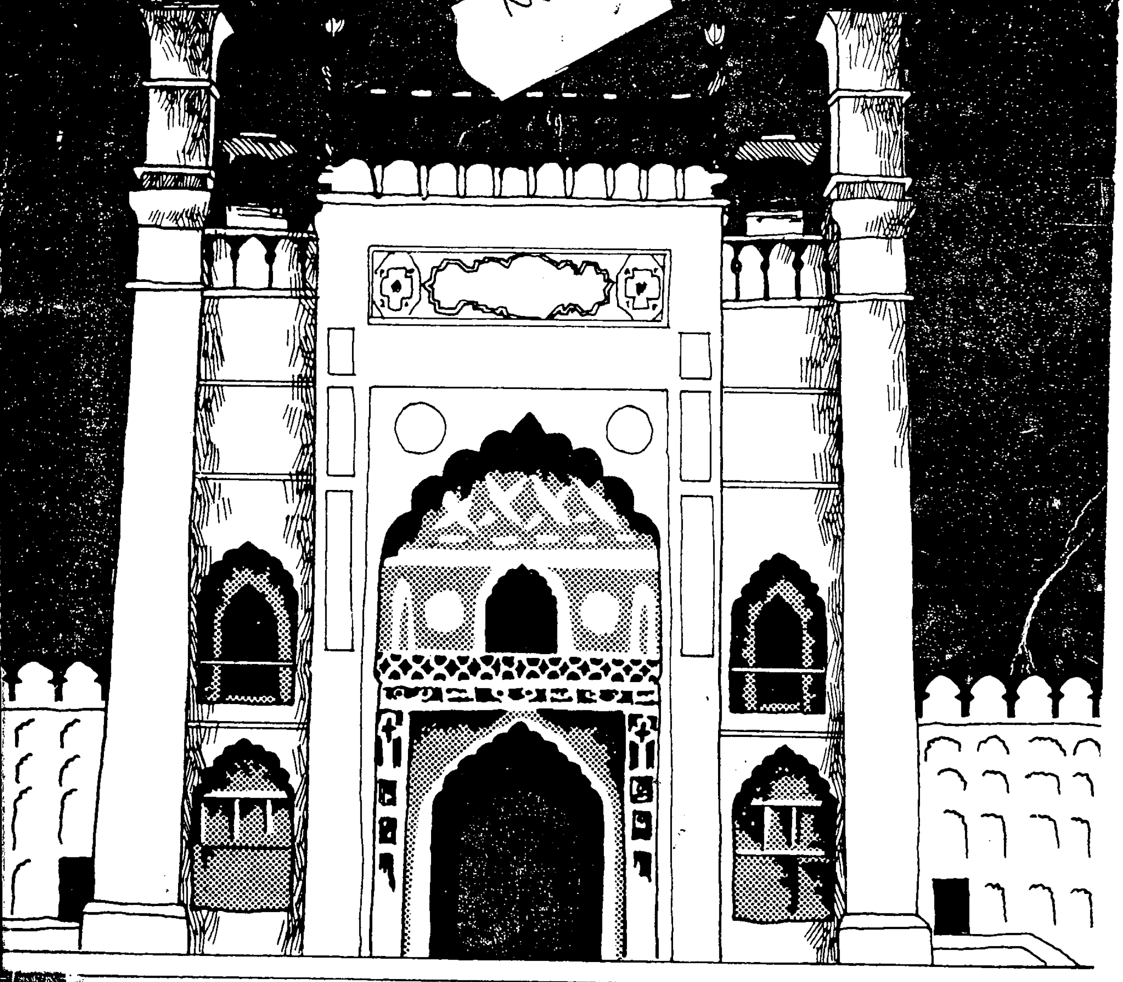
Caring for Muslims and their Fam[illegible] religious asp[illegible]

Alix Henley



Produced for the DHSS and the King Edward's Hospital Fund for London by the National Extension College.

DHSS/King Edward's Hospital Fund for London

Acknowledgements

I should like to thank all the many people who have taken the time and trouble to help me put this book together. In particular, I should like to thank Sarfraz Ansari and Cate Clark for their tremendous patience. Also Dr M. M. Ahsan, Frances Appleby, Professor Hasan Askari, Catherine and Roger Ballard, John and Mary Bavington, James Clayton, Sister Leonore Cooke, Ann Cowper, Dr S. M. Darsh, Fatma Dharamsi, Diana Forrest, Peri Halpern, Nan Henry, Abida Begum Khan, Razia Malik, David Matthews, Zaibunnisha Patel, Ralph Russell, Dr A. F. A. Sayeed, Sharma Sharif, Colette Taylor, Habib Ullah and all the kind people who welcomed me into their homes and patiently answered my questions.

I hope that there is nothing in the book that offends them, but if there is I ask their forgiveness. They will understand how impossible it is to do justice to so vast a subject in so few pages. Any errors are entirely my own responsibility.

I should also like to thank Dreen Daniels who once again performed miracles with the typescript, and my father and Fred for all their help and support.

Translations from the Holy Quran are taken from *The Koran*, trans. N. J. Dawood (Penguin Classics, Fourth revised edition, 1974), pp.265, 387, 293, 350-1, 235, 334, 292-3, 436, 387, 349, 235-6, 356, 357. Copyright © N. J. Dawood, 1956, 1959, 1966, 1968, 1974, and are reprinted by permission of Penguin Books Ltd.

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January 1982

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1. General introduction

Religious beliefs and practices are central to the lives of many Asian people in Britain. They tend to become even more important at times of personal crisis and isolation such as during illness and in hospital.

An informed understanding of the religious beliefs and values of patients is clearly essential to good patient care. No health worker would consciously refuse a patient's request that was connected with his or her religious beliefs or practices. But where health workers do not know very much about a patient's religion they may easily give offence unintentionally, especially in the press of daily business.

Health workers in Britain know the significance of, for example, prayer books and crucifixes, and how to avoid causing unnecessary offence when preparing patients for surgery. They are likely to be less confident of what they are doing when, for example, a Muslim child comes into hospital with a leather pouch attached to his arm, or a patient protests when being shaved for an operation.

Institutional health care in Britain has also grown up to fit in with the traditional ways of British society, many of which are based on Christian practices; for example, we try to send patients home over Christmas, Christian chaplains make regular rounds of hospital wards, and Christian services are held on hospital premises. When patients in hospital wish to make confession, to receive communion, or to baptise their babies, ward staff generally understand what to do, and, equally important, are immediately sympathetic to requests. Non-Christian patients often find it more difficult to get help in fulfilling their religious duties merely because these duties are unfamiliar. This increases their feelings of isolation and unhappiness.

Few British health workers, or other professionals in the

caring services, have up to now been given the opportunity to understand much about the beliefs and practices of Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam. This may inhibit their ability to offer comfort to patients and their families. It may also mean that when patients request special facilities, or refuse to do something for religious reasons, they are regarded with suspicion or irritation by health workers.

Asian people in Britain

For both adults and young people, for people who have come to Britain as adults, and for those born and brought up in Britain, religious beliefs and practices are likely to become particularly important at those times of illness and stress when they are also most likely to be dependent on the caring services.

Most people from the Indian subcontinent and East Africa now living in Britain came from societies in which religion and religious practices are taken for granted. Religious events are the main social events, and religious observances are a normal part of daily life both for individuals and for whole communities. Social and religious values are intertwined and most people do not distinguish them; every act has religious significance, and people judge themselves and others accordingly.

The extent to which individual settlers maintain their religious beliefs and practices in Britain varies a good deal.

In the early days of immigration most people felt under great pressure to conform, and to become as inconspicuous as possible in an alien society. This often led them to abandon external religious practices and observances. For example, many Sikh men, in the early days of immigration, cut their hair and removed their turbans because it was believed that this would make it easier for them to get jobs.

As the wives and children of the early settlers began to arrive in Britain the quality of life within their communities began to improve. Asian communities organised places in which to gather and worship and began to employ permanent religious functionaries to lead prayers and to perform ceremonies that had previously been neglected. As communities became more established and organised, it became easier to practise their religion and to feel supported in their

beliefs. Many communities also began to set up evening or weekend schools where children could learn the basic elements of their parents' faith and practices and could learn to read the holy books. This trend was strengthened with the arrival of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims from East Africa, who had already had experience of recreating their communities and religious identities in a foreign country. They were familiar, for example, with the practical details of administrating and organising temple, gurdwara and mosque communities, and of organising religious ceremonies and festivals within a wider society that did not share their beliefs. Especially among Hindus and Sikhs, people from East Africa often took over the administration and organisation of religious facilities in Britain.

There is naturally a great diversity of religious belief, practices and attitudes among those Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims in Britain who have come to this country as adults, just as there is among British Christians. Some people are extremely devout and find the focus of their lives in their religion; others have discarded most external signs and practices while retaining a strong faith; others have little or no faith but may still retain many of the practices and values of the religious traditions in which they were brought up.

Among young Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims brought up in Britain there is again as much diversity of religious belief and practice as among their Christian peers. However, their education in British schools and in a Christian-based society with a strong secular emphasis is most unlikely to have helped them towards any knowledge or understanding of their parents' beliefs. Prevailing racist attitudes towards minority cultures may also have affected their attitudes towards their parents' religion and origins. Their degree of understanding and faith will therefore depend largely on their parents and on the provision made by their own community: some young Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims are well informed about their faith and are very devout. Others who are not may nevertheless wish to retain some of its practices. These may become particularly important to them in hospital or during illness.

This book

The information in this book concentrates on those features of Muslim religious practice that are likely to be particularly important for health workers and other professionals in hospital and in the community, setting them in the context of the religious beliefs and values from which they spring. It provides a base of knowledge from which to discuss with practising Muslims their needs and wishes in an informed and sensitive way, and with greater confidence. It is likely to be especially relevant to those Asian Muslims who arrived in Britain as adults.

2. What is Islam?

Islam is the religion of the Muslims. The literal meaning of Islam is 'submission', and a Muslim is one who submits to God's will and so is at peace with Him.

In order to become a Muslim, a person must make the following statement of faith sincerely and with true belief: 'I bear witness that there is no god but God and that Muhammad is the Messenger of God.'

There are at present more than nine hundred million Muslims in the world. They live primarily in the Middle and Near East, Soviet Central Asia and Western China, Africa north of the Equator, the Indian subcontinent, Malaysia and Indonesia. There are now also about five million Muslims in Western Europe, of whom about one and a half million are in Britain.

At present most of the Muslims settled in Britain are Asians from the Indian subcontinent and East Africa. This outline deals principally with them, but much of it will also apply to Muslims who have come to Britain from other areas: Turkey and Cyprus, the Middle East and Malaysia.

Being a Muslim means following a complete way of life: Islam contains clear-cut practical rules which all practising Muslims must follow and which cover most day-to-day aspects of individual, family, and community life. Consequently, although the cultures and histories of Muslims in different countries vary widely, and though there are many local religious practices, the basic beliefs, principles and practices of devout Muslims remain the same everywhere: all Muslims regard the Prophet Muhammad as the final messenger of the one true God; all Muslims believe that they must observe the five main duties of Islam – faith, prayer, giving alms, fasting and pilgrimage to Mecca; and all Muslims accept the truths and the code of behaviour

laid down in the Holy Quran and in the recorded deeds and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad.

Devout Muslims in Britain will continue to live by Islam and are unlikely to adopt those aspects of Western culture and lifestyle that conflict with their religious beliefs. For example, the free mixing of the sexes, the dress of Western women, Western attitudes towards the family, alcohol and gambling are all un-Islamic. In many instances, to adopt Western ways would require Muslims to go directly against the beliefs and practices of their religion.

This can cause problems for adult immigrants attempting to recreate a Muslim life in Britain. It can also cause serious difficulties for their children, as they move between two very different worlds, many of whose basic ideas and values conflict. Young Muslims are under additional pressure in Britain, since the Muslim values of their homes and families are often regarded as inferior and less civilised by the majority community.

Local customs

Like Christians in different parts of the world, most Muslims follow certain local or national customs that are not strictly part of Islam but have a religious or social significance. Some of the practices and ceremonies described in this book are followed particularly by people from Pakistan, Bangladesh or India, and not by Muslims from other countries.

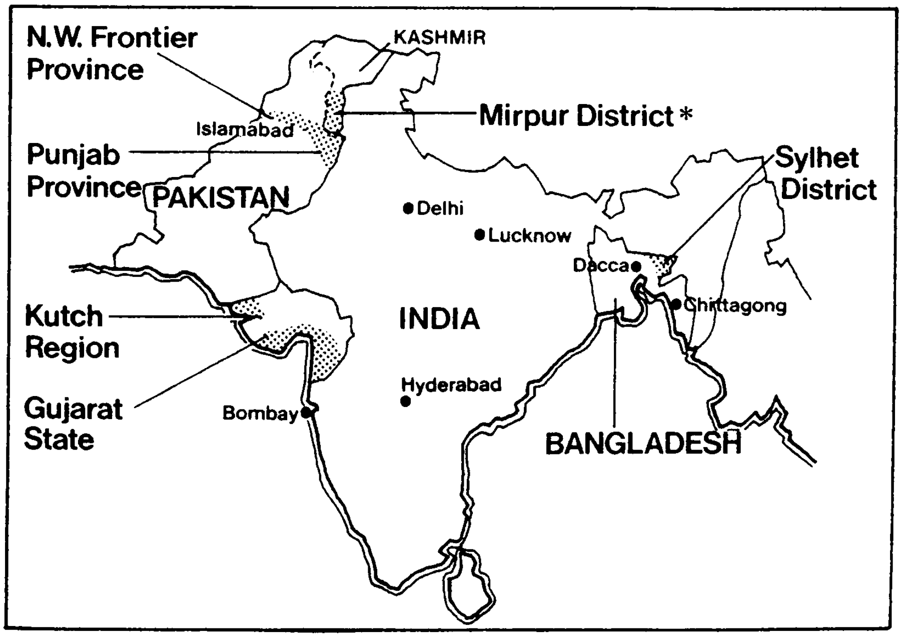
A guide to the pronunciation of Asian words in the text is given on page 80.

3. Where do the Asian Muslims in Britain come from?

Map 1 shows the areas of the Indian subcontinent from which the main groups of Asian Muslims have come to Britain.

Pakistan and Bangladesh were set up as Muslim states and both have predominantly Muslim populations. India has a Muslim population of over seventy million, making up just over eleven percent of its total population.

Map 1: The Indian subcontinent, showing the areas from which the main groups of Asian Muslims have come to Britain.



*Mirpur District is in Kashmir which is now divided between India and Pakistan, both of whom claim it as theirs. A ceasefire line runs through Kashmir from north to south. Mirpur lies in the part of Kashmir under Pakistani control, to the west of the ceasefire line, and known as Azad (Free) Kashmir. The rest of Kashmir is under Indian control.

Some Asian Muslim groups have come to Britain via East Africa, most of them having originally emigrated to East Africa from Gujarat State in India, and from both sides of Punjab's 1947 border. Map 2 shows the main East African countries from which they have come.

Map 2: East Africa, showing the countries from which the main groups of Asian Muslims have come to Britain.

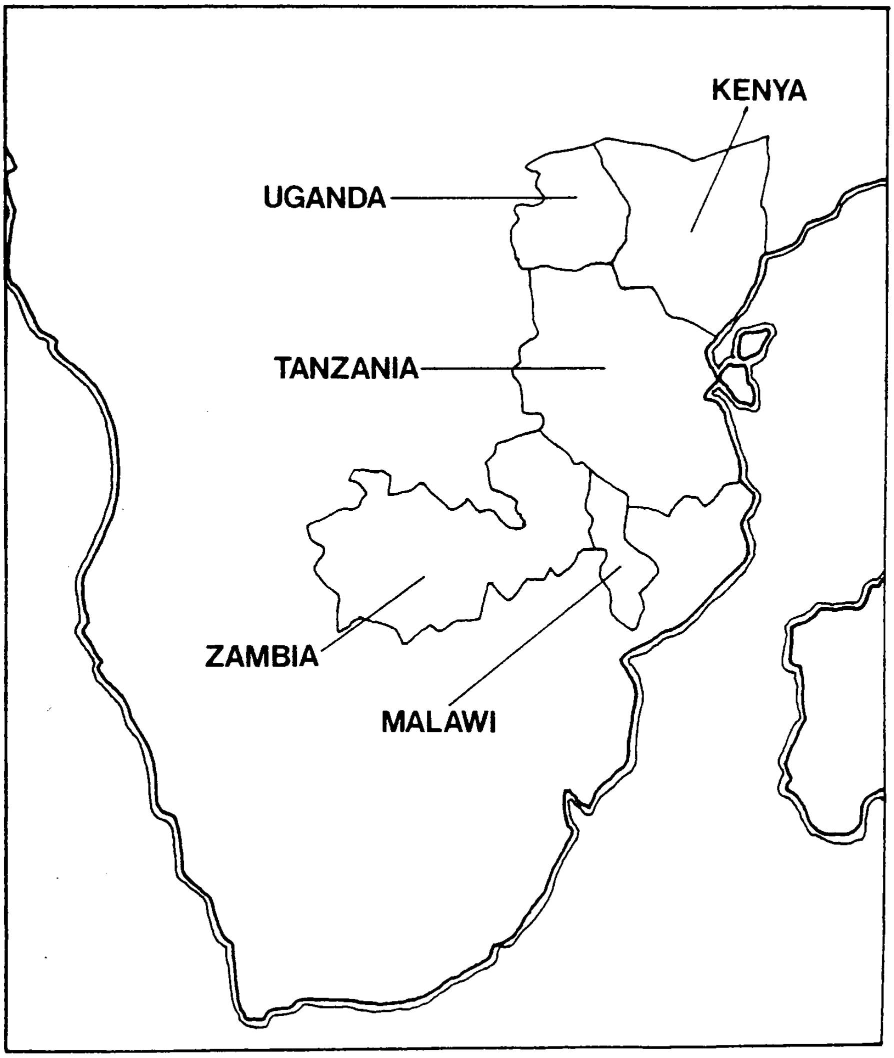


Table 1 lists the main Asian Muslim groups in Britain, where they or their families originated, and the Asian languages they speak.

Table 1: The main groups of Asian Muslims in Britain

From the *INDIAN SUBCONTINENT*		
Mainly from	Referred to as	First language
PAKISTAN:		
Mirpur District	Mirpuris or Azad Kashmiris	Punjabi (Mirpuri dialect)
Punjab Province	Pakistani Punjabis or Punjabi Muslims	Punjabi
N.W. Frontier Province & Attock District (Punjab Province)	Pathans	Pashto and/or Punjabi
also a few from other areas		some Pakistanis speak Urdu as their first language
BANGLADESH:		
Sylhet District	Bengalis Bangladeshis or Sylhetis	Bengali (Sylheti dialect)
also a few from Dacca & Chittagong		Bengali
INDIA:		
Gujarat State especially from the *Kutch* region in Northern Gujarat	Gujarati Muslims or Kutchi Muslims	Gujarati or Kutchi dialect
also a few from other parts of northern and central India, e.g. Delhi, Lucknow, Hyderabad		Muslims from other areas of India often speak Urdu as their first language
From *EAST AFRICA*		
Originally emigrated mainly from	Referred to as	First language
Punjab (India & Pakistan)	East African Punjabi Muslims	Punjabi
Gujarat State (India) including the *Kutch* region in Northern Gujarat	East African Gujarati or Kutchi Muslims	Gujarati or Kutchi dialect
Bombay area (India)	East African Konkani Muslims	Konkani

Asian languages in Britain

The national language and lingua franca of Pakistan is Urdu. Almost all Pakistani men speak Urdu as well as their own first language, and most Pakistani women understand it. Punjabi and Urdu are similar.

Pashto, Gujarati, Konkani and Bengali are each different languages, as different as English, French and German.

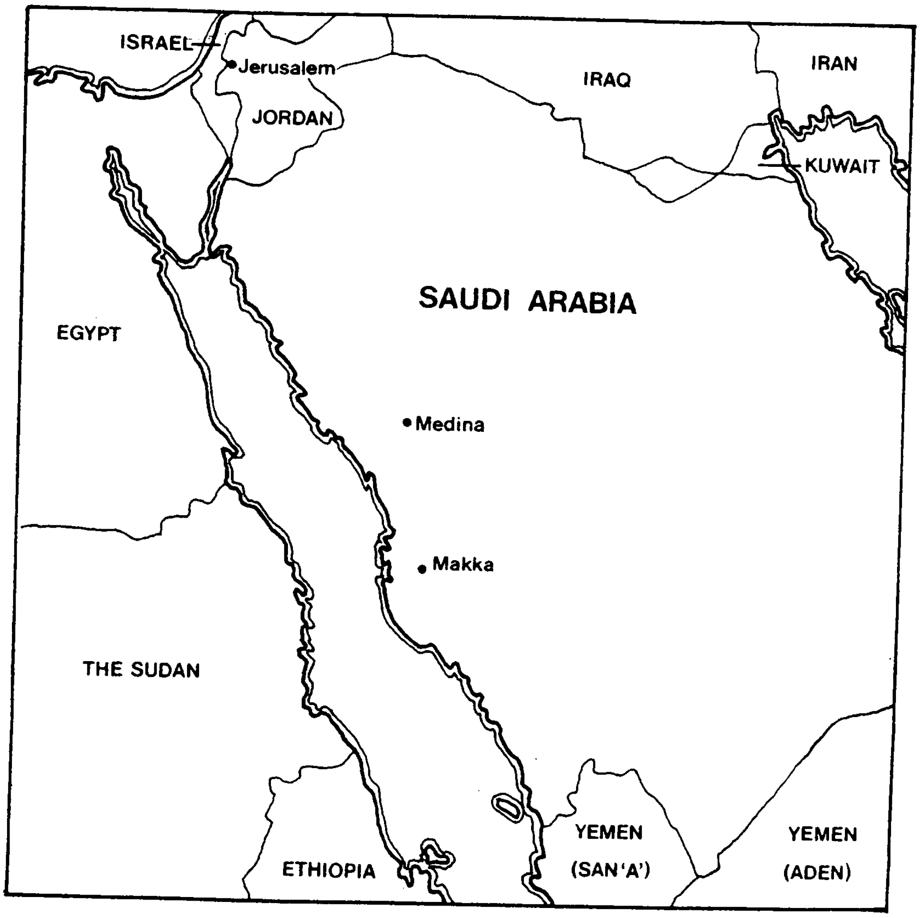
Some people speak a dialect of one of the main languages: the Mirpuri dialect is fairly close to standard Punjabi, and the Kutchi dialect is fairly close to Gujarati. The Sylheti dialect is very different from standard Bengali.

4. The beginnings of Islam

4.1 The early days

Muslims believe that Islam was revealed to Muhammad by God. Muhammad was born in Makka (often known in the West as Mecca) in what is now Saudi Arabia, in 570 A.D. The beginnings of Islam go back to Muhammad's preaching in Makka.

Map 3: Saudi Arabia



In 622 A.D. the Prophet Muhammad and his followers left Makka to escape persecution and went to live in Medina, a nearby city. There, the true meaning of Muhammad's message became clear. Islam emerged as a new and complete religion, forming the basis of a distinctive Muslim community with its own system of government, laws and rules.

The date of Muhammad's journey to Medina, known as the Hijra, is the beginning of the Muslim era, and the year is known in the Muslim Calendar as 1 A.H., the first year After the Hijra. Muhammad died in Medina in 11 A.H. (632 A.D.) and was buried there. By this time the Muslim religion had already spread all over Arabia. Makka, Medina and Jerusalem (because of its links with Abraham and Muhammad) are all holy cities to Muslims. Makka is the most sacred; the pilgrimage of the Hajj is made here (see 6.5), and prayers are always said facing in the direction of Makka.

The power of Islam was such that in the first hundred years after Muhammad's death its message spread all over the Middle East, North Africa, much of Central Asia and even into Spain, and as far east as the Indian subcontinent.

4.2 Islam in the Indian subcontinent

Islam first touched the western parts of the Indian subcontinent in the early eighth century. Muslim invaders established their rule in Punjab in the eleventh century and expanded their power rapidly east, west and south from there. By the sixteenth century the Mughal emperors, a Muslim dynasty from Central Asia, had established their rule over the whole of northern and central India* up to the eastern borders of what is now Bangladesh and as far south as Bombay. Their capital was Delhi.

By about 1700, under the last great Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb, most of the Indian subcontinent was under Mughal rule, and many Indians had converted to Islam, though the majority of the population was still Hindu. After the death of the Emperor Aurangzeb in 1707, however, the Mughal Empire broke up rapidly, as a result of external

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*The name India was used until 1947 to mean the whole Indian subcontinent, covering what are now Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka as well as present-day India itself.

invasion and internal revolt. Small and large areas broke away to become independent states, many of them with Muslim rulers, for example, Bengal, Oudh, Hyderabad and Mysore. At the same time the British, French and Portuguese were moving into India. By the 1820s the British, in the guise of the East India Company, had emerged supreme, both over their European rivals and over the main Indian contenders for power.

In 1857 there was a great revolt against the British, led by Indian soldiers mutinying against their British commanders. The revolt was put down with difficulty and with great ferocity, and thereafter the whole of India (except for a few remaining Princely States such as Kashmir and Hyderabad) was placed under the direct rule of London. Queen Victoria was proclaimed Queen-Empress.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, increasing numbers of Indians began to demand a greater say in their country's affairs. By the end of the First World War, under the influence of Gandhi, the movement to assert Indian rights extended to all sections of the population. Muslims participated very fully in this movement at first, but began increasingly to feel that in an independent India they would be oppressed by the Hindu majority. In 1936 Mohammed Ali Jinnah took over the leadership of the Muslims, and campaigned for the creation of a separate homeland for them.

Independence and the partition of India

By 1940 there was a general Muslim demand that Independence should be accompanied by the partition of India, and that the Muslim majority areas in the north-west and the north-east should be set up as a new and separate independent Muslim State to be called Pakistan. At Independence on August 14th, 1947 the boundaries were drawn accordingly.

The partition of the country was accompanied by great violence between Hindus and Sikhs on the one hand and Muslims on the other. Perhaps half a million people were killed, and there was a massive movement of about twelve million people between the newly divided states. Several million Muslims had to move from India into what were now East and West Pakistan, and several million Hindus and Sikhs had to move in the opposite direction.

Bangladesh

Following the establishment of Pakistan in 1947, relationships between its East and West wings (more than one thousand miles apart) deteriorated rapidly. In 1971, after a war in which the Indians assisted the East Pakistanis against the West Pakistani army, East Pakistan became the independent state of Bangladesh.

5. What Muslims believe

Muslims believe that there is one God, Allah, and that Muhammad is His final messenger.

God is the Eternal Creator, Compassionate and Merciful. He is All-Knowing and All-Powerful and His will must not be questioned in any way. He alone is to be worshipped. Allah is the Arabic word for God.

> Allah is One, the Eternal God. He begot none, nor was He begotten. None is equal to Him.
>
> *The Koran*, Chapter 112

Muslims believe that Muhammad was the last of a long line of prophets and that he completed everything that had gone before. Abraham, Moses, David, Job, John the Baptist and Jesus, among others, are regarded by Muslims as forerunners of Muhammad. Their messages were, however, ignored and distorted by those who heard them. Jesus is particularly revered in the Holy Quran, though the idea of his divinity is regarded as heresy. Much of the teaching of the Old Testament is shared by Muslims, Jews and Christians.

Muslims believe that the Prophet Muhammad's message sealed and crowned all earlier messages. They see Islam as the final and most perfect of all religions, the absolute and only ultimate truth.

> This day I have perfected your religion for you and completed My favour to you. I have chosen Islam to be your faith.
>
> *The Koran*, Chapter 5

The Prophet Muhammad insisted that he was only a messenger, an ordinary man chosen to proclaim God's will. He was not to be regarded as a mediator between

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human beings and God. It is offensive to call Muslims 'Muhammadans' since they feel that this implies that they worship Muhammad in the same way as Christians worship Christ. It is customary for Muslims, when they say the name of the Prophet Muhammad to add the words 'Peace be upon him', immediately afterwards. Respect is paid in the same way to other prophets.

Muslims believe that all men and women are called to be servants of God and that every aspect of their lives is controlled and shaped by His will. Men and women must try to live perfectly, following all that is laid down in the Quran. They must recognise that what they themselves can achieve is limited, however hard they try, and must therefore accept what God sends without question or resentment. This may affect Muslim people's responses to, for example, bereavement and illness.

Muslims believe that they have certain religious duties to perform. These include the five 'pillars' of Islam: faith in God, daily prayer, fasting during Ramzan (sometimes called Ramadan in accordance with the original Arabic pronunciation – most Asian Muslims say Ramzan), and, if their means allow, giving alms and making a pilgrimage to Makka. God has also entrusted each individual with a certain portion of material goods which must be used in His service.

Muslims, like Christians, believe in life after death and in the resurrection of the dead. Every individual should live on earth as perfectly as they can. When a person dies they will be judged by God, and rewarded or punished with Heaven or Hell for the life they have lived.

> Those who surrender themselves to Allah and accept the true faith; who are devout, sincere, patient, humble, charitable and chaste; who fast and are ever mindful of Allah – on these, both men and women, Allah will bestow forgiveness and a rich reward.
>
> *The Koran*, Chapter 33

As well as the Holy Quran, Muslims must follow the Sharia, the Islamic legal system evolved by scholars and based entirely on the Quran and on the recorded sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad. The Sharia is a detailed Islamic legal code covering practically every aspect

of life including personal and public conduct, marriage, inheritance, and crime. Between them, the Holy Quran, the Sharia, and the recorded sayings and actions of Muhammad give Muslims all the guidance they need in any situation. Islam makes no division between secular and religious matters; daily life, food, dress, manners, education, politics, law are all religious issues.

Muslims consider that women and men have equal rights and are spiritually and morally equal, but that they have different roles and responsibilities in life.

6. The duties of a Muslim

The five main duties, which all Muslim men and women should perform, are known as the 'pillars' or foundation stones of Islam. They are acts of discipline intended to help Muslims to lead a generally disciplined life. Some of them have practical implications for health workers. Not all Muslims practise every aspect of their faith strictly, but for those who do, the five pillars of Islam are extremely important.

6.1 **The statement of faith** (Kalima)

> "There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the prophet of God."

All Muslims must make a statement of their faith in God, and in Muhammad as His prophet. God is the Eternal Creator from whom all life comes and to whom it returns. Only God is to be worshipped.

6.2 **Prayer** (Namaz or Salat)

6.2.1 Five daily prayers

Every adult Muslim must say certain set prayers at five specified times every day. In Britain many Asian Muslims try to adhere to this as far as possible. Parents should encourage their children to say formal prayers from about the age of seven.

The times of namaz (prayer) are specified in the Holy Quran:

- after dawn
- around noon

- in the mid-afternoon
- early evening (after sunset)
- at night

A certain amount of leeway is allowed so that people can fit their prayers into a convenient moment.

In Britain, the hours of daylight vary and affect the times for namaz: at the height of summer, for example, the first prayer of the day may be at 3 am and the last (the fifth) at 11 pm. In winter the times for noon, mid-afternoon and early evening namaz run very close together. Local times of prayer are published in British Muslim newspapers and by local mosques.

Before praying, a Muslim must wash (see 6.2.2). When praying, he or she must stand on clean ground (a mat is often used), and must face Makka (south-east in Britain). Both men and women must remove their shoes and cover their heads before praying. During the prayers certain specified movements must be performed at different stages: standing, kneeling, bowing and touching the ground with the forehead. Many people say their own personal prayers after the formal prayers.

The length and content of each of the five formal prayers are fixed, but when people are pressed for time they are allowed to say a shorter version of the formal prayer.

In Britain, Muslims out at work or at school may have to miss some of the set prayers but most devout Muslims try to fit their prayers into convenient moments of the day. Some employers in Britain allow Muslim workers to break for a short period at the correct time to pray. Most people at home pray regularly at the required times.

Although Muslims are generally unselfconscious about praying, most people prefer some privacy; in hospital it may be possible to find a little-used room in which Muslim patients can pray at the set times, or at least to draw curtains round a bed. Discuss with Muslim patients whether they will wish to pray. If so, find out the times of prayer in advance, so that hospital routines can be arranged to interfere as little as possible.

6.2.2 Washing in preparation for prayer

For Muslims, physical and spiritual cleanliness are closely

linked. It is stated in the Holy Quran that every Muslim must always wash certain parts of the body thoroughly in running water three times before praying. This ritual wash follows a set routine: the face, ears, and forehead, the feet to the ankles, and the hands to the elbows. The nose must be cleaned by sniffing up water and the mouth must be rinsed out. People may also have a complete shower before praying if they feel they need to. Washing facilities are always provided in mosques so that people can prepare themselves for prayer.

Muslim men and women must also wash their private parts with water after urinating or defecation and cannot pray unless they have done this. Most people take water for washing into the lavatory with them if a tap is not provided in the lavatory cubicle. Bed-bound Muslim patients who have used a bedpan may wish to be given a proper wash with water.

The requirement to wash before prayer often necessitates special facilities in British institutions. Other people may be offended if Muslims have to wash their feet in handbasins while preparing for prayer, or if they spill water on the floor while washing in the lavatory.

In certain circumstances Muslims must wash completely before praying: both sexes after sexual intercourse, men after a nocturnal emission, and women at the end of their menstrual period.

6.2.3 Exemptions from the five daily prayers

Certain people are exempt from the formal set prayers though they may still say private prayers.

Women up to 40 days after childbirth and during menstruation, and people who are mentally ill, should not say formal prayers.

The seriously ill are exempted altogether, but not all sick people are necessarily exempt. They must follow the requirements for prayer as far as they are able. People who are not bed-bound must pray as normal. A sick person who cannot stand or kneel may pray sitting or lying in bed. It is most important to perform the set washing procedure before praying and a sick person must wash if at all possible. If it is impossible to obtain water, the Holy Quran allows for a symbolic wash to be made.

6.2.4 Friday prayer

Friday is the Muslim holy day. On Fridays all male Muslims over the age of twelve should go to the mosque for congregational prayer. This is led by the Imam (prayer leader), and preceded by a sermon. After the formal congregational prayer certain additional prayers are repeated privately, often counted off on prayer beads (tasbih).

The precise time of Friday prayer varies depending on the committee of the local mosque but is usually in the early afternoon. Unlike the Christian Sunday or the Jewish Sabbath, Friday is not necessarily a day of rest for Muslims. In Bangladesh, for example, the official day of rest is Sunday, but extra time is allowed on Fridays for men to attend the mosque in the middle of their working day.

Muslim women do not normally (except for members of one sect, the Ismailis – see 18) attend the mosque for congregational prayer. On Fridays, most women say the usual noon prayer at home. Some mosques, however, provide a separate prayer room for women, which they use for Friday congregational prayer. More usually, women only attend the mosque for meetings and other functions.

6.3 **Fasting** (Roza or Siyam)

All healthy Muslims over the age of twelve must fast during Ramzan. This is the ninth month of the Muslim year, and the month in which the Holy Quran was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. Because the Muslim year is lunar the dates of Ramzan and other Muslim festivals change in relation to the Western solar year. Estimated dates of Ramzan up to 2000 A.D. are given in Table 2 below.

Muslims consider that fasting is one of the highest forms of worship, enabling them to reach a high spiritual level and to come closer to God. It also helps people to practise self-discipline, and to share and understand the suffering of the poor and hungry. Most Muslims in Britain observe the fast of Ramzan, though some people may perform a modified fast to fit in with changed daily routines here.

Before Ramzan begins, all disputes and ill-feeling must be sorted out. Extra prayers are said throughout the month, the Holy Quran is read from beginning to end, and people

abstain from frivolous pleasures. In many ways, the spirit of Ramzan is similar to that of Lent as observed by very devout Christians.

6.3.1 The month of Ramzan

For the 29 or 30 days of Ramzan, Muslims must abstain from all food, all liquid (including water), and tobacco between dawn (the first signs of daylight, about one and a half hours before sunrise) and sunset. The fast should begin when it is light enough to distinguish a black and white thread, and end when they can no longer be distinguished. The times of beginning and breaking the fast, and of the five set daily prayers during Ramzan, are usually published and circulated by local mosques.

> Believers, fasting is decreed for you as it was decreed for those before you: perchance you will guard yourselves against evil. Fast a certain number of days, but if anyone of you is ill or on a journey let him fast a similar number of days later on; and for those that can afford it there is a ransom: the feeding of a poor man. He that does good of his own account shall be well rewarded: but to fast is better for you if you but knew it.
>
> In the month of Ramadhan the Koran was revealed, a book of guidance with proofs of guidance distinguishing right from wrong. Therefore whoever of you is present in that month let him fast. But he who is ill or on a journey shall fast a similar number of days later on.
>
> Allah desires your well-being, not your discomfort. He desires you to fast the whole month so that you may magnify Him and render thanks to Him for giving you His guidance.
>
> *The Koran*, Chapter 2

During Ramzan most Muslims get up an hour or two before dawn and eat a meal before the fast begins. They do not eat or drink again until sunset, when most people first take a light meal with plenty of fluid, say the evening prayer, and then have a larger meal.

During Ramzan the routine of most Muslim families, and particularly of the women, is completely altered. Many women get up two or three hours before dawn to cook the early meal, and stay up late at the end of the day clearing

up after the family has eaten. They usually catch up on sleep when the men and children are out of the house during the day. This may affect Muslim women's attendance at clinics and other provision during Ramzan. It may be courteous to restrict home visits at this time and to find out in advance when women are likely to be up and ready to receive visitors.

6.3.2 Exemptions from fasting

All Muslims except young children (under about twelve) are required to fast, but there are certain exemptions:

- People who are ill are not bound to fast, but must make up the number of days they have missed as soon as possible after Ramzan.
- The elderly in poor health and the infirm do not have to fast for the full month but should fast a little if they can. They should provide food for the poor to make up for the days' fasts they have missed.
- Women who are menstruating are not allowed to fast, but must make up the number of days' fasts they have missed at a later date (usually as soon as possible after Ramzan).
- Women who are pregnant or breast-feeding are not bound to fast but should also make up the days missed at a later date. However, some pregnant women may decide to fast, taking the opportunity of making a full and complete fast during Ramzan since they are not menstruating. This can legitimately be discouraged if they are in late pregnancy.
- People on a journey are not bound to fast but must also make up the number of days they have missed as soon as possible after Ramzan.

During Ramzan, people who are not fasting should not eat or cook in front of other Muslims, since this might lead someone else to break their fast. It is considered a grave sin for anyone to break the fast of Ramzan without a compelling reason, and entails a serious penalty.

Children are usually encouraged to fast for a few days at the age of about seven. They often fast with their parents

on Fridays and weekends. Between twelve and fourteen they should begin to fast for the whole month. Parents are watchful for any ill effects; children are usually very keen to complete as much of the fast as possible.

6.3.3 *The dates of Ramzan*

The dates of Ramzan fall about ten days earlier each year, because the Muslim year contains only 354 days. Table 2 gives estimated dates of Ramzan. The exact dates depend on the sighting of the new moon in different countries and so cannot be forecast precisely. In Britain, when Ramzan falls in the summer months, people may have to fast for many hours every day.

Table 2: Estimated dates of Ramzan and the Islamic Years

A.D. Year	A.H. (Islamic) Year	Beginning of month of Ramzan	End of Ramzan (feast of Eed-ul-Fitr)
1982	1402	24 June	22/23 July
1983	1403	13 June	12/13 July
1984	1404	2 June	2/3 July
1985	1405	22 May	20/21 June
1986	1406	12 May	10/11 June
1987	1407	2 May	31 May/1 June
1988	1408	22 April	21/22 May
1989	1409	12 April	11/12 May
1990	1410	2 April	1/2 May
1991	1411	23 March	21/22 April
1992	1412	13 March	11/12 April
1993	1413	3 March	1/2 April
1994	1414	21 February	22/23 March
1995	1415	11 February	12/13 March
1996	1416	1 February	2/3 March
1997	1417	22 January	20/21 February
1998	1418	12 January	10/11 February
1999	1419	2 January	31 Jan/1 Feb
2000	1420	23 December	21/22 January

6.3.4 Muslim patients during Ramzan

Special provision may be required in hospital for those Muslim patients who are able and wish to fast: they will generally need to eat a meal before dawn and then another after sunset. They will also need a glass of water and a bowl at the four prayer times during the fast so that they can rinse out their mouths in preparation for prayer. Patients who are fasting and are not bed-bound may prefer to go and sit in a side ward at mealtimes. Discuss with patients what they wish to do and what they will need.

Although people are not required to fast if their health is likely to be affected, this is an individual decision, and some very devout Muslims may still wish to; they will not take anything at all into their bodies, through the mouth, the nose, nor by injection or suppository, between dawn and sunset.

In cases of chronic illness, if fasting might be undesirable for medical reasons, again, only the patient him or herself can decide what to do. Other people can advise but cannot insist. Some devout Muslims may wish to fast whatever the consequences, although the Holy Quran allows a good deal of flexibility to the sick and elderly. If a Muslim cannot fast at all, they are permitted in the Quran to perform another virtuous act such as providing food for the poor.

During Ramzan, medicines for fasting Muslim patients should be prescribed taking the fast into account. Tablets can be prescribed and injections given, for example, at sunset, at midnight, and before dawn. Ask Muslim patients whether they plan to fast during Ramzan and discuss how medicines can be taken to avoid breaking the fast.

Diabetic Muslims will not usually fast during Ramzan but, for those who do, it may be necessary to adjust insulin quantities and the times at which it is given, to fit in with Ramzan meal patterns. Stress to diabetic patients that they must take some carbohydrate-containing food if they become hypoglycemic.

It is most important to know the dates of Ramzan each year (see Table 2 above) in order to ensure that Muslim patients are given appropriate treatment and advice, and that any possible problems can be discussed and ironed out in advance.

6.3.5 Other fast days

Although Ramzan is the only compulsory Muslim fast, some devout Muslims may make other voluntary fasts at particular times: for example, on two days in Muharram (the first month of the Muslim year). Some people may fast regularly on three days every month. People may also fast as penance for misdeeds.*

6.4 **Almsgiving** (Zakat)

Almsgiving, zakat, is an integral part of Muslim worship. The Holy Quran requires every Muslim who can afford it to give approximately 2½ per cent of their disposable income to the needy every year. (Precise amounts vary depending on whether the money is capital, income etc.) The zakat money must be given during the month of Ramzan. The money collected may be given to the poor and needy, or to community projects such as the upkeep of the mosque. The more that is given the better, provided that one's family and dependants do not suffer as a result.

Most Muslim families also regularly give further sums of money to the poor and for other causes and for the needs of the local community. Muslims in Britain often give money for projects and causes in other Muslim countries. The money should be given as far as possible in secret.

The practice of almsgiving reflects the attitude of Islam towards material possessions. All things in the world belong to God. Human beings are merely His trustees. Wealth is to be produced, distributed, acquired and spent in a way that is acceptable to God. Luxurious living, conspicuous consumption, profligate spending, and gaining money through the exploitation of others are all explicitly forbidden in the Quran. Devout Muslims in Britain follow this ideal very closely, and may deliberately decide not to buy luxuries for themselves, their children and their homes, and to dress and live simply and unostentatiously.

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*For more general information on the foods and diets of Muslim people in Britain see *Asian Foods and Diets* in this series, also available from the National Extension College.

6.5 **Pilgrimage** (Hajj)

It is laid down in the Holy Quran that every Muslim who is able and can afford it, should make the Hajj, a pilgrimage to Makka, the most holy city of Islam, at least once in their life. The Hajj must be made during the second week of the twelfth month of the Islamic year (Zil-Hija).

The aim of the Hajj is to gain spiritual renewal and greater awareness of the essential brotherhood and equality of all people. Muslim men and women from all over the world, of all races, nationalities and backgrounds, come together to worship and make the pilgrimage, without distinctions of wealth, race, or class. Every man and woman on the Hajj wears a simple white garment and backless sandals. Women also cover their heads. Everyone walks the same pilgrimage route together and everyone joins in the congregational prayers. In 1981 over two million Muslims made the Hajj.

Going on the Hajj is regarded by Muslims as a unique spiritual and emotional experience and as a great honour. The Hajj often has a profound and lasting effect on those who have made it. People are expected to have prepared themselves for spiritual renewal before going on the Hajj.

The whole pilgrimage takes six days. It involves walking a long set route round various significant and holy places in and around Makka connected particularly with the prophet Abraham, his wife Hagar and his son Ishmael. In the first stage of the Hajj the pilgrims walk around the Ka'aba in the sacred mosque seven times. The Ka'aba is the most sacred place for Muslims and is a cubic structure which Muslims believe was built as a House of God by the prophet Abraham and his son Ishmael. Throughout the six days the pilgrims pray both silently and as a congregation. They retreat from the world and devote all their thoughts to worship and to the meaning of the pilgrimage.

Before anyone goes on the Hajj they must ensure the financial security of the family left behind, and settle all quarrels, disputes and debts. Anyone who has made the pilgrimage may use a title before their name. In the Indian subcontinent men use the title Haji and women Hajan. People who have been on the Hajj are given great respect within the community and may be consulted by other Muslims on religious matters.

Muslims may go on the Hajj at any age but most go in middle age. A Muslim may also go on the Hajj on behalf of another family member who has died without ever making a pilgrimage. Someone who is sick or disabled may appoint another person to make a pilgrimage on their behalf.

Many Muslims also visit Makka at other times of the year to make a lesser pilgrimage known as Umra.

7. The Holy Quran

7.1 Divine revelation

Muslims believe that the Holy Quran is an actual message from God revealed through the Prophet Muhammad, and written down without alteration, in the words in which it was revealed. It is God's final statement on the whole meaning, purpose and conduct of human existence.

Because the Holy Quran consists of the actual words of God it is treated with the utmost reverence. It must not be criticised or altered in any way, and its meaning cannot be changed, adapted or reinterpreted to suit people's wishes or current social values. The reverence of Muslims towards the Holy Quran has been compared with the reverence of Christians towards Christ.

The Holy Quran is written in Arabic and is about the same length as the New Testament. It is divided into 114 chapters (surahs) of varying lengths. It reveals the nature of God and His relationship with humankind, people's duties on earth, and the nature of the life to come. It lays down detailed practical rules on many aspects of individual, family, and community life, though allowing a good deal of leeway to take individual circumstances into account. It includes, for example, guidance on suitable food, proper dress, prayer, family duties and responsibilities, borrowing and lending money, almsgiving, gambling, alcohol, marriage, divorce and inheritance. Devout Muslims turn to the Holy Quran for guidance on most matters and problems. For areas not covered in the Holy Quran, they turn to the Sharia, Islamic law, which has been developed from the recorded sayings and acts of the Prophet Muhammad.

Many figures who also appear in the Old Testament are mentioned in the Quran, including Adam, Noah, Jonah, Joseph, David, Jacob, Abraham, Solomon, and Moses.

Jesus is regarded with great respect and also Mary, his mother. Jews and Christians are mentioned with respect in the Holy Quran as People of the Book, people who share some of God's Revelation. Muslims believe that the five books of Moses (Torat), the Book of Psalms (Zaboor), and the New Testament (Injeel) were also divinely revealed, but that their texts have become changed and seriously corrupted with the passage of time.

Every Muslim should be able to read the Arabic text of the Quran. Many devout Muslims learn it by heart, earning the title of 'hafiz' for men or 'hafiza' for women. No translation from the Arabic is considered adequate to convey the true spirit and meaning of the Holy Quran, or to retain its power.

7.2 Looking after the Holy Quran

The Holy Quran must be treated with great care. Nothing may be placed on top of it and it must not be touched by anyone who has not washed in the way also required before prayer (see 6.2.2). The Quran is normally kept high up on a shelf, wrapped in a white cloth. It is placed on a stand when it is being read. It should never be put on the floor or near such things as shoes or underclothes. No one may talk, smoke, or read while it is being read, and both men and women usually cover their heads. Muslims in Britain may be reluctant to take a copy of the Holy Quran into hospital with them in case it is not treated with the reverence due to it.

Taviz, a small piece of cloth, leather or metal containing words from the Holy Quran, may sometimes be worn on a black string around the arm, waist or neck for protection. For example, parents may put a taviz on a child as protection before it goes into hospital. Unless it is unavoidable, these religious articles should not be removed by other people. They must be kept dry.

7.3 Learning to read the Holy Quran

In Britain, since Muslim religious instruction is not provided in schools, most Muslim children go to a mosque school for religious instruction, after school on weekdays or during the

weekend. At the mosque school, children learn to read the text of the Quran in Arabic and memorise parts of it. For religious discussions and for reading other religious books, Pakistani and Indian children normally use Urdu, and Bangladeshi children use Bengali. Instruction is given by someone who has studied the Quran and whom the local community regards as qualified.

Most Muslim children in Britain begin to attend mosque school at the age of five; girls attend until puberty, but many boys continue until they are about fifteen. Children are generally keen to attend, and most parents feel that it is essential that their children should be well grounded in their religion, the most important aspect of their lives.

7.4 Other sources of guidance for Muslims

The Prophet Muhammad is regarded as an exemplary human being. Muslims often turn for additional guidance to well-documented traditions about his acts (sunnah) and words (hadith in Arabic, hadiss in Urdu). These are regarded as valuable sources of information on how Muslims should act in different situations, particularly in areas which are not covered in the Holy Quran. There are several well-known collections of reliably recorded hadith of which families may have copies at home. Several collections of hadith are available in English translation.

8. The mosque

8.1 The functions of the mosque

In a Muslim country a mosque (masjid) is primarily a place of worship for men and a centre of religious education for children. It also regularly reminds the whole population of their religious duties: from each mosque in a Muslim country the voice of the Imam can be heard throughout the neighbourhood calling people to their prayers five times a day. Each mosque serves the neighbourhood within which its call to prayer can be heard. In Britain the call to prayer (azaan) is made only inside the mosque. Its sound is something that many Muslims in Britain miss.

In Britain, many mosques provide instruction for children in their mother tongue as well as in reading the Quran, and mosques still form an important focus for community life. Each of the different Muslim communities living in an area usually tries to have its own mosque within walking distance, where its members can gather for prayer and for social functions, and where they can speak their own language among people from their own community. For this reason there may be several mosques within one area, each mosque serving a particular group.

In most communities women do not attend the mosque for prayer but always pray at home. However, older married women, well educated in the Holy Quran and in Islam, may visit other women of the community in their homes to teach and pray with them and to read the Holy Quran. These women may be important influences within the community, particularly among the younger women. Women may attend the mosque for meetings and other functions.

8.2 The organisation of the mosque

Islam has no ordained priesthood. There is no central

Islamic authority or hierarchy of religious leaders. Each community has its own religious leaders, local men with some status in the community, such as scholars, teachers and lawyers. Each mosque is organised by a committee of such men who are responsible for the maintenance of the mosque, for organising classes and meetings, and for hiring and paying their Imam (see 8.3). They are also responsible for raising the necessary money.

Each committee usually has a President or Chairman, a Treasurer and a Secretary. They are in effective charge of the mosque, and usually have a good deal of authority within the community, though they refer to the Imam of the mosque on religious issues and for rulings from the Quran. Since each community is independent, policies and practices of different communities may vary a good deal.

8.3 The Imam

In Britain there is usually a permanent Imam in charge of each mosque. In a Muslim country this would not be necessary, since any respected Muslim with a good knowledge of the formal prayers and the Holy Quran can act temporarily as Imam and lead congregational prayers. In Britain the Imam of a mosque is supported and paid by the whole community. He normally performs all religious functions and teaches in the mosque school. Members of the community refer to him on religious issues and matters of correct religious practice.

An Imam may also be referred to as a Maulvi or a Maulana. Both these terms imply a man who knows Arabic and is well educated in religious matters and in Islamic law and practice. The term Mullah is also used but occasionally has a derogatory sense to indicate someone who is ignorant and bigoted.

Unlike a Christian priest, an Imam does not traditionally have a pastoral role. Such tasks as visiting the sick, comforting and praying with the dying, and supporting the elderly and those in trouble, are normally performed by ordinary Muslims within the community, men for men and women for women. An Imam is not absolutely required to be present at such events as marriage, death and burial, though he is normally asked to attend.

In Britain, although it is not part of their traditional role,

some Imams do fulfil certain pastoral functions. If a Muslim is very ill or dying or needs help, and has no family available, he or she may wish you to contact the Imam at the local mosque. Get the address from your local Community Relations Council. The President or Secretary of the mosque committee may also be able to organise help from among the community.

8.4 Entering the mosque

Each mosque usually contains a room for prayer, washing facilities, a room for the school, and a room for lectures or discussions. In Britain, most mosques are still converted houses, though more and more communities are building new mosques with traditional Islamic architecture.

The prayer room in the mosque is usually very simple. In Britain, certain Islamic architectural features have often been added to the original building, such as arches over the windows. The walls are normally bare but may have Quranic inscriptions on them. There are no seats. People stand, sit and kneel on the carpeted floor. In the middle of the wall closest to Makka (the south-east wall) there is a niche, the Mihrab, towards which all the worshippers face while they pray. On the right of the Mihrab is a raised pulpit or chair (Minbar) and from its steps the sermons on Fridays and at the Eeds (Muslim festivals – see 19) are delivered.

Before entering the prayer room all Muslims must perform the preparatory wash. Shoes must be removed and left outside and the head must be covered. Both sexes must be modestly dressed. Women visitors should wear, for example, a long skirt or loose trousers with a long top.

9. Muslim families

9.1 Family duties

The family is central to Muslim life and to Muslim society. In the Holy Quran, God gives specific guidance on the rights, responsibilities and obligations of every Muslim within his or her family, and stresses the family's value as a source of support, love and security. In Asian culture the family is traditionally a much larger unit, often referred to as the extended family, and including people whom most British people would regard as distant relatives.

Marriage and the raising of children are fundamental to a good Muslim life and are religious duties. The duty of every Muslim to support parents and protect orphans and the weak is repeated frequently.

> Your Lord has enjoined you to worship none but Him, and to show kindness to your parents. If either or both of them attain old age in your dwelling, show them no sign of impatience, nor rebuke them, but speak to them kind words. Treat them with humility and tenderness and say 'Lord, be merciful to them. They nursed me when I was an infant.'
>
> *The Koran*, Chapter 17

For most Muslims in Britain, obligations to family members in the Indian subcontinent and East Africa remain very strong.

As in Asian tradition generally, sons are considered responsible for the care and support of their parents as they grow older. This contrasts strongly with traditional British patterns. When a son marries, he and his wife often remain with his parents and bring up their children there. In Britain, with smaller houses and greater job mobility, this happens less frequently, but at least one son and his family, usually

the oldest, will generally remain with his parents.

When a relative is ill, all family members have strong responsibilities towards them. Everyone who can must visit a sick relative to give comfort and support. Female relatives will often take over the care of a child if its own mother is sick. If an older relative back in Pakistan or Bangladesh is ill, family members may go at very short notice to look after him or her for long periods of time.

Sexual morality is strict, to protect the family and society. Sex is only permitted within the context of marriage, in which men have specific and clear responsibilities to protect and provide for women and for any children. Extra-marital sexual relations are strictly forbidden and are condemned in the Holy Quran. Deep shame for the whole family follows the discovery of any illicit sexual liaisons. It is considered proper and responsible to segregate the sexes after puberty to prevent any encouragement to pre- or extra-marital sexual relations.

9.2 Men and women

Muslim men and women must perform the same religious duties: five daily prayers, fasting during Ramzan, almsgiving, and pilgrimage to Makka. Muslims regard men and women as having the same rights, but different, though equally important, roles. Under Islamic law and in the Holy Quran, the difference between roles of men and women are made clear and are seen as divinely ordained: men are responsible for all matters outside the home and for supporting their families; women are responsible for rearing and educating children, looking after the family and running the home.

Muslims draw a striking contrast between the position of women in Arabia before Muhammad and their position after the coming of Islam: before Islam, women were chattels and had no protection whatsoever. Muslims regard the Quran as having made a radical change in the position of women, giving them rights and security that they had not had before, and giving men strict obligations of protection, fairness and restraint towards women. The Holy Quran raised the status of women, recreated the stable family unit for the protection of women and children, and gave women a legal status as independent human beings, with special emphasis on their

economic rights.

> Women shall with justice have rights similar to those exercised against them, although men have a status above women.
>
> *The Koran*, Chapter 2

It is laid down in the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad that women have the right to equal education, to earn and possess money, to inherit, and to control and dispose of their money or property without reference to their husbands or fathers. This latter right was not obtained by English women until the end of the nineteenth century in the Married Women's Property Acts. Before then, an English married woman could not possess anything, even what she earned. By contrast, the Holy Quran allows a married woman to retain her legal identity and to run a business of her own without consulting her husband. She has no obligation to contribute anything to the household expenses. Muslim men, on the other hand, must contribute their earnings to the household.

Within Muslim families, men and women generally share decisions, with women chiefly responsible for the comfort of the family, the upbringing and moral education of the children, and the atmosphere and conduct of the home. However, in most matters outside the home a Muslim woman should always be under the guardianship and protection of a man: her father, her husband, or her sons if she is a widow. This may be important, for example, in contacts with the Health Service: it is not within the role of a traditional Muslim woman to decide alone on a family planning method, nor to sign a consent form for an operation. Where a signed consent form is required urgently it may be essential to keep in close touch with the husband or father and to be able to contact him at all times. Families and individuals will differ, but in many Muslim communities almost all decisions will ultimately be referred to the men.

Traditional Muslims regard purdah, the physical seclusion of women, as a measure designed to protect them. Women should remain in their homes most of the time, and should not meet men except very close relatives.

> If you fear Allah, do not be too complaisant in your speech, lest the lecherous-hearted should lust after you.

> Show discretion in what you say. Stay in your homes and do not display your finery as women used to do in the days of ignorance. Attend to your prayers, give alms to the poor, and obey Allah and his apostle.
>
> *The Koran*, Chapter 33

According to Muslim and Asian tradition, a man who cares for his wife and protects her from contact with strange men is a good husband. In the Indian subcontinent, observance of purdah is therefore often considered an indication of status and respectability and the mark of a caring husband. The veiling of women's faces is not laid down in the Holy Quran and is a social custom that originated in the Middle East. The burqah, a veil used in some parts of the Indian subcontinent to cover the face when a woman goes out among strangers, is rarely worn by Asian Muslim women in Britain.

Beliefs about women's roles and responsibilities influence Muslim parents' decisions about the upbringing and education of their daughters in Britain. Since it is almost impossible for a girl to participate fully in the life of her British peers and remain a good Muslim, parents may decide to protect their daughters by sending them back home to live with their extended families rather than expose them to the pressures of adolescence in Britain.

Islamic teachers would agree that if Muslim women are exploited, ill-treated or deprived of their rights, this is explicitly against the laws and the spirit of Islam, and reflects an evil in a particular society. They would also say that the equality of role demanded by many Western women is against the fundamental nature of men and women as ordained by God.

9.3 Public behaviour

A rigid code of public behaviour is normally observed between the sexes, particularly in conservative Muslim families, and in families from rural areas.

For example, on visits among many Muslim families, men and women do not normally shake hands. They keep their eyes down in each other's presence. They sit separately: men and women in the same room do not sit on the same sofa, for example. It is considered courteous for the women of the family to withdraw or remain silent when men or

older people are talking to visitors. Outside the family, men and women usually socialise separately.

To Western eyes the public behaviour of Muslim women may seem to indicate subservience. Relationships within the privacy of the family, however, are far more like those in Western families.

10. Practical care

Muslim men and women are required to be modest about their bodies. Many Muslims find any exposure offensive and shocking; cooperation and thought may be required from staff in hospitals and other institutions to avoid causing unnecessary embarrassment or distress.

10.1 Women

Muslim women should traditionally be clothed from head to foot, except for their hands and faces, and their clothes should conceal the shapes of their bodies. For a conservative Muslim woman to uncover her legs would be as shocking and humiliating as for a British woman to be required to walk around in public with her breasts exposed. Backless hospital gowns, or garments that leave the legs bare or have a low neckline, are immoral and humiliating for most Muslim women, particularly in the presence of strangers, especially strange men. Parents of Muslim girls at school may regard school uniforms, sports clothes and bathing costumes as offensive and condusive to immorality.

Most Muslim women do not expect to undress fully except when they are alone. In the subcontinent, women do not usually undress for physical examination, but uncover only parts of themselves at a time. Following this procedure in British hospitals and clinics may avoid distress for Muslim women.

Clothes

Muslim women from Pakistan and Gujarat traditionally wear shalwar kameez. A sari may also be worn on special occasions such as weddings.

The kameez (shirt) is a long loose tunic with long or half

sleeves. The kameez of a Gujarati Muslim woman is usually waisted. The shalwar (trousers) of Muslim women are usually cut very full to avoid any immodesty. A long scarf (chuni or dupatta) is an integral part of the outfit. It is placed over the shoulders and across the front to cover the breasts. A woman may cover her head with one end of the dupatta when she goes out, or as a sign of respect and modesty in front of visiting strangers, older people and men.

Muslim women from Bangladesh traditionally wear a sari with a waist-length blouse and underskirt beneath. One end of the sari may be pulled over the head as a sign of respect or modesty.

The shalwar kameez, the sari, or the blouse and underskirt, are usually worn as both day and night wear. They are loosened at night for comfort.

Women coming into hospital should be informed that they may continue to wear their normal night clothes if they wish, rather than going to the expense of buying nightdresses specially for the occasion. Wearing familiar clothes also prevents discomfort and embarrassment.

Muslim girls and women who wear Western dress will usually wear trousers or long skirts to cover their legs.

Wedding jewellery

When a Muslim woman marries she usually receives a number of glass or gold wedding bangles, equivalent in significance to a British wedding ring. Some women in hospital may be very reluctant to remove their wedding bangles if they are asked to do so. If at all possible, wedding bangles should be taped if a woman is reluctant to remove them. Always discuss any problems with the patient or her family.

Some Muslim women in Britain now wear a wedding ring instead of or as well as wedding bangles. Like the wedding ring of an English woman, this should not be removed unless absolutely necessary. Other jewellery may also be worn to indicate that a woman is married. Some women may, for example, wear a small jewel on their nose. If an important item of jewellery must be removed explain the reason and discuss this with the patient or her family first.

Other jewellery and make-up

Muslim women may wear other jewellery, some of which

could have important religious or cultural significance. For example, a woman may wear a taviz, a small cloth or leather amulet containing words from the Holy Quran to keep her safe at times of illness or during labour (see 7.2). Some women may wear a small medallion with words from the Holy Quran engraved on it. None of these items should be removed unnecessarily. If they must be removed, discuss this with the patient or her family first.

10.2 Men

Muslim men should always cover themselves from the waist to the knees: nudity, even in the presence of other men, may give offence.

Most men in Britain wear Western-style shirt and trousers, though some men may wear traditional dress to relax in at home or to go to the mosque.

Traditional Pakistani male dress is a shirt (kameez) and loose trousers (pajama). The traditional dress of Bangladeshi men is a shirt and a lungi, a length of cloth wrapped round the waist, usually reaching down to the calves. Muslim men cover their heads, usually with a brimless cloth hat or cap, while praying and as a sign of respect at ceremonies such as marriages and funerals. Older and devout Muslim men may wear a hat or cap all the time.

10.3 Physical contact between men and women

Strict Muslims regard physical contact between a woman and a man who is not her husband as forbidden. To many Muslims, the free and easy personal and physical relationships between men and women in Britain are signs of a morally corrupt society. Even putting an arm in a friendly or comforting manner round a patient of the opposite sex may be perceived as offensive and as sexually promiscuous.

Physical contact between members of the same sex, on the other hand, is perfectly acceptable. Touch is used to indicate friendship, support and understanding and can be invaluable in overcoming barriers of language and unfamiliarity. Putting one's arm around a worried patient of the same sex, for example, may give tremendous comfort and reassurance.

Women patients

Even in a medical setting, many Muslim women will react strongly against any physical contact with men, as, for example, in an examination by a male doctor or nurse, or even by male ambulance drivers coming into the home. An internal examination by a male doctor can be traumatic. Many women feel shocked by such contact, humiliated and dirty, and may regard themselves as sinful and spiritually unclean.

Muslim women should always be examined by women doctors and men by male doctors. Where it is impossible to provide a female doctor to examine a female patient, a non-Asian male doctor, who is not part of the culture of the patient, may be less distressing than a fellow Asian.

Men patients

Older male Muslim patients are often unaccustomed to dealing with women in positions of authority or with professional status and may sometimes be embarrassed and difficult with female health workers. This is particularly likely with nurses, who generally have a low status in traditional Muslim and Asian societies since they have physical contact with strange men.

10.4 Washing

Most people in the Indian subcontinent take showers rather than baths, and consider sitting in a bath of water dirty. They do not feel clean unless they have washed under running water. Where showers are not provided Asian people may prefer to use a small bowl to pour water over their heads. In British-style bathrooms this may cause problems with water splashing onto the floor.

After using the lavatory, Muslims must wash themselves with water, using the left hand. If a tap is not provided, people normally take water for washing into the lavatory in a special jug or bottle. Find out from Muslim patients whether they have or need a small jug. Where bidets are provided in the lavatory cubicle this will not be necessary. Lavatory paper is not traditionally used in the Indian subcontinent and may be regarded with distaste. Asian people in Britain often use lavatory paper as well as water.

Because the left hand is traditionally used to wash the private parts, the right hand is normally used for eating, handling things, pointing and so on. Many people may still observe this custom. It is important to remember this when, for example, fixing drips or placing food where patients can reach it. When handing something to a Muslim it is courteous to use the right hand.

Most Asian food is traditionally eaten with the fingers. People who eat with their fingers will wish to wash their hands before and after a meal.

Most Muslim women and men shave their underarms and pubic hair. Women may use a depilatory cream instead of a razor.

10.5 Menstruation and birth

Like orthodox Jewish women, Muslim women are traditionally considered, and may consider themselves, unclean during menstruation and for forty days after giving birth. They do not perform formal religious functions at these times; they do not fast, say the five daily prayers, or touch the Holy Quran. At the end of their period of uncleanness they take a ritual bath and clean themselves, their clothes and their room thoroughly before returning to normal life. Some conservative Asian Muslim women do not cook during menstruation or during the forty days after giving birth, though it may be impossible to stick to this in Britain where there may be no other women to help with looking after the family.

Sexual intercourse is also forbidden during menstruation and during the forty days after birth, and most Muslims adhere strictly to this.

11. Muslim dietary restrictions

The dietary restrictions outlined here apply to all practising Muslims wherever they come from.

Muslim food restrictions, like many other aspects of the discipline of Muslim daily life, are clearly laid down in the Holy Quran and are regarded as the direct command of God. Because of this there is little individual variation in the food restrictions followed by devout Muslims. Only very Westernised or non-practising Muslims are likely to disregard Muslim food restrictions.

Muslim patients in hospital are likely to need help in working out what foods, if any, on the menu are acceptable. Most will stick to a vegetarian diet since the meat provided is not 'halal'. Some, worried about possible ingredients of even vegetarian dishes, and preferring familiar flavours and textures, may rely on food brought in by their families. Some may feel that, in the special circumstances of a British hospital, they are not bound to follow all the normal restrictions. Discuss with each patient individually what they do and do not wish to eat, and how to ensure that they receive an adequate diet while in hospital.

Adult Muslims must also fast during the month of Ramzan (see 6.3).

11.1 Meat

All Muslims must follow certain restrictions on meat. These resemble some Jewish restrictions.

a) Muslims may not eat pork or anything made from pork (sausages, bacon, ham) or anything made with pork products (cakes baked in tins greased with lard, eggs fried in bacon fat, suet puddings, jellies). This prohibition is

very strict and many Muslims would say that a person who eats pork cannot be a Muslim.

b) All other meat and meat products are acceptable provided they are 'halal', which means permitted, killed according to Islamic law. To be halal, the name of Allah must be pronounced over the animal, and its throat must be cut so that it bleeds to death. This is similar to kosher meat which is also acceptable to Muslims, though Muslim patients may not know that it is available. Muslims normally have to shop for their meat at special halal butchers. (The opposite of 'halal' is 'haram' which means forbidden.)

> Do not eat of any flesh that has not been consecrated in the name of Allah; for that is sinful.
>
> *The Koran*, Chapter 6

Because Muslims can only eat meat that is halal, they cannot usually eat meat when they are away from home. In hospital or schools they are likely to eat a vegetarian diet unless halal meat dishes are provided.

Many Muslims will also refuse any dish or food whose ingredients they cannot be sure of. They will not buy commercial foods, such as jellies, ice creams, biscuits, soups or bread, that they believe contain either pork products, or non-halal meat products, such as fat, suet, gelatine, glycerol or rennet. When buying any processed food most Muslims are extremely careful to read the detailed list of ingredients. Muslim parents are likely to buy only vegetarian baby foods. However, some Muslims in Britain who live far from Asian communities and Asian shops may of necessity eat non-halal meat.

These are relevant passages in the Holy Quran:

> You are forbidden carrion, blood, and the flesh of swine; also any flesh dedicated to any other than Allah. You are forbidden the flesh of strangled animals and of those beaten or gored to death; of those killed by a fall or mangled by beasts of prey (unless you make it clean by giving the death stroke yourselves); also of animals sacrificed to idols.
>
> *The Koran*, Chapter 5

and

> Believers, eat of the wholesome things with which we have provided you and give thanks to Allah, if it is He whom you worship. He has forbidden you carrion, blood, and the flesh of swine; also any flesh that is consecrated other than in the name of Allah. But whoever is constrained to eat any of these, not intending to sin or transgress, incurs no guilt. Allah is forgiving and merciful.
>
> *The Koran*, Chapter 2

11.2 Fish

Fish is considered to have died naturally when it was taken out of the water and so the question of a special method of killing does not arise. Except for prawns, all fish which does not have fins or scales is forbidden.

11.3 Dairy products

All dairy products and eggs are permitted. However, many Asian adults do not eat Western cheese because they find it rancid and very strong. Most Western cheese is anyway unsuitable for Muslims because it contains non-halal animal rennet. Cottage, processed, curd and vegetarian cheeses which are not made with animal rennet are completely acceptable to Muslims in religious terms.

11.4 Alcohol

Alcohol in all forms is specifically forbidden in the Holy Quran. It may only be used in medicines if there is no possible alternative. Even then some Muslims will be reluctant to take it.

11.5 Cooking, serving etc.

Most people will not eat any food that has been in contact with prohibited foods: a salad from which a slice of ham has been removed has already been contaminated. Utensils that have not been washed since they last touched prohibited food contaminate any other food that they touch: the same spoon cannot be used to serve minced meat for other patients and potatoes for Muslims.

Like orthodox Jews, and some very strict Hindus and Sikhs, some conservative Muslims may refuse all food that has not been prepared in separate pots and with separate utensils, on the grounds that if pots and utensils have ever been used for prohibited food they contaminate all other food they come into contact with. Some Muslims may refuse any food prepared outside their own home since they cannot be sure that the utensils have always been kept separate.

In cases where patients are unable to eat any of the food offered by the hospital and no other foods are available, it may be possible to provide simple but nourishing snacks until more suitable food can be found. Milk, fresh fruit, cooked vegetables, salad, dried fruit, and nuts will almost always be acceptable.

11.6 Tobacco

There is no prohibition against tobacco.

12. Family planning

12.1 Contraception

There are no statements on contraception in the Holy Quran; a good deal is written however on the value of the family, and on children as the purpose of marriage. Like Roman Catholics, many conservative Muslims feel that contraception interferes with God's design. They may therefore refuse to consider any form of family planning, and regard the arrival of any child as the will and gift of God which must be accepted. Other Muslims believe that parents should have only as many children as the husband can support, and that the mother's health should not be adversely affected by too many pregnancies. There are government family planning programmes in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Some Muslim families may be reluctant to consider contraception for cultural as well as religious reasons, particularly in their early years in Britain. In Asia, large families are traditionally regarded as the norm and as desirable. In rural areas large families are particularly valued and are vital as a support for parents as they grow older. Every child is considered a blessing from God. Sons in particular increase the real prosperity of the family and are a permanent source of support to parents (see 9.1).

12.2 Abortion

Infanticide, abortion and other methods of getting rid of unwanted children were prevalent in Arabia at the time of Muhammad. The Holy Quran explicitly forbids these practices:

> You shall not kill your children for fear of want. We

will provide for them and for you. To kill them is a great sin.

The Koran, Chapter 17

Islam, like Roman Catholicism, regards abortion as wrong, though it may perhaps be permitted where it is necessary to save the life of the mother. Devout Muslim women who have had abortions, possibly on medical advice, or at the urging of others, may suffer guilt and remorse later.

12.3 Infertility

The overwhelming importance of children, and especially of sons, in traditional Asian culture can have serious implications for couples in cases of infertility or other problems, for example if a woman needs a hysterectomy.

The woman, in a couple, is generally considered responsible for producing children. A woman who cannot have children is very likely to feel that she has failed as a wife. Her husband and in-laws may in some cases reject her and may initiate a divorce or a second marriage.

Conservative men may be most reluctant to attend fertility clinics with their wives, and may feel humiliated and angry at any suggestion that they might be in some way responsible. Considerable tact and time may be required to overcome this problem for a couple.

The procedures of an infertility clinic are anyway likely to be completely unfamiliar and possibly very offensive. Patients whose English is not very good will need an interpreter. The interpreter should be of the same sex as the patient and should be married.

13. Asian Muslim names

The names of Asian Muslims from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India work on a very different system from British names. (Note that the details given here do not apply to the names of Muslims from the Middle East or elsewhere. They have different naming systems.)

Traditionally Asian Muslims do not have a shared family surname, so in most families each member has a completely different last name. Here is an example of a Pakistani Muslim family:

Husband: Mohammed Hafiz

Wife: Jameela Khatoon

Sons: Mohammed Sharif
Liaquat Ali

Daughters: Shameema Bibi
Fatma Jan

In the Indian subcontinent family members are identified by their own name followed by their father's or husband's name:

Jameela Khatoon w/o (wife of) Mohammed Hafiz

Liaquat Ali s/o (son of) Mohammed Hafiz

The lack of a shared family surname can cause real difficulties for British people who are accustomed to a shared family surname, and who use this as the main name for filing and retrieving records.

In Britain a few Asian Muslim families have begun to use a shared family name but this goes very much against tradition and is a radical change. Asian Muslim children born or educated in Britain are, however, often given their father's last name as a surname.

For British records, enter the last part of each person's name as the surname (for filing). Record the name of the husband or father for extra identification, according to the traditional system.

Address Asian Muslims formally by their whole full name (not just title and last name).

Male and female Asian Muslim names work on different systems. The two systems are described separately here.

13.1 Male Muslim names

Most men have two or three names. A few men may have more. Here are some examples:

Mohammed *Hafiz*
Gulam Mohammed
Yusuf Ali
Suleiman Mia

Habib Ullah
Bahadur Khan
Muhammad *Khalid* Qureshi
Mohammed Abdul *Rahman* Choudrey

13.1.1 Personal name

Everybody has a personal name, the equivalent of the British Christian or first name. The personal name is normally used alone by family members and very close friends, and with children.

In the male Muslim naming system the personal name usually comes either first or second. If it comes second it is usually preceded by a religious name such as Mohammed, which should not be used as a personal name. It is therefore not always acceptable to call someone by his first name. In the list of names above the personal names are italicised.

13.1.2 Calling name

Every male Muslim has a calling name. This is the informal name by which he is usually called by his friends and acquaintances. It may occasionally be his personal name alone, but more often it is a two-part name with his personal name and his religious name together: Mohammed *Hafiz*, *Gulam* Mohammed, *Yusuf* Ali, *Habib* Ullah, Muhammad *Khalid*, Abdul *Rahman*. (Personal names italicised.)

The two parts of a calling name are sometimes linked by

a grammatical participle: *Zia*-ul-Hassan, *Shehab*-ud-Din, usually written in British records as Ziaul Hassan, Shehab Uddin. Note that Ziaul Hassan's personal name is Zia, not Ziaul.

13.1.3 Religious name

The religious name is part of the calling name and to a devout Muslim is in some ways the most important part of his name. It should never be used alone as a name.

The most common religious names are Allah, Ullah (the form used when Allah follows another name) and Mohammed. These are particularly sacred. To address a devout Asian Muslim by any of these names alone can be as offensive as addressing a devout Christian as Christ or God.

Ahmed, Ali and Hussein are sometimes religious names, when they are used with a personal name. There are also many other names that can have a religious significance.

It is very difficult for most non-Muslims to tell which names have religious significance and when. To avoid giving offence, always use the two-part calling name when addressing someone informally, unless you are sure that you know which is his personal name and that it is acceptable to use it alone.

Some Asian Muslim men and boys in Britain have become resigned to the fact that many British people use their religious names as personal names. To a devout Muslim, however, this is never acceptable.

13.1.4 Other names

Some men also have another name which usually follows their calling name. This is often a hereditary male name: Qureshi, Choudrey, Khan.

In many cases Asian Muslim men have begun to use their hereditary male name as a surname only since they came to Britain, to fit in with the British naming system. Hereditary male names are not normally used by women and may not be used by all the men in a family.

Instead of taking a hereditary male name someone may have begun to use his father's last name as a surname, e.g. Liaquat Ali's father is Mohammed Hafiz. For British records he may give his name as Liaquat Ali Hafiz. Note that his calling name is Liaquat Ali, not Liaquat Hafiz.

It is most important always to record the full name of a Muslim man or boy and not to drop his middle name as in the British naming system. The importance of knowing the full name becomes clear in this example: Mohammed Sharif is the son of Mohammed Hafiz. He gives his name for British records as Mohammed Sharif Hafiz. His calling name is Mohammed Sharif and his personal name is Sharif. It is clearly incorrect to call him by his first name + his last name as in the British pattern: Mohammed Hafiz. Mohammed Hafiz is his father's name.

Some Bangladeshi men may use a male title equivalent to Mr (spelt variously in English Mia/Miah/Mian) following their name.

Shafiur Rahman Miah

Suleiman Mia

All the 'surnames' described here are generally adopted in Britain to fit in with the British naming system. They will not usually appear on passports or any other documents issued in the Indian subcontinent.

13.1.5 Correct forms of address

Formally it is correct to address an Asian Muslim man by title + full name:

Mr Mohammed Khalid Qureshi

Mr Mohammed Hafiz

Informally it is correct to use his calling name (usually two parts) unless specifically asked otherwise:

Mohammed Khalid

Mohammed Hafiz

The personal name alone (Khalid, Hafiz) usually indicates a very close relationship. Never use Allah, Ullah or Mohammed alone.

13.2 Female Muslim names

Muslim women from rural areas usually have two names,

neither of which is a shared family name:

Amina Begum
Salamat Bi
Jameela Khatoon
Fatma Jan
Nasreen Akhtar
Shameema Bibi

The two names are always used together except with family and close friends.

13.2.1 *First name*

The first name is always a personal name, as in the British naming system.

13.2.2 *Second name*

The second name is either a female title equivalent to Ms (i.e. not indicating marital status) or another personal name. These are several Asian Muslim female titles:

Bano
Begum
Bi
Bibi
Khanum
Khatoon
Sultana

Some common personal names often used as second names are:

Akhtar
Jan
Nessa
Kausar

(Akhtar and Jan may also be male personal names but are most common as female second names.)

If a woman has two names, enter the second as her surname in records. Record her father's or husband's name, as in the traditional system, for extra identification:

Amina Begum w/o (wife of) Mohammed Hafiz Chaudrey

13.2.3 *Correct forms of address*

Formally it is correct to use title + full name:

Mrs Amina Begum

Mrs Fatma Jan

Informally it is correct to use the first (personal) name:

Amina

Fatma

Do not address Amina Begum just as Mrs Begum. This is a female title and does not identify anyone. If there are several Muslim women in the room all or none may respond. Always use the full name.

Note that female titles or names are not shared as last names by men. Amina Begum's husband is never Mr Begum, nor Fatma Jan's husband Mr Jan. They have completely different names.

13.2.4 Shared family name

A few women, as they begin to have more contact with British society, choose to use their husband's last name as a shared family name:

> Fatma Bibi, married to Mohammed Aslam, becomes Fatma Bibi Aslam in British records.

Many women, however, particularly those who came to Britain as adults, find it unacceptable to have their name changed in this way. There is no Asian Muslim convention whereby women adopt one of their husband's names.

In most cases, if a woman uses a shared family surname, continue to address her formally by her full name, Mrs Fatma Bibi Aslam, or by her own name, Mrs Fatma Bibi.

Informally use her first name, Fatma, as you would in the British naming system. Note that, in this example, Aslam is her husband's personal name (Mohammed is his religious name) and to call her Mrs Aslam is like calling the wife of John Smith, Mrs John. Fatma Bibi is her own name and is what she will hear and respond to unless she has been using her husband's name as a last name for several years.

Muslim girls growing up in Britain are often automatically given their father's last name as a surname when they go to school. This is usually acceptable. There is however a danger that a girl's name will be different in her other (non-school) records.

13.3 Identifying all the members of one Muslim family

If there is no shared family surname, record and file each member under his or her own name, but note the name and relationship to the head of the family.

Here is an example:

Husband: Mohammed Hafiz
Wife: Jameela Khatoon
Son: Mohammed Sharif
Daughter: Shameema Bibi

In records:

Surname	*Other names*
HAFIZ	Mohammed
KHATOON	Jameela w/o Mohammed Hafiz
SHARIF	Mohammed s/o Mohammed Hafiz
BIBI	Shameema d/o Mohammed Hafiz

Address each person by their own full name unless specifically asked. Remember that Mohammed Hafiz's personal name is Hafiz, and his son's personal name is Sharif.*

If the family is using a shared family surname, record each member as normally.

13.4 Asian Muslims from East Africa

Most East African Asians have come from towns and cities and have experience of British-style bureaucracy and administrative systems. They are likely to use a family surname and to give their names in a way that fits into British records.

13.5 Gujarati Muslim names

Most of the Muslims in Britain from India (as opposed to Pakistan or Bangladesh) come from Gujarat State (see Map 1). Most Gujarati Muslims already have a shared family surname, patterned on the Hindu family name system. A few may

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*For more specific help with recording and using Muslim and other Asian names correctly, see the Training Pack *Asian Names and Records* published in this series and available from the National Extension College.

have a Hindu family name, such as Patel, but may be recognised as Muslims by their first names:

Mohammed Sharif Patel

Yusuf Patel

14. Birth and childhood ceremonies

The event of birth is surrounded by certain specific religious ceremonies. Those outlined below are followed by most Muslims and may be important in hospital. Some communities and families will have additional or slightly different customs. If possible, discuss with a couple before the baby is due whether they wish to perform any religious ceremony at the birth and what will be required.

14.1 At the birth

Every Muslim baby must be bathed completely immediately after the birth to get rid of any impurity. This is normally done before the child is handed to the mother.

Very occasionally Asian Muslim parents may ask for the placenta so that they can bury it. They may find it offensive to incinerate or otherwise dispose of the placenta. Some Muslim parents may also wish to bury aborted foetuses, of whatever age.

The call to prayer (azaan) should be whispered as soon as possible into the child's right ear and a similar call into the left. This should be done by the father, a male relative or another male Muslim chosen by the family. These few words should be the first sound that the child hears and are its introduction to the Muslim faith. It is important that families are given privacy to do this if they request it.

14.2 Shaving the baby's head

The heads of all babies are usually shaved (to symbolise removing the uncleanness of birth and to help the hair grow thickly) on the sixth or seventh day after birth (sometimes the fourteenth or another day considered suitable). Oil

and saffron may be rubbed into the baby's head. Some parents may wish to do this for babies who are still in hospital. The baby's hair (and nails if cut) are buried and silver equal to the weight of the hair is given to the poor. As with most items in the Muslim religious code, families are only asked to do this if they can afford it. Many families in Britain cannot.

14.3 Naming the baby

The baby may be given its name on the day on which the hair is shaved. A name is not usually chosen before the birth as this may tempt fate or impinge upon God's power. The name is often chosen by an older relative who chooses the names of all the children in the extended family. The Imam or the doctor may sometimes be asked to choose the baby's name.

The names of brothers and sisters and cousins are often chosen to go together in meaning or sound; for example, two sisters or cousins may be called Nasim (morning breeze) and Shabnam (morning dew), or three brothers or cousins may be called Zahid, Zaid and Zahir. (See also 13: Asian Muslim names.)

For Asian Muslims in Britain, the relative who chooses the family's names may be in the subcontinent. Getting a name chosen and back through the post to Britain may take weeks or even months; this can cause complications with the registration of the baby's name. Some families may give their baby a temporary name to comply with the law and will then wish to change it when the real name arrives.

14.4 Circumcision

All Muslim boys must be circumcised. In most Pakistani and Indian Muslim families this is done in the first few days after birth, but in Bangladeshi families it may be left until a boy is about eight years old. Circumcision should always be done before the boy reaches puberty.

Muslim circumcision is done on grounds of health. There is traditionally no religious rite attached to it but in some communities it is regarded as a festive occasion, and friends and relatives celebrate together. Money is given to the poor if the parents can afford it. In Britain circumcision is often done privately by a general practitioner, or by a Jewish rabbi.

15. Marriage

Marriage in Islam is a civil contract, not strictly a religious ceremony: it is not a sacrament. Marriage is regarded in Islam as a practical and social necessity, and as a landmark in an individual's life. It enables people to lead a chaste and responsible life, to fulfil their human duties and to develop themselves to their full potential.

Every Muslim should marry. The ideal time for marriage is traditionally shortly after puberty but most countries now have national legislation on the minimum age for marriage. A Muslim man may marry a Jewish or Christian wife. A Muslim woman may only marry another Muslim and a non-Muslim man must therefore convert to Islam if he wishes to marry a Muslim woman.

In Asian tradition marriages are generally arranged by the families of the young people concerned, though this practice is changing both in the subcontinent and in Britain. Young people nowadays often play an important part in the choice of a partner and in the final decision. Nevertheless, marriage is seen very much as a union between and a matter for two whole families, not just as a private union between two individuals.

First cousin marriages are permitted in Islamic law and are frequent among some Pakistani and Indian Muslims. Bangladeshi Muslims tend to marry within the wider extended family. Many people consider that marriages within the family are easier and more likely to succeed. The bride and groom often know each other and come from closely connected backgrounds. And the new bride usually moves in with relatives whom she already knows, rather than into a household of complete strangers.

15.1 The wedding

Weddings are traditionally very important social occasions in Muslim society and continue to be major events for Muslim families and communities in Britain. Women particularly come into their own during and before a wedding.

The two families agree a sum of money (mehr) which the groom will pay the bride either at the time of marriage or afterwards. He must also promise to treat her kindly and to support her in a manner fitting to his own means and social position. Female dowries are not part of Islamic law but are very commonly given in Asian Muslim communities.

Before her wedding a bride may be secluded for several days even from close friends and family members. In some traditional families this seclusion may last for weeks. The marriage ceremony is often very simple and can be performed by any respected Muslim man well-versed in religious matters. It is not necessary for an Imam to officiate. Both parties must give their consent to the marriage but the bride can be represented at the wedding by a guardian. At least two male Muslim witnesses are required but as many people as possible should be present. Secret weddings are invalid under Islamic law.

In Britain Muslim couples often undergo a civil ceremony in a registry office before the religious ceremony. The civil ceremony is usually treated as an engagement ceremony and the 'real' marriage ceremony follows later.

In Asian tradition weddings call for elaborate public celebrations and lavish entertainment. The wedding usually lasts all day and is marked by a grand feast for large numbers of friends and relatives.

15.2 Polygamy

Sexual relationships outside marriage, in which a man need take little or no responsibility for a woman and any children, are strictly forbidden in Islam. A great deal of emphasis is placed on the responsibilities that must accompany any sexual relationship, particularly for men.

Under certain clearly defined conditions, Muslim men are allowed to have up to four wives: the husband must be sure that he can treat all his wives exactly the same and must have adequate means to support them all equally and

in a manner befitting his status. Economic realities and human nature mean that in practice most men can have only one wife.

In India, Pakistan and Bangladesh national legislation forbids polygamy unless permission has been obtained from a special court. The court will only give permission in certain cases, such as the infertility or permanent physical or mental infirmity of the first wife. The husband also has to get permission from his existing wife before he may marry again. Polygamous marriages are however still common in a few communities. It is not legal for a man to make a polygamous marriage in Britain, but a polygamous marriage made in a country that permits polygamy by a resident of that country is valid in British law.

It is very rare for Asian Muslim men coming to settle in Britain to have more than one wife. However, in cases where a man has more than one wife in Britain, the second wife may, under social security legislation, be disqualified from receiving benefits that are dependent on her husband's national insurance contributions.

16. Divorce

Islam recognises the possibility of the incompatability of a married couple and of the irretrievable breakdown of a marriage. However, although divorce is permitted in Islam, it is also severely disapproved of, and Muslim communities will normally do all they can, following well-recognised procedures, to heal the breach between a couple. In Britain, however, the normal community and family support may not always be available. Before a divorce can be granted, at least three attempts must be made by three different parties over a period of several months to reconcile the couple.

If, as is most common, the divorce is initiated by the man, he is not required to justify the divorce in court but must repeat the words 'I divorce you' in front of witnesses three times at monthly intervals. This discipline gives him time to reconsider and to prevent any decision being taken in the heat of the moment. The man must also pay his ex-wife the sum of money (mehr) he promised her when they married.

> Those that renounce their wives on oath must wait four months. If they change their mind, Allah is forgiving and merciful; but if they decide to divorce them, know that He hears all and knows all.

and

> When you have renounced your wives and they have reached the end of their waiting period, either retain them in honour or let them go with kindness. But you shall not retain them in order to harm them or wrong them. Whoever does this wrongs his own soul.
>
> *The Koran*, Chapter 2

If a woman initiates the divorce she must go through a

similar process but must justify it publicly in a Muslim court.

If both parties to a divorce are resident in Britain they must go through divorce proceedings in a British court of law.

In Islamic law the children of divorced parents may be raised by the mother during their infancy; boys up to seven years, girls up to eleven years. A mother loses her right to the children if she does not care for them properly or commits adultery. Even when the children are with the mother, they remain under the guardianship of their father. He is responsible for supporting and educating them. He may remove them from their mother if he thinks this is best for them. However, courts in Britain have the power to make their own custody orders in what they consider to be the best interests of the children.

Divorced or widowed Muslim men and women are encouraged to remarry. Widows and widowers may remarry after three months. It is considered virtuous to marry a widow. A pregnant woman may not remarry until after her baby is born.

17. Death and burial

Like Christians, Muslims believe in life after death and in death as a stage in God's plan for man. The death of a loved one is seen as a temporary separation. Muslims believe that the time of death is predetermined by God and may feel that it is wrong to struggle once God's will is clear. Devout Muslims believe that suffering and death are part of God's plan and that one's religious duty is to strive to accept whatever God sends and to surrender to His will, whatever the cost.

Some people may feel at a death that crying and open expressions of grief and sorrow are sinful in that they indicate lack of acceptance of what God has done. Some very devout Muslims may discipline themselves to show no emotion. It is more common, however, for people, especially the women of the family, to express their grief openly with crying and weeping. It is the duty of all friends and relatives to visit a bereaved family to comfort them and to share their grief.

17.1 Care of the dying

The presence of a religious leader is not necessary when a Muslim is very ill or dying. Members of the family may sit by the bed to pray and recite verses from the Holy Quran to give comfort to the dying person, and will usually perform all necessary rites and ceremonies. The family and the dying person will also repeat together the Muslim declaration of faith (kalima): 'There is no god but God and Muhammad is His prophet.' These are among the first words that any Muslim hears and the last words that he should utter.

The dying person should, if possible, sit up or lie with his face turned towards Makka (see 4.1). This may necessitate

moving the bed. Another Muslim, usually a member of the family, whispers the call to prayer into the dying person's ear. Family members may recite prayers aloud round the bed. Sins are not confessed to another person before death since Muslims believe that confession and true repentance before God are sufficient. If no family members are present, any practising Muslim can be asked to give help and religious comfort; it is probably best in such cases for hospital staff to contact the local mosque, provided the patient wishes, and to ask someone to come and attend the patient. The hospital chaplain may also be able to give help and advice.

17.2 Last offices

Many Muslims are very particular about who touches the body. It should preferably not be touched by non-Muslims. If it is necessary for health workers to perform any procedures following the death, disposable gloves should be used, and where possible, the family should be consulted first.

Provided the family is willing, the following should be done: close the eyes, straighten the limbs, and turn the head towards the right shoulder. This is so that the body can be buried with the face towards Makka. The body should then be wrapped in a plain sheet without religious emblems. The body should not be washed; this is part of the funeral rites to be carried out later.

Normal Muslim procedure is that the body is straightened immediately after death, the eyes are closed, the feet are tied together with a thread around the toes, and the face is bandaged around the chin and head so as to keep the mouth closed. Some families in Britain may wish to do this. The hair and nails should not be cut.

The body is then usually taken home or to the mosque and washed, usually by the family. In Britain the family may wash the body at the undertaker's or at the mortuary. Women wash a female corpse and men a male corpse. (Women during the forty days after childbirth or during menstruation should not go near the dead.) Camphor may be put under the armpits and in the orifices.

The body is clothed in garments of clean white cotton; a seamless shirt, wrapping and covering sheet. The arms are

placed across the chest. People who have performed the Hajj to Makka (see 6.5) may have brought back a white cotton shroud for themselves.

A stillborn baby or a foetus miscarried in late pregnancy should normally be given to the parents for burial. The same rules apply regarding last offices.

17.3 Post-mortems etc.

In Islam, the body of a Muslim is considered to belong to God and, strictly speaking, no part of a dead body should be cut out, harmed or donated to anyone else. Post-mortem examinations are forbidden unless absolutely necessary for medico-legal reasons. If a post-mortem is necessary, the reasons for it must be clearly explained to the family.

Very strict Muslims are likely to be completely against organ transplants, but some may consider them acceptable. There is no prohibition against blood transfusions.

Suicide is a very grievous sin in Islam. Euthanasia is strictly prohibited, but in common with many other people, most Muslims would not wish a doctor to strive officiously when death is clearly imminent.

17.4 Burial

Muslims are always buried, never cremated. According to Islamic law and practice, Muslims must be buried as soon as possible. In the Indian subcontinent burial normally takes place within twenty-four hours.

After the washing of the body, passages from the Holy Quran are recited and the family prays. The men then take the body to the mosque or to the graveside for congregational prayers, reading from the Holy Quran before the body is buried. The grave should be aligned so that the face can be turned sideways towards Makka. The most qualified person usually officiates at the ceremony. Flowers are not normally sent to Muslim funerals but may be in Britain.

Muslims would not usually be buried in a coffin. According to Islamic law the area above the grave must be slightly raised, the body must be buried facing Makka and the grave must be unmarked. This is usually contrary to local cemetery regulations but several local authorities provide

special areas for Muslim burials.

In Britain some Muslim families prefer to take their dead back to their home in the subcontinent to be buried, since it is not always possible to follow the rules for burial laid down in the Holy Quran. This involves an extremely complicated and costly bureaucratic procedure which can seem inhuman and be very distressing to people who are already grieving.

17.5 Mourning

Mourning may last for about a month and during this period relatives and close friends will come and keep the family company and comfort them. They discuss the person who has died and grieve with the family, sharing the loss with them. Traditionally, the family stays indoors for the first three days after the funeral. The family does not normally cook – friends and relatives bring food to the house for them.

The grave may be visited every Friday for 40 days after the funeral and alms given to the poor. Special prayers may be said on certain days. A widow should traditionally modify her behaviour for 130 days, wearing plain clothes and no jewellery. She should stay in the house all the time unless absolutely necessary.

Coping with the unfamiliar organisational side of death and burial in Britain can be extremely distressing for Muslim families. A good deal of practical help may be needed, for example, in contacting undertakers and explaining what is required, contacting employers, dealing with paperwork and so forth.

18. Different Muslim groups

There are two main branches within Islam: Sunni Muslims (about 90 percent of all Muslims) and Shia Muslims. The split between them occurred within a few years of the Prophet's death.

Differences arise largely from traditional disagreement about whether leaders should be hereditary or elected. Sunni Muslims believe that there is no line of hereditary or divinely appointed leaders to succeed Muhammad and that every Muslim has an equal status before God. Shia Muslims believe in a continuous line of divinely designated charismatic leaders and in Shia communities religious leaders generally have a good deal of power and authority. Most Muslims in the Indian subcontinent are Sunni Muslims, though there are also many Shia communities. Iran has the largest Shia population.

There are various smaller groups within the main Sunni and Shia branches, sometimes sharply hostile to one another. Some are more conservative than others, and each usually worships and socialises separately. All Muslim groups or sects, however, follow the same basic practical and religious codes, and the distinctions between them are not generally significant to an outsider, except that each group usually sees itself as a separate community. Where contacts are being made, they will normally need to be made with each group and community separately.

One Shia sect, the Ismailis, differs a good deal from other Muslim groups. Ismailis are led by their hereditary Imam, the Aga Khan. As a community, the Ismailis often appear very Westernised, though they retain most important traditional Muslim values such as the emphasis laid on marriage and family life. Ismaili women often wear Western dress.

A small, mainly Pakistani, sect which regards itself as

Muslim but is not so regarded by the orthodox is that of the Ahmadiyas. A few years ago the Ahmadiyas were officially declared to be non-Muslims by the Pakistani government and there may be considerable hostility towards Ahmadiya communities by other Muslims in Britain.

19. Muslim festivals

The Muslim year is lunar. It consists of twelve months each of 29 or 30 days depending on the year. A Muslim year therefore has 354 days instead of 365. Because of this, events in the Muslim calendar occur ten or eleven days earlier each year in terms of the Western (solar) calendar.

19.1 The Eeds

The two most important Islamic festivals are Eed-ul-Fitr (the festival to mark the end of the fast of Ramzan) and Eed-ul-Azha (the festival to commemorate the Hajj and the willingness of the prophet Abraham to sacrifice his son). 'Eed' means anniversary. The celebration of both these festivals was prescribed by Muhammad for thanksgiving and rejoicing and they are extremely important religious and family events on the scale of Christmas in Europe. In Muslim countries they are celebrated as holidays.

Each of the Eeds begins with prayers. The day is normally spent visiting friends and relatives and exchanging gifts. Alms are given to the poor and other causes. Congregational prayers (usually for men) are held at the mosque in the morning. In the Indian subcontinent a lamb or a goat may be killed at the time of the Eeds and the meat shared with friends and relatives or with the poor. Muslims in Britain may send money home for an animal to be sacrificed and the meat distributed in the village at home. Nowadays Eed cards are often exchanged in the same way as Christmas cards.

Eed-ul-Fitr (Festival of Almsgiving). This is celebrated on the day after Ramzan. The date of Eed-ul-Fitr, and of the end of Ramzan, depends, like other Muslim festivals, on the sighting of the new moon and cannot be firmly fixed in

advance. Eed-ul-Fitr may occur on the twenty-ninth or thirtieth day of the month and the new moon is eagerly awaited. Some communities accept the authority of Saudi Arabia in deciding the date, others of Morocco, others wait until they have seen the new moon themselves.

Eed-ul-Fitr is a major event in the Muslim year with the same kinds and scale of family and religious celebrations as Christmas celebrated by devout Christians. It marks the end of a month of fasting, prayer and self-discipline, in some ways similar to Lent. Most people buy new clothes to celebrate. The main religious celebration takes place for men in the morning at the mosque. In the afternoon friends and relatives pay visits, and are offered the traditional Eed dish of sweet vermicelli (sevian), rather like being offered mince pies at Christmas. Children may receive presents, and Eed, like Christmas, is a particularly special occasion for them.

Eed-ul-Fitr is the date by which every family must have given its annual quota of money (zakat) to the poor and needy. Additional alms are often given.

In Britain most Muslims take one or two days holiday over Eed-ul-Fitr in the same way as British people working in non-Christian countries do at Christmas.

Eed-ul-Azha (Festival of Sacrifice). Often referred to as Bakr'eed. This is the other major festival in the Muslim year. It celebrates the ending of the time of the Hajj and the willingness of Abraham to sacrifice his son at God's command (Muslims believe that the son was Ishmael, and not, as in Christian tradition, Isaac). A lamb or goat is usually sacrificed and the meat shared with the poor and with relatives. Special festive meat dishes are prepared.

Eed-ul-Azha marks the end of the time of pilgrimage to Makka, and Muslims all round the world are united at this time with the pilgrims in Makka, to renew their dedication to God. The main religious celebration for men takes place at the mosque in the morning. There is great family celebration and festivity.

Other festivals. There are various other smaller festivals in the Muslim year which celebrate historical occasions. Each of these is accompanied by minor celebrations. Since religion is central to the lives of most Muslims, even the minor religious festivals of the Islamic year are important

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religious and family events, though the degree to which they are celebrated may diminish with the pressures of life in Britain.

19.2 Muslim patients in hospital during the Eeds

Most Muslim hospital patients who are able would very much like the opportunity to go home at both the Eeds in the same way as many patients are allowed home over the Christmas holiday. Non-urgent tests, operations or investigations for Muslims should be avoided as far as possible during the two Eeds. Routine home visits should wait where possible till after the festival.

Muslim patients in hospital over Eed are likely to receive cards and presents very much as at Christmas. Family and friends may wish to visit them throughout the day bringing special festive sweets and other dishes. Muslim patients who are on a restricted diet should be allowed a taste of these if possible. Relatives of Muslim patients may also bring sweets or cakes to give to the other patients on the ward.

Muslim patients in hospital at Eed may like to celebrate together in much the same way as would English people in hospital abroad over Christmas, and will be grateful for recognition that this is a special festive time for them. It may be possible to discuss in advance the significance of Eed and what provision Muslim patients would like. Staff and other patients should be encouraged to wish any Muslim patients Happy Eed. During the Eeds visiting regulations should be lifted as far as possible for Muslim patients, just as they traditionally are at Christmas.

19.3 The Muslim year

The names of the festivals vary in the different languages. Urdu names are generally given here. Dates cannot be given as they vary every year (see beginning of chapter).

- *1st of Muharram.* New Year's Day in the Islamic calendar. Commemorates the day on which Muhammad left Makka for Medina.
- *10th of Muharram.* Shia Muslims usually fast and mourn

on the 10th of Muharram to commemorate the martyrdom of Husain, the Prophet's grandson, in battle. Some Sunni Muslims may fast on this date to commemorate the deliverance of Moses and the Israelites from the Egyptians.

- *Eed-i-Milad.* The Birthday of the Prophet Muhammad. The third most important festival of the Islamic world. Muslims gather to hear sermons and celebrate.
- *Shab-i-Baraat* also known as Lailat-ul-Baraat. Fifteen days before Ramzan. Believed by some Muslims to be the night on which God ordains the fate of all mankind for the next year. Fasting and a vigil continue through the night to atone for past wrongs and for the future and to pray for the dead. Congregational prayers may be held. Asian Muslims may hold firework displays on this night.
- *Ramzan.* Month of compulsory fasting for all adult Muslims (see 6.3).
- *Shab-i-Qadr* also known as Lailat-ul-Qadr. Usually on 27th day of Ramzan. Commemorates the day when the Holy Quran began to descend towards the earth.
- *Jumat-ul-Wada.* Last Friday of Ramzan commemorating Muhammad's last speech to his followers. Great congregations collect for Friday prayers at the mosque.
- *EED-UL-FITR.* Festival to celebrate end of Ramzan (see above).
- *Zil-Hija.* Month of the Hajj (pilgrimage).
- *EED-UL-AZHA.* Festival to celebrate the end of the Hajj (see above).

The precise dates of all these festivals should be obtained each year from your local mosque, from your local Community Relations Council, from the Commission for Racial Equality, Elliot House, 10-12 Allington St., London SW1E 5EH (01-828-7022), or from the Islamic Cultural Centre (see 20.4 below for address).

20. Note to trainers

This book is not necessarily intended as the basis of a training session, though it can be used as such by people who wish to run a session specifically on aspects of Islam and on caring for Muslim patients. It may also be read purely as a source of background information which can then be fed with other information into more general training sessions for health workers.

20.1 Running a training session on the care of Asian Muslim patients

Religious practices and prohibitions make little sense out of context. The religious practices of non-Christian patients are too often seen merely as difficulties, problems, and sources of inconvenience for health workers – not the ideal starting point for a supportive relationship or for mutual respect. For most Muslim people their religion is the focus of their lives. Consequently, some introduction to the basic ideas behind Islam and to Muslim practices is essential if health workers are to be equipped to work sensitively and knowledgeably with their Muslim patients.

The type and length of training session to be run will depend on the time available, the amount of knowledge the trainees already have, and whether there is a significant Asian Muslim population living locally. Most non-Muslim trainers and tutors will also be naturally and justifiably reluctant to conduct a training session about a religion of which they are not followers. For this reason Asian Muslim outside speakers who can speak of their own faith and practices and from their own experience should be brought in wherever possible.

20.2 Suggested aims and content of a training session

Aims

i) to give trainees a basic understanding of and respect for the main ideas and values of Islam

ii) to outline how far these ideas and values are likely to be important to Asian Muslim patients and clients in Britain

iii) to describe Muslim religious practices likely to be important to trainees in their work with patients and clients, and to discuss their practical implications

iv) to enable trainees to discuss Muslim beliefs and practices sensitively, and from a basis of some knowledge and confidence, with Muslim people

Content

(Precise content will depend on the needs and situations of trainees.)

1. Where the different groups of Asian Muslims in Britain originated: uniformity and diversity of belief, practice and experience
2. Brief historical outline: foundation and development, links with Judaism and Christianity, Islam in the Indian subcontinent
3. The main beliefs of Islam: Islam as the final and ultimate religion, the role of the Prophet Muhammed, the Holy Quran and the Sharia (Islamic law)
4. The five main 'pillars' (duties) of Islam, their significance and their practical implications for health workers

   - the statement of faith
   - prayer: washing, exemptions, provision in hospital
   - fasting: exemptions, provision in hospital
   - almsgiving
   - pilgrimage

5. Muslim dietary restrictions: implications for health workers, food in hospital and during illness, provision
6. Family and community values: men and women, marriage and divorce, family planning, educating the children
7. The role of the mosque in the community
8. Birth and childhood ceremonies: provision in hospital
9. Care of the dying: family involvement, preparation for burial, guidance for hospital staff
10. The major Muslim festivals and their significance: patients in hospital
11. The local Muslim communities: local mosques and other Muslim organisations

20.3 Using outside speakers

Speakers should be asked to spend a good proportion of the session on topics connected with health care and on practices that are likely to be important in caring for people in institutions.

It is important to discuss the aims of the session with them beforehand, and any questions or specific problems that trainees are likely to raise during the session.

It may be useful to ask the speaker to read quickly through this book to help focus on the issues that are likely to be important, and to raise and discuss issues on which he or she disagrees. A speaker should bear in mind the regional and class differences that exist between Asian Muslims living in Britain and the need to outline possible variations in practice among local communities.

Local Community Relations Councils, community organisations, colleges or Industrial Language Training Units may be able to suggest suitable speakers. Asian Muslim nurses, doctors or other staff might also be available to speak. In addition, use any Asian Muslim trainees in the group as speakers or as additional contributors.

Where it is not possible to get a speaker to come and talk to trainees, it may at least be possible for the trainer or tutor

to visit Asian Muslim patients and families before the session and talk to them about their religious beliefs and practices, the effect of living in Britain on their way of life, the difficulties they face in contacts with the Health Service, what they would like health workers to know about their religion, and how they would like Health Service provision to take account of their religious needs and practices.

20.4 Sources of material on Islam

Several Muslim organisations in Britain now publish books and booklets in English about Islam both for young Asian Muslims and for non-Muslims who wish to find out more about Islam. Among these are:

Islamic Cultural Centre
146 Park Road
London, NW8 7RG

Minaret House
9 Leslie Park Road
Croydon
Surrey, CR0 6TN

The Islamic Foundation
223 London Road
Leicester, LE2 1ZE

Centre for the Study of
Islam & Christian–Muslim
Relations
Selly Oak College
Birmingham, B29 2LE

UK Islamic Mission
202 North Gower Street
London, NW1 2LY

Da'watul Islam
52 Fieldgate Street
London, E1 1ED

APPENDIX: Glossary of Muslim terms and approximate guide to pronunciation

Key to pronunciation

Most of the Asian words in the text are in Urdu or Arabic. Where both are given, e.g. prayer: namaz or salat, the Urdu word is written first since it is more commonly used by Asian Muslims.

The pronunciation of some words is difficult to indicate in English spelling, but the spellings below give a very rough guide. Pronunciation varies to some extent from area to area. The stressed syllable in each word is italicised, as in *Eng*land and exp*ect*.

Vowels

ȧ	very short – as in 'material'
a	short – as in 'must' and 'funny'
aa	long – as in 'mast' and 'farm'
o	– a rounded 'o' between 'pot' and 'port'
u	short – as in 'put' and 'foot'
oo	long – as in 'pool' and 'flu'
e	short – as in 'pen' and 'fetch'
i	short – as in 'skip' and 'fist'
ee	long – as in 'beat' and 'weep'
ai	– as in 'fight', 'right' and 'kite'
ay	– as in 'pain' and 'rain'
au	– as in 'found' and 'round'
~	– above a vowel makes it nasal

Consonants

q	– like 'k' but sounded at the back of the throat
kh	– like 'ch' in Scottish 'loch'
gh	– like 'kh' but far back in the throat
r	– is usually pronounced quite strongly
ss or s	– as in 'miss' and 'soon'
z	– as in 'has' and 'zoo'

Aspirated consonants e.g. dh, ph, th are not generally indicated.

Glossary

Ahmadiya (sect)	ahmad*ee*ya
Allah (Arabic word for God)	all*aa*h
Attock (district in N.W. Pakistan)	*a*tak
Aurangzeb (last great Mughal emperor)	aurangz*e*b
Azaan (call to prayer)	az*aa*n
Azad Kashmir (part of Kashmir under Pakistani control)	az*aa*d kashm*ee*r
Bakr'eed (Eed-ul-Azha)	b*a*kåreed
Bengali (language and person from Bangladesh)	bång*aa*li
Burqah (veil)	b*oo*rqa
Chuni (long scarf)	ch*oo*ni
Dupatta (long scarf)	dup*a*ta
Eed-i-Milad (birthday of Prophet Muhammad)	eed-i-mil*aa*d
Eed-ul-Azha (Muslim festival)	eed'l az*aa*
Eed-ul-Fitr (festival at end of Ramzan)	eed'l f*i*tår
Gujarat (Indian State)	gujår*aa*t
Gujarati (language and person from Gujarat)	gujår*aa*ti
Hadith (words of Muhammad – Arabic)	had*ee*th
Hadiss (words of Muhammad – Urdu)	had*ee*ss
Hafiz (man who has memorised the Quran)	haf*ee*z
Hafiza (woman who has memorised the Quran)	haf*ee*za
Hajj (pilgrimage)	hadj
Hajan (woman who has performed the Hajj)	h*aa*jàn
Haji (man who has performed the Hajj)	h*aa*ji
Halal (permitted)	hal*aa*l
Haram (prohibited)	har*aa*m
Hijra (Muhammad's journey to Medina)	h*i*jra
Imam (Muslim prayer leader)	im*aa*m
Injeel (New Testament)	inj*ee*l

Islam (Muslim religion)	iss*laa*m
Ismaili (member of Shia Muslim sect)	ism*ai*li

Jumat-ul-Wada (last Friday of Ramzan)	*ju*mat ul wȧd*aa*

Ka'aba (most sacred place of Muslims in Makka)	k*aa*ba
Kalima (statement of Islamic faith)	k*a*leema
Kameez (long tunic)	kȧm*ee*ss
Konkani (language spoken by people from area south of Bombay)	k*o*nkȧni
Kutch (northern part of Gujarat State)	katch
Kutchi (dialect of Gujarati and person from Kutch)	k*a*tchi

Lailat-ul-Bara'at (Muslim festival – Arabic)	l*ai*lat ul bar*aa*t
Lailat-ul-Qadr (Muslim festival – Arabic)	l*ai*lat ul q*a*dȧr
Lungi (Bengali male dress)	l*u*ngi

Makka (holy city in Saudi Arabia)	m*a*kka
Masjid (mosque)	m*aa*sjid
Maulana (man educated in religious matters)	mol*aa*na
Maulvi (man educated in religious matters)	m*o*lvi
Medina (city in Saudi Arabia)	med*i*na
Mehr (money promised to bride)	mer
Mihrab (niche in mosque wall facing Makka)	m*i*hrab
Minbar (pulpit)	m*i*nbaar
Mirpur (district of Azad Kashmir)	m*ee*rpoor
Mirpuri (dialect of Punjabi and person from Mirpur)	m*ee*rpoori
Mughal (Muslim dynasty)	m*oo*ghal
Muhammad (the Prophet of Islam, several alternative spellings in English)	moh*a*mmad
Muharram (1st month of Islamic year)	muh*a*rram
Mullah (man educated in religious matters)	m*u*llah
Muslim (follower of Islam)	m*u*sslim

Namaz (prayer – Urdu)	nam*aa*z

Pajama (trousers)	paj*a*ma
Pashto (language spoken by Pathans)	p*a*shto
Pathan (people from N.W. Frontier Province)	pat*aa*n
Punjab (area divided between India and Pakistan)	pånj*aa*b
Punjabi (language and person from Punjab)	pånj*aa*bi
Purdah (lit. veil)	p*a*rda
Quran (Muslim holy book, also spelt koran in the West)	qur*aa*n
Ramadan (month of fasting – Arabic)	ramad*aa*n
Ramzan (month of fasting – Urdu)	ramz*aa*n
Roza (fasting – Urdu)	r*o*za
Salat (prayer – Arabic)	sal*aa*t
Sari (female dress)	*saa*ri
Sevian (sweet vermicelli, eaten at Eed-ul-Fitr)	sevi*a͠n*
Shab-i-Baraat (Muslim festival – Urdu)	sh*a*bibar*aa*t
Shab-i-Qadr (Muslim festival – Urdu)	sh*a*biq*a*dår
Shalwar (loose trousers, male or female)	shalw*aa*r
Sharia (Islamic law)	shar*ee*a
Shia (a branch of Islam)	sh*ee*a
Siyam (fasting – Arabic)	siy*a*m
Sunnah (acts of Muhammad)	s*u*nnah
Sunni (a branch of Islam)	s*u*nni
Surah (chapter of the Holy Quran)	s*oo*ra
Sylhet (district of eastern Bangladesh)	sill*e*t
Sylheti (dialect of Bengali or person from Sylhet)	sill*e*ti
Tasbih (prayer beads)	t*a*ssbeeh
Taviz (religious amulet)	taav*ee*z
Torat (five books of Moses)	t*o*råt
Umra (lesser pilgrimage to Makka)	*oo*mra
Urdu (official language and lingua franca of Pakistan)	*oo*rdoo

Zaboor (book of Psalms)	zab*oo*r
Zakat (alms and welfare due)	zak*aa*t
Zil-Hija (month of pilgrimage)	zil-h*i*ja
Zohr (time of midday prayer)	z*o*hár

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