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FROM SECLUSION TO INCLUSION: BRITISH *'ULAMA* AND THE POLITICS OF SOCIAL VISIBILITY

The British State and Religion

In Britain, civil society includes civic religion with government-funded chaplaincies to parliament, the armed forces, and wherever people are vulnerable, whether in prison or hospital. The personnel and buildings of the Church of England—an established church—continue to be used for national and local rituals of celebration and mourning. Public service broadcasting continues to include religion. All state schools must give education in religion, and taxpayer money funds students who study nondenominational theology at the university level, so that the discipline is not confined to confessional colleges and maintains a conversation with academic life in all its diversity.

Because public life makes institutional space for "religion," that space has begun to make room for Islam, as it earlier had for nonestablished Christian denominations and the Jews.[1] The annual ceremony at the cenotaph in remembrance of those who died in war now includes members of all faiths. All new religious education syllabi used in schools—agreed at municipal level—have to reflect diversity and no longer can simply teach about Christianity. Many university departments of theology now include religious studies. Islamic Studies can be studied at the postgraduate level at at least sixteen universities, and a growing number of academics teaching the discipline are themselves Muslim.

Since the Labour government came to power in 1997, a range of measures have been taken to meet Muslim-specific concerns. In 1998, after a ten-year struggle, Muslims won the right to state funding of a couple of schools, a privilege hitherto only enjoyed by Christians and Jews. In September 1999, the Prison Service appointed the first Muslim Adviser. And a question on religious affiliation was included in the 2001 census in England—the first since 1851—after strenuous lobbying by Muslims. The Home Office also commissioned research to determine the extent of religious discrimination, an issue that has exercised many Muslims since the publication in 1997 of the

1 A new study of Muslims in Britain, France, and Germany makes clear that each nation's approach to Muslims is shaped, in part, by historically based church-state institutions (Fetzer and Soper 2005).

Runnymede Trust inquiry, entitled *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All* (Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia 1997).[2]

The institutionalization of Islam also has proceeded apace. Key battles were won in the 1980s on issues such as planning permission to establish mosques; the accommodation of religious and cultural norms in schools, including the provision of halal meat in school meals; burial spaces in cemeteries; gender-specific community centers; and the right to wear Islamic dress. In a city such as Bradford, Muslims can perform the call to prayer from their mosques for three of the five daily prayers. "By the mid-1990s [in Britain], there were at least 839 mosques and a further 950 Muslim organizations, ranging from local self-help groups to nationwide 'umbrella organizations'" (Ansari 2002, 6). The most significant among the latter is the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), founded in 1997. The MCB has its roots in Islamist protests against Salman Rushdie's book *The Satanic Verses*; the upsurge of protests indicated the pressing need for an effective national body to lobby government and liaise with statutory and public bodies.

Indeed, in Britain it is the Islamists who have pioneered an Islamic civil society with associations of Islamic doctors, lawyers, and teachers, an Islamic human rights commission, and the cleverly named FAIR, or Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism, established in 2001. The MCB is indicative of a new organizational sophistication. For its inaugural convention and accompanying glossy literature it chose the slogan "Seeking the Common Good," which deliberately echoed an influential document published a year earlier by the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales. The main weaknesses of such a movement are that it is seen as elitist, enjoys little grassroots support in the main centers of Muslim settlement, operates mainly outside traditionalist Muslim networks, and is dismissed as Wahhabi/Salafi by those in the more Sufi-oriented traditions.[3]

The Muslim communities enjoy a measure of incorporation into public and civic life. In 2001 there were more than two hundred Muslim local councilors (161 Labour, 27 Liberal Democrat, and 22 Conservative). In 1997 the first Muslim member of Parliament was returned, with another selected in 2001. The government also appointed three Muslim peers drawn from the Pakistani, Bengali, and Indian communities.

In the last few years the British state has also begun to self-consciously engage with what are dubbed "faith communities." This is most evident with the creation of a Faith Communities Unit in the Home Office in November 2003. In February 2004, in a wide-ranging report entitled "Working Together: Co-operation Between Government and Faith Communities," the government acknowledged:

2 A new report, *Islamophobia: Issues, Challenges and Action* (Richardson 2004), reviews progress in the last six years.

3 For an overview of Salafism in the United Kingdom, see J. Birt, 2005.

"In recent years there has been a sea-change in the consultation of faith communities. Work done, in particular through the Inner Cities Religious Council and the Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom, has been influential in changing Government's attitude to the contributions which faith communities can make. Some areas of policy are now routinely recognised by Departments as requiring the input of the faith communities, for example as partners in urban regeneration." (Home Office Faith Communities Unit 2004, 8)

The Inner Cities Religious Council was set up in 1992 as a forum in which representatives of faith communities could work together on urban renewal and issues of social exclusion. It was an initiative born of collaboration between the Archbishop of Canterbury and a government minister. The Inter Faith Network for the UK is a nongovernmental organization that was established in 1987 to link interfaith activity and develop good relations between people of different faiths. The network has worked with a range of government agencies to develop "religious literacy": 44 % of authorities in England and Wales now have an officer responsible for liaison with faith groups (Inter Faith Network for the UK 2003, 1X).

The rationale for such collaborative activity was that faith communities were considered a good point of entry for involving local communities and, particularly in the inner city, difficult-to-reach groups. Further, it embodied "the new politics of the 'third way'": "instead of a dominating state or a minimalist state, the future is seen as a partnership between an active civil society and a modern government committed to social partnership and decentralisation […] [with] faith communities […] viewed as agents of social cohesion, important building blocks of civil society and valuable partners in the new frameworks and processes of local government" (Farnell et al. 2003, 7–8). It was also in line with European Union directives—the "Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003"—to make reasonable accommodation for religious needs in the workplace.

The Home Secretary's rationale for establishing a Faith Communities Unit in the Home Office was clear in the Heslington lecture "One Nation, Many Faiths—Unity and Diversity in Multi-Faith Britain," which he delivered at York University in November 2003: to recognize and build on practical collaboration across different faiths, to encourage interreligious and intercommunity engagement, and to incorporate moderate religious leaders in policy discussions and thereby isolate extremists.

Scrutinizing the 'ulama through a Post-9/11 Security Lens

It was important to point to the continuity of government policy pre- and post-9/11. However, it is clear that Muslims in general and imams in particu-

lar are now the object of scrutiny in a way they were not pre-9/11.[4] This should not be a source of surprise: in December 2001, Richard Reid, the shoe bomber, was apprehended during his attempt to blow up a plane on its flight from Paris to the United States; Reid, a Muslim convert, was radicalized at the now notorious Finsbury Park Mosque. In May 2003, two British-educated Pakistani Muslims were involved in suicide attacks in Israel. A Rubicon was crossed in March 2004, a couple of weeks after the Madrid massacre of 191 people, when eight British Muslims, most of them young British-born and -educated Pakistanis, were arrested after the discovery of more than half a ton of explosives and bomb-making equipment in west London. Five have since been charged. In the past, radical Muslims in London were drawn from "Arab Afghans," Egyptians such as the now notorious Abu Hamza, arrested in May 2004 and facing extradition to the United States for his alleged links with al-Qaeda. Yet here were young, British-educated Muslims drawn from the biggest ethnic group in the United Kingdom—two-thirds of Britain's 1.6 million Muslims, according to the census data for 2001, have their origins in South Asia, with the biggest group from Pakistan.[5]

Concern about the nature, character, and impact of Muslim religious leadership in the United Kingdom—a staple of Islamic publications for more than fifteen years (cf. Lewis 2002, chap. 5)—is increasingly being articulated by a variety of distinguished British Muslims in the mainstream media. Two examples illustrate this concern. Lord Ahmed, one of the three Muslim members of the House of Lords, and himself of Kashmiri origin, recently penned a long article in *The Mail On Sunday* (April 4, 2004)—a newspaper considered the voice of "middle England," whose votes Labour and other political parties carefully cultivate—under the title "Top Muslim: Ban Preachers of Hate," in which he alleged:

"[…] a significant minority of imams perpetuate the outdated notion that Muslims are the victims of British colonial oppression and encourage people to rise up against the white man. If a Church of England vicar used the kind of abusive language about Muslims that some imams habitually use about the British, they would be rightly prosecuted for inciting racial hatred. The reason the imams are not prosecuted is because the non-Muslim community has no idea what goes on inside some mosques […] Most come from the Indian subcontinent, speak no English and have no knowledge of British culture […] All this has a terribly damaging effect on young Muslims in Britain. They go to the mosque and hear a sermon in a foreign language

4 BBC news reported on July 2, 2004, that the Home Office had released figures revealing that police stop and search of "Asians" had increased threefold from 2002 to 2004, largely as a result of new antiterrorist legislation. In real terms this meant an increase per day from two to eight stop and searches. In 2004 the MCB produced a short pocket guide for Muslims entitled "Knowing Your Rights and Responsibilities," which includes sections on "stop & search powers of the police" and "vigilance and the terror threat."

5 The 2001 census gives the ethnicity of South Asian Muslims as follows: Pakistani, 42.5 %; Bangladeshi, 16.8 %; and Indian, 8.5 %.

about the past. It has no relevance to the problems they face—unemployment, racism or any of the economic and social problems affecting Muslims in Britain. At the same time, it fills them with hate and absurd notions about Britain and the British. They leave the mosque angry and confused and walk straight into the arms of extremist groups such as Al-Muhajiroun which talk to them in language they understand and offer them a way of venting their anger […]"[6]

A young award-winning British filmmaker and radio producer, Navid Akhtar, recently underlined the seriousness of the alienation of sections of young Muslims from South Asian backgrounds in a radio program broadcast on prime time on a popular BBC radio show, *Five Live Report*. His program was cleverly entitled "Islam's Militant Tendency" and began with these words: "I am a British-born Muslim and I have always believed it is possible to practise and live a British way-of-life. But among young Muslims I am increasingly rare."[7] His program opened a window into the proliferation of radical Muslim bookshops that romanticize jihad and pump out audiotapes and videotapes by the likes of Abu Hamza—a radical Salafi message—and study circles that meet outside the mosques and are led by young British Muslim professionals. Akhtar worries that such literature and study circles, though not advocating violence, generate "an extreme and separatist version of Islam." He believes that many young British Muslims are "at odds with their parents' insular Asian culture and the mainstream British way of life. They find themselves in a vacuum with no direction, no roots and a lot of questions. 'Pure' [Salafi] Islam claims to be authentic Islam as practised at the time of the Prophet Muhammad" (BBC's *Five Live Report*, March 14, 2004).

British Muslim academics and intellectuals also have little positive to say about 'ulama. Ziauddin Sardar, who writes for the *New Statesman*, has one reference to 'ulama in the index of his much publicized *Desperately Seeking Paradise, Journeys of a Sceptical Muslim*. The reference is to an address by a preacher of an influential revivalist movement, which he characterized as "a closed circuit whose sole, obsessive concern […] [with] ritual obligations […] left the world and all its problems out of the equation" (Sardar 2004, 13). Dr. Humayun Ansari, in a ground-breaking history of Muslims in Britain,

6 Al-Muhajiroun is a splinter group that broke away from Hizb at-Tahrir; the latter had their origins in Palestine, where they had separated from the Muslim Brotherhood. Lord Ahmed also appears for the prosecution in a detailed indictment of the *'ulama* in the first of a four-part series of articles on life in Muslim Britain in *The Times* (July 26, 2004), written by young British journalist Burhan Wazir and entitled "Mosques: Sources of Spiritual Comfort or Out of Touch?"

7 Militant Tendency was a radical left-wing group that infiltrated mainstream Labour politics in the 1980s and for a while, especially in Liverpool, where they were the controlling group, brought the city's public services to a halt.

dryly describes the proliferation of mosques in Britain as "accompanied by sectarian fragmentation and ideological inflexibility" (2004, 346).[8]

The Home Office's response to these anxieties has been to render obligatory as from August 2004 a certain standard of English for any "minister of religion" wanting to work in the United Kingdom.[9] Further, it has supported the Learning and Skills Council in England to pilot some basic managerial training for Muslims active in mosques and Muslim organizations. In the longer term it intends to open a dialogue with all religious communities in order to establish basic accreditation and accrediting bodies for "ministers of religion" coming into the country.

British-Educated 'ulama: The Impact of Post-9/11

The picture offered so far of the 'ulama is, however, only partly accurate. I have worked for twenty years as an adviser on Christian-Muslim relations to Anglican Bishops in Bradford, as well as for the last four years as a university lecturer in the Department of Peace Studies at Bradford University. This experience has provided me with a range of contacts and friendships within the Muslim community, not least among some religious scholars.[10] In what follows I briefly profile a number of imams whom I have got to know. All are Sunnis who have spent much of their education and socialization in Britain and, with one exception, in Islamic *madaris* in Britain.[11]

All are seeking to connect with young British Muslims, many alienated from the mosques. All have realized that the institutions of wider society are eager to work with them on a range of initiatives, especially at city level on issues of cohesion and urban regeneration. One had developed partnerships with agencies and organizations in wider society, and his work was already marked by a new professionalism well before 9/11. Others again, in retro-

8 Fear of *'ulama* as bearers of South Asian sectarianism, among other things, was one reason the founders of the Bradford Council for Mosques drafted a constitution in 1981 to exclude them (Lewis 2002, 145–146).

9 British Council offices overseas will give a test to ascertain whether the applicant has reached Level 4 of an accredited system—at present graduates overseas need Level 5; nurses and doctors need Level 6. After two years they will be expected to achieve Level 6.

10 This is not to pretend that I have not been viewed at times with suspicion and variously accused of being a "spy for the church" or of working for MI5! Such "malicious gossip" has been noted by other academics working in this field (see Werbner 2002, IIX).

11 There are now at least twenty-five registered Islamic seminaries in Britain. Only three offer undergraduate or graduate courses accredited by British universities. One was established in the 1970s, three in the 1980s, eighteen in the 1990s, and three since 2000. For their history, ethos, sectarian affiliation, curriculum, and changing social roles, see J. Birt and P. Lewis (forthcoming) and S. Gilliat-Ray (forthcoming).

spect, saw 9/11 as an event forcing a conservative community to open up mosques to a range of outside agencies, however reluctantly. Another realized that post-9/11 he had to encourage Muslims to emerge from their comfort zones and begin to engage with wider society. One continues to be ambivalent about such engagement.

I do not pretend that they are typical of the majority of British imams; they are not. They do, however, indicate an emerging engagement with British society among a section of the better educated imams. Their career trajectories illuminate both the civic and public roles we might envisage more of them fulfilling in the years to come and the structural weaknesses that must be addressed if more are to follow them.

Pioneering a Multipurpose Muslim Center

Dr. Musharaf Hussain, in his early forties and of Pakistani ancestry, is the founder of and inspiration behind the Karimia Institute in Nottingham, which he established in 1990. Dr. Hussain has traversed three distinct intellectual and cultural worlds. He acquired his elementary religious education from a Pakistani imam in Bradford, then went on to earn a PhD in medical biochemistry. After some years as a research scholar at a British university, he spent a year in a traditional Islamic "seminary" in Pakistan. He rounded off his Islamic formation by obtaining a BA in Islamic Studies from al-Azhar in Cairo.

The Karimia Institute is an innovative, multipurpose center serving the local community. It includes a mosque, a new sports center, an accredited nursery, an information and technology center and a number of classrooms, and a radio station. Its private primary school is located nearby. Dr. Hussain also established a monthly magazine, *The Invitation*, which has been running for more than ten years and now has some two thousand subscribers and a Web site. The institute's most recent annual report listed seventeen projects, twenty full-time and thirty-five part-time staff, and an annual budget of some £400,000. What is striking in the report is the institute's emphasis on youth:

> "At Karimia our youth work is not about tackling disaffection but more of preventative nature by providing a learning environment, recreational activities and camps. We want to inspire the young and train them to be good citizens by giving them a sense of direction and mission, so that they can be a positive force for social change. Our youth club attracts many youngsters who would otherwise be on the streets."

Another feature of the report is the willingness of staff to be involved in a range of partnerships, whether with the local education authority, urban regeneration schemes, the local further education college, or the youth service. Their work in providing tutorial classes in English, math, and science for youths under 16; a General Certificate of Secondary Education in Islamic Studies in Urdu; and homework clubs, adult classes, and youth provision all

point to their success in such partnerships. In the report, they reflect on the demands of partnerships:

"It is important to emphasize the fact that the organisation's work does not only produce good in an individual's life but […] produces many goods for the wider society. [Further] work that is funded by others may be minutely scrutinized […] [and] such funds cannot be used for *da'wa* [an "invitation" to Islam] work […] and [must] not discriminate against anyone […] Most of us joined [Karimia] because [we] are driven by faith to help and serve others […] I hope that our secular friends and agencies will notice this commitment to faith and the important role it plays in people's life."

In conversation, Dr. Hussain remarked that as he engaged with wider society and its agencies his fears and stereotypes began to be challenged. He feels that most local Muslim institutions in the United Kingdom are still in the first two stages of creation and consolidation. Few have moved into the critical third phase of "professionalism." He also was one of the pioneers of the local Muslim charity Muslim Hands, which now has sixteen paid workers and operates in thirty-five countries. In 2003 it raised some £4 million. Muslim Hands is now a professional organization and has won an "Investing in People" award: most of the staff have gone through his mosque, local schooling, and university.

He has developed many of his initiatives gradually. For seven years the institute ran extratutorial classes in a variety of subjects. This project enabled the institute to develop a pool of young trained teachers, some of whom now work in its private school. Similarly, they have been licensed by the radio authority to run a local radio station during the month of Ramadan every year since 1996. They trained a number of people during this time, three of whom have gone on to be journalists with the BBC in various capacities. This gave them the confidence to apply for one of sixteen licenses across the country for community radio. They won this license in 2002, partly because of their willingness to share it with an Asian women's group.

The ethos and concerns of Dr. Hussain are evident in his professionally produced monthly magazine, *The Invitation*. He writes the editorial; one of his Friday sermons becomes the article on the Quran; his book of hadith translations furnishes a monthly hadith reflection; and he acts as resident mufti, answering a selection of questions. His contributions breathe a Sufi humanism; indeed, he often cites from famous Sufi writers. This observation is not to charge his magazine with otherworldliness. He told me that often his editorial is a response to an article in *Newsweek*; he reads eclectically and draws from the Islamist journal *Impact International* as well as the monthly *Q-News*. There are articles on fair trade and health matters, as well as articles by local Muslim women. A recent issue of *The Invitation* includes a hard-hitting piece entitled "Why We Are Where We Are?", from which the following remarks are drawn:

"[Our] dominant chauvinism has trampled upon [women's] God given rights […] Women have become subservient to […] husbands […] extra decoration pieces in their homes […] There are few independent and progressive thinkers in contrast to the vast majority of traditionalists and ritualistic [scholars] […] because it is an easier option as compared to requiring *ijtihad* or adaptation to the new realities of the modern world. In the absence of any clear vision, today the Muslims present themselves as victims around the world […] [we retreat into] escapism from reality […] [and] we blame the Jews for [all] our ills […] [the desiderata listed include the need to] build bridges of understanding with the West […]" (2003, 10:2, 24–25)

He is one of only two scholars in the Barelwi/Sufi tradition who sit on the central committee of the MCB. Since 9/11 he has sought to increase the range of contacts with his local community—not least a joint project with a local church—so as to challenge negative depictions of Muslims. He assumed national media prominence when, in September 2004, he and the assistant secretary general of the MCB, Dr. Daud Abdullah, went to Iraq, supported by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, to intercede for the life of Ken Bigley, a British hostage, who later was murdered. Dr. Hussain had already held a much publicized prayer vigil for Mr. Bigley in his local Muslim primary school. Their intervention won much praise from the British media for them personally and for the MCB. The choice of a member of the Muslim Brotherhood and a Sufi to travel together showed a good deal of wisdom, as each could appeal to different constituencies in Iraq.

Dr. Hussain is aware that if more 'ulama are to have the skills and confidence to benefit from the new openness of the local state and public bodies to Islam, there will have to be major changes in religious formation. He sets great store by the Muslim schools movement; there are now over 110 full-time private Muslim schools in the United Kingdom, most of which are affiliated with the Association of Muslim Schools (AMS), established in 1993, to which he belongs and which he used to chair. He believes that such a network will render many of the Islamic "seminaries" in Britain irrelevant in the not-too-distant future. The AMS network follows the national curriculum; thus, schools in the network do not teach Islam "out of context"—unlike in many Islamic seminaries in the United Kingdom, whose teaching still occurs in Urdu and whose curriculum still appears to be frozen in nineteenth-century India. He surmises that the Muslims will follow the Catholics and develop a tertiary college and teacher training college within the next decade. Such an institution could draw on the products of the AMS and both offer degrees and pioneer an appropriate Islamic curriculum in order to develop a new religious leadership that is at ease in Britain. Such a curriculum could include history, philosophy, and the social sciences.

We Can Kick It: An Islamic Drug Awareness Service

In 1996 Khalil Ahmed Kazi, a Gujarati and in his early thirties, became one of the first imams appointed to prison chaplaincy work after completing his six-year '*alim* course at a "seminary" in Bury.[12] He initially assumed that his role would simply be an extension of his preaching and teaching role in the mosque, which he continues part time. He discovered that his '*alim* course had furnished him with few transferable work or social skills: he had to master the art of writing complex letters on behalf of inmates to probation officers and review boards; to organize religious festivals in the prison; to develop administrative and managerial skills enabling him to work within a complex hierarchical institution; to acquire the knowledge and confidence to relate to Christian colleagues; to perform a pastoral role for disorientated Muslim prisoners and intercede with fathers whose first response was to wash their hands of the sons who had brought shame on the extended family; and to build a network of support within the Muslim community for those released. As a chaplain he had a generic role and therefore wider responsibility for all prisoners. Initially, his role as a prison chaplain was met with incredulity within the Muslim community, which was in denial about the soaring number of Muslim prisoners.[13]

The lessons he has learned as chaplain were applied in Batley, West Yorkshire, where he is general secretary of an institute of Islamic scholars which networks some one hundred Deobandi 'ulama. His first biannual report for 2000–2002 made clear both the need for "professionalism" in the organization and the emerging patterns of interaction with wider society. The report was marked by a refreshing candor. Typical was the comment in the foreword by the chairman, who pointed to the need for

> "true Islamic knowledge and wisdom [in a period] of turmoil and *fitna*. Each day brings greater challenges and requires insight into complex issues. Many a time it becomes extremely difficult to differentiate between *haq* [truth] and *batil* [falsehood], and thus a dilemma is created as to which route one should adopt."

The organization is between Dr. Hussain's second and third phases, consolidation and professionalism. This is clear from Kazi's overview as general

12 Bury is the "mother" house of a network of sixteen Islamic seminaries in the United Kingdom which belong to a reformist traditionalist group, Deoband, created in India in 1867. Historically, a main target for reform has been other traditionalist Muslims, especially the Barelwis, who are deemed to have made too many concessions to Hindu religiosity and customs. The Barelwis have five seminaries in the United Kingdom.

13 The census data for 2001 indicated that 2.7 % of the British population is Muslim, yet the Muslim prison population is 8.5 % (see Home Office Faith Communities Unit 2004, 96).

secretary of the institute, in which he described the shift from "ad hoc" responses to development of a formal constitution and the introduction of the apparatus of any "professional" organization—agenda, attendance registers, minutes, and even a Web site. The report indicated the extent to which they were engaging with wider society through their contacts and work with groups responsible for hospital and prison chaplaincy; local schools and colleges; a *da'wa* and publications department; lecture and youth programs; a community services network working with the police, members of Parliament, and policymakers; lectures on Islam delivered in a variety of venues, including an interfaith council; and a support group for drug and alcohol abuse.

There was also plenty of self-criticism. In the section on Islamic education the report noted that "the student, after spending a good part of the day at [state] school, comes exhausted both mentally and physically to the madrasah. If the [teacher] then conducts his lesson without any preparation, planning or using relevant methods, how would that then capture the imagination, attention and hearts of the students?" One major concern clearly articulated in the report was the limited expectations that parents have of Islamic education. "Their idea of Islamic education is no more than the ability to read the Qur'an […] [U]nder the pretext of flimsy excuses, such as increased school workload or attending weddings," they deprive them of this basic education:

> "Consequently, when pupils reach adolescence, when they are in a position to appreciate the beautiful teachings of Islam, when they need to be guided through the difficult period of teenage-hood, they are taken out of *madaris*. This great injustice is going to create an identity crisis, an ignorant rebellious Muslim."

As a prison chaplain, Kazi is well aware of the growing disaffection of a section of young Muslims from the mosque. In Batley, where he serves as a part-time imam, he has started meetings for these disenchanted young Muslims in a community center, a neutral space outside the mosque. Able to bridge the world of mosque, prison, and wider society, he has developed some innovative projects in partnership with local agencies. One that has given him considerable satisfaction was the launch at a Muslim community center in Batley in April 2004 of an Islamic drug awareness service, We Can Kick it, with an accompanying Web site.

The project, which aims to work with hard-to-reach groups in local mosques, schools, and community centers, involves all of Batley's fifty mosques and has been devised by Kazi, as Muslim consultant and project coordinator, with a number of Muslim professionals—two drug trainers from the Health Authority, a sports researcher, and a community liaison officer—who have created the material to be used in the mosque with eleven-year-olds. The material has been tested with schools and the project funded by police and drug action teams. Those who complete the two-hour course, whether in a mosque, a community center, or school, are given a certificate and access to

sports training programs as an alternative to the culture of "hanging out" and drug misuse.

This is just one of many projects in which Kazi is involved. Another, the Madressah Project, aims to promote positive parenting and provides guidance on child-welfare issues. It is headed by another Bury-trained religious scholar and funded by the social services and community education and regeneration services. It has already built relationships with thirty mosques, establishing a cross-cultural dialogue in order to explain child protection, behavior management, and health and safety issues both in the home and in the mosque teaching environment. Kazi is a member of its management committee.

His latest project, which at the time of writing is awaiting Home Office approval, is an imaginative scheme to provide a community chaplaincy project in three areas from which many Muslim prisoners come. The aim is to establish a team of chaplains who will recruit, train, and supervise teams of volunteers. These volunteers will act as mentors and provide one-to-one support for ex-offenders released from prison. Services on offer will include housing advice, drugs- and alcohol-awareness training, counseling, debt counseling, benefits advice, and job-search support. The project has the full support of all the chaplains and Anglican and Catholic dioceses. Although the project will cost in excess of £800,000 over three years, it would only have to keep twenty prisoners per year from re-offending and returning to prison in order to cover its costs through the money saved by the prison services.

For Kazi the key to the success of such ventures is partnership: partnership between Muslim scholars and Muslim professionals and partnership with a variety of agencies now willing to work with religious groups. Police now go into mosques to speak about drugs awareness, something that would have been unheard of just a few years ago. The mosques used to be closed worlds, and many of the elders and 'ulama were deeply suspicious of non-Muslim society. Kazi frankly admits that the shock of 9/11 has enabled him to open up this closed world: as a respected traditionalist religious scholar, he has been able to negotiate access to such agencies and legitimize such initiatives in Islamic terms by providing Islamic support materials.

From Seclusion to Inclusion?

The activities of 'ulama like Khalil Ahmed Kazi, who have developed a new set of skills by working outside the Muslim subculture of Islamic seminary and mosque, indicate a growing awareness of the need to connect with streetwise British Muslim youth and the increasing willingness of support agencies to work with them. Two young Bradford religious scholars reflect two overlapping sets of responses to this challenge. Although their work cuts across ethnic divides, Mufti Saiful Islam, a Bangladeshi scholar, serves a largely Bangladeshi community, and Sheikh Ahmed Ali, a Pakistani, serves a largely Pakistani constituency. Both are in their early thirties and have

established independent Islamic institutions, staffed and run largely by British-educated 'ulama whom they have recruited from Bury and its associate seminaries. Both continue to have good relations with local mosques.

The aim of such independent institutions is to get away from the somewhat negative associations that mosques carry for Muslim youth. Both run a range of activities for Muslim youngsters which are intended to maintain their interest through adolescence—the major gap in provision that Kazi identified. Ahmed Ali runs additional educational classes on the weekend in computing, English, and math as well as homework clubs. Everything is studied through the medium of English. In all, he and his colleagues seek to supplement and consolidate state education. In the summer Ali takes youngsters camping and organizes day trips to local theme parks. In cooperation with youth workers they arrange weekend soccer games and competitions in the summer. They take groups of young men between fifteen and thirty years of age to the annual Islamic study camp (*tarbiyya*) organized by Bury since 1998, where they listen to addresses in English delivered over a period of three days and live under canvas. Ahmed Ali states quite clearly that his Islamic academy is to be understood as a "social center" generating a wide range of activities not normally associated with a mosque.

Ahmed Ali is a charismatic speaker and has used this strength to develop an audiotape ministry. He has over sixty titles and sells between forty thousand and fifty thousand tapes a year. He does not avoid controversial issues. One of his best-selling tapes is entitled *Drugs, the Mother of All Evils*. It is clear why he is popular: he can speak the language of the street, and his tapes are larded with local phrases drawn from the drug culture. The message, however, remains very traditional: shape up or else hellfire awaits you. He is a textual scholar, not a social scientist. Another recent tape is amusingly entitled *"The IT Syndrome" (I am IT!)*; in it he parodies the "big-timers" and role models for disaffected youth in the community, with their "7-series BMWs, Mercs and mobile phones," who forget the Quran's warnings about "exalting riches and forgetting Allah." He reminds them of the Quranic punishments: amputation for theft, "80 of the best" for false accusation, stoning for adultery with a married woman. He does not spare his hearers gruesome and lengthy details about the humiliations of hell. Ali makes no concessions to Western, liberal sensibilities.

Two other tapes indicate that he is unapologetically traditional in his thinking. He addresses the issue of "forced marriage" and acknowledges that it is a widespread cultural abuse in South Asian communities: "some are blackmailed, some are threatened, some are severely beaten." Drawing on Hanafi jurisprudence, he points out that Islamic legal norms insist that the wife is not a commodity, that she has rights to a modest dowry, and that she must give her permission to marriage. Moreover, the essential factor in choosing a partner should not be her wealth, status, or beauty but her piety. Marriage, he adds, is a form of worship; unfortunately, piety is not the first concern of parents who are more preoccupied with marrying "this or that

uncle's or aunt's son or daughter." Further, a guardian should take account of *kuf*, equality of status. He also is deeply critical of conspicuous consumption at weddings—what he amusingly refers to as "blow [all your savings] and show [off your supposed wealth]"—as well as of the popularity of Hindu customs. Imparting much sensible advice, he mentions that if men contemplate multiple wives—no more than four, of course—they must treat them with "equality and justice."

In two recent tapes entitled *Iraq*, Ahmed Ali shows that he is well read in classical Islamic history. The burden of his lengthy narratives is that Allah tests his people; they show patience and eventually prevail. He reminds them of the early conquests of Islam, when the mighty superpower of its day—Persia—was "humiliated" by the Muslim armies, whose faith struck "terror into the hearts of the *kuffar*." Chapters drawn from Iraq's bloody subsequent history are rehearsed to conform with this pattern: Ali is killed in vicious intra-Muslim wars, and the splendid Abbasid empire centered on Baghdad is exposed to defeat and "terrifying slaughter by the pagan Tartars." Today the Iraqis have suffered terribly from sanctions and war, but, as Ahmed Ali reminds his audience, the Tartars were eventually converted to Islam. Allah prevailed then, and Islam will prevail again. For the present, Ali suggests to his audience that, "instead of spending their money on five mobiles and three satellite TVs," they should visit Iraq, Jordan, and Palestine with an Islamic scholar in order to strengthen their faith. "Remember it is the site of your religious history … so when the bombs drop remember this."

He is anxious about the inroads of non-Muslim cultural practices. In one of his most recent cassettes, *Tawheed and Shirk*, he reminds his audience that *shirk*—associating something or someone with Allah—is the unforgivable sin. He expresses dismay that some misguided Muslims protested against the Taliban's destruction of Buddhist statues in Afghanistan. He recounts with approval a hadith to the effect that a companion of the Prophet is commended for cleaving the head of a female seer. Yet all around Ahmed Ali sees Muslims adopting unacceptable practices: whether consulting their zodiac signs in the tabloid press—a particular weakness, he alleges, of Muslim women; celebrating Valentine's Day; or advertising the festivals of the *mushrikun* (those who commit shirk) in Islamic magazines. He also delivers an intra-Muslim polemic against practices such as praying at the tombs of Islamic saints for children. All such activities are tantamount to shirk, as only Allah has knowledge of the future and of the unseen.

Ahmed Ali, unlike the two other 'ulama discussed thus far, has not been systematically exposed to wider society, and so has not had to develop new intellectual and social skills to complement those acquired in his Islamic formation. His only openness to non-Muslim agencies has been some collaboration with Muslim youth workers and teachers. He seems content to work within a relatively closed Muslim social world. In conversation with me, he expressed some bitterness that the valuable work he does to engage with

disaffected Muslim youth and raise educational standards is not recognized by teachers and the police.

Whereas Ahmed Ali's main medium of communication to a broader constituency is the audiotape, Mufti Saiful Islam prefers the popular format of the magazine, the pamphlet, and poetry. Like Ahmed Ali, he went straight into an imamate at a local mosque after completing his '*alim* training. Whereas Ali went to Cairo to complete his training at al-Azhar, Saiful Islam was in the first group to complete a newly developed *ifta*' course begun in Bury in 1995 to train Hanafi muftis. Like Ali, he soon became aware of the limited impact of the traditional mosque on Muslim youth, who were increasingly being drawn into a range of antisocial and immoral behavior. For this reason, he too has established an independent Islamic institution.

In addition to carrying out "normal" methods of teaching, Saiful Islam runs a weekly session of Quran exposition followed by a question-and-answer session. He makes clear in his publications that simply rehearsing what the Quran and Sunna say about issues is no longer enough. In a pamphlet entitled "Alcohol, the Root of All Evil," he notes after the section on Quranic verses and hadith that "these traditions should be sufficient to display the corruption and evils of alcohol. Unfortunately in this 'advanced age' […] one may be more influenced by medical and scientific research." He then includes material on the intellectual, physical, psychological, and social costs of alcohol, drawing on a range of popular sources, including *Reader's Digest*.

He has produced two volumes of pithy comments and articles entitled *Pearls of Wisdom* in 2001 and 2002. As with Ahmed Ali, fear of hell plays a central role in his teachings. Thus, a warning was sounded for would-be usurers when a Pakistani, well known for dealing in interest, died: "Soon after his passing away, his facial features began to change until it resembled that of a pig" (1:39).

In both volumes a traditionalist reading of the social roles of women is commended. The second volume recounts a dialogue between "a modernist lady and an intelligent young girl." The former accuses the latter's father of keeping her imprisoned at home, as if in jail. The young girl protests that jailers keep criminals under lock and key, whereas "diamonds and gold [are kept] in a safe place. I am my father's diamond, which he keeps in this holy sanctuary [home] … the thought of escaping does not arise in my mind … I love the safety and peace of my home" (2:42–43). In the first volume a hadith is narrated in which women are enjoined to pay "*sadaqah* [alms] and offer repentance abundantly," as women feature more prominently in hell than men. The reason, according to another hadith, is that women are "more habituated to cursing (during conversation) and … are ungrateful to … husbands" (1:11). Another scholar is cited as saying that "Women who possess degrees of B.A. and M.A. cannot compete in understanding and intelligence with women who have acquired *deeni* [religious] knowledge. Yes, in deception and schemes, the western-educated women may be ahead.

But remember, that words of intelligence will come out from women of piety" (1:41).

Mufti Saiful Islam is clearly not much impressed with Western education. A poem entitled "The Western Youth" includes the following:

"He thought he was only twenty and was going to live to seventy.
The West taught him to be free and to acquire a useless degree.
Filled with selfishness and free, never did he perform a single deed.
When told to change and repent, he said why? I'm happy and content.
If only he knew what contentment was, he may not have made such a loss.
Satisfaction is what he chased, with disbelievers he embraced […]" (1:24)

In conversation, however, he pointed out that in a non-Muslim context "the law of necessity" operated. Because the community needs women teachers and medical personnel, they would be allowed to go on to further education, albeit properly covered.

His bimonthly magazine, *Al-Mu'min*, is a polished production. It enjoys a circulation similar to that of *The Invitation*. It includes sections on *tafsir* (Quranic commentary), hadith, religious and historic personalities central to Islam, a women's section, poems, a children's corner, and a question-and-answer page where the mufti gives fatawa on everything from clones to contraception. Although there is a women's section, women themselves do not seem to write for the magazine (though they do for *The Invitation*). Moreover, there are fewer articles on contemporary political events.

However, there is no embarrassment about asking difficult questions; for example, a questioner asks whether a man's marriage is still valid if he has had an affair with his wife's sister. The mufti answers that the marriage remains valid, and then points out that the prevalence of such immoral behavior is rooted in the failure to maintain strict segregation (purdah) among close relatives within the family. A recent issue even answered questions about oral and anal sex. Moreover, many of the articles self-consciously seek to connect with the world of Muslim youth by using such catchy titles as "Designer Clothing," "Benefits and Harms of the Internet," and "Football: A Religion?"

One innovation that Mufti Saiful Islam has pioneered is that of teaching the '*alim* syllabus to local adults on a part-time basis—the course of study can take up to ten years. He realized that many men wanted to take up this study but, because of family commitments or full-time jobs, could not afford to study full time at a seminary. Already this pattern of religious formation is bearing fruit: one of his trainee imams, Amjad Mohammed, is already trained as a teacher; another, Rafaqat Rashid, is a local doctor. Both are in their early thirties and form the nucleus of a small group of fellow Muslim professionals who established the Islamic Cultural Association (ICA) in Bradford in 2003.

The aims of the ICA are listed in their literature and on their Web site. They include portraying a positive image of Muslims; enabling Muslims to play a more positive role in the wider community by fostering better commu-

nity relations and working for the good of society as a whole; facilitating a two-way communication between Muslims and public bodies and addressing educational and health deficits in the community; and seeking to eradicate the discrimination and disadvantages faced by Muslims. They stress that the ICA "consists of professionals who have been raised in England" and who have "a training in the classical sciences from qualified teachers and sources."

Their Web site has a range of helpful articles on Islamic beliefs. Many are self-critical, such as one entitled "Male Chauvinism and the Muslim World," in which they criticize as incompatible with Islamic law such abuses as female mutilation, honor killings, and forced marriage. They have a chatroom where contemporary local issues are discussed, such as "Are our Muslim parents playing a proactive role in the education of their children?" and "What should the government do to promote social inclusion of Muslims?" Non-Muslims also take part.

The vice chair of the ICA, Amjad Mohamed, produced an illuminating article on their Web site entitled "British Muslims—Where From, Where To, Where Now?" In it he noted:

> "Today, the Muslim community in Britain is a relatively settled community […] [which has] established a diversity of Islamic organizations. […] However, occurrences like *The Satanic Verses*, for example, are perceived as a conspiracy against Muslims. Also, external factors such as problems in the Holy Land (Palestine), the massacre of Muslims in Bosnia, and […] [lately] the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, not forgetting the controversial French ban on the headscarf, unsettle the resident British Muslims. […] The Muslim community had decided, possibly unconsciously, that rather than defend their religion, it would be better to isolate [themselves] from the wider society and, therefore, not attract attention. However, events over the last few years have changed that position. British Muslims can no longer hope not to be seen nor questioned. *Events outside of their hands have dragged them from seclusion into the questioning eye of the general public*. British Muslims have […] to decide whether [or not] to 'open their doors' to the wider community […] [and thereby] dispel myths, misconceptions made against the religion of Islam." (italics mine; see www.ica-online.org)

The activist thrust of their work is evident in the Quranic text that adorns their literature: "[…] mankind can have nothing except what it strives for" (Surah An-Najm 53:39). Thus far they have organized or participated in a number of local conferences. In June 2004 they ran a drugs-in-community project in cooperation with the police. Dr. Rashid has organized gender-specific workshops on diet and diabetes issues in three mosques. More recently they have been working with Muslim youth workers by mentoring vulnerable youngsters.

The ICA is a welcome development in an area of the city with high levels of educational underachievement—in one ward 46 % of the community is without qualifications—unemployment, and youth disaffection spilling over into antisocial behavior and drugs. Amjad Mohamed is frank about the difficulties in encouraging cross-community relations in the present climate,

with "white faced British soldiers killing brown faced Muslims in Iraq … brown faced Muslims doing nasty things to white [hostages] … In all, it is difficult for Jones to feel comfortable with Ali and vice versa." Moreover, unlike the Indian Gujarati communities of Batley or Leicester, which are used to living as a minority in India or East Africa, the large Pakistani communities in Bradford feel comfortable in their Muslim enclaves, where they are now the majority. The British National Party and far-right activity also make them reluctant to move too far outside the substantial Muslim quarters of the city.

Jihad to Engage Journalists

Sheikh Ibrahim Mogra, a Gujarati in his mid-thirties, is based in Leicester in the East Midlands. Originally from Malawi, he was sent to the United Kingdom to train as a doctor, but decided to become an '*alim* instead. His educational formation includes Bury, al-Azhar, and an MA at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. Mogra has worked part time in mosques, taught in one of the three Islamic seminaries in the city, and now runs his own mosque school. In addition to these traditional roles, he has pioneered work in the wider community, not least with local interfaith groups. He has organized joint Christian-Muslim fundraising for hospitals in Kosovo and Gaza. He has been part of a joint Christian-Muslim group setting up and delivering an innovative chaplaincy course for Muslims at a local Islamic institute. He runs the Leicester-wide Radio Ramadan, which, like two dozen similar ventures across the country, is granted a license for the period of Ramadan. Mogra realized that if a traditional imam has a congregation of some two hundred on Friday, Radio Ramadan would give him a constituency of thousands for his teaching and preaching. He consciously invites imams from all traditions to participate. He is active in the three local universities, where he delivers the Friday *khutba* on consecutive weeks and takes part in the annual conference of the Federation of Student Societies. The 2004 conference, with its seven hundred students, was covered in the *Guardian* newspaper. Sheikh Ibrahim Mogra, "a leading young imam," was said to call on

> "Muslim students to reach out to their peers. Urging them to be more integrationist, he said: 'That is where the struggle lies. If we reach out we can win the hearts of this country.'" (*Guardian*, June 19, 2004)

Mogra has frequently insisted to me that he did not want to be limited to the traditional role of imam. He preferred to work part time in his own mosque school rather than serve as a full-time imam and thus be constrained within the role envisaged by a majority of mosque committees. His local community work has won him a measure of national recognition. He has been appointed as an area representative for the MCB and chairs their mosque and community committee, for which he was reselected in May 2004 for a further two

years. The MCB has very few active 'ulama as members, and of these Mogra is the first '*alim* of his generation who was educated in a British seminary. In October 2004 he helped open the first regional office for the MCB outside London, based in Leicester. He is grateful to the MCB for giving him a national platform for his gifts—as well as for enhancing his skills with leadership training.

Ibrahim Mogra passionately believes that post-9/11 Muslims must engage the media to correct misunderstandings and that mosques must open their doors to the public in order to show that they have nothing to hide. As part of his own efforts in this respect, he was profiled in a radio documentary entitled "Rookie Imams," for which he negotiated access to a Deobandi seminary.[14] His personal jihad, he told me recently, was to engage journalists. He is unusual in that he is prepared to talk to and work with the local and national media. Imam training does not, historically, include communications skills necessary for a public and civic role, as such a role simply is not envisaged.[15] He was prepared to appear on a recent hard-hitting television program, *Some of My Best Friends Are Muslim*, broadcast on Channel 4 (August 17, 2003) and produced by Yasmin Alibahi-Brown, a columnist for the national broadsheet *The Independent*. Here Alibahi-Brown spoke openly about her worries about increasing intolerance in the community and about her own experience of receiving death threats and hate mail because, as an Ismaili, she is not considered an Orthodox Muslim—her sin compounded by the fact that she has married a Christian.

Through his work with the MCB, as well as local and national interfaith contacts, he is clearly developing a national profile: he was one of six British imams to appear in a British television series entitled *Shariah TV*. The series consisted of six weekly, hour-long programs screened for Channel 4 in May and June of 2004. In many ways it indicated the coming of age of Islam in Britain. A Muslim was the head of religious affairs; the series was researched by Muslim consultants and fronted by a young mainstream television presenter, So Rehman, who is himself a Muslim. The aim of the programs was to provide an opportunity for young British Muslims to pose a range of questions to specialists on Islamic law and other experts. So Rehman made clear in his introduction to each program that there are different interpretations on a range of issues.

What was refreshing was a context in which imams could be quizzed on a range of controversial issues by a cross section of young Muslim profession-

14 Access to such institutions remains very difficult; see S. Gilliat-Ray (2005).

15 Tim Winter, an English Muslim who lectures on Islam at Cambridge University and who often appears in the media, recently wrote that "[…] we need to be more frank in blaming our own Muslim communities for failing to engage in more successful and sophisticated public relations […]. Major mosques and organisations have little or no public relations expertise. To accuse the West of misrepresentation [of Islam] is sometimes proper, but all too often reflects a hermeneutic of suspicion rooted in zealot attitudes to the Other" (Seddon 2003, 13).

als, male and female, with and without the hijab. Most were in their twenties and thirties and clearly were located along the complete spectrum of Muslims, from cultural Muslim to traditionalist and radical. They were respectful of the imams, without being deferential. The series touched on a full range of issues, from domestic to civic and political, from homosexuality to mortgages to citizenship and interfaith relations. The program in which Mogra appeared touched on "consumerism and lifestyle" issues: Could a Muslim barrister-in-training attend meetings in pubs if she did not herself drink? Should students apply for student loans? Was it halal to take out house mortgages? Could a Muslim doctor recommend abortion in the case of fetal abnormalities? Was it acceptable to run a sports club for young Somali Muslim women? Was there a place for cosmetic surgery, or was this prohibited? What was the status of organ transplants? Could a Muslim with Christian relatives attend a christening service or a Christmas party?

The Politics of Visibility: Conclusion

It will be clear that the "politics of visibility" refers to a number of issues: the extent to which the state encourages religious actors to engage in civic society; whether even British-educated 'ulama have the skills, competence, desire, and freedom to capitalize on such opportunities; and whether mosque committees, citywide councils of mosques, and national umbrella bodies—traditionally run by Muslim businessmen and professionals—actually want to make space for a contribution by these 'ulama.

We can conclude that, notwithstanding the events of 9/11, both state and local government, as well as public services, have sought to work with Muslim communities in general, and 'ulama in particular, on a range of issues. They are especially alert to the need to connect with British Muslim youth and welcome religious leaders who are willing to act as mediators in this process.

Surprisingly, perhaps, 9/11 has not proved an unmitigated disaster for Muslim communities. Some 'ulama have seen it as a wake-up call for Muslims to venture out from their comfort zones and relatively closed communities. They view it as an opportunity to explain themselves to the media and to engage with professionals in wider society—whether clergy, teachers, social workers, or the police—in order to address youth disaffection and help raise the worryingly low educational standards among sections of Muslim youth.

The 'ulama presented in this chapter are all exceptionally able and have successfully negotiated multiple linguistic, educational, and cultural worlds. However, even they fall into two categories: one "cosmopolitan," the other "transnational."[16] The latter, in contrast with the former, are "rarely heard and

16 This useful distinction is developed by Pnina Werbner (2002) in her studies of Manchester Muslims.

even more rarely recognised and listened to beyond their own communities. They speak a foreign language or enunciate alien, widely unacceptable sentiments" (Werbner 2002, 6–7). It is clear that two of the 'ulama discussed could probably be characterized as transnational in this sense. Both were trained and socialized in a relatively closed Islamic environment; neither have had direct exposure as the others have to Western tertiary education. Nor have they taken up social roles as chaplains, for which they would have to develop new social and intellectual skills—most often referred to in shorthand as the need for "professionalism." However, in the case of Mufti Saiful Islam it will be interesting to see whether his training of 'ulama locally, of men who are already "professionals"—teachers and doctors—forces him to engage vicariously with such complex social and intellectual worlds, the sine qua non of any mufti working in Britain.

It is also evident that if more British-educated 'ulama are to follow these pioneers in seeking to access and influence civic and public life, certain structural weaknesses will have to be addressed in both mosque culture and the seminary. All of the 'ulama discussed have felt the need either to set up independent institutions or to maintain their economic independence of mosque committees. Ironically, working part time as a chaplain can generate a salary larger than what one would earn as an imam in a mosque. However able, an imam in a mosque usually is poorly remunerated and lacks contractual security. Further, if mosque committees are to attract the better educated who can connect with British Muslims, they will have to provide not just a living wage but also resources and opportunities for imams to develop professionalism.

Clearly, seminary formation will have to include new intellectual, social, and communication skills. At the moment, it can take as much as ten years for the most able products of these seminaries to feel at ease in wider society. If these issues are not addressed, there is a danger that a two-tier system of 'ulama will be created: those least able to understand and connect with the concerns of British Muslims will find employment inside the mosque, whereas those most able to connect will find employment outside it.

What is also clear from these snapshots of the world of British 'ulama is a willingness to work with Muslims outside their own sectarian tradition. Dr. Hussian's visit to Iraq is a spectacular example of this: because he is a Sufi, one might have expected him to have little in common with the member of the Muslim Brotherhood who accompanied him; yet they worked well as a team. Increasingly, there are examples of Islamists and 'ulama working together. Arguably, the MCB is—in origin and ethos—Islamist, yet it has begun to enlist a few able 'ulama into its ranks. Such active collaboration across sectarian divides bodes well for the future.

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