University of Sussex

A University of Sussex DPhil thesis

Available online via Sussex Research Online:

http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/

This thesis is protected by copyright which belongs to the author.

This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the Author

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the Author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given

Please visit Sussex Research Online for more information and further details
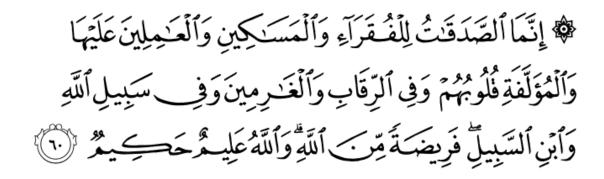
Islamic Reform, Piety and Charity among Muslim Businessmen and Entrepreneurs in Birmingham, UK

Sufyan Abid

PhD Thesis

Department of Anthropology

School of Global Studies

University of Sussex, UK

June 2015

Declaration: Work Not Submitted Elsewhere for Examination

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature …………Sufyan Abid………………..

إِنَّمَا ٱلصَّدَقَٰتُ لِلْفُقَرَآءِ وَٱلْمَسَٰكِينِ وَٱلْعَٰمِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَٱلْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي ٱلرِّقَابِ وَٱلْغَٰرِمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَٱبْنِ ٱلسَّبِيلِ ۖ فَرِيضَةً مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ۝

"The alms are only for the poor, for the needy, for those employed to collect it, for bring the hearts together for Islam, for freeing captives or slaves, for those who are in debt, for the cause of Allah, for the travellers; this is ordained by Allah who is Know-all and Wise".

Al-Quran. Chapter 9, Al-Tobbah (The Repentance), Verse 60

Abstract

This thesis explores the practices of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham in relation to their beliefs in a variety of Islamic reformisms, ideals of piety and responses towards charity and philanthropy. The thesis problematizes various streams of Islamic reformisms among different groups of reformist Muslims and elaborates how these groups engage with Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in order to establish and assert their identity as 'authentic and good Muslims' in public spheres. The thesis discusses how reformist Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs give public performances of their pious lives and how their ideals of piety and living a moral life are reshaped and negotiated among Birmingham Muslims while they search for role models in social and economic spheres of life. Finally, this thesis explores and establishes the links between charity and donation related practices of Birmingham Muslims with their beliefs in any particular reformist interpretation of practicing Islam in everyday life; and how doing charity and philanthropy becomes a site for the public performance of piety. This thesis further explores charity practices of Birmingham Muslims in order to understand the context, motivations and background of Muslim charitable organisations and Muslim philanthropists. One year ethnographic fieldwork was conducted in predominantly Muslim neighbourhoods of Birmingham, UK as part of this anthropological research. This thesis claims its originality by filling the gap of lack of anthropological research on Birmingham Muslims in the context of ongoing anthropological debate on Islamic reformism, piety and charity that has emerged as a result of anthropological researches conducted in other Muslim societies. My argument, in this thesis is that there is an element of Islamic reforms in all forms of different Islamic streams or sects of Muslims. The charity practices of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs are highly influenced by their adherence to any interpretation of reformist Islam that too, is greatly influenced by local realities and global trends.

Table of Contents

Chapter 3

The Economic Networks, Practices and Ideals of 'Being Successful' amongst Muslim Businessmen and Entrepreneurs in Birmingham……………………. 98

Chapter 4

Public Performances of Piety and Moral Life amongst Muslim Businessmen and Entrepreneurs in Birmingham ……………………………………………………… **129**

Chapter 5

Purifying the Profits: Motivations Behind Charity and Philanthropy among Birmingham Muslims ………………………………………………………… **158**

Chapter 6

Chapter 7

Acknowledgements

This thesis is a result of cooperation and goodwill of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham which they showed to me during my fieldwork and continued to show their cooperation and friendliness after I finished my fieldwork. I am indebted to the Muslim Charity Organisations in Birmingham who are doing selfless work and making sincere efforts to change everyday lives of people in Birmingham and across the world. I am also thankful to reformist Muslim individuals, groups and organisations in Birmingham who are devoted to recreate a sense of community among Muslims based on shared values between them and trying to introduce how to live as Muslim in compatibility with British society and culture. Thanks to Birmingham Muslims in general; you were very kind, hospitable and cooperative. By living with you and doing my research and fieldwork with you, I could become professionally what I am today, I am humbled by you and cannot show my gratitude for you by words only! I am grateful to the vibrant and diverse culture of Birmingham and its people which educated me about different aspects of everyday life in Britain.

I would like to say thanks to Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan for awarding me with the funding to do my doctoral studies. Without the generosity of Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, this research project could not have been accomplished.

I am indebted to my main PhD supervisor, Professor Filippo Osella who enabled me how to design, proceed and complete doctoral research project. Professor Filippo Osella not only helped me as an academic supervisor during my doctoral research, but also remained my mentor and a guide and kept me focused on my work. Without his guidance, kindness, patience and support, it would have been impossible to do my studies. I value it very much the way you approach anthropologically to study Muslims. I am also very thankful to Dr. Jon Mitchell, my secondary supervisor for PhD, who gave me positive and constructive feedback about how to approach to my PhD work.

I am very lucky to have Professor Magnus Marsden at Department of Anthropology as internal examiner for my PhD viva. Professor Magnus Marsden gave a very indepth, positive and critical feedback and made me see my doctoral work from the approaches and angles which I could never envisage before. It made me really humbled to read your feedback and your appreciation about the originality of my anthropological work about

and many others who were so helpful during the research fieldwork. Gratitude to the imams of mosques and volunteers at Muslim Charities in Birmingham.

I am totally indebted to my parents, sisters and brother, who enabled me to do all things in life. Especial thanks to my elder brother Naeem ur Rehman Dogra, who did everything possible to make sure that I have everything to finish my doctoral studies smoothly despite his own commitments and family responsibilities. Anybody who has a brother like you can never be deprived from making dreams turn into reality. Many thanks to my younger brother, Matee ur Rehman Dogra, who was there to help me whenever I needed. I wish you all the best for you studies, career and pursuit of happiness.

Last but not least at all, rather most important of all, the love of my life, my soulmate and life-partner, Zille Huma, I dedicate this thesis to you. If it were not your smile and company, I couldn't have done anything in life. You gave me hope and strength to carry on despite all the odd circumstances. I am proud that you finished your PhD at Sussex before me. You are the best person who accompanied me at University of Sussex and elsewhere and who kept me going throughout my life. I regret the days that I couldn't spend with you and cherish those days when I could be with you. I am proud of the fact that we both could acoomplish our PhDs with happy endings.

Chapter 1

1. Introduction

This thesis explores the relationship between the practices of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham and their attendant beliefs in various types of Islamic reformism, ideals of piety and responses towards charity and philanthropy. The thesis problematizes the various streams of Islamic reformism amongst different groups of reformist Muslims, and elaborates on how these groups engage with Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in order to establish and assert their identity as 'authentic and good Muslims' in public spheres. The thesis then discusses how reformist Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs engage in public performances of their pious lives and examines how their ideals of piety, and living a moral life, are reshaped and negotiated amongst Birmingham Muslims whilst, at the same time, they search for role models in social and economic spheres of everyday life. Finally, this thesis explores and establishes the links between charity and donation related practices of Birmingham Muslims and their beliefs in particular reformist interpretations of practising Islam in everyday life. The focus is primarily on how 'doing charity and philanthropy' becomes a site for the public performance of piety and a reflection of belief in any particular stream of reformist Islam. Hence, the thesis explores charity practices of Birmingham Muslims in order to understand the context, motivations and background of Muslim charitable organisations and Muslim philanthropists. The main contribution of the thesis is that it addresses the lack of anthropological research on Birmingham Muslims in the context of ongoing anthropological debate on Islamic reformism, piety and charity. This is significant because of the emergence of comparable anthropological research elsewhere in Muslim societies.

My argument is that Muslim entrepreneurs and businessmen in Birmingham are disposed to a variety of interpretations of Islam. For them, success in life and the afterlife is vital while they conduct their everyday lives and attend social and economic affairs. 'Being a successful and good Muslim' is a desirable personal trait among Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham, and this is manifested through public performances of piety, the demonstration of a moral life to others and by engaging in charity work and giving donations publically. Doing charity in public becomes vital for Muslim

businessmen in order to purify their profits, assets and surplus with a belief that through charity, businesses and assets will multiply and/or will not be taken away from them. However, the act of doing charity, its nature, direction and scope, and the relationship between Muslim businessmen, entrepreneurs and different Muslim charitable organisations is mostly determined by their belief in particular interpretations of practising Islam in everyday life *and* by their affiliation with particular groups of reformist Muslims. Moreover, Muslim charitable organisations not only provide a space for Muslim entrepreneurs and businessmen to forge political, social and economic alliances at domestic, national and international levels. They are also a source for introducing the application of particular interpretations of Islam in their everyday lives as these organisations facilitate a space for asserting their identity as 'pious, successful and good Muslims'.

This thesis also claims that there is an element of Islamic reform in all forms of different Islamic streams or sects. The thesis acknowledges that Muslim individuals or groups in all different streams, do their best to advance their mission, and teachings, using one or another form or expression of Islamic reformism. At the same time, the act of doing charity by Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham is largely influenced by their belief in particular interpretations of reformist Islam. Thus, how and where they spend their charity money is mostly determined by their outlook, worldview and affiliation with a particular stream or group of reformist Muslims. By exhibiting piety and giving public performance of their moral and virtuous lives through doing charity and donations, Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs assert their identities of being 'successful and good Muslims' in public. Public performances of piety and acts of doing charity thus become spaces for them to 'make good and do good' (Osella & Osella 2009) in life and the afterlife.

1.11   Operational definitions of concepts and categories of analysis

In this chapter, I focus on the key terms, concepts, notions and themes that will be discussed throughout whilst also introducing the background of my critical explorations. To begin with, Islamic reformism is, as a concept, open to multiple interpretations and critical redefinition. As a student of Anthropology, I am going to borrow from Asad (1993) the lens to look at "any *particular* religion [Islam in case of this thesis] …. and translate it into heterogeneous elements according to its historical character" (p. 54). I will use a similar understanding while undertaking Anthropology of Islam, and will be

using the same pattern in analysing Islamic reformism. I utilise the concept of Islamic reformism among Birmingham Muslims in this thesis in two, but not mutually exclusive, ways. Firstly, I interpret Islamic reformism as an effort by Muslim individuals, or groups, to renew and revive a Muslim's relationship of living everyday life with practising Islam. The renewal and revival can be aimed at a specific group, sect, community, or locale within which Muslims abide. Secondly, I interpret Islamic reformism as an alternative modernity and worldview where the reinterpretation of Islamic tenets is central in transforming everyday lives. Alternative modernity and worldview in the form of reformist Islam is visible whenever any Muslim group, or community, is exposed to different forms of world orders or, to use the term "modernity", either from within Muslim communities or outside. However, equating Western modernity with Islamic reformism is a problematic notion and a simple equation cannot be drawn between the two (Robinson 2001, 2008). In other words, I view Islamic reformism as a process *and* an effort by like-minded Muslims to align the 'authentic Islamic way' of conducting everyday life with prevailing social, economic and political challenges. These reformist Muslims' main aim is to assert their identities as Muslims whilst gaining the most out of 'prevalent socio-political orders or modernities' they are living with and in due course, redefining/adjusting these socio-political orders and modernities with or without challenging them through their everyday life practices.

The idea of Islamic Reform had been a focus for classical anthropologists like Clifford Geerts (1968) and Ernest Gellner (1969, 1981) and, also, more recently it has been a focus in the works of Dale F. Eickelman (2000, 2004), Frances Robinson (2013) and some recent anthropological works like that of Benjamin, F. Soares (2005, 2013), Magnus Marsden (2005, 2009, 2013) and Filippo Osella (2009, 2013). Robinson (2013), in *Islamic Reform and Modernities in South Asia*, elaborates on the concept of Islamic reformism and religious renewal for Muslim societies in the eighteenth century South Asian context. The central premise of Robinson's work is the realisation by these reformist Muslims of their personal accountability before God and the responsibility of their own actions in this world. Thus, in the South Asian context, Islamic reform manifests itself by challenging the authority of the past and by producing new forms of religious authority which reinterpret Islam in innovative ways. Various reformist groups used print media and, as a result, reformist interpretations became accessible to a wider audience. Such reforms by South Asian Muslims contributed to an emphasis on human will where both Muslim men and women acquired Islamic knowledge to lead their lives in a political

context where Muslims were no longer in power after Britain colonised India. The Muslim reformers were popular and motivational for the educated and middle class groups who were influenced by these reformist ideas on how to transform their lives and were galvanised to consider themselves responsible for their actions and outcomes. The emphasis on basic texts, the Quran and Hadith, by the various reformists undermined local customs and promoted rational and standard versions of perceptions and behaviours for Muslims about conducting everyday life. However, it is important to note that Hindu and Sufi mystic elements of everyday Muslim life were replaced by Sharia based interpretations. At the same time, the reformist Muslims of South Asia presented one strand of Islamic modernity and though many Hindu and Sufi mystic elements did survive in other traditions, they were deprioritised as a result of this standardisation.

I utilise the concept of Islamic reformism in a broadly similar way to Robinson (2013). However, Robinson's interpretation of Islamic reformism is limited by its focus on 'educated, urban and middle class Muslims' and changes in their religious attitudes only. In contrast, this thesis emphasises that the phenomenon of Islamic reformism has widespread approval and presence in the everyday life practices of all Muslim individuals and groups in Birmingham including affluent Muslims, businessmen and entrepreneurs, *and* working class groups, manual labourers, so-called *illiterate* Muslims and also middle class Muslim groups. At the same time, this thesis addresses the impact, relationship and influences of Islamic reformism beyond just religious implications as I examine the relationship of reformist Islam and adherence to a particular interpretation of Islam by a Muslim with economic practices, political aspirations, transnational links, piety and charity manifestations and the everyday life practices of Birmingham Muslims. By doing so, the thesis examines the phenomenon of Islamic reformism via a holistic approach and moves beyond the narrower idea of Islamic reformism which has tended to limit its application to the religious practices only and to the attendant changes within religious practices over time by and within Muslim middle classes. Marsden (2012) while reviewing the work of Rudnyckyj (2010) maintains that ethnographic and anthropological literature on Islamic reform, piety and newer forms of engagements with neoliberal economies in Muslims societies has the tendency to marginalise the segments of Muslim societies who are not on the vanguard of such transformations and focuses mainly on the adherents and proponents of such transformations. In this sense, this thesis emphasises *Barelvi* Muslims' reformist efforts in Birmingham as an attempt to fill the gap as mentioned by Marsden; considering that classical anthropological literature and even

some recent one on Islamic reform and piety tend to limit the phenomenon of Islamic reform, expressions of piety and political mobilisation of masses by Islamists in Muslim societies to non-*Barelvi* sections of Muslim societies.

Broadly speaking, when it comes to how to observe and understand the process of Islamic reformism in Birmingham, this thesis is going to reference the reformist efforts of two Muslim groups/streams/sects; Salafis and Barelvis. I will focus on these two streams of reformist Muslims in relation to their presence, both demographically and religiously, their reformist activity and my accessibility towards the Muslims individuals related to these two streams. The majority of Birmingham Muslims are adherent to the *Barelvi* or *Salafi* stream of practicing Islam in everyday life. However, the terms *Salafi* and *Barelvi* also need careful consideration and revision in anthropological discussions.

The word *Salafi* literally means an individual who follows the ways of forefathers or the teachings of founding fathers. *Salafis* are puritanical Sunni Muslims who believe in the renewal of the true practices of Islam in the everyday lives of Muslims all over the world by taking inspirations from early Muslims (Eickelman and Piscatori 1996). They have a literalist idea of practising Islam as it is explained in the Quran and Hadith (sayings and practices of Prophet Muhammad) and they reject any interpretation of the practice of Islam which is based on, or related to, the cultural practices of Muslims in any part of the world. They also believe in a standardised and unilateral interpretation of Islamic tenets which they see as applicable for all Muslims across the world. *Salafis* are globalist in terms of their introduction and identity as a Muslim group and in various parts of South Asia are commonly known as *Ahl-e Hadith*. However, there are some differences between *Salafis* and *Ahl-e Hadith* in terms of outlook, agendas and worldview. Both believe in advancing the same message and interpretation of Islam. But the term *Ahl-e Hadith* was coined during the colonial period of late nineteenth and early twentieth century British India and *Ahl-e Hadith* in South Asia are more focused on the organisation and administration of their group on the local and national levels, particularly in their focus on creating adherence to a puritanical version of practicing Islam in everyday life. However, younger generations of *Ahl-e Hadith* in South Asia and in Birmingham often fashionably introduce themselves as *Salafi*. Most young *Ahl-e Hadith* preachers in South Asia write the term *Salafi* alongside their names as their introduction. *Ahl-e Hadith* are commonly known as Wahhabis in South Asia. *Ahl-e Hadith* are centred at Green Lane

Mosque in Birmingham and are connected with the *Ahl-e Hadith* or *Wahabi* groups in South Asia and/or the Middle East.

Ahl-e Hadith came at the forefront of Islamic public sphere in British India as a faith and revival movement with the objective to enhance the relevance of Islam in daily life (Reetz 2006). During and after European colonization in South Asia, a wave of revivalism, reformism and modernity is visible in most Muslim societies, especially during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The first widespread, and recognised, reformist movement in the modern era was known as the *Salafi* or *Wahhabi* movement and it is usually associated with the work of Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab (1703-92) on the Arab peninsula (Zakia 2004). This reformist trend was ideological as well as political in its nature. Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab not only protested against the mystical and superstitious thoughts among Muslims but also challenged the authority of the Ottoman Empire over Arabia (that later appeared on the world map as Saudi Arabia). The *Wahhabi* movement labelled other Muslims as 'polytheists' due to their 'corrupt practices' and their inclination towards Sufi Islam (Fattah 2003). This reformist current also influenced the Muslim intellectuals of Iraq, Syria, Egypt and South Asia (British India mainly) during the nineteenth century. Starting after 1920s, *Ahl-e Hadith* in Pakistan re-established and strengthened links with *Salafis* in Saudi Arabia after 1970s mainly due to personal connections (Reetz 2006). Present day *Ahl-e Hadith* or *Wahhabis* in South Asia are famously known for their opposition to visiting shrines of Muslim saints, seeking help from shrines or from live or dead saints for everyday life matters, saint worship in any form, music and other expression of art like paintings, following the four major law schools within Sunni Muslims, celebrating the birth of Prophet Muhammad and opposition to any form of 'innovation' within the Islamic practices (Searle-Chatterjee 1994). On the contrary, *Ahl-e Hadith* or *Wahhabis* do limit the source of authority within Islam to the Quran and Hadith (saying of Prophet Muhammad) only and seek a puritanical and literalist version of everyday life practices of Muslims.

These categories of *Salafi, Wahhabi, Ahl-e Hadith* are overlapping and share a great degree of similarity in most instances of Islamic practices in everyday life for the Muslims who adhere to reformist Islam. However, there are some differences with regards their outlook and world views. The major difference is that *Ahl-e Hadith* in South Asia are focussed, as a religious and political group of reformist Muslims, on their local, regional or national level struggles in advancing their mission of Islam and to challenge other

6

interpretations of practising Islam presented by other Muslim groups whom they face in their daily lives and live side by side with them, particularly in countries like Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. *Ahl-e Hadith* trace out their religious genealogy with the works of reformist Muslims of South Asian origin like that of Shah Waliullah (1703-1762), Siddiq Hasan Khan (1805-1902), Sanaullah Amritsari (1868-1948) and Dawud Ghaznawi (1895-1963) (Reetz 2006) unlike Salafi in Middle East who trace out their religious genealogy with the works of Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab. There is also a transnational aspect to the *Ahl-e Hadith* movement in that they link themselves with the imam of the Holy Mosque in Mecca, Saudi Arabia with respect to religious interpretation of Islam for everyday life matters. Unlike *Salafis*, *Ahl-e Hadith* do not have any global ambitions to change the ways of Muslims and standardise their everyday life practices but they are more concerned with the local and national level situations, mainly in South Asia, that they may come across and which they have to respond to while conducting their everyday lives.

I am using the term *Salafi* as a generic term for *Ahl-e Hadith*, *Wahhabi* or other groups of Muslims with a belief and practice of puritanical and literalists interpretation of practicing Islam in everyday life in Birmingham; firstly, because most of my research participants in Birmingham, adhering to this stream of reformist Muslims, introduce themselves as *Salafi*s. Secondly, it would be factually incorrect for Somali, Yemeni or Arabs, or other non-South Asian Muslims, who identify themselves as *Salafis*, to be bracketed as *Ahl-e Hadith* or *Wahhabi*, a name specific to a literalist and puritanical stream of Muslims with South Asian backgrounds and mainly of Pakistani background when it comes to numbers in Birmingham. *Salafi* Muslims oppose the idea of intercession between an ordinary Muslim and his/her access to spiritual achievement, religious knowledge and access to blessing by Allah through holy men or shrines. *Salafis* believe that a direct contact with Allah and access to Islamic knowledge and scholarship for everyday life guidance is possible for an ordinary Muslim if he or she follows the Quran and Hadith. At a personal level, *Salafis* in Birmingham are also famous for a life of simplicity which does not involve spending on and celebrating various feasts associated with holy men and spending on family functions on the occasion of marriage, death or birth. The most striking and observable difference between *Salafis* and other streams of reformist Muslims is that of a little bit different bodily movements and positions while praying five times a day.

For the convenience of analysis, I am going to consider *Deobandis*, a stream of reformist Sunni Muslims, as a reformist Muslims' group similar to that of *Salafis* with respect to their attitude towards shrines and saint worship. However, there are sharp differences between *Deobandis* and *Salafis* with respect to origin and continuity. *Deobandis* are an orthodox Sunni Muslim sect/stream of reformist Muslims which originated from the town of Deoband in Uttar Pradesh, North India during early nineteenth century in British India soon after India was fully colonised by the British. It started as a revivalist movement to bring religion back into everyday life after the decline of Mughal Empire when Muslims lost political power and government in most parts of South Asia. Although there is a major difference between *Deobandis* and *Salafis* regarding the idea of Taqlid (following one of the four law schools of jurisprudence within Sunni Islam famously known as Hanafi, Shafi'i, Maliki and Hanbali) whereby *Salafis* do not subscribe to the authority of any law school of orthodox Sunni Islam and pertain to the Quran and Hadith as final verdict for matters and situations related to everyday life. *Deobandis* strongly follow the Hanafi law school within orthodox Sunni jurisprudence. But other than that, both *Salafis* and *Deobandis* share similar puritanical beliefs when it comes to eliminating cultural and local customs and rituals related to the religious practices. In Birmingham, *Deobandis* are also labelled as *Wahhabis* by all non-*Salafi* groups and particularly by *Barelvis* in Birmingham. In the context of Birmingham Muslims, *Barelvis* and *Salafis* constitute majority and this thesis mainly focus on these two streams more than *Deobandis* as most of my research participants were follower of the *Barelvi* or *Salafi* stream.

The other stream of reformist Muslims I will discuss throughout this thesis are the *Barelvis*. *Barelvis* are a sect of Sunni-Muslims originating from a small town, Ray Baraili, Uttar Pradesh, India during nineteenth century British India. *Barelvi* Muslims' practices of Islam mostly revolve around saints and shrines, keeping regional and cultural expressions of everyday life intact while they perform religious rituals. The *Barelvi* stream of practicing Islam involves practices of visiting shrines and tombs of holy men with religious devotion. These holy men, dead or alive, are called pir and considered as centres of spiritual guidance and role models for living an Islamic way of life. For Metcalf (1982), *Barelvis* as a reformist movement, did not appear out of a desire to standardise religious practices of Muslims, but as a reaction and opposition to the other Muslim reformist movements of the nineteenth century India; something this thesis contests and maintains that *Barelvis* are also at the forefronts of the process and efforts of Islamic reformism in Birmingham. The practising of Islam in everyday life by *Barelvis* is

sometimes equated with that of Islamic Sufism or popular/cultural form of South Asian Islam. The central difference between *Barelvis* and other reformist Muslims groups is the status and position of Prophet Muhammad as a person. *Barelvis* believe that the Prophet Muhammad possesses knowledge of the unknown and has knowledge about events and things that ordinary people cannot know with their human senses. Unlike *Salafis*, *Barelvis* view the Prophet Muhammad not only as a person or a human, but also as *nur,* the light of Allah.

With respect to my research participants in Birmingham, the majority adhere to the *Barelvi* stream of reformist Muslims, and I will use the category of *Barelvi* for a variety of groups within *Barelvis*. It would be incorrect to view all *Barelvis* reformist groups as part of a monolithic category. Just like there is a variety of groups within *Salafis* Muslim reformists, there is a variety of various groups among *Barelvis*. *Barelvis* are divided into various groups in Birmingham and each one is led by a different *pir* or shrine or other type of organisation (These sub-groups within *Barelvis* and *Salafis* is something that I will be writing in details in chapter two of this thesis). *Barelvis* use the generic term *Wahhabi* or more recently, *Salafi*, for all streams of Muslims who do not believe in the intercessionary powers of *pirs*, saints and who consider visiting shrines as innovation to Islamic practices, i.e. *Bid'a*. For *Barelvis*, *Deobandis* also constitute as *Wahhabis* along with *Ahl-e Hadith* with respect to their belief about *pirs* and shrines. Although *Barelvis* are visible in urban centres in various parts of South Asia, their backbone are the networks of shrines and linked *madrassas* which are tied with large landholdings and rural life (Reetz 2006).

Using the broader categories of *Salafis* and *Barelvis* to understand and problematise the notions of Islamic reformism, I argue that there is an element of Islamic reforms in all forms of different Islamic streams or sects and *Barelvis* are no exception to it. Classical anthropology of Islam had the tendency to portray the peasantry, the illiterate, the rural and, in the South Asian context *Barelvi* groups and streams of Islam, as recipient of or reactionary to the idea and practice of Islamic reform (Gellner 1969, Metcalf 1982). This thesis argues that considering *Barelvis* at the borderline, or at the margins of, Islamic reformism is an inadequate, misleading and incomplete analysis. This thesis argues in contrast that *Barelvis* play a role in shaping and influencing the idea of Islamic reformism in comparable and equal ways to the various *Salafi* groups. Moreover, in the context of presenting and asserting multiple interpretations of being true Muslims in Birmingham,

Barelvis are at the forefront of the reformist Islamic streams. As Metcalf (1982) would put it, *Barelvis* have emerged in reaction to Islamic reformism of *Deobandis* and *Ahl-e Hadith* in late nineteenth century British India. But a primary characteristic of today's *Barelvi* Islamic reformism is that of a vital stakeholder in the nuanced creation of Islamic reformism whilst also struggling to occupy the driving seat of the band wagon of reformist Muslims; the latter is something which I explain in details in chapter two.

Moreover, this thesis will not only explore how various streams of Islamic reformism present contesting interpretations of being a good Muslim in Birmingham; it will also analyse the broader relationship between various interpretations of reformist Islam and economic practices, ideals of piety and charity and donation related practices of Birmingham Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs. Thus, it is important that Islamic reformism, moral economic practices, piety and charity are investigated via a careful anthropological consideration by looking into their interrelationships as concepts and everyday life practices of Birmingham Muslims.

1.12   Islamic Reformism: Past and Present

Systematic efforts have been made by individuals as well as various groups in Muslim societies to introduce an idea of the relationship, and influence, of Islamic reform on the social order. Various groups in Muslim societies employ different techniques to get their share in the process of defining of what is it to be a true Muslim, to gain social recognition, to influence political power and to maximise chances of upward social mobility for the followers and believers of their particular reformist streams. Some reformist Muslim individuals and groups innovatively define 'Islamic reformism' to present a standardised way of practicing Islam. Others, define 'Islamic reformism' in response to a situation where they feel their identity of being Muslim is threatened by a new version of modernity introduced by any group of Muslims from within or by non-Muslims from outside. At the same time, the process of defining Islam becomes the basis for the socio-economic expansions of certain Muslim individuals or groups and also it serves as an explanation for the justification of everyday life practices as truly Islamic. Although the meanings of the term Islamic reform has always been contested (Reetz 2006), with the advent of western modernity during colonisation, processes of Islamic reformism have also been advanced. Irfan Ahmad (2009) explains how the political language of twentieth century

modernist and reformist Islam was introduced by Maududi[1] (1903-1979) in British India during the early twentieth century, and afterwards in Pakistan and Bangladesh, in order to construct the idea of n Islamic state as a response to the growing influence of the colonial state in India. As soon as Maududi realised the power of the state after the first election in India in 1937, he re-interpreted the Quran and basic concepts of Islam in a form which provided an idea of an alternative state [Islamic state] with which to confront the colonial state. Maududi not only rejected the religious interpretation of the Quran by all of his contemporary religious scholars, he also advocated his understandings about the interpretation of Quran as the 'real, true and authentic'. He discovered the influence, depth and 'extraordinary capacity' of modern colonial state to impact on the individual and collective lives of people and their everyday practices, which made him view the state as the best tool of Islamisation. In the absence of Muslim rulers defining public sphere, reformist Islam created its own public discourse based on the Quran and Hadith (Reetz 2006) as an effort to provide alternative system of institutions for public guidance (Freitag 1988). Whilst acknowledging this specific couching of Islamic reformism in political language, Islamic reformism cannot be reduced to a single definition that can be applicable to all reformist efforts in Muslims history. Each stream of Islamic reformism in the modern history of Muslim societies can be viewed as an attempt to introduce Islam as a system, a movement and a code of life that provides a comprehensive outline for public and private spheres of everyday life.

The origin of the idea of Islamic reformism can be traced at different points in the history of Muslim societies. There were two major reformist trends during the first millennium of Islamic expansion and civilization; the Mu'tazillites and the Sufi version of Islam (Choueiri 1990). While the former advocated a rational approach in jurisprudence under the influence of Hellenistic philosophy within Muslim civilisation, the later expressed a popular discontent and presented a folk version of Islam in response to the growing influence of codified version of 'official Islam' under the Mamluks, Ottomans, Safavids or Mughal Empires in the Muslim world.

Popular reformist response to colonisation was given by modernist Muslims on religious as well as political grounds. People like Jamal-al-Din Afghani (1838-1897), Muhammad

---

[1] Syed Abul Ala Maududi (1903-1979) was a twentieth century Muslim reformist who founded his party Jamaat-i-Islami in British India. He later moved to Pakistan after partition. Maududi published a considerable amount of material which introduced the idea of Islam as 'code of life' and about how Muslims should live their social and political lives.

Abduh (1849-1905), Rashid Rada (1865-1935), Hasan-al-Banna (1906-1949), Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) and Abul Ala Maududi (1903-1979) presented a modernist interpretation of Islam as system and 'code of life' in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The modernist Muslims focussed on the idea of the Islamisation of nation-state as a major objective for the Muslim society's reformation. A number of Islamist organisations who started their work with the objective to attain state power in the twentieth century were highly influenced by the thoughts of these modernist Muslim reformists like the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the Jamaat-i-Islami in Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. At the same time, secular notions of Islamic reformism can also be seen at that time. The secular Muslim reformists presented the 'enlightened' version of Islamic reformism by establishing educational institutions on the patterns of European universities. Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) in British India presented the scientific and rationalised worldview of Islam to reconcile it with the modern world (Habib 2000).

Reformist Muslims usually present the idea of God as "puritanical, unitarian, individualist, scripturalist ideal of a single deity, which has enclosed its message in a definitive revelation available to all who care to read it" (Gellner 1981 pp.159). Gellner argues that such an explanation of God limits the role of clergy and opposes the idea of following Islam through a particular caste or priesthood. Hence, the audience of reformist Muslims become the 'literate class of scribes' who represent themselves as guardians and exegetes. In relation to the everyday lived experience of people and their response to Islamic reformism, Gellner claims that people do not choose between the traditional and reformist version of Islam via 'idiosyncratic caprice', but rather via the fulfilment of different social needs and priorities that have a significant influence over their choices. Reformism is not a question of 'either this or that' for people as it remains in a peaceful co-existence with traditionalism whilst also sometimes being in conflict with it. This always depends on how different groups which stand to profit from a particular interpretation of Islam or the people who have their positions and life-style ratified by that interpretation come into a conflict with each other. For Gellner, the frequency of the 'pendulum' swinging between urban literate and rural traditional versions of Islam is important in order to assess the degree to which the nature and scope of reformation and transformation that a Muslim society can change.

Conditions of industrial modernity or urbanisation did not necessarily lead to fewer reformists' uniform or globalised religious form of Islam than they favoured the process

of rationalisation (Green 2011). Customary practices underwent a resurgence in Bombay during (1840-1915) because of the resonance between the working conditions of industrial capitalism, the broken social order and the uprooted cultural situation of labourers from their ancestral background. The concept of one Allah at a distance in the sky as presented by reformists was a lonely one and shrines of Sufi saints near factories and mills or charismatic Sufis were closer to labourers and industry workers than an absent God. Unlike Gellner's puritanical, unitarian and scripturalist God gaining more prominence in favourable urban condition for reformist Muslims, *Bombay Islam* of Green, shows that the reformist Muslim groups in Bombay (1840-1915) could not present a unified version of Islam which was acceptable to all Muslims from various ethnicities and religious backgrounds. Instead it created more pluralisation in a cosmopolitan society on the basis of the streams of Islam they believed in, and reformist Muslim groups could only attract a small minority of Muslims in Bombay. Similar argument has been put forward by Rytter (2014) that transnational Sufism in Denmark reshapes kinship patterns and provides space for Pakistani migrants families to seek their social well-being through receiving charismatic counselling; something that reflects *Barelvi*/Sufi reformist interpretation of Islam relevant in contemporary times. Similarly, Reetz (2006) maintains that emergence of Islamic public sphere in British India cannot only be confined to reformist Islam, but 'Sufi movements and orally transmitted Islamic practices' also shaped its manifestations wherever possible (p.23). Both streams cannot be treated as mutually exclusive in terms of their contribution in the construction of an Islamic public sphere.

Green (2011), however, like Metcalf (1982) associates the phenomenon of Islamic reformism in Bombay (1840-1915) as having more influence on the Muslim middle classes than other groups. Again, this locates Islamic reformism as a middle class Muslim's prerogative where Green equates reformist Muslims, and their efforts, to their Christian counterparts working in Bombay during the colonial period. However, Islam in the broader South Asian context had already shown versions of reformism amongst all streams of Islam prior to colonisation. Hence, linking reformist Islam with colonial modernity and industrial environment does not entail a complete history of Islamic reformism in South Asia. Werbner (2013) in her work 'Reform Sufism in South Asia' presents the case of Islamic reformism within Sufi orders and Sufi saints and how it has redefined the practices and nature of relationship between saint and a disciple or follower. Werbner argues that the process of reform Sufism and induction of Sharia as compatible

with mystical tradition of Sufism was affirmed by the sixteenth century reformist Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi in Mughal India, who was a follower of the Naqashbandiyya Sufi order.

The contestation between reformism and traditionalism cannot be treated as separate categories within a Muslim society as Gellner (1982) and Geertz (1968) propose. There is no sharp dichotomy that may exist between tradition and modernity (Eickelman and Piscatori 1996). Soares (2005) challenges the dichotomous or binary way of studying Islam by delineating its practices into orthodox and unorthodox categories. Soares maintain that such categorisation entails the vague and, to an extent, positivist assumption that with the advent of further modernisation in Muslim societies, the 'unorthodox, traditional, popular and local' practices of Islam will eventually be replaced by 'orthodox, reformist and official' practices which in itself is subject to problematisation within the discourse of the anthropology of Islam. In contrast, Soares builds on Asad's (1986) notion of understanding Islam as a 'discursive tradition'. Furthermore, Marsden (2009), in his anthropological work, explores travelling among the Chitralis youth in Pakistan and demonstrates that heterogeneity and belief in various streams of reformist Islam within the Chitrali society in Northern Pakistan is not a problem for a coherent Muslim life. Whilst people negotiate the complexities of 'conducting life' in diverse ways, and this involves negotiating both modernity and tradition, they challenge but also reaffirm both the older and newer influences on their lives. Marsden maintains that people create meanings for their lives from the 'reformist' as well as 'traditionalist' discourses which are prevalent at any particular time in any Muslim society. Simpson's (2013) work 'The Changing Perspective of Three Muslim Men on the Question of Saint Worship over 10-Year Period in Gujarat, Western India' presents an interesting debate surrounding the issues of fixing Islamic reformism within any particular stream of practising Islam and the streams of Sufism or saint worship lacking the reformist trends. Simpson questions the use of terminologies like *Barelvi* or *Deobandi* and their association with certain fixed ways of practising Islam in everyday life. He takes the examples of three men originating from Muslim families where saint worship is practised and then changes in their life events influence their perceptions about the practice of saint worship. For Simpson, whilst these men confront economic and political situations and other important life events or specific challenges, they are 'neither saint worshipper nor non-saint worshipper in a straight forward sense'.

Similar arguments have been made by Osella & Osella (2008) about a reformist Muslim family in Kerala, South India where celebrating a birthday is considered un-Islamic. Here, women bring a cake and cut it for children without singing a birthday song in order to make sense of their religious practices along with experiencing the modernity they are exposed to on a daily basis. The reformist Muslims demonstrate an agility when negotiating the reinterpretations of the ideals of their organisation, or leader, as they shuttle between reorienting concepts of being a 'true Muslim' and staying relevant with the social currents in any diverse Muslim society. Ahmed (2013) and Shehabuddin (2013) in their separate works comment on this fluid reinterpretive capacity of the Jamaat-i-Islami in India and Bangladesh respectively as they explore the differences and changes that an early Islamist like Maududi was a proponent of. Maududi was a proponent of the idea of gender segregation and exclusion of women from public sphere. At the same time, Maududi proposed that women should disobey their men if they deviate from Islamic ways. Ahmed argues that a total dismissal of Islamic feminism would be a faulty premise as an egalitarian reading of the Quran is possible. Ahmed presents the case of Jamaat-i-Islami, India and how it has deviated from the basic neopatriarchal postulates of Maududi over the period of time as a result of internal critique from its members and pressure from other Islamists. The Jamaat-i-Islami's discourse on the limited mobility of women, political leadership of women and the idea of women being the 'inferior sex' has been challenged and has also changed.

Whilst the origin, context, message and implication of Islamic reformism has been debated in relation to wider Muslim societies, proponents and opponents, the relationship between Islamic reformism, identity and identity politics in everyday life is in need of more anthropological attention. Alam (2013) in 'The Enemy Within: Madarasa and Muslim Identity in North India' argues that for right wing Hindu groups, the process of 'othering' primarily constitutes Muslims, but that within Islamic Madarasa, 'othering' takes a different form. For teachers and students of Madarasa, the other constitutes the Muslims who follow different *Maslik* (religious sect). Alam states that the idea that being an 'Indian Muslim' constitutes a monolithic identity is a surface level understanding of Muslim identity in India. For Muslim students in a madrasa, the way a Muslim practises Islam defines his identity of being a true Muslim or not. For Alam, the identity politics within different Muslim *Masliks* is going to be the determining factor of defining themselves in relation to other Muslims following different reformist interpretations of Islam. The process of 'othering' among various Muslim streams became more visible

through reformist and revivalist interpretations of Islam during the early twentieth century and reflected itself in various educational, revivalist and political movements led by various factions of reformist Muslims at the Islamic public sphere of British India (Reetz 2006). Huq (2013) in 'Reading the Quran in Bangladesh: The Politics of 'Belief' among Islamist Women' discusses the interpretations of certain Quranic verses among Islamist women's 'study circles', its possible impacts on their personal lives and their understanding about wider politics and social system. The Quranic 'study circles' arranged by Islamist women for their sympathizers or low rank workers are generally selective in term of discussing the verses of Quran that help Islamists to convey the message of who is a 'true Muslim' and who is not. Huq argues that through imparting exegesis of the Quran written by the famous reformist Islamist scholar Maulana Abul Ala Maududi, the Islamist women in Bangladesh stress the idea of 'hypocrisy' and redefine it as practising Islam for self and personal salvation only and not for the betterment of wider public sphere. Through reading the Quran and its exegesis, Islamist women prepare its sympathizers and workers to challenge 'Western modernity, Hinduised customs and un-Islamic socio-political structures of governance' (reference?) by presenting themselves as well informed and well equipped individuals who are ready to face this challenge.

Another implication of Islamic reformism on Muslim groups and its dimension in recent times is the focus of reformist Muslims on identity politics of Muslims. The identity, and identity politics, of reformist Muslims reflects itself in the emergence of organisations providing social services to Muslim communities in the eve of any natural or human made disaster. The provision of social services through humanitarian and charity organisation becomes another venue for reformist Muslims to assert their identities as that of true Muslims and propagate their mission. Though the central argument of this thesis is that the decision of whom and where to give charity as well as direction and nature of doing charity among Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham is influenced by their belief in interpretation of Islam presented by reformist Muslim groups; I will discuss in detail the role of Muslim charity organisation and their relationship with reformist Muslims with donors in chapter 5 and 6 of this thesis. Jasani (2013) in 'Violence, Reconstruction and Islamic Reform' elaborates on the notions of Islamic reformism and its vitality in the post-conflict lives of riot affected Muslims in Gujarat, India. After anti-Muslim riots in Gujarat in 2002, people were displaced and were relocated in camps at the beginning and then were shifted into newly built houses constructed by reformist Muslim organisations. Jasani argues that people, particularly women in camps and in

newly built colonies of Muslims, were reorienting themselves in the post-violence environment vis-à-vis reformist Muslim organisations and they were concurrently reorienting their understanding about practising Islam in everyday lives. The rise in the popularity of reformist Muslim organisations has a lot to do with the services provided at a community level, particularly building houses. At the same time, people engaged with these new ways of practising Islam in their everyday lives by constructing varied meanings and ambiguous interpretations and also as a catharsis and as a daily activity to reconcile with the loss and grief they had experienced during riots. Reformist Muslims remained successful in attracting people when dealing with post riots scenarios for a variety of reasons, on both the local and the global levels, and their role in post-violence development is one of the success story among various Muslim groups. At the same time, Muslim identity is not merely a product of a Muslim's relationship with Islam but multifaceted. Marsden (2008) traces out the composition of Muslim identity in the context of transregional and local understanding of Chitrali rural Muslims in Northern Pakistan. For Chitrali Muslims, men from Afghanistan and Tajikistan in their villages are not merely the 'rootless migrants or refugees' but also they are relatives, friends and people sharing similar history of continuity of religious knowledge. Marsden challenges the notions of 'centrality of globalizing modernity' as constitutive element of Muslim identity. Marsden argues that Muslim cosmopolitanism has its roots and continuation in premodern and preglobalized networks of labour, travelling, form of religious knowledge and historical ties that are transregional.

The other important area where reformism strives for the introduction and creation of new meanings and interpretations is the challenge of western meta-narratives like democracy, human rights, the secular image of plural states and other attendant themes of liberal ideologies. The whole debate of Post-Islamism revolves around this new language that tries to interpret Islam on the grounds which are compatible with the western jargons of democracy, progress and human rights along with current environmental and feminist debates (Bayat 1996, Stacher 2002, Schwarte 2003, Dagi 2004, Kamla et. al 2006). The academic and theoretical significance of Islamic reformism in social sciences currently revolves around the question whether it is a social movement that is highly embedded in any Muslim society or a political action for a particular political agenda by any interest group. Bayat (2007) explores this question via a cross cultural comparison of late twentieth century Iran and Egypt. He presents the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran has happened without the presence of any organised social movement whilst it could not gain

any political advantage in Egypt despite a strong and consistent social movement in support of Islamic revolution. The writer also distinguishes between the Islamist and Post-Islamist trends in Islamic reformism, particularly in the Middle East. Islamic reformism in the Post-Islamist era confronts questions of global significance like democracies, human rights and a sovereign state. Hence, reformist Muslims in the twenty first century focus on developing an understanding of Muslims which is about projecting an idea of 'making Islam democratic' and thus presenting an idea acceptable to global economies, particularly in the West.

The idea of modernisation in reformist Muslims' discourses takes a different shape. It is the interface of practising written and codified Islam in everyday life while pursuing and achieving all possible opportunities and benefits that global capitalist economy may offer them. However, the particular notion of successful life offered by reformist Muslims contradicts two important realities in the ongoing lives of Muslims. Firstly, it discards the tradition based customary world view which attracts the majority of rural, illiterate, poor and peasant population that practise oral and folk version of Islam in general. Because following traditional cultural values and adhering to traditional beliefs dominates 'high ambitions and commercial ethics to social life' by creating a type of stagnation that does not favour the idea of reformism. Secondly, the 'westernisation' of behaviours in individual and social life is condemned by reformist Muslims. Alternatively they provide a new, unique and 'modern' identity of Muslims that represents virtuous practices in life, keeping afterlife in mind and confronts all challenges offered by global capitalism as well as industrial and scientific revolution.

When it comes to see the wider impacts of Islamic reformism on the everyday life and social and economic practices of Muslims, emerging ideas about the concepts of leadership and success, both in life and afterlife, among businessmen and entrepreneur Muslims and among Muslim middle-classes are becoming part and parcel of the popular discourses of reformist Muslims. Osella and Osella (2013) in their work 'Islamism and Social Reform in Kerala, South India' deconstruct the dichotomous and binary production of anthropological discourses around 'Sufi or traditional Islam vis-a-vis reformist Islam' as an academic lens to delineate over the history, development and debate surrounding contemporary reformist movement in Muslim world in general and in Kerala in particular. Osella & Osella argue that contradictions and contestations exist even within the reformists as well as traditionalist, thus they keep in mind the wider local and global

cultural contexts within which Kerala Muslims live. An interesting 'negotiated compromise' in a reformist Muslim family as Osellas observed, was buying a birthday cake for the children by women in the absence of men and eating it but not singing a birthday song. *Wahhabi* reformists in Kerala acknowledge their 'normative differences' with that of *Salafis* in Saudi Arabia and Gulf with regards issues related to social arrangements as they stress the local roots of their reformist movement. Osella & Osella conclude that a reformist minority within any Muslim society mostly remains successful in changing thought patterns and practices amongst the majority.

Osella (2009) in his work 'Muslim Entrepreneurs in Public Life between India and Gulf: Making Good and Doing Good' maintains that Muslim entrepreneurs in Kerala, India are a dedicated group aimed at community upliftment and who establish networks of educational institutes, social welfare related services and introduce Muslim modernity comparable to the standards of Gulf. While doing so, Islamic reformism becomes the premise or space where Muslim entrepreneurs strive to live moral lives and propagate their ideas and actions. Muslim entrepreneurs advance their businesses and profits along with community advancement by initiating projects like building colleges or universities and the prosperity of Muslims in Gulf becomes an 'ideal type' for them. In the struggle to create Islamic modernity, Muslim community leaders try to create a balance in achieving an Islamic way, modern education and discipline and developing an identity of a Muslim that helps them create work ethics compatible to modern global capitalism. 'When successful Muslims propose solutions for the common good, education becomes the core focus of charitable and activist energy' (Osella and Osella, p. 214).

Turner (1974) draws on Weber's thesis of political and economic development culminating as capitalist economy in Western Europe and delineates on the reasons for the lack of development of asceticism which is essential for capitalism in the Muslim Middle East or elsewhere. For Turner (1974), modern Islamic reformism was an 'apologetic response to often military of cultural threat; and it was an attempt to answer a feeling of inferiority and frustration by reformist Muslims under the western colonialism' (p. 240). He concludes that the ideas like hard work and efficiency are imported by Muslim reformers who were educated under western intellectual tradition. Turner, however, could not envisage that reformist Muslims like Jamal-al-Din Afghani (1838-1897) and Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) were more concerned with the political and cultural revival of Muslims under colonialism and that they were not trying to come

up with a theory of how to create the idea of Islamic Protestantism for the economic salvation of Muslim societies. The economic practices of Muslims in the Middle East today, particularly in the Gulf but also elsewhere, demonstrate that Muslim reformists, businessmen and entrepreneurs do not have to wait for the emergence of 'Islamic economic system', if there is any such thing, in order to be productive member and beneficiaries of global capitalist economy. Rather they are eager to sit in the driving seat of the vehicle of Western capitalism and neoliberalism by gearing it up with their own lubricant of 'moral economies'.

1.13   Moral Economies as Reformist Agenda

As it has been explained earlier, the processes of Islamic reformism are better understood if these are viewed holistically via a close observation of their relationships, interactions and impacts on wider social and economic aspects of any Muslim society and how this shapes and reorients everyday life practices of its adherents, proponents and opponents. However, in Anthropology, as well as in other social sciences, the scope of Islamic reformism has been reduced to 'religious revivalism' for most of the times. Metcalf (1982) has, to a degree, identified how economic practices and social context has been affected, and has been affecting, the emergence and efforts of Islamic reformism. According to Metcalf, viewing Arya Samaj (a Hindu reformist movement) as a 'movement of Hindu trading class whose economic and political position was newly flourishing' and the *Deoband* movement as a product of 'declining, embattled landed and service elite' would be a misleading dichotomy. 'The Deoband ideology offered not only an alternate source for gratification for those who turned away from a world in decline, but also the basis of an active political and economic life for those involved in it' (Metcalf 1982, pp. 257-258). Islamic reformisms cannot be understood in terms of its implications on the wider spectrum of lives of Muslims who are proponents of any of its streams until its relationship with the economic practices of those groups of Muslims is understood.

Capitalism as an economic and a social system has been debated by Muslim scholars and reformists since the nineteenth century. A central theme of these debates has been the rejection of the capitalistic economy or its modification in order to make it compatible with a morality based on how Islamic economies should have been (Shari'ati 1986). Muslim reformists analysed capitalism via a dichotomy of good and bad, evil (or sinful) and virtuous and thus classified it into categories by incorporating their own interpretations as Muslim reformists. A focus on devising a distinct and unique economic

system for Muslims which incorporated the moral aspects of economy has remained the central theme in the writings of reformist Muslims (Tripp 2006). Improvements in the economy as a social institution is perceived as something basic, important and inevitable to initialise and to foster the process of social change and development in Muslim societies (Maududi 1975, 1951/1981). Whilst the Quran states nothing against keeping private property, it does criticise the 'dishonest merchant' but there are no criticisms about traders or trade, and trading is encouraged as a heavenly profession within Islam (Rodinson 1974). Rodinson argues that if Muslim societies could not industrialise for long time, it has nothing to do with Islam per se. But that it has a lot to do with the technological lead of Western countries and less to do with approach of Muslim entrepreneurs during that time.

In Weber's famous thesis, a major theme is religiously and morally motivated work ethics and the relationship between these and the market economy. Turner (1974) analyses Islam and Weber's thesis and develops an argument that the formulation of a law in a conducive context helps to develop the rational principles that were prerequisites for global capitalism. He argues that Weber's thesis anticipates that the instability of Qadi courts, the presence of patrimonial bureaucratic principles and the feudalisation of economies could not facilitate a context in which rational law could encourage capitalistic tendencies among Muslim empires, especially among the Ottomans. But, with the advent of the twenty first century, it can be argued that the colonial experience in Muslim societies might have been instrumental in altering the feudalisation of economy and the patrimoniality of jurisprudential interpretations by incorporating a type of restitutive law. The social change in class structure of Muslim societies during colonialism and the resulting engagement with global capitalism might have helped in creating the favourable conditions for the emergence of entrepreneurship among Muslim societies. Socio-economic developments in both rational laws and in the ideals of Muslims amongst Muslim societies in the twenty first century have been studied by many anthropologists as intellectual transformations largely influenced by reformism and reformists. The proponents of this reformism are the emerging middle classes, urban, professional, and educated business entrepreneurs who have a strong belief in ensuring success in life and the afterlife.

Adas (2006) explains the emergence of entrepreneurial Islam in 1990s in Turkey and how Islamic entrepreneurs are asserting their identity and values through their economic

practices. This is most visible in their strong observance of paternalist control and in the organisation of a strong sense of brotherhood in the firms they operate with other Islamic entrepreneurs in the same market. Turkish Muslim entrepreneurs present themselves as an alternative of economic model when they compare their economic progress with the failure by secular elites in Turkey in achieving the same level of technological and economic advancement like that of Western countries. Muslim entrepreneurs in Turkey claim that the economic development by secular elites strengthened the class divide and created inequalities in Turkey despite their modernisation project. Islamic entrepreneurs criticise traditional Islamic practices of Muslin and Western values alike while advancing their version of modernity, success and practicing Islam in everyday life. Adas mentions that the biggest organisation of Muslim entrepreneurs in Turkey has a motto of 'high technology, high morality' which shows their aspirations towards a morality led modernity. Drawing an analogy between Muslim entrepreneurs and Weber's Calvinists, Adas maintains that both share similarities like that of hard work and earning money as a religious obligation.

Weber's argues that Islam cannot achieve an 'inner worldly' ethics comparable to Protestantism because Islam is a world-rejecting religion which focuses on the salvation of individual by faith. He confined 'inner worldly asceticism' only to Calvinism where the individual is self-evaluating in the light of one's religion. Islamic societies in post-colonial economies have thrived and their transnational mobility has underpinned economic activity. Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham in this thesis, and Muslim entrepreneurs studied anthropologically in other parts of the world, however, show a different side of this story of compatibility of Islamic values with modern global capitalism. The ethnographic analysis in the following chapters challenges Weber's categorisation of Islam lacking inner worldliness but the analysis also explains how the continuous self-evaluation on moral and economic grounds has become normative for Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham.

 'Corporate Islam' can be another aspect of such Islamic reformism in the economic sphere (Rudnyckyj 2009). It is argued that 'market Islam' tends to focus on the ethical dispositions that are compatible with the contemporary neo-liberal and capitalist market economy. This understanding of being a Muslim is less concerned with politics and the Islamisation of the state and focusses more on changing the individual 'from within' for effective professionalism as well as self-management. Market Islam is a response to the

international challenges of globalisation and the free market economy. The focus in market Islam is to train an individual for self-monitoring and reduce corruption through 'ethical auditing' and spiritual reformism. The moral checks are utilised in particular training programmes in Indonesia which focus on individual actions in business corporations and the aim is to enhance his performance at the workplace and also to prepare him to face the challenges of 'life and afterlife'. Rudnyckyj (2009) in 'Market Islam in Indonesia' explains how a state owned steel manufacturing unit in Indonesia provides an environment for its employees where work ethics are interpreted through Islamic terminologies by reformist Muslims. Workers are taught to believe that living moral and pious lives also include hard work, discipline and not wasting time on workplace. The writer maintains that the 'Market Islam' presented by reformist Muslim trainers in the workplaces is the idea that articulates modern work ethics which combines and interprets Islamic practices which seem fit for labour markets and workforces which participate within global capitalism. Rudnyckyj places 'Market Islam' as parallel to Hefner's (1993, 1998) 'Civil Islam' as a distinct mode of Islamic work ethics which are concerned with the global market and which have less to do with the wider social and political dimensions of Muslim society. Market Islam, thus, focuses on strong work ethics rather than 'miracles' in order to boost personal piety and worldly success. The writer views 'enhanced Islamic practices' as a mechanism to compete and confront modernist global market's challenges and demands presented by 'modernist' and reformist Muslims. Marsden (2012) while reviewing the work of Rudnyckyj (2010) maintains that the reason why spiritual trainings for steel factory employees were popular and vigorously accepted was that PowerPoint presentations infused with faith based notions and delivered by reformist Muslim trainers provided a space for employees to feel themselves Islamic and modern at the same time. The privatised Muslim saints and their emergence as religious entrepreneurs in Mali is also an interesting phenomenon in this context (Soares 2005).

Iqtidar (2013) in 'Secularism Beyond the State: The "State" and the "Market" in Islamist Imagination' forwards the idea that Islamist forces have shifted their focus from 'state' to 'market' in order to gain power in the changing world. While Maududi emphasised taking control over the state by forming a Leninist style Islamist cadre based party, the *Jamaat-i-Islami*, after Maududi, has been active in gaining the wider mass support of those who they previously ignored. This has been enacted by asserting power in marginalised communities through the establishment of educational networks and by provision of

health related social services and thus exerting their power base in a Gramscian way. Iqtidar argues that rapid privatisation and consumerism have changed perceptions of active political engagement and political mobilisation between political leaders and workers in the *Jamaat-i-Islami* as well as other national political parties in Pakistan. There is a growing perception that the influence over the market has far more greater return than having influence on state. While there have been changes in the role of the state and its structure post-1990s on a local as well as a global level, reformist Muslims and Islamists have also changed strategies in order to be part of the new world. The works of Iqtidar (2013) and Rudnyckyj (2009) are evidence of a shift in reformist Muslims from reviving Islam and concentrating over acquiring state power to having a presence and control in markets and engagements through economic activities.

The argument that Islamic values are inherently incompatible with modern market economic ethics and modernity in general is an old one. Moreover, the idea that Muslims should choose between 'Mecca or Mechanisation' infers that Islamic values are an obstacle in becoming part of global capitalist economy (Lerner 1964). However, Muslim entrepreneurs and their reformism mainly focusses on two spheres of life and these are viewed by them as a route to success and upward social mobility at the individual and collective level for Muslims communities; these spheres of influences are the economic and education sectors. Observable phenomena in this regard are a variety of Islamic banks offering alternatives to avoid the vices associated with global capitalism and a number of universities with agendas of social and moral reformation amongst Muslims societies. The global economy is changing the social conditions with its influences on individuals and societies and Muslim societies and economies are no exception in this regard. The reformist Muslims taking lead in economic and educational fields makes them relevant in rapidly changing world.

This is how Muslim businessmen, entrepreneurs and reformist Muslim individuals and groups express the notions and interpretations of reformist Islam in which they believe in and how they put these ideals into practice while conducting their everyday lives. Here, the debate about the wider implications of Islamic reformism brings us back to the main argument of this thesis, that is, to see wider implications of Islamic reformism on various aspects of everyday life. By observing aspects of Islamic reformism in the behaviours of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs regarding their economic practices, it is also possible to understand the embodiment of piety and its reflection in their everyday life. I

argue that by exhibiting piety and giving public performance of their moral and virtuous lives through doing charity and donations, Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham assert their identities of being 'successful and good Muslims' in public; whereby piety becomes a space for them to 'make good and do good' (Osella & Osella 2009) in life and afterlife.

1.14   Piety-led Moral Lives of Muslim Businessmen and Entrepreneurs

"With the final dissolution of Muslim power in [the] nineteenth century, North India had come a re-evaluation of Muslim norms of comportment that placed Islamicate *tahzib* ('etiquette') and *adab* ('propriety') into a new set of relations with neo-Hindu as well as British systems ....of physical comportment and bodily conditioning" (Nile Green, 2013 pp. 83). In colonial India, Muslim Sufis focused their attention and gave a lot of importance to the bodily control of people by emphasising the physical and social expression of particular etiquette and norms. What Green draws from the change in public bodily expression during colonial India is still evident in various reformist Muslim groups in Birmingham in a different context, both geographically and historically. Various reformist Muslim groups as well as Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham have similar notions of presenting personal bodies in the public sphere, especially whenever their adherents are on the mission of *Dawa* or they are identifying themselves as Muslim in any public forum. The exhibitionism of piety-led moral lives among Birmingham Muslims is an interesting aspect to consider for further explorations and problematisation in this thesis. This bridges the overall thesis argument which focusses on the prevalent reformist interpretations of Islam and their relationship, influence and impact in shaping and reorienting charity and donation related practices of Birmingham Muslims. All reformist Muslim individuals in South Asia have emphasised the need to revive faith and piety (Reetz 2006).

Deeb (2006) in her work on Lebanese Shi'i explores how less attention have been given to the wider contextual study of piety where Muslims communities practice Islam in everyday life and combine it with modernity or with being modern. For Deeb, though 'public piety is the public practice of 'authenticated Islam' (pp. 8) whereby interlocutors, by practicing public piety, do assert a belief of material and spiritual progress. The criteria for piety are usually community defined in the light of Sharia and anybody who confirms to the norm of community is believed to be a pious person. Whilst problematising the notion of being modern and the associated ideas of modernity, Deeb maintains that less

is written about the nuances views of pious Muslims and their understanding of being modern and how the ideals of spirituality are entangled whenever modernity is described or discussed amongst them. Increased piety amongst Muslims means more deeply felt understating of Islam according to a specific definition given by reformist Muslims. Thus, for Deeb, more visibility of being Muslims equates with being 'pious modern' among Lebanese Shi'i; This is a process and a practice which I build on in this thesis and whilst acknowledging and building on Deeb's notion of *Visiblity* or Public Piety, I call it the public performance of piety and moral lives among Birmingham Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs.

Deeb, however, constructs the concept of *Visible* Piety or Public Piety among Lebanese Shi'i Muslims by using the commonly shared idea of *Iltizam* (commitment) where *Iltizam* becomes an individual's personal pledge, or social duty, to assert Muslim identity in an integrated sense. Here each action, whether religious, social or political, becomes an expression of being a good, pious or modern Muslim at a public level and this also gives the same sense and meaning to an individual at a personal level. Being pious becomes vital at both a personal level in the establishment of a person's morality and also at the communal level; it works in presenting religion as an alternative to the West in defining a pious modern Muslim. However, the notion of the public performance of being pious and moral lives among Birmingham Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs, I construct, on the ideals of 'success' or 'being successful' in this life and the afterlife among my research participants in Birmingham parallel to that of *Iltizam* among Deeb's Lebanese Shi'i Muslims. The reason for not utilising Deeb's exact concept of public piety constructed on the notion of *Iltizam* (commitment) amongst Lebanese Shi'i Muslims for public performance of pious and moral lives among Birmingham Sunni Muslims is the different contexts in which our interlocutors are located. At the same time, Lebanese Shi'i localism and the assertion of Muslims' identities vis-à-vis other Muslims and non-Muslims alike might be instrumental while Deeb constructs the idea of 'pious modern' based on *Iltizam* (commitment). In case of Birmingham Muslims, their transnational links (both geographical with their country of origin and spiritual with the imagined community of Muslims, *Ummah*) as well as their positioning of being in the 'heart of Western modernity' must be taken into consideration while formulating their aspirations to be 'successful'; a term that I would like to equate with Deeb's 'pious modern'.

The academic focus and emphasis on the emergence and expressions of public piety in various Muslim societies has gained momentum. This phenomenon coincides with the development and growth of how the free market economy has coupled with the globalisation of mass media, communications and transportations. On top of this, the political atmosphere of the post 9/11 global world has been instrumental in shaping how political and media driven discourses have represented Muslim identity and being Muslim. Schielke (2009) argues that piety among Egyptian Muslim youth is an 'ambivalent practice limited to [a]specific period of time marked by crises' (pp.37). The ethnography of Birmingham Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs, and their public performance of piety and virtuous life, portrays an extended span of piety that becomes a lifestyle among them. This thesis maintains and adds to Schielke's notions that with age and responsibilities among Muslim businessmen and entreprenues, public performance of piety becomes a constant in their everydaylife. In another study from Egypt, Ismail (2013) explores how the personal subjectivity of medium level Muslim entrepreneurs in Cairo, who operate in the competitive and Islamised global capital market, entails autonomous and individual notions of making choices surrounding investment, savings, partnership and understandings of local and global economic currents. Ismail (2013) views public expression of piety among Muslim entrepreneurs as a medium through which to adhere and acknowledge religion as a codification of 'ethics of transaction'. Ismail's concepts of the public expression of piety among Muslim entrepreneurs focus on the Islamised identity of the business proprietor and the business itself. The public practices of Muslim entrepreneurs in Cairo, Ismail explains, usually include displays of Islamic texts in shops, the closure of shops at time of prayer and the hiring of male-only staff. This thesis explores the public performance of piety by Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham and focuses on their social engagements, their relationships with reformist Muslim groups and their acquirement and dissemination of 'pious introductions' in local markets as well as amongst the local community of Birmingham Muslims. For Ismail, the public expression of piety embodies practising Islam as 'an ethic of transaction' and I will examine this by taking into account the holistic significance of public performance, and the expression of piety, in order to determine its implications for various aspects of everyday lives. Public expressions of piety by Birmingham Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs are transformed and reshaped by global currents of Islamic reformism and local micro-politics as well as social interactions. Moreover, the economic practices of Muslim entrepreneurs, and their relationship with piety-led moral

lives of Muslims entrepreneurs, is gaining increasing attention in Anthropology (Osella 2013, Ismail 2013, Soares 2013, Iqtidar 2013).

The present notion of piety-led lives of Muslims, and their public expression, warrants an analysis of how the processes of public piety reflect on the status, identity and beliefs of the observant. 'Delicate relationship between strong-man politics and holy-man piety' (Geertz 1968, pp. 33) is a classical way of looking at the assertion of a pious Muslim identity. With the advent of Islamic reformism, the ideals of piety has been intertwined with the relationship between the political, or public, sphere of contemporary Muslim societies. The classical distinction between political and moral lives of Muslims is difficult to analyse separately as they are not mutually exclusive. Marsden (2012) while reviewing the work of Rudnyckyj (2010) maintains that the work performance of steel factory employees through spiritual reform were transformed into an expression of piety for employees by reformist trainers; a shift from the classical idea based on Geertz notions about social distribution of work in Indonesian society.

Marsden (2013) in 'Women, Politics and Islamism in Northern Pakistan' explores the everyday life struggles, debates and ambiguities experienced by women while conducting their lives vis-a-vis public expressions of self-representation and piety among reformist Muslims in small towns of Northern Pakistan. Marsden maintains that while public expressions of piety are instrumental for Islamists and reformist Muslim groups in retaining political and social power, at the same time, reformist Muslims are subject to mockery and frequently accused of hypocrisy amongst Muslims in general. Marsden presents how ordinary women assert their subjectivities in issues concerning public life and while doing so, they rely on their everyday life experiences, local knowledge, Muslim identity and their engagement with complex ways of dealing with reformist Muslims. This happens despite them being less well-off and belonging to non-elite Muslim families of the area. At the same time, well trained and *Madrasa* educated Islamists also respond to specific life situations in ways that do not 'fit perfectly' with their identity as Islamists as they advance the Islamisation project into public life. Marsden's (2007) work on all male sonic parties in North Western Pakistan shows that music gathering and dance, as popular form of entertainment, are contested by men of piety and at the same time attended by men who publically support Islamist parties. The participants in music gathering are located into a political context where Islamist assert their power to purify public sphere by introducing a restrained expressions of masculinity which ought to be

x

lives of Muslims entrepreneurs, is gaining increasing attention in Anthropology (Osella 2013, Ismail 2013, Soares 2013, Iqtidar 2013).

The present notion of piety-led lives of Muslims, and their public expression, warrants an analysis of how the processes of public piety reflect on the status, identity and beliefs of the observant. 'Delicate relationship between strong-man politics and holy-man piety' (Geertz 1968, pp. 33) is a classical way of looking at the assertion of a pious Muslim identity. With the advent of Islamic reformism, the ideals of piety has been intertwined with the relationship between the political, or public, sphere of contemporary Muslim societies. The classical distinction between political and moral lives of Muslims is difficult to analyse separately as they are not mutually exclusive. Marsden (2012) while reviewing the work of Rudnyckyj (2010) maintains that the work performance of steel factory employees through spiritual reform were transformed into an expression of piety for employees by reformist trainers; a shift from the classical idea based on Geertz notions about social distribution of work in Indonesian society.

Marsden (2013) in 'Women, Politics and Islamism in Northern Pakistan' explores the everyday life struggles, debates and ambiguities experienced by women while conducting their lives vis-a-vis public expressions of self-representation and piety among reformist Muslims in small towns of Northern Pakistan. Marsden maintains that while public expressions of piety are instrumental for Islamists and reformist Muslim groups in retaining political and social power, at the same time, reformist Muslims are subject to mockery and frequently accused of hypocrisy amongst Muslims in general. Marsden presents how ordinary women assert their subjectivities in issues concerning public life and while doing so, they rely on their everyday life experiences, local knowledge, Muslim identity and their engagement with complex ways of dealing with reformist Muslims. This happens despite them being less well-off and belonging to non-elite Muslim families of the area. At the same time, well trained and *Madrasa* educated Islamists also respond to specific life situations in ways that do not 'fit perfectly' with their identity as Islamists as they advance the Islamisation project into public life. Marsden's (2007) work on all male sonic parties in North Western Pakistan shows that music gathering and dance, as popular form of entertainment, are contested by men of piety and at the same time attended by men who publically support Islamist parties. The participants in music gathering are located into a political context where Islamist assert their power to purify public sphere by introducing a restrained expressions of masculinity which ought to be

x

lives of Muslims entrepreneurs, is gaining increasing attention in Anthropology (Osella 2013, Ismail 2013, Soares 2013, Iqtidar 2013).

The present notion of piety-led lives of Muslims, and their public expression, warrants an analysis of how the processes of public piety reflect on the status, identity and beliefs of the observant. 'Delicate relationship between strong-man politics and holy-man piety' (Geertz 1968, pp. 33) is a classical way of looking at the assertion of a pious Muslim identity. With the advent of Islamic reformism, the ideals of piety has been intertwined with the relationship between the political, or public, sphere of contemporary Muslim societies. The classical distinction between political and moral lives of Muslims is difficult to analyse separately as they are not mutually exclusive. Marsden (2012) while reviewing the work of Rudnyckyj (2010) maintains that the work performance of steel factory employees through spiritual reform were transformed into an expression of piety for employees by reformist trainers; a shift from the classical idea based on Geertz notions about social distribution of work in Indonesian society.

Marsden (2013) in 'Women, Politics and Islamism in Northern Pakistan' explores the everyday life struggles, debates and ambiguities experienced by women while conducting their lives vis-a-vis public expressions of self-representation and piety among reformist Muslims in small towns of Northern Pakistan. Marsden maintains that while public expressions of piety are instrumental for Islamists and reformist Muslim groups in retaining political and social power, at the same time, reformist Muslims are subject to mockery and frequently accused of hypocrisy amongst Muslims in general. Marsden presents how ordinary women assert their subjectivities in issues concerning public life and while doing so, they rely on their everyday life experiences, local knowledge, Muslim identity and their engagement with complex ways of dealing with reformist Muslims. This happens despite them being less well-off and belonging to non-elite Muslim families of the area. At the same time, well trained and *Madrasa* educated Islamists also respond to specific life situations in ways that do not 'fit perfectly' with their identity as Islamists as they advance the Islamisation project into public life. Marsden's (2007) work on all male sonic parties in North Western Pakistan shows that music gathering and dance, as popular form of entertainment, are contested by men of piety and at the same time attended by men who publically support Islamist parties. The participants in music gathering are located into a political context where Islamist assert their power to purify public sphere by introducing a restrained expressions of masculinity which ought to be

free of vices. Men participate in these musical gatherings after offering their evening prayers. The patronage of these musical gathering is given mostly by Muslim businessmen who are sometimes, affiliated with Islamist parties and some participants, at some stage of their life time, have been part of spiritual trips of *Tablighi Jamaat*. The male participants of sonic gatherings are neither deviant Muslims nor Islamists in a strict sense while attending musical gatherings, rather the boundaries of being pious or being popular men enjoying 'impressible amazing fun' in a community are blurred. Classifying and categorising people into reformist Muslims or Islamists, then, becomes complicated by the diverse picture of a society where each actor is trying to figure out meanings of life whilst negotiating the blurred boundaries of what constitutes to be authentically Islamic or what not.

Haniffa (2013) in 'Piety as Politics among Muslim Women in Contemporary Sri Lanka' explains the impact of piety movements on public as well as private spheres of life amongst middle or upper middle class women in Sri Lanka. The piety movement for the women group, 'Al Muslimaat' has established a new orthodoxy within women circles and has provided space for social transformation whilst un-limiting the notion of piety as a personal phenomenon. Haniffa argues that the successful reform movement among *Salafi* and *Tablighi* groups have given rise to Sufi reformist groups as a response and there has been a recent surge in Sufi reformist based piety movements. Piety then becomes a tool for reformist groups to assert their interpretation of practising Islam for the everyday occasions of social nature like rituals of death, weddings and the interaction patterns among family members. Haniffa explores that piety movement takes inspiration from the true and authenticated ways of practising Islam by Muslim converts in Western world. This is something that I will discuss via the in-depth ethnographic insights that I collected from observations of a reformist Muslim group of Muslim converts in Birmingham throughout this thesis. At the same time, it will be misleading to argue that 'piety-led lives' of reformist Muslim groups and individual does not entail the critical self-evaluation of their lives, however the critical thinking is aimed at appeasing the will of God (Mahmood 2001).

So far, I have argued that reformist Muslims present a variety of interpretations of practising Islam in everyday life for Birmingham Muslims, and particularly for businessmen and entrepreneurs, whereby the piety-led moral lives of both reformist Muslims and Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs becomes a role-model for the

Muslim community and ideals of success, hard work, living a virtuous life and devotion to Islam and its public manifestations are cherished by reformist Muslims who present this way of living as standard practice of a Muslim. The continuity and reproduction of this persona and the pious introduction of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs, however, require a public space or would be in need of *visibility*, as Deeb (2006) would put it, which is fulfilled by doing the acts of charity and philanthropy along with giving public performance of piety. Atia (2013) maintains that among Muslim youth in Egypt, volunteerism with Muslim charity organisations has become a popular expression of living a pious and moral life. The last part of my thesis' argument deals with the intricacies and complexities of charity and donation practices of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs and how they are related to their beliefs in particular interpretations of reformist Islam. My central argument in this thesis is that apart from doing charity in the form of *Zakat* as a religious obligation, the nature, background, shape and direction of doing charity other than *Zakat* among Birmingham Muslims is mostly determined by their belief in particular interpretations of practising Islam in everyday life and by their affiliation with particular groups of reformist Muslims. The type of reformist interpretation of living Islam in everyday life Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs believe in becomes a decisive factor when they imagine about the destination and utility of their charity money. Moreover, Muslim charitable organisations do provide a space for Muslim entrepreneurs and businessmen to forge political, social and economic alliances at domestic, national and international levels. They are also a source for introducing the application of particular interpretations of Islam in their everyday lives as these organisations facilitate a space for asserting their identity as 'pious, successful and good Muslims'.

1.15   Charity and Philanthropy

By drawing parallels between the act of charity, and the idea of gift in Anthropology, the scope of Muslim practices of charity and donation is placed into dialogue with the Anthropological debates of charity, aid and givings. While Marcel Mauss's reciprocity focusses on two individuals who are part of a process of giving, taking and reciprocating, Muslim charitable practices problematise Mauss's concept of gift by their nuanced and atypical idea of giving because of how their practices and self-conceptions contradict the classical lens. In Anthropology in particular and in the social sciences more broadly, the latter has been generally understood in Maussian terms. "To make gift of something to someone is to make present of some part of oneself" (Mauss 1990, pp. 16) and "to refuse

to give, to fail to invite, just as to refuse to accept, is tantamount to declaring war" (pp. 17). This description presupposes that gift is a private property of the giver and its transfer to someone else depends upon the will of the giver. This is something which is contested within Islamic discourses whether gift or wealth is/can be an individual' possession or is it the property of Allah and is bestowed upon man by Allah. At the same time, Islamic discourses have similar assessments of acts of charity that "the exchange of gifts produces an abundance of riches" (Mauss 1990, pp. 19). The universal acknowledgement of gift or charity has been affirmed in the teaching and commandments of Abrahamic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. As Mauss put it "the ancient morality of gift has become a principle of justice. From the victory of 'Poor' in Jerusalem, the time when the doctrine of charity and alms was born, which, with Christianity and Islam, spread around the world" (pp.23).

This thesis culminates in an analysis of the practices of charity and donations among Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham. Although less studied in Anthropology, the Islamic charitable tradition and its recent relationship, as well as impact on Muslim communities, is an interesting area that is very useful in the (de)construction of frameworks and perspectives in the understandings of Islam today for social sciences. I have argued so far in this thesis that reformist Muslims in Birmingham come up with innovative ways to engage with Muslims by making Islam relevant in their everyday life practices and daily routines. Reformist Muslim groups from various streams encourage public performances of piety and moral lives for Birmingham Muslims in general and Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in particular. Doing charity and giving donations publically become a vital event for both reformist Muslims groups and Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs and through this, each actor asserts their interpretations of true Islam as authentic. Thus, the identity of being a good Muslim is established and giving charity and donation is highly encouraged by all Muslim reformist groups. However, whom to give, when to give and where to give charity is something highly contested among Birmingham Muslims. This thesis establishes that giving charity among Muslim entrepreneurs and businessmen is linked, influenced and to a great extent determined by their belief in any particular interpretation of practicing Islam in everyday life presented by any reformist Muslim group; and Muslim charity is not merely a result of Islamic binding of giving alms on Muslims.

The modern idea of charity and the use of term charity in social sciences is not unilaterally accepted as an 'Islamic idea' by some reformist Muslims. Muslim reformists and some Islamists contest and detest the idea of charity as a non-Islamic idea. Sayyid Qutb, the Muslim Brotherhood Egypt's main ideologue, asserts that *Zakat* is a superior concept than the Western notion of giving alms (Mitchell 1969). Repudiating both socialism and capitalism, Islamic *Zakat* aims at steering people towards a common goal for both poor and rich. On the other hand, the idea of a gift produces reciprocity that generates animosity amongst the receiver from the donor. Unreciprocated gifts bring moral credits to the donor but wounds the recipient (Mauss 1990) and this is something that some Islamist and Muslim reformists deny (Benthall 1999). However, the concept and word 'charity' is commonly used amongst Muslim charitable organisations in Birmingham and this is a primary reason why I utilise the word 'charity' whilst discussing Muslim giving practices in my thesis.

In order to analyse and explore the current charitable practices amongst Birmingham Muslims, it is important to understand the history, contexts, impressions and practices of Muslim charity in a holistic way. There are three major ways through which Muslim charitable practices have been executed historically. These are Zakat, Waqf and Sadaqa. The literal meanings of *Zakat* is to purify, multiply and enhance according to Quran's chapter 9, Al-tobbah (The Repentance), verses 60:

"The alms are only for the poor, for the needy, for those employed to collect it, for bring the hearts together for Islam, for freeing captives or slaves, for those who are in debt, for the cause of Allah, for the travellers; this is ordained by Allah who is Know-all and Wise".

Zakat is obligatory and compulsory giving upon Muslims and it is one of the basic five pillars of the Muslim belief. Usually it is 2.5% of the amount of money and assets over *Nisab*. *Nisab* is the fixed amount of moveable and immoveable properties and assets through which an individual qualifies to be able to give *Zakat*. The word *Zakat* has the Arabic meaning of payment being due on a property in order to purify it, and this causes it to be blessed and multiplied. In the early days of Islam, after the death of Prophet Muhammad, paying *Zakat* became the criteria for deciding if somebody is Muslim or not and whether a war should be waged upon somebody or not was decided if the person is paying *Zakat* or not (Bashear 1993).

The other mode of Muslim charity is *Waqf* which has existed for centuries in the Islamic world till the end of Ottoman Empire, and it still exists in one form or another in several Muslim countries. *Waqf* refers to the voluntarily fixing of an amount from the property of someone for charitable purposes and this cannot be used for other purposes after the death of the donor. Historically, it was immovable property which was used to donate for *Waqf* most of the times. The third mode of giving is *Sadaqa* which literally means alms or voluntary giving. *Sadaqa* is not a replacement for *Zakat* but after paying *Zakat*, if a Muslim does *Sadaqa*, it is considered an act of high virtue which buys an individual a high degree of spiritual merits. *Waqf* is a form of *Sadaqa* commonly known as *Sadaqa-i-Jariyya* which literally means a voluntary giving that continues forever.

I focus mainly on *Sadaqa* in this thesis as it is a voluntary form of Muslim giving. There are some academic and practical reasons why I chose to focus on *Sadaqa* in contrast to the other ways of doing charity among Birmingham Muslims i.e. *Zakat* and *Waqf*. Studying *Zakat* via ethnography is not an easy choice because people prefer to follow the principle of confidentiality while paying *Zakat* to somebody whom they personally know (Benthall 1999). Usually people do not talk about it much as some of the recipients are their distant relatives or close friends whom they do not want to expose as recipients of their *Zakat*. Additionally, *Sadaqa* has an element of personal subjectivity which *Zakat* does not have. Objective commandment to give (in the form of *Zakat*) upon Muslims also has a subjective input of some free will (in the form of *Sadaqa*) (Kochuyt 2009). Here, I am more interested in the subjectivity of Muslim giving in Birmingham as it is best reflected in the *Sadaqa* based voluntary giving rather than in *Zakat* which is compulsory. However, when studying *Sadaqa*, it is vital to discuss and relate the context and impact of historical practices of giving in various Muslim societies as this continues to impact Muslim giving in current day Birmingham. In this regard, the available anthropological and other literature on *Waqf* is helpful in understanding the contemporary charity practices of Muslims that somehow are a blueprint of historical Muslim charity practices.

The Ottoman Empire began to lay the formal structure for Muslim charity by establishing food kitchens for the hungry and needy. These survived from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century and they were also the first of this particular kind of Muslim charitable giving. In the twentieth century, certain Muslim states like Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Sudan and Yemen established a system of collecting *Zakat*, but Muslims preferred giving *Zakat* face-to-face to the recipient. With the advent of modern Muslim

charities worldwide, the *Zakat* calculators were introduced on their websites. It is difficult to trace out the practice of *Zakat* and *Sadaqa* in Muslim societies historically, as sources mentioning such practices among Muslims societies are 'less anthropological' and more 'anecdotal and unsystematic' (Singer 1996). However, the only visible practice of doing charity in Muslim history is through *Waqf*. For centuries in the Middle East and elsewhere, the administration of public *Waqf* has served the function of advancing the interests of the Muslim family responsible for the administration as it gave them power to distribute assets and donations along with having a fixed share for themselves. The position of being an administrator of public *Waqf* was considered a high social status. The *Ulama* were linked with *Waqf* both as beneficiary and as administrators. Freed slaves were also appointed as administrators in the *Waqf*; and this was something which kept the family bond intact between the offspring of freed slaves and that of the *Waqf* donor. The size of the *Waqf* was instrumental in determining its political and social influence, and it also served the purpose of strengthening and supporting the ethnic and national level groups (Baer 1997). One of the historic characteristics of *Waqf* is that the property rendered for it tends to be immovable. *Waqf* has served as a source for public expression of the donor's piety. *Waqf* has also served the purpose of promoting Islam. There was no legal system in place that could produce the perpetual organisation and set of rules to govern *Waqf* and, as a consequence, some of the *Waqf* came into the grip of corrupt managers. After colonisation, some Muslim states introduced laws to regulate *Waqfs* that reformed and modernised the institution of *Waqf* (Kuran 2001).

For centuries, *Waqaf* has served as an institution for social services for the people in need in Muslim societies. It does not exist in the same shape or structure in modern times as it used to be, but *Waqf* has to a great extent shaped the imaginations, practices and ideals of Muslim charities and Muslims' charitable practices. The preference to donate towards a building that is under construction, or which already exists in the form of immovable property for charitable purpose, is common among Muslim donors in Birmingham. This is something that is still very prevalent in the imaginations of charity among Muslims. Donations for hospitals, educations centres, mosques and institutions etc. are a reflection of that imagination. *Waqf*, in other words, not only provided social cohesion among Muslim communities but also promoted the case of Islam. At the same time, reformist Muslims have been at the forefront in the administration of *Waqfs* associated with a wealthy patron. I discuss this in detail in chapters five and six when I discuss my ethnographic insights on this topic. Reformist Muslims in Birmingham have taken the

place of traditional *Ulamas* and wealthy patrons are replaced by Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs whilst *Waqfs* have been replaced by the newly established modern Muslim charities.

Unlike Christianity, where charity is an expression of love for the community, Islam conceptualises it in term of 'purification' and the 'circulation' of wealth in society for social justice. Hence, taking interest over loan or something is viewed as bad 'circulation' of wealth in society while the *Zakat* is viewed as good 'circulation' of wealth. Surplus wealth (*fazl*) is a potently repeated concept in Quran and people who have surplus are encouraged to give money for charitable purposes. The Quranic economic decrees and postulates revolve around the themes like that of the purification of wealth sought through voluntary *Sadaqa*, and involuntary *Zakat* forms of giving, circulation of wealth in the society, recipients who are defined as the deserving one, surplus and reciprocity of wealth that bind Muslims to give so that Allah can enhance their surplus and claim or right of those who are in need. The early expansion of Islam had a lot to do with the Quranic economic postulates that kept the poor in the centre of giving (Bonner 2005). There is no hostility in Islam about the accumulation of wealth. Nineteenth and twentieth century Islamic critique of capitalism is based on the notion that Islam offers solution to economic inequalities through encouraging practices like *Zakat* and *Sadaqa*. Modern forms of Muslim giving revolve around individual responsibility alongside with a shared sensibility of Islamic reformism and a recognition of the role of the global capitalist economy. The charitable sentiments of a giver are not free from the logic of market economy (Osella 2014 forthcoming).

While there is an element of maintaining social order in all forms of Muslim giving, voluntary and involuntary, Muslim giving and charity has always been subject to local, national and international politics. Britain used the name 'Red Crescent Society' instead of 'Red Cross' between 1912 to 1920 in order to help wounded Muslim soldiers as well as to collect funds from wealthy Muslims such as the Nizam of Hyderabad in British India (Benthall 1997). Efforts to collect *Zakat* by a centralised body, such as the state, often receive resistance. Muslim peasants in Malaysia view payment of *Zakat* to government not as a process to purify their wealth but as a payment they make to the government and as the equivalent to a tax. Villagers name giving *Zakat* to government as *Zakat Raja* (*Zakat* for king) and giving of *Zakat* with their choice as *Zakat Peribadi* (personal *Zakat*). *Zakat Raja* has a disrepute among paddy growers and *Zakat Peribadi* is viewed as a

personal religious charity. Peasants in Malaysia view *Zakat Raja* as illegitimate because they view it as spent on officialdom which is far away from peasants and they cannot see their *Zakat* being spent on something or by someone with their eyes. At the same time, the villagers happily pay paddy to deserving people around them. What appears more comforting for peasants and villagers is to do the act of charity face-to-face and they view this as the true spirit of Islam (Scott 1987). Hayes (1987), while exploring the emergence and pattern of gifting in Western Indian city of Surat, during the nineteenth century, maintains that rich merchants established their identity as trustworthy businessmen who are committed to their religious tradition by giving gifts in public. The gifting also helped rich merchants to establish clientele ties with the British ruling class during the twentieth century in the same way as local noblemen in the seventeenth century established relationships with Mughal rulers by paying them tributes. Thus, gifting and giving served a clear political purpose for businessmen in Surat city as they secured amicable ties with ruling classed by gifting. Moreover, gifting also secured repute for traders and merchants as it showed that people have concern for the public good in the eyes of ruling elites. Hindu and Jain merchants in Surat viewed philanthropy as a medium to gain access to the ruling classes but public good was the least of their concerns (Hayes 1987).

One constant throughout the debate of Muslim giving has been its relationship with the promotion of Islam and the mission of *Dawa* along with the assertion of the giver's identity as someone with a sense of commitment, dedication and responsibility towards the community. In a study on the work of six welfare organisations in Sindh, Pakistan, Kirmani (2012) found that some of the charities had the objective of providing welfare to people in order to make people better Muslims. In Islam, wealth is not seen as an individual predestination, as is the case of Weber's Protestants. Instead, it is viewed as Alllah's gift and the purpose of *Zakat* is to strengthen the transcendental brotherhood between believers as Islam does not encourage Muslims to give *Zakat* to the immediate or nuclear family. The *Ummah* exists, as Muslim giving, an anonymous donor giving to unknown fellow, plays a vital role in maintenance of this relationship of an individual Muslim with this imagined community, *Ummah*, he belongs to (Kochuyt 2009). However, in the post 9/11 regime of giving internationally, Muslim charities has been viewed as suspect in delivering funds to organisations with potentially extremist political agendas. Islamic charitable organisations are instrumental in representing the friendly face of Islamist originations and their political agendas (Wiktorowicz 2002). The focus on Muslim charity going to fundamentalist organisations is a popular theme in media and

among journalists that keep the centrality and importance of charity and giving among Muslim communities undisclosed before the wider public (Singer 2006). Muslims in Europe have lived a 'decade of suspicion' after 9/11 (Rytter and Pedersen 2013). Islamic charities have been scrutinised for potential links with terrorist organisations under the post-9/11 charity regime of the USA (Benthall 2004).

The idea of defining or naming Islamic charitable or Islamic voluntary organisation is also problematic for social scientists. Clark (2004) uses the term Islamic social institutes (ISIs) in order to avoid the confusion associated with the phrase 'Islamist organisation' as an offshoot of some Islamic political group or 'Islamic non-governmental organisation'. This is further compounded by how it is very difficult to separate the workings of such organisations from government social networks. Clark argues that by using a social movement theory approach to charity in Islam in three countries, (Egypt, Jordan and Yemen) Islamic social institutes broaden the space for the middle-classe educated Muslim professionals to have horizontal networking amongst themselves more than it facilitates the mobilization of poor Muslims in a vertical way. This is because Islamic social institutes, as Clark adds, have the need to disseminate and propagate its message as these institutes, in one way or other, have relations with Islamic movements. Vertical patron-client relationships are often weak as the poor are not an integral part of institutions while middle class professionals thrive via their networks, both Islamists and non-Islamists, and use the space provided by Islamic social institutions. Clark, in other words, presents a critique on how the modern social service provision by Islamic social institutes does not have a patron-client relationship. The patronage is something that was a peculiarity of Islamic *Waqf*, to maintain social status of both patron and client that has historically existed within the parameters of Muslim charity (Baer 1997). The changes in class structure and the shift of middle classes towards reformist Islam is one explanation for the lack of patron-client relationships between poor and rich Muslims. However, while Clark elaborates on how much direct involvement middle classes have with Muslim charitable organisations, she does not grasp the relationship between reformist Muslims' interpretation of practising Islam and their access and influence on the everyday lives of Muslims, whether middle classes and poor. Most of the research in social sciences about Muslim charity mostly looks at the relationship of Islamists or that of Islamic political movements with Muslim charity organisations (Wiktorowicz 2002, Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003, Clark 2004, Cordier 2009, Kochuyt 2009).

However, this thesis traces out as well as claims its originality by exploring the dynamics of relationship between various reformist Muslim groups with Muslim charity organisations in Birmingham which are not always political in nature and are mostly shaped by other factors of conducting everyday life like economic and social. Atia (2012) in her work maintains that recent trends of charity, volunteerism and *Da'wa* through the platforms of faith based development organisations in Egypt provide a lens to delineate the relationship between economic practices of Muslim with neo-liberalism. Coining the term 'pious neoliberals', Atia (2013) explains that charity provides a space to Muslim businessmen and reformist to purify their wealth in order to enhance it. "In Egypt, faith based development organisations adapts Islamic principles of charity to promote neo-liberal practices like financial investment, entrepreneurship, self-help strategies, and management science" (Atia 2012, pp. 811). Clark (2004) maintains that Islamists create a web of religion, political activism and charity, and all of this is reinforced by public virtue and personal piety. The ethnographic evidence in this thesis tends to refute this partially. Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham strive for success in this life and the afterlife and, while doing so, they create an emblem of piety, charity and practice of Islam for everyday life. This emblem is directly tied to one or other reformist Muslims interpretation which does not transform everyday life struggles into a political aim, such as the aim to take over the state or have political solidarity among their Muslim brethren. Rather this emblem serves as a space where they pursue material success in life and spiritual success in afterlife. Although acts of charity and giving are influenced by the reformist interpretations of practicing Islam, it does not necessarily invoke political ambitions among Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham.

The recent emergence of Muslim charity organisations in Britain, and their spread worldwide, has attracted many social scientists and anthropologists. Muslim charity organisations, particularly ones in the West, are strongly influenced by the British charity environment and Britain has given birth to the majority of internationally renowned Muslim charities. These Muslim charities based in Britain were not the structures imported from Muslim world but have local roots amongst the British Muslim community. Muslim charitable organisation based in Britain could work in conflict hit countries like Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq during war days and successfully take advantage of their Muslim identity (Cordier 2009). The Islamic voluntary organisation are capable enough to deliver social services effectively; a phenomenon that has been widespread throughout the Muslim World. The Islamic voluntary organisation skilfully

fill the gap of provision of services by states (Benthall 1999). The Bosnian war triggered the trend of global Muslim charity and philanthropy practices, particularly in Britain. Muslims in Britain got scared that if the brutal prosecution of Muslims in one European country like Bosnia can happen, it can happen anywhere in other European countries (Cordier 2009). The emergence of faith based organisation has been instrumental in the process of asserting cultural identity by migrant communities and, more recently, the importance of faith based organisations has increased in the arena of international development (Clarke 2006). Islamic Relief is working as an NGO in some Muslim majority areas in Africa, where other secular and Western NGOs have been working for longer time periods. The observer found that Islamic Relief has certain advantages and edge over other secular NGOs working in the same areas because of its Muslim identity. Faith based organisations are getting more prominent positions in the arena of humanitarian assistance and social services delivery (Benthall 2006). The globalization of *Zakat* and Muslim giving coincides with the emergence of global Muslim reformist and revivalist movements inside and outside of the Muslim world from the 1980s onward.

In the thesis, I will not be using the word faith based development organisations. Instead, I will be using the term Muslim charitable organisations. As the nuances related to the word 'development' are contested among my research participants because of different understanding of it. Some of the Birmingham Muslim charitable organisations do not agree with the framework of humanitarian assistance and development within the context of 'international development' especially how it is operationalised and executed by the United Nations and other development agencies, western donors or west based development organisations, i.e international NGOs. At the same time, I would like to clarify that these debates surrounding development, and more specifically the role of faith-based organisation in international development, is something beyond the scope of this thesis.

Part 2   **Methodology**

1.16   The Setting

The locale for my one year ethnographic fieldwork was predominantly Muslim neighbourhoods in Birmingham, UK. I conducted my fieldwork with Birmingham Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in particular and with Birmingham Muslims in general. The period of fieldwork was November 2010 to November 2011. Muslim neighbourhoods is a generic term that I use for areas in Birmingham where the majority, or significant number, of Muslim populations reside. In fact, the majority, or large proportion of Muslims in those areas of Birmingham, do not consider these areas as 'Muslim neighbourhoods' per se. This is because even majority Muslim population areas in Birmingham have some non-Muslim populations. However, for the convenience of analysis, I call these areas Muslim neighbourhoods. By Muslims neighbourhoods, I mean the areas in Birmingham where there is a majority, or significant population of residents, who are Muslim, or where there is an Islamic cultural centre or some social and spatial location of Muslim activities. Though I conducted my fieldwork in some areas where there are very few Muslim residents but where have some offices of Muslim charity organisations or a venue where some Muslim social, political or religious activities took place. For example, I did some participant observations on Broad Street, a place in Birmingham which is famously known for night life, pubs, night clubs, casinos and adult entertainment industry related activities. But, at the same time, the street has some halls and conference rooms which were used by a Muslim charity organisation during the day to organise their fundraising. At the same time, I conducted my fieldwork in the predominantly Muslim neighbourhood, like Balsall Heath, where residents were campaigning against the eradication of prostitution. In this respect, the general understanding of a 'Muslim neighbourhood' cannot be assumed to negate a wider link with the broader influence of Birmingham city's culture and society.

Most of my fieldwork was conducted in the neighbourhoods of Sparkbrook, Spark Hill, Bordesley Green, Small Heath, Moseley, Ladypool Road, Balsall Heath which are in the south of Birmingham city centre. I also did my fieldwork in neighbourhoods like Hall Green, Acock Green, King's Heath, Yardley which are in the south of Birmingham. These neighbourhoods are all south of Birmingham and are densely populated with Muslim residents but I also worked in the east of city centre Birmingham with residents in Alum Rock. However, in the north of Birmingham city centre, I did fieldwork in Aston, in the

west of Birmingham city centre, I did fieldwork in the neighbourhoods of Winson Green, Smethwick and Harborne. Most of Muslim populations in these neighbourhoods are within seven or eight miles of the city centre surroundings.

The selection of Birmingham as a locale for my fieldwork was a deliberate decision for multiple reasons. Muslims constitute 14.3% of Birmingham city's population according to 2001 census, and 21.8% according to 2011 census (ONS 2014). Additionally, the majority of Muslims in Birmingham are of South Asian background and 74% of Muslims in Birmingham are from a Pakistani background (Abbas 2005). The majority of British Pakistanis come from Northern Districts in the Punjab province and Azad Kashmir and have settled in North or South East of England while maintaining their village-kin networks from their place of origin intact in Britain (Werbner 1990, Shaw 2000). It was convenient for me to interact and communicate with Muslim populations as I am fluent in languages that the majority of Muslim populations in Birmingham speak which is mainly English, Urdu, Punjabi, and Kashmiri (Mirpuri). Additionally, I am familiar with Arabic and Farsi languages and I am fluent in reading and writing Arabic and Farsi. My other reason for selecting Birmingham as a locale for my fieldwork was the presence of internationally renowned Muslim charities. Birmingham has given birth to famous Muslim charities which have originated and popularised trends of Muslim charitable giving in Britain. While I had an idea that I would work on Islamic reformism, piety and charity among Muslim communities in Britain at the beginning of my fieldwork, my research supervisors suggested that it would be convenient for me to conduct such research in Birmingham as it is 'anthropologically virgin' regarding the themes I wanted to study.

The presence of significant numbers of Muslims in Birmingham, who constitute 21.8% of the total population, was an opportunity for me to conduct my fieldwork by having a detailed and in-depth description of my research themes. The representation of Muslim communities and Islamic culture is visible in Birmingham city's cultural and human landscape. I could easily observe, participate and become part of the ongoing everyday lives of Muslims in Birmingham after I gained access to key research participants in my pursuit to study Islamic reformism, economic practices, piety and charity related practices. I began my fieldwork by visiting different mosques. I could learn about mosques from various websites and then from one mosque, I could learn about some religious gathering or event happening in another mosque and go there. Most of the data

regarding contested interpretations of reformist Muslims about practising true Islam, and how to be a good Muslim in everyday life, I gathered through spending time in mosques in the beginning of my fieldwork. I also came to know about the presence of various reformist Muslim groups and their whereabouts through mosques. Having a prior familiarity with different ways and practices of various reformist Muslims, I could easily join them and participate in their gatherings. I did most of my observations of contesting interpretations of reformist Muslims in predominantly Muslim neighbourhoods in the south and east of Birmingham like Sparkbrook, Spark Hill, Alum Rock and Small Heath for first three to four months of my fieldwork.

At the same time, I discovered and was introduced to wider networks and the presence of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs through my involvement in the centenary celebration of the famous South Asian Urdu language poet, polemic and activist, Faiz Ahmed Faiz (1911-1984). The year 2011 was the centenary celebrations of the poet and was celebrated all over the world. Through Mr. Hashim, a local journalist, I got a chance to attend one of the planning meetings for the centenary celebrations and most of the committee members were pleased to see my interest in celebrations and grip over Urdu poetry, particular that of Faiz Ahmed Faiz, most of which I knew by heart, and after few meetings with them, they selected me as a one of the six members of organising committee for celebrations. The centenary celebrations had five big programmes in Birmingham as Faiz Ahmed Faiz used to stay in Birmingham in the 1970s and early 1980s and most of the literary circles of South Asian community knew about him. The organising committee did some fundraising for these programmes by visiting Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham and asking them to donate some money for programmes along with selling these men tickets for the programmes. In the beginning, I thought that maybe I should not get involved in the centenary celebrations of Faiz Ahmed Faiz, who was famous for being a leftist, Marxist humanist and somebody who stood for secular values as this might not help me to meet a lot of Muslim community leaders, reformist groups and businessmen. To my surprise, I discovered that most of the sponsors for these events were Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs, Muslim community leaders and even some of the reformist Muslims. For their love of poetry and that of Urdu language, they were eagerly participating in these programmes. I discovered how Muslim businessmen are influential in mobilising Birmingham City Council's resources in order to make these events successful. Most of the events for the centenary celebrations happened in the Birmingham City Council's buildings and the majority of

the participants were Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs, along with some Hindu and Sikh community members. I made my acquaintances with Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham through the organisation and participation of the 2011 centenary celebration of the poet in Birmingham. I also happened to interact with the local media sources for the promotion of these events amongst the Birmingham community and I appeared on local Islamic TV channels, radio stations and also on the BBC Asian Network live talks. The friendships and acquaintances in the first quarter of my fieldwork helped me to interact with Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs on Ladypool Road, Spark Hill, Sparkbrook, Alum Rock and Aston neighbourhoods and to discover a great deal about their economic practices and networks.

Apart from 2011 being the centenary celebrations of Faiz Ahmed Faiz, 2011 was also the year of the Arab Spring, the England Riots and the year of my fieldwork. There was a significant degree of political activism amongst Muslim youth who belonged to various ethnic and national backgrounds in Birmingham. I came to know a lot about the local political activism of Birmingham Muslims and their relationship with various reformist Muslim groups and their interpretations of being Muslim in Birmingham. A year before, Pakistan was struck by the worst natural calamity in history, the Pakistan Floods of 2010, which were followed by minor floods in year 2011 and 2012. The majority of Muslims in Birmingham are of Pakistani backgrounds, and they were actively mobilised and working with various Muslim charity organisations in Birmingham for fundraising and providing help to flood victims. Here, I am engaging with Martin Sokefeld's argument (2006) about the role of *'critical events'* in the formation of diasporas and their collective political and social actions toward any particular situation. Sokefeld in his work 'Mobilizing to transnational space: a social movement approach to the formation of diaspora' maintains that it is not necessarily the relationship with geographical boundary of 'place of origin' that constitute the idea of diaspora as diaspora did not emerge as a consequence of direct migration from one place to another. Rather it comes into being as a result of some critical events or specific developments. Sokefeld presents the examples of Kashmiris in Britain who developed a sense of diaspora after anti-Indian militancy started in Kashmir in 1989 onwards. The Sikhs emerged as international diaspora after the movement of Kahlistan in India and the army action on their sacred site Golden Temple in India. However, although these two groups were experiencing migration over longer periods of time, their introduction as diaspora at public, as well as at global levels was a result of their response to some *'critical events'* that were social and political in

nature. Sokefeld argues that community is not a social reality but a discursive practice. Relating my fieldwork timings with the critical events like that of 1) Arab Spring generating a series of political protest and activism among Muslim youth in Birmingham, 2) England Riots resulting in three Muslim youth deaths in Birmingham, 3) students and anti-cut protest 2010 and 2011, 4) Conservatives winning local elections in 2010 which marginalised the local Muslim community, 5) Centenary Celebration of famous Urdu poet, 6) Pakistani floods being most important event of the year among the Muslim community and their relationship with various Muslim charity groups, 7) completion of a decade of 9/11 attacks in USA and its impact on Muslim neighbourhoods in Birmingham where they had to live under surveillance regime 24/7, it was a 'busy year' for Birmingham Muslims; so was it for me as an ethnographer locating myself among Birmingham Muslims within that very time. I could observe and get involved in the broader societal picture of everyday life of Birmingham Muslims which they reflected through conducting their routines on daily basis (Giddens 1984) by reflecting their subjectivities about the above mentioned critical events.

"With a faith in ethnography, the mundane expressions of piety can be seen in the acts of charity and sacrifice" (Deeb 2006, pp. 41). Taking on Deeb, I started observing the public performance of pious and moral lives by Birmingham Muslims in a range of gatherings but these were mostly religious and social gatherings. One primary indicator of the public performance of piety and moral life was the presence in mosques on Friday prayer or other prayer times and in informal gatherings and discussions after prayers. Piety-led lives of successful Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs were best exhibited in the events related to charity and fundraising. The act of doing charity, and giving donations, is performed publically by Birmingham Muslims. Different charity organisations, affluent and influential Muslim businessmen or reformist Muslim groups organise a charity event, a religious lecture, a gathering in mosque or a poetry or singing programme. Usually seats are allocated to guests in any such programmes in advance. There is a fixed ticket price that people pay to buy tickets for seats in the venue of event. Sometimes, people buy seats upon their arrival but mostly it is decided in advance that who is going to sit where. Organisers of charity event deliver tickets and seat numbers at people's houses, offices or shops. The venue is selected depending upon the resources, size and strength of Muslim charity organisation. The venue is mostly selected at a hotel, restaurant, marriage hall, or conference theatre in Muslim majority neighbourhoods. International Muslim charities do fundraising in big conference halls near the city centre, or the

Edgbaston Cricket Ground or the Central Mosque of Birmingham. Medium level Muslim charity organisations organise their event in local schools at Alum Rock, Sparkhill or in any *Halal* food restaurant on Ladypool Road.

The organised way of arranging a charity or fundraising event can be seen at reformist Muslims charity events and the same pattern is followed by well-established Muslim charity networks in Birmingham. Birmingham Muslims who are not affiliated directly with either of these groups usually organise a charity fundraising event by inviting any religious or literary scholar from abroad, or a singer or any sports celebrity, mainly cricketers. In different circles of Muslims in Birmingham, few individuals, who are well known for having expertise in oratory skills required for such occasion, are expected to perform the role of stage secretary or a focal person for fundraising during the event. The programmes usually start a bit later than the time mentioned on invitation cards. In case of any religious gathering, the sermon and lecture is delivered first and then donations are asked for and fundraising starts. However, if it is a cultural event, the fundraising is done before the performance of the main artist or singer. People give money by writing a cheque, or by pledging a fixed amount of money publically, while the organisers write down their details or provide people details of the bank account of charity organisation. The organisers also explain how to make a quick money bank transfer into their accounts to the individuals who pledge money. There is a system of follow up and some organisations write letters the next day to individuals who pledge money, others do phone calls or send their workers to collect cheques etc. On every Friday, and almost every day during the holy month of Ramadan, volunteers of Muslim charity organisations can be seen on the main roads of all southern neighbourhoods of Muslim residents in Birmingham. To understand charity in Islam, it is not sufficient to collect interesting data, one also need a conceptual framework that makes sense of this (Kochuyt 2009).

I stayed in Moseley, a mixed neighbourhood in the south-west of city centre. I rented a bed set in a street next to a famous Sunni-*Deobandi* mosque. It was convenient for me to walk or travel by bus from my residence to various Muslim neighbourhoods in the south of Birmingham. In the beginning, I spend most of my time in mosques, and soon I got my introduction to Faiz Ahmed Faiz centenary celebration committee members. I then started spending my afternoons in the local journalists office in the Balsall Heath neighbourhood who worked for Urdu newspapers and Urdu TV channels. I was lucky in that sense as I was introduced to these people organising events for centenary celebrations

by another anthropologist, Dr. Rubina Jasani, PhD from the University of Sussex under the supervision of Dr. Filippo Osella in 2008, who was doing her job in Birmingham on a research project with the National Health Services. Dr. Jasani introduced me to her circle of her friends and through them, I met Urdu language journalists in Birmingham. I can safely describe my 'access' to my research participants an easy one in the beginning.

1.17 Reflexivity, Positionality and Access

My own identity is very crucial and critical when it comes to my own exploring the topics of Islamic reformism, moral economies, piety and charity amongst Birmingham Muslims. "The identity of anyone or any groups is produced simultaneously in many different locales of activity by many different agents of many different purposes. One's identity of where one lives is only a social context and not most important one in which it is shaped" (Marcus 1998, pp. 62-63). This applies not only to my research participants but also to myself. Before coming to Britain in 2008 for my PhD, I stayed in Pakistan for 25 years of my life. I am by birth and by nationality Pakistani and my ethnicity is Punjabi. I completed my early and higher education up until my M.Phil in anthropology from different educational institutions at Lahore and Islamabad which are two famous cities of Pakistan. I am fluent in Punjabi, Urdu and English languages. My parents are also Punjabi and my family is Muslim by religion and practice the *Salafi/Wahhabi* stream of Islam. Personally, I am open with respect to my beliefs and that of others/my friends a universities considered and described myself a 'cultural Muslim'. However, I had a rigorous socialisation and training in Quranic lessons, *Hadiths*, interpretations of the Quran, Muslim history and Islamic Studies during my childhood and early youth which made me acquainted with Arabic and Persian languages. I have also studied the history of Islam and I am familiar with religious and reformist movements within Islam in Pakistan and elsewhere in the world. I am also familiar with the theological and ecclesiastical debates, and differences of beliefs between the various streams of Muslims, but mainly that of *Barelvi* and *Wahhabi*. Additionally, prior to my PhD and fieldwork, I already had information about the saints and mother-shrines in Pakistan and India of the *Pirs* and *Pirkhanas* whom I came to know in Birmingham. Apart from that, I had prior knowledge of reformist Muslim groups like *Jamaat-i-Islami, Dawat-i-Islami* and *Tablighi Jamaat* and their functions and operations in Pakistan where I visited mosques and prayed with people. *Barelvis* and *Salafi/Wahhabis* have slightly different bodily postures while praying five times a day. Having a familiarity with both, I used to pray in *Barelvi* mosques with *Barelvi* styles and in *Salafi* mosques with *Salafi* bodily postures.

My proper academic training as an anthropologist and experiences of doing ethnographic fieldwork before my PhD helped me a lot to overcome 'homeblindness' regarding my topic and research participants that I might have because of my familiarity and positionality that I carried with me as a result of rigorously training in Muslim tradition during first twenty years of my life (Eriksen 2010).

I tried my best not to give my opinion on the matters of religious practices where Birmingham Muslims have differences of opinion. While one research participant asked me what are my views about *Milad* (celebrating birthday of Prophet Muhammad), something that is controversial and an 'innovative practice' in Islam for *Salafis* but highly significant and sacred event for *Barelvis*, I replied that I do not have much knowledge, or information, about the religious authenticity of *Milad* so I do not have any opinion whether it should be celebrated or not. "In terms of [the] presentation of one's self, the best approach is to be naïve and knowledgeable" (O'Reilly 2009, p. 10). When meeting Mr. Qazi, a famous reformist Muslim and community leader, I never mentioned that I had any prior previous information about *Jamat-i-Islami* in Pakistan and I preferred listening to his plans and efforts for making Islam relevant in everyday lives of people.

The Faiz Ahmed Faiz's centenary celebration related events in Birmingham were a chance for me to introduce myself as somebody with great interest in poetry, aesthetics and cultural history of North India and Pakistan to Birmingham Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs as well as to reformists Muslim groups. While some community members thought to ask the Birmingham City Council for the establishment of a cultural centre for young people of Pakistani heritage and background, some of them said that they would find me a job if their cultural centre project is approved by the City Council.

Another shock occurred during the middle of my fieldwork while I was participating in the annual conference of a *Barelvi* reformist group, *Dawat-i-Islami*. My journalist friend and research participants told me about the annual conference and I joined them to attend it for observations. There were around 4000 to 5000 people participating in the annual conference of *Dawat-i-Islami*. It was a busy day for organisers and I was trying to take a photograph of a big poster which was displayed publically at the entrance of the mosque and which showed the picture of cheque of £10,000 given to them as a donation. Suddenly, some participants, who were members of *Dawat-i-Islami*, came towards me and asked me why I was taking photographs. I told them that I am PhD student and I have come here to observe the annual conference. They asked me why should they believe that

I am not a British intelligence officer who may be taking pictures of this religious event which can be used for the political purpose of misrepresenting the Birmingham Muslim community. I told them that they can ask about me from my journalist friends. I called my friend who was in the main hall of mosque and told him the details. He came outside to the entrance and one of the members of *Dawat-i-islami* knew him. After my friend, Mr. Hashim, introduced me to those members of *Dawat-i-Islami* who were questioning me, they were satisfied. One of them told me that they cannot rely on anybody these days as most of the people come to the mosques as spies with secret recording technologies in their dress and take pictures and then try to link peaceful people like them with 'potentially terrorists' organisations or activities in Birmingham.

I thus discovered that Birmingham Muslims are a community under siege[2]. Birmingham's Muslim neighbourhoods have highest ratio of CCTV cameras per person in the world, said Mr Hashim. Mr. Hashim told me that journalist like him are facing difficulties after Channel 4 secretly made videos of sermons of imams in Green Lane Mosque in Birmingham and then broadcasted it in an effort to demonise Muslims as advocates of hate speech and terrorism[3]. I then realised the sensitivity of taking photos, recording interviews and making videos in the Muslim neighbourhoods and I decided against this in future as it can jeopardize my rapport with my research participants and my role as a researcher. The extensive surveillance of Muslim majority neighbourhoods in Birmingham made it difficult for me to have access at some places and individuals who were afraid of being made scapegoats by British security agencies' hunt for 'terrorist sympathisers'. Particularly, people at the biggest *Deobandi* mosque in Birmingham, were extremely conscious and sensitive about talking to anybody who resemble to them like a journalist or anybody taking notes, recording or taking pictures. After living a 'decade of suspicion' (Rytter and Pedersen 2013) under governments' high surveillance, *Deobandi* in Birmingham were not welcoming to anybody who can potentially label them as 'Taliban' in media because they follow same law school of jurisprudence of Sunni Islam as it is followed by Taliban in Afghanistan. People at *Deobandi* mosques refused to talk to me whenever I introduced them as researcher or student. Mr. Hashim told me that he mostly receives requests from other journalists, particularly white journalist from English media, to introduce them with any member of *Deobandi* Muslims, but he

---

[2] http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2010/jun/04/surveillance-cameras-birmingham-muslims
[3] http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/dispatches-undercover-mosque/

apologises them as he himself finds it difficult to collect information for reporting from *Deobandi* Muslims.

At the same time, I think it would be wise to highlight this practice of putting communities under surveillance as counter-productive because people feel more marginalised and excluded from participating in mainstream social life. "Critical ethnography attempts to expose hidden agendas, challenge oppressive assumption, describe power relations and generally critique taken-for-granted [assumptions]" (O'Reilly 2009, pp. 52). I believe one contribution of this research is to represent Birmingham Muslims who focus on their everyday lived experiences which go beyond the post-9/11 media driven, populist and essentialising perceptions of Birmingham Muslims as 'potential terrorists'. Marsden (2005) has reflected on similar issue in his work with Chitrali Muslims in Northern Pakistan. Marsden explores Chitrali Muslims who live creative and lively everyday life routines and who are concerned with their depictions as 'fundamentalists eager to wage a holy war'.

1.18   Other Methodological Complexities and Challenges

Bolognani (2007) in her work about methodological issues of doing fieldwork and research among British Muslims emphasis on the point that due to the post 9/11 and 7/7 political context in Britain, something that Rytter and Pedersen (2013) call that Muslims going through a 'decade of suspicion' after 9/11. Bolognani views that gaining access and building trust to do research among British Muslims has become difficult for researchers. Bolognani argues that pre-9/11 researches among British Muslims also faced challenged of trust and access, however, female researcher has some advantages over male researchers in terms of gaining access in gender segregated environments. As one respondent of Bolognani narrates British Muslims have lost interest in 'white officialdom and white authority' (p.282), I will extend the scope of concern and suspicion of respondents from giving access to the researchers to the level of positionality, identity and mutilocality of the researcher herself/himself. Originating from a Pakistani and Muslim background, my ethnographic experience with Birmingham Muslims made me aware of the fact that while 'being white and researcher' might become problematic for researchers as a Muslim research participant, after living through decade of suspicion in Britain, might frame them equal to 'white journalists and officialdom' who are hyperactively looking for 'spicy' bits of news of Muslim communities and then reporting it in a paper after twisting it with neo-con tilt; non-white researcher and researchers of

Muslim background, at many levels, might be exempted from this generalised 'research barrier' as experienced and mentioned by many anthropologists and other researchers (Werbner 1990, McLoughlin 2000, Bolognani 2007, Gilliat-Ray 2010).

Among white anthropologists working with Muslims in Britain, gender is an established category that influences the scale of access and trust, female anthropologist having an edge over males (Jeffery 1976, Goodwin 1994), however, race and religion, e.g. the identity of non-white, Muslim origin ethnographers doing fieldwork among British Muslims and its influence on the issues like access and trust are the methodological areas that has not been discussed and debated in anthropology yet. In sum, the methodological issues discussed and debated in anthropology of doing ethnography with British Muslims so far, intrinsically conceptualise ethnographer as white and of non-Muslim background with English as first language; the ethnographic reductionism which exclude me as an ethnographer.

Having said that, I am not claiming that being non-white and of Muslim origin as an ethnographer among British Muslims is always advantageous, it has its own complexities. Being non-white Muslim and of Pakistani origin ethnographer, I was perceived as a *freshie* by my interlocutors. *Freshie* is a complex term that is apparently used in insulting manners for newcomers or first generation migrants who come to Britain by second or third generation British Muslims/South Asians. Usually second or third generation members of Muslims community, particularly youth, use this term in order to make fun of the manners, ignorance, etiquettes, and ambitions of first generation migrants, especially those coming from South Asian backgrounds. While *freshie* is a socially determined criterion to standardise the expected behaviours and also to make fun of those who are 'newcomers and don't know how things work in Britain', it is also an exotic category for those who are born and brought up in Britain. A *freshie* is a reminder to them about their parents, grandparents and first generation ancestors' everyday life and practices. For me, as an ethnographer, it proved to be advantageous in terms of data collection and information gathering. One of my research participant and a friend, a British Muslim of Pakistani origin said to me, "the way you talk and things you know about British Muslims, you don't sound like a typical *freshie*". For the youth, it was fun to call me *freshie* while having a banter or a funny conversation, and for elderly, the conversations with me was a reminder of their 'good old days in Pakistan'. After completing my fieldwork, I now realise that being Pakistani was in favour of my

ethnographic experience as I might not have been able to initiate conversations and topics if I were a British Pakistani, born and brought up in Birmingham with a proper *Brummie* accent. Some of my research participants viewed me as somebody who is a '*freshie*' but who has the right attitude to become part of the Birmingham Muslim community.

Usually the informal conversations begin with my research participants asking me the question where is my hometown in Pakistan and that led to the gossip about shared knowledge and personal experiences about geographies in Pakistan between researcher and research participants and also within research participants. Most of the ethnographic information that I could collect was a result of informal chats and gossip about everyday life with my research participants in Birmingham. There was a lot of Mullah-bashing in informal gatherings of British Muslims in Birmingham while they talk about topics ranging from business, family matters, politics, country of origin to music, fashion, scandals, weddings . The notion that British Muslims being under the pressure and carrying the burden of becoming 'representative of Islam' (Bolognani 2007), explaining the misconceptions about Islam whenever confronted by interview like situation, becomes relative and situation specific one, depending on the identity and focus of discussions an ethnographer might lead to or become interested in during interview or conversation. It was not easy to have long conversations and lots of informal discussions with Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham. "It is actually crucial to take first step tentatively and carefully. Sometimes a setting or topic can be very sensitive and access has to be negotiated carefully. Access is not permitted for the reasons of privacy. Elites or powerful groups can be particularly difficult to access because they have power and knowledge to obstruct access in subtle ways, and perhaps have more reasons than others not to want to be exposed" (O'Reilly 2009, pp. 9). The norms of interaction and bodily movements with researcher and research participants in a private space or official space and in Muslim public space were different while doing fieldwork with Muslim chaplains (Gilliat-Ray 2010).

Wilding (2007) enhances the meanings and appropriateness of emic and etic anthropological categories while researching transnational processes and how they reflect the concerns of research participants. Wilding maintains that it takes a year or more while conducting ethnography to grasp emic perspective. Here comes my ethnographic problematisation whether I needed a year's time to grasp emic perspective of my research participants or more; or less. I was born in Pakistan, and majority of my research

participants, Muslims businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham, migrated from Pakistan to Birmingham or were of Pakistani background. Unlike many anthropologists, I did not had any linguistic barriers or even cultural barrier while interacting with them. If moving from one 'emic to another' constitute the foundation of ethnographic immersion (Wilding 2007), then what about the 'shared emic' that I carry with myself being a Pakistani, born and raised in Pakistan while doing my ethnographic fieldwork with British Pakistanis in Birmingham?

On the other hand, transnational scope of anthropology and anthropological literature as well transnational anthropologist pose similar challenges to other anthropologists. The work an anthropologist have done in one part of the world can be detrimental for the work of another anthropologists studying a group of people that are transnationally linked yet placed in different geographical spaces thousands of miles apart. While the presence of an anthropologist in Birmingham, Dr. Jasani, was a great help to me in order to know people initially, and then make my own contacts through them, mentioning the name of another well-known anthropologist, Pnina Werbner, became a very crucial and difficult phase in my fieldwork with one *Barelvi* reformist Muslim group. The development of my rapport with Birmingham Muslims and access to their wider networks was at stake suddenly. I was at the Ghamkol Sharif Mosque, in the Small Heath neighbourhood of Birmingham, talking with the manager of the mosque and the shrine-to-be (for details see chapter two) when he asked what is this anthropology subject that I am studying. Whilst answering his question, and whilst explaining what anthropology is, I mentioned the name of Pnina Werbner and that she has written a book about the Ghamkol Sharif Shrine in Pakistan. The manager was suddenly upset and infuriated to hear the name and asked me immediately if I have any relationship with Pnina Werbner or if I am sent by her? He also mentioned I should not lie while sitting at a holy place and tell him honestly if I am an 'agent'? I told him that as a student of anthropology, I happen to see her book 'Pilgrim of Love (2003)' but I do not know her directly. Then the manager said that she was a spy who misused them and wrote a book which was offensive to them and they even burnt her book. This was a shock for me and I clarified to the manger immediately that I have no direct link with Pnina Werbner and that I am originally from Pakistan and pursuing my own studies here in Britain. Then I provided him some other references of my affiliation with universities in Pakistan and people I knew in Birmingham and he was satisfied. It was a shock for me to see how the work of an anthropologist in one part of

the world can be hampered by the work of another anthropologist in the same community living in another part of the world.

My ethnographer encounter with my research participants of Ghamkol Sharif Islamic Centre in Birmingham and its relationship with the previously done anthropological work by Pnina Werbner (2003) can be recorded as an anthropological case in any ethnographic court as "*Pnina Werbner Vs. Sufyan Abid (2011) Ethnography, Ghamkol Sharif*", if this way of citing my methodological challenge might be helpful in clarifying my situation. Werbner's work 'Pilgrim of Love (2003)' was perceived as an offensive book by devotees of Ghamkol Shareef shrine in Birmingham. The book was burnt by the devotees of Ghamkol Sharif shrine in Pakistan. How my ethnographic journey was affected by it provides another insight of transnational impact of anthropological literature and its relationship with doing ethnography with transnational groups.

1.19   Data Collection and Methods

This thesis is an ethnographic exploration of the themes of Islamic reformism, moral economic practices, public performance of piety and the practices of charity and donation among Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham. Different ethnographic methods of data collection were used for collecting the data. The aim of the thesis is to study Islamic reformism, piety and charity among Birmingham Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs. Therefore, the process of data collection remained focused on what was going on in the locale of my PhD research. This was conducted mainly through participant observation. This participant observation was a type of 'social learning' for me where I 'learnt new forms of cognition in order to make sense of field environment' (Mitchell 1997). This particular approach helped me to understand and observe the underlying structures of the aspirations of Birmingham Muslims by systematic evaluating their ongoing religious and economic life and by capturing their perspectives on social fusion and fission. The fieldwork was a process of 'contextualizing' the observations and responses by having some basic knowledge of the structure of social relationships and the underlying social meanings and sensitivity of the power relations (Davies 2008) within the Birmingham Muslim communities and neighbourhoods.

My previous academic training in anthropology and experience of doing fieldwork during my M. Phil research in anthropology was a plus for me when conducting my fieldwork. I have conducted six months of ethnographic fieldwork in North-Western Pakistan among the Pashtuns in 2007. I conducted that fieldwork among the people of different ethnic

groups with a different culture and language from that of mine. One year of ethnographic fieldwork was not only a process of data collection but also a phase in which I learned to connect the dots of social life of people with each other where I came up with a grounded theory which explained the links, trajectories and connectedness of the themes of Islamic reform, economic practices, piety and charity and philanthropy. A researcher constructs grounded theory through his/her engagement with world and it is not a linear and calculated process of merely writing a report (Clarke 2005). Thus grounded theory is constructed and not discovered (Chamraz 2006).

"Ethnography is iterative-inductive research" (O'Reilly 2009, pp. 3). After three to four months of fieldwork and doing observations and participant observation, I started to think about in-depth interviews. There is not always a clear distinction between doing participant observation and conducting an interview (O'Reilly 2009). I started my ethnographic interviews with my research participants after I made sense of social and geographical settings of Birmingham's Muslim neighbourhoods and after having acquaintances with considerable number of people. Ethnographic interviews, unlike other forms of interviews, are conducted in a context where interviewers have a prior introduction and rapport with research participants (Heyl 2001). I had the potential to do sixty three in-depth, or ethnographic, interviews. These interviews were not done in one setting and some were done after sixteen meetings with one research participant over the period of one year fieldwork. In the selection of research participants for interviews, I used non-probability purposive sampling. The latter involves selecting research participants purposefully in order to meet the criteria that is reflective of representation of research topic while accessing people (Ritchie and Lewis 2003). Nearly half of the interviews, thirty five out of sixty three, are with Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham. Eighteen interviews were conducted with reformist Muslims. The remaining ten were with activists, salaried professional or volunteers for Muslim charitable organisations. Here, I faced a methodological dilemma whilst allocating a number to the category of research participants like Muslim businessmen and entrepreneur or reformist Muslim. Because it was difficult, and almost impossible, to categorise one person into one category like Muslim businessman and entrepreneur and not the other like reformist Muslim.

Along with in-depth, or ethnographic interviews, I could do twenty two participants observations of charity and fundraising events. In some of the fundraising events, I was

working as a volunteer, and in some of them, I was sitting as an observer. Most of these charity events were religious in nature and were organised by reformist Muslims. These were the best social platform for me to collect data about charity and donation related practices on Birmingham Muslims. "Ethnographic study of actual collection and distribution of Zakat in a Muslim community would be a worthwhile project; but its difficulty and sensitivity should not be underestimated. One aspect is that beneficiaries are often unwilling to disclose that they have been helped for the fear of compromising their eligibility for public welfare benefits. Another is that special religious merit is gained by giving alms in secret" (Bethall 1999, pp. 34). I faced the same challenge as my research participants, especially Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs, never like or wanted to talk about how much money they were giving for donations and charity and how much they were saving.

I finished my fieldwork in November 2011 but remained in contact and I am still in contact with my research participants. I frequently visited Birmingham after finishing my fieldwork. 'Gone native' is seen as offensive term associated with colonial ethnography (O'Reilly 2009, pp. 88). I have been in touch with my research participant after fieldwork and they invited me to various events, sometimes as a speaker, and sometimes as organiser for an event. I feel among them as 'native' as some of my research participants are in Birmingham because we share similar levels and interests regarding knowledge, participations and dealings with Muslim charities, poetry sessions, groups discussion about Islam and politics and relationship with reformist Muslim groups in Birmingham. Even some local Muslim councillors at Birmingham City Council asked me to write speeches for them that they were supposed to deliver on various social events.

I took fieldnotes, jottings and writing ethnographic observations during my fieldwork. The most important phase was to connect different themes emerging from ethnographic data with an argument. The perfect timing for writing this is when a researcher found a story in the collected data and in the analytical deliberations (Berg 2004). It took me some time to formulate my fieldwork data into a coherent argument that would logically span throughout my PhD.

1.20   Structure of Thesis

The structure of this thesis is descriptive and analytical mainly. I have tried to come up with a grounded theory about my topic in a straight-forward sense. The first chapter contains two parts. The first part deals with the problematization of the concepts like

Islamic reformism, moral economies, piety and charity by engaging with relevant anthropological debates and literature. I have described and operationalised the terms and categories of analyses that I have used throughout this thesis in order to discuss my interlocutors. The first chapter also presents the main argument of this thesis. I have located the practices of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs regarding Islamic reform, piety and charity into the ongoing debates and discussions about these themes in Anthropology and other social sciences. My argument in first chapter helped me to construct grounded theory about Birmingham Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs by engaging with literature about Islamic reform, piety and charity. The second party of first chapter deals with methodology and my routine during fieldwork. I also discuss the issues of access, rapport, problems and ethical dilemmas that I faced during the course of my fieldwork.

The second chapter of this thesis describes the contestations about Islamic reformism and provides ethnographic details about how various reformist Muslim groups present multiple interpretations of being a good Muslim. This chapter deals with everyday life experiences and religious practices of Birmingham Muslims and especially that of reformist Muslim groups. For the sake of analysis, I categorise various reformist Muslim groups of both *Barelvi* and *Salafi* streams into various typologies based on their methods of outreaching Birmingham Muslims. Some of these categories are old ones like *Salafi* and *Barelvi* while I have tried to come up with new analytical categories about various reformist groups and sub-groups. The second chapter explains how each reformist Muslim group tries their best to assert their identity as only true and authentic Muslim. This chapter mainly focuses on the contestation between various reformist Muslim groups in Birmingham along with providing introduction of various Muslim groups and their strategies.

Third chapter deals with economic practices and economic networks of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham. This chapter also focuses on the ideals of being successful in life and afterlife that are vital for Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs. The chapter also explains the interactions and relationships of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs with each other beyond their associations with various reformist Muslim groups. The aspirations of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs and their strategies on savings is the main theme that run across the chapter. Economic practices and ethics of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs like self-evaluation,

businessmen partnerships, secret economic plans and deals and relationship and influence of reformist Muslim individuals on the choices of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs are major issue that this chapter explores in details.

Fourth chapter of this thesis bridges up the themes and links the ethnographic details that I discuss in chapter two and three with the one in chapter five and six. The fourth chapter deals with public performance of piety and moral life of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs. The chapter explains how Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs learn giving public performances of their pious and morality-led lives in public sphere and how reformist Muslim groups and individuals encourage and appreciate these public performances. The chapter also explores the politics and economics of giving public performances of piety and moral life. This chapter explains how Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs enhance their economic agendas by acquiring the pious introductions of themselves and at the same time, how affluent and rich Muslim businessmen are prone towards giving public performance of piety. The chapter delineates how different print and electronic media are used by reformist Muslims as well as Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs to inform others about their 'self-righteousness'.

The fifth chapter of this thesis explores the factors and reasons behind the practices of doing charity and giving donations publically by Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham. This chapters explores how Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs purify and enhance their assets, possession and surplus by doing charity in the form of *Sadaqa* and *Sadaqa-i-Jariyya*. The chapter describes how Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs enter into a trade with Allah through act of charity and philanthropy. Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs keep in mind the betterment of life in form of material gains and that of afterlife in form of spiritual merits in mind while doing charity and giving donations. This chapter also explore how understanding of making life and afterlife better through associating with the global Muslim community or through linking up with local socio-political realities makes Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs do charity. The chapter also traces out the roots and relationships of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs with their countries of origin or with less well-off relatives pressurise them for their involvement of charitable activities. Also, the chapter sheds light on the warnings by reformist Muslim groups and how they play an important role for Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs to do charity and donation.

Chapter six of this thesis explains how Muslim charity organisations become a site for Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs to assert their identity of successful community leaders and also becomes Muslim public sphere for them to give public performances of piety and morality-led life. Equally, Muslim charity organisations become sites for reformist Muslim groups and individuals whereby they assert their identities as true and authentic Muslims and advance their version and mission of *Da'wa*. This chapter mainly explains the contestations between Muslim charity organisations in Birmingham and different as well as contradictory viewpoints about how and where a Muslim should be giving charity money. This chapter begins with the history and evolution of Muslim charity organisations in Birmingham narrated by my research participants. The chapter enters into details about contestations between Muslim charity organisations about what is it to be a proper Muslim charity organisation by using the example of two big Muslim charity organisations and discourses surrounding around the notions of true Islamic charity practices. The chapter also looks at the transnational yet transcendental notions of Muslim charity organisation's network connecting Birmingham Muslims of various backgrounds into the membership of an imagined community of Muslims, *Ummah*. Mainly, this chapter presents how the interpretations reformist Muslim groups and individuals about what it is to be a good Muslim influences the decisions of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs such as whom they should be giving their charity money, where it should be utilized and how it should be utilized?

Chapter seven, the last chapter of this thesis sums up the argument, connect anthropological debates about themes under study in chapter one with the findings from ethnographic data and conclude the discussion and analyses.

Chapter 2

Contesting Islamic Reformisms and Multiple Interpretations of Being a 'Good Muslim': The Everyday Life Experiences and Religious Practices of Birmingham Muslims

Islamic reformism has been considerably debated in anthropological writings in recent years as anthropologists have tried to make sense of the efforts and impacts of the work of reformist Muslims. Recent anthropological works generally engage with the previous approaches of Geertz (1968) and Gellner (1969) by refuting the understanding of Islamic reformism through binaries like folk vs. official Islam, puritanism vs. sufism or urban literate reformist Islam pitted against rural traditional cultural ways of practicing Islam in everyday life. More recent approaches instead focus more on how the interactions of these binaries are reflected in situation-specific ways in the everyday lives of Muslims (Osellas 2008, Simpson 2013, Marsden 2005, 2013, Jasani 2013, Ahmed 2013). In this chapter, with the help of ethnographic data, I am going to discuss and explain the varieties of reformist Islam which are reflected in the everyday lives of Birmingham Muslims; how the reformist Muslim groups are presenting themselves via the most acceptable face/form of Islam; the nature and scope of reformist Muslim groups' work; the contesting and multiple interpretations of being a 'good Muslim' by various reformist groups; and the similarities and differences between the messages of reformist groups who belong to different Islamic sects/streams. Most importantly, I will be discussing these dynamics and reflections not only between various reformist Muslim groups but also from within a sect/stream of practicing Islam in everyday life of Birmingham Muslim.

My argument in this chapter is that there is an element of Islamic reform in all forms of different Islamic streams or sects amongst Birmingham Muslim. Each group of Birmingham Muslims, howsoever Sufi or puritan it may be, have their own perspective and framework of Islamic reformism which allows them to engage with other Muslims outside their group and also with non-Muslims at the same time, so that they spread their message and make it relevant for their followers and others in everyday life. Before I extend my argument, it is pertinent to define and explain what Islamic reform is how I use this term operationally in my research. I engage with the recent work of Robinson (2013) where he examines Islamic reformism in the nineteenth and early twentieth

century South Asian context as an 'assault on religious authority of past, emphasis on human will, education of middle classes and standardisation of basic text as rational explanation of conducting everyday life'. It is clear that there is no single definition of the term but contextual interpretations of Islamic reformism are there. Whilst keeping Robinson's interpretation in mind, I will explain Islamic reformism in the context of the everyday lives of Birmingham Muslims as a process and an effort by a group, or groups, of likeminded Muslims to align the 'authentic Islamic way' of conducting everyday life with prevailing social, economic and political challenges. Central to this process is the wish to assert a Muslim identity locally as well as globally, whilst gaining most out of 'prevalent modernity' they are living with and in due course, creating their own version of modernity and redefining/adjusting with the prevalent one. Each Muslim reformist group in Birmingham stays alive and present not only as religious but also as a social, economic and political group. Thus each group provides a platform for social action and maintaining local and global connections for its followers whilst providing a basis for the interpretation of conducting everyday life.

In this chapter, I am presenting my argument that no Muslim group is an exception to this kind of Islamic reformism and there are multiple and contesting interpretations of Islamic reformism available for Birmingham Muslims. My ethnographic data is helpful for understanding each Muslim group's unique way of advancing their reformisms. This is the beginning of my argument and in the coming chapters, I will relate it to my wider thesis argument that Birmingham Muslims are prone to multiple interpretations of Islamic reformisms which provide the basis for them to formulate economic, social and political alliances. Each individual, within the reformist groups, as well as Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham, thus, try to 'become successful' in this life and the afterlife by manifesting and giving public performance of piety and virtuous life and by donating money for charity and philanthropic works. However, the act of being pious and doing charity is mostly influenced by the interpretation of any reformist Muslim group about how to conduct everyday life.

Below, I will deal with the various groups and individual of reformist Muslims in Birmingham, their networking and teachings, engagements with their followers and with Muslim communities, and their interpretations of being a 'good Muslim'.

2.1 A Grave Waiting for its Dead: Reformist Agendas of *Barelvi*s at Ghamkol Sharif Mosque, Birmingham

"How can you expect your followers and their next generations to remain attached with their beliefs and values as they used to do at their place of origin before coming to Birmingham? How would they stick with *Barelvi* rituals and practices in this far off land like Birmingham, United Kingdom while there is no grave, tomb or shrine of any saint here? Don't you think the other puritan groups or sects of Muslims with their reformist agendas and interpretations of Islam have leverage on you as they don't need any shrine or any grave to propagate their interpretation of Islam and in spreading their message?"

I asked these questions to the administrator of the Central Mosque of Ghamkol Sharif[4] in Birmingham, after I completed my first tour of the most famous Islamic Centre of Sunni-*Barelvi* Muslims in Birmingham under his guidance. Instead of answering my questions and, in a way, understanding my curiosities, Mr. Fazal Elahi, the administrator held my hand politely and started walking outside the main door of mosque. He called a young man sitting near the reception to bring the keys to unlock the door. On the rear side wall of the big car parking space of outside the mosque of Ghamkol Sharif in Birmingham, there is a small door, which is locked and in the middle of the wall. Mr. Fazal Elahi opened the door and I could see another building under construction which was not as big in size as Ghamkol Sharif Mosque but about one quarter of size of it. In the middle of the construction site, Mr. Fazal Elahi pointed towards a hole in the ground and said with a contented smile, "Here is the answer of your all questions and a result of our all future plans". At first I could not understand what he was saying but soon I realised that the hole looked like an empty grave. Mr Fazal Elahi then explained that after a long legal battle with the local authorities at the Birmingham City Council, they won the case to establish the grave of the disciple of *Zinda Pir* here in the heart of Birmingham. He will be buried here in Birmingham after he dies in Pakistan where he is living currently. Hazrat Sufi Abdullah Khan, the disciple of *Zinda Pir*, has lived in Birmingham for decades and has served as a spiritual leader to local Birmingham Muslims. Now he wishes to die while being close to his saint patron so he is spending his last days at that shrine in Pakistan though he occasionally visits Birmingham.

---

[4] Ghamkol Sharif is a very famous Sufi Shrine in North Pakistan. The word Ghamkol Sharif is literally the name of a small town in the Kohat district of North Western Pakistan. It is the shrine of a twentieth century saint famously known as *Zinda Pir* (the living saint). The devotees of *Zinda Pir* have established a mosque in Birmingham with a similar name; the Central Mosque Ghamkol Sharif.

I asked similar questions about the need of a shrine to Mr. Shaikh, a key informant of my research, who is a very important person and an activist as well as community leader for local *Barelvi* Muslims. He did not tell me the details of the story of the empty grave, but every time he told me with a smile and satisfaction, "This issue (absence of shrine) has been taken care of by *Barelvis*". Mr. Shaikh was quite optimistic about the future of *Barelvi* Islam in Birmingham. He said that the *Barelvis* are luckily more numerous than any other Muslim sect in Birmingham, and that their numbers provide an edge for them over others. "Keeping the socio-political and religious representation of Muslims in Birmingham, I am sure that the face of Islam in Birmingham will be that of *Barelvi* Islam in future", he told me.

Muslims of South Asian origin in Birmingham follow different streams/sects of practising Islam in their everyday lives. The majority of Muslims in South Asia follow the *Barelvi* sect of practising Islam. *Barelvis* follow and practice Islam whilst keeping South Asian culture and traditions intact within their religious practices. An inclination towards Sufism, a devotion to saints, visiting shrines and the performance of shrine related rituals are vital in practising Islam for *Barelvis* along with a distinct perception and understanding of the Prophet Muhammad as person. *Barelvis* are different to other Sunni-Islam sects in South Asia with regards their beliefs about Prophet Muhammad's spiritual powers and over the issue of his veiled presence in the world after his physical death. *Barelvi* Islam exhibits itself through South Asian populist ways of practising Islam in everyday life among its followers. Most of the important rituals and practices of *Barelvi* Islam revolve around saints, their miracles, their tombs and shrines in South Asia.

Likewise, the majority of Muslims in Birmingham are from various parts of South Asia and practice *Barelvi* Islam. The Ghamkol Sharif Mosque and Islamic Centre in Birmingham is one of the biggest projects of establishing a shrine-like infrastructure by *Barelvis* in the UK. There are a number of active *Barelvi* reformist groups in Birmingham and each one of them generally associates itself with a particular saint or shrine back in South Asia and they organise various social and religious activities for their followers in Birmingham. However, the absence or lack of any famous shrine or grave of any saint in Birmingham creates a gap in the relationship between philosophy, teachings, messages, history, narratives, practices and the interpretations of *Barelvi* Islam within the daily lives

of *Barelvi* Muslims. When it comes to practising or preaching their version of Islam in Birmingham, the lack of any famous or functional shrine becomes an obstacle when relating *Barelvism* in a meaningful and comprehensive way. This gives an opportunity for puritan, rationalists and orthodox Sunni sects of Muslims in Birmingham, like *Salafis*, *Ahl-e Hadith* and *Deobandis* to publicise and propagate their interpretations of Islam by taking advantage of this *Barelvi* shrine vacuum i.e. the absence of any tomb or shrine. Particularly for second or third generation Muslims, who are born and brought up in Birmingham and do not have any exposure or direct experience of relating their practice of Islam with any particular shrine or saint, they can easily be convinced by puritan sects' imams, preachers and missionaries about how to practice Islam in everyday life and what sort of Islam they should be practising. However, the *Barelvi* reformists fill this gap of the absence of shrines in Birmingham by fixing the site for the grave of a living saint. Hence, they replace the shrine with an empty grave waiting for its dead.

Mr. Fazal Elahi, the administrator of the Ghamkol Sahrif Mosque and Islamic Centre, told me the history of the centre and about the established networks of services that are there for public usage. The main person behind this whole project is Hazrat Sufi Abdullah Khan who came to Birmingham in 1962 from Pakistan after his spiritual master and saint patron, *Zinda Pir*, himself instructed him to leave for Birmingham. *Zinda Pir* declared Sufi Abdullah Khan his special appointed disciple in Birmingham, i.e. *Khalifa*.[5] Upon arrival in Birmingham, Hazrat Sufi Abdullah Khan started his preaching in his household and then gradually established a mosque at his house in nearby Sparkhill neighbourhood. In the 1980s, Hazrat Sufi Abdullah Khan established a small Islamic seminary i.e *Madrasa* at the Golden Hillock Road, Small Heath, Birmingham. In 1990s, on the opposite side of the road in front of the seminary, land was purchased from the City Council of Birmingham for a cheap price for the purpose of building a mosque. The construction work started in 1992 and now the mosque has the capacity to facilitate 5000 people at any one time for worship. Almost five million pounds were spent on the construction of the Ghamkol Sharif Mosque and related social services centres in the last two decades.[6]

---

[5] Khalifa or Caliph in relation to a saint or *Pir* means somebody who will be spiritual and administrative guardian of the shrine after the death of saint. The Khalifa of any shrine is supposed to organise annual rituals of the saint's death and the birth and conduct of gatherings and masses for spiritual and religious purposes. *Khalifa* or *Gaddi Nashin* are the words used for a Caliph of a saint in the Urdu language.
[6] How the money is collected, and the role of charity and philanthropy in the lives of Birmingham Muslims, is discussed in chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis.

While Hazrat Sufi Abdullah Khan was making an effort to establish this huge infrastructure of Ghamkol Sharif Centre in Birmingham, he was in touch with his saint *Zinda Pir* for guidance. *Zinda Pir* himself never visited Birmingham and he died in 1999 in Pakistan. Hazrat Sufi Abdullah Khan, based in Birmingham during all this time, was in touch with him before his death. Both saint and disciple met several times in Mecca on the eve of the annual pilgrimage (Hajj). At the time of *Zinda Pir*'s death*,* Hazrat Sufi Abdullah Khan went to Pakistan from Birmingham to lead the funeral prayer. *Zinda Pir* was buried at Ghamkol Sharif, in North-West of Pakistan. On his instructions, the empty grave at Birmingham has been reserved for his disciple, Hazrat Sufi Abdullah Khan. However, the sites of the Ghamkol Sharif centre, the main shrine of *Zinda Pir* at Pakistan and the empty grave at Birmingham are not only connected spiritually but also through everyday interaction amongst followers through their worldly affairs related to business, politics and social networking. As Pnina Werbner (2003) explains this in her work on *Zinda Pir*:

"Recognising the elective affinity between Sufism and achievement of worldly individual success in a modern and postmodern world is, I suggest, a key to understanding Zindapir's popular appeal to members of the armed forces and other top civil servants in Pakistan. It also explains the popularity of the *Shaikh* in Britain where the order is led by a *khalifa* based in Birmingham who was Zindapir's companion during his army days. This *khalifa* has built a British order up into a major British regional cult, while continuing to recognise the ultimate authority of Zindapir and the lodge in Pakistan." Pp.10

For *Barelvi*s in Birmingham, the Ghamkol Sharif Mosque and Islamic Centre is a central place for their religious rituals and social activities. Mr. Fazal Elahi said that nobody believed in them when they started building this centre. People said that it will be hard to generate such huge amount of money required for construction and the other expenditures. He said that he still remembers the local officer in the Birmingham City Council saying that it will take thirty to forty year to complete this project, but *Barelvi*s in Birmingham took it as a challenge. They made it possible in less than ten years to complete the construction of the mosque. Although the construction and expansion of building is still going on, they have successfully completed the main building and it is

now beginning to function as was envisioned. The funds were collected from followers based in Birmingham, and also, around the world in order to build the site.

With the completion of the physical infrastructure, various factions within *Barelvi*s have used this building for different ways of revitalizing *Barelvi* teachings. The most successful ones are the modernist and reformist *Barelvi* stream, *Dawat-i-Islami*[7]. While *Dawat-i-Islami* follows *Barelvi* practices, their organisation and outlook is not directly under the spiritual and administrative influence of *Zinda Pir's Caliph* in Birmingham. The annual congregation of *Dawat-i-Islami* took place at Ghamkol Sharif Islamic Centre in Birmingham in 2011. There were around ten thousand followers who participated in the one day long religious gathering. It was a full day's gathering with a variety of programmes, speeches, hymns and activities. The followers of *Zinda Pi*r, and that of *Dawat-i-Islami*, participated in religious gatherings at the centre collectively. *Dawat-i-Islami* have their own Islamic Centre in the nearby neighbourhood of Alum Rock in Birmingham. Their centre's building cannot accommodate the number of followers they have for their annual congregation. It is a semi-detached house which is used as an Islamic Centre. For their annual congregation, *Dawat-i-Islami* use the building of the Ghamkol Sharif Mosque and Islamic Centre.

Mr. Fazal Elahi said that it is a popular understanding among *Barelvi*s that followers of *Dawat-i-Islami* try to control and take over the administration and daily functioning of any mosque wherever and wherever they get an opportunity to enter and start their group activities. They try to introduce their ways of saying *Salaat-o-Salaam*[8] and expect other *Barelvi*s to follow their ways of saying prayers. However, Mr. Fazal Elahi said that it is because of the spiritual power of *Zinda Pir* and his special blessings over his *Khalifa*,

---

[7] Dawat-i-Islami is a reformist sub-group of *Barelvi*s started from Karachi, Pakistan in 1980s. They are *Barelvi* reformists who came to the forefront in Pakistan after Tablighi Jamaat, a Deobandi-Sunni evangelical movement, became popular at the social as well as the official political level of Pakistani Muslim society. Dawat-i-Islami attracts mostly lower-middle class and middle class *Barelvi*s with modernist and reformist interpretations of *Barelvi* rituals and practices. Within two decades, it has successfully mobilised *Barelvi* masses in large numbers, including many affluent and famous people.
[8] Saying Salaat-o-Salaam is the most common practice among *Barelvi*s to pay attribute to Prophet Muhammad in form of poetry and prose. People say Salaat-o-Salaam in groups with a loud voice and everybody in the mosque participates in this group activity. Usually Naat (poetic verses praising Prophet Muhammad) are the most common version of saying Salaat-o-Salaam. Naat is an individual performance which one person recites and which others listen to. Salaat-o-Salaam is done after each prayer in the *Barelvi* mosques especially on Thursdays and Fridays. Naat is mostly recited in Urdu and Punjabi languages but Salaat-o-Salaam, as a whole, is recited in various languages like Arabic, Persian and English and Urdu. English Naat and *Salaat-o-Salaam* are common and popular among the Birmingham Barelvi youth.

Hazrat Sufi Abdullah Khan, that neither any person, nor any other *Barelvi* group, ever tried to take control of the administration of Ghamkol Sharif Islamic Centre of Birmingham from his team. Mr. Fazal Elahi recited to me a verse from the poetry of Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938), the national poet of Pakistan, as a way of explaining the unity and harmony amongst *Zinda Pir's* followers and that of *Dawat-i-Islami*.

The poetic verse is: "*Khanjjar hilaal ka hay qomi nishaan hamara*"

Translation: "It is the Crescent (by which he meant common purpose of Muslims) that is our national symbol and that keeps us united".

He said that the annual meeting of *Dawat-i-Islami* at Ghamkol Sharif Birmingham also serves the purpose of introducing *Zinda Pir's* spiritual order to people from all over the UK who participate in the annual meeting of *Dawat-i-Islami*. He said that the large numbers and manpower of *Dawat-i-Islami* combined with our spacious premises and infrastructure help us to propagate and promote the message of *Barelvi* Islam in Birmingham. He also said that major events, like annual gathering of *Dawat-i-Islami*, are helpful in order to counter the 'propaganda' of *Salafi* Muslims.

The Ghamkol Sharif Mosque and Islamic Centre is one of the biggest centre for *Barelvis* in Birmingham. However, the *Khalifa* and the followers of *Zinda Pir* are one group of *Barelvi* reformists among many others. Ghamkol Sharif Mosque Birmingham is famous for its magnificent building and infrastructure and it mainly entertains the followers of *Zinda Pir*. As a mosque and centre, it provides these followers with a cosmopolitan and transnational view of practising Islam whilst keeping their links with the holy mosque at Mecca and also with the tomb of Prophet Muhammad intact by organising an annual pilgrim group for travel to Mecca. Additionally holy men and the disciples of *Zinda Pir* visit Birmingham from the mother shrine of *Zinda Pir* in Pakistan and address the devotees at the Ghamkol Sharif Mosque in Birmingham. Administrators and devotees from Ghamkol Sharif Mosque in Birmingham also visit the shrine of *Zinda Pir* at Pakistan and thus keep the community intact through a transnational spiritual network of brotherhood through their allegiance to the same saint. At the same time, the Ghamkol Sharif Mosque does not represent/control *Barelvi* Muslims as single spiritual entity. There are other reformist Muslim groups who have access to *Barelvi* Muslims in Birmingham beyond the borders of Sufi orders. *Dawat-i-Islami* is one of these groups

who have a unique reformist idea of modernising *Barelvi* Islam and outreaching the believers at margins of social and spiritual hierarchies prevailing in recent times within *Barelvi* Islam.

For the sake of analyses, I am going to call *Barelvi* Muslim reformists at Ghakol Sharif Mosque a *Communitarian* stream of reformist Muslims in Birmingham. I call them a *Communitarian* stream of reformist Muslims on the basis of their approach and method of engaging with people. The followers and proponents of this stream believe in the *Pir* as a central authority that delivers spiritual blessings. However, their interpretations of Islam, efforts for *Barelvi* reformism, and everyday life practices mainly focus on the function of their social services related and spiritual networks. The Ghamkol Sharif Mosque and Islamic Centre does not ignore the factor of the personality cult of *Pir,* or in their case *Zinda Pir*, altogether. However, their method of engaging with devotees and common people involves providing social welfare related services and spiritual services to community. The social services are mainly Muslim funeral services, day care centre, radio transmissions, vocational and academic short courses, involvement with NGOs and campaigns like anti-drugs campaign among youth, Islamic education, marital services, and guided tours of the mosque for visitors and outsiders etc. The main target of their outreach to people is via families and their engagement in group activities at Ghamkol Sharif Mosque and Islamic Centre.

2.2 *Dawat-i-Islami*: Reforming and Modernising *Barelvi* Islam

Dawat-i-Islami attracts thousands of its followers in their monthly and annual meetings which they usually organise at Ghamkol Sharif Islamic Centre in Birmingham. I attended many of their meetings including the annual congregation that lasted for a whole day during my fieldwork. Most of their followers come from the working class, salespeople, vocations and manual workers. Madni Bhai is a local activist for *Dawat-i-Islami* in Birmingham. He is a shopkeeper who is thirty seven. During his lecture in one of the weekly meetings of *Dawat-i-Islami*, Madni Bhai was trying to engage with his fellow brethren by giving them this example: "If one of you are staying in UK with a fake or invalid visa, he will be having this constant fear on his mind the he might get caught by authorities for his illegal stay. He might get permission for further stay through different ways or by appealing through court, but all the time when he does not have the valid visa, he will be sending money to country back home and he will not be having any assets here.

So my brothers, while we are not sure about the person without visa that authorities will catch him or not, but what we are sure is that the angel of death will definitely catch that person one day, as it will catch all of us. The important question here is that have we been sending any money in form of spiritual merits and virtues to appease Allah whom we are going to face after death or do we have managed to acquire any valid visa through spiritual merits and virtuous deeds to enter into paradise after our death. The only way to get valid visa to enter into paradise after dying is through investing our efforts and time for the learning Islam and practising the ways of holy saints at each step in our everyday lives".

Madni Bhai told me that whenever he talks with the followers of *Dawat-i-Islami* using analogies of life after death, and its relationship with everyday life economic practices and problems, it always makes more sense to them. He often said to me that most of his follower's mind works in terms of calculating pounds and wages due to their daily job routines, labour work and nature of economic engagements. That is why he uses these particular examples in his lectures. Whilst encouraging people to attend gatherings of *Dawat-i-Islami* on a regular basis, he was saying, "If you are given ten pounds to work on something sitting at home, you will do that. But if you are promised twenty seven times more money for doing the same task, you will be happily willing to travel for that. Same is the reward by Allah with doing good and offering prayers at home and that of doing same by joining the group at mosque". Madni Bhai told me that one of their group members, whenever he tried to encourage that member to join the group, he made the excuse that he was busy working on his garage as car mechanic. One day Madni Bhai was successful in convincing that member who was workaholic and that person joined the *Madni Qafila*[9] for three days whilst leaving his garage work. After three days, I told him that how much virtues and merits he has accumulated in the eyes of Allah. After completing those three days, he started crying and requested Madni Bhai that he should be given a permanent place in their *Madni Qafila* as he does not want to go back to the material world that is full of vices and temptations.

Dawat-i-Islami is an organised reformist group within *Barelvis* and their followers generally function on a self-help basis. *Dawat-i-Islami* rely on the text and publications

---

[9] Caravan of Medina (the town in Saudi Arabia where Prophet Muhammad is buried), the term is used by *Dawat-i-Islami* members for the missionary caravan that walk in the streets and bazaars inviting people to join their virtuous cause for a specific period of time .

produced by their founding father and his associates in order to disseminate their message. They also focus on a particular dressings and daily habits. As an analytical category, I am going to call the stream of Islamic reformism presented by *Dawat-i-Islami* a *Modernist* stream of *Barelvi* reformism. People under this stream believe in the textual and codified interpretations of *Barelvi* Islam done by the *Jamaat*[10] more than the belief in the personality cult of the *Pir*. Instead of a *Pir* as the centre of a devotee's attention, they engage in outreach to people by making the Prophet Muhammad a symbolic centre of attention. For the *Modernist* reformist Muslims, following the code, text and worship rituals promoted by organisation are the best ways to have success, spiritual blessings and powers in everyday life and afterlife. *Dawat-i-Islami* is the major proponent of the *Modernist Barelvi* reformist stream in Birmingham. With the help of a well-established organisational structure in Birmingham and worldwide, and discipline among their followers, *Dawat-i-Islami* has managed to attract a large number of *Barelvi*s as their members and for missionary activities. *Dawat-i-Islami* do express spiritual allegiance to Muhammad Ilyas Qadri[11], a Karachi based spiritual and administrative head of *Dawat-i-Islami*, but devotee are expected to consider the text and ritual worship of *Dawat-i-Islami* more seriously than the personality cult of Muhammad Ilyas Qadri. Their method of engage with people primarily focuses on having a specific apparent physical appearance, attire and following the code of conduct of *Dawat-i-Islami* in everyday life and a conviction to abstain from sins and evils. I am calling this stream of *Barelvi* reformism as *Modernist* because of their achievement of modernising *Barelvi* Islam and giving a recognition to its followers. Generally other streams of reformist Muslims are identifiable from their appearance and practices like that of the *Tableeghi Jamaat*. *Dawat-i-Islami* is the first *Barelvi* Muslim reformist stream to have introduced a specific dress code among its followers, a text book to read, a language to speak with the public and a certain worship ritual to follow. *Modernist Barelvi* Muslims are, in a way, a more recent emergence of neo-Sufis with a considerable number of followers and this has challenged other reformist Muslim groups because of its phenomenal growth and popularity.

---

[10] Organisation or party. The word *Jamaat* is usually used by Islamic organisations or parties in South Asia.

[11] Muhammad Ilyas Qadri is spiritual and administrative head of *Dawat-i-Islami,* based in Karachi, Pakistan. He established *Dawat-i-Islami* in 1980s. He has published a lot of missionary material for the followers of his for *Dawat-i-Islami* in form of books and booklets.

However, a significant number of *Barelvi*s in Birmingham practice Islam with what I call 'old school' ways of practising Islam through *Pirs* and by associating themselves with their spiritual achievements, powers and miracles.

2.3 Networks of *Pirs,* their Devotees, and the Establishment of *Pir-Khanas* (saint-dwellings)

Here I am using this term 'Old School *Barelvi*s' for those individual and groups among *Barelvi*s who believe in performing the traditional practices of spiritual and religious related experiences in their everyday life with the blessings and association with *Pir*. 'Old School *Barelvi*s' associate their achievements, economic betterment, smooth family affairs and good health in everyday lives as a direct result of their association and devotion with *Pir*. Though Ghamkol Sharif Islamic Centre and *Dawat-i-Islami* have attracted a significant number of people from *Barelvi* Muslims through popularising their message and efforts in Birmingham, *Pirs* are also very much influential as well as popular in certain circles and families of *Barelvi* Muslims in Birmingham.

The most famous *Pir-Khanas* in Birmingham are that of Nerien Sharif[12] and Sultan Bahu Trust[13]. *Pir* Alauddin Saddiqi is the spiritual head of the Nerien Sharif shrine and *Pir* Sahibzada Sultan Faiz-ul-Hasan Sarwari Qadri is the spiritual head of the Sultan Bahu Trust. Both of these *Pir-Khanas* started their establishment and missionary activities in Birmingham in the late 1980s. Both of the *Pir-Khanas* attract hundreds of followers, not only from Birmingham but from all over the UK. Along with this, both *Pir-Khanas* have direct and strong ties with their mother-shrines back at Pakistan. *Pir* Alauddin Siddiqi is a direct descendent and son of the saint Khawaja Ghaznavi who is buried at the *Nerian Sharif* shrine in Kashmir, Pakistan. *Pir* Sahibzada Sultan Faiz-ul Hasan Sarwari Qadri is a direct descendent of the 17th century South Asian saint Sultan Bahu. Both of the *Pirs* have been established modern colleges and universities in Birmingham and Pakistan respectively for educational entrepreneurs.

---

[12] Nerien Sharif is a famous Sufi shrine in the Pakistan Administered Kashmir established by Khawaja Ghaznavi of Naqshbandi order. The establishment of *Pir-Khana* in Birmingham was facilitated by a descendant, *Pir* Alauddin Saddiqi, of the famous saint buried at Kashmir at the mother shrine.
[13] Sultan Bahu was a famous South Asian Muslim Sufi saint of Qadri order during the 17th century whose shrine is in Western Punjab, Pakistan. His descendants have established a *Pir-Khana* at Birmingham.

Pir Alauddin Saddiqqi has a very busy *Pir-Khana*. He is fluent in English, Urdu, Persian, Pashto, Punjabi, Mirpuri (Kashmiri-Pahari) and Arabic languages. He is well connected, not only within the British-Muslim community and the *Nerien Sharif* shrine at Pakistan, but he also has personal links and contacts at Al Azhar University, Cairo and at various other shrines in Iraq and Turkey. I met *Pir* Alauddin Siddiqi a few times during my fieldwork. He calls an audience of his devotees every Thursday evening after offering his prayers. In the huge living room of his Islamic Centre that is known as Mohiuddin Siddiqiya, he sits on a sofa wearing a white dress and a green turban mostly. People come from different parts of UK to have the blessing of *Pir* Alauddin Siddiqi. After I introduced myself as PhD student doing fieldwork, he told everybody in the room that "this young man is doing a great job. He will be a doctor in his academic subject. We need people like him to advance our mission of *Dawa*[14]. The dilemma is that most contemporary *Ulama*[15] who know the teachings of Islam, do not know English and modern sciences. And those who know English and modern sciences do not know the real teachings of Islam". He proudly told me that due to his efforts, people are coming back to Islam while living in this country i.e. UK and non-Muslims are converting to Islam. Then he announced to the audience, "One day, the flag of Islam will be hoisting in this country, *Insha Allah*".[16] All of the audience were happy and admiring of *Pir* Alauddin Siddiqi after listening his prediction.

During the fasting month of Ramadan, *Pir* Alauddin Siddiqi invites an Egyptian *Qari*[17], who graduated from Al Azhar University in Cairo for Quran recital prayers during Ramadan. He talks with this *Qari* in Arabic language in front of people. People usually come to *Pir* Alauddin Siddiqi's *Pir-Khana* for different reasons. Mostly they come seeking spiritual solutions for disputes, health and illness issues in their family, better prospects for their businesses and jobs and usually husbands who want to control their wives and wives who want to control their husbands. *Pir* Alauddin Siddiqi sits on a sofa and convenes his audience after evening prayers in a large meeting hall next to the mosque. A man came from Bristol and told *Pir* that he always has a headache and his business is not doing well. He requested *Pir* to do something for him. *Pir* asked him to come closer

---

[14] *Dawa* means spreading the message of Islam and calling people to follow the right path.
[15] These are religious scholars schooled in Islamic teaching and scriptures.
[16] *Insha Allah* means God willing.
[17] The man who learns all the Quran by heart and recites it in prayer with a melodious voice. Usually during the month of Ramdan, *Qari* is equivalent to *Hafiz* (the one who learns Quran by heart) but *Qari* is also known for their different melodious ways of reciting the Quran.

and he looked at his forehead. Then he told the man and the audience in loud voice that this man will always have headache as he rarely bows his head before Allah for prayers and his business is not good because his heart is not in business; rather it is always busy about thinking evil plans and indeed his heart is empty from remembering the name of Allah and his Prophet Muhammad. Then he told the man from Bristol to go back and come again after he has properly bowed his head before Allah five times a day and have remembered his name wholeheartedly. Then the man gave fifty pounds to the assistant of *Pir* Alauddin Siddiqi and asked for an amulet. The assistant said that he should not be asking for more and that he must not be impatient but that he should be salient and obey the order of *Pir* and should visit again. The assistant told the man that he might be given the blessings of *Pir* and an amulet next time. During his Thursday lectures to his devotees and followers after evening prayers, *Pir* Alauddin Siddiqi shares stories and miracles of the spiritual powers of his father and grandfather before the audience. The moral lesson and end of these stories is usually the success and victory for those followers who believe in their *Pir* and trust in him. *Pir* emphases that his blessings for worldly success are reserved for only those devotees who have a strong faith and a blind trust in him.

Pir Alauddin Siddiqi has huge development plans for the social welfare and spiritual well-being of his followers. He told me that he is looking forward to establishing a big network of different services like that of health and education for his followers. Currently, he is looking for a right place to buy property to start this project and that he has a couple of sites in his mind. However, in the Mohiuddin Siddiqqiya Islamic Centre in Birmingham, where he is based presently, there is already a network of services available for his followers. The building and Islamic centre can entertain up to two thousands worshippers at one time. There is a *Madrissa* operating in the building which offers different kind of religious courses for the young, the old and for women to read and understand the Quran and other Islamic education opportunities. *Pir* Alauddin Siddiqi told me that not all people are good and nice; some are really cunning and deceitful here and do not have any positive feelings and soft corners for their fellow Muslims because they live in sinful culture. He said that a few people from a nearby neighbourhood even tried to cheat him while he was trying to buy some property over there. During my visits to the *Pir-Khana* of *Pir* Alauddin Siddiqi, I discovered that he is a famous philanthropist in Birmingham and has a long history of property purchase deals and real estate business.

The other famous *Pir-Khana* of Birmingham, the Sultan Bahu Trust, functions more or less on similar patterns. *Pir* Sahibzada Sultan Faiz-ul-Hasan Sarwari Qadri, who is the spiritual head of the Sultan Bahu Trust and a direct descendent of the 17th century South Asian saint Sultan Bahu, engages with his followers with the same pattern of lectures and talks where he shares the miraculous spiritual powers of saint Sultan Bahu. He recites the poetry of Sultan Bahu, which represents the folk wisdom, spiritual experiences and pains of travelling in the Punjabi language. The poetry of Sultan Bahu is very popular amongst the followers of his *Pir-Khana* in Birmingham as well as in Punjab, in Pakistan and India. *Pir* Sahibzada Sultan Faiz-ul-Hasan Sarwari Qadri, however, has a more modernist approach towards outreach towards people in education and he places an emphasis on the secular education of disciplines. His main focus is establishing educational institutions for his followers which impart religious education that is combined with the secular in Birmingham and Pakistan. He visits Pakistan frequently and his followers are mainly of Punjab origin from Pakistan unlike that of *Pir* Alauddin Siddiqi whose followers are mainly Pakistani and Indian Muslims in Birmingham with Kashmiri origin. This is due to the location of the mother shrine of both *Pir-khanas*; the Shrine of Sultan Bahu is in Punjab while the shrine of Nerien Sharif is in Kashmir.

For the sake of analyses of various streams of Islamic reformism in Birmingham, *Pir-Khanas* are what I call a *Traditionalist* or 'Old School' *Barelvi* stream of reformism in Birmingham. Under this stream of reformism, the devotees believe in the spiritual power and personality cult of *Pir*. *Traditionalists* have transnational associations with the mother shrine back in South Asia and see its reflection and presence in the personality of *Pir* in Birmingham who is usually a direct descendent of the saint buried at the mother-shrine. The personality cult of *Pir* is the main focus of their engagement with people and families. *Pir* becomes a sole source of salvation in this life and afterlife for the devotees and they look towards *Pir* whenever they might have any personal problems, family issues or if they are seeking religious or spiritual guidance. However, the personality cult of *Pir* as a focal person for everything for devotees does not limit the role of *Pir* just to being a spiritual healer. *Pir* functions as a philanthropist too. Two well established *Pir-Khanas* in Birmingham are the examples of *Traditionalist's* Islamic reformism. Here, the *Pir* becomes a key figure for the execution of all activities related to spiritual wellbeing, social welfare, business deals, philanthropy or any other charity related events among followers. The method through which *Traditionalists* engage with the general public involves the

Pir in every affair as the key figure and focal person whose blessing and acknowledgment is essential for success, betterment and salvation.

Rytter (2014) while explaining the transnational connection of *Barelvi* Muslims of Pakistani origin in Denmark with Sufis and saints explores that majority of them relay on 'religious technologies of redemption' (pp.116) that can only be found in South Asia. Barelvis in Denmark remain connected with saints and *Pirs* in order to seek social well-being and counselling. Similarly in Birmingham, the two *Pir-Khanas* are *Traditionalist* interpretation of *Barelvi* reformist Islam are established and attract hundreds of 'Old School *Barelvi*' followers who seek spiritual and material salvation in their lives through their association with a particular *Pir* and a particular *Pir-Khana*. They are advantaged due to their family link and that of carrying a popular spiritual heritage which connects them with a well-established shrine back at Pakistan. However, during the course of my fieldwork, I came across a unique example of a quest by one of my respondents to establish a brand new *Pir-Khana* without being the offspring of any famous *Pir* or shrine back in South Asia.

2.4 The Making of a *Pir*: The Process and Contestation over Acquiring Spiritual Powers and Establishing Moral Authority

Mr. Raza is a local businessman, entrepreneur and owner of one of the famous Indian food restaurant in Birmingham. He is in his fifties and he came to UK looking for work in 1960s. He excelled in business through hard work and entrepreneurial skills and, over a period of time, his restaurant gained popularity for the quality and taste of is food. Mr. Raza is socially well connected within the Muslim community and he originally belongs to Lahore where he was born and bred in the walled-city[18] of Lahore. This area is famous for preserving a traditional culture of the city and its social life. He is a practising *Barelvi* Muslim. However, he is not the follower of any of the two *Pir-Khanas* that I have previously mentioned above.

Instead he is a staunch follower of another 10th century South Asian saint Hazrat Ali Hijveri, famously known as Data Gunj Bakhash. The shrine of Hazrat Ali Hijveri is the most venerated one in South Asia out of all shrines. It is situated in the walled city of Lahore. The shrine is the most popular one amongst *Barelvi* Muslims of South Asia

---

[18] This is old neighbourhood of the inner city in Lahore. The fortified wall around the city was built during the Mughal era.

because Hazrat Ali Hijveri is considered to be the spiritual teacher of most of the South Asian saints, including Moinuddin Chishti of Ajmir, India. But there is no *Caliph* or offspring of Hazrat Ali Hijveri who claims the title of being a direct descendent of the saint. The shrine of Hazrat Ali Hijveri in Lahore is administered by the ministry of religious affairs of Pakistan. The followers of Ali Hijveri associate and connect themselves directly with the saint and followers and devotees visit the shrine from all over the world to have the spiritual blessings of the saint Hazrat Ali Hijveri.

Mr. Raza started by introducing himself as a dedicated devotee of Saint Ali Hijveri to his friends and the *Barelvi* Muslims of Birmingham. With enthusiasm, he then begun sharing his association and special devotion to the shrine of Hazrat Ali Hijveri to his restaurant's Muslim customers. In a period of ten years or so, he has economically prospered and his restaurant business has grown successfully. His restaurant has an upper floor, which is a medium size hall with a capacity to accommodate more than one hundred people. This upper floor is hired by customers to organise different events like receptions, parties and privates dinners for various social and political groups as well as individuals. For the last three to four years, Mr. Raza has been organising various religious events at the upper floor of his restaurant. Few years before my fieldwork year, he succeeded in registering a non-profit organisation with the name 'Ali Hajveri Welfare Trust' with aim of promoting the education and teachings of Ali Hijveri along with helping the destitute and the needy. He has earned a reputation of serving food to the hungry amongst the Birmingham Muslim community and this is a trait which the shrine of Hazrat Ali Hijveri is famous for in Lahore.

I was introduced to Mr. Raza through a mutual friend, Mr. Hashim, who is a journalist by profession and a very close friend to Mr. Raza. Mr. Raza always gives a warm welcome to Mr. Hashim on his visit to restaurant as Mr. Hashim is the most important contact person and journalist in Birmingham for Urdu language electronic and print media[19]. Mr. Raza was pleased to know that I have studied in the Islamia College Civil Lines, Lahore, a college which is in the same neighbourhood as the shrine of Hazrat Ali Hijveri in Lahore.

---

[19] Urdu electronic and print media is popular amongst the majority of Muslims in Birmingham of Pakistani and Kashmiri origin. There are various Urdu language TV channels and daily, as well as weekly, newspapers in Birmingham. This is discussed in more details in chapter four of this thesis.

In our first meeting, Mr. Raza told me that he was going to arrange a grand *Mefil-i-Naat*[20] next month and he invited me to come and participate. I volunteered to help in the preparations and arrangements of the event. Mr. Raza was pleased to know that I had volunteered for his programne. One of his sons prepared banners and posters for the programmes and we distributed and displayed them at important locations in neighbourhoods with Muslim majorities. The *Mehfil-i-Naat* was in fact an introduction of the 'Ali Hijveri Welfare Trust' to the wider Muslim audience of Birmingham. Though Mr. Raza has been doing welfare work for years in informal ways, he now does everything under the umbrella of his organisation, the Ali Hijveri Welfare Trust.

During the program of *Mehfil-i-Naat*, Mr. Raza told people that this gathering is to celebrate the preaching and message of Hazrat Ali Hijveri and as a humble servant, it is his duty to arrange such gatherings. Then he told people different stories of his deep association and devotion to Hazrat Ali Hijveri and how he always tried to find an excuse to visit the shrine in Pakistan. He told the audience, that during one of his trips to the shrine, the administrator of the main annual event at the shrine of Hazrat Ali Hijveri did not let him sit on the stage during the ceremony. The administrator of the annual event has not been introduced to Mr. Raza. Mr. Raza told that administrator that he is going to sit near the grave of Hazrat Ali Hijveri and that he will ask the saint why he, the saint Hazrat Ali Hijveri, has invited him from the UK in the first place and but why he is not giving him a chance to actively participate in the annual ceremony. Mr. Raza said that after telling this to administrator, he rushed toward the grave of saint Hazrat Ali Hijveri and sat near it. Immediately the same administrator came towards the grave area and was looking for Mr. Raza. The administrator then told him that he is deeply sorry that he could not see the special link between Mr. Raza and the saint Hazrat Ali Hijveri. The administrator apologised and requested him afterwards to sit on the main stage and address the audience at the annual ceremony. Mr. Raza told people that he did not ask anybody to tell the administrator about him and he personally considers it a 'divine intervention of saint Hazrat Ali Hijveri' that the administrator changed his mind about giving him a place to sit on the stage.

---

[20] This is a gathering where hymns are sung in the praise of Prophet Muhammad, mostly in Urdu or Punjabi language. It is the most popular form of saying *Salaat-o-Salaam* among *Barelvis*.

At the end of the *Mehfil-i-Naat* in the upper floor of his restaurant, Mr. Raza offered everybody a free dinner at his restaurant. Mr. Raza told me later that the present *Khalifa* from the shrine of 11th century saint Sheikh Abdul Qadir Gilani in Iraq came to Birmingham. Sheikh Abdul Qadir Gilani is the most famous Sufi saint throughout the Muslim World and was the founder of the Sufi Order Qadariyya. Mr. Raza said that he went to see the present *Khalifa* of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Gilani and told him about his association with Hazrat Ali Hijveri's shrine in Pakistan. Mr. Raza was sharing this story with me enthusiastically in front of some of his customers and friends at his restaurant. He told me that something miraculous happened next day after his meeting with that *Khalifa*. He was surprised to see the *Khalifa* of the shrine from Iraq at his restaurant next day. The *Khalifa* gave him a letter and a ring as a blessing. Mr. Raza said that he did not know how to speak Arabic otherwise he would have talked with *Khalifa* in more detail. Mr. Raza said to me that he does not show the letter and ring to everybody as it is something special. Mr. Raza believed that after receiving the letter and blessings, he is a totally changed character and has not committed any sin afterwards in his life.

Mr. Raza has started sitting as a spiritual guide in the upper floor of his restaurant on Thursdays and sometimes on Fridays in the evenings. He told me that he believes that he is the chosen one representative of Hazrat Ali Hijveri for the people of Birmingham and he feels himself responsible for spreading the Islamic teachings of the saint Hazrat Ali Hijveri in the UK. He has a few devotees now and they come to Mr. Raza for spiritual solutions to their personal problems. Mr. Raza told me that he has given blessings to some women for their family problems and now they are very happy and have become devotees of him. In one meeting, while I was talking about a local television programnme about another *Pir-Khana*, Mr. Raza shared with me in confidence that some people have contempt for him after he has established his charity organisation 'Ali Hijveri Welfare Trust'. Mr. Raza said that those people always try to malign his reputation and deny his spiritual accomplishments. According to Mr. Raza, these people have material pursuits as a primary concern in their lives and spiritual as secondary. Mr. Raza was particularly pointing out the people, who are devotees of the Sultan Bahu Trust, who have always tried to undermine his efforts to spread the message of Islam. According to Mr. Raza, people at these two *Pir-Khanas* in Birmingham always assume that only those who can have some spiritual achievements are the direct descendants or offspring of any known

saint. But Mr. Raza believes that through personal devotion and efforts, one can acquire spiritual accomplishments if one has a *Pir* like saint Hazrat Ali Hijveri.

The story of Mr. Raza demonstrates the complex contestations about acquiring spiritual power and status and recognition of identity as *Pir* making an effort to establish a *Pir-Khana* within Barelvis. The old *Pir-Khanas* have a contempt about the emergence of new ones. According to Mr. Raza, people from the two well established *Pir-Khanas* in Birmingham have started showing their dissatisfaction and contempt for him after he has established his own network of charity and philanthropy with the name of Ali Hijveri Welfare Trust. Before the organisation and registration of the Ali Hijveri Welfare Trust, Mr. Raza use to participate in the charity related welfare work and activities organised by the two established *Pir-Khanas* in Birmingham and used to give charity money to them. After Mr. Raza emerged as an independent actor in philanthropic activities associated with being a *Pir*, other *Pir-Khanas* did not accept his accomplishments both as spiritual head and as charity organisation leader. Some of the devotees of established *Pir-Khanas* in Birmingham call Mr. Raza as *dabba*[21] *Pir*.

The above stream of Islamic reformism in Birmingham is what I am going to categorise as the *Newcomers* stream of *Barelvi* Islamic reformism. In terms of methods of engaging with people, *Newcomers* are following the same pattern as that of *Traditionalists*. For *Newcomers*, the major hindrance in gaining social approval amongst people in Birmingham is the absence of a direct lineage to a prominent saint in South Asia. However, their method of engaging with people is the propagation of the idea that being *Pir* is not always an ascribed status rather it can be an achieved status too. The example for this kind of reformist stream in Birmingham is that of Mr. Raza. He is trying to establish and assert his identity as *Pir*. For this purpose, he has strategically selected the shrine of Hazrat Ali Hijveri as a site for spiritual guidance which does not have any direct descendants. Mr. Raza is trying to convey this message to his devotees and friends that everybody can achieve the status of becoming a *Pir* through personal effort and devotion. He has also established his own network of social welfare and charity and he has started doing spiritual gatherings under his own initiatives.

---

[21] This is slang for a fake Pir or an imposter without any spiritual powers.

2.5 The Convergence and Divergence of Various Streams of Islamic Reformisms, Interpretations and Practices among *Barelvi*s

I have categorised four streams of Islamic reformism within the *Barelvi* Muslims in Birmingham for the sake of analyses; *Communitarians, Modernists, Traditionalists,* and *Newcomers*. I have explained all four categories in relation to their methods of outreach and engagement with people. These categories of analysis also explain the nature of reformist messages and their implications for the everyday lives of their followers. I am not fixating these categories of analyses nor should, as Green (2011) mentions, these categories 'be reified' as a fixed identity which separates the followers of one particular stream of Islamic reformism from others. I emphasis here that *Barelvi* Muslims' identity as practising and reformist Muslims is as fluid as that of any other Muslim group in Birmingham. This is evident in how they relate themselves to situation specific practices and interpretations of Islam in everyday life in comparison to other *Barelvi* and non-*Barelvi* streams. The founding father of *Barelvi* stream, Ahmad Raza Khan, himself preferred to be seen as an Islamic scholar first and as a mystic second (Reetz 2006).

Here I would like to engage with the idea of 'Reform Sufism' presented by Pnina Werbner (2013). Werbner argues that Islamic reformism within Sufism is mostly limited to the one spiritual order[22] of Naqshbandiyya as the process of 'Reform Sufism' was started by the sixteen century reformist Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi in South Asia. For Werbner, 'Reform Sufism' is a self-purifying process that eliminates the localised and cultural elements of any Sufi ritual at any shrine whenever there is an orthodox authority intervening in the affairs of a shrine in South Asia. The shrine purifies itself and abandons the localised customs that indirectly generate local economy for many adherents. However, this thesis claims that limiting reform Sufism to the Naqshbandiyya order only is a factual fallacy as the most active reform Sufism group, *Dawat-i-Islami*, is from the Qadariyya order and has more of a focus on observing the *Sunnah* and codified teaching of practicing Islam. The *Barelvi* puritanism of *Dawat-i-Islami* has been acknowledge by other *Barelvi* streams as well. Similarly, the *Pirkhana* of Sultan Bahu Trust in Birmingham is a follower of the Suhrawardiyya order with a reformist agenda of providing a modern education to the younger generations of Birmingham Muslims. In my observation of Birmingham

---

[22] There are four famous spiritual orders popular among Muslims; Qadriyya, Chishtiyya, Suherwardiyya, and Naqashbanddiyya. These spiritual orders stand for how to relate an individual with the wider chain of spiritual authority with the overall aim being the self-purification of a person.

Muslims, 'Reform Sufism' is a common phenomenon amongst all streams of Muslims adherent to Sufism. Simpson, (2013) in his ethnographic work of 10 years with three Muslim men, elaborates on how blurred, and context specific, the association with one or other form of Islamic reformism becomes while conducting everyday life. Ewing (1997) argues that Islamic mysticism or Sufism is not merely 'traditional' as some reformist would put it, rather the dichotomy of tradition and modernity is mutually constitutive in Islam.

Other variations about the reformist efforts between various actors among *Barelvi*s is that unlike *Modernist* and *Communitarians*, who give all attention to the institutional structure, welfare activities and organisation, *Traditionalist Pir-Khanas* rely on their ties, repute, fame and the popularity of *Pir*. While the *Modernist Barelvi*s have various individuals within their organisational structures to perform different rules and duties for administration and execution of different events and activities, the *Traditionalists*, or 'Old School *Barelvi*s', believe in the esteemed spiritual powers of the cult of personality of *Pir* who is the focal person and centralised figure for everything. *Modernists*, like *Communitarians*, do not fully negate the importance of the personality cult around a *Pir*, but give preference to their *Jamaat* and text. *Traditionalists* have a network of social services and community engagements, like *Communitarians*, but the functions of community engagement for *Traditionalist* are only a means for gaining appreciation of *Pir* by devotees and general public and not an end as they are for *Communitarians*. For *Communitarians*, the absence of a shrine is a hindrance for advancing their message to people and for *Newcomers* it is the absence of direct lineage and ties with any prominent shrine in South Asia.

The above analysis provides a broader picture of one Sunni-Muslims sect i.e. *Barelvi*s and their Islamic reformisms. While *Barelvi*s are more numerous amongst Muslims in Birmingham, they do not constitute an overwhelming majority vis-a-vis other Muslim sects. There are other Muslims sects like *Salafi* and *Deobandi*. In the other half of this chapter, I will explain the same phenomenon of Islamic reformism, interpretations and practices among non-*Barelvi* Muslims.

2.6 Rich *Salafis*: Struggling to Establish Local Influence and the Global *Ummah*

"In Palestine, people are dying as a result of Israeli bombing. In Uganda, Muslims kids have no choice but to study at Christian missionary schools. In Pakistan, people are selling their daughters for money. Everywhere in the world, Muslim *Ummah* is suffering because it has deviated from the true and authentic way of practicing Islam in everyday life." The imam at Central Mosque of Birmingham was delivering an emotional speech in front of a gathering of more than two thousand people. This was a *Salafi* gathering in the mosque after evening prayers during my fieldwork. *Salafis* arranged this gathering at the Central Mosque of Birmingham for Islamic educational purposes for people. The theme of the gathering was to learn about the lives of the close companions of the Prophet Muhammad during his lifetime and to interpret them for the people of Birmingham how they can relate their everyday life practices with the life stories and examples of the close companions of the Prophet Muhammad. Most of the participants inside the mosque were young and middle age people both males and females, and were listening to the lectures in segregated sitting arrangements. It was a gathering of people from various ethnic and national backgrounds. The majority were Pakistanis but also Indian, Bangladeshi, Somali, Yemeni, people from various Middle Eastern countries, Turk and some white British members of *Salafi* community of Birmingham Muslims. I call them *Salafis* because the members of this reformist Muslim stream belong to different ethnic backgrounds and identify themselves as *Salafis*. Although people adhering to similar interpretations of practicing Islam in South Asia are known as *Wahhabis* or *Ahl-e Hadith*.

The Central Mosque of Birmingham is a purpose built mosque and accommodates around three thousand people at a single prayer. On the eve like Eid prayers or other religious gathering, it accommodates around twenty thousand people by doing multiple prayers arrangements. The history of management and administration of Central Mosque of Birmingham is a contested one among Birmingham Muslims. In the past, there have been legal and social competition between *Salafis* and *Barelvi*s who have struggled to take control of the administration of the mosque. *Salafis* remained successful in gaining control of the mosque due to their effective resource mobilisation and support from Birmingham Muslim communities from diverse ethnic backgrounds. The members of the mosque committee represent not only *Salafis* but also a few *Barelvi*s, though *Salafis* are in the majority and are influential in decision making processes. A sizeable number of Muslims in Birmingham follow reformist interpretations of the *Salafi* stream of practising

Islam which emphases literalist understandings of the Quran and Sunnah (ways of Prophet Muhammad). *Salafis* relate themselves to the orthodox interpretations of Islam mostly practised in Saudi Arabia and other parts of Middle-East. The majority of Muslims in Birmingham, besides South Asia, are from the Arab World and Somalia.

Mr. Fiaz is a member of the board of trustees at the Central Mosque of Birmingham. He is a practising *Salafi* Muslim and owns a small business. During several meetings with him, he told me that *Salafis* are the most organised Islamic group in the city. He always told me that the collective identity of Muslims in Britain is, and will be, that of *Salafis*, although this claim is highly contested by *Barelvi*s. Mr. Fiaz is proud of his efforts of engaging rich and resourceful Muslims into the board of trustees and into other welfare and religious activities at the Central Mosque of Birmingham and he has been involved with the Central Mosque of Birmingham for the last twenty eight years. He told me that the decade of 1980s was full of turmoil as various Islamic groups tried to get hold over the management and administration of the mosque. However, consolidated efforts, and better links with Muslims from communities other than Pakistanis, helped *Salafis* to get hold of the management of the mosque. He told me with a sense of victory and smile on his face, "now Masha Allah[23], there is one imam at Central Mosque who is linked and paid by one of the departments of Saudi Arabian government and works for the propagation of Islam and other educational activities".

Mr. Fiaz told me that since the "like-minded" people have taken over the mosque, things have changed dramatically. Islam has achieved prominence in the social lives of people, in community integration and in the identity of Muslims in Birmingham. He said, "We have created systems for the missionary activities for Islam using the platform of Central Mosque of Birmingham. We are running a *Madrasa* for children and especially for the Muslim families who are scattered in Birmingham and their residences are not located into a Muslim majority neighbourhood in the city. There is a transportation service for poor families while rich drove their kids to mosque by themselves." I met Mr. Fiaz in another gathering of *Salafi* reformists held in another Islamic cultural centre in nearby neighbourhood. Mr. Fiaz told me that only *Salafis* in Birmingham have this capacity and strength to organise the gatherings of Muslims from all parts of the world.

---

[23] With the grace of God

For analysis, the above is what I am going to call a *Trader* stream of *Salafi* Islamic reformism and interpretation. *Trader*s usually attend Friday prayers and perform other religious rituals at Central Mosque of Birmingham. These are mostly rich and influential *Salafis* who are businessmen by occupation. It is perceived as a privilege among *Traders* to have a membership on the board of trustees at the Central Mosque of Birmingham. While *Traders* do believe that *Pirs* and their *Pir Khanas* are not true representation of Islam, they do not discard them openly. Simpson (2013), in his work with three Muslim men in Indian Gujrat with whom he conducted fieldwork over the period of ten years, argues that while confronting economic and political situations, and other important life events or specific challenges, these men are 'neither saint worshipper nor non-saint worshipper in a straight forward sense'. *Traders* are more interested in maintaining an exotic image of the Central Mosque of Birmingham for non-Muslims and maintaining a place where Muslims can show a true colour of unity and community cohesiveness. *Traders* do believe in the notions of *Ummah* but only at the surface level as they are not part of any reformist Muslim group which has a global agenda of spreading Islam. For *Traders*, the annual pilgrim and frequent visits to Mecca are the practicing vital to be a Muslims and is something to boast about at public level. The Central Mosque of Birmingham, for *Traders,* is a quasi 'stock-exchange' of spiritual merits where they not only keep an eye on their spiritual surplus but economic and social as well. Role models for success in everyday life for *Traders* is the Royal Family of Saudi Arabia which is a perfect example of success in this life and the afterlife. For *Traders*, Royal Family of Saudi Arabia are doing good financially in life and they are successful in afterlife by the virtue of their custodianship and supervision of Holy Mosques in Mecca and Madina. For *Traders*, practicing Islam is not merely a mystic way of living where an individual is not actively engaged in pursuing for the material gains of life, but it is to spread the mission of *Da'wa* by advancing economic and socio-political networking according to the teachings of the Quran.

2.7 Back to Basics: Literalist and Scripturalist *Salafi* Reformism

Another important aspect of missionary activities by *Salafi* groups is the refutation of *Barelvi* interpretations of practicing Islam. I met Mr. Bhatti in one of the meetings where *Salafi* groups introduced their way of practising Islam to other Muslims and non-Muslims. Mr. Bhatti is a sixty seven year old man who is now retired. He said he converted from *Barelvi* sect to *Salafi* almost twenty years ago. He was born in Pakistan and came to UK

in his early twenties. He came to UK to join his elder brothers who were already working in different factories. He began his career as factory worker but he left his factory job and started his own business in London. He was the first of his brothers to leave factory work and he earned profit from his property business and moved to Birmingham from London. He said that he turned towards practising Islam strictly after his son decided to leave family because he wanted to cohabit with an English woman without marriage. Mr. Bhatti viewed it as a family tragedy and he re-read Quran with translation. With the help of friends, he found new meanings in the Quran which brought peace to his everyday life. He told me that Allah never listened to him before adopting *Salafi* ways as he was not praying and communicating with Allah in the right way and according to the spirit of the Quran and Islamic teaching. He was living the life of a *Mushrik*.[24] He listens to audio tapes recordings from the Quran by the Arab *Qaris* from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and he then copies their accent when reading the Quran at home in his free time. He showed me his religious library and collection of audio and video tapes of various Arab scholars of Islam. Rytter (2010) in his work about black magic among Pakistanis in Denmark maintains that Pakistani Muslims resort to reading Quran while confronting personal or family crises or on discovering that somebody is doing sorcery against them.

Mr. Bhatti is retired but says that his retired life is busier than his previous employed life. He is a full time volunteer for various *Salafi* groups who are devoted to spreading the true message of Islam for Muslims and non-Muslims. He teaches the Quran to different school kids with translations into English, Urdu and Punjabi languages. During the weekdays, he travels to various mosques to deliver Dars-i-Quran[25] for different youth groups. Mr. Bhatti says that his main target in preaching Islam and teaching the Quran are the third generation kids of Muslim families who, according to Mr. Bhatti, are at the verge of forgetting about Islam due to their parent's lack of interest in the religious education of their kids and the social pressures from wider British society. Mr. Bhatti says that he teaches every kid he meets that if he can learn Quran in his fifties with translation, then it is very easy for kids to learn it at a younger age. According to Mr. Bhatti, *Salafi* teachings of Islam are more rationalist and closer to reality than the superstitious beliefs and mythical experiences of *Pirs* based ways of preaching Islam by *Barelvi*s. For him, this is

---

[24] The one who makes partners with Allah and seeks help from them instead of asking Allah for help directly.
[25] Quran lecture with interpretation and elaborations of verses

the reason why *Salafis* are successful in attracting young people from *Barelvi* families in Birmingham. On my inquiry, Mr. Bhatti happily said that because of the absence of any shrine or tomb of any *Pir* in UK, the message of *Barelvi* preachers and Imams in the mosques looks like a fairy tale and fictional to young people who are born and raised into the scientific environment and education system of Britain. On the other hand, the *Salafis* never say anything while preaching Islam that goes against human rationality and logic. Every Saturday, Mr. Bhatti sets up a stall in the city centre with help of a *Salafi* group and preaches to people about the true ways of practising Islam and he invites non-Muslims to recognise the message of Islam. The stall or camp where Mr. Bhatti sits for half of the day offers leaflets, books and audio-visual material which are free to everybody. It is mostly young men of Pakistani, Arab, Bangladeshi or Somali backgrounds who administer the stall every weekend. I joined Mr. Bhatti at the stall on a number of occasions at his invitation and I was thus introduced to a few *Salafi* activists. Most of the stall organisers and administrators are local young men who are fluent speakers in the *Brummie* English local dialect and accent and are students in local colleges or universities. Through the associates of Mr. Bhatti on the stall, I came across the other two well established centres of *Salafi* reformists in Birmingham. One of them is the famous Green Lane Mosque and the other is the Alum Rock Islamic Centre in Birmingham. The Green Lane Mosque is run, and administered collectively, by *Salafis* who are originally from Pakistan, the Middle East and Africa. Though most of the members on the mosque committee are of Pakistani origin. Mr. Bhatti told me that famous *Salafi* leaders and preachers from Pakistan, and all over the world, visit this mosque and deliver lectures to spread the message of Islam. On one Friday prayer, the sermon and prayer was led by Professor Sajid Mir, who is a political and religious leader of the *Ahle Hadith* in Pakistan. After the Friday prayer, I participated in the lunch and discussion of the local *Salafi* leaders with Professor Sajid Mir. The local activists gave an informal presentation on the networks of youth, children and women who are actively engaging the wider community with the mosque's activities about learning the right ways of practising Islam in daily life.

The above is what I am going to call a *Puritan* stream of *Salafi* reformism, interpretation and practices. *Puritans* are the group of *Salafis* who have their major establishment at the Green Lane Mosque. *Puritans* are literalist in their outlook towards Islam as they believe in strict and legalist interpretations of Islam. *Puritans* are mostly small businessmen, government officers, factory works and self-employed freelance workers. For *Puritans*,

there is no room for disagreement on what is written in Quran and Hadith. The concept of the oneness of Allah as omnipotent and omnipresent is vital in their understanding towards Islam. *Puritans* believe in convincing other Muslims, especially *Barelvi*s, through debate and dialogue by making the Quran and *Sunnah* as the basis for dialogue. With respect to social and political ties, *Puritans* are strongly connected with *Salafis* in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and elsewhere. This relationship is established in everyday life practices via dissemination of religious literature to wider audience and through transnational charity networks.

The Alum Rock Islamic Centre is a *Salafis* initiative for the propagation of Islamic literature in the English language, mostly in form of small booklets. The centre is run by youth workers who volunteer their services for the functioning of the centre. I met Mr. Kaleem at the Green Lane Mosque who informed me about centre. He told me how the *Salafi* youth at Green Lane Mosque do believe in similar interpretations of practicing Islam but with respect to methodology of outreaching people, they prefer a different platform. Mr. Kaleem told me that the work of *Dawa* at Green Lane Mosque is mostly dominated by the opinion of elders. He said that the elders have a very mosque-centred approach while the 'target population' of the message of Islam is outside the mosque. Mr. Kaleem is a young man of twenty eight years age and he is a school teacher and youngest brother in the family of three brothers and two sisters. He said that he is very ambitious in his wish to clarify people's misconceptions that non-Muslims have about Islam and that Muslims have about practising Islam. He is a member of a youth group that works for *Dawa* at the Alum Rock Islamic Centre. He said that his group prefers to organise meetings and activities outside mosque to have a greater chances of meeting new people. After a couple of meetings with Mr. Kaleem, he told me that the *Salafi* group he is associated with is planning to organise a big event in collaboration with what he called the 'most inspiring and fantastic people' to spread the message of Islam, not only in UK but all over the world. He then informed me about work of Islamic Education and Research Academy (iERA).

2.8 Going Global: British Converts and their Popularity among Muslim Youth
iERA is a London based Muslim reformist organisation working for *Dawa* in Britain as well as at the international level. The organisation is mostly run by people who have converted to Islam. Some team members in the organisation are from Muslim

backgrounds and are not converts. iERA has become a renowned group of people who preach Islam all over the world and it has a special recognition amongst young people. The senior management of iERA consists of white, middle aged, middle class British converts to Islam. In Birmingham, iERA does not have any proper office but it has strong links with individual activists and other *Salafi* groups. Mr. Kaleem is one of the associates and contact people for iERA in Birmingham. Mr. Kaleem told me that he is among the organisers of one day *Dawa* training programs. They have launched a massive campaign for youth to come and participate in their one day training programmes. He told me that his group has been inviting people for months to come and participate via social networking technologies, local television, word of mouth and mobilisation among youth through mosques. Mr. Kaleem said that iERA speakers are exceptionally motivational and they have a talent for inspiring people especially youth to work for *Dawa*. The title of the training program by iERA was 'Changing the World through *Dawa'*.

The price to secure a place for attending the one day training program was twenty five British pounds ticket for an advance online booking or telephone booking whereas it was thirty pounds ticket for buying an entry ticket on the spot. I booked my ticket through telephone. Mr. Kaleem told me that they had chosen the Birmingham City Council town hall building as the venue. When I arrived there, I could see more than two thousand people in the hall and most of them were young men and women in their twenties. Men were sitting in front of the stage while women were sitting on the upper floor in the Town Hall Building. I met Mr. Kaleem and he seemed very happy to see the huge turnout of people. He told me that after seeing the huge number of participants in their programme at the Town Hall of City Council Birmingham, he is more convinced about the truthfulness and popularity of Islam. He said that there are a number of non-Muslims among the participants. There were six lectures throughout the day with breaks for prayers, tea and lunch. The program started with Quran recitation and some speakers were introduced. Four of them were white British converts, one of Pakistani origin and one of Egyptian-Canadian background. The main speaker was Abdul Rahim Green, who is also the head of iERA. Mr. Kaleem told me that the people who are running iERA are highly educated and influential among Muslims in Britain and that they have in-depth knowledge of Islam. They are highly inspirational preachers of Islam in Britain. Most of the young *Salafi* individuals, and some groups, are in contact with iERA for the cause of Islam. Mr. Kaleem told me that his friends and group have been planning to organise this event for

months and they were in contact with team of the iERA. Now they have an informal group of young Salafis in Birmingham that work for iERA on a voluntary basis. This group organises, communicates and administers all the activities that iERA plans to do in Birmingham. Mr. Kaleem told me that today's event 'Changing the World through *Dawa'* is their biggest event and biggest group activity and they are very pleased to see it being so successful. Mr. Kaleem informed me that through local Muslim councillors in city council, they were able to book Birmingham Town Hall building.

Abdul Rehman Green, the main speaker of the event, informed the audience that their organisation iERA is conducting research in a scientific way in order to explore ways to introduce Islam to non-Muslims in Britain. He said that the biggest challenge for young Muslims in Birmingham is to confront one Christian missionary organisation 'Campus Crusade for Christ' that is working in 190 countries. Their main target is to convert vulnerable and poor Muslims into Christianity. He stressed that it is a duty for everyone out of you to spare time, money and other resources to compete with this Christian missionary organisation through spreading *Dawa* not only in Britain but in all corners of the world. He told the audience that through doing business with non-Muslims in Britain, they can spread Islam by impressing them with the good morality and conduct that they have learnt from Islam. He stressed the importance of learning about true Islam through studying the Quran and *Sunnah* and said that people cannot preach Islam with money, time and resources unless they have proper education about Islam. Other speakers like Green delivered emotional speeches about keeping personal contacts with each other to strengthen brotherhood between Muslims. Speakers focused on how it is vital for each Muslim to engage in having social ties with new converts to Islam. They warned that due to negligence of ordinary Muslims, some converts have gone back to their old ways and some people have established the 'Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain'.

The speakers and organisers showed different videos to the audience and highlighted their efforts to spread Islam in African countries such as Kenya, Malawi and Tanzania. The speakers and organisers wore Arabic robes and speakers used Arabic accents whenever they quoted any verse from the Quran or when they used Arabic words in their speeches. Hundreds of young men and women registered themselves for various short courses and training programs which iERA was going to organise in Birmingham in the coming months. The speeches were unconventional and modern for the Muslims youth. I talked

with three participants and asked them about their opinions and responses to the speeches. They said that for all their life, they had been listening to typical Friday sermons in the mosque by local Imam about how to be a pious Muslim. But here, iERA people have showed them a new dimension of living like a true Muslim. Mr. Kaleem said, "Just being pious Muslim is not what Islam requires from you, if you are a Muslim, you have a responsibility to change the world and save people from going into hell fire". One of them registered himself as a volunteer for iERA in Birmingham when and wherever he may be of help.

The second major event of iERA in Birmingham was conducted in the Small Heath neighbourhood. The venue was a local mosque of Somali Muslims and the event was organised by a young group of Somali Muslims. Mr. Kaleem invited me again to attend the event. It was organised in the month of Ramadan and it was a short programme that was supposed to finish before breaking the fast. There were around three hundred young men and some middle age men in the mosque. The message and speeches were the same and there were video clips of Black Muslim preachers and how they were attracting people towards Islam. However, the focus was on international crises in the Muslim world and how the youth can play a role in spreading the *Dawa*. At the end of the event, gift boxes were distributed amongst all the participants which consisted of literature about introducing Islam, the Quran and social problems in British society. These gift boxes were given to participants with the promise that they will pass the gift boxes on to their non-Muslim friends. At both events, charity and donations were also collected for the cause of *Dawa*.[26] Mr. Kaleem told me that these events of iERA are a platform for young Muslims from different ethnic background to come together, be introduced to each other and spread the message of Islam to people through mutual friendships. In both events, the iERA organisers showed videos of their efforts to spread Islam in the various countries, especially Malawi in Africa. The video clips of individuals and groups from Malawi converting to Islam were shown in both programs. Participants chanted the slogans of Takbeer[27] after they saw people in videos taking Shahada[28].

---

[26] I will write the details of charity and donation aspects of these events in chapter five and six of this thesis.
[27] The slogan of "God is Great" or Allah o Akbar
[28] The ceremonial declaration that "there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the man and messenger of God" in order to convert to Islam.

In my analyses, I call the above group's approach a *Missionary* stream of *Salafi* Islamic reformism, interpretation, and practices. *Missionary* streams are mainly the people working in and working with iERA. Most of the proponents of *Missionary* streams of *Salafi* reformism strongly believe in converting non-Muslims to Islam. Headed by white middle class British converts, *Missionaries* in iERA convince their followers that salvation lies in spreading the message of Islam to non-Muslims. Most of followers from the *Missionary* stream of Salafi reformism are young people from middle class families. Their major attraction for young people is the ethnic diversity among preachers and followers. iERA have a rigorous training manual, training program and workshop for young Muslims and new-converts to prepare them to talk to non-Muslims. Although the general followers of *Missionaries* do focus on converting non-Muslims in Britain, senior members have established a strong network of charities to convert non-Muslims in African countries, especially in Malawi. However, iERA preachers do travel all over the world to advance the cause of Islam thorough spreading its message.

2.9 Islamising Britain: Participation in Active Local Politics

I met Miss Noreen at the end of the iERA's program of Birmingham City Council's town hall while she was distributing pamphlets amongst people about the introduction and activities of her organisation the Islamic Society of Britain. She also gave me an invitation for a programme happening in a local art centre which was celebrating the conversion to Islam of Lauren Booth who is the sister-in-law of the Ex-Prime Minister of UK, Tony Blair. The arts centre was on the corner of a street which was very close to my residence. It was interesting for me to witness a *Salafi* woman who represented her organisation spreading the message of Islam because unlike some of *Salafi* women, who were leaving the venue of Town Hall, she was not wearing a veil covering her full face but she was wearing a Hejab. Miss Noreen is of Pakistani origin and came to UK almost 12 years before. She is single and thirty years of age. She did her master's at university and then she got involved with the Islamic Society of Britain. She told me that I can meet more people of her organisation during the event.

It was Friday evening and upon my arrival at 6pm, I could see a long queue of men, women and children outside the local art centre standing and waiting for their turn to enter inside. It was like a family event or family gala as there were dozens of families inside the art centre. The entry ticket was five pounds per person and though the centre is not a

big venue, it can accommodate around five hundred people at any one time. A group of boys and girls were sitting at the reception registering every participant whilst taking their email addresses and phone numbers for future information of events associated with the Islamic Society of Britain. Before the formal start of program, I networked with a few people. Most of them were into education and social activism for a living as well as social life activities. I met a teacher of a local school, Mr. Ghulam, who teaches Urdu language to children. He told me a little bit about other participants. Mr. Ghulam told me that the arts centre is run by a famous Muslim political and social activist who has introduced the idea of Islamic graffiti among the arts circles in Birmingham. He said that all the graffiti about Palestine visible on the streets of Birmingham are created by him and his friends. The artist Mr. Chaudhry was busy in receiving guests and on the walls of arts centre, there were paintings and graffiti, mainly about Palestine.

There were two main speakers for the event, Lauren Booth and a Palestinian Arab woman activist. The speakers narrated stories of compassion and the sacrifice of Palestinians. They mentioned the plight of Muslims in Palestine and Gaza and emphasised to local Birmingham Muslims to raise their voice against Israeli atrocities whenever and wherever possible. A heated debate started after a white British non-Muslim participant raised some critical questions of rocket attacks on Israeli villages. Soon after she finished her questions and comments, I could see dozens of young men and women in their twenties and thirties, mainly of South Asian origin, raised their hands and they were eager to reply to that woman. Some of them became emotional and started speaking without the permission of moderator. The Palestinian Arab woman activist intervened and calmed down the participants by again delivering a speech about compassion and patience. She said that it was the patience of Muslims in Palestine that made Lauren Booth think about Islam and then finally convert. Mr. Ghulam told me with smile on his face that he feels proud to see passionate young boys and girls in Muslims community who are skilful and equipped enough to participate in any debate about the Muslim *Ummah* or other social issues at any forum. Mr. Ghulam said that because of their engagement with the Islamic Society of Britain, this generation is proud of its identity as Muslim and they do not introduce themselves as Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Indian or Arab but as British Muslims. He told me that it is because of the training which the Islamic Society of Britain provides them which gives them the chances to participate in various programmes like this.

Miss Noreen told me that they are running an FM radio station. After she came to know about my interest in Urdu poetry, she introduced me to Mr. Zeb and Miss. Saman who run a poetry show at their FM radio and they invited me on their show. Both Zeb and Saman told me that their show is very popular among young people although there are so many other shows on their radio about Muslims in Britain and Islam in general. I participated in their radio show as guest and shared some Urdu poetry with them. The name of their FM radio is Unity FM. The radio is based in a building famously known as the Bordesley Centre Birmingham which is situated at the corner of two predominantly Muslim neighbourhoods. The Islamic Society of Britain has an educational set up in this building where they run various educational lectures and cultural events as well as charity fundraisings. The buildings have a recreational centre for young people and a sports hall, an employment centre, a mosque, a nursery, some accommodation for homeless, a library and a children's centre. Through this radio programme in which I participated, Mr. Zeb informed me about their plans for social activism in solidarity with the brothers and sisters who are struggling to change the political destiny of *Ummah* in various Arab and North African countries. He said that the Western World is labelling *our* struggle as the Arab Spring but in fact, this is a surge for an Islamic revolution all over the Muslim world in which *we* are playing our part while based at Birmingham. He told me about the Birmingham Citizen Council as a face for the civic engagement of Muslims amongst Birmingham's vibrant civil society. Mr. Zeb and Miss Saman invited me to an event which they were organising which focussed on solidarity with Libyan freedom fighters.

This event which focussed on the solidarity with Libyan freedom fighters and other activists of the Arab Spring was hosted by the Birmingham Citizen Council. The venue for the programme was the Islamic Centre of Sparkbrook in Birmingham which is a mosque and a community centre that is run by the Islamic Society of Britain. After my visit to the Islamic Centre of Sparkbrook, I could see that Islamic Society of Britain is working as a foreign off shoot of Jamaat-i-Islami.[29] Birmingham Citizen Council is an umbrella organisation for various faith based groups but it is predominantly represented by Muslims who are members of the Islamic Society of Britain. I met Noreen, Zeb and

---

[29] Jamaat-i-Islami is an Islamist political party with an ideology of pan-Islamism which seeks to establish an Islamic state. It was established in British India by Syed Abul Ala Mudaudi and it now works in separate organisations in Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. Jamat-i-Islami is an influential political pressure group in Pakistan and have strong links with other Islamist organisations all over the world. Majority of the people who are workers of Islamic Society of Britain, generally vote for Respect Party, UK.

Saman at the event and they introduced me to the main guest of the programme who was an activist and member of the Libyan freedom fighters during the war against Gaddafi. I could see families and youth activists of Islamic Society of Britain excited about the event. The participants were more than three hundred in numbers and some Christian and Sikh representatives of their organisations were also present. The youth were chanting slogans of freedom when Libyan activist started his speech. While the other speakers were focusing on democracy and human rights issues in Libya, the activist from Libya and representative of Islamic Society of Britain, Mr. Fazal, was explaining how events taking place in Libya are connected with wider issues of Muslim *Ummah* and are not in isolation from the wider world.

After the speeches, I introduced myself to Mr. Fazal. He was happy to know that I am PhD student. He said that we need Muslim youth who are equipped with modern education as well as having an in-depth knowledge of Islam and the real purpose of life of human being. Mr. Fazal is senior member of Islamic Society of Britain and he is forty five years of age and has two sons and two daughters. He is a medical doctor by profession and has said that what we the Muslims in Birmingham need is a strong family system and in-depth knowledge of Islam as well as the best of modern education. Mr. Fazal said that the success of the Islamic Society of Britain is due to its members who are successful professionals, experts in their fields with the best of education and living everyday life in this modern world according to the teachings of Islam. In my inquiries about why people from the Central Mosque of Birmingham do not participate in the events that the Birmingham Citizen Council organise, Mr. Fazal showed his contempt for all big Islamic Centres in Birmingham. Mr. Fazal said that whether it is the Central Mosque of Birmingham, the Ghamkol Sharif or any *Pir Khanas*, they are all interested in serving their personal interests at the cost of the interest of Muslims all over the world. Fazal told me that the sad truth is that the people at the Central Mosque of Birmingham and at the Green Lane Mosque will never appreciate our event because we are supporting not only Libyan freedom fighters but also the ones in Egypt and Bahrain as they are loyal to the Royal Family of Saudi Arabia. He said that *Pirs* are only interested in increasing their clients and welfare of their *Pir-Khanas* and they even do not know about the issues of the global Muslim *Ummah*.

For analysis, I am going to call the above an *Islamist* stream of *Salafi* reformism, interpretation and practices in Birmingham. *Islamists* claim that they are not affiliated with any sect of Islam but their religious practices are those of *Salafis*. *Islamists* in Birmingham are based at the Islamic Centre of Sparkbrook and at the Bordesley Centre. To achieve unity and political and economic networks amongst the global Muslim *Ummah* is the objective of *Islamists*. Most followers of *Islamist* streams of reformism are young professionals and Muslims who are social activists. *Islamists* strongly believe in having a share in political power. During the local council or general elections in Britain, *Islamists* fully supported the Respect Party. During the time of my fieldwork, Salam Yaqoob, a candidate for the local MP election, was the public face of *Islamists* in advancing their idea of being successful Muslims. *Islamists* believe in all sorts of social and political engagements happening in Birmingham. On the other hand, they do train and educate their members with the literature published by *Jamat-i-Islami*. *Islamists* advance their message through gathering and events that attract men, women, children and especially families.

Ahmed (2013) presents the case of *Jamaat-i-Islami*, India, and how it has deviated from the basic neo-patriarchal postulates of Maududi over the period of time as a result of internal critiques from its members and pressure from other Islamists. The *Jamaat-i-Islami's* discourse on the limited mobility of women, political leadership of women and her being the inferior sex has changed and has been challenged. According to my observations with *Islamist* stream of Muslim reformist in Birmingham, I could see that women are at the forefront in advancing the mission of *Dawa* in the Birmingham's Islamic public sphere. The way women, affiliated with *Jamaat-i-Islami*, participate in the public sphere at Birmingham is different than those of their counterparts in Pakistan because of the former's visibility in public spaces, their participation in partially gender segregated programmes, and their support for a female MP candidate Salama Yaqub etc.

2.10 Varieties of *Salafi* Islamic Reformisms, Interpretations and Practices in Birmingham

For the sake of analysis, I have narrated *Salafi* streams of Islamic reformisms, interpretations and practices into four categories of analyses on the basis of their outlook towards Islam and the method of their respective propagation. These categories are not mutually exclusive but are overlapping and complex. Each analytical category of *Salafi*

reformists, while converging with others by claiming to be the torch bearer of true and authentic Islam, do have a degree of divergence amongst individual actors and group activities on the basis of personal futuristic aspirations, belief in a specific interpretation and understating of Quran and *Sunnah* and reflection or response towards global political order prevailing in the world.

These different streams of *Salafi* reformism converge and diverge on various issues in the different aspects of everyday life. Like *Traders*, *Islamists* have a common trait of pursuing worldly success and compromises to advance this. But both of these streams have entirely different and, somewhat, opposing political outlooks. While *Islamists* believe in constructing a global Muslim *Ummah* as one political entity, for *Traders*, the Ummah appears more like that of a wider network of likeminded people providing space for generating economic entity. However, both streams of *Salafi* reformism agree on personal stability, pious lives and playing an active part on the socio-economic and political levels in society. For the *Missionary* stream, the world appears as an opportunity to intervene with religious cause, and the *Islamists* believe in strengthening political networking within wider world and Muslim *Ummah*. However, *Missionary*, like *Puritans*, do not compromise over literalist interpretations of following the Quran and both criticise *Barelvi*s for their lack of interest in learning from the Quran and relying on stories told by *Pirs*. *Traders*, *Puritans* and *Islamists*, on the other hand, believe in strong social networking bonds via family ties, kinship and religious gatherings. *Missionary* tend to engage in individualistic efforts to achieve their ends which are based on personal efforts and do not rely on social ties. However *Missionary* and *Islamists* both believe in effective use of modern technologies and social networking websites for the propagation of their massage.

I could see the presence of a large number of youth in the programmess, seminars and meetings of reformist *Salafi*, and the new-converts charismatic leadership of Muslims. On the other hand, old and middle-age people are in greater numbers in the *Barelvi* reformist gatherings and groups. Although there are a number of youth present in the meetings of *Barelvi*s reformist groups, their percentage of the total crowd is less in comparison to the percentage of youth present in the meetings, gatherings and missionary activities of *Salafis* and the new-converts Muslim reformist groups. The socio-cultural and behavioural differences of youth present in both groups was quite apparent. Youth

present in the meetings, gatherings and activities of *Barelvi* reformist groups usually manifest to have more knowledge, information and contact with cultural values, dressing, language and influence of their 'country of origin'. On the other hand, the youth present in meetings and gatherings of *Salafis* and new converts groups represent more assimilation into mainstream 'British-Muslim youth culture' with a quest for the pursuit of modern education, career success and reflect the global ideals of *Ummah*. From their apparent behaviour, youth present in the gatherings of *Salafis* and newly converts, reflects aspirations and through their actions, introduce themselves as Muslims related to a global culture of Islam and are less interested in relating themselves with their 'country of origin'. However, another aspect of the manifest differences in the behaviours, attitudes and everyday life practices between youth of both reformist *Barelvi*s as well as *Salafis* groups is the economic practices of their parents, families, and extended relatives. Most of the youth present in *Salafi* and newly converts gatherings and meetings that I came across belonged to salaried classes or from parents with working professional and middle class backgrounds.

2.11 Conclusion

This chapter explores the prevalence of various streams of Islamic reformisms, interpretations and practices in everyday lives of Muslims in Birmingham. Muslims entrepreneurs, businessmen, professionals and activists belong to various economic and social classes and come from a diverse range of ethnic and national backgrounds though most of them are of Pakistani origin. However, the Bangladeshi, Indian, Arab and Somali diasporas do constitute a significant number among the total population of Muslims in Birmingham. I have tried to analyse the different streams of Islamic reformism and interpretations on the basis of their religious outlook, their belief in specific interpretations of practising Islam in everyday life and their method of engaging in outreach towards the general public of both Muslims and non-Muslims.

My argument in this chapter is the initial part of my overall thesis argument. My thesis argues that the various streams of Islamic reformism, interpretations and practices constitute a base line which determines the attitudes and practices of Muslims entrepreneurs and businessmen who strive towards a successful life which involves a public performance of piety and practices related to philanthropic engagements. In this chapter, I have explained how the various streams of Islamic reformism and

interpretations constitute their self-perception of being Muslims. The belief in various streams of reformism and interpretation serves as a common purpose in forging wider social, religious, economic and political alliances and groupings. The engagement of any Muslim individual, or group, with one particular stream of Islamic reformisms in Birmingham helps in understanding their perception of how they relate themselves to the local community as well as to the wider world. Nile Green (2011) while analysing four different categories of religious economy, *Anjuman, Jama'at, Brotherhood* and *Shrine* of Muslim entrepreneurs in Bombay during 1840-1915, views divergence between these groups by comparing the dynamic of functioning of each category. For Green, "…… while *Anjuman* firms comprised new kinds of modern associations with formal agendas, philanthropic programs, membership dues and newsletters, the organisation of shrine firms ranged from individual entrepreneurs who established 'franchise' shrines connected to parent shrine elsewhere to larger pilgrim centres and communities of charisma organised on the model of hereditary family business". Pp.17

The majority of Muslims in Birmingham follow various *Barelvi* reformist streams and interpretations. However, their practices as religious *Barelvi* are undermined because of the lack of any well-established shrine or well-known grave of any saint. Though *Communitarian* and *Traditionalist* streams of *Barelvi* reformism are in the process of establishing the shrine through making the necessary arrangements for the future, all streams of *Salafi* reformism are happy about the fact that the youth, and especially *Barelvi* youth, tend to agree with their interpretation of Islam because of the 'incomplete form' of *Barelvi* Islam in Birmingham due to the lack of a shrine.

I conclude the chapter with the finding that there is an element of Islamic reforms in all forms of different Islamic streams or sects. Limiting the scope of practising or advancing the reformist version of Islam merely to middle-classes (Green 2011, Adas 2006) would be a factual fallacy. As many working class and manual labourers associate themselves with reformist Muslim groups and assert a 'born again Muslim' identity through which they become part of a reformist stream of Islam which results in them having an influence over how it evolves and is interpreted. In the next chapter, I will extend my argument to how the ideals of being successful and the economic practices of entrepreneurial Muslims are shaped and defined by their beliefs and the followings of particular streams of Islamic reformism, interpretations and practices.

Chapter 3

The Economic Networks, Practices and Ideals of 'Being Successful' amongst Muslim Businessmen and Entrepreneurs in Birmingham

The ideals of 'being successful' amongst Muslim entrepreneurs and businessmen in Birmingham carries dual meanings. While the pursuit of profit in business and achievements in worldly affairs are pivotal in being successful, success in the afterlife is also an important factor when conducting everyday life and dealing with everyday economic activities for Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs. The ideals and interpretations of being successful are, sometimes, contested between businessmen, entrepreneurs and professional networks of Muslims in Birmingham. However, 'being successful' in itself remains a central theme of the economic networks and practices of their everyday lives. This worldview of success in life and the afterlife emphasises the performance of certain behaviours and attitudes in business life, economic deals, family values and in making priorities for future planning for Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs. In this chapter, I explore how various economic networks based on social groupings are constituted by different groups of Muslim entrepreneurs, businessmen and professionals, what economic practices they share in common amongst themselves, and how their beliefs and associations with particular streams of Islamic reformism establish similarities and dissimilarities between each other's economic practices and social networks. This chapter narrates the converging and diverging points of reformist Muslims and Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham by explaining how their economic practices and beliefs link to particular streams of reformist Islam.

My argument is this chapter is that Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs struggle to be successful in the life and afterlife and they keep their economic practices tied to their beliefs which are presented by various reformist Muslim groups in the interpretations of practising Islam in everyday life. However, the beliefs and practices of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham are more fluid and blurred in nature when it comes to adhering to one or the other streams of reformist Muslim groups and individuals, particularly when it comes to everyday life and business related dealings and interactions. The beliefs and practices towards any particular stream of reformist Islam becomes negotiable when Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs interact in life situation which demand a compromises in how to practice Islam.

I engage with the anthropological works of Adas (2006), Osella & Osella (2009), Rudnyckyj (2009), Green (2011), Sloane-White (2011), Soares (2013) who broadly deal with Muslim entrepreneurs in various contexts and Islamic/spiritual economies in general. Recently, Muslim entrepreneurs, businessmen and their economic practices have been studied in Anthropology as torchbearers of 'Islamic modernity' and in pursuit of worldly success through community upliftment (Osella 2009) while introducing Islamic work ethics which are compatible with the global market economy (Adas 2006, Rudnyckyj 2009). Muslim entrepreneurs are also exhibiting enhanced focus on personal piety and bringing Sharia based 'Islamic subjectivities' into workplace as a tool of efficiency (Solane-White 2011). The emergence a 'youthful Muslim entrepreneurs' and their relationship with liberalizing market (Soares 2013) has also been of recent anthropological interest. Whilst all of these researchers explain the emergence of Muslim entrepreneurs in public arenas, and their impact on the markets they are engaged with, less is written about the everyday life practices and the diversity of Muslim entrepreneurs and their beliefs in various streams of Islamic reformisms. This chapter contributes to the ongoing debate of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs by focusing on their social networking in everyday life, their beliefs in certain reformist Islamic interpretations, their personal evaluations of each other's character, financial savings and work ethics, their bringing back of piety into everyday life, and how Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs reshape their moral outlooks in their businesses, social relations and in their future agendas of businesses and families success.

3.1 Muslim Businessmen and Entrepreneurs

It is significant to discuss the operational definition of the category of analyses and the term 'Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham'. The term is mentioned repeatedly throughout this thesis and Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs are a group of Birmingham Muslims with whom I conducted most of my fieldwork and did my ethnographic observations with. However, Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs are not a monolithic or a fixed category of people and there is a degree of plurality and diversity among them at many levels. I would like to emphases that it would be inadequate analysis to look at Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs as merely a groups of people actively involved in businesses and trying to gain maximum profit out of the market they are indulged with. As a category of analysis, Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs would make more sense if they are viewed holistically and their social, political and

religious practices are also brought into analyses and discussion while explaining their economic practise.

Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs are involved in a variety of economic activities and they are a thriving business community in Birmingham. Most of them are success stories and have experienced the intra-generational upward social mobility through hard work, savings, doing strategic and timely investments and by involving all family into small business and expanding it further. Most of them have similar economic journey and life history of 'rags to riches'. The richest among Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs runs the businesses of cash and carry, supplier of raw material, owners of slaughter houses providing *Halal* meat, food industry (especially the ethnic food supply to local markets), successful solicitors and medical surgeons. They second level of successful Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs are restaurant owners (mainly Indian food restaurants but some have ventured into fast food supply chain and are quite successful there), property and real estate, educational entrepreneurs, printing and publishing, salariat professionals etc. The third category of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs are shopkeepers, taxi drivers doing various other jobs or having shares in other small businesses, or a family where three or four members are involved in different economic activities while having one family business, self-employed apprenticeships, and service providers like security and translation services to various companies and businesses.

One way of looking at Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs is their business and economic activity they engage with, the other way of looking at them is by focusing on their ways of engagments with Birmingham Muslims in particular and British society in general.

Along with having successful economic lives, Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs actively organise and participate in social, political and religious activities, charity and fundraising events. The subjectivities, tastes and aesthetic preferences of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs become more visible and observable by analysing and looking into their choices of attending or not attending a particular event of any social significance for Birmingham Muslims. Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs organise and sponsor various religious events by inviting famous Islamic scholars from other parts of Britain and from other countries, they organise and participate culture festivals and poetry session, they mobilize people during local and national elections in Birmingham by joining various political parties, they organise talks and seminars for the vents of

religious and political significance in Britain or related to their 'country of origin' or about something global but significant for Birmingham Muslims. Charity and fundraising events are most common and important gatherings where Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs donate money and show their support for various Muslim charities working on various issues in Muslim countries. Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs also join hands with each to protect their businesses and interests by aligning with reformist Muslims groups in Birmingham by establishing various pressures groups and platform to Halal Food Committees or Sunni Mosque Federation etc. they also do fundraising and donations for different local and sometimes international political and religious groups. Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs actively engage in public gatherings for their economic interests at local level and also join hands for anything concerning Muslim *Ummah* at global level.

However, It is difficult to draw a blunt line differentiating between Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs and reformist Muslim individuals as most of the reformist Muslim individuals are businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham and vice versa. Some reformist Muslims are economically very successful while they are important members of their reformist Islamic group as well. Due to this hybridity of economic pursuits and reformist agendas embedded in one person or a group, it would be inadequate to analyse economic practices of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs as mutually exclusive to their reformist and missionary activities. Hence I emphases that a holistic way of looking at Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs can better explain their everyday life and its complexities and intertwining of religious, economic, social and political.

3.2 Friendships, Social Gatherings, Businesses and Economic/Social Networking among Muslim Businessmen and Entrepreneurs

"O Allah, we are your humble servants. We are praying to you from the core of our hearts to bless us, particularly to our friend Mr. Shoukat, who is launching his new business office today. Our Lord, you know that our lives are full of mistakes and sins, but we are trying our best and putting an effort to earn an honest living so that we might be able to help our brothers and sisters through the Rizaq-i-Halal[30] that you will provide us through our business. O Allah, give our friend Mr. Shoukat strength and energy so that he would be able to make his business successful and would be able to earn enough to help others

---

[30] Money earned through pure and permissible means

in need. Almighty, you know that Mr. Shoukat has saved money from the *Rizaq-e-Halal* that you provided him because of his struggle and hard work over a period of time, and now he is investing that money into a new venture with a complete trust in your divine help and Ghaibi Madad[31] in day to day matters. O Allah, bestow your favours and success in the business and health of Mr. Shoukat and be his guardian. We are all sinful men who seek your forgiveness and repent over our sins. Help us to succeed in the life and afterlife. Amen".

These were the emotional words and powerful language of prayer by Lord Nazir Ahmed[32] when he was praying by raising his hands at the end of an inauguration ceremony for a new business office of Mr. Shoukat. Everybody who was sitting in the newly established business office felt emotional while Lord Nazir Ahmed was praying. The participants were saying *Amen* at the end of each sentence of prayer by Lord Nazir Ahmed. There were around fifteen participants present in the opening ceremony of Mr. Shoukat's new business project, a new trading company, which he entitled the 'People's Business Forum'. Lord Nazir Ahmed used the words *Rizaq-i-Halal* and *Ghaibi Madad* during his prayers and these have important connotations for the economic practices of Muslim businessmen in Birmingham. The literal translation of *Rizaq-e-Halal* means pure, permissible and profitable earnings and it is a common term used by Muslim businesses, community leaders and religious leaders in Birmingham. *Rizaq-i-Halal* is a type of income or profit which is not earned through cheating the customers or through any forbidden trade like selling alcohol, or the money earned through interest. The term and concept of *Rizaq-i-Halal* is also used for the income, assets and savings which a Muslim possesses after having completed the charity obligation of profit like Zakat or Sadaqa where the alms are given to the needy and deserving. The idea of *Rizaq-e-Halal* is that it is clean money which carries the blessings of Allah. *Gaibi Madad* literally means help from unknown sources, usually divine sources, and the term is the equivalent to 'divine intervention'. *Ghaibi Madad* brings the blessings of Allah which come unexpectedly to an individual. Whenever there is more profit than expected, it is referred to as divine intervention and it is referred to as *Ghaibi Madad*. The term is also used in spiritual

---

[31] Help from unknown sources, usually divine.
[32] Lord Nazir Ahmed is first Muslim peer at House of Lords, UK and is a popular social and political figure amongst Birmingham Muslims. He is known as a success story among British Muslims and he is also praised amongst Muslims due to his knowledge about Islam and global politics and political activism.

circles by *Pirs* and Sufis when they talk about the help of Allah to holy men. Usually when a *Pir* describes the anecdotes of his ancestors to his devotees, he uses this term and describes the spiritual accomplishments, and victories, over the forces of evil by his ancestor *Pirs* which was sent by Allah. At the same time, the term is also used to refer to victory during war even if a Muslim army gains victory despite being fewer in numbers and fighting with fewer weapons, the victory is said to be because of *Ghaibi Madad*. Lord Nazir Ahmed used the same words to connote the success of Mr. Shoukat's newly established business as he termed the business activity important in how it has similar meanings for the material, spiritual and everyday life struggle of survival by Birmingham Muslims.

I went to Mr. Shoukat's new business office for an inauguration ceremony with a mutual friend who was also invited. Mr. Shoukat is a forty three years old male entrepreneur and a businessman of Kashmiri-Pakistani origin. He is a local political representative of the Pakistan People's Party[33] in Birmingham, an activist for the Labour Party at the local council level in Birmingham, and a follower of the *Barelvi* stream of practicing Islam in daily life. He invited Lord Nazir Ahmed to say prayers and seek the blessings of Allah for the opening ceremony of his new business venture. I was a bit surprised to discover that Mr. Shoukat is a practicing *Barelvi* Muslim and that he had invited Lord Nazir Ahmed to say prayers at the opening ceremony of his business and to give blessings. Lord Nazir is known for his *Salafi* orientation of practicing Islam amongst Birmingham Muslims. Usually *Barelvis* invite the local Imam or their spiritual leader, like the alive *Pir* or the *Caliph* of a dead saint, to say prayers at such events like the inauguration of a business. Upon inquiring about this at another meeting, Mr. Shoukat told me that he and his business colleagues are not in Pakistan anymore where sectarian affiliations, and divisions, matter more. Mr. Shoukat said that Lord Nazir is a successful community leader, a renowned politician, a Peer in the British House of Lords, a successful businessmen as well as a practicing Muslim. Mr. Shoukat said that nobody had ever seen Lord Nazir Ahmed drinking alcohol or doing any un-Islamic activity and that there is a general trust about his personality. Mr. Shoukat said, "As you know I am a political activist and a businessman, so I invited Lord Nazir for saying prayers at inauguration ceremony of my

---

[33] The Pakistan People's Party is a popular progressive, and centre-left political party in Pakistan. At the time of my fieldwork, the Pakistan People's Party was the ruling political party and was sitting in the Pakistan government.

business considering him a role model and a success story, both politically and economically. He is personal inspiration for me because he is a practicing Muslim even with all these worldly success and achievements. I don't bother which sect he belongs or what interpretation of Islam he follows or believes in". Marsden (2005) in his work about Muslim village intellectuals in northern Pakistan maintain that depictions of rural Muslims 'often said to be either straightforwardly resistant or meekly submissive' (pp.1) in their responses to Islamising efforts of puritan and reformist Muslim individuals and groups are widespread in social sciences. Marsden argues that the response of village Muslims in northern Pakistan is neither dismissive nor hostile to reformist Muslim and they tackle 'the task of being Muslim' in complex ways. In a similar fashion, Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham while pursuing their worldly success do maintain their relationship with reformist Muslims intact in complex ways beyond the fix identities that they have by the virtue of their association with one particular stream of practicing Islam in everyday life or another.

After the inauguration ceremony of Mr. Shoukat's business, I talked with Lord Nazir Ahmed when refreshments were being served. Lord Nazir asked me about my village in Pakistan and informed me that his family own some agricultural land in the same district in Pakistan where I come from. My friend Mr. Hashim told Lord Nazir that my family also follow the *Salafi* tradition of Islam like his. Lord Nazir was happy to know that but he immediately corrected Mr. Hashim with laughter that he is *Ahale Hadith* and not a *Wahabi* or *Salafi*.[34] Then he told everybody sitting in Mr. Shoukat's office that in to his position as a Lord in the House of Lords, he sits in different committees and that he has discovered how much money Muslim monarchs and kings from Middle East, who claim to be *Salafi* in their understanding of Islam, have in British banks. He told everybody that he believes that if these monarchs and kings spend ten percent of their total wealth on the welfare of poor Muslims, all the problems of education and health in most of the Muslim

---

[34] Lord Nazir Ahmed does believe in reformist and puritan Wahabi or Ahale Hadith interpretation of Islam, like Salafis, but he does not like to be associated or identified with global Salafis as a political or social entity. Ahale Hadith emphasis and connect themselves with the local roots and of their fellow brethren in South Asia and they trace their religious lineage to reformist Muslims originating from South Asia. With respect to beliefs in interpretations of Islamic practices in everyday life, both Salafis and Wahabis have similar viewpoints, but some Wahabis of South Asian descent have contempt for Arab Salafis particularly that of Saudi Arabia. They distance themselves on political or social grounds with complaints and protests that Salafis from Saudi Arabia, or the Gulf countries, are rich but they do not spend their money on the welfare of the Muslim world. Some Wahabis detest Salafis on political grounds as they consider the ruling Salafi monarchies in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states as allies of the 'infidels' i.e. America in particular but Western Imperialism in general.

world could be eradicated. He told all participants that being a resourceful or a wealthy Muslim is not only just a luxury but also a big responsibility towards the community and fellow Muslims and, most of all, in front of Allah on judgement day. This conversation was interesting for the participants who were small or medium level businessmen from various parts of Birmingham. In this gathering, the boundaries and beliefs of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs for different interpretations of practising Islam, and their relationship with various groups of reformist Muslims, was blurred as they were maximizing their chances of worldly success through social networking.

I introduced myself to Mr. Matlub, who is a friend of Mr. Shoukat, and who also had some joint business initiatives with Mr. Shoukat. Mr. Matlub actively participated in the organisation of the inauguration ceremony and the administration of other related arrangements for the ceremony. I asked Mr. Matlub about the prospects of their Peoples Business Forum. He told me that Mr. Shoukat manufactures different Halal[35] food items for various Cash and Carry stores in Birmingham. However, their main agenda for launching the People's Business Forum is to attract trader investment from abroad, particularly from Pakistan. Mr. Matlub said that he and Mr. Shoukat are well known activists in the Pakistan People's Party in Birmingham and that they are affiliated with the Labour Party in Britain and actively take part in local political activities in Birmingham. Due to their relationship with the Pakistan People's Party, they are able to develop links with investors from Pakistan who are associated with, or supporters of, the Pakistan People's Party. For Mr. Matlub, the People's Business Forum office ensures a viable space in building economic networks for Mr. Shoukat but that it is simultaneously a transnational investment space and opportunity.

The above mentioned inauguration ceremony of Mr. Shoukat's business was an interesting event and in a way, an entry point for me to observe the economic practices of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham. For the pursuit of economic success, Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs constantly negotiate their beliefs in one particular stream of Islamic reformism or other. In Birmingham theses are Muslim reformists from *Barelvi* or *Salafi* origins. However, all of the networks of Muslims businessmen and entrepreneurs that I observed manifested different understandings and beliefs of worldly success and economic practices. During the course of my fieldwork, I came across various friendship circles, economic networks and socio-political groups of

---

[35] Permissible or pure food that is allowed to eat or drink under Islamic rules.

people with both similar and different religious and economic agendas. For the sake of clarity of analysis, I am going to write about and explain how these groups through their economic practices, worldviews and socio-spatial locations bracket themselves into different friendship circles and networks. I will also explain the social ties amongst Muslim businessmen which are based on shared economic practices. Most importantly, I will explore the relationship between the beliefs of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs and the interpretations of reformist Muslims conducting everyday economic life. By doing so, I will establish connections between this chapter and the previous chapter. I will then explain the outlook of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs towards the ideals of 'being successful in life and afterlife, whilst keeping in mind their affiliation with any particular stream of Islamic reformism.

3.2.1 Socialites

Mr. Matlub also runs an Indian food restaurant on a busy street in Birmingham. He invited me to an evening get together with his friends. Most of his friends are involved in the restaurant business and are, like him, restaurant owners. They meet to gossip, make business deals, drink alcohol and have dinner together every fortnight or at least once a month. I attended these monthly, and occasionally quarterly, meetings six times during my fieldwork. The venue for meetings is usually one of the main three or four restaurants that each of them owns. I observed during these meetings that food restaurant owners come from a variety of backgrounds amongst Birmingham's Muslims. The concentration of restaurant businesses owned by Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs is mostly in the neighbourhoods of Ladypool Road, Moseley, Stratford Road on Sparkhill, Sparkbrook, Coventry Road and Alum Rock Road. These roads and neighbourhoods in the South and East of Birmingham have a significant presence of South Asian communities on both sides of roads and in the neighbourhoods. Ladypool Road in particular is a well-known street for Indian food restaurants in Birmingham and it attracts a variety of different ethnicities including white British, and Afro-Caribbean to eat a variety of spicy Indian foods. Mr. Matlub told me that after industrial production decreased and job opportunities in factories started vanishing in Birmingham in the late 1980s, people who used to supply *Halal* food to Muslim factory workers started their own restaurant businesses. They started as small restaurants but their food businesses grew over the period of time. Now some of them are quite successful in the food business.

This fortnightly or monthly social gathering of people in the food restaurant business is a pivotal event for them and a sort of leisure evening of socializing with friends. Most of the time they sit at a famous restaurant at Ladypool Road but sometimes they go to other restaurants on Stratford Road, Birmingham. Almost all of them drink alcohol and then have their dinner. Their gossip continues for three to four hours before they go for dinner. Five or six restaurant owners are permanent attendees of this gathering and most of their gossip is about small or major things happening amongst South Asian communities and includes a mockery of Islamists and other reformist Muslim groups. At the same time, these restaurant business owners give money to the mosques in the neighbourhoods where they have their residences. They participate and supervise the Islamic events in the local mosques, especially in relation to inviting and organising a speech of some Islamic scholar. They have friendships with other Muslim restaurants owners who do not drink alcohol. However, when they get together to drink alcohol, they call it a 'gathering of special friends'. Usually gossip starts with everyday life matters and the ups and downs of business. The second time I attended this gathering, the majority of participants were planning to attend an auction of restaurant crockery and second hand big deep freezers that was going to happen in Southampton after a week. Mr. Matlub was happy as he was looking for big deep freezers at cheap rates for his restaurant. He shared his feelings with me that he is proud to have so many helpful friends in a society where people are mostly selfish and individualistic.

Most of the businessmen friends in the circle of socialites have religious and spiritual affiliations with the Ghamkol Sharif mosque and shrine. Two of them are *Salafi* Muslims. The general idea of being a good Muslim among socialites is to be good at heart and observe the rituals like fasting of Ramadan, Friday prayers, celebrating Milad al Nabi[36], paying respect to the shrine of Ghamkol Sharif and giving charity for the spiritual good of the Birmingham Muslim community. At the same time, they drink alcohol in secret from their families and other Muslim businessmen friends who are practising Muslims. However, they do not encourage others to drink but make fun of their practising Muslim friends who strictly do not drink alcohol and who consider it un-Islamic. Most of the

---

[36] Milad-al-Nabi is the event of celebrating the birthday of Prophet Muhammad. The event is controversial with respect to its Islamic legality. *Barelvis* celebrate Milad-al-Nabi with enthusiasm and religious zeal. *Salafis* and *Deobandis* don't observe this event but consider it as un-Islamic. Every year in Birmingham, *Barelvis* lead a procession of Milad-al-Nabi to celebrate their prophet's birthday.

socialites have strong connections with local Muslim councillors at the Birmingham City Council and politicians from Pakistan.

3.2.2 Gatekeepers

On the other hand, businessmen who are practising Muslims have their weekly social gatherings at the Central Mosque of Birmingham after Friday prayer. This particular group of businessmen are wealthy and well off amongst the Muslim community in Birmingham. Most of them are of Pakistani and Kashmiri origin, and some of them are of Indian, Bangladeshi and Arab origin. After the Friday prayer, they go downstairs to the basement of the mosque for a cup of tea or chit-chat. They arrange lunch after Friday prayer whenever some important event happens, like the arrival of any guest at the Mosque or a meeting of the Mosque committee as most of them are the members of Central Mosque Committee. I was not allowed to attend the post-Friday prayer meetings which concerned the affairs of the Central Mosque Committee but I could attend a few of their gatherings that were not about the affairs of the Central Mosque Committee. These businessmen are in the local Cash and Carry business or they are suppliers of goods and services. Two of them are in *Halal* meat wholesale business. These businessmen do have some non-businessmen friends present in their Friday meetings. These non-businessmen friends are present in the meetings about the affairs of Central Mosque after Friday prayer and they are members of board of trustee. However, they are more like functionaries or the bureaucracy of the Central Mosque as their roles are mostly to execute the decisions made by the Central Mosque Birmingham's Committee.

For the sake of clarity of analysis, I mention this circle of Muslim entrepreneurs and businessman as gatekeepers because of the religious authority they have over the Muslim community in Birmingham and their power to declare what is Islamic or un-Islamic by using the platform of the central Mosque of Birmingham. The diversity amongst the gatekeepers is not only their ethnic composition but also the nature and variety of trades or businesses which they are involved in. There is a strong perception amongst gatekeepers that they are the face and public impression of Muslims or *'Gatekeepers of Islam'* in Birmingham for others because of their hold on the administration of the Central Mosque of Birmingham and because they have official recognition of certifying what is Islamic and what is un-Islamic. In general, Muslims in Birmingham, look towards the Central Mosque whenever something is supposed to happen, like the announcement of sighting of the moon, or declaring the beginning and ending of fasting for Ramadan and

Eid festivals, or interacting with other religious communities, as well as informing Birmingham Muslims about venues where they should buy *Halal* food and where they should not. Their meeting point is always the Central Mosque of Birmingham and the majority of Muslim businessmen in this friendship circle of gatekeepers follow the *Puritan* and *Trader* streams of *Salafi* Islam. But a couple of non-businessmen members of gatekeepers do follow *Communitarian* and *Traditionalist* stream of *Barelvi* Islamic reformism. The ideals of success and being a good Muslim for gatekeepers are more performative in nature than having a mere belief in something which is Islamic. Unlike socialites, who keep their relationship with reformist Muslims at a personal level, gatekeepers are always performing their Islamic practices in front of the wider public.

3.2.3 Tycoons

There is another group of rich Muslim businessmen who are financially influential amongst the Muslims community in Birmingham. They have their own circle of friends and they organise a variety of social gatherings. This group is comprised of business tycoons amongst Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham. These business tycoons are affiliated with the Central Mosque of Birmingham and the supervision of mosque affairs and they also give donations to the mosques and other Muslim groups. At the same time, they are affiliated with other mosques as well. These tycoons are well known for organising and sponsoring cultural and Islamic events which are of public significance for the Muslim population in Birmingham. These tycoons are at the forefront whenever it comes to interactions with non-Muslim communities at the public level. Most of the poetry sessions and musical evenings in which different South Asian communities participate, such as Islamic events like *Milad-al-Nabi* or *Mehfil-i-Naat*, are sponsored and funded by these tycoons. I met Mr. Mansha at one of the musical evening programs held at the Midland Arts Centre in Birmingham. The event was organised by a local literary society, Fanoos[37], which works for the preservation and advancement of the Urdu language in Birmingham. My friend, and key informant, Mr. Hashim introduced me to Mr. Mansha. Mr. Mansha is the owner of a well-established local Cash and Carry store in Birmingham. He told me that his business has been very successful for the last six to eight years and that he is currently expanding his business. Mr. Mansha told me that in

---

[37] Fanoos is an Urdu word which literally means lamp. Fanoos is a literary society that organises various programs for the promotion and celebration of the Urdu language. The society is mainly run by poets, journalists and it is funded for the organisation of various events by businessman of South Asian origin, both Muslims and non-Muslims.

spite of his recent success in business, he still remembers the tough old days when his father used to work hard as vendor to earn a living on the streets of Birmingham. During the dinner after the musical program, Mr. Mansha told me that it always makes him happy to support the events that are cultural and of Islamic significance for Muslim community. I told Mr. Mansha about my PhD and research. Mr. Mansha informed me that he is going to attend an event in Westminster where Muslims with stories of economic and social success from all over the Birmingham would participate. He told me that Mr. Hashim is also going to participate in that event and that I can join them. I happily accepted their invitation and I joined them on their trip to Westminster, London.

It was an Eid Milan[38] event in the British Parliament at Westminster which was organised by the Islamic Bank of Britain (IBB), UK and which was hosted by Muslim members of the House of Commons from Birmingham.[39] There were around thirty participants from Birmingham and in total more than two hundred people attended the *Eid Milan* event. Mr. Mansha, Mr. Matlub, Mr. Shoukat, Mr. Shaikh and Mr. Hashim were among the participants along with others from Birmingham. There were numerous speakers at the event including two Muslim members from the Houses of Parliament, Lord Nazir Ahmed from the House Lords and Baroness Saeeda Warsi from the House of Commons, as well as other national level politicians from the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrats political parties. Mr. Shoukat brought his two teenage sons to participate in the event. Mr. Shoukat told me to stay with his sons and to introduce them to other guests after the speeches and during the tea break. Mr. Shoukat said that he wants his sons to know all the important and successful people in the country, particularly those who are from a Muslim community. Mr. Shoukat said with a laugh, whilst standing amongst friends in a groups, that who knows but one of his sons may give a speech here as a Member of Parliament in the future. Mr. Shoukat told me that he made his sons take leave from school for the day so that they could participate in the event to see what is happening in the lives of important people and how Muslim community leaders, who are success stories in the Muslim community, behave on such occasions.

---

[38] Eid Milan literal means the meetings and greetings after Eid or the post-Eid reception. An Eid Milan party is a common get-together event after the end of the fasting month of Ramadan and a celebration of Eid-al-Fitar. Usually circles of friends, professional organisations, student groups and other social, or political groups, of Muslims celebrate the event of Eid Milan.

[39] There were two Muslim MPs at Westminster from Birmingham at the time of my fieldwork. Shabana Mehmood from the Ladywood constituency and Khalid Mehmood from the Perry Barr constituency.

I thanked Mr. Mansha for making my participation in the event possible. Mr. Mansha later shared with me that he has business plans for the future and he thinks that the Islamic Bank of Britain in Birmingham can be helpful for providing loans or investment opportunities. The Islamic bank of Britain has a Birmingham branch which is situated in a Muslim majority neighbourhood of Small Heath. The bank was registered and opened in Birmingham a few years back. Muslim entrepreneurs and businessmen from Birmingham were receiving information from the Islamic Bank of Britain's information desk that was set up at *Eid Milan* gathering about bank's *Sharia* complaint retail financial products and *Halal* mortgage alternatives for house purchasing. Though the nature of the *Eid Milan* event was social and economic, Lord Nazir Ahmad and the MPs from Birmingham also raised some political issues in their speeches. Lord Nazir said that Muslims in Britain have been demonised in Western media in the post 9/11 sera, but that the recent riots in England[40] had proved that Muslims are not 'potential terrorists' but 'defenders of private property'. Khalid Mehmood, the Muslim MP from Birmingham, said in his speech that Muslim youth have given their lives in Birmingham to protect private property and businesses and that today's celebration of Muslim economic success in Britain is great news for Muslims. Mr. Shoukat told me that all political leaders of Pakistani Muslim background are related to each other through kinship, social relations and businesses whether they are Labour Party or Tory supporters. On my inquiry, he told me that all Muslim political leaders from Birmingham have strong social or economic ties with each other and that party affiliation in Britain is not as important for them as much as their personal relationships with each other. He further explained that luckily most of them are in the Labour Party which makes it easy to make open socio-economic and political alliances. Mr. Hashim said that even if they do not have an alliance here in the UK, they have to make an alliance when it comes to looking after their influence in Pakistani political affairs, particularly in Azad Kashmir[41] where most of them come from, and that they need to seek business benefits from each other's links and relationships in Pakistan.

---

[40] In August 2011, riots broke out in the majority of large cities in England. In Birmingham, three British Asian Muslim men were killed in a hit-and-run attack in Birmingham while they were safeguarding their shops.

[41] Azad Kashmir literally means Independent Kashmir. It is part of the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir between India and Pakistan and it is under the administrative control of Government of Pakistan with its own legislative assembly. In Birmingham, most of the Muslim population is originally from Mirpur, one district of Azad Kashmir, and they call themselves Mirpuris. Usually in Birmingham, people from Mirpur are quite influential in the local politics of Mirpur, particularly during the elections of legislative assembly of Azad Kashmir.

I refer to this influential group of friends as *Tycoons* for the sake of clarity of analysis. It is difficult to say that *Tycoons* follow one particular stream of Islamic reformism due to the wide acceptability that they have for all streams of reformist Islam. Moreover, there is a wide diversity amongst *Tycoons*. But whilst keeping their individual economic advancements and understanding of practising Islam in mind, they are to some extent, followers of *Newcomer* streams of *Barelvi* reformism or *Trader* streams of *Salafi* reformism as I have explained in the first chapter of my thesis.

3.2.4 Brotherhood

Muslim professionals, on the other hand, are mostly middle aged (though some of them are young), have different circles of friends and ways of doing social gatherings. I met Mr. Badar at a social event in a local school in the Small Heath neighbourhood. The event was organised by a school management committee and other local Muslim community leaders and it focussed on the theme of preserving the identity of being Muslim in Britain. The talk was about how to make sure that their children, whilst being schooled in the British education system and living in a western cultural environment in general, do not forget their Islamic identity, and the historical legacy and cultural values of their forefathers and their linkages with their 'place of origin'. Mr. Badar is a Social Worker at Birmingham City Council, has a Master's level education and has done various training courses about Social Welfare. He was pleased to know that I am doing my PhD in Anthropology. He told me that it is always in the hands of researcher how to represent the community that a researcher is working with. He said that researchers and journalists always look for bad news about the Muslim community in Birmingham and that they love to publish bad news whilst conveniently ignoring good news. He introduced me to his friends who were predominantly professionals and employed in white collar jobs. Mr. Badar said that he is inviting some of his friends to have tea at his home and that he would like to invite me as well. I went to Mr. Badar's home. His living room was full of books about revivalist and reformist Muslims of the *Salafi* orientation of practising Islam. The talk between his friends during the tea was generally about social and political issues in Britain and other parts of the Muslim World. I found out that Mr. Badar and his friends do not like just meeting for a cup of tea but prefer organising and participating in the events which are aimed at the Muslim community's solidarity and unity in Birmingham.

Through Mr. Badar, I came to know about the monthly family day at the basement hall of the Sparkbrook Mosque. I attended these family gatherings twice. Mr. Badar told me

that he and his friends believe in a strong and well-connected community of Muslims in Birmingham who are successful in terms of their life-time achievements, education and professionalism in their respective fields. I could see that the family day gatherings of professionals is linked to the activities and wider network of the Islamic Society of Britain. Participation in these family day events was not restricted to families over anybody else. Usually the organisers arranged various events at the family days for the entertainment of all participants such as singing, stand-up comedy and performances by children. Men, women, children and the elderly all participate in the family day. It starts in the afternoon and continues until the evening. The participants pool money and arrange food, cold drinks and tea for everybody. It is the only circles of friends of Muslims I came across where men and women were socialized together as participants. Though individual men do not talk or interact with individual women, men when in groups talk and interact with women in groups. At Muslim professional social gatherings, they create a Muslim culture of partying in Britain which is, to some extent, influenced by the general norms of social gatherings in wider British society. I met Mr. Fazal again during my second time at a family day event. Mr. Fazal said that being Muslim does not mean that we should hide ourselves from the social world we live in. He was critical of how other *Salafi* groups socialised as they, according to Mr. Fazal, consider mixing and socialising with non-Muslim communities as sin. He was also critical of *Barelvi* groups who he said had the tendency to limit their social lives to their relatives and people from their 'place of origin'. Mr. Fazal told me that he is proud that he organised the street party on the eve of Royal Wedding of Prince William and Kate. The street party was non-alcoholic and he said that non-Muslims from his street and neighbourhood, white or black, participated in large numbers and were happy that a group of Muslims organised the party for Royal Wedding. He said that this is how a Muslim should face the world he lives in, 'bravely and confidently' and that we should avoid making our own ghettos. Mr. Fazal told me that the Royal Wedding was a chance for his friends and like-minded Muslims to assert their Muslim family values and the sanctity of the family institution. Mr. Fazal, while talking to other friends on the lunch table, said that social gatherings are the best source for spreading *Da'wa* to other people and for connecting to them. He used the example of the Prophet Muhammad who started to spread the message of Islam to the general public by organising an event together and by serving food to everyone.

I refer to the above circle of friends, who are mainly Muslim professionals, as a *Brotherhood*. Friendship in the circle of *Brotherhood* is not just a social relationship for

the sake of fun but also a type of recruitment which commits one's time and efforts to mobilize others and popularise Islamic culture at in the public sphere in Birmingham. Though *Brotherhood* negate the idea of being identified with any Muslim sect, their way of practising Islam in everyday life follows an *Islamist* stream of reformism which is to a great extent a *Salafi* interpretation of Islam. The ideals of success in the world for *Brotherhood* are to invest one's time and efforts into organising events which create solidarity amongst the Muslim community. *Brotherhood* always aims to integrate the Muslim community into wider British society whilst maintain the Muslim identity at the forefront.

These various circles of friends which includes Muslim businessmen, entrepreneurs and professionals in Birmingham not only share a common economic outlook and interest, but in most cases, they have a common belief in a particular Islamic stream of practising Islam in everyday life. However, with the exception of the professional's social network, the belief in a particular interpretation of Islam is not a decisive factor in determining the behaviour and nature of the relationship within each circle of friends. Individual actors, in any group of friends, affiliates with a particular stream of reformist Muslims in Birmingham when seeking religious and spiritual guidance in everyday life matters. The group, in general, respects its individual member's choice of his relationship with a sect or the way he practices Islam in everyday life. Green (2011) in 'Bombay Islam' categorizes the religious productions presented by different streams of Muslim entrepreneurs in Bombay during 1840-1915 into four categories. These four categories are *Anjuman, Jama'at, Brotherhood* and *Shrine* respectively. Green believes that the various interpretations of Islam tie these Muslim entrepreneurs into economic networks both directly and indirectly and that the different categories describe the nature and scope of the religious economy which is shared by a group of Muslims who operate together like a family business. He stresses that each one of them has a clientele based on the nature of its composition, history and family lineage. In a comparable fashion, I see the various circles of friends amongst Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs advancing their worldly success by associating themselves with a particular group of friends. Furthermore, the compositional nature of each circle then creates a bias towards the orientation of a particular stream of reformist Islam and shared economic practices which they view in the context of an Islamic ethos in Birmingham.

Usually these circles of friends function as a space for its members to personally evaluate their learning by measuring and sharing each other's economic and social achievements, and this gauging their failures and the lessons they have learnt. In the next section of this chapter, I analyse the economic practices of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham by focussing on the scale through which they evaluate each other's economic achievements whilst, at the same time, being secretive about some economic activities.

3.3 "How Much Did you Save?" Measuring and Inquiring about Each Other's Success and Savings

Mr. Ehsaan is the owner of an Indian food restaurant on Ladypool Road which is in a neighbourhood where the Muslim population is a majority. His restaurant is the newest one on Ladypool Road and this street is famous for its Indian food varieties in Birmingham. I met Mr. Ehsaan in the central mosque for *Salafis* in Birmingah, the Green Lane Mosque, after a Friday prayer. I told him that I live nearby on Ladypool Road where his restaurant is and that I have eaten at his restaurant few times. Mr. Ehsaan was pleased to know that I am offering my Friday prayer at the Green Lane Mosque and not in any of the other mosques in the neighbourhood where I live. The Green Lane Mosque is three neighbourhoods away from the restaurant of Mr. Ehsaan. Mr. Ehsaan was born in an industrial city, Sialkot, in Punjab, Pakistan and he is a fluent speaker of the Punjabi language. He told me that he came to the UK twenty four years ago and that he started his career as a waiter in another restaurant at the same street. He told me that he could observe the flourishing of restaurant businesses during the 1990s in Muslim majority neighbourhoods in Birmingham. He was promoted from waiter to restaurant manager and he learned how to run a restaurant business. He said that his younger brother joined him in the UK when he was a manager at another restaurant. Upon my questioning about how he made it possible to own his own restaurant, he replied that every person with a right approach, and an attentive business-mindedness, can be the owner of restaurant. He said that the secret of his success in business was how to ask the same question to himself constantly after every month, six months and every year: *How much had he saved?*

Mr. Ehsaan told me that he kept the record of all his income and expenditure from the start of his career. He said that he used to ask his fellow colleagues how much did they save in the last month or the last six months? Whenever he learnt that somebody else from his trade could save more than him in a month or six months, he swore to Allah and

himself that he would struggle better next time to save more than that person. Mr. Ehsaan started working on a plan to secretly establish his own restaurant business. The moment he found a restaurant premise to rent out on Ladypool Road, he informed his boss that he was leaving his job. Mr. Ehsaan then started a new business but according to him, he was a newcomer to a business market where other competitors had strong social networking and huge investments. He said that he only knew a few people in Birmingham at that time and that his biggest problem was his lack of social networking. Mr. Ehsaan was an employee who had turned into a boss and a new entrepreneur in the market. He told me that he came to Birmingham from the Punjab while most of the businessmen and Muslim families in the area, where his restaurant is, have migrated from Azad Kashmir. At the beginning, his restaurant was not a profitable success and a time came when he started to get disappointed. However, slowly, but surely, something happened which changed his economic situation altogether.

Mr. Ehsaan pointed towards the Green Lane Mosque building while we were leaving the main mosque exit after prayer and he said that this is the place where Allah showed his first Barakat[42] into his business. He said that at the beginning, he was disheartened that he had made himself look foolish in front of other well established restaurant owners by investing all his savings into his new business. He learned that management skills and efficiency alone are not enough to ensure business success. Public relations and strong social networking was something he was missing as a young entrepreneur even though he was, as a young entrepreneur, challenging his previous employees. He said that one day a relative told him that Professor Molana Sajid Mir[43] is coming to lead the Friday prayer at the Green Lane Mosque in Birmingham. Mr. Ehsaan said that his parents and relatives are closely linked to Professor Molana Sajid Mir as the Professor comes from his birth city in Sialkot in Pakistan. Mr. Ehsaan said that due to his family links and personal devotion, he offered to the Green Lane Mosque Committee to arrange lunch for

---

[42] Barakat or Barakah literally means the blessing of Allah upon business efforts. The social meanings of Barakat are the opening of new horizons of profit into one's business. Usually successful Muslim businessmen use this term when they are asked how is their business going? The usually reply in Urdu language is "Allah ki Barakat hay", which in business terms means that they are in profit and that business is going fine.

[43] Professor Molana Sajid Mir is a religious and political head of Salafis and Ahale Hadith groups in Pakistan and elsewhere around the world. Sajid Mir is a sitting senator in the Upper Parliament of Pakistan and has been part of various coalition governments for a number of years. In Birmingham, the management committee of the Green Lane Mosque links themselves to his religious leadership and administration. He is famous for his personal links with the royal family of Saudi Arabia and with other important figures in Arab countries.

the Professor after Friday prayer. Mr. Ehsaan said that it was the first time where he was introduced to the public at large. Everybody appreciated the food and the Professor said good words about him, his family and their devotion to practising Islam in their everyday lives. Ehsaan's friends requested the Professor to do a special *Barakat* prayer for the newly established business of Mr. Ehsaan which was not profiting well which means that he was facing difficulty. The Professor not only prayed for *Barakat* of Mr. Ehsaan's business but also guided people that it is their religious duty to support each other for the success of their worldly affairs. Mr. Ehsaan said that he started offering prayers at the Green Lane Mosque regularly and he earned a good introduction and repute with mosque committee and people in general. After this, he soon started to receive orders for parties, meetings, weddings and family dinners at his restaurant. Mr. Ehsaan said that for the first time in months, the upper floor of his restaurants started to get busier and he earned a reputation for cooking tasty food. But he did not forget his basic principle of saving and in a few years, he was in a position to buy himself a house.

I often came across the discussions of businessmen and entrepreneurs when they asked about each other's economic achievements and savings. Inquiring about socio-economic inquiries, each other's profits and financial deals are a common practice. However, the sort of inquiring, scaling, measuring and judging each other's success and achievements is more common amongst close friends who have a degree of mutual trust. Scaling and measuring each other's success and life takes another angle when it comes to discussions between Muslim businessmen and professionals in Birmingham. Muslims in Birmingham do not always boast about economic achievements. For some of them, what make an individual successful in the life and the life after are not financial savings but a person's life style and legacy.

I came to know about Mr. Tahir while I was working as a volunteer for a local literary circle of Birmingham Muslims upon the publication of a small booklet about the Centenary Celebrations of the famous twentieth century Urdu poet and polemic Faiz Ahmed Faiz (1911-1984).[44] The literary circles of Muslim businessmen, professionals

---

[44] Faiz Ahmed Faiz (1911-1984) was a progressive poet and polemic from Pakistan who wrote in Urdu. He travelled to the UK frequently and was married to an English woman. He used to stay in Birmingham during his visit to Britain in the 1970s and the early 1980s. Some of his friends from Birmingham arranged a variety of literary events for the Centenary Celebrations (1911-2011) of his work and poetry during the time of my fieldwork. I worked as an active member of the Faiz Ahmed Faiz Centenary Celebrations Committee, Birmingham, UK where I organised celebrations of many different events related to the poet's Centenary Celebrations.

and social activists planned to organise a series of events for the centenary celebrations (1911-2011) of Faiz Ahmed Faiz. These events were mainly funded and given patronage by *Tycoons*. I was in contact with the local literary organisation *Fanoos* and through this organisation, I worked as a team member in organising various literary events. I met Mr. Tahir when I frequently visited his printing press. Mr. Tahir owns and runs this printing press which is mostly availed of by the local Asian community of Birmingham. Mr. Tahir's printing press is famous for providing services to make restaurant menus, marriage cards, invitation letters, banners and posters of local events and printing religious brochures and booklets, particularly for Muslims in Urdu and English. Mr. Tahir started his business ten years ago and according to him, he was successful because his business was a family effort. All three brothers worked hard to make his business successful. Mr. Tahir has earned a good reputation amongst Birmingham Muslims as a young entrepreneur and a successful businessman. Mr. Hashim happened to visit Mr. Tahir's printing press frequently as Mr. Hashim works in the advertising and marketing of products for Asian and Muslim businessmen along with working for local Urdu newspapers. Mr. Hashim is very famous for his work in Birmingham and he has contacts and links with local politicians, businessmen, religious communities and Imams of mosques as well as with artists and media people.

Mr. Tahir told me that his work experience and length of time as a business man age Birmingham is less than half of that of Mr. Hashim's but that he has more financial assets than Mr. Hashim could ever earn throughout his career. Once, during a tea break from work in his printing press, I was chatting with Mr. Hashim and Mr. Tahir and we were talking about different successful businessmen. Mr. Tahir said to Mr. Hashim that if he could have the same level of local knowledge, social contacts and popularity like that of Mr. Hashim's, he would have been more successful and one of the richest of Muslims businessmen in Birmingham up till now. He said to me to ask Mr. Hashim why he did not grab business opportunities whenever they came up during his career? Mr. Hashim was trying to avoid the questions and conversation about his material achievements and he was trying to change the subject of discussion. Mr. Tahir continued to compare his economic progress and achievements and he said to Mr. Hashim, that if Mr. Hashim was clever in his line of advertising Asian businesses and journalism, he would have established a television network or he should have taken a franchised in any one of the Urdu language TV channels which providing those services and businesses from Birmingham to various TV channels. Mr. Tahir said that in last five to ten years, some

Muslim entrepreneurs in Birmingham have profited a lot from obtaining a franchise in one of the television networks from Pakistan, India, Bangladesh or Dubai or by starting their own Islamic television networks in Urdu, Punjabi or English languages. To Mr Tahir, this is something which Mr. Hashim could have excelled in as an entrepreneur. I could see that Mr. Hashim was getting upset upon being told about the business opportunities he had so far missed. Mr. Tahir left the conversation as he had to go back to his office to attend some clients. Mr. Hashim then told me that he was silent as he thought it would have been bad manners if he had replied to Mr. Tahir about what he has and Mr. Tahir does not have or would never have despite his 'so-called financial success'.

Mr. Hashim said that he had seen many Muslim businessmen in Birmingham achieving upward economic mobility but that when they die, nobody turns up to their funeral prayer. Mr. Hashim said that he knew another person like that of Mr. Tahir who was rich and busy making money all the time, but that on his death, his sons were unable to locate the phone number of any local mosque to arrange a funeral service. The deceased's sons, Mr. Hashim told me, requested to him if he could arrange an Imam for the funeral of their father in the mosque and if he could request some Muslims to attend their father's funeral prayer. Mr. Hashim said that when he arrived at the deceased's home, his sons were having a bitter argument over how to trace the phone numbers of people they might know and about who should do what and each one of them was saying. 'I don't know, I don't know'. Mr. Hashim said that he is happy that because of his life style and strong social networking within Muslim communities in Birmingham, his sons will be not be 'begging somebody to request people to attend his funeral prayer'. He is not so busy in running after money that when he dies, his sons would not know what to do. Mr. Hashim said that unfortunately the majority of Muslims businessmen are running after worldly success but that they forget the fact that real success is the success in the afterlife when they will be facing Allah and where they would not be able to buy that success in the afterlife with their money.[45]

Rudnyckyj (2009) in his work on the rise of Muslim entrepreneurial work ethics, and its relationship with economic globalisation in a state owned steel manufacturing unit in Indonesia, maintains that the model of 'spiritual economy' presented by reformist Muslim

---

[45] I will explain this point in detail in the fourth and fifth chapters. There is another dominant viewpoint among Muslim businessmen in Birmingham that success in afterlife can be achieved with money if the money is earned through *Rizaq-e-Halal* and if they do charity.

trainers to the workforce emphasises self-accountability and hard work as Islamic work ethics. During my fieldwork, I observed the same phenomenon of self-evaluation amongst Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham who own and run their own small private units. Rudnyckyj observed the rise of Islamic work ethics in a controlled environment of a state owned manufacturing unit where services of reformist Muslim trainers are hired in order to inculcate Islamic values at workplace. I had observed, on the other hand, that the same work ethics in the privates business of Muslims in Birmingham, whereby, instead of a hired reformist Muslim trainer, the relationship, friendships and social networking with various reformist Muslim groups functions as a context in which Muslim businessmen acquire Islamic economic practices and work ethics by becoming part of reformist Muslim's network. The mere relationship with reformist Muslim groups, and their adherence in interpretation of any stream of reformist Islam, provides the 'education and training' whereby private business owners learn and practice modern Islamic work ethics in their every life economic practices.

The economic practices, saving strategies and understandings of Mr. Ehsaan, Mr. Tahir and that of Mr. Hashim are a reflection of the different methods Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs employ in order to measure and plan their economic achievements over the following six months or year. Discipline and efficiency combined with *Barakat* is viewed as a recipe for financial betterment and the accumulation of surplus. While Mr. Ehsaan received help from reformist Muslim groups by establishing social relations with Birmingham Muslims at the Green Lane Mosque, Mr. Tahir relied on family efforts and continuous evaluations and comparisons with other Muslims businessmen and entrepreneurs. Mr. Hasim, in contrast, did not have the desire to be super rich but, at the same time, he invested his time and energies in building up his social capital.

On one hand, Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs are in the habit of inquiring about each other's savings and business achievements. On the other hand, there is a culture of secrecy about economic practices and business plans, particularly amongst the competitors in the same market or in the same trade. While inquiring about savings and other economic practices is normal, secrecy is more common whenever somebody explores new ventures of making profit or has any expansion plan for an already existing business.

3.4 Being Secretive about Business Expansion Plans and Economic Deals

Mr. Bashir's restaurant is a very popular place to have dinner with families and friends amongst well-established Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham, particularly for those who settled in Birmingham in the 1960s or 1970s. The restaurant is on Ladypool Road which is the famous 'food street' amongst Asian communities. I was introduced to Mr. Bashir by Mr. Mansha and Mr. Hashim. After the public events like a poetry session, musical evening, religious, political or social gathering, or any event at the Pakistan Consulate[46] in Birmingham, people assemble afterwards at Mr. Bashir's restaurant to eat or to have a cup of tea. Mr. Bashir's restaurant is like a space for Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs where they can come and talk frankly about various issues and where they will be served the best food and service by Mr. Bashir's team. I was given the task by the organisers to liaise with Mr. Bashir to make dinner arrangements at his restaurant after a book launch event by a local Muslim college teacher which was held in the city council's local neighbourhood library. I met Mr. Bashir twice for this purpose. A day before the event, I had my dinner at Mr. Bashir's restaurant and I wanted to see Mr. Bashir to ask about the next day's menu for dinner guests. I was informed by the staff that Mr. Bashir is in the restaurant's backyard.

Mr. Bashir's restaurant is situated on the main road and its backyard's boundary faces the fence of a small neighbourhood public park. There is some space on the backyard which is generally used as car parking for hotel customers. Mr. Bashir was standing there having a cigarette when I approached him. He was pleased to see me and said that he wanted to have a break for some time as he had had a long day at the restaurant. I told Mr. Bashir that the restaurant was full of customers while I was having my dinner. Mr. Bashir said that he knows that the biggest challenge for his business is to create more space within the restaurant for customers. He said to me that he thinks that I am an educated person and to him, I am like a younger brother so he can trust me he can share that the problem of having more space for a restaurant have been solved. He said that he was perusing a planning permission application for the local council because he would like to extend the

---

[46] The Pakistan Consulate is any important place in the everyday lives of Muslim communities in Birmingham. The majority of the Muslim population of Birmingham are of Pakistani or Kashmiri origin. Different events of national significance for Pakistan are held at the Pakistan Consulate in Birmingham from time to time. The Consul General, who is the administrative head of the Pakistan Consulate at Birmingham, is a civil servant and a diplomat of the Government of Pakistan. He is a very important invited guest at almost every event of public significance amongst Muslims in Birmingham. All influential people in Birmingham try their best to have a personal friendship with the Consul General of Pakistan in Birmingham.

backyard of his hotel up until the fence of neighbourhood park. Mr. Bashir told me that only a few people know about his plans. He does not share it with others as anybody can go to the court to stop the extension plans. He mentioned the name of Mr. Ehsaan as a rival businessman and expressed his fear that this guy can go to the court to challenge his application. He said that Mr. Ehsaan is a highly thankless person as Mr. Ehsaan started his career in Birmingham as a waiter at his restaurant. Mr. Bashir was angry that he gave a promotion to Mr. Ehsaan and that made him manager as he left his restaurant, established a new restaurant on the same street and he now acts as a competitor in the same market. Mr. Bashir said that he is pleased that he has almost got permission for an extension as local councillors have written in favour of his extension application. Mr. Bashir said that he is proud that every important person amongst the Muslim community is like a friend to him and with their support, and through his strong social networking, he could succeed in getting a planning permission application granted. Mr. Bashir told me that he wants to start the construction work at night so that the next morning, people will see a different place. He said that he does not want to give anybody a chance to go to court and stop his construction plan in the name of public interest, that's why he plans to start construction work during the night time.

I heard a similar story of being secretive about business plans from Mr. Ishaq. Mr. Ishaq works in the Chamber of Commerce and focusses on Asian Businesses in Birmingham. I met Mr. Ishaq at a local currency exchange shop on Stratford Road in Birmingham. Mr. Ishaq told me that he works on a specific project for interconnecting and creating opportunities for Asian Businesses. He said that he has thoroughly observed and understood the economic practices of the Asian community and particularly of Muslim businessmen. Mr. Ishaq was not happy about the methods of economic practice of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham with small or medium level businesses. He said that he is sick of copycat methods and the approaches of small and medium level Muslim businessmen. He told me that he was the pioneer for providing money exchange services in Asian neighbourhoods. He started three outlets of providing currency exchange services particularly to Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. He said that within a couple of years, a dozens of small and medium level Muslim businessmen opened currency exchanges and money transfer services and outlets in their shop, or in small offices attached to their shops. The result now is that currency exchange businesses in Muslim and Asian neighbourhoods are highly over-saturated and there is no significant profit in it anymore. According to Mr. Ishaq, he has learned that being secretive in his

experience is the best way to earn some profit. He said that the examples of Muslim businessmen is like that of passengers leaving a sinking ship because when they see a boat around, all of them jump into it at the same time and sink the boat. Mr. Ishaq said when he refers to a boat, he means any new business opportunity which promises some profit as people rush towards it to grab it without any proper planning or market calculations. Hence, at the end, all get fed up and remain empty handed. Mr. Ishaq said that he has some other ideas in his mind about future business plans but he will not share them with anybody unless he materialises and executes them first.

3.5 Family 'Empire' Map: A Story of Success and Failure of Business and Social Relations

Mr. Naqaash is a fifty seven years old businessman who lives with his extended family in Birmingham. He has three sons. His first two sons are with him in business and his third son is a GCSE student at a private local secondary school. Mr. Naqaash came to Birmingham in 1968 from France and when he started his job as a factory worker. I met Mr. Naqaash at a charity dinner when he was there with his youngest son. He told me that his son likes to participate in debating contests at his school. I told Mr. Naqaash about my debating experiences as a student in Urdu in Pakistan. Mr. Naqaash was pleased to know that and he said that he would like me to talk to his son about debating and career counselling. He said that he wants to see his youngest son as a future leader of the Muslim community in Birmingham. I met Mr. Naqaash again during a poetry session and I told him about my research. Mr. Naqaash invited me for a cup of tea over a weekend. I discovered that Mr. Naqaash had recorded all of his major personal, and family life, events on paper and he had prepared a life map of his past. He keeps all past events, and future economic and political ambitions of his family, written on paper and kept the record in his files. Upon my request to ask to see those files, he said that he cannot show me everything from his personal record as they are supposed to be a 'family secret' but that he will show me one of them.

Mr. Naqaash told me that he started his career in Birmingham alone as his brothers and other family members were in France. The rest of his five brothers stayed in France and they started their careers there. He was a factory worker for fifteen years and during this time, according to Mr. Naqaash, he 'learned the ways of world in Birmingham'. He left his factory job and started his own business of providing a self-drive services to the public. He convinced his brothers to move to Birmingham and together all six of them,

Mr. Naqaash said, can build an 'family empire of business'. Mr. Naqaash said that although he is not formally educated, he always love to read and hear the stories about successful Muslim businessmen. He was determined that he must do something in his life time to make a difference. He said that he convinced his brothers that they must have a 'united interest and vision' of their family in their minds all the time. He built a bungalow back in Pakistan for his parents and bought land for another bungalow in a small town near Islamabad. He analysed the capabilities of his brothers and he learned that two of his brother do not have experience while the other two are talented but do not have the knowledge of how to run a business. He started a new business for two of his brothers which provided Asian foods to small stores and corner shops. Mr. Naqaash said that in the whole decade of 1980s, all of the brother worked really hard and their business empire started to expand. However, due to their lack of education they could not get benefits from the 'system' and mainstream markets. Mr. Naqaash said that he along with his brothers, decided to invest in the college and university education of their youngest brother with the hope that the youngest will modernise the whole business empire after getting a degree. But in 1992, his plans to advance his family efforts were ruined because of the personal interests of two of his brothers. But the biggest blow for him had yet to come. His youngest brother refused to be part of the family business, married a white British woman, settled in London and started carrying out his job with a private company. Mr. Naqaash said that all the business empire he built was shattered because his brothers did not wanted to make a collective family effort any more.

Mr. Naqaash showed me a printed A4 page on which he wrote down his future plans and the lessons he learnt from the past. The page contains some columns, lines, proverbs and some narrative descriptions of certain situations in two main sections. In the upper section of the page, Mr. Naqaash wrote down how he analysed the qualities and work capabilities of his brothers. He wrote down the term Ghuddaar[47] in bold letters in front of the name of his youngest brother. While explaining the future planning map to me, Mr. Naqaash never used the name of his youngest brother but always referred him as *Ghuddaar*. Mr. Naqaash said that in the year 1992, he confronted a new reality of life as all his ideals of living a successful life, and having economic achievements, vanished. Mr. Naqaash said that he reviewed all of his life and after months of introspection, he came to know that

---

[47] Ghuddar literally means traitor. In general terms, Ghuddar is also used for a person who betrays or does not fulfil the expectations of significant others.

there was something very important missing from his everyday life and plans. According to Mr. Naqaash, all of his brothers could not get on well because there was no *Barakat* in their lives and businesses. They were running after success and money by forgetting the Almighty Allah and they were not practising Muslims. Mr. Naqaash said that his future vision for his family business and the success of his sons is based on a strong belief in *Barakat*. He said that in last twenty years, he has earned more money and stability and that is all because of *Barakat*. Mr. Naqaash is a practising *Barelvi* Muslim now and is a devotee of the shrine of Ghumkol Sharif. He said that his sons are doing well and that they have established three branches in Birmingham and in nearby towns for self-drive services provided to businesses. He said that for his sons, the sky is the limit and that they have plans to open branches all over the UK. But for the youngest son, Mr. Naqaash has different plans. While the two eldest are running business, the youngest is attending an expensive private school in Birmingham. Mr. Naqaash said that he will go into politics and he will be in charge of the charity that they are going to establish soon in future.[48]

Mr. Naqaash has started building relationships with politicians both in Pakistan and in the UK. Whenever there is a public gathering on any social or political issue, Mr. Naqaash makes sure to attend that event with his youngest son. He said that he has a business investment in a property in Pakistan. Due to his interest in building a relationship with well-known people, Mr. Naqaash told me that real estate tycoon Malik Riaz[49] knows him personally and that he has investment in a real estate business in Pakistan in the name of his sons. Mr. Naqaash said that they are lucky in that they have influence in both countries and that his son has the opportunity to join politics both in Britain and in Pakistan. He said that he is proud that his youngest son has been involved in debates and speeches about the issues and problems of the Muslim community in Birmingham at various forums as a young leader. According to Mr. Naqaash, from the time he has started practising Islam in his everyday life, his efforts are always fruitful and he feels that *Barakat* is there. He quoted a Quranic verse which says that 'it is always in the hands of Allah to choose whom to bless with prosperity and success and whom to deprive from success'.

---

[48] I will discuss the role of establishing charity and doing philanthropy in detail in chapters five and six.
[49] Malik Riaz is a Pakistani real estate tycoon. Most of the Muslim businessmen from Birmingham, who have investments in property and real estate in Pakistan, have business relations with him.

Mr. Naqaash was also present at the event organised by the Islamic Bank of Britain in Westminster with his youngest son. He proudly shared with other Muslim businessmen that his youngest son had been performing well in co-curricular activities at school. He was very confident that his son would do further studies at Oxford University. "When successful Muslim proposes solutions for common good, education becomes the core focus of charitable and activist energies" (Osellas 2009, pp. 214). In the case of Birmingham Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs, the quality of the education of their own children becomes a priority for them. In Britain, quality education of international standards are available, and the energies of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs are focused on the moral and Islamic education of their children in particular and the Muslim community in general. With rising entrepreneurships and economic success among Birmingham Muslim businessmen, their tastes for consumption and for occupation are changing (Geertz 1963) as they prefer their sons to be educated with moral character and wish them to pursue a political career within Birmingham Muslim community, something they couldn't achieve during their youth as they were busy in establishing their businesses and were preoccupied by economic pressures of early entrepreneurship. Sloane-White (2011) discusses the notions of '*Barakah*-driven lives' of successful Muslim businessmen and white-collar works in the Malaysian corporate sector and maintains that these Muslim entrepreneurs are less concerned about 'Eurocentric success models' in their economic practices and more in the pursuit of *Barakah*. I could see similar notions of *Barakat* amongst Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham through my interaction with Mr Naqaash and Lord Nazir Ahmed. However, applying the notion of *Barakat* whilst conducting everyday economic life does not mean that Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs are relaying on miracles and supernatural factors in their success. Rather, these are the Islamic work ethics of self-evaluation, discipline and belief in success in life and afterlife that are considered a source which brings *Barakat* to their businesses and lives.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter explored the economic practices of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham and focused on their ideals of 'being successful'. The successful person or the idea of 'success in the life and afterlife' for Muslim businessmen, entrepreneurs and reformist Muslims in Birmingham is a vital aspect of their everyday life routine. The socially established criteria of being 'successful' is that of an individual who has a history

of economic achievements in his life-time, holds a sound and well-established business, has savings and ownership of real estate properties, performs the pilgrim to Mecca, supervises mosque affairs, gives charity and donations at different occasions publically and has an influence in local politics here as well as their 'place of origin'. Rytter (2011) in his work bout improvement strategies among Pakistani families in Demark explores that Pakistani families compete with each other in various aspect of everyday life in order to gain prestige and social recognition. Pakistani men in Denmark compete with each other in terms of pursuing career, getting membership of various social and religious organisations and associations, by doing voluntary work and by giving generous money as charity to various causes. Mostly, the parents compete with each other and with broader society they live in by saving money and by sending their children in expensive schools in order to get better education which might guarantee a promising career. However, the ideals of success are contested among Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs for various reasons. The various circles of friends reflect their worldviews and aspirations of what is it to be a 'successful' Muslim and successful businessman. Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs do not have rigid, or strict, ideas of sticking to reformist Muslims' interpretation of practicing Islam when it comes to forge economic or political alliances in order to gain influence. The majority of Muslim businessmen are open to adapting their respective beliefs in reformist Muslims' given interpretation of Islam when it comes to meet the socially established criteria of being 'successful'.

This chapter explores the various circles of friendships of Muslim businessmen which are aligned in their economic practices and orientations towards reformists Muslims groups. Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs sponsor events of religious and cultural significance for Birmingham Muslims. At the same time, depending on the version of reformist Muslim's interpretations which they believe in, they assert their Muslim identity by introducing an 'alternative' life style; something best reflected in the friendship circles I call *Brotherhood* or *Socialites* in this chapter. Measuring each other's success in financial terms, and the continuous self-evaluation for better performances, are common traits that Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs employ in order to meet the socially established criteria of being successful. The element of *Barakat* plays an important role in the imaginations of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs when they explore and contemplate either their material and spiritual success, or, the lack of success.

In this chapter, I have explained the ideals of success and contestations amongst Muslim businessmen, entrepreneurs and professionals. The ethnographic details in this chapter help to establish the link between the ideals of success amongst Muslim entrepreneurs and businessmen and their orientation and conformity towards any particular reformist interpretations of practising Islam in everyday life. The debate surrounding the relationship between belief in any reformist interpretation of Islam and economic practices as well as the associated ideals of being successful among Birmingham Muslims will allow me to extend my main argument on public performances of piety and virtuous life among Birmingham Muslims. In next chapter, I will continue to develop the main argument of my research on how the ideals of success that are embedded in any reformist interpretations of Islam reinforce and reshape the behaviour of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in public places and this encourages them give to public performances of piety and moral/virtuous life in front of others.

Chapter 4

Public Performances of Piety and Moral Life amongst Muslim Businessmen and Entrepreneurs in Birmingham

Public performance of piety and moral lives is a key element in the everyday socio-economic lives of successful Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs. This is a medium for successful Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham to express their achievements, affluence, commitment and dedication in worldly affairs before the wider audience in general and potential business partners/clients and the Muslim community in particular. In this chapter, I will provide ethnographic details of the behaviours and practices of Muslim entrepreneurs and businessmen in Birmingham which they demonstrate before the wider Muslim community in Birmingham. The chapter will focus on how and why the projection of the 'righteous self' becomes pivotal for Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham whenever they encounter any social gathering or a public space. This chapter will elaborate on how social gatherings and meetings become a stage for Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham where they give a performance of their pious and moral lives to everyone. I connect the chapter to the previous two chapters of my research by elaborating on how the public performances of piety and moral lives aims to not only seeking credibility within the Muslim community, but also, how these performances are performed with the expectations of reward in the life and afterlife.

Recent Anthropological debates have focused on the significance of piety by considering its micro and macro manifestations and their relationship between the latter manifestations and the public sphere of Muslim societies. I will engage with the anthropological works of Soares and Osella (2009), Schielke (2009), Deeb (2009) and Marsden (2005, 2009) in my ethnographic analysis where I expand on the public performance of piety amongst Birmingham Muslims. Deeb (2009) advances the debate of piety politics and its relationship to the wider Muslim public sphere by arguing that Anthropological discourses on piety and the public sphere either deal with the Habermassian notion of the public sphere and how it has shaped Muslim subjectivities, or they limit pious subjectivities to a political self-fashioning as Mahmood (2005) would argue. Habermassian understanding of public sphere restricts participation in public sphere to educated, bourgeoisie and middle classes only (Reetz 2006); something that

discourses on and understanding of Islamic reformism in Anthropology shares in common (Geertz 1968, Gellner 1981, Metcalf 1982, Green 2011). Deeb deconstructs the instrumentalist argument of 'piety reductionism' by expanding the notion of piety politics to the private and public spheres of everyday life in Muslim societies by focusing on Shi'i women in Lebanon. Soares and Osella (2009) argues that the emphasis on ethical self-fashioning in Anthropological debates about 'piety' have an inherent tendency to ignore or overlook macro-politics within and around Muslim societies. Both argue that neither reducing Islam to the 'epiphenomenon of Islam' nor to the ethical self-disposition of 'piety minded' Muslims is helpful in understanding the 'Islam how it is in everyday life of Muslims'.

This chapter engages with, and adds to, these debates by exploring the wider relationship of piety amongst Birmingham Muslim at two levels. Firstly, I explore how the notions of piety are reconstructed and reoriented by reformist Muslim groups in particular and by the process of Islamic reformism in general and how this informs how Birmingham Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs give public performances of their pious and morality-led lives. Secondly, I explore what impacts and influences the public performance of pious lives by Birmingham Muslims businessmen and entrepreneurs have on wider social, political, economic and religious practices. Finally, this chapter will advance the overall thesis argument that Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham are disposed towards a variety of interpretations of practising Islam in everyday life as presented by reformist Muslim groups. Each reformist Muslim group contests idea of what is it to be a 'true and good Muslim' as they assert their identities of being a true Muslim by encouraging certain behavioural practices of their followers who adhere to their definition of being a good Muslim. Islamic reformism is embodied in the socially established criteria of 'being successful' in the everyday life of those Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs who believe and associate in their given interpretations of being a good Muslim. These Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs, in order to establish their 'identity as good and successful Muslims' among their community, give public performances of their pious and successful lives whenever, and wherever, they get a chance. These public performances are encouraged by reformist Muslim groups who then present these performances of piety-led lives as a role model for Muslims in Birmingham.

4.1 Learning Public Performance of Piety and Moral Life through Practising Islam in Everyday Life

Soon after the Friday prayer in the Central Mosque of Birmingham, Mr. Fiaz asked me if I could stay a bit longer as some guests were coming to the mosque to meet the mosque committee and Muslim community leaders. Fiaz said that he thinks it would be a good idea to introduce me to the guests as a researcher working with the Birmingham Muslim community. He said that he has also invited some other Muslim youth who are either studying or doing some sort of business or job. The guests would be happy to meet Muslim youth doing higher studies or running successful businesses. There were three other Muslim youth already waiting in the basement of the mosque when I arrived there. I introduced myself to them.

It was the first visit of a newly appointed Archbishop of Birmingham (Catholic) to the Central Mosque of Birmingham. The chairman of the Central Mosque of Birmingham invited influential members and successful businessmen of the Muslim community to stay over for lunch after Friday prayer to greet Archbishop. There were around twenty five people from the host's side and the Archbishop came with a team of six people. The chairman of the Central Mosque of Birmingham, a popular Muslim figure in Birmingham, thanked the Archbishop upon his arrival and said, "I am pleased to see you and your fellows at our mosque. We should hold more and more meetings like this. Unfortunately, we are living in such a society these days where sinners and bad people do their get together almost every day while the morally responsible and pious people rarely do so because they are so busy in their own lives that they cannot find time for socialising with other like-minded people with good cause". Mr. Latif, who is a very influential and successful Muslim businessman in Birmingham, and one of the well-known *tycoons*, gave a speech in which he appraised the Archbishop for writing a letter to Prime Minister David Cameroon over his remarks about the failure of multiculturalism in Britain[50] and for sharing the concerns of marginal religious communities in Birmingham. Mr. Latif said that it is strange that our Prime Minister does not see multiculturalism as a blessing for this country. He personally felt offended by the comments of David Cameroon as he, and people like him, offer an alternative, moral and positive way of living a successful life to the majority of those affluent people who spend more money on vices and sinful indulgences of daily life than spending their energies and money on any good cause. He

---

[50]http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-12371994

added that he personally knows many of his Muslim friends who live a 'moral and good life' despite the fact that Allah has blessed them with worldly richness. He views them as a 'role model' for other affluent people of Britain with regards their personal lives, social relations and family orientations. This is what, Mr. Latif argued, is the beauty of his and his colleague's adherence to the uplifting Islamic values of their everyday life. He acknowledged the presence of the Archbishop in the mosque and he said that he wished for people of faith to come forward and take the lead in everyday affairs of their communities and guide them into the right direction.

While Mr. Latif took the lead of initiating the discussion, others hosts also delivered brief speeches in the pre-lunch part of the meeting. These speeches were generally about welcoming the Archbishop at the mosque and about how practising Islam has brought peace and prosperity to their lives. In post-lunch part of the meeting, it was a more informal chat and people were discussing various topics in small groups. Mr. Faiz introduced me to Mr. Iqbal who is a middle aged Muslim businessman of Indian descent. Mr. Iqbal is popular amongst the Birmingham Muslim community because of his extensive travel experience and exposure to various parts of Muslim World. Mr. Iqbal shared his travelling experiences to Palestine, Egypt, Turkey, Morocco and Saudi Arabia. His emphasis was on his spiritual encounters and his meditative experiences during these travels. He was talking with his friends about experiencing '*Noor*[51]' while he was at the Holy Mosques at Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia and at the Aqsa Mosque in al-Quds (Jerusalem). He proudly told the audience that he felt proud as a British citizen when he had a chance to say prayer at the graveyard of Indian soldiers in Palestine who fell there while defending the British Empire during the early 20th century military campaigns. He told me that he always felt better as a Muslim and that his faith grew stronger every time he visits any mosques, library, shrine or other places of historical significance in the 'heartland of Muslim World'. Mr Iqbal said that due to his soul searching and travelling in the Muslim World, many of his affluent Muslim friends from Birmingham have started to make similar spiritual journeys to these wonderful places that he recommends apart from going to Mecca to perform the annual pilgrimage. Eickelman and Piscatori (1990) view pilgrimage and migrations among Muslim societies as a form of political and social

---

[51] This means 'Light of God', and experiencing Noor generally implies getting showered by the imaginary light whilst closing the eyes and remembering or chanting the name of Allah or Prophet Muhammad. This is usually a personal meditative experience. One chapter in the Quran is also named as Al-Noor (The Light).

action. Religiously inspired travelling for Muslims is one of the many other forms of traveling and migration. Travel within Muslim lands also serves the consciousness of Muslims by extending the sense of the frontier of *Ummah* (Moudden 1990). Mr. Iqbal's account of his traveling to Muslims lands, in this sense, is an assertion of his self-identification as that of a learned Muslim who has first-hand knowledge and exposure to the wider Muslim World.

The majority of the affluent Muslims from Birmingham were at a lunch table at the Central Mosque of Birmingham. Some of them usually attend Friday prayer in other mosques in the town and mainly as part of the *Barelvi* tradition at the Ghamkol Sharif Mosque. However, the opportunity to sit at a lunch table with other faith and community leaders was attractive enough for these Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs to come together at the Central Mosque of Birmingham for Friday prayer; a mosque that has an overall *Salafi* outlook. The majority of the participants in the lunch program at the central Mosque of Birmingham were affluent Muslims who belong to both the *Salafi* and *Barelvi* reformist Muslim groups. At the same time, some of them have close friendships and some of them are related to each other through kinship. This meeting over lunch with the Archbishop of Birmingham at the Central Mosque was a venue for successful Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs to assert their identity as pious businessmen who live virtuous lives. Mr. Fiaz told me that although some rich Muslims offer their prayers in various mosques other than the Central Mosque of Birmingham, there is always a desire in their hearts to have membership on the board of trustee at Central Mosque of Birmingham.

4.2 A Pious Introduction: Acquiring Trusteeship at the Central Mosque of Birmingham

Mr. Fiaz said that he is the only member of the board of trustees at the Central Mosque of Birmingham who is not wealthy. He acquired this membership because of his devotion and hard work on all small and big matters related to the everyday functioning of the mosque. However, due to years of affiliation with the Central Mosque, he is well-respected amongst the other board of trustee members, despite being a small businessman. He told me that he knows how rich and affluent Muslims of Birmingham try their best to acquire membership of board of trustees. Rich businessmen give big donations to the mosque to gain membership. The minimum amount they normally have to pay is a one-off payment of five thousand pounds but the members have to pay some fixed monthly

amounts as well. Each year some new members are selected for the board of trustees and some of them leave. I asked Fiaz why it is so important and competitive for affluent Muslims to gain membership to the board of trustee. He replied: "It gives them everything". Fiaz said that the Muslim business community is well-connected to their economic practices with regards their market and clientele. One way or other, most businesses of affluent Muslims reflect an ethnic dimension whether it is retail, cash and carry, restaurant, *Halal* food supplies or property and real estate. Mr. Fiaz told me that the membership at the Central Mosque gives them a sort of license of being a 'good Muslim' amongst other Muslims in Birmingham and it becomes part of their introduction. It is not only the best platform for social networking and knowing what is happening in the market through personal sources, but it also fulfils their social and political aspirations. Some rich Muslim community leaders are interested in local politics or in their own representations at the public level and being a member of the board of trustees become an introduction of the individual.

I met Haji Sahib over a dinner in an Indian food restaurant where people gathered after an Urdu poetry session. Haji Sahib is a rich businessman who owns a supermarket store and is a member of the board of trustees. He is quite open with regards his beliefs and associations in *Barelvi* interpretations of Islam. From him, I discovered, that it is not only the economic prospects and practices that compel Muslim businessmen to acquire membership. Haji Sahib said that he gained membership because he believes that he cannot let *Salafis* hijack the projection and presentation of Islam in Birmingham to the wider public. Haji Sahib organises events and gatherings at the Central Mosque in *Barelvi* style like *Salaat-o-Salaam* (praising Prophet Muhammad) and *Naat*. He always urges other *Barelvi* Muslims to actively participate in events at the Central Mosque. I saw Haji Sahib on various occasions during my fieldwork at different social, religious and political gatherings and I observed that Haji Sahib is not only present in gatherings at the Central Mosque but also at the Ghamkol Sharif Mosque and other places. He sometimes delivers a speech at these gatherings and his focus is usually on how a Muslim should live 'good, pious and successful life'.

Public performance of piety, and that of living a morality-led life, is an art of conducting daily life among Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs. This art of behaving in the public sphere is socially learned, reproduced and rejoiced by them on the eve of any social, political and economic gatherings of Muslim community. It becomes vital for

various reasons to give a public performance of personal piety and how morality-led one's way of living is. Public performance of pious lives by Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham is equivalent to that of the 'use of theatre by reformist Muslims in Indonesia to spread the message if Islam' (Abid 2010). Here, Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham not only assert their personal identities as 'good Muslims' through public performance for reformist Muslim groups, but the public performance of conducting moral lives also advances their version and mission of *Dawa* to ordinary Muslims. As I have explained in previous chapters, Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs are prone towards a variety of reformist Muslim groups in their everyday lives. So giving a public performance of piety, and exhibiting their moral and virtuous lives, helps them to establish their version of living the life of that of a 'role model' for the Muslim community and particularly for youth. At the same time, through public performance of piety, the affluence and success of business is displayed in front of others. In general, it becomes pivotal for the community and community leaders to know how well, economically and socially, a person is doing. Equally, for that person it becomes inevitable to let others know about his success by giving a public performance of it in pious ways.

4.3 Encouraging the Public Performance of Piety

The Pakistan Forum[52] is one of the most popular platforms for Muslim businessmen of Pakistani heritage and background in Birmingham. The Pakistan Forum has members from the Muslim businessmen community who actively participate in local council elections and other social affairs of the community. The Forum organises public gatherings of prominent Pakistani community members in order to highlight and present their demands or concerns to key figures in the local government. During my fieldwork, I learnt that some members of the Pakistan Forum were lobbying the local government to establish a cultural centre for the Pakistani community in Birmingham. The proponents of the Pakistani cultural centre were of the view that there are already enough mosques in Birmingham for the community. What they saw as needed was a cultural centre that might be helpful for the younger generations of Pakistani heritage to ensure an awareness about their parent's history, language, migration trajectory and their achievements in Britain.

---

[52] The Pakistan Forum claims to be a non-profit, civil society type group of Muslim Businessmen of Pakistani heritage. The group openly supports Labour Party. The group only becomes active and functional when the Labour Party wins local elections and forms a government at the Birmingham City Council. The Forum represents itself as a civil society for the Pakistani diaspora in Birmingham.

However, the majority of the members of Pakistan Forum were in favour of demanding land for building another mosque or Islamic centre in the name of community welfare and cohesiveness. There was an argument, grouping, difference of opinion and lobbying within the members of Pakistan Forum whether they should be demanding help from local government for establishing a cultural centre or that for a mosque. Mr. Mushtaq, a member of the Pakistan Forum and a proponent of the cultural centre, told me that he already knows that his friends and like-minded sympathisers would not be able to convince the majority of Forum's members to present a demand for establishing a Pakistani cultural centre before the city council authorities. He said that the biggest hurdle for such an idea is the approach, life style and priorities of people like Haji Sahib. He told me with a laugh, "some community leaders like Haji Sahib want to take all Muslims in Birmingham into heaven, even if they have to take them forcefully". On the eve of the re-launch meeting of the Pakistani Forum, where a large number of Muslim businessmen, community leaders, local councillors of Pakistani heritage, Labour Party leaders, British MPs of Pakistani descent and around three hundred Pakistani community members were present, Haji Sahib delivered this speech:

"Dear audience, we all know that British society progressed and developed as a whole, once it got rid of superstitions and prejudices of nepotism and developed a positive outlook for future. Progress and prosperity of a community is always a team effort. We can have a member of parliament on the basis of caste relations and kinship ties within Pakistani community, but we will never have dignity, representation and voice as one community if the bases of our union are those values that British society rejects. We can have a big house here and back in Pakistan because we want to show off people our wealth, but will never have a place of recognition in this society due to our lavish life styles. We can advance our business by doing this and that, but we will never develop a reputation of a trustworthy stakeholder or business partner in wider markets unless people believe in our characters. We might feel better about ourselves and about our egos by ignoring or avoiding a member of our community due to petty disputes, but we will never be able to represent our community as a dynamic force that is united for good cause. We might feel satisfied and relieved from our Islamic duties by just paying charity to mosques and donations to Imams, but we will never be successful in eradicating vulgarity and sinful practices if we are not fully involved with in mosque affairs and don't involve our next generation in building Islamic institutions. If we built a cultural centre for future generations, we don't know what type of people will be running that centre and how it

will affect our children's minds and character building, but if we built an Islamic centre, at least we would have this satisfaction that it will be run by pious people and good Muslims".

The other community leaders, who got a chance to speak before the audience, also supported the idea of establishing an Islamic centre. Haji Sahib took a lot of pride while talking with people, after the speeches, about his contributions to establish mosques in Birmingham throughout his life time. He said that nobody believed when they planned to establish the Ghamkol Sharif Mosque and people said that it would be difficult to generate enough money to build such a huge infrastructure. But Allah sends *Ghaibi Maddad* (divine help) if you have intentions to serve the will of Allah, said Haji Sahib, sitting on a dinner table with other community leaders. Mr. Mushtaq told me later that he does not agree with what community leaders say and demand from the local government. He said that although Haji Sahib has talked about living a pious life, and that Haji Sahib has condemned contesting elections by mobilising voters on caste relation and kinship ties, he said that Haji Sahib favours candidates from his own caste when voting during elections. At the same time, Haji Sahib owns a house here and has a large house back in Pakistan but that he condemns this in his speeches. Mr Mushtaq said that if it were no people like Haji Sahib, who engages with politics on the bases of caste relations and kinship ties within the Pakistani community, Birmingham could have three MPs of Pakistani background instead of two in the 2010 general elections. Mr. Mushtaq told me that although in his public speeches, Haji Sahib speaks against caste based politics, actually, he did not support a British-Pakistani candidate who was contesting parliamentary elections because she was not from his caste.[53]

I observed a similar attitude towards encouraging the public performance of piety and virtuous life in a fundraising and *Dawa* event organised by iERA, a *Missionary* stream of *Salafi* Islamic reformism.[54] While a speaker was giving lecture about how to 'change the world through *Da'wa'* his emphasis was that people should publicise if an individual carries out a virtuous act. The rationale the speaker gave for publicising pious and virtuous acts was that Muslims in Britain live in a society where nobody notices what you do unless you publicise it. The speaker said that evil acts get all the publicity while pious and

---

[53] Salma Yaqoob, a candidate with a British-Pakistani background who is a politician and was a candidate for the Respect Party from the Birmingham Hall Green Constituency, secured second position in the 2010 elections to a Labour Party candidate.
[54] See chapter two for details.

moral acts mostly go unnoticed. The speaker emphasised that you must record your *Da'wa* related activities and share them with other fellow brothers and sisters. One man, who gave a generous donation to iERA's 'mission *Dawa*' program, was invited by the speaker to come on the stage and then the speaker addressed the women participants who were sitting on the upper floor of the council hall in Birmingham in the following words: "Sisters, you can see this brother. *Masha Allah*, he is healthy, good physique, right dressing, Islamic appearance and I can provide witnesses to testify that this brother lives a life of Taqwa.[55] The best part of the story is that he is young, rich and single living a pious and moral life. Any sister whose family would like to contact this brother's family can have his contact details from me. Dear audience, I am not doing anything un-Islamic by introducing a single male to females rather I am advancing the mission of *Da'wa*. All sisters must not waste their time and youth in finding the 'right person' by following their idealistic whims. The only indicator you sisters should be looking for while finding a life partner for yourselves, should be a guy living the life of *Taqwa*, and if the guy is rich too, believe me, that is going to be a perfect match for you".

For reformist Muslims, pubic performance, encouragement and the appreciation of pious and moral lives of Muslim businessmen, entrepreneurs and youth is a *Da'wa* technique for advancing their mission and message. By doing so, reformist Muslim individuals and groups not only enhance the loyalty and attachment of the individual being projected to their reformist interpretation of practising Islam, they also encourage others to behave, follow and become like the one who is being projected as a role model. Thus, the events and situations which encourage and glamorise the public performance of piety becomes a win-win situation for both reformist Muslims and Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham. For Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs, public performance of piety, at the same time, also serve a socio-political purpose. Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs, with political, economic and social ambitions, advance their 'pious introductions' to prospective and potential voters, clients and community members in general. The story of Haji Sahib also reflects that through the public performance of piety and moral life, disagreement and counter arguments can be managed as well as manipulated. Thus, the public performance of piety and moral life becomes a site of contestation amongst divergent opinions and reformist groups to assert their identities and to make sure their presence and voice being heard at the public spheres of

---

[55] Living life in a way that you avoid sins on each step of life and perform pious ad virtuous acts.

everyday life of Birmingham Muslims. At the same time, I critique the perception, or correlation, that the public performance of piety is merely an instrumentalization for worldly success and gains by reformist Muslims and Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs. The same notions of personal piety and its 'unconscious or non-exhibitionist' public performance are implied by some reformist Muslim groups like *Dawat-i-Islami* and *Tableeghi Jamaat* for the gains in the afterlife. Instead, I assert that the version of public performance of piety amongst these group is 'unconscious or non-exhibitionist' because these reformist groups strictly believe in not giving a public performance of their pious lives and yet, at the same time, their physical appearances and modes of engaging with other Muslims is an act of public performance in itself. These groups do not encourage their members to give a public performance of piety and virtuous life for their personal gains. Instead, they encourage their members to do this for the sake of advancing their mission of *Da'wa* and to secure a place in paradise by submitting to the will of Allah.

Encouraging and performing personal piety and virtuous life publically is a common trait among almost all streams of reformist Muslims, whether *Barelvi* or *Salafi*. The only exceptions, however, are the *Barelvis* who affiliate themselves with *Dawat-i-Islami* and the second are the members of *Tableeghi Jamaat*. However, both of these groups are minority groups with respect to their followings in Birmingham. I could not get access to leaders or representatives of *Dawat-i-Islami* as they were not willing or interested in giving any kind of interview. Madni Bhai, who is a well-known worker of *Dawat-i-Islami*, told me when I asked him about the reluctance of his organisation's representatives to interview, or hold an informal chat, that none of their member would be willing to interview because they do not practice Islam in their everyday lives for self-projection. In a telephonic conversation with a senior representative of *Dawat-i-Islami*, I introduced myself and my PhD research. After he inquired further, I told him that my PhD research will be published as PhD thesis at my University and that it might become part of a research publication in academic journals in future and clarified that I am not a journalist. I requested him to give me time for an interview or informal chat about his work. He replied, "A pious act and a pious life should reflect itself through everyday life actions of Muslims and not through text of any book or any research journal that is reproduced after an interview". On my further explanation that I will not use his real name in my research writings in case he is thinking about 'confidentiality' or if he prefers anonymity, he replied "mentioning my fictitious name for something which I said would

be a lie and lying is a big sin in Islam". He advised me that I should be participating in their weekly programs of *Salaat-o-Salaam* and that I should be listening to their message of Islam and should not be talking to or interested in knowing about the messenger. Most of my observations about *Dawat-i-Islami* are based on my participations in their programs and spiritual gatherings.

At the same time, members of *Dawat-i-Islami* follow a strict dress code and maintain a particular physical appearance all the time. They can be identified in streets or other public places with their green turbans and white dresses. There is an emphasis among *Dawat-i-Islami* members on performing every act of public or private significance in everyday life in accordance with the ways of Prophet Muhammad. The public performance of piety for *Modernist Barelvis* i.e. *Dawat-i-Islami* does not manifest itself through talking or sharing their pious and virtuous deeds with other fellow Muslims. Instead it is reflected through everyday life actions which maintain an appearance in strict adherence to the ways of the Prophet Muhammad. Thus, the performance of piety becomes a very personal and yet very public act at the same time amongst *Dawat-i-Islami* whom, for the sake of clarity of analysis, I call *Modernist Barelvis*. The popularity of private notions of piety amongst the members of *Dawat-i-Islami* also has an economic dimension. The majority of the members of *Dawat-i-Islami* come from lower middle class or poor backgrounds of *Barelvi* Muslims, and are mainly labourers. Most of them are factory workers, manual workers, shop assistants etc. The economic constraints on their everyday life hardly leaves room for the public performance of pious and virtuous acts. The notions of piety and virtuous acts, thus, carry significance in their private lives more than in the public spheres of everyday life.

On the other hand, *Pirkhanas*, the *Traditionalist* stream of reformist *Barelvi* Muslims in Birmingham, strongly believe in the public performance of piety and virtuous life. However, the standard for piety and ideal type for the virtuous life of the devotees of any *Pirkhana* is the personality and cult of *Pir*, the living saint. *Newcomers* (the individual making an effort to establish his own *Pirkhana*, see chapter two) on the other hand, have to inform people about their pious ways of living life, doing business and acquiring spiritual powers. Amongst reformist *Salfi* stream of *Islamists*, the definition of pious and virtuous life carries another meaning. For *Islamists*, the virtuous and pious Muslim is the one who is well integrated into mainstream British society, has a good job or a successful business, associates himself with global Muslim *Ummah* with political consciousness and

asserts their identity as a Muslim at public platforms. Encouraging and demonstrating public performance of piety becomes pivotal for different streams of Islamic reformism in order to spread their mission and message. Each actor has to give a performance in front of others to show their association with any particular interpretation of practising Islam and how the belief in that very interpretation has changed and allowed their life to prosper.

Schielke (2008) maintains that Islamic revivalist movements offer an alternative to escape boredom for Egyptian rural youth in more efficient way than other Islamic traditions can. However, the ambivalence of everyday life makes the affiliation of youth short lived with Islamic revivalist movements sometimes. The case of Birmingham Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs, and their display of public performance of piety and virtuous life, is an addition to Schielke's notion of piety among Muslim Youth in Egypt. Among Birmingham Muslims, the practice of public performance of piety is a constant everyday life practice. Although in the month of Ramadan, the ideals and exhibition of personal piety and doing charity becomes more prominent in aspects of daily life, the practice of public performance continues after Ramadan among Muslim businessmen and entreprenurs in Birmingham. The compromise and negotiations over piety-led lives, however, are there while Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs apply the notions of piety and their moral lives to their personal agendas of worldly economic success. Schielke (2009) also notes that morally committed *homo Islamicus* youth with aspirations of material and worldly success tend to part ways from being observant of Islamic morality under the pressures of global consumerism in their everyday lives occasionally. Shielke argues that people tend to make sense of their lives by negotiating with moral ambiguities on daily basis. Youth who tend to touch women on the street without their consent also tend to be pious on various other occasions in their lifetimes under the influence of *Salafi* ideals of piety and Islamic revival. This everyday life crises of 'moral ambiguity' is something that I could observe among Muslim businessmen and entrepreeurs as well.

4.4 Economic Dimensions of the Public Performance of Piety: Selling the 'Self-Righteousness'

I came to know Mr. Chishti through Mr. Fiaz. Mr. Chishti is a member of the board of trustees at the Central Mosque of Birmingham and he has his own business of the sale and purchase of cars. At the mosque, he manages food, other essential items and

administers the arrangement of any event, construction, repairing and other related chores concerning the daily functioning of the Central Mosque. I held several meetings with Mr. Chishti during my fieldwork and he invited me to his house few times for dinner or a cup of tea. He shared some interesting facts about the members of board of trustees. Mr. Chishti said that there are various reasons how Muslim businessmen, apart from 'just being a good Muslim or community leader', secure membership. He told me that several trustee members at the Central Mosque have remained very active over the issue of the provision of *Halal* cookies to children in public and private schools on social and political platforms in Birmingham. Some board members have actively pursued the provision of *Halal* cookies to children in public schools in Muslim neighbourhoods by involving local councils and by mobilizing local councillors. These members were in the food business and they owned small manufacturing units of *Halal* cookies. Mr. Chishti told me that after the city council gave approval for the provision of *Halal* cookies and food for schools, Muslim food manufacturers became the favoured supplier of the authorities in City Council Birmingham for the contracted supply of *Halal* cookies and other *Halal* food item for schools

Mr. Chishti further informed me that a few *Halal* slaughter houses in Birmingham are owned by Muslim businessmen. The ownership of a slaughter house is a very profitable business due to growing demand of *Halal* food in Birmingham and elsewhere in Britain. However, all sorts of *Halal* food provision to the food shops, restaurants and other outlets in Birmingham is supervised by the 'Halal Monitoring Committee'. Every supply of *Halal* meat from any slaughter house must be stamped by the Halal Monitoring Committee. Mr. Chishti said that although there are government inspection teams, who monitor the food quality in every slaughter house, Imams and religious scholars have their own monitoring mechanisms for *Halal* food suppliers to restaurants, hotels, catering services, schools and shops. The Central Mosque of Birmingham plays an important role in monitoring *Halal* food supplies and most of the Halal Monitoring Committee members are appointed by the consent of board at the Central Mosque. The Halal Monitoring Committee sends their representatives and employees to every slaughter house to ensure that animals are slaughtered in proper Islamic ways. The slaughter houses that do not comply with the instructions of the Halal Monitoring Committee have to face dire economic consequences. Members of the Halal Monitoring Committee put the name of the slaughter house on their website which does not comply with their instructions. The Halal Monitoring Committee's website has the complete data of all types of *Halal* food

suppliers in Birmingham. The negative labelling by the Halal Monitoring Committee on any food business in Birmingham is highly detrimental to the profits and public relations of that business. Mr. Chishti said that the slaughter houses and other *Halal* food outlets in the towns have to pay a fix amount to the Halal Monitoring Committee for the services they provide. The committee has an office and a staff comprised of Imams from various mosques and from all streams of reformist Muslims. Muslim businessmen who do not comply with the Halal Monitoring Committee are boycotted by the Muslim consumers on the request of Halal Monitoring Committee. Imams of various mosques announce the name of the shop or slaughter house and encourage people, particularly on the eve of Friday prayers, not to do custom with those particular food outlets which do not comply with the instructions of Halal Monitoring Committee. Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs, who are related to the food business, have to be on good terms with Halal Monitoring Committee and the best possible way to secure the profits of their business is by acquiring membership on the board of trustees at the Central Mosque of Birmingham. It is a marriage of convenience for Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs, said Mr. Chishti.

Here, as a point of clarification, I am not reducing the pursuits, desires and efforts of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham to acquire membership on the board of trustees, or any other management position at Central Mosque, purely to their economic motives. Neither will I generalize that their economic ambitions are the primary reason for the full membership of the board of trustees at the Central Mosque. I argue instead that the public performance of piety by Muslim entrepreneurs and businessmen has manifold dimensions. Even if an individual might be able to gain some economic concessions through an association with the Central Mosque or with the Halal Monitoring Committee, the prestige and repute of being a 'community leader' can be another benefit that they might be looking to attain for their piety-led lives. Also, the economic and social interpretations of public performance of piety and virtuous lives are not mutually exclusive. Along with the obvious economic dimensions of involvement at the Central Mosque, there are also various socio-political grounds for affluent Muslims to have an 'appropriate introduction' i.e. to appear as pious and virtuous Muslim businessmen. Marsden (2009) explores travelling amongst the Chitralis youth in Pakistan and asserts that heterogeneity within the Chitrali society in Northern Pakistan is not a problem for a coherent Muslim life. While people negotiate the complexities of 'conducting life' through diverse life choices, including modernity and tradition, they not only challenge

but also reaffirm both the older and newer influences on their lives. I assume that Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham create meaning in their lives in relation to reformist as well as traditional discourses. Like Marsden, I see similar notions of living a piety-led life among Muslim businessman and entrepreneurs in Birmingham on the one hand, whilst carrying the baggage of 'necessary evils of modern life' as a characteristic and as an art of living everyday life, on the other hand. This art of living makes them negotiate and deal with piety continuously while making various economic and social choices. Like Marsden's Chitrali youth in Northern Pakistan, Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham have to simultaneously carry both material and spiritual ways of living life.

4.5 Reputation Matters: Conversations and Gossips at Public Gatherings

Mr. Chishti told me that sometimes at the Central Mosque, the community leaders have to confront critical situations which risk the image of the whole Muslim community. He told me that a few years back, a Muslim owner of a slaughter house abused the trust of the Muslim community. On the eve of Eid Aladha[56], more than eight hundred families placed an order for animal to be scarified at his slaughter house. As people do not have permission to slaughter an animal on their own at their homes by local authorities, they have to hire the services of a slaughter houses or they give money equal to the cost of animal scarification to charities (something that I will discuss in details in coming chapters). Mr. Chishti said that the Muslim owner of the slaughter house sacrificed the animals a night before the Eid; ideally he was supposed to do that on Eid day after the prayer as per tradition. He might not have been exposed to this violation but his workers at slaughter house, in order to finish the daily job on a hectic day quickly, started supplying meat to households soon after prayer time. Some of the people received meat even before prayer time. People were surprised that how they can have meat ready and served before Eid prayers. The Muslim community was really offended as they could not understand why the Muslim owner of slaughter house has actually done with the sacred ritual of animal scarification. The Central Mosque Committee and community leaders boycotted that Muslim businessman. But he was taken back in few years' time after he apologized to the Central Mosque committee. Mr. Chishti said that if the people at the

---

[56] The religious festival celebrated all over the Muslim World on the eve of annual pilgrim at Mecca. Muslims, who can afford it, scarify an animal in the name of Allah after the Eid day prayers.

Central Mosque had wanted it, the issue might have gone to the media and that would have been a huge embarrassment for the whole Muslim community. However, that Muslim businessman became very alert after that incident. The moral conduct is very important while an individual Muslim deals with the Muslim community organically like providing food services etc. As in history of Muslim societies, people who did not offer Friday prayer were considered unreliable witnesses in court and public expressions of piety has been very important for acquiring personal credibility (Kuran 2001).

Similarly, the phenomenon of performing piety-led lives is not only limited only to the economic sphere of life. Local council's elections in Muslim neighbourhoods are another site of contestation over the notions of piety and being a good Muslim. Especially for the last decade in Birmingham, soon after the Islamist groups had made an electoral alliance with the Respect Party, the moral argument over the piety and virtuous life of contestants for the local councillors in Muslim neighbourhoods had become an integral part of election campaign.[57] Affluent Muslims with political ambitions had to give a public performance of piety and of a virtuous life in order to introduce themselves as the 'right candidate' for local elections. My research participant, Haji Sahib, had a reputation of conducting campaigns for Muslim councillors for local elections whilst making piety and moral life a slogan for election campaigns when favouring his candidates amongst the Muslim community.

4.6 Pious Self-Projections through Local Print and Electronic Media

Urdu print and electronic media is a popular medium of mass communication, mostly among Pakistani-British Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs who constitute the majority of Birmingham Muslims. There are three Islamic television channels in the Urdu language operating from Birmingham. Two of them are run by *Pirkhanas* while one of them is run by *Salafis* Muslim reformists. These television channels are very popular among Birmingham Muslims as well as well as among British Muslims. In all of the offices, shops or households I visited during my fieldwork, I observed people watching one of these three channels. There are four Urdu newspapers, two daily, one weekly and one fortnightly. These mass communication mediums are also a source of self-projection for Muslim businessmen to present their image of being a 'good and successful Muslim'.

---

[57] Recent example of this culture is the 2012 by-election at Bradford West where the Respect Party candidate George Galloway in the presence of his Muslim voters publically declared that he has never drank alcohol. He challenged the Muslim candidate for the Labour Party, Imran Hussain, to say the same in public by swearing on the Quran.

Television channels of *Pirkhanas* most of the time broadcast live lectures of *Pirs* and Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs are commonly invited to the audience for such lectures, talk shows and discussions. The themes of these discussions are mostly about Islamic teachings and history, moral and family values, how to be a good Muslim and what type of role model Muslims in Birmingham should be looking for along with other Islamic themes and rituals of prayer. These Islamic television channels and Urdu newspapers are popular and a common source for referencing what is happening amongst affluent Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham.

In one of the TV talk show about 'role models for Muslim youth in Birmingham', I was invited as a discussant topic along with two other influential Muslim community leaders. The other community members were Mr. Shaikh and Mr. Chishti. The host of this Islamic TV talk show was Mr. Khalid, a lawyer by profession who worked as a TV host part time. This particular Islamic TV channel is run by a local *Pirkhana*. For about an hour, the host Mr. Khalid, was emphasising that the best role model for Muslim youth in Birmingham is *Pir* himself. The TV talk show in itself was a projection of *Pir* as a role model for Birmingham Muslims. The host and other two guests were in agreement about the fact that *Pir* is the most pious and virtuous personality in Birmingham who can lead and represent Birmingham Muslims at any forum. At the same time, they discussed and shared incidents of their lives when they could do some pious acts for the welfare of the Muslim community in Birmingham. Mr. Shaikh shared how his association with *Pir* had helped him evolve spiritually and to obtain success within the local community. He said that he was sick once and he thought that he might never be able to leave his bed. But then it was the blessings and prayer of *Pir* through he was fully recovered and he obtained worldly success again. Mr. Shaikh said that he is a community leader now and he tries his best to guide others especially youth to live a pious, religious and moral lives.

Mr. Hashim is a journalist who works for Urdu newspapers and TV channels in Birmingham. He shared with me that he receives requests from Muslim community leaders all the time that he should print their picture and some message in the newspaper. He said that influential and affluent Muslim businessmen in Birmingham have this weakness for their own publicity and all of them want their picture in the newspaper from time to time. He said that he happily does it as he earns money out of it. His observation was that Muslim reformist groups are interested in getting their message printed in the newspaper with the name of their groups while community leaders want their photo in

newspapers. He goes for media coverage of various religious and social events of Birmingham Muslims and sometimes he receives some money from individuals who want their photo and message printed in newspapers. Mr. Hashim said that by maintaining the image of a 'pious and god fearing Muslim' through local Urdu media, some Muslim businessmen and reformist groups collect a lot of charity and donations for their charity organisations, especially during the month of Ramadan. Mr. Hashim told me that the introduction of Muslim community leaders as 'good Muslims' is vital for them to win the trust of people and the media is the best tool for them to maintain this image. He told me with laughter that he has been doing this job for the last twenty years and now he knows which Muslim community leader in Birmingham is 'fake' and which one is 'true' as a person.

Eickelman and Anderson (1999) in 'Redefining Muslim Publics' maintain that a new sense of Muslim public is emerging as the 'authoritative use of symbolic language of Islam' mainly through mosques and by Imams has now been contestably used on media and on other modes of communication. This new Muslim public sphere is 'discursive, performative and participative'. The writers argue that the new media 'erodes the gap between producer and consumers' by creating new standards for public rhetoric and, in the process, creates a public space. The media, in this new Muslim public sphere is owned and managed by influential Muslims, "aims at everyone and direct personal communication to specific others with whom one already has a personal relationship (pp. 15)". In the case of Birmingham's Islamised mass communications, the TV channels not only keep the clients and consumers of *Pirkhanas* and other reformist Muslim groups intact, but they also keep them in touch with their 'country of origin' by broadcasting political talk shows, news and drama series which other famous TV channels broadcast back in the country of origin. At the same time, due to the accessibility of devotees and sympathizers to modern media and TV, *Pirs* and reformist Muslims keep in touch with their devotees and sympathizers on a daily basis by delivering a sermon or by engaging with them through some live talk show where the consumers sometime have the chance to give a live call and communicate directly with their faith leader. The latter is something which in itself is a prestige and an act of giving a public performance of being pious as the rest of the community is also watching and listening to one of their members calling and talking with the faith leader.

The mastery of the art of better public performances of pious lives is achieved through social learning, by achieving a 'pious introduction', by acquiring membership on the board of trustee at the Central Mosque or other mosques, by encouraging the public performance of piety in reformist Muslim groups gatherings, by establishing the credential of committed and responsible community leaders, or by having a permanent or repeated presence and appearance on Islamic TV channels where reformist Muslims inculcate the values of being pious and present piety-led lives as 'role model' for Birmingham Muslims. Along with reformist Muslim individuals setting standardised parameters for how to conduct everyday life, there are few individuals among Birmingham Muslims who best represent the phenomenon of public performance of piety through their everyday lives. I am going to write about the life course/life histories of two reformist Muslim individuals as well as Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs who embody all the traits of 'piety-led lives' and who, to a great extent, have the social approval of being role-models for all the major social circles of Birmingham Muslims. The everyday life of these two individuals is a reflection of the phenomenon of the public performance of piety amongst other Birmingham Muslim community leaders, reformists, businessmen and entrepreneurs.

4.7 The Public Performance of Pious and Successful Lives

The following is a life history of two famous community leaders, reformist Muslims and influential personalities in Birmingham. Both of them come from different walks of life but what is similar about them is their common practice and understanding about the public performance of their piety and virtuous lives. Their life course/life histories will be providing ethnographic details of how public performance of piety and moral life manifest itself and respond to the quest of Birmingham Muslims for role models.

4.7.1   Mr. Pirzada

Mr. Pirzada is one of most prominent personalities among Birmingham Muslims. He is sixty two years old. Mr. Pirzada was born in Azad Kashmir, Pakistan and came to the UK when he was twenty years old. He belongs to a practising Muslim family where each family member has strong credentials of acquiring Islamic knowledge and practising it in everyday life. Mr. Pirzada started his career as a solicitor in Birmingham after studying law in London. I met and interviewed Mr. Pirzada on several occasions during my fieldwork. Mr. Pirzada is a living example of 'successes' for Birmingham Muslims. In

him, they see a successful man with worldly and material achievements who keeping Islamic practice intact in his life.

Mr. Pirzada shares his experiences and tells stories to people as he is commonly invited as a guest speaker to different Islamic or cultural events of Birmingham Muslims. He is famous for explaining everything at various gatherings by quoting his own personal examples. In a gathering of young adults, he told young high school boys and girls that as a student, he was the most intelligent and the most obedient student for the teachers and parents. He told young people, that all the achievements of his life are because he respected his parents, elders and teachers all his life. He advised them to be obedient to teachers and parents. Mr. Pirzada shared that when he was at high school, a group of boys from other village were jealous of his achievements and good relations with teachers. Once on his way back home from school, that group stopped him and severely beat him up. It was possible for him to gather boys from his village and take revenge, but the school teacher came to know about it and he ordered him to do nothing and be patient. Mr. Pirzada said that he followed the instruction of his teachers. It was because of his obedience that Allah gave him success and a prestigious job position. When he was working in Pakistan whilst appointed by the UK Immigration Department to look at immigration applications from the UK, two of those boys who had beaten him twenty years back were among the applicants. Mr. Pirzada told students that he was so pleased that he was in a position where he could either accept or reject their application. He told students that if he were not obedient to teachers, he might have been involved in a fight and have ended up in jail or something. But he believes that it was because of his teachers and elders that he could get this powerful position. Instead of taking revenge, he helped those people who were nasty to him. He also told students that in his early youth, he used to spend time in the company of pious elders who were god-fearing and who had acquired high spiritual status due to their devotion to Islam.

Mr. Pirzada presents himself before an audience strictly as a practising Muslim who is very comfortable with 'modern ways and everyday life in Britain'. He always tells others that it is a matter of will and good intentions to live an Islamic life in Britain without compromising Islamic values. In a mosque once, he was sharing how he had to struggle to find *Halal* food in the early days of his stay in London in 1960s. He said that he use to travel miles to get *Halal* food. Mr. Pirzada said that it is vital to be careful in his food habits. He said that with each morsel of food we intake, it affects our religious and

spiritual wellbeing and personal evolution. He has a strict belief that food plays a vital part in attaining spiritual merits and status. Once in a gathering at a hotel over dinner, he said that he often hears people making excuses for not being careful in eating as they say *Halal* food is not available. He quotes his own example and said that it was extremely difficult in 1960s to find *Halal* foods and he always travelled to make it sure to arrange it even if he had to travel or stay hungry overnight. Mr. Pirzada has three wives and ten children in total. He also shares with people that as an affluent Muslim, you should have more than one wife if you can afford it. He projects his personal and family life as that of a successful and good Muslim and tells people that his wives, although they live in different houses but interact with each other like sisters and friends which makes him very happy.

Mr. Pirzada is a very famous Muslim solicitor in Birmingham. He told people that in the profession of being a solicitor, one has to give arguments in favour of a client even if the client is guilty. He said that one of his uncles, who was a saintly personality, advised him not to take the case of anyone who is an offender or guilty. In one of his speeches during a charity dinner, he quoted the example of Mian Tufail Ahmed.[58] He told the audience that Mian Tufail Ahmed was a lawyer by profession in British India when he intended to join *Jamat-i-Islami*. Syed Abul Ala Mudodi, the then head of *Jamat-i-Islami*, said to him that he earns his living by serving the legal system of Kuffar (non-believers), which is against Islamic Sharia Law so he cannot be allowed to join *Jamaat-i-Islami*. MianTufail Ahmed abandoned his profession as a lawyer and became a woodcutter in order to join *Jamaat-i-Islami*. Mr. Pirzada said that he is not as pious and virtuous as Mian Tufail Ahmed was, but he tried his best and choose the field of immigration while practising law where he can help a lot of people whilst earning a reasonable income. He told audience that throughout his career, he never entertained any criminal cases as a solicitor. Mr. Pirzada said that one teacher at Lincoln Inn, London where he studied law, used to refer to Islamic Law as Muhammadian Law[59] (a term used for Islamic Sharia law during colonial times in British India), and he always corrected him that it is Islamic Law and not Muhammadian Law. Mr. Pirzada is head of a charity and is actively involved in helping people and in fundraising efforts. He has a maverick personality in terms of how he makes political and social alliances amongst Birmingham Muslims. So far, he has been

---

[58] MianTufail Ahmed (1914-2009), born in Kapurthalla State, British India and died in Lahore, Pakistan, was Amir (President) of Jamat-i-Islami in Pakistan from 1972 to 1987.
[59] A term for Muslim Personal Law in the legal system in British India.

part of most national level political parties of Britain. He has been an active member of the Conservative Party, Labour Party and Liberal Democrats. He tells people in political gatherings that he left the Conservatives because a group within the Conservatives, the Conservative Friend of Israel, did not like him and always tried to ignore him and he openly criticised Israel's policies towards Palestinians. Mr. Pirzada said that he left Labour after the Labour government in alliance with America invaded Iraq and many innocent Muslims got killed. A few years ago, Mr. Pirzada established his own political party and he is very much active in Birmingham local politics.

4.7.2 Mr. Mufti

Mr. Mufti is seventy four years old, a famous reformist Muslim, entrepreneur, local imam, teacher, community leader and a social activist. He has lived in Birmingham for fifty six years. He has sons, daughters and grand-children. I met him more than twenty times during the course of my fieldwork and I have interviewed him several times. He is famously known for his desire to have his picture in local newspapers and Urdu print media almost every other day. He likes being photographed at gatherings and on various social occasions. Mr. Mufti is always at his best behaviour in public gatherings, amongst crowd, delivering speeches, sermons and saying prayers for community, organisations, groups and individuals. My other research participants like Dr. Butt, Mr. Hashim, Mr. Shaikh and Mr. Mushtaaq told me that they have been seeing Mr. Mufti with the same physical appearance, dress and topics of discussion for decades among Birmingham Muslims and that he has not changed, both physically and behaviourally, although he has aged.

Mr. Mufti belongs to *Barelvi* stream of practising Islam in everyday life. However, he has been affiliated with *Jamaat-i-Islami* for many years.Then he parted with *Jamaat-i-Islami* over some disagreements with its founder Syed Abul Ala Mudodi. At the same time, mainstream *Barelvi* clerics disagree with Mr. Mufti's opinions about various streams of reformist Muslim groups. Mr. Mufti has a liberal viewpoint about issues like listening to certain type of classical Indian and Sufi music, women travelling alone, eating with non-Muslims, dance and keeping beards. He is also mocked by some of the local Imams who call him 'so-called and self-appointed Mujjaddad'.[60] Mr. Mufti, however, claims that he is the only Muslim community leader at Birmingham who has been accepted by all

---

[60]Mujjaddad is a word for an Islamic scholar who reinterprets and presents teachings of Islam according to his time.

groups, associations, parties and sects of Muslims as well as non-Muslims. He told me that although he is trained and educated as an Islamic scholar, he is, at the same time, liberal as well as conservative with regards the interpretation of how he practises Islam in everyday life in Britain. Mr. Mufti likes to be at the centre stage of events when local influential Muslims are present. Whenever he writes any booklet, leaflets or pamphlets about something, he tries to get his picture on it. In his office, he has a huge pile of newspaper cuttings, journals, books, and DVDs of his interviews, pictures and sermons. He is always available for talk shows on local Urdu television networks in Birmingham for religious dialogue or debate.

When I asked Mr. Mufti the reason for why he had such a huge pictorial collections in various newspapers and journals, he told me an Urdu proverb:

"Jungle main moor nacha kis nay daikha?"

Translation: If a peacock dances in jungle (and not in front of any public), who is going to watch it?

Then he said that he public performs his good acts with the intentions that other Muslims and especially youth might follow him. He said that it is vital that good Muslims do good acts in public as other people will get motivation from it. Mr. Mufti is always the most active on the eve of Eid as he plays a role of the middle man between various *Salafi* and *Barelvi* groups on the issue of sighting the moon and celebrating *Eid al Fitre* on same day in Birmingham.[61] Mr. Mufti starts negotiations between two streams of Birmingham Muslims to come to an agreement and celebrate Eid on same day. This is usually a peak time for Mr. Mufti to be publically visible to all Birmingham Muslims in various gatherings, mosques, newspapers and live talk shows on local TV channels. He always issues statement in the media with pride whenever all Birmingham Muslims celebrate Eid on same day. His message on such occasions is always about 'unity among believers' to Birmingham Muslims. He also encourages them stay to united and ensures that if they continue to stay united, one day any British Muslim could become the Prime Minister of Britain.

---

[61] Usually Salafi Muslims in Birmingham celebrate Eid when it is celebrated in Saudi Arabia and other parts of Middle East. On the other hand, Barelvi Muslims celebrate Eid when it is celebrated in South Asia which is usually the next day. Sometimes both groups celebrate on same day.

Mr. Mufti is heading many Islamic organisations and is a pioneering member of many charities and Islamic societies. He is the head of the Sunni Mosques Council. In his position as an important Muslim community leader, he happened to meet various Muslim heads of states from Muslim majority countries on their visit to Britain. He has met the Royal Prince of Saudi Arabia, visited Lybia and met Muammar Gaddafi in order to participate in the World Sufi Conference, met Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, the Jordanian Prince Hasan bin Talal, the British Prime Minister Toni Blair and many other ministers and various head of organisations across the Muslim World. He has recorded of all these meetings and keeps his pictures alongside all of the international leaders he has met. He shows all the pictures to the visitors eagerly. In one party, he confidently told the audience that due to his chance to meet British ministers and other politically important people, he lobbies for the introduction of Muslim Family Laws within British Laws for Muslims. He takes pride in sharing his achievement that he was part of the fundraising committee to generate five million pounds for the whole project of construction and functioning of the Ghamkol Sharif Mosque in Birmingham.

Mr. Mufti told me that he has helped twelve children to learn the whole Quran by heart. He told people at a public gathering of the Pakistan Forum that he works as a visiting Imam in prisons and because of his preaching, many convicts have started practising Islam after they came out of prison. He said in that meeting that when he arrived in Birmingham, there was only one mosque, now due to his efforts, there are eighty eight mosques in Birmingham and surrounding areas. He encouraged others to give money and become part of the administrative affairs of mosques as this is the easiest way to earn spiritual merits. Mr. Mufti was talking to journalists once and saying that it is highly important to show the bright side of Muslims in Britain, especially after the 9/11 and 7/7 incidents of terrorism. He ensured journalists that he is willing to participate in any program and any talk show where he can enlighten wider public about how peaceful Islam is and how brilliant it is to live a life as practising Muslim. He advised me not to settle in the suburbs of any town if I live in Britain in the long term but rather I should stay in Muslim majority neighbourhoods. He told me that in his experience, educated people who live in suburbs tend to become atheist or communists and their children conveniently forget about their Asian and Muslim roots and culture.

Both Mr. Pirzada and Mr. Mufti are very prominent Muslim community leaders who embody all the desirable traits that makes them perfect example of 'pious and successful'

community leaders. At the same time, both are staunch believers and advocate of two different reformist Muslim groups and are at the forefront when it comes to advancing their interpretations of practising Islam in everyday life. Both of them are also examples of the changing social status and emulate going from 'rags to riches' in their respective life times. Both are the head of families with adult children who earn decent incomes. Both are advocates of reforming everyday life practices of Muslims and committed to the Muslim community. Mr. Pirzada and Mr. Mufti also believe in giving public performances of their virtuous and pious lives with the aim to set example for others. Both life stories also reflect how public performance of piety-led life is learned, acquired, negotiated in everyday life practice that one has to repeat every day. Both life histories reflect Deeb's (2006) idea of *visibility* and public piety by embodying and repeating all the traits of being successful, being pious and being a good Muslims. Both life histories challenge Schielk (2009) idea of limiting piety-led life to specific times marked by crises. Instead both lives reproduce piety-led lives as a solution to crises at the individual and collective levels. Marsden (2005) explains that the notion of piety among Chitrali Muslims in Northern Pakistan are multiple and that they are defined and reinterpreted from strands of various reformist Muslim streams. For Chitrali youth, the meanings of Sufism or *Tassawaf* are the strict observance of religious and cultural code of moral behaviours in public spaces. The lived experiences of Muslims with piety-led lives of *Ulema* is that of a debate and fluidity in which certain behavioural practices are continuously evaluated on criteria of Sharia or Sufi's ways, *Tariqa*, yet people aspire and at the same time detest to live a life like that of *Ulemas*. In the same way, the lives of Muslim reformists-cum-businessmen and entrepreneurs, like Mr. Przada and Mr. Mufti, represent multiple dimensions which seek insight into 'success' in life and afterlife for Birmingham Muslims. Birmingham Muslims, while confronted with the complex ways of living as Muslim in the British context, aspire to retain their Muslim identity and their search for role-models for everyday life makes people like Mr. Pirzada and Mr. Mufti very close to the ideals of success in life and the afterlife.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter is an extended development of the main argument of my thesis that Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham strive for being successful in life and the afterlife by adhering to a particular reinterpretation of practising Islam presented by any reformist Muslim group. While doing so, they assert their identities of 'successful and

good Muslims' by giving a public performance of their piety-led moral lives. This chapter had found out that giving public performance of piety to the wider Muslim public is an art that is learned and acquired through in various ways.

Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham learn about giving public performance of piety while they practice Islam in their everyday lives. Though giving public performance of piety is not something that all Birmingham Muslims and all reformist Muslim groups will recommend as a recipe of being good Muslim, it is mirrored by a significant number of Muslims individual and groups who believe that the public performance of pious lives is essential in order to protect Muslim identity and culture. It is mainly reformist Muslim groups who are in the process of standardising and creating 'role-models' for Birmingham Muslims and while doing so, they encourage certain behavioural practices of influential Muslims as 'best practices'. The search for role-models and the desire to be a role-model amongst Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs is something that make the public performance of piety-led lives an essential practice. Reformist Muslim groups in Birmingham appreciate and advocate the ideals and practices of being 'successful' among influential Muslims who are concerned with community affairs, earning a handsome *Rizaq-i-Halal*, an aspiration to be connected with global *Ummah*, living a pious life whilst being part of British society's wider cultural and modern context, and projecting one's self while 'making good and doing good' (Osella and Osella 2009).

The ethnography in this chapter explores how Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs aspire towards membership of the central Mosque of Birmingham in order to be known as people with the right credentials within the Muslim community. This serves two purposes; one is to enhance social relations with other community leaders and the other is to assert their identity as members of certain reformist Muslim groups. Other is that it gives them a pious introduction which is helpful in advancing profits if they are in the food and restaurant business. It also allows them to avail of spiritual merits by virtue of their membership to the Mosque committee and by advocating the cause of Islam with a closer connection to other pious individual and by extending it to global *Ummah*. At the same time, morality-led arguments are encouraged, supported and reinforced by reformist Muslim groups and pious individuals and these arguments relate to the social affairs concerning Birmingham Muslim like whether to build another mosque or a cultural centre. The public performance of pious lives are also encouraged by giving charity and

having an Islamic appearance and way of life. While certain reformist Muslim groups do not believe in the public performance of piety-led lives, their appearances and everyday life practices and routine itself becomes a public performance. Yet acts of piety and being pious become part of the Muslim public sphere, even if an individual means to confine it to the personal space in order to enhance spiritual merits.

Public performances of piety among Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs does not exclude the margin for them to be 'human' and commit errors, wrongdoings or even sin in everyday life. This chapter does not aim to project the idea that everything in the lives of Muslim businessmen, entrepreneurs, community leaders and reformists is all 'great and amazing' according to Muslim standards regarding their everyday life routine. Birmingham Muslims negotiate between performing virtuous acts, making profits and choosing something for them that might not be Islamic in everyday life struggles. However, the Muslim public sphere is overwhelmed by moral arguments of how to conduct a pious life and act of public performance are always encouraged using modern technologies of TV channels and newspapers. Influential Muslims who control TV channels also project their own self-righteousness via these mediums and they connect to their followers via these on a daily basis. Birmingham Muslims' role-models are reproduced through media representations of certain personality traits that are encouraged by most of Birmingham Muslim in the context of their lives whilst living in wider British society. This chapter has also presented the stories of two Muslim community leaders who are vital in understanding how to embody the character of being pious and successful by reproducing it for others through the everyday life routine.

The theme in this chapter is a continuity of the argument of this thesis that Muslim entrepreneurs and businessmen in Birmingham give public performance of piety as a manifestation of their economic success and their adherence to particular religious interpretations. At this stage, the question emerges of how do Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs maintain their public image of being pious and successful people? What do they have to do to please and satisfy reformist Muslims groups and others in order to sustain their acceptability of being community leaders? How do they deal with the profits and surplus? Here, doing charity, giving donations and being a philanthropist serves them as a solution to their religiously motivated economic practices which are given a social acceptability through their public performance of piety and moral lives in everyday life. The next chapter will build on this chapter analysis in order to connect the dots of my

main argument which links the established relationship between Islamic reformism and doing charity through the public performance of piety among Birmingham Muslims.

Chapter 5

Purifying the Profits: Motivations behind Charity and Philanthropy among Birmingham Muslims

Doing charity and giving philanthropic donations is a common practice among Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham.[62] There are multiple factors and various reasons for doing charity and philanthropy. Doing charity is a religious obligation for many Muslims in the form of *Zakat* but *Zakat* is only one form of charity amongst many others for Muslims. *Sadaqa* and Sadaqa-i-jariya[63] are other ways through which Birmingham Muslims engage in charity practices. In this chapter, I focus mainly on *Sadaqa* and *Sadaqa-i-jariya* as common charity practices which Muslim entrepreneurs and businessmen Birmingham engage in through charity fundraising events. I also focus on how these charity practices are performed as public acts. "Ethnographic study of actual collection and distribution of Zakat in a Muslim community would be a worthwhile project; but its difficulty and sensitivity should not be underestimated" (Bethall 1999, pp. 34). Birmingham Muslims practice charity besides *Zakat*, both publically and privately, and they consider these acts of charity to be an integral part of their everyday social lives as members of a local Muslim community.

My argument in this chapter is that doing charity is not only a result of and limited to the Islamic binding and code of giving alms in form of *Zakat*, but that it is also a way of carrying out the social responsibility which is associated with being successful Muslim businessman and entrepreneur. Successful Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs appreciate and expect to accumulate and spend 'dual money'. I use the idea of 'dual money' to understand how some Birmingham Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs regard the act of giving money in the name of Allah. For these men, this act of giving ensures not only worldly profits in the form of economic prosperity, and the repute of being a good Muslim during life time, but this money also serves a dual purpose and ensures spiritual merits which help them to secure a place in the paradise after life. "Pious neoliberal subjects are driven toward the material success in present life and spiritual success in the afterlife "(Atia 2012, pp. 811). Building on the idea of the 'pious neoliberals'

---

[62] Recent reports on charity in Britain have suggested that Muslims are Britain's top charity givers. http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/faith/article3820522.ece

[63] This is a form of charity which lasts forever. An example of this form of charity would be establishing any infrastructure related services or donating to a program of any Muslim charitable organisation like building a hospital, school, mosque or adopting an orphan.

of Atia, I will explore the charity and donation practices of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs and the relationship between their ambitions and aspirations for life and the afterlife. There are personal, historical, cultural, political and religious factors behind the act of doing charity and giving donations among Muslims in Birmingham. The common perception among Birmingham Muslims about doing charity and donation is that it is like entering into a 'fair trade' with Allah that enhances assets and profits. Otherwise, in case of not doing charity, the profit is considered not '*Halal*' and is impure that can be taken away anytime. The act of charity is a guarantee of the purity of surplus profits and it is strongly believed among Muslim entrepreneurs and businessmen that a pure or *Halal* surplus always multiplies 'the grace of God'. This brings success and (economic) security in life, but it is also a guarantee of salvation in the afterlife. Unlike Mauss's dyadic reciprocity, Islamic giving is a triadic form of reciprocity (Kochuyt 2009) in which the gift transaction is made between two individuals and Allah as a third entity.

This chapter will discuss the importance of doing charity and giving donations in the everyday lives of Birmingham Muslims. I problematize the surface level understandings of doing charity and philanthropy by analysing charity and philanthropy as important social and political acts. With the help of detailed ethnographic data, the chapter explores the further meanings and complex nature of doing charity and giving donation in the everyday life of Birmingham Muslims. In the previous chapters, I explained how Muslims in Birmingham believe in various interpretations of practising Islam and whilst following their respective versions of Islam, their association with their sect, 'place of origin', affiliated social and political groups, families and relatives remain intact. Their economic practices, decisions and choices are usually the result of negotiated compromises between their various social relations whilst also being influenced by their ideals and beliefs in various interpretations of practising Islam. The characteristics and introduction of an 'ideal' role model for successful Muslim businessman and entrepreneur is a person who should have a strong belief in the 'right interpretation' of practising Islam, have significant economic achievements during his life time, is a pious and a virtuous fellow and is involved in community affairs where he generously utilises his influential position and spending power for the community and Islam. To maintain the recognition of this socially established criteria of being successful Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham, doing charity, giving donations and having a reputation of involvement in philanthropic activities become prerequisites of good repute for influential Muslims in Birmingham. Charity and philanthropy become sites for successful Muslim businessmen

and entrepreneurs to assert their identities as 'community leaders with right credentials'. This chapter will discuss the role of charity and philanthropic activities in the everyday lives of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs and the reasons behind their charitable activities. I will mainly engage with the work of Atia (2012) when exploring the local and international nuances of Muslim charity and its impact on Muslim community.

There are many factors which affect the charity practices and philanthropic donations of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham. But the possession of 'surplus' is the main reason for them to engage in charity practices. There is a religious belief that charity and philanthropy safeguards the surplus and that Allah multiplies the surplus for those who do charity. In this chapter, I discuss the main factors motivations behind doing charity, giving donations and getting involved in philanthropic activities by Birmingham Muslims in general and Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in particular.

5.1 'Fair Trade' with Allah: *Ten in life, seventy in the afterlife*

"I am pleased to inform my brothers and sisters that *Zakat* is a binding on every Muslim man and woman if you have enough financial resources but *Sadaqa* is a different and very interesting thing for a Muslim. *Sadaqa* is like having a saving account within the bank of Allah". Mr. Amir said this whilst delivering a lecture to a gathering of more than 3000 people at a fundraising event organised by the Islamic Education and Research Academy (iERA). The speaker, Mr. Amir, is in his mid-forties, is of Egyptian-Canadian descent and is a famous fundraiser among the Muslim community in Birmingham. Various charity organisations and mosques invite him to mobilise and motivate people at their fundraising events. Mr. Amir was delivering his fundraising talk at an event organised by Islamic Education and Research Academy (iERA) in the City Council's hall in Birmingham (I have already exlained the work of iERA as *Missionary* stream of Salafi reformism and their notions about public performance of piety in previous chapters). "Doing *Sadqa* is like opening a saving account in the bank of Allah. As you open a saving account in any British bank, you get a fix amount of money as profit at the end of every month. But the bank of Allah is neither a miser nor mean and unlike worldly banks it does not operates on the principals of greed and exploitation. My friends, no bank is richer than bank of Allah as no one is wealthier than Him. Likewise, nobody can give you more profit than Allah himself. If you invest one pound as *Sadaqa* in your saving account in the bank of Allah, He will give you profit of seven pounds. If you invest ten pounds, He will give you a profit of seventy pounds. If you do the same thing in holy month of

Ramadan which is a bonus month for getting spiritual merits, Allah will give you seven hundred pounds profit in return of your ten pounds investment as *Sadaqa*. The profit money will come to you in this world in mysterious ways and there will be an equal reward of spiritual merits in the afterlife for you. Isn't it a lottery of merits by Allah for your good deeds? Isn't it a fair trade with Allah?"

Mr. Amir here used the language and terminology of modern banking and finance. The majority of the audience were young people and most were second or third generation Birmingham Muslim. These were people whose parents had worked really hard in their life time and had achieved financial stability in businesses and elsewhere. Atia (2012) in her work on neoliberalism, Islam and faith-based development in Egypt coins the idea of *pious neoliberalism*. This idea explores how pious neoliberals have active engagements in the making and shaping of modern neoliberalism as they employing a globalised religious discourse of faith and volunteerism which combines individualism and entrepreneurship. Thus, these individuals are not merely just consumers, or passive recipients, of neoliberal economies and development. In building on Atia's pious neoliberals, Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham have similar engagements with reformist Muslims. Moreover, both Atia's pious neoliberals in Egypt and my research participants reproduce and aim to create a responsible religious successful Muslim class which thrives on worldly success on the one hand and, on the other, outreach the global community of Muslims, *Ummah*, by delivering their newly acquired wealth, religious devotion and enthusiasm for success to the *Ummah*. Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham in that sense are 'pious neoliberals' who, in alliance with reformist Muslim groups in Birmingham, are striving for material and spiritual gains. Thus, this fundraising event of iERA was not only an event for encouraging volunteerism, charity, piety-led life styles for youth and religious guidance about financial investments for spiritual benefits, it was also about reorienting the social, political, and geographical boundaries of British Muslim youth by connecting them to Muslim landscapes and by introducing them to the cultural and geographical landscapes that are 'fertile' for the advancement of the *Da'wa* mission. The event was organised by the reformist Muslim groups who I discussed in my second chapter as *Missionaries* in their interpretations of practising Islam. The event was predominantly a gathering of *Salafi* Muslims whose audience were mainly youth with a strong sense of belonging to the Muslim *Ummah* across the world. Mr. Amir told me that he strongly believed that *Sadaqa* is the best and most 'fair trade' with Allah. He said that in his lectures and talks

to various Muslim groups in Birmingham, he conveys this message with his best possible effort. "Volunteerism as form of Da'wa has gained momentum. Egyptian youth often participate in charitable organisations as an act or expression piety" (Atia 2012, pp. 816).

At the same time, people related to iERA believe that *Sadaqa* is not only a fair trade with Allah, but also a great source of spreading Islam through *Dawa* by the production of pious neoliberals. At the same event, another Muslim reformist speaker, Mr. Tariq, asked the audience to engage in charity in order to spread the mission of Islam. He introduced his 'Adopt-a-Convert' plan in Malawi, Africa and he said that through their charity money and donations, they can save somebody from going into hellfire whilst being miles apart from the beneficiaries of their donations. Mr. Tariq said that their organisation had started irrigation projects in Malawi and that they have attracted many people in their mission of spreading Islam by providing employment opportunities. He stressed that by engaging in charity projects, like 'Adopt-a-Convert', they can present the best face of Islam to the world by providing financial and social assistance to people in need. Mr. Tariq said that if anybody 'Adopts-a-Convert' in a far off country, like Malawi, and convert performs a virtuous act or worships Allah, the person financing that convert will receive equal merit for each virtuous acts of the adapted convert. He then told the audience that this is another form of *Sadaqa-i-jariya*. The reinterpretation of the concepts of *Sadaqa-i-jariya* by reformist Muslims in Birmingham also transforms, in Atia's (2012) words, the 'boundaries of Islamism and neoliberalism in subtle ways without challenging or opposing either of them' for pious Muslim youth. These Muslim youth are initially required to acquire Islamic values whilst living their lives in the heart of western culture by avoiding sins, volunteering for Islamic events, engaging fully in education and businesses and actively taking part in doing *Sadaqa* and encouraging others to do same. "The performance of Zakat entail specific obligations and rights that transcend nation state boundaries. The specific obligation to God, while an individual duty, is shared with all Muslims" (May 2013, pp. 162). Many people gave generous donations from one hundred to five thousand British pounds during the event. Some of them wrote checks while other registered their personal details and pledged in front of others to provide the money through online banking or by setting up a monthly direct debit plan.

The *Salafi* preachers in the gathering attempted to convince the audience that by doing *Sadaqa*, the audience not only change the lives of those people who are receiving benefits from their financial assistance but also their own afterlife as they will be rewarded by

Allah for such acts in their afterlife. Doing *Sadaqa*, as a popular form of charity, is a twofold act in how it is described by reformist Muslims as, on the one hand, it purifies assets, profits and savings but, on the other hand, it is instrumental in spreading their mission of *Da'wa*. The intrinsic message by reformist Muslims for Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs and Muslim youth here is to have maximum worldly economic success so that they can help others and get more reward and merits from Allah through their financial assistance for any good cause. Doing *Sadaqa* in public places by giving a public performance for Muslim businessmen also becomes an act of asserting their identity as successful and virtuous community leaders.

The introduction of *Sadaqa* and *Sadaqa-i-jariya* as a purifier and multiplier of assets, savings and surplus by *Salafi* preachers and fundraisers to Muslim Businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham also provides a space for both groups to understand and acknowledge their 'global responsibility' in being Muslim. *Salafi* preachers and fundraisers communicate to Muslim businessmen that personal growth and advancement in business can enable them to fulfil their 'global responsibility' by helping others and advancing the cause of Islam. At the same time, Allah will reward them with merits if they do *Sadaqa* by multiplying their assets and surplus. This is how Muslim businessmen in Birmingham sought the purification of their surplus by keeping in mind a picture of their life and afterlife prospects. At the same time, the purification of surplus by Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs has another dimension, which is at more of a local level in its scope but which carries similar understandings. Through the case study of Mr. Hasan, I explore another way of doing *Sadaqa* and *Sadaqa-i-jariya* by Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in their bid to seek Allah's blessings for the betterment of their economic situation. Mr. Hasan's story explains how some Birmingham Muslims do not view themselves as 'responsible globally' for the advancement of Islam but rely on local initiatives for life and afterlife salvation.

Mr. Hasan is a young businessman and entrepreneur who inherited his father's business of selling *Halal* cookies to Muslim children in public and private schools and to other educational institutes in Birmingham. He owns a small factory which manufactures *Halal* cookies. Mr. Hasan has a university degree in Modern Arts and he also enjoys making videos and music about the everyday life issues of the Muslim community in his free time. He saw his father and grandfather working hard to make their business a success in their lifetimes. Mr. Hasan came up with the idea of selling *Halal* cookies to Muslim

children in schools and their business expanded from there on. Now he manages a staff of twenty to twenty five people in his factory every day. Mr. Hasan identifies himself as a liberal Muslim with respect to his practice of Islam in everyday life. His parents and family practice the *Barelvi* stream of Islam. Mr. Hasan told me that despite being a liberal Muslim in everyday life, he strongly believes in the afterlife. He believes that by providing *Halal* cookies to Muslim children and students at various schools and educational institutes in Birmingham, he is not only earning a good profit but he is also securing a place in paradise. He said he believes that the money he is earning through his business of *Halal* cookies is a 'dual money'. Allah is not only ensuring his and his family's economic progress but Allah will also give them a reward for in the afterlife. He said that hundreds of Muslim children eat their manufactured *Halal* cookies in school and that these children and their parents must be praying for him and his family because of the provision of *Halal* cookies to children. Mr. Hasan told me that there are many blessings which arise from the 'dual money'. From the time their business has started to provide *Halal* cookies to children, Allah has made them richer and their profits have multiplied. They are rich now and each one of their family member owns their house and they also have multiple elsewhere too.

Mr. Hasan told me that going to pub in the evening or over the weekends for socialising is what people do in Britain. He thinks that the majority of Muslims do not go to the pub because pubs do not offer *Halal* food. He told me enthusiastically, "I want to be served with *Halal* pie in pub in my life time". Hasan said that he believes that selling *Halal* food to Muslims brings *Barakat* in the life and profit for the seller. He said that he has future business plans to offer *Halal* food in pubs. Mr. Hasan said that Britain is a free country and that a pub can be a space for Muslims to introduce their faith to non-Muslims. But according to Mr. Hasan, Muslims do not go to pubs because their dietary needs are mostly not met, even if they do not consume alcohol, because it is hard to find *Halal* food in pubs. He said that he wants to get Allah's blessing by providing *Halal* food in pubs for Muslims so that Muslims in Birmingham can become an active part of the social life in Britain. *Halal* food is attracting a growing numbers of consumers and emerging Muslim middle classes who want to consume it and see it available in all possible public spaces in Britain (Abid 2012). Mr. Hasan told me that his grandfather used to tell him stories of his experience of the lack of *Halal* food in public places. He said that his grandfather used to remain hungry at the workplace sometimes because *Halal* food was not available. Mr. Hasan's grandfather used to buy a live chicken and bring it back home to slaughter it in

an Islamic way and then eat it. He also said that his neighbours thought that Muslims ate cats and dogs in their homes when they saw the remains of the slaughtered chicken outside in the rubbish. He said that his grandfather later started a chip shop business and started to sell *Halal* food after he saw his Muslim community suffering due to the lack of available *Halal* food. Mr. Hasan believes that it was because of the scarification of his grandfather that Allah has blessed their family with good business which his father subsequently improved on and now he is doing his bit.

Mr. Hasan told me that he does charity along with a group of likeminded friends who are all into small businesses. Generally he gives *Zakat* to the poor Muslims he knows personally but he and his friends also do *Sadaqa* and once a year, they organise a fundraising event. Mr. Hasan said that he plays music and that sometimes, during charity events, he fundraises by playing music. They give charity money to the people suffering from natural disasters around the world or to vulnerable groups within Britain. Mr. Hasan told me that he believes the more he does *Sadaqa*, the more he is successful in business. He thinks that he earns pure money because of his *Halal* cookie business and that *Sadaqa* safeguards his business. Mr. Hasan said, that for him, doing *Sadaqa* is a social act. He always fundraises in Birmingham pubs where he invites all Muslims and non-Muslims friends together and offers them *Halal* food. Hasan told me that doing *Sadaqa* publically is very important as it keeps the community together and gives people a proper introduction to a businessman like him. At the same time, he believes that *Sadaqa* is not only an act of financial giving, but also an act which is beneficial to the wider public at societal level.

According to Mr. Hasan, his business of selling *Halal* food is another form of doing *Sadaqa* as he is trying to do a greater good for the Muslim community by providing them with *Halal* food in public spaces. Though Hasan does *Sadaqa* for transnational charitable projects, this is not the only way for him to purify his business profits. His emphasis on spreading the message of Islam by providing socio-religious services to Muslim community, like selling *Halal* food, carries similar notions of reformist Muslim interpretations that I referred to in my first chapter as the *Communitarian* stream of *Barelvi* Islam, based at the Ghamkol Sharif Mosque in Birmingham. Mr. Hasan is seeking Allah's blessing for his business by doing social actions which entail economic prospects. Unlike iERA's understanding of doing *Sadaqa* globally in order to spread the mission of *Da'wa*, Hasan believes that there is enough space within British culture and society where

by doing *Sadaqa*, one can not only please people and also Allah. Mr. Hasan's idea that by selling *Halal* food and earning 'dual money', he is purifying his assets and savings. He thinks that whatever he donates as *Sadaqa* is a spiritual bonus for him on top of his profits. This understanding of doing *Sadaqa* through offering Halal food services carries a similar meaning to having a savings account in the bank of Allah as advocated by fundraisers of iERA. "In Egypt, faith based development organisations adapt Islamic principles of charity to promote neoliberal practices" (Atia 2012, pp. 811).

Financially successful Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham earn their profits through their businesses and, at the same time, they believe that their businesses can also buy or secure their salvation in the afterlife if they do *Sadaqa* and donate money for good causes. Mostly, the act of doing charity and giving donations by Muslim businessmen is influenced and determined by the interpretations of reformist Muslims about how to conduct in everyday life. As I have discussed in the first and second chapters, reformist Muslims present a 'code of life' for their followers in which the afterlife is a vital component where the afterlife relates to most of everyday life. The everyday beliefs of reformist Muslims and that of Muslim businessmen establishes the belief that each pound spent for any charitable purpose in the name of Allah is not a pound spent or wasted, rather it becomes an investment which multiplies and grows. Rich and successful Muslim businessmen usually prefer giving donations as *Sadaqa-i-jariya* to charities that run hospitals or orphanages with the expectation or agreement that the charitable organisation will build a room or a building with their name on it. Until the time people receive benefit from that building or room, the donors will receive merits and Allah's *Barakat* will return to safeguard their business and to purify their profits. At the same time, the name of a particular person or business on any charity building is also a public performance of being a good Muslim i.e. pious and successful. The use of charity as a purification of wealth is the main reason for vibrant Islamic charity in Egypt (Atia 2013).

The Imam of the Central Mosque in Birmingham visited Saudi Arabia and convened a meeting of influential Muslim businessmen, entrepreneurs and activists after a Friday prayer after a Friday prayer on his return to Birmingham. I was talking to Mr. Latif, an important Muslim businessman, after Friday prayer when a mosque official came and told Mr. Latif that the Imam would like to say a few words to the 'noble people of Birmingham'. The Imam was giving a lecture to his selected audience and telling them

how generous the King of Saudi Arabia is. The Imam said that the Saudi King spends money all over the world to spread the mission of Islam. The Imam told the audience that he himself is a witness to how every month, the King convenes the meeting of Islamic scholars from all over the world to ask how much they have advanced the cause of Islam. The Imam said that there is a special blessing of Allah over the head of Saudi King as he is generous when it comes to spending money for the cause of Islam and that this is why Allah has made him the 'Custodian of Holy Mosques'. The Imam was explaining this to a group of successful Muslim businessmen and stressed that due to Arab Spring, all monarchies, dictators and kings in the Arab world are very much worried about their future and their governments but that due to Allah's blessing, and the generous attitude of the Saudi King, there is no political upheaval in his kingdom. The Imam conveyed the message to the influential Muslim businessmen and philanthropists in Birmingham that Allah would protect their assets, businesses and profits if they spend generously. Mona Atia (2012) in her work on pious neoliberalism, Islam and faith based development organisations traces the relationship between religion and neoliberalism which is maintained by faith based development organisations as key players. Faith based development organisations and televangelist (Tele-Islamic) Muslims advance narratives of Islam which are compatible with the neoliberal market economy. The idea of 'pious neoliberalism' provides a lens through which to look at the work of faith based development organisations as provider of socio-spatial change occurring in the religious as well as economic landscapes of Muslim communities in Egypt. I have explained in chapter three of this thesis about similar notions shared by Muslim charity organisations, Islamic Bank of Britain and Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs of Birmingham in their gathering at Westminster where Lord Nazir Ahmed told audience about Birmingham Muslims as "defenders of private property during England Riots 2011".

Such messages that charity will protect and multiply profits, saving and surplus, as stated above, are frequently heard at mosques but also from reformist Muslims, community leaders and charity or fundraising events. However, Mr. Ghalib, a retired officer from the city council and a social activist within the Birmingham community has another perspective on *Zakat* and *Sadaqa*. Mr. Ghalib is a popular person but particularly amongst Indian and Pakistani artists and people who organise various cultural events. He became a friend of mine during my fieldwork. Mr. Ghalib told me that he believes it is not binding on Muslims in Birmingham to give *Zakat* as long as they are paying taxes to the British government. According to Mr. Ghalib, *Zakat* used to be a form of tax deducted by the

Islamic State from its citizen which was then utilized for the social welfare and social security of its citizens. Mr. Ghalib said that Britain is a welfare state and so as long as we pay our taxes that is the equivalent to paying *Zakat*. There is no *Sharia* law which binds Muslims to pay *Zakat* in Britain. According to Mr. Ghalib, the only charitable donation possible for Muslims in Britain is *Sadaqa*. At the same time, Mr. Ghalib believes that *Sadaqa* is a solution to worldly and financial problems as Allah enhances the assets of somebody who occasionally does *Sadaqa*.

The majority of people who do *Sadaqa* and other charitable acts in order to enhance their savings, their profit surplus and to purify their wealth. But there is another very important factor and motive behind giving among Birmingham Muslims which I call the 'pressures of being prosper'.

5.2   Guilt and Sympathy: Pressures of Prosperity

People who migrated to Britain from the 1950s onwards, along with second and third generations, realize that they have prospered and that their lives have changed greatly when compared to their relatives who have not migrated and who still reside in their 'country of origin'. The majority of these migrants started their careers as factory workers, labourers and other manual jobs. However, they have their own houses now and are wealthier compared to the relatives or communities back at their 'country of origin'. People compare their lives and material possessions with their parents, the previous generations or relatives in other countries which gives them a sense of triumph regarding their economic achievements, on the one hand, but also sense of guilt and sympathy, on the other. Most of the elderly Muslim businessmen do charity because of their own personal observations of the state of impoverishment that generally prevails among their relatives or people back at the 'country of origin'. Some of them have experienced poverty in their lifetime or have seen other people go through the similar experience. Other Muslim Businessmen are obliged to do charity after seeing the cinematic portrayals, pictures and news of poverty, hunger and deprivation outside Britain. These images are generally viewed in charity dinners, through media or some Muslim charitable organisations in Birmingham which arranges for these images to be viewed. Another important reason for doing charity and giving donations among Birmingham Muslims is the realization that they are living far better lives than their previous generations, or the relatives back at the 'country of origin'. Mr. Shaikh told me that he visits Pakistan every two years or sometimes after one year and does charity in his village in Kashmir. He said

that he usually gives his *Zakat* and *Sadaqa* money to the relatives of his parents and to some people who are poor and that he personally knows about their poverty. He also provides a fixed amount of money annually to a *Madrissa* in Pakistani administered Kashmir. He informed me that he asks four of his sons, who are all settled in their life with families and businesses, to give him their charity money so that he could give it to deserving people in the village of his parents in Kashmir. He said that sometimes his sons listens to him and gives him money and sometimes they do not. The different attitudes within the families of Muslim businessmen towards giving charity is something that I will discuss in detail in the next chapter.

Mr. Ghalib invited me to an event he organised in Birmingham. The venue was the *Pirkhana* of Sultan Bahu Trust's building. The event was an evening with a well-known Urdu poet and writer, Mr. Qasmi, from Pakistan who is popular for his literary contributions amongst South Asian communities in Europe and North America. There were around sixty to seventy people participating in the program and the majority of these were religious leaders and businessmen. Mr. Qasmi, the guest speaker, was there to share his poetry and read some comics which he usually publishes in daily Urdu newspapers or some excerpts from his books and other writings. After reciting his poetry briefly, Mr. Qasmi started reading his personal experiences as a young boy before he travelled abroad for the first time. He mentioned his experiences of poverty and the sufferings of his family in late 1960s and early 1970s. Mr. Qasmi shared that how his mother used to eat leftover from lunch or dinner after all the family members have eaten. He and his brother could only eat chicken once in a month and were served only one tiny piece of chicken. For them, it was like having a big feast. Usually no chicken pieces was left for their parents and they used to pour some boiling water into the curry pot and then dip their morsels of bread into it after all the brothers and sisters have eaten. Mr. Qasmi told audience that in those times, a picnic for them was when his father used to buy one watermelon and then the whole family went to the nearby bank of the river and each of them ate one piece of watermelon. His mother used to stitch clothes and save some pieces of cloth and then make handkerchiefs and mufflers for them. Mr. Niaz, Mr. Shaikh and other Muslim businessmen thanked the guest speaker after he had finished. Mr. Shaikh then told the audience that although what Mr. Qasmi was reading was his own family experiences, he felt that Mr. Qasmi was telling the story of his family. Mr. Shaikh told the audience that he does not feel any shame in sharing that he experienced extreme poverty as a young boy and now with the blessings of Allah, he is a successful businessman in Birmingham

and that all of his sons are well settled and doing well in business. He then asked the audience not to forget the days when their families did not have money and now that they have, they should give due share of their money to relatives and the deserving people they know personally. Mr. Shaikh said that it was the plan of Allah to send them here to Britain and to enable them to help those who are in poverty and if they do not do that, with all their money, they would not be able to sleep with peace as their past will haunt them. Mr. Shaikh, who is proud of the fact that he is still in contact with people from his 'country of origin' and helps them with his charity and donations, is, at the same time, also one of the big donors and fundraisers for the construction of Ghamkol Sharif Mosque in Birmingham. While my research participants like Mr. Shaikh, Mr. Niaz and many others give charity to their relatives and the deserving people they know in Birmingham and abroad, they are also actively engaged in the work of reformist Muslims and have affiliations with reformist Muslim groups. Their traditional way of 'sending money back home' does not stop them being part of what happens in the place where they live. Then, *Pir* Sahibzada Sultan Faiz-ul-Hasan Sarwari Qadri, who is the spiritual head of the Sultan Bahu Trust in Birmingham, another reformist Muslims groups and a Muslim charity organisation, emphasized why people should engage in charity work and gifts. He told them that many individual lives are transformed with their help and that many welfare projects function smoothly because good people, like the audience, usually give generous donations.

I also participated in another charity fundraising event organised by the Muslim Cab Drivers of Birmingham. The Muslim Cab Drivers is an informal group of like-minded Birmingham Muslims who are taxi drivers. It is a self-help group which looks after the men in the taxi business. This group of cab drivers invited a Punjabi pop singer, Ibrarul Haq, who is very popular in South Asia, North America and Europe among Punjabi speaking communities. His music is also very popular in public places, youth clubs and in cabs. The singer also runs a charity welfare trust in Pakistan. I participated in this event as Dr. Butt invited me and he was also one of the main organisers of the event. Dr. Butt is a popular as well as an affluent person as well as a practising medical doctor in Birmingham. Dr. Butt is also very well known among Muslim communities because of his interest in charity works and his inclination towards *Tableeghi Jamat*. My friend Mr. Hashim, who himself is a registered patient of Dr. Butt, told me that Dr. Butt is also known as 'Dr. Death' among his patients who use this funny name with each other as a joke. Mr. Hashim told me that Dr. Butt has a habit of preaching to Muslim patients by

making them afraid of death and dying and that because of this, his patients who know each other have given him the humorous name of 'Dr. Death'. Dr. Butt and some of his Muslim Businessmen friends made financial arrangements during this charity event evening for Muslim Cab Drivers.

Dr. Butt told me that Ibrarul Haq, the singer, is a great philanthropist as he is doing amazing charity work and providing free health services to thousands of poor and needy people in Punjab. It was a Saturday evening and the event was organised in a large Indian marriage hall in an ethnically mixed neighbourhood in Birmingham. There were more than one thousand participants, young people, families and groups. People bought tables for sitting in advance. After some local singers and young men performed, Ibrarul Haq started his performance with a long speech on the importance of charity. The speech was very religious in its tone. Ibrarul Haq told people that they will be carrying only a single coffin with them when they will be laid down in their graves after they die and that they should only be worried about their coffin and not about worldly material possessions. During the speech which was quite long, one cab driver stood up in his seat and interrupted the speech of the singer. The cab driver shouted that he was there to listen to the singer's music and not to listen his speech. The cab driver said that he had bought a ticket for a music show and not that of a sermon. While the cab driver was shouting, Dr. Butt came up on the stage, took the mike from the hands of Ibrarul Haq, and firmly asked the interrupting cab driver to sit down in his seat or leave. The cab driver then calmed down. Then Dr. Butt said to the audience that no doubt we are having an evening of music with singer Ibrarul Haq, but let us not forget that this is primarily a charity fundraising event. Dr. Butt said that whilst you people love listening to music, it should not come at the cost of your merits in afterlife. He told the audience that they are indeed lucky people who are enjoying this evening's entertainment but that they must, at the same time, realize the pain of others in their hearts and fear of Allah in their minds. He categorically said that those who just want to waste an evening with music should go to a night club like many other people in Birmingham. The differences between 'us' sitting here and listening music as decent people and 'them' who are in night clubs is that they will lose time, energy and money while we will enjoy music along with doing charity, earning merits and leaving this place by making a contribution to the lives of those who we have left behind in our 'country of origin'. Then Dr. Butt told his personal story that how he had come to Britain and have earned a name and money. He said that after all these years, I have not forgotten my countrymen and I always do charity for them. Dr. Butt then

informed the audience that he is proud of the fact that his name is written on three hospital rooms that are being run by the singer Ibrarul Haq and that he has been doing charity with his welfare trust for long time.

Affluent people like Dr. Butt are a source and aspiration for doing charity for the people back in 'country of origin'. The relationship between the charity practices of Birmingham Muslims and their sense of belonging to their 'country of origin' produces a sense of guilt which prevails as a result of attaining prosperity and affluence in their everyday lives in Britain. The better living conditions of Birmingham Muslims than that of their parents, their early life experiences of poverty or deprivation of any sort, or the impact of images as a result of natural disasters, social problems or any fundraising related promotions are usually the stimulus for doing charity for their 'country of origin'. It is important to stress here that the pressures of being prosperous amongst Birmingham Muslims is neither the sole reason for doing charity nor the result of their longing for and belonging with the 'country of origin'. In daily life, Birmingham Muslims come across many interpersonal and social situations that might act as a reminder of their past lives. The pressures of being prosperous, however, becomes a burden vis-à-vis the poverty among close or distant relatives and charity becomes instrumental in easing that burden.

5.3 Wa'eed[64] and Fears: Disseminating the Consequences of Not Doing Charity

Another very important aspect of charity related practices among Muslim businessmen in Birmingham is the phenomenon of *Wa'eed*. *Wa'eed* is the process, and a message, by which Birmingham Muslims are made aware of the consequences and losses of not doing charity out of their *Halal* incomes and profits. As I have discussed before, generally people engage in charity in order to purify their wealth or because of the pressures of being relatively prosperous in comparison to their relatives. However, *Wa'eed* becomes an important aspect of this whole process of doing charity or giving donations. During Friday prayers, or on the eve of any other religious or social event of fundraising, Imams or other religious leaders disseminate *Wa'eed* to the people.

---

[64] The literal meaning of Wa'eed is 'warning'. Wa'eed is an Urdu word with religious connotations for forthcoming threats and consequences in a person's, or a group's, life. Wa'eed is usually imparted to people by religious scholars, Imams or community leaders amongst Birmingham Muslim communities. It generally means that Allah can take all material possessions away and bring the bad days back into one's life.

I participated in dozens of gatherings in mosques, public places, restaurants and marriage halls where the virtue of disseminating *Wa'eed*, by the charity event organisers or charity organisations generated a significant amount of funds. I was also a volunteer in organising such events for various different organisations. The management of fundraising events invites *Ulemas* who are experts in delivering speeches which are full of *Wa'eed* as they select particular Quranic verses and historical incidents from Muslim history. Both *Barelvi* and *Salafi* reformist Muslim groups collect funds for their *Madrissas*, or for their charitable organisations, by the use of *Wa'eed*. Usually organisations, or individuals, initially explain their performance to the audience, then an Imam, or an expert fundraiser, gives an emotional speech where Quranic verses are quoted which remind an individual that Allah's happiness is vital to our everyday life success in family and business. Everything of daily use and in everyday life is presented by the speaker as a 'luxury' and a gift from Allah. The Imam of the Central Mosque once said to the audience, "the water you drink, the food you eat, the house you have, the household items you use, the cloth you wear, the internal heating system you use in winter to keep you warm, health and well-being of your family members, the bank balance you keep, the successful business and jobs you have, can be taken away from you within no time by Allah if He is not happy with you". He also said that Muslims in Birmingham should not forget the poverty and the misery that their parents or grandparents have experienced in past. The Imam repeated some Quranic verses with English translations alongside his own interpretation again and again;

Alhaakumal Takathur. Hatta Zurtumul Maqabir.

Translation: The desire to increase your possessions indulges and diverts you. To the extent, that you don't realize until you reach into your graves. (102:1, 102:2 Al Quran).

One local councillor, Mr. Ahmed, is very popular for fundraising events. He knows the names of Muslim businessmen in Birmingham and that of their family members and relatives by heart. He is usually invited for fundraising and he takes control of the stage and the mike at the moment the money is about to be collected. He delivers a fifteen to twenty minute speech in which he shares his own eyewitness accounts of poverty, hunger, disease, suffering and misery among women, children and the elderly across the Muslim World. Mr. Ahmed is a well-travelled person and he visits areas of natural disasters across the world and he also partakes in general trips with charity organisations. His speciality is to explain a scene of suffering and human plight from across the Muslim world and

173

then to contrive a similar situation in Birmingham by relating it to the lives of Birmingham Muslims. In one event, he said that on one New Year's Night, while our youth was celebrating here in Birmingham in night clubs or house parties, a child from a family of Pakistan flood victims, died because of the cold. He told the audience to imagine if their child is out in the cold in Birmingham on a New Year's Night and that they have no warm clothes, blanket or duvet to keep their child warm, and that their child dies as a result. Then Mr. Ahmed said to the audience that it can happen to anybody as he has seen in his life time how many rich people's businesses go bust and their family members end up on the streets begging for money or asking their relatives and others for help. He asked people to donate money in the name of Allah as *Sadaqa* if they do not want bad days to be imposed on them by the wrath of Allah. He also said that if people do *Sadaqa*, Allah will not only reward them with more wealth and *Rizaq-i-Halal* (the money earned through fair and legal means and hard work), but that he will also keep all worries and troubles away from them and their families.

Community leaders and influential Muslims in Birmingham like Councillor Ahmed, are not only collecting funds for charities by disseminating *Wa'eed* and fears of getting poor among people. They are, at the same time, keeping Birmingham Muslims in touch with the harsh realities of world, particularly that of the Muslim world by telling them stories and showing them images of human suffering as a result of natural disasters and human conflicts. There are always stories of suffering and images of natural and human disasters from Somalia, Yemen, Eritrea, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Burma, Palestine, Kashmir and Bosnia at such fundraising events which keep Birmingham Muslim's imaginations of global and local Muslim sufferings intact and these images and imaginings in turn serve as a living *Wa'eed* for them (This dimension of charity and its relationship with global Islam is something I will discuss in detail in the next chapter).

Wa'eed dissemination by religious authorities and influential Muslims usually carry connotations of the global Muslim plight and of the responsibility of well off Muslims to do charity for this plight. However, this is not the only usage of *Wa'eed* in the everyday lives of Birmingham Muslims. Sometimes, in private meetings in the local settings of Muslim neighbourhoods in Birmingham, *Wa'eed* is also applied to the personal circumstance of individuals. People refer to other's stories of huge setbacks and life crises as living proof that Allah's curse comes to those who do not do charity and do not purify their wealth and assets. I met Mr. Khan a few time during the course of my research. Mr.

Khan is 36 years old and is a well-educated Muslim scholar. Due to his knowledge of current affairs, history, local affairs and politics, he is very popular among young Muslims and he is treated as role model-cum-celebrity. He is also popular on local media and he sometimes appears on national level media. Mr. Khan works on various projects which relate to community cohesion and integration with different government offices and Birmingham City Council. His view of doing charity and philanthropy among Birmingham Muslim is that this practice is part of Muslim culture in Britain. Mr. Khan told me that the majority of Muslims in Birmingham are of South Asian origin and they came to Birmingham from the 1950s onwards. Mr. Khan said that it was predominantly single men who migrated in those times and that there was a culture of saving and sending remittances back home to their families. After Muslim migrants settled down in Birmingham with their families, their remittances took the form of charity. Although the amount did not remain the same, people continued to send money abroad and the following generations developed a similar practice of giving into charity organisations in Birmingham and they formalised this culture of giving. According to Mr. Khan, Birmingham Muslims do charity because of the associated pressure which come with being prosperous and because they compare their lives with their relatives who are not as rich as them. At the same time, people are also god fearing and they do charity to please Allah.

In another meeting at Mr. Khan's house, where he invited me along with a dozen other people, mostly young adults and students, Mr. Khan recounted a story. He also told young people to listen carefully and to learn something from what he is going to share. He said he is an eye-witness in this story of a Muslim businessman in the neighbourhood of Sparkhill which is a predominantly Muslim neighbourhood of Birmingham. Mr. Khan narrated that the Muslim businessmen started with a convenience store which developed into a local superstore which sold a variety of ethnic food and spices to the local community in predominantly Muslim neighbourhood. Over a period of ten to fifteen years, Mr. Khan told us that the Muslim businessman became rich. He expanded his business and started to import fruits and vegetables and he then became a wholesale supplier of fruits. According to Mr. Khan, while he was getting richer and popular as a businessman, he never gave any money to a mosque, other community welfare activities or any charity. The local Muslim community was very upset by his attitude and lack of interest in the welfare of mosques or in charity related activities. Because Sparkhill was a Muslim community neighbourhood, the local elders met that businessman as asked him

to get involved in the welfare of the neighbourhood's Muslim community. The elders asked him to donate money to mosques in the neighbourhood which he refused to do. Mr. Khan said that the elders then suggested to him that because he had earned enough money that he should then settle down in a suburb like other Muslim businessmen who are rich and wealthy and who have bought new houses in Birmingham's suburbs. Mr. Khan told us that this business man did not move to the suburbs. The local Muslim community leaders never liked him for his lack of interest in community affairs, mosques and charities and they gave up trying to involve that Muslim businessman in community affairs. However, Allah's grip is a most hard one, warned Mr. Khan to youth sitting around us in his drawing room, and the wrath of Allah came upon that Muslim businessman. Mr. Khan said that this businessman had a son and that this son started to sell drugs by transporting heroin into fruits or fruit boxes, and that, at the same time, his son became a drug addict. Eventually, his son died due to a drug overdose.

Mr. Khan said that it was the worst thing he had ever seen in his life because after that rich Muslim businessman's son died, the Imam of a local mosque was on purpose unavailable to say the funeral prayers. People did not come to give their condolences and only his employees from the superstore were there at the funeral. Mr. Khan said that the Muslim businessman had to request the Imam from another mosque in a different neighbourhood to come and say funeral prayers. According to Mr. Khan, the whole episode of that Muslim businessman's son's death became a *Wa'eed* for everybody. Mr. Khan said that because the Muslim businessman of Sparkhill possessed a lot of wealth, and lived in a community of Muslims, but did not spend a penny as *Sadaqa* in the name of Allah or for mosques, community or charities, Allah took his son away and his attitude towards money was a disgrace for him on the dead body of his son. Mr. Khan said that the whole story of that Muslim businessman became a *Wa'eed* for Muslim businessmen community in Birmingham and people talked about it for a long time afterwards. Mr. Khan said that had the Muslim businessman given charity and remained connected with the local community through the mosque and had he done some charity work within community, people's responses would have been different at the time of his son's death. Gifts to humans and to the gods also serve the purpose of buying peace between them both (Mauss 1990). In Maussian terms, that Muslim businessman could have bought 'peace' with Muslim community if he had done charity.

Birmingham Muslims apply the concept of *Wa'eed* in everyday life in order to reform their practices, characters, dealings with others and relationships with Allah and not just for the sake of fundraising. *Wa'eed* plays a very important role in charity and fundraising events as well. Not only does the global suffering of Muslims around the world become the grounds for fundraisers to make people afraid of what might happen to them in future, the local circumstances of individual Muslims, and the mishaps of their lives, become reasons for people to do charity and keep *Barakat* in their households and businesses. The fundraisers use such events, stories and images in order to make Birmingham Muslims aware that their well-being and prosperity is not guaranteed forever, and that doing *Sadaqa* can bring Allah's blessings to their lives.

5.4   Conclusion

For the wider community of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham, the act of doing charity and giving donation is a way of purifying their wealth and profits and a way of securing Allah's blessings for their businesses and families. In this chapter, I have analysed the different aspirations, motivations and dynamics of doing charity among Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs. The chapter primarily addresses why Birmingham Muslims do charity and what relationship this has with social, religious, economic and political practices and associations in everyday life. This chapter links the start and end points of the overall thesis argument connecting how reformist Muslim individuals and groups are influential in shaping up and motivating Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs to do charity. The process of Islamic reformism cannot be looked with respect to merely religious changes and shift in religious patterns, as it can be seen in classical anthropological literature. Emerging trends in Islamic reformism are a result of other changes in people's social lives and these social changes, or processes, influence various aspects of people's lives other than their religion or religious practices. The act of charity and donations among Birmingham Muslims is no exception to this rule. As charity among Muslims is mainly a religiously driven phenomenon, the impact of various streams of Islamic reformism on respective beliefs and practices is an obvious one. While reformist Muslims present modernised interpretations of practising Islam, and various practices of Islam to make Islam relevant to people's everyday lives, the processes heavily influence the practices of charity among Birmingham Muslims.

The *Salafi* reformist Muslim groups reinterpret *Sadaqa* and reorient the culture of giving among Muslims, particular amongst youth. While promoting the practice of *Sadaqa*

among Birmingham Muslims, *Salafi* reformist groups associate the practice with the advancement of their mission of *Da'wa*. Muslim reformists employ the language of modern banking, finance, commerce and the neoliberal market in order to make Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs, as well as youth, believe that doing *Sadaqa* is a 'spiritual investment' and 'fair trade' with Allah. As well as this, the best way to do *Sadaqa*, for *Salafi* reformists, is to promote the mission of Islam and to advance *Da'wa* locally and globally. *Salafi* reformist groups provide services to make sure that people contribute donations for the *Da'wa* mission, that these people know where their charity money is going and that they know what purpose their money is being used for. The networks and services set up by *Salafi* reformist organisations becomes quasi-*Waqfs* in modern sense for Birmingham Muslims as the latter see their charity money as serving the mission of Islam and these Muslims also reorient themselves in relation to the historical idea of a 'glorious Muslim past' where social services were provided by 'just Muslim rulers'. Reformist Muslims reinterpret the meanings of *Sadaqa* and transform it into a strong bond of global brotherhood among Muslim *Ummah*, and, thus, make Muslim giving in Birmingham a transnational charitable practice as well as a transcendental charitable practice. However, Birmingham Muslims who are not part of *Salafi* reformist groups have local version of doing charity which does not exclude advancing the mission of *Da'wa*, acquiring spiritual merits as well as securing success in businesses. Birmingham Muslims believe that money earned through hard work and *Rizaq-i-Halal* (money acquired through permissible means) can be a form of 'dual money' which not only secures 'success' in life but also in the afterlife. This chapters pinpointed how reformist groups' interpretations of doing charity and giving *Sadaqa* has significantly influenced the nature and direction of giving charity among Birmingham Muslims.

This chapters also explored how Birmingham Muslims relate their own experiences, or their parents' experiences, of being less well off with their respective contemporary success. They also compare their success with the standards and quality of life of their distant relatives or people who they know are less off. Muslim charitable organisations are at the forefront in presenting cinematic portrayals of poverty, hunger, disease, natural disasters, wars, and the persecution of Muslims in various parts of world. These images presented by fundraisers and Muslim charity organisations are viewed by Birmingham Muslims and they remind them about poverty, hardships and the less well-off people whom they know. Through different literary and religious activities organised by reformist Muslim groups and various circles of friends, Birmingham Muslims are

constantly reminded of what they did not have few years, or a few generations, before and what some Muslim communities do not presently have. Another stimulus for doing charity and giving donations among Birmingham Muslims is the social pressures associated with being prosperous which generate a sense of guilt when they compare their own standards of living with those who are in their 'country of origin' or in other parts of the world.

The inculcation and repetition of the fear of unknown, *wa'eed*, that everything which a wealthy Muslim has can be taken back, is disseminated by all reformist Muslim groups in Birmingham. The dissemination of *wa'eed* influences Birmingham Muslim charity and donations practices at two levels. Firstly, it serves as a reminder that the wealth and assets they possess are not theirs but a gift from Allah which they keep temporarily. Secondly, all their wealth and possessions can be taken back from them at any time unless they do *Sadaqa* which can work as a shield from future mishaps. The general picture of global Muslim suffering is presented by reformist Muslims and fundraisers via the idea of the suffering that can also come to Muslims in Birmingham. Muslim charity organisations also relate the idea that if Muslims in Bosnia can be persecuted, then there is no guarantee that they will be safe in any other part of Europe. Here the reformist Muslims and Muslim charity organisations advance the idea that *Sadaqa* can protected them from the harm that might come to at the personal level or the collective level. While successful Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs are known for their generous giving in the name of Allah, some negative examples of Muslim businessmen are also discussed among Birmingham Muslims who did not do Sadaqa and who eventually unsuccessful in business and in other areas of their lives.

Overall, this chapter explains how acts of charity and giving donations by Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs are shaped and influenced by reformist Muslim's interpretations about how and why Muslims should be doing charity. At the same time, Muslim charity organisations also provide platforms for Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs where they can assert their identities of being pious, god fearing and the associated ideas of having worldly and material success in business. In next chapter, I explore contestations over the act of giving, doing charity and giving donations, competition amongst Muslim charity organisations, and the ideals and perceptions of Birmingham Muslim about how betterment of Muslim *Ummah* should be attained through charity money.

Chapter 6

Contestations among Muslim Charitable Organisations with Competing Worldviews

In this chapter, I explain the dynamics of charity practices among Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs, the history and evolution of Muslim charitable organisations, contestations and redefinitions of the idea of 'Muslim charity' among reformist Muslim groups, the competition between Muslim charities for fundraisings, the relationship between 'global Islam' and Muslim charities in Birmingham and the role of Muslim charitable organisations and reformist Muslim groups in asserting and negotiating identity politics at the local, national and international levels in Birmingham. In previous chapters, I established that Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham are influenced by a variety of reformist interpretations of Islam. For them, success in life and the afterlife is vital whilst they conduct their everyday socio-economic activities. 'Being successful' is a desirable personal trait amongst Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs and it is manifested through the public performance of piety and by doing charity and giving donations publically. Charity in public thus becomes instrumental for Muslim businessmen in order to purify their profits and surplus with the belief that through charity, their businesses and assets will multiply and/or will not be taken away from them. However, the act of doing charity, and the relationship of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs to different charitable organizations, is mostly determined by their belief in a particular religious interpretation and by their affiliation with a particular group of reformist Muslims. In this chapter, I explain how Muslim charitable organisations in Birmingham not only provide a space for Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs to forge political and economic alliances at the domestic, national and international levels, but also how these organisations become a source which introduces and applies a particular interpretation of Islam in their everyday lives. This chapter also explores how acts of charity and Muslim charitable organisations impact, reshape and reorient the worldviews of Birmingham Muslims at the personal, local, international and transnational levels.

In this chapter, I engage with the works of Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan (2003), Benthall (2004) and Atia (2013) who mainly deal with emergence and function of Islamic charity organisations. Most of the research on and study of Muslim charity organisations has been viewed in relation to post 9/11 political rhetoric which has linked Muslim charity

organisations with terrorist organisations; this tendency undermines and reduces the greater scope, in Anthropology as well as in other social sciences, of looking at the functioning and impact of Muslim charity organisations in various aspects of everyday social lives of Muslim communities (Wiktorowicz 2002, Benthall 2004, Singer 2006, Cordier 2009). This chapter explores the functioning of Muslim charity organisations beyond the post-9/11 rhetoric and media driven images as the ethnographic details in this chapter sheds light on the role and impact of Muslim charity organisations on the everyday social, economic and political lives of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham. The chapter discussion also focusses on how the decision to give money to charity among Birmingham Muslims is a result of their links and beliefs in interpretations of reformist Muslim groups about how to practice Islam in everyday life. There is a lack of Anthropological studies which delineate the relationship between reformist Muslim groups and Muslim charity organisations and this chapter fills that gap.

6.1 The Background and Evolution of Muslim Charity and Philanthropy in Birmingham

"There were ten to fifteen young students at universities and colleges in Birmingham in 1980s who used to collect pennies from Muslims, while riding on local busses and going from one street to another street and from one mosque to another mosque. In the beginning, they were mostly Arab Muslim students who were mobilizing Birmingham Muslims to do charity and give donations for their Muslim brother and sisters in other parts of world. While events like Rushdie Affairs [65] shaped and united Muslim communities in Birmingham into political and social pressure groups, charity networks went beyond the local level to the global level after the Bosnian War[66] and crises for Muslims in former Yugoslavia." This was relayed to me by Mr. Umar who is a paid employee in Islamic Relief, which is a worldwide Muslim charity network. He is in his mid-forties and is of Arab-Irish descent. Mr. Umar has been working with Islamic Relief for more than twenty years and has been based in Birmingham for his entire career. He has witnessed the emergence and evolution of Muslim charities in Birmingham. He told

---

[65] The Rushdie Affair is the response of British Muslims and Muslims all over the world to the Indian born British-Indian writer Salman Rushdie's book *The Satanic Verses* (1989). Many Muslims perceived the book as offensive to Islam and an insult to the Prophet Muhammad and there were violent protests in response to the book across the world. Muslims in Birmingham organised rallies and public meetings in order to condemn the book and author.

[66] This was a war amongst the formersYugoslavian states (1992-1995) in which many Bosnian Muslims were persecuted and killed.

me that he himself is a living history of Muslim charities in Birmingham as he knows almost all Muslim charity organisations and their workings, both formal and informally, in Birmingham. Mr. Umar told me that there has been a phenomenal growth of Muslim charities in Birmingham in last ten to fifteen years. For him, the number of Muslim charity networks in Birmingham is an opportunity as well as a challenge for the Muslim community. Mr. Umar said that there was a time when people only knew of Islamic Relief in Birmingham as there was no other Muslim charity and almost all Muslim donors used to only give charity money to Islamic Relief. But now, said Mr. Umar, there are certain individuals, mosques and neighbourhoods who no longer fund Islamic Relief. He said that some Muslims oppose and forbid others Muslims if they are planning to give their charity money to Islamic Relief and advise them no to do so. Mr Umar said that things have changed a lot in the past decade or so.

The above information about Islamic Relief, and the wider emergence of Muslim charities in Birmingham, explains the macro picture of Muslim charities in Birmingham. During the course of my fieldwork, I observed and interacted with more than a dozen Muslim charity organisations working in Birmingham. Most of them followed the pattern set by the Islamic Relief's example. However, the emergence of these famous international Muslim charitable organisations does not explain the whole story of the evolution of Muslim charities in Birmingham. Mr. Khan and Mr. Shaikh, who are Muslim community leaders and my research participants who I mentioned in previous chapters two, four and five, relayed a different history of the emergence of Muslim charities network in Birmingham.

According to Mr. Shaikh, Muslim charity remained confined to sending remittance money back home to families and relatives or to needy people who Birmingham Muslims knew personally from the 1950s and onwards. Mr. Shaikh said that during and after the 1970s, most Birmingham Muslims were doing charity for mosques. During the 1970s and 1980s, the focus of Birmingham Muslims has been to donate money in order to build, construct or buy land for mosques. 1980s was the time, said Mr. Shaikh, when various factions of Birmingham Muslims and reformist Muslim groups were engaged in an ongoing tussle of 'occupying mosques' and were disputing about how to run these mosques according to how they saw fit. Various reformist Muslims belonging to different sects disagreed over practising Islam, ways of saying prayers and administratively running mosques. Each group competed with the others by pooling more money for

mosque expenditures so that they could get hold and take control over the administration of the mosque. Once any particular reformist group properly consolidated their 'occupation' over a mosque, they started a *Madrissa* within it and they also started to seek funds and charity money for the mosque. Mr. Shaikh said that the many Muslim charities emerged in the late 1980s which was after Muslim groups in Birmingham settled the internal disagreements over who will be running the affairs of any particular mosque. At the same time, Birmingham Muslims were also exhausted by the disagreements between sectarian groups and some of them shifted their attention of giving money to modern Muslim charities who were helping Muslim around the world. Mr. Shaikh said that still there are disagreements amongst Birmingham Muslims about whether they should give money to charities working globally or to local mosques. Mr. Khan said that the 'culture of giving' among Birmingham Muslims has changed a lot in the last couple of decades. According to Mr. Khan, it was global politics which changed the attitude of giving among Birmingham Muslims. Mr. Khan said that simple things became political after 1990s. According to Mr. Khan, the majority of Birmingham Muslims are of South Asian backgrounds. While they were closely connected with their local mosques who represented their own ethnic communities, Mr. Khan said that the idea of Muslim identity gained popularity after the events of 9/11 in the USA. Global politics also influenced the Muslim charity and culture of giving in Birmingham. According to Mr. Khan, Muslim charities with global agendas of improving the health, education, infrastructure and development of Muslims in other parts of world gained popularity in Birmingham after 9/11.

My friend and informant, Jamal, who is a 52 year old male social activist of Afro-Asian Muslim background provided me with a detailed picture of the recent history of charity, and his experiences as social activist, in Birmingham. He works on ethnic and race relations in Birmingham for the local council with a focus on art and music. Jamal views the British state as a manipulative body in how it controls the money and funding of charity organisations. By controlling charity and funding, Jamal said, the British state manufactured the conditions which generated animosity amongst various ethnic communities in Birmingham. Jamal said that he had his first experience as a political activist in 1980s when Pakistanis, Indians, Bangladeshis, Afro-Caribbeans and even white Irish communities of migrants, both Muslims and non-Muslims, in Birmingham established a united front against the racial attacks and hooliganism of white skinhead nationalists. He said that in those times question of religion among South Asian and Afro-

Caribbean communities was a sort of 'alien' in the ongoing discourse of political activism and social engagements of those days. Jamal added that in the post-Thatcherite British state of 1990s, ethnic minorities in Birmingham, experienced a high momentum of cohesiveness and cordiality as the Birmingham City Council, and national government, allocated funds for mainstreaming ethnic communities at both the social and economic levels. He said that South Asian and Afro-Caribbean communities created art, music and charity events together whilst keeping alive their united front and social activism against racism and discrimination. He said that this suddenly changed after 9/11 when the British state began to launch projects on religious harmony with a specific focus on Muslims. According to Jamal, it was the City Council's policy to 'target Muslim youth to make them mainstream citizens which they already were' by allocating all money for Muslim charities and Muslim social groups and that this marginalised other faith communities. This public money was previously used on ethnic communities welfare related activities, but government policies' shifted towards Muslims charities and this reflected an obsession towards mainstreaming Muslim youth in Birmingham and this focus alienated other ethnic communities from active social participation. The result of this was feelings of animosity and bad blood between different ethnic communities within Birmingham.

The role the of British state in controlling and establishing the nature and scope of relations between ethnic communities makes more sense in understanding the '2005 race riots in Birmingham'. Though some ethnically mixed neighbourhoods in Birmingham, especially Handsworth, have experienced frequent riots over the last few decades, the riots of 2005 were the first of their kind in Birmingham which were labelled, and represented, as 'race riots' where South Asian communities were confronted Afro-Caribbean communities. A local councillor in Birmingham, Mr. Ahmed, told me that marginality and social exclusion was not only experienced in the post 9/11 context by Muslims, but that Afro-Caribbean, Sikh and Hindu communities also felt marginalised as the city council's funding for the welfare of ethnic communities was being mainly allocated to Muslim groups and Muslim neighbourhoods. Mr. Ahmed said that the 2005 riots are generally perceived as riots between South Asian and Afro-Caribbean community, but than in fact, it was the Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslims communities who were facing the Afro-Caribbean community more than other South Asian groups and communities. According to Mr. Ahmed, one of the many reasons which generated riots in Handsworth in 2005, was the government funding allocated to Muslim charities and other projects in order to mainstream Muslim communities.

The above three are the major explanations of the history, emergence and evolution of Muslim charity organisations in Birmingham. What is common amongst these three different interpretations is that Muslim charity organisations became very popular and were at the forefront of Muslim communities after the 1990s in general and in the post-9/11 context in particular. Global world events in last two decades or so, particularly in the Muslim World, have played a vital role in the emergence, popularity and introduction of various Muslim charities in Birmingham and around the world. Whether it is the Bosnian War or the Rushdie Affairs as Mr. Umar said, or the rapid information flow and 'globalisation of Muslim communities' after 9/11 as Mr. Khan said, or the British state's allocation of money to various Muslim groups in order to mainstream Muslim communities and youth as explained by Mr. Jamal, it is apparent that the charity practices of Birmingham Muslims and Muslim charity organisations in Birmingham have been influenced, and reshaped, in response to global politics of the Muslim World and the wider impact of the Muslim World on Muslim communities in Britain. The present situation of Muslim charities in Birmingham is that of saturation as there are many Muslim charities working in Birmingham. The success story of Islamic Relief in Birmingham, which is an important local and global player in Muslim charity, paved a way for many other Muslim charities to come forward and gain significant success in the arena of Muslim charity networks. Although there are different interpretation about the emergence of Muslim charity organisations in Birmingham, the central idea was to extend the use of *Zakat* and *Sadaqa* for charitable purposes locally as well as globally.

At the same time, it would be simplistic to view Muslim charity networks and Muslim charity practices in Birmingham as a monolithic, linear and homogenous category. Equally, I do not view Muslim charity as a homogenous and monolithic category of analysis in this thesis. All Muslim charities in Birmingham have personal, transnational and international affiliations with individuals or groups in, and outside of, Birmingham. Though the above mentioned interpretations about the history, background and evolution of Muslim charities present a broader picture, each Muslim charity has a specific story about its background, origin, patronage, and affiliation with reformist groups and future plans. There are different ways, procedures and processes through which the various Muslim charities conduct their everyday business pursuits. Each Muslim charity in Birmingham predominantly reflects a belief in a particular interpretation of Islam which is presented by any one reformist Muslims group. The belief in particular interpretation of practising Islam in everyday life provides Muslim charities with a framework with

which to outline their mission statements and objectives, services and future plans. Sometimes, mission statements, objectives and given introductions of any particular Muslim charity do not reflect the actual workings of the organisation on the ground but the organisation's theoretical self-conception coheres with a particular set of beliefs in the everyday practice of Islam.

6.2 How Islamic is Islamic Relief Now? Contestations and (Re)definitions of the Idea of a Muslim Charity

The question of how to do charity and where charity money should be spent is an important one and it usually generates serious debate among various Muslim charity organisations in Birmingham. Recent trends and opinions about doing charity among Birmingham Muslims is a polarised one and it is subject to negotiation. One of the *Salafi* versions of doing charity has gained much popularity among some Muslim charitable organisations. Some *Salafi* reformist groups in Birmingham have come up with the idea of total rejecting modern discourses of 'sustainable development' and refute working within the framework of the international development principles and paradigms i.e. like following the Millennium Development Goals or other United Nations backed development agendas, or initiatives for development taken by Western based donors and development foundations. These Muslim charitable organisations are mostly run by *Salafi* reformist groups and their nature of working for charitable causes derive its inspiration and orientation from the concepts of consolidating cooperation among Muslim communities across the world. The proponents of these Muslim charitable organisations believe in providing humanitarian assistance for Muslims on the principles of Islamic faith. This means that they do not write project proposals or seek funds from the UN or other global donors and do their charity work without following development models of international development agencies or without first making their development plans compatible with the Millennium Development Goals. The leading example for this paradigm for doing Muslim charity is the Ummah Welfare Trust which is a Muslim charity organisation based in Birmingham and other cities of Britain. It claims to operate at a zero administration cost and zero spending on its fundraising campaigns. It claims to provide an Islamic alternative of doing charity work without engaging with 'Western donors'. This is in contrast to some Muslim charities like Islamic Relief who work in partnership with the modern discourses of 'sustainable development' and in alliance with global Western donors. Some Muslim charitable organisations, with the leading example

being Islamic Relief, view modern discourses of sustainable development and receiving funds from global donors and working within the paradigm of Millennium Development Goals as a viable way of doing charity whilst keeping their Islamic faith intact and a core value of their Muslim charity organisations. In Birmingham, the divisions between Muslim charities in terms of the outlook and nature of their humanitarian work is in line with either the Ummah Welfare Trust model or that of the Islamic Relief model. The similarity between both models is that of a global vision and global outreach whilst doing humanitarian work and mobilizing funds from Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs based in Birmingham and elsewhere.

Islamic Relief Worldwide, which is a Muslim charity organisation, is a main proponent of working within the framework of international development and in partnership with other Western based development organisations whether the latter are Muslim or non-Muslim. Islamic Relief have worked in non-Muslim countries for emergency help. Islamic relief is also a member of the Disaster Emergency Committee (DEC) in Britain and it has adopted a two-fold identity which has gained it recognition by Muslim communities in Britain as well as by the international media, both Islamic and humanitarian media. It is Islamic in how it collected donations in the name of Islam and also in how it mobilised Muslim charity funds for Bosnians Muslims. It is humanitarian in the sense that it worked within the universal parameters of humanitarian assistance like that of Oxfam, Save the Children or other international development agencies (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003). Many other Muslim charity orgnisations work on similar principles like Islamic relief. However, the recent emergence of some Muslim charities, like that of Ummah Welfare Trust, as an alternative for to the Islamic Relief model has strengthened the idea that 'Western' notions of doing charity and development work under the umbrella of Millennium Development Goals are not purely Islamic.

Here, I will be discussing the discourses from within and around two Muslim charitable organisations; Islamic Relief and Ummah Welfare Trust. Both of these charities are big in size and have a presence in most of the Muslim World as well as having a large following amongst Muslim communities in Birmingham. There are many other Muslim charities that are active in this ongoing debate, or contestation, over the interpretation of what it is meant to be an Islamic charity. To explain this phenomenon of what is the true Islamic way of doing humanitarian assistance and charitable work, I discuss the opinions

of volunteers, donors, workers and sympathizers of Islamic Relief and Ummah Welfare Trust.

Mr. Abdul Wahid is a volunteer in the Ummah Welfare Trust. He owns a business which rents and sells automobiles in Birmingham. He told me that he has been volunteering with the Ummah Welfare Trust for last decade. He said that he use to give charity money to the Islamic Relief before volunteering for the Ummah Welfare Trust. He said that he thinks that the Ummah Welfare Trust is doing charity and philanthropic work in a more Islamic way than Islamic Relief. When I enquired further, he told me that if I really want to know what he means, then I should visit the Islamic Relief office and I would feel like I was entering the office of any multinational corporation. They have a huge office with dozens of staff members. I always wonder, said Mr. Abdul Wahid with laughter, how can they have a single penny left to spend for real charity work after having such a huge office and such a large numbers of paid staff. He said, 'just imagine how much money that people donate to Muslim charities like Islamic Relief for the purpose of helping other Muslims in need and distress, actually goes to managing offices, paying staff and buying vehicles etc.'. Mr. Abdul Wahid said that this is not Islam or an Islamic way of doing charity. He said that a true Muslim will never take money for doing charity work if he already has enough resources. He pointed towards himself who has been doing charity work as a volunteer with the Ummah Welfare Trust for last ten years and he has never taken a penny as a salary. He told me that he knows dozens of other Muslims in Birmingham who are doing the same as him. All of us ask this question to others who give charity to Islamic Relief, 'how Islamic is Islamic relief now'? Mr. Abdul Wahid said that Islamic Relief used to be a good Muslim charity but now they have changed their ways and how they run as an organisation after they received major funding from Kuffar[67] and they then compromised their local touch with Muslim communities and the Islamic spirit. Mr. Abdul Wahid's comments reinforce the general perception that Western aid allocated for development in Muslim societies through Western based NGOs, particularly in Africa and Asia, has long been associated with missionary activities which aimed to promote Christianity and corrupt the values of a Muslim society as it is mostly claimed by reformist Muslim groups and individuals (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003). Apart from being partners with *Kuffar*, Mr. Abdul Wahid said that Islamic relief is going to change their head office from Birmingham to London, which is just another way of

---

[67] The non-Muslims or non-believers in Islam.

spending more money on administration and salaries. While people are moving their offices from London to other places in Britain in order to save money, Islamic relief is moving there. Mr. Abdul Wahid said that exhibitionism, self-promotion and showing off is against the teachings of Islam. Besides, Muslims do not need to seek a lecture or take instructions from any authority, like Western donors, on how to do charity work other than Quran and ways of Prophet Muhammad.

Mr. Salim is part of the senior management among the Islamic Relief team in Birmingham. When I enquired about people critiquing Islamic Relief, he told me that what some Muslim community leaders do not realize is that things do not always remain the same, they change. Islamic relief was started by common Muslims and in just twenty seven years after its foundation, Islamic Relief has become a leading global charity in Muslim World. Mr. Salim said that everybody and every organisation evolve, so have Islamic Relief. He said that twenty seven years before, we had different donors and most of them were common Muslims, now we have international corporations giving us donations. We are not confined to distributing food only in disaster hit areas but we have grown to a great extent. Mr. Salim said that now Islamic relief provides services on the principles of sustainable development and we have not compromised over the core Islamic values. Mr. Salim said that the majority of Muslims who criticise Islamic Relief do not understand how the 'rules of the game' for global charities have changed after 9/11. Now the international charities operate under different frameworks than they used to a few decades before. He said that Islamic Relief is representing Muslims, along with the other global development charities around the world, and that Islamic Relief now has access to the United Nations on matters such as consultations and the implementation of various development projects and policies. He said that some Muslim charities who are advocating the idea of zero administrations cost as Islamic practices are founded by rich Muslim businessmen while Islamic relief have its roots among common Muslims. At the same time, Mr. Salim said, Islamic Relief's spending on administrations is purely according to Islamic principles of charity guidance. He said that some Muslim charities are run by those individuals who consider themselves to be 'better Muslims' than others and that is the real problem. He said that in Birmingham, there is a lot of propaganda about Islamic Relief moving office to London, but that people conveniently ignore the fact that fifty percent of British Muslims live in London and the south of England and that there is no big Islamic charity present in those areas. He said that we have introduced more sophisticated ways to Muslim businessmen in order to do charity and deal with their

Zakat, *Sadaqa* and *Waqaf* money like providing them services to calculate *Zakat,* providing financial experts support about how to ascertain their profit amount for *Waqaf* and which are the best areas for them to use their *Sadaqa*. Rich Muslim businessmen have fixed a portion of their businesses for Islamic relief and the profit comes the charity and that is a modern way of doing *Waqaf.* This is something that Islamic Relief has introduced, said Mr. Salim.

While there are disagreements between Islamic Relief and the Ummah Welfare Trust in terms of their organisational outlook, administrative costs and spending money on advertising for fundraising, both claim to be Islamic charities. Birmingham Muslims who give money to these organisations believe in certain interpretations of practising Islam in everyday life. The people who believe in interpretation of Islam presented by *Puritan Salafi* reformist Muslim groups tend to do charity and give donation to charity organisation like Ummah Welfare Trust. However, many *Salafi* Muslims give their charity money to Islamic Relief especially those who believe in *Islamist* or *Traders* or *Communitarian* interpretations of practising Islam in everyday life as I have explained in chapter two of this thesis. What is similar about the donors of both of the above mentioned charities is that they believe in a global Islam and view Muslims all over the world as connected to each other. While both of these big Muslim charitable organisations strive to eliminate the social problems in the Muslim World, the donors and funders of both of these organisations have their own worldview about it. Established businesses and educated middle class Muslims view the methodology of Islamic Relief as more compatible with the global trends of development.

Mr. Tahir, who is a successful businessmen and runs his own printing press in Birmingham, said that he and his brothers give their *Zakat*, *Sadaqa* and charity donations to Islamic Relief. Mr. Tahir said that what Muslims in Birmingham must not forget is that they can only be successful if they understand the social and political trends of the modern world. For him, said Mr. Tahir, the only solution to problems in the Muslim World is to spread modern education and to provide Muslim communities with better leadership. He said that he is always satisfied to see Islamic Relief representing Muslims at international forums with other charity organisations of international standings. Mr. Tahir said that it was an honour for him when Prince Charles visited the Islamic Relief's office and donated a huge amount of money to Muslims across the globe. Mr. Tahir said that for British Muslims, it was a moment of pride as Prince Charles's visit came soon after the events of

9/11 and Prince Charles acknowledged the positive and constructive role of Islamic Relief within and outside Britain. Mr. Tahir also said that in Birmingham there are some groups of Muslims who want to exclude Muslims from mainstream public participations and want them to live in their own ghettos by ignoring or boycotting the wider society around them. He said that Muslims should learn lessons from history. Mr. Tahir told me that he has been a history student and he compared the mentality of Muslims who preferred to live in their ghettos to that of Islamic *Ulemas* who boycotted modern education after India came under the British Raj. What Islamic Relief is doing for Muslims in Britain today is the same thing that Sir Syed Ahmed Khan[68] did for Muslims in Hindustan after the British took over in 1857.

What Mr. Tahir believes, in a way, represents the worldview of a large number of formally educated Muslims middle classes and their responses toward charity and donations. However, Mr. Abdul Wahid represents a different viewpoint about how an Islamic charity should function. In another meeting with Mr. Abdul Wahid, he told me that a Muslim charity's job is not only to provide food or help Muslims in disaster hit areas across the world. A Muslim charity has a duty to deliver services as well as deliver the message that Muslims do not have to rely on the help of international organisations all the time. They should learn to stand on their own feet, said Mr. Abdul Wahid. He said that international NGOs will always drag you into their own agendas and will impose conditions upon everybody who receives their help. Mr. Abdul Wahid said that for a Muslim charity, in order to help other Muslims, it does not have to write long projects proposals, funding applications, do workshop and seminars, stay in expensive hotels, start useless campaigns and work under given time frame to meet deadlines. It is simple and clear if somebody needs help, and you go and provide that help on your own expense. That is what we do at the Ummah Welfare Trust, said Mr. Abdul Wahid, if somebody gives us a hundred pounds, we deliver that exact hundred pounds to somebody who needs it and do not spend more than half of it on offices, administration and salaries of staff. We have strong networks of volunteers who travel across the world on their own expense in order to provide help to Muslims communities who are in need of it.

---

[68] Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-1898) was a modernist Muslim reformist who struggled for the political rights of Muslims under the British Raj. He advised other Muslim to reconcile with the British colonial government and he advocated social reformism and scientific rationalism among Muslims.

What is obvious in the methodology of Muslim charities like the Ummah Welfare Trust is the rejection of mainstream development practices presented by international development organisations and actors based in Western countries or United Nations. At the same time, they introduce their own ways of helping Muslims across the world which are, according to them, 'purely Islamic'. The donors for Muslim charity organisations, like the Ummah Welfare Trust, view the humanitarian interventions by international development agencies with suspicion and do not trust them. The methodology and conceptual framework for providing humanitarian assistance to communities in need is very much contested among Birmingham Muslims. Each reformist groups of Muslims in Birmingham have their own understanding of how to do charity which is based on their interpretation of Islam.

The idea of whether charity money, like *Zakat* or *Sadaqa* can be used for the help and welfare of non-Muslims has recently been contested among reformist Muslims and Muslims charitable organisations. In Birmingham, some Muslim charitable organisation fundraise with a promise that they will be spending charity purely and absolutely on needy Muslims. They encourage Muslim donors to give them charity money as they guarantee it will be spent on Muslims. At the same time, they advise Muslim donors not to give charity money to specific Muslim charities who are famous and reputable for their work but who, at the same time, also spend money on the welfare of non-Muslims. This difference of opinion is reflected in the policies of two British Muslim charity organisations where one extends its *Zakat* money to non-Muslims in Africa while the other restricts it to Muslims only (Benthall 1999).

Apart from the notion of charity for the development and welfare of Muslims across the globe such as poverty reduction, health and education programs, building infrastructure etc, another reformist group of Muslims believe in doing charity solely for *Da'wa*. These are the people I have categorised in my first chapter as *Missionaries* with respect to their belief in a particular interpretation of Islam. For *Missionaries*, the best way to do charity is to change the beliefs of people and convert them to Islam. Reformist Muslims at the Islamic Education and Research Academy (iERA) actively engage with Muslim communities in Birmingham who do charity and give donation for the cause of spreading Islam. While iERA does not denounce or discourage charity work being carried out by other Muslim charities, they advocate that people should do charity in order to spread Islam. As the leadership of iERA is comprised of converts, they focus on fundraising to

convert non-Muslims to Islam. iERA offers its donors a range of different programs like Mission Dawa, Muslim Now, Big Debate, One Reason for converting people to Islam or consolidating their beliefs with Islam where people can give charity money. All of these programs aim to attract people towards Islam, to train individuals and groups how to impart *Dawa*, to help new converts in their social adjustments and to do research on issues like challenges to Islam in Britain. The donors can pick any programme he or she likes when giving to the charity. iERA asks its donors at public fundraising events to give money for Mission *Dawa* in an African country, Malawi and to generate big debates in other countries which raise the awareness of Islam to the wider public. Birmingham Muslims donate money under 'Adopt A Convert' program to iERA.

Mr. Kaleem, an activist of iERA in Birmingham, told me that what Muslims do not understand is the importance of doing charity to spread the mission of Islam. He said it is the duty of every Muslim and that people should spend money on this issue. Mr. Kaleem said that places like Malawi are ideal grounds for advancing the mission of *Dawa* and that we provide a chance to Muslims in Birmingham to contribute to the spread the mission of Islam by sponsoring irrigation project of iERA in Malawi which attract people towards Islam. Atia (2012) in her work maintains that faith based development organisations have brought the work of *Da'wa* to public spaces, and that this has changed the geographical boundary of *Da'wa* which was previously limited to mosques and sermons. She also says that *Da'wa* can be viewed as volunteerism for the youth and it is a popular way of doing charity and engaging with poor people by providing social services and it is also popular with the rich by actively engaging reformist Muslims and volunteers who are present at social and entertainment spaces. Voluntary organisations play a significant role in the expansion of neoliberalism and Islamism without contradicting or opposing both, Atia (2012) maintains. Mr. Kaleem said that while everybody cannot go to Malawi and do *Dawa*, people can donate money and help those who are doing it there. iERA speakers in their public lectures often quote the name of the first British Muslim convert from Liverpool, Abdullah Quilliam (1856-1932), who established a charity network for orphans and widows to spread the teachings of Islam and which converted dozens of native British people.

The contestations between Muslim charities about how to use charity money to a great extent reflect the attitude and beliefs of their donors. While reformist groups of Muslims have their own agendas and objectives behind charity organisation, the ordinary believer

and donor view his or her donation as a contribution to the advancement of a particular interpretation of the practice of Islam in everyday life. What appears common to the majority of the Muslim charity networks is their belief in one or other form of global Islam. Here, I would like to emphasise that the beliefs of an ordinary Muslim in one or another form of global Islam does not have to be political in nature. An ordinary Birmingham Muslim who gives donations to a Muslim charity to work in another Muslim country might have a worldview which connects with the global *Ummah* and who seeks the betterment of their brethren in Islam. I explained in a previous chapter that Muslim suffering across the globe is disseminated and established for ordinarily Muslim businessmen in Birmingham by Muslim charities, their fundraising experts, Imams and by certain individuals. The multidimensional relationship with the imagined community of the global *Ummah* is pivotal when understanding the analyses of Muslim charitable organisations and Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs who give donations to these organisations.

Having said that, it is not always the case for Birmingham Muslims that relating to the global Muslim *Ummah* in a monolithic and linear way is instrumental in doing charity and giving donations. There are many personal, local and transnational factors which determine the nature and structure of Muslim charity networks. Certain individuals, especially the *Pirkhanas* (saint dwellings), have a defined group of people and specific geographies for doing their charity works. All *Pirkhanas* have their charity networks. However, although *Pirkhanas* have transnational charity networks, these have defined geographies, and do not have the global orientation and aspiration of the Muslim *Ummah* in the same way as most of the established Muslim charity networks in Birmingham, such as Islamic Relief and the Ummah welfare Trust.

6.3 Accusing Each Other: The Personal and Local Dimensions of Muslim Charity

I was offering Eid al-Fiter[69] prayer in the Central Mosque of Birmingham during my fieldwork in year 2011. *Eid al-Fiter* is the time when the Central Mosque of Birmingham is very busy as more than 10,000 people offer *Eid* prayer there. Before the *Eid* prayer is offered, the management of the Central Mosque collect donations in the form of cash

---

[69] Eid al-Fiter is a religious festival of Muslims that is celebrated after the month of fasting, Ramadan, ends. People meet and greet family, relatives and friends. Muslims also give Zakat-i-Fitrana (equal to the amount of one time lunch or dinner or a day's expenditure per each person; the amount varies) at the end of holy month of Ramadan along with doing *Sadaqa* in many other ways.

from the people present. I was in the same line to offer *Eid* prayer next to Dr. Butt. I could see Mr. Fiaz, a member of the board of trustee at the Central Mosque, walking to collect money in front of prayer line. He was with another person who was holding a piece of cloth in their hands in which people were pouring donations. When they passed near Dr. Butt, Mr. Fiaz stopped. He asked Dr. Butt to forget what happened in the past on a joyous occasion like *Eid al-Fiter*, and that he should be giving big donations. Dr. Butt said that he has already given his *Sadaqa* to deserving people before coming to *Eid* prayer and that Mr. Fiaz should be asking other people sitting elsewhere inside the mosque to give big donations. Dr. Butt said to Mr. Fiaz in a loud voice that those big businessmen who only like their names to be written and publicised everywhere should also do some charity with the mosque and not always expect others to do it. Dr. Butt also said that he has given maximum charity to the mosque as long as he was a member of the board of trustees. Mr. Fiaz smiled and told Dr. Butt not to worry and he moved forward to collect donations before the *Eid* prayer. After the prayer, I asked Mr. Fiaz why had Dr. Butt not given a donation and why he talked in an angry tone. Mr. Fiaz said that it is a long story that he would tell me some other time.

Later, in my meeting with Mr. Fiaz, he told me that Dr. Butt was a past member of the board of trustees. At the same time, Mr. Mansha, another successful Muslim businessman, was also a member. Both Dr. Butt and Mr. Mansha had families and two of Dr. Butt's daughters were married to two sons of Mr. Mansha's. There were some family disputes and eventually both daughters were divorced by Mr Masha's sons. From that time onwards, there was a feeling of animosity between Dr. Butt and Mr. Mansha. Dr. Butt could not tolerate the influence of Mr. Mansha in the affairs of the Central Mosque and he resigned from the board. Now Dr. Butt gives a lot of charity money here and there but does not give money to the Central Mosque like the other well off and influential Muslim community leaders and businessmen in Birmingham. Mr. Fiaz told me that Dr. Butt supervises some charity and fundraising events which host the guests from all over the world. Mr. Faiz said that Dr. Butt gives a lot of money to celebrities at public fundraising events just to compete with, and show off to, his rival Mr. Mansha. However, he does not give money to the Central Mosque as Mr. Mansha is one of the big donors there. While he offers his Friday prayer or *Eid* prayers in the Central Mosque, Dr. Butt always support charities that are not local but transnational and run by celebrities like

Ibrarul Haq or Imran Khan.[70] Mr. Fiaz said that within the Pakistani Muslim community in Birmingham, it is Dr. Butt who does a lot of charity work by inviting celebrities, Islamic scholars and cultural icons from Pakistan. Organising such charity events also becomes an event for Dr. Butt where he invites important community members and project himself as an important person among Birmingham Muslims. Mr. Fiaz told me that this is something that Mr. Mansha cannot do so actively.

Influential Muslim community leaders, like Dr. Butt, have personal disagreements with other individuals and one aspect of how they engage in public charity events is to deal with their grudges which they might have with others. What Dr. Butt did in the Central Mosque on the eve of *Eid* prayer was a personal act. At the same time, it also reflects a general attitude among Birmingham Muslims to blame others for not doing charity or doing charity for their own benefit. This attitude of blaming and criticising others is not only limited to individuals' personal sides but it also exists within the majority of charity organisations as well. I met Mr. Obaid who runs a small electronic appliance business in Birmingham. He told me that the majority of Muslim charities in Birmingham are established to benefit certain individuals. He told me that one famous Muslim charity in Birmingham, who runs its development programs in many Muslim countries, has two main directors who are Syed[71] by their caste. Mr. Obaid said that both of them take a big salary from the money that people give in the form of *Zakat* and *Sadaqa*. Mr. Obaid said that according to the Islamic teaching and social practices of Muslims, a *Syed* can never take *Zakat* or *Sadaqa* money as salary, even as a gift. This goes against the teachings of Islam but it is the greed of certain individuals that they give a bad reputation to the sacred identity of being *Syed*, said Mr. Obaid. At the same time, Mr. Obaid told me that he wonders how come these charity networks of certain individual and those of *Pirs* can afford to do hours of live fundraising on television channels. He said that he knows that it is very expensive to pay for on airtime on live television channels in Britain. It shows, said Mr. Obaid, that these charities have enough money to rent live on air time from private television channels. Certain *Pirkhanas* have their own private channels which are very popular. A well-known *Pirkhana* was fined heavily by Ofcom after they asked people to pay one thousand pounds as an act of charity. The appeal was pitched as a

---

[70] Pakistani cricketer turned into politician
[71] Descendants of Prophet Muhammad through his daughters.

promise that they would ask *Pir* to do a special prayer for a person's health and well-being.

Accusing other Muslim charities is not only limited to individuals but also some charities blame other charities for wrongdoings. Apart from the general debate of how the charity money should be spent, certain charities specifically accuse other charities of fraud or the misuse of charity funds. One senior officer of a Muslim charity showed me a picture that another Muslim charity was using in order to raise money for a particular disaster hit area outside Britain. That senior officer told me that this picture is a fake one and that a particular Muslim charity has made this picture in order to collect charity money. He said that the charity is not present in the country they are asking money for. I collected similar observations from Mr. Raza too. Mr. Raza claimed to be a special representative of a famous South Asian saint in Birmingham. As I mentioned before in the first chapter, Mr. Raza is in the process of establishing his own *Pirkhana* in Birmingham and he had also started his own charity network. He told me that he used to give his charity money to other *Pirkhanas* before he established his own charity network. Now he does not give any money to other *Pirkhanas* but instead he asks his devotees and friends to give money to his own charity network. Mr. Raza said that one big reason that other *Pirkhanas* always mock his claim to have acquired spiritual powers from his patron saint along with their jealousy for him is because he has stopped giving charity money to them. He said that despite the malign of his personality by other *Pirs* and their devotees, he is committed to his spiritual work that he has been assigned by his patron saint and he will continue to expand his own charity network. Similarly, Mr. Qazi, who is a philanthropist and educational entrepreneur, and who also runs a huge educational network for Muslim communities in Birmingham, shared a similar story with me. He told me that they are running a charity school with people's donations from Birmingham. He said that once they were approached by a local Muslim charity in Birmingham. Mr. Qazi said that the charity offered to provide food for children in their charity school in Quetta, Pakistan. Mr Qazi said that he allowed them to do that. Mr. Qazi said that charity arranged only one dinner for seventy children in our school but they made a video about it and publicised a lot of pictures about it. In Birmingham, with the help of those pictures and video, they fundraised thousands of pounds. Mr. Qazi told me with grief that they hardly spent less than five hundred pounds over that dinner but they collected far more money than they actually spent. Mr. Qazi showed me the website of that charity and showed me the pictures of their school children having dinner on that Muslim charity's website. Mr. Qazi

said that they have decided to boycott that Muslim charity as they felt deceived and exploited by them.

In general, the blame game is very common among Birmingham Muslims, particularly among those who are related to charities directly or indirectly. It also has a lot to do with the identity politics of representation and contestations between various reformist Muslim groups over how to assert their identity as 'good Muslims' and about how to do charity. With the arrival of new and more charitable organisations backed by reformist Muslim groups in Birmingham, the competition among charitable organisations has increased in many ways. Though the big charitable organisations blame each other for wasting money over things like administration costs, offices and the lack of sustainability and quality in services, the small Muslim charitable organisation blame each other for fraud or being fake and in some cases, misrepresenting Islam. While Mr. Umar believes that criticism by the community is good as it encourages organisations to be transparent in how they work, Mr. Khan said that it is a very dangerous trend developing in Birmingham and that it is strengthening the sectarian and other small divides within Muslim community in Birmingham. Mr. Khan told me that as a community, Muslims need to learn from the Jewish diaspora and must agree on certain fundamental principles of doing charity and spreading the mission of Islam. Islamic charity organisations are always politically denounced by other NGOs when they work in the same place. Contestation between various Islamic charity organisations is also a common and global phenomena. Different charity organisations share different beliefs in practising Islam and always accuse each other of misusing funds or using Islamic Charity for political purposes. There has been a tendency in some Islamic charity organisation in Sudan to become more pragmatic over the period of time and focused on providing humanitarian assistance than favouring one brand of Islamism (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003).

However, the contestations and negotiations about what a Muslim charity is or how a Muslim charity should work or whether a Muslim charity is really doing any good for the Muslim community has created its own nuances of social and political activism amongst Muslims in Birmingham. The culture of giving charity among Birmingham Muslims has created its own dynamics which is shifting the 'patterns and boundaries of giving' amongst the existing hierarchies of charity and donations related practices and trends within the Muslim World.

6.4 Transnational/Transcendental Charity from the 'Muslim South to the Muslim North' via Birmingham

"I have been doing business with my Lebanese partner from last 6 years. He is not only my business partner but we are good friends too. Through him, I came to know about the Palestinian refugees and children who are experiencing suffering due to unfavourable political circumstances. As a Muslim, I don't bother which part of world my money is going as long as it is helping Muslim *Ummah* in a way or other. I send my annual *Zakat* for Palestinian refugees and children in Lebanon. I am satisfied because my business partner makes sure that my *Zakat* money goes to deserving people and I trust him. You see here at Birmingham, the government can take care of the people in need but in other parts of the world, systems are not so great. It is duty of every Muslim to help other Muslims who are in suffering and pain. Some of my relatives send money back to Kashmir for charity but I am not socially well connected there. Besides, it really does not matter whether my *Zakat* is going to Lebanon or Kashmir. Allah has equal reward for charity wherever you do it." One of my research participants, Jamil Ahmed, a forty two year old man of Pakistani-Kashmiri origin told me this after I asked him about his charity and donation practices. I was in contact with Mr. Jamil for three months and I came to know him through a common friend. What Jamil told me is the story of one person of Pakistani origin who is engaged in transnational charity work due to his personal connections. However, at the collective levels, engaging in transnational charitable activities is a common practice amongst Muslims of South Asian descent. This is a direct result of the emergence and growth of charitable organisations established by Muslims of Arab origin in Birmingham over the period of last twenty to thirty years. The charity link between Muslims of South Asian descent as donors for Muslim charity organisations working in various parts of Middle East has strengthened.

The relationship between Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs of South Asian descent and Muslim charities managed and run by Muslims of Arab descent in Birmingham can be explained due to the large and growing population of Muslims of South Asian descent and Muslims of Arab origin actively asserting their Islamic identity as the self-appointed 'gatekeepers' of global Islamic trends. However, Arab and Somali Muslims in Birmingham are partially accepted as 'gatekeepers' of the global Islamic trends of practising Islam and doing charity by segments of the South Asian Muslims population who practice *Salafi* interpretations. *Salafi* Muslims are at the forefront when it comes to

responding or relating themselves to social change, political upheaval and human conflict in the Muslim World and the majority of Muslims of Arab and Somali origin are united together with Muslims of South Asian descent as their *Salafi* brethren. The nature of relationships and patterns of interaction between Muslim charitable organisations managed by Muslims of Arab origin mostly shows their dependency on successful fundraising from South Asian Muslim donors in Birmingham. Muslims from South Asian backgrounds follow various interpretations of practising Islam in their everyday lives which are unique to Bangladesh, India and Pakistan with respect to their origin of those interpretations. However, the interactions between Muslims of South Asian origin and Muslims from other parts of world, mainly from Arab countries, provide them with a space to assert common beliefs and the practices of Islam in their everyday life and this is something which mostly favours *Salafis*. The South Asian Muslims who are followers of South Asian cultural traditions of Islam are at a loss whenever it comes to the public expression of practising or introducing Islam in front of wide British society where Islam is a minority religion. Traditionally, the cultural aspects of charity and donations among Muslims of South Asian origin in Birmingham has been sending money 'back home'. They send money to various groups of people with whom they are linked through geography, ancestral ties and caste-based unequal status relations. However, in the last couple of decades, the emergence of Islamic charitable organisations mostly managed by Arab Muslims have played a crucial role in the transformation of charity and donation practices among some of wealthy, and businessmen, Muslims of South Asian descent. This transformation is observable among those South Asian Muslims who have travelled to the Middle East for any reason or who are linked to the economic, social and political networks of Muslims from the 'heartland of Islam' i.e. Middle East.

"The general perception is that it is always the rich Arab people giving money, particularly from Saudi Arabia and Gulf countries, which goes to South Asian countries for the purpose of charitable works. However, what our organisation is doing here proves this perception is no more the whole picture of the story of Muslim charity. Now we have donors who are Muslims of South Asian origin in Birmingham contributing significantly to charity work in the Middle East through their financial help. This is the other side of picture of Muslim charity and donation practices of modern times". Mr. Umar told me about the new trends of charity among Birmingham Muslims. It appears that when it comes to charity and philanthropy among Birmingham Muslims, the so-called 'Muslim South i.e. South Asia and Muslim North i.e. Middle East' boundaries are blurred. I also

came across Muslims of Bangladeshi and Pakistani descent at fundraising related charity dinners who supported orphanages in Egypt and Yemen by donating money to some Muslim charity networks established in Birmingham. Mr. Umar told me that the shift in the attitudes of Birmingham Muslims to donate money for Muslims across the globe came after Islamic Relief launched successful campaign in Birmingham for five years during and after the Bosnian War. Many other charity networks followed the same pattern and until the year 2000, most of the Muslim charities networks in Birmingham had gone global in their outreach. Atia (2013) in her work on Islamic charity in Egypt explores how giving in Muslim societies stems from the idea that trusteeship is an integral part of Islamic economics and that this leads to charitable practice among Muslims. The writer proposes that the idea of charitable practice amongst Muslim societies relies upon 'specific interpretation of what constitute social justice'. Atia explores that *Zakat* and *Sadaqa* giving by Muslims in Egypt has extended its scope from one Muslim personally giving his charity to another to wider activities like micro-finance, social entrepreneurship and volunteerism as a form of *Sadaqa*.

6.5 The Bargaining Tricks: Spending Less Money, Gaining More Spiritual Merits
Just like all Muslim charity organisations do not have a similar and monolithic practice of functioning and outreaching to their donors, so are the donors and funders who have a variety of aspirations for doing charity. Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs also comes from various religious outlooks and their beliefs reflect diverse interpretations of practising Islam. I have emphasised from the beginning of this thesis that Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs strive to attain the socially established criteria of 'successful Muslims' by giving a public performance of piety, possessing a well-established business and giving public charity money and donations alongside taking an interest in the local community's situation through supervising mosque affairs. These *pious neoliberals*, as Mona Atia (2012) has described them, are also known for the trait of calculability. By calculability, I mean the pattern among Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs, while dealing with their business finances, most of them calculate the daily expenditure and income of their businesses as part of the everyday life of a businessman. While 'success' in life can be achieved by proper calculations and estimations of their cash and finances, income and expenditures, and by making the right projections and choices about business investments, success in the afterlife follows the same logic for some Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs. While Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs generously donate money for charitable purposes to various Muslim charity

organisations, they also keep in mind its impact for their salvation in the afterlife. There are some favourite areas for Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs to do charity and helping and sponsoring orphans is one of the most favoured. Almost all Muslim charities have orphan sponsorship programs. Helping and sponsoring an orphan is an act of extreme virtue and it is highly valued in Islamic chartable practices. The Prophet Muhammad himself was an orphan and He raised many orphans and encouraged his followers to do the same. Muslim charity organisations in Birmingham introduce the idea of sponsoring an orphan as the equivalent to buying a 'direct ticket to paradise' for Birmingham Muslims.

However, how much it costs depends upon which part of the world a Muslim charity is running an orphanage. Islamic relief has a rate of £25 to £35 per month as a cost of raising an orphan in their orphanages. For some countries, their cost is £25 per month and for others it is £35. Mr. Umar told me one of the rich Muslim businessman was their major donor. One day he told Mr. Umar that he is going to give his donations to another Muslim charity for sponsoring orphans as he can sponsor more orphans for the same amount of money that he donates to Islamic Relief. Mr. Umar said that he decided to meet that Muslim businessman and ask the reasons behind his decision. He told Mr. Umar that donating money to orphans is something that he believes in and it does not matter which Muslim charity organisation it goes to.   However, what matters, said that Muslim businessman to Mr. Umar, is what he gets from his donations in terms of spiritual merits from Allah. That Muslim businessman told Mr. Umar that by sponsoring more orphans in the same amount of money, he can get more spiritual merits. Mr. Umar told me that another of their donors who was a highly successful Muslim businessman, and has a huge business network in Britain, decided to do the same. But Mr. Umar said that he convinced this donor that no other Muslim charity organisation provides the same quality of life to an orphan as Islamic Relief does and that he can verify it himself. This other Muslim businessman changed his mind and decided to carry on donating to the Islamic Relief orphanage. Mr. Umar told me that it is really a sad truth that some Muslim charity organisations, in order to have more donations, offer donors to donate less money than what Islamic Relief will ask for the same charitable purpose. He said while this is not a healthy trend for Muslims charitable organisations in Birmingham, Muslim businessman and entrepreneurs are often attracted to this idea so that they can earn more spiritual merits by spending less money, or the same amount of money, to another Muslim charity organisations for the same charitable purpose.

On the one hand, there are Muslim donors who weigh their monetary donations alongside spiritual merits. On the other hand, Muslim charity organisations are also competing with each other in terms of increasing their fundraising. For this, they come up with ideas and campaigns among Birmingham Muslims such as that they are the best option for doing charity as they spend the charity money of Birmingham Muslim in true Islamic ways. Or these organisations claim that they have a local as well as a global outreach to the Muslim world. The phenomenon of bringing the issue of the 'global Muslim outreach' into fundraising campaigns started after Muslim charity organisations provided help to Bosnian Muslims. The Bosnian conflict enhanced the competition amongst Muslim charities for fundraising in Britain as well as the assertion of a Muslim's identity by various reformist Muslim groups. The staff of Muslim charity organisations in Bosnia helped in (re)Islamizing Bosnian Muslims cultural landscape (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003). Such images of helping Muslim communities across borders and uniting *Ummah* through aid and humanitarian assistance were also used by various Muslim charity organisations in order to prove that they were the most capable of doing charity work in comparison to any other Muslim charity organisation in Birmingham. For reformist Muslim groups, Muslim charity organisations who work in places where Muslim communities are suffering became a site where they could compete for advancing their interpretations of how to be a 'responsible Muslim' by virtue of their membership with Muslim *Ummah*. While Muslim donors view spending less money with one organisation rather than other as a way to earn more spiritual merits with same amount of money, Muslim charity organisations play the 'access card' of the network to the wider Muslim *Ummah* as a bonus point in their fundraising activities.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter explores the themes of the emergence and evolution of Muslim charity organisations in Birmingham from the perspective of my research participants and the contestations amongst Muslim charity organisations over which one is more Muslim or Islamic in terms of their orientations, frameworks, ideologies and who deserve to collect and to be given Muslim charity money. The ethnographic data also explored the accusations and critiques by reformist Muslim individuals and groups towards various Muslim charity organisations who are not working in true spirit of Islam according to their interpretations, orientations and viewpoints. This chapter discussed the understandings of reformist Muslims about working in collaborations with Western

based, non-Muslim donors and NGOs and about the global impact of Muslim charity organisations on local partners within and beyond Muslim world. More closely, this chapter explored personal disputes of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs and their reflections through their charity activities. The data in this chapter has informed about Muslim charity organisations and transnationalism, and the negotiations of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs over achieving more spiritual merits by doing *Sadaqa* and giving donations. This chapter establishes the last link in the overall thesis argument that the act of doing charity and giving donations among Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham is determined by the specific beliefs of practising Islam with the interpretations which are presented by the reformist Muslim groups who they associate themselves with.

This chapter finds that the emergence and evolution of Muslim charity organisations as vibrant local and significant global phenomena is a recent one. In the last three decades, the global political scenarios, the open market economy and globalisation, the rapid flow of information and resourceful people from one place to another, the post-9/11 regime of control over transnational aid and humanitarian assistance, and reformist Muslim groups establishing global networks have all been instrumental in the present formations of Muslim charity organisations. Critical events like the Rushdie Affair, the Bosnian War, the 9/11 attacks in the USA and the ramifications of these on Muslim charities have played a vital role in the growth, modifications and functioning of Muslim charity organisations in Birmingham. At the same time, the British government response's to tackling extremism in Birmingham by funding Muslim charity groups and various reformist Muslim groups has also been pivotal in shaping the current form of Muslim charity organisations in Birmingham. Alongside these macro developments, the internal disputes amongst various reformist Muslim groups in trying to extend their influence over the Birmingham Muslim community by taking control of the administration of mosques have alienated the majority of Birmingham Muslim from the 'petty squabbling of *Ulemas*' and has diverted their attention towards the 'amazing global contribution of Muslim charity organisations' to help their Muslim brethren across the world. However, the charity practices of Birmingham Muslims has changed from focusing on sending remittances back home to doing social and financial assistance for the upliftment of the *Ummah* globally and Muslim charity organisations have played a central role in bringing about this change in Birmingham. In a similar way, Muslim charity practices in Birmingham have shifted from a personal and communitarian spirit of taking care of kith

and kin towards the collective betterment and improvement of the global Muslim *Ummah* with the added idea of the spirit of renaissance and gaining more spiritual merits.

The personal and subjective relationships between Muslim charity organisations and Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs, as well as reformist Muslim groups cannot be separated from the organisational function, impact and outlook of Muslim charity organisations. Because the majority of Muslims in Birmingham hail from same the 'country of origin', they have personal ties and relationships with each other. The success story of Muslim charity organisations cannot be viewed as only the result of the strong religious commitment and devout passions of 'altruism for *Ummah* by Birmingham Muslims'. Network of relatives, people coming from same 'country of origin', kinship relations through marriage amongst Birmingham Muslims, spiritual allegiances to networks of *Pirs* and *Pirkhanas*, transnational political interests, enmity and bad bloods among influential Muslims, commitment to reformist Muslim groups, and local city council politics of Birmingham are all important factors that manifest as strengths and opportunities for Muslim charity organisations. Moreover, all of these are source of weakness at the same time. Local politics amongst influential Muslim businessmen and reformist Muslim groups in city council elections as well as the assertion of an identity which is the 'true and only' representative of Birmingham Muslims are important dynamics in the everyday social and political life in the predominantly Muslim neighbourhoods of Birmingham. These characteristics of the everyday lives of Birmingham Muslims are equally important in the formation, evolution and functioning of Muslim charity organisations as the global politics, relationships and aspirations for the Muslim *Ummah* and the coercion from international and national regimes which largely control the world of charity, aid and development after the 9/11 and 7/7 incidents.

Another interesting aspect of Muslim charity organisations in Birmingham is the flow of charity money and newly emerging relationships between donors and receivers in the Muslim world. Birmingham Muslims of South Asian descent generously donate money to development projects and humanitarian assistance in Muslim countries in the Middle East, North Africa and Somalia etc. This trend of Muslim charity organisations is changing the stereotypical perception of 'rich Arabs Muslim' giving charity money to poor 'South Asian' Muslims and this is something which is still very much exaggerated in the popular media and elsewhere i.e. Saudi Arabia or Qatar doing philanthropic work in Bangladesh or Pakistan. At the same time, the viewpoint and approach of Muslim

businessmen and entrepreneurs when doing charity in order gain spiritual merits and please Allah is also an influential factor of modern Muslim charity organisations. Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham, like that of '*pious neoliberals'* of Atia (2013) in Egypt, are not only exerting their identities by giving public performance of their pious, responsible lives of that of Muslim community leaders committed with their business and welfare of Muslims *Ummah*, in Birmingham, they also profess the element of calculability of converting their charity money into maximum spiritual merits on a 'high exchange rate' while doing 'fair trade' with Allah.

Chapter 7

Conclusions

This thesis presents an ethnographic exploration and explanation of Islamic reform, piety and charity amongst Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham. The thesis engages with the broader anthropological debates surrounding Islamic reform, public piety, charity and philanthropy which are broadly located in the 'Anthropology of Islam'. The ethnographic fieldwork was conducted in predominantly Muslim neighbourhoods in Birmingham over the period of one year. This thesis argues that a variety of reformist Muslim groups reinterpret Islam as a 'way of life' which is practised in everyday life and that this appeals to Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham in their pursuits of 'becoming successful and good Muslim' in the life and afterlife. Reformist Muslim groups encourage and appreciate the public performances given by Muslim businessmen, entrepreneurs and community leaders of living a pious and moral life as 'standard behavioural practices of everyday life' and they project them as role models for Birmingham Muslims. Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs assert their identities of being 'successful and good Muslims' by giving public performances of piety-led lives and by giving generous charity donations and engaging in philanthropic with various Muslim charity organisations. However, the act of giving charity and to whom Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs should give their charity money, or where their charity money should be utilised, is determined by the beliefs of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in any specific interpretation of practising Islam advanced by any reformist Muslim group or individual. Muslim charity organisations, thus, become sites and public spheres for reformist Muslim groups and Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs where the former advance their interpretations of practising Islam as 'true, authentic and relevant' for British Muslims whilst, at the same, Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs avail of Muslim charity organisations as sites to give public performance of their piety-led lives. For both reformist Muslim groups and Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs, Muslim charity organisations are a platform to advance their way of being a successful Muslim whilst embodying the local social, economic and political realities of everyday life in Birmingham by connecting themselves with trends and issues related to global Muslim *Ummah*.

This thesis engages with broader Anthropological literature by exploring the relevance of the classic notions on Islamic reform in Muslim societies like that of official vs. folk Islam or urban, reformist and puritanical Islam pitted against rural, traditional and illiterate Islamic practices (Geerts 1968, Gellner 1969, 1981) with currents debates about Islamic reformism as a revivalist movements with its own subjectivities (Metcalf 1982, Eickelman 2000, 2004, Green 2011, Werbner 2013, Robinson 2013). Then the thesis extend the sphere of anthropological literature connecting Islamic reformism with market economy, economic practices of Muslim entrepreneurs and blurring multiple interpretation of lived experience of being a Muslim (Soares 2005, Osella and Osella 2009, 2013, Marsden 2005, 2009, Simpson 2013). The thesis engages with the recent anthropological literature which looks at the intricacies of reformist Muslims groups who take control of Muslim public spheres and their politics of identity (Ahmed 2013, Shehabuddin 2013, Alam 2013, Huq 2013, Jasani 2013). Building on the works of Filippo Osella (2008, 2009, 2013), this thesis links the phenomenon of Islamic reformism with the economic and social practices of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs (Adas 2006, Rudnyckyj 2009, Iqtidar 2013) in order to extend the argument to the public performance of the pious and morality-led lives of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham by engaging with and adding to the idea of public piety and visibility presented by Deeb (2006). At this point, the thesis draws on the Maussian notion of gift (1990) and links the reformist Muslim interpretations of practising Islam in everyday life with their attitude towards charity and philanthropy (Baer 1997, Benthall 1999, 2004, Clarke 2006, Singer 2006, Kochuyt 2009, Atia 2012, 2013, Osella 2014). This thesis consolidates its argument that voluntary acts of charity like *Sadaqa* by Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in Birmingham are determined by their beliefs in any particular interpretation of practising Islam in everyday life and that these interpretations are in turn presented by reformist Muslim groups and that these charity acts are enacted by giving a public performance of piety.

This thesis finds that there is an element of Islamic reforms in all forms of different Islamic streams or sects in Birmingham. All streams, whether hailing from the *Salafi* or the *Barelvi* school of thought and tradition, partake in a reinterpretation of Islam for everyday life in order to advance their version as authentic and to make it relevant for their adherents. This thesis challenges the Anthropological assumption in previous studies on Islamic reform that *Barelvi* or Sufi versions of revivalist movement are merely reactionary to that of *Deobandi* or *Salafi* reformist Muslim movements. The ethnographic

details in this thesis suggest otherwise, keeping the practices and efforts of *Barelvi* reformist Muslims in Birmingham in mind who are at the forefront of the process of reformism. The grave of a live saint which has been built for when he dies so that he may be buried in Birmingham and the philanthropic networks of *Pirkhanas* which provide social, educational and spiritual services in Birmingham and abroad, are manifestations by *Barelvi* reformist Muslims groups where they take the initiative to keep their way of practising Islam as relevant for people and to make it more meaningful for youth and coming generations of Birmingham Muslims. At the same time, this thesis explores the internal differences, disputes and dynamics of reformist Muslim groups who follow the same stream of practicing Islam, i.e. *Barelvi*. While Muslim reformists assert their interpretations of practising Islam as authentic and true, they maximize their influence by undermining and discouraging other reformist groups' efforts, especially that of *Newcomers* among *Barelvis*. Associations with the global Muslim *Ummah* are privileged by reformist Muslim networks and while *Salafi* reformist groups take advantage of the similarities between how they practice Islam and a wide range of Muslim groups coming from South Asian, Middle Eastern, African or local British backgrounds in establishing their introduction as global Muslims, the *Barelvi* reformist groups also enhance their global outlook via their links with international Islamic institutions such as inviting a Quran reciter from the Al-Azhar University in Egypt or by enhancing the transnational links of their devotees and followers of *Pirkhanas* in Birmingham and the mother shrines associated with their *Pirkhanas* in Pakistan or India.

This thesis also problematises the Anthropological tendency to limit the concept and scope of Islamic reformism to changes in the religious practices and attitudes of Muslims and instead enlarges the concept of Islamic reformism to include its influences and impacts on the wider economic, political and social spheres of the everyday lives of Muslims. Along with this, this thesis advocates that limiting the scope of practising or advancing the reformist version of Islam merely to the middle-classes (Metcalf 1982, Adas 2006, Green 2011) would be a factual fallacy in light of the current scenarios of the compositions and functioning of reformist Muslim groups. As many working class people and manual labourers associate themselves with reformist Muslim groups and assert a 'born again Muslim' identity through which they become part of reformist streams of Islam which results in them having a influence over its evolvement and process of reinterpretations. The thesis also explores the globalised vision and version of practising Islam by looking into the stances and responses of various reformist groups and

individuals over various local and international issues that extend the scope of being a 'good Muslim' from observing personal piety to becoming part of enhanced Muslim public sphere that entails politics, populism and philanthropy. Examples of this popular and globalised way of asserting a Muslim identity can be how reformist Muslim groups put forward their agendas such as how to integrate into the hybrid and diversity of British society by keeping their distinct Muslim identity intact by organising non-alcoholic street parties to celebrate the wedding of Prince William and Kate and by emphasizing the importance of family values. Or they revitalize being 'global Muslim' by involving and encouraging Muslim youth for *Da'wa* volunteerism and giving importance to Islamic missionary activities in Britain or abroad by groups like iERA, or by showing solidarity with popular Islamist parties protesting during Arab Spring in Middle East and North Africa while reformist Muslim groups in Birmingham showing support for them by widening geographic horizons of Muslim youth in Birmingham towards global *Ummah* through organising discussions and dialogues. The global Muslim connectedness is also enhanced by establishing and advancing network of humanitarian services thorough Muslim charity organisations.

The thesis began by problematising and elaborating the existing categories of Muslim sects, groups and streams. By exploring two broadly descriptive categories, or ways, of practising Islam in everyday life, *Barelvis* and *Salafis*, this thesis provides a clear picture of groups and sub-groups of reformist Muslims and how they advance their agendas and make their reinterpretations relevant to people's everyday lives. This thesis describes the various streams of reformist Muslim groups in Birmingham and for the sake of description and analysis, I presents interpretive typologies of reformist Muslims groups on the bases of their functioning and the methodology through which they extend outreach to Birmingham Muslims. Major reformist groups within *Barelvi* Muslims have their establishments in Birmingham at various places. *Firstly*, I looked at the Ghamkol Sharif Mosque in Birmingham who I describe as *Communitarians* as they believe in engaging with the community by providing spiritual and social services. *Secondly*, I looked at *Dawat-i-Isalmi* who are a puritanical *Barelvi* reformist group and I described them as a *Modernist* stream of reformist Muslims as they focus on more codified and textual teachings. *Dawat-i-Isalmi* stick to what is told by their organisational chiefs through published material while their devotees and followers are expected to maintain a specific physical appearance and dress code at all times. *Thirdly*, I looked at a network of *Pirkhanas* and *Pirs* who I described as a *Traditionalist Barelvi* reformist group because

of their adherence to traditional ways of making the personality cult of *Pir* as the centre of their material and spiritual projects and agendas. *Fourthly*, I looked at the individuals who are trying to deconstruct the 'spiritual status quo' amongst *Barelvi* Muslims and I called these people the *Newcomers* as they are trying to establish their personal identity as that of a *Pir* and are in the process of acquiring spiritual powers and establishing their own *Pirkhanas* through the blessings of Allah and through their special association with great Muslim saints. These four streams of *Barelvi* reformist Muslims have both similarities and differences in their outreach methods.

This thesis also explained and described *Salafi* reformist groups via four categories. *Firstly,* I looked at the *Trader* stream of *Salafi* reformists who are based at the Central Mosque of Birmingham. I called them *Traders* because most of their adherents are businessmen by professionals. *Traders* present themselves as 'representative' of Birmingham Muslim because of their hold on the Central Mosque, their eclectic approach to working in collaboration with all groups of Muslims and their neutrality towards reformist Muslim groups in Birmingham. *Secondly*, I looked at the *Puritan Salafi* reformist Muslim group who are based at the Green Lane Mosque and who believe in refuting the interpretations of Islam as presented by *Barelvis*. This thesis describes them as a *Puritan* stream of reformist Muslims as they have a strong sense of being 'better Muslims' and they believe in changing other Muslim's ways and practices in an effort to transform them. *Thirdly*, I looked at a group of British coverts who work with the Islamic Education and Research Academy (iERA) and who I described as a *Missionary* stream of Salafi reformist Muslims. *Missionaries* believe in association with the global *Ummah* and their reformist agenda is to spread the mission of *Da'wa* in Britain and abroad. *Missionaries* have a large following amongst the Birmingham Muslim youth. *Fourthly*, I looked at the *Islamist* stream of *Salafi* reformist Muslims. *Islamists* focus on becoming a prominent and effective part of mainstream British society and believe in changing the system by becoming part of it. *Islamists* are mostly middle-class educated professionals who are in alliance with other Islamist political groups around the world but they mainly take inspiration from *Jamaat-i-Islami* in Pakistan and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. *Islamists* in Birmingham actively participate in local politics and show their response to all significant socio-political events happening in the Muslim World. These various *Salafi* stream of reformist Muslims, like that of *Barelvis*, have similarities and differences in their outreach methods.

Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in their pursuits to 'make good and do good' (Osella and Osella 2009) individually associate with the economic and social networks of friends as well as collectively making an effort to attain 'success' in life and the afterlife. The socially established criteria of being successful expect Muslim businessmen to be behave responsibly by showing commitment towards the betterment of their communities and their personal salvation in afterlife. The various friendship circles of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs have different patterns of interaction with reformist Muslim groups. At the same time, in collaboration with reformist Muslim groups, Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs have fun together, respond to situations related to Muslim community via the platform of the Central Mosque, sponsor religious, cultural and literary activities for Birmingham Muslims, maintain cordial relationship with MPs at Westminster, and associate themselves with the imagined community of Muslim *Ummah*. Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs keep an eye on their accounts in two ways. *Firstly*, by self-evaluating their financial accounts by comparing their six monthly, or annul savings, with other Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs in same trade and by keeping their economic deals and business plan secret before they are executed. *Secondly*, by spiritually evaluating their actions, and reflecting if *Barkat* is present in their businesses and if Allah is doing *Ghaibi Madad* (divine intervention) in their pursuit of *Rizaq-i-Halal*.

This thesis engage with Lara Deeb's (2009) idea of public piety and the notion of *visibility* by providing ethnographic detail and analysis of public performances of piety and moral-led lives given by Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs. Giving public performances of piety by Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs is a learned process which receives enormous encouragement and appreciation by reformist Muslim groups. The majority of them try their best to be present at events and meetings of social significance where they share and discuss together their pious experiences, travels, initiatives and ambitions. Giving public performances of piety also serves as a tool to mould public opinion and by presenting moral arguments, Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs advance their personal agendas as well as asserting their identity as someone who is deeply concerned about the moral development of the Muslim community in Birmingham. Another aspect of giving public performances of piety is to achieve the socially established criteria of being 'successful and a role-model' for the youth in particular and wider Muslim community in general. Reformist Muslim individuals encourage the public performance of piety and present it as being a 'pious modern' Deeb (2009) in front of Birmingham

Muslims whilst promising salvation to Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs for being pious and generous. Pubic performances of piety-led life are encouraged by the majority of reformist Muslim groups but some discourage exhibitionism. At the same time, those who discourage public performance of piety, they manifest everyday life practices and daily routine in such a way that their personal piety despite their rebuke to public performance becomes visible in public through their dress code, physical appearance, ways of practicing Islam and their commitment with advancing the mission of *Da'wa*; *Dawat-i-Islami* and *Tableeghi Jamaat* are best examples of this.

Apparently, giving a public performance of a piety-led life suggests a desire for the social recognition of being a good Muslim and the personal commitment with spiritual merits and salvation in afterlife. Yet there are direct and established links of giving a public performance of piety and having economic gains through being a good Muslim. For a Muslim businessman and entrepreneur, acquiring membership on the board of trustee in the Central Mosque of Birmingham is a socially valuable position. At the same time, it is useful to influence the Halal Meat Committee if the individual is running a *Halal* food business or is a supplier of *Halal* cookies for Muslim children in schools in predominantly Muslim neighbourhoods. Hence, for Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs, public performance of piety breed economic betterment and, at the same time, economically successful Muslim businessmen give public performance of pious lives. The life histories of Mr. Pirzada and Mr. Mufti discussed in chapter four are the best reflection of the reciprocal relationship between piety and prosperity. Both of them are successful Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs and are well known as reformist Muslims and their everyday routine becomes the embodiment and reproduction of the synonymity between piety and prosperity. The concepts and definition of piety and prosperity are blurred for Birmingham Muslims by the ever visible portraits of actions, speech, affluence and charisma of reformist Muslims like Mr. Pirzada and Mr. Mufti.

This thesis has argued that Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs are adherents of particular interpretations of being a 'good and successful Muslim' which are presented by particular reformist Muslim groups. Reformist Muslim groups encourage Muslim businessmen to give public performances of piety and virtuous life. By doing so, Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs acquire the recognition of being pious and successful in life and the afterlife. In other words, as Atia (2013) would put it, they become 'pious neoliberals'. However, to sustain this image of themselves, in collaboration with the

various reformist Muslim groups, Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs become part of the functioning, formation and activities of Muslim charity organisations. Muslim charity organisation become a space for Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs to do charity and give public donations. Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs, in order to purify their assets, profit surpluses and businesses enter intro 'fair trade' with Allah whereby they invest ten pounds with the expectations of turning them into seventy pounds worth of surplus in their life time and in the form of spiritual merits in afterlife. Reformist Muslim groups organise fundraising events and encourage Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs to do *Sadaqa* that will work as a shield for their assets. At the same time, reformist Muslim groups reinterpret the meanings of *Sadaqa* according to their beliefs and activities. While for some, giving *Sadaqa* to health and education charities is important, for other reformist groups, doing *Sadaqa* for the spread of the mission of *Da'wa* in Britain and across the world is more important. Giving money to Muslim charity organisations for Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs, thus, becomes a 'dual money' which not only expands their savings but also enhances their spiritual merits.

Another reason for Birmingham Muslim to do *Sadaqa* with Muslim charitable organisations by giving public performance is a change in their life conditions in the last three or four decades. The majority of Birmingham Muslims businessman and entrepreneurs have become richer in one or two generations and they compare their better lives with their poor distant relatives and the less well-off people they know personally in Britain or back in their 'country of origin'. The pressures of being prosperous and a sense of guilt for their poor relatives, or acquaintances, motivate Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs to do *Sadaqa* with Muslim charity organisations. While some do *Sadaqa* out of the pressure of being prosper, other are afraid that the assets and surplus is unprotected and can be taken back by Allah anytime if they do not do *Sadaqa*. Reformist Muslim groups, and individuals, disseminate *Wa'eed* repeatedly and continuously by reminding themselves that their material possessions are not their properties but that they are a gift from Allah as a result of His blessing upon them. Reformist Muslim individuals and fundraising experts of Muslim charity organisations present cinematic images, videos, pictures and narratives of 'global Muslim suffering' to Birmingham Muslims in order to remind them that this can happen to them if they do not please Allah by giving *Sadaqa*. *Wa'eed* is implied not only in terms of 'global Muslim sufferings' always but also the real life incidents and mishaps of Birmingham Muslims become a sort of *Wa'eed*. Life

crises of Birmingham Muslims are usually associated with the lack of *Barakat* of Allah and the attitude of not giving *Sadaqa*.

Muslim charity organisations play the most pivotal and central role in providing a space for Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs to assert their identity as 'good and successful Muslims' and to allow the space to give public performances of their piety and to engage in public philanthropy. The emergence, evolution and popularity of Muslim charity organisations is a recent phenomenon in Birmingham. While Islamic Relief is a pioneer of many charity trends in Birmingham, it became popular locally and globally because of the Rushdie Affair and the Bosnian War (Benthall 2003). Birmingham Muslims used to send remittances back home and used to give donations to mosques and *Madrissas* in Birmingham. Due to the internal disputes between reformist Muslim groups in the 1980s and the early 1990s over the control of mosques in Birmingham, Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs shifted their charity towards charity organisations. At the same time, the control of aid money in the post-9/11 context and the politicisation of Muslim identity were instrumental in popularising Muslim charity organisations. The British government and Birmingham City Council's practices of channelling funds for the development of ethnic minorities towards mainstreaming Muslim youth in order to tackle extremism reshaped the functions, budgets and scope of Muslim charity organisations.

With the rising popularity of Muslim charity organisations in Birmingham and worldwide, the competition for both fundraising and over the issue of asserting a 'true identity through Islamic practice of charity' arose. Various Muslim reformist groups disagree over how the charity money of Muslims should be spent and each one of them have their own viewpoint about it. While Islamic Relief believe in working in collaboration with global development donors via the framework of the Millennium Development Goals set by the United Nations, and spending Muslim charity money on the humanitarian assistance and development of non-Muslims across the world, Muslim charity organisations, like the Ummah Welfare Trust, reject these notions and discourses of development and ways of using the charity money of Muslims. Certain reformist Muslim groups and individuals raise question about how Islamic is Islamic relief? Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs believe in certain interpretation of practising Islam in everyday life and that interpretation determines their decision about which Muslim charity organisation they offer charity money to. Certain Muslim reformist groups advocate the idea that Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs should give charity solely

for the purpose of advancement of *Da'wa* and the mission of Islam in Britain and across the world. The central finding and argument of this thesis is that giving money for charitable purposes by Muslim businesses and entrepreneurs is not an automatic and simple response to the Islamic binding of giving alms in form of *Zakat* or voluntary alms giving in form of *Sadaqa*; its dynamics are more complicated than the general understanding that people are supposed to do charity by virtue of being Muslim. Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs reflect their beliefs in the interpretations of reformist Muslims through their choices regarding doing charity. The selection of certain Muslim charity organisation and the direction of their charity money depends on their relationship with certain Muslim reformist groups or individuals who are very much effective on the choices of doing charity.

This thesis also explores the personal, subjective and local aspects of Birmingham Muslims' charity practices. Influential Muslims use the public performance of doing charity and Muslim charity organisations in order to enhance their personal agendas and, in some cases, to influence opponents or the individuals they are in dispute with. At the same time, Muslim charity organisations also accuse each other of corruption, misuse of funds and being fake. Reformist Muslim groups and individuals have similar attitudes towards certain Muslim charity organisations who they do not approve of, especially with respect to their agendas, outlooks and affiliation with certain reformist Muslims groups. *Pirkahans* also malign each other for the misuse of funds. The practice of accusing each other by reformist Muslim groups results in the selective charity giving by Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs. However, certain Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs give charity and donations to more than one Muslim charity organisations. Another aspect of Muslim giving by businessmen and entrepreneurs is the concept of calculability where an individual gives in terms of cash and he receives in the form of spiritual merits. Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs, and Muslim charity organisations, negotiate and reorient themselves and their aspiration in order to gain the maximum material and spiritual output of their financial inputs. Certain Muslim charity organisations, like reformist Muslims, lure Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs with the promise of gaining more spiritual merits from the same amount of funding and donation, which they are giving to another Muslim charity organisation, by offering them a payments plan which sponsor more orphans with less money.

Another aspect of charity and philanthropy amongst Birmingham Muslim is the trend and tendency of transnational yet transcendental form of giving. Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs of South Asian descent give charity money to various development projects in the Middle East and North Africa. The transnational global networking and outreach of Muslim charity organisations in Birmingham challenges the stereotypical idea of 'rich Arab Muslims' who always give money to 'poor South Asian Muslims'. Certain Muslim charity organisation were originally founded by Arab Muslims but they are now being run and funded by Muslims from South Asian and British backgrounds. The global networking and transnationalism of Muslim charity organisations are instrumental in opening up new cognitive frontiers on Muslim geographical landscapes for the young volunteers of these charity organisations and for the donors, i.e. Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs. Muslim charity organisations through their working and fundraising evoke the sense of the Muslim *Ummah* and sensitize Birmingham Muslims regarding 'global Muslims sufferings'.

Bibliography

Al-Quran. Chapter 9, Al-Tobbah (The Repentance). Verse 60

Al-Quran. Chapter 102, Al-Takathur (Abundance of Worldly Possessions). Verses 1 & 2

Abbas, Tahir. 2005. *Muslims in Birmingham, UK*. Background Paper for COMPAS, University of Oxford

Abid, Sufyan. 2010. 'Islamic Spectrum in Java'.[Review of "Islamic Spectrum in Java: Anthropology and Cultural History in Asia and the Indo-Pacific"] by Daniels Timothy, 2009. Ashgate: Surrey and Burlington. In *Anthropological Notebooks*. Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 93-94

……………. 2012. 'The Halal Frontier'. [Review of "The Halal Frontier: Muslim Consumers in a Globalized Market"] by Johan Fischer, 2011. New York: Palgrave in *Anthropological Notebooks*. Vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 93-94

Adas, Emin Baki. 2006. 'The Making of Entrepreneurial Islam and Islamic Spirit of Capitalism'. *Journal of Cultural Research*. Vol. 10. No. 2. Pp.113-137

Ahmad, Irfan. 2009. 'Genealogy of the Islamic State: Reflections on Maududi's Political Thought and Islamism'. *Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute (N.S).* pp. 145-162

……………… 2013. 'Cracks in the 'Mightiest Fortress': Jamaat-e-Islami's Changing Discourse on Women'. In *Islamic Reform in South Asia*, edited by Filippo Osella and Caroline Osella, 317-345. Dehli: Cambridge University Press

Alam, Arshad. 2013. 'The Enemy Within: Madarasa and Muslim Identity in North India'. In *Islamic Reform in South Asia*, edited by Filippo Osella and Caroline Osella, 117-138. Dehli: Cambridge University Press

Asad, Talal. 1986. *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam*. Washington DC. Georgetown University Centre for Contemporary Arab Studies

……………. 1993. *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam.* London: The Johns Hopkins University Press

Atia, Mona. 2012. 'A Way to Paradise: Pious Neoliberalism, Islam and Faith Based Development'. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. Vol. 102, No. 4, pp. 808-827

……………. 2013. *Building a House in Heaven: Pious Neoliberalism and Islamic Charity in Egypt*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press

Baer, Gabriel. 1997. The Waqf as a Prop or the Social System (Sixteenth – Twentieth Centuries). *Islamic Law an Society*. Vol. 4, No. 3, pp. 264-297

Bashear, Suliman. 1993. 'The Origin and Development of the Meanings of Zakat I Early Islam'. *Arabica*. T. 40, Fasc. 1, pp. 84-113

Bayat, Asef. 2007. *Making Islam Democratic: Social Movements and Post-Islamist Turn,* Stanford, California: Stanford University Press

----------------1996. 'The Coming of a post-Islamist Society', *Middle East Critique*, Vol. 5, No. 9, pp. 43-52

Benthall, Jonathan. 1997. 'The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Islamic Societies, with Special Reference to Jordan'. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*. Vol. 24, No. 2, pp. 157-177

…………………. 1999. 'Financial Worship: the Quranic Injunction to Almsgiving'. *The Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute*. Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 27-42

……………………. 2004. 'Humanitarianism, Islam and September 11' in *International Development and Assistance: Where Politics Meets Economy*. Edited by Andrzej Bolesta. Warsaw: Leon Kozminski Academy of Entrepreneurship and Management

…………………. 2006. 'Islamic Aid in North Malian Enclave'. *Anthropology Today*. Vol. 22, No. 4, pp. 19-21

Benthall, Jonathan and Bellion-Jourdan, Jerome. 2003. *The Charitable Crescent: Politics of Aid in the Muslim World*. London: I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd

Bolognani, Marta. 2007. Islam, Ethnography and Politics: Methodological Issues in Researching among West Yorkshire Pakistanis in 2005. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*. Vol. 10, No. 4, pp. 279-293

Bonner, Michael. 2005. Poverty and Economics in Quran. *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*. Vol. 35, No. 3, pp. 391-406

Bruce, Berg. 2004. *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. Boston: Pearson

Chamraz, Kathy. 2006. *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis*. London: Sage Publications Ltd

Choueiri, M. Youssef. 1990. *Islamic Fundamentalism.* Boston: Twayne Publisher

Clark, Jenine. 2004. 'Social Movement Theory and Patron Clientelism: Islamic Social Institutions and the Middle Class in Egypt, Jordan, and Yemen'. *Comparative Political Studies.* Vol. 37, No. 8, 941-968

Clarke, Adele. 2005. *Situation Analysis: Grounded Theory after the Postmodern Turn*. London: Sage

Clarke, Gerard. 2006. 'Faith Matters: Faith-based Organisations, Civil Society and International Development'. *Journal of International Development*. Vol. 18, pp. 835-848

Cordier, Bruno De. 2009. 'Faith-based Aid, Globalization and Humanitarian Frontline: an Analyses of Western-based Muslim Aid Organisations'. *Disasters*. Vol. 33, No. 4, pp. 608-628

Dagi, Ihsan D. 2004. 'Rethinking human rights, democracy, and the West: post-Islamist intellectuals in Turkey'. *Middle East Critique.* Vol. 13, No. 2, pp. 135-151

Davies, Charlotte A. 2008. *Reflexive Ethnography: A Guide to Researching Selves and Others*. Routledge: New York

Deeb, Lara. 2006. *An Enchanted Modern: Gender and Public Piety in Shi'i Lebanon*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press

…………… 2009. 'Piety Politics and Role of a Transnational Feminist Analysis'. *Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute.* S112-S126

Eickelman, Dale. F. 2000. 'Islam and the Languages of Modernity'. *Multiple Modernities* Vol. 129, No. 1, pp. 119-135.

Eickelman, Dale F. and Piscatori, James. 1990. 'Social Theory in the Study of Muslim Societies'. In *Muslim Travellers: Pilgrimage, Migration and the Religious Imagination*. Edited by dale F. Eicklman and James Piscatori. London: Routledge

Eickelman, Dale F. and Piscatori, James. 1996. *Muslim Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press

Eickelman, Dale. F. and Jon W. Anderson. 1999. 'Redefining Muslim Publics' in *New Media in the Mulsim World: The Emerging Public Sphere* edited by Eickelman, Dale. F. and Jon W. Anderson

Eriksen, Thomas H. 2010. *Small Places, Large Issues: An Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology*. London: Pluto Press

Eving, Pratt. 1997. *Arguing Sainthood: Modernity, Psychoanalysis, and Islam*. Durham: Duke University Press

Fattah, Hala. 2003. 'Wahhabi Influences, Salafi Responses: Shaikh Mahamud Shurki and the Iraqi Salafi Movement, 1745-1930'. *Journal of Islamic Studies*. Vol. 14, No. 2. pp.127-148

Freitag, Sandria. 1988. *The Roots of Muslim Separation in South Asia: Personal Practcies and Public Structures in Kanpur and Bombay*. Edited in Burke and Lapidus, 1998, pp. 115-145

Geertz, Clifford. 1963. *Peddlers and Princes: Social change and Economic Modernization in Two Indonesian Towns.* London: University of Chicago Press

……………….. 1968. *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia.* London: University of Chicago Press Ltd.

Gellner, Ernest. 1969. *Saints of the Atlas*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson

…………………. 1981. *Muslim Society.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 159

Giddens, Anthony. 1984. *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Cambridge: polity Press

Gilliat-Ray, Sophie. 2005. (Not) Accessing Deoband Dar ul-uloom in Britain. *Fieldwork in Religion*. Vol. 1, pp. 7-33

…………………. 2010. Body-works and Fieldwork: Research with British Chaplains. *Culture and Religion: An Interdisciplinary Journal*. Vol. 11, No. 4, pp. 413-432

Goodwin, Jan. 1995. *Price of Honour: Muslim Women Lift the Veil of Salience on the Islamic World*. London: Warner Books

Green, Nile. 2011. *Bombay Islam: The Religious Economy of the West Indian Ocean, 1840-1915.* New York: Cambridge University Press

……………. Breathing in India, c.1890. In *Islamic Reform in South Asia*, edited by Filippo Osella and Caroline Osella, 79-113. Dehli: Cambridge University Press

Habib, S. Irfan. 2000. 'Reconciling Science with Islam in 19th Century India'. *Contributions to Indian Sociology (N.S).* Vol. 34. No. 1. Pp 63-92

Haniffa, Farzana. 2013. 'Piety as Politics among Muslim Women in Contemporary Sri Lanka'. In *Islamic Reform in South Asia*, edited by Filippo Osella and Caroline Osella, 171-201. Dehli: Cambridge University Press

Haynes, Douglas E. 1987. 'From tribute to Philanthropy: The Politics of Gift Giving in a Western Indian City'. *The Journal of Asian Studies*. Vol. 46, No. 2, pp. 339-360

Hefner, Robert W. 1993. 'Islam, state, and civil society: ICMI and the struggle for the Indonesian middle class'. *Indonesia* Vol. 56 pp. 1–35.

…………………. 1998. *Market Cultures: Society and Morality in the New Asian Capitalism*. Boulder: Westview Press

…………………. 1998. 'Multiple Modernities: Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism in the Globalizing Age'. *Annual Review of Anthropology*. Vol. 27, pp. 83-104

Heyl, Barbra S. 2001. 'Ethnographic Interviewing' in *Handbook of Ethnography* edited by P. Atkinson, A. Coffey, S. Delamont, J. Lofland and L.Lofland. London: Sage, pp. 369-383

Huq, Maimuna. 2013. 'Reading the Quran in Bangladesh: The Politics of 'Belief' among Islamist Women'. In *Islamic Reform in South Asia*, edited by Filippo Osella and Caroline Osella, 284-314. Dehli: Cambridge University Press

Iqtidar, Humeira. 2013. 'Secularism Beyond the State: The 'State' and the 'Market' in Islamist Imagination'. In *Islamic Reform in South Asia*, edited by Filippo Osella and Caroline Osella, 472-503. Dehli: Cambridge University Press

Ismail, Salwa. 2013. 'Piety, Profit and the Market in Cairo: A Political Economy of Islamisation'. *Contemporary Islam*. Vol. 7, Issue. 1, pp. 107-128

Jasani, Rubina. 2013. 'Violence, Reconstruction and Islamic Reform'. In *Islamic Reform in South Asia*, edited by Filippo Osella and Caroline Osella, 255-280. Dehli: Cambridge University Press

Jeffery, Patricia. 1976. *Migrants and Refugees: Muslim and Christian Pakistani Families in Bristol*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Kamla, Rania. Gallhofer, Sonja & Haslam, Jim. 2006. 'Islam, Nature and Accounting: Islamic Principles and the Notion of Accounting for the Environment'. *Accounting Forum*. Vol. 30, pp. 245-265.

Kirmani, Nida. 2012. 'The Role of Values and Beliefs in Charitable and Development Organisations in Karachi and Sindh, Pakistan'. *Development in Practice*. Vol. 22, No. 5-6, pp. 735-748

Kochuyt, Thierry. 2009. 'God, Gifts and Poor People: On Charity in Islam'. *Social Compass*. Vol. 56, No. 1, pp. 98-116

Kuran, Timur. 2001. 'The Provision of Public Goods under Islamic Law: Origin, Impact, and the Limitations of Waqf System'. *Law and Society Review*. Vol. 35, No. 4, pp. 841-898

Lerner, Daniel. 1964. *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernising the Middle East*. Free Press: New York

Mahmood, Saba. 2001. 'Rehearsed Spontaneity and the Conventionality of Ritual: Disciplines of Salat'. *American Ethnologist*. Vol. 28, No. 4, pp. 827-853
……………….. 2005. *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*. Princeton: Princeton University Press

Marcus, George, E. 1998. *Ethnography through Thick and Thin*. New Jersey: Princeton University press

Marsden, Magnus. 2005. *Living Islam: Muslim Religious Experience in Pakistan's North-Western Frontier'*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

………………….. 2005. 'Muslim Village Intellectuals: The Life of the Mind in Northern Pakistan'. *Anthropology Today*. Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 10-15

…………………... 2007. 'All Male Sonic Gatherings, Islamic Reform, and Masculinity in Northern Pakistan'. *American Ethnologist*. Vol. 34, No. 3, pp. 473-490

………………… 2008. 'Muslim Cosmopolitan? Transnational Life in Northern Pakistan'. *The Journal of Asian Studies*. Vol, 67. Issue 1, pp. 213-247

………………….. 2009. 'A Tour not so Grand: Mobile Muslims in Northern Pakistan'. *Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute (N.S)*. 57-75

…………………. 2012. 'Spiritual Economies: Islam, Globalisation, and the Afterlife of Development'. *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology*. Vol. 77, No. 2, pp. 275-277

………………... 2013. 'Women, Politics and Islamism in Northern Pakistan' in *Islamic Reform in South Asia*, edited by Filippo Osella and Caroline Osella, pp. 230-254. Dehli: Cambridge University Press

Maududi, Sayyid Abul Ala. 1975. *The Economic Problem of Man and its Islamic Solution*, translated from Urdu. Lahore: Islamic Publications

………………………1951/1981. *The Rudiments of Islamic Philosophy of Economics*. in Selected Speeches and Writings of Mawlana Mawdudi. Vol. 1, translated by S. Zaker Aijaz. Karachi: International Islamic Publishers

…………………………. 1952-1960. *First Principles of Islamic State*, translated from Urdu. Lahore: Islamic Publications

Mauss, Marcel. 1990. [1925] *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*. London: Routledge

May, Samantha. 2013. Political Piety: The Politicization of Zakat. *Middle East Critique*. Vol. 22, No. 2, pp. 149-164

McLoughlin, Sean. 2000. Some Reflections on Fieldwork in Britain. *Journal of Semitic Studies, Supplements*. Vol. 12, pp.175-191

Metcalf, Barbra Daly. 1982. *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press. Pp. 257, 258

Mitchell, Jon P. 1997. 'A Moment with Christ: the Importance of Feelings in the Analysis of Belief'. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute (Incorporating Man)*. Vol. 03:01 pp. 79-94

Mitchell, Richard P. 1969. *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*. New York: Oxford University Press

Moudden, Abderrahmane El. 1990. The Ambivalence of *rihla*: Community Integration and Self-definition in Moroccan Travel Accounts, 1300-1800' in *Muslim Travellers: Pilgrimage, Migration and the Religious Imagination*. Edited by dale F. Eicklman and James Piscatori. London: Routledge

Office for National Statistics. *Census 2011*. www.statistics.gov.uk/census2011

http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/KS209EW/view/1946157186?cols=measures

accessed on 27/04/2014

O'Reilly, Karen. 2009. *Key Concepts in Ethnography*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd

Osella, Filippo. (Forthcoming). *What Morality has Got to Do with it? Islam, Market and Charity in Sri Lanka*.

Osella, Filippo and Caroline Osella. 2013. 'Islamism and Social reform in Kerala, South India'. In *Islamic Reform in South Asia*, edited by Filippo Osella and Caroline Osella, 139-170. Dehli: Cambridge University Press

…………………………………………. 2009. 'Muslim Entrepreneurs in Public Life between India and Gulf: Making Good and Doing Good'. *Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute*. 15 (N.S.). 202-221

…………………………...................... 2008. 'Islamism and Social Reform in Kerala, South India'. *Modern Asian Studies,* Vol. 42, pp.317-346

…………………………………………… 2000. *Social Mobility in Kerala: Modernity and Identity in Conflict*. London: Pluto Press

……………………………………...... 1999. 'From Transience to Immanence: Consumption, Life-cycle and Social Mobility in Kerala, South India'. *Modern Asian Studies,* Vol. 4, pp. 989-1020

Reetz, Dietrich. 2006. *Islam in the Public Sphere: Religious Groups in India, 1900-1947*. New Dehli: Oxford University Press

Ritchie, Jane and Lewis, Jane. 2003. *Qualitative Research Practice*. London: Sage

Robinson, Francis. 1997. 'Religious Change and the Self in Muslim South Asia Since 1800'. *South Asia*. Vol. 20, No. 1, pp. 1-15

………………….. 1998. 'Islamic Reform and Modernities in South Asia'. *Modern Asian Studies*. vol. 42, pp. 259-281

………………….. 2001. *The Ulama of Farangi Mahall and Islamic Culture in South Asia*. Dehli: Permanent Black

…………………. 2013. 'Islamic Reform and Modernities in South Asia'. In *Islamic Reform in South Asia*, edited by Filippo Osella and Caroline Osella, 26-50. Dehli: Cambridge University Press

Rodinson, Maxine. 1974. *Islam and Capitalism*, translated by Brian Pearce. London: Penguin Books

Rudnyckyj, Daromir. 2009. 'Market Islam in Indonesia'. *Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute(N.S)*. pp. 183-201

…………………… 2009. 'Spiritual Economies: Islam and Neoliberalism in Contemporary Indonesia'. *Cultural Anthropology*. Vol. 24. Issue 1. Pp. 104-141

Rytter, Mikkel and Pedersen, Marianne Holm. 2013. ' A Decade of Suspicion: Islam and Muslim in Denmark after 9/11'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. pp, 1-19

Rytter, Mikkel. 2014. 'Transnational Sufism from Below: Charismatic Counselling and the Quest for Well-being'. South Asian Diaspora. Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 105-119

………………. 2011. 'Money or Education? Improvement Strategies among Pakistani Families in Denmark'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. Vol. 37, No. 2, pp. 197-215

Schielke, Samuli. 2008. Boredom and Despair in Rural Egypt Life. *Contemporary Islam*. Vol. 2, pp. 251-270

………………….2009. 'Being Good in Ramadan: Ambivalence, Fragmentation, and the Moral Self in the Lives of Young Egyptians'. *Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute*. S24-S40

……………….. 2009. Ambivalent Commitments: Troubles of Morality, Religiosity and Aspirations among Egyptian Youth. *Journal of Religion in Africa*. Vol. 39, pp. 158-185

Scott, James, C. 1987. 'Resistance without Protest and without Organisation: Peasant Opposition to the Islamic Zakat and the Christian Tithe'. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. Vol. 29, No. 3, pp. 417-452

Shari'ati, Ali. 1986. *On the Sociology of Islam*, tr. H. Algar Brekeley: Mizan Press

Shaw, Alison. 2000. *Kinship and Continuity: Pakistani Families in Britain*. London: Routledge

Shehabuddin, Elora. 2013. 'Jamaat-i-Islami in Bangladesh: Women, Democracy and Transformation of Islamist Politics'. In *Islamic Reform in South Asia*, edited by Filippo Osella and Caroline Osella, 445-47. Dehli: Cambridge University Press

Schwarte, Christoph. 2003. 'Environmental Protection in Islamic law: An Overview on Potential Influences for Legal Developments in Iraq'. *Local Environment*, Volume 8, No. 5, pp. 567-576

Searle-Chatterjee, Mary. 1994. 'Wahabi Sectarianism among Muslims of Banaras'. *Contemporary South Asia*. Vol. 3. No. 2. Pp. 83-93

Simpson, Edward. 2013. 'The Changing perspective of Three Muslim Men on the Question of Saint Worship over 10-Year Period in Gujarat, Western India'. In *Islamic Reform in South Asia*, edited by Filippo Osella and Caroline Osella, 202-229. Dehli: Cambridge University Press

Singer, Amy. 2006. 'Soup and Sadaqa: Charity in Islamic Societies'. *Historical Research*. Vol. 79, No. 205, pp. 306-324

Sloane-White, Patricia. 2011. 'Working in Islamic Economy: Sharia-ization and the Malaysian Workplace'. *Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia*. Vol. 26, No. 2. Pp. 304-334

Soares, Benjamin, F. 2000. 'Notes on Anthropological Study of Islam and Mulsim Societies in Africa'. *Culture and Religion: an Interdisciplinary Journal*. Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 277-285

……………………… 2005. *Islam and the Prayer Economy; History and Authority in a Malian Town.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press

…………………….. 2013. Religion, Liberalization and the Market in Mali. (Forthcoming)

Soares, Benjamin and Filippo Osella. 2009. 'Islam, Politics and Anthropology'. *Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute.* S1-S23

Sokefeld, Martin. 2006. 'Mobilizing to Transnational Space: A Social Movement Approach to the Formation of Diaspora'*, Global Networks* Vol. 6, No. 3, pp. 265-284

Stacher, J. A. 2002. 'Post-Islamist Rumblings in Egypt: The Emergence of the Wasat Party'*, Middle East Journal,* Vol. 56, No. 3, pp.415-432.

Stark, Jan. 2005. 'Beyond 'Terrorism' and 'State Hegemony': Assessing the Islamist Mainstream in Egypt and Malaysia'. *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 2, pp. 307-327

Tripp, Charles. 2006. *Islam and the Moral Economy: The Challenge of Capitalism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Turner, Bryan S. 1974. 'Islam, Capitalism and Weber Thesis'. *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 25 No. 2 pp. 230-243

Weber, Max. 1958. *Protestant Ethics and Spirit of Capitalism*. Charles Scribner's Sons: New York

…………… 1993. *Sociology of Religion*. Beacon Press. Boston, MA.

Werbner, Pnina. 1990. 'Manchester Pakistanis: Division and Unity' in *South Asian Overseas: Migration and Ethnicity* edited by C. Clark, C. Peach and S. Vertovec. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

………………… 1990. *The Migration Process: Capital, Gifts and Offerings among British Pakistanis*. New York: Berg

……………… 2003. *Pilgrim of Love: The Anthropology of a Global Sufi Cult*. London: Hurst.

………………. 2013. 'Reform Sufism in South Asia.' In *Islamic Reform in South Asia*, edited by Filippo Osella and Caroline Osella, pp. 51-78. Dehli: Cambridge University Press

Wiktorowicz, Quintan. 2002. 'Islamic Activism and Social Movement Theory: A New Direction for Research'. *Mediterranean Politics*. Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 187-211

Wilding, Raelene. 2007. Transnational Ethnographies and Anthropological Imaginings of Migrancy. *Journal of Ethnic and Migrations Studies*. Vol. 33, No. 2. pp. 331-348

Zakia, Belhachmi (2004) 'Al-salafiyya, Feminism and Reforms in the Nineteenth-century Arab Islamic Society'. *The Journal of North American Studies*. Vol. 9, No. 4. pp. 63-90