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### Author

Leonard, KB

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# **American Muslims and Authority: Competing Discourses in a Non-Muslim State**

**KAREN LEONARD**

## **INTRODUCTION**

How do American Muslims define and attempt to follow Islamic law, or *shari'a*? They are not living in an Islamic state, or even in a state dominated by Muslims, yet political spokesmen and specialists in Islamic law are attempting to define the nature of Islamic authority and determine its force in the U.S. This essay first reviews the contours of the American Muslim community and then outlines the problems associated with the understanding and practice of Islamic law in the U.S. Third, it delineates contests over sources of authority between American Muslim spokesmen trained in modern professions and more traditionally trained Islamic scholars. The contestants are chiefly Muslims, but after September 11, 2001, others have played roles in defining the legal and political landscape for American Muslims as well; that is the fourth part of the essay. This last development has brought Islamic scholars to the fore, challenging the claims to authority of the new spokesmen. It has also signaled important shifts, probably lasting ones, in the patterned interactions among American Muslims and between Muslims and others in America. While the focus here is kept on Islamic law and jurisprudence as sources of authority, other sources of authority are clearly emerging in the American context.

## **AMERICAN MUSLIM DIVERSITY**

Muslims are an increasingly important part of the socio-political landscape in the U.S., and they are not only numerous<sup>1</sup> but come from many backgrounds. The number of African American Muslims is quite substantial, some 30% to 42% of American Muslims, and the number of European-American converts is growing. Historically, Arabs were the next most numerous group and formed the earliest Muslim American organizations. Arabs began immigrating at the end of the nineteenth century,

but Christians were the great majority among them until recently. The growth of Islam in America has come chiefly through post-1965 immigrants, with South Asian Muslims arriving and becoming one of the three major groups.<sup>2</sup>

In studies done of Muslims in the U.S. in the 1970s and 1980s, the emphasis was still on Arabic-speaking Muslims based on the East Coast and in the Midwest. However, a group of highly educated Pakistanis in upstate New York loomed large in one important study, and it was found to be the most “conservative” in beliefs and practices.<sup>3</sup> The demographic shift in sources and numbers of Muslim immigrants after 1965 signaled an interruption in a perceived pattern of steady Muslim “assimilation” or adaptation to American society, and Islam and Muslims have begun claiming a place in American religious and political life.

Arab and South Asian Muslims are the largest immigrant groups. The Arabs are far more diverse in terms of national histories (and colonial pasts), coming from Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco (and, in smaller numbers, from Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Yemen, and other Persian Gulf states). South Asian Muslims are almost all from three countries, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, with a largely shared subcontinental history, most recently of British colonial rule. At the present time, first-generation South Asian Muslim Americans are taking a conspicuous lead in the formulation of American Muslim political discourse.<sup>4</sup> Although diverse in terms of national backgrounds, languages, and religions, these immigrants are relatively homogeneous in terms of socio-economic class. A highly educated group,<sup>5</sup> its members are fluent in English, most of them having been educated in that language since childhood.

South Asian Muslims have some advantages in the national political arena. Indian Muslims, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis share a heritage of political struggle with white or colonial rulers; Indian Muslims are accustomed to being in the minority, now, in Hindu-majority India. South Asian Muslims also, to different degrees, come to the U.S. with experience in democratic politics. This contrasts with Muslims from many Middle Eastern countries who have little or no experience with democratic processes. South Asian Muslims are better positioned than Arab Muslims with respect to the American media and the general public, since American foreign relations with South Asia are less politically charged than those with the Middle East and its Muslims. Some of the prejudice suffered by Arab Americans<sup>6</sup> is less easily triggered by South Asian Muslim leadership.

South Asian and Arab Muslims dominate the national leadership of Muslim organizations, relating somewhat uneasily to African American Muslims. Mosques are the most prominent sites of religious activity. Because Islam has no centralized clergy and mosques operate independently of each other and because mosque-attendees are only 10–20% of American Muslims,<sup>7</sup> Muslim political developments should not be equated with what is going on in the mosques. Yet one can generalize that, while Arabic-speakers tend to have greater proficiency in Arabic and in *fiqh* and *shari'a* (jurisprudence and Islamic law), so that they may dominate in many mosque functions and in teaching the young (Arabic lessons, the first reading of the Qur'an), it is the recent South Asian professional immigrants who have been fuelling both the building of local mosques and the regional and national mobilization of Muslims on religious and political issues.<sup>8</sup>

### ISLAMIC LAW IN THE AMERICAN CONTEXT

The importance of context is stated well by the anthropologist Talal Asad:

Islamic religious, legal, and political ideologies do not have an essential significance which moulds the minds of believers in a predictable way. They are part of changing institutions, and of discourses which can be, and often are, contested and *re-constituted*. To understand the authoritative limits of such contestation one must focus on religious discourses within specific historical situations, and not on a supposedly original Islamic ideology. Because it is the way in which 'the word of God' is reproduced, and the [political] situation to which it is addressed, which together determine its force, and not the lexical and syntactic forms of the sacred text considered in isolation.<sup>9</sup>

Leading scholars like Khaled Abou El Fadl, Professor of Islamic Law at UCLA, and Taha Alalwani, President of the Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) Council of North America and head of the Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences,<sup>10</sup> urge that the context should strongly shape decisions about Muslim practices in America. Abou El Fadl, who now has several books and many articles published, stresses the search for authoritative findings, not the pronouncement of ahistorical authoritarian edicts.<sup>11</sup> An American Muslim lawyer, Anver Emon, emphasizes this



process of searching in his foreword to the second edition of Khaled Abou El Fadl's important work on *fiqh* in North America:

The Divine Will's categorizations of human actions (Shari'a) must be strictly distinguished from the human endeavor of understanding those categorizations and the Divine Will (*fiqh*). . . . With the multiplicity of opinions and their seemingly relative validity, does this mean there is no single answer to an issue of Islamic law? . . . The distinction between *fiqh* and Shari'a exists because of the limited capacity of the human intellect to know the Absolute absolutely. . . . The only burden on humanity is to engage in the process of inquiry and analysis.<sup>12</sup>

The historical experiences of Muslims certainly testify to variance despite adherence to certain basic teachings of Islam. There was an identifiable "core" Islamic way of thinking and acting in seventh-century Arabia, yet Islam is not a religion with a single, hierarchical structure of authority. There was a core text, the *Qur'an*, an evolving set of collected traditions, the *Hadith*, and an evolving body of law, the *Shari'a*, but those Arabian Islamic beliefs and practices have both influenced and been influenced by the places to which they were subsequently taken.<sup>13</sup> Islam moved to new and different places and confronted older religions, conquering or coexisting with them and their non-Muslim adherents. Without centralized institutions governing clergy or mosques, Islam has developed differently within regions of the Middle East, Central, South and Southeast Asia, China,<sup>14</sup> and elsewhere, and such situated interactions shape the diverse ways in which it is practiced throughout the world.<sup>15</sup> Even in Saudi Arabia, Islam's birthplace, Islamic beliefs and practices have been reshaped over time.<sup>16</sup>

American versions of Islam are being formulated in an ongoing dialogue with other members of American society. Some post-1965 immigrant Muslims had hoped to avoid an "Americanization" of Islam, such as they saw occurring among earlier Muslim immigrants and among contemporary Muslim Americans.<sup>17</sup> However, new versions of Islam are being constituted from "American" ways of being Muslim and from other ways, as long as Muslim immigrants keep coming, of being Muslim. These emerging constructions of self and community are being partially shaped by the debates over who should represent and interpret Islam in America.<sup>18</sup>

Muslims in America come from many places and represent many strands of Islam. The "Muslim community" in America, like Islam itself, is not

monolithic, and differences or tensions within it are influencing the emerging versions of Islam. With respect to religious law, pluralism has long been characteristic and accepted. There are four main Sunni (mainstream or orthodox) schools of law, the Maliki, Shafi'i, Hanafi, and Hanbali, and a leading Shi'i school, the Ja'fari, all represented among American Muslims. In addition to the Sunni and Shi'i traditions, there are smaller Shi'i groups like the Ismailis and Zaidis, and sects like the Ahmadiyyas and Druze whose Islamic identity is contested. Then there are the Sufis, whose charismatic leaders teach mystical strands of Islam; the Sufis are from very diverse backgrounds but many are European-American converts.<sup>19</sup>

The problems associated with the understanding and practice of *shari'a* and *fiqh* in America derive partly from the scarcity of specialists in Islamic law and partly from the emergence of new spokesmen, men not well-schooled in Islamic civilization and law but well-credentialed in modern professions. The current leaders of national-level Muslim organizations working towards a unified Muslim community in the U.S.<sup>20</sup> are primarily well-educated immigrant professionals of South Asian and Arab background. While some *imams* in mosques and scholars of *fiqh* continue to exemplify high standards of Islamic learning, those in leadership positions in many mosques and in the increasingly powerful political coalitions are typically medical doctors, engineers, and other professionals. (There are a few African American scholars of *shari'a* and *fiqh*, but they have only recently engaged the immigrants, as will be seen.)

These new spokesmen have changed the inward foci of national-origin communities and reached out to other Muslims and the American public, advocating citizenship and participation in mainstream politics and abandoning a stance that had assumed only temporary residence in the U.S. As they built major organizations and institutions with professional staffs and bureaucratic procedures, the new leaders began defining the community in ways that emphasized their own role and marginalized spokesmen and groups less like themselves. Without classical training in Islamic history and law, it is they who have stepped forward, speaking, authoritatively and publicly on legal issues ranging from citizenship and voting to marriage and family law. As legal scholar Khaled Abou El Fadl says, "In the United States the field of *sharia* is flooded with self-declared experts who inundate our discourses with self-indulgent babble and gibberish . . . those who are unable to differentiate . . . the fundamentals of Islam from its particulars."<sup>21</sup>

## CONTESTS OVER AUTHORITY AMONG AMERICAN MUSLIMS

Muslim mobilization in the U.S. involves consideration of Islamic legal discourses and practices. The field of *fiqh* is being developed in the American context, but who should be authorized to develop it and authorized by whom? Is the U.S. *dar ul Islam* (the place or abode of Islam) or *dar ul harb* (place of war),<sup>22</sup> and if the latter, must Muslims migrate from it? If they remain, are they bound by the laws of the non-Muslim host state or not? As recently as 1986, national Muslim leaders advocated residing only temporarily in *dar ul-kufr*, or the place of unbelievers (the U.S.). But by the end of that same year, the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), the leading North American Muslim activist association, took a position favoring citizenship and participation in mainstream politics in the U.S.<sup>23</sup>

The active role of Muslims in modern American politics encourages other legal designations, such as *dar ul aman* (place of order) and *dar ul 'ahd* or *dar ul sulh* (place of alliance or treaty). The latter terms reflect usages in South Asia and the new South Asian American leadership,<sup>24</sup> just as older references invoked Islamic movements in the Arab world like the Salafiyya and the Ikhwan and Arab American leadership.<sup>25</sup> American Muslim discourse now includes explicit discussions about the compatibility of Islam and democracy<sup>26</sup> and Islam and human rights. Proponents of democracy argue that the selection of the *caliph* (the political head of the *ummah*, abolished by Turkey's Ataturk in 1924) was not based on hereditary principles, and they promote the institution of the *shura* or "mutual consultation" council as analogous to democratic institutions in the West. ISNA helped form a national Islamic *shura* or representative council on religious issues, and the presidency rotated annually between the heads of ISNA and ICNA (Islamic Council of North America) and two African American leaders (W. D. Muhammed of Chicago and Imam Jamil Al-Amin of Atlanta).<sup>27</sup> ISNA's National Fiqh Council, however, has not been accepted as authoritative by all immigrant Muslim scholars, and it has been criticized by African American Muslims for being "overwhelmingly composed of naturalized Muslims," men who know little about U.S. family law and inheritance rights.<sup>28</sup> There are regional experiments with *shuras* as well, often focusing initially on practices.<sup>29</sup>

Both Abou El Fadl and Alalwani, the *fiqh* scholars invoked above, disapprove of the application of Islamic legal decisions made elsewhere to the contemporary American context and encourage *fiqh* scholarship in the U.S.<sup>30</sup> Alalwani rebuts the opinion of a scholar who maintained that it



was unlawful for Muslims to hold citizenship in non-Muslim states by noting that this decision was specific to North Africa during Muslim struggles against French colonialism. He also rebuts an opinion holding that, since the U.S. is *dar al-kufr* and *dar al-harb*, Muslims can disobey U.S. laws and regulations, arguing that wherever Muslims find the freedom to practice Islam is *dar ul-Islam* and *dar ad-daw'ah* (place of calling), a place where the laws must be obeyed and the message of Islam should be spread.<sup>31</sup> Abou El Fadl is particularly eloquent in a despairing critique of the pronouncements by *fiqh* specialists who met for three days in Detroit in November of 1999 as the “Sharia Scholars Association of North America.” Although “[h]alf of the thirty-eight or so scholars have never lived in the U.S., the vast majority have never stepped foot in an American court room, and at least half live under corrupt and oppressive governments,” these men issued a double-spaced thirteen-page set of opinions on major issues facing Muslims in North America.<sup>32</sup>

Yet, while *fiqh* and *sharia* have historically played central roles in defining Muslims and Islamic communities, they are arguably of declining importance in the U.S. The Wahhabi puritanical strand of Islam, so strongly associated with Saudi Arabia today and promoted elsewhere, erases reliance on these classical schools of law, not least in the U.S. with its dearth of Islamic legal scholars and traditions. Speaking of the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*, the sources of Islamic law, Abou El Fadl says:

my books, in this context—you are so foreign, so marginal. . . .  
Here, in this time and place, you are fossilized showpieces. . . .  
Yet, I know that you are eternal and immutable because you speak forever. But you are contextual because it is the people that read you who must speak to the age, the people that read you who must transform through you into a book for our new age and new place.<sup>33</sup>

Who is reading and interpreting Islam and Islamic law in the U.S. context? The new spokesman and new kinds of media (print, radio, TV, videocassettes, and the Internet) have reinvigorated Islamic discourse, developing a wider role and mainstream audience for Islam. The more numerous and less observant Muslims, presumably beyond the reach of what is being said in mosques, are being reached through the new political organizations and popular Muslim media. Reaching the masses means “presenting Islamic doctrine and discourse in accessible, vernacular terms”; as elsewhere, American Islamic discourse has “become reframed in styles



of reasoning and forms of argument that draw on wider, less exclusive or erudite bodies of knowledge.”<sup>34</sup>

Thus men with educational qualifications in medicine, engineering, architecture, and business have emerged as major spokesmen for and about Islam in America. Immigrant doctors and engineers publish short general books intended for English-reading Muslim and non-Muslim audiences.<sup>35</sup> This is even a point of criticism with respect to leadership within mosques, as the “present leadership” is characterized as having medical, business, or computer technology training rather than “knowledge and wisdom.”<sup>36</sup> Modern technology has reinforced the authority of the new spokesmen, producing “an increasing laicization among Muslims and a weakening of the competence of the ‘ulama.’”<sup>37</sup> These confident new spokesmen have, however, produced a landscape devoid of respect for the schools and methods of Islamic legal scholarship.<sup>38</sup>

Abou El Fadl’s view is borne out by two recent social science studies of Muslims in America. In April 2001, a highly-publicized national survey of mosques was released, undertaken and sponsored by some among the new spokesmen. In defining their survey population, they omitted some Shi’i (the Ismaili followers of the Aga Khan), the Ahmadis (until recently accepted as Muslims in the U.S.)<sup>39</sup> and the Nation of Islam (Louis Farrakhan’s group). Defining a mosque as any organization that sponsored Friday prayers and other Islamic activities, the survey included young Muslim groups on campuses but overlooked the numerous, largely African American Muslim groups in American prisons.<sup>40</sup> One of the findings of the study was that those who attend mosques place the traditional schools of law at the very bottom of the list in terms of “sources of authority in the worship and teaching” of their mosques. Those who answered the questions posed by the survey, presidents and members of mosque boards of directors and *imams*, felt that the teachings of a particular *madhhab* or school of law were of little or no importance (52%), somewhat important (25%), very important (18%), or absolutely foundational (5%). Their preferred sources of authority (absolutely foundational) were the Qur’an (95%), Sunnah of the Prophet (90%), the teachings of the righteous *salaf* (elders) (16%), the teachings of great scholars of the past (10%), human reasoning and understanding (10%), and the teachings of certain recent Muslim leaders and scholars (7%).<sup>41</sup>

The first systematic poll of American Muslims designed to cover participation in public life included a section on religious practices. The poll was commissioned by the Project MAPS (Muslims in the American Public

Square) and conducted by Zogby International in November and December of 2001. This section covered the self-identified Muslim respondent's relationship with the mosque, conversion issues, the importance of religion in one's life, and interactions between the mosque and politics. But this poll made no attempt to ascertain sectarian affiliation within Islam or views of sources of religious authority.<sup>42</sup>

Before September 11, 2001, the stance of these western-educated political leaders of American Islam was overwhelmingly optimistic, proclaiming that American Muslims would play a major role in the "reconstruction" of the United States. Thus one man wrote that Muslims could make "an essential contribution to the healing of America" by becoming more visible and ceasing to "cast doubt on the compatibility of Islam, democracy and human rights." Indeed, he, like many others, felt that American Muslims also would play a special role in leadership of the international Muslim *ummah*. Arguing that Muslims in North America had a "head start" over those in Europe, since most already were or were becoming citizens and could participate in public life, he said:

Muslims all over the world are looking with high expectations toward the Ummah in the United States and Canada. Its dynamism, fresh approach, enlightened scholarship and sheer growth is their hope for an Islamic Renaissance worldwide. Perhaps the mujaddid of the 15th Islamic century and the second millenium of the common era will be an American Muslim, insha Allah.<sup>43</sup>

Muqtedar Khan, a young Indian American Muslim political scientist, wrote euphorically:

"But internally, it [the U.S.] is the most Islamic state that has been operational in the last three hundred years. Internally, it is genuinely seeking to aspire to its ideals and the growing cultural, material and religious health of American Muslims is the best testimony to my claim. This debate, the existence of a Muslim public sphere where Muslims can think freely to revive and practice Islam is its gift to Muslims. Something unavailable in most of the Muslim world."<sup>44</sup>

A Pakistani American physician echoed this, adding "All that we need is unity among Muslims."<sup>45</sup>

## CHANGES AFTER SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

Then came the tragedy of September 11, 2001, and evidence that the World Trade Center explosions had been triggered by Islamic extremists. The trajectory along which American Muslims were moving has changed dramatically, with significant implications for the contests over authority. Earlier tendencies on the part of American Muslim spokesmen and political organizations to narrow the boundaries of the community, de-emphasize the interpretative breadth of Islamic law, and emphasize foreign policy issues at the expense of domestic ones have been reversed. The new tendencies are being strongly shaped by non-Muslim politicians and the media in the U.S., in an interaction between American Muslims and the state that is, perhaps paradoxically, drawing Muslims more closely into national political life while drawing more widely on the religion's rich, long-standing traditions of humanistic and legal scholarship.<sup>46</sup>

American Muslims were initially silent, hoping that Muslims had not been responsible for the murderous attacks, but President Bush began meeting with Muslim religious leaders almost immediately<sup>47</sup> and visited the leading mosque in Washington. But it was not one of the new spokesmen, the political leaders, whom President Bush chose to stand on the White House lawn with him on September 20. It was Shaykh Hamza Yusuf, an American convert and charismatic teacher about Islam and Islamic law, who stood there as one of six religious leaders and the only Muslim to meet privately with the President that day, lamenting that "Islam was hijacked on that September 11, 2001, on that plane as an innocent victim."<sup>48</sup> A clear pattern emerged as the White House and the American media learned more about American Muslim leaders and organizations. Scholars and others outside the Muslim political organizations were called upon to speak publicly about the true meaning of *jihad*, Islamic views of terrorism, and similar topics, while the leaders of American Muslim political organizations found themselves on the defensive.<sup>49</sup>

Shaykh Hamza Yusuf, a white American convert<sup>50</sup> to Islam in his early forties who co-founded and directs the Zaytuna Institute in the San Francisco Bay area,<sup>51</sup> was arguably the leading figure. His words about hijacking Islam were repeatedly quoted and his views welcomed by the President, the media, and the American public. Young American Muslims, many of them already his fans, circulated his interviews and speeches

more than any others on e-mail. In an interview published September 16, Hamza Yusuf called the World Trade Center attackers:

enemies of Islam . . . mass murderers, pure and simple. . . . I think that the Muslims—and I really feel this strongly—have to reject the discourse of anger. Because there is a lot of anger in the Muslim . . . world about the oppressive conditions that many Muslims find themselves in . . . we have to move to a higher moral ground, recognizing that the desire to blame others leads to anger and eventually to wrath, neither of which are rungs on a spiritual ladder to God. It's times like these that we really need to become introspective.

Answering the reporter's questions about the meanings of *jihad*, martyrdom, and suicide in Islam, he ended by saying, "If there are any martyrs in this affair it would certainly be those brave firefighters and police that went in there to save human lives and in that process lost their own." His words resonated widely with the American public.<sup>52</sup>

Shaykh Hamza, in a CBC radio interview on September 23, invoked his training in Arabic and Islamic law as he talked about his September 20 meeting with President Bush. He had told the President that "Infinite Justice" was a poor choice of name for the American military operation against terrorism, and that "crusade" evoked similarly negative reactions among Muslims. The President told him that "the Pentagon doesn't have theologians and they're the ones that name these things," and he said the name would be changed.<sup>53</sup>

Shaykh Hamza's views about contemporary spokesmen for Islam were clearly related to the contest for authority among competing spokesmen for Muslims in America.

Islam has very few scholars at very high levels. Most of the brilliant students in the [M]iddle East now go into medicine and engineering, . . . they don't go into philosophy . . . almost every one of these terrorists that are identified . . . you will not find amongst them anyone who did his degree in philosophy, in literature, in the humanities, in theology . . . [brilliant students are] only studying the physical sciences to the neglect of what makes us human, which is humanity, is poetry, is literature, as well as philosophy and theology. . . . I think the Muslim world really has to stop



blaming the West for its problems . . . it's the easy way out, it's not a Qur'anic world-view . . . we all need to really look in the mirror . . . the Muslims need to become introspective and . . . the West needs to understand. . . . I came out of the enlightenment tradition and I still believe in the best of the enlightenment tradition and I think that Islam confirms and enhances that tradition. . . .<sup>54</sup>

Shaykh Hamza Yusuf, born Mark Hanson and with strong Sufi tendencies,<sup>55</sup> has never been centrally engaged in American Muslim political organizing (although he has often been a featured speaker at national conventions). A charismatic speaker with a following like that of a rock star's among second-generation American Muslims, the Shaykh has produced numerous, widely-circulated videos and cassettes. His public appearances, often with Siraj Wahaj (a popular African American Muslim speaker), generate enthusiastic audiences and fill stadiums. Already well known, he was "fast becoming a world figure as Islam's most able theological critic of the suicide hijacking," according to a story in *The Guardian*. The story asserted that "Many Muslims find his views hard to stomach, but he is advising the White House on the current crisis" and reported that his detractors dubbed him a "collaborator," Bush's "pet Muslim."<sup>56</sup> Hamza Yusuf told the British reporter that Muslims should return to their "true faith," stripped of violence, intolerance, and hatred. He declared:

Many people in the west do not realise how oppressive some Muslim states are—both for men and for women. This is a cultural issue, not an Islamic one. . . . I think the way Muslims are allowed to live in the west is closer to the Muslim way. A lot of Muslim immigrants feel the same way, which is why they are here . . . if they are going to rant and rave about the west, they should emigrate to a Muslim country. The good will of these [western] countries to immigrants must be recognised by Muslims. . . .<sup>57</sup>

He remarked again on the backgrounds of the nineteen terrorists, the consistent feature being, in his view, that they were educated in the sciences rather than the humanities.

Others who spoke out and were highlighted in the mainstream U.S. media were Professor Ali Asani, Professor Khaled Abou El Fadl, Sheikh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, and Professor Muqtedar Khan. Asani, an Islamic Studies professor at Harvard and a member of the Aga Khan's Shi'i community (one of the groups excluded from the 2001 study of

American mosques), criticized American Muslim spokesmen for having used incendiary language in private while speaking of peace to the American public.

Even when there are disagreements within the Muslim community about extremism, they will project to the outside that we are all monolithic and peaceful . . . [but now, the more extreme leaders have gone] on alert. They realize that they are part of the problem, that the Sept. 11 incident can be the result of this kind of thinking they have been propagating for so many years.<sup>58</sup>

Asani was also quoted in a lead editorial in the *Los Angeles Times*. He praised American pluralism as essential to the true spirit of the Koran, as undermining “exclusivist” and repressive versions of Islam.<sup>59</sup> He voiced the “general concern among Muslim intellectuals about how not only CAIR but some of these other organizations are claiming to speak in the name of the Muslim community, and how they’re coming to be recognized by the government as spokespeople for the Muslim community in the U.S.”

Khaled Abou El Fadl, already introduced here, has been controversial in Muslim community circles.<sup>60</sup> Known for his independent views, particularly about women in Islam,<sup>61</sup> he had published a piece entitled “Terrorism is at Odds With Islamic Tradition” in the *Los Angeles Times* on August 22;<sup>62</sup> he was turned to after September 11, giving talks locally, appearing on CNN, and writing powerful indictments of Muslim leadership.<sup>63</sup> Trained in both Islamic and American law (at Cairo’s Al Azhar, the University of Pennsylvania, Yale, and Princeton), Abou El Fadl talked about the “crumbling of the Islamic civilization [that] has removed the established institutions to seriously challenge the extremists. . . . Extremist theology is a combustible brew of puritanism, ethical and moral irresponsibility and rampant apologetics.”<sup>64</sup> Long a critic of the science-trained new spokesmen for American Muslims, Abou El Fadl was admiringly profiled in January 2002 in the *Los Angeles Times*.<sup>65</sup>

Others turned to after September 11, Sheikh Muhammad Hisham Kabani and M. A. Muqtedar Khan, illustrate not the background in classical legal training so much as the diversity and broader range of spokesmen;<sup>66</sup> the former leads a Naqshbandi Sufi group with a strong U.S. following,<sup>67</sup> and the latter is a young Indian-origin Ph.D. in political science from Georgetown, who did have a career as an unofficial *mufti* (legal scholar), but on the Internet and along innovative rather than classical lines.<sup>68</sup>

The media attention given to Islam and American Muslims has foregrounded not only Islamic legal scholars but issues of Islamic law, as an amusing, but fundamentally serious, e-mail from “an American” illustrates. The writer expressed resentment at “being bombarded by some instruction from the media on how I should ‘understand’ Islam.” A few lines from this lengthy epistle give the idea:

[I]t’s been over a month . . . and there seem to be hundreds of TV talk-show hosts, news people, Islamic experts, roaming Imams, and Muslim clerics who keep telling me how I should get acquainted with the ‘real’ Muslim world of the Koran, Hadith and the Sunna and how these terrorist guys who pulled off the 9/11 attacks don’t really represent the actual Islamic faith . . . why should I be the target audience. . . . If I have it right, all the people who did this were Muslims. . . . I mean I already know what they did was wrong as do most honest Americans, so why are you telling me? . . . Tell them about the religion! Yes, tell the Muslims . . . that they have it backwards and inside out. . . . So please, to all the media types and so-called Islamic experts—stop giving me your line on how these guys have hijacked a religion . . . [then 7 questions are posed, like, why not a *fatwa* on the hijackers, when one was put out on Salman Rushdie who only wrote a book that got it wrong?]. . . . I’m still not sure if I’m considered a non-believer that Muslims should live in peace with or if I am an infidel that should be killed for my corrupt life style, or my religious belief . . . there are but two possibilities: in the least, either the majority of Muslims acquiesce [sic] to the ‘hijacking’ of their religion, or at worst, they give tacit approval to the murderous actions the Islamic terrorists have done in the name of Allah.<sup>69</sup>

Some American Muslims have managed to see the events of September 11 as an opportunity. As one man wrote, “American Muslim leaders have gotten more media time than we could have ever imagined in our wildest dreams.”<sup>70</sup> Copies of the Qur’an were sold out in bookstores all over the U.S., and many Islamic centers and mosques held open houses. Others, however, saw September 11 as a major setback for Islam in America.<sup>71</sup>

With all the conflicting reports and opinions being bandied about, the contest for authority goes on. American Muslim organizational leaders have tried to seize center stage again, only to attract media attention to

some of their earlier rhetoric.<sup>72</sup> The outgoing president of ISNA, Muzzamil Siddiqi, led a memorial service at the Washington National Cathedral; as President Bush said later, “He did a heck of a good job, and we were proud to have him there.”<sup>73</sup> Reporters did research and raised questions about Siddiqi’s earlier remarks in public speeches.<sup>74</sup> The rhetoric designed for private and known audiences of co-believers, rhetoric designed to instill pride and a sense of mission, sounded very different when moved into a public arena and read by a wider audience.

American Muslims previously uninvolved in political organizing were galvanized into action, newly concerned with Islamic law and its implementation in the U.S. One new organization, led by medical men and other professionals, formed to combat extremism and implicitly accused leaders of earlier organizations of condoning extremism and doing a disservice to American Muslims.<sup>75</sup> A debate began about what is being said in American mosques, and by whom. Were the “traditional,” foreign-born *imams* in American mosques or the western-educated members of the boards of directors that run the mosques more “immoderate” in their views before September 11? One writer argued that the “moderate” members of the boards should hire only American-educated *imams* “who are fluent in English and are voices of moderation, who can talk to the media . . . and who can sustain a constructive dialogue with Americans from all walks of life. . . .”<sup>76</sup> But others criticized the members of the boards of directors who employed *imams*: “board members, who are usually educated in various fields like medicine, engineering, computers, and so on, do not have adequate knowledge of Islam . . . they will not allow their imams to make independent statements.” This writer advocated training young people in American schools to become both *imams* and board members.<sup>77</sup>

Events in 2003 and 2004 have intensified conflicts centered on Islamic law and its interpretation in the U.S. What began as a so-called “gender *jihad*” in the 1990s has led to a “progressive Muslim” movement in the twenty-first century. This has, in some ways, furthered a deepening division between immigrant Muslims and indigenous African American Muslims. Ironically, the gender *jihad* initially featured leading figures from both immigrant and indigenous Muslim backgrounds. African American women are prominent among the Muslim feminists writing about Islamic law and jurisprudence. Amina Wadud, an African American Muslim and an Islamic Studies professor, called in her book, *Qur’an and Woman* (1999),<sup>78</sup> for a radical and continual rethinking of the Qur’an and *hadith*, asserting that



much now considered divine and immutable *shari'a* is the result of a long, male-dominated intellectual process. Another African American Muslim, Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons, writes of the growing number of Muslim women scholars and activists "seeking to separate Islam, the religion, from culture, tradition, and social mores . . . at times bringing to the foreground the interpretations of earlier sects or groups in Islam who were labeled heterodox and their views dismissed."<sup>79</sup> The gender *jihad*, then, could work across sectarian boundaries.

The gender *jihad* is an important strand in an emerging cosmopolitan Islam in the U.S., one that is being produced by *fiqh* specialists and other scholars of Islam. This strand is best exemplified by a volume edited by Omid Safi and published in 2003, *Progressive Muslims*. The fifteen contributors are almost all now teaching in the U.S. but many are immigrants, and their academic degrees come from all over the world. Four are American converts, two of them African American women. In the volume, Kecia Ali and Moosa Ebrahim go further than Wadud and Simmons in questioning the patriarchal basis of Islamic law. Another and even more controversial element in the progressive Muslim movement involves open discussions of gender and sexuality. This has been initiated most conspicuously by the new website Muslimwakeup.com (it was preceded by a few gay and lesbian Muslim websites). The fall of 2004 saw the formal establishment of the Progressive Muslim Union of North America.<sup>80</sup> The website ([progressivemuslims.com](http://progressivemuslims.com)) lays out its principles. These explicitly recognize as Muslim "anyone who identifies herself or himself as "Muslim," including those whose identification is based on social commitments and cultural heritage," and affirm "the equal status and equal worth" of all human beings, regardless of religion, gender, race, ethnicity, or sexuality."

The progressive movement is not just academic; it is beginning to have an impact on the national immigrant-led organizations that it has been actually attacking. The changes in the American political landscape after 9/11 have pushed the national Islamic and Muslim political organizations into the paths pioneered by the academic progressives. A leading national political organization, the Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC), made progressive Islamic thought the theme of its 2004 convention in Long Beach and invited some of the academics in the *Progressive Muslims* volume to speak; MPAC also has published an issue of its journal, *The Minaret*, focused on progressive Islam and Muslims and advocating moves in that direction. Even the more religiously oriented and conservative ISNA, in its journal *Islamic Horizons*, started a three-part series on its own history with

a focus on the role of Muslim women in nurturing the Muslim Student Association (MSA) and its development into ISNA.<sup>81</sup>

There have also been deepening conflicts between immigrant Muslims and African American Muslims, and these are reflected both organizationally and in contests over sources of authority. African American leaders split off in 2001 from the immigrant-led Sunni Muslim groups to establish a new organization called MANA, the Muslim Alliance of North America.<sup>82</sup> Turning away from the national immigrant-led organizations because of their failure to reflect the concerns of indigenous Muslims, their focus on overseas agendas, and their efforts to become part of the dominant or white mainstream culture, MANA's leaders want to maintain a critical stance toward American society. MANA defines "indigenous" as "anyone who is native to America, including second generation immigrants."<sup>83</sup>

This African American Muslim initiative is also reflected in academic battles over Islamic law and jurisprudence. A respected African American Muslim scholar of Islamic law (and MANA board member), Sherman Jackson,<sup>84</sup> has publicly attacked Khaled Abou El Fadl, the latter now linked to the progressive Muslim academics. Jackson claims Abou El Fadl and other immigrant intellectuals are buying into white America's claims to "false universalisms" and are overlooking the justifiably different African American interpretations of Islam and African American needs for social justice. Jackson writes explicitly about doctrinal interpretations not shared by immigrant and black Muslims and calls for different versions of Islam tailored to constituencies strongly marked by race, class, and histories within the nation. Accusing immigrant Muslims like Abou El Fadl of being "American Muslim romantics" who try to appease the dominant culture by presenting an acceptable "universal" and progressive version of Islam, he sees them as presenting only a part, a specifically Middle Eastern "East's truth," as the whole in order to preempt views that lie outside the boundaries of their imagination or experience. Asserting that the Prophet Muhammad was sent for all peoples, at all times and in all places, and that there are not only New and Old World realities but different realities within the New World, Jackson sees Islam's pluralistic legal traditions as enabling interpretative communities to adapt Islam to their circumstances. If American Islam is to be truly pluralistic, he writes, "it will have to be bold and vigilant in its refusal to ignore or jettison any of these histories and experiences in favor of appeals to a false universal, no matter how chic, powerful, or expedient the latter may be."<sup>85</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The boundaries of Muslim America and the numbers of authoritative spokesmen for American Muslims have been steadily expanding since September 11, 2001, and differences once suppressed have become open. The leaders of the American Muslim political organizations no longer are recognized by the American government or the public as the only spokesmen for American Muslims. There are pressures on the political spokesmen even from their own followers to broaden their constituencies by generation and gender and to put greater emphasis on American values, training, and domestic political issues.<sup>86</sup> Post-9/11 spokesmen and women for Islam speak for and represent a wider range of Islam's sectarian, intellectual, artistic, and legal traditions than do the political spokesmen. The gender *jihad* and a progressive Muslim movement have grown greatly in importance, interacting in interesting ways with organizational and legal challenges to immigrant Muslims from indigenous, primarily African American, Muslims.

These developments are taking place in the context of growing tensions between the goals of American Muslims and those of the political leaders of the U.S. In 2005, American Muslims and the leaders of American Muslim political organizations face many challenges and American, not Islamic, law is probably of more concern. National American Muslim groups like CAIR and MPAC increasingly allege violations of the civil rights of Muslims and Arabs, and there clearly have been such violations. Concern about profiling by religion and/or national origin has grown steadily.<sup>87</sup> The legal issues with which American Muslims are now most concerned are also of concern to many other Americans, as the Patriot Act and other measures threaten the civil liberties of all.

## NOTES

1. Islam is poised to displace Judaism and will be second to Christianity in the number of its adherents in the United States. For the varying population estimates, from 1 to 8 million, see Karen Isaksen Leonard, *Muslims in the United States: the State of Research* (New York, 2003) 4, 147 (note 1).

2. One breakdown puts African Americans at 42%, South Asians at 24.4%, Arabs at 12.4%, Africans at 6.2%, Iranians at 3.6%, Southeast Asians at 2%, European Americans at 1.6%, and "other" at 5.4%. Another breakdown puts "Americans" at 30%, Arabs at 33%, and South Asians at 29%. The first is Fareed H. Nu'man, *The Muslim Population in the United States: A Brief Statement* (Washington, D.C., 1992); and the second is Ilyas Ba-Yunus and M. Moin Siddiqui, *A Report on the Muslim Population in the United States* (New York, 1999).



3. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Adair T. Lummis, *Islamic Values in the United States: a Comparative Study* (New York, 1987) point to this conservatism in numerous places, e.g., 30–33, 123–24, 127. They saw considerable adaptation among earlier immigrants.

4. Karen Leonard, “South Asian Leadership of American Muslims,” in Yvonne Haddad, ed., *Muslims in the West: From Sojourners to Citizens* (New York, 2002), 233–49.

5. In the 1990 U.S. Census, the immigrants from India had the highest median household income, family income, and per capita income of any foreign-born group, and they also had the highest percentage with a bachelor’s degree or higher and the highest percentage in managerial and professional fields. Karen Isaksen Leonard, *The South Asian Americans* (Westport, Conn., 1997), 77–78. Since 80% of South Asians in the U.S. are from India and Pakistan, and about 90% of these are from India, the Asian Indian census data is quite relevant. Among Indian immigrants in the 1990 census, 10% were medical doctors and 17% were engineers. Iranian Muslims, also highly-educated and sharing many of the attributes of South Asians, are overwhelmingly secular in their orientation. See Mehdi Bozorgmehr, “Internal Ethnicity: Iranians in Los Angeles,” in *Sociological Perspectives* 40, no. 3 (1997): 387–408, which reports that only 5% are religiously observant “always and often” and 95% are so “occasionally and never” (chart, 398). Also, Iranians are Shi’i, the minority sect within Islam and within American Islam as well.

6. Edward Said, *Covering Islam*, 2d ed. (1981; New York, 1997).

7. For the estimate, no longer accepted as accurate but without an accepted replacement, see Haddad and Lummis, *Islamic Values*, 8.

8. In the leadership of many mosques, too, South Asians are becoming prominent. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, “At Home in the Hijra: South Asian Muslims in the United States,” in Howard Coward, John R. Hinnells, and Raymond Brady Williams, eds., *The South Asian Religious Diaspora in Britain, Canada, and the United States* (New York, 2000).

9. “Ideology, Class and the Origin of the Islamic State,” *Economy and Society* 9, no. 4 (November 1980): 465.

10. Abou El Fadl, from Kuwait but educated in Egypt, is the Omar and Azmeralda Alfi Distinguished Fellow at UCLA’s Law School. Alalwani, of Iraqi origin, has headed the Fiqh Council since 1986, when ISNA upgraded and expanded its thirty-year-old Fiqh Council. He is also president of the School of Islamic and Social Sciences (SISS).

11. Abou El Fadl first became known for his columns in *The Minaret*. Published by the Islamic Center of Southern California, this is one of the four leading American Muslim journals according to Sulayman Nyang, “Islam in America: a Historical Perspective,” *American Muslim Quarterly* 2, no. 1 (1998): 10–11. Khaled Abou el Fadl, “The Authoritative and the Authoritarian,” *The Minaret*, May 1997, 43, cites earlier jurists who explain that the purpose of a *Sharia* inquiry is not to reach the right result but the inquiry, the search for the ruling, “a life consumed by the search for the Divine Will.”

12. Khaled M. Abou El Fadl, *The Authoritative and Authoritarian in Islamic Discourses: A Contemporary Case Study* (Austin, Tex., 1997), 10–11. The third edition is now out, with a lengthy new introduction and postscript. See *And God Knows His Soldiers: The Authoritative and Authoritarian in Islamic Discourses* (New York, 2001).

13. Talal Asad, *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam* (Washington, D.C., 1986), 7, 14.

14. See the pathbreaking work by Maria Jasachok, *A Mosque of One’s Own: On Being Muslim, Hui, and Woman in Contemporary China* (Richmond, Surrey, 2001).

15. See John Bowen, for example, on legal, moral, and social applications of Islamic texts in Indonesia: *Muslims through Discourse: Religion and Ritual in Gaya Society* (Princeton, N.J., 1993), 8.



16. Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion* (Baltimore, 1993), 208–14.

17. For earlier immigrants, see Barbara C. Aswad and Barbara Bilge, *Family and Gender Among American Muslims: Issues Facing Middle Eastern Immigrants and Their Descendants* (Philadelphia, 1996); Earle H. Waugh, Sharon McIrvin Abu-Laban, and Regula Burckhardt Qureshi, eds., *Muslim Families in North America* (Edmonton, 1991); Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Jane Idleman Smith, eds., *Muslim Communities in North America* (Albany, 1994); Mehdi Bozorgmehr and Alison Feldman, eds., *Middle Eastern Diaspora Communities in America* (New York, 1996). For the contemporary scene, see Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and John L. Esposito, *Muslims on the Americanization Path?* (Atlanta, 1998); Jane I. Smith, *Islam in America* (New York, 1999).

18. See Talal Asad, "Modern Power and the Reconfiguration of Religious Traditions," *Stanford Humanities Review* 5, no. 1 (1996): 5 (<http://www.stanford.edu/group/SHR/5-1/text/asad.html>).

19. Marcia K. Hermansen, "In the Garden of American Sufi Movements: Hybrids and Perennials," Peter B. Clarke, ed., *New Trends and Developments in the World of Islam* (London, 1997), 155–78.

20. See Leonard, *Muslims in the United States*, Appendix II, for a chart of these organizations.

21. Khaled Abou el Fadl, "Setting Priorities," *The Minaret*, April 1998, 41. Others have described these new spokesmen as "boss Muslims" or "professional Muslims."

22. The secular Muslim scholar, Bassam Tibi, argues that globalization has swept all Muslims into an international state system that renders discussion of *dar ul Islam*, or "the abode of Islam," obsolete. Defining secularization as an inevitable part of social evolution towards functional differentiation in modern society, Tibi says it will allow for the development of Islam as a religious ethic, a "civil theology." A political scientist born in Damascus and living in Germany, Tibi uses Middle Eastern and North African materials and advocates a secularization of Islamic religion, theology, and culture. Bassam Tibi, *The Crisis of Modern Islam: a Preindustrial Culture in the Scientific Technological Age*, tr. Judith von Sivers (Salt Lake City, 1988), xiii–xiv, 130–31, 148.

23. Larry Poston, *Islamic Da'wah in the West: Muslim Missionary Activity and the Dynamics of Conversion to Islam* (New York, 1992), 32, citing an *Islamic Horizons* 15, no. 3 (May–June 1986) article by Dr. Muzammil Siddiqi, "Muslims in a Non-Muslim Society," 22; for ISNA's initiative, see Steve A. Johnson, "Political Activity of Muslims in America," 111; Sulayman S. Nyang, "Convergence and Divergence in an Emergent Community: A Study of Challenges Facing U.S. Muslims," 247, both in Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, ed., *The Muslims of America* (New York, 1991).

24. One Indian American Muslim political scientist explains that since there is no explicit declaration of war against Islam, the U.S. cannot be *dar ul harb*, and since there are no specific treaties with resident Muslims, it cannot be *dar ul sulh*. He concludes that most American Muslims believe the U.S. to be *dar ul aman* (as India, in fact, is categorized by Muslims there). Mohommed A. Muqtedar Khan, "Muslims and Identity Politics in America," in Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and John L. Esposito, eds., *Muslims on the Americanization Path?* (Atlanta, 1998), 115, 118–19. Indian Muslim discourse has become increasingly relevant since in both India and the U.S. Muslims are a minority in a secular state, very concerned with secular pressures, with interrelations among Muslims, and interrelations among religions Kenneth Cragg, *The Pen and the Faith: Eight Modern Muslim Writers and the Qur'an* (London, 1985), 3–4.

25. In the 1980s, discussions within developing Muslim organizations revolved around issues centered outside the U.S., and most American Muslim national leaders opposed Muslim participation in American politics or gave it only qualified support. Reflecting the Middle Eastern origins of most leaders then, internal conflicts focused on Sunni-Shi'i

differences heightened by the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the Iran-Iraq war, or Salafiyya versus Ikhwan-ul-Muslimeen (that is, Reformist/Fundamentalist versus Muslim Brotherhood) and intra-Ikhwan-ul-Muslimeen differences linked primarily to politics in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the Gulf states. Johnson, "Political Activity," 111–24.

26. A new Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy (CSID) was formed in 2000 in Washington, D.C., as a membership-based nonprofit organization. See [www.islam-democracy.org](http://www.islam-democracy.org). The Chair, Ali Mazrui, is also the Director of the Institute of Global Cultural Studies at SUNY-Binghamton, and the Vice-Chair, John Esposito, is Director of the Center of Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University.

27. *The Minaret*, August 1995, 22, and *The Orange Crescent* 18, no. 2 (February/March 1993) report the 1993 forming of this council, which was thought to include 65% of all mosques in North America. Al-Amin's (the former H. Rap Brown's) arrest for murder in 2000 and recent conviction and W. D. Muhammad's reported withdrawal from the *shura* in 2000 put this arrangement in jeopardy. The National Fiqh Council was under reconstitution in 2004, and women and Shi'i were being added.

28. Aminah Beverly McCloud, *African American Islam* (New York, 1995), 126–27.

29. *Shuras* typically try to set common dates for all mosques and Islamic centers for Ramadan. South Asian and Arab-based congregations often differ on which day to offer the Id prayers ending the Ramadan month of fasting. Some use Saudi Arabian sightings of the moon to determine the timing of observances in North America; others use local sightings. Some set the prayers for the day after the day of Arafat, others set them by sighting of the moon. Fifty-six member mosques and affiliated groups in southern California formed a *shura* in 1995, and twenty-six Islamic centers agreed on a common date for Id prayers in December of 1995. *Los Angeles Times*, January 20, 1996, B4. A common date for Id was still not being practiced in 2004.

30. Alalwani heads SISS, the School of Islamic and Social Sciences, first established as the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) by Dr. Ismail R. al-Faruqi and others in 1981 in Washington, D.C. In 1996, it moved to Herndon, West Virginia, and was reshaped as SISS with a small campus in Leesburg, Virginia. It offers an M.A. in Islamic Studies (an American-style graduate program) and in Imamate Studies. Christopher A. Furlow, "Islam, Science, and Modernity: From Northern Virginia to Kuala Lumpur," paper presented at the American Anthropological Association meeting, Chicago, 1999. It trains *imams* for the U.S. armed forces and has offered to train *imams* for Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islam.

31. See Alalwani's examples of misapplied *fatwas* in Abu Amal Hadhrami, "Muslim Americans Need Own Outlook," *Islamic Horizons* 29, no. 1 (Jan.–Feb. 2000): 48–53. See also Abou El Fadl, "Striking a Balance."

32. Khaled Abou el Fadl, "The Page," *The Minaret*, January 2000, 41–42. Their opinions were the product, he says, of "oil-nourished plutocracy" (the remark points to the rising tensions between American and "foreign" forms of Islam).

33. "Conference of Books Revived," *The Minaret*, August 1996, 23.

34. Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson, eds., *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere* (Bloomington, 1999), 12.

35. Examples of Eickelman and Anderson's "new people" include the physicians Dr. Hassan Hathout, *Reading the Muslim Mind* (Plainfield, Ind., 1995), and Dr. Shahid Athar, *Reflections of an American Muslim* (Chicago, 1994).

36. Aslam Abdullah, "Expectations from American Muslim Institutions and Leadership," *Pakistan Link*, Oct. 16, 1998, 14. He also wants social and behavioral science and management skills, not political maneuvering and wealth, in those who run the Islamic centers and mosques.

37. Cragg, *The Pen*, 9.

38. Abou El Fadl, *And God Knows the Soldiers*, 1–42, lays this out forcefully.

39. C. Eric Lincoln found that, in 1960, “the Ahmadiyah were generally accepted as a legitimate sect of Islam.” *The Black Muslims in America* (Boston, 1961), 221. Whether or not the Ahmadi consider their founder a Prophet is contested, and there are differences among Ahmadi too, who were declared non-Muslims in 1974 in Pakistan after the third of three court cases. The two earlier decisions, based on the same body of textual material as the third, did not find them unorthodox, and the third decision was reached only under extreme political pressure. Tayyab Mahmud shows the political forces behind all three decisions. “Freedom of Religion and Religious Minorities in Pakistan: a Study of Judicial Practice,” *Fordham International Law Journal* 19, no. 1 (Oct. 1995): 40–100.

40. Ihsan Bagby, Paul M. Perl, Bryan T. Froehle, “The Mosque in America: A National Portrait,” April 26, 2001, released through CAIR (Council on American-Islamic Relations), Washington, D.C. For the definitions and exclusions, Ihsan Bagby, personal communication, June 26, 2001. Project MAPS (Muslims in American Public Square), based at the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University with an advisory board of leading academics, is also undertaking a national survey of Islamic centers, mosques, schools, and organizations.

41. Ihsan Bagby, Paul M. Perl, Bryan T. Froehle, *The Mosque in America: A National Portrait. A Report from the Mosque Study Project* (Council on American-Islamic Relations: Washington D.C., 2001), 28. Page 1 describes the respondents and other background information about the survey, which is the Muslim part of a denominational survey project coordinated by the Hartford Institute for Religious Research.

42. The questionnaire and interview results can be found at [www.projectmaps.com/PMReport.htm](http://www.projectmaps.com/PMReport.htm). The method was to create a phone list by matching the zip codes of 300 randomly selected Islamic centers (from a list that omitted Nation of Islam and Ahmadi mosques) against local telephone exchanges, then identifying common Muslim surnames from the local telephone books and calling them. If the person answering identified him- or herself as Muslim, the interview proceeded. An additional sample of African American Muslims was taken in person at several (named) urban locations to compensate for their Anglo-American or non-Muslim surnames, to achieve a weighting for African Americans of 20% of the American Muslim population (many would consider this an underestimate).

43. Murad Wilfried Hofmann, “Muslims in the Next Millenium,” *Islamic Horizons* (January/February 1999), 20–22. Hofmann is a retired German diplomat to Algeria and Morocco, with a Munich University doctorate in jurisprudence.

44. Mohommed A. Muqtedar Khan, “Muslims and American Politics: Refuting the Isolationist Arguments,” *American Muslim Quarterly* 2, nos. 1–2 (1998): 68.

45. Omer Bin Abdullah, then President of the APPNA (Association of Pakistani Physicians in North America), said, “the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights were knowingly or unknowingly based on the Islamic principles of equality and justice for all . . . [thus there is] a great similarity between the success of America, especially in science, medicine and technology, with the success that was achieved by the Muslims of Baghdad, Cordoba and Istanbul . . . in this country, Muslims have the opportunity to practice Islam as it should be practiced because there is no government edict to restrict religion, nor is there sectarian control over belief. . . .” Omer Bin Abdullah, “Eyes on the Muslim Future in America,” *Pakistan Link*, August 18, 1995, 27.

46. See Karen Leonard, “American Muslims Before and After September 11, 2001,” *Economic and Political Weekly* (Mumbai), June 15, 2002, for a fuller treatment of this topic.

47. Bush had been slated to meet with American Muslim leaders at 3 p.m. on September 11, with several of those I have termed the “new spokesmen.” See Leonard, “American Muslims,” for details.



48. Peter Ford, "Listening for Islam's Silent Majority," *Christian Science Monitor*, Nov. 5, 2001. On that very day, September 20, FBI agents showed up at Hamza Yusuf's house to question him about a talk he had given September 9 in which he had criticized the U.S. and said "this country has a great, great tribulation coming to it." His wife told them he was with the President, and they found she was correct. He had been the only Muslim invited to pray with the President, sing "God Bless America," and endorse the plans for military action. Hanna Rosin and John Mintz, "Muslim Leaders Struggle With Mixed Messages," *Washington Post*, Oct. 2, 2001, A16.

49. American Muslim leaders were caught in a situation that was difficult from the beginning and continues to be so. Proclaiming their loyalty to the U.S. and tempering their previously strong and outspoken criticisms of U.S. foreign policy, they have been confronted with the American bombing of Afghanistan, then the worsening situation in Israel and Palestine, and then uncertainties about the next targets of the "war on terrorism."

50. The respected scholar of Islam, John Esposito, told American Muslims that they had to put forth more women and young people who speak accentless American English to articulate their community's message. "Unless you tap the next generation, you are not going to make it through the next few months," he said, suggesting that, by using representatives who speak English as Americans do, Muslims would avoid appearing as though they were a predominantly foreign group. "Muslims Urged to Work on Improving Image," *Los Angeles Times*, Oct. 7, 2001, cited in CAIR Islam-Infonet American Muslim News Briefs of that date. Esposito was a speaker at a fundraising banquet for the Council on American-Islamic Relations, Los Angeles, Oct. 6, 2001.

51. A convert to Islam at age seventeen, Hamza Yusuf (42 in 2001) is the son of two academics, his father a professor of the humanities; he has studied with leading Islamic scholars in Algeria, Morocco, and Mauritania.

52. Richard Scheinin, "Expert Says Islam Prohibits Violence Against Innocents," *San Jose Mercury News*, Sept. 16, 2001.

53. Shaykh Hamza Yusuf also said that what Americans were now feeling "has been business as usual for Lebanese people, Palestinian people, Bosnian people," and when the reporter immediately asked about Israeli people, his answer was sympathetic: "Certainly the fear element is there for Israeli people . . . there are still a lot of Jewish people alive who remember the fear and terror of what happened in Europe. . . ." Interview transcribed by Jamillah Karim and sent to me via e-mail, Oct. 9, 2001. In Arabic, he said, "Infinite Justice" is an attribute of God and Muslims would consider using that phrase almost a proclamation that America was God.

54. *Ibid.*

55. Sufism, the mystical strand of Islam, increasingly has been attacked in the U.S. by post-1965 immigrant professionals.

56. Jack Sullivan, "Imam Hamza Yusuf: 'If you hate the west, emigrate to a Muslim country,'" *The Guardian*, Oct. 8, 2001 (the day Yusuf was to meet with religious leaders at the House of Lords in London).

57. *Ibid.*

58. Hanna Rosin and John Mintz, "Muslim Leaders Struggle With Mixed Messages," *Washington Post*, Oct. 2, 2001, A16. The story cites talks by Shaykh Hamza Yusuf and Muzammil Siddiqi before September 11 that had included apocalyptic warnings; Siddiqi could not be reached for comment for the *Post* story, but defended himself later by more fully contextualizing his remarks in CAIR Islam-Infonet and other venues.

59. *Los Angeles Times*, Oct. 10, 2001, B12.

60. He was a featured columnist for *The Minaret*, but it would not always publish his pieces. The Islamic Center of Southern California, which initiated MPAC and publishes *The Minaret*, is one of the most successful interethnic Islamic congregations in the



U.S. and its new spokesmen make a self-conscious effort to formulate and represent an American Islam.

61. These are laid out in all his books, but see especially his *Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women* (Oxford, 2001).

62. *Los Angeles Times*, Aug. 22, 2001, B13.

63. "Derangements," *The Minaret*, special edition, Oct. 2001, 11; "When God Asks the Child," *The Minaret*, November/December 2001, 11.

64. Teresa Watanabe, "Extremists Put Own Twist on Faith," *Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 24, 2001, A13.

65. Teresa Watanabe, "Battling Islamic 'Puritans,'" *Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 2, 2002, A1.

66. For more on them, see Leonard, "American Muslims, Before and After September 11, 2001."

67. Kabbani is the representative in the U.S. of a sect based in Cyprus. He strove for ascendancy in American Muslim politics in the late 1990s, and he had been successful in presenting an individualistic and moderate form of Islam to Americans. But in 1999 Kabbani alienated the Sunni mainstream immigrant leaders by branding 80% of the American Muslim population "extremists" in a speech to the U.S. Secretary of State's Public Forum. Roundly condemned, he had been boycotted ever since by all major American Muslim groups. He was immediately called upon by the mainstream media after September 11.

68. While still a student, Khan was "the Cyberspace Mufti." "The Internet has made everyone a *mufti* [legal advisor] . . . [opening up] a variety of opinion . . . [it is] the globalization of the *mufti*." A self-described "more liberal voice," he gave advice that was no doubt controversial, reportedly saying, about homosexuality, that, while there certainly cannot be gay pride parades in mosques, "Clinton's 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' is a perfectly Islamic solution." About premarital sex, he said "remember that Allah is all-forgiving, especially to those who repent sincerely (this is in case you have already been naughty)." Emily Wax, "The Mufti in the Chat Room: Islamic Legal Advisers Are Just a Click Away From Ancient Customs," *Washington Post*, July 31, 1999, C1.

69. I got this e-mail October 27 from a friend in Pakistan, and efforts to track down its author and source failed. The full-length message captures the mix of anger, ignorance, and intelligent questioning on the part of many Americans.

70. Nayyer Ali, M.D., "Winners and Losers," *Pakistan Link*, Nov. 2, 2001. He included President Bush, Pakistan, and Islam among the winners, India and Israel's right-wing among the losers, and Afghanistan as still unclassified. Addressing the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) in Qatar on October 10, the head of the American delegation said, "At no other time has the Muslim community in America been more effective in working with the American government." Dr. Jamal Barzinji, board member, American Muslim Council, and director, International Institute of Islamic Thought; full text in *Islamic Horizons*, January/February 2002, 56.

71. Dr. Ghulam M. Haniff said, "The dastardly act occurred just when Muslims were beginning to make inroads into the mainstream. . . . The Muslim community in America will be under the gun for a long time. . . . The future looks bleak and uncertain." Haniff, "WTC Tragedy: A Major Setback for Islam," *Pakistan Link*, Oct. 26, 2001, CL6. Two weeks later, he saw opportunities. "Muslims must stand up, assert their identity and not only accommodate to life in America but become champions of liberty and justice." Ghulam M. Haniff, "American Islam at a Turning Point," *Pakistan Link*, Nov. 9, 2001, CL4.

72. The most thorough story is Jake Tapper, "Islam's Flawed Spokesmen: Some of the Groups Claiming to Speak for American Muslims Find It Impossible to Speak Out Against Terrorist Groups," *Salon*, Sept. 26, 2001. He implicates CAIR and the AMC as having been tacitly supportive of extremist groups.

73. The President said this at the September 26 meeting with Muslim leaders, according to CAIR Islam-Infonet, Sept. 26, 2001.

74. Hanna Rosin and John Mintz, "Muslim Leaders Struggle With Mixed Messages," *Washington Post*, Oct. 2, 2001, A16. Siddiqi's statement that, "If you [the U.S.] continue doing injustice, and tolerate injustice, the wrath of God will come," was taken out of context (the Palestinian struggle for justice in the Middle East), he argued in a letter to the *Post* responding to the story, reproduced in CAIR Islam-Infonet, Oct. 5, 2001. See also Solomon Moore, "Fiery Words, Disputed Meaning," *Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 3, 2001, B20, for more on Siddiqi, Hamza Yusuf, Abdurahman Alamoudi of CAIR and the AMC, Nihad Awad of CAIR, and Sheikh Kabbani's spiritual mentor.

75. Mahjabeen Islam, M.D., "An American Muslim's Perspective," *Pakistan Link*, Nov. 16, 2001, CL3; and see <http://www.usmae.org>.

76. Hasan Zillur Rahim, "Silence of the Imams—Muslim Clerics Must Challenge Extremist Views," *India-West*, Oct. 26, 2001, A5. Rahim is a software consultant and was editor of *Iqra*, an Islamic magazine, from 1986–1999.

77. Zahir Ahmed (Chair, Islamic Research and Publications), "Mosques not Controlled by Imams," letter to *India-West*, Dec. 28, 2001, A6.

78. It was first published in Malaysia in 1992, where Wadud has been active, and then translated and published in Indonesian (1994) and Turkish (1997), evidencing the global reach of the gender *jihad*. Wadud taught in Kuala Lumpur's International Islamic University for three years and participated in Malaysia's influential "Sisters in Islam" group. See Jane Idleman Smith, *Islam in America* (New York, 1999), 201–2, for a brief biography.

79. Gisela Webb, ed., *Windows of Faith: Muslim Women Scholar-Activists in North America*. (Syracuse, N.Y., 2000), 205.

80. The Progressive Union, inaugurated November 15 (Eid Monday), is led by Iranian-American Omid Safi, the editor of the *Progressive Muslims* volume, and three others (Egyptian-American Ahmed Nassef, the co-founder and editor of *Muslimwakeup.com*; Arab-American Sarah Eltantawi, who left her post as communications director of MPAC to hold the same post for the new group; and Hussein Ibish, Lebanese-American former Communications Director for the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee(ADC).

81. *Islamic Horizons*, May/June 2003. This growing liberal, moderate, or progressive movement wherever it manifests itself is under attack from immigrant Muslim conservatives, of course, one of whom (Abid Ulla Jan 2002) calls it "neo-mod" and as harmful to Islam as America's "neo-cons."

82. Powerful African American Sunni Muslims were involved in planning this since 1999, with Jamil Al-Amin (the former H. Rap Brown) in Atlanta and Imams Siraj Wahaj and Talib Abdur-Rashid in New York; they conferred with other indigenous leaders, including Shaykh Hamza Yusuf. After Jamil Al-Amin's arrest in 2000, MANA was formally inaugurated in February of 2001. Its head is Siraj Wahaj, Sunni imam of the Al-Taqwa mosque in Brooklyn and a very charismatic speaker; other leaders include Ihsan Bagby, long a key insider in ISNA, and imams in Cleveland, Detroit, Ann Arbor, New Haven, and North Carolina.

83. <http://www.mananet.org/about.asp>.

84. Jackson has published on Islamic law but is now turning to African American Islam more specifically; his book, *Islam and the Black American: Looking Toward the Third Resurrection* (Oxford, 2005), is a major new interpretation of African American Islam.

85. Sherman A. Jackson, "Islam(s) East and West: Pluralism between No-Frills and Designer Fundamentalism," 112–35, in Mary L. Dudziak, ed., *September 11 in History* (Durham, N.C., 2003), 132. Jackson would use Islamic legal traditions to justify polygyny

(to ease black women's poverty), Islamic punishments for adultery (when it destroys and impoverishes black families), violence (in the face of the overwhelming and unjust state power exercised by Israel against the Palestinians), and affirmative action (rather than reliance on Islam's commitment to equality).

86. Thus a widely-circulated piece by an American Muslim political scientist advises first-generation immigrants to redefine a Muslim American agenda, with a focus on issues in the U.S. and a more adequate reflection of the concerns of African American Muslims. Pointing out that Pakistani and Indian Muslims differ on Kashmir, he urges that "those . . . who feel compelled to pursue national or ethnic agendas should be free to do so through separate national or ethnic associations and lobbies." Himself a first-generation immigrant from India, Ayoob does not seem to envision the second generation taking leadership yet. Mohammed Ayoob, "How to Define a Muslim American Agenda," *New York Times*, Dec. 29, 2001.

87. Asma Gull Hasan, "First Betrayed by the Hijackers, Then by the Americans," *Pakistan Link*, Nov. 2, 2001, CL3, expresses the outrage of young American-born Muslims who feel suspicion and discrimination directed against them.