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Muslim Minorities in Victoria

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MUSLIM MEMORIES IN VICTORIA: BUILDING COMMUNITIES AND INTERFAITH RELATIONS FROM THE 1950S TO THE 1980S

Dr Dzavid Haveric*

Abstract: There is no history of Islam in Australia without a history of Muslim communities; there is no history of these Muslim communities without the memories of Australian Muslims. Within Australia's religiously pluralistic mosaic there is no history of the Muslim faith without sharing universal values with other faiths.

This paper is primarily based on empirical research undertaken in Victoria. It is a pioneering exploration of the building of multiethnic Muslim communities and interfaith relations from the 1950s to the 1980s. It is part of much broader research on the history of Islam in Australia. It is kaleidoscopic in its gathering of individual and family migrant memories from Muslims in all walks of life. It includes an older Muslim generation as well as those who came later, in subsequent waves. Muslim interviewees in the research were migrants of various ethnicities from Albania, Bosnia, Cyprus, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kosovo, Lebanon, Pakistan, Palestine, Sri Lanka, Syria, Turkey, Tanzania and Kenya. Muslim men and women are represented, and also those born in Australia. This research was enhanced by consulting Islamic and Christian archival sources.

Keywords: *Islam, Muslims, multiethnic, interfaith, religious centre*

BUILDING COMMUNITIES FROM THE 1950S TO THE 1980S

The Muslims who came to Victoria had various starting positions, differing goals and diverse experiences in their lives, but often shared 'common activities,' which allowed them to interact intra-religiously and also inter-religiously. Muslims in Victoria 'discovered' diversity within Islam that is even broader and more sophisticated than they found possible in their homelands because in Victoria they were able to meet fellow Muslims from many different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.¹ They met to build communities, practise their faith and form community resources for future generations – they contributed *collectively* in the making of history.

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¹ Dzavid Haveric, *History of the Bosnian Muslim Community in Australia: Settlement Experience in Victoria* (Germany: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2016).

By the mid-20th century, the Indo-Afghan Muslim community in Victoria was fragmented and had almost disappeared. The Afghan and Indian Muslims, however, have their rightful place in the early history of Australia. The new wave of migrants after the Second World War, particularly after 1950, included a number of European Muslims, including Cypriots, Bosnians and Albanians.² These were followed by Turks in the late 1960s and then Lebanese in the 1970s. Over time, the Victorian Muslim population has become extremely ethnically diverse, with Muslims coming from the Middle East, Africa, Southern and Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe and a multitude of other places.³ These early post-war immigrants encountered an almost complete absence of Islamic infrastructure in Victoria.⁴

About his first days in Victoria in 1950, Turkish Cypriot Ibrahim Dellal can remember how he and his friends, a Turk and a Bosnian, were pleased to see in Fawkner, a suburb of Melbourne, something that belonged to Islam in Australia – it was a Muslim ‘chapel’! Nearby, they saw an old Afghan gravesite. These were the surviving examples of the Islamic heritage of the old Afghan cameleers and Indian hawkers in Victoria. Dellal also remembered Rasheed Bey, the last ambassador of the Ottoman Empire in Australia:

The Ambassador’s office and home was in Toorak (Melbourne). He was sad because of the crumbling of the Ottoman Empire. He came much earlier to Australia. When I met him he was in his age of 70s. Rasheed Bey was also an artist, painting mainly Australian landscapes.⁵

Since 1950, an ‘unexpected Islamic renaissance’ in Victoria arose. It initiated from the post-WWII Muslim migration to Victoria, and these pioneers provided the original impulse for what is now an ongoing effort in community building.⁶ The post WWII re-vitalisation of Muslim communities was chiefly a result of migration.⁷ Starting from scratch, dispersed Muslim migrants in Victoria gradually grew together as tiny ethnic groups and then as a multiethnic community by following the Islamic creed and giving open expression to their faith experience. Unlike Perth, Adelaide or Brisbane, where old mosques existed, in Melbourne they began their religious life with prayers in people’s homes. The initial post-WWII Muslims in Victoria, who banded together to establish inaugural Islamic settings, were not from a single ethnic group – it was a small but ethnically diverse community that preceded the foundation of ethnically based mosques. This multiethnic community represents ‘trans-ethnic unity grounded in

² Ian Gillman, *Many Faiths One Nation: A Guide to the Major Faiths and Denominations in Australia* (Australia: Collins, 1988), 224.

³ Wafia Omar and Kirsty Allen, *The Muslims in Australia* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1996), 10.

⁴ Mario Peucker and Shahram Akbarzadeh, *Muslim Active Citizenship in the West* (London: Routledge: 2014), 146.

⁵ Ibrahim Dellal, interview by author (Victoria, 3.4. 2017).

⁶ Ali Kettani, “Challenges to the Organisation of Muslim Communities: The Case of Australia, a Successful Trial,” in *Political Participation and Identities of Muslims in Non-Muslim States*, eds. Wasif Shadid and Sjoerd van Koningsveld (Kampen, the Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1996), 21.

⁷ Peucker and Akbarzadeh, *Muslim Active Citizenship in the West*, 146.

religious identity.⁸ Islamic culture and religion sustained the bonds between Muslims that might have otherwise dissolved.⁹

In 1957, a small group of Muslims formed the Islamic Society in Victoria (ISV). The first president of the ISV was an Albanian Muslim named Dervish.¹⁰ The members of this society were European Muslims from Albania, Bosnia (Yugoslavia) and Cyprus. Among them was Jalal Deen, who was the secretary of the ISV.

Jalal Deen lived in Carlton. He was born in Australia, a son of an Indian merchant and an Australian wife, and ran his cloth shop in Johnston in Carlton. In character, Jalal was an Aussie, while in his spirit he was a Muslim.¹¹

Their community meetings were attended by about 20 Muslims. They sought a community in which positive values were kept alive. Gradually more Muslims began to arrive – Turks, Lebanese, Malaysians and a few Indonesians, as well some Indians and Pakistanis, who were mainly Colombo plan students coming to study in Melbourne. The Colombo plan was established in 1951 which enabled Asian students of diverse ethno-religious backgrounds from several neighbouring countries to study at Australian universities. Many Muslim students also joined the ISV.¹² However, Islam supplied the guidance for developing a *multiethnic* Muslim membership for the ISV in their new social life environment, giving decisive direction for understanding their experiences in their new country. Indeed Islam, their common faith, helped them to form a community – it was this early pioneering of Islamic institution building in Victoria. For multiethnic Muslim socialising, they hired a hall at the Savoy Theatre in Russell St as well as Richmond Hall or Collingwood Hall for Eid prayer.¹³ The establishment of the first Sunday schools in 1957 appeared to be an early effort by parents to provide Islamic education for their children. The school operated in rooms behind the old Savoy Theatre with 15 children of different Muslim ethnicities.

A group of Bosnian Muslims, who had heard Fehmi El-Imam from Lebanon had studied at a *madrasa* in Tripoli, approached him and asked him to take up the role of imam in Carlton. This was not only because of his Arabic language skills, but also because of his knowledge of Islam. His father was an imam in Tripoli, but Fehmi was mainly a self-educated Islamic scholar, apart from his theoretical studies of Islamic sciences in Tripoli. Ferid Muslimovic, a migrant from Bosnia, narrates:

Fehmi agreed to work as an imam on a voluntary basis. He didn't want to take payment or donations for himself; rather, he insisted that donations must be given to the mosque. For

⁸ Gary Bouma, *Mosques and Muslim Settlement in Australia* (Canberra: AGPS Brown Prior Anderson, 1994), 65-6.

⁹ Dellal, interview.

¹⁰ James Jupp, *Understanding Australian Multiculturalism* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service: 1966), 39.

¹¹ Abdul Khalid Kazi, interview by author (Victoria, 20.4. 2017).

¹² Nuim Khaiyath, interview by author (Victoria, 19.7. 2017).

¹³ Ferid Muslimovic, interview by author (Victoria, 5.5. 2017).

the Carlton mosque, a small community began its congregation each Friday led by Imam Fehmi.¹⁴

Most likely, Sheikh Fehmi did not imagine his career would mean moving into a religious role in Australia with a rewarding mission to lead the Muslim community, a noble career that would not only change his own life, but the lives of many Muslims in Victoria. A Bosnian Muslim said “Imam Fehmi was our father, educator and advisor.”¹⁵ At the same time, Dellal was active in organising community activities that have been recorded in his biography titled *The Struggle of Ibrahim* by Salih Yucel. Soon the Muslim community in Victoria would receive a scholarly impetus that would enhance its community development potential. It was the stimulus of Dr Kazi, an Islamic scholar from Pakistan, in the field of Islamic studies and Arabic, who completed his studies first in Pakistan, then in Cairo at al-Azhar University and finally in London.

In the community domain it was in Muslim terms, a ‘truly humbling beginning.’ From a tiny social capital, Muslims bonded together in this ‘meaningful construct’ in community building. In 1961, a small house in Carlton, 1008 Drummond Street, was adapted from a *masjid* to become an ‘Islamic centre’. The cost of the house was about £8,500. When El-Helou arrived from Syria, standing in the front of the *masjid*, he was surprised to see only a small brick house, nothing at all similar to the mosques in Damascus, Beirut or Istanbul. However, he soon learned the Muslim community was small and what he saw was the beginning of the building of a community.¹⁶ The Carlton *masjid* was a three bedroom house with a pleasant backyard. It had some shelves and rolled carpets. The house had a small tea room. In its very earliest phase most of multiethnic members were Bosnians and Arabs and a few Cypriots led Fehmi El-Imam.¹⁷ In this old house in Carlton, the earliest Muslim settlers would hold ‘get-togethers’ – some regularly, others occasionally. In 1965, a group of Muslim women gathered at the Islamic centre in Carlton and formed an organisation named the Muslim Ladies’ Auxiliary.¹⁸ It represented an important historical milestone as the role of Muslim women from different ethnic backgrounds was recognised and appreciated.

At Melbourne University, a federal Australian Islamic body was established in 1964 at the Department of Semitic Studies. This historical conference was sponsored by the ISV and was the first official conference of the Australian Federation of Islamic Societies (AFIS, later renamed Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC)). The conference’s agenda included: (1) the formal opening of the conference by the president of the ISV; (2) discussion and ratification of the constitution and the foundation of the AFIS; (3) the general education of children; (3) the education of adults; (4) cultural affairs; (5) social welfare of Muslims living

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Ehasan El-Helou, interview by author (Victoria, 20.8. 2017).

¹⁷ Beco Bilic, interview by author (Victoria, 10.7. 2017).

¹⁸ Muslimovic, interview.

in and visiting Australia; (6) an all-Australia Islamic journal; and (7) resolutions for the advancement of Islam in Australia.¹⁹

This organisational structure, founded on an implicit multi-ethnicity, came to symbolise the ‘rebirth of Islam in Australia.’²⁰ In Victoria, Muslim leaders of various backgrounds, most notably Ibrahim Dellal, Dr Abdul Khaliq Kazi and Imam Fehmi, would lead development of the multiethnic Muslim community for over 50 years through many challenges. They developed a greater insight into the Muslim community and beyond the Muslim community about what it means to be living the Islamic faith in a religiously pluralistic Australia. The members have benefitted enormously as they have grown a multiethnic Muslim community in Victoria. Simultaneously, the community plans were already in train to find more suitable premises. It appeared Preston would be the new location. At the same time, in the public domain, perceptions about Islam and Muslims were persistently puzzling.

At that time Australians didn’t use the word Muslim; rather they said ‘Islamic man’. People in Melbourne did not talk of mosque; rather they spoke of ‘Muslim church’. People around us didn’t know what a mosque was. Muslim women wearing *hijab* were perceived as ‘nuns.’²¹

With the passage of time, Muslims, through encounters, learned there were also Jews, Christians and followers of other faiths in their neighbourhood. Proximity helped them to mutually get to know each other better and respect each other. As with other religions, Islam insists that maintaining good neighbourhood relations is important.

At that historical point, Islam could be said to be ‘surviving,’ even as commitment to the faith was made more difficult as Muslim people in their families and relationships became increasingly isolated from each other, particularly due to geographical distances. With such isolation comes great pressure, even spiritual pressure, to simply conform to Australia’s assimilation policies. In fact, after arriving in Australia, considerable numbers of Muslims loosened their religious ties. The following story is a case in point:

My spiritual journey began in 1969. I came from the Middle East to Melbourne with my relatives as a child. We lived in a distant part of Melbourne, so were isolated from the community which was still small and dispersed. However, as a young girl, I was a ‘social butterfly’ playing netball, volleyball and had many Australian friends. Being born a Muslim, as a child I didn’t speak Arabic and didn’t have an English translation of the Qur’an at home. When Jehovah’s Witnesses visited our home preaching their faith, I welcomed them. In conversation with them, I expanded my knowledge of English, tried to understand other faiths and even began to read Bible stories. I went to a mass in the Kingdom Hall of that denomination. At school in Fawkner I also studied the Bible. I adopted an anglicised name. Although I was open to other religions, I began struggling about being assimilated.

¹⁹ Dzavid Haveric, *The Australian Minaret: Outline of the periodicals published from 1961 to 1971* (Victoria: One World Publishing, 2013) 35.

²⁰ Mary Lucille Jones, “Muslim Impact on Early Australian Life,” in *An Australian Pilgrimage: Muslims in Australia from the Seventeenth Century to the Present*, ed. Mary Lucille Jones (Melbourne: Victoria Press, 1993).

²¹ Mohamed Habib, interview by author (Victoria, 5.5. 2017); Omar Hallak, interview by author (Victoria, 3.8. 2017); El-Helou, interview.

Subsequently, the exploring of individuality by searching for my own religious identity was a challenge for me – You have to reflect and ponder because you cannot embrace religion without study. When I found the Qur'an my father encouraged me to read and study it and in time I understood the message of the Qur'an and that enhanced my spiritual journey as a Muslim. I believe that all three Abrahamic religions have much more in common than differences. I still love other religions and respect them. By exploring my religious identity I felt more comfortable in returning to the path of Islam.²²

Furthermore, in the late 1960s, Ramzys' parents who came from Lebanon were concerned that if they stayed longer in Colac, a small town in the Western District of Victoria, their children would be assimilated completely as there was no Muslim community in the area. They moved to Melbourne and enrolled their children in Preston mosque's Sunday school.²³ Undeniably, practising the Islamic faith under the challenges of assimilation where a mosque did not exist was hard, especially in rural settings. Mohamed Hassan, a migrant from Egypt, recalls: "We lived in Bendigo from 1970 to 1982 and it was difficult there to find other Muslim families. There was no *jumma* (Friday prayer) congregation in the country town – we had to travel to Shepparton or Melbourne for holidays and Eid. It was the lack of halal (permissible) food and *wudu* (cleansing rituals) at work – no Islamic burial was allowed – just a coffin, no cloth shroud was allowed."²⁴ Goga, a migrant from Albania, also remarks, when Eid celebrations or *janaza* (burial services) were held, they travelled to Shepparton. This long distance prompted them to build a mosque in Melbourne. The community was far away and there was no electronic communication. Telephone calls were expensive; only telegrams were used if someone died.²⁵ Another story reflects this isolation:

In Bendigo, the very first Muslim we met was a Turk, then Indonesian, Egyptian and South African families. All together there were only five families. At the Egyptian family's house all the kids learned Arabic. During Ramadan at our home we invited four Malaysian students from my school for *iftar* [meal during Ramadan] and we prayed together, led by my father. But, social life for this tiny Muslim community in Bendigo was isolated. Later, we moved to Melbourne...²⁶

Despite these persistent struggles, the community continued to grow and new initiatives, in time, prevailed. In this regard, the most illustrious example is Preston Mosque. The members of the ISV in 1967 first rented an old house at 90 Cramer St, Preston. Jalal Deen found the weatherboard house and it was purchased when it was put up for sale.²⁷ The Preston premises was considered the first multiethnic Islamic centre. In this old house, various Muslim ethnic groups would hold 'get-togethers'. Even a few years later it was the Preston headquarters of the AFIS. Later, its office moved to North Melbourne before buying a three-storey premises in Jeffcott Street for the Islamic Council of Victoria.²⁸ In the early days of the Preston *masjid*

²² Anonymous informant, interview by author (Victoria, 6.6. 2017).

²³ Ramzi Elsayed, interview by author (Victoria, 9.7. 2017).

²⁴ Mohamed Hassan, online interview by author (Victoria, 15.8 2017).

²⁵ Vahid Goga, interview by author (Victoria, 17.8. 2017).

²⁶ Tasneem and Fatima Chopra, interviews by author (Victoria, 28.8. 2017).

²⁷ Muslimovic, interview.

²⁸ Dellal, interview; El-Helou, interview.

there was no Turkish-centric, nor Arab-centric or Bosnian-centric board control. It was rather a multiethnic and welcoming space. Muslim women were neither excluded nor segregated – “it was an organic and natural interaction.”²⁹ Among themselves there were “no words in conversation on Shia and Sunni Muslim differences ... we all were together and were proud of our own ethnic backgrounds.” The spirit of tolerance was dominant.³⁰ Only after the Iranian Revolution did this become more prominent. There was no curtain inside the mosque between men and women. While men prayed in a front row, women followed with their row.³¹

Deciding to build the mosque led to further mobilisation, negotiation and lobbying. The next step was to plan a suitably designed mosque. While the establishment of a religious setting in Carlton was temporary, the building of the mosque in Preston by replacing the ‘weatherboard house’ on the same block of land was fundamental in growing roots into Victorian soil. And this community initiative was reinforced by the new Muslim arrivals who also took part in those activities.

A number of Muslims contributed to the establishment of Preston Mosque. The early 1970s was a time of a huge influx of Muslims settling in Victoria, such as Lebanese and Turks.³² During the 1970s, Indian Muslims, such as Hayderbadis from the princely state of Hyderabad, came to Victoria as professionals or academics. In that period, Omar Hallak, originally from Palestine, became the President of the ISV for three successive terms (1973-1985). When he came to Preston, he found “early Bosnian and Turkish Muslims [among them a former presidents of the Preston community and a treasurer], as well as one Muslim from Russia.” During Hallak’s presidency, Preston Mosque and community centre would be built.³³

In the early 1970s, Sheikh Fehmi was appointed as the full-time imam with the ISV and embarked on an ambitious project to build a large Islamic centre in Preston. Sheikh Fehmi searched for donors in the USA, Europe and Middle East – Saudi Arabia was the most successful donor. Dr Kazi also went to Saudi Arabia and met King Malik Faisal. The King of Saudi Arabia was “not only interested in building the mosque, but in the establishment of Islam in Australia.” He requested research and an assessment on this matter. This historical mission was principally undertaken by Dr Ali Kettani, an advisor to King Faisal, with the cooperation of Australian authorities. Dr Kettani visited a number of places across Australia and, after his assessment, the King approved “the donation in value of \$2.2 million for the mosque in Preston [Melbourne], Lakemba [Sydney], Brisbane, Darwin and other places. It was a huge injection of funding,” said Elsayed.

When the mosque began to be built, a building committee of five members was elected. Elected members were Victorian Muslims of different ethnic backgrounds: Dr Kazi (Pakistan), Dr Abidin Tarik (Indonesia), Sheikh Fehmi (Lebanon), Ibrahim Dellal (Cyprus) and Beco Bilic (Bosnia), who was the construction technician. This committee organised the building of the

²⁹ Elsayed, interview.

³⁰ Bilic, interview.

³¹ Elsayed, interview.

³² Ammar Sachak, “Profiles of Prominent Victorian Muslims,” *La Trobe Journal* 89 (2012): 105-106.

³³ Hallak, interview.

mosque, engaged labourers and supervised the construction.³⁴ According to El-Helou, the architect Abasi Sherif (Egypt) made “the project design for the mosque.” In support of their community development, books began arriving from the Middle East, India, Pakistan, Lebanon, Egypt, England, the USA, Turkey and Bosnia. The AFIS received copies of the Qur’an, Hadith, Islamic booklets, prayer books and books for children and distributed them within the Muslim communities.³⁵

A turning point in the history of Islam in Victoria was the opening of Preston Mosque, named Omar Bin Al Khattab Mosque. On the opening day, Sheikh Fehmi was heavily engaged – “it was a big day, a massive day.” Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, Saudi Arabian Ambassador on behalf of Saudi government as major donors, and other distinguished guests and the Australian media attended.³⁶ Prime Minister Gough Whitlam opened the mosque and gave a donation. About 400-500 people attended the opening mosque celebrations. Whitlam started his speech with Salam Alaykum – “it was a very nice and welcoming speech.” Representatives from Preston Council, the Catholic Bishop, Victorian architects and many friends of diverse backgrounds attended.³⁷ It provided an enormous sense of pride for Victorian Muslims. During the ceremony, Isaaf El-Helou was seated next to Whitlam. She was very proud of having a brief chat with the Prime Minister of Australia. She remembered Whitlam asked her “how did you find Australia?” “The prime minister was a genuine, good man,” she said. When the building of the mosque was accomplished, Dr Ali Kettan also visited the Muslim community in Preston.³⁸

Other important aspects in the life of Victorian Muslims included publishing an Islamic journal the *Australian Minaret* under the auspices of AFIC from 1971 with an editorial board chaired by Kazi. In 1975, Hallak also established an Islamic publication and printing press. In 1976, he edited and published *Al Hidayah* monthly magazine in Arabic and English.³⁹ The establishment of first halal butcher shop, Istanbul Halal Meats, on Sydney Road was a good move in satisfying dietary requirements.⁴⁰ During the mid-1980s, more halal shops emerged.⁴¹ In the past, the Muslim community in Preston used the design and lettering characters marked by a stencil to produce an Islamic calendar. Although Ehasan’s first Islamic calendar was stencilled, his first printed *Hijri* calendar (Islamic calendar) was made in 1983 with a big picture of Mecca. This calendar, with a common prayer timetable, was distributed with the intention of it being used by and uniting all Muslims across Australia.⁴²

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, the AFIC youth camps were especially popular among school-going youth in their search for an Australian Muslim identity. The highly

³⁴ Bilic, interview.

³⁵ Habib, interview; Bilic, interview.

³⁶ Elsayed, interview.

³⁷ Habib, interview.

³⁸ El-Helou, interview.

³⁹ Hallak, interview.

⁴⁰ Hassan, interview.

⁴¹ Elsayed, interview.

⁴² El-Helou, interview.

successful AFIC youth camps provided suitable educational, sporting and entertainment programs for young students. A lot of community energy, voluntary dedication and money were invested into the annual Muslim youth camps. Most of people involved in organising the Muslim youth camps considered it as a worthwhile and rewarding activity in the cultivation of younger Muslim generations.⁴³ Tasneem Chopra, a Kenyan born, remembers:

After going to youth camps I have lifetime friendships. Many of my friends in the camps were Egyptians, Syrians, Bosnians, Turks, South Africans, Indians, Lebanese, Singaporean, Malaysians and a Bulgarian. There is great cultural diversity among Muslims in Australia. We learned a scholarly program called BIK – *basic Islamic knowledge* – we ran sports activities such as canoeing, archery and volleyball; and we sang, told stories and read poetry for entertainment as well as holding an award ceremony.

My teacher understood my religious belonging and taught me that I am a Muslim Australian and/or an Australian Muslim.⁴⁴

Muslim voluntary work increasingly became community-oriented, expressed in a variety of volunteer initiatives in and around the Preston community. Many Muslim men took part in volunteer work. For instance, Hallak drove a bus picking up children and bringing them to their classroom at the mosque. He also taught Arabic and the Qur'an in the Albanian Mosque in Carlton as well as Preston Mosque. Wafa's father, originally from Lebanon, formed a group of seven or eight men going in two cars to visit sick and elderly Muslim community members.⁴⁵ A few years earlier, Bosnians also formed their social welfare organisation in Preston.⁴⁶ During Eid celebrations, more Muslim men volunteered at large gatherings of Victorian Muslims, assisting members in organising that occasion.⁴⁷ Eid celebrations from 1972 to the 1980s were described in these terms:

There was much to enjoy, as Muslim men and women from various ethnicities gathered; kids were running around, they all felt a sense of community.⁴⁸

Muslim women set a fine example by their splendid contribution to the Islamic communities in Victoria. They played a crucial role in the community. They cared for the children and brought them to Sunday school, prepared food in canteens, and for Ramadan they prepared *iftar* (sunset meal). Just like some skilled Muslim men who washed the dead bodies of men as part of funeral services, some skilled Muslim women took on the same role for deceased Muslim women. Muslim women also cleaned the mosque, assisted in organising functions and also taught children the Qur'an and Hadith – “they spread a sense of generosity, and their kindness still resonates in memories.”⁴⁹ Muslim women sent articles to the Islamic journal of the *Australian Minaret* or were involved in administrative duties. For instance, when the AFIC

⁴³ Haveric, *The Australian Minaret*, 25.

⁴⁴ Tasneem Chopra, interview; Ahmad El-Helou, interview by author (Victoria, 17.8. 2017).

⁴⁵ Wafa Fahour, interview by author (Victoria, 17.8. 2017).

⁴⁶ Muslimovic, interview.

⁴⁷ Dellal, interview.

⁴⁸ Elsayed, interview.

⁴⁹ Elsayed, interview; Habib, interview. Salah Salman interview by author (Victoria, 21.7. 2017).

office was in North Melbourne, a Bosnian woman was the receptionist. She was fluent in English and also acted as an interpreter.⁵⁰

Faith-based organisations in Victoria included Islamic schools, which may have “evolved out of the migration and the settlement process”⁵¹, but also arose due to a thirst for knowledge and educational requirements suitable for young Muslims. King Khalid from Saudi Arabia was the main donor for the primary school named in his honour. The King Khalid School in 1983 was the first Muslim school accredited by the government and today it is also accredited as an academy. The school began with 63 students – boys and girls – and now it has over 600 students. As a Muslim community venture, it has used education to spread knowledge and generate a sense of fulfilment and happiness. When the school held an open day, it was “one of my happiest days in Australia,” said Salah Salman, the principal. Soon Werribee Islamic College (1986) was established followed by Minaret College (1992), Ilim College (1995), Sirius College (formerly Isik College, 1997) and East Preston Islamic College (1998).

Subsequently, during the 1970s and especially the 1980s, the majority of mosques were established along ethno-linguistic lines and geographical locations of Muslim settlement.⁵² Ethnically-established mosques and other Muslim institutions emerged in direct response to the growth and challenges among Muslims and their community needs.⁵³ Then it appeared apparent that Muslim communities needed to take on *ethnic* forms – “ethnicising Islam.” This developed through the Islamic community board, management of mosque affairs and its membership, but also, equally important, the emphasis given to ethnic community languages. Muslims in diverse lingual communities still retained multiethnic connections. One could say these connections were made externally and internally – externally by going to other mosques or visiting other ethnic Muslim communities, and internally by welcoming other Muslims to their mosque and ethnic community. A common language and the ritual regulation of life, as determined by shared religious belief among particular ethnicities, were conducive to fomenting feelings of religious ethnic affinity.⁵⁴ Hence, not only sectarian characteristics and groupings, but linguistic and cultural-traditional practices, enhanced Muslim ethnic communities.

Each mosque by its nature is multiethnic, but in terms of its governance is managed by a particular ethnic board and membership. Early examples of this were the Albanian Muslim community in Carlton (1967), the Turkish Muslim community in Coburg (1971) and the Bosnian Muslim community in Footscray (early 1970s). The Lebanese Muslim community continued to be centred at Preston Mosque, while the Egyptian Muslim community became

⁵⁰ El-Helou, interview.

⁵¹ Michael Humphrey, “An Australian Islam? Religion in the Multicultural City” in *Muslim Communities in Australia*, eds. Abdullah Saeed and Shahram Akbarzadeh (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2015), 35.

⁵² Haveric, *History of the Bosnian Muslim Community in Australia*; Omar and Allen, *The Muslims in Australia*.

⁵³ Anthony Johns and Abdullah Saeed, *Muslims in Australia: The Building of a Community*, in *Muslim Minorities in the West*, eds. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Jane Smith (California: Altamira Press, 2002).

⁵⁴ Montserrat Guibernau and John Rex, eds., *The Ethnicity: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Migration* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press: 1997), 24.

well established in Heidelberg. Diverse Muslim ethnic settings have multiplied since the 1980s. Furthermore, when Omer Ergi, a Turkish Muslim, arrived in Victoria in 1974 his first place was Fatih Mosque in Coburg, the first Turkish mosque in Victoria. It looked like a “little Istanbul.” In the Turkish ethnic community in and around Fatih Mosque, Turkish was spoken and Turkish tea was served. There he met many Turkish Muslims, some of whom had migrated earlier. In 1981, an Albanian imam, Sheik Rexhep Idrizi, came to the Albanian Mosque in Coburg and there he met many Albanian Muslim members, including an old and wise Albanian, Memet Zuka, a founder of the ethnic Albanian Islamic community.

Multi-ethnicity retained its vital role, this time through the Board of Imams Victoria (BOIV), founded in 1984. This multiethnic Muslim organisation was also supported by various early Muslim representatives. It has a membership of about 27 imams of different ethnic backgrounds with a mission of promoting positive relations between Muslims and people of different faiths, living in harmony and building a more cohesive society with greater public understanding of Islamic teaching. In fact, to the degree that Australia’s multiculturalism seeks social harmony by promoting the meaningful fulfilment of what belongs to a shared humanity, it will thereby embrace *all* cultural, ethnic, racial and religious diversity.

INTERFAITH RELATIONS FROM THE 1950S TO THE 1980S

In a pluralistic society, such as Australia, in which individual religious conviction is determined by one of a number of faith traditions, social cohesion is enhanced by common participation in interreligious harmony created by all combined beliefs. Such harmony was made achievable by personal religious testimony and respecting the values of different systems of beliefs as well as understanding one’s common humanity. For all their diversity, there are certain properties that religions hold in common, including divine ground from which humankind has sprung. It is also a belief that is woven together by the Abrahamic faiths – Judaism, Christianity and Islam — as well as by other faith traditions and beliefs, including Aboriginal spirituality.

The principles for interfaith dialogue are particularly precious for *all* faiths and their shared values are also in accord with the Golden Rule – “do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Every religion has some version of the Golden Rule, sharing the Ethic of Reciprocity.⁵⁵ These virtues are helpful in looking at the problematic realities that concern us as human beings. Indeed, to discover our own faith is profoundly in agreement with others is an encouraging experience.⁵⁶

The religious history of Muslims in Victoria has moved forward. Islam found its place next to the Judeo-Christian religions and cultural traditions as well as those of other faiths and beliefs. New historical developments, after the initial building of Muslim communities,

⁵⁵ Huston Smith, *The World’s Religions: Our Great Wisdom Traditions* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991), 385.

⁵⁶ Karen Armstrong, *The Great Transformation: The World in the Time of Buddha, Socrates, Confucius and Jeremiah* (London: Atlantic Books, 2006), xii-xv.

simultaneously included Muslim interfaith contacts and then the gradual building of interfaith networks. It was another important historical process because Muslim interfaith involvement with followers of other faiths has now become an integral part of Australian history. Their mutual encountering and cooperation with different religious adherents confirms that Muslims not only recognised but embraced the multicultural and multi-religious values of Australia. Interfaith initiatives galvanised the community into finding new ways to maintain their own identity and values, but also to accept and respect the diverse identities and values of others.

Islam served not only as a unifying bond that holds Muslims together, it also provided a basis for identity with non-members of the faith. Chronologically, interfaith relations began at the personal level, followed by professional and academic levels, and then at a community level.

In the 1950s, interfaith relations at a personal level were in terms of informal contact and acquaintance. First, interfaith encounters occurred during the Eid or Christmas holidays through mutual visiting between neighbours and friends, and the sharing and distribution of small gifts, a long lasting tradition.⁵⁷ During Ramadan, Muslims offered *iftar* to share with followers of other faiths; while at Christmas, Muslims were invited by Christian friends for Christmas cake. These were situations of cultural heterogeneity. Melbourne offered a mix of people from different cultures, as Dr Habib, an Indian Muslim, further explains:

As a Muslim, I have to use only the food permitted to Muslims according to Islamic dietary requirements, so in such a situation I was served with soft drinks and often veggies. But we learn of different cultures through mutual respect and cultural-religious sensitivity. In other words, I am with them but – I know what I do and what I don't want. I don't want to hurt anyone by what I don't like.

On a personal level in the 1960s, Dr Kazi participated in numerous pioneering interfaith dialogues with Christians and Jews. He also joined interfaith groups. There were three groups – Jewish and Christian representatives and Dr Kazi as a Muslim representative. “We came and went, we met and talked in the Jewish Centre in Toorak,” said Dr Kazi. Ibrahim Dellal and Sheikh Fehmi attended interfaith meetings to build bridges with diverse religious followers. Mainly on an individual basis, they approached local councils asking to hire a hall for Muslim festivals. Nuim Khaiyath, a migrant from Indonesia, was involved in a number of interfaith conversations giving lectures across Victoria, including Geelong Grammar School in Geelong and Scotch College in Hawthorn. In the early 1970s at Scotch College he met an Anglican priest while he was giving lectures on Islam and Indonesia. Discussion developed on the similarities among monotheistic religions.⁵⁸ With the passage of time, the religious education syllabi of 10 schools in Victoria included an exploration of other faiths. Many schools also indicated their attempt to promote tolerance and understanding of other faiths.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Nur Shkemi, interview by author (Victoria, 10.8. 2017).

⁵⁸ Khaiyath, interview.

⁵⁹ David Penman, *A Garden of Many Colours: A Report of the Archbishop's Commission on Multi-cultural Ministry and Mission* (Melbourne, Victoria: Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, 1985), 95.

However, going to a Christian school then meant deepening knowledge of Christianity and Islamic-Christian understanding. In the early years, a number of young Muslim students went to Christian schools, as there were no Islamic schools in Victoria. For instance, Wafa and her siblings were enrolled in St Bridget's Catholic School in North Fitzroy. Nuns were their teachers. Their father encouraged them to take part in church activities and respect other faiths, even going regularly to church as part of the school curriculum. Then Wafa went to the public Preston Girls High School.⁶⁰ Chopra also states:

My everyday interaction with different religious followers was the *norm*. But to see a Muslim, it was an *exception*, as Muslims were in small numbers. I went to an Anglican high school. I had religious instruction classes on Christianity. My friend was a Christian priest's daughter. With my parents I went to church services in Bendigo. We attended church funerals; we went to many Christmas parties, every time we were invited by different Christian families. We never labelled or categorised them and vice versa.

The university environment was an excellent opportunity to meet non-Muslim scholars, such as Christian theologians. Interfaith relations at an academic level have included cooperation and networking with university staff. Studies in comparative religions were special opportunities to obtain knowledge from other faith traditions. An Anglican Archbishop, David Penman (d. 1989), formerly a deacon and ordained priest, was a student of Dr Kazi at the University of Melbourne. Penman's hard work on Muslim-Christian dialogue perceived the need to understand the Muslim world in order to have dialogue with it. Dr Kazi gave an introduction to Islam, the Qur'an and Hadith as well as Sufism. These were Islamic subjects within the context of comparative Abrahamic faiths where scholars of other religions also taught Judeo-Christian thought promoting interfaith dialogue.⁶¹ In an ecumenical sense, Penman became a key partner in interfaith dialogue. Later, Penman undertook missionary work in Pakistan and the Middle East.

At the University of Melbourne, Islamic scholars, most notably Dr Abdul Khalid Kazi, became leading Muslim representatives in early interfaith dialogues and encounters. During Dr Kazi's early academic career, Australian students often came to study at the University of Melbourne at the Department for Semitic Studies where Hebrew, Aramaic and Arabic were taught. In essence, "it was studies of these languages." Then it developed into "Middle Eastern thought and culture" as a part of Biblical studies and Islamic studies within the context of comparative religions studies. For that development, Professor John Bowman, "had a dynamic spirit behind it," stated Dr Kazi. Another example was a Jesuit priest, John G. Flynn, also formerly Dr Kazi's student on Muslim sects and divisions (Book of Religious and Philosophical Sects). Through their interfaith cooperation, both of them worked on, translated and formulated a book in which Dr Kazi also explained the theological structure in Islam. The book was based on a book of the same name – *Kitab al-Milal wa-al-Nihāl* by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Karim Shahrīstānī.⁶²

⁶⁰ Fahour, interview.

⁶¹ Kazi, interview.

⁶² Ibid.

An important historical event occurred when the Religious Centre at Monash University was established in 1968. It was a turning point in Victorian Muslim interfaith history and would gradually challenge Muslim groups to take part in interfaith activities. The opening of the Religious Centre was widely reported across Melbourne. From the beginning, setting up the Religious Centre at Monash University was a venture of imagination and courage. The Religious Centre was planned by the Christian and Jewish communities of Melbourne as a space that “could be used by all religious groups” – “the circular form of the building as a symbol of unity, eternity and ecumenical feeling.”⁶³

Janssen in the Monash University Religious Centre pointed out the centre (the large chapel) was used for Christian and Jewish services, Muslim prayers, Bible studies, Catholic confession, and meetings of religious societies, interfaith discussion and gatherings, as well as joint ceremonies. In the small chapel, mass and eastern meditation were held. The Religious Centre helped to create trust between the members of the various traditions. A series of discussions in 1979 on Christianity, Judaism and Islam were held – there were discussions on “Jewish-Christian, Muslim-Christian and Buddhist-Christian relations.”⁶⁴ With the growth of a significant non-Western student population, the centre was increasingly used by other faith groups, particularly Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus. The use by Muslim students was so great “they paid for the installation of special footbaths for the ablutions prior to prayer.” There was no doubt that contact between people of different religions was made easier at Monash University than elsewhere because it had a religious centre, a building shared by all religious societies.⁶⁵

While numerous Christian scholars and missionaries went to the Muslim world, Muslim scholars also arrived in Western countries, including Australia, Canada, the USA and UK – it was an exchange of inter-civilisational wisdom and interfaith experience. In the 1980s, instead of going to al-Azhar in Cairo or the Islamic University of Medina in Saudi Arabia, students from Indonesia began coming to Australia. For instance, some Indonesian Colombo plan students came to Melbourne to do PhD research at Monash and Melbourne universities. Among them was a scholar – Mohammad Bambang Pranowo – who joined the Islamic Study Group. He was a student at Monash University from 1985-1991 and then became a professor at Jakarta University. There was also a group called the Indonesian Study Group, which held meetings each Tuesday at Monash University and had about 15-20 members. It had occasional interfaith gatherings and its topics were about Islam and other religions.⁶⁶

Since the 1960s, Muslims were culturally very sensitive towards other religions and their followers, but also a spirit of acceptance of others would prevail.⁶⁷ Dr Habib’s relationship with diverse religious followers was excellent: “they were very helpful and everything you need they will come to help – it is a harmonious atmosphere,” he said, further pointing out

⁶³ Penman, *A Garden of Many Colours and Mission*, 79.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Peter Janssen, *Monash University Religious Centre* (Clayton, Melbourne: Monash University Religious Centre, 1984), 39.

⁶⁶ Khaiyath, interview.

⁶⁷ Habib, interview; Khaiyath, interview.

“there were interfaith dialogues at Monash University between Jewish, Christian, and the Muslim group with an imam.” The Ecumenical Migration Centre (formerly the European-Australian Christian Fellowship) was established in 1962 as a non-denominational agency for the welfare, education and community development of migrants, such as Greeks and Turks.⁶⁸ It worked state-wide and across “ethnic, faith and language boundaries for the full participation of migrants and refugees.” The interfaith sharing of these universal values of humanity and Islamic belief made it easier for Muslim migrants to settle and adapt in Australia. At the same time, “an Australian ethos of Islam within a multi-religious diversity” was developing.⁶⁹ In 1967, *The Australian Minaret* asked: How can Islam be adapted to the Australian way of life?

First of all, we who belong to the Islamic community believe that Islam, as are other religions, is a religion of humanity. Many people genuinely seek the Truth. They have a real desire to find God and above all they wish to be at peace with the Divine Will. To be adapted to the new Australian environment it is important to nourish a way of life which is well-balanced.⁷⁰

At the community level, Muslim interfaith activities in Victoria during the early 1970s had a “very low profile.”⁷¹ There were a number of reasons for the slow interfaith development, including the lack of proficiency and communication in English. As well, there were limitations in education, insufficient social capital and restriction on transport as many did not have cars – “community was more inward-focused, it supported community members instead of interfaith engagement,” outlined Goga.⁷²

However, interfaith understanding between communities was recognising that the integrity and particularity of each faith must be appreciated and upheld. Penman, in *A Garden of Many Colours*, wrote that various faiths can be seen as communities of followers who hold to a body of diverse ideas, principles and doctrines – sometimes these were clearly set out, as in the five pillars of Islam.⁷³ In 1984, the Anglican *Church Scene*, wrote about the task:

[it is important]...to identify and marshal words, art-forms, shared symbolic expressions, to enrich the celebration of broad alliances in which many Christians would join – for peace, preservation of the environment, social action, interethnic fellowship, dialogue between faiths.⁷⁴

From the early 1970s, interfaith relations were awakened and gradually found a place, for example mosque open days as well as Eid celebrations. Local politicians were invited to the mosque opening in Preston in 1977. During Eid festivals, Christian and Jewish friends visited the Muslim community in Preston, offering their help, while Muslims were quick to reciprocate. There was significant interfaith support for the building of mosques. This was

⁶⁸ Penman, *A Garden of Many Colours*, 101.

⁶⁹ Mohamed El Erian, *Jamjoom: A Profile of Islam: Past, Present and Future* (Melbourne: Islamic Publications, 1990), 101–2.

⁷⁰ Haveric, *The Australian Minaret*, 59.

⁷¹ Khaiyath, interview.

⁷² Goga, interview.

⁷³ Penman, *A Garden of Many Colours*, 40.

⁷⁴ Church Scene, National Anglican newspaper, issued May 25, 1984, Yearly Book, Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, North Fitzroy Victoria.

shown in a variety of ways. For instance, a long standing community leader Memet Zuka collected donations for the Albanian Mosque in Carlton, and even sought donations from different religious denominations within the same nationality. Donations were not only given by Albanian Muslims, but also by Albanian Catholics and Eastern Orthodox Christians.⁷⁵

Moreover in the mid-1970s, with the approval of the local authority, Bosnian Muslims renovated an old church in Nicholson Street, Footscray, and transformed it into a Muslim prayer room. This was one of earliest examples of how productive cross-cultural and inter-religious understanding was fomented between Muslims and the majority Christian residents. The local council, in turn, gave its support to the development of Bosnian Muslim community facilities. Some other early Muslim communities followed similar patterns, which in subsequent years would lead to the establishment of Islamic centres and mosques in other localities where Muslims resided. For instance, in Noble Park a 1950s Catholic church complex was purchased and became the property of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Islamic Society of Noble Park.⁷⁶

Hassan remembered his early interfaith days during the 1970s when Christmas functions were held at his workplace in Bendigo: “we listened to Carols by Candlelight and visited churches for interfaith conversations with Christian friends.” In 1976, in Bendigo, the first Christian-Muslim Interfaith Conference was organised by Hassan between the Islamic Council of Victoria and Anglican and Catholic ministers, with international speakers. The AFIC president, Professor Mohamed El Erian, also attended this conference.⁷⁷ As the building of a mosque was often the concern of Muslims, interfaith understanding was very important. Hassan also narrates:

In the 1980s we [Egyptian community leaders] approached the Anglican Church to purchase a church in Lloyd Street, Heidelberg, for the Elsedeq Egyptian Islamic Society. The priest rejected the approach. I contacted an Anglican priest I knew from an interfaith conversation and we arranged a meeting with him, the Heidelberg priest and a few members from our society. They met three to five of us, mostly teachers and engineers. They realised we were just normal families and had much in common, then agreed to the sale to keep the place a house of worship.

In the 1980, the Department for Migrants, Refugees and Ethnic Affairs established a principle for interfaith action: ‘you should not bear false witness against your neighbour’. By 1981, the department was actively encouraging face-to-face and faith-to-faith encounters.⁷⁸ Hence, in 1984, an Ecumenical Forum was held in Melbourne. Anglicans, Catholics, an Eastern Orthodox Christian priest and other representatives participated with Muslims in sharing common values from different religious viewpoints. About 50-60 people were at the form. They talked about living together harmoniously by following the Holy Scriptures. One of speakers was Sheik Fehmi. Christians explained to Muslims their religious teaching and

⁷⁵ Rexhep Idrizi, interview with author (Victoria, 2017).

⁷⁶ Dzavid Haveric, *History of the Bosnian Muslim Community in Australia*.

⁷⁷ Hassan, interview.

⁷⁸ Penman, *A Garden of Many Colours*, 48.

Muslims did the same to Christians. At that occasion, prayers were performed separately, but through ecumenical dialogues, similarities between faiths were discovered. For instance, “Muslims learnt that Eastern Orthodox Christians prayed five times daily and that nuns cover their heads similar to Muslim women,” remarked Elsayed.

In interfaith relations it is important that people respect each other, learning to cooperate, learning to agree and disagree. Everybody should learn that the ‘other person is better’ – it has a positive impact – but at the same time you must have self-respect. If you believe in God there is no reason for disharmony. Sitting and talking is the best...⁷⁹

Professor Akhtar Kalam, an Indian Muslim from Victoria University, also took part in interfaith relations. Earlier, he worked in India with Mother Teresa helping people with leprosy, and was given a Service to Humanity award by the Pope, a recognition presented to him by Cardinal Ritchie. Working as a Muslim chaplain at Victoria University, he promoted interfaith understanding and social cohesion. Since the early 1980s, there was a broader diversity of faiths at universities. Interfaith relations at Victoria University were “healthy, cooperative, understandable and peaceful.” Since he came to Victoria University he had friends from Hindu, Jewish, Christian and other backgrounds. There was a mutual respect – “His religion is his. My religion is mine.” Further, “no religion is bad – if you follow your religion you can be a good person,” outlines Professor Kalam. Showing mutual respect for the religious beliefs of others also reflects love for God. Dr Aladin Zayegh, a Syrian Muslim also from Victoria University, narrates:

A mother of a little daughter said I want to ‘make’ you, my daughter, Muslim. Why? Your behaviour, as my neighbour, is an example of kindness and respect. I wish my daughter to respect her parents. Well, for any person to behave well and respect parents, each religion is good.

While religious education and maintaining positive relations were critical factors in practising one’s religion, interfaith activities were vital for mutual understanding and support by those of other faiths.⁸⁰ In this way, Salman asserted, from the first days Muslims and followers of different faiths, including parents and teachers, joined and supported King Khalid School. The Catholic Church supported the school from its earliest days, from the time when a permit had to be obtained, to the submissions made during efforts to comply with council requirements – “practically with every move.” Followers of different religions were invited to the school functions. Salman further stated, “at school we introduced the harmony project and invited Christian and Jews to visit our school and in turn they invited us to the Jewish and Christian schools.”

With the increase in the Muslim population, Muslims have become more visible and dialogue has moved into broader interreligious levels that include many faith traditions. Local councils have their input into interfaith activities by supporting interfaith networks, which became recognised at national level by the Commonwealth of Australia. Dr Kazi has also

⁷⁹ Habib, interview.

⁸⁰ Hassan, interview.

pointed out it “is a great ecumenical, rather than political, move when the Prime Minister and other political leaders visited the Islamic Council of Victoria. But, it also represents an excellent example of social and political inclusiveness.”⁸¹

CONCLUSION

By examining these Muslim memories it is evident that early Muslim communities were built on multi-ethnicity and that process took place in the early 1950s. While the 1950s can now be argued as the time of Islam’s ‘rebirth’ in this country, it was the open and public expression of Islam in the 1970s and 1980s that was experienced as its ‘revival’. The period between the 1950s and 1980s can now be characterised by its ‘gradualism,’ despite a number of issues that Muslims experienced. It took time and patience for its contributions to be embroidered into the fabric of Melbourne suburban life. This was also bridge-building project that has played an historical role in Victoria’s cultural-religious landscape. Its main legacy is an early institution and networks, which led to a sense of belonging and significant spiritual attachment to Australia.

In the interfaith context of Victoria, religion gave Muslims a space for meeting people of other faiths and thereby enriching a sense of the universal religious spirit and values. The development was more than just pragmatism and practical wisdom of those involved. From the post-WWII period, Islam has found its way by anchoring itself in Victoria’s pluralistic and interfaith mosaic. It has done so by cultivating its own local Islamic ethos. While in the 1950s and 1960s interfaith dialogue occurred mainly at the level of individuals or small groups, it began to flourish since the emergence of a Multicultural Policy. Such dialogue has grown simultaneously with community building and the engagement of community members. The fruits of interfaith relations and cooperation with non-Muslims became worthy achievements. Islamic virtues and interfaith relations became important aspects in the rhythm of Muslim daily life and the formation of Muslim self-awareness, their respect of different values, as well as their own outlook on life and the contemporary world.

⁸² Kazi, interview.

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