

Sacred and Gathering Places

Islamic Gathering Spaces: Mosques (*Masjid*) and Other Centres

In homes or at a mosque or other place of prayer, the sight of Muslims reciting the Qur'an or using prayer beads for the invocation of sacred Qur'anic verses or particular praises of Allah or the Prophet is common.

Nevertheless, mosques are not the only places that Muslims gather to worship, as diverse communities have meeting places suited to their particular needs, including

- Mosques, *masjids*, or *mussallas*
- Sufi lodges (*zawiyah*, *tekke*, or *khanaqah*) and shrines (*maqam*, *dargah*, *mazar*)
- Ismaili houses of congregation, *jama'at-khanah*
- Twelver Shi'ite *husayniyyahs* and *imambaras*

Muslims worship in a building called a mosque or *masjid*, meaning place of prostration. In the Sunni Islamic tradition and laws, there are strict and detailed requirements for a place of worship to be considered a mosque or *masjid*, with places that do not meet the standards regarded as *musallas*, or prayer halls. Mosques are often only one part of a larger Islamic complex, which may include ablution facilities, a school, a community centre, a library, a gymnasium or recreational and sports area, a kitchen and classrooms. There are strict restrictions placed on the use of the area formally delineated as the mosque. Traditionally, according to the Islamic Sharia laws, after a space has been formally designated as a mosque, it should not be used for another purpose.



Figure 76: The Islamic Center of America is a Shia Mosque located in Dearborn, Michigan and is reputed to be the Largest Mosque in North America

Traditionally, mosques often have elaborate domes, minarets, and prayer halls, in varying styles of architecture. Mosques originated on the Arabian Peninsula, but are now found in all continents. They often have multiple purposes; not only are they places where Muslims pray, they are often centres for information, education, social welfare, and dispute settlement.

Mosques typically contain an ornamental niche (*mihrab*) set into the wall that indicates the direction of Mecca (*qiblah*) and *minarets* from which calls to prayer are issued. The pulpit (*minbar*), from which the Friday (*jumu'ah*) sermon (*khutba*) is delivered, was in earlier times characteristic of the central city mosque, but has since become common in smaller mosques. Mosques typically have segregated spaces for men and women. This basic pattern of organization of mosques takes different forms depending on factors such as the region, period built, and school or sect of Islam.

Outside every mosque, or just inside the entrance, is a place where worshippers can remove and leave their shoes. There is also a place where they can carry out the ritual washing (*wudu*) required before prayer. The main hall of a mosque is generally a largely bare room with very limited furniture, other than possibly some chairs for members with health or disability issues. There are no pictures or statues present as Muslims reject all forms of idol worship and there can be no physical representation of Allah, who may only be known in spirit. Everyone sits on the floor and generally all are considered to be of equal status regardless of where they sit in the prayer hall. A *mihrab* (niche in one of the walls) points to Mecca, the direction that worshippers should face when performing their prayers.

A *musalla* is an open space outside a mosque, mainly used for prayer, and traditionally used for the *Eid* and funeral prayers as per the *Sunnah*. A *musalla* may also refer to a room, a building, or place for conducting *salat/salah* and is usually translated as a “prayer hall.” Typically, a *musalla* is smaller than a mosque and is mostly used for conducting small congregational prayers, not for large congregational prayers such as the *Jummah* Friday prayers or the *Eid* prayers. In Muslim majority countries and increasingly in other nations, *musallas* are often available in airports, malls, universities, and other public

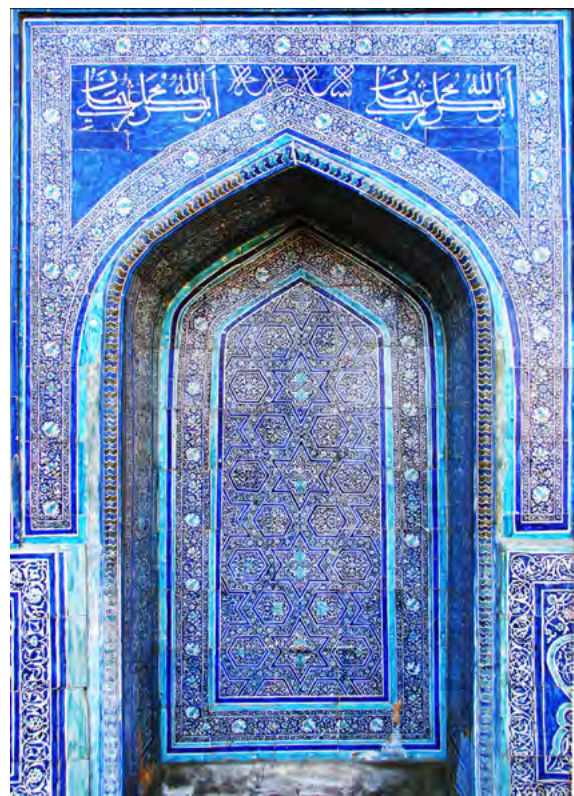


Figure 77: The Mihrab in the Summer Mosque of Allah Kuli Khan in Khiva, Uzbekistan was built in 1830

places to allow Muslims to conduct their daily prayers in a safe, comfortable, and quiet environment.

Mosques serve many purposes beyond prayer, including *Ramadan* vigils, funeral services, *Sufi* ceremonies, marriage and business agreements, the collection and distribution of alms, as well as homeless shelters.

Historically, mosques were also important centres for the education of children and new converts, as well as Islamic religious studies. In modern times, they still have a role as places of religious instruction and debate, but higher learning or advanced religious studies now generally take place in specialized post-secondary institutions.

There are some mosques which are especially important in the Islamic faith: these include the Great Mosque of Mecca (centre of the *hajj*), the Prophet's Mosque in Medina (burial place of Muhammad), and Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem (believed to be the site of Muhammad's ascent to heaven).

Historically, many mosques in the Muslim world were built over or near the burial places of Sufi saints, royalty, and other venerated figures, which often has made them popular destinations for pilgrimages.

As Islam spread from its birth place, mosques were built across the expanding Islamic world. In some cases, churches and Hindu and Jain temples, influenced Islamic architectural styles. Some of the more famous examples include the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul and the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem which was built on the Temple Mount.

Conversely, mosques were also converted to Christian churches, with one of the more famous being the conversion of the major mosque in Toledo, Spain to the cathedral of Santa Maria and The Umyyad Mosque in Damascus to a Christian church at the close of the fourth century.



Figure 78: In Islamic countries, many public places provide prayer areas for travellers or clients. This is a sign in Malaysia directing people to the prayer area.



Figure 79: Eid Celebrations at Qutab Shahi Tombs, Hyderabad, India.

In the contemporary world, the conversion of churches to mosques, especially some older churches, has drawn much attention and some resistance. Due to the growing Muslim populations in Europe and other Christian dominant countries, as well as the result of declining membership in many Christian denominations leading to a surplus of churches, many churches are being converted to mosques.

Eidgah or Idgah, also Eid Gah or Id Gah are South Asian Islamic open-air enclosures, usually found outside a city or its outskirts reserved for *Eid* prayers, which are offered in the morning of *Eid al-Fitr* and *Eid al-Adha*. They are usually a public place that is not used for prayers at other times of the year. Although the term *Eidgah* is of Indian origin, it may be used to refer to a *musalla*, the open space outside a mosque, or other open grounds where *Eid* prayers are performed, as there is no specific Islamic term for a site where *Eid* observances are held.

A *Surau* is a building, intended for gatherings or assembly, common in some regions of Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula. They are typically used for worship and religious instruction. While they are usually smaller structures, their purposes are similar to mosques, but they are mostly used for religious instruction and festive prayers. They depend on local community support and funding for their survival. In contemporary usage, *surau* is often used to refer to either a small mosque, or a designated room in a public building (such as a shopping mall, a university, or a rest stop along a highway) for Muslims to perform their *salat* prayers.

Hosayniya (hussainiya, Hussainia), also known as an *ashurkhana*, *imambargah*, or *imambara*, is a Twelver Shi'a Muslim gathering place or congregational hall dedicated to commemoration ceremonies, especially those associated with the Mourning of Muharram. The name derives from Husayn ibn Ali, the grandson of Muhammad.

The Mourning of Muharram, which is also known as the Remembrance of Muharram or Muharram Observances is a set of commemoration rituals observed by Shia Muslims, as well as some non-Muslims. The commemoration falls in *Muharram*, the first month of the Islamic calendar. The Mourning of Muharram marks the anniversary of the Battle of Karbala in 680 CE, when Imam Husayn (Hussein) ibn Ali, a grandson of Muhammad, was killed by the forces of the second Umayyad caliph. As well, all family members and companions accompanying him were killed or subjected to humiliation.

The commemoration of this event during the yearly mourning season, with the Day of Ashura as the focal date, serves to define Shi'a community identity.

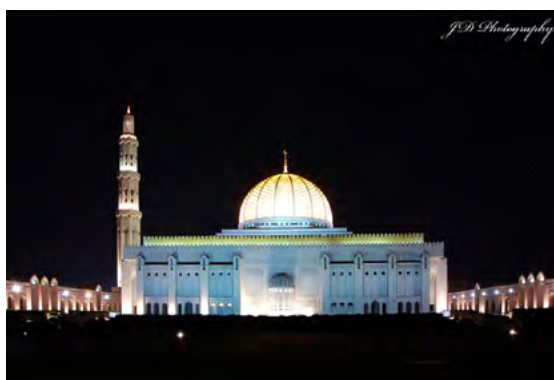


Figure 80: Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque – Muscat, Oman

Muharram observances are held in countries or communities with larger Shi'a populations.

The chart that follows provides an overview of the various types of Islamic religious structures and some differences in terminology and use among different Muslim schools and sects.

	Sunni	Shi'a	Ibadi
Types of Gathering and Worshipping Places	Mosque (<i>Masjid</i>), <i>Eidgah</i> , <i>Surau</i>	Mosque (<i>Masjid</i>), <i>Husseiniyas</i> , (aka <i>Hussainia</i> , <i>Imambarah</i> or <i>Ashurkhana</i>) and <i>Eidgah</i>	Mosque (<i>Masjid</i>)
Attending and visiting gathering places	Sunnis generally attend mosques (<i>masjid</i>) for Friday <i>Jummah</i> prayers and throughout the week for <i>salat</i> . When travelling, they may use a <i>surau</i> and for celebration of <i>Eid al-Fitr</i> and <i>Eid al-Adha</i> , they may go to or use an <i>eidgah/idgah</i> space.	Shi'ites attend mosques (<i>masjid</i>) as other Muslims do. On special occasions they may go to <i>housseiniyas</i> , which are halls specifically intended for the commemoration of the Battle of Karbala. For <i>Eid al-Fitr</i> and <i>Eid al-Adha</i> celebrations they may go to or use an <i>eidgah/idgah</i> space.	Ibadan's generally attend mosques. They believe that <i>Jummah</i> prayers should only be held in major cities in which justice rules. For centuries, Ibadis did not observe congregational prayer because of the lack of a just <i>imam</i> and they rejected the blessing of tyrannical rulers in the <i>khutba</i> .
Pilgrimages and Shrines	They may make pilgrimages to shrines and venerate 'saints'. Salafis reject <i>ziyarat</i> , a form of pilgrimage to sites associated with Muhammad, his family members and descendants, his companions, and other venerated figures in Islam such as the prophets.	They may make pilgrimages to shrines and to venerate 'saints.'	

	Sunni	Shi'a	Ibadi
Styles of mosques	They tend to have domes and minarets. Mosques are generally more austere. Portraits of any kind are regarded as forms of idolatry.	Mosques do not necessarily have domes or minarets. Shiite mosques and <i>husseinyas</i> are often adorned with calligraphy of the names of Ahlul Bayt (the Prophet's family), which include Muhammad, Ali, Fatima, Hasan, Hussein and others. Shiite mosques are often draped with traditional Shiite colours and flags.	Ibadi mosques generally reflect a simplicity of design, and therefore seldom have minarets. Nevertheless, they may be quite beautiful and richly decorated.
Holy days	<i>Eid al-Fitr</i> (breaking the fast at the end of <i>Ramadan</i>), <i>Eid al-Adha</i> (celebrating the end of <i>Hajj</i>), <i>Mawlid</i> (observing Mohammad's birthday, although Salafis reject its celebration)	<i>Eid al-Fitr</i> , <i>Eid al-Adha</i> , <i>Mawlid</i> (observance of Mohammad's birthday), <i>Ashura Day</i> (commemoration of the death of Hussein ibn Ali), <i>Eid al-Ghadeer</i> (celebration of the appointment of Ali ibn Abi Talib by Prophet Mohammad as his successor)	

	Sunni	Shi'a	Ibadi
Prayer style	<i>Wudu</i> includes completely washing of feet. Worshipers face the <i>Kaaba</i> in Mecca when praying. They generally, place their foreheads on prayer mats or floors. Hands are folded over the chest when praying, except Malikis who hold their hands at their sides as Shias and Ibadis do. Male worshippers often wear a white skullcap and females wear a <i>hijab</i> or other head covering.	When performing <i>Wudu</i> , Shi'a clean their ears with their fingers. Worshipers face the <i>Kaaba</i> in Mecca when praying. During ritual prayer (<i>salat</i>), Shi'a place their forehead onto a piece of naturally occurring material, often a clay tablet (<i>mohr</i>), or a tablet of soil (<i>turbah</i>) ideally taken from a holy site such as Karbala, instead of directly onto a prayer mat. Shiite male worshippers often wear nothing on their heads when praying while females wear a <i>hijab</i> or other head covering.	Like Maliki Sunnis and Shias, Ibadi pray with hands open and held at their sides. They do not say 'Amen' after the <i>Fatiha</i> , and do not say the <i>qunut</i> invocation in the <i>fajr</i> prayer.

Islamic pilgrimages and sacred spaces

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Hajj is the most well-known pilgrimage in Islam.

Pilgrimage is a fundamental part of human experience. Like other religious traditions, these journeys often involve distinctive rituals, narratives, and communities.

In Islam, pilgrimage is most commonly identified with the *hajj*, the great pilgrimage to Mecca and its surrounding sites. A related pilgrimage, the *umrah*, is often referred to as 'The lesser *hajj*'.



Figure 81: Mecca (Makkah) is the birthplace of Muhammad. The image above captures the Kaaba in the Great Mosque of Mecca

What is *hajj*?

Hajj is undoubtedly the most well-known pilgrimage in Islam; it is one of the five pillars of Islam and is considered a duty for all Muslims who are in good health and can afford the journey to Mecca. It takes place during the month called *Dhu al-Hijjah*. *Hajj* has many rituals including *tawaf* (the circumambulation of the *Ka'bah*) and *sa'i* (the running between the hills of Safa and Marwah). *Umrah* is similar to *hajj* but can take place at any time of the year. Pilgrims also enter the holy sanctuary of the Grand Mosque of Mecca through a different gate. The pilgrimage to the *Ka'bah* is specified in numerous Qur'anic verses, including 5.97 which reads:

God made the Kabah the Sacred House
maintaining it for humanity
and the Sacred Month and the sacrificial gift
and the garlanded.
That is so that you will know that God knows
Whatever is in the heavens
And whatever is in the earth. (Bakhtiar's translation)

Hadiths are accounts of the Prophet's life that determine much of Islamic practice. Some of these texts provide specifics on how to conduct the rituals associated with *hajj*. For example, one hadith reports that 'The Prophet offered four *rak'a* of the *zuhr* prayer in Medina and two *rak'a* of *'asr* prayer at *Dhu al-Hulaiifa*'. This hadith and others tell Muslims how to execute the particular rituals of *hajj*, which include specific prayers and supplications, as well as the order in which the traditions associated with *hajj* should be performed.

Pilgrimage guides also serve as an important aid for Muslims by giving instructions on what prayers and other supplications to perform at particular sites. For centuries these existed in a written form, while today Muslims also have the option of electronic forms of pilgrimage guides or smartphone apps, for both *hajj* and *umrah*, as well as for other pilgrimages known generally as *ziyarat*.

The use of technology has altered *hajj* in other ways too. In previous centuries, the only options for travel were by land or sea, and the journey could be both difficult and dangerous, as well as long. The advent of air travel has made it easier for Muslims to reach Mecca. Tour companies offering packages for *umrah* and *hajj* are also popular; their posters can be seen on billboards, in Islamic literature and online.

Why is Mecca so important to Muslims? Numerous cultural artefacts speak to the importance of Mecca for Muslims, as well as the religious duties associated with the city and its environs. Pictures of the *Ka'bah* are found on posters, on carpets, in Muslim places of worship and in Muslim homes. Pictorial representations of the holy sanctuary are found in numerous Islamic cultures, executed in styles ranging from drawings and paintings to prayer rugs. In addition to paintings, drawings, and other artistic representations, *hajj* guides,

maps, manuals and certificates inspired and recorded the experiences of pilgrims from the *Hijaz* to faraway lands such as Southeast Asia and Africa.

Mecca is important to Muslims for a number of reasons. The Prophet was from Mecca and returned there before his death. The Hira cave, on Jabal al-Nour, is reportedly where the Prophet received his first revelation. Islam is also an Abrahamic, monotheistic religion that is strongly rooted in the traditions associated with Judaism and Christianity. Muslims believe that Mecca is the place where Abraham and Ishmael built the *Ka'bah*, an act referred to in *Qur'an* 3.96. According to Muslim tradition, the Prophet Muhammad returned the *Ka'bah* (more formally called *al ka'bah al-musharrafah*) to its former status as a monotheistic site, rescuing it from the polytheism that had taken it over in previous centuries.

Are there other Islamic pilgrimages?

Outside of *hajj* and *umrah*, hundreds of other religious journeys are undertaken by Muslims around the world, ranging from local visits to family graveyards in Japanese villages to large-scale annual pilgrimages to cities such as Karbala and Mashhad. In part, the restrictions on *hajj* contribute to the popularity of these other pilgrimages. Islam is a global religion with over 1.7 billion followers; however, only two million pilgrims can perform *hajj* each year due to safety concerns and the limited space of the sites. The expense of *hajj* and its distance from many Muslim communities are also barriers. Thus, Muslims around the world participate in other religious journeys known collectively as *ziyarat*. While not considered an obligation on the same level as *hajj*, these journeys are nonetheless popular. The other factor that may contribute to their popularity is that the range of places visited as part of these traditions is immense, and often reflect the cultural and religious variations in diverse Muslim communities. For instance, among popular *ziyarat* sites are the graves of Sufi saints, the large tomb complexes of Shi'a *imams*, the mountains surrounding holy cities and the forests of Bosnia.

Various debates surround the religious appropriateness of these *ziyarat*. These debates centre around who has the authority to determine proper Islamic tradition. Some Muslims are uncomfortable with pilgrimages outside of *hajj*; they are not universally accepted, yet they remain popular around the world, from Africa to Southeast Asia.



Figure 82: Imam Reza Shrine, Mashhad Iran

What pilgrimages are important to Shi'a Muslims?

Muslims around the world have their own pilgrimage traditions that exist outside of *hajj* and *umrah*. In some cases, these are particular to a small community, such as the case of the local pilgrimages in Southeast Asia. In other cases, pilgrimage is a transnational affair, involving Muslims from every corner of the Earth. The best case of this outside of *hajj*, *umrah* and popular Sufi sites such as Rumi's tomb in Konya in Turkey, is found in the transnational pilgrimages of the Shi'a.

For Shi'a Muslims, the family of the Prophet and in particular the relatives of his daughter Fatima and her husband Ali (the Prophet's cousin), are especially important. These relatives are recognized as the Twelve Imams and their family by the majority of Shi'a, who consider the visitation of the Imams' tombs, as well as those of their relatives, a duty.

Imam Reza's shrine in Mashhad, Iran, is one of the most popular Shi'a sites. As the largest mosque in the world, the shrine complex covers an area of over six million square feet. Imam Husain's shrine at Karbala also represents the largest pilgrimage in the world in terms of numbers, with up to twenty million people gathering for the *Arbaeen*, which commemorates the martyrdom of Husain.



Figure 83: Medina (Madinah), Saudi Arabia, the mosque, al-Masjid an-Nabawi or 'The Prophet's Mosque', is the burial place of the prophet, Muhammad

Sainthood in Islam

The question of sainthood in Islam is an interesting one. Islam does not have a canonization process like, for instance, the Catholic Church. In academic literature, the word saint is often used to describe the *awliya'* (the singular form is *wali*), or the 'friends of God'. These are individuals believed to be close to Allah. Sufi individuals such as Rumi, whose tomb in Konya sees millions of visitors a year, and Rabiah, who is buried in Basra, Iraq, are considered by many to be *awliya'*. In other contexts, those close to Allah are culturally specific, such as the *wali songo* – the nine founding saints of Islam in Indonesia. There, numerous tombs of the *wali songo* populate the coastlines and interior of Java.

The oldest mosques on islands such as Lombok are visited by locals, Indonesians from other islands in the archipelago and by Muslims from as far away as Cairo. The Imams of the Twelver Shi'a Imamate resemble more closely the early martyrs of the Christian Church, with the exception of the last Imam, who is believed to be in a state of occultation.

Sacred space in Islam

Sacred space is an important topic in understanding Islamic pilgrimage. The direction of prayer is the *Ka'bah*, bringing the focus of Muslim prayer towards Mecca throughout the day. The *qiblah* (direction of prayer) is often marked by a sticker or other symbol in hotel rooms, so that Muslims can orient themselves for their daily prayers. Shi'a, who like other Muslims face Mecca to pray, use a prayer stone (*turbah*) made from clay from a holy Shi'a city, or place their forehead on the earth, illustrating the importance of the earth as a sacred tableau.

For Muslims, the world is Allah's creation, hence the expression, 'The world is your prayer mat'. This saying is likely inspired by a *hadith* of the Prophet's in which he states, 'The entire earth is a place of prayer except for graveyards and bathrooms'. Whatever the authenticity of the tradition, the Islamic view of space does not observe the religious and secular division that is more common in the West. Islamic practices such as removing one's shoes before entering a mosque, shrine or home suggest that any place where prayer takes place is sacred. Some places, however, are more sacred due to their history, who is buried at the site, or how many pilgrims visit the place.

The importance of *awliya'* and other important Muslim individuals shapes the sacred spaces associated with pilgrimage in Islam. In the case of the Prophet Muhammad's grave in Medina, the presence of his body in the graveyard where he is buried (*al-masjid al-nabawi*) and the history of the early Muslim community (*ummah*), have shaped the history of the city. The Jannat al-Baqi, the graveyard adjoining the Prophet's mosque, is the site of many of the graves of his relatives and companions. The renovations and expansions of his modest and small mosque, the first in Islam, which also served as his home during his lifetime, attest to the popularity of pilgrimage for Muslims, whether in Mecca, Medina or elsewhere in the world.

Mosques and Islamic Places of Worship in Manitoba

Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at Ahmadiyya Muslim Center

Address: 525 Kylemore Avenue
Winnipeg, MB R3L 1B5
Canada

Phone: 204-475-2642

Website: <https://www.ahmadiyya.ca/>

Manitoba Islamic Association

Address: 2445 Waverley Street
Winnipeg MB R3Y 1S3

Phone: 204-256-1347

Website: Miaonline.Org

Pioneer Mosque, Islamic Centre Manitoba

Address: 247 Hazlewood Avenue
Winnipeg, MB R2M 4W1

Phone: 204-256-1347

Fax: 204-956-3849

Winnipeg Grand Mosque

Address: 2445 Waverley Street
Winnipeg MB R3Y 1S3

Phone: 204-256-1347

Islamic Information Institute Of Manitoba

Address: 594 Ellice Avenue
Winnipeg, MB R3G 0A3

Phone: 204-779-4446

Fax: 204-772-9656

Website: www.iiim.info

Mosque: 731 Wellington Avenue,
Winnipeg, MB R3E 0H9

Madinah Masjid

Address: Mosque
29 Keenleyside Street
Winnipeg, MB R2L 0V4

Masjid Bilal - Winnipeg Islamic Centre

Mosque: 33 Warnock Street
Winnipeg, MB R3E 3L6

Manitoba Dawah Center

Address: 368 Edmonton Street
Winnipeg, MB R3B 2L3

Phone: 204-415-0351

Website: <http://mdcinfo.exico.ca/about.php>

Mosque - Muslim Prayer Space

Address: (Room # 0w16) Mosque
Graham Hall,
515 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, MB R3B 2E9

Website: <https://Winnipeg-Mb.Allcanadachurches.Com/Mosque-Muslim-Prayer-Space-Room-0w16/#Hcq=Kuzzhtr>

Mosque: U of M Prayer Room

Address: Mosque E3-160
EITC
97 Dafoe Road West
Winnipeg, MB R3T 5V6

Salam Masjid

Address: Mosque
294 Burrows Avenue
Winnipeg, MB R2W 1X6

Phone: 204-342-5642

Website: www.facebook.com/SalamMasjid294

Yaseen Centre of Manitoba

Address: Mosque
746 Ellice Avenue
Winnipeg, MB R3G 0B6

Phone: 204-688-3736

Facebook: www.facebook.com/yaseencentreofmanitoba/

Mosque—Mia Pembina Valley Mussallah

Address: 385 Mountain Avenue
Winkler, MB R6W

Husaini Association of Manitoba
(Shia Ithna-Asheri)

**Zubaidah Tallab Masjid
(Thompson Mosque)**

Address: 335 Thompson Drive
Thompson, MB R8N 1W2

Phone: 204-778-5011

Husaaini Islamic Centre

Address: 1744 Provincial Trunk
Highway 59
Niverville, Manitoba

Email: husainiassociation@gmail.com

Website: <https://husaini.ca/>

Association of Pakistani Canadian

Address: 348 Ross Avenue
Winnipeg, MB R3A 0L4

FaceBook: <https://www.facebook.com/mmfsite.org/>

Islamic Centre of Brandon

Address: 123 Rosser Avenue East
Brandon, MB R7A 1P2

Website : <https://www.brandonmasjid.org/>

Mail: admin@brandonmasjid.org

Phone: 813-335-2041

Phone: 925-640-5335

**Winnipeg Islamic and Centre
(Masjid Bilal)**

Address: 33 Warnock Street
Winnipeg, MB R3E 3L6

Website: <https://bilalcentre.org/>

Winnipeg Central Mosque

Address: 715 Ellice Avenue
Winnipeg MB R3G 0B3

Phone: 204-774-7005

Website: <http://www.winnipegmosque.org>

Modern Islam: Issues and Challenges

Islamophobia

Islamophobia is fear of and hostility toward Islam and Muslims. It is a form of prejudice and discrimination which may often lead to hate speech and crimes as well as social and political discrimination, and may be used to rationalize policies such as mass surveillance, incarceration, and disenfranchisement, and can influence domestic and foreign policy.

Islamophobia affects most directly Muslims and those who are perceived to be Muslims. It disproportionately affects those who may visibly be identifiable as Muslims, such as women who wear *hijabs* or scarves and people who are often mistaken for Muslims, such as Sikh men who wear turbans.

Over the last few decades, the Muslim communities in Canada have reported that they are increasingly concerned about rising hate-motivated violence and Islamophobia in Canada and around the world. In the last few years, violent acts fueled by racism, religious bias, and hate have targeted Muslim Canadians.

Islamophobia is the result of a long history of conflictual relationships with Muslim majority nations and peoples.

Historical Influences of Islamophobia

Historically, the Western world has, at times, had a conflictual and complex relationship, beginning with the Crusades. The Crusades were a series of religious wars between Christians and Muslims started over control of Jerusalem and holy sites considered sacred by both groups. In all, eight major Crusade expeditions occurred between 1096 and 1291. The bloody, violent, and often ruthless conflicts propelled the status of European Christians, making them major players in the fight for land in the Middle East and the wars with the Islamic Empire of the Middle East and North Africa.

In addition to the Crusades, the Inquisition established within the Catholic Church to root out and punish heresy throughout Europe and the Americas also led to conflict with Muslims and Muslim converts. Beginning in the 12th century and continuing into the 1800s in some countries, the Inquisition led to severe treatment of Jews and Muslims in Europe, including imprisonment, torture, and persecution. Its worst manifestation was in Spain,



Figure 84: Trump Protest in Toronto 2017
Protesters marching in Toronto against Islamophobia and Trump's ban on Muslims entering the U.S.

where the Spanish Inquisition was a dominant force for more than 200 years, resulting in some 32,000 executions.

These wars in Europe also contributed to distrust of Muslims. The Ottoman wars were a series of military conflicts between the Ottoman Empire and various European states dating from the Late Middle Ages up through the early 20th century. Between the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453 and the beginning of the 18th century, when the Ottoman Empire expanded and reached its height, Western Europe alternated between awe, fear, and sometimes respect. Regardless, the sustained wars with the Ottoman Empire led to distrust and fear of Muslim nations and peoples.

Lastly, almost every Muslim majority country was conquered and colonized by Europeans, including Russia, at some point. Most of those countries only gained independence after World War II, with many gaining independence in the 1960s. Although most Muslims living in Muslim countries that experienced colonization were born after World War II, colonization continues to cast a long, dark shadow on relationships and perceptions. Muslims governed the area now occupied by Israel since the seventh century C.E. The conquest of the Ottoman Empire in World War I and Britain's de facto colonization of Palestine (as a "trust" territory) after that conflict permitted the modern state of Israel to emerge.

This history of conflict, persecution, and colonization has had significant impact on the peoples of Europe and the Western world in general. Common perceptions of Muslim people and nations in the Western nations can be quite negative and distrustful.

Contemporary Manifestations of Islamophobia

The Arab-Israeli conflict, which has resulted in political tension, military conflicts, and other disputes between Arab countries and Israel, escalated during the 20th century, stretched into the early 21st century, and contributed to the rise of Islamophobia in North America and Europe. In addition, the rise in Islamophobia prior to the attack on the World Trade Centre on September 11, 2001, was in part a reaction to conflicts in the Middle East with Muslim majority nations such as Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, and Lebanon. These conflicts



Figure 85: United Against Islamophobia

and the terrorist acts enacted by extremist Muslim factions have contributed to the development of negative stereotypes, misinformation, and fear of Muslim people and Muslim majority nations.

Perhaps the greatest impact on Islamophobia resulted from the September 11, 2001, attacks in the United States. Many in North America and throughout the world were horrified that so many innocent people, including Muslims, were killed. Other extremist factions of the Muslim faith and the ongoing conflict and terrorism inflicted by those claiming to be acting in the name of Islam, have led to the perception that Islam and its adherents are seen in a very negative light and are often negatively portrayed in both mass and social media.

In Canada, statistics and surveys show that reported hate crimes against Muslims surged in Canada after 2001, along with negative attitudes toward those of Islamic faith. In addition, while the number of hate crime reports has ebbed and flowed over the past years, they have never dropped down to pre-9/11 levels.

Statistics Canada data on police-reported hate crimes between 2009 and 2020, reveals a slow but steady increase in the number of anti-Muslim incidents across Canada for the first half of the 2010s, from 36 reports in 2009 to 99 in 2014.* This trend continued in 2015 when 159 hate crimes against Muslims were reported to police, a 60 per cent increase. In 2017, there was an even larger increase with 349 incidents reported: a jump of over 150% from the year prior.

Since then, on average, over 140 incidents have been reported each year between 2018 and 2020. Only in 2020 was there an abatement of hate crimes with the lowest number being reported since 2013. There were 82 reported hate crimes that year. Despite the drop in 2020, hate crimes overall increased during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The prevalence of bias against Muslims was demonstrated in a national online survey of 1,079 Canadians, between November 24 and December 4, 2017, undertaken by EKOS Research Associates (www.ekos.com/) on behalf of the Canadian Muslim Forum (<http://fmc-cmf.com>) and Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (<http://cjpme.org>).



Figure 86: 2016 Protesters against Islamophobia and Racism, Minneapolis, Minnesota, September 17, 2016 Entering the U.S.

* Boynton, Sean. "Since 9/11, Islamophobia Has Been 'A Constant Feature' in CANADA, Experts Say - National." Global News, 13 Sept. 2021, <https://globalnews.ca/news/8174029/9-11-islamophobia-canada/>.

The survey revealed that*:

- Canadians are the least comfortable with authority figures who wear a *hijab*, compared with any other type of religious dress.
- Canadians are more likely to hold negative stereotypes about Muslim Canadians, than about Christian or Jewish Canadians.
- Canadians are much less comfortable welcoming a Muslim into their family rather than people of other religious faiths.
- Canadians believe in the protection of religious rights generally, but are less concerned for the religious rights of their Muslims neighbours.
- A surprising number of people (17%) perceive the Muslim Canadian community to be monolithic with uniform perspectives and views. Only about half of Canadians recognize a diversity of perspectives and Canadian Muslim-held views.

Nevertheless, Canadians were shocked in 2021 by several violent attacks on Muslim Canadians. One such attack was perpetrated on the Afzal family from London, Ontario. Several members of the family were struck and killed by a vehicle driven by a man police say was motivated by hatred of Muslims. The fatal stabbing of Mohamed Aslim Zafis outside a Toronto-area mosque by a man with alleged links to neo-Nazi ideology, as well as multiple hate-motivated attacks on Black and racialized women in the Edmonton area point to the rise in Islamophobia. The National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM) noted in a recent report that more Muslims have been killed in targeted hate-attacks in Canada than any other G7 country in the past five years.

On July 22, 2021, the growing concern with Islamophobia and racism led the Government of Canada to hold a virtual National Summit. It was organized by the Federal Anti-Racism Secretariat and convened by the Honourable Bardish Chagger, Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth. The intent of the summit was to provide a national platform for Muslim communities to identify viable and specific ways to combat Islamophobia across the country. This national forum testified to the troubling experiences many Muslim Canadians and others experience in North America, Europe, and other parts of the world.

How Islamophobia Impacts Muslims in Canada

A literature review done in Canada, *Growing Up Muslim: The Impact of Islamophobia on Children in a Canadian Community* (2018)** highlights the impact of Islamophobia on Canadian Muslim children. This community-based study examines the dichotomous experiences of Muslim school-aged

* "2018 Survey: Islamophobia in Canada, Still a Grave Problem." CJPME, CANADIANS FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, <https://www.cjpme.org/islamophobia>.

** Elkassem, Siham, et al. "Growing up Muslim: The Impact of Islamophobia on Children in a Canadian Community." *Journal of Muslim Mental Health*, Michigan Publishing, University of Michigan Library, 2 Aug. 2018, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/j/jmmh/10381607.0012.101/--growing-up-muslim-the-impact-of-islamophobia-on-children?rgn=main%3Bview>.

children who are taught theirs is a faith of peace and yet regularly experience microaggressions and overt hostility because of their religious affiliation and beliefs.

The study confirmed that Muslim school-aged children are living in communities where they often experience discrimination and stigmatization. Children regularly experienced oppression and expressed fear due to either being Muslim or perceived as being Muslim. Islamophobia is present in their daily lives and has a direct impact on them.

The result is that some children are 'cautious' with non-Muslims and attempt to determine whether they fall into a group that is sensitive to Muslim issues or one that is overtly discriminatory. Focus group participants discussed how media portrayed them negatively, and their feelings of being continually judged and stereotyped. The children expressed that, despite all that being Muslim brings and what Islam represents and strives to embody among its adherents, many non-Muslims, not only feared them but also hated them, even though they were still only children. Such experiences are a challenge as children and youth navigate work, social, and community relationships in an environment where they are never sure how they will be received and perceived.

The authors of the study indicate that school-aged children who are Muslim would benefit from opportunities to have ongoing conversations about their experiences outside of their families, especially as some participants indicated a reluctance to ask certain questions of family members or report all their experiences on a regular basis. At the school level, teachers, school staff, and other caregivers would benefit from training, which would help them learn how they could support and respond to children when they face both critical incidents and daily microaggressions and discrimination. At a community level, there is a need for focused conversations and discussions about the impact of Islamophobia on school-aged children.

Schools Challenging Islamophobia

Schools are not exempt from Islamophobia and racism. As anti-Muslim sentiments continue to deepen, educators must use their positions to ensure that all students have a critical eye and are able to separate the violent actions of ISIS and other extremist groups from the lives of the majority of the moderate and peaceful Muslims who live across the world.*

Students need to be supported in situations in which they have to defend themselves in the face of racism and religious discrimination. Educators can choose to be true allies and fulfill their commitment to making their school communities nurturing spaces for all students, teachers, parents, and staff.

Schools must work harder and in substantial ways to dismantle Islamophobia. The public education system should not take a neutral stance in the midst of Islamophobia. Rather, the public education system must dedicate itself to

* "Bullying and Bias: Addressing Islamophobia in Schools." *Islamophobia*, Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), 20 Sept. 2021, <https://islamophobia.org/research/bullying-and-bias-addressing-islamophobia-in-schools/>.

fostering understanding among a diverse community. Schools need to accept their role and responsibility in countering hateful narratives, including Islamophobia and, more importantly, recognize their capacity to make a significant and long-lasting difference.

To assist schools in addressing Islamophobia and racism, resources to support schools have been developed by different groups and educators. For example, the Islamic Social Services Association has created a resource for teachers titled *Helping Students Deal with Trauma Related to Geopolitical Violence and Islamophobia*. (www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/97e4-Geopolitical-Violence-and-Islamophobia.pdf)



Figure 87: Canadians Remember Muslim Family Killed in London, Ontario

Challenging Anti-Muslim Racism Through a Critical Race Curriculum in Quebec Secondary Schools by Nadved Bakali is an article arguing that teachers need to exercise agency and professional judgment to challenge anti-Muslim racism in Quebec secondary schools and suggests approaches for doing so by employing principles from critical race curriculum. ([www.academia.edu/29921976/Challenging AntiMuslim Racism Through a Critical Race Curriculum in Quebec Secondary Schools](http://www.academia.edu/29921976/Challenging_AntiMuslim_Racism_Through_a_Critical_Race_Curriculum_in_Quebec_Secondary_Schools))

The Tessellate Institute published the 2016 policy paper (<https://equityineducationhub.blog.yorku.ca/files/2018/06/117-Examining-Islamophobia-in-Ontario-Public-Schools-1.pdf?x21401>) *Examining Islamophobia in Ontario Public Schools*, which advocates that:

- School boards develop and implement equity policies that refer to Islamophobia explicitly.
- All Ontario public schools boards should offer anti-Islamophobia workshops for teachers and require all teachers to attend.
- School boards should provide lesson plans and other curriculum resources to support teachers in anti-Islamophobia education in the classroom.
- Dedicated spaces be provided within school settings, which serve a dual purpose: for Muslim students to express their identity and for non-Muslim students to learn more about Muslims and ask questions.
- Research is needed on the experiences of Muslim students in Ontario public schools.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) has created *Bullying and Bias: Addressing Islamophobia in Schools* (<https://islamophobia.org/research/bullying-and-bias-addressing-islamophobia-in-schools/>) and offers on their website guides on several topics to help educators challenge Islamophobia.

An American resource, *Countering Anti-Muslim Racism in Schools* by Hafsa Siddiqui in collaboration with The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) and the University of Illinois, Chicago offers ways for teachers and others to create spaces where all young people feel they belong. Hafsa encourages people to educate themselves and others while learning how to shift the narrative. The curriculum was designed for Grades 6 to 12 and is a deep exploration of the way one sees the world and the people around them. We are all constantly inundated with stereotypes and narratives that do not represent the most marginalized members of communities.

Countering Anti-Muslim Racism explains where these stereotypes come from, how America's history of colonialism influences students' understanding of other communities and cultures, and how centuries-old narratives of Orientalism and anti-Blackness affect real people, such as neighbours, classmates, and colleagues.

The resource follows a four-part model in which students learn about institutional racism, the long history of anti-Muslim racism in America, the effects of racism on the lives of Muslims today, and how students can take action against both individual and institutional forms of anti-Muslim racism.

Schools can, and often do, create welcoming and inclusive environments for Muslim and other minority students through specially designated occasions, like Black History Month, Islamic History Month Canada, Asian Heritage Month, and Indigenous Cultural Days. These commemorations legitimize the presence of diverse religions, and students help educate, celebrate, and encourage relationships amongst a diverse student body, which in turn helps to foster a strong sense of unity among Muslim youth and their peers.

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Bakali, Naved. *Islamophobia: Understanding Anti-Muslim Racism through the Lived Experiences of Muslim Youth*. , 2016. Print.

Resource

Video: Canadian Muslims calling for action to end Islamophobia, Global News <https://globalnews.ca/video/8046833/canadian-muslims-calling-for-action-to-end-islamophobia>

Islam in the Diaspora: Diversity and Adaptation

The Western World (especially Europe, but North America as well) has struggled to adjust and respond to one of the largest examples of human migration ever experienced. Over decades, several factors have contributed to Muslims' desire to immigrate, including but not limited to: the impact of the colonial past, the need for labour in the Western countries, and the unemployment problem in the Eastern countries, followed by family reunification and asylum claims. In the 21st century, growing political unrest, conflict, and war in Muslim regions have been additional driving factors for Muslim global mobilization. This is especially true in the Middle East where, since 2010, many Muslims have been forced to abandon their countries due to war and terrorism.

Although much of the global Muslim population world continues to be located in Asia Pacific, the Middle East, and North Africa, a considerable number live in non-Muslim majority countries and this number is growing rapidly. In 2010, the number of Muslims in Europe reached 43,470,000 making Islam the biggest religious minority in the region. The same year in the United States, the number of Muslims reached 4,320,000. It is estimated that Muslims will constitute 8% of the European population by 2030 and 2.1% of the American population by 2050.

In Canada, there has been a similar pattern of growth. It is expected that, by 2030, seventy-nine countries will have more than 1 million Muslim citizens. "Non-Muslim" countries such as Belgium, Canada, and Netherlands will be in the top seven countries that fall into this category. The size of diasporic Muslim communities is growing rapidly and, therefore, it is critical to pay attention not only to their problems and challenges, but also to improving the conditions and opportunities for Muslim citizens in order to make greater and more impactful contributions to social, cultural, economic, and political development in these nations.

The Muslim Diaspora is culturally and linguistically diverse, with different countries of origin, ethnicities, religious beliefs (sects), and socio-economic status, and education levels. As well, historically, there has been a tendency for Muslims of the same origins or ethnicity to cluster in specific non-Muslim majority countries. For example, in France, the Muslim population is predominantly from the Maghreb countries, namely Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco; in Germany, the Turks are the main Muslim immigrant category; and in the United Kingdom, the Indian and the Pakistanis constitute the main Muslim immigrant group.

Immigration to a new country poses many challenges as well as new opportunities for any newcomer, regardless of origin or religion. Situations where the host country and country of origin have great religious, cultural, and linguistic differences may result in severe adaptation and integration problems. Across the Muslim Diaspora, the main difficulties in terms of integration with the host country seemingly are language issues, unemployment or underemployment (having to work in jobs that are

substantially below one's skill, education, and knowledge level), and lower access to educational and socio-economic upward mobility.

The broader international political context also impacts the quality of life and chances of Muslim immigrants. Events such as September 11 attacks, the publication of caricatures of Prophet Muhammad and subsequent attacks on Charlie Hebdo, and bomb attacks in major European cities have negatively affected the image and lives of Muslims in host countries, including Canada.

What has led recent researchers to describe today's Muslims as diasporic is not their shared beliefs and practices, their history of dispersion, the centrality of Mecca, or the mass migration of certain ethnic Muslim populations. Instead, it is the consciousness that many Muslims share, particularly those living as minorities, that they are part of a global community or *umma*. This feeling is strengthened for some by the marginalization, hostility, and discrimination that they believe Muslims are now subject to, particularly in the West. Media and wider public fears about terrorism since 9/11 have led to the stereotyping of Muslims as extremists and have contributed to this shared consciousness.

Religious Adaptations in the Diaspora

While religion and daily prayer is still very important to the majority of Muslims in the Diaspora, Islam in diaspora generally shows a liberal, progressive understanding of the faith. This understanding is based on a preference for Islamic ethics over law, derived from a contextual and *masjid*-oriented reading/interpretation of the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*, which seeks peaceful, respectful coexistence with non-Muslims, and complements the Western socio-political context.

This tendency, to interpret Islam in a more contemporary manner is reflected in the Pew Research Centre's survey of Muslims in the United States. In the 2017 survey, they found that

“...many Muslim Americans see room for multiple and more contemporary interpretations of their faith. A majority of U.S. Muslims say there is more than one true way to interpret Islam, and about half say traditional understandings of the faith need to be reinterpreted to address current issues.”*

* Pew Research Center, July 26, 2017, “U.S. Muslims Concerned About Their Place in Society but Continue to Believe in the American Dream”. P. 105, www.pewforum.org/2017/07/26/findings-from-pew-research-centers-2017-survey-of-us-muslims/



Figure 88: Participants at the Canadian Islamic Cultural Expo 2007

Another significant aspect of Islam in the Diaspora is the number of intermarriages and converts to the faith. The Pew Research Centre found that, in 2016, about eight-in-ten U.S. Muslims (78%) say they have always been Muslim, while 21% converted to Islam. These converts often need assistance and mentors in Qur'anic Arabic, study of the Qur'an, and learning of prayers and rituals.

Similarly, children of Muslim parents who immigrated to Canada or other Western countries, often grow up and are educated in a social and linguistic setting where Muslims are a minority and English or another language is the dominant language. The children of Muslim immigrant parents also need support similar to converts, except that in their homes they have Muslim role models.

Therefore, most Mosques in Canada and the Western world have language and Qur'anic studies classes specifically for converts and children. As well, the translated and transliterated versions of the Qur'an are available to assist them in participating in the communal prayers and other religious events.

For example, the Manitoba Islamic Association (MIA) offers *Teachings of the Qur'an* (textbooks and workbooks), Volumes I, II, III, which are written in English and Arabic. The MIA presents the teachings of the Qur'an for elementary level children at their own level of understanding. In addition, it offers a converts committee to contribute to the well-being of new Muslims who embrace Islam. It is a committee run by converts for converts. The committee provides human supports, seeks to educate new converts, and helps integrate them into the community and mosque. Their education programs include an Arabic language program, a Qur'an program, a Sunday Qur'an, and a preschool program.

"Muslims tend to believe their community wants to integrate into Canadian society rather than remain distinct. Non-Muslims hold the opposite view, although less so than a decade ago. Muslims and non-Muslims generally agree on the values immigrants should adopt when moving to Canada." P. 27

"Three-quarters believe Muslims should have the right to pray in public schools, with smaller majorities supporting the right for women to wear the niqab at citizenship ceremonies and when receiving public services. Non-Muslims are somewhat less supportive, especially in Quebec." P. 29

"Muslims share with other Canadians a value on openness to connection between different cultures in the country's diverse society. Nevertheless, Muslims also hold a more patriarchal view of the family, and are much less accepting of homosexuality. P. 31

"Survey of Muslims in Canada 2016."
Environicsinstitute.org, Environics Institute,
Apr. 2016, https://www.environicsinstitute.org/docs/default-source/project-documents/survey-of-muslims-in-canada-2016/final-report.pdf?sfvrsn=fbb85533_2.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, MIA began offering a virtual mosque as well as some virtual education programs, and also began allowing for virtual participation.

Other adaptations, include the setting of the time for the *Isha'* (evening) prayer where using traditional methods for setting the prayer time would result in an excessively late prayer time during the summer months. In the United Kingdom, many Mosques have adapted the timing of the communal Friday noon prayer to accommodate people who work or study and would be forced to either miss or experience hardship if they wished to participate. In these communities, rather than have changing prayer times, a set time is used.*

Muslims Adapting and Integrating into Canadian Society

Like members of other ethnic Diasporas, Muslims share certain beliefs and practices, and these are lived out in diverse national, social, and cultural contexts, which affects their ability to integrate.

Generally, Muslims in Canada appear to be integrating well. This is in large part because many Muslim immigrants to Canada enter on employment visas intended to help fill vital jobs with skilled labourers and professionals. Muslims in Canada are often more highly educated than any other religious group; however, many have also immigrated from refugee or war-affected backgrounds.

A survey of Muslims in Canada in 2016 by Environics of Muslim integration in Canadian society reported on a number of aspects and found that Muslims are a bit more positive about how they are viewed by mainstream society, and most agree they are better off than Muslims in other western countries.



Figure 89: “We are all the same. We are the Same”, say Jewish and Arab Youth

* Mcgown, Rima Berns. “Cultural Integration.” *Muslims in the Diaspora: The Somali Communities of London and Toronto*, University of Toronto Press, 1999, pp. 43–68, www.jstor.org/stable/10.3138/9781442677470.7.

Role of Education

Education can play an important role in the adaptation and integration process for both newcomers and the host community members. The challenge is creating an education system which responds to the needs of Muslims in the West while enhancing the process of integration and teaching the Western-style notions of citizenship. Sexuality education, religious extremism, terrorism, and pluralistic values are among the challenges that education systems in the West need to alter in both policy and practice.

While western education systems fundamentally rest on a rather monolithic world-view, inspired by Christianity and often based on secularism, they need to adapt to the realities of the post-migration era. The Muslim transnational communities in the West complicate the matter even further as they pose new challenges in the notions of identity and belonging of the younger generation of Muslims in the Diaspora.

Most Muslims want leaders and supports to help them bridge the gap between their old cultures and their new homes and interpret their faith's texts in a Western context, which is for many, all their children know.