of communication technology, such as magazines, cassette tapes, and, most recently, Internet sites, aids in this multiplication of Islamic voices.

In Europe and the United States, the traditional modes of conferring religious authority are definitively losing their influence. The institutional structures of the Muslim world cannot be simply duplicated in the host countries. Muslims are thus in the process of creating new institutions and forms of authority appropriate to their new environment.

Community and local ties are particularly important in the reinvention of authority. It is now often neighborhood religious communities, not the State, that have the power to grant legitimacy to religious authorities. The rise of the small community comes out of an unprecedented democratization of authority in Islam. It also acts in combination with other sources of legitimacy, including membership in national or international religious institutions, participation in transnational religious movements, or personal charisma.

There are four types of religious authority that emerge in this context: (1) the bureaucratic leader, who works on behalf of institutions originating from the Muslim countries; (2) the community or "parochial" leader, whose activity is concentrated in the mosque or Islamic association of a particular neighborhood or city; (3) the globalized leader, whose activities are focused on transnational Islamic movements, whether they be Salafi groups or Sufi brotherhoods; and, lastly, (4) the preacher or public speaker. The roles taken on by any one individual can change or be combined. The globalized leader, in particular, benefits from establishment in a local community, which enables him to ground his international activity, so to speak, in a specific place. Many leaders of the Tabligh movement follow this model. Personal charisma can come into play in any of these types, and often makes all the difference in terms of a leader's influence and self-presentation. The celebrity preachers and public speakers of Islam may not necessarily have local ties, and generally tend to follow the model of the globalized leader. We should also mention that women are still absent from most positions of leadership, although since the year 2000 they have made a spectacular entry into religious debates and dialogue (not to mention mosques) in the United States.

# CHAPTER 7

# Bureaucratic and Parochial Leaders

### *The Bureaucratic Leader*

Bureaucratic leaders in Islam are leaders paid by or otherwise associated with the Islamic institutions of influential Muslim countries. In Europe, this influence was exerted throughout the 1960s via national associations or other secular groups. Since the 1980s, however, religious organizations have become the primary means of keeping control over expatriate Muslim populations. This influence is exerted by countries such as Algeria, Morocco, and Turkey, and Saudi Arabia, through associations like the World Islamic League. Paris, Madrid, Milan, Brussels, and Geneva are all home to large mosques controlled by the governments of Algeria, Morocco, or Saudi Arabia. One of the most recent of these is the mosque of Berlin, which opened its doors on December 5, 2003. This mosque is run by the DITIB (Islamic Union of Turkish Religious Affairs), the religious arm of the Turkish State in Germany.

Dalil Boubakeur, rector of the great Mosque of Paris and president of the French Council of Islam since May 2003, is a prime example of the bureaucratic Islamic leader. The son of the late Sheikh Hamza Boubakeur (former rector of the mosque, under whose leadership it gradually passed from French to Algerian control), Dalil Boubakeur is a member of the Algerian elite, equally knowledgeable about Islamic and French culture: his post at the mosque in Paris is subsidized by the Algerian government.

These bureaucratic leaders, the spokesmen for nationalized versions of Islam, have the task of supervising immigrant populations and facilitating communication between them and the country of origin. The Muslim States, for their part—in addition to their various strategies for gaining a monopoly over the official image of Islam—also attempt to control mosques on the local

level by choosing and exporting imams. Thus one can find imams affiliated with the DITIB, the Mosque of Paris, or the King of Morocco throughout Europe.[3] These imams often face criticisms from younger generations for their inability to understand the particularities of European Islam, as well as for their poor command of the language of the host country.

Bureaucratic imams also exist in the United States, even if their influence relative to Europe is appreciably less.[4] In 1999, we met with Sheikh Shamsi Ali, the imam of an Indonesian Islamic center in New York. Born in a small village in Indonesia, Ali was enrolled by his family in an Islamic school when he was still very young. From there, he was chosen to study at an Islamic university in Pakistan. His first position with the Islamic Foundation was in Jeddah, as an administrator of education. As a result of his connections in the Indonesian government, he was sent to the United States in 1996.

The center in which Ali works was created by a small group of Indonesian businessmen and diplomats. It was built in 1995 thanks to a donation from President Suhartu and the help of the Indonesian Minister of Religious Affairs: "Yes, he [Suhartu] came here to the United Nations and it happened that the head of the community at that time [was able] to meet him and explain about the intention of the Muslims here to build a *masjid*. So, he donated around 150 thousand dollars . . . boy, that was a big donation there . . . and our minister of religion of affairs contacted some rich people from our community. They donated also."[5]

In Shiite communities, the bureaucratic leader is the most common type of religious figure. In the hierarchical structure of Shi'a, each mosque is directed by a *marja'*, a learned Muslim chosen through the hierarchy of religious leaders and subsidized in part by the local congregation. Because of the differences between the Duodecimial and Ismaili sects of Shiite Islam—which are exacerbated still further by political divisions and ethnic diversity—the degree of fragmentation in Shi'a is fairly high. The Al Bayt Federation of America, created in 1996, has nonetheless attempted to provide a measure of unity for the different branches of Shiite Islam.

In New York in 2000, we spoke to Sheikh Al Shalani, a representative of the Al Khuai Foundation and the spokesman for the Shi'ite Muslim Scholars of North America.[6] Iraqi-born, Al Shalani studied at the Islamic seminary in Najaf and at Kullyyat Al-Fiqh, a university specializing in the study of jurisprudence, and received his master's degree in Islamic studies from Cairo. He describes the beginnings of his organization:

> *Bism Allah Al-Rahman Al-Rahim.* I have been here for about eleven years now, working with the Al-Khuai benevolent foundation. This foundation was established almost twelve years or eleven years ago by the great Ayatu Allah Al-Sayed Abu Al-Qasim Al-Khuai. Its main headquarters are in London. We also have branches in the United States, Canada, France, Thailand, India, and Pakistan, plus some other branches here and there. The aim of this foundation is to serve the Muslim community in general and the Shi'a community in particular, [as well as] to give the right image of Islam and Muslims to Western society . . . . The foundation started almost at the end of the war between Iran and Iraq. During that period of time, Iran was [portrayed] by western society [as] terrorists [and people who] have no respect for other religions, no respect for human beings, etc.—which is, we believe, propaganda coming especially from America, because Iran was so against them. [We wanted] to [get away from] politics, because whatever happened between Iran and western society, specifically the United States, had to do with politics. It had nothing to do with religion. We try to [teach] the non-Muslim society that Muslims, and especially Shi'a, do all follow the Republic of Iran in every aspect and that whatever is going on is [just] politics, [and has] nothing to do with religion.[7]



Although they still retain a presence in the United States and in Europe, bureaucratic leaders, tied directly to the institutions and governments of the Muslim world, have since the 1980s been largely shut out by local community, or "parochial" leaders. These latter are similar to Catholic priests or Protestant pastors, who have traditionally derived their authority from the local parish. We should also note that in the United States, parochial leaders have always been dominant, particularly in the African American Muslim community.

### *Local Authority: The Congregational Model*

In Europe and the United States, the hierarchies and clerical dynasties of the Muslim world symply cease to apply. Instead, the mobilization of ordinary Muslims is the deciding factor for the new forms of authority. This mobilization is seen, for example, in the development of mosques and Islamic centers throughout the Western world. Over 1,500 Islamic centers have been built in the United States since 1980, and more than 6,000 in Western Europe in the past three decades. Such rapid growth in the number of Islamic centers—not to mention the increase in Muslim funeral parlors, *halal* butcher shops, Islamic schools, and so on—is a striking indication of how well Islam has adapted to its democratic and secularized context. This

adaptation takes the form of what is understood in America by the term "congregation." The term designates a kind of religious activism based on principles of (a) voluntarism, (b) management of the congregation by the congregants themselves, and (c) the organization of social and cultural activities as an integral part of the congregation's social function.

These three aspects of the congregational model contribute to the changing nature of Islam in American and European society. In Muslim countries, Islam is an official institution of the State. To be Muslim in a Muslim country is an aspect of social and cultural convention. But in Europe and the United States, on the other hand, there is little societal pressure to belong to a religious group of any kind. To belong to or leave a religious group is, therefore, an act of personal choice and a result of the voluntarism that characterizes religious life in contemporary society. Thus the creation of new Islamic centers is due, more than anything, to mobilization on the part of the Muslim community itself. That is, the construction, administration, and development of Islamic centers are all the result of voluntarism, the daily involvement of its members, who donate their time, ability, and money so that these places can exist.

Second, in Muslim countries, the people are not empowered to run prayer rooms and mosques. These places of worship are public property and are consequently created, run, and maintained by the State. Because this kind of management by State power is largely impossible in Europe,[8] and even less likely in the United States, it is the congregants themselves who take over the management of places of worship.

The third important role played by the congregation is in the creation and implementation of social activities. In both Europe and the United States, the mosque is the center of community life. In other words, the mosque is not just a place one goes to pray, but a true "community center," toward which preexisting networks of solidarity are redirected. This means, that the various activities that set the rhythm of religious life—marriage rites, circumcision, funerals—take place in the mosque itself more and more often. Moreover, Islamic centers now also provide such activities as courses on the Qu'ran for children and adults, conference series and seminars, courses for new converts (primarily in the United States) assistance with funeral rites, recreational activities for children and women, social assistance, and even psychological counseling.

Education is by far the mosque's most important function, in both Europe and America. In almost every mosque, adjacent to the prayer room, is a room reserved for religious training. This training usually consists of lessons on the life of the Prophet, the fundamentals of Qu'ran and *Hadith*, and basic Arabic. These educational programs achieve a dual purpose: not only the transmission of religious and cultural tradition, but also the socialization of children in Islamic culture, so that they may avoid the "temptations" presented by a Western environment. Islamic education can also take the form of intensive seminars for teenagers and women, conferences, or cultural programs.



In contrast to the simple place of worship—whose activities are limited to the observance of ritual practice, and in which the cleric or religious leader plays the dominant role—the congregation is characterized by the active involvement of its congregants in the creation and administration of the religious space—sometimes even including the direction of religious activity itself. This model applies not just to Islam, but to all religious groups in the United States. It is a striking factor of American religious life how rapidly almost all recent arrivals, including Buddhists and Sikhs, adapt to the congregational model. Islam's integration into the different societies of Europe also reflects this developing congregationalism, even if the term itself is never really used.

It should be noted, however, that in contrast to other immigrant groups, Muslim immigrants to the United States after 1965 never assimilated to the point of modeling their rituals on those of Protestant congregations: adopting Sunday as the primary day of religious observance, for example, or English as the language of prayer. Prayers continue to be said in Arabic, although sermons are delivered in English with increasing frequency. The same trend applies in Europe, although the use of vernacular languages in the mosque has frequently encountered hostility on the part of first-generation immigrants from Turkey and North Africa.

Ebaugh and Yang[9] note the centrality of the imam's role as another aspect of adaptation to the mainstream Protestant model of religion. However, as the same evolution is occurring in Europe—where the Protestant congregational model is far from the mainstream—we maintain that the so-called Protestant model is more accurately described as the adaptation of religious authority figures to the constraints of postmodern pluralism and relativism.

The aforementioned structural changes in the structure of Islam in the West particularly affect the status of religious leaders. In the West, the imam acquires a centrality unheard of in the Muslim world. We should recall that in countries where Islam is the official state religion, it is organized as a rigid hierarchy with a strict division of religious roles. The principal figures—the *cadi* and the *mufti*—have the status of civil servants. The mufti's role within the religious hierarchy is to decide questions of religion; the cadi is qualified to decide legal issues (marriage, divorce, etc.). The imam, for his part, is

responsible for leading prayer and delivering sermons. He defers to the mufti and the cadi, and sometimes (in cases where the mosque-goers have a need that is beyond the imam's power to address), to other specialists.

In Europe and in the United States, on the other hand, the imam's sphere of activity is not nearly so circumscribed. The person who leads the prayer service is usually the most highly educated or the most respected member of the community (though this still does not necessarily mean that he has a degree in religion). Because there is no true institutional structure, he is imam, cadi, mufti, and teacher all at once; he presides over burials, represents the community in official ceremonies, and so on. The list of his roles both within and without the religious community is potentially endless.

The challenge of this kind of expansion of the imam's duties within the community is not merely one of religious competence: it is also and especially one of cultural and psychological skill. The Muslim community can be extremely diverse—particularly in the United States, where characteristics such as country of origin, ethnicity, socio-economic level, generation, and so on, vary widely, and Pakistani communities live side by side with Lebanese and Turkish groups. The African American mosques of the inner city are perhaps the only non-multiethnic Islamic communities existing the United States. Farouque Khan, the president of the Long Island Islamic Center describes the creation and the expansion of his mosque:

> This group of fifteen families would meet in church basements, in houses on Sundays and try to educate the children. That was the beginning of this community. And in 1984, this property became available—835 Rush Hollow—a property with a nice piece of land in front. The place where we are now was the house on sale. So we purchased this house, along with the land, in 1984. And to give you an idea, in 1984 when we prayed here for the first time for Friday, there were three of us. And now we have six to seven hundred people praying on Fridays here . . . Six to seven hundred people. So that was the beginning. We then started the Sunday school, and the community started growing. We started designs for the mosque in 1989. We laid the foundation stone and started actively fundraising, and as the money became available, we proceeded with the construction. And I think [it was in] 1991 [that] we inaugurated the mosque which you see right in front of you here. Now the community has grown to where we have over four hundred children coming to the Sunday school. We have had to have two shifts. We have an adult [education] program. We have special programs—every day basically—for Qu'ranic recitation. Different groups meet on different days in the Center. So it has become a very active community. And on our mailing list we have almost three thousand individuals. So they are basically the supporters of the Center. . . . The fifteen families who started the center were mostly from South Asia. Most of the people who were together at that time were from Pakistan, India, Kashmir, with a few from the Middle East, not many, [but a] few. Now it's everybody. Everybody. As we developed by-laws for the institution, some rules and regulations, we made sure that this place was kept open for anyone who wanted to come, whether they are Shi'a, Sunni, Hanafi, [or] Wahabi.[10]



In Europe, on the other hand, the neighborhood mosque tends to be much less ethnically diverse. Whether in Paris or Berlin, Amsterdam or Madrid, local mosques remain fairly homogenous, both in their leadership and in their congregants. It is not at all surprising, therefore, that local mosques tend overwhelmingly to be North African in the suburbs of France, Pakistani or Bangladeshi in English cities, and Turkish in Germany.

### *Negotiating the Building of Mosques*

The other challenge posed to the imam by the Western environment relates to the necessity of communicating with non-Muslim society. The changes in the nature of the mosque in Europe testify to a growing need for dialogue between Muslims and Western governments. The extent to which Islamic community life has established itself in the cities of the West can be seen in the transition from the prayer room, often invisible and anonymous, as a place of Muslim worship, to the public space of the mosque. The difference between these two spaces is not a matter of building area or size. The difference is in how visible the mosque is as a locus of Islamic activity within the city as opposed to the private space of the prayer room, (often simply an apartment or the back room of a shop).

If the prayer room goes unnoticed by the non-Muslim community almost by definition, the same can hardly be said of the mosque. Every project for the building of a mosque entails discussion and negotiation between the different protagonists in the urban context. The mosque transforms Islam from being invisible to being unwanted.

Wherever Islam seeks to establish itself within the urban environment, it encounters resistance from the very outset. No matter what the actual content of the demand made by Muslims regarding the proposed mosque, the first stage of dialogue is often a veiled or explicit refusal on the part of the municipal or local (i.e., neighborhood association) negotiating partners.[11]

The strength of this refusal is in indirect proportion to the degree of acceptance enjoyed by Islam in its respective national and local contexts. In countries with a long-standing history of immigration, such as France or Great Britain, the *a priori* resistance to mosques is losing its force. Some mosques have already been built (Lyon, Evry, Mantes la Jolie), others are in progress, but regardless, the construction of a mosque inevitably entails a process of negotiation with the municipality and local organizations. The projects at Marseille and Toulouse provide two examples of resistance to mosque construction in which it is no longer the resistance of local authorities that creates the problem; the delay in construction is due mostly to competition between different Muslim organizations, to such an extent that on June 17, 2004, the mayor of Marseille announced the cancellation of plans for a Grand Mosque in favor of several smaller local mosques. Even the Paris city council's long-standing refusal to grant a building permit to the expansion project of the Addawa mosque, in the nineteenth Arrondissement, was resolved in 2001 after the election of a new mayor.

One of reasons why this kind of resistance is losing strength in Europe is that at least some of the mosques constructed in the past ten years have proven themselves to be good neighbors in the religious environment of their respective communities. The mosque of Lyon, established in 1994, almost did not come to be, due in part to the explicit hostility of certain local community preservation associations, but also and especially to the first Gulf War and the accompanying outburst of anti-Islamic sentiment. These two factors were nearly fatal to the mosque project. Today, however, this mosque—officially inaugurated in September of 1994 in the presence of the Minister of the Interior—is a favored negotiating partner in local politics. Similarly, in Evry and Lille, mosque representatives and municipal authorities continue to work together. Another reason for this change of heart on the part of local authorities is the realization—particularly after the 1989 controversy over the wearing of headscarves—that Islam is no longer solely a matter of isolated migrant workers, but also of new and established generations. Municipalities thus have a vested interest in bringing Islam out of the shadows and releasing it from its status as a religion on the margins. Governments are now banking on a strategy of official recognition for Islam. With this strategy, they hope to forestall the threat of fundamentalism raised by the Paris Métro bombings of 1995 and other attacks by imitators of Khaled Kelkal.[12]

In England, as well, the construction of mosques and their establishment within the urban environment has become fairly noncontroversial. Of the more than 1,200 Muslim associations in Great Britain, almost all have officially recognized status in religious matters (the ritual slaughter of animals, burial rites).[13] In some cities, these associations have banded together in coalition to maintain a permanent dialogue with the municipal authorities. The Council of Mosques of Bradford and the Federation of Islamic Associations of Leicester are two notable examples. According to Sean McLoughlin, one of the reasons for this lack of controversy is the demographic concentration of Muslim populations in cities like Bradford.[14] In all of these cases, the lack of controversy over proposals for the building of mosques is due to good communication between the local community, municipal authorities, and Islamic representatives. The emergence of a new generation of educated and middle-class Muslims at the head of these associations has meant a greater skill in conducting negotiations compared to that of first-generation immigrants.

In countries such as Spain or Italy, however, where Muslim immigration is a relatively recent phenomenon, proposals for the construction of mosques continue to encounter heavy resistance. A project to build a mosque in Lodi, for example, provoked a resistance, in 2000, on the part of both the general population and the local authorities that serves as a sort of model for resistance to mosque construction throughout Italy.[15] Similarly, in Germany—where recognition of the definitive nature of Turkish immigration is relatively recent, despite the fact that Turkish immigration itself is hardly new—proposals for mosques continue to encounter significant obstacles.



### *The Emergence of a New Generation of Local Leaders in Europe*

The ability to communicate with the non-Muslim community and to conduct negotiations with political authorities is crucial for local religious leadership. Many first-generation immigrant imams in Europe have confined themselves to their ethnic community, be it Turkish, North African, or Middle Eastern. In most cases, the initiative to build a mosque is taken by Muslims from the same country or region and who live near one another in a particular city or neighborhood. In France, for example, the first mosques and prayer rooms of the 1980s were almost exclusively created by immigrants from the Maghreb. In England, it was the *Babas*—an Urdu word that translates as Daddies and refers to first-generation immigrants from the Indian subcontinent—who both built and retained control of the first mosques. The "Babas" hegemony has led to conflicts between the different prayer rooms that correspond, in turn, to the regional and religious divisions of the country of origin: Punjabi, Gujrati, Barelvi, Deobandi, and so on.

For the most part, the imams of the first mosques received no formal religious training, or else a training that limited the possibility of spreading the

religious message in a Western context, as shown by Daniel Rivet's report on French imams presented to the National Ministry of Education in June 2003.[16] According to this report, the majority of French imams are foreign-born—primarily Turkish and North African—and lack proficiency in the French language. But as the new, European-born or educated generation come to take the helm of Muslim congregations, the spectrum of activities for which the imam is responsible continues to expand, as does the interaction between the Muslim community and the outside environment. It is often the case nowadays that the position of imam and director of the mosque are combined. Mamadou Daffé, for example, a director of research and expert in pharmacology at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS, National Science Research Center), is the "charismatic" imam of the Mirail neighborhood in Toulouse. As of 2004, he leads evening prayer in the Al-Houciene mosque, the only religious institution in Toulouse where the *khotba* (sermon) is given in French. Daffé is the prototype of the local leader. A self-described "imam-researcher," he came to France from Mali in 1975. He currently lives with his family in a housing project in the Empalot quarter, and in the space of only a few years, has become the spiritual guide to many of Toulouse's young Muslims.

Larbi Kechat, the director and imam of the Addawa mosque, located on the Rue de Tanger, is another local religious leader who, since the mid-1980s, has contributed to the new openness of the mosque. Kechat, a graduate of the Sorbonne, has kept somewhat apart from the French Islamic world. Refusing to participate in the national competition for institutional leadership, he achieved his position instead through the development of social and cultural activities within the mosque. His mosque has gained popularity among Muslim youth largely because of his determination to situate it in a non muslim environment. His reputation as "a martyr" also contributed to his attractiveness to the younger generations: in 1994, he was unjustly arrested and sentenced to house arrest on suspicion of having supported the Algerian radical group GIA (Groupe Islamique Arme, or Armed Islamic Group).[17] He delivers his sermons in French, and has organized a number of colloquia and seminars, inviting religious, intellectual, and political figures to discuss subjects on such varied topics as secularization, modernization, and women's rights. The Addawa mosque is located in a former textiles warehouse, transformed into a religious center in 1967. After more than 20 years of legal battles with the Paris City Hall, Kechat finally obtained permission in 2001 to build a real mosque—which, once it is completed, will be one of the largest in Europe.[18]

In Germany, the emergence of a new generation—represented, for example, by the Islamic Federation of Berlin—also permitted negotiations to be



opened with government authorities in 2002 on a proposal for a mosque in the Kreutzberg district of Berlin. The Islamic Federation of Berlin[19]—made up of high school and college students and lawyers, all Turkish in origin—represents the new face of German Islam, which is just beginning to come out of isolation. This new generation is more likely than previous ones to engage in discussion with German authorities, as well as with other segments of German society, such as churches and political parties.[20] This fact, however, does not mean that the dialogue between Muslim groups and the outside world is always easy.

Even in England, a new generation of leaders are beginning to emerge from within the Muslim community. While these leaders are still primarily known for their family positions and their roles as providers of traditional education, they are at the same time developing connections with local governments and non-Muslim organizations. One of these new leaders is Ibrahim Mogra, imam of the Umar mosque in Leicester. Born in England, he is a recognized figure within the Deobandi community that dominates Islamic life in Leicester. At the same time, he is involved in a variety of interfaith dialogues and communication efforts with the non-Muslim world around him. "If we want to change the perception people have of us," he says, "we must take the initiative, we must build relational networks and friendships."[21]

### The Growing Integration of American Mosques

Most religious leaders in the United States establish relations with the non-Muslim world as a matter of course, with the exception of leaders from Salafi and Tablighi groups. Resistance from the non-Muslim world to the building of Islamic centers, is much less pronounced than in Europe—or at least it was before September 2001—largely because religious freedom and the social role of religion is seen as one of the cornerstones of American society. Muslim dialogue in America also tends to be more inclusive than in Europe, encompassing not only local authorities but also the media, the schools, social services, and the churches. Talal Eid has been the imam and director of religious affairs at the New England Islamic Center of Quincy and Sharon since 1982. At a meeting held on November 2003, he insisted on the necessity of communication with non-Muslims in the post–September 11 context. "We have to educate people about key concepts like *jihad* and *kafir*," he stated, "and also explain certain rules like *hijab* and the prohibition against mixed-sex relations."

The New England Islamic Center is one of the oldest Islamic centers in the United States. It began in the 1920s as a permanent space for Lebanese

immigrants to gather. The religious differences between Christians and Muslims were minimized in order to concentrate on the preservation of Arab language and culture. With the passing of the years, the religious activities of the center came to be modeled on those of Protestant congregations, including the adoption of mixed-sex religious services and the copying of Christian almsgiving practices in the *zakat.* The arrival of immigrants who were more strict in their observance of Islam after 1965 changed the character of the center. Muzammil H. Siddiqi, who served as president of the ISNA from 1996 to 2000, was the imam responsible for turning the center toward a more orthodox orientation.[22]

Originally from Lebanon, Talal Eid holds a degree from the University of Al Azhar, as well as master's degree in Theology from Harvard Divinity School. Since 1993, he has been studying for his doctorate at Harvard. Before coming to the United States, Eid was the imam of the An-Nasir mosque in Tripoli. His current post is partially subsidized by the World Islamic League. The community has grown dramatically since the 1980s, and the center now has two locations, Quincy and Sharon, Massachusetts. The center's activities attract hundreds of families every year. Among its most popular are a full-time elementary school, seminars for adults, and a summer camp.

The dual challenge for Islam—"To explain America to Muslims and Islam to Americans," in the words of Imam Talal—is made more difficult by the majority of imams' failure to adapt to their new context. The first generation of Muslim immigrants to Europe was often poorly educated in Islamic theology, or educated in such a way that limits their ability to teach in a Western setting (as the Rivet report on French imams, presented to the Minister of the Interior in May 2003, demonstrates[23]). The fact that many foreign-born imams are brought to the West on the initiative of institutions in the country of origin—or even, in the United States, of the congregants themselves—further reinforces this situation. Communication between imams and their congregants is often difficult. Problems have arisen in almost every mosque: either because the imam is too strict, or because he has political aspirations, or because he does not sufficiently address the particularities of the environment in his sermons or even in his everyday speech.

This failure to adapt on the part of the imam is often "counterbalanced," especially in the United States, by the role played by the president of the mosque or organization. According to a 2001 survey on American mosques (1209 total surveyed), sponsored by CAIR, 81 percent of American mosques have an imam. In half of these, the office of imam and the office of president are filled by two different people.[24] Most large American mosques tend to be organized in a fairly systematic fashion, with the president elected by an executive council and the imam hired as an employee. This is the case, for example, of the Islamic Center of Long Island, run by an executive committee of 25 members (including two women) and a committee of sponsors. The president is elected by the committee. The imam is an employee of the center.



This is how the president of the center describes the process by which their imam was hired:

> What we have avoided is a single person coming and telling us what's right and what's wrong. Many years ago, we went looking for imam. We put together a job description. What does the imam have to do? Well, he's got to lead the prayers. He's got to ask—to deal with non-Muslims, okay. He's got to deal with the youth, he's got to deal with the women. Major issues. So we interviewed a whole bunch of candidates. We advertised and a lot of people came through. We could not find one person who could do all this. So we divided up the responsibilities and the job. . . .
>
> Well, the imam, Hafez, he leads the prayers, okay, he's good at it. He does that. [But] if a question comes from the community which is sensitive, they refer it to me. I am the spokesperson. So we divided up the job. We said, we do not have anybody at this time with whom we feel comfortable that he can do all these things. So let us do it bit by bit and do it well. And it's worked out very well . . . As far as I know—in terms of Islamic history, I mean—the job description for an imam was never someone who did everything. You know, the Prophet in Islam himself did not do everything. And unfortunately, [there are] a lot of people who do come here to go to the States, or come from, you know, very reputable institutions, Al Azhar, etc. . . . after they come here and they get a job here as an imam, then suddenly they're autocratic.[25]

According to the CAIR survey mentioned above, the median age for imams who are not also presidents of the mosque is 42; for those who are both imam and president, 48. In cases where the roles of president and of imam are separate, the imam is a full-time employee. Most imams have a university degree, 77 percent of these in Islamic Studies. The percentage of degree-holders is even higher (93 percent) among presidents or directors of mosques who do not serve as imams. Farouqe Khan, the president of the Long Island mosque, came to the United States in 1967 to conduct post-doctoral research. A doctor who took his early training in Kashmir, he is also the head of a cardiology unit in a large New York hospital.

It is within the African American community that the function of imam and director are most often combined. The level of Islamic education of these imam-directors also tends to be lower than the average. Imam Siraj Wahaj has been the imam of the Taqwa mosque in Brooklyn since its creation in 1981. Born Jeffrey Kearse, he was raised Baptist, and converted to Islam while still a young man. When Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, Kearse was 18 years old: "When they killed Martin Luther King," he says, "they killed the dream. After that, we became more militant and more radical."[26] As a student at New York University, he was attracted to both the Nation of Islam and the Black Panthers. He eventually joined the Nation of Islam in 1969. Upon the death of Elijah Muhammed in 1975, the founder of the movement, he followed the path set out by Warith Deen Mohammed and turned to Sunni Islam. Self-taught in both Arabic and Islam, Wahaj, along with 50 of his coreligionists, took an intensive 40-day course in Islam sponsored by the government of Saudi Arabia. He subsequently decided to build on this foundation with a four-month course in Mecca. In 1981, with the help of some friends, he founded his own mosque, located in a Brooklyn apartment. His next step was to purchase a former clothing store at public auction, for a sum of $30,000, and convert it to an Islamic center. Sixty percent of Wahaj's congregants are black immigrants from Africa. As both imam and president of the mosque, Wahaj is, in his own words, "in charge of everything."

The fight against drug use has been one of Wahaj's primary "missions" in the Taqwa mosque. In an unprecedented move for the time, he formed an alliance with the police in order to find and prosecute drug dealers, and eventually succeeded in eradicating drug traffic in the mosque's immediate neighborhood. "In '89," Wahaj recounts,

> we had a 40-day anti-drug campaign, where we were able to close down fifteen drug houses in this particular area. We know that in order for our congregants to be saved, we had to get rid of the drugs in the area. So, we literally closed them down. We had a big rally. It was on January 21, I think in '89 or '88, something like that. And the police came and they raided all those fifteen drug houses. And when they raided them and arrested the people, we stood our men in front of them and then a lot of them came back. And so we stood in front of these drug houses. Other brothers walked around the block, others drove around. We did this for 40 days, 24 hours a day. And, in a way, to keep the drugs out. That is why we got a big reputation for that. As you know, it was in the *Times* newspaper. It was in every major media. I mean, they came all over the world: from Germany, from France, from Italy, from Spain, from everywhere, you know, to know, to cover. Because it was major, major news . . . It was *jihad*.[27]



Since September 11, the situation has changed for American mosques. Attacks and acts of vandalism have increased exponentially.[28] More important, the "War on Terror" has resulted in the heightened surveillance of Islamic centers and organizations and a tighter regulation of their activities. The Islamic Society of Boston began in the 1980s as a congregation of MIT students in Cambridge. In the decade that followed, its membership grew in rhythm with successive waves of immigration. The center's membership is primarily Middle Eastern and North African. New branches are currently being constructed in Boston's primarily black Roxbury district, a development that will doubtless change the ethnic balance of the center's membership.

In a November 2003 interview with the author, W., the director of communication for the center, described visits to the center after September 11 by the FBI and the INS, visits that are now the daily lot of all Islamic places of worship. The most delicate political problem in this area concerns the religious or financial sponsorship of certain mosques. Some mosques are tied to associations labeled by the Bush administration as "international terrorist organizations." During the month of October 2003, the Islamic Center of Boston was the object of several articles in the local press after one of its members was arrested for "giving support to a terrorist group involved in Palestinian issues." A further source of controversy was the fact that Sheikh Qaradawi, one of the official sponsors of the center, was also known as a sometime supporter of Hamas.[29]

At the same time, however, such a climate of suspicion requires more than ever an openness to the non-Muslim world and an active solicitation of allies. Thus the leaders of the ISB, following the example of many other Islamic spaces, decided to increase its "open door" programs, to provide proof of the center's transparency and the goodwill of its administration.

Because first-generation immigrants still tend to dominate European mosques, the median age for imams is higher, and the level of education lower, than those of American mosques. Socioeconomic level is the crucial difference here. Most American mosques are financially self-sufficient and in good financial health.[30] The building of a mosque or center is rarely, if ever, described as a problem of finances. In Europe, on the other hand, the financing of both the construction and the day-to-day upkeep of Islamic spaces is constantly presented as both a political and a financial difficulty. The Islamic Federation of Berlin's 2002 negotiations for the construction of a mosque in the Kreutzberg district, for example, were additionally hampered by the Federation's lack of funding.[31]

Within the gradual restructuring of Muslim communities in the West, the emergence of "parochial leaders" constitutes a noteworthy phenomenon. This emergence, however, does not mean that diaspora Muslims are cut off

from the larger religious currents, all of them more or less political, which have spread throughout the Muslim world during the course of the twentieth century: first as a form of resistance to colonialism and then as an oppositional stance to secular political regimes. The proof of the connection between Western Islam and the Muslim World is (1) the influence of these movements—the Egyptian Muslim Brothers movement in particular—on local leaders in Europe and the United States; and (2) the role played by particular "transnational" leaders and charismatic speakers within diaspora Islam.

# CHAPTER 8

# Transnational Leaders and Charismatic Speakers

## *The West: The New Locus of Muslim Brothers' Influence*

Certain religious authorities in Islam are also associated with transnational religious movements. As we have already seen in chapter 5, The Tablighis and Salafis, are two forms of this transnational Islam. Both movements reject their non-Muslim environment and encourage their followers to separate themselves from mainstream society. In contrast, followers of movements such as the Muslim Brothers or the Pakistani Jamaat Islamiyya are much more involved in the recognition of and activity within Western society. Given this fact, these latter movements appear as the primary forces behind the reinvention of the *Ummah* in the West (a preoccupation not universally shared, however, by all "parochial" leaders).

The followers of the Muslim Brothers explicitly try to recreate the spirit of *salafiyya* which emerged in the nineteenth century. The attempt to place modern culture within an Islamic context is not a recent phenomenon. It also formed an integral part of the sweeping reform movements (*islâh*) of the nineteenth century. These reform movements were in large part a response to the renewed confrontation with the Western world triggered by Napoleon Bonaparte's invasion of Egypt. The chief representatives of these movements, collectively known as *salafiyya*, were the Persian Djamal Eddin Afghani (died 1897), the Egyptian Mohammad Abduh (died 1905) and his disciple, Rachid Ridâ, the Syrian Kawakibî, the Algerian Ibn Badis, and the Moroccan Allal Al-Fassi. Confronted with the challenge of modernity, these scholars believed that the Islamic tradition contained the resources

Muslims required. They advocated a return to the faith of the Elders (*salaf*) and the rejection of the compromises and superstitious practices that had obscured the true nature of the Revelation. In contrast to many members of the elite—who saw modernity as the absorption and adaptation of Western methods—the Muslim reformists argued against the strict division of past and present, acknowledging the possible benefits of both modernity and the Muslim tradition. To this end, the Salafi reformists promoted the practice of *ijtihad* (interpretation) to combat the traditionalism that rendered Islam inflexible and hindered its ability to adapt to new circumstances in the areas of society, culture, or politics. The trauma of Islam's contact with the West, therefore, did not originally result in a schism between those who approved of Western culture and those who disapproved of it; rather, it resulted in the intense desire of many Muslims for reform within Islam itself.

In the period between the two world wars, the balance of power shifted in favor of secular modernists. This signified the end of the efforts of the reformists, who had attempted to ground modernity in a foundation of classical Muslim culture, and the beginning of an era in which Islamic thought was removed from any historical or geographical context. This break explains the evolution of Islamic political thinking toward radicalism and antimodernism, as well as how the motivating principle behind these movements came to be not progress, but justice.[1]

The Society of Muslim Brothers was the first translation of *salafiyya* into a concrete organizational structure. The date of its creation, 1928, situates it in a decade that saw the disappearance of the last institutional manifestation of Muslim political unity, with Kemal Ataturk's dissolution, in 1924, of the Ottoman Caliphate. The political vision of the Muslim Brothers also serves as a sort of model: in its 60 years of existence it has encompassed a vast spectrum of modes of action—from socio-educative and medical charity work to electoral politics and even underground activities (against the repression of the Nasser regime)—and has been claimed, if sometimes only temporarily, by almost all other Egyptian, Middle Eastern, or North African Islamist movements.[2] The Muslim Brothers has always distanced itself from the Wahabi doctrines of the Saudi regime, which, as we have discussed in chapter 5, has since the 1980s been in the process of changing the meaning of the term "Salafi." Like the Salafists of today, followers of the Muslim Brothers consider the Salaf—the first generations of Muslims and companions of the Prophet—as their point of reference, and refuse to follow a particular school of jurisprudence. Contrary to Wahabi-inspired Salafists, however, followers of the Muslim Brothers rely on *ijtihad* (the power to interpret the revealed text) as a way to construct a form of jurisprudence adapted to the circumstances of modernity.



In Europe and in the United States, there are a number of different organizations who derive inspiration from the Muslim Brothers. In Europe, the most important of these are the UOIF (Union des Organisations Islamiques de France), the UOIE (Union des Organisations Islamiques d'Europe or Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe), the Zentralrat in Germany, and in England, the Muslim Council of Britain, and the Islamic Foundation. In the United States, the MSA (Muslim Student Association) and its satellite organizations, of which the ISNA is perhaps the most important, follow the Brothers' model. The leaders of all these organizations display a remarkable social and intellectual homogeneity. The first generation of leadership, all from the urban educated middle class of the Middle East, is the product of opposition movements in Muslim countries. This leadership includes such individuals as Dr. Nadeem Elyas, the Syrian president of the Zentralrat, and the first president of the UOIF, Ahmed Jaballah, who was a member of the Islamist opposition in Tunisia. In the past decade, however, a new, European-born generation, belonging to the educated middle-classes, has come to the fore in organizations such as the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB).

Both generations of leaders are involved in the struggle for official representation of Islam by the respective countries in which they live. The secretary general of the UOIF, Fouad Allaoui, is also one of the two vice presidents of the French Council on Islamic Religion. In 2002, Dr. Elyas drew up a charter in which he demonstrated the compatibility between Islamic principles and German democracy. Since the Rushdie Affair, and even more so after September 11, the MCB has become one of the main negotiating partners with the British government on issues relating to Islam.

Within this new democratic and pluralistic context, the Muslim Brothers have reconnected with their historical origins as an activist movement with a devoutly religious outlook. It bases its conduct on the principle of respect for the institutional and political environment of the host country, hand in hand with the maintenance or restoration of religious and ethical heritage. This "remoralizing" approach is expressed via the organization of various educational, charitable, athletic, and cultural activities.

Many imams, particularly among the young and educated, subscribe to the philosophy of the Muslim Brothers. They are sympathetic to its interpretation of Islamic tradition, or else they admire certain historical figures within the movement. It should also be noted, however, that an attraction to the Muslim Brothers does not necessarily mean affiliation with a particular organization.

### Enlightened and Mobilized Orthodoxy

In the United States, the Hathout Brothers are the real "veterans" of this movement. Both are doctors of Egyptian origin, very active in Islamic lobbies. We spoke with Dr. Hassan Hathout in his office in June of 1999. We also visited him at the California Islamic Center, in the heart of Los Angeles. A practicing gynecologist originally from Cairo (his brother is a cardiologist), Dr. Hathout received his Ph.D. from the University of Edinburgh, and emigrated to the United States in 1989. In addition to his medical practice, he has tirelessly devoted himself to the development of Islamic activities. Besides his work as an author and public speaker,[3] his most significant project (in cooperation with his brother) has been the Southern California Islamic Center and the expansion of its activities, which now include conferences, seminars, educational programs,[4] interfaith dialogues, and community programs.[5] He has also had the distinction of being the first Muslim to open a plenary session of Congress.

The New York Islamic Center was built thanks to the financial support of the governments of Kuwait, Libya, and Saudi Arabia, as well as contributions from countries such as Indonesia, Turkey, Morocco, and Algeria. The center was completed in 1991 in midtown Manhattan. Its architecture demonstrates a desire to reconcile Islam and modernity. Its construction alone cost over 20 million dollars. In 2000, we spoke with the Egyptian-born imam of the center, Mohammed Gemeaha, then in charge of religious affairs. A cheerful-looking man of around 40 years, he places himself deliberately in the tradition of Qaradawi, whom he names as one of his models in theological matters, along with Tantawi, at Al Azhar. Himself an alumnus of Al Azhar, Gemeaha worked as a translator for the head imam of this prestigious Islamic university, before being sent to Europe and from there to New York. Talking about Islam in the United States, Gemeaha tends to minimize the restrictions that Muslims face, explaining that it is possible for Muslims to eat the same meat as Christians[6] and to have recourse to civil courts, even in questions of Islamic civil law.

This kind of openness to Western society, however, could not prevent the fallout of September 11. Two weeks after the attack on the World Trade Center, Gemeaha returned with his family to Egypt. In official accounts, his departure was motivated by death threats directed at both him and his family. Another version, however, is that Gemeaha's departure was due to an interview he gave, published on an Arabic-language website[7] (in which he spoke of the attacks as a Zionist plot).

Nonetheless, the Muslim Brothers movement—along with authorities such as Sheikh Qaradawi—continue to attract young educated Muslims throughout the Western world who want to reconcile the exigencies of Islam with secular life without losing their soul. The author of more than 50 works, including *Islamic Awakening between Rejection and Extremism* (1984),[8] Sheikh Qaradawi became famous for his participation in debates televised on Al Jazeera. He is one of the chief figures of the Brothers movement in Europe and the United States. Born in Egypt in 1926, his entire education was focused on Islamic Studies: he received his B.A. from Al Azhar in 1953, and his doctorate from the same institution in 1973. Along with Sheikh Mawlawi of Lebanon, he was one of the first to become interested in the minority condition of Muslims living in the West. In the middle of the 1990 headscarf controversy in France, he took an extremely liberal position, counseling families to give up the headscarf if it was disrupting the life of the family or the young woman concerned. Sheikh Tantawi, of the same persuasion and ideology as Qaradawi, went even further, in 2003 taking a position in support of French government policy to ban headscarves from public schools. Qaradawi is a sponsor of both the UOIF and the UOIE. His book *The Permitted and the Forbidden in Islam*, which has been translated into both French and English, restates his moderate positions on the interpretation of Islamic law. It was nonetheless censored in 1997 by the French Minister of Interior.[9] Qaradawi is currently the president of the European Fatwa Council, of which Sheikh Mawlawi is vice president.

The Muslim Brothers expends its energies in two main areas: theological reflection, based on the principles of *ijtihad*, and intellectual production. The European Council for Fatwa and Research and the Fiqh Council of North America are examples of the first type of activity. Created in London in 1997 on the initiative of the FIOE[10], Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe, the European Council for Fatwa and Research is composed of 35 members representing the majority of Western European countries. Their fatwas are responses to questions asked by Muslims throughout Europe. The Muslim Brothers distinguish themselves from Salafis or Tablighis by their efforts to situate the interpretation of *fiqh* within a Western context. In spite of this, however, they can by no means be called a liberal or progressive movement. Their philosophy is most accurately described as one of enlightened conservatism. They actively practice *ijtihad*, with the primary aim of allowing Muslims to live devout lives within the European environment. Their rulings attempt to reconcile the requirements of Islamic practice with secular life. The result is a certain strictness in private matters, in combination with an active involvement in civil and political life. In October 1998, they issued a fatwa, for example, advocating political participation for Muslims in the democratic system.[11] At the same time, however, another fatwa prohibits the sale of alcohol in Muslim-owned restaurants and discourages Muslims from

working in places that prepare pork. Yet another fatwa recommends against investing any money in order to earn interest. And much ink was spilled over the council's fatwa (issued in 2001, after a process of discussion begun in 1999) regarding a female convert to Islam whose husband remains a Christian.[12] The council ultimately decided that the woman could remain married, but only in the hope that the husband would eventually convert.

This kind of decision, which takes into account the difficulties presented by a Western environment, is also typical of the rulings given on many internet sites, such as Islam-online, discussed in chapter 6, which could be categorized as "enlightened conservatism." Taking the same line as the FIOE, imam Al-Hanooti[13]—a graduate of Al Azhar and proponent of the Muslim Brothers' philosophy who writes for both the ISNA's website and that of the Muslim American Society[14]—issued a fatwa in which he states that a Muslim woman may not marry a non-Muslim man, but she can remain married to her non-Muslim husband if she thinks that he might convert. A question on the website asks, "I am a recent convert to Islam, Alhamdullihah! My problem is I reverted[15] and my husband and children did not. My main frustration is whether I am committing a sin by staying married to my husband since he is not Muslim or whether I should wait and see if he becomes a Muslim and if so for how long? I must also mention that he encourages me to go to the masjid and reminds me of my prayer time, however he will not revert at this time. I need your help as I can not seem to get an answer." Al-Hanooti's answer is: "It is unlawful for you to stay with your husband if he is a non-Muslim, but you can still give him time if you are hopeful that he will accept Islam. If there is no hope, I encourage you to get out of the marriage the moment you can do it."[16]

The most divisive question among religious authorities is to what extent the obligations of *Shari'a* can be fulfilled in the West. In other words, can one consider, with the *Hanafi* school of thought, that as a cultural minority, Muslims may not be able to follow all the obligations of *Shari'a*, even those with a moral dimension such as prohibition against earning interest? The council's various fatwas demonstrate a certain ambivalence in this area. In one fatwa, mentioned above, they prohibit the sale of alcohol by a Muslim, but in another—hotly disputed—fatwa, they allow the use of credit, arguing that in a Western country the Islamic rules prohibiting lending on credit cannot be followed.

The Fiqh Council of North America, presided over by Sheikh Taha Al-Alwani, takes a similarly moderate stance. Born in 1935 in Iraq, Dr. Al-Alwani is a graduate of Al Azhar, where he received a Ph.D. in Islamic Law in 1973. After working for many years in the Arab world's university system, he came to the United States in 1984. He has been active in many of the founding activities of Islam in the United States. He is the first president of the School of Islamic and Social Sciences in Virginia, the president of the Fiqh Council of North America, and a founding member of the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT). Today, he is one of the foremost thinkers on *fiqh* as it relates to minority issues—a subject that elicits a great deal of debate, even among those who subscribe to the Muslim Brothers philosophy.[17] One fatwa of the Fiqh Council that set innumerable pens to writing, for example, declared, in September of 2001, that it was legitimate for American Muslims to fight in the U.S. Army against Afghanistan. This fatwa demonstrates the desire to reconcile Islam with its western context that is characteristic of the Muslim Brothers movement.[18]



### *The Ambitious Project of Islamicizing Knowledge*

In terms of intellectual production, it is the Islamic Foundation—sponsored by Ahmad Kurshid of Pakistan's Jamaat Islamiyya—which constitutes the chief center of research and reflection on questions of Islam in Europe. The Foundation operates through a variety of research and educational programs and publications, including a number of books and magazines like *Encounters: A Journal of Multi-Cultural Perspectives*. According to its mission statement, The Islamic Foundation,

> established in 1973 in the city of Leicester, is a major centre for education, training, research and publication. The Foundation seeks to build bridges between Muslims and others, while promoting the highest standards of academic research and publications. Since its inception, the Foundation has been pursuing the following objectives: to contribute to a better understanding of Islam in the West; to foster better relations between Muslims and members of other faith communities; to promote educational ventures for the intellectual nourishment of the Muslim community; to present Islamic responses to the contemporary challenges in the academic field and enhance a global dialogue of civilizations. The Foundation has established research units on interfaith studies, Islamic economics, Islam in Europe, Muslim educational needs, education and training for new Muslims and non-Muslim professionals and cultural awareness about Islam. The Foundation has published nearly 300 books on a range of subjects related to Islam and the Muslim world and regularly publishes three journals. It houses the largest private Islamic library in Europe, which contains over 36,000 books and around 300 different journals.[19]

One of the foundation's most recent projects is the creation of the Markfield Institute of Higher Education, officially established by Prince Charles in January of 2003. The Institute was created to allow university graduates to study aspects of Islam.

Across the Atlantic, a network of scholars and scientists who all met through the MSA founded the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) under the sponsorship of Sheikh Al-Alwani and Ismael Faruqi. Their first meeting took place in Lugano, Switzerland, in 1977.[20] In addition to its publications, the Institute holds dozens of colloquia and seminars on both the national and international level, usually in cooperation with the MSA or American academic institutions. Shortly after September 11, we attended a conference on "Conflict and Religion in International Relations", organized jointly by the IIIT and Georgetown University. This conference strongly criticized the lack or inefficiency of communication between Muslims and the different segments of American society on topics relating to Islam. IIIT has branches all over the world: it operates in Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Germany, and, since 2001, in France. As a forum of intellectuals created to promote research, publications, and seminars on the question of Islam in relation to scholarship and modernity in general, the IIIT attempts a critique of Western thought from the standpoint of Islamic thought. Their vast and ambitious project is the "Islamicization of knowledge." Several different interpretations of Islam, not all of them based on *salafiyya*, are represented in this project. Their common conviction, however, is the idea that Western scholarship is in crisis, and that this crisis is, in turn, affecting the *Ummah*. One must find a way out of this crisis by attempting either to discover a kind of properly Islamic scholarship;[21] to create a scholarship that would respect the sacred, in the universal sense; [22] or to somehow reconcile Islamic tradition and Western scholarship.[23]

The School of Social and Islamic Sciences was founded in 1996 in Leesburg, Virginia by Dr Taha Al Alwani. Its mission corresponds to IIIT's project of reconciling Western and Islamic forms of thought, doing so from the standpoint of "enlightened *salafiyya*." Combining the contributions of Western social sciences with Islamic tradition, the school aims to reconnect knowledge to a respect for religious principles and values, and to contribute to the Islamicization of knowledge. The social sciences are thus practiced and imagined in terms of an Islamic vision of life, humankind, and the universe. A knowledge of traditional Islamic scholarship is important, but should itself be looked at critically, in a sort of "intellectual *ijtihad*," which would allow students to develop new methodologies for classical sources. The school grants two types of academic degrees: Master of Islamic Studies and a professional degree for practicing imams. About forty students are enrolled every year in both programs. In 1999, the school was authorized by the State of Virginia to give doctoral degrees in Islamic Studies, making it the first Islamic university in America to receive State recognition. The school's other great success has been to train and grant degrees to Islamic chaplains in the U.S. Army. The number of Muslims serving in the four branches of the U.S. Army is estimated to be between 10,000 and 20,000.[24] The school grants degrees to approximately ten military chaplains per year.



### Preachers and Public Speakers

The term "charismatic leader" applies to figures such as Siraj Wahaj, or Sheikh Younous of the Tabligh Al Rahma mosque, located in a Paris suburb. Young, physically appealing, Younous attracts hundreds of young people to his Thursday conferences, making him one of the most popular Muslim leaders in the area. But it should come as no surprise that charisma is a characteristic shared by many preachers and spokespeople in Islam. Charismatic leaders in Islam mostly come from among the community of intellectuals, academics, and scholars. Their success demonstrates the evolution, described by Anderson and Eickelman, of a new kind of legitimacy in Islam that exists alongside traditional authority. In the West, these new authorities have in fact become the norm, not the exception. In general, they are not students of religion, and do not situate themselves within a particular official Islamic tradition. But they have a microphone, a pen, an Internet connection, and the faithful audience they attract with their message is the primary source of their legitimacy.

Didacticism and apologism are two tendencies shared in common by most popular Islamic leaders. Didacticism here refers to a kind of desire to teach Islam that has no equivalent in the Islamic world proper. In an environment where scholarly institutions are few, the spokesperson often has to take on the role of teacher. Conferences often highlight topics dealing with central concepts of the Qu'ran or Islamic tradition, or with issues of faith in general. The apologist tendency has to do with the defense of Islam and with explaining to audiences influenced by a widespread Islamophobia that Islam is not as bad as "they" (Westerners) say. After the events of September 11, 2001—particularly in the United States—this apologist tendency has generally ceded to a more critical attitude towards certain branches or personalities in Islam.

Sayyed Hosein Nasr was born in Teheran in 1933, emigrating to the United States at the age of 12. He was the first Iranian-born graduate of MIT, and received his Ph.D. in history of sciences from Harvard University

in 1958. He then returned to Iran, where he enjoyed a brilliant career as a professor until the 1979 Iranian Revolution. In that same year, he returned to the United States. At Temple University, he joined with Ismael Faruqi to develop a program of Islamic Studies. Today, he holds the chair in Islamic Studies at Georgetown University. He has written over 30 works in English, and some in Persian and English.[25] Thanks to his universalist perspective on critiques of knowledge, as well as the inspiration he takes from Persian mysticism, he has become one of the best-known conference-speakers and intellectuals outside Muslim circles. Within Muslim circles, on the other hand, it is his book, *A Young Muslim's Guide to the Modern World*, that has attracted the most attention. The book stresses the necessity of preserving an authentic Islamic identity in the heart of the West.

Jamal Badawi is Canadian. A professor of Islamic Studies and Management at Halifax, he began his studies in Cairo and completed his Ph.D. at the University of Indiana. He is the author of a number of books and articles,[26] and has created more than 300 programs and special reports on Islam. He enjoys a great popularity among North American Muslims, and his conferences, recorded on cassette or video, are bestsellers. His main areas of interest are the economy, women's issues, and interfaith dialogue.

During one of his conferences on women's issues in Islam, he claimed that women's liberation in the West had been due to their struggle against the evil intentions of men; whereas in Islam, women's status came from divine decree and was thus inherently true.[27] In another conference, citing verses from the Qu'ran, he described domestic violence as something to be shunned except in exceptional circumstances, and even those bound by certain limits, such as not striking the face.[28] One of his more noteworthy conferences, held after September 11, was "Islam, World Peace, and September 11." In this conference, he declared the September 11 attacks to be against the principles of Islam, and gave advice to Muslims on how to communicate with non-Muslims regarding the concept of *jihad* and the confusion between it and holy war.

Hamza Yusuf was born in Washington and raised in Northern California. He converted to Islam in 1977, at the age of 17. He then spent ten years in Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Morocco, and Mauritania studying Islam under a variety of ulemas and sheikhs. Upon his return to the States, he began a double major in Paramedics and Religious Studies at San Jose State University. He is a primary cofounder of the Zaytuna Institute, where he promotes the reinstatement of traditional methods for the teaching of Islam.

We should additionally mention Mokhtar Maghraoui, an Algerian American professor of Physics at the University of Syracuse, who serves as a



member of the ICNA's Council of Imams; Dr. Ahmed Sakr, professor of Education at the University of Illinois, who specializes in family and economy. Sherman Jackson, professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Michigan and an expert on Islamic law; and imam Siraj Wahaj, mentioned above, are African American Muslims who have also achieved prominence within the general Muslim community.

Turning to Europe, let us mention Sheikh Ahmad Ali. Ali came to England from Pakistan at a very young age. He studied both secular and Islamic subjects at school, and eventually founded Al Mahad al-Islam, a Bradford-based institution that provides information and education on Islam for high school- and college-age students. His conferences focus on the system of beliefs in Islam, Islamic law, Hadith, and the interpretation of texts.

### *Tariq Ramadan: A Leading Spokesman for Islam*

During the 1990's, France saw the emergence of a new generation of local preachers and speakers born and raised on its soil. The growing popularity of these preachers among the children of immigrants attracted the attention of social workers, who were taken off guard by this singular act of "integration," as Dounia Bouzar's pioneering survey demonstrates.[29]

But it is Tariq Ramadan who has emerged as the most popular preacher among European Muslims. As the son of Saïd Ramadan[30] and the grandson of Hassan El-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brothers, he enjoys a special cachet among European Muslim youth. The author of numerous publications, he has been the main intellectual figure of the European Muslim world since 1990, particularly among Maghrebi communities. His position as professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Fribourg in Switzerland further confirms his status as a model for young Muslims in search of their spirituality. His brother Hani, the current president of the Geneva Islamic Center, has also achieved a certain renown, albeit along more fundamentalist lines. Hani's article, which appeared in the September 10, 2003, *Le Monde*, advocating stoning as a punishment for adulterous women, cost him his teaching position.

Tariq Ramadan, for his part, is one of the most listened-to and respected figures in the French-speaking Muslim world, a fact proven by the number of young people his conferences attract. He can also cite the immense support he received from the community when, between November 1995 and May 1996, he was forbidden entry into France, for reasons that were eventually proven baseless. His popularity is largely due to his understanding

of how to address the hopes and needs of French Muslim youth. His language is strict but enlightened, promoting respect and understanding between the fundamental values of the host country and the values of Islam. "A young Muslim," he states, "is someone who is both French and Muslim and must find ways in which he can figure out how he is French and Muslim at the same time. It is a kind of realization, but one which requires a long process. The true Muslim comes to understand himself in the rigorousness of his conversation with God, and in the Muslim community by initiating dialogue with those who think differently from him."[31]

A further reason for Ramadan's popularity is that he has managed to keep himself out of the internal conflicts and rivalries between Muslim organizations for the privilege of representing Islam in France. There are some Islamic leaders who choose a representative role, and others who choose to focus on education and the spreading of the Islamic message. Ramadan situates himself among the latter. Since 1997, he has organized traveling conferences in Nîmes, Paris, Lyon, Strasbourg, Toulouse, Nantes, Geneva, and Brussels. These conferences cover a variety topics associated with Muslim tradition (*Tafsir*[32], the life of the Prophet, mysticism, etc.) through a monthly cycle of workshops. The conferences regularly attract between 1,000 and 2,000 young people, depending on the city. Muslim Presence (Présence musulmane), a coalition bringing together various youth associations in each city, is the main support of this traveling school.

The other facet of Ramadan's vocation as preacher is a tireless effort to explain to the media and to intellectuals what Islam is. In numerous interviews and publications, Ramadan has solidified his reputation as a central figure in public debate about Islam, at least among the French public. His article, "Criticism of the (new) communitarian intellectuals," published in October 2003 on the website Oumma.com—in which Ramadan accused certain Jewish journalists and intellectuals of lacking objectivity in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict—caused a veritable uproar. Thus, accused of anti-Semitism by some, victim of mainstream Islamophobia according to others, Ramadan has divided both public opinion and the French intellectual world into two camps. The pro-Ramadan camp includes a number of old leftists, today remobilized in the fight against globalization. The anti-Ramadan camp claims a number of highly prominent figures such as Bernard-Henri Lévy, André Glucksmann, and Bernard Kouchner (who once called Ramadan an "Intellectual crook").[33] The controversy surrounding Ramadan guarantees that he will remain a prominent figure from now on, not only for Muslims but also for many segments of French intellectual and political life that are marginalized in official political circles.[34]



But it is in the United States, without question, that the status of preacher in Islam is undergoing the most profound change. The criticisms of American policy or society that formed the content of some Islamic discourse before September 11 have largely disappeared. In Talal Eid's coinage, an "Islamically correct" discourse now prevails in Friday sermons, widely understood to be under high surveillance, and imams and speakers specifically instruct Muslims to no longer use words like "diabolic" to describe the United States.

Imam Anwar Al-Awlkai, from the Al Hijra mosque in Virginia, explains: "in the past, people made inflammatory statements, and we thought that they were just words. Now we know that these words should be taken seriously and that they can have serious consequences."[35]

In contrast to European Muslims, Muslims in America have displayed an increasing willingness to criticize aspects of their community. Two days before September 11, Hamza Yusuf predicted that America was about to go through a period of crisis. Shortly after the attacks, Yusuf made a public statement that he regretted his language, which, he said, could be easily misinterpreted. He has since become one of the most fervent advocates for change in Muslim leadership in the United States. "Islam has been taken hostage," was his response to the World Trade Center hijackers. He has also publicly criticized the training and education of the religious authorities in America, who, according to him, are insufficiently trained in the humanist elements of Islamic tradition.

Let us note, finally, that in this still very closed world of Islamic religious authority, it is as speakers and workshop leaders that women are beginning to come to the fore. The woman's voice in Islam is still very much a North American phenomenon, but we should mention the examples of Azizah al-Hibri and Ingrid Mattson in this context. El-Hibri is a professor of Law at the University of Richmond and president of Karama, an organization of Muslim women lawyers and human rights specialists. Mattson is professor of Islamic Studies at Hartford Seminary in Connecticut and vice president of the ISNA, the largest Islamic organization in America. Despite this progress, there are still no women imams who lead prayers in mixed-gender congregation, though this has begun to be a subject of debate in some communities since early 2000.

### Conservatism and the Democratization of Religious Authority

To conclude this look at the democratization of Islamic authority in the United States and Europe, we should note some characteristics that all these groups and types of leaders share, and which make up the particular character

of Islamic transmission in the West.[36] The problem of religious authority is how to transfer legitimacy from the Muslim world to the West. There is no longer any one person or movement who can claim sole jurisdiction on Islam. This lack of monopoly is as much an issue within the Muslim world as it is in the West. Nonetheless, the minority status of Muslims in the West means that institutions with a guaranted legitimacy and authority disappear completely. This, in turn, exacerbates the current global crisis.

In the West, therefore, even more than in the Muslim world, criteria for legitimacy in matters of religious authority tend to be relaxed. It is no longer a requirement, for example, to be a disciple in a long line of religious masters. The hiring criteria for both the Fiqh Council of North America and the European Council for Fatwa and Research are much less stringent than those of the traditional *ijaza* (license). The Councils' hiring criteria are: residence in the United States or Europe, respectively; a degree in Islamic Studies; and the recognition that the candidate is faithful to the values of Islam. Such flexibility has allowed for the inclusion of scholars such as Jamal Badawi, Sherman Jackson, Khaled Abou El-Fadl, and Moktar Maghraoui, as well as of women such as Azizah al-Hibri.

Once again, however, the greatest problem is how to transfer theology from the Muslim to the Western world. The Salafi interpretation tends to take primacy over all others, eventually becoming recognized as the "orthodox" version of Islam, which one can either adhere to or abjure. The widespread tendency in contemporary Islam to categorize everything as either *haram* or *halal* is one consequence of Salafi dominance. This binary opposition precludes the options of the possible, the neutral, the recommended and discouraged, which are equally valid within Islamic tradition.

The uncertainty surrounding the teaching of Islam also results in the fact that schools of jurisprudence[37] are often regarded with suspicion, and sometimes even wholly rejected. Most schools continue to have representation in the West—Maleki, Hanafi, and Shafi in Europe; Hanbali, Hanafi, and Maleki in the United States—but very few religious authorities, including many bureaucratic leaders, follow a specific school. Thus Sheikh Shamsi Ali, from the Indonesian Islamic center in New York, describes his position: "Most Indonesians are Shafi, but in my teaching methods, I don't subscribe to any school in particular. I use them all. If we can practice *ijtihad*, why not? That's what Islam wants. The Qu'ran has been interpreted in terms of the understanding of the Arabs and the conditions in which they live. We have to interpret the Qu'ran in terms of these changes: for example, regarding usury and how the prohibition is understood differently in the American context."



There are, of course, exceptions to this rule. From his Zaytuna Institute, located in the San Francisco Bay area, Hamza Yusuf specifically promotes Maleki rite. Abdulaah Adhami, an imam and teacher at an Islamic school in New York, provides another counterexample. His father was a Syrian diplomat, and he himself was born in the United States but spent his childhood in Damascus. In a 2000 interview, he recounted:

> I began training in the traditional Islamic discipline [when I was a child], on the authority of my maternal grandfather. He was *naqeeb Al-Ashraf*, or the head of those who have documented lineage back to the Prophet, peace be upon him. And in narration, in the first *Isnad* would be the family one, of course, on his authority back to the Prophet, peace be upon him, and of course back to the narrators of *Hadith*. I am honored to have earned a license to narrate over fifty collections, documenting the prophetic tradition of the Prophet, peace be upon him. This is called *Hadith Ijazah*, or a license to narrate. And my training still continues, it's still continuing. . . . I've heard from other *shuyoukh* [sheikhs] and studied for about four years with various *shuyoukh* in Damascus before I came back here. That was my initial base in the tradition or discipline. The rest of it was supervised study. When I was here on my own . . . [it was] a very alienating environment, because obviously it's nothing parallel to being under the care of the masters, the *shuyoukh* in Damascus. There is no comparison. . . . And that environment is really unparalleled in modern times; it's not the same, now, because of various circumstances. And because the *shuyoukh* are older now. They don't have the same level of energy in giving. So, I consider myself extremely blessed to have been in Damascus during a most right period of religious development and learning. And that continues to this day.[38]

Another consequence of the minority condition, particularly in the United States, is that the differences between Sunni and Shiite Islam tend to be minimized. In mosque attendance as well as interpersonal relationships, the divergence between the two branches of Islam appears as less and less of a determining factor. Nonetheless, the preeminence of Shiite clerics appears undiminished, largely due to the continued influence of international movements linked to Shi'a governments or to the religious institutions of Iran, Lebanon and Iraq.

But despite all these changes and pressures—and contrary to much received opinion—Islamic thought is in no danger of becoming a force for innovation or critique. At most, it is tailoring its moralistic stance to better

take into account a changing outside environment. As we have already noted in our examination of virtual Islam, the democratization of Islamic religious authority does not necessarily imply its liberalization.

### Diasporic Islam and the Challenge of Universal Democratic Principles

In conclusion, an investigation into the world of the mosque shows an adaptation to the European or American environment. We have described this adaptation in terms of the adoption of the congregational model, particularly in the changing relationship between ordinary Muslims and figures of religious authority. In this sense, the community's increased access to aspects of religion and religious teaching, as well as its greater involvement in the day-to-day running of religious spaces and functions, does indeed constitute a kind of democratic progress. Nonetheless, this democratization of religious life should not be confused with an enthusiastic embrace of liberal democratic norms and values. Two mistakes in thinking must be avoided. The first is the expectation that newcomers to the West will wholeheartedly embrace "Western values": values that are, furthermore—need it be mentioned?—not unanimously agreed upon even among natives of the West. Indeed, the most virulent critiques—from the Right to the Left of the political spectrum—come from within the democratic societies themselves. There have been Marxist and Trotskyist critiques of Western society, and critiques from the Far Right on the illusion of the principles of equality and justice or on the myth of universal democratic participation. In the United States, as we have discussed in chapter 2, the position of African Americans continues to demonstrate the limits of American democracy and its pretensions of universality. Even without having recourse to extremist positions, one can still point out the vast distance that separates the citizen/individual and the workings of democratic institutions. The second, opposite mistake (noted in chapter 2) is to consider all Muslims to be resistant *a priori* to any and all Western political values.

But why such warnings here? Because one should not assume, based on the information presented in this chapter, that Muslims will automatically adapt to Western democracies—as if they arrived in the West with no reservations about Western culture or criticisms of Western democratic values. In chapter 5 especially, we set out existing forms of resistance to Western norms and values, which can go as far as outright rejection, or even (rare though it may be) the will to destroy. Such extreme forms of resistance are rare. But among the Muslims of Europe and the United States, there are other ways of distancing oneself, many of which we have described in this chapter.



These alternate forms are by far the most common: without requiring the embrace of radical causes, they nonetheless express a certain reserve and critique of the cultural bases of democratic norms. These critiques are largely unspoken and implicit in the interviews that we conducted, surfacing only in the discussion of certain topics, such as women or the family, in sermons, conferences, and debates on both sides of the Atlantic.

The moral and cultural code of the Muslim woman is constantly seen as the antithesis of that of the Western woman, an opposition also claimed by Western-born female converts to Islam. A feminist Islamic discourse can be seen in the headscarf controversy in France between 2003 and 2004, and emerges in the taking-on of leadership roles by women such as Ingrid Mattson (vice president of the ISNA, mentioned above) and Amina Wadud (discussed in chapter 9).[39] Islamic orthopraxis, especially in terms of the dress code, constitutes a critique of the universal application of the principle of gender equality. These Islamic practices imply that, on the contrary, the principles of equality and individualism are not as universal as we Westerners would like to believe.

In this sense, Islamic orthopraxis in Europe and America must be differentiated from political Islam in the Muslim world. A reactionary moral position espoused in the suburbs of Lyon or New York does not necessarily imply a reactionary political stance, even if many Westerners still automatically associate the suburbs of Vénissieux with FIS in Algeria or Jamaat-Islamiyya in Cairo. Islamic demands in the West are mostly made within the context of the democratic system; whereas in the Muslim world, political demands are formulated within the context of authoritarian regimes, in which often no option is left open other than that of violence.

Muslim leadership in the West has therefore placed its emphasis primarily on issues of morality and the maintaining of differences, and even a kind of hierarchy of generations and genders. This situation clearly illustrates the divide between democratization and liberalism. In essence, the democratization of religious practice is *not* always followed by an acceptance of individual prerogative in matters of the family or personal morality. What many Muslim clerics describe as the Muslim point of view in regard to family or moral issues is largely a means of keeping their distance from the cultural underpinnings of the West, and thus functions as an implicit critique of Western democracy. In short, the internalization of democratic values by some Muslims, and Muslim leaders in particular, is colored by a good deal of skepticism for the universality of certain principles. Cultural education programs—such as the one announced on May 11, 2004 for the training of imams in French culture—may be helpful in quelling this skepticism.[40]

At the same time, however, current conditions—particularly since September 11—hinder the free expression of Muslim critiques of the West. The emergence of an "Islamically correct" language in mosques, described above, is a good example of the current impossibility of expressing one's skepticism. Even if this skepticism is expressed indirectly, for example, on issues of family or personal morality, it risks censorship and rebuke. Thus the Algerian imam of Vénissieux, who had spoken in support of polygamy and the stoning of adulterous women, was expelled from the country on April 21, 2004 by the French Ministry of the Interior. (The administrative court of Lyon, however, eventually stayed the expulsion, on the grounds that it had no basis in fact but rather on "general statements resting on subjective opinions." [41]). The Imam's opinions are no doubt objectionable, and Can be subject to both civil disciplinary measures and criminal prosecution; what remains an open question, however, is the way in which his comments were politicized by the Minister of the Interior, who made the decision to deport the Imam on grounds of public security.

We are thus dealing with classic dilemma of the new immigrant, obliged to display a wholehearted embrace of the values of the new political community of which he or she wants to be a part. In other words, the new immigrant must be more enthusiastic about his or her host society than its native inhabitants—all the more so in the unfriendly environment of post–September 11. The result among Muslims in the West is an ambivalence that is neither hypocrisy nor dishonesty, but a means of survival. This ambivalence demonstrates the extent to which Islam remains a alien phenomenon in Western societies. Islam will only cease to be alien once Muslims living in the West are able to express their criticisms of the democratic process, without being accused of disloyalty or being seen as a danger to society.

In this respect, it is interesting to point out that the only criticisms which are accepted, and even expected, from Muslims in the West are those that take issue with Islamic tradition itself. As chapter 9 shows, reformist trends, ranging the spectrum from moderate to radical, are currently beginning to develop within the Islam of the diaspora.