

# **Conversion and Cultural Alienation**

The Degree of *Cultural Alienation*  
that people experience when they  
embrace Islam in South Africa

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this humble effort to:

*Our newly formed Democracy*

which was achieved *only* after toil and struggle by the many unsung heroes of our cherished and beloved land, whose efforts were not in vain and whose fruits we, as South Africans, now cherish and inherit, the fruits

*of non Racialism,*

*of human dignity,*

*of human equality,*

*of Freedom of Choice,*

*of Freedom of Conscience,*

*and Freedom from stereotyping freedom, which some of the older and larger Democracies in the current world only pay lip service to, who have these lofty ideals displayed in their statue books, but not in the day-to-day lives of their citizens.*

Not so *my* South Africa. Long live our Democracy.

Long live South Africa.

Inkosi Sikelele-Africa.

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## DECLARATION

I, **Rafeek Hassen**, declare that this dissertation is my work, and has not been submitted previously for any degree at any other university.

*Rafeek Hassen* 5/04/06

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## ABSTRACT

In this Research Document I would attempt to *quantify* the degree of *Cultural Alienation* that fellow South Africans (from the major ethnic, racial and Religious groupings) experience when they embrace Islam.

A secondary objective would be to quantify the degree to which one's worldview changes (views on the Middle East conflict, America and the West and South African politics) on embracing Islam.

I will attempt to do so by employing both qualitative and quantitative methods in the Research process. Questions such as : is culture a separate entity from religion and if so what is the difference? What are the ingredients that comprise this concept we call culture? I will also look at the theoretical and theological arguments surrounding these issues in Islam from its original sources and scholars.

A survey will be conducted by way of a questionnaire, with reverts to Islam, to establish the degree of *their* alienation with regard to food, dress, Arabic as a language, rejection from family and friends and views on the Middle East conflict, USA and the West and South African politics.

Since all data collected will be analysed according to acceptable statistical methods, it will be assumed that the *average* results obtained would be a good indicator of the degree of *cultural* alienation a fellow South African (from a particular ethnic / cultural group) would have to undergo when contemplating embracing Islam.

The Research findings indicate that *cultural alienation does* indeed take place when someone embraces Islam, but that it varies and is dependent on both *individual, external* and *cultural* factors.

The Research findings also show that in the case of reversion to Islam, changes in one's worldview also take place, the extent of which is dependent once again on individual and external factors.

One of the main findings of the research is that there is no specific quantum **percentage** with regard to the extent of cultural alienation for any given individual embracing Islam, as there are many variables. There are however, general *trends* and *patterns*, which do provide helpful guidelines for someone contemplating embracing Islam.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost my gratitude goes to Almighty *Allāh* ﷻ Who made it possible for me to undertake this research and to accomplish it.

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My gratitude goes to all members of staff of the School of Religion and Theology, Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal who have in so many different ways stimulated me into the right direction.

I would also like to thank the National Research Foundation (NRF) in Pretoria for granting me the financial support by way of a bursary that made it possible for me to complete this research project.

I would also like to thank all those who volunteered to fill in the research questionnaire, without which this project would not have been possible. All of them, in the true spirit of *Ubuntu*, were willing to share their experiences on their reversion to Islam, knowing that their willingness to do so, would make it easier for their fellow compatriots to make a more informed choice.

Finally, I am grateful to my wife, Mariam and children Mohammed Ameen and Fatimah Zahra, who bore my long absence whilst engaged in researching and writing this research document. May *Allāh* ﷻ bless them all, ‘*āmīn*.



## INTRODUCTION

The **major objective** of the research is to ascertain the *degree* of **Cultural Alienation** experienced by someone embracing or converting to Islam in the South African context.

Based on the above findings, a **secondary objective** is to ascertain if any transformation in one's *outlook to life or worldview* has occurred as a result of such conversion to Islam.

It is hoped that the outcome of this research study would help inform fellow South Africans (of whatever racial, religious, ethnic or cultural persuasion) contemplating converting to Islam, of the *degree of Cultural Alienation* they may *have to* undergo when making such a transition to Islam.

Though much have been written and researched on culture, alienation and civilization, this study will focus more on the *Islamic* position on these issues for three reasons:

1. At the global level there are at times *wide ranging* opinions by Muslim Scholars on these issues,
2. In the South African context, the problem is more acute in that the debates on these issues have not yet 'taken off' in any substantial way. At the level of international Muslim academia, though divergent views are being postulated, at least the debate has begun.
3. This research study's main focus is *Conversion to Islam and Cultural Alienation* in the South African context. Seeing that there is not much consensus among Muslim scholars on the issue of *Culture, Alienation and Civilization*; this study would dwell largely on academics who have written on this issue giving their Islamic position.

It is envisaged that at the end of the exercise, a *contextual* and *acceptable* position on these issues can be reached. It also needs to be stressed that one of the *cornerstones* of academic research is 'to agree to disagree'.

The glorious strides made, and new frontiers that have been reached in the field of human knowledge (both religious or secular) were only possible within the paradigm and spirit of *this* approach. It is hoped that this current study is also subjected to the very same objective and open academic scrutiny.

## RELEVANCY OF RESEARCH

This research study is relevant, as our new Democracy has opened the doors for greater cultural exchange and understanding. It has also guaranteed freedom of choice and conscience without fear of stigmatization or stereotyping. As a result of this, there is a steady drift towards people embracing Islam or at least there is a greater enquiry and 'openness' about Islam, which was previously marginalized. Under the Colonial and Apartheid regimes, Christianity was considered and promoted as the only 'authentic' religion.

An article<sup>1</sup> published in the *Daily News*, a national daily paper printed in Durban South Africa, has shown a distinct drift by more and more African South Africans towards Islam. The article cites the influence of Muslim African foreigners from others parts of Africa who came into South Africa as refugees, as one of the contributing factors, as Islam was previously seen as only an 'Indian' or 'Malay' religion.

However, African Culture and Euro-centric culture will have to contend with Arab, Malay and Indian Culture when converting to Islam in the South African context. This is so as Islam which originated in Arabia in the Middle East, reached the shores of the Cape in 1652 by Muslim political exiles from Malaysia and Indonesia during the Dutch East India Rule; and in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century by Muslim indentured

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<sup>1</sup> Bell, Gordon. "More South Africans becoming Muslims" in the *Daily News*. Durban. Independent Newspapers. 6 November 2004. (See Appendix 1).

laborers brought from India to work on the sugar cane fields of Natal during British Colonial rule in 1860.

Another factor that makes this research relevant is the current *Global Islamaphobia* and stereotyping of Islam and Muslims as *not* being compatible with Western Culture or with modernity; and at times accused of being *in* conflict with it, the so called 'clash of civilizations' as postulated by Samuel Huntington<sup>2</sup>.

This research would seek to critically evaluate if there is a clash in cultures and civilizations, between Islam and the West, and if so, to what extent. An evaluation of African, Islamic and Western culture and civilization will also be explored, as South Africa is a mixture of both African centered and Euro-centered communities.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to come to an objective conclusion with regard to cultural alienation when converting to Islam, some key and relevant concepts would have to be explored:

- (1) Definition of Religion and Culture. Is Culture and Religion the same or is there a line that divides them?
- (2) What is the Islamic Concept of Culture? What is the relationship between Culture and Religion from an Islamic Perspective?
- (3) What are the '*ingredients*' that make up this concept called Culture?
- (4) What is Cultural Alienation?
- (5) Having established the above issues / concepts / definitions, one can then seek to establish the degree of Cultural alienation experienced by someone converting / reverting to Islam.
- (6) Finally, one would attempt to establish if any transformation has taken place in one's *outlook* to life as a result of the reversion to Islam. In other words besides any cultural shift that occurred, did a **civilizational shift** occur?

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<sup>2</sup> Huntington Samuel (1996). *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York. Simon and Schuster

## RESEARCH FOCUS AND METHODOLOGY

Islam is at times perceived to be an Indian, Arab, or Malay religion in the South African Context by those not well informed of the faith. However, notwithstanding the fact that Islam indeed is a global entity (one in every four persons on planet earth is a Muslim), there is no 'getting away' from the fact that there is a *cultural* component to Islam.

This research document would endeavour to determine the extent to which a person entering Islam will have to 'give up' their existing culture and adopt new elements of culture from Islam – what we term *cultural alienation*.

A secondary objective of this research would be to investigate whether or not a person's views about the world has changed having embraced Islam. This latter finding is also important in that Islam, as a *global player* is being portrayed as a civilization that is in *conflict* with the modern world. Besides a cultural shift, has a '**civilizational shift**' also occurred on converting to Islam, and to what extent this shift occurred and how difficult / easy was this transition.

As a *broad principle*, due to the nature of the research, both **qualitative** and **quantitative** research methods will be used.

The research questions (1) to (4) enumerated above will require **qualitative** research methodology involving Cultural and Cultural Alienation Theories and research works by scholars on the subject matter to date. It would also involve critical reading of Islamic Sources and Islamic Scholar's theories on the issue of *Islam, Culture and Alienation*.

Questions (5) and (6) would require **quantitative** analysis by way of a questionnaire given to randomly selected reverts to Islam across the Cultural Spectrum in South Africa. (Sample of questionnaire attached see Appendix 2)

The data/information from these questionnaires will then be fed into a computer program and be subjected to a series of *quantitative analyses* to provide the final outcome of the research exercise.

Quantitative Statistical Analytical techniques will be used to *minimize* or cut out *any* subjectivity or errors from affecting the final result. This scientific method would also establish a 'margin' of error, expressed as a percentage, on the final outcome.

In this way it is hoped that those who are contemplating converting to Islam (of whatever racial, cultural or religious background) would have assessments of 'real life' examples as contained in this research document, and thus be able to make a more informed and objective decision.

# CHAPTER ONE

## CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION

### INTRODUCTION

Islam at one level is regarded as a religion and a culture, but at *another* level Islam is also a civilization. Currently there is a perception that Islamic culture and civilization is in conflict with Western culture and Western Civilization. In this chapter we will explore if this perception is correct. This issue is very significant to the current study for two reasons:

1. If we agree with the postulation that Islamic Culture is in conflict with Western Culture or for that matter with African Culture in the South African context, then it implies that there will be conflict at the *individual* level as well when someone converts to Islam. This in turn would imply that conversion to Islam not only *alienates* one from one's culture but also brings one into *conflict* with one's previous culture.
2. This study will also explore the relationship between culture and religion and culture and civilization with politics. Attempts will be made to determine if these are different issues or if there is an overlap between them.

From an Islamic perspective, there is a close relationship between culture and civilization; hence the relevance of this issue for the current topic under discussion.

In the words of Mahmood Mamdani:<sup>3</sup>

This moment in history after the Cold War is referred to as the era of globalization and is marked by the ascendancy and rapid politicizing of a single term: **culture**. *Culture Talk after 9/11, for*

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<sup>3</sup> Mamdani, Mahmood (2005). *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*, Jacana Media (Pty) Ltd, pp. 17-18.

example, qualified and explained the practice of 'terrorism' as 'Islamic'.

Thus the issues of culture and civilization will have to be discussed from an Islamic position as well.

## 1.1 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION

Though at a very basic level it can be said that *culture* is the ways and habits of a certain *people* or *community*, and civilization refers to a *global phenomenon*, there are many different definitions of culture and civilization.

1. Alija Ali Izetbegovic<sup>4</sup> gives the following definition:

Culture is the influence of religion on man, or man's influence on himself, while civilization is the effect of intelligence on nature, on the external world. Culture means the art of being man, and civilization means the art of functioning, ruling and making things perfect. Culture is the 'continual creating of the self', civilization is the continual changing of the world.

Izetbegovic restricts the influence of culture to the human being and not the *external* world. While culture indeed influences the 'self' it is the 'self' that impacts and moulds the world around us.

Ali Izetbegovic continues by saying:

Civilization is the continuation of technical not spiritual progress... Therefore, civilization is neither good nor bad in itself. Man must create civilization.... The bearer of culture is man; the bearer of civilization is society. The meaning of culture

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<sup>4</sup> Izetbegovic, Ali. (1984). *Islam Between East and West*. Indiana. American Trust Publications, pp. 39-40)

*is self-power attained through upbringing, the meaning of civilization is power over nature by means of science.”*

Technically, Ali Izetbegovic is correct by drawing a distinction between culture and civilization, however, in *practice* and in *reality*, the type of *culture* a society imbibes, is the type of *civilization* it would create. Put in another way, if according to Izetbegovic, ‘the bearer of culture is man, and the bearer of civilization is society’; does not man make up society?

Thus there is a close relationship between culture and civilization and they are not two mutually exclusive concepts.

Dr Muhammad Fazl-ur-Rahman Ansari<sup>5</sup> defines three types of Culture in Society:

*Ideational Culture* which views life in an abstract manner, focusing more on the spiritual aspect of human life,

*Sensate Culture* which focuses more on the sensual and material aspect of life, to the exclusion of spiritual considerations, and

*Intergralistic Culture* like Islam, which combines and strikes a balance between the Ideational and Sensate paradigms which also integrates the spiritual and material and physical aspect of life into an integrated ‘whole’.

Dr Ansari in conclusion postulates that each type of cultural outlook impacts from the individual level onto the societal level leading to the emergence of a social order and civilization based on the type of Cultural outlook adopted.

## 1.2 THE THEORY OF CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS

According to Mamdani:<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ansari, Muhammad Fazl-ur-Rahman (n.d.) *The Qur’ānic Foundations and Structure of Muslim Society* Karachi. Begum Aisha Bawany Wakf. Vol. 1, pp. 114-116.

<sup>6</sup> *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*, op. cit, p. 19.



The difference in the contemporary perception of black Africa and Middle Eastern Islam is this: whereas Africa is seen as **incapable** of modernity, hard-core Islam is seen as not only incapable of but also **resistant** to modernity”

Mamdani continues by stating that the ‘founding father’ of the **clash of civilization** theory is Bernard Lewis, the well-known Orientalist at Princeton who has been an adviser to the US policy establishment, who coined this phrase in his article he wrote in 1990 entitled ‘*The Roots of Muslim Rage*’.

Mamdani states that ‘Lewis’s text provided the inspiration for a second and cruder version of the **clash of civilization theory** written by Samuel Huntington, a political scientist at Harvard, whose involvement with the US policy establishment dates from the era of the Vietnam War:

‘It is my hypotheses’, Huntington proclaimed in an article titled “The Clash of Civilizations?” (1993) In *Foreign Affairs*:

That the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great division among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be **cultural**. **Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.**

Between Lewis’s theory and Huntington’s theory of **clash of civilizations** we have a third postulation by the late Edward W. Said who ‘forcefully argued for a more historical and less parochial reading of culture, one informed by the idea that the clash is more *inside* civilizations than *between* them.’<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 22.

The biggest flaw in this **clash of civilization** postulation is equating culture with religion. In the words of Mamdani <sup>8</sup> :

It does not make sense to think of culture in political – and therefore territorial - terms. States are territorial, culture is not.

Another problem with equating the current global conflicts with culture and religion is that it is *selectively* applied to Islam only.

Conflicts in other parts of the world are not attributed to cultural / religious or civilizational causes if those involved are not Muslims.

Ziauddin Sardar in his book *The Future of Muslim Civilization*<sup>9</sup> sites exploitation and monopoly in civilizations as the causes of conflicts, rather than religious or cultural factors.

The Occident (the Capitalist West and Communist East) has continued to pursue its own goals directed towards economic and technological monopoly and exploitation, choosing to ignore the complaints of the developing nations. It is a civilization based on seeking its own self-actualization, regardless of consequences and side effects.

Though undated, the mention of the Communist East indicates that Ziauddin Sardar wrote this during the Cold War period. In his book he correctly argued at the time, that though the capitalist West and Communist East are *apparently* in conflict on economic policies, in terms of Civilization, they are one. Thirty years later and after the collapse of the 'iron curtain' current global events have proved him to be correct in his analysis.

Ziauddin continues by stating that the Islamic civilization **still** maintains its value system and traditions despite the duration of fourteen centuries of its existence.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 27.

<sup>9</sup> Sardar, Z (n.d.) *The future of Muslim Civilization*. Karachi. Haider Ali Muljee Taha, p. 3.

Dr. Syed Abdul Latif<sup>10</sup> states that a culture or civilization that has 'vitality' and 'possesses usefulness to life' will have 'staying power' and will thus survive the passage of time. He continues by stating that a civilization must stand for progress of 'all of humanity and not for an exclusive class of a section of society'.

Dr. Latif concludes by stating that in a system that 'depends for its sustenance on the continued exploitation of other communities, you have organized life but not civilization.'

**Islam is indeed a global player** as described in the extract below:

World of Islam  
**Global religion<sup>11</sup>**

Islam is a religion for all people from whatever race or background they might be. That is why Islamic civilization is based on a unity, which stands completely against any racial or ethnic discrimination. Such major racial and ethnic groups as the Arabs, Persians, Turks, Africans, Indians, Chinese and Malays in addition to numerous smaller units embraced Islam and contributed to the building of Islamic civilization. Moreover, Islam was not opposed to learning from the earlier civilizations and incorporating their science, learning, and culture into its own worldview, as long as they did not oppose the principles of Islam. Each ethnic and racial group that embraced Islam made its contribution to the one Islamic civilization to which everyone belongs.

The sense of brotherhood and sisterhood was so much emphasized that it overcame all local attachments to a particular tribe, race, or language--all of which became subservient to the universal brotherhood and sisterhood of Islam.

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<sup>10</sup> Latif, Syed Abdul (2002). *Principles of Islamic Culture*. India. Goodword Books, pp. 9-12.

<sup>11</sup> Alim CD Rom Program Version 3-1.

The global civilization thus created by Islam permitted people of diverse ethnic backgrounds to work together in cultivating various arts and sciences.

Although the civilization was profoundly Islamic, even non-Muslim "people of the book" (Jews and Christians) participated in the intellectual activity whose fruits belonged to everyone.

The religion of Islam was itself responsible not only for the creation of a world civilization in which people of many different ethnic backgrounds participated, but it played a central role in developing intellectual and cultural life on a scale not seen before. For some eight hundred years Arabic remained the major intellectual and scientific language of the world. During the centuries following the rise of Islam, Muslim dynasties ruling in various parts of the Islamic world bore witness to the flowering of Islamic culture and thought.

### 1.3 ASPECTS OF ISLAM THAT CREATE A GLOBAL CIVILIZATION<sup>12</sup>

As stated by Dr Abdul Latif, only a civilization that has *vitality and usefulness* will have 'staying power' and would survive the passage of time.

The *Qur'ān*<sup>13</sup> is very clear in that Islamic Civilization can only claim to be 'better' than any other **provided**, and **on condition** it *serves humanity* and enjoins the good and forbids evil in society.

*"Ye are the best of peoples evolved for (the service of) mankind enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong and believing in Allāh."* (*Qur'ān*, 3:110).

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<sup>12</sup>Maududi Sayyid Abu Al-'Ala, *Islam: Its Meaning and Message*, M. Tariq Quraishi (ed.), American Trust Publications, Indianapolis, Indiana, (1984: 12-14)

<sup>13</sup> All verses quoted are taken from the *The Holy Qur'an- Translation and Commentary* by Ali, Abdullah.Yusuf, published by IPCI (1993).

A. Yusuf Ali, commenting on this verse, states:

The logical conclusion to a Universal Religion is a non-sectarian, non-racial, non-doctrinal, religion, which Islam claims to be. For Islam is just submission to the Will of Allah. This implies (1) Faith, (2) doing right, being an example to others to do right, and having the power to see that the right prevails, (3) eschewing wrong, being an example to others to eschew wrong, and having the power to see that wrong and injustice are defeated. Islam therefore lives, not for itself, but for mankind. The People of the Book, if only they had faith, would be Muslims, for they have been prepared for Islam. Unfortunately there is Unfaith, but it can never harm those who carry the banner of Faith and Right, which must always be victorious.<sup>14</sup>

What is it in Islam, that made it not only survive for the last fourteen centuries despite the great obstacles and onslaughts against it), but is still attracting adherents to the point that it is the fastest growing religion in the world today?

Apart from the above concept, Maududi has offered **eight** essential points in the corpus of the Islamic teachings that provide for the creation of a lasting global civilization.<sup>15</sup>

*Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ mission was for the whole world and for all the time; and not only for the Arabs as borne out in the Qur'ān:*

*"Say: "O human beings! I am sent unto you all as the apostle of Allāh to Whom belongeth the dominion of the heavens and the earth:*

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p.151.

<sup>15</sup> Maududi, Sayyid Abu Al-'Ala. (1984) *Islam: Its Meaning and Message*. M. Tariq Quraishi (ed.). American Trust Publications, Indianapolis, Indiana, pp. 12-14.

*there is no god but He: it is He that giveth both life and death. So believe in Allāh and His apostle the unlettered Prophet who believed in Allāh and His words: follow him that (so) ye may be guided.”*  
(*Qur’ān*, 7:158).

This verse of the *Qur’ān* removes the influence and mission of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ from the Arabian Peninsula and catapults it into the ‘global market’.

Another verse of the *Qur’ān* highlights the universality of Islam.

*“We have not sent thee but as a universal (Messenger) to men giving them glad tidings and warning them (against sin) but most men understand not.”*  
(*Qur’ān*, 34: 28)

It is a logical consequence of the finality of his prophethood. He had to be the guide and the leader for all men and all people for all ages.

The mission of Muḥammad ﷺ, as well as of other prophets who brought the universal message of Islam, does not end with the announcement of the message. He has to guide the people by explaining to them the implications of the Islamic creed, the moral code, the divine injunctions and commandment, and the form of worship that sustains the whole system. He has to exemplify the faith so others can pattern their participation in the evolution of **Islamic culture and civilization**.

The believers must grow under his guidance into an organized community:

1. *Spiritual Life:* prayer (*ṣalāh*), fasting, charity giving (*zakāh*), pilgrimage (*ḥajj*), love for Allāh and His Messenger, love for truth and humanity for the sake of Allāh, hope and trust in Allāh at all times and doing good for humanity for the sake of Allah.
2. *Intellectual Life:* True knowledge based on clear proof and indisputable evidence acquired by experience or experiment or by both. The *Qur’ān* points

*to the rich sources of knowledge in the whole universe. Islam demands faith in Allāh on the basis of knowledge and research and leaves wide open all field of thought before the intellect to penetrate as far it can reach.*

3. **Personal Life:** purity and cleanliness, a healthy diet, proper clothing, proper behavior, morality and good healthy sexual relations within marriage.
4. **Family Life:** A family is a human social group whose members are bound together by the bond of blood ties and/or marital relationship and nothing else (adoption, mutual alliance, common law, trial marriage...etc.). Marriage is a religious duty on all who are capable of meeting its responsibilities. Each member of the family has rights and obligations.
5. **Social Life:** Man is ordained by *Allāh* to extend his utmost help and kindness to other family members, relations, servants and neighbors. There is no superiority on account of class, color, origin or wealth. Humanity represents one family springing from the one and the same father and mother. The unity of the humanity is not only in its origin but also in its ultimate aims.
6. **Economical Life:** Earning one's living through decent labor is not only a duty but a great virtue as well. Earning is man's private possession. The individual is responsible for the prosperity of the state and the state is responsible for the security of the individual. The Islamic economic system is not based on arithmetical calculations alone but also on morality and principles. Man comes to this world empty-handed and departs empty-handed. The real owner of things is Allāh alone. Man is simply a trustee.
7. **Political Life:** The sovereignty in the Islamic State belongs to Allāh; the people exercise it by trust from Him to enforce His laws. The ruler is only an acting executive chosen by the people to serve them according to Allāh's law. The State is to administer justice and provide security for all citizens. Rulers

and administrators must be chosen from the best-qualified citizens. If an administration betrays the trust of Allah and the people, it has to be replaced. Non-Muslims can administer to their personal life of marriage, divorce, foods and inheritance according to the Islamic law or to their own religious teachings. They are entitled to full protection and security of the State including freedom of religion.

8. **International Life:** Man has a common origin, human status and aim. Other people's interests and right to life, honor and property are respected as long as the rights of Muslims are in tact. Transgression is forbidden. War is only justified if the state security is endangered. During war, destruction of crops, animals and homes, killing non-fighting women, children and aged people are forbidden. The concept of **Ummah** or global fraternity and brotherhood is also a powerful concept in Islam that forms the building block of a lasting civilization.

Ziauddin Sardar<sup>16</sup> states that ' a civilization must develop a **unified front** and an **inspirational base** within its parameters.'

The *unified front* is provided for in Islam by the concept of the global *Ummah* and the *eight points made by Maududi above provide the inspirational base*. Sardar concludes by stating that 'Muslim society contains a kaleidoscope of languages, dietary habits, dress, customs and ethnic cultures. But there is an overriding unity in this rich diversity: the adherence of the *Ummah* (global fraternity) cuts across all lines of cleavage.'

*"Verily this Brotherhood of yours is a single Brotherhood and I am your Lord and Cherisher: therefore serve Me (and no other)."*  
(*Qur'ān*, 21: 92).

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<sup>16</sup> Sardar Z, op. cit., p. 257.



Commenting on this verse and especially the term *Ummah*, A Yusuf Ali states:<sup>17</sup>

*Ummat*: this is best translated by Brotherhood here. "Community", "race", and "nation," and "people" are words, which import other ideas and do not quite correspond to "*Ummat*". "Religion" and "Way of Life" are derived meanings, which could be used in other passages, but are less appropriate here. Our attention has been drawn to people of very different temperaments and virtues, widely different in time, race, language, surroundings, history, and work to be performed, but forming the closest brotherhood as being men and women united in the highest service of *Allāh*. They prefigure the final and perfected Brotherhood of Islam.

There are other verses of the *Qur'ān* that describe and expand on this *global* concept of *Ummah* (global fraternity) as one that is justly balanced, not extreme in its position and dealing fairly with all.

- (a) "*Thus have We made of you an Ummah justly balanced that ye might be witnesses over the nations and the Apostle a witness over yourselves.*" (*Qur'ān*,2: 143).
- (b) "*And verily this (Ummah) Global Brotherhood of yours is a single (Ummah) Brotherhood and I am your Lord and Cherisher: therefore fear Me (and no other).*" (*Qur'an*, 23: 52).

## SUMMARY

Based on the above, the question that needs to be answered is whether civilizations of necessity *clash* as postulated by Lewis and Huntington, or can they **co-exist**. There are examples in recorded history where great civilizations came into contact

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<sup>17</sup> Ali, Abdullah Yusuf, op. cit., p. 843.

with one another and *co-operated* and *co-existed* with one another rather than getting into *conflict* with one another.

Another problem with Huntington's hypothesis is that he postulates that 'the source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or economic, but cultural..' There is an inherent fundamental flaw in Huntington's postulation in that culture is actually a product of a 'belief and value system' which stems from a particular ideological outlook to life (be it religious, Political or economic).

Hence Huntington is actually *masking* the *real* causes of conflict that is economic exploitation as postulated by Mamdani, Ziauddin Sardar and Dr Latif.

No doubt there are examples to the contrary as well. The point nevertheless is still valid that civilizations do not *have* to clash. Historically, Islamic civilization came into contact with five great civilizations: The Greek, Semite, Persian, Indian and Chinese and with each encounter Islamic Civilization learnt to adopt and adapt to the new encounters, but without losing the essentials of its cultural identity and without any '*clash*' problems, with the exception of Persia.

Thus at the *civilizational level*, Islamic culture also went through a process of assimilation and alienation through contact with other civilizations.

It is evident that currently, Islamic Civilization is under strain and feels alienated to a substantial degree from its ideology and worldview. The current cultural discourse of equating terrorism with Islamic culture puts the Islamic Ummah under greater strain as a civilization.

The current 'attack' on Islam and Muslims at a global level has been analyzed very clinically by **Mahmood Mamdani** of Kampala Uganda, who is based at Columbia University as Professor of African Studies. His latest book<sup>18</sup> brings the whole issue of Islamic Culture and Clash of Civilization home by giving examples of current global happenings.

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<sup>18</sup>*Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*, p. cit., see pp. 17-27.

He describes all the current discourse on global conflicts bedeviling the world as *culture talk* and he talks about the *politicization of culture* in the current conflicts around the world.

However, the '*clash*' syndrome though increasing tensions *between* Islamic civilization and Western Civilization, may actually lead to a *unifying* outcome *within* the Islamic Civilization based on the universal social principle that 'when a people or culture are under attack, they unite'.

This last point was very clearly borne out in the current research survey that was carried out. Of the four categories that were subjected to the survey, the last one explored if any significant changes occurred in one's **world views** (Middle East Conflict, USA) after converting to Islam.

The majority response was that one's worldviews *did* change and that too quite significantly.

The result merely states that a *significant change* **did** occur in one's world view on converting to Islam, but this in no way implies that such change translated to *confrontation* or *clash* with the West.

## CHAPTER TWO

### RELIGION, CULTURE AND ALIENATION

#### INTRODUCTION

One needs to establish the relationship between religion and culture. Where they differ and where they overlap. In this chapter we will also explore the concept of cultural Alienation both from an academic and Islamic viewpoint. Is there such a thing as Islamic Culture or is Islam as a **religion** *separate* from Islam as a **culture**? It is hoped that these and other related issues will be addressed in this chapter.

In fact, it is only after resolving these issues from *an Islamic* perspective, that the survey and analysis of conversion and cultural alienation be undertaken as one cannot quantify something unless one has agreed on its *definition*, its parameters and its scope.

Thus in this chapter we would first look at religion, culture and alienation *as it is generally* understood and then look at these issues *from an Islamic* perspective. Having arrived at some conclusion on these issues we will then be in a position to determine what are the *ingredients* that comprise this phenomenon called culture from an Islamic perspective that would then provide the necessary theoretical and religious rationale for the study of conversion and cultural alienation.

#### 2.1 DEFINITION OF RELIGION

Despite the prevalence of Religion as a phenomenon 'as old as human existence', there are various definitions of Religion and at times some scholars even **postulate** that it is *not* possible to accurately define Religion.

In the study manual by Kumar, P.<sup>19</sup> points out that Derrida and Zizek define “Religion as ‘Specter’, a phantom-like category, a free floating something.”

Jonathan Z. Smith<sup>20</sup> – draws the moral, *not* that Religion *cannot* be defined, “but that it can be defined, with greater or lesser success, in more than fifty ways.”

Finally in the words of Talal Asad<sup>21</sup>: ‘The concept of religion as we understand it (and hence tend to define it) is a by-product of the special historical and political circumstances of Western modernity.’

One can see the truth of this statement in the *current* discourse on Islam as described by Mamdani cited above on post 9/11. Talal Asad’s comments were made pre 9/11 but laid a principle position that the definition of religion is a ‘**by-product**’ of historical and prevailing circumstances.

Another definition of religion in modern times relegates it to the domain of *personal belief*, again as mentioned by Tala Asad: ‘This effort of defining religion converges with the liberal demand in our time that it (religion) be kept quite separate from politics, law and science.’

This view as shall be seen is contrary to the Islamic concept of religion.

If one has to summarize from the discussions above, broadly one could say that *culture* is the *ways, behavior and norms* of a people; while *religion* is the *belief* system of a people

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<sup>19</sup> *Method and Theory in Religion and Social Transformation*, School of Religion and Culture UKZN Westville Campus (n.d.), pp, 1-15.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

## 2.2 DEFINITION OF CULTURE

There are many different definitions of culture. We will use Robert Murphy's definition of culture as a working version for this discussion, as it is one that is comprehensive and quite relevant to the present discourse on cultural alienation:

Culture means the total body of tradition borne by a society and transmitted from generation to generation. It thus refers to the norms, values, and standards by which people act, and it includes the ways distinctive in each society of ordering the world and rendering it intelligible. Culture is...a set of mechanisms for survival, but it provides us also with a definition of reality. It is the matrix into which we are born, it is the anvil upon which our persons and destinies are forged.<sup>22</sup>

The above definition of culture given by Robert Murphy is quite comprehensive and a good 'generic' definition of the term giving so many perspectives on the issue.

Some of the key points of Murphy's definition of culture include:

1. It *specifically* excludes the use of the term *Religion* directly, but alludes to it by using the words 'norms, values, standards by which people act' and that culture provides us with 'a definition of reality'.
2. Culture is the 'ways' of a society / people.
3. Culture also is that element which makes each society 'distinctive'.
4. It is the 'matrix into which we are born'.

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<sup>22</sup> Murphy, Robert (1986). *Culture and Social Anthropology: An Overture*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, p.14.

Up to the penultimate line one can concur with Robert Murphy, however, his final thoughts are quite significant in terms of the current discourse on cultural alienation.

What does Murphy mean when he states that culture ‘is the anvil upon which our persons and destinies are forged?’ He raises a very deep and interesting postulation by this statement for cultural theorists. The implication is that we are all *born* into a certain culture and thus *destined* to remain in that culture.

Does Murphy leave room for people opting out of the cultural matrix into which they are born and *adopt* another cultural matrix? Or does he imply that even if we do opt for another cultural matrix, there are certain *ingrained* cultural traits into which we were born that will remain with us and cannot be erased even if we plot to cross cultural lines and barriers?

We will take up this theme in more detail when we discuss the theoretical issues surrounding alienation as well as when we discuss the Islamic concept of culture and alienation.

### 2.2.1 CULTURAL THEORIES

Based on the many accepted definitions of culture, many *cultural theories* have emerged. These cultural theories are complex and varied but four important and generally accepted characteristics stressed by cultural relativists emerge:<sup>23</sup>

1. Symbolic composition;
2. Systematic patterning;
3. Learned transmission; and
4. Societal grounding.

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/anthropology/courses/122/module1/culture.html>

### 2.2.1.1 Symbolic Composition

The fundamental element or building block of culture is the **culture trait**. Traits assume many forms varying from material artifacts -- tools, house structures, food, dress, art works -- to behavioral regularities -- family interrelationships, economic exchanges, and legal sanctions -- to abstract concepts and beliefs. All of these diverse and complex manifestations share one feature in common; they are symbols and as such express meaning.

A **symbol** is simply understood as an expression that stands for or represents something else, usually a real world condition. The use of words in a language provides the most obvious example. Words stand for perceived objective entities and states.

Words as symbols, however, differ from the objects they represent and have special qualities, which is why they are so useful to us. One important characteristic is that they bear no intrinsic relation to what they represent and are thereby arbitrary.

Art and ceremonial objects also have obvious symbolic meanings and are intentionally created to represent them.

### 2.2.1.2 Systematic Patterning

Cultural elements as symbols assume their meanings in relationship to other symbols within a broader context of a meaning system. To interpret a symbol, therefore, one must investigate the interrelatedness of elements and the presence of unifying principles that connect symbols to form larger patterns and cultural wholes. For the present we can conclude that cultural traits **and patterns** must be initially understood in terms of the logic of the culture and the integration of cultural elements according to internally consistent themes and principles.



This perspective is termed *holism*, a position that maintains that individual culture traits cannot be understood in isolation.

### **2.2.1.3 Learned Transmission**

Cultural traits and broader cultural patterns inclusive of language, technology, institutions, beliefs, and values are transmitted across generations and maintain continuity through learning, technically termed **enculturation**. Accordingly, learning abilities and intelligence are essential assets for all human groups and have replaced the role of biologically based genetic transmission of instincts dominant in most other animal species.

We adapt to our environment through cultural strategies rather than genetic predispositions.

Accordingly, human groups have spread to every part of the world and survived drastic differences in climate and diet without dramatic anatomical changes. The result has been that physical differences among peoples, which have developed over millions of years in thousands of diverse ecosystems, are remarkably superficial.

Cultural differences, however, are profound and limitless and form a fascinating subject matter for ongoing study and enquiry.

### **2.2.1.4 Societal Grounding**

Culture is observable only in the form of **personal behavior** but can be abstracted from individuals' actions and attributed to the social groups to which they belong.

We can best understand the social aspect of culture by realizing that the central function of human symbolization is communication and requires adherence to understood conventions.

We most consciously experience social forces in the form of legal sanctions (laws passed by local or national governments) , which are themselves culturally based,

but group norms constrain our behavior in a wider array of circumstances for example the language we use to communicate and the clothes we wear.

While the emphasis on the social determinants of personal behavior is basic to the culture concept, some studies tend to exaggerate their influence to the point of overlooking individual behaviour completely. As such, people are often viewed as actors in a play written and directed by an extra-natural author labeled "culture" or "society". (This tendency is called reification, the process of assigning a material reality to an abstract concept.)

Cultural and social forces are manifest only in the behavior of individuals, who are subject to influences of a different nature, such as psychological drives, personal ambitions and creative imaginings. The social scientists focus on the culture concept gives us only a partial view of the human reality and we must borrow from or cooperate with other disciplines to achieve a total understanding of the human experience.

Thus we can conclude that there are many deep seated processes and principles that are engrained and collated into this term we call **religion and culture**. Due to its complex nature, an *interdisciplinary* study technique and approach is needed to adequately describe, understand and study religion and culture. This will be expanded on later in the current study.

### **2.3 CONCEPT OF RELIGION AND CULTURE IN ISLAM**

As mentioned earlier, one needs to look at these concepts from the *Islamic perspective*, as there are some basic and fundamental differences and concepts within the Islamic paradigm that would impact on the analysis, outcomes and conclusions of this research project, namely, **the degree of cultural alienation people experience when they embrace Islam.**

## 2.4 DEFINITION OF RELIGION IN ISLAM

Much more emphasis will be placed on the Islamic position on the issue of religion, culture and alienation for two reasons:

- (1) This is the main focus of the study, and
- (2) There seems to be a lack of consensus by the scholars of Islam on these issues.

Thus, unless an acceptable Islamic position on these issues are not defined and understood, a proper conclusion cannot be reached.

Before a definition of Religion from an Islamic perspective can be given, it would be appropriate to give some relevant and necessary *background* information that would help the reader to understand the Islamic perspective.

There are three essential and accepted sources from which Muslims derive their values, concepts, beliefs, laws and rituals:

- a) The *Qur'ān*, which the Muslims accept as the unchanged words of God, revealed to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ in Arabic by the Angel Gabriel ﷺ.
- b) The *Sunnah*, which is the recordings in books of *Aḥādīth*<sup>24</sup> of all that the Prophet (p) said, did and approved.
- c) *Ijtihād* – the legal pronouncements by the learned scholars of Islam within the framework and spirit of the *Qur'ān* (a) and the *Sunnah* (b) on matters that is 'unclear' or not specifically covered in the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*.

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<sup>24</sup> Hadith singular, Ahadith in plural is the books of traditions (of which there are six accepted authenticated books, each compiled by different historians), which are kept *separate* from the Qur'an.

Thus any discourse to analyze Islam in its multifarious dimensions will have to quote from the above three sources for it to hold any validity among Islamic Scholars.

#### 2.4.1 DEFINITION OF THE TERM RELIGION FROM THE QUR'ĀN

The Arabic term that is used for *religion* in the *Qur'ān* is termed *al- Dīn*. Although this is sometimes loosely translated into English as *religion*, its *definition* and *concept* within the Qur'anic framework and Sunnah is not the same as understood by the ' West' or those not familiar with the Islamic paradigm.

*"This day have I perfected your (din) religion for you, completed my favor upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your (din) religion". (Qur'ān, 5:3).*

In this verse of the *Qur'ān*, God Almighty describes religion (**din**) not as some *belief* but as some evolutionary *process* of His Way / System to be adopted by human beings, which process started from the beginning of creation and reached perfection in the final messengership of the Prophet of Arabia the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Based on another definition religion is defined as the same concept and essence as that of the previous Prophets (A.S.) and that religion should not cause division:

*"The same religion (Din) has He established for you as that which He enjoined on Noah--the which We have sent by inspiration to thee--and that which We enjoined on Abraham Moses and Jesus: Namely that ye should remain steadfast in Religion and make no divisions therein." (Qur'ān, 42: 13).*

In this verse religion (*dīn*) is being described as the *same concept* that was given to previous nations and prophets. The idea here is being reinforced, namely, that the

concept of religion in Islam is *not a new concept*, but the same that was preached by all previous prophets.

Another unique definition and concept of religion is that religion is in keeping with the natural disposition of *all human beings* as stated in the Qur'anic verse below.

*“So set thou thy face steadily and truly to the Religion (Din), and (Establish) God’s handiwork according to the (natural) pattern on which He has created mankind: no change (let there be) in the work (wrought) by God: that is the standard Religion (dīn al-Qaiyyim) (Qur’ān, 30: 30).*

This concept that Islam is *Din al fitr* i.e. a Religion that conforms to the *natural disposition* of all human beings has been elaborated by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ in one of the most authentic books of *Āḥādīth*, namely, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*.

The funeral prayer should be offered for every child even if he were the son of a prostitute as he was born with a true faith of Islam (i.e. Belief in One God). If his parents are Muslims, particularly the father, even if his mother were a non-Muslim, and if he after the delivery cries (even once) before his death (i.e. born alive) then the funeral prayer must be offered. And if the child does not cry after his delivery (i.e. born dead) then his funeral prayer should not be offered, and he will be considered as a miscarriage. *Ḥadīth* 2.440, narrated by Ibn Shihāb

Abū Hurayrah ؓ (a companion of the Prophet ﷺ) narrated that the Prophet said, "Every child is born with a true faith (i.e. belief in One God) but his parents convert him to Judaism or to Christianity or to Magainism, as an animal delivers a perfect baby animal. Do you find it mutilated?" Then Abū Hurayrah ؓ recited the holy verses: "The

pure True Religion (Dīn), which God has created according to the natural disposition of all human beings." *Qur'ān* (30.30).

Abdullah Yusuf Ali<sup>25</sup> comments on this verse:

As turned out from the creative hand of God, human beings are innocent, pure, true, free, inclined to right and virtue, and endued with true understanding about their own position in the Universe and about God's goodness, wisdom, and power. That is his true nature, just as the nature of a lamb is to be gentle and of a horse is to be swift. But man is caught in the meshes of customs, superstitions, selfish desires, and false teaching. This may make him pugnacious, unclean, false, slavish, hankering after what is wrong or forbidden, and deflected from the love of his fellow men and the pure worship of the One True God. The problem before the Prophets is to cure this crookedness, and to restore human nature to what it should be under the Will of *Allāh*.

Dīn al-Qaiyyim (standard religion) here includes the whole life, thoughts and desires of man. The "standard Religion," or the Straight Way is thus contrasted with the various human systems that conflict with each other and call themselves separate "religions" or "sects". God's standard Religion is one, as God is One, *Qur'ān* (30.30)

### **Striving 'in the cause of God' as part of Religion**

Another aspect or dimension of Islam as Din is that of *striving or struggling* for a 'good' or 'just' cause.

*"And strive in His cause as ye ought to strive (with sincerity and under discipline): He has chosen you and has imposed no difficulties on you*

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<sup>25</sup> A, Yusuf Ali, op. cit., pp.1059-1060.

*in religion; ... so establish regular prayer and give regular charity (to the poor and needy) ... " (Qur'ān, 22: 78).*

Here three other concepts of religion in Islam are described as follows:

- (1) Requiring one to *strive* in the cause of God. Here the striving is used in a *general* sense and includes amongst other things, (perfecting ones character, seeking knowledge, fasting, praying five times a day at the prescribed time.), and does not necessarily imply *fighting*.
- (2) Religion should be easy to follow and not made difficult.
- (3) Establishing regular prayer and charity to the poor and needy.

However, in another verse of the Qur'an striving is described as fighting a liberation struggle to free people from oppression as also one of the practices of Religion in Islam:

*"Let those fight in the cause of God who sell the life of this world for the Hereafter. To him who fights in the cause of God whether he is slain or gets victory soon shall We give him a reward of great (value). And why should ye not fight in the cause of God and of those who being*

*weak are ill treated (and oppressed)? Men women and children whose cry is: "Our Lord! Rescue us from this town whose people are oppressors; and raise for us from Thee one who will protect; and raise for us from Thee one who will help!" (Qur'ān, 4:75-76).*

This verse brings out a concept of religion *very different* from that understood in the West. Religion is not just rules and rituals, but also struggling for justice and helping people from oppressive regimes.

Unlike the Western concept that Religion is a *separate* entity from politics or social injustices – Islam’s concept of religion is an all-embracing concept. Religion in Islam is not just **dogma** or **belief** but a concept intertwined with other aspects of material and social life.

In Islam, religion is a *serious* matter and not one to be taken as some *part time* hobby as stated in the following Qur’anic verse:

*“Leave alone those who take their religion to be mere play and amusement and are deceived by the life of this world. But proclaim (to them) this (truth): that every soul delivers itself to ruin by its own acts.” Qur’ān, 6:70).*

Another very striking definition of religion is given in Chapter 107, one of the Chapters of the *Qur’ān* that was revealed to the Prophet (p) in the very early Makkan period:

*“Seest thou one who belies (true) Religion (Dīn) Then such is the (man) who repulses the orphan (with harshness) and encourages not the feeding of the indigent. So woe to the worshippers Who are neglectful of their Prayers those who (want but) to be seen (of men) but refuse (to supply) (Even) neighborly needs.”*

The following is the comments of A.Yusuf Ali on the above verses:

Din may mean either (1) the Judgment to come, the responsibility in the moral and spiritual world, for all actions done by men, or (2) Faith, Religion, the principles of right and wrong in spiritual matters, which often conflict with selfish desires or predilections. It is men



who deny Faith or future responsibility, that treat the helpless with contempt and lead arrogant selfish lives. (107:1)

The Charity or Love which feeds the indigent at the expense of Self is a noble form of virtue, which is beyond the reach of men who are so callous as even to discourage or forbid or look down upon the virtue of charity or kindness in others. (107:3)

True worship does not consist in the mere form of prayer, without the heart and mind being earnestly applied to seek the realisation of the presence of Allah, and to understand and do His holy Will. (107.5)

Hypocrites make a great show of hollow acts of goodness, devotion, and charity. But they fail signally if you test them by little acts of neighborly help or charity, the thousand little courtesies and kindnesses of daily life, the supply of needs that cost little but mean much. (107.7)

From the above verses of the Qur'an, one can very clearly see that the concept of Religion in Islam involves and regulates *action* and intervention in the material, social and political life as well; and not just some beliefs or dogmas confined to one's personal feelings. If this be so, then surely Religion in Islam also impacts, guides and regulates our **cultural life** as well.

To what extent and how Islam regulates the cultural life of a Muslim is one of the objectives of this study. But to come to an objective and comprehensive conclusion, one still has to explore what the *Aḥādīth* [Books of Traditions of the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, and the opinions (*Ijtihād*) of the learned scholars of Islam have said about religion, culture, and alienation.

## 2.5 CONCEPT OF RELIGION FROM *SUNNAH*

The *Qur'ān* being the main source of Islamic guidance, much more detail was given. A few quotations only will be given from Ahadith (prophetic traditions) and Islamic Scholar's views (Ijtihad) as they are all also based on the Qur'anic principal and merely *expand on it*.

There are many sayings of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ wherein he defined the term *religion (Dīn)*.

One day while the Prophet was sitting in the company of some people, (The angel) Gabriel came and asked, "What is faith?" Allāh's Apostle replied, 'Faith is to believe in Allāh, His angels, (the) meeting with Him, His Apostles, and to believe in Resurrection.' Then he further asked, "What is Islam?" Allāh's Apostle replied, "To worship Allah Alone and none else, to offer prayers perfectly to pay the compulsory charity (Zakāt) and to observe fasts during the month of Ramaḍān." Then he further asked, "What is *Ihsān* (perfection)?" Allāh's Apostle replied, "To worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you cannot achieve this state of devotion then you must consider that He is looking at you." Then he further asked, "When will the Hour be established?" Allāh's Apostle replied, "The answerer has no better knowledge than the questioner. But I will inform you about its portents.

1. When a slave (lady) gives birth to her master.
2. When the shepherds of black camels start boasting and competing with others in the construction of higher buildings. And the Hour is one of five things that nobody knows except *Allāh*.

The Prophet then recited: "Verily, with Allāh (Alone) is the knowledge of the Hour".<sup>Q (31. 34)</sup> Then that man (Gabriel) left

and the Prophet asked his companions to call him back, but they could not see him. Then the Prophet said, "That was Gabriel who came to teach the people their (Din) religion." Abū 'Abd Allāh said: **He (the Prophet) considered all that as a part of faith.**" *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth* 1.47, narrated by Abū Hurayrah ﷺ

From the above *Ḥadīth* and especially its conclusion, it can be very clearly seen that, even from the Prophet's sayings, Religion (*Dīn*) covers a very *wide-ranging* arena in Islam and is not just confined to *belief or worship*.

This next *Ḥadīth* taken from Imam Malik's collection of Ahadith, the *Al-Muwaṭṭa'*, equates Good Character as being part of Religion.

Yaḥyā related to me from Mālik that Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd said that he heard Said ibn al-Muṣayyab say, "Shall I tell you what is better than much prayer and ṣadaqah?" They said, "Yes." He said, "Mending discord. And beware of hatred - it strips you (of your *dīn* [Religion])" (*Al-Muwaṭṭa' Ḥadīth* 47.7).

Finally we will quote just one more *Ḥadīth*, keeping in mind that there are thousands of *Aḥādīth* in no less than six huge different authentic compilations of Hadith Books.

### ***Modesty as part of Religion***

Yaḥyā related to me from Mālik from Salāma ibn Ṣafwān ibn Salāma al-Zurāqī that Zayd ibn Ṭalhah ibn Rukāna, who attributed it to the Prophet, may Allāh bless him and grant him peace, said, "The Messenger of Allāh, may Allāh bless him and grant him peace, said, 'Every (Religion) *dīn* has an innate character. The character of Islam is modesty.' (*Al-Muwaṭṭa' Ḥadīth* 47.9).

Thus it can be also **concluded** on the basis of *Aḥādīth* that as well, that Islam is not just a religion in the 'normal' sense it is understood in the West but an all embracing comprehensive way of life that affects one's social, cultural, economic, political, moral and spiritual life.

## 2.6 OPINIONS OF SCHOLARS

According to *Ziauddin Sardar*:<sup>26</sup>:

*The concept of religion projected by the Qur'ān has as its foundation the worship of one God. However, man has to worship God not merely in a static sense, confined only to prayer, but in a dynamic, consequential and comprehensive form. . The pursuit of knowledge, the remembrance of God, personal spiritual development, economic and social justice are all acts of worship.'*

*Alija Izetbegovic*<sup>27</sup> says "Islam is not only a religion or way of life, but primarily the principle of the organization of the Universe."

According to Dr Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī<sup>28</sup> "Islam considers the whole earth a field for religious practice, for the very business of religion."

Dr Abdul Latif<sup>29</sup> is of the view that "A study of these values resolves itself into a study of Islam as a cultural force operating as a factor for civilization".

From the above Qur'anic references, Ahadith and opinions of Islamic Scholars (*Ijtihad*); one can conclude that in Islam religion has a very *wide* and far reaching

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<sup>26</sup> Sardar Z., op. cit. p. 15)

<sup>27</sup> Izetbegovic Ali, op. cit., p. iv.

<sup>28</sup> Al-Qaradawi, Yusuf (1990). *Islamic Awakening between rejection and Extremism*. Karachi. Qazi Publishers, p. 3.

<sup>29</sup> *Principles of Islamic Culture*, op.cit., p. 8.

influence on its adherents and is not just a concept or a belief that is relegated to one's *private* domain.

This part of the study was necessary to show that within the framework of Islam, religion as a concept *encompasses culture and civilization*.

## 2.7 CONCEPT OF CULTURE IN ISLAM

Keeping in mind the definition of culture according to Robert Murphy as quoted above, let us look at the Islamic concept of culture.

As mentioned earlier, besides the *Qur'ān* and the prophetic traditions (*Aḥādīth*), we will also have to explore the works of Islamic Scholars on the issue of culture in Islam.

### 2.7.1 ON BASIS OF QUR'ĀN

There are many aspects or components of culture: food, dress, and rituals. We will begin the discussion on the concept of culture in Islam by first looking at:

#### **Religious rites and rituals**

The *Qur'ān* talks about nations and communities from the beginning of creation that was being guided by God by way of Prophets (A.S.) sent to them.

It points out that God did not just give *religion* (sets of beliefs) to people, but also *rites and rituals* that are the ingredients of culture.

*“To every people (nation) did We appoint rites (of sacrifice) that they might celebrate the name of God over the sustenance He gave them from animals (fit for food) but your God is one God: submit then your will to Him (in Islam) and give thou the Good News to those who humble themselves.” (Qur'ān, 22: 34).*

This concept of the origin of *rites and ceremonies* as having a *Divine* origin is again highlighted in another verse of the *Qur'ān*:

*“To every People have we appointed rites and ceremonies which they must follow let them not then dispute with thee on the matter but do thou invite (them) to thy Lord: for thou art assuredly on the Right Way.” (Qur'ān, 22 : 67).*

In both the verses quoted above a key concept is that **“to every people.”** This is very significant and would be used as one of the *main* arguments for the acceptance of certain customs, rituals and practices found in various communities, societies and cultures.

Unlike western historians and missionaries who regarded cultural practices they were not familiar with as ‘barbaric’ or ‘uncivilized’ or ‘heathen’ practices, Islam comes with a very revolutionary concept that prophets were sent to **‘every nation’** on earth by God to teach them religion and rites and ceremonies.

#### **EXAMPLES OF PRE-ISLAMIC PRACTICES THAT WERE ALLOWED**

There are many Muslim scholars that hold the opinion that when a person converts to Islam, one has to abandon *altogether* customs and cultural practices that one was born into.

We will give a few examples from the *Qur'ān* to show that this position is not correct. The Qur’anic verse below addresses and *dispels* this *very argument* with regard to one of the rites of the pilgrimage:

*“Behold! Şafā and Marwah are among the Symbols of Allah. So if those who visit the house in the season or at other times should compass them round it is no sin in them. And if anyone obeyeth his own impulse to good be sure that God is He Who recogniseth and knoweth.” (Qur'ān, 2:158).*

The above verse of the *Qur'ān* in question was revealed when some of the companions of the Prophet (p) showed reluctance to follow one of the rites of the pilgrimage on the grounds that it was a practice of the pagan Arabs.

*Imām* al-Bukhāri (one of the most authentic *Aḥādīth* compilers) has recorded some details regarding the above Qur'anic verse from one of the companions of the Prophet ﷺ by the name of 'Āsim bin Sulaymān ؓ as follows:

I asked Anas bin Mālik about Ṣafā and Marwah. Anas replied, "We used to consider (i.e. going around) them a custom of the Pre-Islamic period of Ignorance, so when Islam came, we gave up going around them. Then Allah revealed, "Verily, Ṣafā and Marwah (i.e. two mountains at Makkah) are among the Symbols of Allāh. So it is not harmful of those who perform the Ḥajj of the House (of Allāh) or perform the Umra to ambulate (*Tawāf*) between them. (*Qur'ān*, 2:158)

One sees from the above *Ḥadīth* the reluctance on the part of the companions of the Prophet ﷺ to move between the mountains of Ṣafā and Marwah during the pilgrimage. God intervenes through the Prophet ﷺ by means of the Qur'anic Verse 2:158 in question and *allows* the practices of the pre-Islamic times, (in this particular instance, the issue of moving between the two mountains) stating, "*it is no sin.*"

Both from the *Qur'ān* and Prophetic Traditions (which are the primary sources of Islamic *Shari`ah*) highlights two issues concerning cultural practices and religious rites:

- (a) Not all the rites and cultural practices of the past are necessarily bad and hence not necessarily prohibited.

- (b) There has indeed been human interference and adulteration by way of additions or deletions to the original practices given by God to people from time to time, called *bid'ah* in Islamic terminology.

The term *bid'ah* means innovation or introducing something new into religion or religious or cultural practice. This term has been used when looking at cultural practices in Islam from its various sources to determine what *comprises* culture and what the ingredients of culture are.

A Yusuf Ali<sup>30</sup> comments on the above Qur'anic verse (2:158) :

The virtue of patient perseverance in faith leads to the mention of two symbolic monuments of that virtue. These are the two little hills of Safa and Marwa now absorbed in the city of Mecca, and close to the well of Zam-Zam. Here, according to tradition, the lady Hajar, mother of the infant Ismail, prayed for water in the parched desert, and in her eager quest round these hills, she found her prayer answered and saw the Zam-Zam spring. Unfortunately the Pagan Arabs had placed a male and a female idol here, and their gross and superstitious rites caused offence to the early Muslims.

They felt some hesitation in going round these places during the Pilgrimage. As a matter of fact they should have known that the *Ka'bah* (the House of God) had been itself defiled with idols, and was sanctified again by the purity of Muhammad's life and teaching.

The lesson is that the most sacred things may be turned to the basest uses; that we are not therefore necessarily to ban a thing misused; that if our intentions and life are pure, God will recognize them even if the world cast stones at us because of some evil associations which they join with what we do, or with the people we associate with, *or with the places which claim our reverence.*

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<sup>30</sup> A. Yusuf Ali, op. cit., p. 62.



Thus the principle that *every* practice, rite or ritual of the past is prohibited is hereby refuted and lays the basis in Islam for **evaluation** of *cultural* and *ritual* practices.

This attitude of Islam to cultural and ritual practices of the past is perhaps one of the reasons that led to the rapid proliferation of Islam across the then known world until today. This is also especially true of the spread of Islam in Africa and India, two nations that have strong and deep-seated cultural traits in their psyche.

Another example given in the *Qur'ān* is that of the old pagan ritual practice of putting a **garland around the sacrificial animal**, another of the rites of the Pilgrimage. This practice was allowed to continue although it was a practice of the past:

*“O ye who believe! Violate not the sanctity of the Symbols of Allāh nor of the Sacred Month nor of the animals brought for sacrifice nor the garlands that mark out such animals nor the people resorting to the Sacred House seeking of the bounty and good pleasure of their Lord.” (Qur'ān, 5: 2)*

Three issues of significance emerge from the above Qur'anic injunction:

### **Cultural and Religious Sites**

In the verse quoted above, God also commands the Muslims to **respect** and **not** to violate '**the symbols of God**'. The immediate reference being made to the mountains of Ṣafā and Marwah.

This part of the Qur'anic verse also lays down a very important principle in terms of Islamic **Culture and Heritage**. To use modern day terminology, we are being commanded by God to honour and respect and by extension to preserve the important cultural and religious symbols and structural and historical sites of Islam.

**Animal Sacrifice** as a pre-Islamic practice has been allowed to continue.

There is a *Ḥadīth* (tradition) reported that this practice of animal sacrifice can be traced back centuries ago to the time of the Prophet Abraham عليه السلام.

The companions of Allāh's Messenger (peace be upon him) asked him the significance of these sacrifices and he replied, "It is a custom which has come down from your father, Abraham." They asked what reward they would receive for them and he replied, "For every hair you will receive a blessing." They asked about wool, and he replied, "For every strand of wool you will receive a blessing. (*Aḥmad and Ibn Mājah transmitted it*).

**Garlanding of animal:** God *allows* such a practice, which was a *pre-Islamic* practice to continue. Thus now that some of the people of Mecca have converted to Islam from their previous pagan religion, they are allowed to continue with the custom of putting a garland around the neck of the sacrificial animal.

#### **EXAMPLES OF PRE-ISLAMIC PRACTICES THAT WERE *NOT* ALLOWED**

*Not all* cultural practices or rituals of the pre-Islamic Arabia were accepted. There are also examples in the *Qur'ān* and the Prophetic Traditions that show that some of the 'old' cultural practices were rejected.

A few examples in this category will be given, bearing in mind that there are many examples for *both scenarios*.

#### **Entering one's house via the back door:**

*"It is no virtue if you enter your houses from the back (door). It is virtue if you revere God. So enter houses through the proper door."*  
(*Qur'ān*, 2:189)

This verse of the *Qur'ān* abolishes the existing practice of entering one's house through the back door (for fear of some 'bad luck'). God mentions that the phases of moon are natural phenomenon and have no 'good or bad luck' attached to them.

### **On rights of widows**

Regarding the Qur'anic Verse: "O you who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will." Q. (4:19) The custom (in the Pre-Islamic Period) was that if a man died, his relatives used to have the right to inherit his wife, and if one of them wished, he could marry her, or they could marry her to somebody else, Or prevent her from marrying if they wished, for they had more right to dispose of her than her own relatives. Therefore this Verse was revealed concerning this matter. (*Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, *Ḥadīth* 9:81, narrated by Ibn 'Abbās)

So here again we see an example of a practice of the pre-Islamic era being rejected.

### **Names of Adopted Children**

It was a practice of the pre-Islamic Arabs to give the adopted child the name of the adopted father. However, this practice was stopped by the revelation of the following verse in the *Qur'ān* to the Prophet ﷺ:

*"Call them (the adopted child) by the names of their fathers: that is more Just in the sight of God,.."* (*Qur'ān*, 33:5).

Commentary of this verse was given by the wife of the Prophet ﷺ, 'Ā'ishah (R.A).

'Ā'ishah the wife of the Prophet) Abū Hudhayfah, one of those who fought the battle of Badr, with Allah's Apostle adopted Salim as his son and married his niece Hind bint Al-Wahd bin 'Utba to him' and Sālim was a freed slave of an Anṣārī woman. Allāh's Apostle also adopted Zayd as his son. In the pre-Islamic period of ignorance the custom was that, if one adopted a son, the people would call him by

the name of the adopted-father whom he would inherit as well, till Allāh revealed: "*Call them (adopted sons) By (the names of) their fathers.*" Q. (33.5) (*Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, *Ḥadīth* 5:335)

### **On inheritance**

The custom (in old days) was that the property of the deceased would be inherited by his offspring; as for the parents (of the deceased), they would inherit by the will of the deceased. Then Allah cancelled from that custom whatever He wished and fixed for the male double the amount inherited by the female, and for each parent a sixth (of the whole legacy) and for the wife an eighth or a fourth and for the husband a half or a fourth. (*Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, *Ḥadīth*, 4.10, narrated by Ibn `Abbās ؓ).

Thus we have given examples of both scenarios, where the Prophet ﷺ under divine guidance *allowed* certain practices of the past, and *did not* allow certain practices.

### **BASIS ON WHICH CULTURAL PRACTICES WERE ALLOWED OR NOT ALLOWED**

A very crucial question to ask is, on what basis or authority did the Prophet (p) allow certain practices or rituals to continue and others to stop?

Answer to this question holds the **key** to a proper understanding of the many issues surrounding permissibility or prohibition of certain Islamic cultural and ritual practices.

### **Prophet ﷺ acts under Divine Injunctions**

Firstly, Muslims believe that *everything* the Prophet ﷺ said was under divine inspiration according to the Qur'an:

*"Nor does he (the Prophet) say anything of his own desire. It is no less than Divine Inspiration sent down to him (from God)" (Qur'ān, 53: 3-4).*

One can see clearly from this verse that the Prophet ﷺ does not speak of his own desires, but whatever he says is of Divine origin. As such **and because** of this principle, the Muslims are commanded to accept *all* the instructions of the Prophet ﷺ whether verbal or by example.

*Secondly, Muslims are commanded to obey all the Prophet's ﷺ commands and the Qur'ān is replete with such commands:*

*"And obey God and His messenger." (Qur'ān, 3: 132)*

Whatever the Prophet ﷺ gives take it and whatever he prohibits, avoid it:

*"So take (act on) what the Apostle gives to you and refrain from that which he has prohibited you from doing and fear God." (Qur'ān, 59: 7)*

In fact obeying him [the Prophet ﷺ], is obeying **God**:

*"He who obeys the messenger (in fact) obeys God." (Qur'ān, 4: 80)*

Based on the above, one can understand now why Muslims look to the *Sunnah* (Example and injunctions) of the Prophet ﷺ as recorded in the various books of *Aḥādīth*, in addition to the *Qur'ān* for guidance in all walks of life, be it prayer, business, family life or politics.

### **Principle or Reason for Abrogation (nullifying or disallowing a practice)**

If from an Islamic perspective the injunctions of the Prophet ﷺ are of divine origin, then the next question to ask is why did God change some of the customs and rituals and allowed others to carry on?

If we want to give a *believer's response* to this question, it would be a simple God is God and He has the Authority to do as He pleases. The *rationalist* would argue that God is not an irrational Being and hence there must be some logical reasons for annulling certain ritual and cultural practices of the past.

However, the *traditionalists* argue that we may not always understand the Divine Wisdom and then too in any case, whether we know the reason for it or not, we have to *accept and follow* the injunctions (from God or His Prophet) regardless of whether we know the reason or not.

The rationalists counter argument to this is that, knowing the reason, circumstances and context for this abrogation, a *principle* can be established, and hence applied when a similar situation arises.

In fact it is *this very principle* that is used by the Scholars of Islam when they have to pass a ruling on a matter that is **not** in the *Qur'an* or *Aḥādīth* (Prophetic Traditions), then they pass a ruling based *on the Prophetic principles* and the *general spirit* of the *Qur'ān*.

#### **The *Qur'ān* says it 'brings something better'**

One of the reasons for abrogation as given by God Himself in the *Qur'ān* is that He brings in a law or practice that is 'better' than the one being annulled.

*"None of Our revelations do We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, but We substitute something better or similar: Know you not that God has power over all things?" Qur'an, 2: 106)*

If we recall the verses of the *Qur'ān* quoted above, it defined Religion in Islam as an *evolutionary process* through the various stages of development of societies and communities throughout the ages (Stone Age, agricultural age, industrial age, computer age) certain new practices would be better now as opposed to the 'old' one.

Let us now look at one example from the Sunnah (example of the Prophet ﷺ) concerning the issue of annulling an existing practice and 'bringing something better' in its place.

### **Playing, amusements, singing, and eating on the days of 'Īd**

Recreation, amusements, and singing, if they stay within the moral bounds, are permissible on the days of 'Īd:

Anas reports: "When the Prophet ﷺ came to Medina they had two days of sport and amusement. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Allāh, the Exalted, has exchanged these days for **two days better than them**: the day of breaking the fast and the day of sacrifice." (*Al-Tirmidhī* Ḥadīth 1476, Narrated by Zayd ibn Arqam ؓ).

### ***Qur'ān* – change as a test to see if follow the Prophet ﷺ**

Another reason given by the *Qur'ān* for changing some practice or rule is to *test* the believers to see if they *indeed* are following the Prophet ﷺ as commanded by God in the *Qur'ān*:

*"And we (changed) the Qiblah<sup>31</sup> to which you were used only to test those who followed the Apostle from those who would turn on their heels." (Qur'an, 2: 143)*

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<sup>31</sup> *Qiblah* – facing the *Ka'bah* in Makkah, the first house built by Abraham ؑ for prayer.

Prior to the revelation of this verse, the Prophet ﷺ commanded the Muslims to face in the direction of al Aqsa Masjid in Jerusalem, which was the first *Qiblah* for the Muslims. This is now abrogated with this new instruction to turn towards Mecca, to the *Ka'bah*, the house that Abraham built for the worship of the One True God, to separate those who truly obeyed the Prophet ﷺ from those who did not.

### Principle of Allowing certain practices

The above were reasons given for changing or disallowing certain practices. Let us now find out on what basis certain practices were *allowed*.

### No Qur'anic Prohibition

According to Dr Yūsuf Al-Qaradāwī<sup>32</sup>:

- The basic asl (principle) is the permissibility of things.
- To make lawful and to prohibit is the right of God alone.
- Prohibiting the *ḥalāl*<sup>33</sup> and permitting the *ḥarām*<sup>34</sup> is similar to committing *shirk*<sup>35</sup>.

This principle is agreed upon by all the jurists, namely that '*everything is allowed except those things that are prohibited*'. This principle applies in the domain of daily and 'cultural practice'.

However, in the domain of **worship** the rule is '*everything is disallowed unless a proof can be found for its practice in the Shariah*'.

There are many examples of this in the Sunnah but just one will be given to illustrate the principle.

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<sup>32</sup> Al-Qaradawi Y (n.d.). *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam*. Indianapolis. American Trust Publications.

<sup>33</sup> *halal* – that which is allowed

<sup>34</sup> *haram* – that which is prohibited

<sup>35</sup> *Shirk* – worshipping more than one God – associating partners with God



There are many *Aḥādīth* in which the companions of the Prophet ﷺ collected his hair. There is no injunction in the *Qur'ān* or the *Aḥādīth* commanding this practice. So why was it allowed? The principle of 'its allowed if there is no prohibition' applied in this case and the Prophet ﷺ did not prohibit the action.

### **Ingrained Cultural practice of people**

Dr Yūsuf Al Qardāwī<sup>36</sup> states concerning the principle of the permissibility of certain things in Islam:

I would like to emphasize here that the principle of natural permissibility is not only limited to things and objects but also includes all human actions and behavior not related to acts of worship, which may be termed living habits or day-to-day affairs. Here again, the principle is that these are allowed without restriction, with the exception of a small number of things which are definitely prohibited by the Law-Giver, as God says in the *Qur'ān*:

*"He (God) has explained to you what He has made haram for you."*  
*Qur'ān* (6: 119)

*The case is different however, in relation to acts of worship. Concerning this we have a sound hadith (statement by the Prophet ﷺ*

*"Any innovation (bid`ah) in our matter (worship) which is not a part of it, must be rejected" (Al Bukhārī and Muslim)*

### **IS *Tarāwīḥ*<sup>37</sup> *Ṣalāh* in congregation a *bid`ah* instituted by `Umar ؓ?**

However, there is an issue of *bid`ah* (innovation) that was introduced by `Umar ؓ, the second successor after the Prophet ﷺ. During the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ and the reign of the first successor after the Prophet ﷺ, Abū Bakr ؓ, the Muslims used

<sup>36</sup> Al-Qaradāwī, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>37</sup> An additional prayer after the last prayer for the night in the month of *Ramaḍān*.

to perform the additional *Tarāwīḥ* prayers that was prescribed for the month of *Ramaḍān* as follows:

- It was read *individually*
- It comprised of eight *raka'āt*<sup>38</sup>

However, during the time of `Umar ؓ he gathered the Muslims in the *Masjid* and made them pray the *Tarāwīḥ* prayers *in congregation* and he *increased the prayer from eight to twenty units*. This has been documented in the Hadith compilation of Imam Bukhari (RA) and after doing this it is reported that `Umar ؓ remarked, 'I have introduced a *ḥasan a-bid`ah* (a good innovation) .

There were many senior and well informed 'students' of the Prophet (p) at the time of this event ( `Uthmān, `Alī, `Abd al-Raḥmān ibn `Awf, Ṭalḥah ؓ and they did not object to Umar (RA) introducing a *good bid`ah* (innovation) in prayer which is *the very heart of worship*.

This issue is important for discussion due to the following reasons:

1. This was an innovation in the domain of a *religious practice* 'act of worship' and not a *cultural practice*.
2. It was done by a very senior and well informed Companion of the Prophet ﷺ and leader of the then Muslim Community.
3. `Umar ؓ admits it was a *bid`ah* (an innovation) but argues that it was a *good* innovation to maintain *unity and harmony*, given the **new** situation and circumstance that arose which was non-existent in the time of the Prophet ﷺ and Abū Bakr ؓ.
4. This practice that `Umar ؓ has been accepted by all the major scholars since then, such that till today, some fourteen centuries later, this practice still continues.

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<sup>38</sup> A *raka'ah* is a unit of prayer; most of them are in even units.

This example, and there are many others, is used by many scholars to hold the position that there are these *zones of flexibility* not only in cultural matters, but also in 'religious' matters. Those scholars who hold the middle ground, argue that `Umar ؓ did not introduce *a new additional prayer*, as the additional *Tarāwīḥ* prayer was *already* introduced by the Prophet (p), and all that `Umar ؓ did was change its *form and format*, and they argue that introducing a practice *bid'ah* into *religious matters that did not exist* in the time of the Prophet ﷺ is not allowed.

Let us take an example in the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ to see how he made allowance for *cultural* preferences of people.

The Prophet ﷺ took into **consideration the cultural practice** of the people and based on this allowed certain practices. The following example is a case in point.

#### **Fiqh 2.153<sup>39</sup>**

It is recorded in the *Aḥādīth* collection of Aḥmad, al-Bukhārī, and Muslim that `Ā'ishah (R.A.) reported that: "Abū Bakr ؓ entered upon us on the day of 'Īd and there were some slave girls who were recounting [in song the battle of Bu`āth in which many of the brave of the tribes of Aws and Khazraj were killed. Abū Bakr said: 'Slaves of Allāh, you play the pipes of the Satan!' He said it three times. The Prophet ﷺ said to him: 'O Abū Bakr, every people have a festival and this is our festival.'"

'In al-Bukhārī's version, 'Ā'ishah said: "The Messenger of Allāh, entered the house and I had two girls who were singing about the battle of Bu`āth. The Prophet lied down on the bed and turned his face to the other direction. Abu Bakr entered and spoke harshly to me, 'Musical instruments of the Satan in the presence of the Messenger of Allāh!'

The Messenger of Allāh turned his face to him and said: '**Leave them.**' When Abū Bakr became inattentive I signaled to the girls to leave.

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<sup>39</sup> *Alim CD Rom Version 3-1.*

It was the day of 'Īd and the Africans were performing with their shields and spears. Either I asked him or the Prophet asked if I would like to watch them [I don't recall now]. I replied in the affirmative. At this the Prophet made me stand behind him and my cheek was against his. He was saying: 'Carry on, O tribe of Arfadah,' until I tired. The Prophet asked: 'is that enough for you?' I replied: "yes," so he said: 'Leave [then].'"

Here we see a clear example of tolerance shown by the Prophet ﷺ for the cultural trait and practice of this particular group of African Muslims whom the Prophet ﷺ knew full well had music as part of their culture.

The fact that music is a deep-seated ingrained culture trait of African people is borne out by a research paper done by **Simpiwe Sesanti**<sup>40</sup> who gives the following quote by Biko concerning the place of music in African culture:

Biko (2001:46) has observed that music in the African culture features in all emotional states: "When we go to work, we share the burdens and pleasures of the work we are doing through music. This particular facet strangely enough has filtered through to the present day. Tourists always watch with amazement the synchrony of music and action as Africans working at a roadside use their picks and shovels with well-timed precision to the accompaniment of a background song. Battle songs were a feature of the long march to war in the olden days. Girls and boys never played any games without using music and rhythm as its basis. In other words with Africans, music and rhythm were not luxuries but part and *parcel of our way of communication.*

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<sup>40</sup> Sesanti, S. *African Culture, Islam, And a Quest For A True Humanity* .Unpublished M.A. Dissertation, University of Utenague (2005).

## Issue of Singing girls

I had a girl of the Ansar whom I gave in marriage, and Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said, "Why do you not sing, Aisha, for this clan of the Ansar like singing?" (*Al-Tirmidhī*, Ḥadīth 3154, narrated by `A'ishah).

Taking the two above examples into account there still exists differences among some of the scholars on the permissibility or not of singing and using musical instruments.

Some argue that it is not allowed and that the Prophet ﷺ tolerated it for that occasion, others argue that *for that particular cultural group of Muslims* it is allowed as it was an inherent part of their cultural trait.

The Prophet ﷺ was indeed aware of this cultural preference and hence *allowed* singing with musical instruments in this instance, *despite* the objection from Abū Bakr ؓ, a very senior and knowledgeable companion. From this incidence we can infer the following:

1. The Cultural practices and preferences of the singing girls in question were acknowledged by the Prophet (p) and hence allowed by him.
2. The fact that Abū Bakr ؓ mentioned the words 'pipes of Satan' indicates that the Prophet ﷺ *did* mention that this particular instrument is not permissible. However, *despite* this ruling by the Prophet ﷺ, *he made an exception* in this particular instance. Again does the exception only apply because:
  - (a) It was the day of `īd celebrations?
  - (b) It was a custom and cultural practice of the persons who were singing with the musical instruments?

3. Certain practices may be permissible for certain cultural groups of Muslims while not recommended or not permissible for Muslims Belonging to another cultural group.

Whatever the different viewpoints may be among the scholars on this issue, one thing is *clear* from the above incident – that the Prophet ﷺ made allowance for certain deep grained cultural practices. This is very relevant for the current study as it leaves room for minimizing the degree of cultural alienation that people may experience when they convert to Islam.

A word of caution and clarity may be added here. This analysis and conclusion falls within the domain of *Ijtihād*, the third source of Islamic Law. There are criterion and pre-requisites for a person to be deemed competent and eligible to undertake the task of *Ijtihad* and pass a *fatwā* (a valid Islamic opinion/ruling) on a matter that is not clear in the *Qur'ān* and the Prophet Traditions.

Though there is no formal priesthood in Islam, it stands as common sense reasoning that, to be eligible to pass a *fatwā*, a person who does not have in-depth and thorough knowledge of the Islamic sources and who does not have the pre-requisites needed, will not be able to pronounce a *binding* and valid fatwa which would be acceptable.

Another factor needs also to be taken into account in this regard, and that is the concept of *Ijmā'* (the consensus of people of *Ijtihād*). A *fatwā* is the ruling of *just one* competent scholar of Islam, and there may be other equally or more competent scholars in the subject who could have their own *opposing fatāwā*, and people could follow opposing *fatāwā*, and this would be acceptable.

However, Islamic *Shari'ah* has a very unique and novel system in its jurisprudence and *Ijmā'* is one such concept. *Ijmā'* is the consensus of Jurists on an issue. When jurists reach a state of *Ijmā'* on an issue, it means that the *competent and eligible* scholars have reached consensus on an issue – and this becomes fairly binding on the Muslim community.

In the South African context currently, there is no clear and acceptable mechanism for consensus (*Ijmā'*) as yet. There are many competent scholars belonging to various '*Ulamā*' bodies, but these '*Ulamā*' Bodies have not reached a point where they can unanimously reach *Ijmā'* – consensus. This poses a great problem especially for 'new' or converts Muslims who experience *unique* problems of alienation and assimilation and are confused by differing *fatāwā*, a problem that would not have existed had there been *Ijmā'* on the issues.

This problem is further compounded by the fact that most of the '*Ulamā*' Bodies are 'run' and dominated by Muslim scholars of Indian and Malay descent, many of whom studied in India or the Middle East and hence are not fully 'in tune' with the unique cultural and traditional values and of the African and European people who convert to Islam.

The challenge in over coming this problem is three fold:

1. The current scholars of Indian and Malay origin will have to undertake studies in African and other cultures to be in a position to pass a competent ruling from an Islamic perspective.
2. There is a dire need to converts, both of African and European origin, to take up studies in Islamic Law and *Shari`ah* so that they would be able to become competent in passing *fatāwā*.
3. One needs to look at the *fatāwā* and *Ijmā'* on similar issues by the Muslim Scholars in Africa and the West where Islam has survived for centuries and they have resolved many of the issues 'long ago' which we are only 'starting'.

### **Taking *social realities* into account – Phasing out a Practice**

A final argument needs to be mentioned as to the manner in which the Prophet ﷺ dealt with certain practices. Alcohol is indeed prohibited in Islam, however if one looks at the way in which the Prophet ﷺ dealt with the issue of alcohol abuse opens

up another window on the gradual and compassionate way with which he dealt with the issue based on Divine Revelation in the *Qur'ān* from Almighty Allāh.

The Prophet [p] 'weaned' his followers off alcohol gradually over many years in **three stages**.

*Stage One* – A verse is revealed to say 'there is some good and some bad in intoxicants'. No outright prohibition.

*Stage Two* – After a long while the next verse comes down stating 'Do not perform prayer in a state of intoxication'. Still no outright prohibition but prayer prohibited if one is intoxicated.

*Third Stage* – When the Almighty Allāh saw that the people were now well informed about the ill effects of intoxicants and were strong enough to control themselves, the Prophet ﷺ was given the final verse which made 'intoxicants, and gambling and games of chance..' now completely prohibited.

Thus one sees a very realistic, humane and practical approach by the *Qur'ān* and the Prophetic tradition in dealing with cultural practices. One may consider alcoholism to be a social evil rather than a *cultural issue*. However, there are many 'issues' in society that take on a *cultural tag*.

How many times have we not heard terms like:

**Culture of non-payment**

**Drinking and driving culture**

**Culture of violence**

In like manner we can talk of alcoholism as a *cultural phenomenon* as illustrated by Simphiwe Sesanti<sup>41</sup> on the issue of alcohol and the African people and how people become indoctrinated into adopting a foreign culture.

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<sup>41</sup> Sesanti, Simphiwe, op. cit., p. 150.



Obviously the spirituous drink outlasted Moshoshoe's law against liquor. When pointed out to our elders that brandy is not African but came with the arrival of whites, they acknowledge it but say now it has become central. In the name of African culture people become drunk, behave in manners that are disgraceful, and make utterances that are ugly. And those who are sober-minded feel alienated.

This is one of the reasons that our young men and women have deserted African culture because it has been reduced to drunken culture. This drinking culture is causing untold destruction in African culture

Finally, in keeping with the comprehensive approach of Islam to religion and culture, the following verse of the *Qur'ān* brings the culture of keeping one's promise and rights of other people, into the domain of *inter personal* and *societal* relationships.

*"O ye who believe! fulfil (all) obligations.."* (*Qur'ān*, 5: 1)

A Yusuf Ali's<sup>42</sup> comment on this verse brings into focus the broad dimensions and all embracing concept of culture in Islam, removing it from the narrow confines of mere rituals or customs.

This line has been justly admired for its terseness and comprehensiveness. Obligations: 'uqud the Arabic word implies so many things that a whole chapter of Commentary can be written on it.

First, there are the divine obligations that arise from our spiritual nature and our relation to Allah. He created us and implanted in us the faculty of knowledge and foresight: besides the intuition and reason that He gave us. He made Nature responsive to our needs,

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<sup>42</sup> Ali, Abdullah Yusuf, op. cit., p. 238.

and His Signs in Nature are so many lessons to us in our own inner life;

He further sent Messengers and Teachers, for the guidance of our conduct in individual, social, and public life. All these gifts create corresponding obligations, which we must fulfill. But in our own human and material life we undertake mutual obligations express and implied. We make a promise: we enter into a commercial or social contract; we enter into a contract of marriage: we must faithfully fulfill all obligations in all these relationships.

Our group or our State enters into a treaty; every individual in that group or State is bound to see that as far as lies in his power, such obligations are faithfully discharged. There are tacit obligations; living in civil society, we must respect its tacit conventions unless they are morally wrong, and in that case we must get out of such society. There are tacit obligations in the characters of host and guest, wayfarer or companion, employer or employed, etc., etc., which every man of Faith must discharge conscientiously.

The man who deserts those who need him and goes to pray in a desert is a coward who disregards his obligations. All these obligations are inter-connected. Truth and fidelity are parts of religion in all relations of life. This verse is numbered separately from the succeeding verses.

### **2.7.2 CULTURAL PRACTICES ON BASIS OF *SUNNAH***

The *Qur'ān* is indeed the first source of reference for Muslims, followed by the Sunnah (the traditions of the Prophet ﷺ).

With regard to cultural practices in particular there is a *Ḥadīth* (saying) of the Prophet [p], which has lent to many different interpretations that impact on cultural ways of a Muslim. The following is the Hadith:

*Ibn Umar reported that the Messenger of Allāh said: He who imitates a people (meaning the unbelievers) becomes one of them.*  
(Reported by *Musnad Ibn Ḥanbal* and *Sunan ibn Dawūd*)

Imitate a people in what aspects? In their food, their dress code? Some to postulate that Muslims must do everything opposite to the unbelievers has used this *Ḥadīth*.

We have already given examples above, which show that the Prophet (p) allowed some of the rituals and practices of the pagan era.

We have also given examples where the Prophet ﷺ allowed certain practices on the basis that they were *ingrained* in the culture of that specific group of people.

Another example in this regard will be given to illustrate that the above statement of the Prophet ﷺ has to be understood in a wider context.

Amir ibn Sa'd said: "Going in and finding Qarazah ibn Ka'b and AbuMas'ud al-Ansari at a wedding where girls were singing" I said, "Is this being done in the presence of you two who are companions of Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) and were present at Badr?" They replied, "Sit down if you wish and listen along with us, or go away if you wish, for we have been given license for amusement at a wedding." (*Al-Tirmidhī*, Ḥadīth 3159, narrated by Abū Mas'ūd al-Anṣārī).

However one must add, that we must guard against 'blindly' imitating the ways and customs of others. In any case, it must also be kept in mind that *anything* that goes against the *Qur'ān*, *Sunnah* or consensus of the Muslim Jurists will not be allowed.

Let us take another Hadith to illustrate that some of the companions of the Prophet ﷺ imitated an eating practice of the Iraqi people although it was not a practice of the Prophet ﷺ:

It was related to me from Malik from Musa ibn Uqba from `Abd al-Rahmān ibn Yazīd al-Anṣārī that when Anas ibn Malik came back from Iraq, Abū Ṭalḥah and Ubayy ibn Ka`b visited him. He brought them some cooked food and they ate, and then Anas got up and did *wuḍū*. Abu Ṭalḥah and Ubayy ibn Kab asked, "What's this, Anas?

Is it an Iraqi custom?" and Anas said, "I wish I had not done it." (i.e. *wuḍū*). Abu Talha and Ubayy ibn Kab both got up and prayed without doing wudu. (*Al-Muwatta`a*, Ḥadīth 2.27).

Thus we see that this *Ḥadīth* of 'not imitating' a people was not accepted *literally* by the companions of the Prophet ﷺ and they distinguished which practices can be 'imitated' and which could not be imitated.

This *Ḥadīth* will be discussed later in greater detail when we analyse the opinions (*Ijtihād*) of the scholars of Islam concerning cultural practices.

### **Some cultural/ritual practices unique to Islam from *Aḥādīth***

On the other hand there are certain *distinct* cultural practices unique to the Prophet ﷺ which forms part of a Muslim's way of life – culture.

#### **Eating with hands and licking fingers**

*Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: When any one of you eats food he should lick his fingers, for he does not know in what part of the food sticking to his fingers the blessing lies. (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Ḥadīth 5050, Narrated by Abū Hurayrah ﷺ).*

## Praying in a prescribed way

Yaḥyā related to me from Malik that he had heard that Abdullah ibn Umar used to say, "(Voluntary) prayer in both the day and night is two at a time with a taslim<sup>43</sup> after every rakat." Malik said, "That is the custom among us." (*Al-Muwatta'*, Ḥadīth 7.7)

## Shaking of hands as form of greeting

*I asked Anas, "Was it a custom of the companions of the Prophet to shake hands with one another?" He said, "Yes." (Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth 8: 279, narrated by Qatadah.*

## Chanting loud praises after compulsory prayers

*(The freed slave of Ibn 'Abbās) Ibn 'Abbās told me, "In the lifetime of the Prophet it was the custom to (make Dhikr) celebrate Allāh's praises aloud after the compulsory congregational prayers." Ibn 'Abbās further said, "When I heard the Dhikr, I would learn that the compulsory congregational prayer had ended." (Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī Ḥadīth 1: 802, narrated by Abū Ma'bad.*

One may add here that this custom of *Dhikr* after the compulsory prayers is followed only by certain groups of Muslims today.

Based on some of the examples given above and there are many such examples, it is clear that there does emerge and there does exist a **general Islamic Cultural Practice**. However one may also add there are also *differences of interpretation* with regard to the Qur'anic Texts and the *Aḥādīth* (the traditions of the Prophet ﷺ)

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<sup>43</sup> *Taslīm* is the practice of turning one's head to the right and then left while uttering peace and blessings after every two *raka'āt*- units of prayer.

These differences are 'healthy' when expressed within the spirit of the *Shari'ah* and allows for **acceptable variations** in cultural practices between the global *Ummah*.

*What* we eat may vary from tribe to tribe or nationality to nationality (provided it is *halāl*) but *how* we eat it (with one's fingers) is very much an Islamic custom or culture.

Likewise many other *lifestyle* and day-to-day practices have some degree of Islamic culture in it. Likewise with regard to *dress code*, there is great deal of flexibility allowed in expressing one's cultural norm (African or Indian or European) but at the same time there are some general guidelines:

- Males should not look like females
- Males cannot wear silk or gold items
- Women must not wear 'revealing' outfits that show their figure and should cover their entire body except their hands and face.
- Men should cover themselves from above the navel to below the knee

Thus the Islamic attitude to cultural practices has 'zones of flexibility' with 'zones of rigidity'. The *zones of rigidity* gives the cultural practice its **Islamic ethos**, while the *zones of flexibility* gives the freedom to express its unique **National or Ethnic or Tribal ethos**.

### 2.7.3 ISLAMIC SCHOLARS VIEWS (*IJTIHĀD*) ON CULTURE

The above discussion on the Islamic Concept of Culture was from its **primary** sources, the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah* (the Prophetic Traditions). There is, as mentioned above, a *third* source of Islamic Jurisprudence called *Ijtihād* which is the opinions of competent scholars of Islam at any moment in Islamic History.

It is this unique system of sources of Islamic law that makes **Islamic Culture** survive and gives it its *dynamism*, its *relevance* to every people of every era and at the same time gives Islamic Culture is *permanence*. The *Qur'ān and Sunnah* gives

Islam its permanence character while *Ijtihād* gives Islam its flexibility and relevance for every people and every era.

We now look at some of the differing views of Islamic Scholars (*Ijtihād*) concerning specific Islamic cultural issues.

### **Is Islamic Culture equal to Arab Culture?**

**Maryam Jameelah** is a revert to Islam having been born into a Jewish family and having lived all her life and grown up in the West since her birth postulates in her book<sup>44</sup> (1978: 7) that Arab Culture is part of Islamic Culture. In her words:

*As the years passed, the realization gradually dawned upon me that it was not the Arabs who made Islam great but rather Islam had made the Arabs great...every Muslim in the world, regardless of his racial or national origin, is an Arab by culture...Had it been the Will of God, the Prophet could have been a Greek, a Roman or an Englishman. Surely there must have been good reasons why God chose an Arab for the Seal of the Prophet hood in preference to any other nation.*

However, other Islamic Scholars have different views on this and hold the opinion that one can be a Muslim without the 'Arab label'.

One such scholar is **Ziauddin Sardar**<sup>45</sup> who states that "Cultural values include ...the local traditions, way of life or arts and crafts of a people."

Sardar also points out:

*But in addition to Islamic culture, there is a fine ethnic gloss: it is this gloss that differentiates the gastronomy of Pakistanis and Turks, the Malays and the Arabs. .. In addition to the Muslim identity-, which has strong distinctive characteristics-, the ethnic culture creates another*

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<sup>44</sup> Jameelah Maryam *Islam in theory and practice*. (1978). Lahore. Allahwala Printers, p. 7.

<sup>45</sup> *The Future of Muslim Civilization*, op. cit., pp. 199, 215 and 247.

*identity and restricts it. Community development operates at both levels: the level of Islamic culture and at the level of ethnic culture.'*

Finally Sardar makes the point that:

The right to cultural expression has been acclaimed not just as a matter of justice but as a human right, perhaps because it expresses an irresistible need for man. Culture is the response to man's highest need, the need that gives him dignity, which makes him man. The principle of cultural authenticity aims at developing indigenous culture to full flowering.. To fight for indigenous creativity and self-expression and defend what it brings forth.

Here we see Ziauddin Sardar postulating that a person can be a Muslim and *still* exert his/her own ethnic or cultural Identity, which is apart from Arab Culture.

I have quoted from Simpiwe Sesanti<sup>46</sup> above and quote him again for two reasons:

- He also reverted to Islam being brought up in a good traditional South African Christian home.
- He has been on a conscious and informed journey to 'find for himself' a Religion that would not undermine or take away his 'African Heritage'

This is his response on the question of Arab culture and Islamic culture:

*So, why not just be African instead of being Muslim as well? The question came back. Well, all nations were given the Lord's law. Some discarded these laws altogether as it happened to the Arabs who rejected Prophet Muhammad, saying Islam was not the way of their ancestors (Lings, 1983:52) and that Islam was Muhammad's invention (Lings, 1983:81). I believe, as the Qur'ān teaches that Islam was sent*

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<sup>46</sup> Sesanti Simphiwe, op. cit., p. 63.



*as a mercy to humankind (Qur'ān 21:107). Instead of God sending Prophets to particular nations, He has now chosen to send a messenger to the whole human race. I am a Muslim because I appreciate this wisdom.*

*When I invite the Arabs to the straight path, I will not be inviting them to Africanism, and vice versa, when the Arabs invite me to the straight path, they will not be inviting me to Arabism, but to God's way – Islam. So that no one nation will feel diminished by the other.*

*The fact that God, in His wisdom, chose an Arab (Muhammad) to convey this message is inconsequential to me. I do not feel, as an African, one bit inferior to any nation, including the Arabs. In fact I feel so grateful to God that I am able to accept the goodness of the message in as much as I accept the goodness of the messenger, without being prejudiced to his nationality. Many Jews of Muhammad's time had this problem – they recognized the truth in Muhammad's message, but rejected him, for how could God choose a messenger outside the "chosen people"? (Lings, 1983:57).*

Good and admirable as Africanism or African culture was and continues to be, it was not and continues not to be perfect. In capturing the negatives in African practices and the effects thereof, I have not yet come across a more accurate, articulate and yet poignant a manner in which Achebe (1986:106) has done it.

This is the *core* of the argument and what Simpiwe and Sardar are concluding is that Islam as a Religion has certain *fixed* and *uniform* cultural practices that pertain to the *faith* and that *can* and *is* being practiced by Muslims all over the world of different cultures and nations (Islamic faith, prayer, fasting, charity and Pilgrimage), but also allows *flexibility* in the expression and practice of *ones own* ethnic and cultural traditions provided they are not in conflict with the *Shari`ah*.

## Islam and one's mental outlook

Maryam Jameelah states that the entire mental, moral and spiritual outlook of the convert is changed.

This view has also been supported by **Dr Syed Abdul Latif** who gave a series of talks on Islamic Culture at Madras University in 1960 and whose book<sup>47</sup> also explores novel perspectives on Islamic Culture or Islam and Culture.

In his book, he defines culture as:

Civilization of the human mind. Or its improvement by training. The mind is thus the mainspring of culture; and it follows that as the mind is, so its expression of the culture which it generates, or throws out or shapes.

Thus we can conclude that on embracing Islam, one's views of the world does change and hence it is one of the areas this study researches.

## Islamic Culture and the 'Arts'

Maryam Jameela further states that Islam differs from all the other religions in its discouragement of the 'arts'.

However, other scholars like Alija Izetbwkovic a Bosnian European Muslim in his book<sup>48</sup> has opposing views to Maryam Jameelah, he regards religions, creeds, drama, poetry, theater, galleries as the unbroken line of human culture.

He goes further on page where he stresses that in Islam, "*religion, morality and the arts. All spring from the same art of creation.*"

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<sup>47</sup> Abdul Latif, Syed, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>48</sup> Alija Ali Izetbegovic, op. cit., pp. 39 and 64.

In practice in the Islamic World one finds expression of various forms of art in the form of Arabian Calligraphy, Indian architecture and songs, African arts and crafts, Turkish 'delights' and dance of the Dervish.

### **Islamic dress code**

In her book<sup>49</sup> Maryam Jameelah postulates a *specific* Islamic dress code, responding to Muslims who say that no specific Islamic dress code is prescribed. She states:

Western ways are not only totally different but also contrary in almost every respect to the teachings of Islam. ...since Islam is a universal faith, it specifies no particular kind of dress. This is a false assumption.

She continues by proposing that Muslims need to 'dress like the Prophet ﷺ dressed due to the fact that Muslims are constantly asked to follow his *Sunnah* (his ways) and not to imitate the ways of other.

Those scholars who have opposing views argue that even the arch enemies of the Prophet (p) like Abū Lahab and Abū Ṣufyān who were not Muslim, also wore the Arab garb and that in coming to Islam the dress of those reverting did not change apart from the few *Sharī`ah* rules regarding dress. Since they were Arabs, both the Muslim and non Muslim Arabs wore similar Arabic garb in keeping with Arab tradition and this should not be confused as being an *Islamic* tradition.

### **Eating Habits in Islam**

In regard to food<sup>50</sup>, Maryam Jameelah gives her views on food and eating habits in Islam.

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<sup>49</sup> *Islam in Theory and Practice*, op. cit., p. 61.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, p. 62.

The *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet gives the believer detailed instructions on the proper manner of eating, all of which conflict with that prevailing in the modern West. .... Food should be placed on the dining cloth on **the ground** and not on tables as is now the custom.

There are many Muslims around the world who adhere to this and others eat at a table, stating again that *all Arabs* both those who were Muslims and those who were not, ate on the floor – hence it was an Arab custom not an Islamic one.

### **Arabic Names as part of Islamic Culture**

The issue of adopting an Arabic name has been a contentious one for many Muslims who embrace Islam.

In her Book<sup>51</sup> Maryam Jameelah proposes an Arabic name for a revert and the concept of an Arab Culture as a distinct culture to be adopted by one reverting to Islam.

One obsession of our (Muslim) modernists is to convince their audience that the Islamic way of life has no connection with Arabian culture, especially the Arabic language...it may be perfectly permissible for a Muslim to retain a non-Arabic name. Is it not nevertheless **preferable for the convert to assume a complete Muslim name with the intention of severing all traces of any previous identification with a non-Islamic way of life?**

**Islam of the modernist can be anything and everything. And if Islam can be anything, then it is nothing!**

The *Sunnah* however, is clear that only if one's pre-Islamic name has negative connotations, and then it should be changed on embracing Islam. However, Islam does not propose severing ties with one's family and lineage – if anything the

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid, pp.68-69.

*Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah* very strongly emphasizes the keeping of family ties even if one's parents are still not Muslim.

In addition, even though one may change one's **name** to an Islamic/Arabic name, retaining one's **surname** is important in Islam so as to identify one's lineage.

Simpiwe Sesanti<sup>52</sup> has the following to say on the issue of Arabic as a language and changing one's name on reverting to Islam.

Why do the Westerners 'and Arabs' forms of writing dominate the world? The answer to that is not difficult. As Williams (1987:134) rightly notes, the integral part of colonialism was the introduction of the conquerors' speech and writing that being the first step in the process of conquering the souls and minds of the Africans. Not only was it the African systems of writing that were destroyed. In the name of Christianity and Islam, the Europeans and Arabs denounced as heathen traditional African beliefs and forced Africans to give up their indigenous African names for so-called Muslim (in reality Arabic) and Christian (in reality European) names. What has the destruction of the Africans' writing systems and names got to do with philosophy? Mphahlele (2002:86) answers this very well when he notes: "Because we have no printed scriptures – and Europeans do not believe a faith exists unless it can be read – our faith was dismissed as a road to darkness, as a belief in magic."

It is clear that Simpiwe is passionate about the issue of name change and rightfully so, however; historically Islam *did not* force people to give up their indigenous names as the Christian Missionaries did. In fact, let alone name change, Islam *never* forced anyone to accept its teachings. The *Qur'ān* states clearly:

*"Let there be no compulsion in Religion, truth stands out clear from error."* *Qur'ān*, 2: 256)

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<sup>52</sup> Sesanti, S., op. cit., p. 73.

In fact in the whole of Africa (including South Africa) one still finds on Government or Official forms the question: *Your Christian name ...*

In no single Muslim country in Africa or in the world on an official form is one asked for one's *Muslim Name*.

In this regard if we take the issue of adopted children discussed above, the prevailing Arab custom of the adopted child also adopting the name of the adopted father was abolished by the *Qur'ān* via the Prophet ﷺ:

*"Call them (the adopted child) by the names of their fathers: that is more Just in the sight of God." (Qur'ān, 33: 5)*

This points out strongly in the direction of **maintaining** one's surname that would point to one's lineage as it is a strong Islamic principle to maintain ties of bonds with one's biological family, tribe and lineage.

### **Islam proposes unity in cultural diversity**

Dr Syed Abdul Latif has aptly expressed this concept of unity of mankind and cultural diversity in his book<sup>53</sup> where he highlights the concept of the unity of humanity and creation as a vital component of Islamic culture and civilization.

O Lord Lord of my life and everything in the universe. I affirm that all human beings are brothers unto one another.<sup>54</sup>

Respect the way of God and be affectionate to the family of God.<sup>55</sup>

He also stresses that the concept of *righteous action* and *service to humanity* as central to the concept of Islamic culture.

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid , p. 37

<sup>54</sup> Reported by Abū Dawūd and Ahmad.

<sup>55</sup> Reported by Baihaqi.

Dr Latif is of the view that '*believe and work righteously*' sums up the entire cultural process of Islam.

This is based on the very clear Qur'anic command to the Muslims:

*"You (Muslims) are the best of people evolved for the service of all of humanity, you enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong and you believe in Allah". (Qur'ān, 3: 110)*

In summing up, the following points emerge concerning the Islamic concept of Culture:

- All Muslims of whatever race, ethnicity or nationality are united in their concept of *belief or faith*, that God is one and that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is the final messenger of God.
- All Muslims believe in the 'Islamic articles of faith' namely; in the unseen, in Angels, in all Divine Books, in life after death and in the Day of Judgment when the world will end.
- All Muslims accept the five daily prayers, fasting the entire month of *Ramaḍān*, *Zakāt* and the *Hajj* (annual pilgrimage)

These are the *fixed* practices of Muslims all over the world that gives Islam its *universal* cultural, ethos and outlook.

However, in matters of dress, food and celebrations (weddings etc) Islam provides *guidelines*, which are fixed, but leaves room for individual and local traditional cultural preferences.

There are many scholars who are of the opinion that one needs to make a distinction between the Prophet ﷺ as an Arab (who represented at times the Arab cultural ways) and the Prophet ﷺ as *a Prophet* who was sent as guide to *all* of humanity in *all* walks of life be it religious, cultural, political and the rest.

Thus the Islamic attitude to cultural practices has 'zones of flexibility' with 'zones of rigidity'. The *zones of rigidity* gives the Muslim practice and culture its **Islamic ethos**, while the *zones of flexibility* gives it its unique **National or Ethnic and Tribal ethos**.

## 2.8 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURE AND RELIGION

Generally the 'ordinary' person tends to equate religion with culture and vice versa. At the academic level, many researches tend to draw fine lines (howbeit at times very obscure) between the two concepts. However, many may not be aware that from an Islamic perspective, there are *clear* lines drawn between Religion and Culture. The differences between Islamic Scholar are revolved around 'where to draw those lines' but are unanimous that a clear line separates the two concepts.

This point becomes very relevant, as one of the main focuses of this research project is to determine the extent of cultural alienation on conversion to Islam. One will not be able to *quantify* the degree of cultural alienation unless one first reaches consensus as to *what* comprises culture in *Islam* and hence what are the ingredients of culture. For this reason, this issue was discussed in greater detail to reach some consensus on the Islamic perspective as to the relationship between religion and culture.

How to determine which practice falls under the domain of Islamic *Religious* practice and what falls under the domain of Islamic *Cultural* practice?

Again, due to the highly developed system of Islamic Jurisprudence, the scholars of Islam have laid a very broad based, a simple yet clear and effective principle in this regard :

- *In Cultural practice, everything is allowed except that which is specifically prohibited by the Shari`ah.*
- *In Religious practice, only that is allowed for which proof can be provided from the Shari`ah.*



Adequate examples were given above to show how *flexibility* has been allowed to accommodate practices of a *cultural nature*. However, an example was also given above [the issue of `Umar ؓ and the *Tarāwīh* [prayer] which allowed for *flexibility* and innovation of a religious *nature*.

There are times in *practice* that the two get confused and *cultural* practices are promoted as *religious* practices. This is clearly borne out in a survey done by Carol L. Anway in her book<sup>56</sup>:

Cultural Islam very often is at variance with Islam. Both (Muslim) men and women are often uneducated as to the true meanings of Islamic injunctions and, by default, follow standard cultural practice of their societies.

Dr Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī has very systematically detailed this important jurisprudential principle in his book<sup>57</sup> that helps bring this important part of the research document to a climax:

While Islam reprimands all those who, on their own authority, declare what is lawful and what is prohibited, it is more strict with respect to those who voice prohibitions; for the tendency to set up prohibitions results in hardships for human beings, unjustifiably narrowing what God has made spacious for His creation.

This principle is borne out in many verses of the *Qur'ān*:

*"God desires ease for you, and He does not desire hardship for you." (Qur'ān, 2: 185)*

*"It is not God's desire to place a burden on you, but He desires to purify you and to perfect His favor on you in order that you may be thankful to Him." Qur'ān (5: 6)*

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<sup>56</sup> Anway. L. Carol, op. cit., p. 192.

<sup>57</sup> *The Lawful and the Prohibited*

The above verse was revealed in connection with the religious practice of *tayyamum*<sup>58</sup>, which is a *core area of* ablution in the religious practice of prayer, which is compulsory for Muslims five times a day.

God ends off by saying 'He desires not to put a burden on us'; so in the field of *optional cultural practice* would God place any unnecessary restrictions?

It is fine if there are directives in the *Sharī`ah* for what is allowed and what is prohibited, but what is the position if there is **no** directive on a particular issue? What then is the position if the *Sharī`ah* is silent on an issue?

Dr al-Qaradāwī gives a clear directive on this issue quotes a few sayings and directives of the Prophet ﷺ in this regard:

“What God has made lawful in His Book is halal, and what he has forbidden is haraam, and that concerning which He is silent is allowed as His favor. So accept from God His favor, for God is not forgetful of anything. He then recited (the verse in the *Qur`ān* chapter 19 verse 64) *'and your Lord is not forgetful.'*<sup>59</sup>

He quotes another *Ḥadīth* on the same page:

God has prescribed certain obligations for you, so do not neglect them; He has defined certain limits, so do not transgress them; He has prohibited certain things, so do not do them; and He has kept silent about certain things out of mercy for you and not because of forgetfulness, so do not ask questions concerning them.<sup>60</sup>

In fact there is a verse of the *Qur`ān* in this regard where the companions of the Prophet ﷺ were told by God not to ask too many questions, especially about things

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<sup>58</sup> The practice of using clean sand to purify oneself for the compulsory prayer when water is not available.

<sup>59</sup> Hadith reported by al Hakim and quoted by al Bazzar as a sound hadith

<sup>60</sup> Reported by al-Darqutnī and classified as ḥasan (good) by al-Nawawī.

that God has remained silent on, as excessive questions in this regard leads to extra burdens being laid on one.

*"O you who believe, ask not questions about things which if made plain to you may cause you trouble. But if you ask about things when the Qur'ān is being revealed, they will be made plain to you, God will forgive those, for God is oft forgiving most forbearing." (Qur'ān, 5:104)*

Islam being a global faith covers many countries, cultures and ethnic peoples. What is the norm in one culture may not even exist in another Islamic area. It is true that on converting to Islam one takes on a whole new way of relating to the world.

However, there are cultural variations and interpretations for a particular country or people. This interpretation will need to be done by *competent* scholars in Islam who are familiar both with the Islamic *Shari'ah* and the cultural issue on what is being analysed. At the global level however, there are other *religious* practices that are universal, which binds the global Muslim *Ummah* (community) into a homogeneous Islamic Religious Culture.

## 2.9 THE INGREDIENTS OF CULTURE

Apart from the *Qur'ān*, *Sunnah* and opinions of the learned scholars of Islam, the book<sup>61</sup> written by Carol L. Anway (a committed Christian whose daughter embraced Islam) also provided valuable insight into the *ingredients* of culture that needed to be quantified for this current survey.

- Her book is *itself* the result of a survey she conducted by way of a questionnaire on the stories of American women who have embraced Islam and the challenges they faced as a result of this choice.

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<sup>61</sup> Anway. L. Carol, op. cit., pp. 57, 67, 70, 73, 147, and 188.

- Anway sent out three hundred and fifty survey forms on a random survey basis to a large cross section of American women who converted to Islam and whose 'educational levels ranged from high school level, graduate and doctorate level'. Fifty-three responded, and her book encapsulates their stories of conversion. She also sent questionnaires to the Parents of those who converted to Islam asking them to express their feelings and views.
- The focus of Anway's research was to explore and describe the effect that conversion to Islam has had on the lives of American-born women and their families. However, from their responses good 'true to life' issues of cultural adaptation and alienation emerged providing valuable information on the common issues / ingredients of culture that needed to be included in the current research study.

Those aspects of her survey that provided relevant material for the focus of this study are as follows:

#### **Acceptance/rejection by families**

Anway writes:

Some families seemed to be unable to tolerate the change. They felt safer by breaking off relationships completely.

#### **The Ritual Prayer**

She also points out the following:

Many of the women found the five daily obligatory prayers easy while others had to work hard at getting into the routine. Wearing the scarf was a blessing and no problem for some, others took years to get to the point of wearing a scarf.

## **Learning Arabic**

Concerning Arabic, she states:

Praying in Arabic and not knowing the *Qur'ān* and the *Ḥadīth* has been the hardest parts for me.

## **Difficulty in adjusting to the Islamic Dress Code**

On the issue of Islamic dress code she states:

The extreme change in dress is probably the hardest shift for the parents and relatives to accept when a daughter becomes Muslim.

## **Food and Drink considerations**

Concerning the issue of food and drink, Anyway states:

Stress usually comes up when we visit my parents. Since we eat only *ḥalāl* meats, we are reluctant to eat anything... they thought this another rejection.

## **Issue of Muslim / Arabic Names**

Arabic Muslim names was a 'sore point' for some as she rightly points out:

They (my parents) felt that I have committed a form of cultural apostasy and blame themselves. They don't like our children's Muslim names and argue greatly with me about it.

## **Changes in one's World View**

She also brings out the issue of changes in one's worldviews:

They (my parents) are uncomfortable with our world outlook and find it to be impractical and idealistic.

Another factor that was not taken into account was the *reasons* and *circumstances* under which the respondents entered into Islam. These factors indeed would impact on the answers / scores given. However, this was a *deliberate* omission as the main focus of the study was more of a *quantitative* nature, namely, to determine the *degree* of cultural alienation on conversion to Islam and not the *reasons* for such alienation.

There still needs to be more discussion on what other elements comprise culture from an Islamic perspective.

In particular for the South African context, more discourses need to focus on *African customs* and their acceptability or not within the Islamic framework of the *Shari`ah*. Issues such as lobola (marriage dowry in the African context) and ancestor prayers by African Traditionalists, could not be addressed in this current study due to the fact that the scholars of Islam have not yet adequately resolved these issues.

## 2.10 CULTURAL ALIENATION

Having defined religion and culture both from an academic and Islamic position, we are left with the issue of defining exactly what we understand by the term alienation both from an Islamic and academic perspective.

### 2.10.1 DEFINITION OF ALIENATION

Alienation is, in social sciences, the state of feeling estranged or separated from one's milieu, work, products of work, or self. Despite its popularity in the analysis of contemporary life, the idea of **alienation** remains an ambiguous concept with elusive meanings, the following variants being most common:

- (1) **Powerlessness**, the feeling that one's destiny is not under one's own control but is determined by external agents, fate, luck, or institutional arrangements;
- (2) **Meaninglessness**, referring either to the lack of comprehensibility or consistent meaning in any domain of action (such as world affairs or interpersonal relations) or to a generalized sense of purposelessness in life;
- (3) **Normlessness**, the lack of commitment to shared social prescriptions for behavior (hence widespread deviance, distrust, unrestrained individual competition, and the like);
- (4) **Cultural estrangement**, the sense of removal from established values in society (as, for example, in the intellectual or student rebellions against conventional institutions);
- (5) **Social isolation**, the sense of loneliness or exclusion in social relations (as, for example, among minority group members); and
- (6) **Self-estrangement**, perhaps the most difficult to define and in a sense the master theme, the understanding that in one way or another the individual is out of touch with himself.<sup>62</sup>

Thus within the scope of this study one will have to determine when a person converts to Islam, to what degree does this conversion lead to social isolation, self-estrangement, cultural estrangement and normlessness.

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<sup>62</sup> "Alienation," *Britannica 2002 Standard Edition CD-ROM*. Copyright © 1994-2002 Britannica.com Inc.

## 2.10.2 MUSLIM SCHOLARS VIEWS ON ALIENATION

Sulayman S. Nyang in his book<sup>63</sup> quotes Frantz Fanon on this phenomenon of colonization of Africa as 'the colonial mentality or colonial alienation'. He goes further and quotes Kenneth Y. Best on the method and process of alienation:

The (schools) were a medium for spreading values which ignored the traditional patrimony of culture. And indeed, these values were often in a state of war against this patrimony. So in turn the schools provoked the crisis of identity.

In his book, Sulayman quotes Spencer Trimingham who postulates that in the case of conversion to Islam in the Ethiopian situation, alienation occurred in three stages.

In the first stage there is superficial adoption of Islamic ways, and this is reflected *in the borrowing of certain material elements associated with Islamic culture*. In the second stage actual elements of Islamic religious culture are adopted and assimilated. The third stage, which is very revolutionary in its effects, consists of transforming the person into a Muslim who is genuinely convinced of the efficacy of Islamic sanctions and hence, is willing to change his customs and habit of conduct.

Ziauddin Sardar has also alluded to this phenomenon of Islamic Culture and alienation from 'local' culture of the convert in his book states:<sup>64</sup>

But in addition to Islamic culture, there is a fine ethnic gloss: it is this gloss that differentiates the gastronomy of Pakistanis and Turks, the Malays and Arabs. In addition to the Muslim identity-which has very strong distinctive characteristics-the ethnic culture creates another identity and restricts it. Community development operates at both levels: at the level of Islamic culture and at the level of ethnic culture.

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<sup>63</sup> Nyang S. Sulayman, op. cit., pp. 8, 57, 66 and 67.

<sup>64</sup> Sardar, Ziauddin, op. cit., p. 215.



However, Sulayman in his book also makes a very pertinent point that with the meeting of the various religions and cultures on the African soil, the African people also became *enriched* culturally and *gained* in many areas from this cross cultural encounter.

In his book, he describes the influence of the Islamic *Şufi* Brotherhood movement in West Sudan as follows:

I am inclined to believe that the growing acculturation of African Muslims in the Islamic Culture together with their desire to play a more active role in the political systems of their times might have led many of them to agitate for reform and change in the lives of their non-Muslim peoples.

In his book, he also quotes 'Edward Blyden, the celebrated Black intellectual, who was very much impressed by the influence of Islam on the black man, in his attempt to demonstrate the cultural impact of Islam, he quoted Barth as saying that some of the vernaculars has been enriched by expressions from the Arabic for the embodiment of the higher processes of thought.

He added, they received terms regarding the religion of one God, and respecting a certain state of civilization, such as marrying, reading, writing, instruments, and the art of warfare as well as architecture, commerce..'

Today, our president, the honorable Thabo Mbeki also acknowledged this point practically when he chose Timbukto in Mali as the prototype of the African Renaissance to show the rich African Heritage that developed under impact of this cross cultural experience.

Though both Sulayman and Sardar acknowledge that cultural alienation *does* occur on converting to another religion, Sardar gives a more realistic outcomes- based analysis of the issue of cultural alienation by postulating that the convert to Islam does not 'give up' *everything* from his or her's indigenous culture but merely *blends* that with the new-found Islamic culture and hence the new convert to Islam

can function at both the level of Islamic culture and their own local or indigenous ethnic culture.

### **Alienation in the context of this study**

This very conclusion was reached in the current study which was discussed above when we discussed the relationship between Religion and Culture and concluded that Islam has zones of rigidity that gives Islam its unique and universal Cultural outlook, and zones of flexibility which allows space for the convert to Islam to also assimilate his or her local 'cultural flavor' or color keeping within the spirit of the Islamic *Shari`ah*.

In this way a convert to Islam is not *totally* alienated from his or her 'ethnic or cultural' origins. Since the main focus of the current study is to *quantify* the degree of cultural alienation, the questionnaire required response on the *quantitative level* and by choice the *nature and causes* of alienation (*qualitative aspects of alienation*) was not asked for.

Even in the analysis of the results, this study focused more on the *extent* of alienation rather than which categories of alienation was experienced more by the respondents. However, the way in which the questionnaire was grouped (lifestyle issues, family acceptance or rejection etc) helps to a significant extent to see which areas of alienation was experienced by the various groups converting to Islam, and from here to ascertain if some 'pattern' does exist in terms of alienation and conversion.

This very conclusion was reached above when we discussed the relationship between Religion and Culture and concluded that Islam has zones of rigidity that gives Islam its unique and universal Cultural outlook, and zones of flexibility which allows space for the convert to Islam to also assimilate his or her local 'cultural flavor' or color keeping within the spirit of the Islamic *Shari`ah*.

In this way a convert to Islam is not *totally* alienated from his or her 'ethnic or cultural' origins.

If one has to summarize the discussion on the Islamic concept of alienation, we quote again Ziauddin Sardar who very aptly states:<sup>65</sup>

Cultural action is a multi dimensional process: it must begin with a reality of a particular situation, but it must also create freedom to perceive this reality as an open-ended potentiality that can be transformed and renovated.

We have shown that Islam does provide such freedom that does not lead to total alienation. The focus of this study is in fact to determine *to what extent* does such cultural alienation take place within the South African Context when someone converts to Islam.

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<sup>65</sup> Sardar, Ziauddin, op. cit., p. 215.

# CHAPTER THREE

## EXPLANATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE AND ANALYSIS

The Survey was conducted on a random sample basis, but ensuring that data is collected from the various categories (race, ethnicity, educational level and religion) that depict the cultural diversity of South Africa.

### 3.1 THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF SURVEY

Cultural Studies is a science and, as such, must deal with both the objective collection and recording of empirical data and the treatment of their findings in terms of an explanatory system.

- **Ethnography** is the process of recording and describing a culture of a specific people, and its traits, patterns, and principles of coherent integration. Anthropologists produce ethnography on the basis of firsthand field observation of the people who are being studied.
- **Ethnology** covers the theoretical aspect of anthropology. Ethnologists ascertain how cultures differ or exhibit similarities through comparison and generalization, suggest reasons for cross-cultural regularities observed, and use these explanatory inferences to formulate new research hypotheses.

Cultural data assume the form of directly observable material items (tools, cultivated fields, houses, statues, lifestyles), individual behaviors and performances (ceremonies, games, meals) as well as ideas and arrangements that exist in people's minds.

This is achievable through two major research techniques: **participant observation** and **key informant interviewing**.

**Participant observation** is based on living among the people under study for a lengthy period, usually a year, and gathering data through continuous involvement in their lives and activities.

Usually a few key informants are selected for in-depth sessions, since the investigation of cultural patterns usually calls for lengthy and repeated open-ended interviews. **Key informant** selection is known as **judgment sampling** and is particularly important for the kind of qualitative research that characterizes ethnography. Anthropologists will very frequently also need to carry out quantitative research from which statistically validated inferences can be drawn.

Accordingly they must construct a either larger **random sample** or a total population census for more narrowly focusing interviewing according to a closed questionnaire design.

In the current study the *key information selection* method was used as part of the quantitative method to gather samples of data by way of a questionnaire.

In order to adequately reflect the *cultural reality and diversity* of our South African society, four main groups were created to reflect the four main racial groups namely:

1. African
2. Colored
3. European
4. Indian

In addition to the four main groups above, the scope of this study also needed to analyse the issue of *gender, ethnicity and education* within the four main groups listed above. Based on this, many *sub-groups* were formed (**twenty two** in all) and samples obtained on the basis of these groups and sub-groups.

These sub-groups by no means covers the total spectrum of the South African population, however, based on the principles of *sampling*<sup>66</sup> it is assumed that the sample taken represents the population based on the principle of inferential *statistics*.

### Measurement Scales<sup>67</sup>

'When theoretical concepts are used in research to refer to observable characteristics of people and environments, they are called *variables* as they vary from person to person or one situation to another.' In this study the variables include gender, race, religion, ethnicity and educational background of the people interviewed.

Descriptive statistics allows these variables to be quantified on a *measurement scale* using numbers. Numbers are easily distinguishable, they can be easily ranked and they can be subjected to mathematical operations.

Numbers also allow for *nominal and ordinate* measurement. Nominal measurement allows for *qualitative* differentiation between the various categories while ordinal measurement allows for *quantitative* evaluation by allowing one category to contain more or less of the measured variable.

Both of these techniques are used in the statistical analysis of the data collected in this research.

### 3.2 ABBREVIATED 'KEY' USED IN GROUPING

It is regretted that the 'old' race classification had to be resorted to classify and group the main categories of people surveyed in this study. This has been done for the following reasons:

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<sup>66</sup> J.B. van Lill and K.W. Grieve (1991) *Descriptive Statistics*. Pretoria. Human Resources Information Centre. Section 1.4.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, Sections 1.5-1.10.

- (1) Though we are two decades into our new democracy, the *reality* and *effects* of decades of racial discrimination cannot be wished away in a mere two decades and these categories are still being used ‘ in normal day to day discourse’.
- (2) Whereas in the past the racial classification was *discriminatory*, in this research document it is being used *just to differentiate* the participants on the basis of the categories and groups required for the research study, and not to *discriminate*.

The four main groups that have been surveyed in this study have been denoted as :

**Group A** = African / Black

**Group C** = Colored

**Group E** = European / White

**Group I** = Indian

### **Gender**

Whenever the letter **M** is used in a group or sub-group it signifies male, while the letter **F** denotes female.

Thus **AM** would denote African Male while **IF** denotes Indian female and so on.

### **Ethnic group**

Among the samples taken of participants of African origin, other abbreviated letters are used to denote the various *language / ethnic* groups: thus **X** represents a person from the Xhosa ethnic group, **Z** represents a person from the Zulu ethnic group, **S** for Sotho, and **Ts** for Tswana.

Thus **AMX** denotes African, Male and Xhosa, **AFS** denotes African, female and Sotho; and so on.

## **Educational status**

To differentiate education status **PM** denotes post matric, while **NM** denotes 'not matriculated'.

Thus **AMZNM** denotes African male Zulu not matriculated, and **AFXPM** denotes African female Xhosa post matric.

When an additional letter **F** is used in a group or sub-group, it denotes a participant who is a foreigner that means one who is not a South African citizen by birth.

**The following is the key of the complete list of all groups and sub-groups used in this research document.**

### **GROUP A: AFRICAN**

#### **Sub-groups**

- AM** = African male
- AF** = African female
- AMFr** = African male foreigner
- AMX** = African male Xhosa
- AMTs** = African male Tswana
- AMSPM** = African male Sotho post matric
- AMZPM** = African male Zulu post matric
- AMZNM** = African male Zulu not matriculated
  
- AFFr** = African female foreigner
- AFZPM** = African female Zulu post matric
- AFZNM** = African female Zulu not matriculated
- AFXNM** = African female Xhosa not matriculated
- AFSNM** = African female Sotho not matriculated



## **GROUP C: COLORED**

### **Sub-groups**

**CM** = Colored male

**CF** = Colored female

## **GROUP E: EUROPEAN / WHITE**

### **Sub-groups**

**EM** = European male

**EF** = European female

## **GROUP I: INDIAN**

### **Sub-groups**

**IMH** = Indian male of Hindu origin

**IF** = Indian female

**IFH** = Indian female of Hindu origin

**IFC** = Indian female of Christian origin

### **3.3 QUESTIONNAIRE AND TOTAL RESULTS OF SURVEY**

As mentioned above, the survey was carried out on a random sample basis, but attempts were made to include the major categories of people in the South African context who have embraced Islam.

**The tabulated results of all four groups and their sub-groups surveyed are found in Appendix 3 of this dissertation.**

### **3.3.1 CRITERION FOR DRAWING UP QUESTIONNAIRE**

The questionnaire had to be drawn up in such a manner that it would address the research concerns of the survey.

Some of the issues that were being investigated were of a personal nature and hence were included in the Questionnaire under the heading **GENERAL PERSONAL PARTICULARS**.

The variables that applied and that were relevant for the research but fixed for the participant appeared in this section of the questionnaire.

#### **Gender, Race, Ethnicity**

These issues were addressed by creating 'blocks' wherein the respondent would just have to place a tick or cross in the appropriate block.

#### **Language**

So as to avoid the problem of translators and interpreters in the various languages, it was decided to select only those volunteers who were proficient in English, apart from their 'home' language and any other language they may be proficient in.

#### **Academic Record and Former Religion**

This was also presented in block form as mentioned above.

#### **Categories to be surveyed**

These were worked out after having established what are the *ingredients* of culture that are subject to alienation/change on conversion to Islam. The following helped reach a final conclusion on the matter:

1. The theoretical discussion on these issues in Chapter Three above which included research books and articles on the subject, help in selecting and defining the categories to be used in this research survey.
2. Being with an NGO that is dealing with converts to Islam, the 'first hand' accounts of reverts to Islam helped in identifying the categories that are relevant and thus needed to be subjected to the survey.
3. The book<sup>68</sup> written by Carol Anway, on American women converting to Islam, is itself a research document based on the results of a questionnaire. The issues raised by these revert to Islam in the Book also helped in identifying the categories that needed to be explored for the theme of this current research task.

Taking all the above discussions and considerations, and after leaving out the *contentious issues* of culture by Islamic Scholars (music, gender issues), the elements /ingredients of culture that were selected to form the grid for this current survey were as follows:

- Food
- Dress
- Name change
- Arabic as a language
- Rejection by family
- Rejection by friends
- Rejection in the work place
- Acceptance by Muslim Individuals
- Acceptance by Muslim Community
- The Middle East Conflict
- Views on the West and USA
- Views on South African Politics

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<sup>68</sup> Anway, Carol L. (1995). *Daughters of Another Path – Experiences American Women Chosing Islam*.

There still needs to be more discussion on what other elements comprise culture from an Islamic perspective.

In particular for the South African context, more discourses need to focus on *African customs* and their acceptability or not within the Islamic framework of the Shariah. Issues such as lobola (marriage dowery in the African context) and ancestor prayers by African Traditionalists, could not be addressed in this current study due to the fact that the scholars of Islam have not yet adequately resolved these issues.

A pattern emerged highlighting certain *basic* changes (alienation) that a person undergoes when embracing Islam. These changes are vast and vary from individual to individual.

Taking all the above into account, twelve (12) categories were identified that would form the basis of the questionnaire. To make analysis easy, these twelve categories were in turn sub-divided into four groups.

#### **Group A: Lifestyle analysis**

Explored **lifestyle** changes and included:

- food
- clothes
- name change
- Arabic

#### **Group B: Rejection analysis**

Explored changes in one's 'old' social circles which included rejection by:

- family
- friends
- work place

### **Group C: Acceptance analysis**

Explored acceptance by (Muslim) members of the 'new' found faith and included:

- acceptance by Muslim individuals
- acceptance by Muslim community

### **Group D: World View analysis**

Explored changes in one's world views as a result of conversion to Islam and included changes in one's views on:

- Middle East issues
- United States and the West
- South African Politics

It must be stressed that there are many other categories which are subjected to change/alienation, but have not been included in this research study for the following reasons:

1. Some of the issues are still 'problematic' and difference of opinion exists on these issues by the Muslim Scholars. ( for example issues such as music, attending religious festivals of one's previous religion, the different schools of thought in Islam, celebrating birthdays etc). These 'contentious' issues were left out as we did not want to complicate the survey and also taking cognizance of the fact that the twelve categories were already a big task to analyze.

This in fact leaves room open for further surveys to be undertaken to explore even the 'contentious' issues that confront the convert Muslim.

2. One required a *definite* answer and thus avoided putting the volunteer in the difficult position of not putting a numeric value to a question if they were *not sure* of an issue. Every question asked required an answer on a scale of 1 to 10, there was no allowance in the questionnaire for an 'I don't know' answer. All questions needed an answer to be graded on a scale of 1 to 10. Hence, unclear categories were left out of the survey.

### Measurement Scales

As mentioned earlier, descriptive statistics allows one to give numeric values to undertake *qualitative* and *quantitative* analysis.

In the current survey, the volunteers were asked to give a numeric value to the question asked on a scale from 1 to 10.

Seeing that *different* issues were being analysed in this survey and at times opposing issues (acceptance in Group C and rejection in Group B), the problem arose as to how to keep a *standard* criterion to measure opposing issues? This was resolved in two ways:

- (a) The **X-axis** would be regarded as the baseline, or original position before converting to Islam. The degree of change, movement or alienation from this baseline must be given the corresponding numeric value between 1 to 10.

Thus for example if very little or no change occurred in one's food, and then a value of 1 or 2 would be given. If however, a very big and substantial change was brought about as a result of conversion to Islam with respect to one's diet, then a value of 10, or 9 or its equivalent would be given.

- (b) The **X-axis** would also represent the *state of ease* and any change from this baseline state of ease would have to be quantified. Thus for example for Category C if it was *easy* for Muslims to accept the revert,

then a value of 1 or 2 would indicate this. However, if there was great difficulty or reluctance on their part to accept the revert, then depending on the degree of non-acceptance, a value of 10 or 9 or its equivalent would be given as the answer.

The advantage of using the above technique makes it very easy during analysis as **the degree of alienation can easily be judged by how far the graph is from the X-axis** i.e., the further one moves away from the *baseline* X axis, the greater the degree of alienation.

If the graph is close to the X-axis for any issue under investigation, the alienation is not significant. However, if the graph is far from the X axis, this would indicate a profound degree of alienation.

Using this technique, comparisons can be made *between* the various categories and the degree of alienation seen at an instant on the graph.

Sample of Questionnaire is to be found in **Appendix 2** at the end.

### **3.4 PRESENTATION AND EXPLANATION OF RESULTS**

#### **Theoretical Considerations<sup>69</sup>**

When research surveys are conducted, especially when they involve survey questionnaires, a vast body of information is gathered called '*raw data*'. This raw data, if included *as is* into the research document would be difficult especially if cross-referencing and comparison between and within categories have to be done.

To overcome this problem and present the data in a coherent, logical and scientific manner that is in- keeping with the principles of descriptive statistics, the data is presented in the form of **tables and graphs**.

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<sup>69</sup> *Descriptive Statistics*, op. cit., Sections 2.1-2.17.

## **Tabular presentation**

Presenting the data in tabular form allows for *frequency distribution* of data, which represents the number of times cases occur in the different measurement categories. Tables also allow flexibility in that the frequency distribution can be grouped giving a clearer mental picture to the reader of the data collected.

## **Graphic presentation**

Graphs provide a visual presentation of the data. There is an old proverb 'a picture paints a thousand words'. Graphs also help summarise complex information and data and present it in a way that is easy to understand.

One form of graphic presentation is called a **histogram**. Information and data is split between the **X** and **Y-axis** such that class intervals are represented on the **X** axis and the frequencies, proportions or percentages on the **Y** axis.

Histograms are also useful in that they take the *total number* of subjects in the sample into account. This in turn makes it much more easier to compare various results within a group or category or comparisons between groups and categories.

In order to understand and interpret the results of the survey, and the various ways in which the results will be analysed, an example will be given by using one *randomly selected sub-group* of persons surveyed.

The sub-group that is randomly selected is **AFZNM** and the following is the results of survey of this sub-group **AFZNM** (see 4.2 above for abbreviated list of *keys* used for all groups surveyed).

**This sub-Group AFZNM represents African Female Zulu not matriculated.**



### 3.4.1 TOTAL RESULTS OF ALL PERSONS IN AFZNM

This shows the results of each person as filled in the questionnaire for this one sub-group, AFZNM. It is the actual *raw* data displayed and summarised in tabular and graphic form.

The tabular form of *all* the results for all groups and all sub-groups can be found in Appendix 3.

#### (a) Tabulated Form of Results for sub-group AFZNM

	AFZNM1	AFZNM2	AFZNM3	AFZNM4	AFZNM5	TOTAL	AVERAGE
<b>CATEGORY A</b>							
FOOD	6	7	3	8	3	27	5.4
CLOTHES	9	6	4	10	8	37	7.4
NAME	4	7	2	2	1	16	3.2
ARABIC	5	8	3	8	5	29	5.8
<b>CATEGORY B</b>							
FAMILY	4	2	1	1	5	13	2.6
FRIENDS	3	3	5	1	1	13	2.6
WORK	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>CATEGORY C</b>							
INDIVIDUAL	4	5	1	1	2	13	2.6
COMMUNITY	2	2	2	2	1	9	1.8
<b>CATEGORY D</b>							
MIDDLE EAST	7	10	5	8	5	35	7
US&WEST	5	5	6	5	6	27	5.4
S.A. POLITICS	8	3	1	2	2	16	3.2
<b>TOTAL:</b>	57	58	33	48	39	235	47
<b>AVERAGE TOTAL:</b>	4.75	4.833333	2.75	4	3.25	19.58333	3.9166667

Table 1

**Explanation of the above Tabulated Form of the Results in Table 1 above.**

The results for the four Categories under investigation A, B, C and D

The results for each participant surveyed. **AFZNM1** represents the first person's result, **AFZNM2** the second person's results and so on. Thus in this sub-group we have the results of *five* participants.

Moving *horizontally* across the table, we have a **Total** column that has the total of the results given by the participant for each sub-category. Thus the first line represents the result of all five participants for the sub-group **Food in Category A: 6, 7, 3, 8, 3** giving a total result of **27**

The last column gives the **Average** result of all the five participants for the sub-category **Food**. ie. **27** divided by **5**, which give us an average result of **5.4** In order to get a more accurate result in case of *very close* values, the average result has been rounded off to the nearest second decimal place.

In the sub-category **Work** above we find zero **0** in all the columns. This is so as the participants in this group are all still students who are in school and who have not yet completed matric and are thus not yet in employment.

Now if we move *vertically* down the Table, we see a **Total** column. This represents the results *across* all twelve categories for that particular participant. Horizontally we get the results for *a particular category* (food, clothes etc) but *vertically* we get the results *across* all the groups and categories. If we take the result for the first participant **AFZNM1** we get a total result of **57** for all twelve categories.

The **Average** column here represents the average result *across* all categories for each participant and in the case of **AFZNM1** the average is **4.75**

If we look at the *bottom right hand corner* of the Table, we get the *Average Result* for all the participants in this group, which in this instance are **3.92** rounded up to the nearest second decimal place.

## Results as Percentage

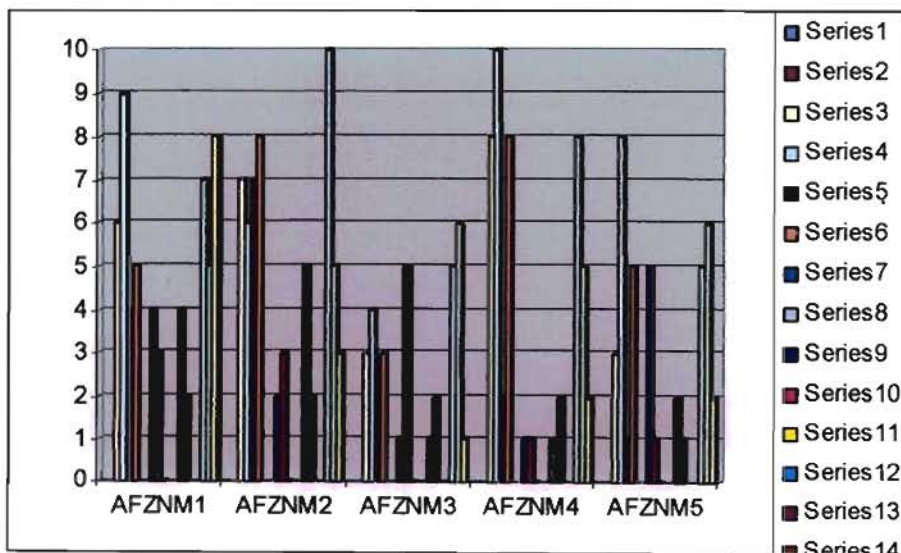
Though the participants were asked to give a score between 0 (zero) and 10 (ten), this also extrapolates to 0 to 100 percent. Thus a result of **4.75** as a *percentage* equates to **47.5 %** percent.

These results will be used in different ways when we begin to do analysis of the results according to the different categories and groups defined and identified in this research.

### (b) Same results for sub-group AFZNM in graphic form for each category

Now we will display the results of each of the twelve (12) criteria in the survey (food & drink, clothes/ dress etc) against each person's response in the group surveyed.

By arranging the results in this format, one can compare the *individual* variations with regard to each category under survey, by each of the five persons surveyed.



**Figure 1**

If we recall the method of analysis mentioned above, the higher the graph for any category (the further away it is from the X axis) the greater the alienation, or the

more difficult it was to adjust to this particular lifestyle change after having embraced Islam.

Keeping this simple analytical principle in mind and looking at **Table 1** and

### **Figure 1**

The following facts emerge:

If we take the first category in **Group A** which is **food**, we see that participant **AFZNM3** and **AFZNM5** did not have much problem adjusting to the *new* requirements and changes with regard to one's diet and eating habits as they gave a score of three (3) which equates to 30 % percent.

However, this cannot be said about participants **AFZNM2** and **AFZNM4** who filled in a result of **7** and **8** respectively, indicating that they *did* experience significant difficulty in adjusting to the *new* dietary requirements on embracing Islam. This equates to 70 % and 80% respectively, indicating a great deal of alienation and difficulty in adjusting from one's previous eating habits.

If we take the second category in Group A, which is **clothes and dress**, again one finds significant variations between the various participants in this sub-group. Participants **AFZNM1(90%)**, **AFZNM4 (100%)** and **AFZNM5 (80%)**, experienced significant alienation and difficulty with regard to changes required in one's dress on embracing Islam. However, participant **AFZNM3 (40 %)** did not experience any significant difficulty and alienation with regard to dress.

In like manner one can analyse all twelve categories that have been identified in this study to determine the degree of cultural alienation experienced by measuring the degree of difficulty or ease experienced in adjusting to the new religious cultural practices and requirements.

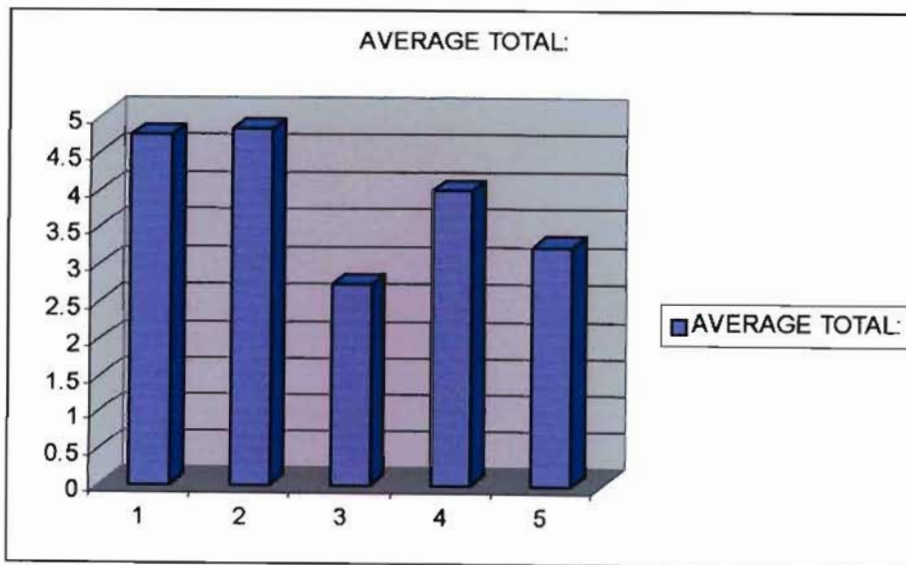
**(c) Overall Average results across categories for AFZNM**

Now we will take an **overall average** result for each person surveyed *across each category*. The results give an indication of the composite overall degree of cultural alienation taking the average of *all twelve (12) criteria together*.

The overall average result here for each individual can then be combined with other respondents in the group or sub-group and in this way an overall average of the *entire group or sub-group* can be obtained. Thus this result gives us an *overall* degree of alienation experienced by a particular group or sub-group.

If we look at **Table 1** again, right at the bottom, going horizontally across the bottom of the Table which indicates **Average Total** we get the overall average across all twelve categories for each of the five participants in this sub-group which is, **4.83, 2.75, 4, and 3.25**.

This average result displayed in a graphic form as shown below in **Figure 2**



**Figure 2**

## Analysis of Results

On the X Axis the numbers **1 2 3 4 5** represent the five participants in this sub-group **AFZNM**.

One can see that though *individually* there were some significant variations *between* categories and for each category, when the *overall* average is taken we can see that there is hardly a significant variation in the degree of alienation for this sub-group taken as a whole.

Whereas for instance when we analysed just food as a criterion above, the percentage difference between the highest (80 %) and lowest (30 %) result we get 50 % percent.

When we do the same for the entire group across all categories the highest (48,3 %) and lowest (27.5 %) we get a difference of 20.8 % with the overall average percentage for this category (see extreme right hand corner of **Table 1**) is **3.92**, which is **39.2 %**.

Thus there is no significant alienation for this sub group when the overall average total results are taken into account for all the four categories combined namely:

### **Lifestyle changes**

#### **Alienation from family and friends**

#### **Rejection / acceptance from the Muslim Community**

#### **Changes in one's World View**

In the same way, we can display the results for other groups and hence compare the degree of alienation experienced by the different groups and sub-groups within groups, with respect to **all** the categories under survey.

Based on the above, we can thus compare the average overall results (degree of alienation) between the four major racial groups as well as the sub groups within a group.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

#### 4.1 EFFECT OF RACE ON CULTURAL ALIENATION

The many decades of colonization followed by decades of Apartheid wherein Islam was portrayed as an Indian, Arab or Malay religion, indeed affects the cross-cultural journey. Besides, as discussed in Chapter 3 concerning culture and alienation, it is clear that all people are *born* into a certain culture, racial, ethnic, linguistic and religious group and thus have certain *ingrained cultural traits*.

One of the main focuses of this study is to determine the degree of cultural alienation experienced by people from the various strata of society, when they convert to Islam.

We will now evaluate the effect of **race** on the degree of cultural alienation experienced by the different racial groups on embracing Islam in the South African context.

##### 4.1.1 Total Overall Average According to Race

This result compares the overall total average **across the entire four racial groups** and sub-groups for each of the twelve (12) criteria undertaken in the survey.

This is a very comprehensive overall result, which is arrived at follows. As indicated above, we will notice that there are (13) thirteen sub-groups for the **African (A)** group. To arrive at the result of **4.25** for the category **food** in **Table 2** below we took the total value of all thirteen sub-groups (as recorded in **Appendix 3**) and then took the average. We did this for each of the twelve categories. Then we did the exact same mathematical exercise for the **Colored (C)** group, **European (E)** and **Indian (I)** groups.

The results thus obtained are now reflected in Table 2 below.

(a) Results in tabular form

	<b>A</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>AVERAGE</b>
<b>CATEGORY A</b>						
FOOD	4.25	4.4	2.43	2.73	13.81	3.4525
CLOTHES	5.86	4.6	4	3.33	17.79	4.4475
NAME	3	1.9	1.57	1.4	7.87	1.9675
ARABIC	3.81	3.1	2.43	2.47	11.81	2.9525
<b>CATEGORY B</b>						
FAMILY	2.52	2.4	5.71	5.47	16.1	4.025
FRIENDS	3.71	4.1	5.43	5.53	18.77	4.6925
WORK	1.53	2.5	3.71	4.79	12.53	3.1325
<b>CATEGORY C</b>						
INDIVIDUAL	4.82	1.8	1	1.6	9.22	2.305
COMMUNITY	3.12	1	2.86	1.6	8.58	2.145
<b>CATEGORY D</b>						
MIDDLE EAST	6.74	6.5	8.71	8.87	30.82	7.705
US&WEST	7.14	8.2	10	8.67	34.01	8.5025
S.A. POLITICS	4.43	4.8	6.67	5.6	21.5	5.375
<b>TOTAL:</b>	50.93	45.3	54.52	52.06	202.81	50.7025
<b>AVERAGE TOTAL:</b>	4.244167	3.775	4.543333	4.338333	16.90083	4.2252083

Table 2



(b) Results in graphic form

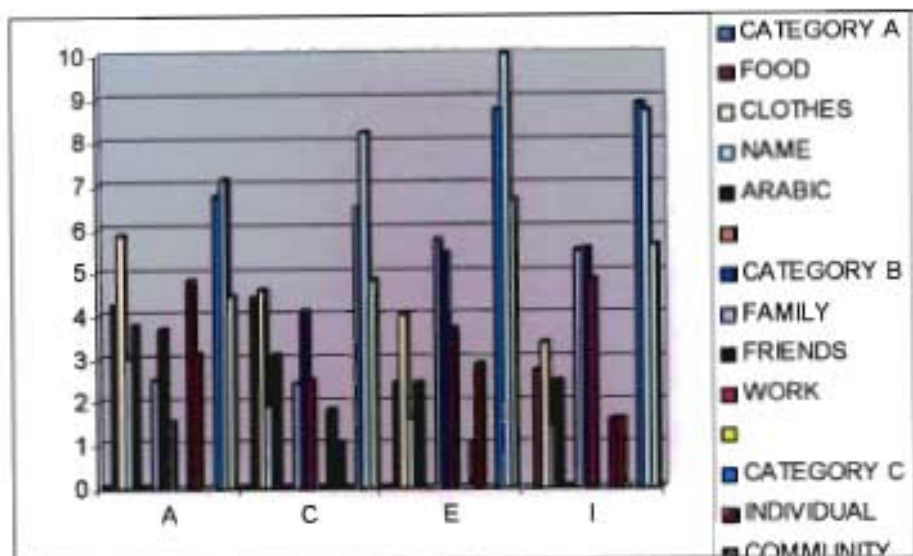


Figure 3

**Analysis of Results**

One needs to keep in mind the theoretical and research discussions concerning the effect of Race on cultural alienation which appears in **Chapter 2** above, and then compare them with the findings and outcomes of this study.

**Category A – Lifestyle Changes**

**Food** – From both Table 2 and Figure 3 above one can see that the African (42.5 %) and Colored (44 %) communities experience a greater degree of alienation with regard to food as compared with the European (24.3 %) and Indian (27.3 %) communities respectively; in fact by 50 % more. However though the first two group's results are twice that of the second two racial groups, the figure of 44 % and 42.5 % is **not high** and is within an acceptable degree of alienation if we accept 50 % as a **median**.

**Clothes** – An interesting result emerges here with the **African** community (58.6 %) showing the greatest alienation or difficulty in regard to dress and attire

followed in descending order by the **Colored (46 %)**, **European (40 %)** and **Indian (33.3 %) Communities**.

Again, taking 50 % as the median, we find that of all the racial groups, the African Community is the only one that *does* experience a significant degree of alienation with regard to attire and dress on embracing Islam (howbeit, not substantially high) when compared with the other three racial groups.

Unfortunately one of the limitations of the present study, is that it did not go into *details* and *reasons* as to the *specific* problem areas of adjustment / alienation. In fact across all the twelve categories, this study merely gave the *degree* or *extent* of cultural alienation but *without identifying the specific areas of difficulty* experienced and the *reasons* for them.

This again leaves open another gap for a detailed study on **conversion and cultural alienation** namely, *why* is it that certain groups or people have difficulty in adjusting to the new requirements when converting to Islam.

#### 4.1.2 Overall Average for Race Across Categories

This result compares the overall average across all categories for each of the four racial groups interviewed in the survey.

If we refer to Table 2 above, and look at the *bottom Average Total* results, this is the average *across* all categories for the various racial groups.

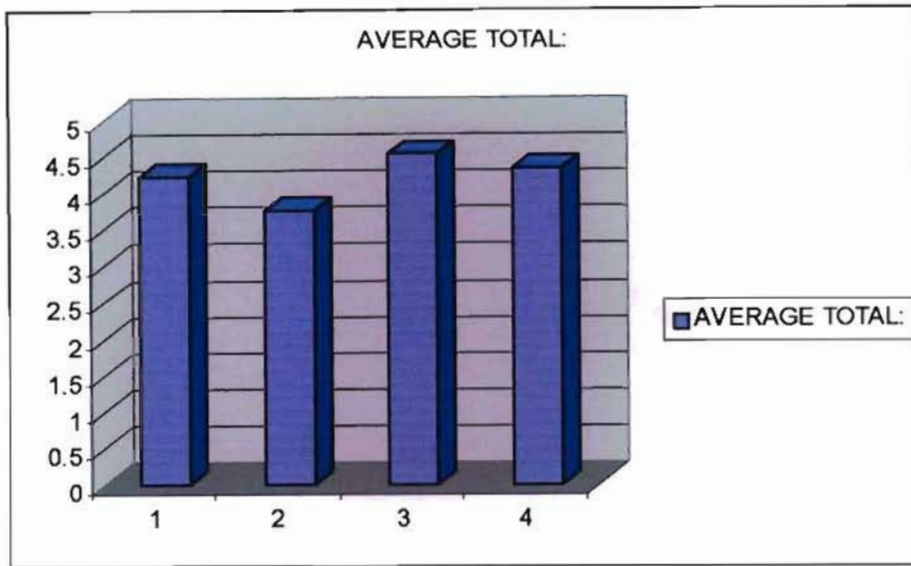
Seeing that we want to analyse the overall average result for the four main racial groups across all twelve categories, only these results will be displayed in tabular form as shown in Table 3 below.

##### (a) Results in tabular form across categories according to Race

	<u>A</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>AVERAGE</u>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<u>50.93</u>	<u>45.3</u>	<u>54.52</u>	<u>52.06</u>	<u>202.81</u>	<u>50.7025</u>
<b>AVERAGE TOTAL:</b>	<u>4.244167</u>	<u>3.775</u>	<u>4.543333</u>	<u>4.338333</u>	<u>16.90083</u>	<u>4.2252083</u>

Table 3

**(b) Same results according to Race in graphic form across categories**



**Figure 4**

**Comments on Results**

The above graph gives a very simple illustration to a very complicated and comprehensive issue. The following conclusions emerge from the above:

There is no significant difference in the degree of alienation experienced by any of the races when analysed across all categories.

Though there may have been individual variations between the individuals in each racial category and *between* the racial categories on some of the groups (example food, or dress), however, when taken as a global average, there emerge no significant variations on the degree of cultural alienation.

Considering that fifty percent (50%) is the acceptable degree of alienation, *all racial categories* had results below the acceptable level of alienation. Which means, when the global average is taken, all races experienced a degree of cultural alienation, below the average.

This translates into the fact that **should any South African of any racial group convert to Islam, at an average, they would experience *little* or a *minimal* degree of cultural alienation.**

## **4.2 EFFECT OF GENDER ON CULTURAL ALIENATION**

Another parameter to explore apart from race/ethnicity, is the impact of *gender* on the degree of cultural alienation on embracing Islam.

In order to get a fairly systematic and objective result, we will look at the effect of gender *within* an ethnic / racial group and also the overall results based on gender only that cut across the racial groups. In this way one will be able to get an overall average effect of gender on conversion and cultural alienation.

### **4.2.1 Overall Average of Each Group According to Gender**

This set of results compares the overall average of each of the twelve (12) criteria with that of the overall male and female average results for each of the four main groups chosen.

This set of results also gives a good comparison of the effect of gender on specific categories under review eg. dress code, food, and so on across the nine categories.

(a) Results in tabular form

	M	F	TOTAL	AVERAGE
<b>CATEGORY A</b>				
FOOD	3.31	4.33	7.64	3.82
CLOTHES	3.23	6.96	10.19	5.095
NAME	2.41	2.5	4.91	2.455
ARABIC	3	3.71	6.71	3.355
<b>CATEGORY B</b>				
FAMILY	3.39	3.33	6.72	3.36
FRIENDS	4.81	3.73	8.54	4.27
WORK	2.67	2.13	4.8	2.4
<b>CATEGORY C</b>				
INDIVIDUAL	2.6	2.57	5.17	2.585
COMMUNITY	3.21	1.83	5.04	2.52
<b>CATEGORY D</b>				
MIDDLE EAST	7.3	7.32	14.62	7.31
US&WEST	7.88	7.51	15.39	7.695
S.A. POLITICS	5.9	3.78	9.68	4.84
<b>TOTAL:</b>	49.71	49.7	99.41	49.705
<b>AVERAGE</b>				
<b>TOTAL:</b>	4.1425	4.141667	8.284167	4.1420833

Table 4

(b) Same Results in graphic form

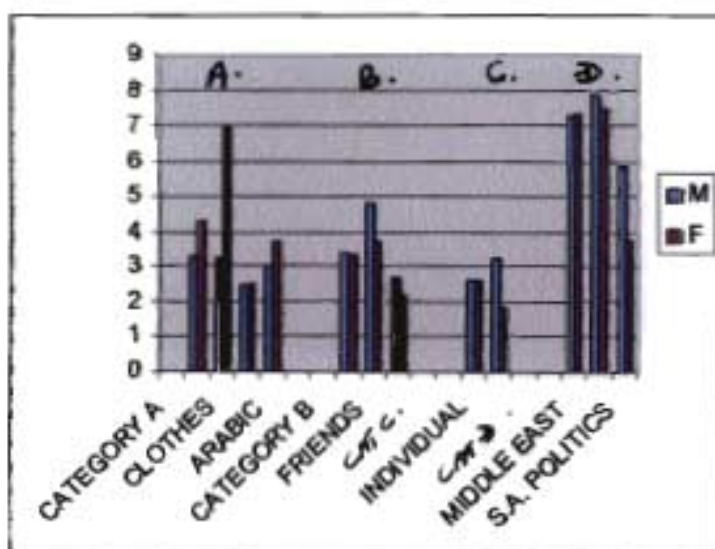


Figure 5

## Comments on Results

In terms of clothes dress, females seem to have a greater degree of alienation than (69,6%) males (32,3 %)

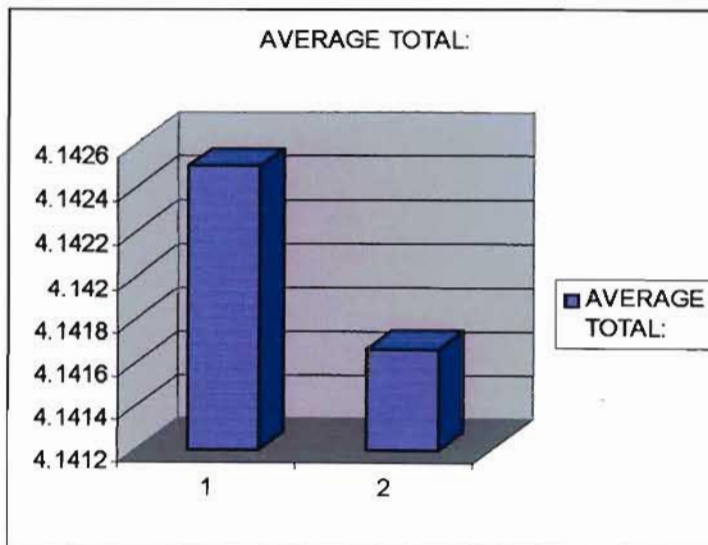
As for friends and Community, males seem to be slightly more alienated than females but overall both are well below the 50 % medium.

In terms of their views on the West and US including Middle East, very significant changes for *both* male and female respondents occur (70%). However, in terms of South African Politics, no significant changes/alienation has taken place.

### 4.2.2 Overall Average for Group *Across* Categories based on Gender

This set of results gives an overall average based on gender and clearly shows the effect of gender on conversion and cultural alienation.

This set of results also shows the difference that race / ethnicity has on gender with regard to conversion and cultural alienation.



**Figure 6**

## **Comments on Results**

If one takes the result *across* categories, one finds very little difference in the degree of alienation *between* the two genders. In addition, the overall degree of alienation for both is 40 %, which is well below the accepted average.

### **4.3 EFFECTS OF EDUCATION ON CULTURAL ALIENATION**

This set of results looks at the effect that a person's educational level has on the degree of cultural alienation when embracing Islam.

Sample results will be taken within sub-groups of the same category where the educational level criterion was substantial so that corresponding realistic and acceptable results and conclusions can be arrived at.

#### **4.3.1 Overall Average Results of AFZPM and AFZNM**

This set of results compares the overall average across the twelve (12) criteria for African female of Zulu background having post matric level of education with that of African female of Zulu origin still in school ie. not yet matriculated.

(a) Average results of AFZPM in tabular form

	<b>AFZPM</b>	<b>AFZNM</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>AVERAGE</b>
<b>CATEGORY A</b>				
FOOD	4.33	5.4	9.73	4.865
CLOTHES	9.33	7.4	16.73	8.365
NAME	5.67	3.2	8.87	4.435
ARABIC	3	5.8	8.8	4.4
<b>CATEGORY B</b>				
FAMILY	4.67	2.6	7.27	3.635
FRIENDS	3	2.6	5.6	2.8
WORK	2	0	2	1
<b>CATEGORY C</b>				
INDIVIDUAL	1.67	2.6	4.27	2.135
COMMUNITY	1.67	1.8	3.47	1.735
<b>CATEGORY D</b>				
MIDDLE EAST	10	7	17	8.5
US&WEST	8.33	5.4	13.73	6.865
S.A. POLITICS	7.33	3.2	10.53	5.265
<b>TOTAL:</b>	61	47	108	54
<b>AVERAGE</b>				
<b>TOTAL:</b>	5.083333	3.916667	9	4.5

Table 5

Same Results in Graphic Form

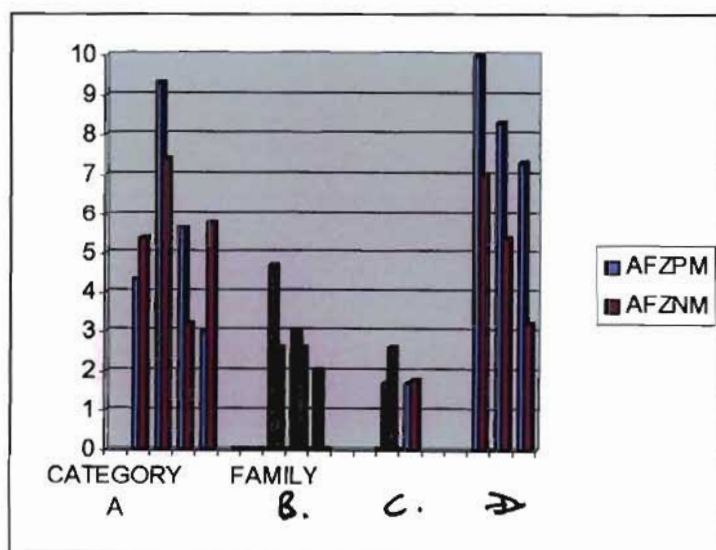


Figure 7



## Comments on Results

There has been significant differences in only *one* area/categories with regard to education and this has been in the area on one's World views with regard to the USA and the West and the Middle East conflict by as much as 50%. This means that those who have matriculated, had a greater degree of change / alienation in their views when compared to those respondents who had not yet matriculated. However, a point to note is that *both* matriculants and non matriculants had an over 50% degree of shift / alienation with regard to their views on USA the West and Middle East conflict.

With regard to their views on South African politics, there was no significant change for those who were not matriculated, however, those who matriculated had a *significant* shift in their views (70%).

### (b) Average results of AFZPM &AFZNM in graphic form

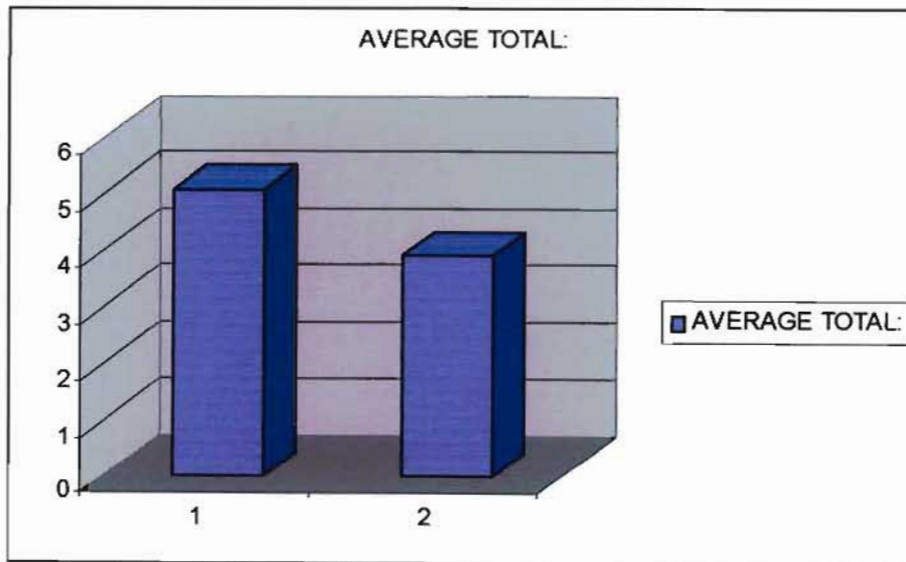


Figure 8

Although some significant differences were noted in some specific categories with regard to impact of a matric education, when the overall average *across* all categories are taken, the difference is negligible and the overall degree of alienation also comes to below the 50% acceptable limit for both categories.

#### 4.3.2 Overall Average Results of AMZPM and AMZNM

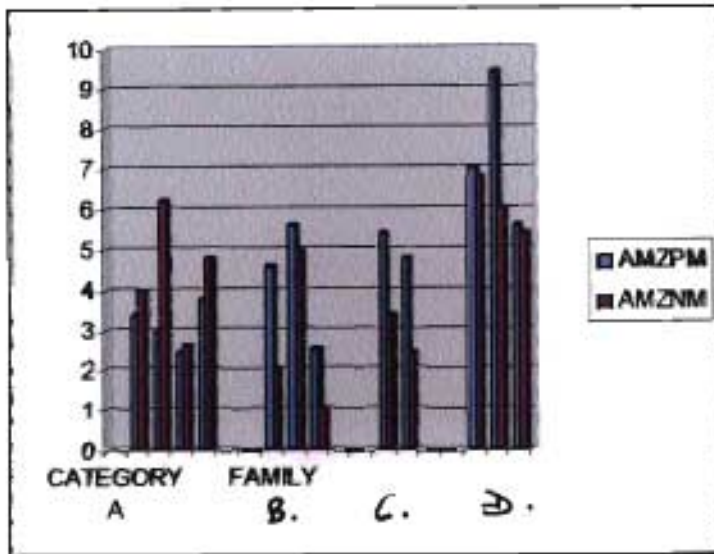
This set of results compares the overall average across the twelve (12) criteria for African male of Zulu background having post matric education with that of African male of Zulu origin not having completed matric level of education.

##### (a) Average results of AMZPM in tabular form

	AMZPM	AMZNM	TOTAL	AVERAGE
<b>CATEGORY A</b>				
FOOD	3.4	4	7.4	3.7
CLOTHES	3	6.2	9.2	4.6
NAME	2.4	2.6	5	2.5
ARABIC	3.8	4.8	8.6	4.3
<b>CATEGORY B</b>				
FAMILY	4.6	2	6.6	3.3
FRIENDS	5.6	5	10.6	5.3
WORK	2.5	1	3.5	1.75
<b>CATEGORY C</b>				
INDIVIDUAL	5.4	3.4	8.8	4.4
COMMUNITY	4.8	2.4	7.2	3.6
<b>CATEGORY D</b>				
MIDDLE EAST	7	6.8	13.8	6.9
US&WEST	9.4	6	15.4	7.7
S.A. POLITICS	5.6	5.4	11	5.5
<b>TOTAL:</b>	57.5	49.6	107.1	53.55
<b>AVERAGE TOTAL:</b>	4.791667	4.133333	8.925	4.4625

Table 6

**Same Results in Graphic Form**

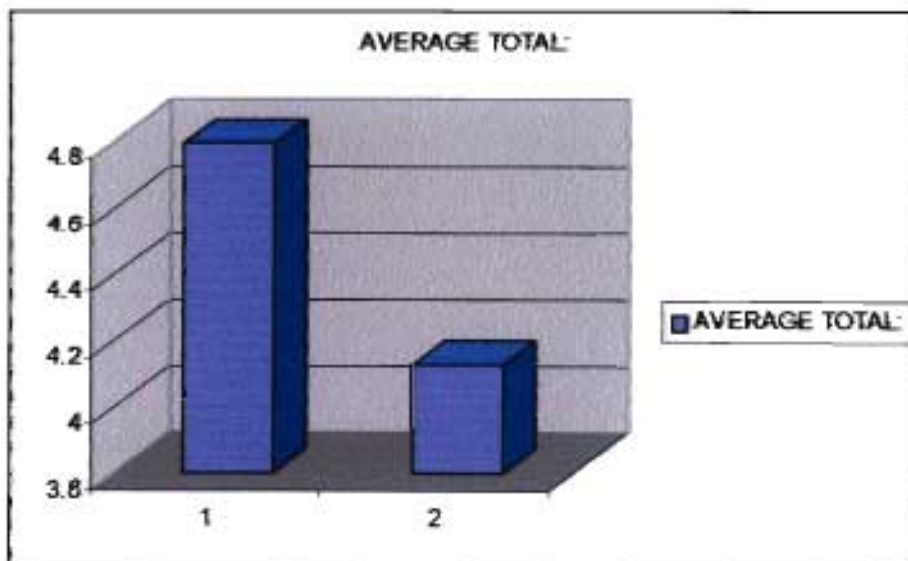


**Figure 9**

**Comments on Results**

There has been no significant difference in the result for Zulu males and Zulu Females in both the matriculated and non-matriculated categories. The only exception being that in the case of the males, no difference exists with regard to one's views on S African politics between those matriculated and those who did not.

**(b) Average results of AMZPM &AMZNM in graphic form**



**Figure 10**

## Comments

Again one finds no significant difference in the degree of alienation for both groups and in any case, both the categories are well below the average of 50% indicating again that no significant alienation has taken place when looked at across all categories combined.

### 4.3.3 Overall Combined Average for (4.3.1) and (4.3.2)

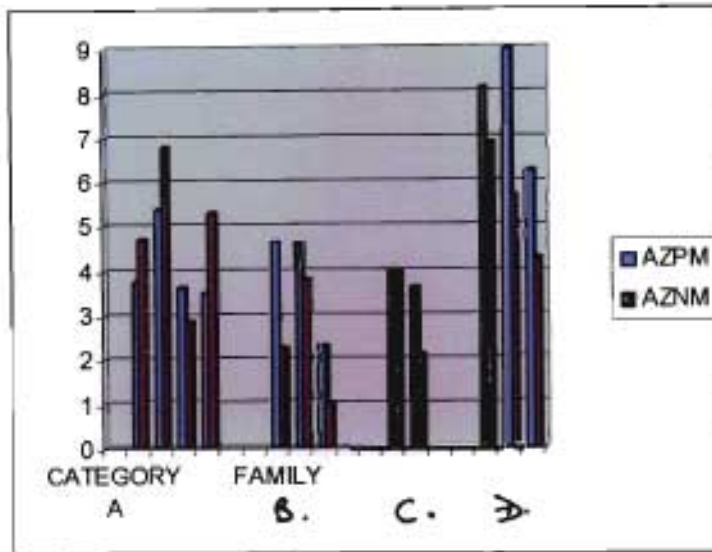
This set of result combines both the male and female average result as recorded in 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 above.

#### (a) Average result in tabular form

	<u>AZPM</u>	<u>AZNM</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>AVERAGE</u>
<b>CATEGORY A</b>				
FOOD	3.75	4.7	8.45	4.225
CLOTHES	5.38	6.8	12.18	6.09
NAME	3.63	2.9	6.53	3.265
ARABIC	3.5	5.3	8.8	4.4
<b>CATEGORY B</b>				
FAMILY	4.63	2.3	6.93	3.465
FRIENDS	4.63	3.8	8.43	4.215
WORK	2.33	1	3.33	1.665
<b>CATEGORY C</b>				
INDIVIDUAL	4	4	8	4
COMMUNITY	3.63	2.1	5.73	2.865
<b>CATEGORY D</b>				
MIDDLE EAST	8.13	6.9	15.03	7.515
US&WEST	9	5.7	14.7	7.35
S.A. POLITICS	6.25	4.3	10.55	5.275
<b>TOTAL:</b>	58.86	49.8	108.66	54.33
<b>AVERAGE</b>				
<b>TOTAL:</b>	4.905	4.15	9.055	4.5275

Table 7

**(b) Average result in graphic form for each category**



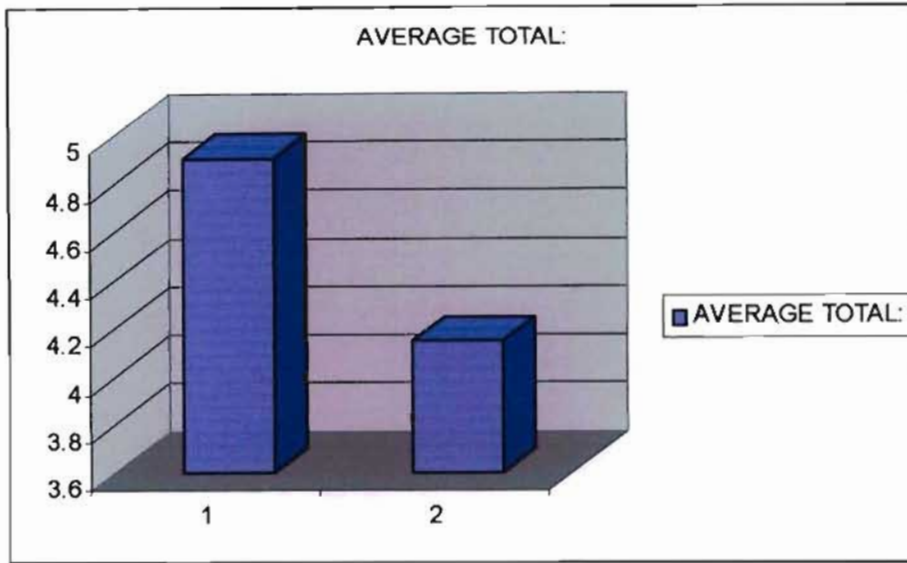
**Figure 11**

**Comments**

When an average is taken for both males and females together, again the result is similar to the individual categories with a significant degree of alienation being experienced with regard to clothing (60 %) and views on USA, West and Middle East (70%) being recorded.

Due to constraints of time and space, samples with regard to educational differences were not done for members of the other three groups and so the result with regard to effect of level of education on conversion and cultural alienation in this study is confined only to the sample category of African Zulu youth.

**(c) Combined Average result across categories**



**Figure 12**

**Comments**

When an average result across categories is taken, one finds that those who are matriculated in this category experience a slightly greater degree of alienation by a margin of ten percent when compared to those who are not matriculated.

Both categories however, are within the acceptable limits of alienation with the matriculated respondents touching the acceptable limit of 50%, however, still being within the acceptable limits.

**4.4 EFFECT OF ETHNICITY ON CULTURAL ALIENATION**

Another way the sampling was done was to determine if tribal and ethnic factors have any bearing on the degree of cultural alienation when people of different ethnic backgrounds accept Islam.

#### 4.4.1 Overall Average Results of AFZNM, AFXNM and AFSNM

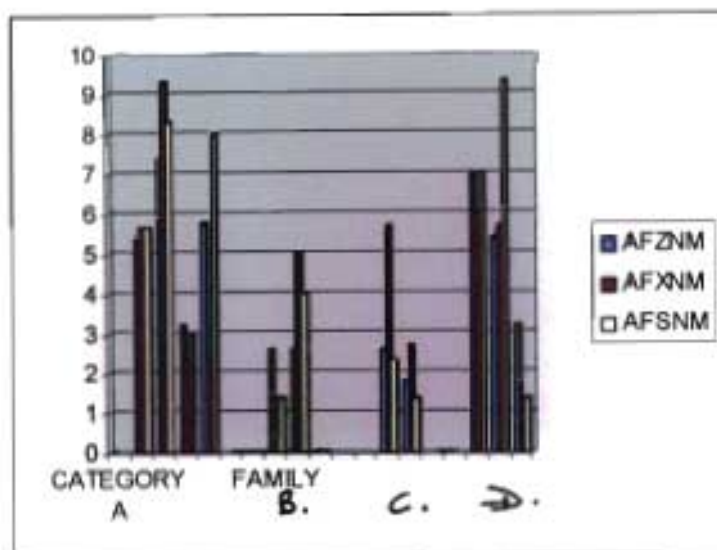
The results compare the overall average between Zulu, Xhosa and Sotho non-matriculated females with respect to conversion and cultural alienation.

##### (a) Results in tabular form

	AEZNM	AFXNM	AFSNM	TOTAL	AVERAGE
<b>CATEGORY A</b>					
FOOD	5.4	5.67	5.67	16.74	5.58
CLOTHES	7.4	9.33	8.33	25.06	8.3533333
NAME	3.2	2.33	3	8.53	2.8433333
ARABIC	5.8	2.33	8	16.13	5.3766667
<b>CATEGORY B</b>					
FAMILY	2.6	1.33	1.33	5.26	1.7533333
FRIENDS	2.6	5	4	11.6	3.8666667
WORK	0	0	0	0	0
<b>CATEGORY C</b>					
INDIVIDUAL	2.6	5.7	2.33	10.63	3.5433333
COMMUNITY	1.8	2.7	1.33	5.83	1.9433333
<b>CATEGORY D</b>					
MIDDLE EAST	7	6	7	20	6.6666667
US&WEST	5.4	5.7	9.33	20.43	6.81
S.A. POLITICS	3.2	1.33	1.33	5.86	1.9533333
<b>TOTAL:</b>	47	47.42	51.65	146.07	48.69
<b>AVERAGE TOTAL:</b>	3.916667	3.951667	4.304167	12.1725	4.0575

Table 8

**(b) Results in graphic form for all categories**



**Figure 13**

**Comments**

Again one finds a similar trend here when ethnicity is taken into account. One sees that *between* the ethnic groups, there seems to be no significant differences in the degree of cultural alienation by the respondents of the Zulu, Xhosa and Sotho origin.

The only significant areas of alienation for all of them was in clothing (80 %) and changes in views on USA the West and Middle East (69%)



(c) Combined Average results across categories

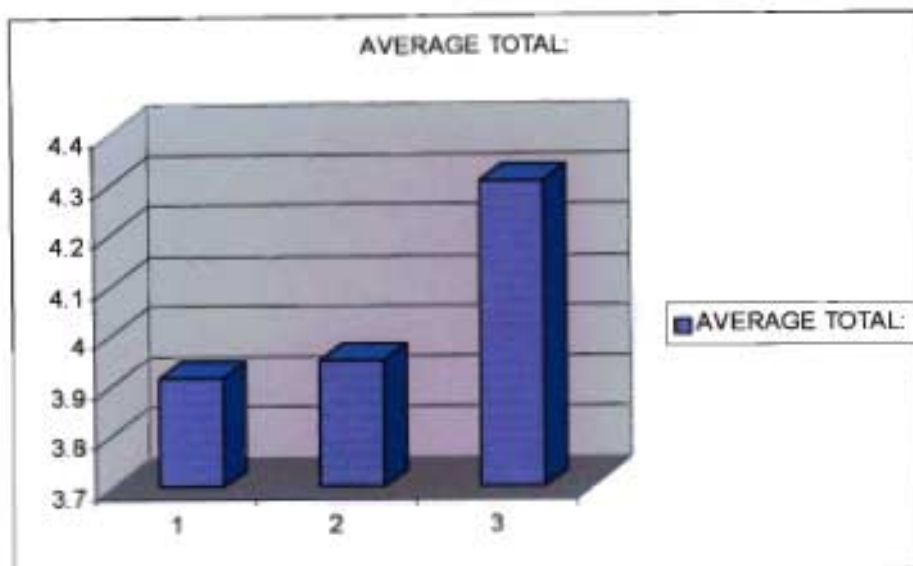


Figure 14

**Comments**

Again, one sees very little effect of ethnicity on cultural alienation when all the results are combined across categories. All of the ethnic groups were also well below the 50% acceptable limit – indicating no real significant degree of cultural alienation with regard to the issues under study.

Again, it must be stated that due to constraints of time and scope, other ethnic groups could not be investigated and also other categories within the groups mentioned above could not be sampled and studied. The above sample was only from students who have not matriculated.

**4.4.2 Overall Average Results of IFH and IFC**

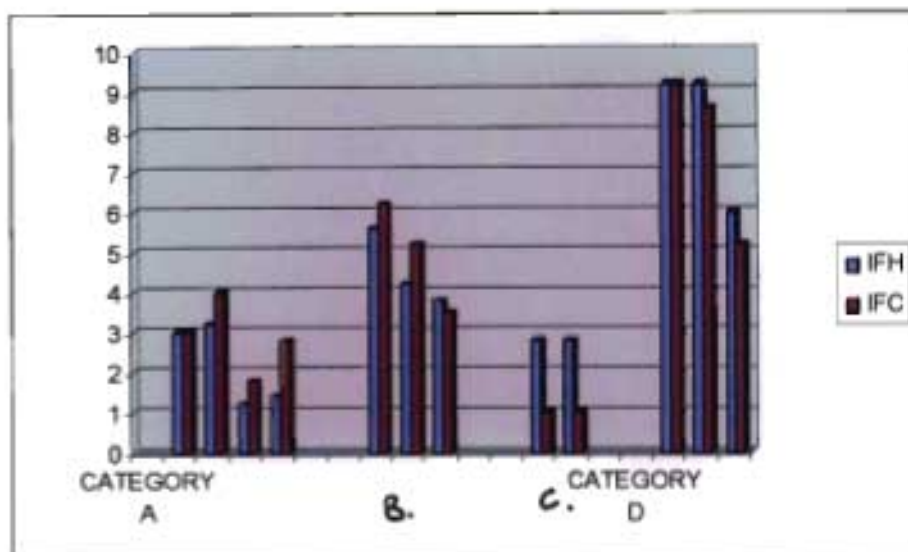
This set of results explores the effect of one's **previous religion** on degree of cultural alienation on converting to Islam. In the sample displayed below, one sees the results of **IFH**, an Indian female of Hindu religion prior to embracing Islam, compared to **IFC**, an Indian female of Christian origin prior to embracing Islam.

(a) Result in tabular form

	<b>IFH</b>	<b>IFC</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>AVERAGE</b>
<b>CATEGORY A</b>				
FOOD	3	3	6	3
CLOTHES	3.2	4	7.2	3.6
NAME	1.2	1.8	3	1.5
ARABIC	1.4	2.8	4.2	2.1
<b>CATEGORY B</b>				
FAMILY	5.6	6.2	11.8	5.9
FRIENDS	4.2	5.2	9.4	4.7
WORK	3.8	3.5	7.3	3.65
<b>CATEGORY C</b>				
INDIVIDUAL	2.8	1	3.8	1.9
COMMUNITY	2.8	1	3.8	1.9
<b>CATEGORY D</b>				
MIDDLE EAST	9.2	9.2	18.4	9.2
US&WEST	9.2	8.6	17.8	8.9
S.A. POLITICS	6	5.2	11.2	5.6
<b>TOTAL:</b>	52.4	51.5	103.9	51.95
<b>AVERAGE</b>				
<b>TOTAL:</b>	4.366667	4.291667	8.658333	4.3291667

Table 9

**(b) Result in graphic form for all categories**

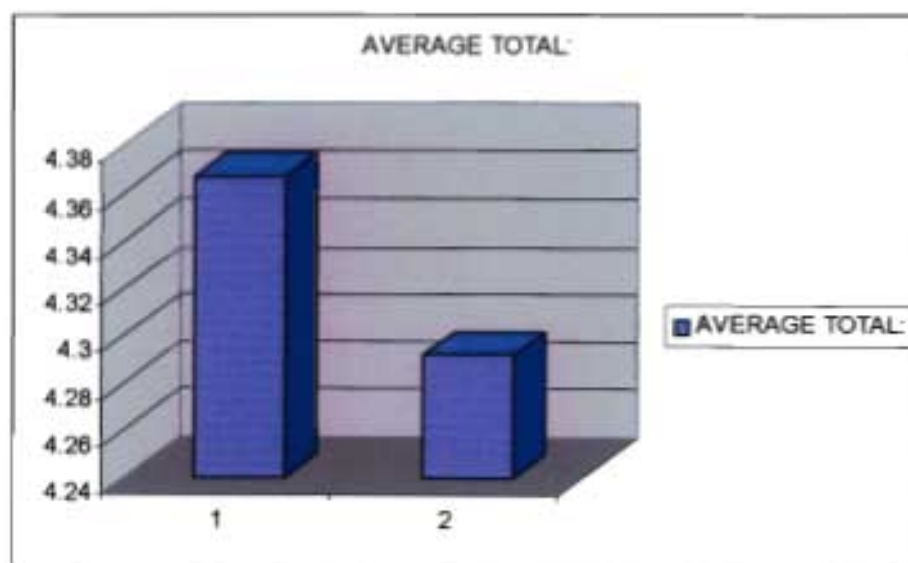


**Figure 15**

**Comments**

Again one finds not much difference between an Indian embracing Islam from a Hindu background or from a Christian background. The only significant degree of alienation experienced by *both* groups was in terms of rejection by family (59%) and changes in views about USA the West and the Middle East (90%).

**(c) Overall Average across categories**



**Figure 16**

## Comments

Between the two categories there is no significant difference and both categories (Indian Hindu and Indian Christian) are below the acceptable limit of 50% and hence experience little or no cultural alienation.

## Unexplored categories

Again, due to limitations of time and space, the following other sub-groupings still needs to be done:

- (a) Comparison between Afrikaans and English persons entering Islam
- (b) Comparison between African Traditional Religious person and African Christian background embracing Islam
- (c) Comparison between Indian of Tamil, Telugu, Hindi and Gujrati background embracing Islam.

However, if one takes the overall average percentage result for the four categories in question, and compares not much difference overall, but may be some difference within the ethnic sub-group.

### 4.5 OVERALL AVERAGE FOR THE FOUR CATEGORIES

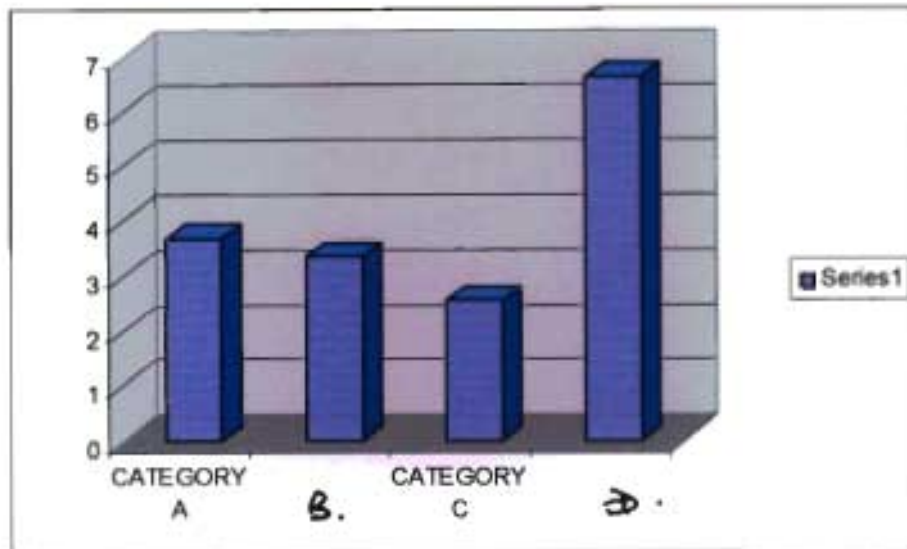
This result looks at the overall average for each of the four Categories A B C and D, which represent **lifestyle [A]**, **social rejection [B]**, **social acceptance [C]** and **changes in world views [D]**.

#### (a) In Tabular Form

CATEGORY A	CATEGORY B	CATEGORY C	CATEGORY D
3.68	3.34	2.55	6.62

Table 10

**(b) In Graphic Form**



**Figure 17**

**Comments**

This is a very significant and important result as it gives a global average across all categories and across all groups. Which means the above result is the average result combining all the following:

1. All the races
2. The two genders
3. All educational levels
4. All ethnic groups
5. Different religious background

One sees from the graph above that in terms of:

**Lifestyle [A],  
Social rejection [B], and  
Social acceptance [C]**

no significant degree of cultural alienation occurred as all the results for these groups are below the acceptable 50% limit.

The only significant degree (66 %) of alienation took place for **Category D**, which represented changes in one's views with regard to USA the West and the Middle East conflict.

#### 4.6 OVERALL AVERAGE FOR ALL CATEGORIES BY RACE

This result is similar to 4.5 above with the only distinction that it gives a comparative view of the degree of cultural alienation across the four categories as differentiated by the different racial groups surveyed.

##### (a) In Tabular Form

	A	C	E	I
A	4.23	3.5	2.61	2.48
B	2.59	3	4.95	5.26
C	3.97	1.4	1.93	1.6
D	6.1	6.5	8.46	7.71

Table 11

##### (b) In Graphic Form

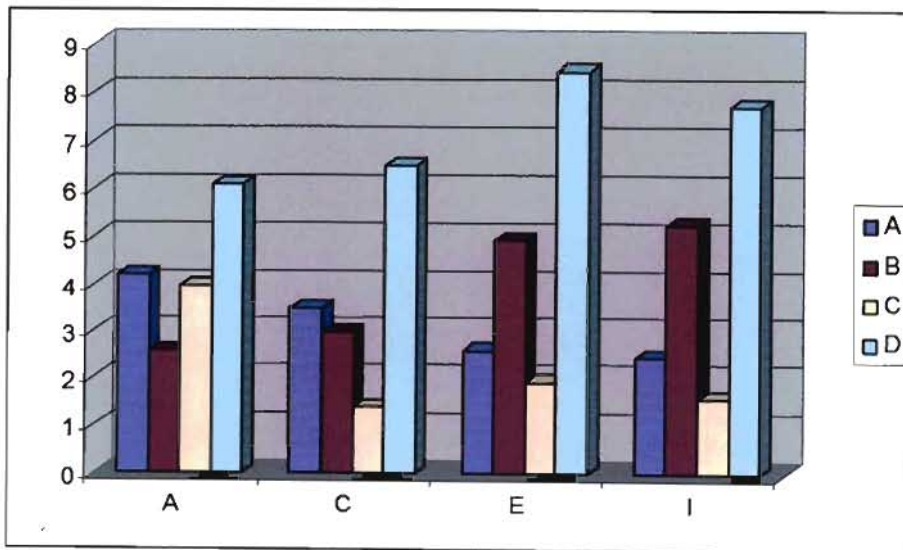


Figure 18

## Comments

The above results gives the global average degree of alienation for the four major categories (**lifestyle, social rejection, social acceptance and changes in world views**) according to the four major races African [A], Colored [C], European [E] and Indian [I].

From the above graph it can be seen that the only category in which any significant alienation took place was in **D**, which represents changes in one's views of USA the West and the Middle East, by all race groups.

With regard to the other three categories – lifestyle, social rejection and social acceptance, all race groups did not experience any significant degree of cultural alienation. However, if we want to compare social acceptance between the races, then the graph indicates that the African and Colored group does not experience much problem here, but that the European and Indian groups experience a greater problem with regard to being socially accepted when they convert to Islam.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this research study we set out to achieve the following:

To *quantify* the degree of *Cultural Alienation* that fellow South Africans (from the major ethnic, racial and Religious groupings) experience when they embrace Islam.

To *quantify* the degree to which one's worldview changes (views on the Middle East conflict, America and the West and South African politics) on embracing Islam.

This was achieved by way of a survey that was conducted by way of a questionnaire, with reverts to Islam, to establish the degree of *their* alienation with regard to food, dress, Arabic as a language, rejection from family and friends and views on the Middle East conflict, USA and the West and South African politics on converting to Islam. These were grouped into four main areas as follows:

### **Group A: Lifestyle analysis**

Explored **lifestyle** changes and included:

- food
- clothes
- name change
- Arabic

### **Group B: Rejection analysis**

Explored changes in one's 'old' social circles, which included rejection by:

- family
- friends
- work place

### **Group C: Acceptance analysis**



Explored acceptance by (Muslims) members of the 'new' found faith and included:

- acceptance by Muslim individuals
- acceptance by Muslim community

#### **Group D: World View analysis**

Explored changes in one's worldviews as a result of conversion to Islam and included changes in one's views on:

- Middle East issues
- United States and the West
- South African Politics

All data collected was analysed and presented according to acceptable statistical principles and the results were startling in some instances and expected in other instances (see 4.6 above).

#### **Limitations of the Study**

Despite the fact that valuable information was attained by the survey, the following limitations have to be noted:

1. Although all race groups were selected, they did not cover all the ethnic groupings in our country.
2. With regard to effect of Education on cultural alienation, University Students, the elderly and illiterate were not analysed individually and more sampling needs to be collected in this category. It must be also noted however, that these categories of people *were included* in the survey, but for a meaningful result and study, a more in depth sampling and analysis would be required.
3. The survey merely asked for a response by allocating a percentage score to the issue raised. No allowance was made for *reasons* for the scores given. Perhaps by looking into some of these reasons and causes, greater insight

could be obtained. Here a mere outcome based analysis – end result analysis was done.

The striking result was that all respondents experienced significant alienation in Category D. This is in keeping with Mariam Jameelah's statement (1978: 33):

*The most important change which took place after I embraced Islam was the transformation of my mind from a (non-Muslim) mind.*

How significant this 'transformation in one's mind' is with regard to current and world events needs to be seen. Is this perhaps the reason for the global Islamaphobia given that Islam is the fastest growing faith in the world?

One of the conclusions in this regard is that Islam is **not** in conflict with the USA or West as a result of *religious* issues but as a result of *human rights* issues.

Another startling finding was that overall there were very insignificant changes in the other three categories (lifestyles and social acceptance or rejection) for all races and all categories. This proves the universality of Islam according to the Qur'anic verse:

*"So set thou thy face steadily and truly to the Religion (Dīn), and (Establish) God's handiwork according to the (natural) pattern on which He has created mankind: no change (let there be) in the work (wrought) by God: that is the standard Religion (Dīn al-Qayyim)." (Qur'ān, 30: 30)*

The survey showed that despite the differences in race, ethnicity, education or religious background, all human beings have a *natural* pattern and disposition.

Another aim of the study was to look at the theoretical and theological arguments surrounding the issue of Culture and Alienation in Islam from its original sources and scholars.

Another factor that was not taken into account was the *reasons* and *circumstances* under which the respondents entered into Islam. These factors indeed would impact on the answers / scores given. However, this was a *deliberate* omission as the main focus of the study was more of a *quantitative* nature, namely, to determine the *degree* of cultural alienation on conversion to Islam and not the *reasons* for such alienation.

The study also revealed still sharp differences in this arena. The survey achieved its results based on the type of questions asked in the survey. However, we must keep in mind that the following contentious issues were not included:

- Issue of lobola (marriage dower according to African Tradition)
- Issue of Music
- Issue of singing and dancing
- Issue of festivals
- Issue of attending and participating in funerals of relatives that are not yet Muslim

Had these issues been included in the survey, perhaps a different result would emerge. In fact the above issues leave a 'big gap' for further studies and for these issues to be tackled in an objective and academic manner both by Muslim 'traditional' scholars (the traditional '*Ulamā*'), the convert Muslims who experience these problems, and the academics and experts (both Muslim and non-Muslim) in these issues.

One has to also keep in mind that in Africa North of the Limpopo there are many Muslim majority Countries (Sudan, Senegal, Mali, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Mali.) who have long grappled and found solutions for these issues of African Culture and Islamic Culture. One needs to engage and read the excellent academic works of these Muslim Scholars (and there are many of them) in order to 'speed up' the gap

We can thus safely conclude by stating that there still exists many 'gaps' for further studies in the area of conversion and cultural alienation by people converting to Islam in the South African context. These issues need to be tackled in an objective and academic manner both by Muslim 'traditional' scholars (the traditional '*Ulamā*'), the convert Muslims who experience these problems, and the academics and experts (both Muslims and non-Muslims); so that greater light can be shed on this pertinent issue.

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## APPENDIX 1

### DAILY NEWS ARTICLE

#### More South Africans becoming Muslims

*November 16, 2004*

**By Gordon Bell**

Black South Africans, drawn to the Islam practiced by African immigrants, are converting in growing numbers.

"The numbers have gone up dramatically if you look at the census figures . . . there is massive growth especially in the (black) townships," said Dr Shamil Jeppie, an expert on Islamic history in Africa at the University of Cape Town.

Immigrants from Central and West Africa have brought with them a new "Africanised Islam" more in line with black South Africans' identities than the religion practiced by followers with closer links to Asia.

"In the townships people see the confidence they bring. The confidence of the African Muslim," Jeppie said.

"There is going to be a different texture, (the balance of followers) is definitely going to change."

Currently, about 650 000 South Africans, or less than 2%, are Muslim. They are mostly members of the country's Indian and colored communities.

Christianity - practiced by 80% of the country's 45 million population - is still the dominant religion among black South Africans.

But an estimated 75 000 Africans are now Muslim compared to *fewer than 12 000 in 1991 during apartheid white rule, according to* research by the Human Sciences Research Council.

Of those, 11% are black Africans and that group is expected to become the largest segment of the Muslim faithful within the next two decades.

"The gap is closing and we are finding each other," Sheik Thafir Najjar, head of Cape Town-based Islamic Council of South Africa, says of reconciliation.



"Under apartheid we were not allowed to share our cultures," Najjar said. But in the end there were "a lot of similarities between African and Muslim cultures", he added.

Najjar said the war on terrorism, led by the United States, had heightened curiosity among Africans about Islam.

Despite their growing numbers, Muslims in South Africa have generally maintained a low profile and operate within the political mainstream.

One notable exception was in the late 1990s when an Islamic group known as Pagad (People Against Gangsterism and Drugs) embarked on a campaign that included bombings in Cape Town.

Their campaign came to a halt when leaders of the group were rounded up by police in 2000 and many prosecuted. – Reuters

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **SAMPLE OF QUESTIONNAIRE**

#### **THE DEGREE OF CULTURAL ALIENATION PEOPLE EXPERIENCE WHEN THEY EMBRACE ISLAM**

##### **Private & Confidential**

I am Rafeek Hassen and currently working on my M.A. dissertation in the School of Religion and Theology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban.

My research includes an empirical component of which this questionnaire is one of the research instruments used in order to be in a position to evaluate the degree of cultural alienation and transformation experienced by people when they convert to Islam.

The purpose of this questionnaire is twofold:

Firstly, it will assist people who have converted to Islam to voice their feelings and views.

Secondly, it will provide data, which may help us to develop better ways for dealing with the different forms of alienation that the new converts face when they embrace Islam.

I will appreciate it if you could kindly assist in this project by providing your personal views and opinions in the questionnaire.

---

##### **Informed Consent**

I hereby give my permission for the use of my views and opinions for research purposes.

.....

.....

Signature

Date

My address is as follows Rafeek Hassen c/o of School of Religion and Theology, Westville Campus, Private Bag X54001, UKZN, Durban

Tel: (031) 260 7343

E-mail address: rafeekhassen@yebo.co.za

---

## GENERAL PERSONAL PARTICULARS

### 1. Gender

Male	
Female	

### 2. Marital Status

Single	
Married	
Divorced	

### 3. Age

20-30 years	
31-40	
41-50	

### 4. Race

Black	
Coloured	
Indian	
White	
Other	

### 5. Ethnic Background

Tribe	
Ethnic Group	
Cultural Background	

### 6. Home Language

Gujerati	
Urdu	
Hindi	
Telegu	
English	
Afrikaans	
Zulu	
Xhosa	
Other	

### 7. Language proficiency

Gujerati	
Urdu	
Hindi	
Telegu	
English	
Afrikaans	
Zulu	
Xhosa	
Other	

### 8. Academic Record

School	
Post-Matric	
University	

### 9. Former Religion

Judaism	
Christianity	
Hinduism	
African Traditional Religion	
Other	

### 10. Employment Details

Employed	
Unemployed	
Own Business	
Profession	

## Questionnaire

On a scale of 1-10 , with 1 having the *least value* and 10 having the *highest value*, kindly put a value between 1-10 for the following questions.

(x) Example :

How much do you like rugby ? A score of 1 would signify that you *do not like rugby at all*. A score of 10 would indicate that you *love rugby very much*. A score of 5 would mean that you have a *average* liking for rugby.

You may want to explain why you gave a certain score for a certain question on the next blank page. However, number your Category correctly, for example if you want to explain your scoring concerning changes in your **Lifestyle**, number it **A ( 4 )** and then give your explanation.

### Category A

### Score of 1-10

(A score of 1 would indicate no changes, and a score of 10 would indicate very big changes )

- (1) **Food & drink** .....
- (2) **Clothes / dress** .....
- (3) **Your Name & / or Surname** .....

### Category B

(A score of 1 would indicate *no rejection*, 10 would indicate **total rejection**)

- (1) **Rejection by your family** .....
- (2) **Rejection by your friends** .....
- (3) **Rejection in your work place** .....

### Category C

(A score of 1 would indicate *willing acceptance*, 10 would indicate huge *reluctance* to accept)

- (1) **Acceptance by your Muslim friends** .....
- (2) **Acceptance by the Muslim Community** .....
- (3) **How did you accept learning Salah & Arabic?** .....

### Category D

(A score of 1 would indicate **no changes** in your views, while a score of 10 would indicate *big change* in your views):

- (1) **Your views about the Middle East conflict** .....
- (2) **Your views about America & the West** .....
- (3) **Your position on South African Politics** .....

**APPENDIX 3**  
**COMPLETE TABULATED RESULTS OF ALL**  
**SURVEYS DONE**

**1. RESULTS FOR GROUP A**

This denotes the results for South Africans of African origin who have embraced Islam.

**1.1 African Male Foreigner AMF**

**GROUP A**  
**GROUP AMF**

	<b>AMF1</b>	<b>AMF2</b>	<b>AMF3</b>	<b>AMF4</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>AVERAGE</b>
<b>CATEGORY A</b>						
FOOD	1	1	0	3	5	1.25
CLOTHES	3	1	10	4	18	4.5
NAME	1	1	10	3	15	3.75
ARABIC	1	1	5	2	9	2.25
<b>CATEGORY B</b>						
FAMILY	1	2	0	1	4	1
FRIENDS	1	3	0	1	5	1.25
WORK	1	0	0	1	2	0.5
<b>CATEGORY C</b>						
INDIVIDUAL	1	4	7	2	14	3.5
COMMUNITY	1	5	0	1	7	1.75
<b>CATEGORY D</b>						
MIDDLE EAST	2	1	10	6	19	4.75
US&WEST	1	4	10	6	21	5.25
S.A. POLITICS	1	1	10	0	12	3
<b>TOTAL:</b>	15	24	62	30	131	32.75
<b>AVERAGE TOTAL:</b>	1.25	2	5.166667	2.5	10.91667	2.729167

1.2 African Male Xosa AMX

**GROUP A**  
**GROUP AMX**

	<u>AMX1</u>	<u>AMX2</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>AVERAGE</u>
<b>CATEGORY A</b>				
FOOD	1	2	3	1.5
CLOTHES	1	0	1	0.5
NAME	0	1	1	0.5
ARABIC	4	1	5	2.5
<b>CATEGORY B</b>				
FAMILY	0	1	1	0.5
FRIENDS	0	1	1	0.5
WORK	0	1	1	0.5
<b>CATEGORY C</b>				
INDIVIDUAL	7	1	8	4
COMMUNITY	10	1	11	5.5
<b>CATEGORY D</b>				
MIDDLE EAST	10	1	11	5.5
US&WEST	10	10	20	10
S.A. POLITICS	1	10	11	5.5
<b>TOTAL:</b>	44	30	74	37
<b>AVERAGE</b>				
<b>TOTAL:</b>	3.666667	2.5	6.166667	3.083333

### 1.3 African Male Tswana AMTs

#### GROUP A

#### GROUP AMTS

	<u>AMTS1</u>	<u>AMTS2</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>AVERAGE</u>
<b>CATEGORY A</b>				
FOOD	5	5	10	5
CLOTHES	5	5	10	5
NAME	5	5	10	5
ARABIC	2	1	3	1.5
<b>CATEGORY B</b>				
FAMILY	7	1	8	4
FRIENDS	7	5	12	6
WORK	4	0	4	2
<b>CATEGORY C</b>				
INDIVIDUAL	2	1	3	1.5
COMMUNITY	4	10	14	7
<b>CATEGORY D</b>				
MIDDLE EAST	10	10	20	10
US&WEST	10	1	11	5.5
S.A. POLITICS	6	10	16	8
<b>TOTAL:</b>	67	54	121	60.5
<b>AVERAGE</b>				
<b>TOTAL:</b>	5.583333	4.5	10.08333	5.041667

#### 1.4 African Male Sotho post matric AMSPM

**GROUP A**  
**GROUP AMSPM**

	AMSPM1	AMSPM2	AMSPM3	AMSPM4	AMSPM5	TOTAL	AVERAGE
<b>CATEGORY A</b>							
FOOD	10	5	5	5	5	30	6
CLOTHES	10	2	3	1	1	17	3.4
NAME	5	5	1	1	4	16	3.2
ARABIC	6	3	7	4	7	27	5.4
<b>CATEGORY B</b>							
FAMILY	1	1	10	1	8	21	4.2
FRIENDS	10	1	3	5	10	29	5.8
WORK	0	1	1	0	1	3	0.6
<b>CATEGORY C</b>							
INDIVIDUAL	1	1	5	5	1	13	2.6
COMMUNITY	1	5	10	5	1	22	4.4
<b>CATEGORY D</b>							
MIDDLE EAST	1	2	10	10	10	33	6.6
US&WEST	1	10	10	10	10	41	8.2
S.A. POLITICS	10	2	10	3	10	35	7
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>57.4</b>
<b>AVERAGE TOTAL:</b>	<b>4.666667</b>	<b>3.166667</b>	<b>6.25</b>	<b>4.166667</b>	<b>5.666667</b>	<b>23.91667</b>	<b>4.783333</b>



## 1.5 African Male Zulu Post matric AMZPM

### GROUP A

### GROUP AMZPM

	AMZPM1	AMZPM2	AMZPM3	AMZPM4	AMZPM5	TOTAL	AVERAGE
<b>CATEGORY A</b>							
FOOD	2	6	5	2	2	17	3.4
CLOTHES	1	4	6	2	2	13	3
NAME	1	7	1	2	1	12	2.4
ARABIC	3	8	5	1	2	19	3.8
<b>CATEGORY B</b>							
FAMILY	1	2	1	9	10	23	4.6
FRIENDS	7	9	1	1	10	28	5.6
WORK	7	1	1	1	0	10	2
<b>CATEGORY C</b>							
INDIVIDUAL	8	10	6	2	1	27	5.4
COMMUNITY	6	10	6	1	1	24	4.8
<b>CATEGORY D</b>							
MIDDLE EAST	9	10	10	5	1	35	7
US&WEST	10	10	10	7	10	47	9.4
S.A. POLITICS	2	6	10	8	2	28	5.6
<b>TOTAL:</b>	57	83	62	41	42	285	57
<b>AVERAGE TOTAL:</b>	4.75	6.916667	5.166667	3.416667	3.5	23.75	4.75

1.6 African Male Zulu not matriculated AMZNM

**GROUP A**

**GROUP  
AMZNM**

	<u>AMZNM1</u>	<u>AMZNM2</u>	<u>AMZNM3</u>	<u>AMZNM4</u>	<u>AMZNM5</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>AVERAGE</u>
<b>CATEGORY A</b>							
FOOD	0	4	10	1	5	20	4
CLOTHES	5	10	5	3	8	31	6.2
NAME	0	3	1	1	8	13	2.6
ARABIC	10	1	4	1	8	24	4.8
<b>CATEGORY B</b>							
FAMILY	0	6	1	1	2	10	2
FRIENDS	5	9	1	6	4	25	5
WORK	0	1	0	1	1	3	0.6
<b>CATEGORY C</b>							
INDIVIDUAL	0	3	2	2	10	17	3.4
COMMUNITY	0	4	2	1	5	12	2.4
<b>CATEGORY D</b>							
MIDDLE EAST	10	7	10	3	4	34	6.8
US&WEST	10	1	9	9	1	30	6
S.A. POLITICS	10	6	1	9	1	27	5.4
<b>TOTAL:</b>	50	55	46	38	57	246	49.2
<b>AVERAGE TOTAL:</b>	4.166667	4.583333	3.833333	3.166667	4.75	20.5	4.1

## 1.2 African Female Foreigner AFF

### GROUP A GROUP AFF

	<u>AFF1</u>	<u>AFF2</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>AVERAGE</u>
<b>CATEGORY A</b>				
FOOD	4	5	9	4.5
CLOTHES	9	10	19	9.5
NAME	2	1	3	1.5
ARABIC	5	0	5	2.5
<b>CATEGORY B</b>				
FAMILY	2	1	3	1.5
FRIENDS	3	1	4	2
WORK	1	0	1	0.5
<b>CATEGORY C</b>				
INDIVIDUAL	5	2	7	3.5
COMMUNITY	1	1	2	1
<b>CATEGORY D</b>				
MIDDLE EAST	5	2	7	3.5
US&WEST	3	8	11	5.5
S.A. POLITICS	1	1	2	1
				0
<b>TOTAL:</b>	41	32	73	36.5
<b>AVERAGE TOTAL:</b>	3.416667	2.666667	6.083333	3.041667

### 1.2.1 African Female Zulu post matric AFZPM

#### GROUP A AFZPM

	<u>AFZPM1</u>	<u>AFZPM2</u>	<u>AFZPM3</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>AVERAGE</u>
<b>CATEGORY A</b>					
FOOD	2	3	8	13	4.333333
CLOTHES	10	10	8	28	9.333333
NAME	5	2	10	17	5.666667
ARABIC	5	2	2	9	3
<b>CATEGORY B</b>					
FAMILY	2	2	10	14	4.666667
FRIENDS	2	2	5	9	3
WORK	2	0	2	4	1.333333
<b>CATEGORY C</b>					
INDIVIDUAL	1	2	2	5	1.666667
COMMUNITY	1	2	2	5	1.666667
<b>CATEGORY D</b>					
MIDDLE EAST	10	10	10	30	10
US&WEST	5	10	10	25	8.333333
S.A. POLITICS	10	10	2	22	7.333333
<b>TOTAL:</b>	55	55	71	181	60.33333
<b>AVERAGE</b>					
<b>TOTAL:</b>	4.583333	4.583333	5.916667	15.08333	5.027778

## 1.2.2 African Female Zulu not matriculated AFZNM

### GROUP A

#### AFZNM

	AFZNM1	AFZNM2	AFZNM3	AFZNM4	AFZNM5	TOTAL	AVERAGE
<b>CATEGORY A</b>							
FOOD	6	7	3	8	3	27	5.4
CLOTHES	9	6	4	10	8	37	7.4
NAME	4	7	2	2	1	16	3.2
ARABIC	5	8	3	8	5	29	5.8
<b>CATEGORY B</b>							
FAMILY	4	2	1	1	5	13	2.6
FRIENDS	3	3	5	1	1	13	2.6
WORK	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>CATEGORY C</b>							
INDIVIDUAL	4	5	1	1	2	13	2.6
COMMUNITY	2	2	2	2	1	9	1.8
<b>CATEGORY D</b>							
MIDDLE EAST	7	10	5	8	5	35	7
US&WEST	5	5	6	5	6	27	5.4
S.A. POLITICS	8	3	1	2	2	16	3.2
<b>TOTAL:</b>	57	58	33	48	39	235	47
<b>AVERAGE TOTAL:</b>	4.75	4.833333	2.75	4	3.25	19.58333	3.9166667

### 1.2.3 African Female Xosa not matriculated AFXNM

#### GROUP A

#### AFXNM

	<u>AFXNM1</u>	<u>AFXNM2</u>	<u>AFXNM3</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>AVERAGE</u>
<b>CATEGORY A</b>					
FOOD	4	6	7	17	5.666667
CLOTHES	10	8	10	28	9.333333
NAME	1	4	2	7	2.333333
ARABIC	2	3	2	7	2.333333
<b>CATEGORY B</b>					
FAMILY	1	2	1	4	1.333333
FRIENDS	10	4	1	15	5
WORK	0	0	6	6	2
<b>CATEGORY C</b>					
INDIVIDUAL	2	5	10	17	5.666667
COMMUNITY	3	2	3	8	2.666667
<b>CATEGORY D</b>					
MIDDLE EAST	9	8	1	18	6
US&WEST	8	8	1	17	5.666667
S.A. POLITICS	1	1	2	4	1.333333
<b>TOTAL:</b>	51	51	46	148	49.33333
<b>AVERAGE TOTAL:</b>	4.25	4.25	3.833333	12.33333	4.111111

## 2.2.1 African Female Sotho not matriculated AFSNM

### GROUP A

#### AFSNM

	<u>AFSNM1</u>	<u>AFSNM2</u>	<u>AFSNM3</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>AVERAGE</u>
<b>CATEGORY A</b>					
FOOD	6	5	6	17	5.666667
CLOTHES	8	7	10	25	8.333333
NAME	5	3	1	9	3
ARABIC	10	10	4	24	8
<b>CATEGORY B</b>					
FAMILY	1	2	1	4	1.333333
FRIENDS	1	10	1	12	4
WORK	0	0	0	0	0
<b>CATEGORY C</b>					
INDIVIDUAL	5	1	1	7	2.333333
COMMUNITY	1	1	2	4	1.333333
<b>CATEGORY D</b>					
MIDDLE EAST	9	8	4	21	7
US&WEST	10	9	9	28	9.333333
S.A. POLITICS	2	1	1	4	1.333333
<b>TOTAL:</b>	58	57	40	155	51.66667
<b>AVERAGE</b>					
<b>TOTAL:</b>	4.833333	4.75	3.333333	12.91667	4.305556

## 2. RESULTS FOR GROUP C

This denotes the results for South Africans of 'coloured' origin who have embraced Islam.

### 2.1 Colored Male CM

<b>GROUP C</b>							
<b>GROUP CM</b>							
	<b>CM1</b>	<b>CM2</b>	<b>CM3</b>	<b>CM4</b>	<b>CM5</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>AVERAGE</b>
<b>CATEGORY A</b>							
FOOD	4	6	1	4	2	17	3.4
CLOTHES	4	4	1	2	1	12	2.4
NAME	2	2	1	1	1	7	1.4
ARABIC	2	2	1	1	1	7	1.4
<b>CATEGORY B</b>							
FAMILY	1	6	4	4	3	18	3.6
FRIENDS	1	8	6	4	4	23	4.6
WORK	1	2	6	5	3	17	3.4
<b>CATEGORY C</b>							
INDIVIDUAL	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
COMMUNITY	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
<b>CATEGORY D</b>							
MIDDLE EAST	6	10	5	5	8	34	6.8
US&WEST	8	8	8	8	10	42	8.4
S.A. POLITICS	5	5	5	5	5	25	5
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>34.4</b>
<b>AVERAGE TOTAL:</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4.583333</b>	<b>3.333333</b>	<b>3.416667</b>	<b>3.333333</b>	<b>14.33333</b>	<b>2.866667</b>



### 2.3 Colored Female CF

GROUP C

GROUP CF

	<b>CF1</b>	<b>CF2</b>	<b>CF3</b>	<b>CF4</b>	<b>CF5</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>AVERAGE</b>
<b>CATEGORY A</b>							
FOOD	7	1	2	10	7	27	5.4
CLOTHES	7	1	7	10	10	35	7
NAME	2	6	1	1	2	12	2.4
ARABIC	2	1	7	5	9	24	4.8
<b>CATEGORY B</b>							
FAMILY	1	1	2	1	1	6	1.2
FRIENDS	1	1	9	2	5	18	3.6
WORK	1	1	1	0	0	3	0.6
<b>CATEGORY C</b>							
INDIVIDUAL	1	1	8	1	2	13	2.6
COMMUNITY	1	1	0	2	1	5	1
<b>CATEGORY D</b>							
MIDDLE EAST	1	10	6	5	9	31	6.2
US&WEST	1	10	10	9	10	40	8
S.A. POLITICS	1	10	10	1	1	23	4.6
<b>TOTAL:</b>	26	44	63	47	57	237	47.4
<b>AVERAGE TOTAL:</b>	2.166667	3.666667	5.25	3.916667	4.75	19.75	3.95

### 3. RESULTS FOR GROUP E

This denotes the results for South Africans of European origin who have embraced Islam.

#### 3.1 European Male EM

##### GROUP E

##### GROUP EM

	<u>EM1</u>	<u>EM2</u>	<u>EM3</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>AVERAGE</u>
<b>CATEGORY A</b>					
FOOD	3	3	3	9	3
CLOTHES	2	4	4	10	3.333333
NAME	2	2	1	5	1.666667
ARABIC	4	1	1	6	2
<b>CATEGORY B</b>					
FAMILY	8	6	4	18	6
FRIENDS	8	8	6	22	7.333333
WORK	10	2	4	16	5.333333
<b>CATEGORY C</b>					
INDIVIDUAL	1	1	1	3	1
COMMUNITY	1	1	1	3	1
<b>CATEGORY D</b>					
MIDDLE EAST	10	10	10	30	10
US&WEST	10	10	10	30	10
S.A. POLITICS	6	10	8	24	8
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>58.66667</b>
<b>AVERAGE TOTAL:</b>	<b>5.416667</b>	<b>4.833333</b>	<b>4.416667</b>	<b>14.66667</b>	<b>4.888889</b>

### 3.2 European Female EF

GROUP E

GROUP EF

	<u>EF1</u>	<u>EF2</u>	<u>EF3</u>	<u>EF4</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>AVERAGE</u>
<b>CATEGORY A</b>						
FOOD	2	1	3	2	8	2
CLOTHES	8	5	3	2	18	4.5
NAME	1	2	1	2	6	1.5
ARABIC	1	8	1	1	11	2.75
<b>CATEGORY B</b>						
FAMILY	1	5	8	8	22	5.5
FRIENDS	1	5	5	5	16	4
WORK	1	1	4	4	10	2.5
<b>CATEGORY C</b>						
INDIVIDUAL	1	1	1	1	4	1
COMMUNITY	8	3	1	1	13	3.25
<b>CATEGORY D</b>						
MIDDLE EAST	1	10	10	10	31	7.75
US&WEST	N/A	10	10	10	30	7.5
S.A. POLITICS	N/A	3	8	5	16	4
<b>TOTAL:</b>	25	54	55	51	185	92.5
<b>AVERAGE TOTAL:</b>	2.083333	4.5	4.583333	4.25	15.41667	7.708333

#### 4. RESULTS FOR GROUP I

This denotes the results for South Africans of Indian sub-continent origin who have embraced Islam.

##### 4.1 Indian Male previously Hindu IMH

###### GROUP I

###### GROUP IMH

	<u>IMH1</u>	<u>IMH2</u>	<u>IMH3</u>	<u>IMH4</u>	<u>IMH5</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>AVERAGE</u>
<b>CATEGORY A</b>							
FOOD	3	3	2	2	1	11	2.2
CLOTHES	4	4	1	2	3	14	2.8
NAME	1	1	1	2	1	6	1.2
ARABIC	4	4	3	2	3	16	3.2
<b>CATEGORY B</b>							
FAMILY	8	6	6	2	1	23	4.6
FRIENDS	10	6	4	8	8	36	7.2
WORK	4	8	6	8	8	34	6.8
<b>CATEGORY C</b>							
INDIVIDUAL	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
COMMUNITY	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
<b>CATEGORY D</b>							
MIDDLE EAST	5	10	8	10	8	41	8.2
US&WEST	10	10	8	5	8	41	8.2
S.A. POLITICS	5	5	5	5	8	28	5.6
<b>TOTAL:</b>	56	59	46	48	51	260	52
<b>AVERAGE</b>							
<b>TOTAL:</b>	4.666667	4.916667	3.833333	4	4.25	21.66667	4.333333

#### 4.2 Indian Female previously Hindu IFH

##### GROUP I

##### GROUP IFH

	<u>IFH1</u>	<u>IFH2</u>	<u>IFH3</u>	<u>IF4</u>	<u>IF5</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>AVERAGE</u>
<b>CATEGORY A</b>							
FOOD	8	3	2	1	1	15	3
CLOTHES	3	5	5	1	2	16	3.2
NAME	1	1	2	1	1	6	1.2
ARABIC	1	1	2	2	1	7	1.4
<b>CATEGORY B</b>							
FAMILY	3	10	5	2	8	28	5.6
FRIENDS	3	5	5	2	6	21	4.2
WORK	1	5	8	2	3	19	3.8
<b>CATEGORY C</b>							
INDIVIDUAL	1	1	1	1	10	14	2.8
COMMUNITY	1	1	1	1	10	14	2.8
<b>CATEGORY D</b>							
MIDDLE EAST	6	10	10	10	10	46	9.2
US&WEST	6	10	10	10	10	46	9.2
S.A. POLITICS	5	5	5	5	10	30	6
<b>TOTAL:</b>	39	57	56	38	72	262	52.4
<b>AVERAGE TOTAL:</b>	3.25	4.75	4.666667	3.166667	6	21.833333	4.366667

### 4.3 Indian Female previously Christian IFC

GROUP I

GROUP IF

	IFC1	IFC2	IFC3	IFC4	IFC5	TOTAL	AVERAGE
<b>CATEGORY A</b>							
FOOD	7	5	1	1	1	15	3
CLOTHES	10	5	1	3	1	20	4
Name	2	4	1	1	1	9	1.8
ARABIC	10	1	1	1	1	14	2.8
<b>CATEGORY B</b>							
FAMILY	10	8	3	8	2	31	6.2
FRIENDS	7	8	2	6	3	26	5.2
WORK	7	4	1	0	2	14	2.8
<b>CATEGORY C</b>							
INDIVIDUAL	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
COMMUNITY	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
<b>CATEGORY D</b>							
MIDDLE EAST	10	8	10	8	10	46	9.2
US&WEST	10	5	10	8	10	43	8.6
S.A. POLITICS	2	5	6	5	8	26	5.2
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>50.8</b>
<b>AVERAGE TOTAL:</b>	<b>6.416667</b>	<b>4.583333</b>	<b>3.166667</b>	<b>3.583333</b>	<b>3.416667</b>	<b>21.16667</b>	<b>4.233333</b>