

FAITH MATTERS
www.faith-matters.org

Sikh and Muslim Media Monitoring and Response Project

Welcome to the first SMMMR Newsletter of 2012!

Dear readers welcome to the first SMMMR newsletter of 2012 which covers January to March.

There has been lots of activity at Faith Matters including the launch of a new project to support victims of Anti-Muslim hate crime as well as events specifically related to the SMMMR project. In mid February the Sikh and Muslim group held a meeting in Ealing which was attended by representatives from Hounslow Friends of Faith, Desi Radio and Dr Raychaudhuri from University College London.

Happy Holi!

Faith Matters would like to wish all of its Sikh and Hindu supporters a very colourful and happy Holi!



Holi is also known as the festival of colours and is celebrated around the world amongst Indian communities that mainly follow Hinduism.

Holi is celebrated at the end of the winter season to welcome the spring season.

People celebrate on the eve of Holi by lighting bonfires and on the day of Holi people throw coloured powder on each other .

Milad ul-Nabi

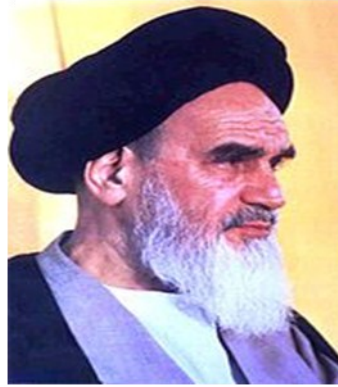
Milad ul-Nabi is an occasion to celebrate the life of the prophet Muhammad. Some Muslims mark this occasion by fasting or with special prayers and conferences.

This year Milad ul-Nabi was on Sunday 5th February. Many Muslims see this as an important time to learn about and reflect on the Prophet Muhammad's life and the teachings of Islam.



Physical appearances of Sikhs and Muslims by Hari Malhi

How can people tell the difference between a Sikh and Muslim male? A devout Sikh man keeps unshorn hair, including an uncut beard, and wears a turban on his head. In contrast, a religious Muslim man wears a topee or turban on his head, and, according to the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed, he views growing his beard as Sunnah and trimming the moustache as one of the Fitra. Below is an example of the types of Sikhs and Muslims I've just described:



When the people in the pictures look so similar, why then do the small ignorant minorities of Sikhs and Muslims continue to ridicule and mock each other about appearance? When Sikhism and Islam teaches tolerance towards other religions, this question is all the more difficult to answer. Most people are educated and knowledgeable enough to figure out how they want to be perceived in the eyes of God. They learn through practising a spiritual lifestyle and arriving at their own conclusions about which physical image they want to adhere to. This build up of knowledge and cycle of life experiences is disturbed when, for example, the small minorities of radical Muslims and Sikhs are obsessed with humiliating each other.

In my personal view, the whole purpose of freedom of religion is for individuals to explore every belief system until they strongly feel they are living a lifestyle which brings them spiritual contentment and liberates them both mentally and socially. If a Sikh man believes his physical appearance is the one God wants him to follow, then that is his private belief. He is allowed to preach his views, but he must never force them on someone else because this, according to the Sikh doctrines, will only paint him as an egotistical and narrow-minded individual. Similarly a Muslim is encouraged to share his religious beliefs and ways of dressing with others in a rational, level-headed manner.

The other reason why I stress the appearance of the Sikh and Muslim male is because they both cover their heads for pretty much the same reason. When a Sikh or Muslim man wears a turban, the turban is no longer just a piece of meaningless cloth; it carries a pious and secular importance. It is a symbol of autonomy, commitment and self-respect. Although Muslims across different parts of the Middle East wear different types of turbans for cultural reasons, the purpose of wearing a turban has the same religious connotations. They want to emulate the lifestyle of Mohammed (PBUH), who is stated to have said: "At the light of judgement, a man shall receive a light for each turn of turban around his head." All of the founding Imams of the four school of Ahl al-Sunnah wal- Jama'ah also wore a turban. In his biography, Imam Abu Hanifah said that he owned seven turbans (maybe, this was one for each day of the week.)



Faith Matters Launches Tell Mama!

Tell Mama is a very new and exciting project that has been launched by Faith Matters in order to support victims of anti-Muslim hate crime.

Victims will be able to send in reports through multiple channels such as email, text and phone calls. These reports will be utilised to also map and record such crimes in order to gain a fuller picture of the problem.

The service which is nationwide was launched on the 21st of February and aims to provide a sense of safety and security to members of the Muslim community in England.



Experiencing **Anti-Muslim** Hate Crime?

Report It

Supported by -

victims support
Find the strength

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Tell MAMA
Measuring Anti Muslim Attacks

'In an emergency, please call 999. MAMA is not an emergency service'

0800 456 1226 0115 707 00 07

tellmamauk #tellmamauk

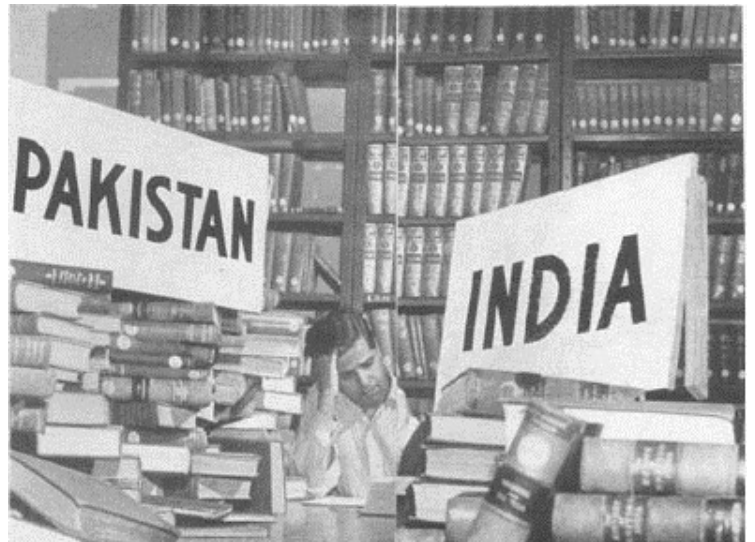
info@tellmamauk.org www.tellmamauk.org

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Anyone wishing to find out more about the project or to report anti-Muslim hate crime should make contact using the details on the flyer above.

Research on India Pakistan Partition

The Scar that Never Healed is an oral history project funded by the British Academy and University College London.



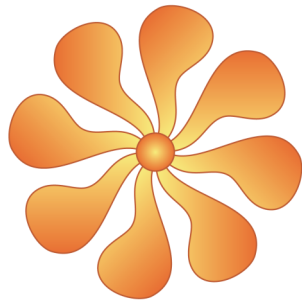
The project involves collecting and preserving the memories of the 1947 Indian partition from members of the south Asian communities of Britain. Interviews lasting around two hours will be carried out with participants.

The aim is to collect as many stories as possible and save them in an archive that will be accessible to academics and the general public. The stories will also be used to organize community cohesion events both in Britain and in the Indian subcontinent.

Researchers are interested in both direct memories from people who experienced partition, and in indirect or inherited memories of people who did not experience the events themselves but heard about stories from older members of the family.

If you have any stories please email a.raychaudhuri@ucl.ac.uk or call **02076791317** or **07743878416**





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“Capable of opening paths to understanding and so to tolerance”

Faith Matters is a not for profit organisation founded in 2005 which works to reduce extremism and interfaith and intra-faith tensions and we develop platforms for discourse and interaction between Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Jewish and Hindu communities across the globe. We have offices in the United Kingdom, Pakistan and the Middle East (Jerusalem).

Below are just some of the projects which our dedicated team are currently involved in:

Community Cohesion

Community Cohesion is integral to Faith Matters. Community Cohesion is what we do well and Community Cohesion is what drives us. We have worked on various Community Cohesion projects: such as “Our Shared Faiths Our Shared Futures,” which brings together theologians from the Abrahamic faiths “Christianity, Islamic and Jewish” monotheism faiths. As well as our Resisting Through Resilience Project, which aims at providing a platform for young Muslims to discuss.

Building divides between Muslim and Sikh Communities

Faith Matters explored local areas of tensions among young Male Sikh and Muslim men which threatened to create local and national hotspots of tension. The project culminated in the Cohesive Community report to be used by communities as a resource to develop cohesion and to look at divergent dialogues.

One Community Many Voices

Faith Matters has developed an online blog which provides a space for people to post their thoughts, articles, opinion pieces and photographs on faith related themes as well as relevant current affairs. It’s a space to express yourself! So if you want to post something then email through to hasina@faith-matters.co.uk

People can access the blog using the link below:

One Community Many Voices <http://onecommunitymanyvoices.blogspot.com/>