

In this report I will be talking about the Auckland muslim community which is defined by the islamic faith and upheld by the key beliefs they follow. The muslim community of Auckland has been growing since the first arrivals in the early 20th century and continues to thrive. The traditions are still being practised to this day and the muslims now are able to do so with more accessibility for things like mosques as well as less racial and religious discrimination, thanks to the muslims who first settled here. As the community grew, some parents wanted their children to be educated in a nurturing islamic environment so they could practise their religion in an understanding space while learning the principles of Islam.

Muslims have been in NZ since the 20th century however those that came before left no further record. Near Dunedin, British people brought Chinese muslims to work in gold mines and promised them land. They came for the purpose of earning money. The history of the present muslim community in Auckland, goes back to a handful of Gujarati men who arrived in the twentieth century and opened small shops. Over time, they brought their sons to NZ to help. In the early 1950s, however, the children of the first arrivals brought their families and settled on a permanent basis. The opening of shops not only brought financial stability for these families but also brought together a community. This relates to the key belief of belief in His messengers. Within hadith its stated:

"The rights of one Muslim over another are five: Returning the greeting of salaam, visiting the sick, attending funerals, accepting invitations, and saying yarhamuk Allah (may Allah have mercy on you) to one who sneezes." [Al-Bukhari (1240) and Muslim (2162)]

When the shop owners would converse with customers, they built strong relationships which in turn meant that when they talked, sharing experiences or knowledge; islam would spread. Since the late 1980s Muslim numbers have risen, partly as a result of political events elsewhere and partly as a result of changes in the government's immigration policy. The 1987 *coup d'état* in Fiji caused a rush of Fijian Indians, many of them Muslims, in the Auckland area in particular. Things like congregating prayers, muslim burial grounds, mosques etc were all taken into account and slowly throughout the years, these first settlers built a community among immigrants but also included the people from this land.

By working together, mosques all over Auckland were built. When the first muslims came, there were no mosques there so in 1950 Marhum Sulaiman closed his shop for Eid and invited the around 30 Muslims he knew to come and perform salah. His shop was cleared, and the first Eid Khutba took place. With the growth of the Muslim population, the funds of the NZMA also grew. When money was sufficient, property was purchased in Ponsonby which became the first mosque in Auckland; Ponsonby mosque. This led to more muslims choosing to settle here because it is hard for Muslims men to perform Jumah salah in congregation. Because of their faith in Allah (The first key belief in Islam) they all congregated every Friday. This community boosted the population of muslims in Auckland, in turn boosting the NZMA's money where they were then able and needed to build a 2nd mosque. Another thing is funerals. Islamic belief holds that the body should be treated with respect in life and in death. This comes from the last key belief of "life after death", which is why we are buried in the ground. The NZMA were able to acquire an area reserved for the burial of Muslims. Because of the rising muslim population, NZ started becoming recognised by other countries especially muslim countries like the UAE ; leading to major contributions such a s school in our country.

By 2001 there were about 23,631 muslims throughout NZ;

Sheikh Zayed was an Arab politician, statesman, and

philanthropist who founded the UAE. He upheld all key beliefs and showed them. During and before his reign, he accomplished many things which resulted in him being called "the national hero of the UAE".

1. He constructed housing facilities, schools, health services, airport, seaport, roads
2. Forged a way for Abu Dhabi to prosper by cooperating with other nations
3. Provided foreign assistance to those in need

The source of this wealth was almost exclusively due to the immense oil wealth of the Emirates. One of his well-known successes was empowering women around the world.



All key beliefs are important to Muslims as well as Islamic values derived straight from the Quran and hadith which is what builds an Islamic community. Historically most Auckland Muslims chose to settle here simply because of the availability of jobs. Nowadays even more Muslims are owners of small businesses meaning that there are more halal takeaways. In addition to this, more mosques as well have opened. With the opening of 3 Islamic based schools (the only ones in NZ), that carry out and teach the key beliefs, which is an environment you would not receive in other schools, many Muslims have chosen Auckland to settle down.

There are also a number of Muslim professionals excelling in their fields. Those raised in NZ have been able to easily access good jobs yet this is different for those who have come in the last decade or so. Some professionals have come to NZ but have found that their qualifications are not recognised. They had to earn a living in some other way, such as by working in restaurants or relying on an unemployment benefit, while they sought to pass the necessary examinations often requiring high levels of English.

The growth of the Muslim community in Auckland has impacted on society. More and more New Zealanders are encountering the Islamic faith and starting to join. This is a result of the growth in the Muslim population in Auckland and more people talking to others about our faith. Also with the growth of the Muslim population there are more Halal shops. Racial and religious discrimination is not common in NZ but there has been little inter-racial connections until recently, leaving many uninformed about Islam and its morals. Therefore negative stereotypes do exist in the minds of many people wherein the issue lies. This is partly because the media, drawing heavily on overseas sources, tend to stress violence and extremism in the Muslim world. Events such as the destruction of the World Trade Center on 9/11, the Bali bombings of 2002 and 2005, and the London bombings in 2005, as well as the conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine, have served to reinforce this impression. There was also the more recent attack on Muslims "the 15th March Christchurch shooting" in 2022. Most Muslims said their experiences of NZ before the attack were generally positive. They talked about friendly and welcoming neighbours as well as work places that were accommodating of religious practices. The community now still upholds these religious practices such as

burials and Jumah congregation and are able to easily build islamic centres and mosques thanks to the muslims who first arrived.

In conclusion the Auckland muslim community has grown from a mere group of Gujarati men who arrived in the early 20th century to now being able to see and notice muslims everywhere you go as well as many diverse communities. These muslims held firm to the key beliefs and now because of them, we are able to practise our faith easily with there being mosques and muslim burial grounds etc all over NZ.

The little religious prejudice in Auckland is mainly because of the media however I personally as well as a lot other muslims have not faced in discrimination because of this.

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