

The World Before Me



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USA & Canada

After spending 32 hours in Amsterdam in transit, I flew to North America. I was fortunate to spend one week in the two largest cities of Canada and the US, Toronto and New York. I had travelled to the US previously in 1978. Whenever I have had the opportunity to travel to the US, I have always noticed vast strides and improvements in the prevailing religious conditions and progress of Muslims. The number of Muslims in the US, their Islamic achievements and their Islamic centres are on the increase daily.

Two days prior to landing in Canada (10th December 1994), I read a detailed report in the famous California newspaper, *Los Angeles Times*, that Islam is the fastest growing religion in America and Canada. To date, the figures of Muslims in the US are vague, with some estimates suggesting six to eight million. However, the *Los Angeles Times* states that this is not based on any reliable survey. According to a survey published in the newspaper, surveyors suggested that there are only 500,000 Muslims in the US. However, the report also added that this only refers to those Muslims who congregate for *Ṣalāh* in the masjids. The surveyors counted 1046 masjids in the US where *Ṣalāh* takes place five times a day and the number of congregants that regularly attend there. From this figure it can be estimated that in every masjid there are approximately 465 people who attend the prayer. This survey also suggested that only 10 per cent of Muslims perform *Ṣalāh* in congregation in the masjid. Bearing this in mind, the accurate figure of Muslims in the US will stand at no less than 5 million.

It is also incorrect to draw the conclusion that the remaining 90 per cent do not perform *Ṣalāh* at all, since masjids are considerable