

CAMBRIDGE CENTRAL MOSQUE

NEWSLETTER – SPECIAL CORONACRISIS EDITION

INCLUSIVITY, AUTHENTICITY, COMPASSION



PHOTO: ELIZABETH DAZIEL



NEW WAYS TO THRIVE

SIX MONTHS OF Covid-19 restrictions have imposed strange limits on our community and on the Mosque which is its heart. When we began to pray in our wonderful new building in April 2019, a moment which represented the fulfilment of a century-long dream for Cambridge's Muslims, we did not imagine that less than a year later the mosque would be closed again!

It was on March 17 that our Trustees made the sad announcement that our doors would close. Our Patron-President, Yusuf Islam, told us that we were entering a new era of *I'tikaf*, of seclusion for worship. The mosque was locked down, and would not open again for congregational prayers until July 6. Yet Allah's Gates of Mercy are open always, and we realised that we were being invited to use this quiet time to continue our journey towards Him in penitence, reflection and love.

And our team has not been idle! This has been a period of unprecedented social activism and outreach. During this strange time we have been heartened to see the amazing dedication of our team of male and female volunteers, without whom the mosque would frankly have been comatose. May they all be blessed for their time and effort! ■

CCM Community Response Service

IN RESPONSE TO the lockdown which was put in place as a result of the pandemic, the Mosque began providing support to the local community through its Covid-19 Response Service.

The support offered to the community has ranged from helping with general supply shopping to prescription pick-ups for those who are self-isolating and unable to leave their homes to collect supplies. The service also provides a phone check-in service for those in the community who are alone and need someone to talk to. Spiritual and moral support is also facilitated with the help of Imam Sejad, while women's counselling is offered with the help of Aisha Barkatullah.

CCM has set up several methods by which individuals can get in touch. There is a Covid-19 Request for Help Form, together with a Support Helpline (01223 654029) which is monitored around the clock, and a dedicated Covid-19 support email for those in need of help, which is covidsupport@cambridgecentralmosque.org

FOOD DISTRIBUTION

THE HOLY PROPHET SAYS: 'Feed the people, spread greetings of peace, and pray at night when people are asleep.' Throughout the lockdown period and especially during Ramadan, the Mosque provided daily hot meals to

NHS staff, students and vulnerable members of the community. We also sent a month's supply of dry food items to refugee families and other vulnerable groups and individuals. We were also able to send daily hot food packs to students and to Jimmy's Homeless Shelter. This was made possible with the generous help of local restaurants Carlos BBQ, Cambridge Gourmet Grill, Taj Tandoori, and Sutton Tandoori.

Dry food items were generously donated by Masjid Omar and PAK Foods in Leicester. Many thanks to Tufail Hussain, director of Islamic Relief UK, for making this connection for us.

Our thanks go also to Spice Gate, IQBRO, and Hillary's Fruit & Veg.

Recipients included staff of all denominations at Addenbrookes' Hospital. Hot meals donated to Royal Papworth Hospital have so far totalled 2299 food packs, which have been received with real gratitude by exhausted workers.

Special Eid gifts have also been donated by PAK Foods for distribution to refugee and vulnerable Muslim and non-Muslim families within Cambridgeshire. These were personally delivered by our team of dedicated volunteers.

CCM enjoys excellent relations with the Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum who, with the City Council, assisted with referrals to us.

Our charitable outreach services have been favourably reported by ITV Anglia, BBC Look East, BBC News, AP News, the Ely Standard and the Cambridge News.



Current Mosque Access Rules

At the time of publication these rules apply:

- Face coverings are obligatory, unless you have a valid exemption.
- Bring your own prayer rug.
- Bring a bag for your shoes and keep it with you inside the mosque.
- The mosque's wudu and toilet facilities are closed.
- Do not enter the mosque if you are showing Covid-19 symptoms.
- Your temperature will be checked as you enter.
- Children under 14 and adults over 69 may not enter the mosque building.
- The cafeteria and Teaching Room are closed.
- Keep to the entrance and exit lanes marked.
- Please pray only on the vinyl squares provided, on which you should place your prayer rug and your shoe bag. After each prayer the squares will be sterilised.
- Maintain a 2-metre social distance even in the garden.
- To attend Jum'a prayer you must book a place free at Eventbrite via our website, otherwise you will not be admitted.
- Please follow the directions of our volunteer teams at all times.



PUBLIC ART

Thanks to the generosity of our friends at Yapı Merkezi we have installed a remarkable sculpture by leading Turkish artist Cahide Erel. The sculpture, which stands in our front portico, references the role of Muslim scholarship and science in transmitting the Zero to the West, ushering in a new era in the development of mathematics. It also denotes the Arabic number 5, indicating that the Five Pillars of Islam are made up of, and lead to, true knowledge and wisdom.



MOSQUE SERVICES

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH Muslim Funeral Services in Peterborough we are fully-equipped to perform Janaza funerals for Covid and non-Covid cases. Further guidance is available on our website.

During the lockdown we continued with our Shahada Service, taking shahadas online using Zoom. We have also performed nikah ceremonies. Since Life Cycle Events have been permitted to take place again we have resumed small on-site ceremonies, with certain restrictions (see our Shahada Guidelines and Nikah Guidelines available online). In July and August we held eight Shahada ceremonies and ten ceremonies of Nikah.

Sadly all Guided Tours are currently suspended. Please check the website for updates. Despite this, on 21 June we took part in the national Visit My Mosque Day. Due to pandemic rules this took place online, consisting of a virtual tour, a Qur'anic recitation and an Adhan demonstration. Speakers included Dr Sejad Mekić, Hafiz Ali Tos, Sarah Waseem, Shahida Rahman and the Revd Devin McLachlan. The recording of this programme currently has over a thousand views on YouTube.

NEW BOOKS BY CAMBRIDGE AUTHORS

Our Chair, Abdal Hakim Murad, has just published a book with the title *Travelling Home: Essays on Islam in Europe* (Quilliam Press). Local resident Ahmad Keeler has also published *Rethinking Islam and the West: A New Narrative for the Age of Crises* (Equilibra Books).

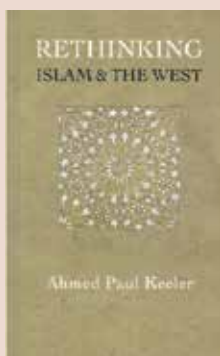


PHOTO: ELIZABETH DAZIEL

VIRTUAL VIRTUES GO ONLINE

TO COMPENSATE FOR the cancellation of our regular activities, particularly during the Blessed Month of Ramadan, the Mosque has launched a raft of online programmes, sermons and classes.

Imam Ali Tos held three separate online courses over Zoom for Cambridge residents. The first course was Hifz Revision, introducing students to different methods of revising Suras previously memorised but then partly lost. Course Two was a Qur'an Memorisation Introduction (Sura ad-Duha to Sura an-Nas), while the third course introduced beginners to the recitation of the Adhan using four different *maqams*.

Our daily livestreaming services during Ramadan included the Adhan (broadcast live every day), live and pre-recorded talks from the mosque in English, Turkish and Bengali, daily Qur'an recitations, beautiful Du'a' prayers, and a special live Iftar programme. We also launched an ambitious online Ramadan TV Channel which broadcast songs, sermons and documentaries round the clock. This was made possible by the generosity of Muslim film producers and production companies, and especially Mishkat Media, which donates all its revenues to our charity.

Content was streamed through multiple online platforms including Facebook Live, Zoom, Mixlr and YouTube. The YouTube streaming enabled us to link content directly to our CCM Live Media Page, enabling non-Facebook users to access the material easily.

This busy online activity generated massive interest around the world. Thanks to our friends at LaunchGood we raised a total of \$46,916 during Ramadan, and saw considerably increased donations on our usual platforms and offline.

Webinars

On May 2 our Ramadan fundraising campaign launched when CCM organised a webinar with Abdal Hakim Murad, Dr Sejad Mekić, Hafiz Ali Tos and Chris Blauvelt. The programme included a Qur'anic recitation, a keynote address and special prayers from our imams. The recording of the live webinar uploaded to Facebook has received over 4,200 views.

Laylat al-Qadr

In the hope that we would coincide with this most holy night of the year, the mosque organised a live all-night programme on May 19. The programme consisted of lectures, Qur'an recitations, Du'as, qasidas and blessings. The lineup of speakers included Abdal Hakim Murad, Dr Sejad Mekić, Hafiz Ali Tos, Hasan Spiker, and fundraiser Faraz Yousafzai.



PHOTO: ELIZABETH DAZIEL

A Doctor's Counsel

By Fraz Mir

CONSULTANT PHYSICIAN, ADDENBROOKES' HOSPITAL

Covid-19 poses one of the biggest healthcare challenges faced by the NHS since its inception. At present, there is no known cure or vaccine so prevention of transmission remains a key element in tackling the disease. A notable saying attributed to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ prohibits entry in to a plague-affected area and exit from it. Even today, this remains sound public health advice and is the basis for "social distancing". While the mosque is central to Islamic life, sensible precautions have to be taken here too in order to keep people safe. This responsibility is not just incumbent upon the management team but individual worshippers as well.

Practical safeguards include the following:

- advising those in the most vulnerable "shielding groups" and the frail elderly against attending congregational prayers until further notice
- admonishing people who feel unwell with symptoms such as a fever, cough, loss of smell, nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea to stay at home for at least 10 days and to get tested

- operating an advance booking system or taking contact details for those attending the mosque so as to help support the NHS track and trace service
- attendees performing ablutions at home in advance if possible
- universal wearing of face coverings (to include the nose and mouth)
- use of hand sanitising gel regularly
- maintaining a distance of at least 1 metre (ideally 2m) from fellow worshippers outside of immediate family circles
- use of personal prayer mats and shoe carrier bags
- avoiding the consumption of food and drink on mosque premises

Ultimately, partaking in any gathering during an outbreak carries risks but steps such as those above will help reduce the danger of contracting coronavirus (and other viruses such as influenza) to a minimum. Indeed, the prevalence of Covid-19 in the Cambridge community as a whole is thankfully very low. With ongoing vigilance and adherence to workable guidance, this ought to continue to be the case until we emerge fully from a terrible pandemic that has already claimed hundreds of thousands of lives across the globe. Inshallah!

For further advice and to organise testing, visit:
www.gov.uk/coronavirus



Cambridge Community Initiatives

CAMCAB

Free-of-charge supermarket drop-off and pick-ups for the over-70s. Call 01223 704704 to find out how they can help.

TAJ TANDOORI

Five free meals daily to older members of the community.

ROMSEY MUTUAL AID

Romsey Mutual Aid is part of a larger effort across Cambridge to provide support for anyone who needs help during the coronavirus outbreak. GET help & GIVE help! Contact romsey.covid@gmail.com or phone 07908 466257.

FOODBANKS

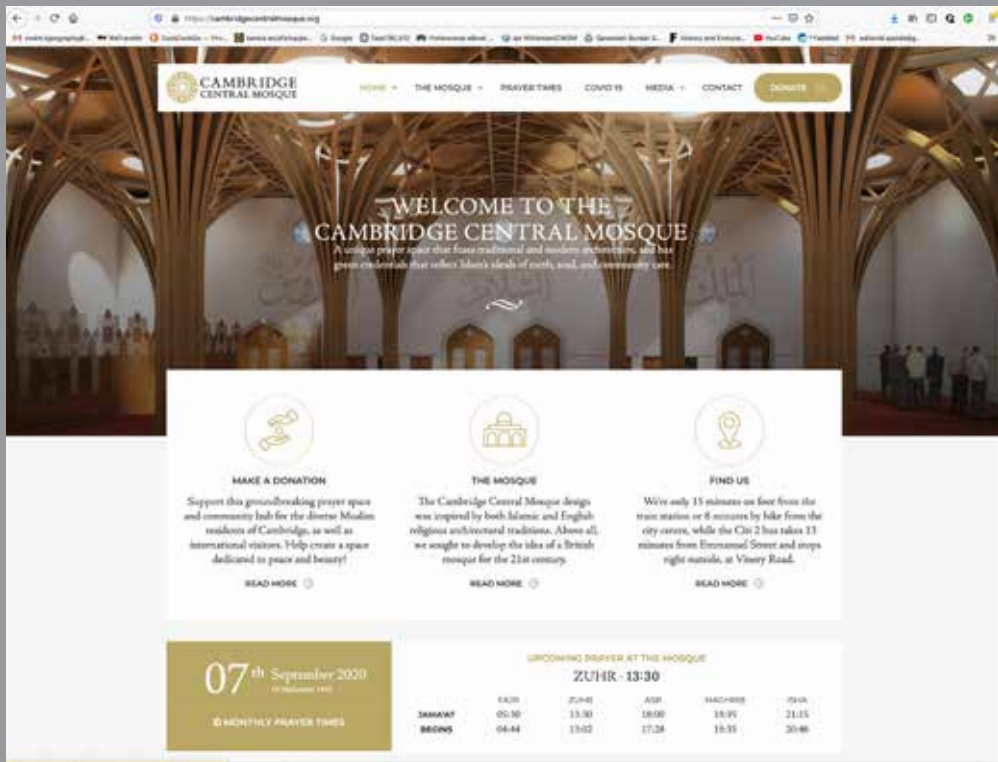
There are currently eleven drop-off points for donated food items in Cambridge. For the list please see <https://cambridgecity.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>

Janaza Fund

CCM has launched a special appeal to help people who are struggling to pay funeral expenses during the pandemic. Please make your donation here: <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/JanazaFund-CambridgeCentralMosque>

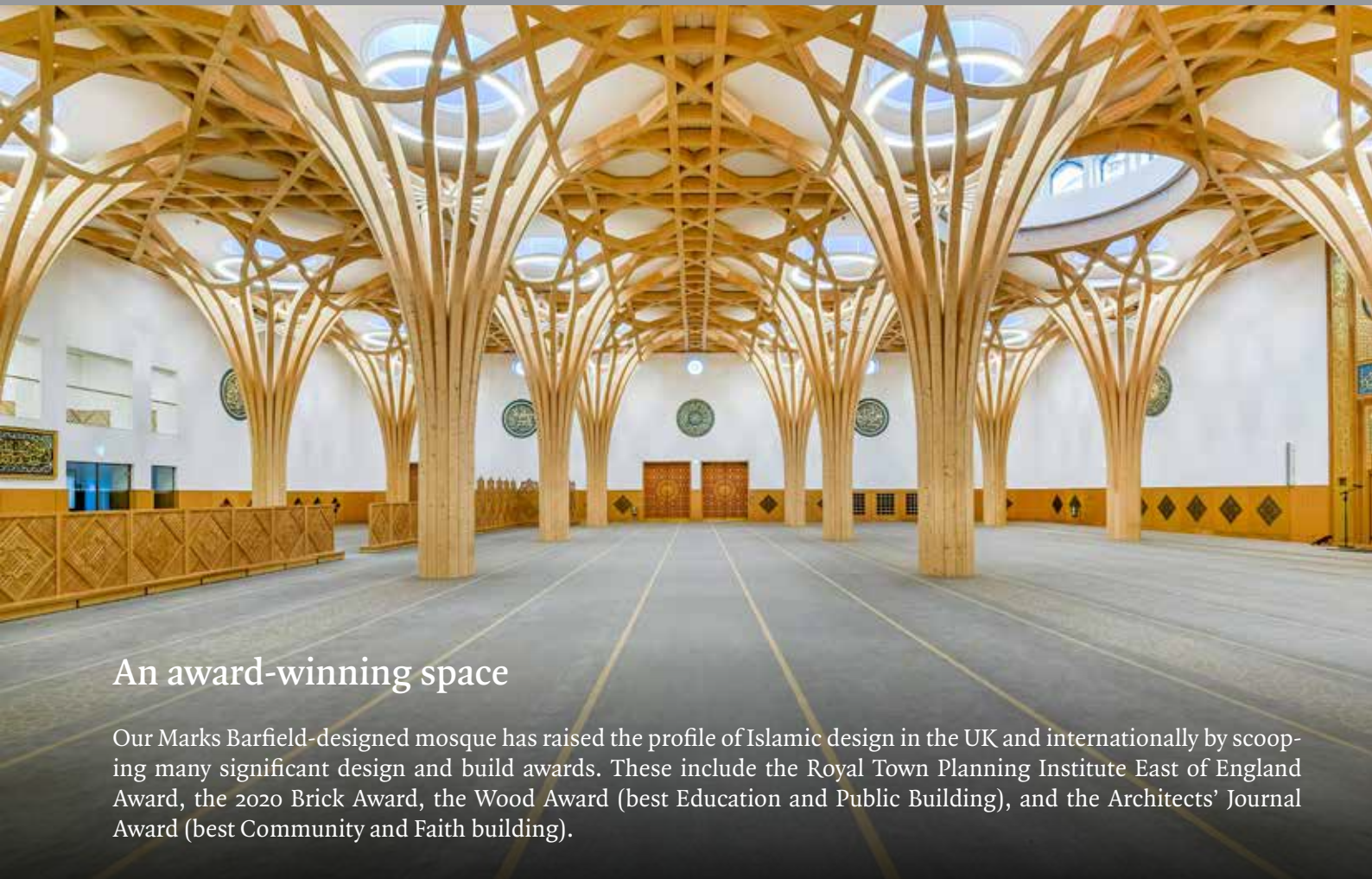
Zakat Payments Online

Zakat is one of the obligatory Pillars of Islam, providing a lifeline for many needy people, including widows, orphans, refugees, the elderly and the homeless. Zakat payments are not used to support the mosque itself but all go to help these categories, as required in Sharia. You can pay your Zakat at the mosque in person by cash or card. Alternatively visit <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/zakatfund-cambridgecentralmosque> You can also donate to the National Zakat Foundation directly at nzf.org.uk



MOSQUE WEBSITE RELAUNCH

Thanks to Zakariya Whiteman and our IT team we have launched a brand-new world-class website for our Central Mosque! As well as prayer times and information on upcoming events, the website offers videos, guidance on marriages, funerals and other services, special features on the mosque's green credentials and technologies, press releases, a photo gallery, songs, poetry, and much more! The linked Soundcloud page offers nasheeds and even nursery rhymes from the popular Halal Mother Goose collection!



An award-winning space

Our Marks Barfield-designed mosque has raised the profile of Islamic design in the UK and internationally by scooping many significant design and build awards. These include the Royal Town Planning Institute East of England Award, the 2020 Brick Award, the Wood Award (best Education and Public Building), and the Architects' Journal Award (best Community and Faith building).

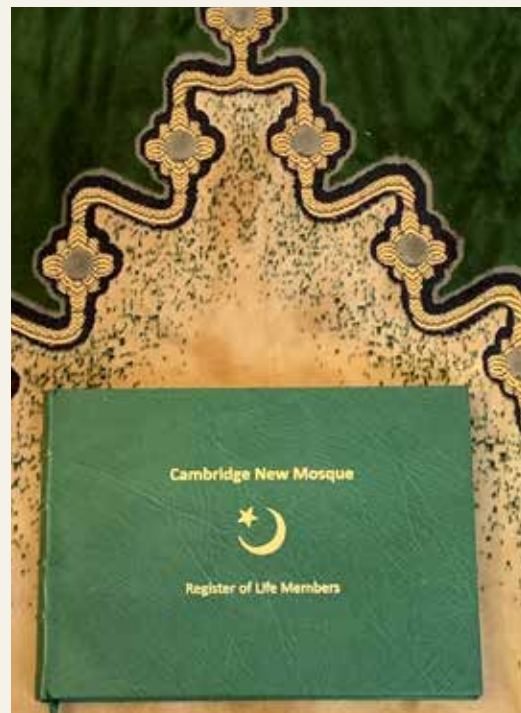


KEITH CRITCHLOW

WITH GREAT REGRET we noted the death on April 20 2020 of Keith Critchlow, the architect and geometer responsible for the geometrical patterns in the doors, atrium floor, dome interior, and ventilation grilles in our mosque.

Critchlow enjoyed a very distinguished academic career, serving as Professor of Islamic Art at the Royal College of Art for many years, where in 1984 he founded the Visual Islamic and Traditional Arts department. This moved in 1992 to the Prince's Institute of Architecture, and is currently active as The Prince's Foundation. He trained generations of Muslim and non-Muslim specialists in Islamic sacred geometry, transforming spaces, texts and artworks across the world.

In his books, notably *Islamic Patterns* (Thames and Hudson, 1976), and *The Hidden Geometry of Flowers: Living Rhythms, Form and Number* (Floris Books, 2011), Critchlow explored the divine miracle of the symmetry and beauty of the physical world, which lies just beneath the surface of every thing. Instead of chaos, he observes, the world is built of order and beauty. Islamic art, by bringing this order to the surface, reminds us of the holy Lawmaker's presence in all creation, and transforms our environment into a constant serene invocation of His presence.



LIFE MEMBERSHIP NEWS

On March 8 our Life Members met at the mosque to welcome new members and to discuss the first year's experience of running the mosque. As of September 1 we have 222 Life Members! Please remember that if you are paying in instalments that you will not receive your certificate or join the Life Membership until your fee is paid in full. The cost of Life Membership is still £1,000, but from 1 October this will rise to £5,000, so if you are not a member yet, hurry to join before the October deadline!



ISLAMIC ART SALE

Don't miss our third online Islamic Art sale! This is scheduled for a launch on Sunday November 1. We will be showcasing dozens of high-value artworks donated by leading artists around the world. Every penny of the proceeds will go to our mosque! Sign up now to the newsletter at www.cambridgeislamicart.com

Chinese Masterpieces

Thanks go to Haji Noor Deen Mi Guang Jiang for presenting a hugely-successful demonstration of traditional Chinese Muslim calligraphy at our mosque! This took place before the lockdown. After his lecture and demonstration visitors were invited to enjoy a unique exhibition of his works. Haji Noor Deen is a regular and generous donor of artworks to our regular online Islamic Art auctions.



The Writing's on the Wall

AFTER MONTHS OF anticipation we have finally installed the magnificent blue and gold roundels on the interior walls of the prayer hall. Individually designed and calligraphed by Istanbul-based master-calligrapher Hüseyin Kutlu, these comprise passages from the Holy Qur'an, written in the Thuluth script.

Thanks to the generosity of Turkish engineering firm Yapı Merkezi and its CEO, Ersin Arıoğlu, we have also been gifted an original tapestry which formerly hung upon the Holy Ka'ba in Mecca, comprising the verse "Verily the first house appointed for mankind was that at Mecca, blessed, a guidance to the worlds" (Holy Qur'an, 3:96). We have also gratefully received dozens of large calligraphic artworks, many of which are now on display in the mosque.

First Exhibition Opens

From December until March our Teaching Room hosted a unique exhibition of medieval Islamic scientific instruments. Thanks to Yapı Merkezi, Emrah Cavlı and leading artist Cahide Erel we were able to insert exhibition cases into the engineered timber wall cavities to transform this room into a world-class museum and display hall. QR codes enable visitors to learn more about each exhibit on their hand-held devices. School groups and many daily visitors have been able to learn about medieval Muslim science, with displays on waterclocks, surgical instruments, optical innovations and observatories.

We hope that with the progressive lifting of Coronavirus restrictions that this much-loved feature of our mosque will soon be open for visitors again. Please check our website for updates.

Corona and Qur'an

By Ahmed El-Halaby

THE MONTHS OF restrictions have impacted the physical wellbeing of many people, but doctors suggest that people with strong religious lives often have much better health outcomes than others. This is partly due to healthier lifestyles: for instance, religious people may avoid alcohol and tobacco. Also, the knowledge of Allah's presence and the hope of a good life to come strengthen our optimism, which can have a very strengthening influence on our immune system and our general sense of wellbeing.

In Islam we believe that everything is in Allah's hands, and that *qadar*, the destiny of things, is by His decree. This is part of *tawhid*, being aware of His unity and omnipotence. He has said: "Lord of the East and the West: there is no god but Him, so take Him as a Patron" (73:9).

So in times of hardship and of ease we reach for the medicine of *tawakkul*: reliance on Him. "Whoever relies on Allah, Allah will be enough for him" (65:3). And He says: "Rely on Allah; indeed Allah loves those who rely on Him" (3:159). This gives us the wonderful news that as we sail our little ships through the storms of life in *dunya*, we are reassured by the knowledge of Allah's closeness and the wisdom of everything He does. Sometimes that wisdom is not clear to us: the Divine is very unlike ourselves, being infinite and seeing the consequences of everything. But even when His decree tastes like a bitter pill, we find a sweetness in it, and we know that in some mysterious way it is part of His total arrangement of creation. And the *aya* tells us that if we reach this happy state, He will love us. And there is nothing better than that.

The scholars say that if we want to know whether we possess something of this happy state, we should look for three markers.

Firstly, we should see whether we hope in or fear anyone other than our Creator. The sign of this is that we always act for what is true and good, irrespective of reputation or material consequence for ourselves.

The second marker is that we have little or no worry about *rizq*. We should be as confident in His decree when we are in need, as we are when our needs have been fulfilled, or even more!

The third marker is that our hearts do not become disturbed by frightening situations. We know that whatever arrow of fate strikes us could not have missed us, and that whatever arrow misses us, could not have hit us

So in difficult and easy times we say this: *hasbuna'Llah wa ni'ma'l-wakil*: "Allah is Sufficient for us, and He is Best of Patrons" (3:173).

May our Creator give us the blessing of seeing everything as part of His decree, give us *sabr*, and make us of those who truly rely on Him, and place their hope and fear in Him alone. Amin.



HYMN BY YUNUS EMRE (d.1321)

Taşlar ile, dağlar ile ...

With the rocks and mountains high
Let me call, my Lord, on Thee.
At the dawn with birds that fly,
Oh let me call, my Lord, on Thee.

With Jesus, raised on high,
With Moses on Sinai,
With the rod that he holds by,
Oh let me call, my Lord, on Thee.

With thankful praise addressed to God,
With the Koran's 'Say: He is God',
With bare feet, head uncovered,
Oh let me call, my Lord, on Thee.

With Job in suffering drear,
With Jacob shedding many a tear,
With Muhammad, loved so dear,
Oh let me call, my Lord, on Thee.

With this song, Yunus regales,
Singing with the nightingales,
With the Truth's most loving slaves,
Oh let me call, my Lord, on Thee.

Translated by Muhtar Holland

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<https://soundcloud.com/cambridgecentralmosque>



PHOTO: ELIZABETH DAZIEL

DONATION INFORMATION

Bank Transfer

HSBC

Address:

63-64 St Andrews Street,
Cambridge CB2 3BZ,
United Kingdom

Account Name: The Cambridge Mosque Trust

Account No.: 54298209

Sort code: 40-16-08

IBAN: GB68HBUK40160854298209

Branch Identifier: HBUKGB4103J

Post one-off cash/cheques made payable to:

“THE CAMBRIDGE MOSQUE TRUST”

14 St Paul's Road
Cambridge, CB1 2EZ
United Kingdom

*Or automate a regular donation by downloading,
completing and posting a standing order form to your bank.
Information on our website.*

www.cambridgecentralmosque.org

Registered charity: 1164931

