

# CAMBRIDGE CENTRAL MOSQUE

## NEWSLETTER

INCLUSIVITY, AUTHENTICITY, COMPASSION



### Message from Yusuf Islam

*"Salams, and welcome to the Cambridge Central Mosque. After ten years of hard work by our amazing supporters, the community's dream has finally come true, with Allah's blessings! On behalf of the trustees, the donors and the Life Members I hope and pray that this very special place of worship becomes a symbol of love, peace and reconciliation between cultures and communities. May the Almighty bless the worshippers, the visitors, the city of Cambridge, and the whole beautiful world He has entrusted to us."*



## Open For Prayer!

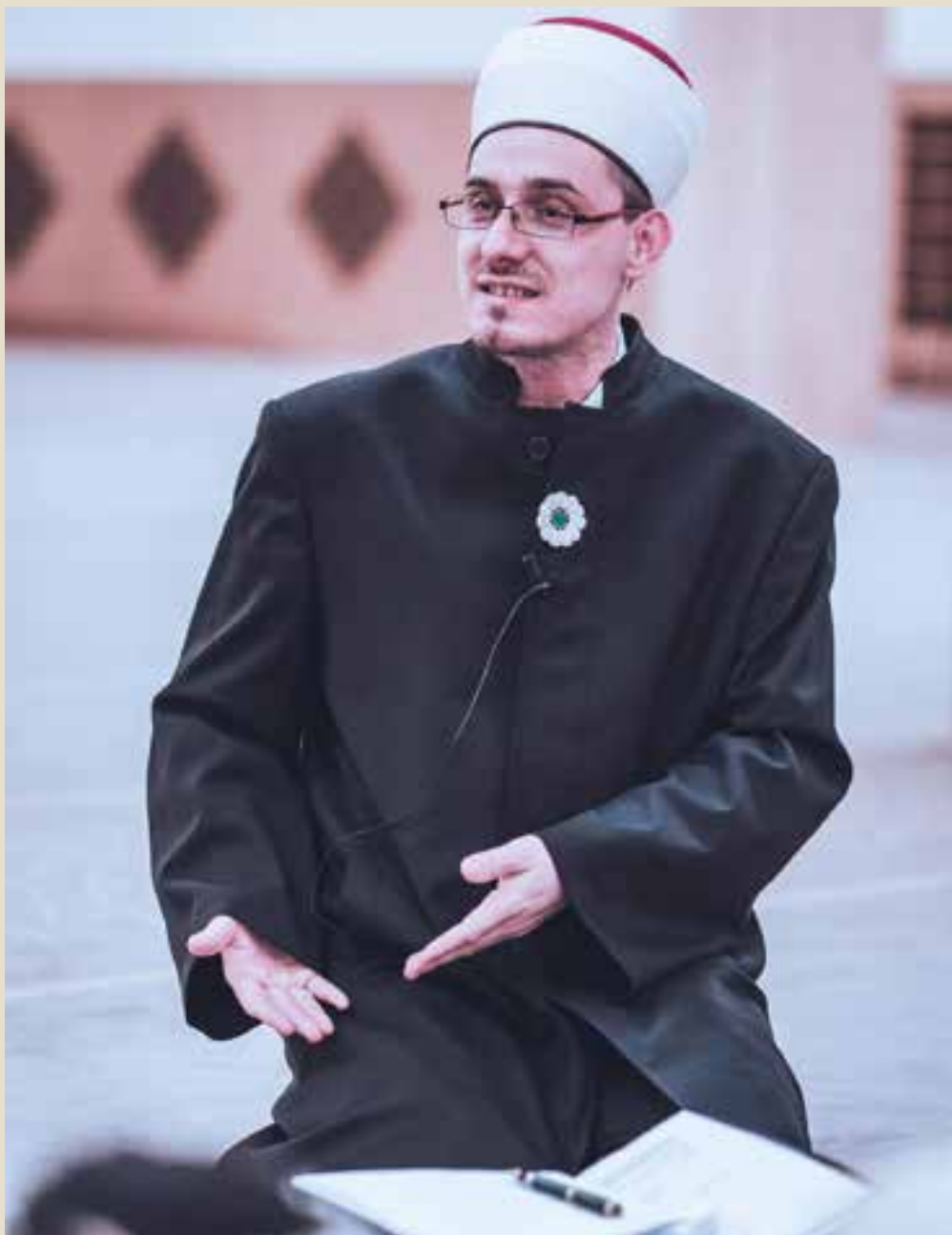
THANKS TO TIMELY behind-the-scenes work by our main contractors Gilbert-Ash we were able to hold our first Friday Prayers on 15 March, led by Hafiz Dr Sejad Mekić. In his inaugural khutba Dr Mekić spoke about the historic symbolism of the joyous occasion. As expected the mosque was filled to its thousand person capacity. Around thirty percent of worshippers were women.

After this 'test flight' of the building Gilbert-Ash took possession again until the Practical Completion

date of April 12 when the Trust formally took over responsibility for the building. At last the five daily prayers commenced. As Hafiz Sejad remarked, they will continue, God willing, "until Judgement-day".

We will announce the date for the Official Opening ceremony very soon inshaAllah. Our warm thanks to all who have donated so generously since the land was bought back in April 2008, and particularly to our main donors, the Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs, and to Yapı Merkezi.





## Meet the Imams

IMAM DR SEJAD MEKIĆ is from Kacuni in Central Bosnia. After completing his memorisation of the Holy Qur'an in his native land he studied in the UK, gaining an MPhil in Theology from Cambridge and a PhD in Islamic Studies from SOAS (University of London) before working as a Research Fellow at the University of Exeter. His publications include *A Muslim Reformist in Communist Yugoslavia* (Routledge, 2016). He is married and has four children.

OUR SECOND FULL-TIME imam, Ali Tos is a Hafiz with high-level classical training in tajwid and makams. A native of Konya in Turkey he holds a BA in Theology from Selcuk University in Konya and an MA in Religious Studies from Howard University (USA). Married with three children, Imam Ali is establishing a Hifz programme at our mosque. He is married with three children.

### MESSAGE FROM IMAM ALI

"Assalamu Alaikum,

By the endless grace and mercy of Allah (c.c.), we at Cambridge Central Mosque successfully completed another spiritual season, the month of Ramadan, which offers one of the deepest connections with our Creator.

After more than ten years of dedicated work, this past Ramadan was so different for those who have been living in this beautiful city, due to the freshly-built 21st century purpose-built British mosque.

Alhamdulillah, after all the sincere intentions, efforts and prayers from Muslim hearts, our duas were accepted and we were able to hear the *adhan*, join the first congregational prayer, and enjoy many Tarawih and iftars in Europe's first eco-mosque. A true landmark building for the city of Cambridge and its diverse residents.

We ask Allah (c.c.) to increase our faith and brotherhood and make us an example for the righteous. And we ask Allah (c.c.) to allow us to be sincere Muslims and represent our beautiful religion of Islam in this world. We also ask Allah (c.c.) to show us the straight path. Amin." 🌸





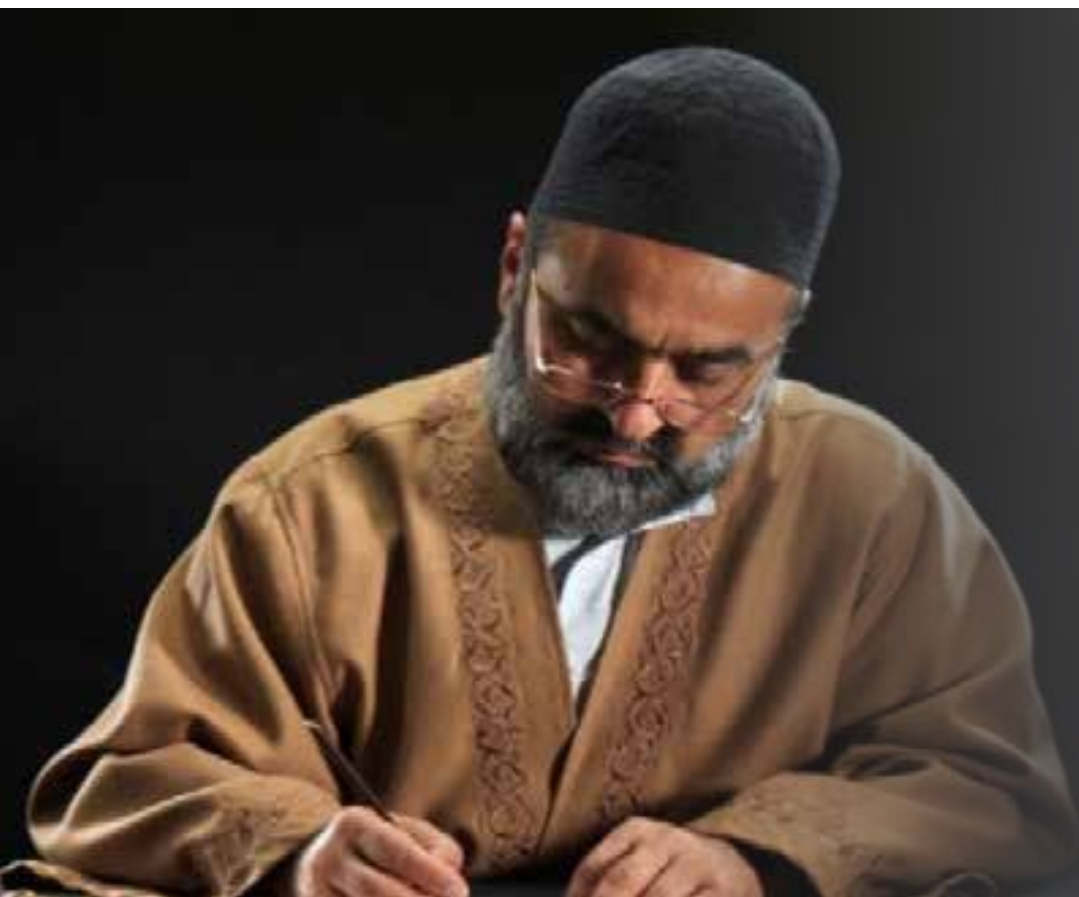
## A HOLY RAMADAN

ONLY A WEEK separated the beginning of operations at the mosque from the start of the fasting month of Ramadan. The administration, imams and volunteers worked around the clock to ensure that everything was in place to welcome the excited crowds of worshippers.

As our kitchen is not yet fully-commissioned we did not cook any meals. However we offered a healthy iftar of dates, fruit and water, supplemented by delicious pastries and other treats brought by worshippers. In keeping with our 'green deen' ethos we supplied biodegradable plates and cutlery. Sheeting was laid on the floors, and we allocated the Teaching Room to females, the Cafeteria to males, and the Atrium to family groups, and this arrangement seemed to be popular. After the meals our volunteers quickly removed left-overs and the sheets were lifted and neatly folded away to restore these areas to optimum appearance, ready for the huge crowds who would arrive for Isha prayers at 10.45.

A highlight of Ramadan was our special iftar for the twenty-four Syrian refugee families who live in the Cambridge area. Cars were sent to collect them and a delicious Syrian meal was served. Many thanks to the Kuweider family for providing this wonderful and authentic feast: a real 'taste of home' for our guests.


Tarawih prayers, held from 11pm to 12.45, were very well-attended, and many nights saw a capacity crowd of men and women. The climax of the month came with our 27th Ramadan night programme when we achieved the Khatm. We enjoyed the voices of our two imams, plus two guest Hafiz reciters, Dr Tariq Muqbil and Shaykh Yusef al-Muzall. After Tarawih prayers Shaykh Abdal Hakim Murad gave a lecture. Imam Sejad then led us in Salat al-Tasabih. Thanks to a generous local donor a hot Sahur meal was provided for the hundreds of worshippers who stayed to attend the dawn prayer with us.



## Calligraphy is lined up!

Calligraphy (khatt) is a highly-regarded and fundamental element of Islamic art. We are therefore very excited that master calligrapher Hüseyin Kutlu has begun work on creating masterpieces for our mosque! Located in Istanbul, Kutlu studied under the great calligrapher Hamid Aytaç, and has provided calligraphy in various styles for major mosques in Turkey, Russia, Albania and elsewhere. The world-renowned calligrapher's work for the mosque will include monumental roundels in thuluth script. Spaces for these has already been cut in the mosque walls.





## Blessings of Al-Andalus 🌀

VISITORS ARE WELCOMED to our mosque by a piece of European Muslim history! The atrium floor, which features stunning Islamic patterns by Keith Critchlow, is made of marble quarried near Alicante, known in medieval times as Laqant, a Muslim city which formed part of the kura (province) of Tudmir. The area was famous as the home of great scholars and worshippers, including Imam Abd al-Rahman al-Dani, and its stone was used for the Friday Mosque in Laqant. So the convivencia of Moorish Spain, when intellectual life flourished and communities learned from each other, is the symbolic foundation for conversations and conferences in our mosque! Thanks go to Stonefit Ltd for their excellent work in laying this complex and impressive element of our design. 🌀





## STAR FEATURES

VISITORS OFTEN ASK about the meaning of the geometric motifs featured in the mosque. These were chosen and drawn by master-geometer Keith Critchlow, a professor at the Prince's Institute for Traditional Arts. One of the patterns is the eight-pointed star, known as the symbol of the 'Breath of the Compassionate'. This signifies the emergence of the symmetries and beauty of the natural world from the creative power of God, an act of love and abundance. The star is formed of two intersecting squares, reminding us of the everlasting participation of the world (the four points of the compass) in the holiness of God (the four 'essential' attributes given to Him by theologians, the four 'corners' of His throne).



## More Life Members

A MEETING OF Life Members of the Cambridge New Mosque was held on Sunday 17 March at 1pm. ID cards were distributed and new members were given their certificates. Islamic talks were given by Shaykh Khidir Hussein, Mawlana Sayful Alam, Dr Sejad Mekic and others. Life Members enjoy several privileges, including the right to attend two Member Meetings each year, when they can discuss progress with the mosque and vote on important mosque-related issues.

Our sincere thanks go to Penny Price, the renowned Cambridge-based calligrapher, for creating the beautiful certificates without asking for a fee! We recommend that our supporters visit her website at [www.penstudio.co.uk](http://www.penstudio.co.uk)

If you would like to know more about Life Membership please contact [cmt.lifemembers@gmail.com](mailto:cmt.lifemembers@gmail.com)



## CMT in Germany

THE TRUST ATTENDED the major 'Future of Muslims in Europe' conference held in Cologne from January 2-4. Convened by the Turkish Presidency of Religious Affairs, this major event brought together mosque and community leaders from over twenty European countries to discuss questions of peaceful integration. The event, opened by Presidency head Dr Ali Erbaş, was held at the impressive DITIB mosque in central Cologne, which includes shops, accommodation, a restaurant, and conference facilities.

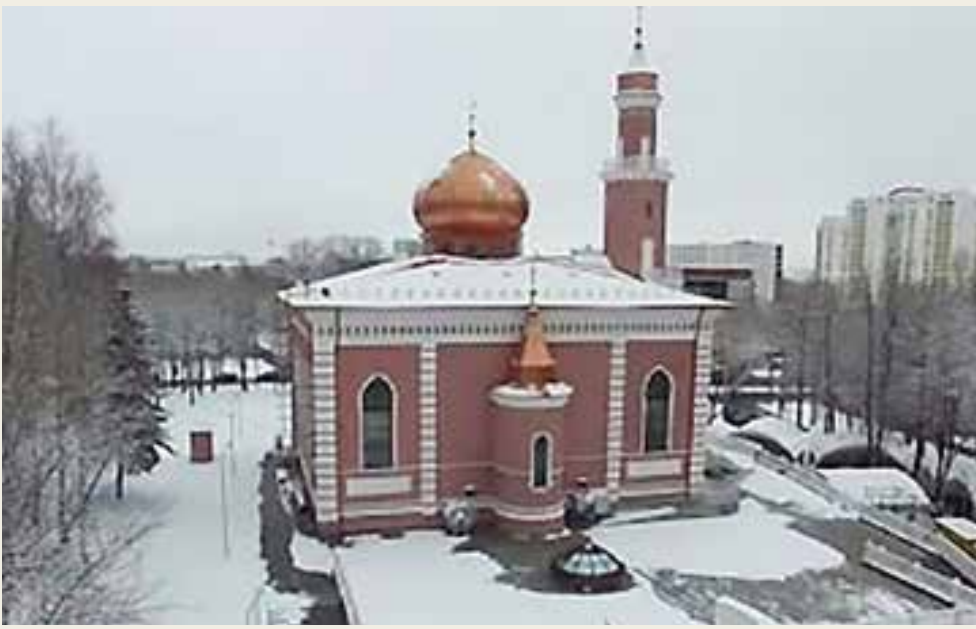
## Songbook Launched

We proudly announce Abdal Hakim Murad's new anthology of songs and poems in Arabic, Turkish and English, set to wonderful Celtic tunes for the benefit of the British Muslim community. Includes favourites such as 'Ey Aşık-ı Dildade' and 'Şükrederiz Hamdederiz'.



Available from 14 St Paul's Road Cambridge CB1 2EZ. Please enclose a cheque for £20 payable to 'Muslim Academic Trust', and state your postal address. This offer is available only to UK and EU residents.





## Diyanet Enables Belarus Mosque

CAMBRIDGE'S DIVERSE COMMUNITY includes Muslims from Belarus! We are delighted that our supporters at Diyanet have been able to complete the rebuilding of the magnificent Cathedral Mosque of Minsk, destroyed by the Communists in 1962. There have been Muslim communities in the East European country for seven hundred years, including the Lipka Muslims, famous for their scholarship and their poetry. The mosque director, Ebubekir-hazret Sabanowicz, is from the Lipka community.

## Five New Lights

THIS RAMADAN WE welcomed into Islam Neil, Leo, Mary, Tyra and Ivana. Our thanks to them for blessing us in this way. May the Lord give them light in their hearts. If you are a new Muslim in our area and would like to attend our regular convert meetings please contact the Cambridge Crescent by email: [info@cambridgecentralmosque.org](mailto:info@cambridgecentralmosque.org)



## WISDOM FROM ISTANBUL

We are selling an HD video lecture by American scholar Dr Walead Mosaad on 'Foundations of the Articles of Faith'. The lecture was recorded live at the historic Yenikapı Mevlevihanesi in Istanbul, and comes complete with famous Turkish spiritual songs by famous ilahi group Efrûz. All proceeds go to our mosque! Buy the DVD, or download from <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/24974/260113215>

## New Website Live

Although the Trust continues to update its historic website at [www.cambridgemosquetrust.org](http://www.cambridgemosquetrust.org) we have commemorated the beginning of prayers at the mosque by launching a brand-new website at: [www.cambridgecentralmosque.org](http://www.cambridgecentralmosque.org)



## FIRST ACADEMIC CONFERENCE

WE LIVE IN a University city and plan to be active hosts and participants in scholarly events. On 31 March our lecture room was used for the first time to host a conference entitled 'Green Theology: Emerging 21st Century Muslim and Christian Discourses on Ecology'. Speakers included Professor Christoph Schwöbel (University of St Andrews), Professor Sohaira Siddiqui (Georgetown University Qatar), Dr Monjed Murad (Harvard University), and Professor Ingrid Mattson (Huron University).



## Book a tour!

THANKS TO THE efforts of Gillian Herbert, Ela Moussa, Daniel Morris and our tireless team of guides we have already shown dozens of adult and school groups around our amazing building! To book a place on one of these expert tours visit <https://cambridgecentralmosque.org/guided-tours/>

## A DIVERSE UMMA!

The 2011 Census figures give a fascinating insight into the diversity of Muslims living in Cambridge. Here are some key statistics:

Ethnicity	Number of Muslims	Percentage
Asian/Asian British	2,894	59.1
White	531	10.84
Mixed	254	5.19
Black	188	3.84
Other	1,030	21.03

Analysis of the 'Other' category indicates the presence of 394 Iranians, 343 Turks, 128 Malaysians, 60 Afghans, and a very large number of smaller groups.





## Nikah and Janaza

TEN NIKAH CEREMONIES were held in the Mosque within six weeks of opening, with many more booked. We offer an attractive range of Nikah and reception packages: please contact us for further details!

The first Janaza (funeral) prayer was held on July 5, for Sister Deana Darke who sadly died at the young age of 21. Our condolences and prayers are with her parents.



## SOLAR ARRAY POWERED UP

THANKS TO THE generosity of Harlow-based firm Silicon CPV we have installed and commissioned an array of solar power cells on our roof! These installations are made in Pakistan to EU specifications and have been donated free of charge to our mosque! Silicon CPV are involved in sustainable technology projects in Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and elsewhere and are world-leaders in this fast-developing green technology.



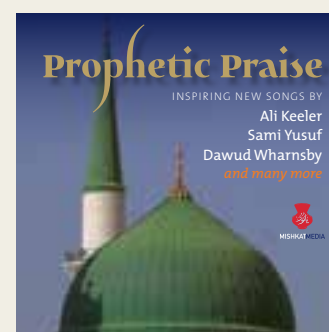
## MINBAR/MIHRAB APPEAL

THE MOSQUE IS not finished! During Ramadan we launched a £45,000 appeal for our Minbar and Mihrab elements! Many thanks to all who have contributed. Following a visit by the Master, Senior Tutor and Bursar of St Edmunds College, St Edmunds have promoted our appeal, raising significant donations from their staff. As always it is especially heartening to receive contributions from our non-Muslim friends.



## New Trustee

WE ARE DELIGHTED to welcome Dr Majid Henning Ruse-Khan to our Board of Trustees. Majid is Reader in International Property Law at the University of Cambridge, and a fellow of King's College. He has previously taught at universities in Germany, Malaysia and Pakistan.



## CD NOW AVAILABLE

LEADING VOCALISTS FROM around the world have been loving our project! Sami Yusuf, Dawud Wharnsby and many others have donated unique songs for our beautiful new album, which features recordings from Bosnia, Morocco, Pakistan, Malaysia, Turkey, Senegal, and elsewhere! The CD is available directly from us. Simply send a cheque for £10 payable to 'Cambridge Mosque Trust' to 14 St Paul's Road, Cambridge CB1 2EZ. Don't forget to include your full UK postal address! And don't worry, if you are not in the UK or if CDs still aren't your thing, then the album is still easily available on iTunes.



## MEDIA MANIA



“Marks Barfield is to be applauded for a truly sustainable, unique and thoughtful building that is true to Islam, true to Cambridge and also true to a peculiarly intelligent, confident and optimistic tradition of English architecture that harks back to Paxton’s Crystal Palace and also takes in many of the country’s best-ever architects. It is a fitting epilogue to the career of David Marks, who tragically did not live to see the completion of this quiet masterpiece.” ARCHITECTURE TODAY

“The new Cambridge mosque shifts the narrative of mosque architecture in Britain. Driven by an ambition of intercultural exchange and dialogue, it is the architecture of hope, and if it succeeds it may come to be seen as one of the most significant religious buildings in Britain of a generation.”

ROYAL INSTITUTE OF BRITISH ARCHITECTS JOURNAL

“It is beautifully built, and bravely and intelligently conceived.”

THE OBSERVER

“The timber ‘trees’ are magnificent, particularly when viewed as a set-piece within the main prayer hall and, on a smaller scale, in the atrium. They both frame and puncture the space, as if nature sprouting from the ground is reaching upwards to grasp the heavens – much as gothic arches formed giant arrows pointing up to God. The fact that each pier is topped with a glazed oculus that allows light to pour down onto the timber and space below adds to an almost celestial sense of spectacle and awe.”

BUILDING

\* The mosque is showcased in the Architecture Room at the Royal Academy’s Summer Exhibition for the second year running. This year’s entry by Marks Barfield takes the form of a video responding to the Exhibition’s theme for the year of ‘Sustainability’.

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## Hymn by Sultan Murad III

‘Uyan ey gözlerim gafletten uyan’

Wake from your heedlessness O my eyes awake  
Long you have slumbered so now my eyes awake  
Azrail’s intention is your soul to take.  
Wake from your heedlessness O my eyes awake  
Long you have slumbered so now my eyes awake.

Dawn hears the birds when early they stir and wake,  
Hear from their tongues all the sweet praises they make,  
Mountains and trees and the stones their worship make,  
Wake from your heedlessness O my eyes awake  
Long you have slumbered so now my eyes awake.

See how they open God’s heaven’s gates so wide,  
Raining his mercy as the faithful abide  
Robing with high honour those who sleep denied.  
Wake from your heedlessness O my eyes awake  
Long you have slumbered so now my eyes awake.

This world is not your home, soon it melts away.  
Even were all seven climes under your sway  
Throne and dominion and glory pass away  
Wake from your heedlessness O my eyes awake  
Long you have slumbered so now my eyes awake.

Here is Murad your slave, all his sins erase!  
Forgive his errors and all his burden raise,  
Raise him in the shade of Ahmad’s flag of praise.  
Wake from your heedlessness O my eyes awake  
Long you have slumbered so now my eyes awake.

TRANSLATED BY ABDAL HAKIM MURAD

## 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: GB31 MIDL 4016 0854 2982 09

Branch Identifier: MIDLGB2103J

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

