

CAMBRIDGE CENTRAL MOSQUE

NEWSLETTER

PROCLAIMING THE BEAUTY OF THE QUR'AN AND SUNNA



CELEBRATING THE HOLINESS OF AL-QUDS

THIS YEAR'S RECITATION of the Mi'rajīyya on Feb 7 was a record success! Ibrahim Hussain recited the Holy Qur'an and a Punjabi qasida by Mir Muhammad Bakhsh. Imam Mustafa Şahin recited a Turkish ilahi entitled 'The gates of the heavens were opened' in maqam Rast. The celebration recalled the great events in Jerusalem, as the Holy Prophet ﷺ prayed with the prophets of ancient times in perfect unity, before beginning his ascension to the Divine Presence in the company of the Angel Gabriel.*

*Bless the Chosen One, on the holy prayer-place
of Prophecy established!*

*Bless the Chosen One, set his foot upon
the stone that Solomon established.*

*Bless the Chosen One, circled round by spirits
of the Patriarchal sages,*

*Bless the Chosen One, blessed by all the
noblest heroes of the elder ages.*

*Bless the Chosen One, hope of all the ages
now in solemn adoration,*

*Bless the Chosen One, praying for the sorrows
of the world in adulation.*

*Bless the Chosen One, raising up his blessed
arms he calls on his Creator!*

*Bless the Chosen One, witness of the nations
and the story's arbitrator!*



MESSAGE FROM OUR NEW DIRECTOR!

Assalamu alaykum wa-rahmatullahi wa-barakatuh,
I extend my heartfelt greetings as the newly appointed Operations Director at Cambridge Central Mosque, joining in December 2023. Hailing from Woking, where I spent my entire life until two months ago, the warmth and embrace from the team and community in Cambridge have been truly humbling.

My professional journey primarily unfolds in Product Management, spanning from electronic components to water purification systems. However, my heart has always drawn me towards working with charities. Alongside my full-time roles, I spent some time as part of the Management

Committee at Shah Jahan Mosque (Britain's first purpose-built Mosque), played a role in Qalb Connection (an international aid charity); and I am serving as a Trustee at Woking Tigers (a Sports Club and community charity).

The decision to transition into a full-time role with a charity had been brewing within me for years. When I chanced upon the opportunity at Cambridge Central Mosque, it felt like a divine alignment – the perfect fit. The warmth extended to me during the interview process, coupled with the legacy left by the departing Director, Muhammad Ashraf, and the ongoing support from Trustees, Imams, staff, volunteers, and the community has been truly uplifting.

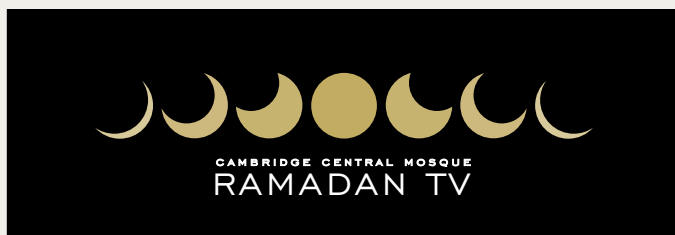
My vision for Cambridge Central Mosque is inspired by the foundation laid by predecessors. I am eager to build on the outstanding work here, fostering growth in our services and community outreach programs. Collaborating with our esteemed Imams, I aspire to expand our online and in-person content, ensuring the Mosque benefits as many people as possible.

My goal is to steer the Mosque towards serving the local and wider community efficiently.

Grateful for this opportunity granted by Allah SWT, I approach this role with a deep sense of responsibility. May my efforts align with the Mosque's needs, and may the entire team contribute positively to the community. Your prayers and ongoing support are invaluable as we embark on this journey together.

Keep us in your duas, and let's collectively contribute to the growth and well-being of our cherished Mosque!

With sincere appreciation and gratitude,
Fezaan Azam
Operations Director



RAMADAN TV IS LIVE

Our ever-popular 24-hour online TV station is back this Ramadan, with an enhanced range of inspirational Islamic programming for all the family. This year for the first time selected features will be advertised in advance at regular intervals through the sacred month. To watch Ramadan TV log on to the Cambridge Central Mosque website. As always this service is absolutely free and contains no advertising. Raise your spirits and increase your Islamic knowledge this year by tuning in to Ramadan TV!

Muhammad Ashraf steps down

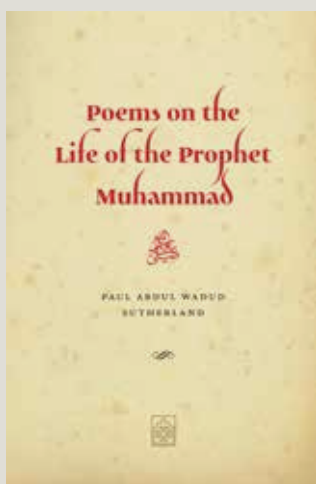
With a heavy heart we have learned that Muhammad Ashraf, who has served as Director of the mosque since March 2020, has stepped



down to pursue other charitable pursuits. At a farewell dinner we awarded him a beautifully bound copy of the Holy Qur'an as a token of our respect and gratitude for having worked without remuneration, steering the mosque through many initial challenges, and the complexities of operating during the Covid-19 pandemic. May Allah richly reward him and grant him and his family success in all their future endeavours.

FRIDAY PRAYERS

Please note that to accommodate our growing community we are now holding two Jumu'a prayers. The khutba of the first prayer is short, and the second is longer. Timings are given on the mosque website.



POEMS FOR RAMADAN

Our longstanding supporter Paul Abdulwadud Sutherland has published a collection of poems, all written during the holy month of Ramadan and dedicated to the theme of the Sira: the blessed life-story of the Holy Prophet. All proceeds from sales of this book go to our mosque!



Baraka Books!

Our mosque does not have a bookshop, but visitors can collect free copies of Muslim Book News, which showcases leading publications by Cambridge-based Islamic publishers, which can then be ordered online. Cambridge is a major hub for Muslim publishing, being the home of the Islamic Texts Society, CMC Press, the Quilliam Press, the Muslim Academic Trust, Lote Tree Press, and Equilibra Press.



TRAVELLING LIGHT LECTURES COMPLETED!

MUSLIMS TRAVELLED TO Cambridge from around the country to attend the final three lectures of the mammoth 40-lecture series entitled 'Travelling Light'. The series, which began production back in 2008 under the direction of producer/director Zakariya Whiteman, showcases leading Islamic speakers, Qur'an reciters and Nashid and Qasida singers from historic mosques around the world. The broadcast-quality series sets new standards in Islamic video production. All revenues from downloads of the lectures go to the Cambridge Central Mosque! The final three lectures were:

Dr Talal al-Azem: The Courtesies of Food

Dr Mariam Sheibani: Arranging Litanies and Dividing the Living Night

Shaykh Jubril Alao: The Courtesies of Marriage

The series offers a comprehensive education in the beliefs, practices and ethics of Islam. Episodes are available for download here: <https://mishkatmedia.com/travelling-light/>

Other shaykhs who have generously contributed lectures include Walead Mosaad, Hamza Yusuf, Abdal Hakim Murad, Abdul Latif Finch, Ibrahim Harvey, Hamza Wald Maqbul, Seraj Hendricks, Gibril Haddad, Muhammad Mendes, Samir Mahmoud, Sulayman Van Ael, Yahya Rhodus, and Idris Watts.

Superb cinematography with drone footage provides students with an awe-inspiring experience of the beauty of Muslim countries and the mosques and sacred spaces in which the lectures were given. See the Great Mosque of Bukhara from the air! Be inspired by the beauty of the Chinese lakeside mosque of Malacca! Discover the historic Sankoré and Djinguereber mosques of Timbuktu! Enjoy lectures delivered in the twelfth-century Alaeddin Mosque in Konya!

The eighty unique Islamic songs recorded especially for the series may also be downloaded from iTunes and Apple Music. Many thanks to all our vocalists, including Ali Keeler, Sami Yusuf, Zain Bhikha, and many more. Again, all proceeds from audio downloads go to the Cambridge Central Mosque.



CMT's first decade

Ten years have elapsed since the first prayers were held on the mosque site (above), long before construction began! Always we remember and pray for those generous souls in the Cambridge community and around the world who placed their confidence in us and donated so generously over the years.

Your Event in Our Mosque!

Do you want to book one of our rooms for a *Nikah*, *Shahada*, *Aqiqa*, or *Janaza* gathering? Or would you like to join one of our regular guided tours, led by experienced and knowledgeable guides? Log on to cambridgecentralmosque.org and check availability!

POLITICIAN OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to our congregant **Mohamed Dilo-war Hossain**, councillor for Kings Hedges ward, on being voted Cambridgeshire Politician of the Year!

Cambridge Festival at CMT

Join Drs Pettinato and El Yousfi from the University's Centre of Islamic Studies for informative talks that reveal how Muslims have traditionally approached the natural world and the natural sciences. See our website for details!



Visiting Inspirations

- Shaykh Qari Saad Nomani gave a demonstration of Qur'an recitation styles by famous past and present-day reciters.
- Shaykh Muhammad Yaqubi launched his translation of Imam al-Jazuli's *Dala'il al-Khayrat*.
- Shaykh Walead Mosaad, spoke on 'Realigning our Core'
- Shaykh Sohaib Webb delivered a *khutba*
- Shaykh Sohail Hanif spoke on 'Living for Umma'
- Shaykh Abdur-Rahman Mangera spoke on 'Ramadan with Family'
- Dr Mariam Sheibani spoke on 'Cultivating Prophetic Character'
- Hisham Abu Yusuf spoke on 'Unveiling the Divine'
- Arit Anderson presented our garden on BBC2's 'Gardeners World'



REMEMBERING A FORERUNNER

Pray for the soul of Choudhry Rahmat Ali (1897-1951). Born in Lahore, he spent most of his life in England, being called to the Bar at the Middle Temple.

A prominent supporter of Muslim rights, he is credited with inventing the name of the country that became 'Pakistan', in his 1933 'Pakistan Declaration,' written when he was a law student at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. He lived at 3 Humberstone Road and is buried in Cambridge City Cemetery.



DISASTER RELIEF DONATIONS SOAR

Following last year's tragic earthquake in Turkey our generous mosque community raised an impressive £179,394 in cash donations. We also supported Islamic Relief UK with a total of £77,645 for humanitarian aid in Libya, Morocco, Palestine and Afghanistan. May all our donors be rewarded with Jannatul Firdaws, inshaAllah.

HEALTH HUB

This has included a Women's Wellness Day, with free health checks, stalls and a keynote address from Dr Susanna Unsworth on perimenopause. We also held a Restart a Heart session, plus a popular Ramadan Wellness Workshop exploring the medical benefits and implications of the fasting month, and the concessions Islam grants for those with health issues.

New Muslim News

Last year we registered 205 conversions, an increase of more than a hundred over last year. Congratulations and welcome to all our new brothers and sisters! Our mosque works with local convert care group Cambridge Crescent to prepare inquirers for conversion, and to teach and support them once they have embraced Islam.

This Ramadan we are asking all our worshippers and visitors to ensure that new Muslims are made to feel especially welcome. It is a meritorious act to invite them for iftar and Eid celebrations in our homes. Remember that many of them will be fasting alone, without family support.



Brick Appeal builds up

The total raised for our mosque from the Buy a Brick Appeal now stands at £131,703.



Mill Road Winter Fair

A record number of visitors from the Cambridge community experienced the mosque during the ever-popular Mill Road Winter Fair this year. The programme featured guided tours, calligraphy workshops, drumming and henna art topped off with assorted tasty treats! Many thanks to all our volunteers and visitors!



Green Theology book arrives

In 2019 our Teaching Room was used for the very first time when a major academic conference held its concluding plenary session. Bringing together leading Christian and Muslim thinkers from around the world, the

event was convened by the Cambridge Muslim College, the Faculty of Protestant Theology in Tübingen (Germany), and the St Andrews Biblical Theological Institute in Moscow. Edited by Lejla Demiri, Mujadad Zaman and Tim Winter, the proceedings of the conference are slated for publication in April by German publishing house Mohr Siebeck, under the title *Green Theology: Emerging 21st Century Muslim and Christian Discourses on Ecology*.

AL-MIZAN COVENANT LAUNCHED

February 27 saw the formal launch of the Al-Mizan Covenant for the Earth, a declaration and programme of action endorsed by Muslim scholars worldwide which seeks to highlight and resist the negative environmental impact of materialism. Presiding over the launch was HE Leila Benali, president of the UN Environment Assembly. The declaration may be downloaded at almizan.earth

INDONESIA MOSQUE GOES GREEN!

The Istiqlal Mosque in Indonesia's capital of Jakarta has become the largest religious building in the world to be certified under the Excellence in Design for Greater Efficiencies (EDGE) protocol.

Built in 1978, the Istiqlal Mosque is the world's ninth-largest mosque, and has a capacity of two hundred thousand worshippers. Like the Cambridge Mosque, it contains twelve pillars, which in Indonesian tradition represent the 12th day of the month of Rabi al-Awwal, the birthday of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It has a grand fountain, which by tradition operates only during Friday prayers and the Two Eids.

Work on greening the Istiqlal Mosque began in 2021, with plans for a comprehensive retrofit. The programme included the use of reflective paint on the building's exterior and roof to reduce radiant heat absorption. Inside, energy-efficient lighting controlled by smart meters is coupled with photovoltaic arrays which cover much of the building's exterior. Water savings of 36 percent have been achieved through the installation of efficient taps and grey water recycling.

Ramadan: Lessons of the Great Fast

OUR MAIN FORMS of worship (*ibada*) are structured to help us achieve transformation. The processes of the hajj, with their preliminaries, trials and culmination, are an obvious example. The Hajj is, at its most basic, the *ihram*, the *tawaf*, and Arafat – three stages of conversion leading to the profound pleas for forgiveness on the slopes of the Mount of Mercy. The Prayer, too, is structured similarly: essentially it is the standing, the bowing, and the prostration: the latter representing the ultimate form of repentance and closeness.

Ramadan seems to have a similar threefold structure. We pass through ten days of mercy; ten days of forgiveness, and then liberation from hellfire. Of course, formally nothing changes; and inwardly, different Muslims are likely to stand at different points on their journey. Still, the believer's experience is to be that of a progressive spiralling-in to the centre, where the divine Presence is to be found. One could say: Acceptance, Absolution, and Liberation. In every sacred tradition, these are the three basic waystations. And we recall, critically, that they are all gifts, they are never of our own making or earning.

So we could say that Ramadan is a way of waking up. Ego (*nafs*) veils us from reality: our own reality and that of other people. How can we truly engage with someone else if our minds are busy trying to convey a good impression, or tempting us to find fault with the person we are talking to? The *nafs*, deep within us, is also outside ourselves, obscuring our sight. When the *nafs* is ruling us, we are wearing very dark spectacles. Sometimes we may not see the other person's humanity at all.

A shame, this, because other people are interesting; in fact, one of the few things that one never tires of is the miracle of human consciousness. The world is only superficially made of objects. Really, what matters about it is the galaxy

of autonomous souls, like points of light dotted around the darkness of oblivion. We will only be given that vision if we are alert to the true and miraculous humanity of others.

Waking up to Allah means leaving ego behind. So it means gaining the ability to see other people. Moder-



nity is so often about massaging the ego that we lose the capacity really to empathise. Many cruel wars in our time represent examples of where this can go.

Scrolling is, regrettably, a widespread Ramadan habit. It gives us an out-of-body experience: we are transported into a world of cybernetic fantasies, where the ego presides; and hence we forget our hunger and thirst. But anaesthesia is not in any way a proper response to the fast. Online entertainment is always a kind of narcosis, run by cynics who wish to hypnotise us into buying and thinking things.

Instead, we need to accept the fast as a *junna*, or protective suit of armour, as is specified in a Bukhari hadith. Ours is a world of overconsumption. We need to learn restraint; and religion is the best teacher of this. Once we can set

aside our immediate bodily wants, we can learn what it is to master ourselves, rather than be mastered by our lower impulses. Through that mastery we experience freedom from the most powerful chains of all: the lower passions.

That's why a hadith tells us that Ramadan is the month in which the devils are chained. We are no longer the toys of our instincts. More, feeling the bodily consequences of controlling our desires, we learn empathy for those less fortunate than ourselves. In our time there is huge overconsumption, obesity, diabetes, and diet regimes; but in our time also there are parents who watch their children die of hunger. Hearing of such tragedies is not as effective as feeling hunger and thirst ourselves.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ loved the poor, and lived as one of them. No coin would spend the night in his house. He was, as one of his Companions said, 'the most generous of men; and was at his most generous in Ramadan.' Here we find another dimension of the fasting month. By learning patience (*sabr*), we learn gratitude (*shukr*), which we are fortunate to taste at the time of breaking the fast. And that gratitude allows us to offer something back. However little the charity we give, it is great in Allah's sight, and in the holy month of Ramadan it is multiplied,

So Ramadan is a time of offering ourselves. We do this in tarawih, in our eating habits, and in our finances. By doing this we learn that what we have is not in any case truly ours. Every cell in our bodies is a gift from Allah. He is 'Lord of the Worlds' (*Rabb al-alamin*); He is 'the Rich' (*al-Ghani*), and we are the poor and needy of Him (*al-fuqara*'). In Ramadan we enhance our consciousness of this dependence; ironically by giving more. Thus we learn the truth about ourselves: creation belongs to Allah, without exception, and we are called to give everything that we have, in submission and Islam, back to Him.

Hadiths on Fasting

'Fasting is half of patient endurance (sabr).' (Tirmidhi)

'Every good deed attracts the reward of ten the like thereof, up to seven hundred-fold; except for fasting, for it is Mine, and I Myself reward it.' (Bukhari and Muslim)

'The Garden has a gate called al-Rayyan, which is entered only by the fasters.' (Bukhari and Muslim)

'The fasting person has two joys: a joy when he breaks his fast, and a joy when he meets his Lord.' (Bukhari and Muslim)

'When the month of Ramadan enters, the

Garden's gates are opened and Hell's gates are locked, and the devils are chained up. A herald calls out: Seeker of good: come! And seeker of evil, desist!' (Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah)

'The devil flows as the blood in the son of Adam, so tighten his ways with hunger.' (Bukhari and Muslim)

Some Useful Rules of Fasting (Hanafi Madhhab)

1. Lying, swearing, backbiting, distressing parents, and committing other sins do not break the fast but greatly reduce its blessings.
2. Eating or drinking forgetfully does not break the fast if one does not swallow anything after remembering the fast.
3. The Ramadan fast requires a vocalised or silent *niyya* intention to fast which must be made any time from Maghrib on the previous day until halfway between Fajr and Maghrib on the actual day of the fast. Strongly expecting to fast is considered a valid *niyya*.
4. Waking up for the predawn meal is Sunna but is not compulsory. Someone who misses it must make the intention to fast before a point halfway between Fajr and Maghrib.
5. Exercise in the gym or strenuous work which causes extreme hunger and thirst is disliked and should be avoided.
6. Gargling and sniffing water in the nose excessively is disliked and if it is

swallowed the fast breaks.

7. Vomiting a mouthful breaks one's fast if it was a mouthful and brought out deliberately.

8. Eating, drinking, and sexual intercourse break the fast.

9. Smoking a cigarette, vaping or using a sheesha breaks the fast.

10. The fast is not broken by inhaling smoke, dust or smells which are present in the air.

11. Injections should be avoided where possible but do not break the fast.

12. The fast is not broken by giving a blood sample.

13. The fast is not broken by rubbing oil, lotion or cream on the body.

14. Hijama (cupping) does not break the fast.

15. Removing hair or nails does not break the fast.

16. Use of kohl (*surma*) in the eyes does not break the fast.

17. Putting oil or medicine in the ear or using eye drops should be avoided during fasting.

18. A traveller is allowed to miss the fast only if he or she set off for the journey

before the fast started.

19. A sick person who cannot fast long days in summer but is able to fast on short winter days must make up the missed days in winter.

20. It is permitted to break the fast if one genuinely fears falling sick because of the fast, fears a worsening of one's illness, or fears a delay in recovering from one's illness. If one breaks the fast in this case, it must be made-up later.

21. A person who is terminally ill, in intensive care or extremely old and cannot fast, must give £5 Fidyah to the poor for every missed fast.

22. When a traveller becomes a resident or a sick person recovers they must make up the missed fasts. This need not be done immediately.

23. Pregnant and breastfeeding women who fear hardship are not required to fast but must make up the missed days later.

24. A menstruating woman does not fast but must make up the missed days later.

25. Taking exams is not an excuse to break the fast.

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

CREDIT AND DEBIT CARDS:

<https://www.justgiving.com/muslimacademic>

Post one-off cash/cheques made payable to:

"THE CAMBRIDGE MOSQUE TRUST"

309-313 Mill Road,
Cambridge CB1 3DF

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