

MOSQUE AND MADRASSAH QUARTERLY

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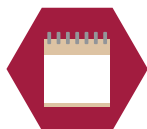
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MM Quarterly Editorial

We begin in the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful and we send our salutations upon the final messenger Muhammad (saw).



I welcome you all to this latest edition of the **Mosque and Madrassah Quarterly**. I start by wishing you all a happy and prosperous **Ramadan**. This blessed month has arrived once again and for those of us fortunate to partake in it, it is important that we use this month to reflect on our lives and resolve to change for the better moving forward. We must make the most of Allah's mercy in this month and remember those less fortunate than us all around the world. We must make sincere prayers for the safety, security and wellbeing of our brothers and sisters wherever they may be.



The last year of Faith Associates activity has seen a significant growth in our activities. Our support of Mosques and Madrassah has been steadily increasing al hamduillah with course attendance increasing especially on Madrassah management, Safeguarding and Mosque governance. Our ground breaking initiative of **ImamsOnline.com** has seen significant progress through its social media following and activities. The vision for Imams Online has been to promote positive Islam from credible voices via the digital space. It is clear to see that the Muslim youth of today are going online to access their Islam. As the #ImamsOnline Digital Summit, held in March of 2015 showed, the focus now for imams and scholars is to learn and understand the mindset of the youth and formulate ideas and engagements to communicate at the same level and on the same platforms.



In today's increasingly turbulent world, the role of **Imams and Scholars** has become even more crucial. The balancing act for Imams and Scholars now is to amalgamate traditional Islamic learning with contemporary avenues of engagement. As always, ImamsOnline

continues to facilitate the development of Islamic Leadership in the UK.



In April 2015, the Imams Online team were invited to attend the second annual annual Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies conference held in Abu Dhabi. The Forum, headed by Shaykh Abdallah bin Bayyah, brought together Islamic leaders from across Europe, the Middle East and South Asia to discuss the need for critical evaluation of extremist mindsets and to formulate a call to action in restructuring the narrative. The conference had a particular focus on the harmful nature of 'takfiri' mindsets and discussed the best way to tackle this catalyst of modern day extremist movements.



This Ramadan also sees the launch of Mosquelftar.com. This initiative follows on from the engagements of Iftar 2012, 2013 & 2014 and focuses on the need to open up our mosques for the wider non-Muslim community and share an Iftar meal with them. The initiative looks to encourage Mosques around the UK to hold community focussed Iftars as a way of showcasing Islamic institutions as being open and welcoming to all.



For advice on Mosque and Madrassah management, information on Faith Associates activities and engagements or to get involved with our work visit our website (www.faithassociates.co.uk) or contact us at info@faithassociates.co.uk.

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Faith Associates Empowering Communities, Building Standards
Serving Mosques, Madrassah and Imams for over **15 years**.

Mosque Iftar



Mosque Iftar will bring the **community together** during the month of **Ramadan**. The Mosque should be more than a place people come just to pray. It should be the hub of the community. Having an Iftar at the Mosque, inviting people of all faith and no faith to experience the unity of breaking the fast is a beautiful experience. Hosting a Mosque Iftar can build relationships with the community. Opening the doors of the Mosque during this special time will show positive Islamic behaviour, openness and kindness.

Supporting your Mosque, Promoting your great work.

The **Mosque Iftar** team can help Mosques & individuals host an Iftar during the holy month of Ramadan. The team have been involved in facilitating Iftar's since **2012**, **working with 100's of Mosques, local authorities & Olympic teams during the 2012 London Olympics**. The Mosque Iftar website is an easy platform for Mosques to promote their Iftars.



For more information on how to be involved with this project, visit our website at www.mosqueiftar.com. Be sure to follow us on Twitter



@MosqueIftar

like us on Facebook. To send us information, images and videos from Iftars you will be holding this month, contact us on



admin@mosqueiftar.com

#ImamsOnline Digital Summit 2015, London

By Furqan Ali

Managing Editor, Imams Online



Imams Online successfully held its inaugural **#ImamsOnline Digital Summit** on the 26th of March, 2015 in London, UK. The Summit brought together over **150 Imams, Scholars and Aalimahs** from the **UK, Europe, Middle East and the US** that represented various denominations and schools of thought, in an effort to revisit and better understand the theological narrative behind extremism and rationalise the need for Islamic Leadership to be active and engaged on the digital space.

Imams Online was honoured to host eminent scholars **Shaykh Abdallah Bin Bayyah (UAE)** and **Shaykh Hazma Yusuf (USA)** who kindly accepted the invitation to attend and imparted their wisdom and

expertise in the field of theology, socio-politics and education. The underlying premise of the Summit focussed on the need to understand the flawed reasoning of extremist ideologies through a revision of traditional Islamic thought and to encourage a new generation of Muslim thought leadership to be innovative in their methods of communication in order to maintain their authority as religious leaders.



The Summit saw a speech delivered by **RUSI's (Royal Unites Services Institutes)** Research Fellow for Middle East studies, Michael Stephens who provided an independent situational analysis of the current conflict in Iraq and Syria. He offered insights into how ISIL and other terror groups in the region use social media and the internet as a key tool to disseminate propaganda.

An extended keynote address from **Shaykh Hamza Yusuf** focussed on the notion of radicalisation in the UK and European context. He imparted much needed practical advice for Muslim leadership in the UK. He focussed on the need to



conceptualise the approach of **Shaykh Abdallah Bin Bayyah** and its critical relevance in addressing the narrative of violent religious extremists. He outlined what needs be done for the promotion of peace and mercy at a global theological level that addresses the schisms and ideologies that are permeating our societies. He ended with a focus on the need to come to an understanding of how we can all be part of the solution: locally, nationally and internationally both within our religious communities and between neighbouring non-Muslim communities.

The Summit also saw the launch of the digital magazine '**Haqiqah**' (The Reality). This unique initiative, produced and endorsed by leading UK scholars, launched as a direct

response to the content produced by extremists groups such as ISIS, who use their material to radicalise young Muslims. As is quoted in the magazine's editorial, the likes of ISIS, Al-Qaeda and Al-Shabbab have, for too long, hijacked the right to inform. **Haqiqah provides our British Imams and scholars a platform to educate, inform and guide young Muslims on the right path.** The content in this magazine looks to tip the balance back in their favour. The Scholars in this magazine have stood up and taken responsibility to present the correct, informed and educated interpretations of the Qur'an and Sunnah as the only legitimate way of counteracting evil and immoral mindsets.

Overall the response from the

attendees was positive. The coming together of Imams, Scholars and Aalimhs from across the UK served as an opportunity to share ideas, learn from different experiences and make a conscious resolution to work together moving forward. The Imams Online project will continue to support the positive work Islamic leaders do across the country and are here to help in the development and training of future generations of Islamic thought leaders.



Like, Share, comment

✉ www.imamsonline.com

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An Act of Faith

Nick Donaldson, Outreach manager at the charity commission



To many charities, the contribution of Zakat is vital: without it a great number of vital projects across communities in the UK and around the world would not be possible. This Ramadan, British Muslims will once again give very generously to many varied charitable appeals and, although the majority are

genuine, some people will set out to fraudulently collect donations for non-charitable and even criminal purposes, depriving those that need them most.

The Charity Commission is urging people to give safely and make sure they know how their Zakat will be used. We are also urging Mosque trustees, who have responsibility for authorising charitable fundraisers to raise money on their premises during Ramadan, to ensure that such appeals are on behalf of legitimate charities. You can do this by making a few simple checks:

Tips for Mosques running charitable collections during Ramadan:



If another English or Welsh charity wishes to conduct an appeal at your mosque, or you wish to collect on their behalf, check whether they are registered – you can find details of all registered charities on the Charity Commission's website www.gov.uk/charity-commission (click on 'Find Charities – search the Charity Register').



Even if they are registered, satisfy yourselves that they are a legitimate charity by asking questions about how the funds raised will ultimately be used. Check their website and any other relevant sources, such as their references, for further information about how they have used funds raised in the past.



Such checks are also very important where fundraisers from overseas want to raise money on your premises, and can be more difficult to undertake. Check that the overseas charity is registered with any relevant overseas regulators, ask to see references and evidence of previous projects they have undertaken, and look out for suspicious signs, such as a lack of clarity on how the money raised will ultimately be used.



Collection boxes should be sealed before use so that it is apparent if they have been opened before they are returned.



After the appeal, obtain information to satisfy yourselves that the money has been spent for the purposes it was raised. It is good practice to provide feedback on how the funds have been used (for example, via a noticeboard).



If you are raising/holding money in cash



Ramadan collections often generate significant cash donations. Trustees should ensure that cash received is properly counted, kept securely, and banked quickly. The money should then be issued to the fundraiser's charity via formal banking methods, such as cheque or bank transfer.



Trustees should obtain receipts for cash payments to other charities and these should be promptly recorded in the accounting records.



If cash is kept on the premises overnight, it should be kept securely in a safe or locked box. Trustees should consider obtaining adequate insurance cover for cash which is held on the premises.



For more information on fundraising, including links to other relevant sources of information, see our guidance 'CC20 – Charities and Fundraising'. Type CC20 into the search engine on our website at www.gov.uk/charity-commission

Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies, Abu Dhabi, 2015

By Dr Qari Muhammad Asim, MBE

Senior Editor ImamsOnline.

Senior Imam - Makkah Mosque, Leeds

Twitter: @QariAsim

Introduction

British Imams attended the second annual Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies ("**Forum**"), which was held in spring this year in Abu Dhabi.

More than 400 Muslim scholars —belonging to different races and countries, speaking different native languages, having different backgrounds and wearing different national dress of varying colours -gathered to show their deep concern at the lack of peace in contemporary Muslim societies throughout the globe.

The Forum was held under the leadership of Shaykh Abdullah bin who is recognized from the Muslim world to the White House, from contemporary scholars to ordinary Muslims. Shaykh Abdallah serves Muslims as a judicious and astute role model, particularly Muslim youth, who may too easily be swayed by the allure of extremist ideologies.

Imams' stance on Extremism

Islamic scholars have unequivocally condemned violent extremism and have demonstrated, through the medium of the **Glorious Qur'an** and ahadith, that the violent actions of groups like **ISIS, Al-Qaeda, The Taliban and al-Shabab** are clearly neither supported by the Islamic scripture nor the Islamic tradition.

The President of the Forum, **Shaykh bin Bayyah**, opened the Forum with the remarks that undoubtedly the last 12 months had been extremely troubling for Muslims. He said that it was this increase in political violence in the Muslim world which demanded that "**we must declare war on war so that the outcome is peace upon peace**" to extinguish the flames of violence, to rescue those who are engulfed in conflicts, and to deescalate tensions throughout the Muslim world.

The responsibility of the scholars and religious authorities at this time in particular is to protect life. No sane person can remain indifferent



to the loss of life and suffering in the Muslim world. What then of those who have pledged to God that they will do their part to set the world right, asks Shaykh bin Bayyah. **Armed Jihad was undertaken by the Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) to bring peace to the world, not to destroy the lives and properties of the inhabitants of the world.**

Revival of the Faith

Leading scholars from across the world spoke at the Forum regarding building peace and forming a unified front against the scourge of extremist ideologies, sectarianism and terrorism that has afflicted the Muslim world for some time now. This is the time for

introspection. **Reviving Fiqh** (Islamic science) is no longer an option, but rather a "**life buoy**" to stop indiscriminate applications of past-time fatwas or excommunication by extremist groups, said the grand imam of Al Azhar, Sahykh Ahmed al Tayeb.

"Renewal is fundamental in the Islamic religion, which is based on constantly linking between religious texts, the purpose of these texts and the current living reality," said **Shaykh Abdullah bin Bayyah**. Shaykh Hamza Yusuf emphasised that the revelation must not be used without its appropriate context.

It is important to get back to Islam's original inspiration - of love, compassion, moderation justice, co-existence- was one of clear messages of the Forum.



Traditional to Digital

One aspect of the Forum was considering and formulating strategies to engage audiences in the digital space. The world is changing at a speed we could never have imagined before. **15-20 years ago**, we did not carry phones with us and now we cannot even conceive of a world without smart phones and social networking. Social media is helping shape the world's events and culture. From the Arab Spring to the global Occupy movement, individuals and groups are more engaged and empowered than ever before. Whilst ever-growing preeminence of social media – especially on mobile computing devices like smart phones– has brought religion back into the daily lives of many, it has also challenged religious leadership and institutions to revive notions of spiritual guidance and identity extremism in both online and off-line. The extremists are using digital space increasingly to outpace traditional religious authority and governments.

Haqqathon

On the sidelines of the Forum, Haqqathon facilitated by an incubator AffinsLabs, took place. **"Haqqathon"** – the first ever hackathon with Muslim scholars was aimed to create new ways for Muslim scholars to connect with young Muslims online and, by doing so, defuse violent extremism. The critical need for something like the haqqathon is clear.

The participants of the haqqathon, included entrepreneurs, IT consultants, imams, journalists, psychologists and others. The passionate and energetic participants split into five teams and explored various factors that lead to young people falling into extremism. Among the other pressing topics that were brought up by the participants was the lack of proper sex education, if any at all, in Muslim households, citizenship, integration, Islamophobia and Islamic education not being presented in an accessible and relevant manner.

Five teams competed over two and a half days for funding to get their project up and running. The teams produced innovative and dynamic ideas to develop a connection between scholars and the grassroots in the digital world. Some of those ideas will be invested into and incubated until an actual end product is developed. Clearly, initiatives like Haqqathon will not banish ISIS from the internet anytime soon but it is a pertinent step towards bridging the gap between Imams and young people on social media.

Conclusion

Engagement, rather than protest should be the approach of Muslims in the current political climate. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) signed the **treaty of Hudaibiyah** with his oppressors to bring peace between the oppressors and the oppressed.

The Forum pleaded for unity for the sake of future generations; it urged religious leadership to put an end to puritanism, sectarianism and the practice of takfir (one Muslim declaring another Muslim an unbeliever). The construction of the Ummah is dissolving and the absence of visionary and tolerant leadership is a concern.

The political ideology -- of using terror as a weapon -- to avenge a history, to settle grievances and to assert power through violence is alien to Islam. The Forum's view was that extremism is a cancer that is destroying the Muslim community (Ummah). It is preventing peace and stability amongst the Muslims. "Wars begin in the minds of men, so we must build castles of peace in people's minds", maintains the President of the Forum.

New publications from Faith Associates

2nd Editions coming shortly



Madrasah support website and Quality Framework to be launch shortly



www.madrassah.co.uk

Contact Faith Associates on
info@faithassociates.co.uk
for more information

Mosque and Madrassah Safeguarding support team



Faith Associates has setup a new Mosque and Madrassah Safeguarding support team. Following consultation and review of various Mosque and Madrassah systems, Faith Associates are happy to announce the establishment of a dedicated Safeguarding support team for Mosque and Madrassah Trustees, Imams, teachers and volunteers. If you require safeguarding training, DBS checks, policies and procedures or general advice on management and service delivery then call Faith Associates on 01494 416202

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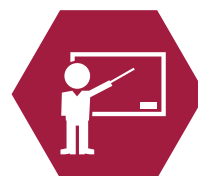
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