

MOSQUE AND MADRASSAH QUARTERLY

BUILDING STANDARDS, INSPIRING THE FUTURE | 2013 ISSUE 1 Q2



IN THIS ISSUE:

- BEACON MOSQUE AL MADINA
- IMAMS VOICE
- RAMADAN CALLS PUT OUT THE FIRE
- SAFER GIVING CHARITY COMMISSION
- ENGLISH TEA WINS IN YORK
- JEWISH SYNAGOGUE AND MUSLIM FRIENDS

faith
ASSOCIATES

- ▶ Beacon Mosque Al Madina
- ▶ Imams Voice
- ▶ Ramadan Calls Put out the fire
- ▶ Safer Giving Charity Commission
- ▶ English Tea wins in York
- ▶ Jewish Synagogue and Muslim Friends

Shaukat Warraich
Editor

Sahar Zahid
Contributing
Editor –
Women's Affairs

Qari Mohammed Asim
Contributing
Editor –
Imam's Affairs

Rashid Laher
Contributing
Editor –
Senior Citizens

Contact details:

Email:
info@faithassociates.co.uk



Faith Associates

Website:
www.faithassociates.co.uk



Beacon Mosque – Al Madina Mosque Barking, London

In 1988 having acquired some marshland in Victoria Road, Barking, the now Barking Muslims Association (BMA) began construction on the first phase of a mosque project.

However, before this could happen £175,000 was spent transforming the land into one capable of holding a substantial sized building. The contract for the main mosque hall came in at £800,000 and over a period of several years this was financed completely by donations from local Muslims. In 1998 phase 2 of the expansion of the site was completed and now can house 3000 worshiper. In 1998 the Barking Muslims Association was dissolved and a Charitable Trust was created which today

administers the Al Madina Masjid.

Recent growth of the Muslim communities in barking especially by Bengali, Arab, Pathan, Somali and Turkish communities is reflected in its congregation. A large group of users are youth and recent years have seen an increase in use by women. Recently Phase 3 has been completed which included a purpose built primary school and community centre on the site. 2013 the Mosque complex can cater for 5000 worshippers for Jummah.

The trustees all hold the view that the mosque plays a pivotal role in the community and acts as a gravitational pull for Muslims whether they are religiously observant or not, therefore, the scope

for additional activity and related services within the mosque compound have been established. All faiths and citizens of no faith have found a space in Al Medina and the leadership aggressively works for excellence and has push forward in providing services that the community aspires for.

The Mosque provides over 20 services including Yoga, Football clubs for all ages, counseling, tuition classed to name but a few. To find out more please contact Mr Ashfaq Siddique (Trustee and Secretary) email : ashfaq@ashfaqsiddique.wanadoo.co.uk Al Medina - 2 Victoria Road, Barking, Essex, London
www.barkingmosque.org



Mosque, Imam, Interfaith friends and the power of English tea

Following the tragic incidents in Woolwich, the Muslim community throughout the country were in fear of reprisals and attacks. Some of these fears were realised when in certain parts of the country, one as close to our home in Grimsby (North East England) came under attack.

Having recently made the local news in York already for gaining planning approval for our new Mosque to be built on our current site, there was already some tension in the city. We know misunderstandings of the Muslim community were high; hence it was our duty to engage with the wider community in the city. Our outreach efforts started long before 26th May 2013, when members of the English

Defence League (EDL) turned up at our door to protest. We have often invited the local community to the Mosque, we opened our doors and we let our neighbours come in. We have held several events where any member of the community could come and participate including Mosque open days and annual awards ceremonies for children attending the Madrassah.

This is why, that Sunday morning, over 150 people from the local White, Black and Asian British community, people of faith and no faith came to the Mosque, placards in hand, smiles on their faces and unity in their hearts. They knew who we were, what we stood for and that we were just as much a part of the York community as they were.

We didn't call, text or post on Facebook asking for support. They contacted us. They told us that a protest was being planned. Most humbling of all, they asked if they could come and support us.

When the EDL protestors arrived at our gates, they must have been shocked. They stood in silence with their Union Jack flags and eventually following some polite interaction, we invited them in to our Mosque. We asked what their quarrel was and dispelled the misconceptions they had about our Mosque, Muslims in York and Islam generally. In the end, they realised that they had nothing to protest about, since we were not in support of what happened in Woolwich, nor did we live up

to the other stereotypes they had been misinformed about.

What this incident made us realise, was that it is our duty and an obligation especially for our future generations to engage and dispel misunderstand not only of our Mosques but the Muslim community. This will not be an easy task but we cannot shy away from it. Long gone are the days when we can live and work in isolation. We are grateful to our multi faith community and open minded citizens of York who have shown their generosity and support during these challenging times.

**Reflections of Zia Salik
(Brother of York Mosque Imam)**

Putting out the fire – Reflection post Woolwich

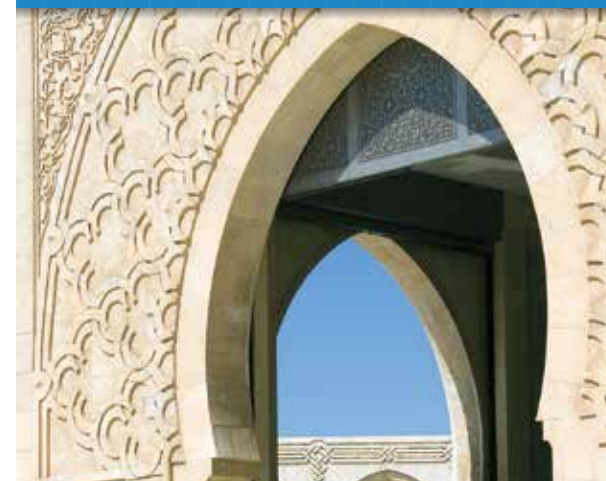
British Mosques are the symbols of Islam and the British Muslim community, and there was an inevitability about the reported attacks of these community built institutions following the barbaric murder of Lee Rigby in the streets of Woolwich, London. However the resilience and steadfastness shown by the British people to protect and defend these institutions, in light of these provocations, is a testament to the tight and mutual respect for all faiths and for their places of worship. The Prime Minister, David Cameron said in a statement following the murder, "The people who did this were trying to divide us. They should know something like this will only bring us together, make us stronger." I feel he was correct in his assessment.

The support shown by all sections of the British community, irrespective of faith to protect and defend Mosques and Muslim institutions around the UK, has been heartening and reassuring. Jewish, Sikh and Christian leaders have held vigils with fellow worshipers and patrolled streets around Mosques in a show of unity in London and other cities around the UK.

Mosque leaders will need to reflect on their role within western societies, as well as the unique position the mosque should play in an austere world. Openness, transparency and a willingness to confront internal and external challenges will be the hallmark of visionary leaders and beacon centres.

MOSQUES, ISLAMIC CENTRES & MADRASSAH SECURITY & SAFETY TIPS

**faith
ASSOCIATES**



Shaukat Warraich (Editor)

Email shaukatw@faithassociates.co.uk – He is currently the CEO of Faith Associates and the author of number of publications on Mosques and Madrassah.



ECO MOSQUE
www.ecomosque.com

"The worshippers of Allah are they who tread gently upon the earth Quran" s25 v63

Eco Mosque helping Islamic Centres, Mosques and Madrassah to reduce their energy bills and running costs.

Reduce your bills and SAVE MONEY



Water Bill



Electric Bill

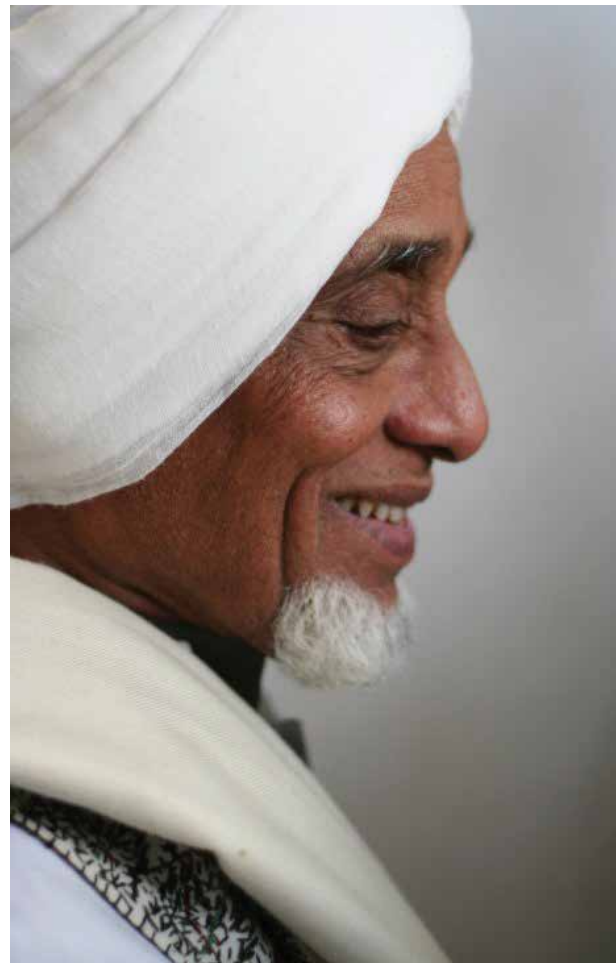


Gas Bill



CALL ON 0203 137 7799

Ramadan Month of Engagement



by **Qari Muhammad Asim**
Chief Imam Makkah Masjid
 Leeds Email:
qmasim@yahoo.co.uk

Fasting is one of the pillars of Islam and every year Muslims fast for a month to detox their bodies and to purify their hearts and souls. Fasting is an act of worship which is designed to bring believers closer to Allah and to rediscover and re-direct themselves and teach themselves self-discipline.

Ramadan is also a time of giving, of charity, of sharing, of engaging, of remembering those in need and reaching out. In keeping with the spirit of the month of Ramadan, mosques should make use of the opportunity to engage with young people and reach out to other communities

during this month.

Feeding Communities

One of the ways in which mosques can bring different communities together is by serving food to all at the time of Iftar throughout the month. The Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) says: "O people, spread Salam (peace), feed food, maintain your kin relationships, and pray at night while others are asleep. With this, you shall enter Heaven in peace." [Bukhari]

The purpose of this community Iftar is for people to share a meal together, get to know each other and celebrate shared common values. The inter-communities Iftar provides an opportunity for people of faith and no faith,

who may otherwise never visit a mosque, to come through the mosque doors and experience for themselves what mosques are like from the inside, as well as enjoy the art work displayed inside mosque buildings. Such meetings of 'getting to know each other' inevitably help break down some of the barriers between different communities and enhance inter-community relations. They also serve the purpose of enabling people to get to know the true teachings of Islam and the universal values that are central to the religion, such as justice, tolerance, respect, compassion and peace.

Social Action

Ramadan is also a time when mosques are filled with young people. Young people are willing and keen to serve their faith by contributing to their local mosque. The keenness and energy of young Muslim volunteers can be positively channelled by the mosques introducing new initiatives that engage them and capture their interests and imaginations.

The aim of these initiatives would be to inspire the youth to be agents for change and make a difference in the environment that they live in. The initiatives may be distributing hampers to those less fortunate in the locality, visiting elderly in care homes, working together to pick up litter from the streets, or campaigning, in a wise and effective manner against social ills, such as drugs and pornography, or helping to regenerate local areas or some other initiatives that bring joy into the lives of others and reduce hardship in the locality.

Engagement with the youth

Ramadan is also a season of engagement with youth for mosques and Imams. Many

young people see the role of mosques as simply a place for ritual prayers. They want to see mosques as dynamic and vibrant institution that are in touch with the challenges faced by young people. Young people expect mosques to hold surgeries or specific study circles, discussing some of the 'sensitive' topics affecting British Muslims and providing practical and pragmatic spiritual guidance. The 'surgeries'/ study circles could be used for a number of purposes; for instance as a forum in which people have the opportunity to talk and discuss marriage problems with the Imam, mufti or other qualified person. Other possible topics for discussion include identity, citizenship, anti-social behaviour, marriage, parenting, drugs, alcohol abuse, estrangement, low self-esteem and extremism. There is no better time than the month of Ramadan to engage young Muslims and the mosques should make the most of this opportunity.

These study circles would also provide an ideal opportunity for an Imam, who might otherwise be cushioned from some of the realities of the every-day lives of young British Muslims, to learn more about the issues facing young people today. At the same time, these type of 'surgeries' would prove a genuine source for generating practical ideas to improve the mosques themselves.

Feeding 2012 People

Realising the opportunities that the month of Ramadan presents, last year in line with the Jubilee Celebrations and the London 2012 Olympics, Leeds Makkah Masjid aimed to serve 2012 people throughout the month of Ramadan. The Muslim community of Leeds donated generously towards this goal, in terms of their finances and time.



On this occasion Makkah Masjid opened its door to all citizens of Leeds and invited everyone to Iftar dinners. The beneficiaries of this community Iftar meal included Muslims and non-Muslims and people of all backgrounds and all ages – men, women and children, University students, youth groups, interfaith delegations, labourers, professionals, the unemployed, homeless, refugees, tourists and many more.

Giving 100 Hours

As part of the Feeding 2012 initiative, a programme was organised at Leeds Makkah Masjid on one of the Sundays in Ramadan, whereby local

Muslims gave up a total of 100 hours and devoted that time to raise funds and then spend the donations on food to feed people in the community, in particular the less fortunate members of the community.

In a spirit of social responsibility and kindness towards those less fortunate befitting the month of Ramadan, during the month of Ramadan, young volunteers from Makkah Masjid distributed hampers to their neighbours, the homeless, the elderly and local refugees.

In this volunteer-led social action aimed at fostering a sense of social responsibility, youth groups visited churches, shelters and charity shops and

neighbours to hand out food and other items of need to them. The youngsters had first raised funds to buy the items required to prepare hampers for the homeless and refugees and had liaised with local businesses and asked them to donate some food for the hampers.

Benefits for Mosques

Organising such and many other events in our mosques serves a number of purposes:

- i) they will break down barriers and instil a sense of security and community cohesion in the minds of ordinary people- both Muslims and non-Muslims;
- ii) they help to uplift the

community's spirits by allowing Muslims and non-Muslims to share a meal together and discuss shared common values and decide on undertaking some small local action to improve, for example, services in their areas;

iii) when young people - men and women- are involved in organising events in the mosque for everyone in their community, they will feel empowered and have an increased sense of belonging to their locality; and

iv) any social actions undertaken by young Muslims in their area will help to bring joy into the lives of others and possibly reduce hardship in their locality.

The majority of the participants of the workshops also discussed the fact that there needed to be specific study circles aimed at parents, discussing some of the 'sensitive' topics affecting British Muslims. These should include the rights of children, the importance of true tarbiyyah (upbringing), rights of husbands and wives, dangers of unlawful earnings. It was felt that elders needed guidance on these topics as much as the

youth in order that they can successfully pass on correct Islamic teachings to their children.

The 'surgeries'/ study circles could be used for a number of purposes; for instance as a forum in which people could talk and discuss marriage problems with the Imam, mufti or other qualified person. Other suggested topics for discussion included identity, citizenship, drugs, anti-social behaviour, marriage,

parenting, alcohol abuse, job hunting, estrangement, low self-esteem, extremism, debt issues and bereavement.

One of the young professionals at the Cambridge workshop maintained: "We often say Islam is a complete way of life, but how often do we act that way? The mosques should take the lead and should show the youth how the mosque can serve their needs in a complete way." Overall, there was an

agreement amongst the young participants of the workshops that there should be more literature available and more workshops should be held around the Islamic concept of stewardship and social responsibility, which will encourage greater participation and contribution to society. Such contribution on commonly shared issues between communities shall encourage civic participation and regeneration projects.

Safer Giving this Ramadan 2013



By **Nick Donaldson,**
Outreach Manager,
Charity Commission

The Charity Commission is the government department that regulates charities in England and Wales. Formed in October 2012, the Commissions Outreach team provides guidance to charity trustees, staff and volunteers on a number of topics, including:

- ▶ Governance and trustee responsibilities
- ▶ Proper transfer of funds overseas
- ▶ Ensuring funds are properly used when sent internationally
- ▶ Registration as a charity with the Charity Commission

To achieve this, we run conferences, workshops and seminars. These have included workshops for 8364; Recently

formed charities working internationally, as well as a specific event for charities operating in Syria and a presentation to a group of Islamic charities on governance. As part of our next set of work on governance, and following significant interest, we wish to engage with faith-based organisations, including Mosques and Madrassahs.

Furthermore, we are working to promote safer giving by the general public, as well as safer collecting by charities, including in the run-up to and during Ramadan. Most people who fundraise for and support charities are honest. However, some will seek to exploit the confidence the public has in charities, as illustrated by the recent criminal convictions for individuals purporting to fundraise for charity in Birmingham.

Tips for Mosques running charitable collections during Ramadan:

- ▶ If another 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.charitycommission.gov.uk
- ▶ 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 sources for further information about this.
- ▶ Look out for suspicious signs. For example, be wary if a charity only provides details of a mobile phone number, or is vague about how the money raised
- will ultimately be used. Encourage fundraisers to provide feedback on how the funds have been used (for example, via a noticeboard).
- ▶ If overseas fundraisers are allowed to raise money on the charity's premises, the trustees still need to take proper steps to verify that the organisation is legitimate and that funds raised will be properly used for charitable purposes.
- ▶ If you provide people who fundraise for your charity official charity material, such as identity badges, collecting tins or boxes, make sure you collect all of them back promptly, checking none are missing and that they have not been tampered with.
- ▶ Collection boxes should be sealed before use so that it is apparent if they have



been opened before they are returned.

- ▶ Ensure that those who are fundraising for you are properly briefed about the charity's work so that members of the public can give to them with confidence.
- ▶ Remember that people who fundraise for you on the street or house-to-house require a licence to do so, and need to comply with fundraising regulations. You can read more about these on the Fundraising Standards Board website, <http://www.frsb.org>.

[uk/english/advice-and-regulation/the-standards/](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/english/advice-and-regulation/the-standards/)

- ▶ If you suspect somebody is fundraising without your permission, contact them to let them know it is not permitted and that they need a licence if collecting on the street or house-to-house. If you suspect that they are collecting fraudulently, contact the Police via Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or through their website at www.actionfraud.police.uk

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 without deduction of expenses.

- ▶ 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.

Further information about safer charitable giving can be found via our website at www.charitycommission.gov.uk/9335

If you would like the Commission to come and speak at an event you are running, including on safer giving during Ramadan or any of the issues described at the beginning of this article, please send details to outreach@charitycommission.gov.uk and we will be in touch with you to discuss further.

Women backbone of Mosque Iftar's



Sahar Zahid
Vice Chairperson and Trustee
Al Minar Mosque London

As the blessed month of Ramadan dawns on us, it is only befitting that I dedicate this column to the wonderful activities that take place within our mosques and centres during this holy month. It is wonderful to observe our mosques morph from being a place where Muslims come together to pray the five prayers to centres for spirituality, support, guidance and social example.

One of the unique things about this blessed month is that mosques are filled with worshipers around the clock. A common scene is the mosque overcrowded with people who usually resort to the neighbouring side streets or buildings to join the prayer. It is not uncommon to

see every room and corridor being used as a prayer facility to accommodate the many who want a taste of the sacred activities. What is even more wonderful is to see so many women, in the essence of this sacred month, make use of such activities.

In Ramadan, women go to mosques not only to pray but also to benefit from the services provided there. For example, some mosques arrange for sessions on and competitions in tajweed and hold daily circles to enlighten female Muslims about their religious and social duties. Added to these are the usual everyday activities of helping the poor and providing the needy with food.

Talking of food, iftar gatherings are a plenty and many prefer to break their fast in the company of fellow Muslims

rejoicing in their joined efforts to meet the requirements of fasting. It is always a joy to see a community rally together to organise mosque iftars (or suhoors), taking it in turn to provide a meal if the mosque itself is unable to do so.

Just reminiscing about all of this brings about the excitement that only Ramadan carries but it is important that we reflect on all that is on offer to us in these wonderful mosques, for such activities take great organisation and preparation. The Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre for example begins planning, what it calls its Ramadan programme, six months in advance with a review of previous services undertaken and different stakeholders consulted on what should be offered and how. Every detail is considered from moon sighting and communicating

the start of Ramadan, itikah services, scholar schedules to distributing zakat ul fitr donations.

From senior management to the volunteers, it is 'all hands on deck' to ensure the 30 days are spiritual, successful and safe. The needs of all service users, from youngsters to our respected elders are taken into consideration and many mosques employ a 24 hour service with activities throughout the fasting day and night.

So this Ramadan as we hurry to make the most of all that our local mosques have to offer, let us take time to thank those who dedicate this month to serving us in our efforts of ibaadah. Let's think about the efforts they have put in to help us ensure it is our best Ramadan to date.

Ramadan Mubarak to you all!



"A generous person is closer to God, to heaven and the people"

Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him)

It is essential that the public continues to support charities, but there are a few things to think about before donating to your chosen charity:

- Check that your chosen charity is registered with the Charity Commission. You can check this at www.charitycommission.gov.uk
- Ask for a charity collector's ID and the charity's name and registration number if you are in any doubt

We would like to wish everyone Ramadan Mubarak

Do you have any questions or feedback?
For further information and guidance go to
www.charitycommission.gov.uk/9335





Brotherhood in Bradford between the Synagogue and Muslim Neighbours

This story has grown from a gesture of looking out for one's neighbour and has become global news in a very short space of time. Perhaps this is not surprising when the neighbours are from the Jewish and Muslim communities. Such gestures between these communities are very rare and so rarely reported that they might not exist in reality. However, we are pleased to report an action of kindness that could well act as an exemplar for the ambitions of the 'Big Society'.

If we go back in time a little, The City of Bradford is no stranger to headlines although a good percentage of these in recent years haven't been too positive. The city was associated with book burnings, civil unrest and tagged as the segregated city in the North. But 2013 has seen the football team make two trips to Wembley in one calendar year after an absence of over 100 years and even witness some positive media through 'City of Dreams' shown on BBC2.

The new friendship between the city's Muslim and small Jewish community is certainly good news and has captured the minds from far flung places. Like most great ventures, this new relationship wasn't manufactured it just happened through people talking. Rudi Leavor, chairman of the Synagogue approached his local Muslim neighbours and highlighted the plea of its dilapidated roof and the need for urgent funds. These discussions resulted in Rudi meeting with Zulfikar Karim, the General Secretary for the Bradford Council of Mosques who in turn facilitated the necessary funds from another neighbour, Mr Khalid Pervaiz of SKA Textiles and owners of Drummonds Mill, which is situated on Lumb Lane and less than 100 yards from the Synagogue. On hearing the plight of the Synagogue, Mr Pervaiz agreed to support them financially on the basis that his neighbours needed his support but also the fact that his donation would preserve a Grade II listed



star building in the heart of Manningham. Mr Pervaiz himself owns a listed building in the form of Drummonds and was completely sympathetic to the cause of preserving heritage in Manningham.

The necessary and urgent repairs have now been undertaken at the Synagogue. However that is not the end, the legacy of the original gesture has continued into a real partnership with the Muslim community helping to preserve the heritage of the Synagogue and assisting with the plans to create a visitor centre at the property. Such a facility would encourage more people to visit Manningham and benefit all the neighbours. The City of Bradford has always welcomed all and can proudly

boast about the 60 plus languages spoken every day. The City's diversity is certainly its strength, which will need to remain united as it will no doubt be tested from time to time, but it's good to keep talking to the neighbours.

Zulfikar Karim, General Secretary of the Bradford Council of Mosques which is the oldest Mosque umbrella body in Europe was given the keys to the synagogue and made custodian. He has subsequently organised a dinner there for the wider community in conjunction with the launch of the World Curry Festival which consisted of people, coming together to share Jewish food as part of the one day Sabbath to celebrate the partnership and new friendship between Muslims and Jews in Bradford.



www.Iftar2013.com

Is your Mosque ready

Invite your neighbour

Join us, call us 0845 273 3903

