



InterFaith MK

Newsletter, April 2018

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Dear Friends and Members of Interfaith MK,

It is sad that last month saw the desecration of some local places of worship with graffiti, causing both sadness and outrage. In this normally peaceful and free society of Milton Keynes, we must build a foundation of trust between all of our communities so that extremism and prejudice of all kinds cannot flourish.

The speech of our Mayor, Councillor David Hopkins, expresses our shared aspirations of a society empowered by “*the power that faith represents in shaping our community*”.

As last month welcomed “Visit My Mosque” this month we will be visiting a fine traditional Anglican church, St James in New Bradwell, for a fascinating talk on the experience of the Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca that constitutes one of the pillars of Islam for the practicing Muslim.

In the following month we will see the launch of our new website at the same internet address of www.interfaithmk.org.uk. It will include all the photos, articles and newsletters about our activities, as well as your opportunity to submit your own interfaith articles for publication.

In order to be compliant with the new **Data Protection regulations** being introduced in May this year, we would like every reader to send us a quick email on interfaithmk@gmail.com granting us permission to hold your phone number and email address on our computer and continue to send you newsletters and invitations to events? (*It is also great to receive kind emails!*). You may also ask to be removed from the list.

With our respects and sincere good wishes,

David Rennie and Ken Harris, Co-convenors, IFMK

We are delighted to invite you to join us for a fascinating talk on:

Hajj - journey of a lifetime - my personal perspective!



By **Kurshida Mirza**

Thursday 5th April, 2018

7:30 to 9:30 pm at

The Church of St James, New Bradwell

Church Street, New Bradwell, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK13 0DA

Teas and refreshments will be served at the end of the evening.



Kurshida is married with two children and has lived in Milton Keynes since 1990. She has a research, policy and strategy background working within local and central government.

Kurshida is a Trustee for **MK Community Foundation**, Chair of **Citizens MK**, founder of **Truby's Garden Tea Room** – MK's Interfaith Café and the West Midlands lead for **Housing LIN** (a learning and improvement network connecting housing, health and care).

Kurshida is passionate about creating opportunities for interfaith dialogue and all her voluntary and community work reflect this.

**Address by the Mayor of Milton Keynes, Councillor David Hopkins,
at the Council of Faiths Annual Dinner, 6th March 2018**

(Reproduced with kind permission)

“I am delighted to be speaking to the Council of Faiths dinner and I have just a few points to make – points that I hope we might ponder and consider this evening.

Religious dialogue is critically important locally, nationally and of course internationally.

Never has this dialogue been more significant. We live in challenging times, in an age where there is so much conflict, division, misunderstanding and poverty.



But if we believe that our future peace lies together – rather than apart – if we believe our future peace lies in understanding and not in isolation – if we believe that our differences (that we all acknowledge) enhance and enrich us rather than divide us – then we must speak about our shared values and speak to our beliefs – often shared beliefs that we must celebrate and proclaim.

Friends, more than two thirds of our fellow citizens in Milton Keynes profess to be followers of major faiths. That being

so, we can be in no doubt about the power of faith - and the power that faith represents in shaping our community. The bringing together of faith groups can however ultimately only be achieved by the leaders of faith groups themselves.

The evidence of history shows us that the greatest of social movements have been built on the strongest of ethical foundations. It was men and women of faith who, two hundred or more years ago, inspired the civil rights movement by saying that we could not be one world until every single citizen, no matter what their colour or creed, their race or background, enjoyed equal civil rights.

And is it not men and women of conscience and religious conviction who say today that we cannot be one world when 30,000 children die unnecessarily each and every day from diseases that humanity has the power to cure. And is it not men and women of conscience who are leading the responses to the present refugee and housing crisis impacting - not just our city, or our country but much of the western world and beyond.

It is the power of faith that forces the greatest possible coalition for the common good. Not one that dictates uniformity of doctrine or culture, but one that is enriched by diversity, united by shared values and empowered by our common commitment to make our Milton Keynes a better place.

It is sometimes said by some that religion has increased misunderstanding and intolerance – that somehow it is responsible for creating many of the problems we face today. It is your task, your shared responsibility to address these criticisms by encouraging all people of faith to act upon their shared moral sensibilities, which are at the heart of all that you and, by definition, they believe.

We have a unique opportunity in this our fabulous and far sited city, to act in partnership – to work together for the common good, to achieve our common goals and ambitions. Milton Keynes has a unique connection that enables us to communicate with each other, to speak with one from the perspectives of our unique ancestories and to make Milton Keynes truly a ‘World City’.

You know, it’s not that long ago, and certainly in my lifetime, that we used to say ‘if only people could communicate across borders, if only they could hear what other people have to say, if only they could speak with one another and find out just how much they have in common, then the world would surely be a different – a better – place.

Today, most of these barriers, these old barriers to communication, have been or are in the process of being removed. We can now communicate with each other across frontiers virtually instantaneously either through international voice and video networks, through the internet, through texting and through email.

There are hundreds of thousands of social networks crossing the world. But are people truly listening to one another? Has the power of communications impacted negatively upon our power to communicate?

I think we have learnt that there is still something special in sharing a common meal together. The much missed Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks, described it as the dignity of difference. People, he observed, all made in the divine image find that they are possessed of a dignity and sanctity that transcends our differences.

We can celebrate these differences - we can use this opportunity to change and further shape Milton Keynes by building a shared agenda to meet the challenges a new community such as ours faces - and to meet the international challenges of refugees and homelessness by communicating our shared values of opportunity and respect beyond these local borders.

Friends, we are Milton Keynes. It is within our grasp to shape a future fit for our children. The future starts here, now – and it is you working collectively who possess that powerful voice for change, for prosperity and for the one community of Milton Keynes that I am certain, we all want to see emerge.

Thank you

Clr David Hopkins

Mayor of Milton Keynes

Representing Danesbough & Walton at Milton Keynes Council

Woburn Sands, Walton (part), Little Brickhill, Bow Brickhill & Wavendon

Visit the Milton Keynes Council web site at <http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk>



Alan Bainbridge skilfully guided the Council of Faith’s Weaving Trust Event held on Wednesday 28th February 2018, facilitating people from different faiths to meet, deeply share and dialogue with each other.

Dear Friends,

Na Mu Myo Ho Ren Ge Kyo

Nipponzan Myohoji cordially and respectfully invites you to celebrate the birthday of the Buddha, at 3pm on Sunday 8th. April at the Temple. With kind regards, Gwyneth Morgan, on behalf of Sister Y. Maruta, Nipponzan Myohoji Peace Pagoda & Temple, Brickhill Street, Willen Lake, Milton Keynes, MK15 0BG

Flower Festival



Na Mu Myo Ho Ren Ge Kyo

Sunday

8th April 2018

at 3pm

We warmly invite you to celebrate

Buddha's Birthday

and the

Buddha-Bathing Ceremony

at

The Temple at North Willen Lake