

# Faith Communities Together Service



***'Celebrating Diversity and Honouring Community'***

**The Islamic Centre, Dorchester  
Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> October 2018, 3pm**

## **Introduction**

Sponsored by Churches Together in the Dorchester Area and supported by Dorchester Town Council, this service draws together the faith communities in Dorchester as we listen to each other and share fellowship. We are especially grateful to Emma Scott from Dorchester Town Council for her support.

# Gathering Nasheed

## Welcome and Introduction

Dr. Tirupattur Mohamed Basheer  
(Chairman of the Dorchester Islamic Centre)

## Insights on Faith

The faith communities present at the service share readings, music and prayers inspired by their scripture and sacred texts.

## The Muslim Community speaks....

*Reading from the Holy Qur'an*

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Gracious*

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ  
وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا  
فَقُولُوا أَشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾

"Say: O People of the Scripture! Come to a common word between us and you: that we shall worship none but Allah, and that we shall ascribe no partner unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords beside Allah. And if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are they who have surrendered (unto Him)."

*(The Holy Qur'an, Al 'Imran, 3:64)*

قُولُوا ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ  
وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَمَا أُوتِيَ النَّبِيُّونَ مِن رَّبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ  
بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٦﴾

"Say (O Muslims): We believe in Allah and that which is revealed unto us and that which was revealed unto Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus received, and that which the prophets received from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and unto Him we have surrendered."

*(The Holy Qur'an, Al-Baqarah, 2:136)*

*Music*

*Prayer*

"Allahuakbar. Allahuakbar. Allahuakbar. It is a phrase well-known to Muslims and non-Muslims alike. It is usually translated as "God is great". But in reality it should be translated as God is greater.

But that begs the question, greater than what? Well, everything. God is greater than everything and anything one can think of in the known universe. In fact, God is greater than the universe itself.

He is greater than our desires, wealth, power, Prime Ministers, Kings, armies, even our families. He is near in his transcendence, and still-majestic in his immanence.

Allahuakbar, perfectly encapsulates what Islam is about. Islam is about asking "What does God want?" at every moment of one's day. It is about putting what

God wants before what we want. Because what God wants is greater than what we want. In fact, Islam comes from the root word "to submit" or to "give in". A Muslim is therefore one who literally submits to the will of the Almighty. He is someone who gives up what he wants in favour of what God demands of him.

And what does God demand of him?

"Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, the needy, the near neighbour, the neighbour farther away, the companion at your side, the traveller, and those whom your right hands possess. Indeed, Allah does not like those who are self-deluding and boastful." (4:36)

That is what God wants. The Prophet Muhammmmed (PBUH) also taught in the same vein and said: "Be kind, for whenever kindness becomes part of something, it beautifies it. Whenever it is taken from something, it leaves it tarnished.". He also said ""By the One in whose Hands my soul is, no slave of Allah has true faith unless he likes for his neighbour what he likes for himself."

Muslim or non-Muslim, black or white, man or woman, young or old, we are all neighbours and as Muslims, God has demanded of us that we must like for our neighbours what we like for ourselves. The Prophet also taught, "He is not a believer whose stomach is filled while the neighbour to his side goes hungry."

So, let us pray that God fosters that feeling of neighbourliness and sacrifice for one another in each of our breasts. Let us pray that we recognise that God is greater, and that through sacrificing what we want for what He wants, we can create a better community to live in.”

## **The Buddhist Community speaks...**

*Reading from "The Places that Scare you", chapter 'The Excellence of Bodhichitta' by Pema Chodron*

The Buddha said that we are never separated from Enlightenment. Even at the times we feel the most stuck, we are never alienated from the awakened state. This is a revolutionary assertion. Even ordinary people like us with hang-ups and confusion have this mind of enlightenment called bodhichitta. The openness and warmth of bodhichitta is in fact our true nature and condition. Even when our neurosis feels far more basic than our wisdom, even when we're feeling most confused and hopeless, bodhichitta – like the open sky – is always here, undiminished by the clouds that temporarily cover it.

Given that we are so familiar with the clouds, of course, we may find the Buddha's teaching hard to believe. Yet the truth is that in the midst of our suffering, in the hardest of times, we can contact this noble heart of bodhichitta. It is always available, in pain as well as in joy.

A young woman wrote to me about finding herself in a small town in the Middle East surrounded by people jeering, yelling and threatening to throw stones at her and her friends because they were Americans. Of course, she was terrified, and what happened to her is very interesting. Suddenly she identified with every person throughout history who had ever been scorned and hated. She understood what it was like to be despised for any reason: ethnic group, racial background, sexual preference, gender. Something cracked wide open and she stood in the shoes of millions of oppressed people and saw with a new perspective. She even understood her shared humanity with those who hated her. This sense of deep connection, of belonging to the same family, is bodhichitta.

Those who train wholeheartedly in awakening bodhichitta are called bodhisattvas or warriors - not warriors who kill and harm but warriors of non-aggression who hear the cries of the world.

These warriors understand the words of the Buddha:

Hatred never ceases by hatred  
But by love alone is healed  
This is an ancient and eternal law.

*Music composed by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche  
in the Garden of Translation near the Boudhanath  
stupa in Nepal. Translated and arranged by Jim Scott,  
March 1998. Translation copyright 2012, Jim Scott.*

### Self-Appearing Illusion

All these forms, appearance emptiness  
Like a rainbow with its shining glow  
In the reaches of appearance emptiness  
Just let go and go where no mind goes

Every sound is sound and emptiness  
Like the sound of an echo's roll  
In the reaches of sound and emptiness  
Just let go and go where no mind goes

Every feeling is bliss and emptiness  
Way beyond what words can show  
In the reaches of bliss and emptiness  
Just let go and go where no mind goes

All awareness, awareness emptiness  
Way beyond what thought can know  
In the reaches of awareness emptiness  
Let awareness go, oh, where no mind goes



## *Prayer*

### Bodhisattva Prayer For Humanity\*

May I be a guard for those who need protection, a guide for those on the path, a boat, a raft, a bridge for those who wish to cross the flood. May I be a lamp in the darkness, a resting place for the weary, a healing medicine for all who are sick a vase of plenty, a tree of miracles. And for the boundless multitudes of living beings may I bring sustenance and awakening, enduring like the earth and sky until all beings are freed from sorrow and all are awakened.

Shantideva

*\*performed daily by the Dalai Lama*

## **The Jewish Community speaks...**

*Reading from the works of Lyman Abbott (American Congregationalist Theologian 1835-1922)*

We Gentiles owe our lives to Israel. It is Israel who has brought us the message that God is one and that God is a just and righteous God, and demands righteousness of his children, and demands nothing else. It is Israel who has brought us the message that God is our Father. It is Israel who, in bringing us the divine law, has laid the foundation of liberty. It is Israel who has the first free institutions the world ever saw. It is Israel who has brought us the Bible, our prophets, our apostles. When sometimes our own unchristian prejudices flame out against the Jewish people, let us remember that all we have and all that we are, we won, under God, to what Judaism has given us.

*Music - London Klezmer Quartet, Happy Hour Hora*

*The central prayer of Judaism is known as the Schema. It sets out the principle of monotheism, also adopted by Christianity and Islam.*

Schema Israel Adonai Elohenu Adonai Echao  
Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuto Leolam Vaed

Ve Ahavata evt Adonai Elohecha Bechol Levavechecha  
uve-chol Naf Shecha U-ve chol Me-odecha. Ve-he-yu  
devarim Ha-eley Asher anochi me-Tzavecha Ha-vom al  
Levavecha Veshinantam le-vanecha ve Dibarta Bam.  
Be-shivtecha be-beveytecha u-ve-lechtecha va-derech  
u-ve-shoch-becha u-ve-Kumecha.

Hear O Israel the Lord is our God and the Lord is One.  
Blessed is his name, whose glorious kingdom is for  
ever and ever.

And Thou shalt love the Lord Thy God with all Thy  
heart, and with all Thy soul and with all Thy might.  
These words that I command you this day shall be  
upon thy heart. Repeat them unto your children and  
speak about them when thou sittest in your home and  
when thou walkest in the street; when thou liest down  
and thou risest up.

## **The Christian Community speaks...**

*Reading from the Letter of St Paul to the Romans, Chapter 12, verses 3-13.*

By the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgement, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness. Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

*Music – A Thanksgiving by Bob Chilcott (b 1955) after  
A General Thanksgiving from The Book of Common  
Prayer 1662*

We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we shew forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives; by giving up ourselves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Prayer*

Gracious God, giver of real hope and true peace; draw us all, in our wonderful diversity of culture, language, and custom, deeper into your good purposes for the whole of your creation. Help and strengthen us by your Holy Spirit as we desire and commit ourselves to protect and care for this fragile planet and each other, and as we seek a common future in which mercy and justice reign and our world resembles more truly your kingdom of heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **The Hindu Community is honoured:**

Let us walk together; let us sing together; in togetherness can we understand each other's minds; thus did the ancient seers share together to reach their divine ends. May our intentions come together; may our hearts become inseparable; may our minds become as one to truly know one another; may we all unite in togetherness.

## **The Sikh Community is honoured:**

O Lord, save our world on fire with conflict and strife. Let the healing kindness of your blessings save us, through any way you choose.  
Says Nanak, the path of peace  
lies in living true to the one God of us all.

## **Time for Reflection**

*This short time of silent worship is introduced by a member of the Quaker community, who will bring it to an end by shaking hands with her neighbour and inviting all to do the same – a sign of recognition of all that we share.*

## **Act of Affirmation**

Led by The Deputy Mayor of Dorchester

Let us now pledge ourselves afresh to uphold and serve the values and fellowship of our town and community. We affirm that every person possesses unique worth and dignity. We affirm our respect for nature, and that we will be stewards of the earth by caring for every part of it and for it as a whole. We affirm our belief in justice for everyone, and peace between peoples and nations.

We cherish the spirit of teamwork that inspires us, and the ties of friendship that enable us to work with one another towards creating just and peaceful societies, achieving sustainable and inclusive social progress, advancing democracy, and building economic resilience with prosperity in which all citizens can share.

*All respond:*

**We affirm our belief in this community as a force for good in the world, and pledge ourselves to its service, now and for the future.**

## **Word of Thanks from the Deputy Mayor**

## **Closing Nasheed**