

IKHLAAS

THE OUISOC MAGAZINE

NEW
BEGINNINGS

LETTER FROM
A SCHOLAR

FRESHERS'
FOOD GUIDE

OVERCOMING
LONELINESS

AND MORE!





إِخْلَاصٌ

Ikhlaas

[Noun] Sincerity



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE MOST
GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL

FROM THE EDITOR

As-salamu alaykum! It's been a joy working on this issue of the magazine, though again, in something of an atypical climate. What do I mean by this? Well, we launched the magazine in 'lockdown' as a way of bringing the society together, at a time in which many of us were in need of social connection with our peers. Who could have foreseen, that almost five months on from the release of the first issue, the impetus behind the publication of the Oxford University Islamic Society Magazine would remain broadly unchanged?

Why New Beginnings then, when it perhaps feels like life for the past seven or so months has remained somewhat the same? Well, one can't but help feel optimistic. We're back in Oxford, it's the start of a brand-new academic year, and many of us are raring to make the most of our time in the city, in spite of the circumstances. We hope that you will sense this general optimism reflected throughout the magazine. Its structure has remained largely unchanged, with a Student Blog, Welfare and Lifestyle, Current Affairs, Alumni and Student Works section, along with an added Special Feature. We've also included a tricky cryptogram at the end for those of you who like puzzles, which even Basim found difficult. For this issue, we were very fortunate to be able to publish a letter from Shaikh Riyadh Nadwi, an Oxford Scholar and distinguished Alim.

Working on the magazine has genuinely been a really rewarding experience for the four of us. Having the opportunity to observe just how much effort members of our community are willing to invest in contributions puts into perspective how lucky we are to be a part of such a vibrant and close-knit society, full of so many wonderful people. We hope you enjoy this second issue of Ikhlaas, and that you have a blessed and fulfilling Michaelmas term.

Wasalaam,

MAGAZINE TEAM



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New Beginnings with Compassion

LETTER FROM A SCHOLAR

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِیْنَ ، وَصَلَّى اللّٰهُ وَسَلَّمْ عَلَی الْمُبْعُوْثِ
رَحْمَةً لِلْعَالَمِیْنَ اَمَّا بَعْدُ :

As the new academic year begins, students, especially *freshers*, often set resolutions and aspirations for their careers. With a sense of a new beginning, that allows one to focus on the future uninhibited by lament over the past. “Yes,” they say, “I have made mistakes and wasted time in the past but now I must focus my mind upon what is important. I will make the most of my time in Oxford to secure the best possible result.”

For a Muslim student, that sense of new beginning and opportunity should also include a focus on the heart and a concern for the soul. Together with intellectual growth, one should also seek opportunities for spiritual growth, for the flourishing of the heart with compassion and the purification of the soul with prayer and devotion.

The First Lesson

When students embark on a journey to study the teachings (*hadith*) of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), the first lesson has special status with its own distinctive name: *Al-Musalsal bi'l Awwaliyya* (“The Continuous with being the First”). Continuous in the sense that this is the first lesson a student receives from his or her teacher, as has been the case for every generation of scholars (*‘ulama*) before. Appended to the text of the hadith is a statement that reads: “This was the first hadith I was taught by my teacher.” Each scholar repeats this statement in the first lesson to the new generation of students in a tradition that extends through the ages for over a thousand years and continues into our time. The first hadith my teachers taught me was the same

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللّٰهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ :



” الرَّاحِمُونَ يَرْحَمُهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ ارْحَمُوا أَهْلَ الْأَرْضِ
يَرْحَمَكُم مِّن فِي السَّمَاءِ “¹

Abdullah ibn Amr narrates that The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “*The Most Compassionate [God Almighty] will be merciful to those who practise Compassion. Be compassionate to those on the earth and those who are in Heaven [The Angels] will be compassionate towards you*”.

This is the first impression of the curriculum in the study of Islam. Divine and angelic compassion awaits those who flourish with kindness, care and compassion for others. A kind word or a caring gesture, even for a few seconds with sincerity can become not only a source of salvation in the next life, as it was for the kind woman who fed a thirsty dog,² but also a means towards profound benefits in our mundane worldly lives. For example, contrary to popular belief, doctors who practise compassion with their patients are less likely to suffer from stress, depression and “burnout” (physical and emotional exhaustion) and they carry a higher sense of personal accomplishment and an enhanced quality of life.³

In the life of a student also, more compassion is associated with lower rates of stress and burnout and vice versa.⁴ Therefore, to gain Divine mercies, and build resilience against stress and burnout in your student life, seek means to enhance compassion in your heart and allow it to manifest in your speech and actions. This is the first lesson from the one who is described in the Quran as *Rahmatan li'l Alamin* (A Mercy to the Worlds), Muhammad (ﷺ).

The First Step

The first step towards flourishing with compassion is to connect repeatedly your tongue, mind and heart with the Source of all compassion. Repeat the first sentence in the Quran at the beginning of every significant thing you do. Say *Bismillahir Rahmanir Rabim*. I begin in the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful. In it is a cure and a flourishing for the heart. Allah says:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَشِفَاءٌ لِّمَا فِي الصُّدُورِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾ قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهِ فَبِذَلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوا هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾ سورة يونس

O Mankind! there has come to you an instruction from your Lord and a healing for the (diseases) in your hearts, and for those who believe, a guidance and a mercy. (57) Say: “In the bounty of Allah. And in His Mercy, in that let them rejoice”: that is better than the (wealth) they hoard. (58)

May Allah (swt) bless your new beginning with a flourishing in compassion and with good results in this world and the next. *Aameen*

By Shaikh Riyadh Nadwi PhD

Oxford, September 1, 2020

Footnotes

1. وأخرجه البخاري في الكنى (ص٤٦)، وأبو داود (١٤٩٤)، والترمذي (٤٢٩١)، والحميدي (٠٩٥)، وأحمد (٠٦١ / ٢)، والحاكم في المستدرک (٩٦١ / ٤)، وغيرهم، كلهم من طريق سفيان
2. Al-Bukhari 3467, Muslim 2245b
3. Gleichgerricht et al. (2013) Empathy in Clinical Practice: How Individual Dispositions, Gender, and Experience Moderate Empathic Concern, Burnout, and Emotional Distress in Physicians, PLOS One 8, no. 4, e61526.
4. Thomas et al. (2007) How do Distress and Well-Being Relate to Medical Student Empathy? A Multicentre Study, Journal of General Internal Medicine 22, no.2. 177-83
5. Surah Yunus 10/57-58

ABOUT THE SCHOLAR



Shaikh Riyadh Nadwi is a scholar in Oxford who hails from the world-renowned tradition of esteemed Islamic scholarship Nadwatul Ulama. He is a polymath in the mould of scholars of the Islamic Golden Age. A distinguished Alim with a doctorate in cognitive science who is also an accomplished artist and fluent in half a dozen languages. The Muslim community and students in Oxford and beyond have benefitted from his intellectual and spiritual guidance for almost three decades.

For more on the Shaikh please visit:

youtube.com/channel/UCcWP1Z4m0qjp36cOjAusC8w/videos



STUDENT BLOG

We will this term be hearing from Charlie, Sanaa and Hameem as they give insight into how 'New Beginnings' have had personal significance at varying points of each of their lives, and share aspects of their experience at Oxford so far.

When I came to Oxford, I was simply yet another clean-shaven white kid, comfortable in my religion as a Catholic Christian. I loved talking about and exploring faith and people's reasons for their beliefs. The time and independence at university really gave me an opportunity to study the Bible and the Qur'an in more depth as I attended both College Bible study, and some ISoc events. After learning of the authenticity of the Qur'an, and reading the Gospel of Jesus (as) in this new light, my faith was completely shaken... In the summer after my first year, I spent more time exploring, no longer a Christian, and in a constant, uncomfortable limbo of knowing Allah SWT is there, but who He is was still unknown. Ultimately, it was the words of Jesus (as) giving the 'Lord's prayer' to the disciples when they asked him how to pray, that was the final 'coincidence' I needed to convert... It is almost word-for-word Al-Fatiha. All these coincidences that the Qur'an and the Prophet (saws) call 'evidence' I had been finding. I felt as though there was thunder as I realised this, and driving back from Oxford in Christmas 2019, I took my shahada in the car, and again with some brothers in January 2020. Alhamdulillah it is the best decision I have ever made.

After the high of finding peace and security in my faith had settled down, I came to realise that while I hadn't changed much in WHO I am, people certainly viewed me differently, both at home and within my new Muslim community.

ISoc has been instrumental in welcoming me to the faith and keeping me on the straight path, especially amid all the distractions and temptations of a lot of the culture I have left behind. Being able to talk to and get close to so many knowledgeable and kind brothers and sisters has been immensely helpful, especially with the general stress of Oxford life.

Lockdown I can't lie was pretty tough, especially at the start.

Among other things, the Muslim influence and environment I had at Oxford was largely lost. I also realised that having this loving community had blinded me from how some people's attitudes, comments, and feelings towards me were changed (some who had been very close to me). Learning how to navigate that aspect of becoming Muslim has been the hardest in my opinion, as it really takes it out of you, especially when it's people you really care(d) about. However, Ramadan came and that was a beautiful solace in lockdown. Strengthening my relationship with Allah (SWT) felt amazing, despite not having others to really share the experience with. Although Ramadan was lonelier for many this year, I feel there was a special type of blessing within it, in being able to solely focus on who you are and what you're doing. The blessing of family, the blessing of the brotherhood and sisterhood, and the blessing of the masjid so overtly apparent, and God on your mind all the time as you are left by yourself and with your own thoughts. As the lockdown has started to ease and we are able to meet with each other more, and go to the masjid, I can truly recognise and feel the blessing of these aspects, which many of us very often take for granted.

CHARLIE PERRY

*3rd year, Chemistry
University College*





NEW BEGINNINGS MEAN OPPORTUNITIES AND POSSIBILITIES FOR SURE, BUT THEY ALSO MEAN RELEARNING YOUR PLACE IN A NEW WORLD AND GETTING TO GRIPS WITH NEW ASSUMPTIONS



The year abroad was one of the main pros of my degree, German and Arabic. In my second year, I moved to Jordan, living away from my family, friends and everything I knew as I attempted to make a new life for myself, in a language I barely spoke, in a country I barely understood. If it sounds jarring, it's because it was. I was full of excitement and positivity - I'd always dreamed of travel and never thought I'd be allowed to just...live somewhere alone, travel wherever I wanted to go. The Muslim community doesn't always look too fondly upon women who travel alone. Thankfully, my parents did not have a choice. It was compulsory for my degree and we were all going to have to learn to live with this new normal for a while.

Whenever people ask me about Jordan, I say it was good overall. Of course it was exciting! So much food - everything was halal too! I was also excited to live long-term in a Muslim country; something I had never done before. But my idealism and optimism faded once I realised how difficult it is to function in a society when you cannot understand the language well. It gave me so much respect for my grandparents, who dealt with this without the financial bonus of the student loan, and without the certainty that "I will return home next year". I had to learn how to deal with problems myself, from my landlord trying to sue me (lol), to my purse getting stolen, to getting stranded at midnight, far from home.

I was also unprepared for the stereotypes I would face in Jordan. I was excited to go to a Muslim country and no longer feel like the minority. Yet I couldn't help but notice that the Jordanians who were interested in the same sort of things as me held assumptions about me because of the way I dressed. I dress pretty modestly and wear a hijab, but I felt that in Jordan, to be religious was to be old fashioned. In the UK, it is generally not a problem if I

turn to my (non-Muslim) friends and say, "I'll be 10 min, just going to pray". In Jordan, I had the feeling I would be met with laughter if I said it, because "who prays?"

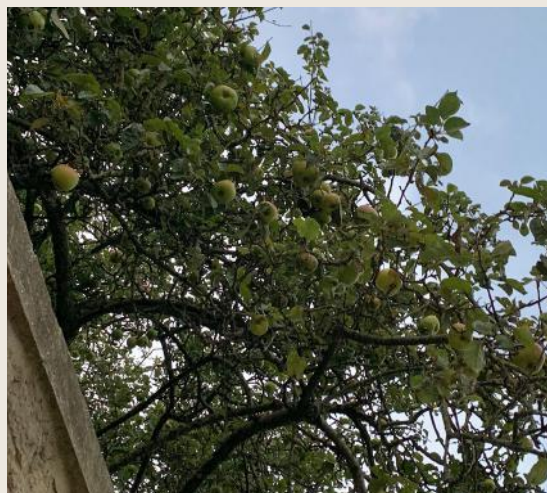
Of course, there were Jordanians who were similar to me, who did not see me as restricted by hijab. But it was difficult to find people with my interests and hobbies who did not have these stereotypes. This was not something I had been expecting and it isn't ever talked about.

New beginnings mean opportunities and possibilities for sure, but they also mean relearning your place in a new world and getting to grips with new assumptions. "New" is always thought of as "good" and honestly Jordan was great, despite the things I mentioned; I loved Jordan and the Middle East and I made some lifelong friends there. I grew as a person in a way that no other experience would let me. But "New" is also "difficult". I was naive going in. But in the end, it is those difficulties that really made the experience, and the memories and friendships worth it. As cheesy as it is.

SANAA ASIM

*3rd year, German and Arabic
St. Hilda's College*





It's that time of the year again when the city of dreaming spires will not long from now be welcoming wide-eyed new undergraduates from all over the world with open arms – albeit under very different circumstances from past years, probably 2 metres apart and with masks on for good measure. As I sit in Singapore penning these words, I can't help but reminisce about the day I first arrived almost a year ago to call Oxford my home for the next few months (before the pandemic forced me, like many other international students, to flee to the safety of family and homeland).

I was fortunate to have both my beloved parents by my side then as we alighted from the Oxford Tube after a smooth journey from London onto the neatly paved sidewalk of High Street. Dragging the baggage along, I took in the gentle sweep of High Street, observing Univ College and the majestic Exam Schools Building. We crossed to the opposite side of the road, and I saw Oxford's medieval façade slowly registering its aura of calm awe in my parents' eyes, being their first time in the city (and only my second), while the chilly autumnal air somewhat alleviated the bumpy tug of heavy luggage as we turned onto Longwall Street, a far cry from the perennial heat and humidity of Singapore. After a row of colourfully-arrayed student houses to our left, we came upon the beginning of a fortress-like wall, at which time I was only dimly cognisant of the fact that I was entering the periphery of my home for the next 3 years: New College.

But at that point what immediately arrested our attention was a tall sturdy tree from beyond the wall, with overhanging boughs laden with globular fruit of varying hues of green and red – apples! We couldn't believe what we were seeing; we stopped there and then to marvel at that wonder. To people who have grown up in an equatorial climate who are accustomed only to find apples in the supermarket shipped from distant lands and yet for whom the very first words we were taught in school were 'A is for apple', seeing apples

actually growing on the branch is an incomparably surreal and ecstatic sight that can only be likened to someone from a temperate country going bananas at encountering bananas on the tree for the first time (outside of a greenhouse) in Southeast Asia.

How serendipitous then that the apple was to mark my beginning – the fruit that starts the English alphabet, that in Western culture has become synonymous with the forbidden fruit consumed by Adam and Eve in Eden which began their journey into mortal humanity, that in 1665 supposedly sparked Newton's theory of gravity with its graceful fall toward the earth – in a college fittingly called New. How I long to trace that path along Longwall Street turning into Holywell Street and to behold again the apple tree heavy with fruit in the coming October! Like many students whose lives have been disrupted in unprecedented ways by the current pandemic, I have come to realise how precious these memories of beginnings can be to sustain us in the absence of the sense of normalcy and continuity that we crave. Even the city of dreaming spires is desolate without its young dreamers to inspire, to forge their new beginnings here.

MUHAMMAD HAMEEM BIN SHEIK
ALAUDIN

2nd year, English Language & Literature
New College



Welfare

&

Lifestyle

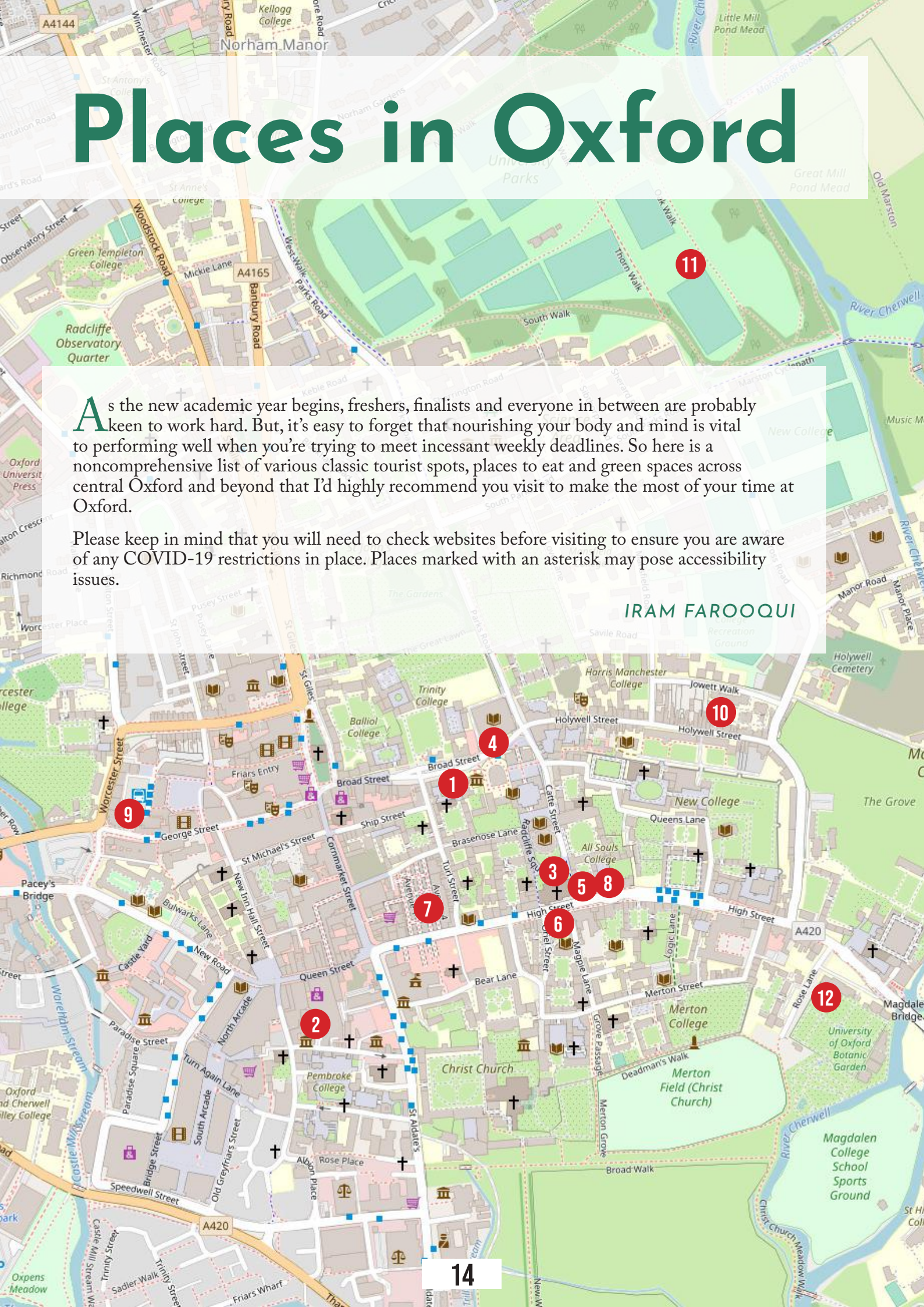
The Welfare and Lifestyle section of the Magazine is intended to comprise a variety of content; among this, advice on day-to-day matters related to health, work and leisure. We hope that you will see this reflected in the section, where we feature an article on places to visit in Oxford, another on halal food that is available within the city, a third on overcoming loneliness, a fourth with careers related advice from the society's alumni and a fifth that offers advice specifically to graduate students.

Places in Oxford

As the new academic year begins, freshers, finalists and everyone in between are probably keen to work hard. But, it's easy to forget that nourishing your body and mind is vital to performing well when you're trying to meet incessant weekly deadlines. So here is a noncomprehensive list of various classic tourist spots, places to eat and green spaces across central Oxford and beyond that I'd highly recommend you visit to make the most of your time at Oxford.

Please keep in mind that you will need to check websites before visiting to ensure you are aware of any COVID-19 restrictions in place. Places marked with an asterisk may pose accessibility issues.

IRAM FAROOQUI



MUSEUMS AND ICONIC OXFORD SIGHTS

William Butler Yeats is known to have said that he wonders how 'anybody does anything at Oxford but dream and remember, the place is so beautiful', something we students fail to appreciate once we get used to the Radcliffe Camera or Bodleian Library being only a short walk away from our bedrooms.

If you're an older student keen to rediscover that sense of awe you had when moving in, or you're a fresher that wants to tick off all the classic tourist spots with your family, here are some ideas on the ones currently open:

1. **The Ashmolean Museum, Beaumont Street** - I try to revisit the Ashmolean every year (have done so ever since interviews!) because it's inevitable you'll see something new every time. There is a huge collection of ceramics, textiles and more from the Islamic Middle East and some unique cards and postcards in the gift shop. Entry is free, bar some exhibitions.
2. **Modern Art Oxford*, Pembroke Street** - a quiet art gallery nestled near Westgate and Pembroke College, this place is a great escape to see contemporary pieces and interactive art; the café serves a great vegetarian brunch on the weekends. Think Tate Modern, but smaller. Entry is free.
3. **University Church of St Mary the Virgin*, High Street** - visit for the unparalleled views of the Oxford skyline, the RadCam and the elusive All Souls at the top of the tower. Wear layers to take off while walking and put on when at the top. The church is free to enter, while the Tower is ticketed.
4. **Blackwell's*, Broad Street** - the quintessentially Oxford independent bookshop has an amazing, large library and also runs events with authors. Check out their 'surprise' wrapped books or take a seat in the upper floors and sink into a good book.

CAFÉS

The café market in Oxford is highly saturated, so finding the perfect hot drink can be a lifelong struggle, but here's some places to start:

5. **Vaults & Garden*, Radcliffe Square** - their hearty soups and well-priced cream tea taste even better when you're sitting in front of the most iconic place in Oxford.
6. **Jericho Coffee Traders*, High Street** - the best place to go if in need of a hot chocolate or frangipane tart. It's only a few minutes away from the RadCam and you get a discount when you bring a KeepCup!
7. **Colombia Coffee Roasters*, Covered Market** - if you're a coffee connoisseur then this is the place for you. Ethically sourced, locally roasted, their hot chocolates are rich, coffee flavoursome and cakes and pastries moreish. You can also buy coffee beans here.
8. **Fantastea, High Street** - hands down the absolute best bubble tea in Oxford; try the muddy latte or chocolate milkshake bubble teas and ask for a free water bottle with every purchase!

Honourable mentions - Café Crème* (halal chicken in sandwiches, alcohol free tiramisu), Rose Café (good for studying – quiet and lots of plugs), Queens Lane Coffee House* (good value with their massive veggie English breakfast), High Street Café* (halal chicken in sandwiches), Barefoot Bakery (delicious vegan and gluten free cakes).

RESTAURANTS

You can refer to Bilaal's piece if you'd like a more in-depth review of halal food available in Oxford, but some of mine and my friends' favourites include:

9. **Glut*, George Street** - an underrated gem, Glut does amazing chicken burgers, loaded fries and milkshakes. Make sure you come hungry! Only the chicken is halal, to the best of my knowledge.
10. **Edamame*, Holywell Street** - a must-visit family-run Japanese restaurant; try their vegetarian yakisoba, salmon teriyaki or miso ramen, but study the menu carefully because they are not halal and it changes frequently during the week. Currently closed due to COVID-19.

Honourable mentions - Hassan's Street Kitchen (the best cheesy chips and chicken strips), Bodrum (halal Turkish food), Mowgli Street Food (innovative Asian food combinations), Za'atar Bake* (Arab desserts and baked goods, with vegan options), Sasi's Thai* (authentic Thai curries).

GREEN SPACES

Studies have found access to green spaces is beneficial for our mental health, especially in congested urban environments. Take the time to go for a walk, slow down and simply appreciate the beauty of Allah's creation. Practising mindfulness and gratitude is more convenient than you think.

11. **University Parks** – walk far enough into Uni Parks, towards the bridge, and you'll be surprised how near you still are to central Oxford! A quiet escape, great for a post-Jumuaah walk with friends or if you want a scenic shortcut to LMH.
12. **Oxford Botanic Garden, Rose Lane** – the oldest botanic garden in the UK boasts year-round vibrant foliage, contained in a variety of glasshouses and external displays. Ideal for a picnic or if you like to study outside (weather permitting), you can expect to see planting at its peak in autumn, as well as the endangered dawn redwood trees turn brick-red. Entry is free for those that present their Oxford ID.

College gardens* – if you have friends at these colleges or perhaps even go to them, count yourself lucky! Worcester has won the title of having the 'Best College Garden' more than once, Magdalen has sprawling gardens and a deer park, Merton's Fellows Garden and Mob Quad is said to have inspired all other Oxbridge quads and Exeter's gardens provide a one-of-a-kind view of the RadCam.

Honourable mentions – Christ Church Meadow* (perfect for a post-brunch walk with beautiful views of Christ Church and Merton, or if you like to run), Port Meadow (further afield, but come for stunning views of horses and the sunset or sunrise).

FRESHERS' FOOD GUIDE

In this guide, I'm gonna run through some of the best places to eat in Oxford. This is by no means an exhaustive list, nor should anything I write here be taken as anything other than one person's opinion. Some of the obvious and more familiar ones, especially chains that you can find elsewhere, I've left out because you don't need to hear what you already know/can find out about somewhere else. Instead, I'll focus on some of Oxford's hidden gems and those places that offer something a little unique. Fair warning - Oxford's an expensive town. Eating out is costly, so make sure you brush up on your culinary skills before you arrive.

Halal Disclaimer

Not all of these restaurants have halal signs/certificates/information on the website. I ask the staff if the meat is halal, they say yes, I eat it. These establishments will be flagged.

BILAAL ALIM

SHEZAN, OXFORD HIGH STREET

£££

The best desi food in Oxford

That auntie is coming to visit you in Oxford - yes, *that* one. Somewhat respectable clothes - check. Itinerary for the day (AKA walk her around until she's too tired to ask when you're getting married) - check. Place to eat - check, we've got you covered. The answer is Shezan. A classy, tucked-away establishment on the High Street you could easily miss - but you'll be glad you didn't when you take that first bite of their creamy butter chicken. Excellent food your auntie will approve of, though mind yourself: their prices aren't horrendous, but you will be parting with more than a pretty penny.

hidden gems. If you don't want to drop quite as much of your hard-earned student finance to impress that auntie (or she can't hack the spice), then you can get your fix of Eastern flavours at this cosy little spot.

Don't get me wrong though - this place more than stands up in its own right. Asian readers of this guide will most likely spring straight for the mixed grill, but do yourself a favour and get one of their excellent, reasonably-priced and very filling stews. They've got plenty of vegetarian options too like their aubergine stew. After you've finished your meal, spare yourself the trek down the road to G&D's and get some of their own excellent coffee and mouth-watering kulfi-style saffron and pistachio ice cream.

SHIRAZ, COWLEY ROAD

££

The best ice cream I've eaten in Oxford

A tucked-away establishment right at the bottom of Cowley Road by the roundabout, Persian restaurant Shiraz is one of Oxford's

DOSA PARK, PARK END ST.

££

Friends of the ISOC

The chillies will make your eyes water, but at least the prices won't. Dosa Park is a long-standing friend of the ISOC, and over here

we have a saying - support the hand that (literally) feeds you. Their delicious chicken biryani, daal and sabzi are staples of our Ramadan iftars, and their crispy dosas are second-to-none - plus, they're right next to the station, so it's a great place to begin or end a friend or relative's visit to Oxford.

HEAT, COWLEY ROAD

££

For the West African flavours

If it's authentic West African food you're craving, head down to Heat on Cowley Road for your jollof and yam fix. While you're there, get some of their spectacular fish curry. They're not too expensive, and you get your money's worth for sure - they aren't shy with their portions.

They have plenty of vegetarian options, plus all their meat is halal (but at the time of writing, they didn't have a certificate).

CHICKEN COTTAGE, COWLEY ROAD

£

Just tastes like home.

"Lemme get six wings and chips, boss." Just the feel of those words rolling off your tongue will instantly quell that essay-induced buzz of anxiety, and that first bite through the crispy breading into the soft flesh will bring shivers down your spine - and your vital organs. I rate it 3rd out of the Chicken Cottage franchises I know - this isn't your Tooting flagship, for sure, but it doesn't need to be; it's that crispy, greasy, warm feel-good factor that'll keep you coming back time and time again.

PS - for anyone not from London who doesn't understand why Cottage gets the love it does, give it a chance before you try the KFC up the road.

TICK-TOCK CAFE, COWLEY ROAD

£

Just feels like home.

Tick-Tock hasn't got the fancy vibe of some of the other cafes in Oxford, but it's cosy and the food is filling and fairly priced. Toasties, sandwiches, and a full English with a huge complimentary basket of free toast - what's not to like?

I always take my friends here for breakfast when they visit, and it's one of the highlights of the weekend every time. Just another reason why Hilda's is the best college.

THAIKUN, GEORGE STREET

££££

"Wow, there's a tuk-tuk in the window of that restaurant! Let's eat there!" Congratulations, you're basic. Take a trip up the road to Starbucks for your pumpkin-spice latte, and mind you don't spill any on your beat-out white Air Forces. Alternatively, if you've got any self-respect (and sense of financial prudence), walk straight past Thaikun, turn into Gloucester Green, and go to Angrid Thai.

ANGRID THAI, GLOUCESTER GREEN

££

Best Veggie food in Oxford

Now we're talking. Banging Thai food at a respectable price - what's there to complain about? Their generous portions of egg noodles will keep you going all day, and the green curry is creamy, spicy, and bursting with flavour. They have plenty of very good vegetarian options for those who follow the forgotten sunnah of not eating red meat twice a day too.

They have no halal meat certificate, but the staff assure me that the chicken is halal.

ASSORTED BURGER AND PIZZA STANDS, GLOUCESTER GREEN

£-£££

You'll regret this, but you don't care.

It's cheap. It's filling. It's extremely unhealthy, but you don't care. Just watch out for Kebab King on the corner - a doner should not cost that much.

KEBAB VANS, VARIOUS

£-££

You'll also regret this, but you still don't care.

Oxford students love their kebab vans and tend to get unwarrantedly aggressive when it comes to defending the reputation of their particular favourite. They're open until early in the morning, and serve up burgers, doners, and cheesy chips. The overall favourite seems to be Hassan's on Broad Street, but students from different colleges will swear by their local.

the loneliness pandemic

At certain points, like many of us, I felt incredibly lonely this lockdown. Generally not the type to feel lonely, I was now hit by a deep and overwhelming sense of loneliness and I didn't know how to cope. It was a different type of loneliness. I saw friends and family around me lonely, away from, or losing loved ones. I saw my closest friends go through grief. At one point it seemed that I could feel all of mankind's loneliness and grief at once and I was almost crushed by the weight of this. I did not want this. I did not want mankind to be lonely. And I cried. But I cried more for others than myself; I knew I'd be fine soon, but I did not want others to feel this awful feeling.

What was worse, I was convinced that loneliness was a default state; whatever we did in life, meeting friends, socialising, was all a cover-up for this default state which was loneliness. Loved ones die, siblings grow apart, friendships break, relationships turn sour. It seemed that we go through life constantly being let down or left to ourselves. I had adopted a sort of 'existential loneliness' philosophy, that mankind was just fated to be lonely. And I was haunted by this.

Why are we so alone and lonely, O God, I asked Him. Looking at Islamic articles, it seemed that a majority were of the opinion that we felt this sense of loneliness because we don't truly belong here, that this yearning was for a Higher Being, and for us to be in His Presence in Paradise. While I had found this explanation satisfying in the past, I did not find comfort in it now. Does God really want us to experience deep and overwhelming loneliness so that we turn to Him? I had been close to God just as much when I was the happiest I had ever been in my life. The other problem with this explanation is that it just accepts loneliness and doesn't give a solution or workaround or any tips on overcoming it. It lets people be miserable because that's just how it should be, we are all



supposed to feel loneliness to connect to God. But then what about the times when I was deeply connected to God and still could feel incredibly lonely?

And that was my problem with this explanation. I think the taboo in our society is to say that we need things other than God. We misinterpret phrases such as “sufficient for me is God” to mean that if we have God we don’t need anything. While that is true in the sense that only God can provide for you and protect you, it doesn’t mean you have no other needs as humans. And I thought, well I do need oxygen, food, water, etc. So, what is so wrong about accepting that I need humans and friendships and deep bonds? And this is where it clicked. That this loneliness was because there was a need I had which wasn’t being fulfilled. And that loneliness can be considered a default state as much as being hungry is a default state. But when you’re hungry, you eat. When you’re thirsty, you drink. You don’t say I don’t need food, I have God. And if you don’t eat, of course you remain hungry. But it doesn’t mean that there is no point eating just because you’ll be hungry again a few hours later.

So, what is the ‘antidote’ to loneliness then? I thought and thought, did some research, even read some psychology papers. And it was just this – connecting with other humans. Human connections were to loneliness as food was to hunger. And I realised, God created a companion for Adam even though Adam was literally in Paradise and in the presence of God! And yet God knew that Adam needed the human connection too, even though he had God. I started to realise how much there is in our religion and in the Prophet’s example, of being cheerful, charitable in smiles, spreading joy; the sense of brotherhood so deeply embedded in Islam, congregational prayers,

“O mankind, indeed, we created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another.

Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of God is the best in conduct of you. And God is All-Knowing, All-Aware.”

Quran 49:13

“Whoever relieves the hardship of a believer in this world, God will relieve his hardship on the Day of Resurrection. Whoever helps ease one in difficulty, God will make it easy for him in this world and in the Hereafter... God helps the servant as long as he helps his brother.”

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)

sharing food, everything! Aha, God doesn’t want us to bear loneliness! It was like a Eureka moment that allowed everything to make sense. God didn’t create me to be lonely and just accept it and bear it as a ‘state we’ll always be in’!

Importantly, it isn’t just shallow meaningless interactions, we need deep bonds in order to overcome the loneliness. We need to feel like we have people in our lives that truly care for us and love us and are there for us. And what really helped me was talking to friends when I was going through this. I realised there were people willing to listen, people that truly cared for me. That was step 1. Step 2 was then actively seeking out and nurturing those deep connections in a way that I hadn’t been doing during lockdown, which had led to this problem. Step 3 was realising that if other people in my life, through showing that they care for me and love me, could take away my loneliness, that meant each and every one of us had the power to take away other people’s loneliness. The beautiful thing about relationships is that usually what you give is what you receive. Which meant that in showing others love and care, I too would receive that back, and both sides would be less lonely as a result. What an ideal situation!

And if we could all start doing that, and really take the time to know one another and care about one another, then we would all contribute to making mankind less lonely. At the end of my ‘grieving period’, I came to a deeply comforting realisation: that the solution to mankind’s loneliness, in fact, rests in all of us – in you, in me, in each and every one of us.

CAREERS

Careers... where to start? It can be hard finding the path that's right for you, and on top of this, knowing how to pursue it.

We got in touch with three ISoc alumni - Supti, Mohamady and Rabii - who gave some interesting insight into their careers and what they believe makes a career worthwhile. Careers discussed here relate to teaching, research and consultancy, but much of the advice is applicable to anyone really.

MOHAMADY

Salaam, I am a neuroscientist and college tutor in neuroscience. My research involves understanding the cellular basis of cognition, focussing on the role of neural networks and cellular processes in flexible learning and abstraction. The key question I aim to address is: how do memories become knowledge and drive intelligent behaviour? Answering this question has brought together researchers across disparate disciplines including biologists, engineers, physicists, mathematicians, economists and philosophers! I have therefore found it to be an incredibly fulfilling career with opportunities to bridge diverse fields, and far reaching philosophical, clinical and practical implications.

Having graduated with a degree in Biochemistry I decided to switch to Neuroscience for my MSc, PhD and rest of my career, as I found that the topics that interested me most related to how cellular processes give rise to higher functions like learning and memory.

To succeed in applications for MScs and PhDs you'll need to show evidence of gaining extra research experience

(e.g. summer research projects/ studentships) and some evidence of having acquired essential skills, especially coding. Your undergraduate grades are also important, and while most graduate courses accept a 2.1, gaining a 1st increases your competitiveness for some courses.

Most high-powered careers are challenging and will take you out of your comfort zone, so it's worth choosing one that gives you a sense of fulfillment. Have a think about what your work contributes to the world and to your deen. Some careers may be financially attractive, but in the end, you may be using all of your intellect, training and effort to benefit unethical or amoral enterprises.

Always be proactive, take full responsibility for your work, overprepare (especially for interviews and key events/meetings), take pride in your work (set yourself higher standards than even your supervisors set you) and don't allow yourself to be undervalued (move on to a different employer if necessary). Start developing all of these features as an undergraduate.

RABII

Salaam! My name's Rabii and I recently graduated from studying PPE at St. Anne's College. This November, I'll be starting as a Business Analyst at the Strategy Consulting firm McKinsey, based out of their Riyadh office. Strategy consultants are hired by large clients such as multinational corporations, banks, governments and nonprofits; ultimately, we make strategic recommendations to help our clients tackle their biggest problems and succeed in their business activities.

Like most people, I really fell into consulting. At sixth form I wanted to be a lawyer (thanks suits!), then an investment banker (thanks billions!) but through my experiences at university I realised that I'm particularly passionate about solving

tough business problems.

In my second year, I participated in an entrepreneurship competition - the Hult Prize. Alongside a team of 3 fantastic co-founders, I set up a platform to help people navigate the online learning space (check us out at SkillsTree.org). From this experience, I was able to develop my communication and business acumen, which placed me well for my consulting interviews.

Internships aren't integral but I would highly recommend looking out for insight programmes. I'm a little biased but I really think experience with a startup is a great way to learn business fundamentals - I would highly recommend checking out the Oxford Foundry. Finally, consulting

is notorious for the case interview so I'd recommend the Oxford Strategy Group or similar societies, to gain access to resources and case practice partners.

When it comes to thinking about future careers, I'd suggest you try as many things as possible. Especially in your first year, participate in as many insight days, internships and side projects as you can. Also, speak to older students to see if there's something you may have missed.

You might be reading these pieces and thinking we've got everything sorted, but that's almost never the case. Just like you, many of us are still on a journey of figuring things out - best of luck on yours!

SUPTI

Salaam everyone! I'm Supti, an ex-ISOC member, graduated from Oxford in 2019, and currently going into my second year of being an English secondary school teacher with Teach First. In Michaelmas of my final year, I applied for the Teach First Leadership Development programme - if you're anything like me, you'll understand why I wanted to start work immediately after graduating. The Teach First programme seemed perfect; you become a full-time teacher in September after only 5 weeks of training in the summer. Whilst daunting at first, it quickly became one of the best experiences of my life!

You gain a diploma from UCL with the Institute of Education department at the end of your two years training, an academically challenging but amazing process that gives you insight into the current education system and how it affects your classroom contexts. Though there are no internships or specific experience required for applying to Teach First, there are insight days you can sign up to through the website. As well as their own assessment day, where you teach a practice lesson, you will also need to complete a baseline English and Maths skills test for which you can easily revise for (though this may be scrapped soon).

My one piece of advice to undergrads who, like me, are not 100% sure on where their careers might go, is to try and find a role they enjoy but that also opens doors. Money, though important, should only be one of the factors that influences your decision and as long as you are upskilling in whatever job you're in you cannot go wrong insha'Allah. Teaching was a no brainer for me, but it has also opened up so many doors and opportunities for roles I did not even know existed, so I have trust in Allah SWT to put me on a path that is best for me!

HOW NOT TO BE MISERABLE AS A PHD STUDENT



The stereotypical PhD student: overworked, exhausted, frustrated, confused, and just miserable. But it doesn't have to be that way! Here are a few reasons you may be subconsciously making things more miserable for yourself and some tips on how to break out of those negative thought patterns. Happiness is a state that is created, not found, and it requires hard work to try and understand what makes us miserable so we can avoid those self-sabotaging habits.

1. OVERCOMING THE IMPOSTOR SYNDROME

This is a classic; you think everyone around you is smarter and you feel like you shouldn't be here and that it was a mistake. The key to breaking this is noticing that everyone can in fact be quite stupid at times. By paying more attention, I realised that people who acted like they knew everything about everything in fact knew very little about many things. It also helped when I noticed how even professors were not ashamed to admit when they had no idea about something. When they didn't feel like a failure or an impostor when someone much junior explained something to them, why would I expect myself to know everything? It is an impossible aim! As a result of feeling like an impostor, we speak up less so people assume even less of us and treat us as such which becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. But if you (a) like others, allow yourself to say stupid things at times without feeling that it means you ARE stupid and (b) just speak up more, you start to realise that you do in fact have lots to say and contribute. And that slowly helps in overcoming the impostor syndrome.

2. STOP COMPARING YOURSELF TO OTHERS - SERIOUSLY!

It really is true – comparison is the thief of all joy. One of the most crucial things my mom told me when I just started my A Levels and something I have been very conscious and

strict about is, “don't compare yourself to others because there just isn't a point. Your competition is not with anyone, your competition is just with yourself. If you are better today than you were yesterday, then that's all that matters.” It's so true – everyone is at different stages in their life/career/PhDs so it doesn't make any sense to compare yourself to others. They have different projects, different backgrounds, different fields, and a different number of collaborators; if someone publishes more than you, it shouldn't automatically make you feel worse as they just have

a different kind of project and may be in a totally different field. It's like comparing apples and buildings, not even oranges. Similarly, it just doesn't make sense to compare yourself to a post-doc or professor because they are at a different stage of their career and have

more experience than you. You just have to be very conscious in blocking out these thoughts when they come to you, and say to yourself, “No! I can't compare myself to him/her, am I better today than I was yesterday? Did I learn from my mistakes, grow, develop, think deeply and understand something new? That is the only yardstick I need to measure myself against.”

Also think about why you embarked on a PhD. Your goal was

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IT REALLY IS TRUE
– COMPARISON IS
THE THIEF OF ALL
JOY.

never to be better than everyone else nor did you start a PhD because you wanted to publish the most. You started *because* you enjoyed research or you were curious and wanted to study a topic in more depth, or you wanted to contribute to academic knowledge. Then why do we judge our progress by comparing ourselves to what other people have achieved? As long as you are still doing the things that made you begin, that's what matters. Everyone else's achievements are irrelevant.

3. BUILD A POSITIVE AND STRONG RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR SUPERVISOR

Some say the student-supervisor relationship is almost half the PhD, the rest is what you actually do. If you don't have a solid working relationship with your supervisor based on communication, honesty, and trust, it makes your life all the more miserable. We need to remember that supervisors are not there to make us trip up or feel stupid, they are genuinely there to help, guide, and mentor. They want more than anything for you to do well as it also reflects on them. The one person you need to learn to trust is your supervisor; others in your research group may see you as a competitor, but your supervisor will almost always want the best for you as your progress reflects on them. Learn to be honest with your supervisor, tell him if you feel you could use more guidance or help, or if you really need a break, or if you are feeling concerned about progress, and he will be able to offer a more accurate picture which, oftentimes, we don't see because we are so emotionally invested in our project. If your supervisor is not the type of person who can offer you what you need in terms of support, try to find a co-supervisor who knows what you are doing and who will support and encourage you rather than bring you down.

4. STOP EXPECTING YOURSELF TO WORK LIKE A MACHINE

I don't know why so many PhD students feel that they should just be working all the time. There is no end to their day or their tasks. Firstly, realise that we always set ourselves overly ambitious task lists; when you make a daily list, take off about half the things as that will be more realistic. I was lucky in that both my post-doc supervisors for my undergraduate and masters project were incredibly chill, laid-back people. That set such a good example for me on how to approach research. One of them told me how she can only really work productively about 3 days a week and doesn't expect any more of herself, since that has been enough for her to publish and find a post-doc in a competitive lab. The other one would do experiments really calmly, take a whole week to do something that could be rushed in 2 days, and never have multiple things running. In that slow calmness she was more in the moment and could prevent mistakes from happening that often occur when we are rushing, multi-tasking, and doing many experiments at once.

During my undergraduate years, I came across Cal Newport's book "Deep work" where he mentioned that, really, we can only work with full concentration for 4 hours in a day. That sounds very little but when I actually set a timer and worked without



IN ORDER FOR YOUR BRAIN TO RECOVER, RESET, GET READY TO STORE NEW INFORMATION, AND GENERATE NEW IDEAS, IT NEEDS A TOTAL BREAK!

distraction in chunks of 30-40 minutes, I could really only clock in a maximum of 3-4 hours. When I set this as my limit and goal, I realised I freed myself of the guilt of not working hard enough because I knew that once I had reached 4 hours my brain just wouldn't take anything in, and it released all the unnecessary pressure. You think you do less, but overtime you realise you are actually being more productive as you rid yourself of the guilt of needing to work all the time. Also, just being in a positive mental state does wonders to your productivity.

5. LEARN TO SWITCH OFF

That brings me to my last point: seriously, take a break and spend a good chunk of time daily to switch off and recharge. In order for your brain to recover, reset, get ready to store new information, and generate new ideas, it needs a total break! If you don't let your brain rest, it will just be constantly tired and refuse to focus. The best breaks are those where you immerse yourself in something different so much that your brain completely forgets about work for a while. So go outside, see friends, do some sport, or immerse yourself in a new experience. Again, you have to be strict; as soon as you find yourself thinking about work, you HAVE to block out the thoughts guilt-free, until it becomes natural to do so. This will ensure you come back refreshed the next day. You might even find yourself excited for work the next day because you actually "missed working" since you hadn't thought about it for a whole 16 hours! Imagine that!

HIRA JAVAID

SIX YEARS OF Q-CLUB

This year marks six years since the establishment of Q-Club at Oxford. The monthly Quran reading group, led by Dr Saquab Ashraf, was established to answer one question: how do we as Muslims in the UK engage with the Qur'an? We all affirm the importance of the Qur'an to our lives. We know that it is God's scripture, we show reverence towards it and many of us read it weekly or even daily in Arabic. But at the same time, most of us don't read or speak Arabic. Whilst the Arabic recitation alone brings great blessings and reward, the words don't penetrate to our hearts – it doesn't really feel like God is directly speaking to us.

THE CLASS

Q-Club reverses these preconceptions. By reading the Qur'an in English using Abdel Haleem's translation, we engage directly with the message of the Qur'an: the nature of God, to follow the Prophet, to do good to the people around, to be moral human beings and, ultimately, to be sincere worshippers. Over the course of two hours, Dr Saquab typically covers a dozen or more verses, stopping frequently to highlight intricacies in meaning or sentence structure. He then provides some commentary based on classical tafasir – such as al-Razi and ibn Kathir – as well as linking the verses to the modern context. Often, he asks what we think a particular verse means, giving us the opportunity to consider the verses directly and the courage to seek out and understand God's words. This is such a dramatic shift to the understanding that many of us have about the Qur'an; that the Qur'an is this inaccessible text that can only be accessed by great scholars or masters of Arabic language.

AT OXFORD

Over the past six years, seven surahs of the Qur'an have been covered in a lot of detail, accounting for over 12% of the verses in the Qur'an. We have covered many of the great stories in the Qur'an: the story of Joseph, Moses, Mary, Abraham and many of the other prophets. Underlying all of these stories and lessons is a fundamental call to think, reflect and become conscious of God. As He says in Taha: *'We have sent the Quran down in the Arabic tongue and given all kinds of warnings in it, so that they may beware or take heed'* [v 113].

THE TEACHER

Dr Saquab Ashraf completed his DPhil (Qur'an) at St Cross College, University of Oxford, where his doctoral thesis explored the literary function of the word *qul* in the Qur'an (supervised by Prof. Nicolai Sinai and examined by Prof. Neal Robinson). Prior to this, he completed an MA from SOAS, University of London with Prof. MAS Haleem and he has studied the traditional sciences in Hadramawt and in the UK.

WHY HALEEM?

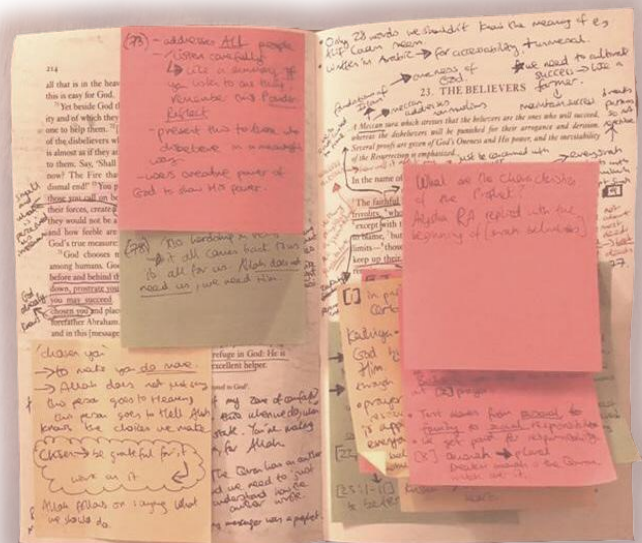
Abdel Haleem chose an unprecedented way to display his translation. He combines the verses into flowing script and breaks the text into paragraphs based on shifts in topic. His reason for doing so is to 'clarify the meaning and structure of thoughts and to meet the expectation of modern readers'. As one of his many efforts to provide clarity to the Qur'an's meanings, Abdel Haleem has introduced punctuation such as commas, semicolons, dashes, exclamation marks, and quotation marks.



COMMENTS FROM ATTENDEES

AbdurRasheed (3rd year undergraduate Physics) says: ‘Q-Club has transformed my relationship with the Qur’an. So often we read the English translation at face value, and we don’t stop to reflect on the structure of the chapters or on why something is ordered or described the way it is. Sometimes, because we don’t understand Arabic, we consider our ability to understand the Qur’an handicapped – although this is certainly true, through Q-Club and Q-Immersion I’ve learnt how to really engage with the English in ways I just didn’t know were possible, and it’s opened up the Qur’an for me and fundamentally changed how I read it, think about it, internalise it, and apply it to daily life.’

Hibba (3rd year DPhil Geography) says: “Q-Club has allowed me to develop a much more personal relationship with the Qur’an. At a time of great intellectual development (the start of my undergraduate degree) where for the first time I was being exposed to new ideas, being encouraged to think critically, getting through extensive reading lists, and being untethered from a syllabus, it was refreshing to similarly be challenged in Q-Club. We were guided to approach the Qur’an in an intentional and mindful manner, identifying patterns, appreciating structure, pondering why a certain word was used in certain places and not others, critiquing translation methodology, contemplating the difference between translation and interpretation, reading and re-reading, and above all reflecting over what lessons we could learn.”



Nabila (Biochemistry, graduated 2017) says: ‘Q-Club was and continues to be an amazing source of spiritual guidance and strength in my life. Growing into life as a young adult and starting to carve my own path, it gave me a new way to access, understand and develop a relationship with the Qur’an that was rooted in love for Allah (SWT) and His Messenger, and the sheer beauty of the message it shares. The style of classes encouraged us all to think, discuss, question and always strive to deepen our understanding of the text, which not only built a wonderful community amongst us, but made the text accessible to me, and allowed me to begin to cultivate a relationship with our Holy Book which, inshallah, will continue for years to come.’

IMRAN NAVED

Mich.

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CURRENT AFFAIRS



The theme for this term's *Current Affairs* section is 'community' and we were pleased to receive a handful of diverse responses to the stimulus from members within our society. Focus in this issue ranges from a piece critical of individualism, to a rejection of top-down political intervention for when it comes to 'Fixing the Internet'. It is important to remind the reader that the articles contained in this section represent only the views and opinions of their authors, and should not be taken in any way to necessarily be representative of the views and opinions of the ISoc committee or of the wider Muslim community in Oxford. Phew, now that's out of the way, sit back and enjoy (or not).

Becoming better brothers

A reflection on the state of brotherhood in the 21st century

In the last fifty years, we have witnessed a critical evaluation of traditional masculinity – you will have truly seen this if, by chance, you are over fifty years old. If not, take my word for it: masculinity is under the spotlight.

Contrary to how many people feel, I believe there is a potential lesson in this for Muslims. It is a chance for us to reflect on whether our own understanding and behaviour maps onto the Qur'anic and Prophetic ideal. Since this is a multi-dimensional discussion, I will limit this article to evaluating brotherhood from my perspective as a young man.

A glance at the positives

On the positive side, innovation has made it easier than ever to contact our brothers in Islam. It is easy to forget how large a blessing this is.

By the Mercy of Allah, I can now get advice from a brother instantly; I can more easily check up on a brother when he is unwell; I can also seek forgiveness from a brother without having to have an intense in-person conversation. To these ends, we must make use of the technologies available to us and give thanks to Allah for their blessing.

Where our brotherhood fails

However, in my opinion, we still fail each other as brothers consistently and systematically in the 21st century. There are two key areas that I would like to highlight, though there are arguably many more:

Firstly, we fail our brothers emotionally. For some of us, this is because we do not love our brothers. Instead, we categorise them as people that we chill, crack jokes, or play sport with. Taking the example of the Prophet, all of these things should *play a role* in our brotherly relationships; however, the relationships cannot end there. They must extend so much further than this – take this verse from the Qur'an:

Remember God's favour to you: you were enemies and then He brought your hearts together and you became brothers by His grace [3:103]

Do you have that mindset – that your heart should be united with the heart of your brother? Ask yourself: do I *love* my brother?

If your answer is 'yes', then you probably fall within the majority – those who love inside, but *do not know how* to practically meet the emotional needs of their brothers.

Sometimes a brother comes to us needing to be heard. We don't recognise this; instead of letting him express himself, we talk him down, or invalidate/interrogate his feelings, or get frustrated when the solutions we present are rejected, or we send signals that we're uncomfortable before he's even started sharing.

If someone wants to confide in you, it's because they've recognised that they can't healthily process their emotions alone – and it is our duty, as brothers in Islam, to support them. Brotherly relationships *must* be safe spaces, where our brother can feel comfortable in sharing his emotions and experiences.

The Prophet says:

“A Muslim is the brother of other Muslims. He never oppresses them. He never abandons them. He never leaves them alone in the face of calamities.”

Secondly, and linking on from this point, we fail our brothers physically. Still, many brothers feel it is unmanly to ask a brother for a hug, or to give one. When we do give a hug, we make it a brief formality rather than a free expression of affection. Research has persistently shown the human need for non-sexual physical love. It is a large part of how we connect with each other.

Moreover, we have numerous traditions of the Prophet where he physically expresses his love for his companions; I will not quote them here owing to lack of space, but also in order to encourage *you* to research the Prophetic example on this issue.

Conclusions

Unfortunately, we have largely forgotten the Prophetic example in our endeavour to become 'men'; either that, or we have actively rejected it. The question we must ask ourselves is this: are we more interested in avoiding discomfort or emulating the Prophet of Islam?

You may not have noticed, but the stakes are high – for all of us.

Society's recent re-evaluation of masculinity has opened a much-needed conversation on the state of brotherhood in the Islamic community.

If enough of us keep failing, our brother may pour his heart out to, or seek physical affection from, members of the opposite gender; they find a way to feel heard and loved, but because of our failure, they are pushed to trespass the boundaries of Allah to do so. Alternatively, his unresolved emotions may remain within. Over the long term, the consequences of this can be catastrophic.

You may think that all of this is a stretch, but what will you say before God when you are confronted with a list of brothers: the ones that fell into sin after you ignored their physical and emotional needs?

We ask Allah to help us in our journey to becoming better brothers.

IBRAHIM AL-HARIRI

Fixing the Internet

In the Ted talk *'How to Fix The Web'*, Brendan Eich explains how cookies have broken the internet. Cookies are small scripts which remember our online activity, tracking all our interactions, locations, likes and searches to build a profile of us. Profiles which, thanks to psychographics and correlation with lots of other profiles, allow for eerily accurate predictions about our preferences.

For many, the free services Google and Facebook provide are a fair exchange for the data they collect. Yet, the issue with this psychographic data aggregation is that the companies discover things about us that we weren't even aware of - discoveries motivated exclusively by economic incentives. As Jaron Lanier explains in *'Who Owns the Future'*, the process of aggregating our data and then sending it back to us gradually pushes us towards financial and educational decisions that make those in charge more powerful. Moreover, *'The Great Hack'* (available on Netflix) documents how this trillion-dollar data gathering industry is dismantling democracy, with Facebook's psychographic data collection, extrapolation and commercialisation contributing to both Trump and Brexit.

The iniquity of the tech overlords is not obscure. In July, Congresswoman Jayapal asserted that Facebook is a quintessential monopoly, using user data to acquire and kill rivals. Although Congress has identified serious issues, political interventions appear ineffective against Big Tech. This is illustrated in *'The Great Hack'* (a highly recommended documentary) which shows how despite the existence of extensive evidence, neither the UK nor the US were able to hold Facebook to account for their nefarious psychographic data manipulation. Furthermore, although the GDPR was created in 2016, Congresswoman Demings pointed out that since 2016, Google have been collecting far more data for evermore pervasive internet tracking. Thus, the EU's efforts similarly seem to be in vain.

It is likely that top-down political interventions will continue to be ineffective and more radical solutions have been proposed. In *'Life After Google: Rise of the Blockchain Economy'*, George Gilder showcases that through tokens for micropayments and cryptographic identities for security, the blockchain provides an infrastructure for reclaiming the power of our data. The blockchain is a distributed ledger which allows for networks to function without a gatekeeping central authority. Through a process called mining, new information is added to the network only

if a majority of the network can verify its authenticity. This relies on solving a hash function, which is one way. Once the answer is found, the message is broadcast to the network and easily verified. Thus, we can operate a network, be it for money or information, by relying on the network itself rather than a controlling entity.

The first use of the blockchain was bitcoin - a decentralised digital currency which verifies transactions not through traditional double-entry accounting but through a many-thousand entry consensus algorithm using time stamps and one-way hash functions. What bitcoin does for payments, Etheruem does for anything that can be programmed - essentially providing a security infrastructure for the

internet. This has many supposed applications in insurance, supply chains and finance. Through Brave, it allows us to control our data. Brave is a browser built on Etheruem's blockchain. It functions through Basic Attention Tokens (BATs); advertisers pay publishers in BATs and users are given BATs for tolerating adverts. The Brave browser updates you on how many trackers are being blocked and how much time is being saved by not having to load cookie scripts. More importantly,

Brave allows you to build a dossier of your data which may one day allow you to give terms to tech conglomerates.

Blockchain represents an innovation in internet security infrastructure which epitomises a sense of control by the people for the people. Yet, the effectiveness of these applications depends on the mass adoption of them - and for most, the convenience of Facebook and Google outweighs security concerns. Though the notion of data dossiers is an exciting one, more creative uses of the blockchain, such as Blockstack for decentralised web identities or Steemit's social network, are even more elusive in their adoption potential. Fixing the internet might just depend on limiting how much information we put on the web and being alert to where our attention is directed on social media.



IT IS LIKELY THAT TOP-DOWN POLITICAL INTERVENTIONS WILL CONTINUE TO BE INEFFECTIVE AND MORE RADICAL SOLUTIONS HAVE BEEN PROPOSED

MUSADDIK AHMED

behind the mask

Even if life seems to be settling down to some kind of normal, it's glaringly obvious that student communities will be forced to function differently post-lockdown. No matter how desperate we all are to see each other again, there's going to be a very different dynamic when we meet. No more enormous groups packed together into a tiny room, a lot less hugs, and lots - *lots* - of masks.

Wearing a mask makes complete sense, but it takes a little time to get used to it. Having briefly considered anti-fog or tiny windscreen wipers, I'm getting used to the inconvenient way it makes my glasses steam up when I'm doing just about anything. But so far, the strangest catch has been this: on finding myself struggling to hear someone in a shop the other day, I had a sudden and inexplicable impulse to pull my mask down, as if I'd somehow understand them better if they could see my face. Now, the last time I checked, my mask wasn't noise-cancelling, but I haven't been the only one by far; something as simple as seeing each other's expressions makes up a key part of the way we communicate with one another. Not to mention how odd it feels when someone can't instantly tell that you're smiling at them.

So with our interactions stretched out horizontally, our positions plotted into place and our communication left feeling foggy, where do we go from here?

While social distance changes the ways we connect, it has also reinforced one of the simplest tenets of any community: looking out for one another. Our communities at home made efforts to reach out to those who were isolated over lockdown, and the importance of carrying forward the same kind of tiny gestures of solidarity can't be overestimated, because so many students will return to university amidst the uncertainty to find themselves feeling they don't have anyone to fall back on.

We have to maintain and build on the open, welcoming ethos at the heart of Oxford's Muslim community. Even if big gatherings were able to go ahead as they did before, that sense of individual

openness isn't something anyone can organise for you. It's on each of our shoulders to check up on that brother in the year below that we bumped into around college the other day, or the sister on your course who you haven't heard from in a while. Something as small as sharing resources and advice that helped us in previous years demonstrates that caring impulse; maybe cooking for someone in your household when they've got a heavy week, or offering a hand with some tricky academic concepts they're tackling.

Even before we had a pandemic on our plates, there was always going to be someone, somewhere, slipping through the gaps; the current climate has simply brought home the visceral importance of having each other's backs. We cannot allow those who are self-isolating or avoiding gatherings to become invisible; we have to make sure they're doing just as okay as the people we cross paths with regularly, in active demonstrations of community spirit.

This focus on smaller, quieter interactions and keeping an eye out for one another has to be utilised to ensure our communities are as inclusive as they can be. We're all in a position now to help reshape our communities to be as welcoming as possible, and that begins with looking out for people who might easily feel excluded and establishing genuine connections that ultimately make the difference between feeling alone and feeling supported.

I'm a big believer that any strong and diverse community fundamentally relies on smaller interactions between individuals and the openness of manner that ensures others know their concerns will be respected and their struggles supported. So where our masks have to stay tightly fastened for now, we need to get used to letting smiles slip in other ways: by showing a more proactive solidarity. And Covid or no Covid, I have it on sound scientific authority that a genuine smile is as infectious as ever.

TAYIBA SULAIMAN

What has led to the decline of the community?

In this article we investigate how individualism has affected the notion of the community and the implications of this on social activism.

When we examine social problems that occur in society it is easy to blame and punish the individual without looking at the societal environment that shapes and influences our behaviour. For instance, when looking at alcohol related violence, it is easy to blame the individual without looking at the culture created by society involving pubs, bars and nightclubs as well as the music industry which glorifies violence. Undoubtedly, the individual is at fault but is the societal culture not also culpable? The blaming of the individual is evident in the response we have seen to the current pandemic. The focus of the media and politicians has been consistently on blaming individuals for their actions for breaching 'lockdown' rules rather than the confusing instructions given by the government where even prominent government officials were found to break the rules. This is not to mention the economic conditions that have made staying at home unfeasible for many.

It is this view of an autonomous individual that forms the heart of liberal thought. It is this view that has led to the decline of the community as many do not see the importance of building a strong community but instead seek to focus on themselves as individuals. This has also affected the Muslim community who now view the root cause of problems as 'wrong ideas associated with belief', 'lack of spirituality', 'bad character' etc. Whilst these are certainly problems that require attention, they are but symptoms of the lack of a strong community that builds individuals. It is not by accident that individuals are left with improper education.

Indeed, individuals collectively make up the community but strong individuals who do not seek to build a community and society with an alternative set of values to those that liberal individualism provides will not lead to any form of long term change. Inevitably, we can only work in our capacity as individuals, but we must seek to improve ourselves as individuals to the extent that we also understand our Islamic obligations to serve and protect the community. Islam urges us to build a community and a society that is founded on enjoining the good and forbidding the evil.

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ

“You are the best nation produced for mankind.
You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong
and believe in Allah.” (Quran 3:110)

Islam encourages us to speak out against injustices occurring around us. Furthermore, when building a community, as outlined in the ayah, it must not be reduced to extracting benefit for ourselves but rather advocating and promoting the truth as a mercy to mankind. The Islamic view is absolutely contrary to the individualistic view of me, myself and I where we are taught not to judge others and focus on only ourselves. Liberal individualism where the individual is made to be the focus of society not only leads to the decline of the community but also leads to the building of self-supporting mechanisms preventing its growth. Therefore, the community is thought to be irrelevant and a burden on the lives of individuals. This is despite the great role the community can play in distributing food and resources, education of the youth, helping broken families, tackling crime, helping the elderly etc.

Beyond local communities, it must also be understood how that community will survive in a harsh environment with contradicting values, when looking at its role in solving wider societal problems associated with education, crime, economics etc. We must understand the political climate that has led to the situation we are in and how the same problems are perpetuated in a vicious cycle. How long will a community survive in a society which propagates values that contradict the status quo of society from its view towards women to the promotion of alcohol and drugs? Consequently, building a strong community requires continuous effort and struggle. However, this can often become very disheartening when it is against the very grain of society, facing continuous battles. It is thus necessary that this community must also promote its values and ideas as a political alternative to have hope for meaningful long-term change. This is particularly important for the role of a strong community in advocating for an alternative in the face of global problems from wars, occupations and poverty to climate change.

ALUMNI



The ISoc is a community that grows and benefits each year from the contributions of every generation. In this issue, we hear from Dr Abubakar Abioye, who details his journey in setting up GMEC – a free online platform that facilitates virtual tutorials for medical students in LMICs. We also feature a reflection from alumnus Djamshid on his time spent at Oxford – having attended the University himself for almost nine years!

Global Medical Education Collaborative

I remember my time in Oxford fondly and especially the OUISoc members that I met and grew to know well, such as Adam Ali, Mohammad Ali, and Imran Mahmud. Whilst studying at the University, they were working on a project called OxPal (www.OxPal.org) that utilised doctors from Oxford to teach medical students at Al-Quds University Medical School in the West Bank, Palestine over the internet. I had thought it very noble and ingenious of them to share knowledge in this way, as a resource across thousands of miles to help bridge the gap in equity amongst medical students across the world.

For the past six years, since leaving Oxford, I have been practicing as a doctor. I became ill with COVID-19 at the start of the pandemic during April. I was frustrated at being unable to help further and, frankly, was getting bored of being stuck in bed all day for weeks. At this time, I was impressed at how UK universities, including medical schools, had been able to move some of their curriculum online so that students in lockdown could continue to learn. Though when I thought of my home country, Nigeria, I knew that no such system would be in place for the medical students there.

Through my friends at OUISoc, I knew that it was possible for doctors in high income countries to teach medical students virtually and that was what I wanted to do in Nigeria and other LMICs. So I teamed up with Natalie Posever and Morgan Sedhev who are Harvard medical students and together we created GMEC (Global Medical Education Collaborative; www.GMECCollab.org).

GMEC is a free online platform that facilitates interactive, virtual tutorials for medical students in LMICs. The mission of GMEC is to reduce the inequity in medical education between high income countries and LMICs by providing a different style of teaching and human capital in the form of our tutors and committee members.

So far, GMEC has grown rapidly and is actively enacting the vision for which it was created. We have conducted over 100 tutorials with students from more than 15 countries, and currently we have around 400 medical students registered on our platform. I think that what makes GMEC truly special is that we are involved with students and tutors who come from all across the world; this diversity is mirrored in our committee which is composed of members from 4 different continents.

We are at the start of the journey for GMEC and there are exciting avenues that we are exploring for our rapid growth. As a non-profit, there are inherent limitations to what we are able to do, however the results that we have achieved so far show what can be done with the right attitude, and people who share the same vision. My past at Oxford has inspired me to create a future that will add value to the lives of hundreds, if not thousands of people across the globe. Our students once said, “right now, there’s no clinical activity of any kind so I fear for what will become of us” and “I really miss doing what I love; it’s like I’m living someone else’s life”. I am especially proud that I have helped create an organisation that has taken note of these woes and been proactive in making lives better.



**DR ABUBAKAR
ABIOYE**

Reflection on my time in Oxford

For those of you who've just gone into your second year, it's likely that you will have a great deal to reflect on from the past year alone. Now imagine that feeling times nine. Djamshid has spent almost nine years at the University and it was interesting to gain a real sense of his perspective on how both the ISoc and the general scene of university life have changed around him during that time. We hope that you too can grasp his insight by having a read through what he had to tell us about his time spent in Oxford.

What did you study at Oxford?

2011–2015: Undergraduate Masters in Chemistry, Worcester College (MChem)

2015–2016: Master in Physics (CMP), Corpus Christi College (MRes) joint with Imperial College London (Thesis title: Polymer Photonic Structures for Control of Terahertz Light)

2016–2019: DPhil in Physics (CMP), Corpus Christi College (Thesis title: Terahertz Nonlinear Optics & III-V Semiconductor Nanowires)

2019–2020: Postdoctoral Research in Physics (CMP)

Had you ever envisaged spending so much time at Oxford and what made you stay for so long?

Well to begin with, I never envisioned myself as a student at Oxford in the first place, being from abroad, but alhamdulillah for this privilege. The undergraduate years were very rewarding, and credit must here go to the university/college. The tutorial system is unparalleled; with one of the best and most active physics departments in Europe, I stayed for my DPhil and again, found that the college system worked really well for me. Some people tend to throw away the college experience and hang out mostly with the ISoc, but I believe that this takes away a lot.

When did you first 'find' ISoc and how was the society in your early years at Oxford?

Back then, the ISoc was not as active as it is today, and I had not heard of it. I spent my first year mainly in college. However, towards Trinity 2012, I met some legends, namely: Imran Mahmud, Jayed Sarker, Imad Ahmed, Aminul Islam, Ibrahim Khan, Mohsin Patel and Adam Ali (and a couple of others) who were core members of the small ISoc. That was it folks, that was the ISoc back then. Jumu'a used to be held in New College, Long Room, and Bodrum used to be on Park End Street. The society hosted small events, mostly between groups of people who would stick together: nights out, movies, dhikr gathering, and of course a few Islamic talks.

What was your personal involvement in ISoc?

I served as Brothers' Welfare, Outreach and Socials during my 2nd/3rd years and then Secretary, followed by a short term period as VP.

What are some of your favourite memories of ISoc?

Countless! But those worthy of mention are: morning Fajr together with breakfast cooked (by us!) at St John's College in Kendrew Quad, cycling trips around Oxfordshire, impromptu dinners, Friday football, and the cultural fair. I would advise people to pay particular attention to the second one as it is much needed. It does not have to be cycling, it could be walking, or volunteering at Willowbrook Farm, basically anything that connects you to nature. Breaking away from a week's hard work at college, with the outside world, is highly rewarding and helps clear your mind. I always found that I worked harder whenever I came back from these trips.

In your opinion, why is ISoc so important?

ISoc has been and will be for many more students to come, the locus of Muslim lifestyle – praying together, eating out, someone to talk to and more. Even though there are over a hundred students within ISoc, anyone can adapt to a particular group (of course we do not encourage the splitting of groups) but certain people will be more suited according to, for instance, certain cultural values or age-related groups. ISoc can even be a hotspot for subject-related discussions where people share questions about exams or tutorials or work.

How did your experience change, going from an undergraduate to a postgraduate?

If you are one of many who think that being a postgraduate means more free time, then you could not be more wrong. Undergraduate degrees tend to be packed with lectures, tutorials and lab hours but over an 8-week period. Postgraduate studies are packed with work throughout the year. When I started my DPhil, I initially spent a lot of time learning new concepts, reading around 10 scientific papers every

week (trying to make some sense of them) and learning how my lab works. At this stage, I was thankful for ISoc because it meant that I had external events I could attend rather than busying myself with DPhil work.

How has your experience at Oxford changed you as a person?

If you had known me 9 years ago, you would say that I have changed significantly. The diverse environment within which I grew up during those years at Oxford has had a wonderful impact on me. I have come to grow fond of so many people from all walks of life, various cultures, and with various ways of thinking. More importantly, I have learnt to mould myself within any group. Oxford has also taught me how to deal with and manage various aspects of life, be these academic, social or personal.

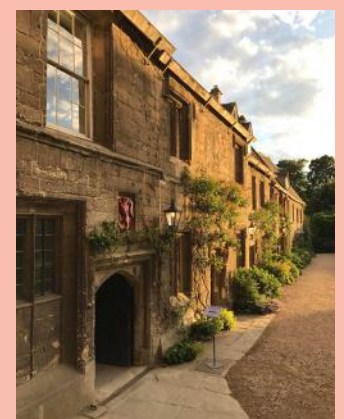
What is your favourite place to study in Oxford?

Worcester College Lower Library was my absolute favourite spot for studying. You are literally steeped in the smell of rare, old books, and high ceilings and chandeliers, huge single-seater tables overlooking the main quad through the 11-foot windows. Outside college, the Radcliffe Science Library (RSL), Level 5, was my main go-to place given the short distance from the science area. On and off, I would go to Blackwell's Bookshop in the Norrington Room, browse through some books I needed and casually sit there and read (books are super expensive, let's face it!).

Do you have any advice for the new freshers who are joining Oxford and our ISoc? What do you wish you knew when you first started at Oxford?

I would first and foremost advise members of the ISoc to try and reach out as much as they can to freshers, so that these freshers get to know of the ISoc from one of its members. As for freshers themselves, I would advise getting to know how the ISoc functions, and maybe helping out at events (even where extra help may not always be needed). It adds to your friendships and everyone grows spiritually together. Get involved with the committee, pitch ideas, maybe a list of potential events/speakers, expand your horizons through meeting new people (especially the international lot) and so on. My first year was spent entirely in my room as I did not know a lot of people. I hope that this time round, freshers get to experience Oxford in a better way and that they do not feel left out when their non-Muslim friends are having fun.

DJAMSHID DAMRY



STUDENT WORKS

Welcome to Student Works! On these next two pages you'll find a handful of creative contributions from members of our community.



TWO PIECES OF ART
AND A PHOTO TAKEN
OF A WITCH

TAYIBA SULAIMAN
ST HILDA'S COLLEGE



EMBROIDERY

AMEERAH LATIF
ST HILDA'S COLLEGE



BABY STEPS,
16/08/2020

HUDAA BAX
ST BENET'S HALL



NEW LIFE FROM OLD,
WATERCOLOUR AND
PENCIL DRAWING

CORAL BENFIELD
ORIEL COLLEGE



OURIKA VALLEY,
MOROCCO (2018)

AHMED JEYTE
LADY MARGARET HALL



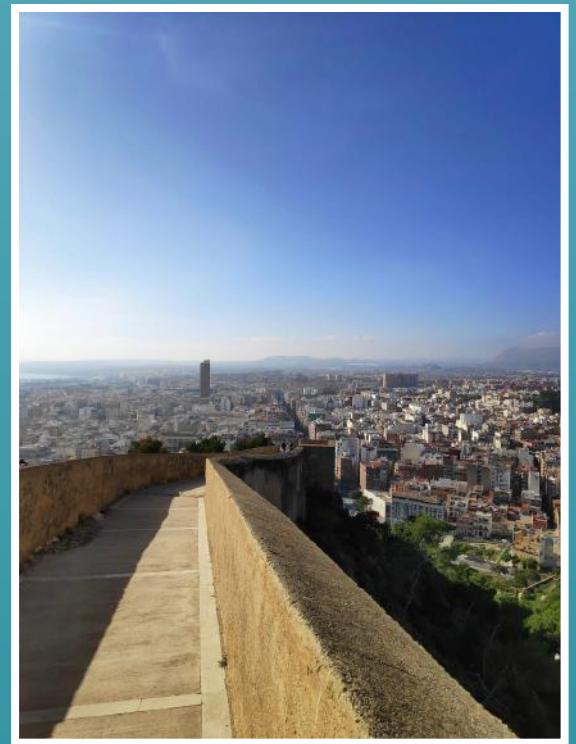
KISWAH CLOTH,
OXCIS

MUAZ NAWAZ
ST. HUGH'S COLLEGE



'DINTON PASTURES
COUNTRY PARK',
WOKINGHAM

ANIQA LEENA
LADY MARGARET HALL



ALICANTE,
SPAIN (2019)

ABDUL LATEEF
ST JOHN'S COLLEGE

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Everyone on committee is always willing to talk to you and help with any questions or concerns you may have. For more details, please visit www.ouisoc.org/committee



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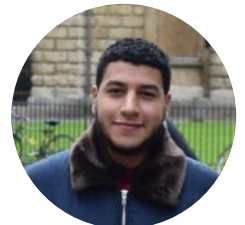
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Events Officer



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Disabilities Officer



Ibrahim El-Gaby
Graduate Affairs Chair

OUISOC Termcard - Michaelmas Term 2020

All events hosted on **Zoom** will have links posted on the WhatsApp groups

MICHAELMAS TERM CARD

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Week 0 4 th Oct		Dessert Meet and Greet (Radcam, 7pm)	Sisters' Scavenger Hunt (Radcam, 4pm) Brothers' Social Night (Radcam, timing depends on activity)	Freshers' Dinners (Sisters: Radcam, 7pm) (Brothers: Outside PR, 7pm) OUISOC Magazine Issue #2 Release	Brothers' Scavenger Hunt (Radcam, 4pm) Sisters' Social Night (Radcam, timing depends on activity)	Christchurch Meadows Picnic (Radcam, 4pm) Brothers Escape Room (Radcam, 7:45pm) Grads' Botanical Garden Trip (Radcam, 1-4pm)	Brothers' Excursions (Radcam, timing depends on activity) Port Meadow Sunrise Walk (Prayer Room, 7am) Graduates' Freshers' Dinner (Radcam, 7:15pm)
Week 1 11 th Oct	Sisters' Excursions (Radcam, timing depends on activity)	Brothers' Post Isha Chill (Prayer Room, after Isha)	Settling into University with Sh. Ibrahim (Zoom, 7-8pm)		Meet The Committee (Zoom, 7pm) Sisters' Bubble Tea (6pm) Brothers' Post Isha Chill (Prayer Room, after Isha)	God's Messenger: Milestones Of Mecca (Quaker House, 7:30-8:30pm)	
Week 2 18 th Oct		Theology: Knowledge of God	Q-Club				Snowdon Climb (All Day)
Week 3 25 th Oct		Sisters' Movie & Henna Night (Zoom, 7:30pm) Brothers' Games Tournament (Zoom, 8pm)	Brothers' Post Isha Chill (Prayer Room, after Isha)	Great British Bike Off (5pm)	Cambridge Head-to-Head (Zoom, 8-9pm)	God's Messenger: Milestones Of Mecca (Quaker House, 7:30-8:30pm)	Amazing Race (Locations around Oxford, 1pm)
Week 4 1 st Nov	Charity Auction (Zoom, 8pm)	'Challenging the Narrative' - Islamophobia Awareness Month	Brothers' Post Isha Chill (Prayer Room, after Isha)	Theology: Knowledge of God	Sisters' Freshers' Only Online Spy Game		Graduates' Cycle Tour (Radcam, 2pm)
Week 5 8 th Nov			The British Muslims in Power (Zoom, 7pm)		Brothers' Munch (Prayer Room, after Isha)	God's Messenger: Milestones Of Mecca (Quaker House, 7:30-8:30pm)	
Week 6 15 th Nov	Graduate Colloquium (Zoom, 2pm)	Brothers' Post Isha Chill (Prayer Room, after Isha)	Q-Club	Theology: Knowledge of God	Sisters' Restaurant Dinners (7pm) Brothers' Online Games Night (8pm)		The key to a successful career: An Islamic Perspective
Week 7 22 nd Nov	Brothers' Bike Ride (Radcam, 10am)	Academic Advice Session (Zoom, 6:30pm)	Interfaith Dinner (Oxford Jewish Chaplaincy, 7pm)	Careers Talk: Medicine & Healthcare (Zoom, 7pm)	Careers Talk: Law (Zoom, 7pm)	God's Messenger: Milestones Of Mecca (Quaker House, 7:30-8:30pm)	Found in Translation?: The Quran in English (Quaker House, 4-6pm)
Week 8 29 th Nov	Graduates' Day-Trip to Stonehenge (Radcam, Time TBC)	Careers Talk: History & English (Zoom, 7pm)	Brothers' Post Isha Chill (Prayer Room, after Isha)	Theology: Knowledge of God	Careers Talk: Maths & Engineering (Virtual, 7pm)	Sisters' Team Quiz	Grad Chat - Term Evaluation and Advice Session (Zoom, 2pm)

REGULAR EVENTS		KEY	
Brothers' Tilawa (recitation) cricle and Breakfast in University Parks	Every Friday	Religious Education	Politics
Fortnightly Welfare Chats	Saturday Weeks 1, 3, 5 and 7 (Location & Time posted in WhatsApp Chats)	Community	Graduates
Dua Kumayl Recitation	Every Thursday 8pm (Prayer Room)	Welfare & Social	Islamic Awareness
			Other

CRYPTOGRAM

ALL LETTERS OF THE ALPHABET HAVE BEEN ASSIGNED A RANDOM NUMBER, DECRYPT THE HIDDEN MESSAGE.

- AHNAF FARABI

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	

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17 5 26 24 2 3 17 5 10 17 3

26 24 2 21 2 18 14 3 26 21 9 6 6 14 2

رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا
إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ


“Our Lord! Accept (this) from us.
Indeed! You are the Hearing, the Knowing.”


IKHLAAS


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