

# People of all faiths unite for Iftar in Southern California

*SoCal comes together to celebrate Ramadan in a tradition of unity and solidarity at Temple Bat Yahm*

NEWPORT BEACH, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, April 18, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [AMMWECC](#) and a Temple Bat Yahm reunited after a hiatus of three years during the pandemic to reignite a spirit of solidarity and human connections at the Temple Bat Yahm in Newport Beach, California. Young Ryaan Syed and Aliza Ali, Muslims youth of Ammwec opened the event with recitation from the Holy Quran.

Bushra Mateen, Dinah Freiden the dynamic Muslim Jewish Christian hostesses and AMMWECC board members, opened the event and shared their joy in reconnecting with everyone.

"Several times people said to me what's a nice Jewish girl from West LA doing with the Muslim community. I said my Muslim family shares the same values as we do, we want a welcoming community, mutual respect, and religious freedom," said Dinah Frieden.

Deborah Cunningham Skurnik, a Christian and Catholic board member of AMMWECC, spoke about the coming together to celebrate Passover, Ramadan, and Easter together.

"Easter starts off with lent, a forty day period of prayers and fasting-representing the forty days that Jesus spent in the desert where he avai8ded all temptations, said Deborah. Bushra Mateen, a Muslim public school teacher, welcomed everyone on behalf of AMMWECC.

"As we break bread today and break our fast, not only are we celebrating a centuries old tradition but we are also writing a chapter in the millennial long history between Muslims and Jews. From the Islamic Golden Age in Andalusia, the Jewish and Muslim scholars worked together on science, philosophy, and art to the Ottoman Empire which provided refuge to thousands of Jews fleeing persecution in Europe. Our communities have often stood side-by-side in face of



Muslim Jewish Christian Women of AMMWECC

adversity," said Bushra to packed audience.

Speaking to a temple full of Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Sikhs, Bahaiis, and other traditions, Rabbi Gersh Zylberman welcomed the guests to the iftar.

"In Morocco, Jews and their Muslim neighbors would gather together in friendship and peace to celebrate the end of the Passover on an occasion known as Maimona, with delicious food, mint tea in abundance, they would enjoy Maimona festival and pray together for prosperity in a spirit of mutual harmony and respect. After an unwanted pandemic hiatus, how fitting it is that we return to this interfaith iftar tradition as this iftar falls on Maimona holiday," said Rabbi Gersh Zylberman, senior Rabbi at Temple Bat Yahm, co-host of the event.

Rabbi Peter Levy of ADL Anti-Defamation League, recalled the time that AMMWEC sister, [Anila Ali](#) called him in 2016, disheartened by the spate of anti-Muslim hate and asked the Jewish community to come together to stand with Muslims to fight hate. And together they put together a Town Hall on hate just as these two communities had often in history, stood with each other in history.

Adam Reingold, CEO of the House of Ruach, shared his experience about his recent trip to Pakistan to tour the schools and human development that his foundation through the Drs Don and Gwen Hecht Philanthropy supports in the interior of Sindh and Karachi through Calpak Education Services.

Dressed in shalwar kameez and draping an ajrak from the shoulder, he said, " I applaud Anila and her IRF Roundtable Pakistan members who celebrated and lit Hanukkah for the first time in



Senior Rabbi Gersh Zylberman- Co-Host of Iftar



Multifaith leaders shares ways to build resilience against hate



Pakistan. I had the honor to attend the International Religious Freedom Roundtable in Pakistan as well. Only by participation of interfaith dialogue and support, that we can make the greatest impact.

"Several hundred Afghan families came to Orange County and much of efforts to house them and settle them came from the the Jewish community nationally. "Coming to a new country is not easy," said Jackie. Some of the Afghan refugee families were present and introduced to all by Jackie Mentor, OC Jewish Coalition for Refugees. The iftar was attended by two celebrities, Razia Jan, a CNN hero, an Afghan shero who still runs girls schools in Afghanistan and CJ Viridi. CJ is a Hollywood and Bollywood singer who enjoys being a part of the interfaith iftar every year,. He is Sikh and rejoices in singing Islamic hymns to warm up the hearts of the attendees.

Local Assemblywoman [Cottie](#) Petrie Norris spoke to the audience and attended the iftar to support her diverse constituents. "When you join your communities on a week night in celebrating their events, you are a servant leader," said Anila Ali, while thanking the Assemblywoman.

Representative Katie Porter also shared her message with the gathering in the spirit of Ramadan. Brother Mohamed Khan and Imam Ghazaly spoke of the significance of fasting in Islam and the diversity in Islam. Prayers were led by Imam Ghazaly Salim, a Cambodian imam, whose voice and recitation mesmerized the Muslims who prayed in the synagogue. The iftar brings together people of all faiths and food was sponsored by the generosity of the Hecht Family of House of Ruach in the true spirit of interfaith.

Anila Ali



Rabbi Peter Levy of ADL Anti Defamation League of OC



Muslim Jewish Christian Hosts of Iftar

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