

Sohaib Sultan, Princeton University's Muslim chaplain, dies at 40

by [Silma Suba](#) in the [May 19, 2021](#) issue



(Courtesy photo)

Sohaib Nazeer Sultan, Princeton University's Muslim chaplain and an interfaith leader, died April 16 after a yearlong battle with a rare and aggressive form of cancer. He was 40.

A public lecturer and writer on Islam, Sultan was greatly revered for his compassionate outlook on life, inspired by his faith. He was known for his interfaith leadership in higher education and as a bridge builder between Muslims and other faith communities.

“I had the singular honor of hiring Imam Sultan to his position at Princeton,” said Paul Raushenbush, former associate dean of religious life at Princeton. “Sohaib brought his kind heart, deep spirit, and welcoming smile into every room and made life better at Princeton not only for Muslims but for every student, staff, and faculty member. His presence in my life was a gift that I am forever grateful for.”

Sultan was a graduate of Hartford Theological Seminary and was the first Muslim chaplain at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut. He was one of seven people profiled in the 2010 PBS documentary series *The Calling*, about the spiritual journey of people from Jewish, Christian, and Muslim faiths who chose to become clergy.

He was author of *The Koran for Dummies*, published in 2004, and *The Qur'an and Sayings of Prophet Muhammad: Selections Annotated and Explained*, published in 2007.

Less than a month before his death, Sultan joined Vineet Chander, Hindu chaplain at Princeton University, for an interfaith conversation on YouTube titled “Living and Dying with Grace.”

In that conversation, Sultan said that there is a *rahmat* (grace or mercy) in accepting death: “Nobody wants to leave this world; there are too many attachments. . . . Whether you’re 40 or 80 or 120, you never want to leave, but at some point, you’ve to leave. . . . That is the way God has decreed the world to be.” —Interfaith America