



DEEN DIALOGUE

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Closing Remarks

Howlader Epon - Barriers to Faith

Islamic Reminders

Nusaybah Naeem - Reigniting Faith

Emra Baker - Q&A: Borders and
Barriers

Zainab Alshaber - Light in Spirit

Zainab Alshaber - Feed Your Soul...

Emra Baker - What's Stopping You?

Get Painting and Discover Islamic Art



Closing Remarks

"As-salaamu alaykum!"

The year is coming to an end and we cannot quite believe we have managed to publish three issues in such a short space of time. We would like to start off by thanking you all for the immense support you have shown for our venture into the world of writing and creativity through this newsletter. Writers, editors, designers and most importantly readers, you have all been crucial to making this project a success and we could not have done it without you.

We began this newsletter because we wanted to provide a platform for Muslim students to share their ideas, voice their opinions and feel valued. We hope that we have achieved this throughout the year and that you may have read something that made you reflect, even if it was just for a few seconds.

This final issue's theme centres around change; whether that be change of seasons, change of time or change of location. As we all know, with change comes hardship and we wanted to address this through the exploration of barriers and how to overcome these. Although, the temporary nature of this world is something we should be conscious of, this does not mean we should not take note and celebrate the little or large victories we may have had.

As we draw to a close for this academic year and with Ramadan soon approaching inshaAllah, we would like you to reflect on all the challenges you have overcome in the past year and goals you wish to set yourself for the future year. Whether that be completing your degree or whether that be completing a Quran within the month of Ramadan. You may be faced with some challenges whilst completing your endeavours but remember with difficulty comes ease and with change comes a new beginning.

We hope you enjoy reading through this issue and we hope to see you in September, Allah Hafiz!

Aisha Patel & Sherzah Jamal
Co-editors in Chief / Founders of Deen Dialogue

One of the few things that have been common amongst all of the recorded civilizations is faith in God. According to BBC Teach (2021), religion can be found in every culture throughout history. People from all kinds of regions, ethnicities, races, and sexes could be said to be united in their belief in the divine, even though that belief manifested in various ways. This trend, however, discontinued in the last century when the European renaissance painted disbelief in God as rational and intellectual.



This pseudointellectual paradigm has only grown ever since, resulting in a constant increase in the atheist population of the world. This trend has also affected the Muslim world. More barriers to faith are now in place than at any other time in human history.

Perhaps the greatest barrier to faith today is the contamination of the heart by sins. Today's materialistic and individualistic world presents us with numerous avenues to go astray, and often the line between right and wrong blurs. Things that were taboo for most of humanity are now normalised; acts that were always forbidden are now socially acceptable. Sins, as a result, are not perceived to be sins anymore. Muslims are not immune to this culture of individualism and often fall into sins. Each sin hardens our heart, and a hardened heart cannot be home to pure Imaan. Allah warned us against this in the glorious Quran:

"On their hearts is a covering because of what they have earned." (83:14)

A lack of unconditional submission to Allah also hardens the heart and creates a barrier to Imaan. Today, the entire world can be characterised as one singular civilization, as ideas and innovations generated in one part of the world easily travel to other parts of the world. Thus, philosophies and ideologies intermingle, changing the moral landscape of the world rapidly and frequently in this multicultural global village. Unfortunately, these cause confusion amongst a portion of our youth and makes them wonder about the rationale behind the regulations that Allah has decreed upon us. In many cases, this confusion has been the steppingstone to eventual disbelief.

In these times of abundant information, it is often difficult to filter out the correct and authentic knowledge. Collectively, we know more now about the world than the previous generations. This knowledge also brings confusion and misinformation. It has become easier for an average Muslim today to absorb flawed theologies and fall into misguidance. Some, unfortunately, eventually end up losing faith or get trapped into distorted, dangerous theologies. Therefore, it is crucial that we look after our hearts constantly and always protect our Imaan carefully and meticulously.



The greatest and easiest way to remove these barriers to faith from our hearts is to engage in dhikr (remembrance of Allah). Constant dhikr not only increases our Imaan but it also protects us from sins. Another significant way to strengthen our faith is to remember death frequently.

Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

“Remember often the destroyer of pleasures,” meaning death.

(Jami' At-Tirmidhi 2307, graded Sahih by Shaykh Al-Albani)

Therefore, we must regularly think about death, time in the grave, and the Day of Judgement as it will enhance our Taqwa (God-consciousness) and boost our Imaan.

It may seem to an uninformed observer that faith in God is disappearing from this modern, materialistic, and individualistic world. However, a keen look at the statistics will quickly dissolve that myth. According to Harriet Sherwood of The Guardian, nearly 85% of the people in the world subscribe to religion, and faith is on the rise globally. (2018) This recent resurgence of faith (especially among Muslims) makes us optimistic about a future where faith in Allah manifests in every aspect of life. It is only through constant dhikr and ibadah (worship) that we can break through the barriers to faith and attain the pleasure of Allah ﷻ.

How can Duaa change one's fate?

One's fate is already written by God but can be changed through prayers (duaa). It is considered an act of worship to pray for yourself, as it is an expression of your complete dependence on the Almighty.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

“Nothing can change the Divine Decree except Dua...”

(Jami' At-Tirmidhi 2139, Sunan ibn Majah 90, graded Hasan by Imam Tirmidhi and Shaykh Al-Albani)

The above hadith verifies that a true believer's supplications or calls to Allah can change their destiny. If a believer's duaa goes unanswered in this world, they should remain reassured that Allah will never leave them empty-handed. Rather, there is hikmah (wisdom) in this, since it could have prevented an unforeseen tragedy and is added to their list of good deeds to aid them in the hereafter. Therefore, it is beautiful to observe that whilst duaa is considered a means of seeking personal gains and objectives in this world, we are generously rewarded for these duaas and are yet to reap these benefits.

Duaas

As the new season welcomes us with its goodness and challenges, here are some duaas that will be of benefit.

Duaa when studying

رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِّنْ لِّسَانِي يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي

“O my sustainer! Open up my heart and make my task easy for me and loosen the knot from my tongue so that they might fully understand my speech.”

(Quran 20:25-28)

Duaa for good weather

اللَّهُمَّ حَوْلَنَا وَلَا عَلَيْنَا ، اللَّهُمَّ عَلَى الْآكَامِ وَالظَّرَابِ ، وَبُطُونِ الْأُودِيَةِ ، وَمَنَابِتِ الشَّجَرِ

"O Allah, let the rain fall around us and not upon us, O Allah, (let it fall) on the pastures, hills, valleys and the roots of trees."

(Al-Bukhari 1013, 1014; Muslim 897; an-Nasa'i 1518)

Duaa for happiness

'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, "No person ("no believer" in another report) suffers any anxiety or grief, and then says:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي عَبْدُكَ ، وَابْنُ عَبْدِكَ ، وَابْنُ أَمَتِكَ ، نَاصِيَتِي بِيَدِكَ ، مَا ضِيقٌ فِي حُكْمِكَ ، عَدْلٌ فِي قَضَاؤِكَ ، أَسْأَلُكَ بِكُلِّ اسْمٍ هُوَ لَكَ ، سَمَّيْتَ بِهِ نَفْسَكَ ، أَوْ أَنْزَلْتَهُ فِي كِتَابِكَ ، أَوْ عَلَّمْتَهُ أَحَدًا مِنْ خَلْقِكَ ، أَوْ اسْتَأْثَرْتَ بِهِ فِي عِلْمِ الْغَيْبِ عِنْدَكَ ، أَنْ تَجْعَلَ الْقُرْآنَ رِيعَ قَلْبِي ، وَتُورَ صَدْرِي ، وَجَلَاءَ حُزْنِي ، وَذَهَابَ هَمِّي

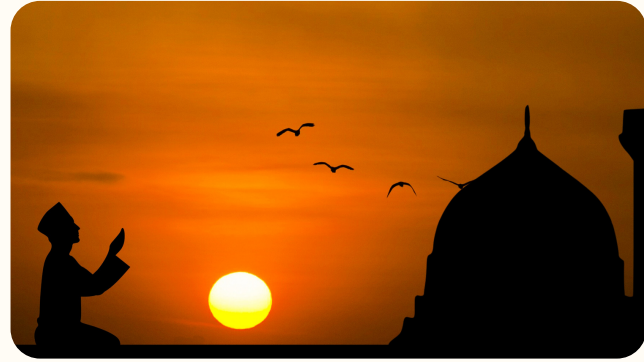
(O Allah, I am your slave, the son of your slave and the son of your maid-slave. Your command over me is forever executed and Your decree over me is just. I ask you by every Name belonging to You, which You have Named Yourself with, or revealed in Your Book, or You taught to any of Your creation, or You have preserved in the knowledge of the unseen with You, that You make the Qur'ān the life of my heart and the light of my chest, and a departure for my sorrow and a release for my anxiety)

except that Allah will remove his sorrow and replace it with happiness."

They asked, "O Messenger of Allah, should we memorize these phrases (of the supplication)?" He responded, "Yes, whoever hears these words should memorise them."

Recorded by Ahmad (4167), al-Hākim (1809), and Ibn Hibbān (984)

Sometimes we walk through winters that feel like they will never end. Our chests feel tight, our heads heavy and our bodies numb with cold. No matter how hard we try, we just can't shake the cold.



But in life, we know that nothing ever stays the same. One moment of coldness will be contrasted with another of warmth. One period of difficulty will always be followed by an abundance of ease. And alhamdulillah, as we now peer outside, we will notice that the sun is lingering a little longer and its warmth is something we have all been craving. Just as the season outside are in constant flux and change, so too are the seasons of our faith.

We know that faith is never constant; it increases and decreases. A pious person of the past was once asked about Iman (faith):

"Does it increase?"

He replied, **"Yes, until it becomes like mountains."**

He was then asked, **"Does it decrease?"**

He answered, **"Yes, up until there is nothing left of it."**

Each of us can attest to this in our personal lives. There are times when our faith feels sky high, and there are other times when we poke around in our empty heart, trying to remember its feeling.



Are we spiritually tired? When our bodies are dehydrated, we become exhausted. We get drowsy, and only feel rejuvenated once our thirst has been quenched. Our hearts are similar. To feel true life, happiness, and vigour, they must be filled with Allah's remembrance.

One of the greatest forms of remembrance is the recitation of the Quran. Some scholars explain that just as rain descends from the heavens to revive the dead earth, the words of the Quran have descended from the heavens to revive our sick and dead hearts.



The words of Allah were not intended for those who lived over 1000 years ago. They were intended for you and me. In this miraculous book are words that will anchor us all through the highs and lows of faith and will speak to us as though they were revealed just to us.

“(It is) Allah (Who) has sent down the best message - a Book of perfect consistency and repeated lessons - which causes the skin (and hearts) of those who fear their Lord to tremble, then their skin and hearts soften at the mention of (the mercy of) Allah. That is the guidance of Allah, through which He guides whoever He wills. But whoever Allah leaves to stray will be left with no guide.” (39:23)

No matter who you are, how you feel or what you have done, pick up the words of Allah and read them as though it a personal letter intended just for you. Let each line you read revive your heart and fill it with the faith you have been craving. Once you get to know the Quran, you will find that it is your greatest and most loyal companion in life. If you approach it with a sincere and humble heart, you will always find exactly what you need, what you were looking for, and so much more.

“Had We sent down this Quran upon a mountain, you would have certainly seen it humbled and torn apart in awe of Allah. We set forth such comparisons for people, (so) perhaps they may reflect.” (59:21)

Nusaybah Naeem



A collection of questions and answers from the GUMSA community on what makes Ramadan special for them.

In your home, what marks the first feelings of Ramadan?

A few things come to mind like when we start to stock up dates, however the first feelings usually start a few weeks before Ramadan. It begins with my mum reminding us to fast what we can of the month of Shaban, planning how to finish the Quran, setting goals and reflecting on the past year to see what we can improve on for the year to come. These reminders from my mum as well as prayers of allowing us to witness Ramadan are what bring on the initial feelings.

How do you break the emotional barriers you have with your friends/family or Allah?

It is important to note religion comes with ups and downs and in times when you are feeling overwhelmed, try to view the bigger picture, and not be critical of yourself. Most of the emotional barriers I feel I have are rooted in feeling incompetent or not good enough, so when I realise that one missed prayer, or one argument with a friend does not warrant giving up, this emotional barrier is broken. Religion is a continuous struggle and what comforts me is knowing time after time the Quran mentions Allah's infinite mercy. In fact we do not start anything without mentioning His quality of being all merciful (Ar-Rehman).

How do you ascend into the spiritual level of reverence also known as "خشوع/ kushuu"?

This is a struggle which every Muslim goes through. In our busy lifestyles it is difficult to concentrate in Salah however we can all take small steps in attaining khushuu.

Start by making sure the space you are praying in is quiet and you pray to Allah to remove distractions and whispers from Shaytan. When in prayer think about this being your last prayer, crossing the bridge of Sirat or the fact you are standing directly in front of Allah. It is important to understand Salah as well. There is a level of disconnect when Salah is performed as just actions, therefore we should all strive to understand the surahs we read, leading to more focus.

What's your favourite thing about Eid?

Togetherness, Food Dishes, Mutual Forgiveness, receiving gifts, new clothes and socialisation without boundaries.

"Sweetest Ramadan Kareem you Beauty"

"حالو يا حالو رمضان كريم يا حالو"

Join my grandmother, my mother and I as we recall Ramadan in Saudi Arabia through the 1930's to 2020

Grandmother

I still remember the days of the month of Ramadan, my mind preserves beautiful memories that cannot be forgotten, the villages of the eastern provenance are similar in their customs and traditions, especially in Ramadan. Whoever lived those days knows that the advent of Ramadan has a special place in our hearts through its beautiful rituals in which you feel the fragrance, sanctity, and spirituality of Ramadan. Rituals saturated with the warmth of family and the smells of popular dishes that spread throughout the village.

Ramadan was a special joy for everyone, and since there was no media in those villages at that time except for the radio, so there were no TVs, series, and fawazirs, people were waiting impatiently when the month was announced on the radio to hear the sound of the canon announcing the holy month.

On the first days of the holy month, neighbours exchanged dishes of food between them, and family and relatives gathered to eat breakfast, and after that they performed evening prayers and tarawih prayers, then women gathered again with neighbours and men gathered in front of the mosque where they talked and chatted until late at night, while young people and children spread in the village squares. They play and have fun until the time of the pre-dawn meal, and their games were inspired by the environment in which they live, such as "the bird, the ram, and the burjun".

As for during the day, in Ramadan, the mosque never lacks worshipers and reciters of the Qur'an; from adults, youth and children even before sunset, when adults and young people go to their homes, and children stay in the mosque's yard to wait for the sunset prayer to set off after hearing the call to prayer.

The sweetest thing in those days was simplicity in everything, in relations between people, in love, in compassion, affection, honesty, altruism, and the interconnectedness between them, and the race to do good, despite the narrow hand, whoever lived through it wished to return.



Mother

We all have special memories of Ramadan during childhood. Ramadan had a different taste from what we feel today. We used to see decorations in most of the streets of Safwa, and a large lantern adorned the middle of the street, and street children gathered after sunset to compete for the owner of the prettiest and largest lantern!

We cannot forget "A Thousand and One Nights," "Fatuta," and "Bouji and Tamtam," which we were brought up on, and "The Fawazir" every year and the "Hidden Camera" program. We cannot forget the "Tawasheh" on the radio at the time of Suhoor, nor the sound of Sheikh Mishari Alafasi, who stuck the Quran in our minds since childhood. And the days of school when we always asked each other with beautiful innocence ... "Are you fasting?". Those were the sweetest days that we will never forget.

When we started fasting for the first time, we used to fast until noon and sometimes until the afternoon, and if we were hungry or thirsty, we would eat and drink, then My Grand Mama says, "You are young ... and it is possible to complete a normal fast!"

Iftar cannon ... Strike!

As for the moment when the whole family was meeting with interest and longing for it, it is when we hear that sentence, then listen to the sound of the cannon, then the sound of the call to prayer. We used to go as if we had fasted for the whole century to eat the best types of food and drinks and fill to our hearts content.

Me

The blessed month of Ramadan came upon us last year and amidst this pandemic it has left our year incomplete.

The first day came under a general and comprehensive curfew, and our streets were empty of people as they crowded into shops, grocery stores, sellers of vegetables and sweets, and they quarrelled at times to buy what was delicious to prepare the breakfast table. Our streets were empty of cars that used to crowd out every Ramadan on this day, except for those authorised by the security and medical services.

The first of Ramadan this year came on a Friday, the holiest day of the week, when large numbers of worshipers who were thankful for the grace of God were gathering in our mosques to perform the Friday prayer in more numbers than any other Friday of the year, and the muezzin had ended the call to prayer by saying, pray in your homes, pray in your home.



Four of us sat at the Iftar table, looking around and remembering our gathering on this day of each Ramadan, when our extended family would join us around the table in a festive atmosphere dominated by happiness, joy, and affection. The food no longer had its usual taste, the grape leaves and stuffed zucchini did not taste the same despite the mastery of cooking because we had a lump in our hearts with the absence of members crucial for our happiness.

Not all of us, as usual, circle around the TV after breakfast as we move between its stations in order to choose a program or series in order to watch and follow it in the midst of different points of view and sometimes pleasant quarrels between those present about what to watch and follow. We were not even interested in searching among the stations for any series, contenting ourselves with following the news stations, awaiting a miracle.

We did not go to the mosque at the evening prayer and follow it with the Taraweeh prayer, intercession and Witr. Just as we used to all live with reverence and worship in the midst of noise and chaos caused by the young children in the mosque during our prayers, who were asked by the imam of prayer and between the rak'ahs to calm down and not disturb the rest of the worshipers, but it was of no use. Those voices have now left an emptiness behind them. A silent cacophony.

No one visited us after breakfast, as is the Sunnah of our Prophet, peace be upon him, regarding the necessity of the ties of kinship in this blessed month, and we did not visit anyone. We did not go out to watch Saudi's decorations in Ramadan, and its people: its beating heart.

But this virus will not prevent us from practicing the spiritual and religious atmosphere in this holy month. We will continue to hold our prayers and rituals inside our homes, and this will be an opportunity for us to devote ourselves to the members of our small family sitting together and talking together and remembering God together.

Finally, no matter the year, Ramadan will remain a guest dear to our souls.

*Light in spirit,
Its breeze is blessed
It comes and goes quickly,
But it leaves behind us many unforgettable memories*

FEED YOUR SOUL... 7 STEPS TO ENLIGHTENMENT

1

Begin the month of Ramadan with the correct intention of increasing your consciousness of Allah through your fasting.

How: Renew this intention each day as you wake up to a new Ramadan morning. "O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous." [Qur'an: Chapter 2, Verse 183]

2

Get some fresh air and a daily dose of exercise. You should take frequent walks to and from the masjid, shops and use the stairs where available to stay physically and mentally alert.

How: [How You Can Incorporate Exercise Into Your Ramadan Routine](#)

Ramadan Beginner Workout

1. Floor bridge
2. Forward lunge
3. Push-ups on knees
4. Squats
5. Plank
6. Backward lunge

Nadoona recommends 10 repetitions of each exercise. 1 set is good: if you can do 2 sets, that would be great, but no more than that.

Ladies, the best time to workout during Ramadan is your 1-week break, so you can hit it hard core that week.

3

Make a comprehensive 'Goals checklist' to help you focus on what you want to achieve in Ramadan. Be realistic with your goals. Think about where you are right now and where you want to get to by the end of Ramadan.

How: [6 Steps to Help Set Realistic Ramadan Goals and Stick to Them](#)

- Before Ramadan, list all of the things you want to accomplish.
- Now take these attainable goals and turn them into action plans by creating a daily to-do list.
- It is possible that your schedule might not work for you, but that is not an excuse for giving up completely; don't abandon your schedule, just modify it.
- The simplest way to make sure that you keep up with your goals is to make it easy for yourself to attain them.
- Reinforcements are also necessary for those of us who need a little bit more of a push, especially during the middle of Ramadan when everyone's morale and zeal seems to wither.
- The last step is something we take lightly, though it can have a significant impact on how efficient we are this Ramadan, and that is 'evaluation'.

FEED YOUR SOUL... 7 STEPS TO ENLIGHTENMENT

4

Translate Ramadan articles and texts from English language into other languages you are proficient at. Spread those translations, so other language speakers could benefit.

How: Can You Volunteer Your Skills?

3 Reasons Why You Should be Volunteering

1. Invest in your Deen
2. Be the change you wish to see
3. Social Productivity

How to Get Started

1. Ask yourself: What am I passionate about?
2. What am I good at?
3. Search for opportunities

5

Distribute meals to the poor and needy.

"He who provides a fasting person something with which to break his fast, will earn the same reward as the one who was observing the fast, without diminishing in any way the reward of the latter." (Tirmidhi 807)

How: Giving Sadaqah as a Family

1. Sponsor an orphan
2. Host a dinner party (Virtual for now)
3. Visit a local orphanage

6

Evaluate yourself every day. Make time to self-reflect and assess your daily activities, from intention, to commitment and practice. Is your heart getting closer to Allah or more distant?

How: Productive Thinking Series – Part 7

Practical Strategies to Sabotage Self-Sabotage

- Start with Istikhara
- Get Rid Of:
 - Seeking approval from people and the disease to please.
 - Stories and dramas that you always keep telling yourself
- Be Clear On:
 - Your values
 - What you stand for. "If you don't stand for something you will fall for anything." — Malcolm X
- Have a Clear Vision

FEED YOUR SOUL... 7 STEPS TO ENLIGHTENMENT

7

Keep in touch with family members and relatives, near or distant. You can send an SMS, make a phone or Skype call, or send a letter or an email. Make it an opportunity to rebuild the ties of kinship.

How: 9 Practical Tips to Rebuild Our Ties of Kinship this Ramadan

- Find out who your relatives are
- Find out their contact details
- Get in touch
- Interview the gran-grans
- Visit/invite for iftar (Following social distancing)
- Set up internet/video chat
- Be the focal point for your family
- Resolve old issues once and for all

7 Nasheeds to Welcome in Ramadan

- 'A is for Allah' by Yusuf Islam (2000)
- 'Ya Adheeman' by Ahmed Bukhatir (2001)
- 'The Crazy Spots I've Prayed' by Dawud Wharnsby (2003)
- 'Burdah' by Mesut Kurtis (2007)
- 'Allah Knows' by Zain Bhikha (2010)
- 'Ramadan is Here' by Native Deen (2011)
- 'Assalamu Alayka' by Maher Zain (2012)

Extra 3 for Eid

- 'Allah Hoo' by Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan
- 'La Elah Ela Allah' by Mishary Alafasy
- 'Eid Song' by Sami Yusuf

7 Brilliant Books

- "Ramadan: Motivating Believers into Action" - by Laleh Bakhtiar, Ph.D.
- "Fasting in Ramadaan as Observed by the Prophet" - by Sheikh al-Hilaalee
- "Ramadaan Companion: Spiritual Reflections" - by Faisal Abdur-Razak
- "Ramadan Rhapsody: A Daily Celebration" - by Linda (Ilham) Barto
- "Fasts as Ordained Before You" - by Muhammad Umar Chand
- "5 Things You Can Do To Taste the Sweetness of Ramadan" - by Imam Suhaib Webb
- "Life Is An Open Secret: Ramadan Special" - by Zabrina A. Bakar

Ramadan Reading Retreat

Venture into the world of Islamic literature and writing every Saturday at 3pm with our show Ramadan Reading Retreat. Aisha, Rumaisa and Sherzah will bring to the airwaves all things bookish from e-readers to the dog-eared debate. Join us as we discuss topics such as our Ramadan reads, modern Muslim publishing, transformational books and reading in the modern age. Whether you're a bookworm or allergic to reading, everyone is welcome to our retreat every Saturday at 3pm!

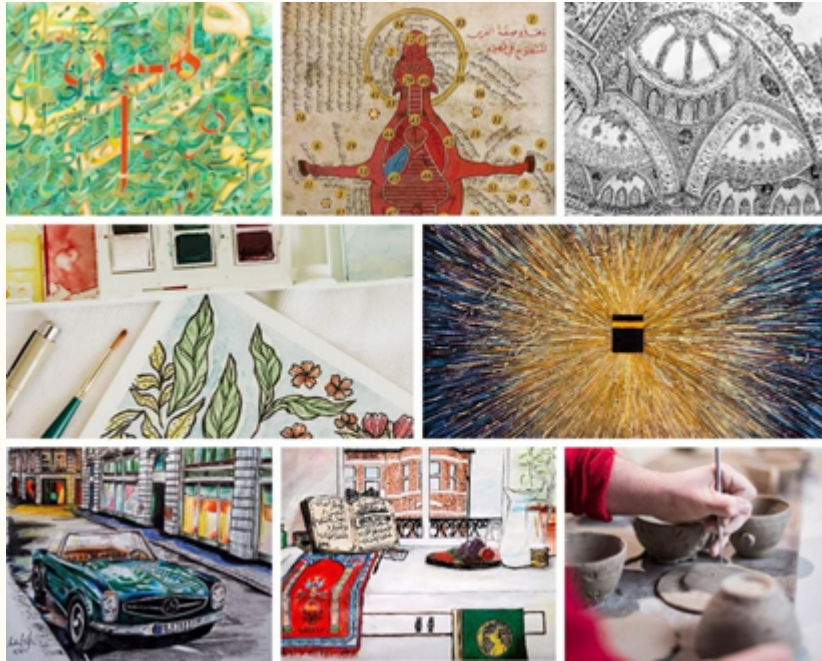
To watch our shows back interact with our event page linked below:
<https://fb.me/e/C8VkdqGA>

How to Listen:

Website: <https://www.ramadanfm.com>
Facebook: facebook.com/ramadanfm
Radio: 87.9FM (Milton Keynes ONLY)

Channel your Artistic Licence

“So blessed is Allah, the best of creators” (27:14)



Islamic artwork is defined as ‘art inspired by faith’ and it’s the perfect avenue to pursue if you want to get your creativity flowing. Many people think that Islamic art is limited to calligraphy – but it entails so much more, including pottery, carving, botany, architecture and even medical diagrams of animals. However, this list is not exclusive, you can draw anything you enjoy (I personally like drawing transport and landscapes). It’s worth checking out British Siddiqa Juma or Stephen Wiltshire for inspiration.

Experiment with colours. Try different mediums such as acrylic, watercolour, crayon, pastels, chalk or ink as you may be better and prefer some over others. Art can serve as a way to escape from daily stresses and is the perfect opportunity to unwind and enjoy its therapeutic qualities. It takes practice to improve, so it’s okay if it’s not perfect! Why not paint pottery or the walls of your house?

Art can also be time-consuming – so it’s an excellent idea to play some Islamic podcasts or lectures in the background to learn something at the same time.

It's Gardening Thyme

"And the herbs and the trees - both bow in adoration" (55:6)

Imagine reading the Quran and its English interpretation in your garden, with a gentle breeze blowing, listening to the cheeping of birds. I do this every summer with my grandma and I feel a deeper connection with the Almighty. However, if you want to nurture your green thumb, and utilise your garden space, then start growing fruit and vegetables, and you'll never look back. If you have a vegetable plot, use that, and, if not, use hanging baskets or tubs (to keep slugs out) to grow strawberries or herbs such as thyme, rosemary, chives and mint.



Herbs are easy, just buy the pot herbs for £0.50-1.50 in supermarkets, then plant and water them. If you have a greenhouse or a porch, you can grow chillies and cucumbers.

Gardening teaches patience, provides optimism and helps you stay healthy. Flowers, fruit and vegetables take time to form; some plants won't ripen for at least a year from planting. However, the enjoyment and anticipating when plants shoot out makes up for it Insha'Allah.

Play sports, climb some walls and dust your sewing machine

During Ramadan, people often feel weary, but you can still play gentle sports or do some yoga. You could try practising this in the month of Shabaan first (the month before Ramadan). During Ramadan, the general consensus is that there are three options for optimum exercise: just after Sunrise (e.g., running 30 minutes); before iftar so you immediately have something to eat; or after iftar such as team football.



If COVID restrictions permit, go rock climbing (The Prop Store – Maryhill), kayaking (Pinkston Watersports – Central Glasgow), horse riding (Linn Park Equestrian Centre) to test your stamina or simply buy an archery kit for your garden to test your precision and accuracy.

Why not stitch your clothes, make a prayer mat, face mask, prayer hat or headscarf? My mum and I made a prayer mat based on a dark green and red leaf ([Man Sewing, Mark Montano](#)) – even my imam was fond of it. It was enjoyable sourcing materials. I also stitched several clothes, so I didn't have to spend money on new ones. Ask someone to demonstrate using sewing machines or watch some YouTube videos to help.

Useful Websites, Articles, Podcasts and TV Shows (click the headings)

Art and Podcasts

- [Muslim Museum Initiative](#) – have an interactive timeline depicting Islamic art through the UK.
- [AhmadArt YouTube Channel](#) – for beginners painting.
- [Art and Architecture of the Islamic World by Bucknell Education](#)
- [Islamic Painting Forgery Article](#)
- [Victoria And Albert Museum Islam](#)

Islamic Spotify Podcasts:

Quran Summaries by Muslim Student,
Delving into Islam by Wael, Mufti Menk,
Muslim Central, OnePath Network, ISA
Podcast, Islamic History Podcast, ABC
Muslim.

Gardening

The easiest vegetables to grow are courgettes, onions and bush tomatoes.

Useful gardening websites, books and television shows:

- Paradise Gardens: The World's Most Beautiful Islamic Gardens by Monty Don. A must watch.
- [Islamic Gardens in the UK pdf](#)
- RHS, Gardeners World BBC
- Diarmuid Gavin – Gardening Together TV series BBC
- Love Your Garden ITV TV series

World Cultures in Glasgow 1901 and Muslim Items

"O mankind, indeed, We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another..." (49:13)



"And whatever thing you have been given - it is [only for] the enjoyment of worldly life and its adornment. And what is with Allah is better and more lasting; so will you not use reason?" (28:60)

"Have they not travelled through the earth and observed how was the end of those before them? They were greater than them in power, and they ploughed the earth and built it up more than they have built it up..." (30:9)

At first glance, these pictures appear like a random assortment. To much surprise, this is Glasgow's Kelvingrove; where, in 1901, the International Exhibition was held. Covering 72 acres and visited by a whopping 11 million people, it exhibited the manufacturing, art and science industries of all nations during the 19th century, especially the British colonies which covered almost a quarter of the world. This included 94 million Muslims (23% of its total). Other countries represented were Russia (Image) and Canada.

Designed by Scotsman James Miller, it was based on 16th-century Spanish Renaissance architecture, but many journalists note that it looked 'decidedly Eastern'¹. Journals highlight that Miller admired Islamic and Arabic architecture as it symbolised exoticness, frivolity and travel which included his previous work in 18882. The Architect Journal described Sellar's vision: "The whole group of minarets, towers, and dome makes a unique spectacle, giving a bold and striking character to this central part of the design...minarets will be covered with gold; the main building will be finished in pure white, while the roofs of the domes will be painted pale green".

Some items present from the Islamic world were a 'few rugs and curios from Persia and Morocco' with the Templeton's Carpets stand appearing as a mosque (image). Indian jugglers and snake charmers (Image) entertained those at the Indian theatre. Various Indian curries and Ceylon tea were served too.

Miller reflectively wrote 'I might mention that not a single tree was sacrificed to make room for any of the buildings...remembering that the life of our exhibition was only to be six months'. This reminds me that exhibitions, cultures and people all vanish with time. However, an appreciation of the work of previous civilisations, whether the 7th, 20th, or any other century, is a reminder that we should admire and showcase our different cultures and ideas to inspire others, in the name of Allāh.



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