



DEEN DIALOGUE

ISSUE #1 | NOVEMBER 2020 | RABI AL-AKHAR 1442



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PRESIDENT **Janna Butt**

"As-salaamu alaykum!"

On behalf of myself and the rest of the committee, I want to welcome everyone to GUMSA this year, especially any new recruits joining us! I wish more than anything that I could meet you and get to know you guys like I normally would, but as we know that won't be possible for a while longer.

Settling into University is hard any year, but this year I know it's been especially difficult and lonely for so many people. We're trying our best to organize as many virtual socials, events and group sessions for everyone to meet each other, but also to help us all cope with the current circumstances.

Even though we've had to change quite a few things this year, the core aims of GUMSA are the same no matter what! We are here to create an environment which helps you develop yourself spiritually, academically and personally. Being busy at University does not mean in any way that we need to neglect our deen – seeking knowledge and growing as Muslims are two concepts that go hand in hand.

As a committee, our aim is to make it as easy as possible for you guys to become the best student and Muslim you can be. We try hard to make our events as fun as they are beneficial, from socials, circles and charity events to community work, dinners, and trips. We're always open to suggestions on new ideas and events to try, so if you ever have any ideas don't be shy to get in touch with any of us!

May Allah keep you all in the best of health and imaan,

Janna Butt

GUMSA President 2020/2021

Islamic Reminders

As we begin this new academic year, we should try to follow our beloved prophet (SAW)'s way of life to succeed and receive the Almighty's blessing and reward. The Prophet (SAW) encouraged us to spread Salaam between one another as this helps to spread love between Muslims, and love unites us all! It is narrated in a hadith from Sahih Muslim, that the Prophet Muhammad (SAW)

said:
أَفْشُوا السَّلَامَ بَيْنَكُمْ

Spread peace (Salaam) between yourselves

When studying, we must connect ourselves spiritually with Allah and seek Allah's help. There is no better way of doing this than by saying a prayer or dua. You can read the following dua:

رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِّن 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."

(Surah 20, Ayah 25-29)

When studying, it can be difficult to focus and retain information. To help us, we can ask Allah to enhance our knowledge throughout our time at university by constantly reciting the following dua:

رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا

**Oh Allah! Increase me in Knowledge
(Surah 20, Ayah 114)**

During the global pandemic, many people are worried and stressed. But in such times, we should not lose hope in Allah. We are advised to seek forgiveness and good health from Allah. This also serves us as a reminder that

our only sanctuary is with Allah. Constantly read the dua given below:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْبَرَصِ، وَالْجُنُونِ، وَالْجُدَامِ، وَمِنْ سَائِرِ الْأَسْقَامِ

"O Allah, I seek refuge in You from leprosy, insanity, elephantiasis, and the worst of diseases."

(Abu Dawood)

Q&A

Q: "Any suggestions for places that could serve decent coffees?"

A: Glasgow offers a wide range of cafes that serve great coffees! Here's a list of a few with positive reviews. Sit-in and Takeaway rules may vary due to government guidelines.

iCafe

315 Sauchiehall Street
233 Great Western Road
250 Woodlands Road
72 Ingram Street

**S'Mug
Coffee
Bar**

187 Great George Street

Tinderbox

189 Byers Rd

**The
Papercup
Coffee
Company**

603 Great Western Road

**Grain
and
Grind**

50 Battlefield Road
109 Clarkston Road
742 Pollokshaws Road

Q: "Where can I buy Al Quran in Glasgow, particularly in the West End?"

- Best place to buy one is online - you have a lot more variety and can get translations too (Recommended: The Majestic Quran)
- Ask your local mosque if they have a copy you can have—close mosques include: Al-Furqan, Andalus, Oakfield Mosque.
- If you want to go to a store to buy one - Glasgow Islamic Store, Darul Kutub

Q: "Are there any good Halal places to eat at near the University?"

Areas surrounding the university are teeming with places to eat, from Chinese to Indian and everything in between. A lot of other restaurants around Glasgow don't explicitly specify if they're halal, or have specific meals which are Halal, so if you're curious don't hesitate to ask them! Sit-in and Takeaway rules may vary due to government guidelines.

**Raja's
Pizza
Bar**

Indian Takeaway
157 Great Western Rd

**The
Lemon
Tree**

Chinese Takeaway
119-121 Great Western Rd

**The
Chicken
Palace**

Takeaway
18 Gibson St

Morello

Takeaway
253 Great Western Rd

Koh-I-Noor

Indian Takeaway
12 Gibson St

**The
Bay
Tree**

Mediterranean Restaurant
403 Great Western Rd

**Beirut
Star**

Lebanese Restaurant
450 Paisley Road West

**Döner
Haus**

German Restaurant
85 West Nile St

When we think of the word history, we often think of times long ago, of people long gone who have in some way impacted the world that we live in today. We may think of people like Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr. or Nelson Mandela to name a few. In terms of Islamic history, our minds will go to our Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) and his companions (R.A). However, today I will share the story of a man from only five years ago whose name you might have come across.



On November the 17th 2015, Brother Mohamed Hoblos from OnePath Network interviewed Brother Ali Banat in a video titled "Gifted with Cancer". In this interview, it was revealed that brother Ali was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer and had been told he had seven months to live. He uniquely referred to his cancer as "a gift" and when asked by brother Hoblos why he used such a term, he replied that "It's a gift because Allah has given me a chance to change".



Prior to his cancer diagnosis, brother Ali was a successful businessman living a lavish life in Australia, with the means to buy whatever his heart desired. After his diagnosis, his life changed dramatically. This diagnosis opened his eyes to even the simplest things that many of us take for granted, like comfortably breathing fresh air.

Referring to the materialistic lifestyles that have become so common, he said: "When you find out you're sick or you don't have much time to live, this is the last thing you want to chase. And that's how we should live our lives every day".

And that's exactly what he did. Brother Ali turned his efforts and wealth, despite his sickness, to helping those that were poverty-stricken and singlehandedly established the charity 'Muslims Around the World'. Despite being told by his doctors that he had 7 months to live, he was gifted with three more years. He spent those three years redistributing his wealth, whether that be donating his expensive clothes, cars and watches, building mosques or schools in impoverished areas and thereby educating generations to come or building water wells to provide safe clean water or providing housing to orphans and widows.

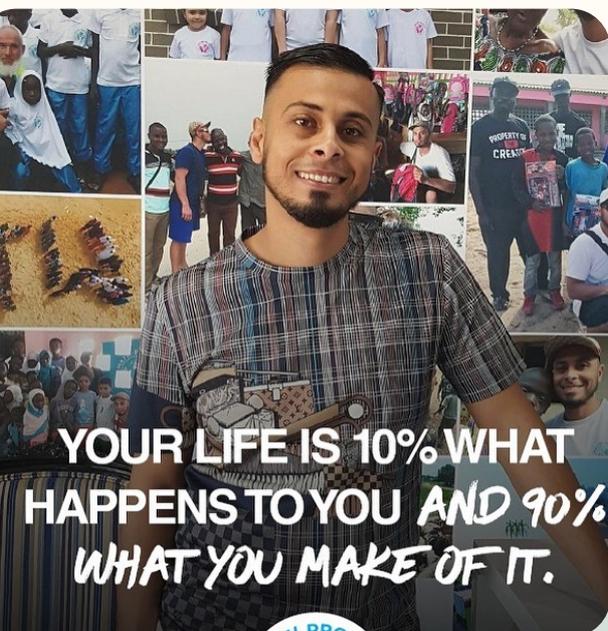
Although the charity's initial focus was on the West African country of Togo, it has now spread to many other countries such as Ghana, Benin and most recently Lebanon to help rebuild the country after the devastating explosion in Beirut. The charity has many ongoing projects and aims to help as many as possible. To date, there has been \$20 million donated, 950 water wells built, more than 1000 orphans sponsored, and 3 million lives impacted.

Brother Ali accomplished in three years what many may not in a lifetime. Instead of spending the last years of his life living in comfort, which many would argue is the appropriate state for someone who is ill, he strived to help as many people as he could and as many as his health would allow. When asked about his biggest regret in life, he replied, "My biggest regret is that it took a man in a suit to tell me I was going to die, yet Allah has been telling me all of my life and I did not believe him".



He left this world with empty hands, but a life of deeds & ongoing charity.

Brother Ali was fortunate to realise the fleeting nature of this life and to act in a way that would benefit him and those around him. As he worked for his akhirah, he helped to provide for those who were destitute and invested in their livelihood. He also serves as an example to those of us who are still here and who can still make a difference to the lives of our Ummah.



After battling cancer for 3 years, brother Ali passed away on the 14th of Ramadan in 2018. Before his passing, he recorded a video to be released after he had passed. In the video, and in his final years of life, he advised his fellow brothers and sisters to have a goal or project in their lives, to not chase this worldly life and to invest in their akhirah. To leave a legacy behind that would help them on the day of judgement. Brother Ali was an inspiration, despite his illness he helped change the lives of many and his legacy will live on for many years to come.

May Allah grant him Jannatul Firdaus. Ameen.

Samia Omar

Though slightly difficult to lure students to our freshers stall this year, we met numerous students, from home and away, eager to begin a new chapter in their lives. It was an opportunity to meet other likeminded students for the first time, as well as take away advice on the much-anticipated university experience, and a reusable tote gift bag! New COVID restrictions meant that a cycling trip on the isle of Millport and our annual Freshers' picnic to Balloch Park were cancelled. Nevertheless, we held bubble football tournaments with the brothers and sisters. Almost impossible to play a decent game, it was very possible to have a tremendous amount of fun. Collisions, spins, head over heels in the bubbles were very common, with some great goals – albeit with slightly more aggression with the brothers. One of the freshers, Humood, studying a master's in law from Medina said, 'it was exhausting but nice to meet other Muslims for the first time'.



- **Sisters Walk in Balloch on 24th October took place and Sisters movie night watching Searching Games night have taken place for sisters and brothers.**
- **Socially distanced Jumma congregations have been taking place using a new booking system, led by our local scholars and students.**

Charity Week

All universities hold 'raising and giving' events, and GUMSA has been a part of this for many years, contributing to charity week in October. Our theme this year is Islamic History, with the purpose of raising money for orphans and needy children, for example providing heart surgery and education in Iraq, Sri Lanka, Philippines and Glasgow. This year we are proud to say that we raised around £20,500 (still to be finalised!) as a joint total with other Glasgow ISOCs, Alhamdulillah.

Initiatives for CW this year:

- **5K Strathclyde Park walk**
- **Inter ISOC Quiz – which GUMSA won! Thanks to Ans, Hassan, Huzaifah, Saif and Sophia who were on the team and those supporting us.**
- **Sold customised hoodies with our names in Arabic**
- **Thought-provoking talk by Shaykh Ruzwan Muhammad on 'Understanding the past to shape our future Ummah'**
- **Charity auction- we raised a total of 10.5K! Alhamdulillah**
- **"Guess the number of sweets in the jar" which allowed us to give some fantastic prizes out!**

Daanish Zaidi, GUMSA's Head Brother said, "No physical events, no bucketing, yet GUMSA still managed to raise £1500 for a record CW Scotland cake total, and close to £3000 overall. Me and everyone else are immensely proud of the team for sticking together and raising money for orphans and needy children, even in such difficult circumstances."

Our mint green 2020/21 GUMSA discount card was released and, as a welcome gift, freshers were able to get one for free! It gives them discounted prices in favourite food places around Glasgow, such as in the African-Caribbean world of Manjaros and the healthy halal Subway on Great Western Road. Designed by Adnan Iqbal and his team, it has been in high demand and successful in raising money for GUMSA. You can visit the GUMSA website or Instagram page for more information on how to secure yours!



Drama



73 Berkeley St, Glasgow, G3 7DX

Ottoman Coffee House

Ottoman styled coffee shop with authentic, traditional Turkish coffee and Turkish delight. Appears small on the outside but very spacious inside, it contains a mix of splendid Victorian and Ottoman décor surrounded by Caliphs and history books with a built-in mosque downstairs (literally huge). They serve a variety of desserts such as baklava with ice cream, made from a local bakery, but also kebabs and rice platters with polite customer service

Fiery



426 Sauchiehall St, Glasgow G2 3JD

Tuk-Tuk

Inspired by the colourful food hawkers of India, which is reflected by the dazzling, colourful interior. All curries are served in separate pots, allowing you to indulge in the homely feeling of serving food into individual plates. Known for their use of chilli, more so than others, making it worth the visit if you like to get your tastebuds tingling. A spicy dish to try would be their 'railway station' lamb curry. A good choice for starters would be the okra fries or pakora platter of deep-fried vegetables

Syrupy-Sweet



110 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6HB

Flavas Desserts

A very short walk from University, this dessert parlour is a fantastic place to relax with your friends. From my pre-COVID Ramadan visit, I was glad to see it has a really good selection to choose from. Their 'freakshakes' – a milkshake with a cake on top and even more chocolate – are filling and fantastically presented. From cookie dough, sundaes, to waffles, they have it all. Their prices are possibly even better than those in the city centre

Two halal food roads in the West End and City Centre

Great Western Road and Sauchiehall Street

These two roads are reputable for buying and eating Halal, Asian and Middle Eastern food. From independent stores such as 'Damascus Gate' to 'Garden Fresh Exotics' and halal cafes, such as Mezza or Bayleaf. Many restaurants on Sauchiehall street, including the Chinese and Japanese ones, serve halal food – there's no harm in asking!

Halal Tesco: Maryhill and Sauchiehall Street Tesco offer halal meat (30 minutes from the university).

VISIT
NOW

Riverside Museum

Who would have thought that the Riverside Museum, with an annual visitor rate of 1.3 million, was designed by the late Zaha Hadid? The renowned Iraqi-British architect designed the building with its zigzag cutting-edge design and green curvy interior. You feel transported into a vehicle in itself. Here, you will learn about the history of transport in over 3,000 impressive objects from the 1800s onwards. During the British Empire, Glasgow manufactured thousands of ships and trains, highlighting the skill force Glaswegians had.



Furthermore, Glasgow has the 3rd oldest underground railway in the world, after London and Budapest – and the museum has excellently recreated this, with the old subway cars, station platforms and even an entire cobbled street containing a bakery and tailors. Outside, docked in the River Clyde, you can find the giant restored 'Tall Ship', Glenlee, which has travelled the world four times and was also used by the Spanish navy.

Price: This tourist attraction is free to visit..

How to get there: 15 minutes' walk from Glasgow University.

Walk into the side road where Kelvin Hall is (Bunhouse road) then take a right onto Old Dumbarton road, stay left onto Ferry Road then at the end of the road turn right and go under the motorway bridge (for walking), follow it down until you see the big fancy building.

Islamic Events in Glasgow

Due to the pandemic, most events are currently held on zoom/online. Here are a few to look forward to:

- **Online Khutbah (sermons) - Glasgow Central Mosque**
- **Celebrate Mercy YouTube Channel - Instilling a deeper understanding of the Prophet Muhammad. Series of videos by American Islamic scholars and activists regarding a variety of topics.**
- **Places for Islamic Knowledge - ISyllabus, Islamic Society of Britain, Cambridge Muslim College YouTube, Ramadan TV Scotland, Radio Ramadan, Amina Muslim Women's Resource Centre, Aga Khan Centre, 1001 inventions.**

DATES & TIMES	EVENTS & ORGANISERS
2nd Oct - 25th Oct	The Black Muslim Festival - Month-long online programme featuring 40+ of the Ummah's greatest Black Muslim scholars, historians and creatives
3rd Nov	Zero Waste Cooking - Halal. Amina Muslim Women's Resource Centre
12th Nov 19:30 - 20:30	Islam's role in the English Enlightenment by Dr Imranali Panjwani. Eventbrite. FREE!
12th Nov 17.00 - 18.45	Muslim Female Religious Authority, University of Edinburgh. Eventbrite
14th Nov 21:00 - 22:30	Islam, The Muslim World & American Politics: What Happens Now by Dr Lawrence Pintak. Eventbrite. FREE!
16th Nov 10:00 - 12:30	Faith, Myth and Domestic Violence – Islam and Domestic Abuse. Eventbrite. FREE!
16th Nov 16:00 - 17:30	The Persecution of the Uighur Muslims in China – Where to Go from Now? by The Coalition for Genocide Response. Eventbrite. FREE!
22nd Nov 18:00 - 20:00	The Story of Abu Bakr (RA): A man of His word. By Darul Iilm. Eventbrite. FREE!
4th Dec 9:00-11:00	The challenges of development in Muslim societies: An introduction. Aga Khan University. Eventbrite. £30-40

As-salamu alaykum!

I'm Sophia and I've recently entered my first year at this fine institution, albeit virtually, not physically.

As all fellow freshers will understand – we've been feeling so incredibly isolated from this new adult world we've recently plunged into. Having newly emerged from high school, we have unwittingly undergone what Kanye would call, 'a paradigm shift,' into a strange new world of pyjama-clad Zoom calls. Our childhood has disintegrated and the schools we once considered our 9-5 homes have moved on without us. And yes – this is the natural order of things but our 'new beginning' has been much more hard-hitting than usual.

Although generations before us started university with the same relentless nerves and imposter syndrome, they were quickly able to establish a supportive network of friends – both old and new – to guide them through this formidable period of transition. Take my parents, for example; Alhamdulillah, both of them also had the opportunity to attend Glasgow University, and neither brought friends with them. I'm sure many freshers coming from high school or other parts of the world will be in a similar position. All of my friends, save one, have moved away, and although I'm lucky to have the company of my family, it is undeniable that friends serve a unique purpose in university life.

My parents quickly found people to share their newfound struggles of adulthood with. From getting lost together when searching for lecture buildings to exploring the campus; they stumbled through it but did so together. Even now, they reminisce about how they'd arrange to meet their new friends between classes or go bowling in the evenings when it only cost a couple of pounds for students (where did their prices go?!)

Meanwhile, the freshers of today are accustomed to going days without seeing the outside world, because, not only are we lazy teens trying to study from home – there is also a relentless global pandemic preventing us from socialising. The system truly seems rigged against us.

However, in these bleak circumstances, I will offer my advice. I am incredibly experienced, after all, having been at university for a solid 1.5 months now - I'm basically a village elder.

Firstly, don't let lockdown hinder you from making new friends, or potentially, finding your best friends. Being a sheltered little Asian girl, I only recently joined social media so I'm not particularly adept at Facebooking. However, if your course has a Facebook messenger chat then I'd highly recommend joining it and striking up a conversation with some peers. Finding Muslims is always a good starting place since you'll already have some common ground. It's also very easy to find a Muslim in a list – we aren't exactly the most subtle when naming children!



I understand it is nerve-wracking to make the first move in a conversation – but just remember that everyone is in the same boat – wondering if we'll ever get to shore, stewing in anxiety. Keep in mind, it'll be a much more pleasant boat trip if you have company – so bite the bullet: type the words, send them through and don't look back!

Secondly, remember that you don't need to seek the 'perfect best friend' – even the most unlikely friendships turn out to be the most profound. Humans are naturally programmed to make connections wherever possible and everyone has the potential to befriend anyone. It isn't similarity that sustains life-long friendships, but rather, dedicating time and effort into the friendship. All of my mum's best friends have unique personalities and outlooks on life, but that's what keeps life interesting – everyone has different viewpoints to put forwards. Don't try too hard to filter through people – trust that Allah SWT will lead you to whoever you were meant to befriend. Undoubtedly, they will each contribute something beautiful to your university journey and life, even if they're there to test you.

Another obstacle to friendship is that non-Muslims love a good pint. Although I'm used to having a diverse group of friends, alcohol is a staple of university culture, just like lectures and procrastination. So, how can we navigate this and avoid clinging to familiar Muslim faces without getting to know the wide range of people we'll encounter in the workplace? We simply must drink to assimilate. I'M KIDDING. (Astaghfirullah 😊)

It remains a difficult question. There are many lovely, non-Muslims out there who can teach us so much about the world. For example, one of my closest school friends was Christian, and I learnt a lot about our sister-religion and her remarkably similar outlook on life. It's crucial to be exposed to contrasting religious views and engage in some good old religious debates. (As I sense we'll be spending the rest of our lives trying to articulately defend the religion). It also really strengthens your faith while allowing you to slip some low-key Da'wah into the works.

Nevertheless, maintaining friendships with non-Muslims outside of academia can be a real challenge without feeling quite detached from their way of life. It is only natural that, when seeking friendships, we gravitate towards fellow Muslims who can help us grow into Islam and strive to better ourselves. However, surely, we cannot expect people in this country to give us the time of day or increase their awareness of our religion if we do not return the favour. Everyone has the capacity to welcome Allah SWT into their heart and, who knows, a Muslim offering them friendship with open arms might just inspire them.

Looking forwards, I'm sure that one day, these challenging times will be behind us and we'll be able to meet in real life – just hang in there! Keep a lookout for wee Soph and I'm sure it'll be the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

Salaam Imaan, Ayshah and Monica,

We spoke about how settling in has been quite tough and after speaking to other students, they've said the same thing. The mix between online lectures, tutorials, seminars and never-ending reading lists have made a lot of us feeling unable to manage our time and find a work-life balance. The settling period is not over for most of us and we feel like it will be a continuous process until we are able to have face to face classes and are able to properly meet other students in our classes. During lockdown, is there anything you have been reading or listening to that has helped you destress?

Yes! we have been listening to talks by Nouman Ali Khan which have been incredibly helpful during this unique time because he speaks about how when we are going through something that is difficult, such as lockdown, we begin to wonder where Allah is because we are going through such a difficult time and then points out that the teacher is always quiet during a test. We have also been watching "**Naseeha sessions**" which have really helped give more insight into Islam and given us a source of meditation, especially with the anxiety of settling into university.

We have been reading Islamic books such as **Muhammed** by Martin Ling and **In the Footsteps of the Prophet: Lessons from the Life of Muhammad** by Tariq Ramadan. These books have allowed us to be more appreciative of our religion after understanding the prejudice and difficulties Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) had to face and although none of us will ever have to go through anything as difficult, we can relate it back to settling into university, and if the Prophet (PBUH) was able to continue on after such hardships, our settling in period is not nearly as difficult, so we know that although it is hard, we can get through it!

Some other books that we have been loving recently are **The Sealed Nectar: Biography of the Noble Prophet (PBUH)** and **Lost Islamic history: reclaiming Muslim civilisation**, which is amazing if you are looking to learn about Islamic art, history and cultures, throughout the centuries. We have been listening to a lot of podcasts that we recommend some of which would definitely have to be **Middle West**: run by UK young Muslims looking at Islamic issues in the west, which can be very insightful and has given us something to think about and consider. Another podcast includes **Deconstructed** by Mehdi Hassan and this podcast looks at political issues.

Sufi heart a Podcast by Omid Safi, is perfect for anyone trying to go inwards and learn about the power of core centred living and the importance it has in Islam. The podcast draws insight from the perception of Islamic traditions. Mysticism, history, spirituality and poetry are highlights in this podcast. This has been helpful because as a first-year student, you are trying to fit in with peers and stay on top of the workload and this can sometimes feel overwhelming, so it is good to have some sort of normalcy and learn more about our faith.

Another Podcast is **Abbasid History** by Talha Ahsan this podcast looks at the Islamic Golden Age. It interviews academics, archivists and artists on their work and tries to educate and inspire as well as entertain. Each episode covers topics such as astrology, poetry, history and language in the medieval Muslim world. Finally, one of our very own students, Monica has started her own podcast called "**Riding into The Unknown**" and she has made an episode recently talking about dealing with uncertainty and isolation during the pandemic so this will be relevant to a lot of students.

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