

COMMUNITY
WELLBEING
PROJECT

AUGUST NEWSLETTER 2023

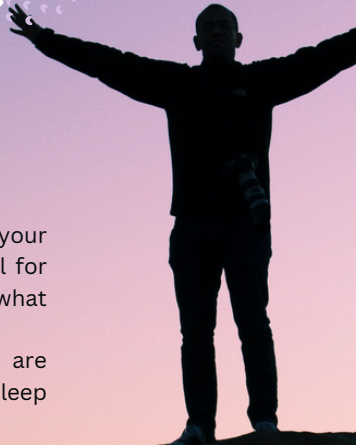
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Gratitude and Wellbeing

- Gratitude is an attitude of counting your blessings, feeling appreciative and thankful for what you have, rather than focussing on what you don't have.
- The benefits of practising gratitude are numerous and range from getting better sleep to having a stronger immune system.



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Islam



and Gratitude/Shukr

When used in an Islamic context, the meaning of Gratitude/shukr extends well beyond general notions of gratitude and thankfulness as they're used in contemporary society. Embodying shukr in its fullest sense is, in fact, a way of life that cultivates endless worldly and otherworldly rewards. The Qur'an and Sunnah are replete with reminders to express shukr. Ibn al-Qayyim went as far as saying that half of our entire belief (imān) rests on practicing it.



Shukr is not simply an optional, supererogatory practice. Rather, it is a fundamental obligation that sets the foundation for and encapsulates the essence of worship
(Qur'an, 16:114; 2:172).

So much so that Allah divides His creation based on those who express shukr and those who do not. In one verse, for example,

He states:
Indeed, We guided him [i.e., man] to the way, be he grateful (shākir) or be he ungrateful (kafūr).
(76:3)



HOW IS BEING **GRATEFUL IS GOOD** FOR YOUR HEALTH?

Research shows that gratitude improves our physical, psychological and social wellbeing. This is because by feeling grateful, we:

- 1 IMPROVE OUR MOOD
- 2 YOU DON'T FEEL JUDGED
- 3 TAKE BETTER CARE OF OUR HEALTH
- 4 LOWER OUR BLOOD PRESSURE
- 5 SLEEP BETTER
- 6 INCREASE OUR RESILIENCE
- 7 GET ON BETTER WITH OTHER PEOPLE

PROOF THAT GRATITUDE WORKS

HOW TO PRACTICE GRATITUDE:



Allah has blessed us with numerous tangible and intangible blessings, be they material objects or states of being. Ultimately, a blessing is anything that brings us closer to our Creator. Oftentimes, we assume only "good" things are blessings, like having a home, attending a good school, or finding a suitable spouse. It's important that we recognize that even events we perceive to be negative (e.g., death of a loved one, divorce, or loss of a job) in reality can still be seen as blessings if they end up bringing us closer to Allah.

In order to count our blessings, we need to first spend time reflecting on what Allah has given us. One way to do so is by thinking about our source of sustenance (rizq). Nine different Qur'anic verses combine the words shukr and rizq.



In one verse, for example,
Allah states:

O you who have believed, eat from the good [i.e., lawful] things which We have provided for you and be grateful to Allah if it is [indeed] Him that you worship.
(2:172):





BE COMFORTABLE WITH WHO YOU ARE

- Each day, write down in a notebook three things you feel grateful for.
 - Do this in the morning or evening, whichever works best for you.
 - Do it every day to get the most benefit from it.
 - Be specific - focussing on details works best.
 - Keep looking for new things to be grateful for.
- 
- 



Other ways of developing

Gratitude



Saying
Alhamdulillah to
Allah Subhan wa
Tala for his
countless
blessings.

Saying thank you to your family and people around you. See how many times during the day you can say thank you to someone for a small thing. If it's a bigger thing, write a thank you note.

Keeping a reminder with you of something you feel grateful for. A photo of your family or pet on your screensaver, a sound recording of your baby or grandmother on your phone, or that trinket in your purse or pocket that reminds you of a great holiday.

Picking something you take for granted and feeling grateful for it. This could be your toothbrush, car or coffee mug; it could be having legs to walk with or eyes to see with; or it could be the sun, fresh air or nature.



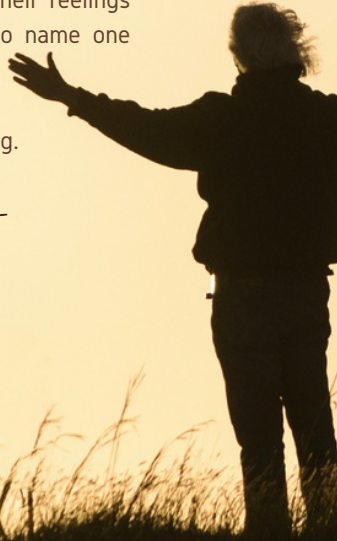
Doing a gratitude meditation. Sit quietly with your eyes closed, and focus one by one on all the people you feel grateful for, whether they are still alive or not. Send each one loving thoughts and feelings.

Writing a gratitude letter. Write a letter to someone you feel grateful for. You don't have to send it, but if you do, you'll feel even better, and even more so, if you read it out to them!

Including the family. Kids can learn to increase their feelings of gratitude too. At dinner, ask each person to name one thing they are grateful for from their day.

Feeling thankful when you wake up in the morning.

*Each new day is a gift
of life. Appreciate it.**



HIJAB:

Spotlighting Servitude to God



One of the most contentious debates about Islam and Muslim women in society revolves around the religious construct of ḥayāʾ (modesty, shyness) and ironically, what has become its most discernible expression—the observance of hijab. The word hijab is linguistically derived from the meaning to be veiled, concealed, or protected and can be used both in its literal and metaphysical sense, as it appears in the Qurʾan. However, the term has become synonymous today with the headscarf worn by Muslim women.

The staggering level of scrutiny on hijab thrust it undeservedly into the limelight of controversy. Its mere mention evokes a spectrum of reaction. Before we redirect the discourse toward the true essence of hijab as an act of servitude to God, it is important to first identify the factors that have contributed to the prevalent misconceptions about hijab. Widespread Islamophobia, global political self-interest, and present-day feminist thought each propagate their own socio-political agendas, which often misconstrue hijab as misogynistic and oppressive, and use it to negatively stereotype those who wear it.





HIJAB: Spotlighting Servitude to God

To the sisters who are thinking about embarking on the journey of wearing hijab, or struggling to keep it on: Know that at the core of every action of the believer is their connection to Allah. Working to strengthen it will keep one steadfast and bring ease on the path to servitude. The servant of Allah never gives up. Remind yourself of your purpose by remembering Allah by His names and attributes. He is the All-Merciful, All-Knowing, most Just, All-Wise, All-Forgiving, most Loving, your Creator and Master who is the source of guidance and legislation. Turn to Allah in prayer and supplication. He is with those who strive in His cause. Stay the course, and stay close to others doing the same. No challenge is successfully overcome without faith and conviction in one's heart. To perfect one's servitude is the ultimate test of life, and one that does not end until death. Hijab is a struggle, on different levels, for many women. There is no good in the condescending behavior that some may show towards those who do not wear it, nor the outright denial of its place in Islam. It's a challenge, for some greater than others. But no challenge is without its due reward from the Lord of the Worlds. The safe harbor of servitude requires a deep trust in Allah and His promise. The oars that will get one to safe harbor are built upon reliance (tawakkul) on Allah to guide the way with safety and ease.

Allah makes a connection in the Qur'an between servitude and complete reliance on Him:

So We have sent you [Prophet] to a community—other communities passed away long before them—to recite to them what We reveal to you. Yet they disbelieve in the Lord of Mercy. Say, "He is my Lord: there is no god but Him. I put my trust in Him and to Him is my return." [13:30]

HIJAB: Spotlighting Servitude to God

Ibn Taymiyyah notes, in light of this and other verses that carry a similar meaning, that reliance on Allah is found in seeking His help, and that it is uniquely tied to servitude in that one cannot be a servant of Allah, nor worship Him without His help. Finally, Allah reminds us that with every endeavor along His path, the true 'abd is conscientious and steadfast. While the world may have placed a spotlight on her hijab, her sight is unwaveringly set on the beacon of servitude. Good actions of worship and obedience, as diminished as they may seem in a world enslaved to man-made standards and values, are never lost with Allah, the One to Whom every sincere servant will return, to find everlasting reward for every effort made in this world.

...Indeed, he who is mindful of Allah and patient, then indeed, Allah does not allow to be lost the reward of those who do good. [12:90]

TODAY
I AM
GRATEFUL



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