



ISSUE 4

FARAH MAGAZINE



MAKING A
Difference

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

May the peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be with you

This is the fourth annual e-magazine of Farah marketed for all to inspire all. It is part of the Farah Saeed Trust; a UK-based non-profit charitable trust. It was setup on April 1st 2014 and is an umbrella of many projects in Farah's name as a sadaqah jariya (continuous charity).

Who is Farah?

Farah is a daughter, sister, wife, friend, doctor and teacher who had been diagnosed with gastric metastatic cancer in March 2014 at the age of 27. She fought bravely with treatment, patience, prayer, courage and determination. She passed away on 8th September 2014.

Each year the Farah magazine consists of a new theme and writers that aim to inspire you. The theme this year circulates around 'Making a Difference'. We have the tendency to overlook at the importance of each role in society and how they make a difference to us from a physical, emotional, intellectual and social point of view. One would ask, what have I done to help this society in a positive way? What are we contributing? What are we changing? This magazine is filled with buzzing writers from various backgrounds that aim to inform you of how they make a difference with a renewed sense of purpose and with the intention to connect. To connect with our Lord and Creator; to connect with our inner selves; and to connect with each other.

It is only a few months that Ramadan has passed, a time where we conduct the three R's. Reviving our hearts, mind and souls with prayer, supplication, fasting, giving charity and remembrance of our Creator. Reflecting on our pasts and how we can improve ourselves for the better in the present and the future. Repenting to Allah (the Most High) of our shortcomings and seeking his mercy.

However, how are we going to implement and make a change? How are we going to be effective against the forces of destruction on Earth? Our actions are judged. Our hearts are in pain. Our eyes are like eagles protecting ourselves. High rates of bloodshed, poverty, corruption and illness across the hemispheres. We as humankind who have witnessed and/or experienced such tests (The Most High) are capable of germinating beauty and make a positive change. To make a difference in the world, it is possible, however, we need to put the effort and time for the world we want to improve.

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How I make a difference in my life as a Professional Relationship Coach, Homemaker and Mother.

- Veronika al Mahdiyah

In today's world Muslim women are under pressure to be great do-it-all super achievers and yet they face insurmountable struggles with the home-work-study balance and how society sees us as Muslim women. I have gone through the scrutiny of it too. Doing a home-based undergraduate degree in Psychology whilst raising two little ones.

learned a thing or two that helped me to achieve the semi-balanced life that I have now.

It all started with the birth of my first child. Holding him in my hands at twenty years old it felt like the clock had started running faster. 'I should do something with my life! How am I going to be as a mother?' All these and bazillions of other thoughts used to rush through my mind.

I always believed that to be a 'good' Mother and a good member of society you must be the useful contributing individual that I didn't feel I was. Tired to the point of exhaustion with an ambition at heart, but, first of all, a Mother.

Five years later with a degree and a second child on my hands I was finally able to see how my role from a young adult had developed over the years. Being a Mother brought to me the sense of urgency: the urgency to succeed and find the path of life that I could very much enjoy.

I couldn't stop thinking how important it is to raise my boys into future men, but I needed to find myself first.

Self-doubt enters every Mother's mind. Many times, the painful past comes up for us to face it. It teaches us how to be stronger this time; how to share love - even though we might not have received much of it ourselves.

Being a Mother means that sometimes love will have to be shown by saying 'no' and we will need to learn to be OK with that.

I think Mothers are under-appreciated and overlooked as a vital part of our society.

These are the women that bring up the new generations. They give love even when they are empty inside. They are there to support and hold tight in difficulties. Their needs are on a back-burner both to them and everyone else.

Mothers keep it silent. Only in Mummy circles you can hear the reality of being one.

When I started working with Muslim women as a life coach even more deeper issues started to appear.

There were specific problems related to different parenting styles, cultural differences and marital expectations.

What seemed an untapped area of Muslim specific advice became a lifeline for sisters that were struggling.

I found that sharing advice that worked for me as a European convert married to a North African made a difference and sisters were very responsive to that too.

It was a pure hunger to find something that solves problems and fits our faith.

After many mistakes and failed attempts to test whether a psychological technique worked, I now know how making a change for the good of yourself first starts to multiply. It's like a little seed that gets planted and is bashed by thunderstorms—to test it how strong will it grow and how will it look once it's grown.

It is as simple as this – making a difference and finding your role in the society starts with developing and discovering your own self with flaws, wrinkles and setbacks.

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Veronika is obsessed with mindset hacks, overcoming fear, and finding the balance between personal and professional fulfilment.

www.muslimhousewife.com

<https://www.facebook.com/muslimhousewife/>

Change is for everyone, the better is for everyone

- by Dr Hajer Boudriga : inspiring radiologist and photographer

The dream

We were all (or at least most of us) were brought up as children surrounded by fairy tales and superheroes legendary stories.

As we grew up, we were all hit by the sheer reality that these stories do not exist and all the global issues cannot be resolved overnight.

I also grew up and knew that all we needed was 'Being the change you want to see in the world' as Mahatma Ghandi once said.

My mother was a nurse and I wanted to be a doctor. I am in the middle of the road but nearly there. The journey was bumpy. I had many grief and pain with sleepless nights which I presume was not out of the ordinary what a medical student might go through.

The truth :

Many are helpless and give up midway. I was almost brought to my knees until I realised that

'God will only test us with what we can bear' (2 :286)

'And By no means shall you attain righteousness unless you spend of that which you love and whatever of good you spend' (3 : 92)

The journey was an eye opener and made me realise that suffering does not just exist on television or radio stations but with daily horrors. Disease is affecting every soul that we might encounter in our every day lives. Pregnant women are dying because of maternal care. Young children are dying because of lack of vaccines. Others are unable to obtain a good condition due to transmitted infections that is caused by insufficient water supplies and sanitations. Cancerous and cardiovascular affections are widespread due to epidemiological changes that we are witnessing. It was only then I realised how much of a responsibility and burden I must hold on my shoulders. Reacting and acting in my field could only reinforce my determination and self-conscience.

During my internship periods in different departments I was put under stressful scenarios especially during night shifts. Nothing compares to a relief you observe in a little child's eyes after a shortness of breath is dealt with. I would not trade his/her parents' gratitude for anything.

The moment of delivering a newborn, such a magical life treat isn't it? Yet, breaking through is one of the most difficult challenges.

At the moment, my everyday practice as an imaging physican puts me in contact with cancer patients. Empathy is at the core of my everyday practice. Giving bad news is even more of an uncomfortable situation.

All of the stated examples remain a rudimentary step a doctor might have come across. And every experience I went through has a special place through my personal development.

Roger Bacon and Galileo pioneered the scientific method to which we mostly are indebted through the research work is held in the world of different fields or to be more accurate, in the developed world.

Belonging to a developing country I became more aware of the disparities in wealth and therefore its consequences on the lives of people. Having insufficient provision in health services and poor access to it means bad access to proper education and thus rise of a degradation in the quality of life.

We might be quite lucky for the donations we get from numerous charities but it cannot respond to the plethora of the challenges we face.

The rule of thumb here is simple: Elucidating the issues is part of the solution and putting people of experience in the right places is the keystone in order to help the government and stakeholders in decision making.

The Untold Story

My passion for cricket initiated from home, where I used to play at the back garden with my father, 5 brothers and 4 sisters. I lost my mother at the age of 9. My father was a Judo champion and weightlifter in his time at Pakistan. My step mother saw my potential and encouraged me with her loving words. Some of my siblings were autistic and disabled, being close to each other as unity was always important. A family influenced by sports we enjoyed watching cricket on TV which is where I found myself inspired by Shane Warne.

I taught myself how to spin bowl on concrete using equipment I had access to: a tape ball, crate and kit. I was sent to a girls school and strived to exceed in both sports and education. I was selected as captain for my school team at the age of 13 where I led my team to victory by beating all the school years, teach-

here where I achieved my first medal and was spotted by a Warwickshire County Cricket Coach who invited me for trials.

Attending trials at a young age during the month of Ramadan was very difficult. My family disapproved taking me to nets or getting serious about playing for any county at all. I missed many sessions and resulted in missing out for selection. However, after several years, during my trial day, I was approached

spinner. One development coach (Bob Walpole) managed to convince my dad by taking the responsibility of taking and returning me to matches during the season. I was prescribed beta blockers for having a rapid heart rate and my doctor advised me to use extra adrenaline energy by taking up sports. A case of hyperhidrosis affected my self-esteem and made me feel anxious. I knew if I was to progress in life and rebuild on my confidence that I had to go achieve what I desired all along.



Salma Bi

*- A haemodialysis nurse
who loves cricket.*

Just like my father I was stubborn and was committed to achieve something in life. I saw a glimpse of how rewarding it was to play sports. During my time at college, I studied Law but had a passion for medicine unsure I was going to be allowed to attend University. Undertaking distant-learning courses I applied discreetly, accepting the offer and only told my family once I had started the course. It was a challenge for me in many ways as my father did not encourage neither me or my siblings to do further education, however I managed to break that barrier. I changed the mindset and was the first child to attend university and study nursing. In my first year, I studied Learning Disability Nursing and then moved onto Adult Nursing.

Giving back to the community, I understood the importance of making the most of my ability and doing more for others. Something I yearned to do since my mother was not present. Passing my driving test gave me the independence I craved for, it meant that I wasn't going to rely on anyone anymore. I had a pas-

family functions and outings. My friends were the ones I met through sport. This was my social life. As a strong-minded person, I saw one goal and that was to work hard at it. I was free to go and chase my dreams. Something I do not often speak about but if I did not have an education that gave me a substantial job. I would have been in financial debt as sports does not pay you unless you reach at an international standard. I have now been working as a Qualified Haemodialysis nurse for over a decade. As a senior nurse, I provide care for acute and chronic patients with kidney failure at a main renal unit. My shift patterns involve working for 12 hours for 3 to 4 days. Carrying a caring and kind attitude, I felt I was made for this rewarding role, helping the poor and vulnerable adults is what I find great satisfaction in. My attitude to face each hurdle has assisted me to accomplish what I have always set out to do. Starting from home, I was the role model to my younger sisters: Aisha and Anisha.

MARYAM

- AN ICON FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE

By Hafsa Waseela; a lecturer and PhD researcher. Please visit her website
www.hafsaabbas.com

*Who is your inspiration?
Someone who elevates your determination into fulfilling your purpose of life?
Someone who reminds you of the characteristics of how a Muslimah should be?
Someone who reminds you of how one should react during trials?*

Amongst the individuals that inspire me in life besides my mother are the Muslim women of the Islamic History. One of these diamonds is Maryam (May Allah be pleased with her and grant her mercy); who is also known as the Virgin Mary. She is the mother of one of our beloved Prophets Isa (peace be onto him) and she was chosen above all other women in the world. She is the only woman who was named in the Glorious Quran; the Book of Allah (The Most High) that was sent during the blessed month of Ramadan. In the Quran; Isa is named as Isa ibn Maryam; and both of these amazing individuals are described predominantly in Chapters 19 and 3. A Surah is even named after her emphasising her status of her nobility; character and piety. So what inspires me about her? Let me begin with the Quranic verse:

'And [the example of] Mary, the daughter of 'Imran, who guarded her chastity, so We blew into [her garment] through Our angel, and she believed in the words of her Lord and His scriptures and was of the devoutly obedient.' (66:11)

Our Beloved Prophet Muhammad *salla allahu alayhi wa salam* said:

'The superiority of 'Aisha to other ladies is like the superiority of Tharid (i.e. meat and bread dish) to other meals. Many men reached the level of perfection, but no woman reached such a level except Mary, the daughter of Imran and Asia, the wife of Pharaoh.' (Bukhari 4.643)

sighs Amazing ma sha Allah.

A level of perfection? Yes our dear Maryam (May Allah be pleased with her and grant her mercy)'s chastity. Her modesty. Her dedication to seek knowledge. Her obedience to Allah in fulfilling His commands. Her courage and patience when faced with trials and tribulations. All this into one? Yes; our dear Maryam had these amazing qualities that in-

She was born into the family of Al-Imran. Her mother made a special supplication to Allah (The Most High) while Maryam was still in her mother's womb as stated in the Quran:

"O my Lord! I do dedicate into Thee what is in my womb for Thy special service: So accept this of me: For Thou hearest and knowest all things." (3:35).

When Maryam (May Allah be pleased with her and grant her mercy) was born; she said:

But when she delivered her, she said, "My Lord, I have delivered a female." And Allah was most knowing of what she delivered, "And the male is not like the female. And I have named her Mary, and I seek refuge for her in You and [for] her descendants from Satan, the expelled [from the mercy of Allah]." (3:36)

She thought her child would be a male but Allah gave her a female and Allah is the best of planners and named her child Maryam which literally means 'Maid-servant of God'.

Allah granted her dua and Maryam (May Allah be pleased with her and grant her mercy) was blessed and protected by Allah (The Most High) as mentioned in Quran 3:37. She was taken care of after her mother's death by our beloved Prophet Zakariya (peace be upon him) who at the time did not have a child and was old.

She was given food and Zakariya (peace be upon him) questioned its origins. Her response was full of belief in Allah (The Most High):

"It is from Allah. Indeed, Allah provides for whom He wills without account." (3:37).

SubhanAllah. Indeed Allah (The Most High) is our Provider who blesses whom He wills and when He wills. Her response pumped blood to all four walls of our beloved Prophet Zakariya alayhis salam's heart as he longed to be a father and made dua in which his supplications were responded swiftly despite his wife being barren. Imagine how a young child having an

"At that, Zechariah called upon his Lord, saying, 'My Lord, grant me from Yourself a good offspring. Indeed, You are the Hearer of supplication.' So the angels called him while he was standing in prayer in the chamber, 'Indeed, God gives you good tidings of John, confirming a word from Allah and [who will be] honorable, abstaining [from women], and prophet from among the righteous.'" (3:38-39)

Her glitter and sparkle here is just the beginning; her story and qualities become even more special as you read on.

The musky essence of Maryam (May Allah be pleased with her and grant her mercy)'s modesty and her liberation from a spiritual perspective can be observed when she first met with Jibraeel (peace be upon him) who came as a form of her man into the location where she was. He seemed like a sort of an alarming threat to her in which she supplicated:

"I seek refuge in Ar-Rahman from you if you are God-fearing." (19:18)

She didn't want to break Allah (The Most High)'s commandments in which it is stated in 2:187:

"...These are the limits [set by] Allah, so do not approach (come close to) them."

This complements with the hadith in which our beloved Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"Whenever a man is alone with a woman the Devil makes a third." (Bukhari)

Another example of her modesty, innocence and purity in her speech can be established when she wanted to protect her chastity after when Jibraeel (peace be upon him) introduced himself she replied:

"How can I have a son when no man has touched me nor have I been unchaste?" (19:20)

How many of our beloved sisters today would respond in that manner after hearing they would give birth whilst they have been untouched?

How many of our beloved sisters would use inappropriate language or even takes steps further by throwing something that is in whatever is in their reach? How many of our beloved sisters would even raise the tone of our voices?

This emphasises the etiquettes of Maryam (May Allah be pleased with her and grant her mercy)'s character in which we can all take lessons from of how she disciplined her emotions; anger and fear.

This is not to say she did not communicate with the opposite gender. Zakariyah (peace be onto him) taught her as well as other male scholars even when she was at the age of maturity. Thus; speech with the opposite gender is permissible as long there is necessity in an open environment and a respectful; to the point speech is taking place. As the Prophet sallallahu alayhi was salam said:

"to speak well or keep silent." (Tirmidhi)

Her modesty in her speech can be inter-connected with her modesty in her heart as Allah (The Most High) said in the Quran:

"...she was of the Qaniteen (obedient)." (66:12)

She was obedient to Allah (The Most High) and felt shameful. This is something we should all have especially in the presence of angels who record our good and bad deeds and are our witnesses besides Allah (The Most High) of all of our actions. May Allah (The Most High) forgive our sins.

Another aspect of her character that inspires me is after given birth; Allah (The Most High) instructed her to return back to her people and not speak to anyone who questions her:

“So eat and drink and be contented. And if you see from among humanity anyone, say, ‘Indeed, I have vowed to the Most Merciful abstention, so I will not speak today to [any] man.’ Then she brought him to her people, carrying him. They said, ‘O Maryam, you have certainly done a thing unprecedented. O sister of Aaron, your father was not a man of evil, nor was your mother unchaste.’ So she pointed to him. They said, ‘How can we speak to one who is in the cradle a child?’ [Isa] said, ‘Indeed, I am the servant of God. He has given me the Scripture and made me a prophet. And He has made me blessed wherever I am and has enjoined upon me prayer and zakah as long as I remain alive And [made me] dutiful to my mother, and he has not made me a wretched tyrant. And peace is on me the day I was born and the day I will die and the day I am raised alive.’” (19:26-33)

She responded to the vulgar speech of her crime of immodesty in which she did not commit with silence. Her baby Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) instead defended his mother from the accusation and introduced himself:

“That is Isa, the son of Maryam – the word of truth about which they are in dispute.” (19:34)

How many of our beloved sisters would react in which Maryam (May Allah be pleased with her and grant her mercy) did these immodesty accusations despite the experience of pain and suffering from the incident? To have even your family’s name mentioned and even being slandered?

My dear sisters in Islam; we can learn so much from the patience and modesty in speech portrayed from Maryam, Umm Isa (may Allah be pleased with her). She was like a tree where blistering winds went from side to side; removing its leaves and some of its branches but still remained firm to the ground.

Moreover; another aspect of her personality that amazes me is her passion for knowledge. Seeking knowledge awakens the dead heart and revives the brains and souls that are lost and provide them nutrients.

As previously mentioned she was taught by Prophet Zakariya (peace be upon him) and male scholars. She was a bright and honoured student of knowledge and when she grew older; a place was built for her known as Al-Mihrab. She was the first female to be even taught at the masjid at the time.

Many women today are discouraged from pursuing studies and are told from a cultural point of view that they should fulfil their duty to be a good wife and mother and not focus too much on educating oneself. In my point of view; I think it is not only important to be trained to be a good wife in obeying the husband and be competent in fulfilling the responsibilities of looking after the family and doing household chores; but equally I also think that having a touch of education Islamically as well as a general education is necessary in order to aid in raising children.

I really don’t know how to end this article about how amazing and inspiration Maryam (May Allah be pleased and have mercy on her) is. In addition; I don’t think I have made justice in covering enough or emphasising how important she is and the lessons we can extract like how honey is extract from the honeycomb . I make dua to Allah (The Most High) that I could meet her in Jannah and say ‘Dear Sister; you have amazed me so much when reading upon your biography whilst in my duniya journey; could I please give you a hug?’

It is necessary for both brothers and sisters to reflect upon lessons from her life and reflect upon our lives and what we have done/achieved and what practical tips we can adapt in order to become better Muslims. Amongst those that circulate through my brain cells at the moment especially during this blessed month of Ramadan are:

- 1) Increase in Istighfar (seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Most High, as well as mankind for any mistakes intentionally and unintentionally).
- 2) Reflecting each day of one’s good actions and bad actions.
- 3) Reading upon our Islamic History that include women; sahaba; Prophets alayhoma salam; khilafahs; imams and so forth.
- 4) Increase in Supplications and never give up.
- 5) Renewing our intentions always.

May we absorb the lessons from Maryam (may Allah be pleased and have mercy upon her) and protect myself and the rest of the Ummah’s modesty in our speech and actions.

May Allah SWT give us the ability to deal with trials and tribulations when we face them like how Maryam (may Allah be pleased and have mercy upon her), Prophet (peace and blessings be upon to him), Prophet Yusuf (peace be upon him) and Prophet Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) when being slandered or any type of cases. Ameen

An interview with: *Approachable Parenting*



Hafsa Waseela interviewed an inspiring guest Sister Kathleen Roche-Nagi; an experienced Parenting Educator, Lecture, Tutor, Trainer, Teacher (QTLS), Nurse SRN, Midwife SCM, Counsellor & Life-Coach

Hafsa: Asalamu alaykum Sister Kathleen, thank you for participating in Farah Magazine's issue 4. Please tell us about yourself?

Kathleen: I am the managing director of Approachable Parenting; a non-profit organisation that works with families and delivers parenting courses. It supports mothers especially in the Muslim community. Ten years ago, I was working with children in schools and discovered they were learning a lot from the emotional work I was doing with them and it increased their confidence. I put together a proposal

at the time, teachers did not have much experience in delivering emotional work.

I developed a programme titled Positive About You that went into schools for a short period of time, longer weeks with younger children and even longer sessions with older children over 6 years of age. It was a great success and I delivered it for two years. I then aimed to make the courses better by making it accessible to parents because children where only good for certain periods of time.

Following this, I was trained in delivering parenting courses and conducted them in the community with the social services and other organisations. I discovered that Muslim families were not attending them and began to question why alongside my colleagues who are psychologists. They had similar issues with difficulty in engaging with muslim families. We conducted research together and the outcome was they wanted someone they could identify from their particular culture and background. This led to the introduction of a course I developed called 'Five Pillars of Parenting' which has been running for over 10 years aiming to reach families. All of our courses have quality marks and required standards.

There are currently several different programmes: Pregnancy and beyond, Pregnancy to 3, 4 - 11 and a teenage programme. We also have pre-marriage education called ME4U and Sparkers' project that aims to train parents who attend the programme and those who want to train others and supporting them around issues such as breastfeeding, mental health issues and setting goals to themselves.

Hafsa: That's brilliant, these courses are inspiring and would benefit parents of different ages. Are there programmes available such as play schemes for children whose parents are working especially in the summer and easter holidays. This would allow the parents not having to face the dilemma of leaving work early.

Kathleen: We do not have playschemes as such but we do have something for teenagers focusing on different elements that incorporate mental health. Mental health and emotional health are major issues within the community that affect children and go undiagnosed. We are planning on organising a programme that involves cooking, exercise and protecting themselves this summer. We have done this in winter and half-term. For parents who are working, we encourage them to attend as parents try to overcompensate by buying their children toys rather than giving them their time which they need.

Hafsa: You've mentioned that one of the core reasons why Muslim families do not attend is because there is not one from their own background. How do you make the programmes adaptable? Are they multicultural? A translator present in the session?

Kathleen: The sessions entail evidence from the Quran and an element of psychology because parents understand from an Islamic perspective but not in a parenting concept. When we attach the psychological perspective of parenting and the importance of raising children emotionally, socially, physically and healthily, they will visualise their re-

There are also non-muslims attending the courses and we welcome and ask them to give their references from other faiths and even if they do not have a faith. The Approachable Parenting courses are geared for the muslim community because many do not attend the courses and their children are having difficulties in school and outside of school.

Hafsa: You are making a big difference in the community by helping parents raise their children, meet others that aim for the same - a form of networking.

Kathleen: How we describe it also, the earlier you get in the better as many wait till they become teenagers before they seek help. Parenting is like esther, you have hydrogen and oxygen which are two elements that come together to form water. It can move around very easily. This is the stage of the baby, where the character is being developed and un-

stage, water can move. After the state of liquid, it becomes ice. If you get in early, you can sculpture the ice. The ice is the teenage years where you discover later, you have blocks of ice which you can push, move and is very difficult.

This is how I explain to parents. If you relate it to water and its different phases, you can understand the importance of parenting. By getting in there early, understanding the development of the brain of the child to secure attachment and apply it throughout life. We now know that the brain development is up to 3 years and this period of time is critical. We need to talk and interact with the baby because it is part of their brain development. Parents do not often see this and ignore. They assume that the baby is okay by allowing the child to watch TV, food and cleaning their nappies. However, more effort is required in the early years to build those relationships in the family and improve the social and emotional development.

Hafsa: Thank you for your inspiration, I love the analogy of the ice used. If someone would like to volunteer for Approachable Parenting, or wanted further information about the courses, how do we access this?

Kathleen: We have a website that we are currently updating at the moment www.approachableparenting.org.uk We are on twitter, facebook, linkedin and Instagram. Please email info@approachableparenting.co.uk if interesting in volunteering.

We do have volunteers, students who conduct their school and summer placements with us. We also have students from areas of psychology and business to develop more skills. We also have parents who volunteer to pre-mentor other parents once they have completed the courses and training. We would have not volunteers.

All of our programmes are Quality marked. One of our programmes is on EIF which stands for Early Intervention Foundation. We have published papers anonymously with the parents' consent. Results have shown that these courses have a major effect on the community and allows the parents to better themselves and modify their parenting styles. It is a continuous effect on the family.

Alhamdulillah we are very privileged to be in a position that we can see in front of our eyes and parents are telling us how things have changed within the programmes as well as what and how things should be done. Learning the knowledge and practicing it and coming back each week telling us the impact is motivating. We know they are making the changes. We also deliver workshops to ensure they are sustainable and there are no problems after a few months and know what they are doing.

Hafsa: Thank you for your time Kathleen and inspiring our readers with your enthusiasm, dedication and commitment to helping parents improve themselves, current and next generation.





Emotional Maturity

So much of our progress in this life and the next rests
on emotional maturity.

We need to be emotionally mature as people who were
termed the best of nations.

How can we expect to grow when we take each
criticism of our community and understanding of Islam
as an attack of character and faith?

From which we hurl labels instead of approaching with
understanding and critical discussion.

How is any of this prophetic behaviour?

It is ironic that many wishes to become closer to God
and practice Islam, but when different opinions come
their way, or if we mentions ills happening within our
community, there is a reactionary defensiveness.

And we do not improve our condition.

We will only change our condition when we
change what is within ourselves.

And then we will bring ourselves
out of darkness into light.

Author: **The Inner Muse**

*'Alif, Lam, Ra. This is a Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], that
you might bring mankind out of darknesses into the light by permission of their Lord
- to the path of the Exalted in Might, the Praiseworthy' (Quran 14:1)*

Real Touching Stories:

Beautiful Stewardess & the Old Man

- Ummu Kulthum

In the eyes of the creator, the human is created in the same state. There is nothing that distinguishes the degrees of mankind from the eyes except the goodness and deeds of worship performed solely for Him. However, sometimes in this world, people often always discriminate among themselves. Looks, status and wealth have always been a distinction in worldly life. But not everyone has such traits, some of them are people who still have a conscience and do not look at people in this way. Just like a beautiful flight attendant working for China Airline.

Inspirational Stewardess

There was once a woman who worked as a flight attendant for China Airline. The woman considered her life to be mediocre. During her work at the airline, she confessed that she had never had a memorable experience.

Last June, she had an experience that may have changed her life forever. She received a flight schedule from Shanghai to Peking and the flight was full. Amongst the passengers, the flight attendant saw an old man who looked like he was from a village and was holding an old bag. She was standing at the plane door to greet the passengers. When she saw the old man, the first thing that she thought of was how someone from a village was able to purchase a plane ticket.

When the plane took off, some flight attendants who were on the plane began serving drinks. At that time, the flight attendant passed by row 20 and looked back at the old man. She saw the old man sitting upright and stiff like a statue in his seat whilst continuing to hug the bag in his arms. At the time, she asked the old man "what would you like to drink?" To her surprise, the old man waved his hand in refusal. She offered to help store the old man's bag, but he refused. After that she let the old man sit quietly.

Serving Passengers Without Differentiating

As she started to distribute passengers' meals, she still saw the old man sitting upright and stiff. She offered food to the grandfather but still refused. She reported the old man's refusal to the head flight attendant. The head flight attendant asked the old man "are you sick?". In a low voice, the old man replied that he wanted to go to the toilet, but he was afraid that he was not allowed to move freely because he might damage the contents of the plane. The stewardess then explained to the old man that he could move as he pleased, after which she told a steward to escort him to the toilet.

When the flight attendants served the second drink, the stewardess saw the old man glance at the passenger next to him. By not asking whether the old man wanted to drink or not, he simply kept a glass of tea on his head. His actions shocked the grandfather who responded "no need, no need".

At that moment the old man spontaneously issued a coin in his pocket and handed it to the stewardess. The flight attendant explained to the old man that the drinks she served were free. The old man told the stewardess that when he was on his way to the airport, he felt thirsty and asked for a drink to the street food vendor, but at that time the street vendors refused and expelled him for assuming himself is a beggar. And at that moment the flight attendant knew that in order to save the cost of traveling from the village, the old grandfather was willing to walk away from the village and drive after the near airport because at that time the money was very little.



The steward persuaded the old man to drink which he later agreed. The flight attendant offered food to the old grandfather but the grandfather refused. When the old grandfather told the flight attendant that he had two very good children, his eldest son had worked while his youngest son was still in third grade at Peking. His eldest son lived in the city with his wife and he rejected to live with him and wanted to stay in the village. He wanted to visit his youngest son but his eldest son could not bear leaving his father ride so far, so he brought his father a plane ticket. He even offered to accompany his father onto the trip but his father refused and wanted to go alone.

He explained to the flight attendant that he did not want to keep his bag in the trunk because the sweet potato will be damaged. The flight attendant assured him the sweet potatoes in his bag will not be affected.

The Most Inspiring and Touching Story

As the flight attendant continued to add a drink to the old grandfather, the old man always replied with a sincere thank you, but he did not want to eat even though the stewardess already knew that the old grandfather was very hungry. When the plane landed, the old grandfather whispered to the flight attendant "is there a small pouch where I could put my food into?" He explained that he did not see good so much good food and wanted his son to taste.

The stewardess then thought that the mediocre food she saw everyday could be so valuable to the old man from the village and with the hunger that the old grandfather might feel from the time he was willing to set aside for his son. She was touched and collected all the food that has not been distributed to the passengers was stored in a bag and given to the old man. However, he rejected as he did not want to take food that was not his.

The flight attendant was amazed from the sincere acts of the grandfather. She then helped the grandfather leave the plane. The old man kneeled and thanked Allah repeatedly. The old man informed them that they are the kindest people he had ever come across. He admitted that he ate a good meal and drank a sweet drink. "On this day all of you do not despise me, you serve me so well, I do not know how to thank you guys, may Allah repay all you with goodness". The old man began to weep and was further assisted away from the airfield.

Dear readers, the morale of this story is to not look at someone from outward appearances.
Respect everyone and be grateful.

Biography I am commonly called Kulthum. I am a mother of a princess and I work in Enrekang city. Please visit my website: <http://ummukulthum.com/> . It contains various stories and memorable experiences in my life. I sometimes make movie reviews, places I have visited and products.

Leaving a Legacy

- Sahlah Nayyar

A seed sowed yesterday is a shade and fruits to several today. That's what a legacy is. A legacy is that which you leave behind for others to benefit from even though you are not physically present in this world. It is that footprint you leave behind on this planet, in people's hearts and for which the world remembers you when you are long gone.

Leaders are never remembered for their wealth, buildings or businesses after they are physically not present. They are remembered for the good they leave behind. Every one of us will one day leave this world. The world is temporary. The question is what have we done for the world and for us to benefit from after we are gone from this temporary life?

Sadaqatul Jariyah (ceaseless charity) would benefit us even after we pass away from this world. It is mentioned in a hadith that Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "When a man dies, his deeds come to an end except for three things: Sadaqah Jariyah ; a knowledge which is beneficial, or a virtuous descendant who prays for him (for the deceased)." (Riyaadh Us Saliheen Book 13, Hadith 1383)

Legacies are not planned so remember that you don't have plan for a legacy, but you can always work towards leaving a legacy. So how can you leave a legacy without planning for it?

- Have a vision in life. Pursue whatever you are passionate about. Focus on what you are awesome at, and work on it with excellence. This can help you work and give out your best work to the world.

- Remain steadfast on your work despite the obstacles. As easy it is to say this, it is quite essential when you want your work to remain - to remain consistent and steadfast!

- Don't look at the results. When you sow the seeds, you may or may not see the big tree which provides fruits and shade. However, others do. So work hard and don't look out for excellent and quick results. You may or not see the results of your hard work, however, if it is done with the right intention and is good work, you will definitely be rewarded by Allah for it. He never forgets.

- Share your blessings with others even if they are little. We all are blessed by Allah (The Most High), so use those blessings which you were blessed with and share them with others. It could be something little like a smile or sharing happiness with others and making them feel positive to sharing material blessings with others.

- Help others with the skills you have, educate them about those skills, and mentor them if they need help in that which you are skilled at. When you mentor and educate others, you learn where you lack and also learn from the individual(s) you are mentoring or educating.

Today is your day! So start working today, start small and do not belittle the little you do. When you work towards



Sahlah Nayyar is a writer and counsellor for teens and students. Her articles have been published in several international magazines, newspapers, and websites. She aspires to inspire the youth with her writings. She is currently pursuing her Bachelor's in Psychology and loves to spend her time reading books on Islam, mental health and psychology



This is a call to the Silent Warrior

Musa Bukhari is a Personal Development Coach and Counsellor for Syed Bukhari coaching. He was the former Head coach of Yasmin Mogahed Counselling and Coaching. He speaks on personal and spiritual development through Islam and Psychology.

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1255138985>

<https://www.facebook.com/musarebelheart/>

We are all fighting something. A battle within our lives. We are all at different stages in that battle. There are three camps of people who are fighting. For some people the battle has just begun. These people look around, petrified at the unknown, not knowing how they will cope. They are buried in an avalanche of turmoil and anxiety. For the second camp, the battle has now reached its peak. You can see it on their faces. These people are fighting full force: they are tired and weak. There is a marked change in their appearance, the skin appears to have lost its hue. It appears to the one observing that they have not slept in years. The final group are now reaching the end of their battle. They are approaching the finishing line: the line that sets them free. They are recognised by their marred faces and battle scars on their bodies. They are quiet. Whilst others see their victory, they see the road that led them there, and they know the reality of this dark painful terrain. They feel as though they have just crawled out of the depths of hell.

To the silent warrior, I know your internal storm. You feel broken, cut, stabbed, battered, slit in emotional destitution and are **still** going. The silent warrior who sits in his room, in pain. Shaking, paralysed from the intensity of the circumstance. Know that your call has been heard and help is coming.

Your Lord knows well what you are going through, He is well aware even though the deceptive one makes it feel like you are alone. You are never alone.
You have Allah (SWT).

Stitch your wounds with the thread of His Light, and when the wound heals, you will be stronger, fortified and illuminating such brightness, only those with a strong sense of overcoming - your wound mates; will appreciate the beauty that now resides in you

Do you think superheroes are just born? No. They are made. In X-men, it was said to Wolverine: "We're going to make you indestructible - but first, we're gonna have to destroy you."

Have conviction in knowing you are being made stronger from your hardship. Hold onto your life jacket, known by a different alias: HOPE. Live in hope and stay away from the chains of despair; that is a valley of misery, you do not want to reside there.

Oh silent warrior, your call has been heard.

These are not only my words.
They are ours.

Musa Butchari

THE FOREVER TEACHER

NOREEN AKHTAR

I am in a role where I am in many people's memories forever. Now when I put it like that to myself, my role seems pretty amazing. Not every profession can have that effect. You won't always remember your Doctor or Dentist, especially if you've had many over the course of the years. You probably won't recall the person who sells you bread and milk at the local store with any particular fondness. But you will always, always be able to recall, your favourite teacher if asked. You will immediately picture their face and smile, instantly recalling everything that made them great and made the drudgery of that chunk of time spent being unwillingly educated half bearable (think moody teenager who can't wait to grow up!).

My mother tells me about the day I started that journey of education myself. I was dropped off to the nursery and like any toddler fearing abandonment I resorted to drastic action, in my case biting a chunk out of my teacher's hand as she tried to stop me from running after my departing mother. Despite getting off on a wrong foot (or hand) I was fascinated by this new world of learning and very soon at the tender age of 4, I had ap-

me of how I would come home and line up my toys, then cross my legs as I had seen my teacher do and proceed to impart vital knowledge in the babble of toddler talk, to the very still class (fascinated, obviously).

In school I loved the feeling of explaining the work to my peers and seeing the look of understanding dawning on their faces, or as they say, when 'the penny drops'. It was an addictive, satisfying feeling. Fast forward to my further and higher education and I still remember those handful of teachers that put their life and soul into the lessons (as well as those who just put in their required hours!). But they are not the ones I recall with fondness. My fondness goes to Dudley, my sociology teacher who gave his recommendation to put me on the Open University writing course, who would sing and dance to get our attention. Now that I'm on the other side, I can truly appreciate the weight of his effort. It goes to Bryan, who would pepper his speeches on Durkheim with the correct way to perform martial arts and walk around the room reading from a book, then step onto a chair and straight onto our line of desks, all the while never even looking up (at our open mouths) or ceasing his dictation or his walk. Needless to say I scored full marks on his paper. Of all my university lecturers, Martin, who taught Anthropology, stands out clearly in my memory. He didn't jump on tables or waltz around rooms but that man knew everything there was to know about the subject. This inspired me to take notes meticulously and hang onto every word. I developed an earnest interest in the subject, which I'm sure would not have materialised had it been anyone else.



Now, many years down the line, I find myself playing many roles in my job. I'm an educator (I try), a counsellor (second job, almost), the class clown (whether I'm feeling like it or not) and a friend all rolled into one. More than once I have been taken aside by a student or had one linger around until the class left and then been approached about advice on a personal matter. I find it a privilege that students feel comfortable in my presence to open up to me and even seek me out. It shows I'm approachable in their eyes and that is how a believer should be. I've had a mature student begin explaining her fears for the final exam and after some gentle probing break down and reveal a personal dilemma that was the true cause of her distress.

These moments are highly charged and do not come in the job description. Sometimes they are heart breaking but they do come up and I am obligated to offer my sincere advice and compassion. These moments are precious to me and my job takes on a new dimension. This is the specific part of my job that makes me feel truly worthy. I am helping someone at a deeper level by giving a listening ear and much needed kindness. I start to see them less as just my students and more empathically as individual human beings with lives outside the classroom and trials from Allah (SWT) that they might be facing, but are still trying their best. Basically, I see the old student me and I'm heartened by the opportunity to help relieve someone's pain, even if it be for a short while.

I often worry about whether I can be the one that makes a difference to their day. I worry about whether I am astute enough to reserve my judgement of the lazy student and see past to the heartbroken soul inside that's trying to keep the mask on. I worry about whether I can be tactful enough to make the class include the student that's always left out without making it apparent and causing embarrassment. But I never stop trying. I'm always armed with a smile, a bag of anecdotes when morale is low (exam time) or the random but genuine compliment that I know will keep them smiling all day and sunny encouragement when everything gets too complicated. So, over the years when I have stumbled home with bags of gifts, tearful goodbyes and beautiful messages from students, I like to imagine the ghosts of my role model teachers of yesteryear, smiling benevolently at me as I open presents and read letters, all the while feeling grateful to have joined the ranks of those 'forever' teachers, who truly make a difference.

A little about the writer...

I am 30 years old (it hurts to write that). I am a closet writer who fantasises about living in a giant library with a never-ending supply of tea and chocolate. In the real world I live with my husband in Saudi Arabia and masquerade as an EFL teacher (whilst furiously reading up on the trickier grammar points. Don't we all). The namesake of this magazine, Farah Saeed, was my dear school friend.

Challenging Times

- Aneesa Khaliq

Growing up, I had an excellent education. I was never pressured into entering a profession I disliked nor did I ever receive private tutoring. Looking back, I was truly blessed with a supportive family who always said: "Just do your best and leave the rest to Allah (The Most High)." Ever since I was 8, I had dreamt of becoming an English teach-

became ill, very ill. I decided to dedicate the majority of my time to looking after him and my family. Working in a mainstream school and caring for my family would have been difficult; therefore, I made the decision to become a tutor instead. I had a degree, and I knew I could teach, and so I took the plunge.

As predicted, the first year was difficult. However, I put my full trust in Allah (The Most High) and continued working hard, working honestly. I tutored students, grandparents, undergraduates, parents etc. I tutored online via Skype and face-to-face too. My principles were very simple: be honest, patient and a good listener. Everyone loves a good listener. You cannot force people to learn, you can only guide them, and that's what I did. I guided them and all praise to Allah slowly, but surely, progress was made. I became an entirely different person.

Yes, it was challenging at times, but I learnt life lessons in return. I learnt that it was my duty, as a Muslim, to give knowledge and to continue to seek knowledge.

It was narrated that Anas bin Mâlik said: The Messenger of Allah said "*Seeking knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim.*" (Sunan Ibn e Majah, Book of Sunnah, Hadith no 224, Classified as Sahih By Allama Albani)

Furthermore, I learnt that it was important to be kind, honest and patient, as every client had different needs. I learnt that I wasn't just there to teach. I had to be a good role model for the youth; I had to give them hope, motivation and support. I learnt that I was there to mentor, and to inspire them to become better individuals. I learnt that some students just needed that slight push in the right direction and that's where I came in. In return, they taught me the value of life, and brought me closer to my religion. As a result, I have worked on several charity projects, which focus on bettering the lives of orphans around the world.

Tutoring has changed my life. I wake up everyday feeling blessed and excited about the knowledge I will deliver to the many people I tutor. I have met people from all walks of life and in sha Allah I will continue to do so. Four years ago, I believed tutoring would never work for me and I would have to return to mainstream education. However, with the will of Allah

to serve them and have the flexibility of working on my own terms. I believe that if you truly want to do something in life and have the right intentions, Allah (The Most High) will help make it possible. Four years later, my business has grown from strength to strength and I couldn't be happier.

I hope my story serves as an inspiration to someone, and provides motivation to step out of their comfort zone and to do something that their community will thank them for.

Our children are our future. It is our responsibility to ensure they have the best start in life. We need to make sure that together, we make the world a better and a safer place, one student at a time.

About the writer...

A simple individual who lives by the following motto: making the world a better place, one student at a time. I have been tutoring hundreds of students (aged 5-50) for the last 4 years in the UK. I studied an English degree at The University of Birmingham, therefore my speciality lies in English Language and Literature.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ALLAH

Shaibah Naveed

Biography: I am 30 years old woman and by profession I work in banking. My real passion in life to help people and remind them of Allah. I am currently studying to be an Aalimah. Follow me on facebook: Shaibah Naveed Instagram: @thegirlwiththeumbrella

To re-start studying at the age of 30, to some people it may appear crazy. Why now? Why an Aalimah course? I went through a few episodes of lost, sadness and testing time. I was searching for something to fill the sadness I had deep within me, searching for that void to be filled. I was placing my hopes in people, objects, anything just to give me a sense of joy.

However, the truth is that it provided me temporary happiness. People would leave or let me down, that new dress I had just bought was old now and I was bored of going to popular hangout everyone was interested in going to. The same. Existing but not living. We have become so accustomed to answering 'I'm fine' when anyone asks us how we are, we don't actually think about how we are feeling and we just ignore it.

I was getting sadder by the day and I got to a point where I thought, I can't live like this. I needed Allah (The Most High). I wanted to feel that connection again. That peace. So I began to study at the weekends. And day by day something felt a little different, something felt awakened. It was my soul. My soul I had ignored for so long. It made me realise the importance of studying and learning about Allah (The Most High), the more you know about Him, the more you can love Him. He is always there for us. When you love a person, you always want them to be close to you, you want to be around them always. Allah (The Most High) loves us even more than your greatest love. In the Quran He (The Most High) states:

'And We are Closer to Him than, his jugular vein' 50:16. That's how much love He has for us.

There is nothing closer. Subhanallah. Now I am not asking you to all go out and become Aalims and Aalimahs but just learn about Allah (The Most High). Learn about Islam and nourish your soul even if it is learning one line. If the love of your life sent you a letter in a language you did not understand you would make sure you got it translated and understood its every word. Allah sent us the Quran for guidance as a gift, it is our map to life. He loves us to this extent. Take that single step.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Allah the Most High said, 'I am as My servant thinks (expects) I am. I am with him when he mentions Me. If he mentions Me to himself, I mention him to Myself; and if he mentions Me in an assembly, I mention him in an assembly greater

length, I draw near to him an arm's length. And if he comes to Me walking, I go to him at speed.'" (Bukhari)

You can distract yourself with socialising and purchasing things you like. However, this will only help you temporarily. I have been there. I am currently in my 1st year and my aim was never to become an 'Aalimah' but more to know about Allah (The Most High) and be the best muslim I can be. I still struggle every single day just like you, but the more you feel free. For things to change you need be that change. I hope that one day by the will of Allah (The Most High), I can fill your hearts with some of the knowledge I have gained. I want to end with this final question, How well do you know Allah (The Most High)? May Allah bless you all, and ease your struggles. Ameen

The Trees

There are some trees a few miles from where I reside that bloom into the most amazing cherry blossoms each year. Just as the season of Spring beautifies the landscape, these trees transform a mildly picturesque area into something so captivating. I had noticed on a recent drive that the colours had started to change. The trees it seemed peaked at a bright pink hue that lasted a week and had now gradually changed to transition to green. The next phase in their journey. Again, preparing for the next season.

The nature of the tree has taught me many lessons. Allah (SWT) has taught me in life to never get too comfortable with anything. Every time something comforted me, it was taken away. Just as the seasons are changing. My life too is ever changing. Circumstances, people, the state of the heart. Ever evolving. Transitioning into the next chapter. Preparing for the next season and the adventure of what life brings. In my endeavours I have always tried to view the change as something good, as a mechanism for my survival, even if at times I do not understand it or even if at times it pains me. The trees tell me

temporary. The transition is so important to our survival. Just as the mother of Musa (as) had to let go of something very dear to her. Place her son into the harsh waters of the River Nile. She grieved, naturally. But Allah (SWT) promised her He would return Musa to her. So she let go. We learned that Allah (SWT) taught the mother of Musa that He is the ultimate Comforter and it was taught in the most powerful way.

Let go and place your trust in Allah (SWT). Let go of your attachments and submit. If the marriage you are in did not work out; if the contract at work ended; if your once biggest supporter has now become a memory. Let go. He will bring you to something beautiful *if* you believe He will. The seasons change and with that the birth of beautiful experience awaits. The trees often look so much more wonderful when the wind ruffles them. There is a lesson in the ruffling. The leaves become more resilient and that's how they thrive. In your humanness ruffling builds character and strength that will serve as light to your internal beauty....

.. if you just let go.

Author: Musa Bukhari

Musa Bukhari is a Personal Development Coach and Counsellor for Syed Bukhari coaching. He was the former Head coach of Yasmin Mogahed Counselling and Coaching. He speaks on personal and spiritual development through Islam and Psychology.

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Actions Make a

Difference

by *Rashdah Hameed*

"A man's true wealth is the good he does in this world"
Muhammad (pbuh)

Life is a short journey that each and every human attempt in order to seek the pleasure of Allah (The Most High). Often people can forget to think about their role in society and think in more narrow-minded terms. This is not a criticism but unfortunately a fact of life. However, making a difference can start with the smallest actions. In Shah Allah!

My role in society has varied over the years. The biggest contribution I probably did was not just helping society but also pleasing Allah (The Most High) and by trying to be a good person. I was a full-time carer for my mother. This required me to constantly make sure that she was OK as she was disabled and had lost the use of her left side due to a stroke. It was tough, I would never say it was easy.

You may wonder how I impacted on society in a positive way by doing this. Well the answer is simple; I joined support groups with whom I worked and we helped each other to become better carers.

As a carer you can often lose touch with like-minded people and you become centred in your own world. A bit like a mother, who may have many people around her but the demands of her children take away from everything around her. But these roles play such an important part in society and how society is shaped.

By taking care of our parents, or even by being carers in a paid capacity, you are helping vulnerable people by letting them know that someone is there for them. That they will be looked after and that they will not be isolated. This is crucial as it makes a huge difference to society at large and grows you Islamically as well.

Although I was a carer for a very long time I also really got interested in social work and became an advisor at the Citizens' Advice Bureau (I have a background in Law) and there I made a bigger contribution to society by helping low income families and people that are in dire conditions.

All praise to Allah (the Most High) you get a wonderful feeling of satisfaction by helping others and knowing that you are making a difference in their lives. When they thank you for having made that difference, you know that the struggle was worth it! do more for themselves.

Being part of Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB) means that I have played an integral role in supporting and strengthening local community ties. I am involved in providing a service that reaches out to a diverse and broad range of people and this is done without any discrimination.

By working at Citizens' Advice Bureau, my colleagues and I have made a positive impact on the health and well-being of clients as well as helping to prevent relationship breakdown, unemployment, being kicked out of their homes and by empowering them to do more for themselves.

By volunteering at CAB not only have I developed myself as a person, I have also made others happy and made a positive difference to society.

I have recently moved into starting my own business and in sha Allah I am looking to make a positive contribution to society via my business by helping to recruit local people, strengthen local ties and bring together the Muslim community as well. Currently we have done an amazing job of providing excellent customer service and we really listen to our customers, these skills have been carried on from my role at CAB and I believe that small things like this make a huge difference in society.

A little about the writer...

I am 33 years old, I love to read and I love to help people. I live at home with my Dad. I am currently running Hidden Pearls: an online fashion & gift company. All praise to Allah, I am proud to say that we are doing well and I look forward to making further contributions to society via the business soon! Do check the website out at www.hidden-pearls.co.uk

Help them catch their Rainbow

- Asqarini Hasbi

Asqarini was born in Jakarta, Indonesia. Her poetry, short stories have been featured in a number of magazines, anthologies and websites that have inspired many. For instance, Annida, STORY, CnS Magz for Teens, BUMN, PKBL in Action, Mississippi Crow, MediaVirus, Pena Santri Community Anthology, Artists for Freedom, Story Star and much more.

It was Saturday afternoon, The weather was warm and the sun shone brightly. As I finished my activities at a mosque called Masjid Al Hikma; South Jakarta, I prepared the teaching material for a course at Bimbel Pena Kita that was not far from the Masjid. I discussed with the co-Founder of this course, Shenny and took the initial step to meet students and

Despite the weather was hot, I kept motivating myself by using public transportation. When I arrived at Bimbel Pena Kita, I saw several students who were playing around with their friends. I also saw a young and beautiful mother who accompanied her children to study there. I noticed that one of her children's name was Iklima, a 3rd grade elementary stu-

timid to ask a question. I gave some examples of basic English to help her do her homework. She was naturally smart and can easily grasp the material very well.

Change of Destiny

Becoming a volunteer in education and becoming a teacher/a tutor has been my passion since a long time. It has been quite frequent for me to postpone this dream and be unfocused due to my social activities. Every good deed needs to be executed and took this opportunity.

"Verily ! Allah will never change the condition of the people until they change it themselves (with state of Goodness). But when Allah wills a punishment for them, there can be no turning back of it, and they will not find a protector besides Him." [Qur'an 13 : 11]

All Praise to Allah, Allah (The Most High) answered all my prayers.



Teachers (left-right) :Sunny (grey hijab), Asqarini (blue hijab), Mother of Iklima (brown hijab)

I chose Knowledge

Knowledge is power and sharing it was my way to serve Allah (The Most High). I believed knowledge can change destiny. Sharing knowledge is part of good deeds called Sadaqah.

Narrated by Abu Hurairah (may Allah have mercy upon him), the Prophet Muhammed (peace and blessings be upon him):

"When a man passes away, his good deeds will also come to an end except for three: Sadaqah Jariyah (ceaseless charity); a knowledge which is beneficial, or a virtuous descendant who prays for him (for the deceased)" [Sahih Muslim]

Public Small Library

By reading books one is able to learn knowledge. That day, I brought some of my personal books that circulated around the Quran. It interest the children and boots their curiosity to read the books.

The Challenge in the Beginning.

At the present, we still in our initial phase of socializing this programme and there were several challenges we faced. We are challenged to find a creative solution to overcome these hurdles. Nevertheless, having a positive mindset is important.

'So verily, with the hardship, there is relief. Verily, with the hardship, there is relief.' [Quran 94: 5 - 6]

When you do good deeds, no matter how small it is, Allah (The Most High) will find and show the way. Have faith in Him.

'And the Hereafter is better for you than the first life' [Quran 93:4]

I feel privileged of becoming a volunteer to help these students do their best in their studies so they can learn how to reach their dreams and help them catch their rainbows. It was always a blessing to know that a student benefitted from the programme. I will never forget to say thank you to Allah (The Most High). I will serve Allah (The Most High) by giving positive impact to others.



Teachers (left-right) : Sunny (grey hijab), Asqarini (white/orange hijab)

Supplication

Supplication after breaking the fast:

ذَهَبَ الظَّمْأُ وَأَبْتَلَّتْ الْعُرُوقُ وَثَبَّتَ الْأَجْرُ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ

Thirst has gone, the arteries are moist, and the reward is sure, if Allah wills.

Marwan ibn Salim al-Muqaffa' (may Allah be pleased with him) said: I saw Ibn Umar holding his beard with his hand and cutting what exceeded the handful of it. He (Ibn Umar) (May Allah be pleased with him) said that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said when he broke his fast: Thirst has gone, the arteries are moist, and the reward is sure, if Allah wills.

[Sunan Abi Dawud – Hassan]

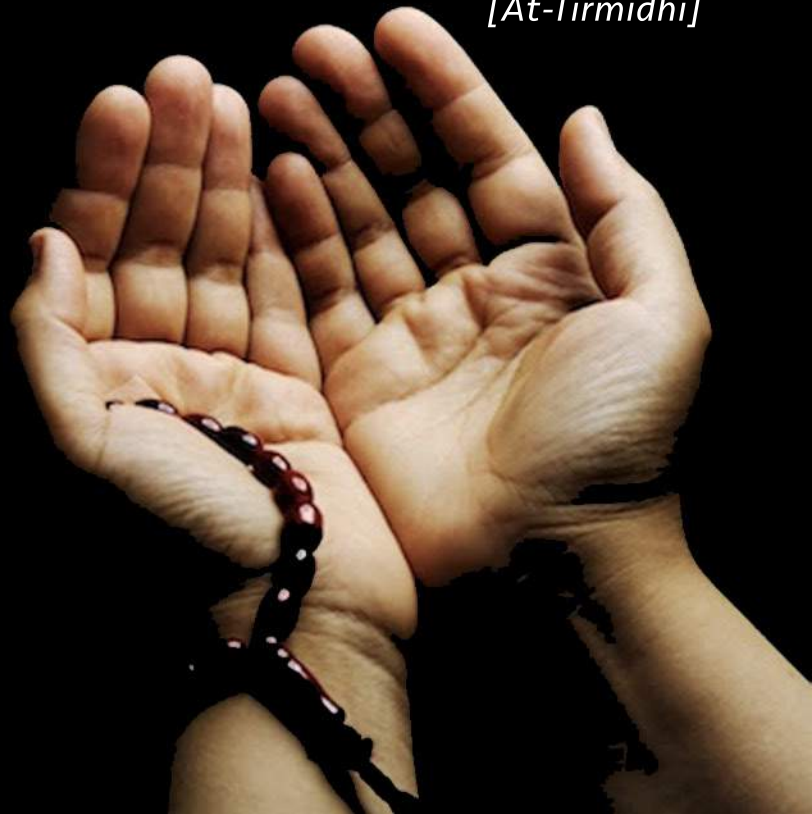
During Last 10 Days of Ramadan:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ عَفُوفٌ تُحِبُّ الْعَفْوَ فَاعْفُ عَنِّي

O Allah, You are Most Forgiving, and You love forgiveness; so forgive me

'Aishah (May Allah be pleased with her) reported: I asked: "O Messenger of Allah! If I realize Lailat-ul-Qadr (Night of Decree), what should I supplicate in it?" He (ﷺ) replied, "You should supplicate: O Allah, You are Most Forgiving, and You love forgiveness; so forgive me."

[At-Tirmidhi]



Volunteering is my cup of tea

It's the voluntary work that I choose to undertake which I feel helps me make a positive and meaningful contribution to society, even though I am currently blessed with a full-time job working in a Parliamentary Office. A job which gives me a valuable opportunity to hopefully make a real difference to people's lives.

I remember the moment I made a conscious decision to volunteer – it was whilst sipping tea and eating home baked cakes at a friend's house who was having a charity fundraiser in her kitchen. I thought to myself 'I could do that' (even though I couldn't bake to save my life!). And so, began my journey on the road to volunteering.

I think most of us view volunteering as an act of charity. All Praise to Allah, I feel blessed with certain God-given skills and freely donate my time, skills, expertise and energies without expecting a monetary return but hope for a non-worldly reward.

And this is why:

Indeed, the men who practice charity and the women who practice charity and [they who] have loaned Allah a goodly loan - it will be multiplied for them, and they will have a noble reward.

(Quran Al-Hadid 57:18)

This realisation came about when I was on maternity leave with my second child; at a time when I felt the frustrated about not being useful to society. Even after fulfilling all my motherly and wifely responsibilities - I felt that I still had a

lot to give. So, right there in that kitchen, I made a firm intention to utilise my maternity leave effectively (for one year) to do as much voluntary work as I could possibly fit in before returning to paid work. I quickly learnt that volunteering pays back a whole lot in terms of acquiring new skills including problem solving and relationship building, different to those in a work situation, as well as making new friends. I organised three fundraisers for our local masjid, with the help of others by bringing together teams of volunteers (which I'm good at) without baking a single cake (which I'm definitely not good at).

I'd never really considered giving my time and energies to non-paid work before this. I've worked for all of my adult life and I feel lucky doing the job that I do; I am in a privileged position to be able help people on a nearly daily basis which is rewarding in itself. I didn't really set out to carry on volunteering after going back to work, thinking I wouldn't have the time to commit, but five years down the line, I now volunteer as the Chair of the School Governing Board, teach girls to knit on the weekends and go on charity runs every year. I also had a short-lived career as a Cub Scout Volunteer which I gave up to concentrate on my already burgeoning portfolio of volunteering activities.

My volunteering journey has not always been plain sailing. It took a while to gain support from close family members so that I could fulfil some of my commitments. It does seem on the face of it, as if you're foregoing your duties as a mother or wife to go off galivanting doing unpaid work which is of no benefit to the family. But I think people soon see the value of the work that you do and that it does have a positive impact if not on the family, then on the community, a charity, or at the very least 'someone, somewhere'.



I've found the best solution when faced with nay-sayers and unsupportive people, is to persuade them to give it a go themselves! The key to it and for anyone thinking about volunteering is to pick activities that you really enjoy anyway – it should never feel boring or cumbersome, so long as it's using skills or interests you already have or want to develop. Of course, the people holding you back may never come around or appreciate your efforts, but I believe that it will never go unrecognised by Allah SWT:

*Allah does not cause the work of the doers of good to go to waste.
(Quran At-Tawbah 9:120)*

My best advice, if you have an idea or inkling, is to trust your gut and just do it! Don't wait for someone else or assume someone else, who you feel is better than you, will care enough to do it. We'll all be questioned alone in the hereafter. Consider that He asks; 'I gave you these skills; to organise, to lead, to write, to question, to create, to teach - what did you do with these skills, did you keep them hidden, did

tistical or arrogant? Or did you use them to do good and benefit those who needed your help the most? I always want to be in a position where I can hand on heart say, I tried to do good.

The first barrier to volunteering or doing something of benefit to society, I've found, is that it starts from within. Convincing yourself that you're best placed or equipped with the skills and resilience to do something of value is the first step to achieving your goals. The next hurdle is overcoming society's expectations. I've seen many a good woman prevented from volunteering because of the attitude that their place is in the home and when they choose to volunteer from home, the attitude shifts to - they should be working in the home for the benefit of the family alone and there is no time for anything else. For those women who do work and volunteer outside the home, I've seen barriers and guilt trips placed upon these women to prove their worth time and time again as mothers, wives and paid employees first, leaving

them too exhausted to fight yet another battle to earn the right to contribute to society at large. It is a constant uphill struggle, but as I said before, not one without reward. The crazy thing about this situation is that on the one hand willing volunteers are vehemently discouraged and disparaged and yet on the other, the same people bemoan the lack of female role

These are battles which can't be fixed overnight and the only way to overcome these, in my experience, is to carry on doing what you can and having the sabr to hope that a better time may come and know that at least you tried. So long as the intention is, clean, altruistic and selfless, suffice to say any act, however small and insignificant it may seem, is enough. I've often wondered why barriers are put up in the first place for women volunteers and wonder why there is a misplaced belief that this could be damaging to society. I understand that there may be a real fear that parents, children, spouses or siblings may be neglected, whilst you go off doing your 'good deeds' but I'm pretty certain most people are able to judge accurately how much time they can afford to take away from their nearest and dearest to give to a worthwhile cause. There are always going to be people who think it's dangerous to allow a woman to do more than what's prescribed in her current role; be that daughter, mother, wife, friend or even student or employee.

Well, they're probably right, I don't think there's anything more dangerous or powerful than a woman with a cup of tea and a head full of ideas. So, go ahead and do that good deed, make that difference. Earn your reward.

*Whether you reveal something or conceal it, surely Allah has 'perfect' knowledge of all things.
(Quran: Al-Ahzab 33:54)*

Sazida Desai is a married mother of two school-aged boys; was born and bred in Lancashire, England with roots in Gujarat, India. She works as a Parliamentary Assistant to a UK Member of Parliament, is Chair of Governors at a local Primary School, teaches girls to knit at the weekend and occasionally does charity runs. She also enjoys writing, knitting, gardening and learning new languages.



Your community

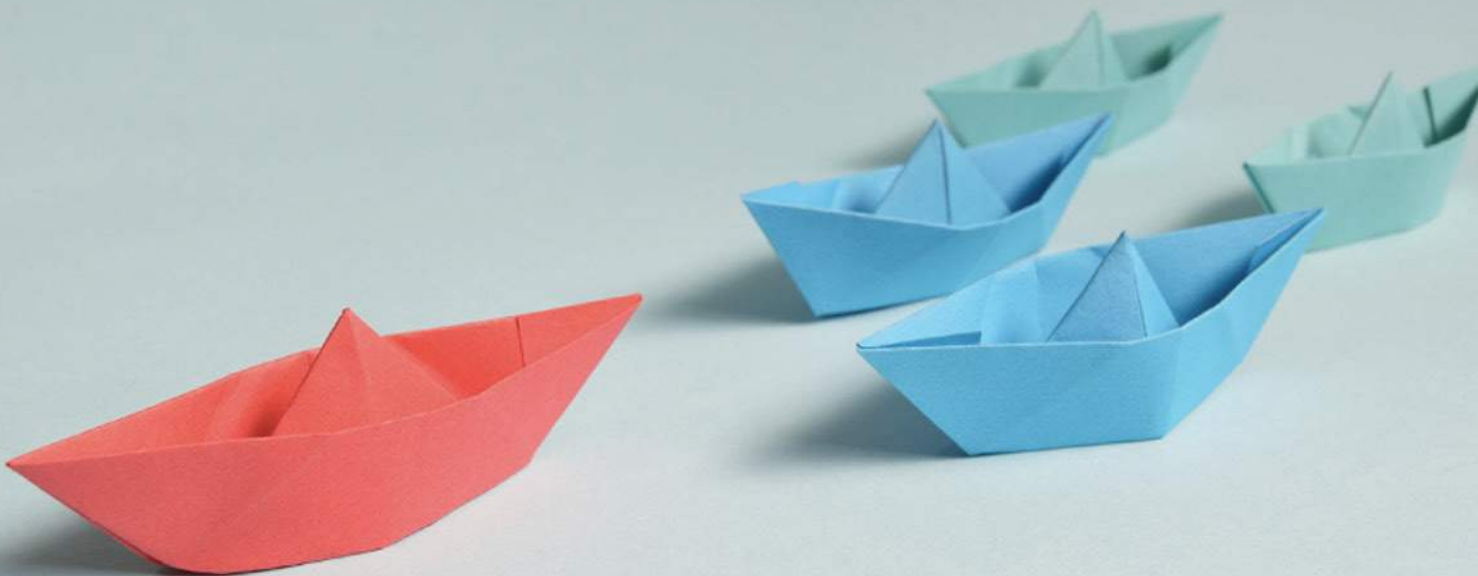
- *The Inner Muse*

You are the average of the community you are in.

For example, if your community has a norm of being late to important events, you will follow this thinking it's okay because 'everybody does it'.

If the norm is to litter the street. The same applies.
The norm becomes your measuring stick.

It is up to you to think outside of this and independently determine what is acceptable and what is not.



A perspective from a Lawyer

My career as a lawyer and lecturer has made a difference personally and professionally. From a personal aspect, the education I have been blessed with has provided me the opportunity to work with the community in a number of ways: volunteering, giving feedback on their writing and providing advice on life choices.

On the other hand, on a professional basis, being visibly Muslim is a huge privilege in my department. Some students have informed me that they never have seen someone with a headscarf reach my position. This encourages me to outwardly strive towards my faith in my profession so that these students see what a Muslim woman can be with Allah (The Most High) help and guidance.

To those with aspirations to be a lawyer or other professions, put Allah (The Most High) and your worship first. Whenever I have free time, I engage in His remembrance. Do not apologise for your beliefs and do not fear about career progression because you cannot socialise nor network in an environment you are uncomfortable with.

Allah (The Most High) is al-Fattah (The Opener) and He will always open doors for you. Lastly, be passionate and evaluate your intentions constantly.

These are all things I am just learning to do and wish I had initiated sooner but all praise to Allah, everything happens at the right time.



A Gazan Survived Soul

- Doaa Abu Amer

Every individual has a point in their life that changes him/her completely. For me this took place on the 29th July 2014. It was the second day of Eid in the Gaza Strip. For 2 million people residing there was not a day of joy nor celebration. We lived in fear and insecurity for most of the time. That night I was barely able to escape myself. I was transferred to Australia for safety. I did not imagine that I will lose majority of my family together in one strike. 14 members. It was difficult to survive such traumatic series of events and suffered from depression. There was a hidden light that nourished my inner soul which strengthened my connection with Allah (The Most High).

At the end of 2014, I returned to Gaza from Australia I began to visualize life from a new perspective. As a young lady, I dreamt of living in peace, joy, energy, excitement and fun. I confess that times were hard and opened my eyes to the genuine meaning of this world and helps us understand clearly our mission in life. The first thing that crossed my mind when I arrived to Gaza was the atmosphere. Demolished houses. Miserable people. This was the portrait of the life in Gaza at that time. I did not think much about my life, I thought I would see my brother, sister, nieces and nephews waiting for me. However, what I discovered was their bodies laid to rest in the graves 30 minutes from where I reside.

As each day passed, I was fighting the idea of their loss. Their voices rung in my ears. I visited my counsellor and he tried to get me to be engaged with life by doing an assignment. This method worked perfectly for me. A few months later, I enrolled in a post-graduate diploma course at university. I tried to convince myself that everything will be fixed and life will be shining again. For one year, I attended classes after work, however, my days became busier and could not find time to spend with myself.

I transferred the pain into positive energy by supporting my community to lessen their suffering. One of the projects was to help women and their children, I got a chance to listen to several stories and it helped my recovery. The more support and assistance I gave, the more happiness I found.

:Doaa Abu Amer is a human rights activist and international relations coordinator in the Ministry of Detainees and Ex-detainees' Affairs in the Gaza Strip. She is also a fundraiser for resilience projects for local organizations in her community

In 2016, I found myself strong enough after I had graduated from my postgraduate diploma successfully. The inner light that used to feed my soul took me far away to new stages in my life. But the laughs and words of my family always appeared and sneaked in my thoughts but this time as a message of pride and motivation to continue what they were planning to achieve in life.

My nephews and nieces were clever and I used to sit with them discussing what they did at school and would promise them of awards for every accomplishment. Those little angels were my inspiration that held their dreams tightly.

Being involved in the community was another great achievement and it taught me many lessons in life. How to be a true human whose aim is to live to help and support others. This was my fuel on a daily basis. It was not only to achieve the outcome of the project successfully but achieving the inner blissfulness of those children and widows by trying to understand their facial expressions.

Today, I have many responses to most of my questions I ask myself. We have the power to survive the trials and tribulations we face. We are created to be honoured and acknowledged. Using our inner strength, whether it was education, talent or service, it will inspire others and this is the best award one can achieved.

I have documented a part of my life to inspire others who are still struggling, to take their hands and move forward. To show the best version of themselves. I am now looking forward to starting soon a new stage of my life and I kindly ask everyone to remember me in their prayers.

Quick & Easy

Chicken Curry

Alia Amir

I am a mother of four, and a linguist by profession. It is important to create healthy and nutritious meals for my children. Planning a balanced meal is essential and incorporates vegetables, grains, poultry and seafood. I shop the food items in advance and cook meals in batches to save valuable time. One of the essential nutrients for children is proteins. Chicken has a high protein content and I would like to share a typical Punjabi chicken recipe called "Murghi ka shorba". It is a soupy chicken curry which can be eaten with boiled basmati white rice or naan bread. Add salad for vitamin intake.

oil	1/4 cup
chicken	1 kg
onion	3 large
Garlic paste	2 teaspoons
Ginger paste	2 teaspoons
Tomato paste	6 tablespoons
Yoghurt	one tablespoon
Salt	one tablespoon
Red chilli powder	one tablespoon
Turmeric	1/2 teaspoon
Coriander powder	one tablespoon
Garam masala powder	1/2 teaspoon
Fresh coriander	half a bunch
Black cumin	one teaspoon
Water	3 cups

- 1) Cut onions into small pieces.
- 2) Put them in a blender with a small amount of water and blend it into a paste.
- 3) Put oil in the pan and add the onion paste to it when the oil is heated.
- 4) Fry it until it turns golden brown, stirring it continuously.
- 5) Add ginger and garlic pastes and keep stirring.
- 6) If you would like a healthier recipe, the chicken can be fried with small amount of oil in a separate pan.
- 7) As the colour of the chicken changes, add it to the onion paste followed by the tomato paste.
- 8) Cook at high heat ensuring the chicken pieces do not break.
- 9) Beat the yoghurt, combine together and keep stirring.
- 10) Add red chilli powder, turmeric and salt. The spices can be adjusted according to your taste.
- 11) Keep stirring and check if the chicken is cooked by inserting a flat knife in a piece of chicken. If you see the oil is separated from the rest of the sauce, the chicken is ready.
- 12) Add water and bring to boil
- 13) Add cumin and chopped coriander.
- 14) Cover with the lid.
- 15) Simmer for two minutes and eat with white rice, pulao or naan



Farah Saeed Trust Puzzle

P Q P T H I V Y H Y G C H T Y
 E E C A E P T U T L H E F B T
 R C S M J I M I G A O C A O I
 S R E P N A N E N G L N R M R
 E X W G N U C G V D I E A L A
 V Y I I M Y E S D O V D H U H
 E D T M U M G I V C L I K E C
 R Y O I A E C N E R E F F I D
 A C C K V N N C H T U N H Y S
 N Q E S W I J E M E V O R T S
 C R D Y S X T R E Q A C L A M
 E K B S P I R I T U A L E V Q
 N A D A M A R T S K G E T A X
 D E X R I T Y Y B O D X G H V
 V J X G W S X H N I P N M G N

CHANGE-MAKER
 CONFIDENCE
 DIGNITY
 HUMANITY
 PERSEVERANCE
 SAEED

CHARITY
 DEXRITY
 FARAH
 LOVE
 POSITIVITY
 SINCERITY

COMMUNITY
 DIFFERENCE
 HEALTH
 PEACE
 RAMADAN
 SPIRITUAL

	+		X		22
-		-		+	
	/		+		8
-		+		X	
	+		-		6
-12		10		51	

Put your math skills to the test!

Try to fill in the missing numbers.

Use the numbers 1 through 9 to complete the equations.

Each number is only used once.

Each row is a math equation. Each column is a math equation.

Remember that multiplication and division are performed before addition and subtraction.