



Ramadhān Day 21 | Good Character Challenge

وَجَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِّثْلُهَا ۗ فَمَنْ عَفَا وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ

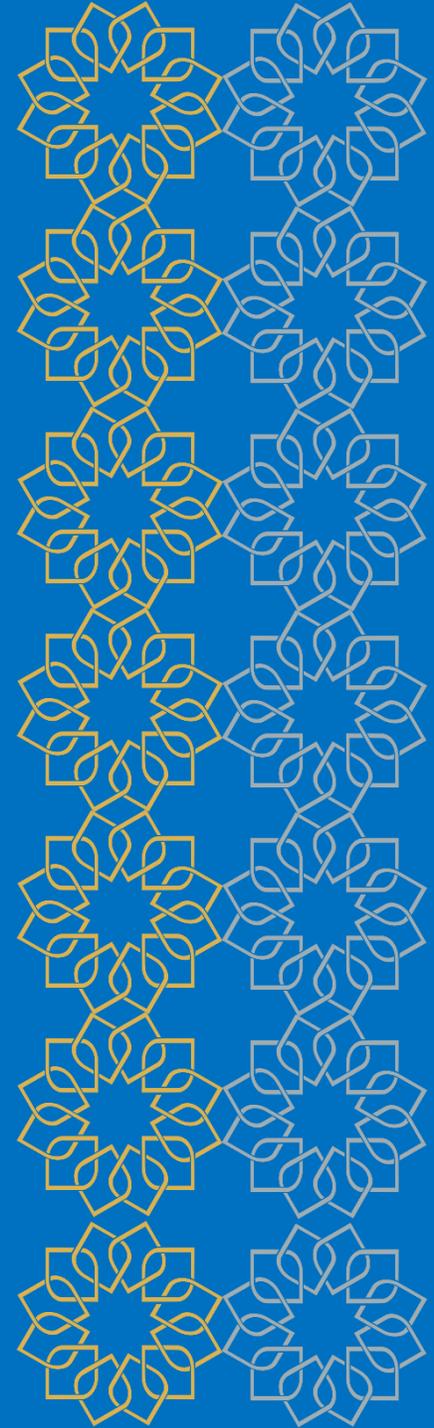
[And the retribution for a harmful act is a harmful one like it, but whoever pardons and makes reconciliation - his reward is (due) from Allāh. Indeed, He does not like wrongdoers} [42:40]

✧ Justice is prescribed in Islām according to its set laws of fairness. It is only fair that if someone harms you, you can request from the authorities to be compensated and for the person to be punished. However, whilst standing firmly for justice, Islām urges Muslims to be tolerant and forgive others.

✧ Restraining anger, forgiving and overlooking the faults of others when Muslims are able to take revenge will always be better for them. Not only will it end the grudge and increase honour in this world, but Allāh says that the reward for the forbearance will be with Allāh Himself. The one who initiated the wrongdoing on the other hand, will be held to full account.

Good Character Challenge:

Think back to when someone wronged you and your response that day. If you are wronged again, try and respond in a better way – in hope for a greater reward.





Ramadhān Day 22 | Good Character Challenge

{وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا طَائِرٍ يَطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ إِلَّا أُمَّمٌ أَمْثَالُكُمْ ۚ مَا فَرَّطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ}

{And there is no creature on the earth, nor a bird that flies with its wings, except (that they are) communities like you. We have not neglected in the Register a thing} [6:38]

✧ Just as humans are an 'Ummah' (a whole community bound together), animals too form an Ummah. They too live a personal and social life, with rights and responsibilities, and with their sustenance provided, whether on land, in sea, or in air. Just as we wish to be respected and cared for, we should likewise treat animals with dignity and care. Their lives are just as worthy as ours.

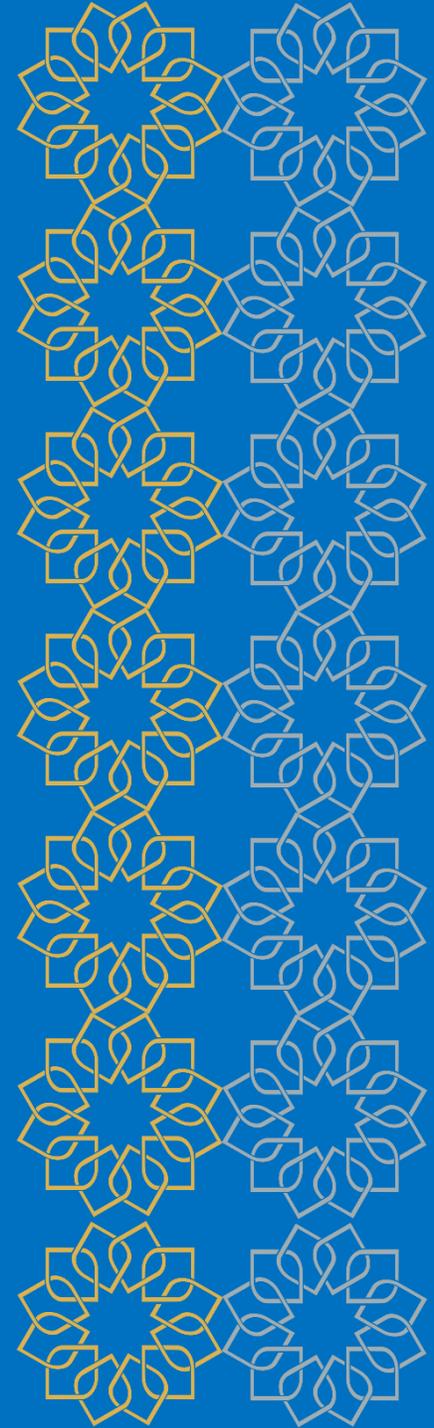
✧ The Prophet (peace be upon him) once told us about a woman who kept her cat confined without food or water until it died. For this reason alone, she was held accountable by Allāh. He also told us about another woman who gave water to a dog that was about to die from thirst. Due to this, she entered Paradise. [Bukhāri]

✧ Often, the welfare and suffering of animals is forgotten. Take for example, a country experiencing war. The neglected animals are in as desperate need of food and medical attention as humans. Muslims believe helping them may be the single reason for which a person enters Paradise. Remember the beautiful statement of the Prophet when he was asked about animal welfare: '*Yes, in every creature with a moist liver there is a reward.*' [Bukhāri]

Good Character Challenge:

Watch the video and read the BBC article on 'The return of the cat man of Aleppo.' Raise awareness and/or money for this or any similar veterinary clinic/animal sanctuary.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/stories-47473772>





Ramadhān Day 23 | Good Character Challenge

{وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ ۖ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ}

{And cooperate (help one another) in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate (help one another) in sin and aggression...} [5:2]

✧ Whatever gets done in this world only gets done through people co-operating and working together. This is how establishments are run, events are organised, products are created and results are achieved. One person, no matter how intelligent, wealthy or powerful, cannot do this alone. This is also the moral of the famous tale of 'The Enormous Turnip.' It was only when everyone pulled together towards the common goal of pulling the gigantic turnip out of the ground, did they succeed and thereafter were able to enjoy turnip soup together.

✧ Muslims believe this is how Allāh, in His Wisdom, has set us up in this world – mutually interdependent on one another and inclining towards certain interests so that groups of people work together to achieve the same goal. The problem arises when people assist each other in wrong (e.g. planning an act of revenge, or victimising and bullying a person). This is the type of cooperation Muslims are warned against.

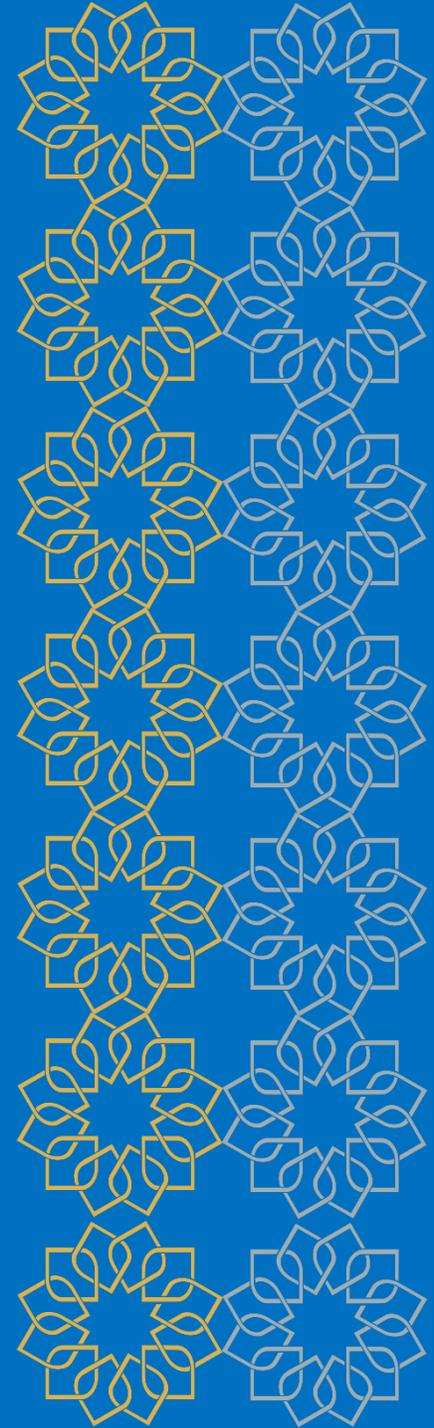
✧ Therefore, mutual cooperation can be in good or it can be in bad, and this is the choice we face in life. In making this choice, the Qurān urges Muslims to cooperate only in actions that are righteous, and forbids from cooperating in anything sinful. In this way, the Qurān helps to spread righteousness, justice and unity throughout the world.

Good Character Challenge:

In a group of two or more, collectively carry out one act of goodness today. Alternatively, you may agree on one act to carry out individually.

Some examples of acts of goodness:

- ❑ Assisting a teacher with a task such as putting up a classroom display
- ❑ Attending a Qurān circle
- ❑ Picking up litter around you
- ❑ Helping to prepare the 'Iftar' meal tonight





Ramadhān Day 24 | Good Character Challenge

{وَأَجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ الزُّورِ}

{And shun every word that is untrue} [22:30]

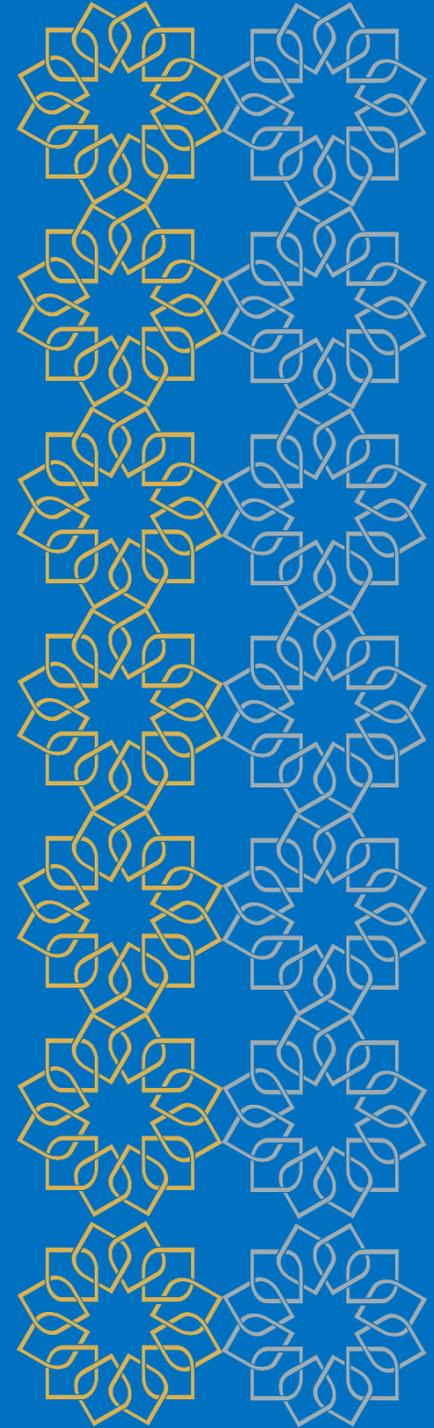
✧ Anything which is contrary to the truth is a lie - whether this be in action, evidence or words.

✧ In Islam, sins are divided into major sins and minor sins. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, *'Among the major sins are associating anyone with Allāh, disobedience of one's parents, giving false evidence and telling lies in general talk.'* [Bukhari] No person is free of sin but avoiding the major sins, like those mentioned above, is an expiation for minor sins. As long as Muslims stay away from major sins, remain upon Tawheed (believing in one God) and ask Allāh to forgive them whilst being sincere in trying not to sin again, He will overlook smaller faults. Allāh says, {If you avoid the great sins from which you are forbidden, We shall remit from you your lesser sins, and admit you to a noble entrance (Paradise)} [4:31]

✧ The goal of Ramadhān is to develop a mindfulness of Allāh. This means that Muslims live their lives knowing that Allāh is watching and knows everything that is said in the heavens and the earth. Therefore, Muslims should stay away from anything contrary to the truth and shun even a word that is untrue.

Good Character Challenge:

Pay close attention to your statements today. Make sure that each word you say is accurate and true, and you are not speaking about others unfairly.





Ramadhān Day 25 | Good Character Challenge

{يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرُ قَوْمٌ مِّنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونَ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِّنْ نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَرُوا بِالْألقَابِ}

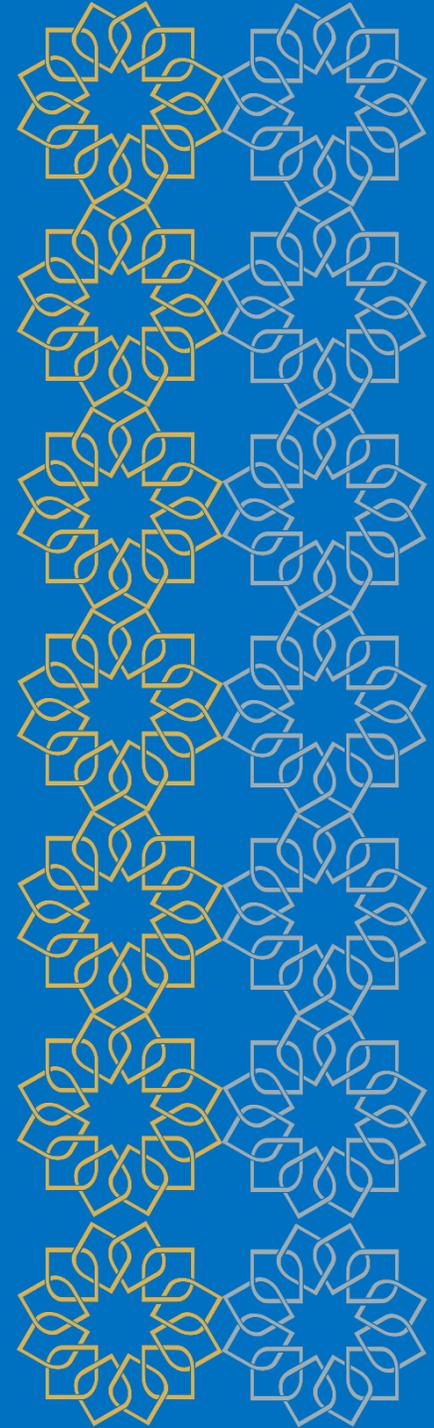
{O you who believe, let not a people mock another people; perhaps they may be better than them. Nor let women mock other women; perhaps they may be better than them. Do not insult one another and do not call each other by (offensive) nicknames} [49:11]

✦ There is no stronger anti-bullying message than that which is found in the Qurān mentioned above. In it, Allāh forbids from mocking, insulting and offending one another with a reminder that the one mocked may be far better in the sight of Allāh than the one mocking. This includes calling people by nicknames that they do not like - doing this will only earn us a poor reputation. Refraining from this on the other hand will protect our relationships, as well as protect our sense of respect for one another.

✦ Humiliating and belittling others is a type of arrogance as the person doing this thinks he or she is in some way better than, or superior to, the other. This includes mimicking others, making a point of their appearance or dress, and making fun of them with the intention to laugh and make others laugh. Muslims believe this is following in the footsteps of Shaytān who, when commanded to bow down to Prophet Adam, said: *"I am better than he."* This is the opposite of the humility that we discussed and challenged ourselves to develop on Day 10 of Ramadhān.

Good Character Challenge:

If you see somebody ridiculing or making fun of another person today, either in their presence or in their absence, remind them about today's Āyah (verse).





Ramadhān Day 26 | Good Character Challenge

{وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَكَ ۗ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ مِنَ الْعَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ}

{... enjoin (on people) all that is good, and forbid them from all that is wrong, and be patient over what befalls you} [31:17]

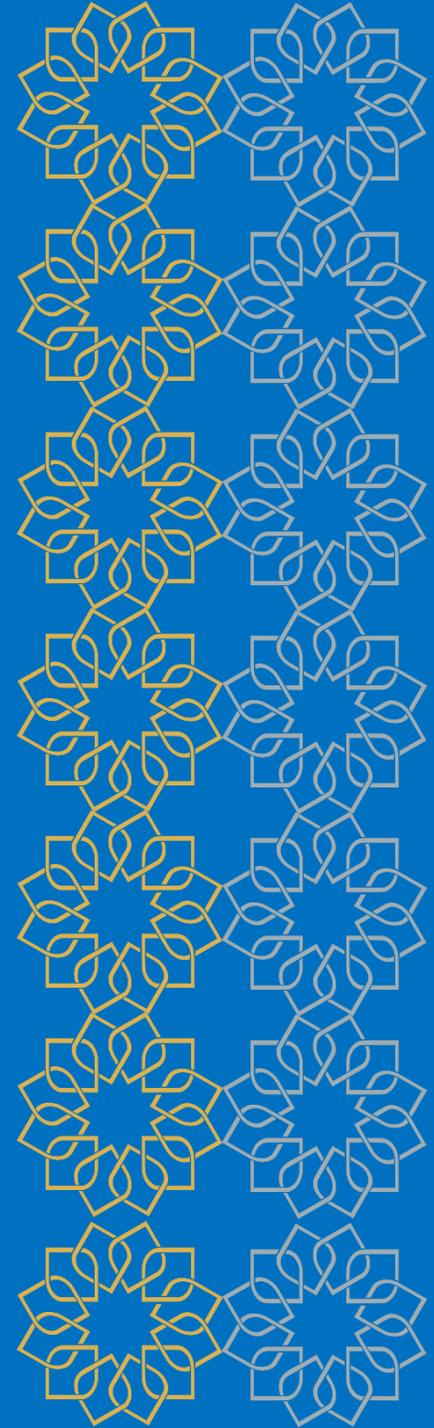
✧ A Muslim's purpose in life consists of two things: 'Amr bil-Maruf' which means enjoining what is good, and 'Nahy anil-Munkar' which means forbidding what is wrong. Both these things require courage and patience. It is not easy to speak up when we see wrong, or urge others to good – it is much easier to stay quiet, focusing only on ourselves, and not caring about the welfare of others. However, if a Muslim was to truly understand his/her purpose on this earth, they would realise that this is not a fulfilment of it.

✧ The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, *'Whoever among you sees an evil action, let him change it with his hand (by taking action); if he cannot, then with his tongue (by speaking out); and if he cannot, then with his heart (by hating it and feeling that it is wrong) – and that is the weakest of faith.'* [Muslim]. Therefore, a Muslim can enjoin good and forbid wrong in one of three ways – depending on our level of authority, responsibility and ability.

✧ Remember – if you call to good, you will earn the same reward as the person who accepts your call and carries out a good act. And if you call to wrong, you will carry the burden of the person you influenced towards wrong.

Good Character Challenge:

With the best of manners:
Encourage someone
towards something good,
or help someone turn away
from something wrong that
you see today.





Ramadhān Day 27 | Good Character Challenge

{وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ}

{And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient} [2:155]

✧ There is not a person on this Earth except that he or she is being tested with some sort of struggle in their life. For each person their test is difficult and can at times feel like an uphill battle that never seems to end.

✧ However, Muslims believe a test is not necessarily a bad thing. It is something that Allāh has put in your life with a good reason behind it. A Muslim's job is to trust that Allāh knows what this reason is and to be patient and hold onto their faith through it. The highest level of faith is to actually be pleased with the decree of Allāh because whatever He has chosen for you has a great benefit which you do not know about. This is truly accepting that Allāh is the Controller of all your affairs. If you can do this, then Allāh promises to guide the very place of your sadness and despair – your heart.

✧ Muslims remind themselves that every single thing that they have – every member of family, every part of the body, every ability that is possessed and every object that is owned – is from Allāh given for as long as He pleases.

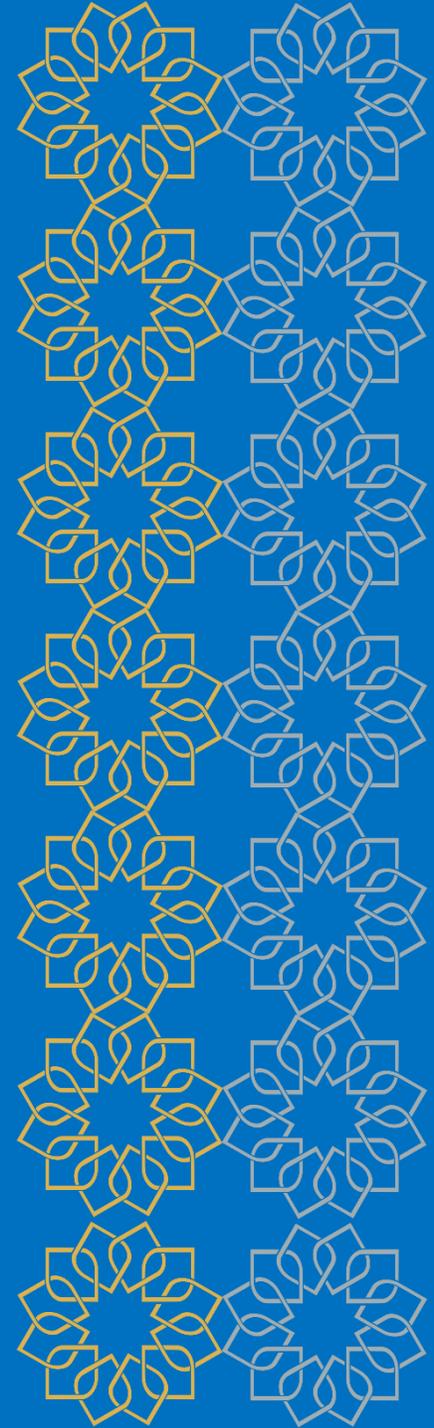
✧ Sometimes it can be difficult to understand why certain things happen but Muslims remember that Allāh knows what they are going through. He also knows what they will gain from it and the ease that they will enjoy after its hardship. These are the glad tidings for those who have the quality of patience.

Good Character Challenge:

Memorise the following supplication which the Prophet (peace be upon him) would say when experiencing hardship:

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ، اللّٰهُمَّ اجْرِنِي فِي مَصِيبَتِي، وَاخْلُفْ لِي خَيْرًا مِنْهَا

We are from Allāh and unto Him we return. O Allāh take me out of my plight and bring to me after it something better. [Muslim]





Ramadhān Day 28 | Good Character Challenge

{يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ حَتَّى تَسْتَأْذِنُوا وَتُسَلِّمُوا عَلَى أَهْلِهَا}

{O you who believe. Enter not houses other than your own, until you have asked permission and greeted those inside...} [24:27]

✦ This Āyah (verse) teaches Muslims a very important etiquette that they should have: before entering anybody's house, permission should always be sought. This includes not looking inside the house before permission to enter is given.

✦ This also applies to entering rooms, like our parents' or sibling's room, and rooms at school or work. If there is somebody in the room, we should not enter before knocking and greeting those inside.

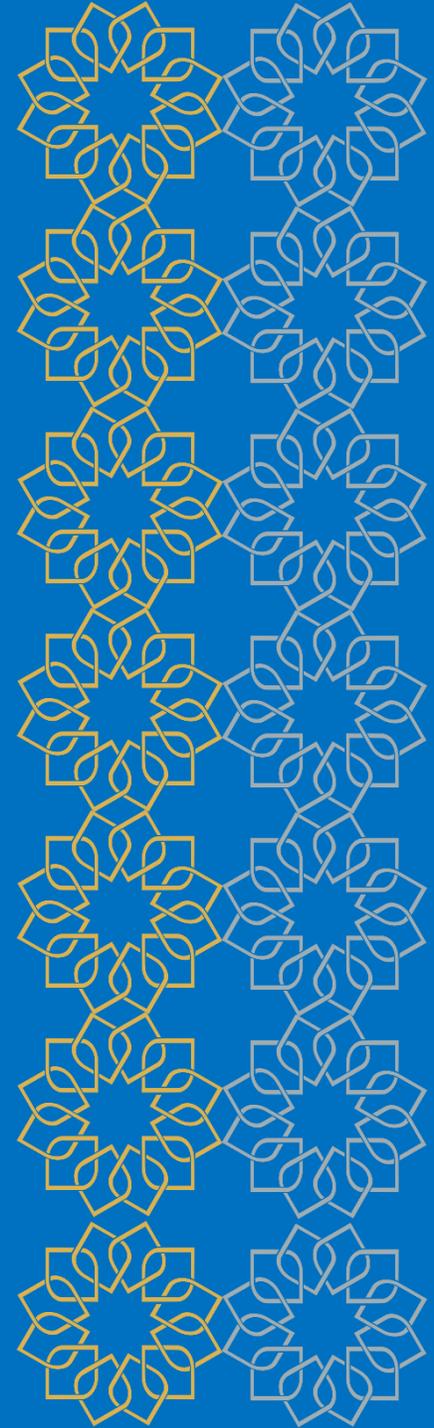
✦ There are three specific times mentioned in the Qurān that we should take extra care to do this:

1. After Ishā prayer
2. Before Fajr prayer
3. At noon (when people may take a nap)

✦ When entering an empty room or house, Muslims should say: *'Assalamu 'alayna wa 'ibādillah as-sā liheen'* which means: 'Peace be upon us and the righteous worshippers of Allāh.'

Good Character Challenge:

Before entering someone's room or house, knock three times for permission to enter. If there is no answer after three knocks, come back another time.





Ramadhān Day 29 | Good Character Challenge

{وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰٓ اَلَّا تَعْدِلُوْا ۗ اَعْدِلُوْا هُوَ اَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوٰی}

{... do not let your hatred of others lead you away from justice. Be just; this is closest to being piety} [5:8]

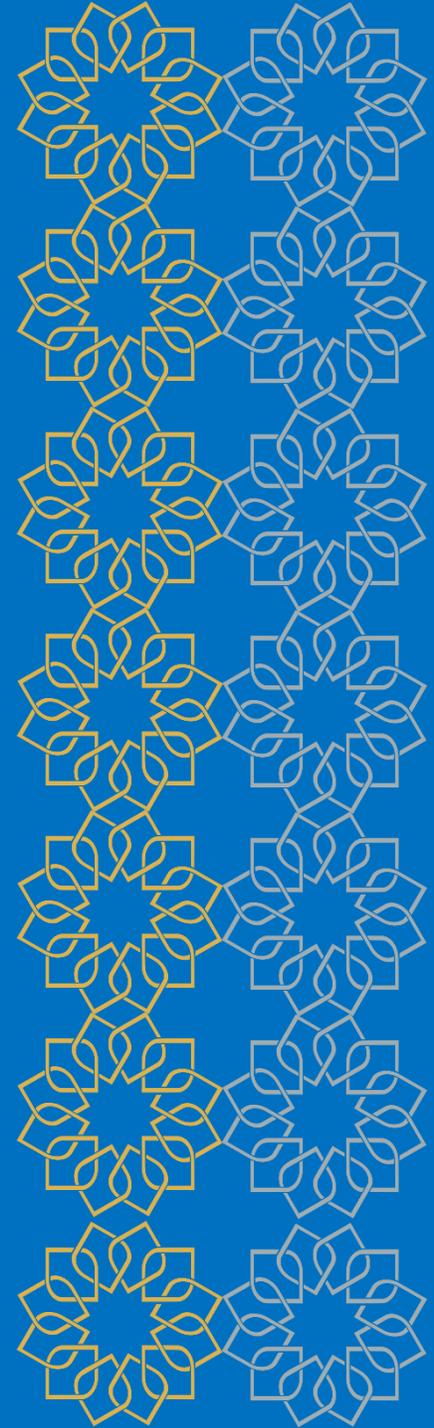
✦ Being just at any time is praiseworthy but the real test of justice is when it is against yourself, your family and your friends, or in favour of someone you do not like. When it comes to standing for justice however, nothing and no one should stand in your way.

✦ The Prophet (peace be upon) was so just that in a hadeeth, a companion called An-Numān bin Basheer said: *'My father wished to give me a gift but my mother said that she would not agree to it unless he made Allāh's Messenger as a witness to it. So, my father went to Allāh's Messenger to ask him to be a witness to his giving me the gift. Allāh's Messenger asked, "Have you given the like of it to every one of your children?" He replied in the negative. Allāh's Messenger then said, "Have Taqwa (mindfulness) of Allāh and treat your children equally. I shall not be witness to injustice." My father then returned and kept back his gift.'* [Bukhāri].

Imagine... if the Prophet (peace be upon him) was so careful and fair with regards to children then imagine his fairness and justice with any other issue!

Good Character Challenge:

Take extra care to be fair in all your dealings today. For example, if your teacher gives you an extra mark by mistake, let him or her know!





Ramadhān Day 30 | Good Character Challenge

{وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ}

{And indeed, you (O Muhammad) are of a great moral character} [68:4]

✦ Muslims are fortunate to have such an excellent example of character in our beloved Prophet - Muhammad (peace be upon him). Many people do not have a sound, positive role model and feel lost and confused about how to live their lives – yet Muslims have a real life example to follow.

✦ In addition to the Sunnah, Muslims believe the Qurān is the Word of Allāh. Allāh says, {O mankind. There has come to you a good advice from your Lord...} [10:57]. This is precisely what the Qurān is - good advice for us. It tells us of those who came before us, Prophets and righteous people, and how they succeeded. It contains verses which speak of Allāh Himself so Muslims can build a relationship with Him. It contains the principles of faith and the rules of law, which tells what is good and permitted, and what is harmful and forbidden. It provides Muslims with a map, showing them step by step how to achieve success in this life and the hereafter.

✦ Allāh says, {If We had sent down this Qurān upon a mountain, surely you would have seen it become humble and crumble from the fear of Allāh} [59:21]. If this is the power of the Qurān... that it could tear a mountain apart... then imagine how it could transform a Muslim's character and change their life.

Good Character Challenge:

The end of Ramadhān marks the end of the Good Character Challenge. Your last and final challenge is to try your best to maintain your good character at all times.

