Ihsan Youth
& FAMILY CENTRE

ISSUE 01
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BELFAST

FAITH • OPPORTUNITY • STRONGER TOGETHER

MAGAZINE

A community to grow with.

Rooted in faith. Growing together.



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Our community. Our shared home.

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Cambridge Central Mosque · Rumman Amin; books · Rhamely; bag · Yaqing Wei; phone · Swello / Unsplash.

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ROOM TO READ. SPACE TO REFLECT.

ASSALAMU ALAYKUM

Welcome to Ihsan Youth Magazine: a place to explore faith carefully, enjoy a story, ask a sincere question and notice what we can contribute to the people around us.

We begin close to home, with Muslims in Belfast. We then take time over the question "Who is Allah?" across three double-page spreads. The other features explore foundations of belief, women of the Qur'an, everyday responsibility and stories of the Prophets.

Our digital-life feature asks how the values we practise face to face can guide what we watch, write and share online. It includes six useful habits, everyday scenarios and a seven-day reset.

You do not have to read everything at once. Start with the subject that interests you, follow a reference or share a question with a teacher. The activities are invitations to think, not tests of what you already know.

May Allah grant us beneficial knowledge and help us put it into practice. Ameen.

IHSAN YOUTH MAGAZINE



Library · Zetong Li / Unsplash

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MAKE IT YOUR OWN

Read one feature, follow a source and choose one small action.

Muslims in Belfast

Faith, community and belonging. Celebrating the history, diversity and everyday connections of our community.

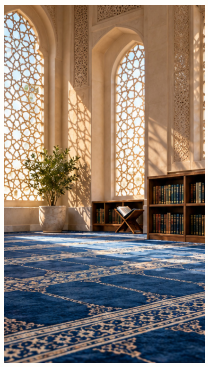


Belfast City Hall
Belfast, Northern Ireland

Belfast's Muslim community is not defined by a single nationality, language or life story. It includes families with long-established roots, people who have made a new home here, and younger generations bringing together their faith, family heritage and local identity. Research from Ulster University highlights this diversity—and the importance of recognising Muslims as part of society, rather than viewing them only as newcomers.

The story of Muslims in Belfast is a story of finding places to worship, creating opportunities to learn, supporting families and building friendships. It is also a story that continues through community gatherings, charitable projects and the work of organisations such as Ihsan Youth & Family Centre.

> *"Faith, community and belonging.*



A place to worship

Muslim community life in Belfast has roots that reach back well before the organisations and facilities familiar today. An archival account records that, in June 1963, the Belfast Pakistani Association wrote to the Lord Mayor requesting premises that could be used as a mosque. The request offers an early glimpse of a community seeking a permanent place to practise its faith and meet together.

Building roots

Belfast Islamic Centre dates its establishment to 1978, when local Muslims came together to create an organisation serving the community across Northern Ireland. Its history reflects the importance of having somewhere not only to pray, but also to receive guidance and support.



Everyday acts of care

These early efforts are worth remembering. Behind every established community space are people who gave their time and energy to make something possible for those who followed. A room prepared for a class, a meal shared with a neighbour or a welcome offered to a new family can become part of a much longer story.



A SHARED STORY

Belonging is built through the things we make possible for one another.

READ FURTHER • Community sources C1–C4 · Full source notes on page 34.

City Hall: K. Mitch Hodge / Unsplash. Small images: generated illustrations, not historical photographs.

Many backgrounds. One shared home.



The numbers offer a snapshot. People give the story its meaning.

More than a number

The 2021 Census recorded 10,870 people identifying as Muslim across Northern Ireland. This is a figure for Northern Ireland as a whole, not Belfast alone. It provides a historical snapshot of a community that forms part of the region's wider religious diversity. It is not a current population estimate.

But numbers cannot tell the whole story. Ulster University's research describes a Muslim population with different backgrounds, identities and experiences, including second-generation people whose lives connect Islam, their family heritage and British or Irish culture. There is no single way to describe everyone's experience of belonging.

A strong community should make room for those differences. Someone who has lived here all their life and someone arriving for the first time should both be able to find friendship, respect and a place to take part.

More than a place to pray

At Ihsan Youth & Family Centre, 143 University Street, our work brings together education, sport, youth support and spiritual development. Our purpose is to help Muslim young people and families learn, contribute and feel a sense of belonging.

That sense of belonging can begin with something simple: a welcoming greeting, a conversation after prayer, an invitation to an activity or someone taking the time to listen.

Ramadan, celebration and generosity

Ihsan's own community history includes weekend iftars during Ramadan, an Eid celebration in 2022 and the Giving Together fundraising project in 2021. These moments show different ways that people have come together—to share food, celebrate and support others.

Practical care is also part of the wider community's work. Belfast Islamic Centre describes distributing charitable support to families in need, alongside advice and assistance for people facing difficult circumstances.

For us, these activities are a reminder that community is something we build through our actions. Preparing a meal, helping at an event or giving time to someone who needs support can be as meaningful as a larger public occasion.



Shared meals. Shared moments.

> NOTICE THE PERSON BESIDE YOU
>
> *A new face in a room may be waiting for someone else to make the first introduction.*

READ FURTHER C1, C2, C4 and C5 · full source notes

Dates and coffee pot · L Photography / Unsplash | Iftar table illustration · Generated illustration

A future built on respect

Learning, friendship and service can help young people feel that they have a place—and a part to play.



Creating opportunities for young people

At Ihsan, opportunities for young people and families include Islamic studies, Qur'an learning, gatherings for questions and discussion, and outdoor and sporting activities. Our Learning Hub also provides another way to explore faith and continue learning.

Our aim is for young people to feel comfortable asking questions, developing their abilities and forming positive friendships. We want them to feel confident in their faith without feeling that they must stand apart from the city around them.

A class can offer more than knowledge. A football session can offer more than exercise. Both can be opportunities to encourage someone, recognise their potential and help them feel included.

An honest conversation

An honest account must also recognise the challenges. Research into Muslim experiences in Northern Ireland identifies Islamophobia, discrimination and barriers to employment alongside the strong relationships people have built within their communities and wider society.

No one should have to feel unsafe or unwelcome because of their religion, appearance or background. Building a better Belfast means making space for conversation, challenging prejudice and treating our neighbours with dignity.

At Ihsan, our hope is to help create that future: a community where faith inspires care, young people have opportunities to flourish, and families know they have somewhere to turn.

Your place in the story

You do not need a title to contribute. Learn the name of someone you usually pass without speaking. Invite a quieter person into a conversation. Ask an older relative how they first found a community here. Listen carefully: their memories may help you appreciate the everyday work behind places you now take for granted.

You might also write about your own experience of growing up in Belfast. What makes you feel at home? What would help another young person feel welcome? A thoughtful account does not need to speak for every Muslim. It can simply tell one story honestly and leave room for others.

Belfast is our shared home. Let us continue making it a place where we can learn from one another, support one another and grow together. May Allah strengthen our community, protect our neighbours and guide us towards kindness and understanding. Ameen.

LEARNING • FRIENDSHIP • SERVICE

CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

Ask someone from another generation: "What helped you feel that you belonged here?"

READ FURTHER C1–C2 · community research and Ihsan programmes

Football boots · Braden Hopkins / Unsplash

Knowing our Creator

A six-page exploration of faith: who we worship, what His names teach us, and how belief can shape everyday life.



Begin with the central belief

At the heart of Islam is tawhid: worshipping Allah alone, without partners. Surah Al-Ikhlas presents this belief with remarkable clarity. Allah is One; all depend on Him; He neither begets nor is born; and nothing is comparable to Him. These are not details at the edge of faith. They shape the way a Muslim understands everything else. (Qur'an 112:1–4.)

When we say 'our Creator', we do not mean a greater version of a human being. We mean the One on whom creation depends. Our abilities have limits. Our understanding grows. We need food, sleep, care and time. The Qur'an describes Allah as the Ever-Living and the One who sustains all existence, untouched by sleep or weariness. (Qur'an 2:255.)

Why this matters to a young person

Life can sometimes feel like a series of judgments: a grade, a place on a team, an invitation, a number beside a post. These things can matter without becoming the measure of your whole life. Faith invites a deeper question: whose approval am I trying to build my life around?

That question is useful when doing the right thing is awkward. You might refuse to join a cruel joke even when everyone else laughs. You might return something valuable that no one saw you find. Belief becomes more than a sentence you repeat when it gives direction to a choice no one else can make for you.

Learning without pretending

Knowing Allah is not the same as claiming to understand every mystery. This feature is an introduction, not an attempt to contain the greatness of Allah in a few pages. Start with the Qur'an's own descriptions. Read a little carefully, ask sincere questions and revisit what you learn.

A useful first practice is to read Surah Al-Ikhlas with its meaning. Instead of rushing through familiar sounds, pause at each verse. Ask what it rules out, what it affirms and what it invites you to trust. A short passage can become a lifelong companion when you keep returning to its meaning.

READ SLOWLY. REFLECT CAREFULLY.

> READ SLOWLY
>
> *Reflect on Surah Al-Ikhlas: Allah is One, and nothing is comparable to Him. (Qur'an 112:1–4.)*

READ FURTHER Qur'an 112:1–4 / Qur'an 2:255

Qur'an on a stand · GR Stocks / Unsplash

Not like anything created

Wonder can lead us towards understanding—but Allah is not an object we can draw, measure or imagine.



The Creator is not the creation

The Qur'an gives a clear boundary for thinking about Allah: nothing is like Him. The same verse describes Him as All-Hearing and All-Seeing. His knowledge and attributes are not limited in the ways ours are. A picture of a person, a light, a landscape or a symbol cannot represent Him. (Qur'an 42:11.)

This matters because our imagination usually works by combining things we have already seen. We imagine a larger mountain, a brighter light or a more powerful person. Belief in Allah asks us not to confuse any created image with the One who created everything.

Look carefully at the world

The Qur'an invites reflection on the heavens, the earth and the change between night and day. It describes people who remember Allah and think about creation. Looking, learning and asking questions can therefore belong alongside worship rather than being treated as its opposite. (Qur'an 3:190–191.)

Try noticing something ordinary with fresh attention: rain gathering on a window, a seed opening, the changing colour of the evening sky. You do not need to turn every observation into a dramatic claim. Sometimes the valuable step is simply to stop taking the world for granted.

We should also be careful with impressive-sounding posts that label every new discovery a 'scientific miracle'. A striking image is not a reference, and a confident caption is not a careful explanation. Check both the scientific claim and the meaning of the verse before repeating the connection. Faith does not need us to spread weak arguments.

Make room for sincere questions

A question is an opportunity to learn. Write it as clearly as you can. Is it about what a verse means, how a belief fits together, or something difficult that has happened? These may need different kinds of conversation. A knowledgeable teacher can help with interpretation; a trusted adult can help you think through a personal worry.

Avoid measuring your sincerity by how quickly you can answer someone else. It is better to say that you need to learn more than to invent a confident response. Let humility be part of your search. We can take questions seriously without pretending that a short video or a single magazine feature settles everything.

A QUESTION CAN BE THE BEGINNING OF LEARNING.

> **A QUESTION WORTH KEEPING**
>
> *What is one thing about faith that you would like to understand more deeply—not simply memorise?*

READ FURTHER Qur'an 42:11 / Qur'an 3:190–191

Mountain lake · Hans Ott / Unsplash

Mercy has a meaning

Allah's beautiful names are not just a list to learn. They invite reflection, worship and a different way of treating people.



Learning through His names

The closing verses of Surah Al-Hashr bring together names describing Allah's knowledge, mercy, sovereignty, holiness, might, creativity and wisdom. They show that power and mercy are not opposites in our understanding of Him. The names help us speak about Allah using what revelation teaches, rather than inventing descriptions. (Qur'an 59:22–24.)

Begin with a few and learn them well. Ar-Rahman and Ar-Rahim direct our attention to His mercy. Al-Khaliq reminds us that He is the Creator. Al-Hakim points to His perfect wisdom. English translations help us begin, but a single English word does not capture every shade of meaning. Read with a reliable explanation and ask a teacher when you are unsure.

Hope that does not excuse harm

In Surah Az-Zumar, those who have wronged themselves are told not to despair of Allah's mercy. The following verse calls them to return to Him. Hope and responsibility belong together: the invitation to forgiveness is an invitation to turn back, not a reason to keep causing harm. (Qur'an 39:53–54.)

For a young person, this can change the way a mistake is understood. You can admit that an action was wrong without deciding that your whole future is ruined. You can stop defending a lie, tell the truth and begin repairing trust. The next honest step matters even when it is uncomfortable.

A sincere apology should not be an attempt to control another person's response. Someone you have hurt may need time. Returning a belonging, correcting a rumour or changing how you speak can show that you mean what you say. Making amends is practical work, not simply a sentence.

Let mercy shape your manners

Learning about mercy should also prompt self-examination. Do you make it harder for someone to admit a mistake by embarrassing them publicly? Do you keep bringing up a person's past after they have changed? You can be clear about right and wrong without enjoying someone else's shame.

Choose one name to study this week. Write its meaning in your notebook, find a verse in which it appears and consider how it can shape your du'a. Then choose an action that belongs with your reflection: patience in a disagreement, gentleness with a sibling or a quiet effort to repair something you have damaged.

> **KEEP HOPE CONNECTED TO ACTION**
>
> *A mistake can be the point where you begin to change—not the sentence that defines your future.*

READ FURTHER Qur'an 59:22–24 / Qur'an 39:53–54

Qur'an and prayer beads · AmirHadi Manavi Moghadam / Unsplash

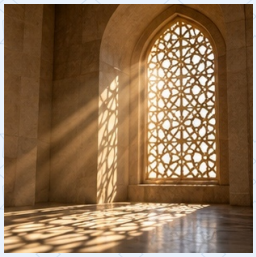
Nothing good is overlooked

Belief in Allah's knowledge and justice gives meaning to the choices that never receive applause.

PAUSE & REFLECT

Quiet choices

Do one useful thing today that no one needs to know was yours.



Known beyond appearances

People can see an action without knowing the whole story behind it. They may miss the effort it required or misunderstand why it happened. The Qur'an describes Allah's knowledge of the human being, including the whispering within the soul. Nothing about us is hidden from Him. (Qur'an 50:16.)

This is not an invitation to become anxious about every passing thought. It is a reminder that an outward impression is not the full measure of a person. Someone may look confident while struggling to speak. Someone's small contribution may represent a great deal of effort. We should be slow to assume that we understand everything about one another.

Justice without the need for an audience

The Qur'an states that Allah does not wrong anyone even by the smallest measure, and that He multiplies good. It also teaches that even very small deeds are brought into account. Our actions are not meaningless simply because they go unnoticed by other people. (Qur'an 4:40; 99:7–8.)

Think about the quiet choices in your own day. You put back a chair you did not move. You refuse to forward a screenshot intended to humiliate someone. You finish a shared task after the praise has gone to somebody else. These moments may never become a story anyone tells. They still help form your character.

The opposite deserves attention too. Being polite in public does not cancel cruelty in private. A charitable post does not make it acceptable to cheat a friend. Rather than dividing life into a religious part and an ordinary part, ask whether your private behaviour agrees with the values you say you believe.

What about the things we cannot explain?

Belief in divine wisdom does not mean we know the reason for every painful event. We should not tell a grieving or struggling person that we can explain exactly why Allah allowed their difficulty. Listening, offering practical help and avoiding easy judgments are often more useful than a speech.

You can hold on to trust while admitting that something is hard. You can seek help while making du'a. You can work against unfair treatment while believing that ultimate justice belongs to Allah. Faith should not be used to silence a person who needs protection, support or a fair hearing.

For today, choose one good action that does not need to be announced. Let it be complete without a photograph, a compliment or a public explanation. Notice how different it feels to do something worthwhile without asking the room to notice.

A PRIVATE CHALLENGE

Do one useful thing today that no one needs to know was yours.

READ FURTHER Qur'an 50:16 / Qur'an 4:40 / Qur'an 99:7–8

Generated illustration · quiet choices; displayed at native-detail size

Turn towards Him

Worship, remembrance and du'a give belief a place in an ordinary day.



A direct call

In Surah Al-Baqarah, Allah answers the question about Him by affirming His nearness and His response to the caller. The verse also calls people to respond to Him and believe in Him. Du'a is therefore not merely a request sent into the unknown; it belongs within a relationship of worship and trust. (Qur'an 2:186.)

You do not need an impressive speech to begin. Outside the prescribed words of formal prayer, you can make personal du'a in a language you understand. Ask for guidance, forgiveness, strength to do what is right and good for the people around you. Speak honestly rather than trying to sound like someone else.

Prayer as a point of return

Allah tells Musa to worship Him and establish prayer for His remembrance. That link helps us understand salah as more than an item to tick off. It is a repeated return to the One we worship. (Qur'an 20:14.)

The five daily prayers are the foundation, not an optional habit to add when life becomes quiet. Learning how to pray, checking the local timetable and making sensible arrangements can help protect that foundation. A beginner can ask for patient teaching rather than trying to learn everything from disconnected clips. Before you begin a prayer, put your phone out of reach. Remind yourself of the meaning of one phrase you are about to say. You may still become distracted, but you can return your attention gently instead of declaring the whole effort a failure. Understanding grows through practice and careful learning.

Gratitude beyond saying thank you

Try connecting remembrance with something concrete. When you thank Allah for a meal, treat it carefully. When you are grateful for a friendship, become more trustworthy within it. When you value the chance to learn, give a lesson your attention. These are editorial suggestions for putting reflection into action, not additional religious rituals.

Du'a should not be reduced to a promise that every wish will happen exactly as requested. The Qur'an's assurance of Allah's response is not a timetable we control. Bring your hopes to Him while continuing to take responsible steps: revise, apologise, seek advice, apply, practise or rest when you need to.

The aim is not to fill every moment with a new task. It is to give your day direction. A prayer performed with care, a sincere request and a grateful action can help faith become part of life rather than something left on the page.

> **MAKE IT PERSONAL**
>
> *What are you asking Allah for—and what responsible step can you take alongside that du'a?*

READ FURTHER Qur'an 2:186 / Qur'an 20:14 / Sahih Muslim 8a

Mosque courtyard · Sheila C / Unsplash

Trust, effort and the next step

Tawakkul is reliance on Allah—not a reason to stop trying.



Trust does not remove responsibility

Surah At-Talaq speaks of Allah making a way out and providing beyond what a person anticipates, and it affirms that He is sufficient for the one who relies on Him. These words offer confidence in Allah, not a guarantee that every personal plan will succeed in the form we prefer. (Qur'an 65:2–3.)

Think of preparing for an exam. You can make du'a and also revise carefully, ask for help with a difficult topic and arrive on time. Trust concerns where you place your ultimate reliance. Effort concerns what you are responsible for doing. They do not need to compete.

The same is true when a friendship needs repair. Hoping that things improve does not replace an honest conversation. You can ask Allah to help you while choosing a calmer time to speak, admitting your part and listening. The result may not be immediate, but your next action can still be worthwhile.

Return when you have drifted

A period of inconsistency need not become your permanent description of yourself. Return to the obligations you have neglected, seek reliable guidance about what to do next and begin again sincerely. The Qur'an's invitation to return to Allah remains a reason for hope. (Qur'an 39:53–54.)

Avoid the trap of making a huge promise that you cannot sustain. Alongside protecting your obligatory worship, choose a manageable additional practice: a little reading with understanding, a regular moment of reflection or a useful service to someone else. A hadith in Sahih al-Bukhari values steady deeds, even when small. (Bukhari 6464.)

Carry these ideas beyond the feature

Across these three spreads we have considered Allah's oneness, His difference from creation, His names, His mercy, His knowledge and the place of worship in daily life. You do not need to remember every paragraph at once. Return to the verses themselves and keep learning with someone knowledgeable.

Try a simple learning notebook with three headings: what the source says, what I understand, and what I still need to ask. Keeping those headings separate can protect you from treating your first impression as the final meaning. It also makes a useful conversation starter in a class or learning circle.

Most importantly, let learning produce humility rather than superiority. Understanding a new term does not make you better than the person beside you. A more useful sign of growth is becoming more truthful, more teachable and more willing to take responsibility for how you act.

> YOUR NEXT STEP
>
> *Choose one passage from these six pages. Read it in context, note a question and discuss it with a trusted teacher.*

READ FURTHER Qur'an 65:2–3 / Qur'an 39:53–54 / Bukhari 6464

Closed laptop · Surface / Unsplash

The foundations we build on

A clear introduction to the Five Pillars of Islam and the six articles of faith.



The Five Pillars of Islam

The Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described Islam as built upon five: the testimony of faith, prayer, zakah, fasting Ramadan and pilgrimage. The following is an introduction to their place in Muslim life, not a complete guide to their individual rules. (Bukhari 8.)

Shahadah: the testimony that none is worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger. It gives direction to worship and commits us to learning from the Messenger's example. It is not simply a phrase on a wall; its meaning belongs in the choices we make.

Salah: the five daily prayers—Fajr, Dhuhr, Asr, Maghrib and Isha. Their times give worship a place throughout the day. Learn the words and actions from reliable teaching and use the centre's current timetable rather than an old screenshot.

Zakah: obligatory giving from qualifying wealth to eligible recipients. It is different from optional charity, or sadaqah. Its conditions and calculations need careful learning; this overview should not be used to work out an individual payment.

Fasting Ramadan: a month of worship in which those required and able to fast abstain from food, drink and other invalidators from dawn to sunset. The Qur'an explains fasting in connection with growing in awareness of Allah and recognises relevant exemptions. (Qur'an 2:183–185.)

Hajj: pilgrimage to Makkah, required once in a lifetime for those who meet its conditions of ability. It is an act of worship with particular times and rites, not simply a journey to an important place. (Qur'an 3:97.)

The six articles of faith

In the hadith of Jibril, iman is explained as belief in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Last Day and divine decree. These beliefs connect the visible parts of our lives with realities beyond what we can observe. (Muslim 8a.)

Belief in angels concerns part of the unseen taught through revelation, rather than something we invent for ourselves. Belief in the messengers includes respect for those Allah sent before Muhammad, peace be upon them all. Belief in the Last Day reminds us that actions carry responsibility. Learning these foundations carefully is more useful than rushing to win an argument about them.

> A BEGINNING, NOT A TEST OF WORTH
>
> *Ask about anything you do not understand. Nobody needs to pretend they already know everything.*

READ FURTHER Bukhari 8 / Muslim 8a / Qur'an 2:183–185 / Qur'an 3:97

Mosque interior · Leylâ / Unsplash

From knowledge to character

What we learn should change the way we speak, study, share and treat the people around us.



The Qur'an: read for understanding

The Qur'an describes itself as a blessed Book whose verses are to be reflected on. Reading is therefore not only about finishing a number of pages. It is also about paying attention to meaning and learning how to respond. (Qur'an 38:29.)

Choose a short passage and read its translation. Then look at the verses around it. Who is being addressed? Is this a story, a command, a warning or a promise? A reliable tafsir can help explain context. When you are unsure, write the question down rather than building a strong conclusion on a fragment.

The Prophet's example

Hadith literature preserves reports about the Prophet Muhammad's words, actions and approvals. Reports have different levels of reliability; an attractive image with his name underneath is not enough to establish that he said something. This issue cites named collections and report numbers so readers can follow up.

One report connects belief with care for neighbours, hospitality and responsible speech. That turns our attention towards familiar situations: how we welcome a guest, whether our noise disturbs someone and what we choose to say when we are annoyed. (Bukhari 6018.)

Character on a screen

A group chat can become a test of manners very quickly. The Qur'an warns against ridicule, insulting labels, suspicion, spying and backbiting. These principles deserve the same attention online as they do face to face. (Qur'an 49:11–12.)

Before sending a message, ask whether it is true, necessary and fair. Before sharing someone's photograph or private conversation, consider their permission and dignity. A joke does not become harmless simply because a group finds it funny. It is possible to leave a cruel conversation without making a performance of yourself.

Learning is something we share

Sahih Muslim describes the virtue of following a path in search of knowledge and of helping others. Learning is not only a personal achievement; it can become a way to benefit a family, a class or a wider community. (Muslim 2699a.)

Help a younger learner practise without mocking mistakes. Share a clear reference instead of forwarding ten unverified clips. Accept correction gracefully when you get something wrong. These habits make knowledge easier to trust and a learning space easier to enter.

You do not need to choose between taking faith seriously and being approachable. Warmth, honesty and careful study belong together. Let the person who asks a basic question feel that the door has opened, not that they have failed an examination.

> **BEFORE YOU SHARE IT**
>
> *Can you find the original source, understand the context and explain why it is reliable?*

READ FURTHER Qur'an 38:29 / Qur'an 49:11–12 / Bukhari 6018 / Muslim 2699a

Books and coffee · Vanessa Dyste / Unsplash

Why did Allah create us?

Beyond marks, money and being noticed: what gives a life its direction?



The question underneath our plans

What would make your life worthwhile? It is easy to answer with a destination: a qualification, a career, a home or a family. Those can be good hopes. But they do not fully answer the deeper question of what you are living for. An achievement tells you what you reached; purpose helps you decide what deserves to be reached.

The Qur'an gives a central answer: humanity and jinn were created to worship Allah. The next verses make clear that Allah does not need provision from His creation. Our worship does not supply a need in Him; it is our response to the One who gives us life. (Qur'an 51:56–58.)

Worship has a centre—and a reach

Prayer, fasting and the other prescribed acts of worship cannot simply be replaced by being a pleasant person. At the same time, faith is not meant to stop when a prayer ends. The Qur'an describes prayer, sacrifice, living and dying as belonging to Allah, the Lord of all worlds. (Qur'an 6:162.)

Consider how that direction might enter an ordinary school day. You could study because learning equips you to help others. You could play a sport fairly rather than deciding that winning excuses cheating. You could do a family task because responsibility matters, even when no one thanks you. These are examples of thoughtful intention, not a claim that any action becomes good merely because we give it a religious label.

Ask two questions, not one

Before a choice, ask both 'Why am I doing this?' and 'Is this the right way to do it?' A sincere-sounding aim does not excuse dishonesty. Raising money for a good cause does not justify humiliating somebody. Supporting a friend does not require covering up the harm they have caused.

The opening hadith in Sahih al-Bukhari connects actions with intentions. It invites attention to what is happening inside a decision, not just how that decision appears to other people. This can be a quiet habit: pause, correct your aim and carry out the task with care. (Bukhari 1.)

Purpose also gives room for rest and ordinary enjoyment. You do not need to turn every hobby into a public project. A life directed towards Allah can include learning, friendship and wholesome recreation. The important question is whether those things sit within your responsibilities, rather than replacing them.

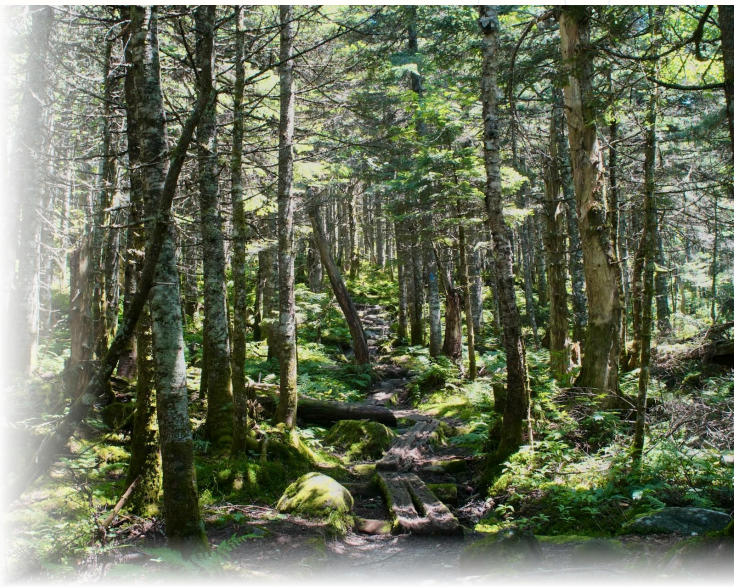
> A QUESTION FOR TODAY
>
> *What is one ordinary responsibility you could approach with a clearer intention?*

READ FURTHER Qur'an 51:56–58 / Qur'an 6:162 / Bukhari 1

Desert dunes · Zetong Li / Unsplash

A life that means something

Success is not only about arriving somewhere. It is also about the person you become on the way.



Life includes a test

Surah Al-Mulk describes death and life as a test of who is best in deeds. The verse directs attention to the quality of our response, not simply to how impressive a life looks from outside. Surah Al-Anbiya also speaks of being tested through both hardship and good circumstances. (Qur'an 67:2; 21:35.)

That makes a useful change in perspective. Difficulty is not the only situation that asks something of us. Having time, ability, friends or money also raises a question: what will we do with what we have been given? Gratitude can be expressed in the way an advantage is used, not only in the words said about it.

You are not your latest result

A disappointing grade may show where you need support. It does not tell the whole story of your effort or decide the value of your future. Equally, an excellent grade does not make you more deserving of respect than someone who learns differently. An achievement is something to handle well, not a reason to look down on others.

Set goals you can act on: attend the lesson, revise a difficult topic, ask a question, finish an agreed task. Outcomes matter, but they are not entirely within your control. Taking responsibility for your next action is often more useful than repeatedly judging your whole life.

Keep the Hereafter in view

The Qur'an reminds us that even the smallest good and harmful deeds will be seen. This widens our understanding of consequence. A choice is not important only when it brings an immediate reward or when somebody is watching. (Qur'an 99:7–8.)

A long view can protect you from short-term pressure. You do not have to join an unkind conversation to keep a place in the group. You do not have to exaggerate an achievement to seem interesting. You can make a choice that is less exciting now but more consistent with the person you hope to become.

Write a purpose you can practise

Try completing this sentence: 'With Allah's help, I want to become someone who...' Choose a quality rather than a job title. Perhaps you want to be dependable, fair, useful or generous. Then name one action that would make that quality visible in the coming week.

Keep the action small enough to recognise. 'Be a better person' is difficult to review. 'Keep the promise I made to help my sibling on Thursday' is clear. Return to your intention after a mistake rather than abandoning it. A meaningful life is built through repeated choices, not one perfect announcement.

> "
>
> ONE QUALITY. ONE ACTION.
>
> *Choose a quality you value and a specific way to practise it this week.*

READ FURTHER Qur'an 67:2 / Qur'an 21:35 / Qur'an 99:7–8

Forest path · Otto Freijser / Unsplash

Faith with courage

Hawwa, Maryam and the wife of Pharaoh: stories of responsibility, devotion and conviction.



Read their stories carefully

The women discussed in these two pages are not decorative figures at the edge of a story. Their choices invite every reader to think about faith and character. One distinction matters: the Qur'an names Maryam directly. Names such as Hawwa, Asiyah and Bilqis are known through Islamic tradition, rather than being given in the Qur'anic passages themselves.

Hawwa: responsibility and return

Surah Al-A'raf addresses Adam and his wife together in the account of the garden. Both are tempted, both recognise their wrongdoing, and together they ask their Lord for forgiveness and mercy. The passage does not tell a story in which the woman alone bears responsibility. (Qur'an 7:19–23.)

That detail matters when we draw lessons. A useful response to a shared mistake is not to find the easiest person to blame. It is to recognise our own part and turn towards repair. In a friendship, at home or during a group project, an honest 'I also got this wrong' can change the direction of a conversation.

Maryam: devotion in uncertainty

Surah Maryam recounts the announcement of a son to Maryam, her question about how this could happen, the difficulty surrounding childbirth and her return to her people. The infant Isa speaks by Allah's permission. Surah At-Tahrim also holds up Maryam's faith and devotion as an example. (Qur'an 19:16–36; 66:12.)

Her story should not be flattened into the idea that sincere people never feel distress. It contains vulnerability alongside extraordinary honour. For a young reader, that can open a more compassionate conversation about strength: asking a question or finding something difficult does not make faith insincere.

Asiyah: belief under pressure

The Qur'an presents the wife of Pharaoh as an example for believers. Her prayer asks Allah for a home near Him in Paradise and deliverance from Pharaoh and his wrongdoing. Islamic tradition knows her as Asiyah. Her example in this verse is one of faith despite the power surrounding her. (Qur'an 66:11.)

The lesson is not that anyone should quietly remain in danger. It is that status and comfort do not determine what is right. When faced with pressure to accept harm, seek protection and trusted help. Courage can include refusing wrongdoing and reaching out to people who can support you.

> **THREE QUESTIONS TO CARRY**
>
> *Can I admit my part? Can I remain sincere in difficulty? Can I refuse harm even when it is normalised?*

READ FURTHER Qur'an 7:19–23 / Qur'an 19:16–36 / Qur'an 66:11–12

Date palm, Morocco · Raúl Mermans García / Unsplash

Wisdom, care and trust

The Queen of Sheba, the mother of Musa and the wife of Imran offer different examples of thoughtful action.



The Queen of Sheba: willing to listen

Surah An-Naml describes a queen ruling over her people. After receiving a letter from Sulayman, she consults her advisers rather than immediately acting on impulse. Later, the account ends with her acknowledging her wrong and submitting to Allah with Sulayman. The name Bilqis is familiar in Islamic tradition; the Qur'an calls her a woman ruling over her people. (Qur'an 27:23–44.)

Her story invites us to separate confidence from stubbornness. A capable person can listen, consider new information and change direction. You do not lose your dignity by admitting that an earlier judgment was incomplete. Sometimes the more mature response is to ask another question instead of defending your first answer.

The mother of Musa: love and action

Surah Al-Qasas tells of Musa's mother being reassured by Allah, placing her baby in the river, and asking his sister to follow him. The account then describes his return to her as his nurse. Her fear and the strengthening of her heart are part of the story; trust does not erase the human experience of concern. (Qur'an 28:7–13.)

Notice the combination of reliance and practical action. The story is not an instruction for parents to imitate its extraordinary circumstances. It can, however, encourage reflection on how trust and careful steps belong together. We can ask Allah for help while using the safe means available to us.

The wife of Imran: a prayerful beginning

In Surah Ali Imran, the wife of Imran dedicates her unborn child to Allah's service. She names her daughter Maryam and seeks protection for her and her descendants. The next verse describes Maryam's good upbringing and the care of Zakariyya. The Qur'an does not name Maryam's mother; Hannah is a name associated with her in tradition. (Qur'an 3:35–37.)

The daughter dedicated to Allah's service in this passage is Maryam, who would become the mother of the Prophet Isa. Reading the account carefully honours the care and prayer that can support a younger generation long before their future is visible. It also reminds us to check a beautiful caption against the passage it claims to explain.

Examples for every reader

These accounts are not only for girls, just as accounts of male prophets are not only for boys. Their themes concern everyone: listening without pride, caring without controlling, taking responsibility and holding to faith. Choose one passage and read it with the verses around it. Ask what the text actually says before deciding what lesson you want it to teach.

> READ BEYOND THE CAPTION
>
> *Choose one woman's story. Write down a detail you had not noticed before and check it in the Qur'an.*

READ FURTHER Qur'an 27:23–44 / Qur'an 28:7–13 / Qur'an 3:35–37

Nile landscape · Jordi Orts Segales / Unsplash

Less waste. More gratitude.

A three-page feature on food, water and the everyday choices that turn care into action.



A blessing is something to look after

Surah Al-A'raf permits eating and drinking while warning against excess. Surah Al-Furqan describes a balanced approach to spending, neither extravagant nor miserly. Together, these passages encourage care rather than a competition to own the least or display the most. (Qur'an 7:31; 25:67.)

A useful starting point is not guilt, but attention. What do we repeatedly buy and fail to use? What gets forgotten at the back of a cupboard? What do we throw away because nobody has planned what happens next? Noticing a pattern gives us something practical to change.

The scale of the problem

UNEP's Food Waste Index Report 2024 estimated that 1.05 billion tonnes of food waste were generated globally in 2022 across households, food service and retail. That figure includes inedible parts. Households accounted for 60% of the total. These are global estimates for a specific year, not measurements of Belfast or of Muslim households.

The numbers show why the subject belongs in ordinary homes as well as in conversations about businesses. They do not tell us that every discarded item could have been eaten. A peel, a spoiled ingredient and an untouched meal are different things. The useful task is to reduce avoidable waste while handling unavoidable waste appropriately.

More than what lands in the bin

Food production and disposal involve resources and environmental impacts. UNEP connects food waste with climate change, nature loss and pollution. Preventing unnecessary waste is therefore about more than having a tidy kitchen: it also means making better use of what went into producing the food.

We should avoid a simplistic claim that finishing our own plate automatically feeds someone elsewhere. Hunger has many causes. Reducing waste and supporting people who need food are connected responsibilities, but one does not replace the other. Plan carefully, share appropriately and support trustworthy local efforts without treating people as a lesson or a photograph.

Begin where you have influence

A young person may not choose the weekly shopping or control the household budget. You can still help: say which packed-lunch foods you actually eat, check before opening another packet, and ask how you can support the person who cooks. Make the conversation useful rather than blaming someone for what went wrong yesterday.

> START BY NOTICING
>
> *For three days, note one avoidable thing that gets wasted and what could prevent it next time.*

READ FURTHER Qur'an 7:31 / Qur'an 25:67 / E1 · UNEP Food Waste Index 2024

Seedlings · Rachel Reinhardt / Unsplash

The habits that help

A thoughtful home does not need more gadgets. It needs a few routines that people can actually keep.



Before the food is bought

Try making a meal plan around what is already available. Ask what needs using, how many people will be eating and what the week is likely to look like. A plan that ignores a late class or a family outing can create waste even when everybody had good intentions.

Give your suggestions in a helpful way. 'There is rice left from the meal we planned—what is the safest way to use or store it?' is more useful than announcing that other people are wasteful. Always follow food safety and storage instructions. Avoiding waste is never a reason to eat something unsafe.

At the table

Start with a portion you reasonably expect to eat; there can be more available when you need it. Make it easy for guests to do the same without feeling that they must take a large serving to be polite. Hospitality can be generous without producing a display that is mostly left behind.

At a shared meal, ask the organiser before moving food, packing leftovers or offering it to someone else. Food safety, allergies and dignity still matter. A well-meant action can cause problems when nobody knows how something was handled. Follow the arrangements made by the people responsible.

Water deserves attention too

Anas reported that the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, performed wudu with a modest measured amount of water. The report is a useful reminder that care in worship need not mean leaving water running unnecessarily. It is not an instruction to turn purification into a race or neglect its requirements. (Bukhari 201.)

Turn a tap off when you do not need the flow. Let an adult or the responsible building team know about a leak rather than trying to repair unfamiliar equipment yourself. These are ordinary practical steps; there is no need to attach an invented religious quotation to make them worthwhile.

Use what you already own

Before buying another bottle, notebook or bag, check whether one you own still does the job. Look after it. Repair or share appropriate items with permission. A purchase labelled 'eco' is still a purchase, and a new object is not automatically better than using an existing one well.

Recycling is useful, but it does not cancel unlimited consumption. First ask whether the item is needed, then how to extend its useful life, and finally how it should be disposed of. For Belfast collections, use the council's current 'What goes in my bins and boxes?' guidance; accepted materials and collection arrangements need checking locally.

> **TRY ONE ROUTINE**
>
> *Choose one: check the cupboard first, take a sensible portion, switch off an unused tap, or care for something you own.*

READ FURTHER Bukhari 201 / E2 · Belfast City Council recycling guidance

Glass of water · Swanky Fella / Unsplash

Make it a community habit

An achievable seven-day challenge for a family, a class or a small group of friends.

PAUSE & REFLECT

Care in action

Choose one practical change. Keep it modest, useful and safe.



Choose a problem small enough to solve

Begin with one shared situation: unopened snacks left after a session, forgotten water bottles, or more disposable cups being taken than people use. Ask the organiser what would actually help. A change works better when it makes somebody's job easier, not when it creates another task for them.

Agree how you will notice progress. You could count unopened items left at the end, record how many reusable bottles are brought, or simply note whether a planned routine happened. Keep it modest and honest. A small observation is not a scientific study, and one successful week does not justify an impressive claim about an entire community.

Days one and two: observe and agree

Look without blaming. Ask where the waste occurs and what gets in the way of avoiding it. Then agree one change and who is responsible. A sign can help, but only when it matches a practical arrangement—for example, placing clean cups where people can find them instead of only telling everyone to waste less.

Days three to five: practise together

Use a quiet reminder before the shared activity begins. Make the first step easy. Offer encouragement when someone forgets rather than turning the challenge into a test of who is a 'good Muslim'. The purpose is to improve a routine, not to embarrass a person. Keep adults or organisers responsible for anything involving food handling, building equipment or waste collection. Do not handle sharp objects, unknown liquids or hazardous litter. A community project should help people safely, and it is sensible to leave unfamiliar materials for the appropriate team.

Days six and seven: review and keep what works

Ask what changed and what was harder than expected. Did the routine reduce waste or merely move the problem elsewhere? Was it practical for the people doing the work? Keep a useful improvement and adjust an unhelpful one. There is no need to call an honest experiment a failure because it taught you something.

Let gratitude be visible

At the end of the week, thank the people who prepared, cleaned, organised and quietly kept things running. Their effort is one of the resources we can take for granted. The project should leave a space easier to use and its people more appreciated—not just produce a photograph for a post.

These seven days are a suggested activity, not a prescribed act of worship or a promise of a particular reward. Their value is in helping us practise responsibility consistently. The goal is a habit that still exists after the challenge has ended.

> YOUR GROUP'S PROMISE
>
> *This week we will change _____. We will know it helped because _____.*

READ FURTHER Read the principle: Qur'an 7:31 / Local disposal guidance · E2

Generated illustration · care in action; displayed at native-detail size

A story is not over at its hardest part

Yusuf, peace be upon him: a dream, a betrayal and the patience to hold on to what is right.



A dream at the beginning

Surah Yusuf opens the account with a young Yusuf telling his father, Ya'qub, about a dream involving eleven stars, the sun and the moon bowing to him. His father warns him against telling his brothers, fearing a plot. The beginning already places love, hope and family tension close together. (Qur'an 12:4–6.)

The brothers' jealousy becomes action. Yusuf is taken away and left in a well, while a false account is given to his father. Travellers later find him, and the narrative carries him into a household in Egypt. These events change his circumstances dramatically, but they do not become the final definition of his life. (Qur'an 12:8–22.)

Integrity away from home

As the account continues, Yusuf is pressured towards wrongdoing by the woman in whose house he lives. He seeks refuge in Allah and refuses. The story later describes him being imprisoned despite evidence that had become clear. It does not promise that choosing the right action always leads to an immediate easy outcome. (Qur'an 12:23–35.)

That point deserves careful thought. We sometimes tell ourselves that a good decision will be obvious because it makes life comfortable straight away. Yusuf's story challenges that expectation. Integrity is not simply choosing the option that brings quick praise. It can require holding a boundary when another person has more power.

Still able to be of use

In prison, two young men ask Yusuf about their dreams. He speaks to them about worshipping Allah and explains their dreams. Even in confinement, the narrative shows him teaching and responding to the people around him. (Qur'an 12:36–42.)

For us, the lesson is not to compare every everyday disappointment with a prophet's trial. It is to notice that an unwanted situation does not remove every worthwhile choice. You may still be able to learn, tell the truth, help someone or ask for the support you need.

Patience is not pretending

You do not have to call betrayal harmless in order to practise patience. A person who has been hurt can name what happened and seek safety. The story is not a reason to remain silent about bullying, coercion or abuse. Speak to a trusted adult when someone is harming you.

At the close of this first part, Yusuf's circumstances have not yet reached their resolution. That is worth sitting with. A story can contain a long middle in which the outcome is not visible. We can keep learning how to respond without pretending to know exactly how our own difficulties will end.

> THINK ABOUT THE TURNING POINTS
>
> *Which choices in the story concern what happened to Yusuf—and which concern how he responded?*

READ FURTHER Qur'an 12:4–22 / Qur'an 12:23–35 / Qur'an 12:36–42

Stone well · bader Abdullah / Unsplash

When strength becomes forgiveness

The later chapters of Yusuf's story bring responsibility, recognition and a remarkable response to his brothers.



Knowledge put to work

The king's troubling dream becomes another turning point. Yusuf explains the coming years of abundance and scarcity and gives a plan for preserving grain. The narrative then describes the clearing of the accusation against him and his appointment to responsibility. His knowledge is not presented simply as something impressive; it becomes useful to others. (Qur'an 12:43–57.)

For a young reader, there is a practical lesson in that connection. Learning a skill is not only about collecting a certificate. Clear thinking, honesty and preparation can serve other people. Ask not only 'What can I achieve with this?' but also 'Who might benefit if I learn to do this well?'

A meeting across a painful past

The brothers eventually come to Egypt seeking provisions. Through the later events of the surah, the family's past returns to the centre of the account. When Yusuf finally identifies himself, his brothers acknowledge that Allah has favoured him and that they were wrong. (Qur'an 12:58–59; 12:89–91.)

Yusuf's response is striking: he does not use his position to humiliate them. He releases them from reproach that day and asks for Allah's forgiveness for them. The story later brings his family together, and he recognises the fulfilment of his earlier dream. (Qur'an 12:92; 12:99–100.)

What forgiveness does—and does not—mean

The account invites admiration for generosity when retaliation is possible. It does not require us to invent a simple rule that every harmed person must immediately restore the same relationship. Trust, safety and the needs of the people involved require care. Forgiveness should never be used as pressure to conceal ongoing harm.

In an ordinary disagreement, you might begin by refusing to keep a person's mistake as a weapon. You can be clear about what was wrong, allow a sincere apology to matter and decide what a safe, respectful relationship should look like. That is more thoughtful than either pretending nothing happened or repeatedly reopening an old wound.

Read the ending, then revisit the beginning

Return to the opening dream after reading the later verses. The journey between them includes loss, temptation, confinement, service and reunion. The Qur'an itself directs readers towards lessons in these accounts. The aim is more than enjoying a satisfying ending. (Qur'an 12:111.)

Choose one quality to carry into your week: refusing jealousy, speaking truthfully, using knowledge responsibly or letting go of the wish to embarrass someone. Do not claim that practising it guarantees a life like Yusuf's. Let the story teach your character without turning it into a formula for worldly success.

> **FOR A READING CIRCLE**
>
> *Where do knowledge, responsibility and mercy meet in the second half of Surah Yusuf?*

READ FURTHER Qur'an 12:43–57 / Qur'an 12:89–100 / Qur'an 12:111

Rice bowl · Rimsha Noor / Unsplash

Courage can begin with a quiet act

Musa, peace be upon him: care in childhood, uncertainty on a journey and help offered beside a well.



A child protected

Surah Al-Qasas introduces Musa's early life against the oppression of Pharaoh. His mother is inspired to place him in the river when she fears for him and is reassured about his future. His sister follows, and the account brings him back to his mother to be nursed. Care, worry and Allah's protection are woven through these verses. (Qur'an 28:3–13.)

A familiar story can lose its weight when we rush to the ending. Pause over the people who take practical steps: a mother, a sister, those who receive the child. The Qur'an is not inviting us to invent conversations for them. It gives enough detail to make us notice the human actions within the account.

Leaving with uncertainty

Later, Musa leaves the city after being warned that his life is in danger. He asks his Lord for protection and turns towards Madyan, hoping for guidance along the way. At the water there, he sees people tending their flocks and two women holding theirs back. He asks about their situation and waters their animals for them. (Qur'an 28:20–24.)

Then he withdraws to the shade and calls upon Allah in his need. One of the women later returns with an invitation from her father. The following verses describe reassurance, an offer involving work and marriage, and Musa's agreement. (Qur'an 28:24–28.)

Help that does not need an audience

The moment beside the well is worth considering on its own. Musa is not described as having everything settled before he helps. He notices a need and acts. A useful lesson for everyday life is that kindness need not wait until we feel successful, established or completely confident.

Keep the comparison sensible. You do not need to take on responsibilities beyond your ability. But perhaps you can explain a task, carry something safely, include a person who has been left out or offer an appropriate practical hand. Start with what is genuinely helpful to the person, not what makes you look generous.

Ask for help as well as giving it

Musa's prayer after helping is not a performance of self-sufficiency. His account lets us see need alongside strength. Being useful to someone does not mean you must hide every difficulty of your own. You can be generous and still ask Allah and trustworthy people for support.

Think of a moment when somebody helped without making you feel small. What did they do well? That memory can become a guide for how you offer assistance. Respect matters as much as enthusiasm: ask, listen and do not turn another person's situation into a public story without permission.

> A QUIET ACT OF SERVICE
>
> *Notice one appropriate way to help this week. Let the other person's needs—not your image—shape the action.*

READ FURTHER Qur'an 28:3–13 / Qur'an 28:20–28

Oasis · bader Abdullah / Unsplash

A voice, a prayer and a way forward

From the call in the valley to the crossing of the sea: courage joined with reliance on Allah.



Called to a difficult task

Surah Taha recounts Musa seeing a fire and approaching it. There he is addressed by Allah, instructed in worship and prayer, and given signs. He is then sent to Pharaoh. Musa's response includes a prayer for an expanded heart, an easier task, clear speech and support from his brother Harun. (Qur'an 20:9–36.)

There is something deeply instructive in that prayer. Musa does not pretend the task is small or that he needs nobody. He names the help he needs. For a young person preparing to speak, lead or face a difficult conversation, it offers a model of seeking Allah's help while recognising the practical demands of the situation.

Gentleness is not surrender

Musa and Harun are instructed to speak gently to Pharaoh, in the hope that he might take heed or become mindful. The instruction does not make Pharaoh's wrongdoing acceptable. It concerns the manner in which the message is delivered. (Qur'an 20:43–44.)

That distinction is useful in our own disagreements. Firmness does not require shouting, and a calm voice does not mean giving up the truth. Prepare what you need to say. Speak about the action clearly. Listen where listening is appropriate, and seek support when a situation is unsafe rather than trying to manage it alone.

At the sea

Surah Ash-Shu'ara describes Pharaoh's forces pursuing Musa and his people. When the two groups come into sight of one another, Musa's companions fear that they will be overtaken. Musa affirms his trust in his Lord. Allah instructs him to strike the sea with his staff, and a way is opened; Musa and those with him are saved. (Qur'an 26:60–68.)

This is a revealed account of an extraordinary sign, not a promise that every obstacle we meet will disappear in a dramatic way. We should not invent a precise modern route or a detailed picture of the event and present it as evidence. The account itself is the source for what we say here.

What can travel with us?

Across these two pages, courage has appeared in more than one form: giving useful help, acknowledging need, asking for support, delivering a difficult message and relying on Allah when the outcome is not under human control. None requires pretending that a task is easy.

Before your next difficult responsibility, write three things: what I must do, what help I should seek, and what I need to ask Allah for. It will not answer every problem. It may help you separate responsible action from the pressure to control everything at once.

> **PREPARE WITH HUMILITY**
>
> *What is your responsibility? Who can help? What will you ask Allah for?*

READ FURTHER Qur'an 20:9–36 / Qur'an 20:43–44 / Qur'an 26:60–68

Calm ocean · Blake Wisz / Unsplash

A night of signs. A lesson for life.



Al-Isra wal-Mi'raj: learning about the Night Journey and Ascension of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Two terms, connected accounts

Al-Isra refers to the Night Journey. The opening verse of Surah Al-Isra tells of Allah taking His servant by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque, whose surroundings He blessed, to show him some of His signs. The verse centres Allah's power and the honour given to His servant. (Qur'an 17:1.)

Al-Mi'raj refers to the Ascension. Its fuller account appears in hadith. In Sahih Muslim, Anas relates the Prophet's description of travelling on Al-Buraq, arriving at Bayt al-Maqdis, praying there and then being taken upwards with Jibril. Distinguishing the Qur'anic verse from the hadith account helps us explain the subject accurately. (Muslim 162a.)

Welcomed among the Prophets

The narration describes meetings with earlier prophets through the heavens, including Adam, Yahya and Isa, Yusuf, Idris, Harun, Musa and Ibrahim, peace be upon them. Their welcome is part of the account's sense of honour and continuity. These are matters reported in revelation; this magazine does not attempt to illustrate the prophets or the unseen. (Muslim 162a; Bukhari 3887.)

For a reader meeting the subject for the first time, it helps to move slowly. Learn the two terms first. Then read a reliable translation of the source. Keep a question beside a detail you do not understand. There is no need to compete over how many dramatic details you can repeat.

What makes a careful retelling?

A moving religious story still needs careful sourcing. A video can combine a sound narration, a later tradition and an invented scene without telling the viewer where one ends and another begins. Check the reference before passing a claim on. A precise date or a colourful detail deserves the same care as the main account.

This feature deliberately does not assign the journey an exact modern calendar date. The upcoming lecture advertised in this issue is a learning event on a stated date; its date should not be confused with a claim about when the historical Night Journey occurred.

A place to begin together

The story invites reflection on Allah's power, the place of His messengers and the meaning of worship. It should lead us towards deeper attention, not simply amazement. As you continue to the next page, keep one question in mind: what reminder from this extraordinary night belongs in an ordinary day?

> COME AND LEARN WITH US
>
> *Discover the Night Journey · Saturday 31 October 2026, 6 pm. See the full invitation and QR code on page 27.*

READ FURTHER Qur'an 17:1 / Muslim 162a / Bukhari 3887 / Official event details

Merzouga night · Marco D'Abramo / Unsplash

The reminder we carry each day

The prescribed prayers connect the account of Al-Mi'raj with the rhythm of a Muslim's everyday life.

PAUSE & REFLECT

Make time for prayer

Read. Ask. Reflect. Protect a place for prayer in your day.



Five prayers, an immense mercy

In the account in Sahih Muslim, fifty daily prayers are first prescribed. Musa advises the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon them, to ask for a reduction for his community. The narration describes repeated returns until five remain, with the reward of fifty. This is a central part of what the account teaches about prayer and Allah's mercy. (Muslim 162a.)

It is easy to be fascinated by the extraordinary elements of the journey and then hurry past this practical consequence. Yet prayer is where the story touches a school morning, a day at work, a family visit and a quiet evening at home. The reminder is not reserved for a lecture or a single night of the year.

Protect a place for prayer

Start with accurate information. Check the centre's current timetable and understand the difference between a prayer's starting time and the time a particular congregation takes place. An old photograph of a timetable may no longer be suitable. Use the official website and ask when you are unsure.

Then think about a predictable difficulty. Perhaps you leave everything until the last moment, cannot find a suitable space, or need to speak to someone about a break. Planning one issue in advance can be more useful than making a vague promise to 'try harder'. Seek guidance about practical or religious questions rather than guessing.

Learn the words as well as the movements

Choose a short phrase from your prayer and study its meaning with a reliable teacher or learning resource. Do not change the prescribed wording casually. The aim is to understand what you are already learning to say and do, so that familiarity does not become complete inattention.

Distraction can happen. Respond by returning your attention rather than deciding that an imperfect effort is worthless. Learn patiently and ask for help with questions about your prayer. This magazine offers encouragement, not individual rulings about validity, missed prayers or exceptional circumstances.

Bring a question to the event

A useful question might be: 'Which details come directly from the Qur'an, and which are narrated in hadith?' Or: 'What can help a young person approach salah with more understanding?' Writing it down beforehand may make it easier to take part in a learning conversation.

After the event, return to the sources rather than relying only on what you remember. Note one thing you learned, one point you still want to understand and one practical change to discuss at home. Let a special evening become the beginning of further learning, not simply the end of a story.

> READ. ASK. REFLECT.
>
> *Bring a sincere question to Discover the Night Journey. The invitation is on the facing page.*

READ FURTHER Muslim 162a / Official event page / Prayer timetable and learning resources

Generated illustration · make time for prayer; displayed at native-detail size

YOU'RE INVITED

Discover the Night Journey

AL-ISRA WAL-MI'RAJ

31 OCTOBER 2026

Saturday • 6 pm

A lecture and interactive learning experience exploring the Night Journey and Ascension of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

COME TOGETHER TO LEARN & REFLECT

Ihsan Youth & Family Centre

143 University Street
Belfast, BT7 1HP

Read the feature on pages 25–26, then bring your questions to an evening of learning with the community.

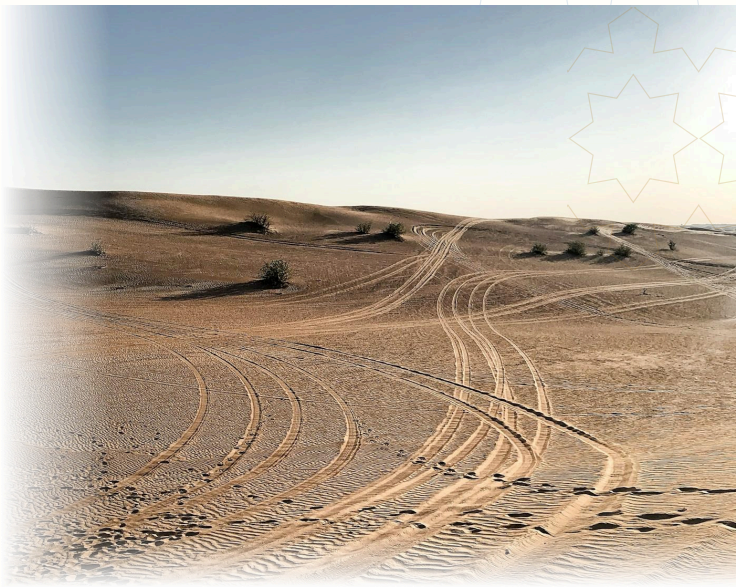
SCAN FOR LATEST DETAILS

Official announcement checked 25 September 2026. Recheck details before travelling.

Sheikh Zayed Mosque · Hassan Pasha / Unsplash · Contemporary mosque photograph; not a depiction of the historical Night Journey.

Faith travels with responsibility

The migration to Madinah: trust, preparation and the people who helped a journey become possible.



A journey with careful preparation

In Aishah's account preserved in Sahih al-Bukhari, the Prophet Muhammad and Abu Bakr prepare for the migration. The narration describes their stay in the cave of Thawr, support with information and provisions, and the use of a skilled guide. Reliance on Allah appears alongside planning and cooperation, not instead of them. (Bukhari 3905.)

The Qur'an refers to the companion in the cave and the reassurance of Allah's presence and support. The account gives us a moment of confidence amid danger, not a reason to dismiss the practical care described elsewhere. (Qur'an 9:40.)

Notice the support around the journey

A retelling can focus so closely on the central figures that the work around them disappears. The hadith includes people contributing different kinds of help. Some tasks were visible; others depended on discretion and reliability. Read the narration and notice how preparation was shared.

That is a useful way to understand community life too. An event needs more than the person speaking at the front. Someone prepares the room, checks arrangements, shares accurate information and stays to help afterwards. A quieter role is not a less meaningful contribution.

Trust does not mean improvising everything

Before a responsibility of your own, ask what preparation is appropriate. Who needs to know? What information should be checked?

What will you do when a plan changes? Good intentions do not remove the need to be dependable. Nor does planning mean pretending that every outcome is within your control.

The comparison has limits. Moving school, starting a course or joining a new group is not equivalent to the Prophet's migration. We can still learn a principle without flattening a historic event into a slogan about personal success: place trust in Allah and take your responsibilities seriously.

A welcome is something people make

The Qur'an praises the generosity of those who received the migrants, describing love for them and a willingness to give preference to others. The verse helps turn our attention from the traveller alone to the community receiving them. (Qur'an 59:9.)

In a new class or at the centre, a welcome can be specific. Explain where things are. Invite the person to sit with you. Do not assume they know the routine or share every reference in a conversation. Ask rather than guessing what they need. Belonging grows when people take responsibility for making entry easier.

A journey can therefore teach the person leaving, the people helping and those opening a door at the other end. Think about which of those roles is yours today. There may be a useful next step much closer to home than you first imagined.

> **BE PART OF THE WELCOME**
>
> *Make one unfamiliar place easier for somebody else to enter this week.*

READ FURTHER Bukhari 3905 / Qur'an 9:40 / Qur'an 59:9

Desert path, Oman · Razvan Horhat / Unsplash

Before you post

How should a Muslim use social media?



A screen does not put our character on pause. The same care we owe someone in a classroom, at home or at the centre belongs in a comment, a private message and a group chat.

A useful pause

Before sharing, ask: Is this true? Is it kind? Is it mine to share? Am I helping someone, or simply enjoying the attention? A short pause gives you space to choose a better response instead of following the mood of the moment.

Social media can be a place for learning, keeping in touch and encouraging good. The aim is not to make every post serious. It is to make your choices more deliberate.

The person behind the profile

An embarrassing clip is still about a person. A rumour still affects a family. The Qur'an warns against backbiting and harmful suspicion; an online audience does not make these concerns disappear.

The Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, taught believers to speak what is good or remain silent. Apply that principle before joining an argument or sending a message you may later regret.

> FAITH BEYOND THE SCREEN
>
> *Your character matters more than your comment count.*

READ FURTHER S1 · Sahih al-Bukhari 6018 S2 · Qur'an 49:12

Notebook and phone · Jakub Żerdzicki / Unsplash

Choose a better feed

Small decisions can bring your online life closer to your values.



01 Check your intention

Ask what you are trying to achieve. Sharing knowledge, checking on a friend or enjoying something wholesome is different from posting to humiliate someone or provoke a reaction. Pause when your motive is unclear.

02 Be careful with your gaze

The Qur'an addresses lowering the gaze to both men and women. Apply that care to what you choose to watch: move on from content that conflicts with your values, and use mute or unfollow when needed.

03 Speak with kindness

Disagreement does not need insults. Explain your point without mocking someone's looks, background or mistakes. Before replying in anger, step away and reread what you have written. Silence can be a better choice.

04 Protect your time

Choose when you will use an app and what you came to do. Keep some time free for study, family, rest and activity. When you notice that you are scrolling without purpose, close the app and choose your next action.

05 Check before sharing

A striking headline or short clip is not the whole story. Find the original source, look at its date and read the context. Be especially careful with claims about other people and with unattributed religious quotations.

06 Make room for salah

Plan your use of the phone around prayer, not the other way round. The Qur'an describes prayer as an obligation at appointed times. Put the device away when preparing to pray, and return to other tasks afterwards.

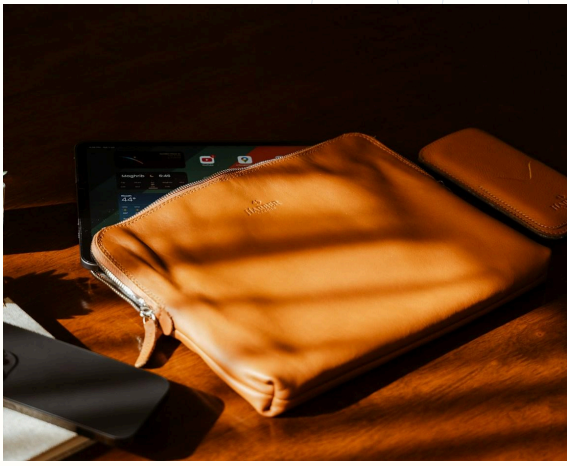
THINK • CHECK • SPEAK WITH CARE

READ FURTHER Sahih al-Bukhari 6018 · Qur'an 24:30–31 · Qur'an 49:6 · Qur'an 4:103

Raindrops on a leaf · Aaron Burden / Unsplash

When the group chat goes wrong

Three illustrative situations to discuss with friends, family or a youth group.



01 A joke at someone else's expense

A classmate's awkward moment becomes the evening's entertainment. People begin forwarding the clip and adding unkind comments. You feel that refusing to join in might make you the next target.

A THOUGHTFUL RESPONSE

Do not forward it. A calm "Let's not share that" may be enough to change the tone. Check on the person privately. When the situation feels unsafe or keeps happening, involve a trusted adult rather than carrying it alone.

02 A dramatic claim with no source

A message arrives with an urgent request to share it with everyone. It names a person or organisation, but gives no original source. The confident tone makes it feel convincing.

A THOUGHTFUL RESPONSE

Do not let urgency replace checking. Look for the original statement and its context. When you cannot verify it, leave it unshared. If you have already passed on something inaccurate, correct it clearly where you shared it.

03 "Just one more video"

You opened an app for a short break. Now the time you set aside for prayer, homework or speaking with family is disappearing. You notice it, but feel pulled towards the next clip.

A THOUGHTFUL RESPONSE

Stop at the moment you notice. Put the phone out of reach, complete the responsibility in front of you and decide whether you still need to return. One interrupted habit is a useful beginning; it does not need a dramatic announcement.

DISCUSS *What makes doing the right thing harder online than face to face?*

READ FURTHER Illustrative scenarios, not reports about real pupils. Qur'an 49:6. Further references on page 35.

Digital workspace · Omar Al-Ghosson / Unsplash

Your seven-day reset



Try one small change each day. Keep the changes that genuinely help.

MON Notice the pattern

Open your screen-time summary or simply note when you reach for the phone. Choose one habit to work on.

TUE Make space for prayer

Put the phone away when preparing for salah. Decide where it can stay until you have finished.

WED Choose your feed

Unfollow or mute one account that leads you away from your values. Find one reliable source of useful learning.

THU Pause before replying

Reread one message before sending it. Change the wording if it is harsher than you intended.

FRI Share something useful

Offer a clear, checked source, a helpful explanation or sincere encouragement. Benefit does not require a large audience.

SAT Give time back

Choose a phone-free activity with family or friends: a walk, a game, reading together or helping with a task.

SUN Reflect without judging

Ask what helped and what got in the way. Choose one manageable habit to continue next week.

ONE HABIT I WILL KEEP

READ FURTHER Activities are editorial prompts, not religious obligations or promises of reward.

Generated illustration · a phone set aside for reflection

Take one idea off the page

An issue is only a beginning. Use these prompts for a notebook, a family conversation or a youth learning circle.



Return to a source

Choose one Qur'anic passage mentioned in the magazine and read it with the surrounding verses. In your notebook, separate three things: what the passage says, what you understand from it, and what you still need to ask. Bring the question to a trusted teacher. You are learning, not preparing to win an argument.

Tell a Belfast story

Ask a parent, relative or community member what helped them first feel at home in Belfast. Listen without interrupting. With their permission, write a short account in your own words. Do not invent dialogue or publish someone's personal experience without agreement. One honest memory can be more valuable than a grand claim about everyone.

Try a seven-day action

Return to the waste challenge on page 20. Choose a single routine that fits your household or group. Agree it with the people involved. Keep a short record of what happened, including what did not work. The point is to learn a habit, not to prove that your family is better than another.

Read the stories together

For Yusuf: where do jealousy, integrity and forgiveness change the direction of the account? For Musa: when do practical action and du'a appear together? For the Night Journey: which source explains Al-Isra, and which narration describes Al-Mi'raj? Check the passages instead of relying only on memory.

Keep your learning gentle

Do not turn these prompts into a public test of who knows the most. Give someone time to answer, accept that people have different starting points, and allow a thoughtful 'I am not sure'. A learning circle should make it easier to return next time.

Make room for the next question

What would you like a future issue to explore? A prophet's story in more depth? Friendship and character? How to understand a short surah? Write a clear question and use the website's contact route to share it with the centre. Suggestions help a magazine speak to the real interests of its readers.

Before you close this issue, complete one sentence: 'The idea I want to carry into this week is...' Keep the answer where you will see it. A single useful action is a better ending than a long list you forget tomorrow.

"

A PERSONAL NOTE

One thing I learned: _____ One thing I will ask: _____
One thing I will practise: _____

READ FURTHER Explore, learn and contact the centre

Belfast City Hall · Peter Clarke

SOURCES / COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT

Behind the articles

Community, environment and the event invitation

C1

Community research

Naomi Green, *A part, not apart. Integration and belonging: Muslims in Northern Ireland.* Doctoral thesis, Ulster University, May 2024. Used for diversity, belonging and reported barriers.

C2

Ihsan's story and programmes

Ihsan Youth & Family Centre: About Us, the official homepage and programme links. Includes the University Street address, project history, learning and community activities.

C3

An early request for a mosque

South Asian Britain: Connecting Histories, Belfast Pakistani Association. Its account cites correspondence dated 18 June 1963 held by PRONI.

C4

Belfast Islamic Centre

The centre's own About page dates its establishment to 1978 and describes charitable support. The archive entry in C3 instead gives 1985. This issue explicitly attributes 1978 to the centre, rather than treating the sources as if they agree.

C5

The 2021 population figure

FactCheckNI, *Demographics of NI: What religions are followed by the people living here?* 26 September 2025. Reports 10,870 Muslims in the 2021 Northern Ireland Census: neither a Belfast-only figure nor a current estimate.

E1

Food waste: scale and scope

UN Environment Programme, *Food Waste Index Report 2024* and accompanying press release, 27 March 2024. The 1.05 billion tonne estimate concerns global household, food-service and retail waste in 2022, including inedible parts.

E2

Belfast recycling information

Belfast City Council, *What goes in my bins and boxes?* Consult current local instructions rather than assuming that a material belongs in a particular collection.

Night Journey event: date, time, format and venue are taken from the official event page. Details were checked on 25 September 2026; readers should recheck before travelling.

Source headings and images in this PDF are clickable. Current website content and collection arrangements can change after publication.

READ / CHECK / KEEP LEARNING

Read further

Qur'an and hadith references by feature

06–11 Knowing our Creator

Qur'an 112:1–4; 2:255; 42:11; 3:190–191; 59:22–24; 39:53–54; 50:16; 4:40; 99:7–8; 2:186; 20:14; 65:2–3. Bukhari 6464; Muslim 8a.

12–13 Islam 101

Bukhari 8 and 6018; Muslim 8a and 2699a. Qur'an 2:183–185; 3:97; 38:29; 49:11–12.

14–15 Why did Allah create us?

Qur'an 51:56–58; 6:162; 67:2; 21:35; 99:7–8. Bukhari 1.

16–17 Women of the Qur'an

Qur'an 7:19–23; 19:16–36; 66:11–12; 27:23–44; 28:7–13; 3:35–37. Traditional names are distinguished from names given in the Qur'an itself.

18–20 Do Not Waste

Qur'an 7:31; 25:67. Bukhari 201. Environmental and local sources are on page 34.

21–22 Yusuf

Qur'an 12:4–22; 12:23–42; 12:43–59; 12:89–101; 12:111. Read the whole surah to retain context.

23–24 Musa

Qur'an 28:3–13; 28:20–28; 20:9–36; 20:43–44; 26:60–68.

25–27 Al-Isra wal-Mi'raj

Qur'an 17:1; Muslim 162a; Bukhari 3887. The event date is not a date for the historical journey.

28 The Hijrah

Bukhari 3905; Qur'an 9:40; 59:9.

29–32 Before you post

S1 · Bukhari 6018. S2 · Qur'an 49:12. S3 · Qur'an 24:30–31. S4 · Qur'an 49:6. S5 · Qur'an 4:103. Activities and scenarios are editorial applications.

HOW THESE ARTICLES ARE WRITTEN

Scriptural accounts are summarised in original English, with references rather than invented dialogue. Reflections, discussion prompts and suggested activities are editorial applications, not additional verses, hadith or promised religious rewards.

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05 Football boots — Braden Hopkins
06 Qur'an on a stand — GR Stocks
07 Mountain lake — Hans Ott
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12 Mosque interior — Leylâ
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28 Desert path, Oman — Razvan Horhat
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33 Belfast City Hall — Peter Clarke

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Small Islamic still lifes and reflection vignettes are generated illustrations, not photographs of the centre, prophets or historical events. No editorial photograph or illustration is reused. Supplied logos and recurring geometric page patterns are branding.

Use reliable translation and tafsir, read passages in context, and ask a knowledgeable teacher about individual religious questions. Final organisational and religious review is recommended before public distribution.

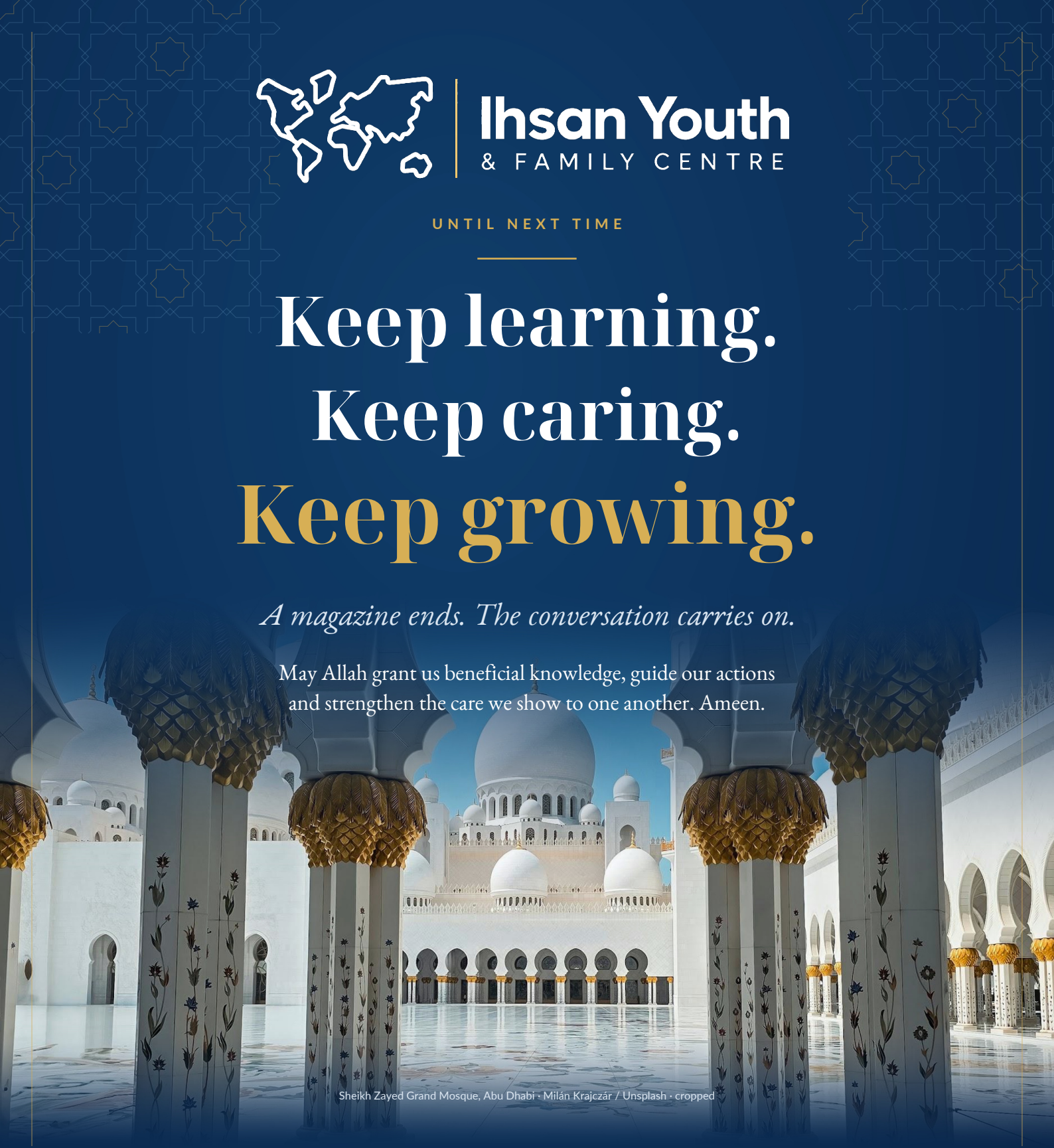
Ihsan Youth
& FAMILY CENTRE

UNTIL NEXT TIME

Keep learning.
Keep caring.
Keep growing.

A magazine ends. The conversation carries on.

May Allah grant us beneficial knowledge, guide our actions and strengthen the care we show to one another. Ameen.



Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, Abu Dhabi · Milán Krajczár / Unsplash · cropped

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SCAN & EXPLORE