



# DEEN DIALOGUE

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# PRESIDENT Daanish Zaidi

*As-salamu 'alaykum*

On behalf of Team GUMSA, I'd like to welcome you all to the first edition of Deen Dialogue for the 21/22 academic year! May you all benefit from the content inside it, Insha'Allah!

**When 2 sisters from the committee started this newsletter last year (may Allah reward them for coming up with the concept), we could have never imagined how much it would grow. At first, it was a way of maintaining our interaction with our members during the COVID-19 lockdown, but Alhamdulillah, we have received such positive feedback since, and it has become a key feature of GUMSA itself, with separate key teams dedicated to its yearly cycle.**

As we come out of the lockdown, and restrictions ease, we will have more events and talks, but the newsletter will still go on. Whether it be in the form of key Islamic reminders, articles on relevant situations affecting the Muslims world, or even food recipes for international students to try, we will try to cover everything a young Muslim student in Glasgow needs to know!

**I hope this newsletter is a way of bringing us all closer to Allah SWT, as that is the end goal. If you wish to contribute in any way to the newsletter, or to GUMSA, or you have any ideas in general, we are all ears, and are always just a message away.**

Jazakumullah Khairan to the Deen Dialogue team for their efforts, to the GUMSA Executive Committee for their efforts, and to you, our readers, without whom this would not have been possible!

*Daanish Zaidi*  
GUMSA President 2021/2022

Assalamualaykum!!

My name is Iona or Ayanah, and as you can probably tell from my very Scottish name, I am a revert to Islam. As I am writing this it's been a year since I reverted, and what an amazing (although different to say the least) year it has been alhamdulillah.



Before coming to this university, I had always heard about GUMSA and knew it was something I wanted to join as soon as I could. Shortly after I received my offer, I remember scrolling through my phone and looking at all of GUMSA's Instagram posts, imagining what it would be like to have a Muslim community of my own. Growing up in international schools all my life, until I came to Scotland in S5, I was blessed to have Muslim friends. Although I have been surrounded by these incredible people, I had never felt a part of the community and that was something I so desperately longed for.

As a new Muslim, this year I have gone through probably the biggest identity crisis of my life as of yet, essentially leaving what was my old life behind and stepping into a new unfamiliar world. I knew that university would be something that would either make or break me, as I'm sure plenty of other reverts and born Muslims alike have felt. You always hear stories of what university life is like in the UK and you don't realise how true it is until you actually attend. This was another reason I felt it was so important to join the Muslim society to find like-minded people.

During freshers, I made it my mission to go to all the GUMSA events, especially considering in the previous year students were unable to meet up and socialise. I wanted to meet new people and try new activities. Straight away I was welcomed by the kindest reception. I felt like I had made friends for life and the feeling I had when I went home after the first event was unmatched. I finally felt like I belonged somewhere and that I could be myself around people who shared the most important thing in my life - Islam. Although very nervous, I talked to so many people in the space of five days and it made me so happy to be surrounded by so many Muslims for the very first time in my life. It's so incredible, not only the amount of Muslims, but also to see the range of ethnicities from all around the world come together to support one another throughout our degrees, InshaAllah.

Through having such a strong group of Muslims, you truly realise how important friends are to your deen. I am so blessed to have so many friends that help me through everything, from all the stupid questions you can imagine I have a million times a day, to keeping me steadfast on my prayers and my journey as I strive to become a better Muslim.

Alhamdulillah for everything. I hope I manage to see you all around if I haven't met you already!

*Iona Polson*

## Character & Personality Traits

As the new academic year commences, we all have aims and ambitions we wish to achieve academically. However, besides education, it is also important to work on our character and personality.

The best way to do that is to follow the examples set by the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and his companions. The Prophet's companions such as Hazrat Abu Bakr (R.A), Hazrat Fatimah (R.A), Hazrat Umar (R.A) and Hazrat Aisha (R.A), along with other companions, all had amazing character and personalities. These examples, if followed, would benefit us in this world and the hereafter.

The first step is to look at how we greet others. In Islam, we should greet one another by saying:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

*As-salamu 'alaykum wa-rahmatullahi wa-barakatuh*

Peace be upon you, as well as the mercy of Allah and His blessings

This should be responded to by saying:

وَعَلَيْكُمْ السَّلَامُ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

*Wa-'alaykum as-salam wa-rahmatullahi wa-barakatuh*

And upon you be peace, as well as the mercy of Allah and His blessings

In short, we refer to this as "Salaam" (سَلَام, peace). Salaam helps us in becoming closer to one another as it eliminates arrogance, emphasises humility and politeness.

Therefore, it is important we start offering Salam to practice social harmony and spread peace.

Abu Hurairah (R.A) reported that the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) said,

**"You will not enter paradise until you believe, and you will not believe until you love one another. Shall I not tell you about something which, if you do it, you will love one another? Spread Salaam amongst yourselves."**

The hadith tells us the importance of greeting each other with salaam. It also signifies the importance of kind gestures in Islam as a simple salaam can have such a positive impact. At university, now that we are back on campus, we can easily follow this hadith when we meet and greet students. Whether we know them already or meeting them for the first time, giving Salaam makes everyone feel welcomed!

Another great personality trait is companionship. The Prophet's companions worked together and achieved a lot of goodness through unity. Their kindness and love for one another lead them to a lot of success. The best example of this is when the Ansar (Muslims of Madinah) welcomed the Muhajirun (Muslims that migrated from Makkah to Madinah). The Muhajirun migrated due to the oppression they faced in Makkah. The Prophet (ﷺ) put in place a system where he paired each Muhajir with an Ansar that shared similar personality traits.

This way the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) made sure that they would get along with one another. This pairing system teaches us the value of finding someone who shares our traits so that we are able to help the way we would like to be helped. When the Muhajirun were migrating to Medina, they left their homes and belongings behind. The Ansar showed great generosity and care to the Muhajirun by sharing everything they owned with them without seeking any compensation in return. They only helped to seek the happiness and blessings of Allah. This is a great example of brother and sisterhood that our Prophet's companions showed to one another.

In the same way, we as students should be nice, caring and help one another, especially when one is in difficulty. Companionship at university is often sought through friendships. Islam puts great emphasis on companionship especially a good one.

Abu Musa reported: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

**"The example of a good companion (who sits with you) in comparison with a bad one, is like that of the musk seller and the blacksmith's bellows (or furnace); from the first you would either buy musk or enjoy its good smell while the bellows would either burn your clothes or your house, or you get a bad nasty smell thereof."**

*Sahih Bukhari 2101*

This hadith highlights the importance of good friends and how having bad company can negatively impact you so surround yourself with those people who will bring you closer to Allah. Friends are a big part of life especially at university. They empower us and endlessly support us through our time at university and outside of it. Make good friendships and treat everyone with kindness!

The Qur'an states:

***"Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves." (13:11)***

This shows that Allah, the best of helpers, is always there to help us, but we need to make an effort ourselves first. Allah helps those who help themselves!

Looking at some of the behavioural traits of our Prophet (ﷺ), his companions, and the many examples shown in the Quran, helps us comprehend what is expected of us Muslims. If we follow these, we are sure to have a great time at university and outside. Since the new academic year has just started, we can all try to make these our new year goals and have a successful year ahead InshAllah!

*Salma Khan Afridi*

The daily prayers: Fajr, Zuhr, Asr, Maghrib and Isha are one of the five pillars of Islam. Therefore, inarguably fundamental to our deen. Many ahadith and verses from the Qur'an emphasise the obligation of these prayers on every Muslim. Prayer is integral to our faith and we as Muslims should be striving to improve our salat. Salat is not just a physical act however perhaps it is this perception which has lead many Muslims to see prayer as a burden rather than the gift that it truly is. Understandably, every Muslim is on their own journey with prayer, so here are some ways you can improve your prayer wherever you may fall on the spiritual ladder.

1

You can't climb a tree if you never get off the ground. In this manner, the first part to improving your prayer is praying. It takes 21 days to build a habit, fix a set space whether that be at home, uni or work this can help create and solidify that routine of praying. If you struggle to begin with all five, start with one and work your way up before you know it you'll be praying them all daily Inshaallah.

2

Many people struggle to motivate themselves to pray, a lot of this can be attributed to the attitude surrounding salat, viewing it more as a task and something to quickly get over and done with. It is human nature to dislike a thing when it feels like a chore naturally making it more difficult to pray. Instead, prayer should be viewed as a form of self care, time taken out of our busy day to days to reflect and be vulnerable with our creator. This mentality can lead to not just motivation to pray but healthier spiritual and mental wellbeing.

3

Heightening your focus in salah is a guaranteed way of improving. It can be difficult to not let your thoughts wander off during prayer but there are ways we can try tackle that. Understanding what it is you are reading can help create a stronger bond to your prayer as well as maintaining focus throughout it. Another way to improve your salah is to understand the meaning behind Ihsan. Ihsan was mentioned in Hadith Jibrael, highlighting to us how Ihsan is to worship Allah as if you were to see him and if you are unable to do that then as if he sees you, adopting this can lead to a sense of accountability in prayer leading to further improvement.

4

Lengthening prayer and praying optional prayers is a good way to take your salah to that next level. Going beyond that baseline in an effort to please Allah (SWT) can lead to acceptance and great reward. Encouraging family and friends to pray with you can cultivate that Islamic environment leading to you receiving reward for not only yourself but all those you encourage to pray. Knowing what you want to make dua for at the end of your prayer can also be incentive to hop on your prayer mat.

The ultimate game changer for your salah is as simple as loving it. Don't forget salah is a gift from Allah (SWT). A chance to connect with our creator, to unwind from our hectic lives and ultimately to find peace and tranquility in our life.

May Allah (SWT) accept our efforts.

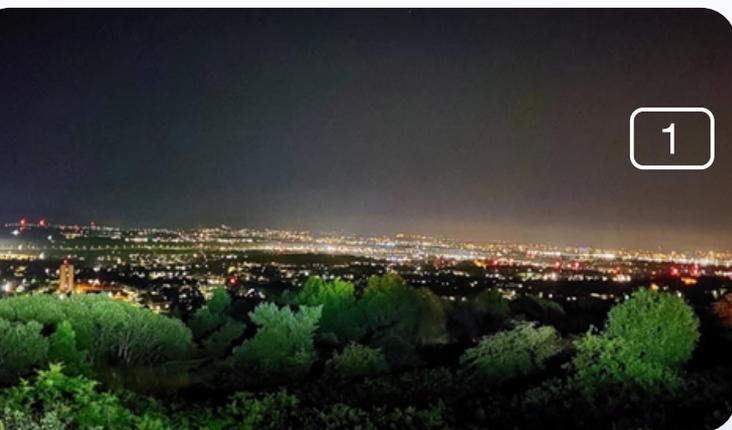
Over the past week I have had the journey of a lifetime. Exploring Glasgow with my friends and even with some random strangers has been an absolute blast... so let me tell you about my favourite places!

PS. Go visit these places while the sun lasts!



Ben A'an was my first hike here in Scotland and it was amazing, even though it took me about 2-3 hrs to get to the top! I'm not in the best shape, so I found it a bit difficult, but it was still fun and definitely worth it to see the view. It was a fantastic climb. The walk was quite steep but rewarding because when I reached the top I was welcomed by the absolutely stunning views this mountain has to offer! This is one site I look forward returning to. I highly recommend it :)

Ever made your own cup then drank from it? I have! At "Café Ceramico"! I absolutely love this place. I have been with friends a few times and every time has been brilliant. The customer service is great, as the staff are so helpful with creative ideas and giving tips on how to achieve certain effects. It has such a nice, chilled atmosphere where you can paint pottery, have a chat, and catch up with friends. In terms of cost; I'd say it's budget friendly and an intriguing new thing to try.



This must be my top choice because it holds my dearest memories of Glasgow. Whether you're looking for a quiet place to study or a place to scream your inner emotions this is the perfect spot. The "Robertson car park viewpoint" allows you to see all of Glasgow (I think) and gives you the feeling that you're on top of the world. Just make sure you get a coat because it can get cold up there!

## Keema Naan

(makes 2)

Keema naan seemingly originated in Central Asia. It's a ground meat infused soft flat bread. This is my mother's recipe, which I still use during university in my flat. My mother is Sri Lankan, so this may be slightly different to other Keema naan recipes online. Insha'Allah you find this simple, filling and scrumptious!



*Actual pictures of my mum's keema naan, sorry about the image quality!.*

### Store cupboard suggestions

- Onions (60p for a bag)
- Potatoes
- Tube of tomato puree (20p)
- Couple of garlic (80p)
- Chili powder bottle/packet
- Oil
- Tandoor chili powder (not actual chili powder but contains a mix of species.) – good for chickpea/bean curries.

- 150g halal mince meat
- 1 medium onion finely chopped
- ¼ bunch of mint, chopped (Asian shop)
- 3 cloves garlic grated/finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon of chili powder
- 2 tablespoons tomato puree
- 1 tablespoon oil, Salt (1 teaspoon)
- Dough: Flour (250g), Water (100ml) and Salt (teaspoon)

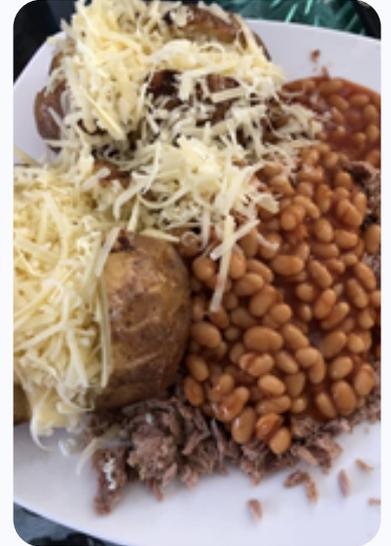
1. Add the chili, garlic, mince, mint, oil, onion, tomato puree and salt into a large bowl. Mix well.
2. In a separate bowl make the dough. Mix flour, water and salt together to make a dough. It should not be sticking to the bowl (add more flour if too 'wet').
3. Cut the dough in half and use one half. Combine it with half the mince mixture to make a ball.
4. Put this ball on a floured cutting board (so the ball doesn't stick) and roll it to make a flat circle about 1/2cm thick (however thick you want it). Width should be diameter of pan.
5. Heat pan (full heat) with a good drizzle of vegetable oil. Once the oil is hot, put the keema naan on and allow to cook for 30 seconds each side. Apply pressure using wooden spoon. Flip over until it looks cooked (avoid burning it). After, spread a little margarine/butter over one surface.
6. Serve on a plate with lettuce, Hellman's mayonnaise (add chili powder to mayonnaise to give it a kick) and a have a glass of milk.

## 'Bismilicious' Jacket Potato with beans

(serves 1)

A recipe from my school food technology teacher which I still use today- especially if I come home late from university placements.

- 2-3 medium potatoes (You can also use sweet potatoes)
- 50g grated cheese
- Tuna tin + 1 tablespoon of Hellman's mayonnaise mixed.
- ½ tin of Baked beans



1. Cut a 'cross' in each potato but not all the way through (want to prevent potato becoming separated).
2. Put in microwave 9-10 minutes (the smaller the potato the less time in microwave otherwise it will get too hard) Do not peel off the skin. The skin contains the flavor and a lot of nutrients. This was to me was a revelation.
3. In the last minute of the potato in the microwave, put half a can of baked beans in (cover with lid to prevent splashing of liquid in microwave) before continuing to heat.
4. Serve potatoes with butter inside and cheese on top. On the side, serve with tuna and beans (keep separate). Say bismillah and tuck in.



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