
His Excellency Dr. Al-Issa: An Opportunity to Strengthen Faith

Health as a Human Right in Islam

Early Hospitals in the Muslim World

Health from a Higher Power



HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The MWL Supports the Global Pandemic Response



*In Islam, human life
comes first.”*

— His Excellency Sheikh Dr. Mohammad
Abdulkarim Al-Issa

About the MWL

The Muslim World League is a non-governmental international organization based in Makkah. Its goal is to clarify the true message of Islam.

Crown Prince Faisal, the third son of King Abdulaziz Al Saud, founded the Muslim World League during the meeting of the general Islamic Conference on May 18, 1962, in order to fulfill his dream for an Islamic Ummah. The establishment of the MWL continued the vision of the Crown Prince to enlighten and educate the international Muslim community, which began with the founding of the Islamic University of Madinah in 1961. The Muslim World League has grown into a worldwide charity to which the Saudi Royal Family remain active donors.

Ascending to the throne as King Faisal in November 1964, the Saudi leader remained steadfast in his faith, proclaiming: “I beg of you, brothers, to look upon me as both brother and servant. ‘Majesty’ is reserved to God alone and ‘the throne’ is the throne of the Heavens and Earth.”

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Recent Activities by the MWL

“ This pandemic requires taking every measure of precaution, including preventing any form of gathering with no exception.”



Dr. Al-Issa met with Director-General Audrey Azoulay at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, France.

MARCH 4

HE Dr. Mohammad Al-Issa made an appearance on French TV Channel **France 24**. In an interview, Al-Issa said that political Islam is not in accord with Islamic values or the national values of any country. He add-

ed that all people must respect the constitution, laws, and culture of the country they are living in and that they should move somewhere else if they cannot.

MARCH 10

The Secretary-General was honored by the **President of the Renaissance of the Muslim Scholars Association in Indonesia**. HE Dr. Mohammad Al-Issa and the MWL were recognized for their commitment to promoting tolerance and moderation around the world and emphasizing the importance of expanding cooperation in the face of extremism.

MARCH 12

HE Dr. Mohammad Al-Issa traveled to the **UNESCO headquarters in Paris** to meet with **Director-General Audrey Azoulay**, who commended the Muslim World League for their trip to Auschwitz in January, saying, "We appreciate the efforts by the Muslim World League in strengthening friendship between nations, and we commend your visit to Auschwitz, leading a delegation of Muslim scholars."

MARCH 16

HE Dr. Mohammad Al-Issa spoke with **Al Arabiya**, where the Secretary-General considered it a "religious duty" to temporarily close places of worship in some Islamic countries to stop the spread of COVID-19. Dr. Al-Issa has asked

Muslims affected by the closures to perform prayer in their homes to prevent the spread of the virus.

MARCH 27

The Muslim World League condemned the terrorist attacks in **Nigeria and Chad**. "We must work together to combat the evil ideological roots of terrorism," – says the statement issued by



Journalist Taoufik Mjaied interviews Dr. Al-Issa on France 24.



Political Islam has no place in France or elsewhere"

– H.E. Dr. Mohammad Al-Issa

HE Dr. Mohammad Al-Issa. In the document, Dr. Al-Issa stressed that those attacks would only intensify the war on terrorism. HE highlighted the importance of continued coordination in confronting the ideological and evil roots of terrorism alongside military confrontation.

MARCH 27

In a statement, HE Dr. Mohammad Al-Issa expressed the Muslim World League's support for the **G20 Virtual Summit** organized by the **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia** to discuss the COVID-19 crisis. Dr.

Al-Issa applauded the Kingdom for taking such swift action in its role as the host of the G20 to take full responsibility in bringing together global leaders to take positive steps in addressing the crisis.

MARCH 29

In an interview with Al-Monitor, HE Dr. Mohammad Al-Issa emphasized the need for interfaith dialogue despite the COVID-19 crisis:

"It will continue beyond this crisis, and that is why we continue to work hard to build more bridges of understanding and cooperation



In Islam, human life comes first. The Muslim World League has received hundreds of messages of support from muftis, senior Islamic scholars and governments with significant Muslim minorities. They realize the necessity of the decision and the imperative to protect human life.”

– H.E. Dr. Mohammad Al-Issa in an interview with Al-Monitor at the beginning of the global coronavirus pandemic.



In his interview with Al Monitor, Dr. Al-Issa discussed the need for greater interreligious dialogue in the face of Covid-19. In 2017, Al-Issa met with Pope Francis to further this mission.

Global leaders united for the extraordinary G20 Virtual Summit to address the COVID-19 crisis.

and to remove the artificial fences created by detachment from each other, and exacerbated by the lack of substantive dialogue in the past.”

HE Dr. Al-Issa responded to Saudi Arabia’s decision to suspend Umrah, the Muslim pilgrimage to Makkah, by stressing that this difficult decision is fully supported by the provisions of Islamic Sharia.

“In Islam, human life comes first. The Muslim World League has received hundreds of messages of support from muftis, senior Islamic scholars and governments with significant Muslim minorities. They realize the necessity of the decision and the imperative to protect human life.”

APRIL 1

H.E. To help fight COVID-19, the Muslim World League regional office in Islamabad, under the supervision of HE Dr. Mohammad Al-Issa, delivered medical supplies to Pakistan’s government. The assistance packages were comprised of necessities, such as protective masks and bags, detectors, and sanitizing products. The delivery was attended by Pakistani officials including, Religious Affairs Minister Noor-ul-Haq Qadri, who

expressed his appreciation for the initiative. In addition to providing medical help, the MWL also initiated a large media campaign in Pakistan to raise awareness and provide guidance on how to prevent the spread of the virus.



In Pakistan, the Muslim World League facilitated the donation of medical supplies including masks and protective equipment for those fighting COVID-19



The outbreak of COVID-19 caused global social and economic disruption.

Editorial Staff of the Journal of the Muslim World League

The month of March brought new challenges for the world with the rapid spread of COVID-19. H.E. Dr. Al-Issa responded immediately to the global pandemic by limiting his international travel and conducting interviews virtually from the Muslim World League headquarters in Makkah.

As Saudi Arabia and other nations around the world confirmed their first cases of COVID-19, the Muslim World League doubled down on its enduring mission to provide aid and support to communities in need, regardless of religion.

In this issue, we address the swift action by the MWL to aid communities most affected by the virus, including the delivery of medical and food supplies from the Muslim World League regional offices around the world, as well as Dr. Al-Issa's call to close

places of worship during the ongoing medical crisis.

In accordance with the provision of Islamic Sharia, Dr. Al-Issa believes human life comes first, which is why he considers it a religious duty to temporarily close places of worship in Islamic countries affected by the virus and asks all Muslims to perform prayer in their homes. The Secretary-General continues to work every day with his fellow leaders on uniting the efforts for the common good of all.

This issue also explores the historical significance of contributions to the medical field from the Islamic world, including the historical precedent for prioritizing health and wellbeing, exemplified by the founding of the world's earliest hospitals in the 9th century and the intrinsic nature of health in Islamic scripture.



An Opportunity to Strengthen Faith

His Excellency Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Abdulkarim Al-Issa



The pandemic has been a challenge not just to the Islamic community, which has seen Friday prayers silent in many mosques, but to the global interfaith community.”

The daily headlines in the media are dire. Countries are closing their borders. Cities are quarantining their citizens. Curfews intended to isolate, prevent human contact and halt the rapidly spreading coronavirus are being implemented around the world.

And still this global pandemic persists, affecting all regions, all people, all faiths. No nation is exempt, no religious community immune or spared.

The deadly spread of this virus prompted the temporary suspension of the Islamic Umrah pilgrimage to Mecca, a religious journey taken by Muslim faithful, a ritual meant to purify the soul from past transgressions.



In this moment, we really are in this together. There is no healing one and forgetting about the other.”

The Umrah is a sacred rite, but it's not more important than our obligation to protect public health and preserve human life.

That is why, lamentable as the decision was, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia acted correctly from a health and religious perspective. As the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques of Mecca and Medina, it was the only decision – just as it was necessary to suspend prayer in mosques across the country.

Human life is a gift and we don't have the right to put it at risk. We have a religious duty to employ all possible precautions to prevent the further spread of this pandemic and to keep our religious brothers and sisters, our fellow compatriots, as well as the entire global family, safe from peril and harm.

As many as 3 million Muslims visit Mecca each year as part of Umrah. The suspension was not only intended to protect the health of Saudi Arabians in the host cities, but also the many pilgrims, the communities they will return to, and the health of the entire world.

The pandemic has been a challenge not just to the Islamic community, which has seen Friday prayers silent in many mosques, but to the global interfaith community.

For Roman Catholics, mass is an obligation. But



Dr. Al-Issa's enduring commitment to interfaith dialogue is exemplified by the first agreement between the Abrahamic religions in France, signed last year.

in many places, mass has been canceled.

Pope Francis "live-streamed" a recent Sunday blessing and the Vatican is now weighing the safest way to conduct upcoming Christian Holy Week Services.

In Jerusalem, the gatherings of all three Abra-

hamic faiths have been restricted.

Saudi Arabia's suspension of Umrah remains under constant evaluation, and it will restart as soon as safely possible. But until then, this is an opportunity for Muslims around the world to strengthen their faith and perform their prayers at home.

Just as it is an opportunity for all believers, of all faiths, to rise to the challenge and pass this test of faith.

Each of us has a chance to recommit to our faith, renew our relationship with our Creator and care for our neighbors, no matter their origin or faith.

Rare are the times when the entire global community is beset by the same threat, and faces a common, deadly danger.

This virus doesn't respect borders, even as we try to close them. No wall will contain it. No fences will protect us.

In this moment, we really are in this together.



To conquer this threat, governments and communities around the world must show similar determination to protect local, regional and global health and security. ”

There is no healing one and forgetting about the other.

Until we are all healed, no one of us is safe.

Now is the time to put all differences aside.

In this battle against an unseen foe, we are one global family.

Some will say that our global interconnectedness brought this upon us, that we would each do better on our own, our doors closed and locked. We cannot give into that fear.

We cannot let this plague separate and divide us.

We cannot let it prioritize the life of one as more important than another.

These times of greatest suffering and threat must make us understand a fundamental truth – all life is sacred, all life deserves our respect and protection.

And preserving and protecting life amidst a global crisis requires us to come together.

Today, there's no us and them.

There's us – all of us – and we need to work together.

Cooperation requires sacrifices, such as the suspension of Umrah and the Pope's closed prayer service. To conquer this threat, governments and communities around the world must show similar determination to protect local, regional and global health and security.

We must honor, encourage and welcome their hard choices. We must pull together and take care of one another.

There are still hard times ahead. But as a global interfaith community, if we treat our brothers as ourselves, if we value the life of each of us, we'll get through this together.

And maybe, once this challenge is defeated, we might find a way to stay together.

THE IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS ON RAMADAN AND IFTAR

Just five years ago, the world's largest Iftar table was assembled in Jeddah. It comprised of 640 tables being joined together to create the 1.5km-long world record for the longest iftar table. The thought of that today would be impossible to fathom.

Sadly, for Muslims who are ill with Covid-19 it means they won't be able to take part in daily fasting. Those who are sick and who have medical conditions aren't advised not to fast. The coronavirus pandemic will also impact people's access to mosques – many of which are shut across the world to avoid the increase of those with this disease. Others are self isolating as they have been in contact with someone with a diagnosis, so they too won't be able to interact as in Ramadans past.

The meaning of Ramadan will be different this year, but at the heart of this spiritual time, we must all take a moment to reflect on our blessings and know Allah is always merciful on its subjects.

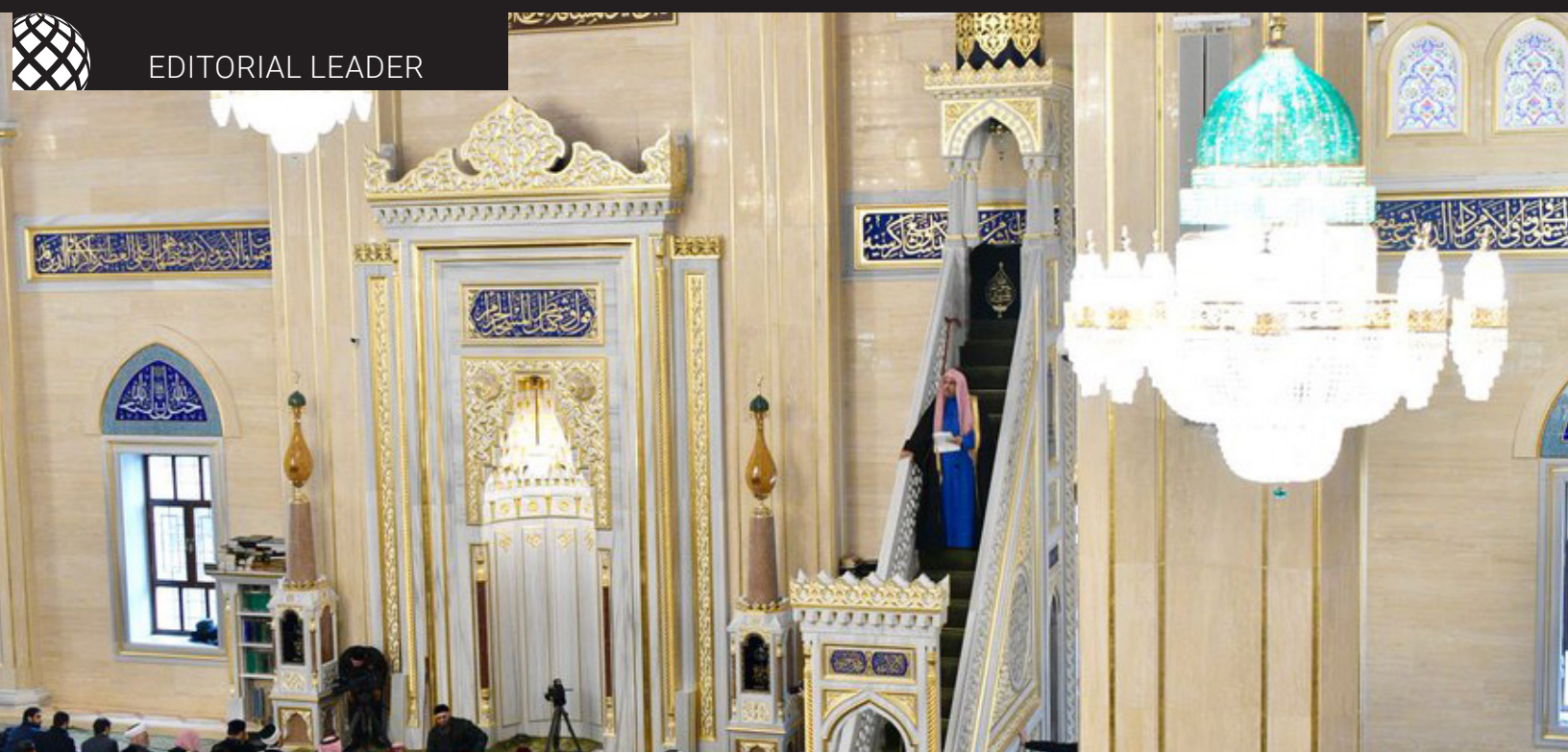
Muslims around the world have begun to reimagine how they will come together during the month of Ramadan.

The month of Ramadan is the holiest month of the year for Muslims. It's a time of joy and gathering of friends and family, and giving back to the poor. It's a time for self reflection and coming together.

Ramadan is also about self control, which this year will include not being able to see or interact with as many people as one would like.

With the coronavirus pandemic ongoing, the cultural norm and tradition of bringing generations of loved ones together as families and friends in a big group for Iftar has been shattered. How will the billions of Muslims across the globe adjust to a new kind of Iftar gathering in smaller groups? How will this impact the spirit of Ramadan this year?





Dr. Al-Issa gives a prayer sermon at the Grand Mosque in Grzony.

Health from a Higher Power: The Importance of Wellbeing for Worship

Editorial Staff of the Journal of the Muslim World League

“No blessing other than faith is better than wellbeing,” the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) once declared. Centuries later, it may be hard for some to take the time to slow down and remember the importance of maintaining physical form in order to improve spiritual wellbeing. But even in today’s fast-paced world, those in search of bettering themselves need look no further than the Qur’an.

Through the teachings of Islam, one can strengthen body and mind while at the same time strengthening the connection to Allah. The ancient wisdom imparted on Muslims for centuries applies to this day, serving as an inspiration

of habits that foster physical, nutritional, and mental health.

The teachings in the Qur’an encourage good physical health to spiritual connectivity. After all, practicing Islam demands exertion, from prayer to pilgrimage, requiring believers to take care of their bodies. Moreover, the Prophet himself practiced various sports that can help to keep Muslims in shape.

All Muslims must perform salat. The prayer is performed five times a day and uses all the major muscles and joints of the body. The physical benefits of salat include increased movement

throughout the body and exercise for one's heart. Physical and spiritual health are both connected to the act of prayer.

The Hajj also requires good health. Obligated to make the pilgrimage to Makkah at least once in their lifetime, Muslims must undertake many days of physical effort. With hot temperatures, strenuous walks, and numerous stairs to climb, the sacred journey must be made with well-prepared minds, bodies, and souls.

Sports are encouraged throughout Islamic texts. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) himself took part and taught, "Any action without remembrance of Allah is either diversion or heedlessness excepting four acts: Walking from target to target [during archery practice], training a horse, playing with one's family and learning to swim." Fencing, foot racing, and wrestling were also suggested and are still practiced to this day.

Good nutritional habits have been recommended for centuries. In the Qur'an, Allah advises his followers to "eat what is lawful and good in the Earth." Food and dietary practices mentioned in the Qur'an are harmonious with recommendations from health authorities today. The acts of fasting, eating in moderation, and consuming recommended foods are all ways to improve one's health and connect closer to the wisdom of the Holy Book.

Fasting has now become increasingly popular in the modern world, but it has long been practiced and recognized for its benefits by the Islamic community. Throughout the month of

Ramadan, Muslims fast from dawn to sunset, devoting themselves to prayer and charitable deeds. Fasting not only brings one a heightened awareness of Allah and improves the soul, but it also has numerous benefits for the body. Fasting aids in weight loss, improves insulin sensitivity and boosts the immune system. Practicing such self-restraint helps with controlling portions, another recommendation of the Qur'an.

One of the best habits for maintaining healthy body weight is moderation. Allah encourages his followers to eat all meals in moderation

through his teaching, "Eat of the good things we have provided for your sustenance, but commit no excess therein, lest my wrath should justly descend on you, and those whom descends my wrath do perish indeed."

The Prophet

Muhammad (PBUH) also warned of gluttony. He preaches, "Don't indulge in over-eating because it would quench the light of faith within your hearts." Heeding this advice can help with weight loss, hypertension, diabetes, and cholesterol.

Searching through the Qur'an, one can find a variety of foods mentioned and recommended by Allah to improve health, such as honey, herbs, grapes, dates, bananas, pomegranate and olives. Many are rich in vitamins and antioxidants. To this day, all are recommendable in a balanced diet. In fact, scientists have found that consumption of higher amounts of olive oil is linked to lower mortality rates in Mediterranean countries. The Qur'an and health professionals both recommend today to eat the meat of cer-



No blessing other than faith is better than wellbeing," the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) once declared.



As a Muslim, maintaining one's health is imperative to being able to perform pious duties and charitable acts."

tain animals, including fresh fish and birds.

Just as important as physical health, mental health is imperative to best practice Islam. One's emotional and social wellbeing directly affects thinking and actions. Reducing anxiety better enables personality traits recommended by Islam, such as inner peace and tranquility. There are many teachings in the Qur'an that provide a toolkit to better improve psychological health. Practicing socialization, proper sleep patterns, and keeping a peaceful mind are three ways one can drastically increase happiness.

Community is crucial in Islamic teachings, and gathering as a group is a common act for Muslims. Islam recognizes the social importance of human interaction and bonding, which can be seen through actions such as congregational prayers, assembling for dhikr, and Eid celebrations. For almost every culture, eating has been a shared act that bonds societies throughout history. The Prophet (Peace be upon him.) said, "Eat together and not separately, for the blessing is associated with the company." Muhammad knew, long before scientists could confirm, just how crucial the act of sharing company was to one's mental state. Psychology professors found that families who routinely share meals together have children with better understandings of their family history and higher self-esteem. These shared times also help give children higher resilience in the face of adversity.

Sleep is frequently mentioned and encouraged in Islamic literature. Both the Qur'an and Hadith detail recommended types of sleep, best sleep practices, and the overall importance of sleep. Through texts, one can find that the Prophet

(Peace be upon him.) recommended adequate sleep within moderation, as he never deprived himself of sleep, nor did he sleep in excess. Science encourages these routines, and subsequent research shows that going to bed early is beneficial for avoiding health issues and improving mood. Sleep and mental health are closely connected, with deprivation having a direct effect on your psychological state.

One of the most beneficial personal attributes for mental soundness is the ability to keep a peaceful mind. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH.) cautioned his followers not to be consumed with anger and encouraged them to practice acceptance during difficult times. One hadith showcases the Prophet's wisdom, saying, "The powerful man is not the one who can wrestle, but the powerful man is the one who can control himself at the time of anger." Not only does remaining calm improve mental wellbeing, but it also reduces one's chance of heart issues, strokes, and a weakened immune system.

The following hadith serves as guidance now, just as it did many years ago: "No one will be allowed to move from his position on the Day of Judgement until he has been asked how he spent his life... and in what pursuits he used his health." As a Muslim, maintaining one's health is imperative to being able to perform pious duties and charitable acts. One requires good health, energy, and a sound mind to perform religious deeds such as praying, pilgrimage and fasting. It is vital to treat your body kindly, through physical exercise, a balanced diet, and a peaceful mind to connect through your faith, in the fullest capacity, to Allah. Islamic teachings serve as a tool to direct these actions.



An Interview with Dr. Hayat Sindi

🗨️ *Dr. Hayat Sindi is an inspiration for health and an inspiration for all.*



Dr. Sindi speaks with students about her research and community outreach.

Few people have achieved as much in the fields of medicine, science and biotechnology as Dr. Hayat Sindi. A native of Makkah, Dr. Sindi's awards are numerous, her accolades are tremendous and her passion for what she does abundant.

Speaking to the Muslim World League magazine, Dr. Sindi discussed what motivated

her to enter these fields. "They are fields with very few women, so I saw a chance to make a difference," she said. "That inspired me. What's unique in biotechnology is how we understand nature, and how it works in a magnificent way. It's about how we understand the human body and how the immune system works, and how we can use all of this biology and transfer it to drugs that can help cure people, medicine that



Dr. Sindi speaks at a leading medical conference, discussing her research.

Dr. Sindi meets regularly with community health leaders as part of her non-profit initiatives with Diagnostic for All.

can target bad cells, and a more natural understanding of diseases.”

Understanding diseases and how to cure them is more urgent than ever given the global pandemic of the coronavirus. “Covid 19 is affecting us all,” Dr. Sindi said. “It’s also sending a clear message of why we need to invest more in people and invest more in the health care system. Look what we’ve seen across the globe, even in the top countries in the world. Their health care systems are weak.”

Dr. Sindi has traveled and worked all over the world, not just because of her role as a doctor, but also due to the numerous awards and recognitions she has received. Voted one of the 100 most powerful women in the world by the BBC in 2018, Dr. Sindi is the Chief Scientific Advisor and Vice President of the Islamic Development Bank, a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador with the role of promoting science education in the Muslim world, a visiting scholar at Harvard University and a member of the Shura Council, Saudi Arabia’s highest consultative body. She was the first Saudi woman to be admitted to Cambridge University in the field of biotechnology and the first woman from the Gulf to earn a Ph.D. degree in biotechnology, from King’s College London, Harvard University and MIT.

Her success is down to her determination to follow her dreams, and let nothing stop her desire to make a difference in this world. During her interview with the Muslim World League magazine from Jeddah, Dr. Hayat explained, “People called me a dreamer, as scientists can live in bubbles. I was out of my comfort zone at Harvard Business School but ... biotechnologists [must] work in a group, so it takes you away from selfishness. ... Science is an open window for me and it showed what you can do for others and how anyone in the world can help society. I have seen that with my own eyes.”

Widely considered to be one of the world’s leading bio-technologists, Dr. Sindi is also the founder of Diagnostic for All, a non-profit initiative that creates low-cost diagnostic devices designed for the developing world. One such invention was a pocket device that can help diagnosis liver dysfunction. Saying she believes in “simple solutions,” Hayat said she wishes that “more people reached out to poor areas and doctors in these areas. This is the real world, and we need to understand it.”

She believes that an understanding of physics and nature can help us design the right diagnostic tools and help us prevent illness. One key element of the social innovation she leads is to

design medicine and cures for those who are on the front lines helping people in the developing world, and that means remembering the challenges the end users face. "We don't always require lots of chemicals that are unavailable to them," she says.

Hayat added that she loves the variety of the fields she works in, saying one goal that truly inspires her is to find a way to prevent asthma, from which her late father suffered. Her father also strongly encouraged her to read about famous scientists like Albert Einstein and Marie Curie and inspired her to become a scientist.

Dr. Sindi's talents and expertise are needed now more than ever, when so many questions remain about the coronavirus. Those questions include how it started, what vaccine may be able to cure it and what might prevent it in the future. Dr. Sindi believes many good ideas will come out of this dramatic time in the history of the world.

She recently received a YouTube video from Uganda showing a system being designed to clean hands in remote areas. Emphasizing the important role of technology in driving innovation, she describes this as one of the key elements of the UN's Sustainable Development Goal Number 3 covering Good Health and Well-being, which calls for the application of technology to promote and produce better health in developing countries.

Dr. Sindi says, "This is a time to have hope. We can't progress without this. We need to give local people the right to flourish, and we will see the amount of intellect and innovation. Being poor doesn't mean you aren't smart. At this time, I hope the world will know – and see – that science and innovation is something everyone can afford. It doesn't

matter if you are rich or poor. This is a wake-up call for all of us."

A wake-up call indeed. In one of her many speeches Dr. Sindi has given around the world, she said, "Challenges never change, but only move up to a new level." Given the health challenges facing the world's entire population due to Covid 19, her advice now for us all is, "We see many challenges, but together many solutions. It's critical to believe in other people. As scientists, we never underestimate our capability of investing in others to give them all a chance, regardless of their race or religion. Creativity is key for development, and prevention is about saving lives."



COVID-19 is affecting us all," Dr. Sindi said. "It's also sending a clear message of why we need to invest more in people and invest more in the health care system. Look what we've seen across the globe, even in the top countries in the world. Their health care systems are weak."





The facade of the Maristan of Sultan al-Mu'ayyad in Cairo, Egypt.

Source: Robert Prazeres

Early Hospitals in Islam: A Tradition of Healthcare

Hospitals have both a very long tradition and history in Islam. They can be dated back to as early as 705 or 715 AC, when a ruler named Caliph al-Walid founded a hospice, possibly a leprosarium, in Damascus.

The first “real” hospital can be dated back to the 9th century and was built in Baghdad. Five more hospitals soon followed, but the most important of the hospitals in Baghdad was founded in 982 by the ruler Ádud al-Dawlah. It had 25 doctors, including oculists, surgeons and bonesetters.

But early hospitals were not limited to Baghdad.

Southwest of Cairo, the first asylum for the mentally ill was built in 872 by the governor of Egypt. Mansuri ospital, built in the 12th century by King Al-Mansur, soon surpassed every other hospital in Egypt in size and importance and was able to maintain its the status as a primary care facility in the country throughout the 15th century. The Mansuri hospital served 4,000 patients daily, free of charge.

Especially the Syro-Egyptian hospitals were built after a very specific outlay. The had a cruciform plan with four vaulted halls (iwans). Those halls were equipped with adjacent rooms, including

kitchens, storage areas, the hospital's pharmacy, and living quarters for those who worked in the hospitals. Big and rich hospitals even had libraries. With every book being written by hand, a large library was an unspeakable treasure. Oftentimes, pious kings and rulers would donate books for a hospital's library to be in its good graces and be able to vaunt their generosity.

The supply of clean water for the medical care and baths was secured with fountains in each iwan and men and women were treated in separate halls. Furthermore, there was already a kind of specialization to the different wings of the hospital. Some of them were reserved for eye diseases, or gastrointestinal complaints, and others again for the mentally ill. Interestingly, for those mentally ill, music therapy was used as a form of treatment as well as storytelling and reading.

At Mansuri hospital, also outpatient clinics already existed and free medicine was supplied to the people.

Also, the methods of diagnosing a patient did not differ much from how it is done nowadays. Physicians and pharmacists made rounds on the patients and prescribed medication. They were accompanied by stewards and instructors, as well as aspiring medical students. Muslim and Christian physicians worked side by side united by the goal of knowledge and healing.

The whole hospital was overseen by an administrator who usually had no medical training. In fact, the appointment to oversee a hospital was political one and subjected to the changing favor of the ruler at the time. Controlling a hospital was a very lucrative task and therefore a coveted position.

The hospitals were financed by pious bequests (waqfs). But also, wealthy men and rulers donated money and property which was spent to maintain and build institutions. Especially for a ruler, it was good publicity to have a famous hospital under his wing.

Not only at Mansuri hospital, services were free of charge. Usually, all hospitals provided medical care without asking for money which is in line with the Sharia law. It says, anyone who is sick needs to be cared for, no matter the financial or social status. Sometimes, discharged patients even received a small stipend so they could work on getting well longer and did not have to return to work straight away. Still, some physicians, especially famous ones, charged fees.



Islamic doctor Abu Ali ibn Sina was known in the West as "the prince of physicians." His "Canon of Medicine" (published 1025 CE) set standards in Medieval Europe and was a must-know textbook there through the 18th century

Some hospitals had real medical schools adjacent to them and the physicians not only treated the ill but also held lectures for those who studied medicine. This was a long and exhausting process and usually only the wealthy could afford to go through it. Teaching hospitals were usually equipped with extensive libraries and lecture rooms. The students also received practical training. Before treating real patients, they had to practice on animal cadavers. Working on human bodies as it is done today, was not allowed.

More advanced students were allowed to diagnose a patient under observation of their teacher and even carry out small medical procedures.

Women were not permitted to study and also were restricted to the female ward of the hospital.

Important for the successful development of hospitals in Islam was that many Greek philosophers' scriptures were translated into Arabic in the 9th century. These philosophers often had studied medicine and gave in their scripture's deep insights into treatment methods and body functions. The trend of building hospitals also found its way into Europe, starting with Muslim Spain. The first known hospital being built there was located in Granada.



Doctors and their students regularly checked in on patients and examined them. The patients were cared for in airy and clean wings of the hospital were allowed to stay as long as needed to make a full recovery.





A copy of the Qur'an, which includes various passages dictating the proper care Muslims must pay to their health.

Health in the Qur'an

The Islamic faith holds that Muslims who seek to live in accordance with the teachings of Islam will experience a prosperous lifestyle. The Qur'an is a book of guidance, outlining the three essential parts that form Islam's holistic approach to life - an approach that covers spiritual, emotional and physical health. Together, these three elements are the key to fulfilling a healthy individual and creating a fruitful life.

Spiritual wellness creates a balance between physical, psychological and social aspects of one's life, which is why it is the first level of health addressed in Islam. Spiritual health is a deeply personal, complex, and abstract concept for

Muslims. The importance lies within understanding the purpose of one's life, and using that as a foundation to approach life. The Islamic faith understands that the material world can present distractions from spirituality. For Muslims, their spirituality cannot exist without submission to Allah.

The Qur'an states that, through Allah, individuals can remain strong in their spiritual growth and pursuit of spiritual health when faced with challenges: "Anyone who believes in God and believes in the last day and leads a righteous life will receive their recompense from their Lord. They have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve" (Qur'an

2:62). Worship Islam explains the importance of allowing Muslims to preserve their spiritual wellness and continue to maintain the personal spiritual connection they have with Allah. One way Islamic followers preserve their spiritual wellness is by following the five pillars of Islam. The five pillars include the Shada, the profession of faith, Salat, the act of worshiping five times a day, Zakat, the participation of Charity, Sawm participating in Ramadan and finally Hajj, visiting the holy city of Mecca.

Emotional health is extremely reliant on one's spiritual wellness, which is why it is the second level of health outlined in the Qur'an. The Islamic faith states that emotional health is associated with a peaceful heart. "O mankind! There has come to you a good advice from your Lord (i.e. the Quran), and healing for that which is in your hearts" (Qur'an 10:57). If a heart is at peace, then all possible

adversities will be seen as blessings rather than disparities. This offers Muslims a chance for optimism when faced with obstacles in life that might affect their emotional wellness. Islamic followers are encouraged to turn to the Qur'an to receive solutions for personal adversities and restoration within their hearts and minds. Muslims are encouraged to routinely read, listen and understand the Qur'an to receive sufficient emotional stability. The Qur'an states that one's heart is content once they become grateful for the blessings they've been granted.

Physical health is the third element of general health outlined within the Quran. Islam explains the importance of maintaining a healthy bal-

anced diet and incorporating exercise for an individual's physical wellness. "O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth (that is) lawful and good and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy" (Quran 2:168). The Quran explains the importance of maintaining a healthy diet. Muslims are encouraged to avoid certain foods that are considered unlawful as well as participate in fasting; all of which promote a healthy lifestyle. With respect to exercise, the Quran encourages all Muslims



The Qur'an outlines the three essential pieces that form Islam's holistic approach to life, an approach that covers spiritual, emotional and physical health. Together, these three elements are the key to fulfilling a healthy individual and creating a fruitful life."

to remain physically active. "Any Action without the remembrance of God is either a diversion or heedlessness excepting four acts: Walking from target to target (during archery practice), training a horse, playing with one's family, and learning to swim" (Tabarani). Islamic followers are encouraged to engage in physical activities to improve the health, strength and overall well-being of the body. The daily performance of the five prayers is a form of exercises, involving stretching and movement of the body. This allows more concentration for prayer and relieving any mental or physical stressors. Prioritizing your physical health will benefit your emotional well-being in addition to relieving stress and anxiety.

Followers of Islam are taught the significance of maintaining optimum health. For Muslims, submitting to Allah offers profound spiritual well-being. Ensuring their heart is at peace establishes and secures a Muslim's emotional health, while incorporating physical exercise and maintaining a balanced diet ensures a Muslim's physical

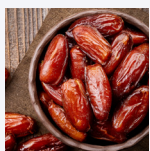
well-being. In Islam, the spiritual, emotional and physical well-being contributes to all aspects of the mind, body, and soul of an individual. The Quran stresses the importance of maintaining each of these elements for the happiness and wellness of each individual, both in daily life and in times of crisis.



And from the fruits of date palm and grapes, you get wholesome drink and nutrition: Behold in this is a sign for those who are wise.”

(Quran 16:67)

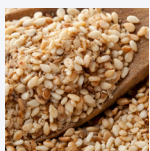
In Islam, human life comes first, and taking care of the health and well-being is a devoir of every Muslim. With the optimally-functioning immune system, our bodies can defend themselves against contracting diseases and infections. While health care providers worldwide disagree on the effectiveness of artificial dietary supplements, nature provides products that help boost immunity successfully, with no side effects. Arabic cuisine has known the beneficial influence of the Earth's best superfoods for ages. Some recommendations reach back to the Umayyad Period and were mentioned in the Quran. Among the most famous Arabic health-boosters are:



DATES: Dates are a great source of protein, fiber, vitamin B6, iron, and antioxidants. Those sweet fruits help balance blood pressure and boost the work of the brain.



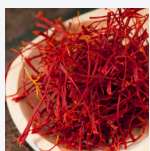
CINNAMON: The aromatic spice is loaded with calcium and antioxidants. Cinnamon has strong anti-inflammatory properties. May cut the risk of heart disease and has a powerful anti-diabetic effect.



SESAME SEEDS: The world's oldest known oil-seeds are rich in magnesium, manganese, zinc, and fiber. They have cholesterol-lowering and blood cell-forming properties, among others.



POMEGRANATE: Low in calories, high in fiber, potassium, and vitamin C, pomegranate also helps with iron absorption. Pomegranate juice has three times the antioxidant activity of red wine and green tea.



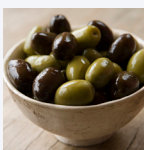
SAFFRON: The world's most expensive spice is high in protein, potassium, vitamins A, B6, C, and antioxidants. May treat depression symptoms, boost mood, and improve memory.



GRAPES: The fruits are known for high antioxidant and vitamin content. Resveratrol, the key grape nutrient, may help protect against cancer, eye problems, cardiovascular disease.



TURMERIC: Turmeric contains active compound curcumin and is high in antioxidants. Its scientifically proven health benefits include preventing heart disease, Alzheimer's, and cancer.



OLIVES: The olive fruit is rich in essential fatty acids and antioxidants. Their beneficial properties include enhancing heart and brain functioning.



Free cataract surgeries sponsored by the MWL dramatically increase the quality of life for patients in Ghana, Comoros, and Senegal.

Health as a Human Right: Prioritizing the Protection of Life and the Human Body



In Senegal, the MWL financed the extension of the medical center in Thies, the country's third-largest city.

The World Health Organization recognizes health as a human right explicitly within its founding document, boldly asserting that “The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the **fundamental rights of every human being** without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition.”

While the recognition that health is a fundamental human liberty did not begin to gain acceptance on the international stage until the twentieth century, the concept has been embedded in the Islamic faith from its beginning. Both the words of the Quran and guidance from the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) have ensured that prioritizing health is a central to every Muslim community and religious practice.

The protection and preservation of life is a central principle of the Islamic faith. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) advised in one hadith: “Sec-

ond to faith, no one has ever been given a greater blessing than health.”

Inherent in this guidance from the Prophet is an indication that health should be prioritized, promoted, and protected through whatever means necessary. The promotion of health itself finds a basis directly in the Quran, prescribing the importance of personal hygiene, sound nutrition, marriage as a means of protecting physical and reproductive health, and respect for the body.

Islam also points to the role that society at large has to play in the promotion and protection of health. As described by Dr. Khayat, every human being has the right to live in a healthy environment.” This obligation on society ranges from refraining from causing pollution to preserving resources critical to keeping people healthy. Similarly, the Prophet underscores the importance of health to Islam in society by defining the relative importance of health and personal wealth, guiding the Islamic community to take action that prioritizes the protection of one’s own health and the health of the community over seeking wealth: “Wealth is of no harm to a God-fearing person, but to the God-fearing, health is better than wealth.”

Beyond community norms, Islam prescribes a specific role for the state in protecting an individual’s health, based on the core principle stated directly in the Quran that the right to life applies to every human being: “If anyone slays a human being...it shall be as though he had slain all mankind; and if anyone saves a human life, it shall be as though he had saved all mankind.” (5:32)

From the inception of Islamic civilization, matters of health were prioritized through the provision

of medical care by the state, without discrimination on the basis of color, race, or religion. The approach taken by early Islamic medical leaders foreshadowed the World Health Organization’s modern day approach to the provision of health services to even the most vulnerable communities.

This was reflected in practice through the early development of Islamic science advancing medicine, and

the access provided to any person in need of treatment. As an early hadith advises: “Make use of medical treatment, for Allah has not made a disease without appointing a remedy for it.”



The promotion of health itself finds a basis directly in the Quran, prescribing the importance of personal hygiene, sound nutrition, marriage as a means of protecting physical and reproductive health, and respect for the body.”



The MWL regularly distributes food aid to communities as a means of ensuring a nutritious foundation to good health.

One of the earliest Islamic contributions to medicine that persists to this day was the advent of the modern hospital. In 1284 C.E., a policy statement by the al-Mansur Qalawun hospital in Cairo encapsulates the Islamic approach to healthcare:



The hospital shall keep all patients, men and women, until they are completely recovered. All costs are to be borne by the hospital whether the people come from afar or near, whether they are residents or foreigners, strong or weak, low or high, rich or poor, employed or unemployed, blind or signed, physically or mentally ill, learned or illiterate. There are no conditions of consideration and payment; none is objected to or even indirectly hinted at for non-payment. The entire service is through the magnificence of God, the generous one.”

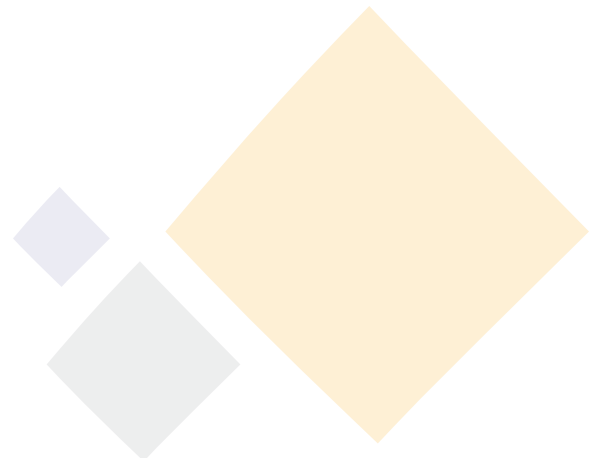
“The hospital shall keep all patients, men and women, until they are completely recovered. All costs are to be borne by the hospital whether the people come from afar or near, whether they are residents or foreigners, strong or weak, low or high, rich or poor, employed or unemployed, blind or signed, physically or mentally ill, learned or

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Early hospitals reflected the Islamic tradition of study and scientific rigor to advance health, guided by the notion that Allah never inflicts a disease unless he a cure is available.

What’s more, the practice of medicine and provision of healthcare services was not confined to only one gender, highlighting the connection between Islam’s treatment of health as a human right and equality of all persons. Rufaida Al-Aslamia, born in 620, is widely recognized as the first female nurse and surgeon who practiced Islam. Rufaida leveraged her medical skills to take care of vulnerable children, individuals with disabilities, and the poor. Her success cuts against stereotypes that cast women as lesser – instead, from a very early time, women have been integral in enhancing society and directly provided critical healthcare services.

Today, the Muslim World League honors this tradition of health as a human right by prioritizing the health and wellbeing of the most vulnerable communities across the world. Its humanitarian programs focus on delivering health resources to improve access to healthcare services: from building hospitals to providing funds for cataract surgeries that enable individuals to regain sight, its commitment is founded in the human rights principles illuminating the Islamic faith.



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