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# Rocket Science

February 2021

Jumada al-Akhir / Rajab 1442



In the name of Allah,  
most Gracious, most Merciful

## Gratitude

We have come to the end of the year 2020 and, for most people, we are happy to say goodbye to it. The main topic of conversation at every turn was COVID-19, and the effect it was having on everyone's lives. The most overused word was *unprecedented*; that is, nothing quite like this has happened before in people's lifetimes. For most people, the discussion was about disappointment, losses, lockdown restrictions, etc; however, there were also successes, pleasant surprises and moments of joy.

Allah (swt) asks us where we are going, but before we can answer this, we need to recognise where we have been. As we reflect over the past year, let us take a moment to reflect and show gratitude for all the blessings Allah has graced us with.

The May 2020 issue of *Rocket Science* contained an article emphasising that, while many things were bad, some things were good. The article concluded, "While it is a worrying time during lockdown, as Muslims we should remember that everything – good or bad – comes from Allah (swt). If it seems bad, we should have patience (*sabr*), and if it is good, we should be thankful (*shukr*). Even in lockdown, we still have a lot to be grateful for."



In short, there are many blessings that we may have overlooked. Allah (swt) says in the Quran (14:34), "If you were to count the favours of your Lord, you could not number them."

### A glass half-full

People are often characterised as glass half-full, or glass half-empty people. That is, it is the same glass. However, some people are optimistic and thankful for the water that is in the glass – what they have. In contrast, other people are pessimistic and ungrateful, and only look at the empty top half of the glass – what they don't have.

Chronic complaining, negativity and ingratitude are some of the worst attributes of modern times. And these are things that have inflicted the Muslim community and our gatherings as well. Not only does this bring you down, but it also brings others down.

We should remember that this is the Devil's strategy, to create despair and disbelief through ingratitude.

Allah (swt) refers to the ingratitude of the Devil in the Quran (7:17): "Then I will certainly come to them [the Devil and other disgraced people] from before them and from behind them, and from their right-hand side and from their left-hand side; and Thou shalt not find most of them thankful." [7:17]

Allah (swt) also laments (34:13), "And few of My servants are grateful."

The importance of realising that everything comes from Allah (swt), and that we should show gratitude for the good we receive, was also expressed by the US president Abraham Lincoln: "We have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation ever has grown; but we have forgotten God! We have forgotten the gracious Hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own."

### **The reality of gratitude**

We all have much to be grateful for, for we are in perpetual blessing. If we were to count our blessings, they would never cease, but only increase.

How many blessings are there that Allah (swt) provides us with, but that we are oblivious to? These may be things we may have never asked for, but in spite of any sins we may have committed, knowingly or otherwise, He continues to give.

True gratitude to Allah is not merely in the form of words, but also through actions. We should

use our blessings and strengths to draw closer to Him and know Him, by following sacred law (*shariah*) and the *Sunnah* of His Prophet (saw). Do we go the extra mile to show appreciation for people?

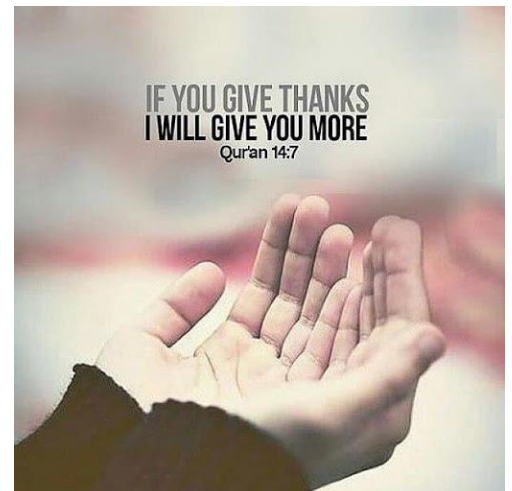
### **Gratitude in the Quran and hadiths**

Many hadiths refer to gratitude, and encourage us to show it.

Aisha (ra) reported, "When the Prophet prayed (the night prayers: *Qiyam-ul-layl*), he would stand until (the skin of) his feet swelled. So, I said, 'O Prophet of Allah, do you do this while Allah has forgiven you all mistakes?' He responded, 'Should I not be a grateful servant of Allah?'" (Muslim).

"Look at those who are beneath you and do not look at those who are above you, for it is more suitable that you should not consider as less the blessing of Allah" (Muslim).

"Whoever is not grateful for small things will not be grateful for large things. Whoever does not thank people, has not thanked Allah Almighty" (al-Firdaws lil-Daylamii).



Several passages in the Quran refer to the prophets, and their gratitude.

"Work, O family of David, in gratitude. And few of my servants are grateful" (34:13).

"O descendants of those We carried [in the ship] with Noah. Indeed, he was a grateful servant" (17:3).

"[He, Ibrahim as, was] grateful for His favours. Allah chose him and guided him to a straight path" (16:121).

"And We had certainly given Luqman wisdom [and said], 'Be grateful to Allah.' And whoever is grateful is grateful for [the benefit of] himself" (31:12).

### Gratitude when sleeping and waking

At the end of each day, and the beginning of the next, we should acknowledge our gratitude that we are still alive and our daily needs are fulfilled.

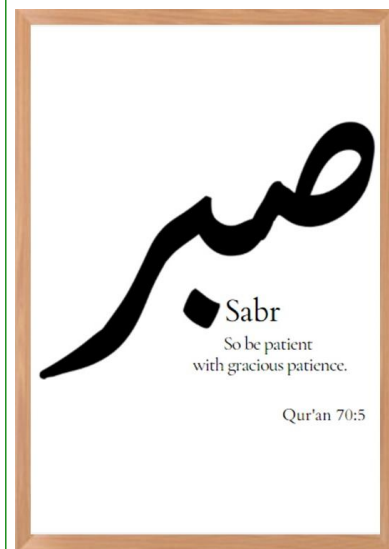
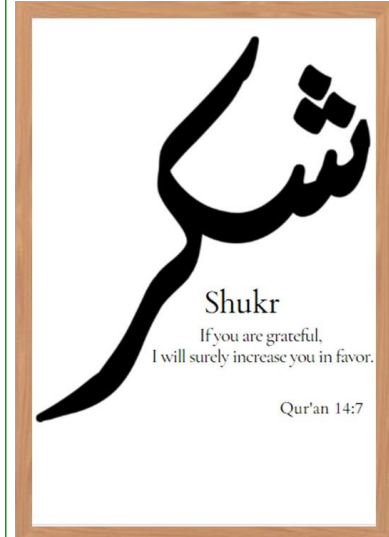
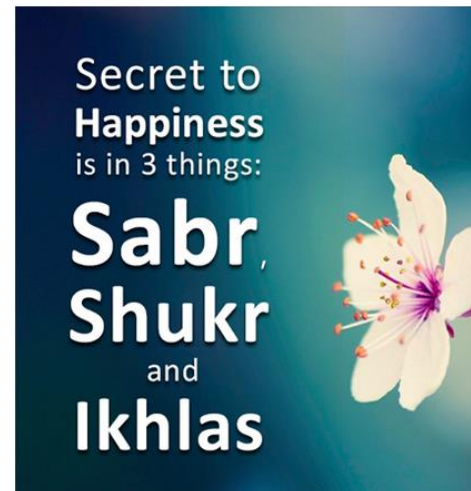
Anas reported that the Messenger of Allah would say, when he retired to his bed, "All praise is due to Allah who has fed us, given us drink, sufficed us, and sheltered us. How many are those who do not have enough and have no shelter?" (Muslim).

The American comedian George Burns, who passed away aged 100, summarised the corresponding feeling in the morning, in humorous fashion: "I get up every morning and read the obituary column. If my name's not there, I eat breakfast."

### Teaching our children gratitude

We should inculcate in our children a sense of gratitude, not just gratitude by words but also gratitude through expression. We should teach them that the real source of all their blessings and pleasures is Allah (swt). We should all therefore thank Him through praise and worship.

In the Quran (14:7), Allah (swt) makes it clear that such gratitude will be richly rewarded. "And when your Lord made it known: If you are grateful, I will certainly give you more, and if you are ungrateful, My chastisement is truly severe."



## Effective fatherhood: A lesson from Prophet Jacob (as)

The world began to radically change in the 20th century with social and technological changes. These changed the family structure and function. However, can we call them “advances, developments, progress, improvements”? Many people would dispute this.

The father’s importance and role has come to be defined as simply the one who provides and earns. That is, the father is typically the one who goes to work, and brings a salary home, to pay for food, clothing, etc. But is this the only role a father plays in the development of his children?

Statistics show that most at-risk youth and young criminals are those that did not have a meaningful relationship with their father, or they lacked a positive male role model in their young, formative years. This void manifests itself in the form of crime, addictions, and mental issues.

Being an active and engaged father means playing a significant role in a child’s life. Many of us may be educated in various fields or hold qualifications, but may or may not know what it takes to be a good parent. You do not need qualifications to father a child, but the status of being a good father role model requires understanding and various skills. Unfortunately, some fathers do not give full attention to their children and are too busy on their phones or watching the television. It is thus no surprise if the children have no interest in us when they grow older.

### Jacob (Yaqub, as) as a model father

The messengers and prophets sent by God were not role models simply in rituals, but also in all facets of life, including being good fathers. One example of this is seen in the timeless example of Prophet Jacob (Yaqub, as), as told in Surah Yusuf (Joseph, as), the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Quran.

“When Yusuf said to his father, ‘O my father! Surely I saw eleven stars and the sun and the moon, I saw them making prostration to me’” (12:4).

Various points can be made about the exchange that this started, between son and father.



Joseph (as) addresses his father in a loving fashion ("O my father").

Who did Joseph run to and share his dream with? His father. We learn that Jacob (as) as a father has created such a nurturing environment for his child, that Joseph can run to him and share his dream, knowing his father will listen.

When our children come to us and share their concerns, do we, as fathers, listen and pay attention to what worries our children, and try to solve their problems? Jacob (as) clearly did, as he replied (12:5): "O my dear son! Do not relate your vision to your brothers, lest they devise a plan against you; surely Shaitan is an open enemy to man."

Just as Joseph (as) addressed his father as "O my father", so Jacob (as) shows affection in the way he addresses his son: "O my dear son!" Similarly, our children need to know they are loved, and this needs to be demonstrated and expressed.

Jacob (as) does not convey the faults of his brothers, but instead protects their relationship with Joseph (as). He simply tells him "Don't tell your brothers", without going into details why he should not tell them.

Jacob (as) does not put blame on the brothers, but rather attributes their faults to Shaitan, leaving the door open to hope that they may change.

The surah continues (12:6), "And thus will your Lord choose you, and teach you the interpretation of sayings, and make His favour complete to you and to the children of Jacob, as He made it complete before to your fathers, Ibrahim and Ishaq; surely your Lord is Knowing, Wise."

Jacob (as) acknowledges and recognises the good in his child from this one conversation, instilling confidence in him about the future.



Nowadays, some parents often criticise their children or compare them to others. They do not acknowledge their children's achievements, but focus instead on their shortcomings. This is captured in the following joke, common in some cultures: "Why did you get stung by a bee? Why couldn't you get stung by an A?"

As a result of this negativity from their parents, children grow up doing the same thing in later life: criticising and not seeing the good in people, including themselves.

### **Conclusion**

We see in the example of Jacob (as) how loving a father needs to be to young children. Our children have been given lots of gifts and talents. These can only be discovered when we become good listeners and engage in conversation with our children.

If we are effective parents, our children should grow up with a strong sense of identity, and strong relationships. They are less likely to suffer from anxiety and depression, and will be better at adjusting to new situations. Our children themselves should grow up to be good parents to their children.

We should practise what we preach, through our behaviour. A child will follow our example, rather than our advice. And, as Muslims, we believe that the best role model was Prophet Muhammad (saw).

As parenting guru Barbara Johnson put it, "To be in your children's memories tomorrow, you have to be in their lives today."



## The story of Layla

Any reader who is familiar with western pop music over the last half century will know the song *Layla*<sup>1</sup>. This article describes various connections associated with this song, and an unexpected link with Islam.

The first part was written by Eric Clapton, while the second, piano part was by Jim Gordon. The famous seven-note riff with which the song starts was in fact written by Duane Allman, of the Allman Brothers Band, with whom Clapton was collaborating at the time. The song was released in early 1971 as a track on *Layla and Other Assorted Love Songs*<sup>2</sup>, the only LP record by Derek and the Dominos, and a subsequent single. Derek and the Dominos<sup>3</sup> was a stage name, as nobody in the group was named Derek. It consisted of Clapton (guitar), Gordon (drums), Bobby Whitlock (keyboards) and Carl Radle (bass). Allman contributed lead and slide guitar on some tracks. A guest participant at the first of their live gigs was George Harrison of The Beatles, a friend of Clapton. Allman passed away in late 1971 at the age of 24.

The song surprisingly did not fare well originally, only peaking at 51 on the Billboard Hot 100 charts. However, after Allman's death, and the release of *An Anthology* of his work, along with *The History of Eric Clapton*, it became the 60<sup>th</sup> best-selling song of 1972. Dave Marsh of *Rolling Stone* magazine ranked it 156 in his *The Heart of Rock & Soul: The 1001 Greatest Singles Ever Made*.

### Background to Clapton's Layla

*Layla*, some of the other songs on the album, and Clapton's 1977 hit *Wonderful Tonight*, were written by Clapton because of an infatuation with Pattie Boyd<sup>4</sup>. She was a model who had married Harrison in 1966. They had met during the filming of the Beatles' 1964 film *A Hard Day's Night*, in which they both appeared. Harrison's 1969 Beatles song *Something (in the way she moves)* is also a love song to Pattie Boyd, although alternative inspirations have been suggested. Harrison and Boyd divorced in 1977, and Boyd then married Clapton in 1979. However, they subsequently divorced in 1989.



Boyd and Harrison

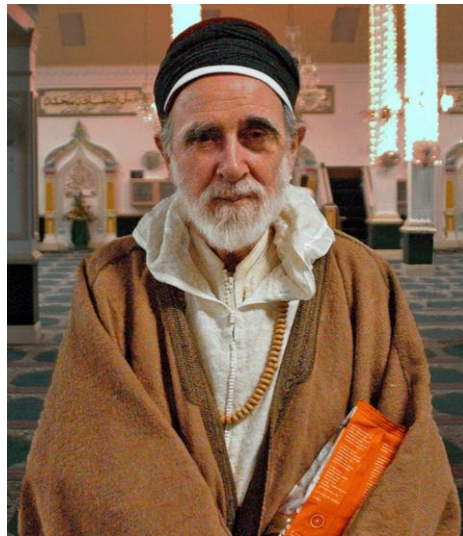


Boyd and Clapton

**Who suggested the title *Layla*?**

The title *Layla* was suggested to Clapton by Ian Dallas<sup>5</sup>. He was born in Ayr, Scotland in 1930, travelled extensively to Greece, France and Italy, eventually living in London in the 1960s, where he became friends with Clapton. He converted to Islam in 1967 and took the name Abdalqadir as-Sufi. He is a leader of the Darqawi-Shadhili-Qadiri Tariqa, founder of the Murabitun World Movement and author of numerous books on Islam, Sufism and political theory. He has been responsible for the establishment of the Ihsan Mosque in Norwich, England, the Great Mosque of Granada, and the Jumu'a Mosque of Cape Town.

He suggested the title *Layla*, based on *The Story of Layla and Majnun*<sup>6</sup>.



Abdalqadir as-Sufi

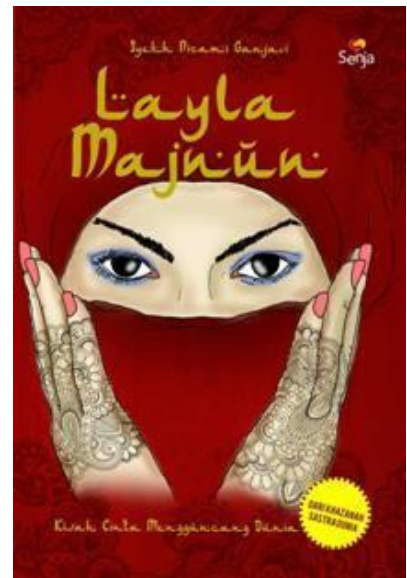
***The Story of Layla and Majnun***

*The Story of Layla and Majnun* is a traditional Arabic story about the 7th-century Najdi Bedouin poet Qays ibn al-Mullawah and Layla bint Mahdi. They fall in love with each other while young; however, Layla's father does not permit them to be together. Qays becomes obsessed with Layla, and he is given the nickname *Majnun* (literally "possessed by jinns", thus "crazy"). The story spread from Arabic to Persian, Turkish, and Indian languages. The most famous version of it is the narrative poem composed in Persian in 1188 by the Persian poet Nizami Ganjavi.

The first song on the second side of the *Layla and Other Assorted Love Songs* LP is entitled "I Am Yours", a direct quotation from a passage in *Layla and Majnun*.

**Conclusion**

So, the title of Eric Clapton's famous song *Layla* was inspired by a traditional Arabic love story suggested by a modern-day Scottish convert shaikh.



1  
[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Layla](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Layla)  
 2  
[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Layla\\_and\\_Other\\_Assorted\\_Love\\_Songs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Layla_and_Other_Assorted_Love_Songs)  
 3  
[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Derek\\_and\\_the\\_Dominos](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Derek_and_the_Dominos)  
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[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdalqadir\\_as-Sufi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdalqadir_as-Sufi)  
 6  
[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Layla\\_and\\_Majnun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Layla_and_Majnun)



## Voice of Islam announcement

Voice of Islam is a trust, a non-profit and voluntary charitable organisation. It was established in 2004, and has been broadcasting television programmes ever since. Its mission has always been to deliver the message of Islam based on the teachings of the Quran and the Sunnah (practices) of the Prophet Muhammad (saw), without promoting any political, national, ethnic, social or class perspective.

After the 15 March 2019 mosque attacks in Christchurch, VOI decided to expand and aim to deliver the message of Islam in the best manner, and fight the hate and disinformation about Islam.

Technologies change and develop. It is increasingly the case that people nowadays do not access information so much by television, but use the internet, social media, etc. In addition, of course, the internet and social media are virtually free, whereas television programmes come with substantial broadcasting costs.

As a result, VOI has decided to discontinue its television programmes.

Instead, it now disseminates information through social media feeds. These can be watched live, or as recordings. They may take the form of:

- talks by individual speakers
- sessions where questions sent in by viewers are answered
- one-to-one discussions with a moderator, often "My journey to Islam" stories by converts
- webinars with more than two speakers, often well-known international figures

To access this free online material, and to subscribe for announcements, updates, etc, go to the following:

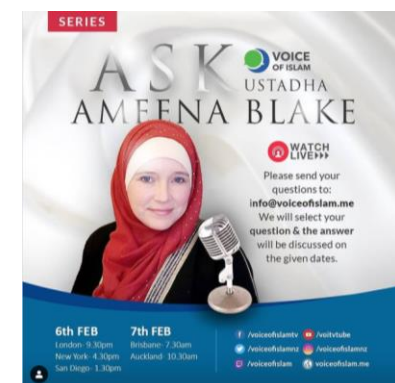
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[instagram.com/voiceofislam](https://instagram.com/voiceofislam)  
[twitter.com/voiceofislam](https://twitter.com/voiceofislam)

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Guests: Yusha Evans, Fahad Tasleem, Jamshed Javed, Yusuf Chambers



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## Why attend Rocket Park jumuah?

Prayers are held at the **Senior Citizens' Association building, Rocket Park, New North Road, Mount Albert.**

- ✓ Central location
- ✓ Plenty of free parking
- ✓ Facilities for ladies
- ✓ Heating and air-conditioning
- ✓ Bayan (religious talk) before jumuah prayers
- ✓ All bayans and khutbahs in English

NB We are only open for Friday prayers – not for the five daily prayers.

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Missed an issue of *Rocket Science*? All our monthly issues are available online at the Mount Albert Islamic Trust website: www.mtalbertislamiccentre.org

## *SwT, saw, as, ra*

**SwT:** subhanahu wa ta'ala "Glory to Him, the Exalted" (when mentioning Allah)

**saw:** salallahu alaihi wassalam "May the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him" (when mentioning Muhammad)

**as:** alaihis salam "Peace be on him" (when mentioning other prophets)

**ra:** radi allahu anhu/ha/hum "May Allah be pleased with him/her/them" (when mentioning members of Muhammad's family, companions, etc)