

Information for Khutbah content: World Alzheimer's Day/Month

(Recite ayahs in Arabic and follow up with translation. These are guidance notes to be delivered in a style that suits you and your congregation. May Allah guide to what is best)

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا مِمَّا تُنْبِتُ الْأَرْضُ وَمِنْ
أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمِمَّا لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

"If We grant long life to any, We cause him to be reversed in nature..." (Surah Yasin, Ayah 36)

We are in Alzheimer's and Dementia Awareness Month and it is part of our faith to be aware that such things may afflict us. It is clearly stated in the Qur'an that if we are granted long life then as we enter old age we will likely face a decline in strength and knowledge:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِن كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّنَ الْبَعْثِ فَإِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِّن
تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِّن نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِّن عِلْقَةٍ ثُمَّ مِّن مُّضْغَةٍ مُّخَلَّقَةٍ وَغَيْرِ
مُخَلَّقَةٍ لِّنَبِّينَ لَكُمْ وَنُقِرُّ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ مَا نَشَاءُ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ
نُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوا أَشُدَّكُمْ وَمِنْكُمْ مَّن يُتَوَفَّىٰ وَمِنْكُمْ مَّن
يُرَدُّ إِلَىٰ أَرْذَلِ الْعُمُرِ لِكَيْلَا يَعْلَمَ مِن بَعْدِ عِلْمٍ شَيْئًا وَتَرَى
الْأَرْضَ هَامِدَةً فَإِذَا أَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا الْمَاءَ اهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَتْ وَأَنْبَتَتْ
مِن كُلِّ زَوْجٍ بَهِيجٍ ﴿٥٠﴾

People, if you are in any doubt about the resurrection, We originally created you from clay, then from a drop of semen, this became a clot of blood, then a lump of flesh – some parts recognisable others unrecognisable – then a foetus. We revealed this to make the Resurrection clear for you. We plant in wombs whatever We chose for a fixed term, then We bring you out as a baby; then you reach maturity, after which some of you die young while others proceed to feeble old age, to the extent that they know nothing after having known so much. Likewise, you see the

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Earth appear lifeless; then, when We send down rain, it stirs and swells, producing beautiful pairs of plants. (Surah Al Hajj, Ayah 5)

Some people in the congregation may have family who have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's or another form of dementia. Here are some of the common signs and symptoms of Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia to be aware of:

- Memory loss is the most common symptom. This will show up in the form of forgetting important dates or events, repetitive questioning, forgetfulness beyond the expected with aging.
- Individuals can change in personality and mood, becoming anxious, confused, suspicious, depressed, agitated, and fearful particularly when they are somewhere that is not familiar to them.
- Dementia can impair judgement and decision making so that the individual might appear irresponsible. This could be things like dressing improperly for the weather, giving excess money to people including strangers, and attention to grooming and hygiene may decline. They may begin to say tactless things or shoplift.
- Mislacing things which happens to the best of us however those from Alzheimer's are likely to leave their things in strange places and become unable to retrace steps when trying to figure out what they have done/are meant to do.
- Communication challenges can arise due to a difficulty with vocabulary and other aspects of language which means conversations may stop mid-sentence.
- Sleeping difficulty due to a malfunctioning body clock and declining ability to separate reality and dreams can arise.
- Shadowing can occur and it shows up as childlike and clingy behaviour. It can be like dealing with a toddler in adult form.

These are a few of the symptoms that you may see in someone with dementia. You can see how the reversal back to childlike being as described in the ayahs mentioned earlier. It is important to seek diagnosis as soon as there is suspicion that Alzheimer's may be involved so that you can seek and gain support both for the carer(s) and the individual with Alzheimer's. It is difficult to witness this decline in loved ones or parents. It is equally difficult to manage their care without some support and self-care. It can impact us emotionally, psychologically, physically and spiritually.

We are encouraged to treat our elderly with respect, kindness and compassion:

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وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا إِمَّا يَبُلُغَنَّ
عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا
وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا ﴿٢٣﴾

“And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honour.” (Al-Isra:23)

And this can be seen as an opportunity to not only serve them but to also gain the pleasure of Allah (SWT) and bi'idhnillah entry to Jannah:

Abu Hurairah who reported hearing the Prophet (SAW) saying "May his nose be rubbed in dust! May his nose be rubbed in dust! May his nose be rubbed in dust!" So Abu Hurairah asked, "Who should be humiliated in such a way O Messenger of Allah?" He, the Prophet (SAW) said: "He who found his parents, one or both of them, approaching old age, but did not enter Paradise." (Bukhari and Muslim) Some guidelines on how to interact with the elderly in general but particularly those who may have dementia. The treatment of parents should be used as a baseline:

- Remember what parents and our elders may have done for us. Have patience and be tolerant
- Be grateful for the opportunity to serve them
- Self care – ensure that you share the load if possible, if not then look at ways to gain respite. Being a carer is hard work.
- Treat them with love, mercy, kindness, understanding and compassion
- Take over roles and responsibilities slowly and as needed, explaining to the elder as much as you can and gaining their consent where possible. Remembering to maintain their dignity
- Accept that conversations will have to be repeated. For the person with dementia it will be as if they are having it for the first time.
- Avoid reminding them that they are getting things wrong or are forgetful. Doing so is likely to generate confusion and/or induce shame

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- Doing what is right for them to the best of your capacities. Ideally we ought to take care personally of our parents.
- Have humility as per the ayah: *And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say: "My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was small."* (Al-Isra:24)
- Make copious amounts of du'as for them and for yourself.
- Approach organisations that can support you such as Age UK, The Alzheimer's Society, The Dementia Society, Meri Yaadein and Carers Trust.

This Khutba was written by Khalida Haque, Clinical Services Manager at Mind CHWF a partner organisation of Muslim Mind Collaborative, in consultation with Imam Shahnawaz Haque, Islam-based Psychotherapist and Marital Counsellor
Further information can be found at:

Alzheimers Society

<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/research/our-research/research-projects/exploring-dementia-south-asian-community>

Report and toolkit for BAME and Dementia

https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-09/ethnic_minorities_increasing_access_to_diagnosis.pdf

Ramadan guide

<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/blog/ramadan-and-dementia-care>

ADAPT South Asian Dementia Pathway

An online toolkit:

<https://raceequalityfoundation.org.uk/adapt/>

Meri Yaadain

<http://www.meriyadain.co.uk>

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Meri Yaadain (meaning my memories), was set up in January 2006 as a project to explore the impact of dementia on South Asian families who were absent at the point of accessing care and support.

Multiple resources (posters/booklets etc) in different languages:

<http://www.meriyadain.co.uk/information/>

TIDE

Caring for someone with Dementia during Ramadan toolkit in multiple languages:

<https://www.tide.uk.net/resources/south-asian-carer-resources/>

Age UK

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk>

The Dementia Society

<https://www.dementiauk.org>

Carers Trust

<https://carers.org>

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