

## How blessed are you?

This was the theme of our local Interfaith Women's Iftar 2020 – a much smaller gathering than usual as 'lockdown' conditions prevented a physical gathering.

It was unanimously agreed that all are very blessed at present; even it generally does not appear so. With some having parents and other family members isolated in other countries and counties, technological developments have facilitated communications to know others are safe. These and other



interactions with friends in different territories have enabled comparisons to take place and for individuals to realise that, no matter how bad things appear, there are others worse off.

Families are getting to spend more time together and with life having slowed down, it is much easier to appreciate and cope with fasting, aside from the quality time with children. Yet, being able to escape to the car for some peace, quiet and solitude has been just as valued.

The wider impact too was recognised – wild animals starting to venture into urban areas, mountains previously hidden from view being seen as the air has become cleaner and locally, our own skies a more vivid blue. The many homeless lost amongst the thousands of legs/feet pounding the streets of London became visible with the result that 80-90% have been housed in vacant hotels and had some dignity restored. What happens next is yet to be seen. We hope and pray there is a change in attitude and behaviour so that solutions to inequalities are found. Knowing that we are also called to action to turn those hopes and prayers into reality. We might not be able to tackle the big issues, but as peoples of faith, we can do our bit – what are you called to do?

The Abrahamic God is one who bestows blessings, yet I was intrigued to note in the cross-scripture guide I have that there is no section listed in either the contents or index for Blessing. Is it a feature of our religions/faith that is so taken for granted? Have we needed these seemingly dark days to appreciate how blessed we are and to see that every cloud does indeed have a silver lining?

Blessings come in many guises – not always immediately apparent, but if we take time out of our busy schedules, we're sure to be able to identify them – and once you start, there seems to be a snowball effect... for starters, consider the Beatitudes (Matthew 5; [Qu'ran](#) 7:161; 7:94-95; 90:17; 21:105; Hadith; 76:8,12; 8:61, ) and end with Numbers 6:24-26 (Qu'ran 3:193): The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

How blessed are you?

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