

GUIDELINES FOR KEEPING WARM IN WINTER

Sulaym ibn Aamir narrates that when winter would come, Sayyiduna Umar ibn al-Khattab (*radhiyallahu anhu*) would be extra mindful of them and write to them, advising: “Winter, which is an enemy, has come, so prepare for it with wool, leathers socks, and socks. Use wool as your under-clothing and outer-clothing, because the cold is an enemy that enters quickly but leaves slowly.”

Ibn al-Rajab al-Hanbal (*rahimahullah*) comments that Sayyiduna Umar (*radhiyallahu anhu*) would write this advice to the people of Syria when it was conquered in his era, as he was worried that the Companions and others who had not previously experienced such cold would be harmed by the cold of Syria. This was out of his complete well-wishing, graceful vigilance, compassion and safeguarding of his subjects. May Allah be pleased with him (Lataa’if al-Ma’arif).

Following in the footsteps of Sayyiduna Umar (*radhiyallahu anhu*), the following is some important advice on what we can do to protect ourselves against the cold and stay warm this winter:

Wearing warm clothes

The best way to protect against cold and stay warm is to wear warm clothes, especially when going outdoors into the cold.

Allah mentions warm clothing amongst His many favours:

“And the grazing livestock He has created for you; in them is warmth [i.e., warm clothes] and [numerous] benefits” (Qur'an, 16:5).

He also said,

“And from their wool, fur and hair is furnishing and enjoyment for a time” (Qur'an, 16:80).

Wearing a number of thin layers, especially clothes made of cotton, wool and fleecy fibres, helps to keep the body warm. Keeping the feet warm and dry is particularly important, not forgetting footwear with good grips during icy/snowy periods.

Even if you are going out into the cold for a few minutes, to put the bins out perhaps or to get something out of the car, wrap up warm; a few moments of being exposed to the cold is enough to make a person ill.

Keeping your head warm with a scarf or hat is important, as a lot of body heat is lost through the head.

Eating properly

Good nutrition is vital to keep the body warm. Hot meals (soups in particular) and hot drinks will help you stay warm throughout the day. Wholegrains, legumes (lentils, peas, chickpeas, beans) root vegetables (potatoes, carrots, turnips etc.), vegetables in general, citrus fruits, spices (in moderation!!!) and herbs (especially ginger), almonds, walnuts, pistachio and other nuts, dried fruits (especially dates and figs) are excellent choices to boost our health during winter.

Keeping the house warm

Cold and damp houses negatively affect our health, so keeping the house warm is a must for staying healthy during winter. We sometimes overlook the most obvious things which make our houses cold, such as unnecessarily opening windows and not attending to draughts under doors, so think about ways to minimise heat escaping from the house; this will also help to reduce heating costs.

Taking care of others

As Muslims, it is our duty to be concerned about the welfare of others and not just be concerned about ourselves. Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, "*None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself*" (Bukhari, Muslim).

We should be checking on relatives, elderly neighbours or anyone who is more vulnerable during the cold, ensuring they have what they need to stay warm and safe, especially during the night. If we can save an elderly person the trouble of going out in the cold and do their shopping for them, or run other errands for them, we should do so and earn immense reward from Allah.

And let us not forgot the spirit of Sayyiduna Umar ibn al-Khattab (*radhiyallahu anhu*) towards the people of Syria, who are currently enduring extreme hardship and struggle, with many of them battling against the bitterness of winter without ample clothing, food and shelter.

There are a number of reliable charities that are providing much-needed provisions to our brothers and sisters in Syria, and other parts of the world. Each Muslim home should aim to provide for at least one family this winter and help alleviate the suffering Allah, out of His Mercy, has saved us from.

May Allah keep us all in His protection, and make us all a means of blessings, comfort, guidance and happiness for others. Aameen.

Please share with friends and families

(Courtesy of Mufti Javed Iqbal, Birmingham)