Welcome to my weekly column on **Self-Care and Clarity of Mind**. If you're taking time out to read this, pat yourself on the back because you have shown commitment to taking care of your mind and body.

Today, In Shaa ALLAH, we will explore the topic: **Self-Care Is Not Selfish**

What self-care acts you have performed today? When I ask my clients this question, the common response I get is: "What do you mean, self-care? Isn't that a bit selfish? I can't ignore everyone else and put myself first. I wasn't raised that way."

Let us understand the vital difference between self-care and selfishness and why self-care is not selfish but rather without self-care, it becomes absolutely impossible to care for others and be a healthy individual in body and mind.

To be selfish is to lack concern and care about others and indulge in personal pleasures and profits.

To practise self-care is to care for yourself with the intention to be a better person in mind, body and spirit, so that you live a full life of love, light, peace and joy and are able to spread love, light, peace and joy to others.

In order to understand self-care at a deeper level, let me explain about your **Physical and Essential Self.**

We often take our **'Physical Self'** as the primary self. When it comes to self-care, we need to delve deeper and find the **'Essential Self'** - our essence. This Essential Self is what dwells inside the physical body. Our spiritual self.

For example...

When you use words like: "I am angry", "I am fat", "I am confused", "I am hungry" and so on, what you are really saying is that your physical body is angry or fat or confused or hungry. Your energy force, the Essential Self, within you, "I", is free from anger or hunger or confusion or fat.

When the Essential Self is ignored for too long, the Physical Self begins to show negative symptoms such as anger, confusion, anxiety, fear, accumulation of abdominal fat, lack of sleep, fatigue, worry, increased blood pressure and shallow breathing, to name a few.

Now, ask yourself...is it selfish to care for your Essential Self so that your Physical Self operates at an optimum level? Think about it...if your Physical Self has been manifesting symptoms of fatigue, poor concentration, agitation, anger, irritability and more, how is that affecting your ability to care for others? How is it affecting your ability to pray? To connect with ALLAH? To live a life of joy and positivity?

The truth is that lack of self-care leads to negative behaviour patterns whereby you eventually feel resentful towards others (the same people you are caring for) and resentful towards yourself. This further results in terrible outbursts of anger or complete withdrawal from people. Before you realise it, you are on pills for a diagnosed mental health issue and are programmed to believe that there is a label that defines you, when in reality, all you need is self-care.

Strategies for Self-Care

- Be compassionate, gentle and caring towards yourself. Do not judge yourself with negative self-talk
- Change negative thoughts by immediately being grateful to ALLAH, and mean it
- Care for others with an intention to care, not with an intention to seek approval or to please
- "No" is a complete sentence. Practise saying "No" and understand that you do not always have to explain why you are saying "No"

- Say "Yes" with love and compassion, not resentment and guilt
- Upon waking up, express gratitude to ALLAH for giving you this brand new day to be a better Muslim
- Be grateful for your body and all its organs. Take care of it by resting and sleeping on time, eating the right foods and drinking water and healthy beverages. Exercise for at least 15 minutes daily
- Inspire others to care for themselves
- Speak only positive words, think only positive thoughts, perform only positive deeds
- Repeat this Positive Affirmation daily: **ALHUMDOLILLAH - Everyday in every way, I am better and better.**
- Love yourself (if you have a hard time understanding this, contact me for a Clarity-Coaching session).