

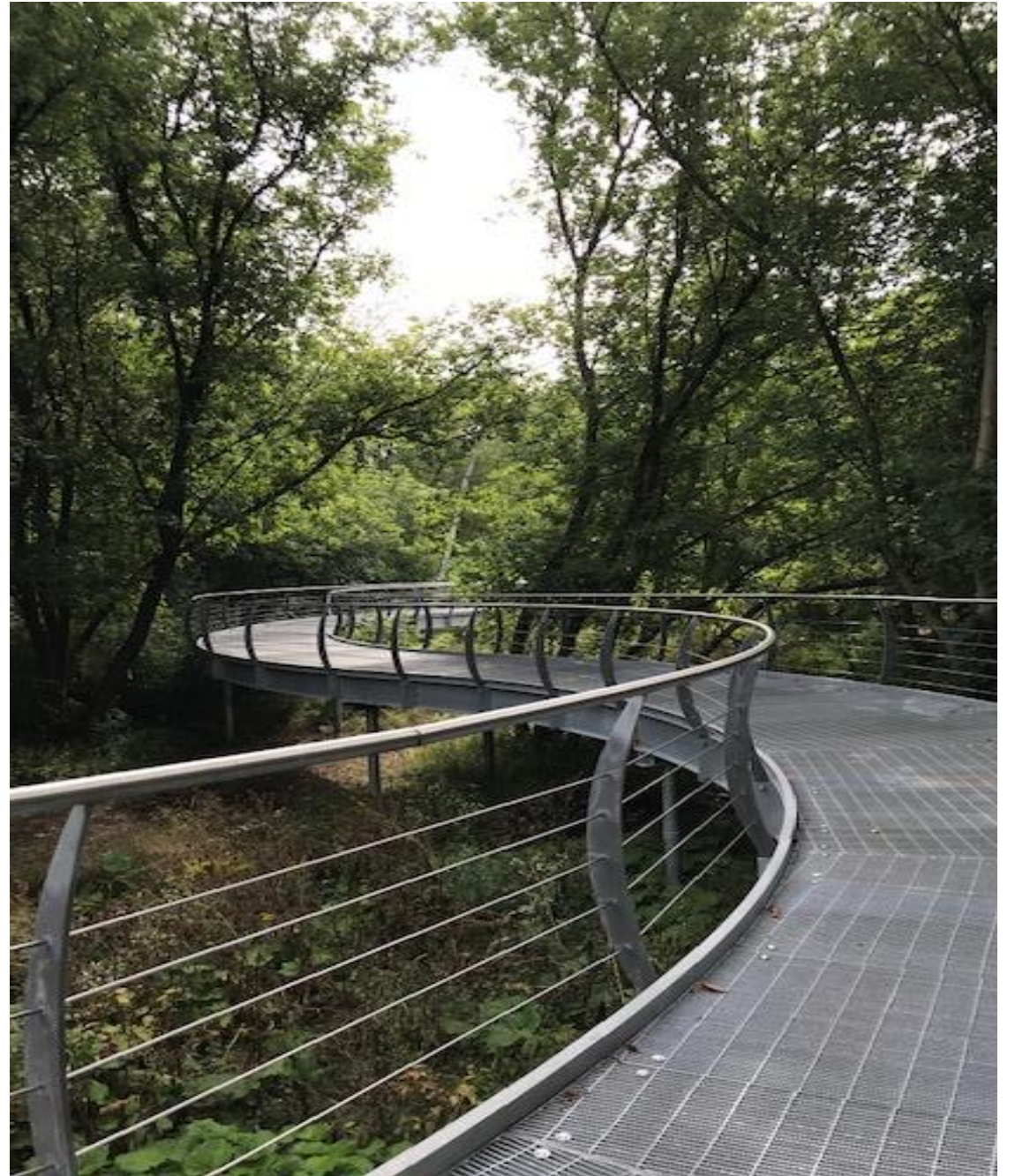


SHINRIN YOKU

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Baraza Group
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Acknowledgements





Presentation Overview

- My journey
- What is shinrin yoku
- Benefits
- Techniques
- Bringing it home
- Islam and the environment
- Our responsibility towards the environment
- Resources



- One year ago, all our lives changed
- Being at home all the time started getting to me
- Weekends were less busy and so we started picking a new place to discover each week
- Started a hiking group (more about that during the talk)
- I am no expert in this field – its all self taught

Where Did it all
Begin?



VIDEO

<https://youtu.be/cZkvXYevU8>



REACTION POLL

What did you feel while watching
the video?



POLL

Have you heard of the term “shinrin
yoku” before today?



What is Shinrin Yoku?

Shinrin = forest
Yoku = bath

Forest Bathing

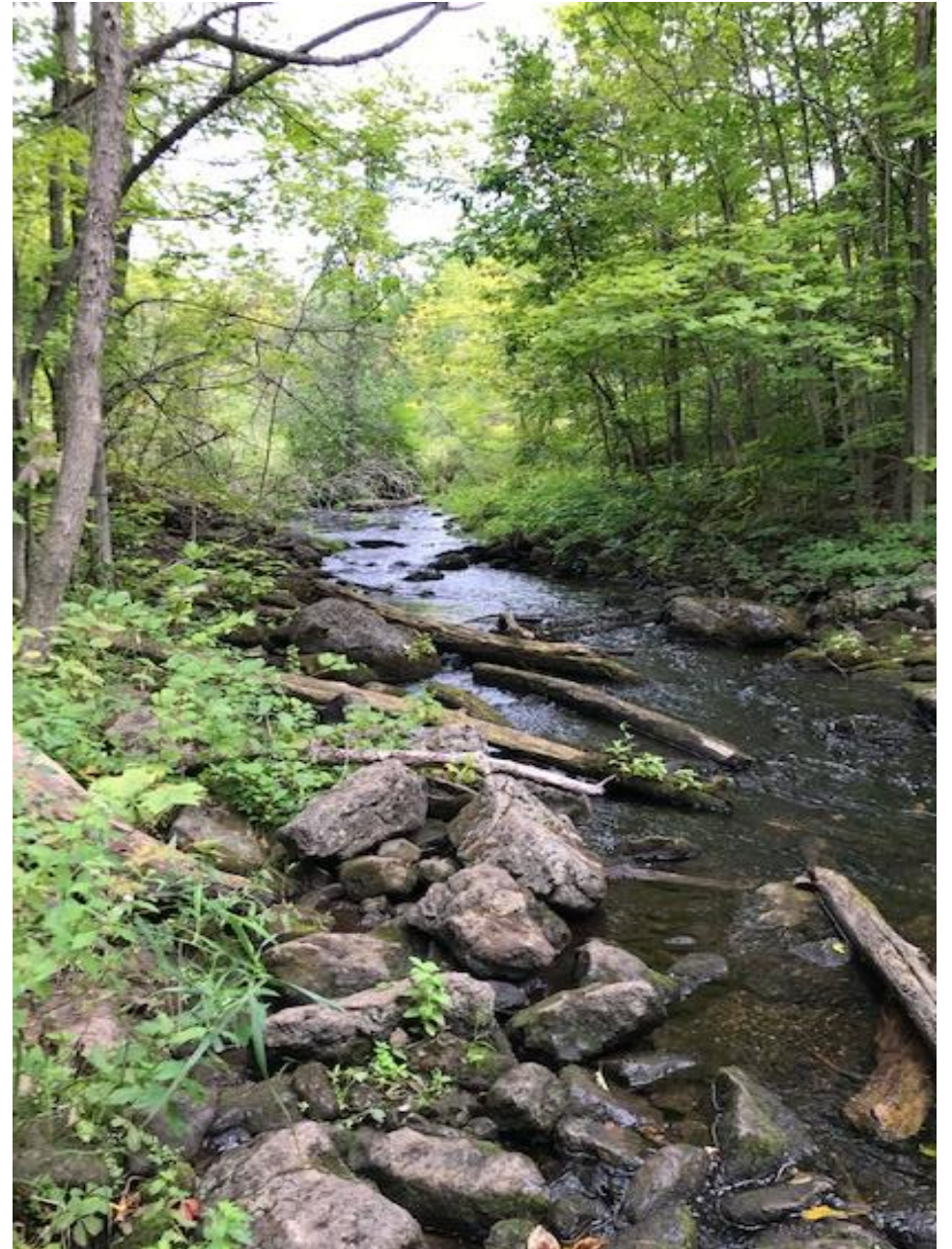




Shinrin Yoku

*Making contact with and
taking in the atmosphere of
the forest through the 5 senses
of seeing, hearing, touching,
smelling and tasting*

- It is based on ancient Shinto and Buddhist practices
- Originated in 1982
- Was coined by the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries
- Came about as a response to a public health crisis - high levels of stress at work and a worrying 'spike' in rates of auto-immune disease and suicide in young and middle-aged men.
- As well as to revitalize the economy of rural areas that were suffering from the mass migration of people from rural areas to the cities.
- Japan now has one of the highest life expectancies in the world!





Why The Need For Connection With Nature?

Nature is where we belong; it has been promoted by most, if not all, religions and cultures

We have moved away from nature and into the hustle and bustle of the city

We are exposed more and more to unnatural things like cell phones and computers

The average American spends 93% of their time enclosed in buildings or vehicles

All these are directly linked to an epidemic of stress and chronic disease

We have lost touch with nature



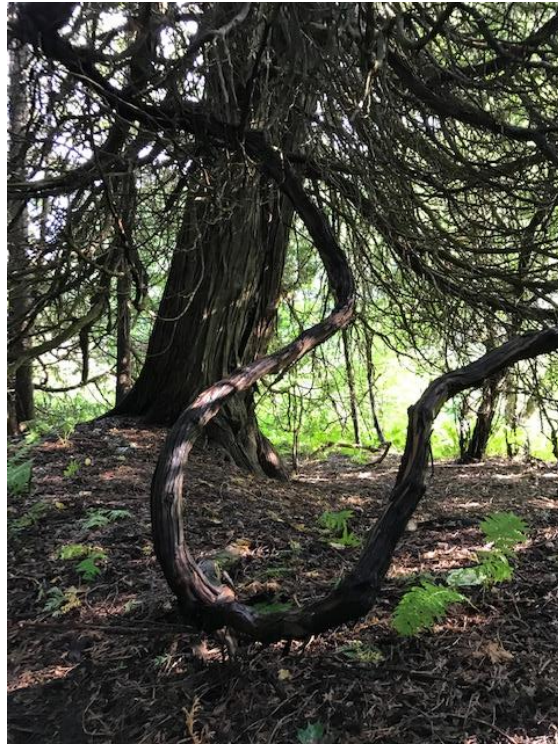
Why Shinrin Yoku?

Shinrin yoku is reconnecting with something that is innate in us but lost

Nature allows us to disconnect from all the “noise” of everyday life so we can focus on ourselves

It pushes us to press the pause button

When humans spend time in a natural setting, especially under the canopy of a forest, they experience healing benefits to the mind, body and spirit (many studies have been done to prove this)



Some amazing formations of trees that made me reflect on their strength and perseverance...

And a sign for them is the dead earth. We have brought it to life and brought forth from it grain, and from it they eat (36:33)



Benefits for the Mind

- Decrease in depression
- Reduction in cortisol levels (a stress hormone)
- Increases positive emotions
- Reduces anxiety
- Improves concentration, self esteem, attention span, & creativity
- Increases feeling of happiness
- Helps connect mentally with other people
- Helps disconnect from electronic devices
- Helps fight seasonal affective disorder

Benefits for the Body

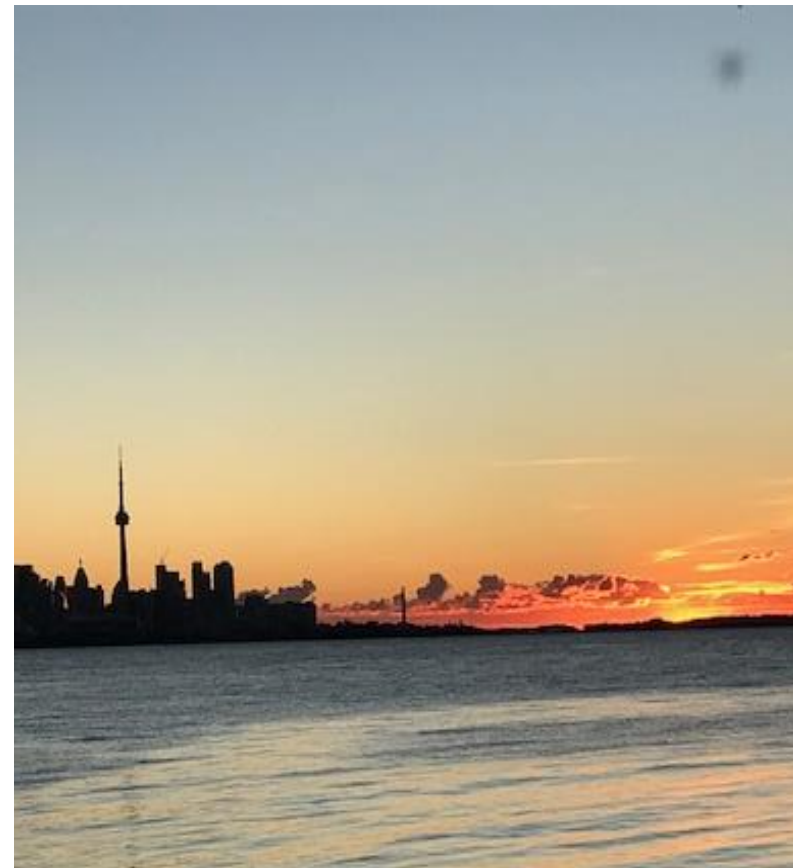
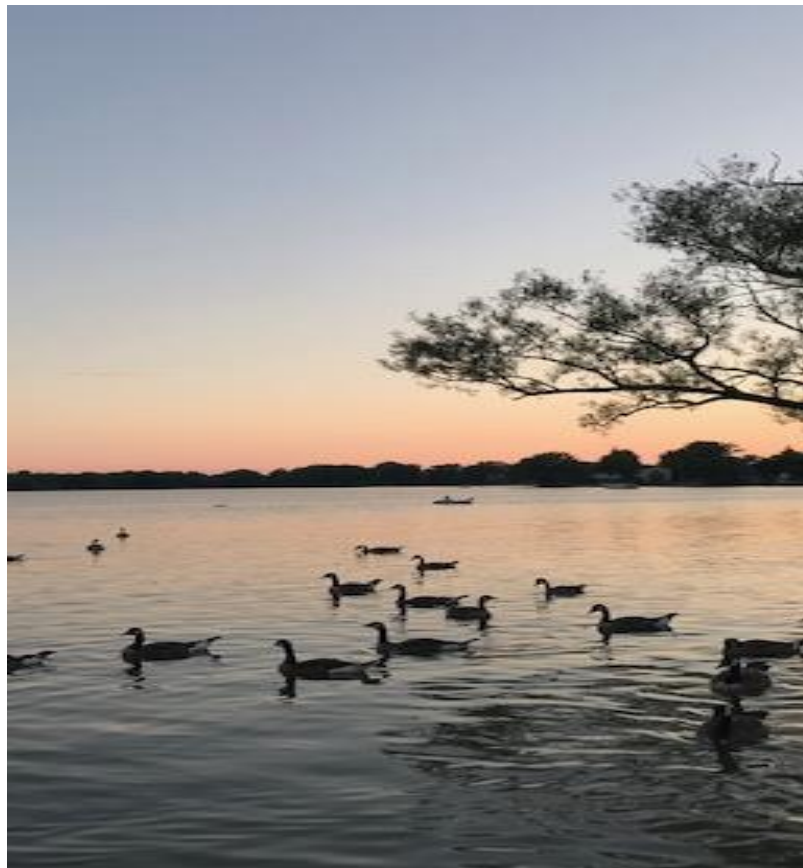
- Burns calories
- Aids in weight loss
- Strengthens core
- Reduces blood pressure
- Strengthens the heart
- Decreases pulse rate
- Improves nervous system function which increases immunity
- May help fight risk factors for cancer?





Social And Spiritual Benefits

- Connection with the Creator of the amazing beauty around you.
- Socializing with people in a safer surrounding, especially when in lockdown
- Allows sharing experiences and images with people - brings about more connection amongst people
- Allows people to think you are an amazing photographer!



Breathtaking sunrises and sunsets...

And He is the One Who created the day and the night, the sun
and the moon – each travelling in an orbit 21:33



What Causes These Positive Effects?

- Some could be from fresh oxygen we get from nature
- Phytoncides are chemicals found within and released by trees and plants
- These are the immune system of the plant and protect the plant from harmful bacteria, fungus, diseases and insects
- These same chemicals have been proven to have positive effects on humans
- Exposure to even a small amount can trigger healthy responses
- And it has a lasting effect for several hours!
- An ill and depressed forest can have a negative effect

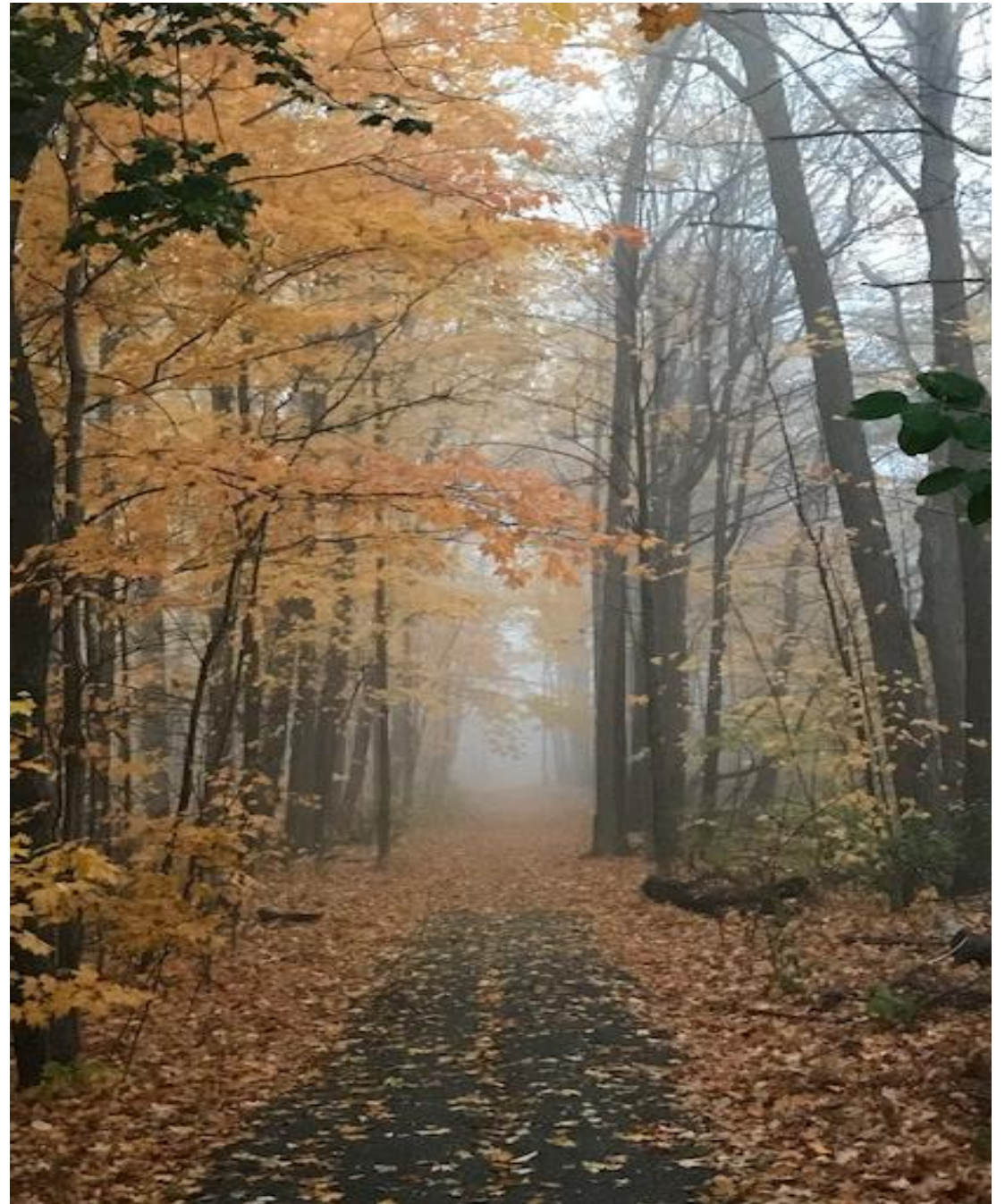


POLL

How many of you make a point of
going for walks in nature

Techniques on How to Practice Shinrin Yoku

- Turn your phone off
- Walk slowly; stop often
- Inhale deeply, feeling your belly expand
- Close your eyes and isolate sensations (listen, feel, and smell)
- Notice all the diversity of life around you
- Be in the now; not the past nor the future
- This can be done all year around



Shinrin Yoku Park (Pomona Mills)

- They will have boards/invites with suggestions as to what to do to connect with nature
- Examples:
 - What you can think about when looking at a stream
 - Things to consider when looking at a tree





How Can One Make It More Of A Habit?

- Start a buddy system
- Join a hiking group
- Or start a hiking group of your own
- Encourage others to get out
- “Variety is the spice of life” – pick new places to go
- BUT know your area and keep a fully charged phone on you at all times



...some natural creatures...and some man-made ones...

not captured in pictures are frogs, squirrels, chipmunks, egrets, salmon, ducks, birds, snakes, bugs (of course!), etc.

What If You Cannot Get To A Forest?

The outside is always changing and so there is variety in there and better for the mind.

The fresh air can do wonders as well

But if you can't go out then bring the outdoors in to you!

- House plants
- Essential oils
- Watching from a window
- Listening/watching it on a device
- Small water fountains in the home





The Connection Between Islam And The Environment

- We prostrate on earth or something connected to nature
- Wudhu is done with water; and if water is not available then another form of nature can be used
- Certain acts of worship are recommended to be performed under the open sky
- There are descriptions of heaven which are full of nature sounds and symbols
- Qur'an
 - There are more than 750 verses related to nature
 - 14 chapter names are associated with nature (e.g. daybreak, sun, dawn, thunder, etc)
 - Allah takes oaths - in the Qur'an - using nature

The Prophet (S) said, 'Every single Muslim that cultivates or plants anything of which humans, animals or birds may eat from is counted as charity towards them on his behalf.'

[Kanz al-'Ummal, no. 9051]





POLL

Have you have contributed towards
an environmental cause in the last
year?



Our Responsibility Towards The Environment

- We must do what we can to protect it - 4 Rs
- Protect and keep the existing places clean
- Appreciate the nature we have around us and donate towards the preservation of it
- Get involved in advocacy groups that fight against urbanization

All these can help combat some of the harmful effects of climate change

- Google maps
- All trails (app)
- Regional Maps (library)
- Internet
- Social media

Resources



Local Trails

- Google search – “trails around me”
- <https://goingawesomeplaces.com/best-parks-in-markham/>
- <https://www.markham.ca/wps/portal/home/recreation/Shinrin-Yoku>
- <https://www.toronto.ca/explore-enjoy/recreation/walking-hiking/trails/>



Take Home Messages...



- It all starts with baby steps
- Just get out – start with 5 mins and increase it by what is comfortable for you
- Buddy system works amazingly well
- Use your senses when in nature
- Be mindful of the precious gift of the environment that we have been gifted with; and help preserve it



WE ARE HUMAN BE-INGS, NOT HUMAN DO-INGS





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