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Rocket Science

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In the name of Allah,
most Gracious, most Merciful

Etiquette in the mosque

Mosques are places of worship, where Muslims come to perform prayers (salat), recite the Quran, listen to sermons (khutbahs) and engage in the remembrance of Allah (swt) (thikr). Allah (swt) says in the holy Quran, "And [He revealed] that the masjids are for Allah, so do not invoke anyone else with Allah" (72:18).

They are the houses of Allah (swt), where peace, serenity, and tranquillity reign. Therefore, in order to establish a conducive atmosphere for this, there are some elements of etiquette of attending the mosque. This article will try to shed some light on some of them.

Cleanliness and respect

In the Quran, Allah (swt) also says, "The mosques of Allah are only to

be maintained by those who believe in Allah and the Last Day and establish prayer and give zakah and do not fear [anyone] except Allah, for it is expected that those will be of the [rightly] guided" (9:18).

Very often we treat our mosques so badly that sometimes it appears that the place itself is not maintained as well as our houses. We are careful at home not to mess things up, keeping it tidy, cleaning up thoroughly. But when we attend the mosque, we are far from clean. Shouldn't a place of spiritual importance, sacredness, and sanctity be treated with respect?

Building a mosque has great reward in the hereafter. The Prophet (saw) said, "Whoever builds a mosque for Allah, Allah will build for him likewise in Paradise."

As the above Quranic verse says, "... masjids are for Allah". So whoever comes to a mosque should leave all the worldly affairs behind, as they have come to a private meeting with their Lord. Further, those who attend the mosque are the People of Allah (swt). We are the people who have heard the call of our Lord and have come to worship Him alone, so how is it possible that we do not treat this special place with respect?



Pink Mosque, Maguindanao, the Philippines



Dress appropriately

The etiquette of attending a mosque is stated in the Holy Quran: "O children of Adam, take your adornment at every masjid, and eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess" (7:31).

Ibn Katheer's tasfir for this verse is that "Using this verse and what was narrated by the prophetic tradition, it is encouraged to beautify your appearance when one approaches prayer, not just on Friday or on Eid. ... it is also encouraged to have a good scent, as this is completion of beautifying one's self." A good scent is to wear perfume or something that smells nice as well as to cover the private parts (awrah).

When we visit a friend or a relative, we ensure that we are dressed appropriately. We ensure that we wear good clothes and that we smell nice. However, sometimes at the mosque, you see people coming with clothes they would be ashamed to wear at home. It is not just the attire, but also the words and pictures that are displayed on their garment. Some of these images are not allowed in Islam. We need to ensure that we educate ourselves in this regard. Also, wearing tights or shorts or close fitting clothes is prohibited. But sometimes we see such people in the masjid. May Allah (swt) increase our knowledge in this regard.

There are several companions of the Prophet (sahabas) and those who followed after them (tabiun), who dressed nicely to go to the masjid. For instance, Imam Al-Hussein (ra) used to dress in his best clothes whenever he approached a prayer. When asked why he dressed in such a way, he

responded, "Allah is beautiful and He loves beauty, so I love to wear my best and beautify myself for my Lord. He is the one who says, 'Decorate yourselves when you attend the Masjid.'" Imam Malik (ra) also used to do the same. Further, Imam Malik would not speak to anyone from the time he left the house until he reached the mosque. Then he would talk about the sayings of our beloved Prophet (saw).

Get rid of bad odour

Going to the masjid with a bad odour is prohibited. The Prophet (saw) said, "Whoever eats onion or garlic, then let them not go near our mosques. Truly, angels are harmed by the same things by which humans are harmed." This refers to the bad smell that comes from eating such foods. This relates not only to garlic and onions, but also in present times, to bad odours from smokers. These disturb the fellow worshippers and as the hadith shows, the angels are disturbed as well. Similarly, there are people who come to the mosque with sweaty and smelly clothes. This should be avoided, as it affects the atmosphere of the mosque. Perhaps they can bring in a change of clothes for the duration of the prayer.

Al-Bukhari narrated that Abi Saeed Alkhadri (ra) mentioned that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "If a man leaves his house on Friday wanting to pray, after washing and putting on a good scent, and enters the mosque, prays two units of prayer (rakaats), stays quiet and does not talk to anybody until the imam has finished his sermon, and then prays with the people, Allah Almighty forgives him for what is between that Friday and the previous Friday."

Allah swt says in the Quran, “[Such niches are] in mosques which Allah has ordered to be raised and that His name be mentioned therein; exalting Him within them in the morning and the evenings” (24:36). Ibn Katheer and others have talked about this Quranic verse and said, “Purify yourself from physical and verbal impurities.” When discussing the verse “name to be raised and mentioned”, it is not just in terms of the Quran and prayer, but it may be by other things as well. Further, cleanliness is very important, as it is half of our faith. There are several rewards for those who clean the mosque on a regular basis.

Manners at the mosque

Sometimes, whether knowingly or unknowingly we may speak or act in a way that displays bad manners. Perhaps it is the tone of the voice, or talking about irrelevant things to the extent that it may become backbiting or slander, or perhaps it is too much laughter. It is highly disliked to raise the voice in the mosque, as it is disliked to laugh out loud, such that we forget to remember Allah (swt).

Imam Malik (ra) has argued against raising one’s voice in the mosque. Ibn Abdeen (in the Hanafi school of thought) has said, “It is discouraged to raise one’s voice, so one does not distract people praying, even if you are reading the Quran or performing thikr.” Fellow worshippers may find it harder to concentrate on the things they are doing.

Some others may be playing with their phones, whether it is replying to a text message, browsing the internet or attending to emails. Yet

others may even start side conversations while the khatib is delivering his speech. Some may even answer their phones or greet friends. Others may walk over to get to the front row or extend their legs such that it causes inconvenience to others. All these are not appropriate for Friday prayer, as the Prophet (saw) said that the person who says “Be quiet” during this period is himself committing an error, and may have his reward for attending the Friday prayers annulled.

All these distractions may lead some people to stop coming to the mosque altogether. The spirit of the mosque and its purpose will be lost. It is our duty to educate ourselves and correct others in a polite manner when we come across such issues.

No doubt we all have our faults. Mosques must be a place where we can all learn and grow by accepting constructive criticism. After all, Islam is a holistic religion and mosques can be places where we increase our iman by making such corrections. Let us keep mosques free of loud noises, hate, slander, backbiting, vain talk and falsehood.





Bringing children

Children are generally encouraged to come to the masjid. Here are some examples from hadith.

It was narrated from Abdullah bin Shaddad that his father said, "The Messenger of Allah (saw) came out to us for one of the night time prayers, and he was carrying Hasan or Husain. The Messenger of Allah (saw) came forward and put him down, then he said the takbir and started to pray. He prostrated during his prayer, and made the prostration lengthy. I raised my head and saw the child on the back of the Messenger of Allah (saw) while he was prostrating so I went back to my prostration. When the Messenger of Allah (saw) finished praying, the people said, 'O Messenger of Allah (saw), you prostrated during the prayer for so long that we thought that something had happened, or that you were receiving a revelation.' He said, 'No such thing happened. But my grandson was riding on my back and I did not like to disturb him until he had enough.'"

The Messenger of Allah (saw) would pray holding Umamah bint Zainab bint Rasulillaah (ra). He would put her down when he prostrated, and then pick her up again when he stood up (Bukhari and Muslim).

The Prophet (saw) said, "When I stand for prayer, I intend to prolong it, but on hearing the cries of a child, I cut it short, as I dislike to trouble the child's mother."

Bringing children to the mosques gives an opportunity for mothers to attend and benefit from the khutbahs. Children are the future of our community. We need to encourage them to spend time in the mosques and instil a connection with Islam from a young age. Otherwise they will find somewhere else to spend their time, which is unlikely to be in relation to Islam.

Having said that, it is also important to keep a perspective for the greater good. A child who is well behaved is encouraged, while a child that runs havoc and creates lots of noise should probably be left at home. Such a child should be taught the etiquette of attending a masjid before bringing them to a mosque.

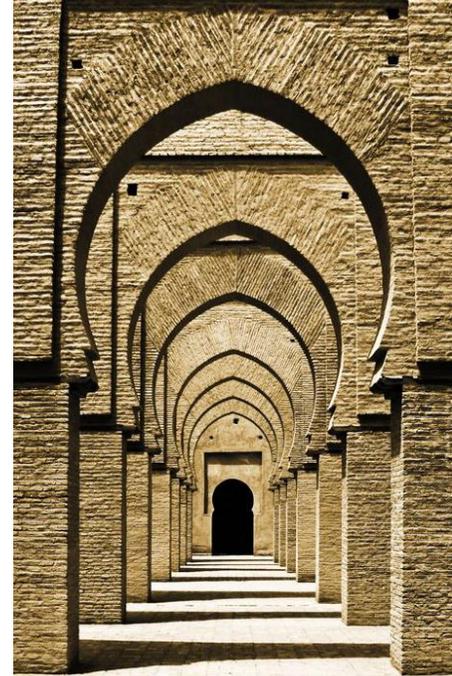
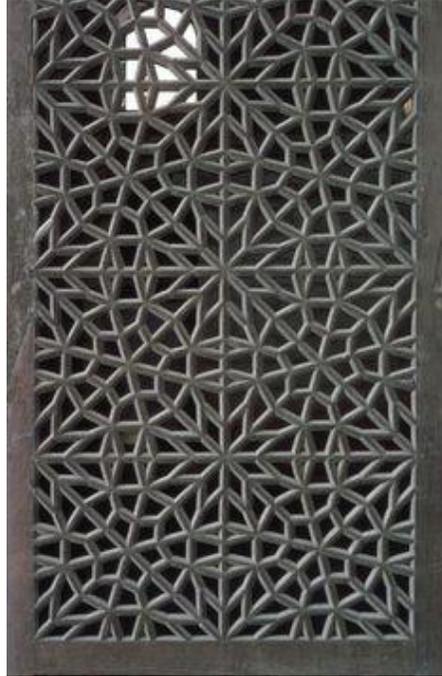
A noisy child is likely to disturb others and we may find it harder to concentrate on salat and reading the Quran. A mosque, by its nature, is a place of serenity and tranquillity where Muslims come to get closer to Allah (swt). We must take every measure to ensure that such an environment prevails.

Exploring Islamic geometry is stimulating fun

The word "geometry" comes from the Greek "geo" (earth) and "metron" (measurement). It is a branch of mathematics dealing with different shapes and sizes in space. A mathematician who works in the field of geometry is called a geometer. One of the greatest geometers from the Islamic world is Abul al-wafa Buzjani (940 - 998), whose tricky geometric iterations have puzzled mathematicians for centuries. He is well known for his extrapolation of squares and triangles. He was given the title Mohandes, the master geometer of his day.

Learning geometry has other benefits too. It is a fact that drawing geometry or a mandala, which is basically a complex geometric figure, can be equal to meditation and thus be stress-relieving. Many cultures use geometrical figures for such an activity and it is thought to sharpen young minds if they try drawing and dissecting the complex geometrical angles to extrapolate patterns of immense beauty.

Islam played an important role through developing complex geometrical patterns used in architectural designs. Throughout the last thousand years, one could see these geometrical patterns emerging through ceramic tiles, latticed screens (known as *jalis*), complex arches, domes and vaults. Often, the tiles are based on repetitive patterns called tessellations.



Ceiling of Nasr ol Molk mosque, Shiraz, Iran



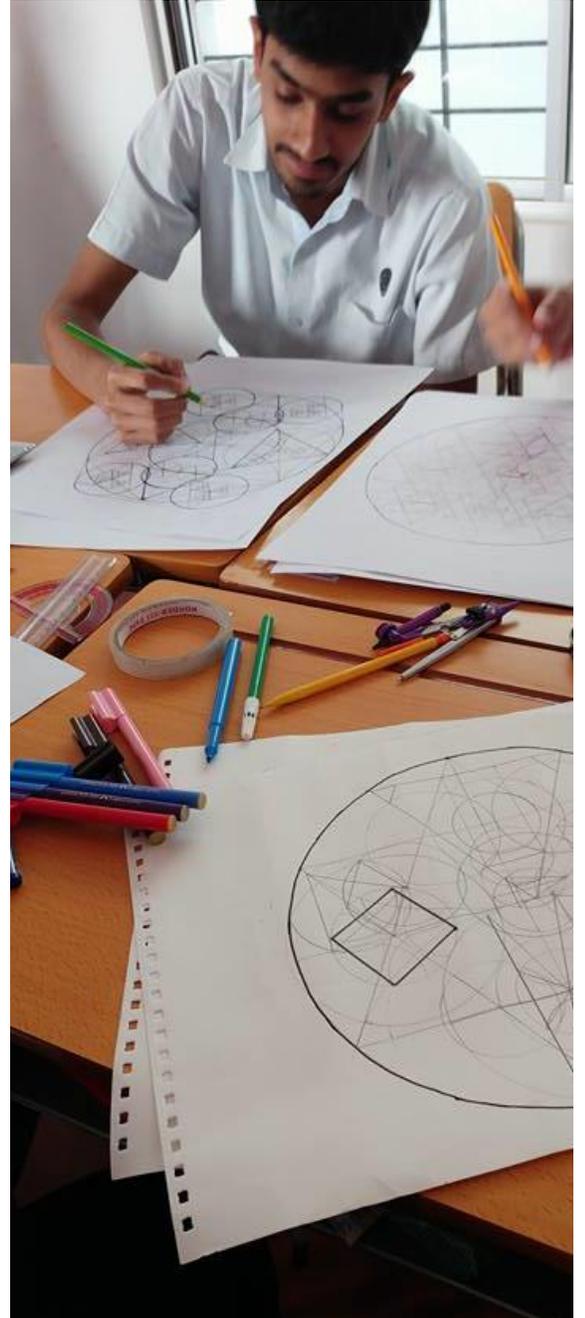
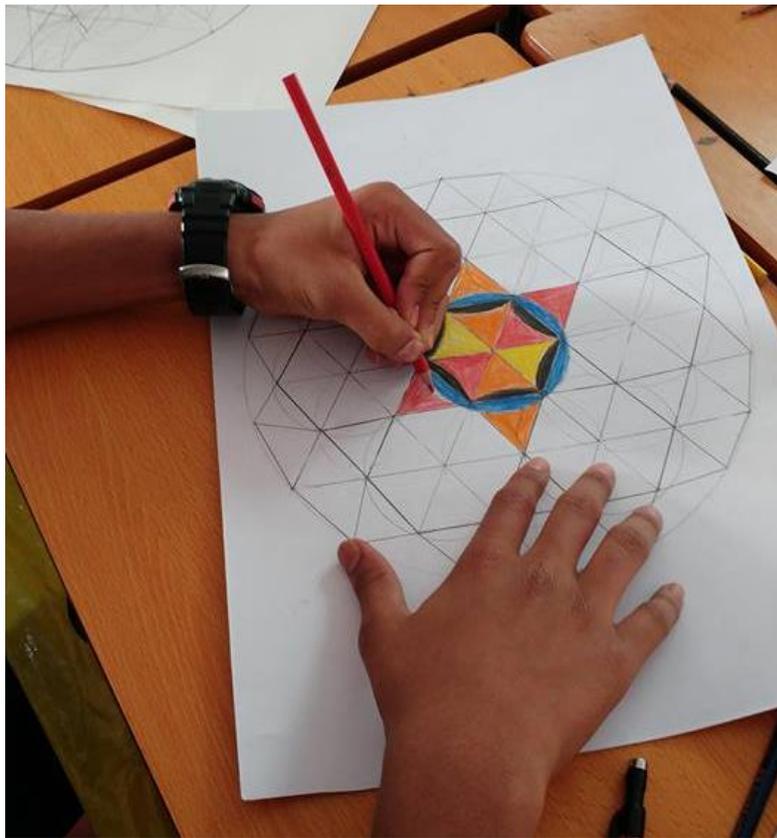
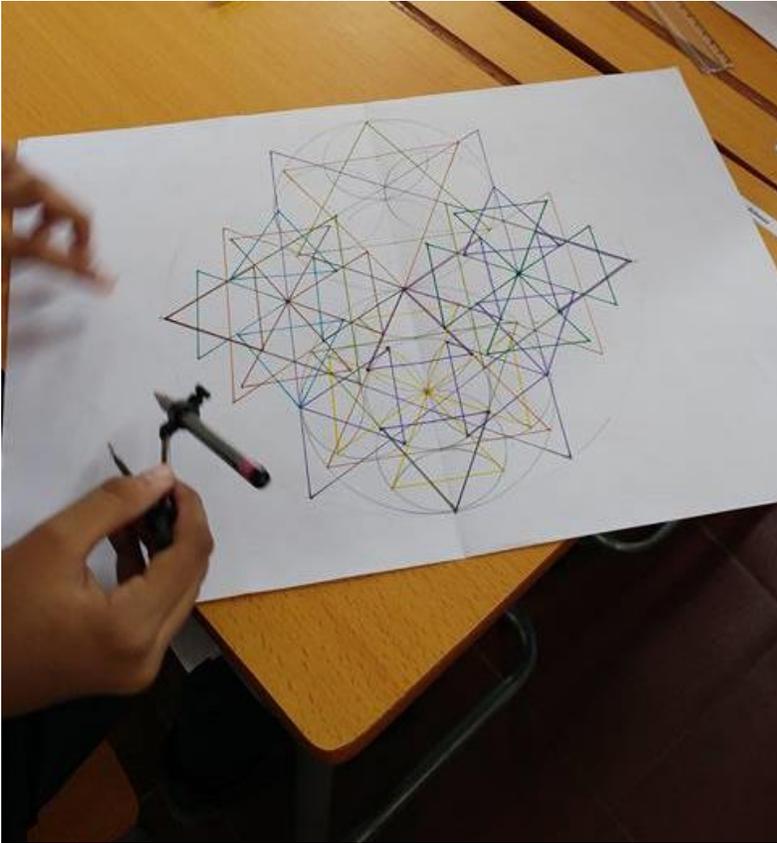
Br Jaffer explains a point on the whiteboard, and supervises students' work



Introducing geometric drawing at an early stage in schools could improve the levels of mental concentration and stimulate the students' minds. Recently, an experimental geometrical workshop was conducted at the Oasis International School, Bangalore, for secondary-level students. The short workshop was an introduction to Islamic geometry using the equilateral triangle (with equal sides and equal angles) as the basic shape. With very simple drawing instruments and coloured pencils, a group of 40 students produced absolutely fascinating geometric patterns. The students were asked to colour the triangles and this further enhanced the quality of the geometric configurations. The geometry and the sense of colour from those young minds were baffling, and the art teachers themselves were shocked to see the outcome of this exercise and the talent the students possess.

A similar initiative is being undertaken by a group of interested professionals in Auckland to teach the wonders of Islamic geometry and how exciting it can be to keep drawing those wonderful shapes, ever expanding and tricky at times.

The course was conducted by Jaffer AA Khan, an architect and regular at Rocket Park jumuah, and Fleur Palmer. They can be contacted at jafferaakhan@gmail.com.



Islamic banking taking off

In early January this year, Storebrand, a Norwegian bank, asked its Muslim customers to express their interest in an Islamic form of banking¹. The bank would buy a property on the customer's behalf and then charge rent until the debt was paid off, thus avoiding an interest-based mortgage. About 300 people contacted the bank by phone, email and Facebook. Norwegian Muslim groups including the Islamic Council of Norway and IslamNet urged their supporters to show interest in the scheme. Bjorn Erik Saettem, Storebrand's communication manager, explained, "We wanted to find out if there could be another way to enter a housing market with rising prices. The product could appeal to young people, new graduates or people who cannot accept normal housing loans because of religious concerns. Storebrand is now currently evaluating the market potential for such a loan and considering what the product might look like. We have also been

approached by financial advisers in the UK and Malaysia who want to help us to put together this type of loan."

This follows similar initiatives on other European countries. In 2013, the West London-based Al Rayan Bank started offering its customers rental-based loans. In 2015, Frankfurt-based KT Bank, owned by Kuveyt Türk, the largest Islamic banking institution in Turkey, offered Islamic banking at its offices in Berlin, Cologne, Hamburg, Mannheim and Munich. The head of Kuveyt Türk Bank, Kemal Ozan, reported that of the 4.5 million Muslims living in Germany, 21% are ready to use the services of an Islamic bank. He also emphasised that the Islamic facilities are available to non-Muslims too.

Needless to say, Islamic banking has faced opposition. Norwegian Finance Minister, Siv Jensen, says the the government is so far unwilling to endorse Storebrand bank's proposals, claiming, "It is not necessary to change the rules to provide special advantages to religious groups." Similarly, Jewish New York-based lawyer David Yerushalmi has led a campaign against Islamic banking, saying it empowers Islamic fundamentalists.



1 'Halal' loans could be introduced at Norwegian bank. RT, 20 Jan 2017. www.rt.com/news/374461-halal-loans-bank-norway

2 Germany's first interest-free Islamic bank opens in Frankfurt. RT, 1 Jul 2015. www.rt.com/business/271105-germany-opens-islamic-bank

Fake news

Recently we have heard much about fake news, "alternative facts", etc.

In January, the UK's *Sun* and *Daily Mail* newspapers both contained reports from Spanish newspapers of an armed man entering a supermarket in the small Galician city of Ourense, shouting, "Allahu Akbar" (God is great)¹. *The Sun* reported it as follows: "Supermarket horror: Gunman 'screaming Allahu Akbar' opens fire in Spanish supermarket while 'carrying bag filled with petrol and gunpowder.'"

Australian website News.com.au reported the incident as "Gunman wearing suicide vest opens fire in supermarket in Spain," followed by a mention of the shooter shouting "Allahu Akbar."

And now the truth. Spanish police and the supermarket chain deny the perpetrator shouted "Allahu Akbar." The incident was simply an attempted robbery by a mentally unstable man known to local police.

Islamophobia awareness group Tell MAMA² director Iman Abou Atta explained, "For years, in some press sources, it has been less about facts and more about an agenda based on sales through sensationalism. Some of these stories have been factually inaccurate and sometimes of no news value apart from pandering to fear and insecurity about other communities, such as Muslims as a whole. We know first-hand how such stories impact on lives and community relations. It is imperative that going forward, we challenge and hold to account fake news stories that are promoted as fact. Such blurring of lines will

have impacts on the way social values are constructed in the future."

The UK's former Shadow Culture Secretary Michael Dugher wrote an article in the *Guardian* newspaper³ arguing that tech giants like Facebook and Google had a greater responsibility to check the truth of what is published on their platforms. "We have a responsibility to stand up for good journalism everywhere. It is an essential part of our free speech and our democracy. The old adage that a lie can travel halfway around the world while the truth is still putting on its shoes has never been more true. The growing risks posed to our democracy mean we can no longer ignore the threat from the proliferation of false news stories."

He is currently leading a Labour inquiry into "the changing way news is consumed and shared online, and at the practical, political and ethical issues raised by fake news."

In December⁴, Facebook announced that they were working with Factcheck⁵ to identify fake news stories and delete them.

1 Sun & Daily Mail accused of Islamophobia after misreporting Spanish gunman story. RT, 13 January. www.rt.com/uk/373584-islamophobia-daily-mail-sun

2 tellmamauk.org

3 Michael Dugher. Fake news must be exposed. The Labour party inquiry is a start. *The Guardian*, 13 January 2017. www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/jan/13/fake-news-expose-labour-party-inquiry-start

4 www.factcheck.org/2016/12/facebook-fake-news-initiative

5 www.factcheck.org

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ



Michael Dugher





Yassir Fazaga

Voice of Islam

VOI delivers the message of Islam based on the teachings of the Noble Quran and the Sunnah (practices) of the Prophet Muhammad (saw).
VOI television is broadcast on:

- APNA TV (Freeview channel 36)(10.30 am Sun)
- Face TV (SKYTV channel 83) in New Zealand (11.30 am Sat & 9.00 am Sun)
- Southern Television (Freeview Channel 39) in Dunedin and Southland (see TV guide for times)
- Mai TV (Fiji Broadcasting Corporation) in Fiji (9.00 am Sun)
- Metro TV in Ghana, West Africa (see TV guide for times)

4 & 5 February

Quran 2: 256-257 There is no compulsion in religion.
Lecture: Making religion relevant by Imam Khalid Latif.
Documentary: Jerusalem part 1.
Tid Bits: Muslims by Yusuf Estes

11 & 12 February

Quran 2: 256-257 There is no compulsion in religion.
Lecture: Our children's future by Yassir Fazaga.
Documentary: Jerusalem part 2.

18 & 19 February

Quran 2: 256-257 There is no compulsion in religion.
Lecture: Struggling against materialism by Yasmin Mogahed.
Documentary: Jerusalem part 3.
Tid Bits: Quran by Yusuf Estes

25 & 26 February

Quran 2: 256-257 There is no compulsion in religion.
Lecture: Key to success by Yahya Ibramin.
Documentary: Seeing the clear proofs of God's existence part 1.

Watch VOI online, or order a free copy of the Quran: www.voitv.org

Auckland prayer timetable for February 2017

(from www.islamicfinder.org. For other cities in New Zealand, see www.fianz.co.nz).

Date	Fajr	Sunrise	Dhuhar	Asr 1	Asr 2	Maghrib	Isha
1	04:58	06:36	01:35	05:23	06:30	08:33	10:06
2	05:00	06:37	01:35	05:23	06:30	08:32	10:05
3	05:01	06:38	01:35	05:23	06:29	08:31	10:03
4	05:03	06:39	01:36	05:23	06:29	08:30	10:02
5	05:04	06:40	01:36	05:23	06:28	08:29	10:01
6	05:06	06:42	01:36	05:22	06:28	08:28	09:59
7	05:07	06:43	01:36	05:22	06:27	08:27	09:58
8	05:09	06:44	01:36	05:22	06:26	08:26	09:57
9	05:10	06:45	01:36	05:22	06:26	08:25	09:55
10	05:12	06:46	01:36	05:21	06:25	08:24	09:54
11	05:13	06:47	01:36	05:21	06:25	08:23	09:53
12	05:15	06:48	01:36	05:21	06:24	08:22	09:51
13	05:16	06:49	01:36	05:20	06:23	08:21	09:50
14	05:17	06:50	01:36	05:20	06:23	08:20	09:48
15	05:19	06:51	01:36	05:20	06:22	08:19	09:47
16	05:20	06:52	01:36	05:19	06:21	08:17	09:45
17	05:22	06:53	01:36	05:19	06:20	08:16	09:44
18	05:23	06:54	01:36	05:18	06:20	08:15	09:42
19	05:24	06:55	01:35	05:18	06:19	08:14	09:41
20	05:26	06:56	01:35	05:17	06:18	08:13	09:39
21	05:27	06:58	01:35	05:17	06:17	08:11	09:38
22	05:28	06:59	01:35	05:16	06:16	08:10	09:36
23	05:30	07:00	01:35	05:16	06:15	08:09	09:35
24	05:31	07:01	01:35	05:15	06:14	08:07	09:33
25	05:32	07:02	01:35	05:14	06:13	08:06	09:31
26	05:34	07:03	01:35	05:14	06:12	08:05	09:30
27	05:35	07:04	01:34	05:13	06:12	08:04	09:28
28	05:36	07:05	01:34	05:13	06:11	08:02	09:27

Asr 1: Maliki, Shafii and Hanbali schools (single shadow length)

Asr 2: Hanafi school (double shadow length)

One of the Saliheen was asked how he kept his khushu (concentration, humility, etc) in prayer. He said, "I imagine that Allah is before me, that the Angel of Death is at my back, that the gardens of Jannah are to my right, that the fires of Jahannam are on my left, and that I am standing on the Sirat"

Credits

Rocket Science is a monthly newsletter produced by the Mount Albert Islamic Trust.

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Why attend Rocket Park jumuah?

Prayers are held at the **Senior Citizens' Association building, Rocket Park, New North Road, Mount Albert.**

- ✓ Central location
- ✓ Plenty of free parking
- ✓ Facilities for ladies
- ✓ Heating and air-conditioning
- ✓ Bayan (religious talk) before jumuah prayers
- ✓ All bayans and khutbahs in English

NB We are only open for Friday prayers – not for the five daily prayers.

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SwT, saw, as, ra

SwT: subhanahu wa ta'ala "Glory to Him, the Exalted" (when mentioning Allah)

saw: salallahu alaihi wassalam "May the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him" (when mentioning Muhammad)

as: alaihis salam "Peace be on him" (when mentioning other prophets)

ra: radi allahu anhu/ha/hum "May Allah be pleased with him/her/them" (when mentioning members of Muhammad's family, companions, etc)