



Rocket Science



Rabial Thani /
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*In the name of
Allah, most
Gracious, most
Merciful*

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*NZ best halal
service provider*

Halal meat exports to Malaysia resume

Malaysia comprises peninsula Malaysia (between Thailand and Indonesia) and East Malaysia (on the island of Borneo). In the 2010 census, the population was 28.3 million, of whom 61.3% are Muslims.



In 2004, halal meat exports to Malaysia contributed NZ\$76 million to the New Zealand economy. However, in 2005 Malaysian auditors delisted many New Zealand beef plants for export for failing to fully comply with Malaysia's new halal standards. Approved meat-processing plants declined from 41 to two¹, and exports slumped to \$26.5 million in 2006. The New Zealand Agriculture and Forestry Ministry and the Foreign Affairs and Trade Ministry became involved in 2007. One stumbling block was New Zealand's insistence on electrical stunning, which it claimed was non-negotiable.

In December 2011, outstanding issues were resolved, and 14 plants have been approved to export to Malaysia. "This has been a long-standing issue and I am very pleased that we have been able to work with Malaysia to find a path that will improve access for our meat exporters," New Zealand Trade Minister Tim Groser said².

The work put in to reaching agreement was recognised last year when the New Zealand Agriculture and Forestry Ministry won an award for best service provider at the World Halal Forum in Kuala Lumpur.



Food Safety Minister Kate Wilkinson added, "In February this year [2012] we introduced standards of halal certification and this has provided assurance to importing countries like Malaysia that halal-certified product from New Zealand is of the highest standard."

Meat Industry Association chief executive Tim Ritchie said the agreement would be useful in dealing with other Muslim countries.

1 www.stuff.co.nz/business/farming/6314514/Halal-deal-reopens-Malaysia-trade-door

2 www.odt.co.nz/news/business/141248/malaysia-signs-halal-meat-agreement-nz

definition

Halal

If you look up the word *halal* in a dictionary or on the internet, you will probably find an explanation like the following: "Halal is an Arabic word meaning lawful or permitted. The opposite of halal is haram, which means unlawful or prohibited."¹

While this is true, it perhaps needs a little elaboration. Islamic law divides human activities into five categories:

1. Fard, wajib (obligatory): things that must be done, such as the five daily prayers. If you do these things, you are rewarded, and if you do not, you are punished.
2. Mandub, mustahab (recommended): things that are recommended, but not obligatory, such as extra prayers, forgiveness, unselfish hospitality. If you do these things, you are rewarded, but if you do not, you are not punished. Also sometimes called sunnah, meaning that they were the habit of the Prophet (saw) but not actually obligatory
3. Mubah (silent): things on which there is no clear guidance, such as sleeping, eating. If you do or do not do these things, you are neither rewarded nor punished.
4. Makruh (disliked, discouraged): things that are disapproved of, but not actually prohibited, such as divorce. If you do not do these things, you are rewarded, but if you do them, you are not punished.
5. Haram (forbidden); things you should never do, such as adultery, shirk. If you do these things, you are punished, and if you do not, you are rewarded.

In other words, there is a mirror image of rewards and punishment.

So, while haram is the fifth category, this means that all the other four categories are halal, that is, permitted. However, they are permitted to various degrees. Wajib activities, by virtue of being obligatory, must also be halal, permitted. Even makruh activities, while being discouraged or frowned upon, are nevertheless permitted, or halal.

Like many other aspects of Islam, the concept of *halal* applies to all facets of life. Thus, for instance, a person's job and other sources of income may be described as *halal*. However, probably the most common context in which the word is used is in relation to food (halal butchers, halal restaurants, etc). There are various requirements and prohibitions regarding *halal* food, the most relevant ones of which are the following:

- Any pig products are haram (forbidden). This includes pork, ham, bacon, gammon, lard, etc.
- other meat (chicken, lamb, mutton, beef, etc) must be slaughtered by (i) remembering God by saying *Bismillahir rahmanir rahiim* and *Allahu akbar*, and (ii) slitting the throat in order to drain the blood, which is the body's way of flushing impurities. In short, people who do not eat halal-



not just food

pig

slaughter

bismillah

slaughtered meat are probably eating a lot of (congealed) blood.

- Food over which Allah's name is not pronounced is haram. "So eat of that [meat] upon which the name of Allah has been mentioned, if you are believers" (Quran 6:118).
- Any animals that have died before being slaughtered are haram. Thus carrion (the carcasses of dead animals), roadkill and other dead animals are impermissible.

carrion

These prohibitions are contained in more than one place in the Quran:

'He has only forbidden to you dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah.' (Qur'an 2:173)

death

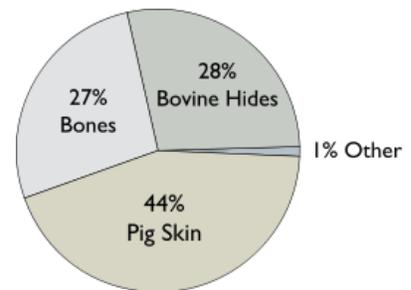
- Also an animal that has suffered a strange death, is haram. In the Quran (5:3), Allah (swt) says:
"Prohibited to you are dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah , and [those animals] killed by strangling or by a violent blow or by a head-long fall or by the goring of horns, and those from which a wild animal has eaten, except what you [are able to] slaughter [before its death], and those which are sacrificed on stone altars, and [prohibited is] that you seek decision through divining arrows. That is grave disobedience."

alcohol

- Any alcohol is *haram*, whether beer, wine, whisky, etc, either as a drink or in cooking. In the Quran (5:90), Allah (swt) says: "O you who believe, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone altars [to other than Allah], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful." Notice that it says "intoxicants" without specifically mentioning alcohol. So, any substance that intoxicates, and leads one to forget Allah (including all drugs), is haram.

gelatin etc

- Foods containing ingredients such as gelatin, enzymes, emulsifiers, and flavors are questionable (mashbooh), because the origin of these ingredients is not known and often not declared on the packaging. For instance some cosmetics may contain pork derivatives, and more well-used and well-known is gelatin. Gelatin is often made from pig skin or bone and therefore may not always be halal. As Muslims, we must check labels and ensure that any products containing gelatin – such as candy and sweets – are halal and lawful to us.



Materials Used in Gelatin Production

from en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gelatin

dire circumstances

However, Islam is a considerate religion and does not impose on anyone a burden greater than they can bear. So, if no other food or drink is available, and one is in physical danger of starvation or thirst, haram foods and drink may become halal, but only under those circumstances. The ayat from the Quran previously quoted continues:

"But whoever is forced [by necessity], neither desiring [it] nor transgressing [its limit], there is no sin upon him. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful." (Qur'an 2:173)

There are two reasons why a Muslims we follow these restrictions. The first is

simply because we believe that the Quran is the verbatim word of Allah (swt), that He created all mankind, and therefore He is in the best position to tell us what is good for us. It is like reading the manual of our car to find out what kind of petrol it takes. (Incidentally, similar restrictions are contained in the Bible.)

The second is that we find there are good scientific reasons for these prohibitions. For instance, Harvard scientists found that people who ate bacon at least five times a week were 59% more likely to develop bladder cancer than those who never did². A World Cancer Research Fund report linked the kind of food consumed to cancers, especially colorectal ones. In particular, researchers say people should stop eating processed meats, such as ham, bacon and salami³.



A recent BBC article⁴ reports that drinking more than three alcoholic drinks a day has been found to have a direct and damaging effect on the heart. Heavy drinking, particularly over time, can lead to high blood pressure, alcoholic cardiomyopathy, congestive heart failure and stroke. Heavy drinking also puts more fat into the circulation of the body. The link between alcohol and cancer is well established, says Cancer Research UK⁵. A study published in the BMJ this year estimated that alcohol consumption causes at least 13,000 cancer cases in the UK each year. Cancer experts say that for every additional 10g per day of alcohol drunk, the risk of breast cancer increases by approximately 7-12%.

1 Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America. www.ifanca.org/halal

2 Bacon link to bladder cancer risk. news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/6194502.stm

3 Red and processed meats and cancer prevention.

www.wcrf-uk.org/cancer_prevention/recommendations/meat_and_cancer.php

4 Campaign warns of drinking 'little too much' alcohol.

www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-16869618

5 Diet, alcohol and cancer in the UK – statistics.

info.cancerresearchuk.org/cancerstats/causes/lifestyle/diet/

began in 2007

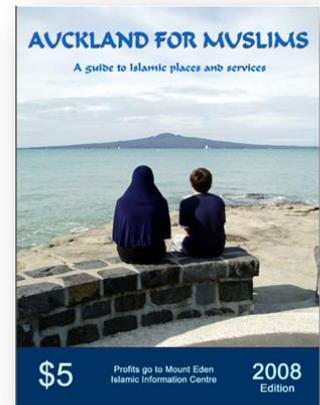
whole of NZ

Islamic associations

no growth in variety

The good, the bad and the ugly

The 2012 edition of *New Zealand for Muslims* has just been published. This booklet began life in 2007, when two pakeha Muslim converts and their friends and relatives collected information for an A5-sized booklet entitled *Auckland for Muslims*, published in 2008 under the auspices of the now defunct Mount Eden Islamic Information Centre and with the financial support of the Community Organisation Grants Scheme of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. It was intended as a first listing of all the Islamic places and services in New Zealand's most populous city.



As soon as that booklet appeared, Muslims in other parts of New Zealand expressed their disappointment that it did not cover the rest of Aotearoa. So the following year, the Iqra NZ Trust was established and the first edition of *New Zealand for Muslims* was produced. This proved not only very popular with Muslims outside Auckland, but also very helpful for Muslim tourists in Godzone.

In 2010 a smaller convenient pocket-sized A6 edition was published, by whittling down all the information to leave just the four most important items for Muslims – whether resident or tourist – in New Zealand: halal food outlets, halal butchers, prayer venues and a prayer timetable.

So what has changed since the 2010 edition?

The good

The number of Muslims in New Zealand has risen. It is difficult to give precise figures for this, as the 2011 census was postponed until 2012 because of the Canterbury earthquakes. In the 2006 census conducted by Statistics New Zealand, there were 36,153 Muslims in Aotearoa. This figure has clearly risen, not only through childbirth, but also through continuing immigration. Most commentators believe the 2012 figure will be at least 50,000.

The 2012 edition includes a listing of Islamic associations in New Zealand. A total of 40 are listed, but there are undoubtedly more.

Four new mosques have been set up. One of these is in Invercargill, at the southern end of South Island. It may seem that this is the furthest mosque from Makkah; however, it turns out that, at 14,665 km, it is slightly closer, as the crow flies – and thus as the qiblat is measured – than Dunedin at 14,809 km. Indeed, both of these are closer to Makkah than Fiji at 15,593 km.

To cater for the increasing numbers of Muslims, the number of halal food outlets has also grown substantially. In the 2010 edition, there were 310 outlets throughout Godzone; in this 2012 edition, 359, a rise of 49 or 16%. New halal outlets have sprung up in such unlikely places as Whangarei, Putaruru, Gisborne, New Plymouth, Timaru, Oamaru and Te Anau, so it is now not difficult to tour New Zealand and eat halal.

The bad

Unfortunately, while the number of halal outlets has climbed, there has been no growth in the variety of food. Of the 111 new food outlets that have opened since the 2010 edition, 57 of them (51%) offer Turkish kebabs, and 32 (29%)

Indian food. Would it not be nice to be able to eat out on halal steak, halal Chinese, halal Mexican, halal Japanese, halal Italian or halal Thai food?



Halal Italian menu, Toronto



Halal Japanese café, Bangkok

Christchurch

The devastating effects of the earthquakes in Canterbury since late 2010 have affected many Muslims. As a Muslim in Christchurch said, it brought home the real meaning of Surah Al-Zilzal.

"When the earth is shaken with her (utmost) convulsion, and the earth throws up her burdens (from within), and man cries (distressed) "What is the matter with her?" (Quran 99:1-3)



Like other Christchurch residents, many Muslims decided to leave. Halal food outlets in the city closed down; some have re-opened in other locations.

The ugly

While researching the 2012 edition of the booklet, many outlets were visited and phoned to check whether they were halal or not. Sadly, some Muslim owners confirmed that their meat was halal ...

- "apart from the ham in the Hawaiian pizza of course"
- "apart from the bacon which I have to serve because my local customers demand it"
- "apart from the beer-battered fish and chips"
- "apart from the mussels in white wine sauce"

In the Quran, Allah (swt) states quite clearly that all forms of pig meat (pork, ham, bacon, gammon, lard, etc) are haram (except in dire circumstances):

"He has only forbidden to you dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah." (Quran 2:173)

There is little point in having your meat supplied by a halal butcher if it is then on the same menu with haram meat. One wonders whether these owners would provide dog meat for their customers; according to Wikipedia, dog meat is eaten in Tonga, China, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Korea¹. Similarly, horse meat is eaten in Tonga, China, Japan, Korea and several European countries².

prohibited in the Quran

prohibited in the Bible

This catering of ham etc for local customers is despite the fact that pig meat is also forbidden in the Bible:

"[The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, 'Say to the Israelites:] And the pig, though it has a split hoof completely divided, does not chew the cud; it is unclean for you. You must not eat their meat or touch their carcasses; they are unclean for you.'" (Leviticus 11:7-8)

In the Quran, Allah (swt) also prohibits alcohol (again except in dire circumstances):

"O you who believe, indeed, intoxicants ... are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful." (Quran 5:90)

Again, there seems little point in having halal meat supplied, if it is then mixed with (non-halal) alcohol. Again, the Bible contains a prohibition against alcohol:

"Then the Lord said to Aaron, 'You and your sons are not to drink wine or other fermented drink whenever you go into the Tent of Meeting, or you will die. This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come.'" (Leviticus 10:8-9)

Some outlet owners felt that pig meat was acceptable nowadays because of advances in hygiene and production techniques.

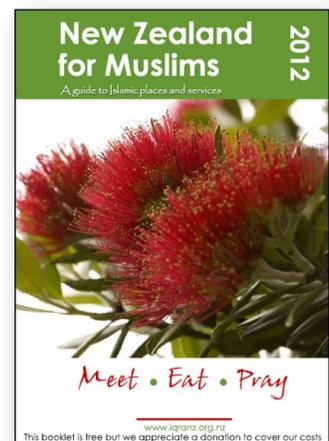
However, the wording in the Quran is quite unambiguous; there are no ifs or buts about it. The Bible is even more explicit and rigorous: "a lasting ordinance for the generations to come".

May Allah (swt) help us to follow his teachings, and only consume halal food and drink. And Allah knows best.

New Zealand for Muslims is available from www.iqranz.org.nz

1 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dog_meat

2 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horse_meat



do we know our neighbours?

some believers do nothing but believe

people of action

Neighbourliness

Who are our neighbours? What are their rights over us? What are our responsibilities as Muslim neighbours? These are very important questions, given the challenging times that we face both in New Zealand and in other parts of the world. How many of us are even aware of our neighbours' names? Hence, it is good to reflect on this topic from the point of view of the Quran and the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (saw).

Recently, NZ First MP Richard Prosser called for the ban of the burqa immediately after he was made an MP after the last general election. Now he has published a book called *Uncommon Dissent* which is in the bookshops¹.

We complain that our neighbours are prejudiced. We Muslims should stop complaining that we are being treated unfairly, that our rights are being abused and then we do nothing about it. If we really take Islam seriously, then we must strive energetically to improve ourselves and strengthen our communities in an Allah-conscious way.



Hence the necessity to reach out to our neighbours. When we stretch our hands in friendship and we open our hearts in respect and compassion towards our neighbours in the wider community, then we remove the fear and anxiety that feeds their bigotry and prejudice.

Today there are believers who do nothing but believe. And there are believers who believe and translate their belief into action. A third category is

insensitive to what is happening around them where their belief is concerned. In the Quran, Allah (swt) says, "Not equal are those of the believers who sit (at home), except those who are disabled (by injury or are blind or lame), and those who strive hard and fight in the cause of Allah with their wealth and their lives. Allah has preferred in grades those who strive hard and fight with their wealth and their lives to those who sit (at home). To each Allah has promised good (Paradise), but Allah has preferred those who strive hard and fight, to those who sit (at home) by a huge reward" (Quran 4:95).

It is clear that Muslims must be people of action, not simply people who claim to hold certain beliefs, but who do very little about it.

We are fortunate to live in a country like New Zealand. We who come from various countries which were colonised by the white masters are not here in a master-servant relationship, but among the white population, as equals.

Our behaviour, our presence here in New Zealand should by now become at least something of a small mercy to our local neighbourhood. Even if we don't yet know how to get others to love us, we can at least try not to let them hate us. If we treat our host community with courtesy, we can at least refrain from behaving in an insulting and ungrateful manner. In fairness, by and large the Muslims here are courteous to the host community, but our only flaw is that many try to keep away from them.

In the last issue of *Rocket Science*, a report stated that, judged on certain parameters, New Zealand is the country of the world that adheres most to Islamic Economic principles. Al hamdu lillah! Are we not fortunate to be able to practise Islamic principles without hindrance?

***you name it, we
Muslims have it***

Why is it that, despite having so many good Muslims around, we still have so many serious problems of domestic violence, honour killing (which was reported in New Zealand recently), gambling, drug and alcohol abuse, theft, burglary, fraud, etc. You name it, we Muslims have it. I know this is rather unpleasant stuff and maybe some of us don't want to talk about it. But anyone who thinks these problems don't concern Muslims is either misinformed or in denial. In everything we do we must remember that Allah is watching constantly.

"No vision can grasp Him, but He grasps all vision." (Quran 6:103)

Allah knows and sees everything and He holds us all to account. He will not excuse us for turning a blind eye to the problems around us.

In a Bukhari hadith relevant to this topic, Abu Shuraih reported that the Prophet (saw) said, "By Allah, he does not believe! By Allah, he does not believe! By Allah, he does not believe!" The companions asked, "Who is that, Prophet?" and he answered, "The person whose neighbour does not feel safe from his mischief." We Muslims cannot be true believers if our neighbours live in fear of us, in fear of our evil deeds.

So what does it mean to be a Muslim, beyond praying, paying zakat, fasting and going on hajj? In our daily prayers, we may say, "Serve Allah and do not join any partners with Him: and do good – to your parents, to relatives, orphans, those in need, neighbours who are near and neighbours who are strangers, the companion by your side, the travellers and those whom your right hands possess: for Allah loves not the arrogant, those who are boastful and vain." The verse refers to neighbours who are near and neighbours who are strangers. It doesn't say your Muslim neighbours only. We must do good to all neighbours, whether they are Christians, Jews, Sikhs or Hindus, etc or whether they have no religion. We are all human beings, *bani Adam*, children of Adam (as) and Eve (Hawa, ra), created by Allah (swt). If we truly love Allah, we must show respect and reverence to all His creatures.

***non-Muslim
neighbours***

The differences between us are only small. We have many important beliefs in common. One important belief in every major religion is the Golden Rule, which is also known as the Ethic of Reciprocity. Prophet Muhammad (saw) said, "A believer is not a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself." Most scholars interpret "brother" in its widest sense, meaning all human beings, not just family brothers or Muslim brothers.

***non-Muslim
brothers***

A Muslim cannot go from home to the mosque, ignoring the problems of his neighbours who are in need. He or she cannot ignore the homeless, the drug addicts, the pregnant teenagers, the gang warfare and crime in his or her neighbourhood. He or she cannot go back home from the mosque, ignoring the poor, the hungry, the widow and orphan. We cannot say this is not our business. The poor have rights over us, widows and orphans have rights over us, and our neighbours have rights over us. They are so important that during the Farewell Pilgrimage some companions like Abu Umama said they thought the Prophet (saw) would tell us to include our neighbours in our inheritance. Islam describes neighbours as being from near and far, and in one way or another every human being on earth is a neighbour.

***Prophet as
example***

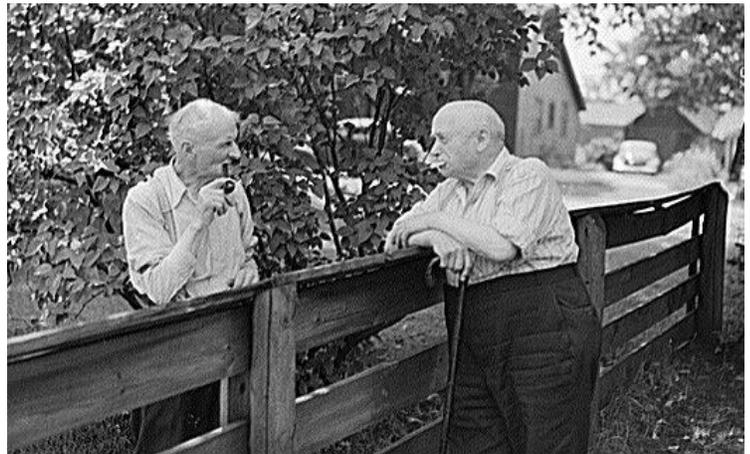
Our Prophet Muhammad (saw) was an excellent role model throughout his life. We all know the story of his neighbour who dropped rubbish on his doorstep every day. Did he get angry and lose his temper? Did he throw rubbish on her doorstep? Did he throw temper tantrums and call her kafir? No, he did not. He simply cleaned up the mess without complaining, and carried on his daily business. One morning he found no rubbish there, so he went to visit his neighbour and found out that she was not well. Did he just walk away, or insult

Don't panic, be Islamic

or mock her, and take revenge? No, he took care of her until she recovered. He was being a good neighbour. He had no time for bruised egos. He was setting an example for others. As a result, Allah softened her heart and she became a Muslim. How many of us would treat a bad neighbour in this way?

These days, we and our faith are constantly in the media spotlight, and mostly for the wrong reasons. But we shouldn't worry too much about this. This is how it's meant to be, as Allah (swt) is fully in control of all His creation. We shouldn't be afraid or defensive. We mustn't behave like victims and adopt a victim mentality. This is Allah's test for us. If we really want a slogan, we could say, "Don't panic, be Islamic." Follow the sunnah, ignore the bad behaviour and temper tantrums, seize the opportunity to show what Islam really is by talking to our neighbours and explaining what the Quran teaches. This is a chance for real da'wah, calling others to Islam. Give them an English translation. Invite our neighbours to our homes, mosques and functions. Let them see Islam in practice. Let us be good living examples.

We have to understand that Allah has a reason for putting us here in this country at this time. We are to take responsibility for our neighbours, as good Muslims should. Our neighbours feel insecure, uncertain about themselves and their future. They wonder what part we Muslims have to play in their lives. It's time for



us to reassure them that we are not after political power or world domination. We have no hidden agendas. We may have come here for political asylum or for economic advancement. No problem with that. But we also have a duty to make our neighbourhoods safe and secure for everyone. That's what being a complete Muslim, a true believer, is all about.

In a famous verse from the Quran, Allah (swt) says, "O Mankind, We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know and respect each other (not that you should despise one another). Truly the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most best in good deeds." What an eloquent explanation for the differences between us and our neighbours! We are all like flowers in Allah's garden, each with its own distinctive colour and fragrance, each one beautiful in its own right. Our differences are not a sign of weakness or division, but a sign of Allah's infinite creativity. His artistry is there for all of us to witness with a sense of reverence and wonder.

1 Winston won't say if he backs burqa-ban MP. *New Zealand Herald* 8 Dec 8 2011.

Umar ibn Al-Khattab (ra)

Umar ibn Al-Khattab (ra) was another of the companions who were promised Jannah during their lifetime. The following story connected to this erudite Caliph shows that he was wise and his decisions were accepted without contradiction.

Two young men came to the Caliph Umar ibn Al-Khattab (ra) accompanied by a Bedouin man. They stood before the courtroom awaiting a judgement.

"What is this?" asked the Caliph.

"Oh prince of the believers," they said, "he killed our father!"

"Have you indeed killed their father?" the caliph asked the Bedouin.

When the Bedouin affirmed the accusation, he was asked by what means he committed the crime.

"He came upon my land riding his camel," said the Bedouin. "I warned him to leave, but he wouldn't. I threw a rock that hit him on his face and he died."

The Caliph immediately said, "The retribution for your crime is death."

The extraordinary thing about this immediate decision is that in modern courtrooms, there tend to be exceptions for men who have connections, or are rich and can offer bribes, or have a lofty status in society and can offer favours to excuse themselves from crimes. But the Caliph was never interested in any of these things. His only concern was justice in the eyes of God, and had the murderer been his own son, he would have taken the same course of action without bias.

The Bedouin heard the decision and pleaded, "Oh prince of the believers, I ask you by the One who maintains the heavens and the earth, to leave me for just a night so that I might go to my wife and children in the desert and inform them of my fate. I will entrust them to God and return to you."

The Caliph asked the courtroom, "Will anyone guarantee his return?"

The courtroom was quiet. No one knew this man, his trustworthiness, the whereabouts of his family, or even his name. Everyone did know, however, that if he did not return to the court on the prescribed day, then whoever volunteered to vouch for him would owe their life to the justice system and be killed on his behalf. The risk was too great and although his testimony was moving, not one man stirred.

Amidst the two young men whose father was slain, the pleading Bedouin whose family awaited the outcome of their care-taker, and the silent people, the Caliph bowed his head, overwhelmed with the burden of delivering justice to every party before him.

He lifted his head and spoke to the two young men.

"Will you not forgive this man?" he asked.

"No," they replied. "The man who has killed our father should be killed, oh



Inside Hagia Sophia, Istanbul

justice

forgiveness

trust

prince of the believers.”

There was a man in the court named Abu Dharr al Ghafari who was known for his asceticism and generosity. He was a young man during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) and now was old and beloved to the Caliph.

“I will guarantee the Bedouin’s return,” said Abu Dharr.

Stunned, the Caliph looked at his old friend. “Do you know him?”

“I don’t,” replied Abu Dharr, “but I’ve witnessed characteristics of faithfulness in him. He does not lie, so God willing, he will return.”

“Do you think I won’t kill you in his place if he flees his punishment?” asked the Caliph.

“God is sufficient in disposing of affairs,” replied Abu Dharr.

And with that, the Caliph ruled that the Bedouin should return to the courtroom in three days’ time to receive his death sentence. He was to tell his family of the situation and try to prepare them for his departure.

The days were short and passed quickly, and soon the two young men, the Caliph, the witnesses and Abu Dharr gathered in the courtroom once again to rectify the issue. But where was the Bedouin? Everyone silently looked around. No one saw him. Abu Dharr looked at the setting sun, inching lower and lower into the western horizon; every minute that passed was a threat to his life. And no one but God knew the effect of this vulnerability in his heart. The Caliph anxiously asked about the whereabouts of the Bedouin. Had anyone seen him? He would have preferred to sacrifice himself before his dear friend Abu Dharr but he was well aware that this law is a provision from the Divine, and when followed perfectly, is a gift for mankind. The pressure overwhelmed the Caliph until, gasping, the Bedouin man came running into the courtroom.

“God is greater!” exclaimed the Caliph, as the crowd repeated after him, “God is greater!”

“Man! Had you stayed in your home, we would never have known your whereabouts! What brought you here?” asked the Caliph.

“Oh prince of the believers,” replied the Bedouin, “my debt is not to you, but to the One who is aware of the secret and knows the hidden. So here I am, oh prince of the believers. My children left in the desert like chicks in a nest with no water or food. But I had to come. Had I abandoned my vow, I feared that society would claim that the word of a man is no longer honourable. I had to fulfil my promise or honesty would have gone from our people.”

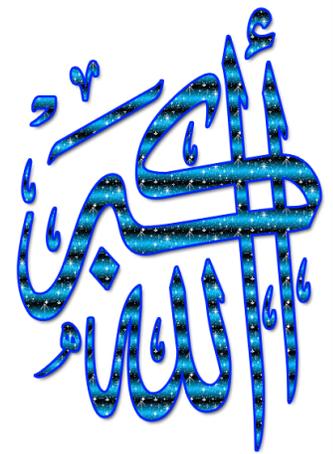
The Caliph, stunned, turned to Abu Dharr, who was pleased and relieved upon the Bedouin’s return, and asked, “And why is it that you have risked your life for this man?”

“Had I not volunteered, allowing him to meet his family once more, I feared that goodness and decency would have gone from our people,” said Abu Dharr.

The Caliph stood up and looked over at the two young men.

“What do you make of this?” he asked them.

“Oh prince of the believers,” they responded, weeping, “we forgive him, for fear that if we do not, forgiveness and mercy might in due time be gone from



Allahu Akbar

*honour
honesty*

decency

mercy

selflessness

our people.”

“God is greater!” whispered the Caliph, as tears dripped off his beard. “May God forgive you, young men, because you have shown forgiveness. May God protect you Abu Dharr, because you have protected another even when it cost you your own distress. And Bedouin, may God reward you for your honesty.”

Have these qualities gone from our people? Are honesty, selflessness and forgiveness only praised values of the past? Let us never let go of them, striving to adopt them in our daily life.

In the modern day, we have a clear example. A young girl of 17 from the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka was sent as a housemaid to Saudi Arabia. Her name is Rizana Nafeek. The agents had forged her birth certificate to make her appear as an adult. She was left at home with a newborn baby and entrusted with the task of bottle-feeding the baby. While in her arms, the baby died. Apparently, the baby had choked and this young teenager did not know how to revive her. However, the police got a confession from her and charged her for murder. She has been in prison since 2005, and she has been on death row since 2007, prompting even the President of Sri Lanka to appeal for clemency. The authorities cannot do anything to pardon her. Islamic law requires that only the parents of the baby can pardon and that too after paying blood money. In spite of all appeals from various humanitarian organisations, the parents have refused to budge and she languishes on death row¹.

The latest effort was made by some parliamentarians of Sri Lanka to go to the village in which that family lives, Dwadmi, meet the elders of the village and appeal to them to intervene and persuade the parents of the baby to forgive this young girl. They made a valiant effort. There is a ray of hope. Still no positive result. May Allah give hidaya to the parents of that child and save an inexperienced domestic aid who obviously had no reason to deliberately kill an innocent child.

And never think that it is only in murder trials that these things come to light. For if we don't have courage to muster these qualities in seemingly insignificant circumstances, how will we ever develop a habit strong enough to withhold the pressure of life and death?

In this world of lies, self-interest and egotism, let us be from among the honest, the selfless, the forgiving. May Allah help us do it.

¹ Rizana Nafeek case taken up for trial. *News.LK*. www.news.lk/news/sri-lanka/1158-rizana-nafeek-case-taken-up-for-trial



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). The show neither delivers nor promotes any political, national, ethnic, social or class perspective – its focus is purely on da'wah and deen-al-Islam (the Islamic faith/way of life).

VOI television is broadcast on:

- Triangle TV in Auckland (8.00 & 11.30am Sat; 8.00am Sun)
- CTV in Christchurch
- Channel 9 Dunedin
- Telstra Digital TV in Wellington & Christchurch CH 50
- SKYTV CH 89 and Freeview CH 21 in New Zealand
- MAITV in Fiji
- METRO TV in Ghana, West Africa

3 & 4 March

Quran 2:21-23

LECTURE: Great Acts of Worship 1 by Waleed A. Hakim

DOCUMENTARY: Answers from the Quran 1 Part 1 by Harun Yahya

10 & 11 March

Quran 2: 21-23

LECTURE: Great Acts of Worship 2 by Navaid Azeez

DOCUMENTARY: Answers from the Quran 1 Part 2 by Harun Yahya

MY PATH TO ISLAM: Mohammed Abu Bakr

17 & 18 March

Quran 4: 196-200

LECTURE: Why Don't You Pray? Part 1 By Bilal Dannoun

MY PATH TO ISLAM: Domini Boff

TID BITS: Salah by Yusuf Estes

24 & 25 March

Quran: 4:196-200

LECTURE: Why Don't You Pray? Part 2 by Bilal Dannoun

FEATURE: Fog is Lifting: Pillars of Islam: Salah

DOCUMENTARY: Answers from the Quran 2 Part 1 by Harun Yahya

31 March & 1 April

Quran: 4: 131-134

LECTURE: A Moment of Truth: Why Islam? By Belal Assaad

FEATURE: Fog is Lifting: Islam in Brief

TID BITS: Deen by Yusuf Estes

DOCUMENTARY: Answers from the Quran 2 Part 2 by Harun Yahya



Belal Assaad

Watch VOI online, or order a free copy of the Quran: www.voiceofislamtv.com

Auckland prayer timetable for March 2012

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



Following requests by readers, we are also showing Hanafi Asr times.

*“When a Muslim offers his salat to please Allah, his sins are shed away from him just as leaves falling off a tree.”
(hadith Ahmad)*

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

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

Asr 2: Hanafi school (double shadow length)

Credits

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

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Why attend Rocket Park jumuah?

- ✓ Central location
- ✓ Plenty of free parking
- ✓ Facilities for ladies
- ✓ Bayaan (religious talk) before jumuah prayers
- ✓ All bayaan and khutbah in English

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

In December 2010, the **Senior Citizens' Association building, Rocket Park, New North Road, Mount Albert**, was closed for renovation by the Auckland City Council. Following these renovations, we believe we are the only jumuah in New Zealand with air-conditioning and heating.

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Back issues of *Rocket Science*

Missed an issue of *Rocket Science*? All our monthly issues are available online at the Mount Albert Islamic Trust website: www.mtalbertislamiccentre.org

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)