



Rocket Science



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*In the name of
Allah, most
Gracious, most
Merciful*

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Religion waning, study says

(abridged from *Hawke's Bay Today* www.hawkesbaytoday.co.nz 9 April 2011)

A study from two American universities looked at patterns in census results and said religion was "headed for extinction" in nine countries, including New Zealand. The 2006 New Zealand census figures showed the number of people declaring no religion increased from 29.6 per cent in 2001 to 34.7 per cent in 2006. Younger New Zealanders were more likely than the rest of the population to be recorded as having no religion.

Waiapu Cathedral Dean Helen Jacobi said there's no arguing that church attendance has dropped and fewer people belong to religions, but that did not mean religion was dying. Events such as the recent earthquakes in Christchurch and Japan had increased attendance numbers, indicating that while people may not regularly attend church, they still feel comfortable there in difficult times.

Havelock resident John Timpson helped establish the Hawke's Bay Rationalist and Humanist Group last year. He said there were a number of factors driving people away from church and faith. "More education, meeting people from different backgrounds, young people's independence and the women's liberation movement have all influenced the way we think. Young people are listening to a minister tell them how to live their life and they're not convinced." Many people ticked census boxes based on family background or social groups, not true belief. His family never attended church or followed a religion, but every census they ticked the box for Anglican.

Some religions were still increasing in numbers, including Islam, which is the fastest growing religion in New Zealand and the world. Mohamed Zewada is the imam, or minister, of the Hawke's Bay Islamic Centre. He said a desire to find out the truth, beyond what they read or hear, has driven people to learn more about Islam. "People have more awareness about people of other faiths and when they find something extremely exaggerated, they go and find out for themselves. This is good for us because once they learn, they find out it is different to what they thought."

The centre had about 40 people convert to Islam in the past few years, without knocking on doors or handing out flyers, he said. "We have networks and programmes to approach Muslims in the area to refresh contact with the mosque. We don't have any expectation that it's dying. People are starting to understand and accept Islam and find it can satisfy the need for spiritual relaxation of every human."

Drinking over the limit 'raises cancer risk'

Many people do not know that drinking alcohol can increase their cancer risk.

(from BBC News www.bbc.co.uk 7 April 2011)

Drinking more than a pint of beer a day can substantially increase the risk of some cancers, research shows. A large Europe-wide study in the British Medical Journal found that one-in-10 of all cancers in men and one-in-33 of all cancers in women are caused by past or current alcohol intake. For alcohol-related cancers, one-in-three in men and one-in-20 in women are caused by any excessive drinking.

The study calculated that in 2008, current and past drinking habits were responsible for about 13,000 cases of alcohol-related cancer in the UK, out of a total of 304,000 cancer cases. Previous research has shown a link between alcohol consumption and cancers of the oesophagus, liver, bowel and female breast. When alcohol is broken down by the body it produces a chemical which can damage DNA, increasing the chance of developing cancer.

This research found that individuals who drank more than two standard drinks a day for men and one drink a day for women were particularly at risk of alcohol-related cancers. A standard drink contains about 12g of alcohol, which is equivalent to a 125ml glass of wine or a half pint of beer. Yet NH guidelines are a little more relaxed, saying that men should drink no more than three to four units a day while women should not go over two to three units a day. Of the cancers known to be linked to alcohol, the researchers suggest that 40 to 98% occur in people who drink more than the recommended maximum.

The results were gathered as part of a large study following 363,988 men and women in eight European countries aged between 35 and 70. The European Prospective Investigation into Cancer (EPIC) study tracked their levels of drinking and how this affected their risk of cancer. Researchers then looked at figures on how much people drink in each country, including the UK, taken from the World Health Organisation. The study focuses on France, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Greece, Germany, Denmark and the UK.

Madlen Schutze, lead researcher "Alcohol linked to risk of cancer" and study author, from the German Institute of Human Nutrition, said that many cancer cases could be avoided if alcohol consumption was limited. "And even more cancer cases would be prevented if people reduced their alcohol intake to below recommended guidelines or stopped drinking alcohol at all," she said.

Sara Hiom, director of health information at Cancer Research UK, said that many people do not know that drinking alcohol can increase their cancer risk. "In the last ten years, mouth cancer has become much more common and one



"They question you about strong drink and games of chance. Say: In both is great harm and utility for men; but the harm of them is greater than their usefulness."
(Quran 2:219)

DNA damaged

"... cancer cases would be prevented if people ... stopped drinking alcohol at all"

“.. one of the most important ways of lowering your cancer risk”

reason for this could be because of higher levels of drinking – as this study reflects. Along with being a non-smoker and keeping a healthy bodyweight, cutting back on alcohol is one of the most important ways of lowering your cancer risk.”

And Ed Yong, from Cancer Research UK, warned of the dangers posed by consuming even small amounts of alcohol. “The more people drink the higher their risk of cancer becomes so even light or moderate levels can increase the risks to some extent, but heavier drinking will increase it even more,” he said. He added that increased drinking in the general population could lead to a “higher cancer burden in the future” unless people took steps to reduce their alcohol consumption.

Dr Rachel Thompson, deputy head of science at World Cancer Research Fund, said that the research adds weight to what we already know about the link between alcohol consumption and cancer. “The WCRF recommends that if people are to drink alcohol they should not consume more than two drinks a day for men or one a day for women. The German study underlines the importance of not exceeding these limits.”

Why is alcohol consumption falling?

(abridged from BBC News www.bbc.co.uk 15 Feb 2011)

Despite new evidence that more people are being treated in hospital for excessive drinking, the overall trend is that we are drinking less as a nation. Why?

It’s difficult to open a newspaper without reading about the alcohol problems that exist in the UK. Recent headlines include “Binge drinking costs NHS [National Health Service] billions”, “Hospitals reel as drink cases soar” and “Alcohol abuse to cost NHS an extra billion”. And this week, figures from Alcohol Concern suggest the number of people being treated in hospital for alcohol misuse has more than doubled in eight years.

But behind these stories is an unexpected truth – Britons have been drinking less and less every year since 2002. Men and women of all ages are slowly curbing their excesses and drinking in moderation, according to the annual survey from the Office for National Statistics, which covers England, Scotland and Wales. It suggests that heavy drinking is falling, abstinence is rising, and young people are leading the drive towards healthier drinking. The decrease among some groups even pre-dates 2002, with men aged 16-24 drinking 26 units a week on average in 1999 and just 15 units a week in 2009, according to the ONS figures.

“There is a received wisdom that we must be drinking more,” says Neil Williams of the British Beer and Pubs Association (BBPA). Its own figures, which are based on sales and not self-reporting, suggest alcohol sales peaked in 2004 and have fallen by 13% since then. “In reality, we see a fairly deep-rooted decline in alcohol consumption which dates back to 2004. That’s not something you see acknowledged in the media.”

It’s frustrating that the true story is not getting out there, says David Poley, chief executive of the Portman Group, an association of drinks producers in the

UK drinking less alcohol since 2002

alcohol sales dropped 13% since 2004

Drinkaware

*no longer a badge
of honour*

UK. "With newspapers, the headline is always the same: 'Shock rise in binge drinking'. But you look at the figures, and you see alcohol sales are declining. It's a myth that we need to make alcohol more expensive [to stop people drinking]. These trends are being reversed on their own."

Historically, sales of booze rose and fell with the economy. Recessions in the early 80s and 90s were coupled with a slump in drinking. And the current downturn is having a similar effect. From 2008-2009, alcohol consumption in the UK fell by 6%. But that decline started long before the credit crunch kicked in – 2004 according to the BBPA and 2002 by the ONS figures. So what happened?

"To a certain extent it's a mystery," says Mr Poley. "There may be multiple reasons. But around that time, the UK did see the launch of some major alcohol health warning campaigns." In 2004 the Drinkaware logo started appearing on beer advertisements. The labelling of drinks bottles improved to make it clear how many units of alcohol they contain. And the health dangers of heavy drinking were increasingly highlighted by the media.

DRINKAWARE.CO.UK

References to "binge drinking" shot up in 2004, according to Dr James Nicholls of Bath Spa University, who researches the social history of alcohol. "The media picked up on it around the time that the 2003 Licensing Act was being introduced - when all the talk was of '24 hour drinking'. And that's when the whole 'Binge Britain' thing kicked off," he says. The Daily Mail ran a memorable campaign, featuring images of young women slumped on pavements and park benches. News stories were peppered with health warnings from groups like Alcohol Concern, Drinkaware and the Royal College of Physicians. "They were very successful at making the health impacts of alcohol a news story," says Mr Nicholls.



In reality, 24-hour drinking never took off. The average pub only opened 24 minutes longer after 11pm last orders was abolished, says Nicholls. But it didn't matter – the headlines had already been written. A new tone had been set for alcohol reporting. The message was that Britain was out of control. The negative publicity not only led people to moderate their behaviour, it also created a new kind of social stigma around being drunk. The ONS survey notes that people may now be "less inclined to admit to how much they have been drinking". Boozing was no longer such a badge of honour. And attitudes in the workplace began to change too, says Graham Page, an alcohol industry analyst. "These days most employers are anti-drink. The six o'clock swill has gone in most places, apart from London," he says.

Meanwhile, consumer forces were also at work to change our drinking habits throughout the last decade. Pubs were closing down, duty on beer was rising, and sales of cheap supermarket wine were rocketing. The caricature of a

“drinker” has slowly morphed – from lager louts downing pints to girls on the sofa, sipping Pinot Grigio.

So is the latest fall a victory for drink awareness campaigning? Such celebrations would be premature, says Don Shenker, chief executive of Alcohol Concern. “There are still 10 million people drinking above the government’s recommended level. And 1.6 million dependent drinkers. These are the frequent flyers into hospital, and they are not changing their drinking habits. It is very likely that alcohol consumption will rise again once the economy picks up. So government alcohol policy should ensure alcohol becomes less affordable permanently, not just in an economic downturn.”

The health warnings are here to stay – and rightly so, as hospital admissions from alcohol continue to rise. It will be a long time before any recent moves towards healthier drinking will be felt in NHS wards.

The shaikh and his pupil

A story from the year 810

This is the story of a pupil who studied under an erudite Shaikh. His name was Hatim al Assam, a disciple of Shaqiq al Balkhi. Shaikh Shaqiq once asked Hatim how long he had been in his company. Hatim replied, “Thirty-three years.”

Shaqiq then asked, “And what have you learnt during this period?”

“Eight things,” replied Hatim.

Thereupon the Shaikh exclaimed, “Verily we are Allah’s and unto Him is our return. I have spent my life trying to teach you but you have learnt only eight things!”

Hatim replied, “Frankly, I have learnt nothing else and I do not like to lie about it.”

Shaqiq then said, “Well, out with those eight things and let me hear them.”

Hatim then said, “I looked around and beheld that every man has something or someone whom he loves and with whom he remains until the hour of death arrives, at which time they part. Consequently, I made charity the object of my love, so that when the hour of death arrives, the object of my love accompanies me to the grave.”

You have done well, Hatim,” said Shaqiq. “Let us now hear the second that you have learnt.”

Hatim replied, “I have pondered over the words of Allah, when He said, ‘But as to him who shall have feared the majesty of the Lord, and shall have refrained his soul from lust, verily, paradise – that shall be his dwelling place’ (Quran 79:40-41) and have come to know that the words of Allah are the truth. Consequently, I have mortified myself and suppressed lust until my soul found its abode in the obedience of Allah.

“Thirdly, as I looked around at people, I found that everyone treasures and exalts whatever valuable things he possesses. I then turned to the words of Allah, ‘All that you possess passeth away but that which is with Allah abideth’ and began to give unto Allah whatever valuable things fell into my hands.



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"Fourthly, as I looked around, I saw that everyone places his trust in wealth, descent, honour and lineage – things which on examination, I found to be empty. I then pondered over the words of Allah, 'Verily, the most honourable of you in the sight of Allah is the most pious of you.' (Quran 49:13) and immediately turned with all my soul to piety in order that I may become honourable before Allah.

"Fifth, I looked around and beheld these people slandering and cursing one another, all because of jealousy. Then I turned to the words of Allah, 'It is We who distribute their subsistence among them in this world's life' (Quran 43:31) and, consequently I abjured jealousy and extended my love to all, realizing that man's lot is from Allah. As a result, I dislike people no more.

"In the sixth place, I saw men oppress and fight one another. Whereupon, I turned to the words of Allah, 'Verily! Satan is your foe; for a foe then hold him' (Quran 35:6). Accordingly, I took Satan for a foe and ceased to hate people.

"The seventh thing I learnt, was the following: As I looked around, I saw that every man was running after bread, and debasing himself and committing all manner of unlawful things in the effort to gain his end. Then I recalled the words of Allah, 'There is no moving thing that moveth upon the face of the earth but its provision is from Me' (Quran 11:8). Realizing that I was one of those moving things whose provision is from Allah, I devoted myself to the things which are Allah's, and entrusted my fate into His hands.

"The eighth and the last thing which I learnt was this: I looked around and found that every man has placed his trust in something created – one in his possession and another in his wealth, a third in his profession and the fourth in his health. In short, all created beings placed their trust in things which are, like themselves, created. I then turned to the words of Allah, 'And to him who putteth his trust in Him, will Allah be all sufficient' (Quran 65:3) from that moment on, I placed my trust in Allah."

Then Shaikh Shaqiq said, "O Hatim, may Allah prosper thee. Verily, I have examined the Pentateuch, the Gospel, the Psalms and the Great Quran and found that all goodness and religion centre around these eight things. Whoever would practise them would conform to the teachings of these four books."

The best advice one can follow in the light of the above story is:

- In happy moments, praise God!
- In difficult moments, seek God!
- In quiet moments, worship God!
- In painful moments, trust God!
- In every moment, thank God!

*May Allah keep
you alive*

Islamic greetings

Before the rise of Islam, the Arabs used to greet one another with expressions like "Hayyakallah" ("May Allah keep you alive"). Even this was corrupted in modern times, copying the Western concept, to "Sabah al khair" ("Good morning") and "Masa'a al khair" ("Good evening"). However, Islam introduced a new greeting – "Assalam-u-alaikum" ("Peace be upon you") with the underlying meaning "May you be saved from all forms of grief, hardship and misery". Ibnul `Arabi said in his *Ahkam-ul Quran* that salam is one of the attributes of Allah (swt) and it means "Allah Raqeeb-un `alaikum" ("May Allah be your protector").

We know the greetings of love used by other nations. Islamic greeting is better than all of those for the following reasons:

- It is not just an expression of love but the reason and logic for this love is expressed in the form of a supplication (*dua*) wishing that you be saved from all forms of grief. This supplication is not only for life, as the Arabs used to say, but also for a life full of goodness.
- It reminds us that we all depend on Allah (swt). Nobody can harm or benefit anybody without Allah's will. Hence, it is a form of worship of Allah (*ibadat*), which reminds the fellow Muslims of Allah (swt).
- When somebody says "I pray that you be at peace", he is promising that you will be safe from his hand and tongue, and he will respect your life, honour and dignity.

Hence, we can safely conclude that salam is: (i) a remembrance of Allah (thikr), (ii) a reminder (thazkira), (iii) an expression of love between Muslims, (iv) a superior supplication, and (v) a declaration that you will be safe from any harm by my hand or tongue.

There are several sayings of the Messenger of Allah (saw) to bring out the importance of this greeting amongst all Muslims.

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ

Abdullah bin Umr (ra) said that a person asked the Messenger of Allah (swt): "Which are the best deeds in Islam?" The Messenger of Allah (saw) answered: "Feed people and greet each other with salam, whether you know each other or not."

Abdullah bin Masood (ra) relates that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said: "Salam is one of the names of Allah which Allah has sent to earth. Hence, we should spread salam. When a person greets another with salam, his level is raised in the eyes of Allah. If members of a congregation do not answer his salam, then creatures better than them (ie Angels) answer the salam".

In the Quran, Allah says, "Whenever you are greeted with a greeting, you should greet with a greeting better than it or at least answer back similarly. Indeed, Allah will take account of all your deeds" (Surah An-Nisa, verse 86). It is Divine instruction to answer with the same or better words. This was demonstrated by the Prophet (saw) as mentioned in Ibn Jareer and Ibn Abi Hathim. One day when the Prophet was sitting with his companions, a person came and said, "Assalamu alaikum". The Prophet of Allah answered, "Walaikum

spreading salam

leaving room for additions

us salam wa rahmatullah". A second person arrived and said, "Assalamu alaikum wa rahmatullah". The Messenger of Allah answered, "Wa alaikum salam wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuhu". Soon after, a third person arrived and said, "Assalamu alaikum wa rahmatullah wa barakatuhu". The Messenger of Allah answered, "Wa Alaika". The third person humbly asked, "O, Messenger of Allah, when they greeted you briefly, you answered back with better wording. I greeted you in the most detailed way. I am surprised you answered me back very briefly saying 'Wa alaika'". The Messenger of Allah answered, "You have not left any room for additions. Therefore I returned you similar greetings which fulfill the condition laid down in the Quran by Allah (swt)."

Here we can conclude that to answer salam with these three phrases is sunnah or the way of the Prophet Muhammad (saw). The wisdom behind limiting to these three phrases is that salam is meant to be a brief communication and not a long speech.

It is our experience that sometimes when a non-Muslim who is either an acquaintance or a stranger finds out you are a Muslim, he blurts out "Assalamu alaikum". The Prophet (saw) replied to even such greetings, but not in the way we answer a Muslim's greeting. He said to such a person, "Salamun ala manit taba'al huda" ("Peace be upon those who are rightly guided").

Even at the beginning of Islam, the Jews of Medina taunted the Prophet (saw) with similar words which conveyed an opposite meaning. A Jew once greeted the Prophet with the words "As sa'am alaikum!" ("May death be upon you "). The Prophet was quick on the draw, and told him "Wa alaika" ("And upon you"), shutting the mouth of that sarcastic man.

Hasan Basri (ra) concluded that "To say salam is voluntary, but the answer to such a greeting is obligatory". It is mentioned in the Muatah of Imam Malik reported by Tufail bin Abi bin Kaab that Abdullah bin Umar (ra) used to go to the market just to say salam to people, with no intention of buying or selling anything. He really understood the importance of the initiation of salam.

who should salam whom

Our beloved Rasoolullah (saw) further guided that :

- The person riding should say salam to the person going on foot.
- A person walking should say salam to one who is sitting.
- A smaller group should say salam to a bigger group.
- The one departing should say salam to those who are staying.
- When leaving or entering your home, you say salam even if nobody is home (angels will answer).
- If meeting again and again, you should say salam again and again.

who should not respond to salam

There are certain exceptions for not answering back the greetings:

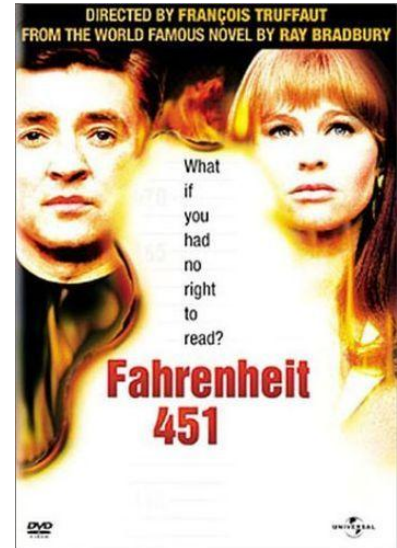
- A person praying should not answer – prayer will become invalid by answering verbally.
- A khateeb, a person reciting the Quran or a person making call for salat (adhan or iqama) or a person teaching Islamic books, should not answer.
- Someone sitting in the washroom should not answer.

May Allah grant us the ability to practise this greeting with true Islamic spirit in our everyday life, and in doing so generate love and unity among us.

The importance of memorisation

dystopia

Fahrenheit 451 is a 1966 film, the first colour film and the first film in English by the French director François Truffaut. It is based on a novel by the US science-fiction writer Ray Bradbury. It is often described as a dystopian novel, meaning one describing a fictional future state which is the opposite of utopia. It is a future American society in which the masses are pleasure-seeking and anti-intellectual: critical thought through reading is outlawed. The central character, Guy Montag, is employed as a "fireman". In this dystopian future, "fireman" means "bookburner". Firemen don't put out fires – they start fires in order to burn books. Anyone caught reading or possessing illegal books is, at the minimum, confined to a mental hospital while the books are burned by the firemen "for the good of humanity".



temperature at which books burn

The novel's title *Fahrenheit 451* refers to the supposed temperature at which book paper combusts, although in fact the temperature is around 450°C, much higher. People in this society including Montag's wife are drugged into compliancy and get their information from wall-length television screens.

value of books

One day, while at work with the other firemen ransacking the book-filled house of an old woman before the inevitable burning, Montag absent-mindedly reads one of her books. This prompts him to steal it. Over the course of a year, Montag hides dozens of books in the ventilation shafts of his own house, and tries to memorise them to preserve their contents. He seeks the help of Faber, a former English professor, who begins teaching Montag about the overall importance of literature in its attempt to explain human existence, and what books really mean. Eventually Montag's boss, the fire chief, learns that Montag has hidden books, and leads a fire crew, with Montag, to Montag's house, to burn it down. Montag begins to question the government's motives behind book-burning, and, having been found out, must decide whether to return to his job or run away knowing full well the consequences that he could face if captured. Montag becomes a fugitive, and escapes to where Faber stays, in the countryside. There, people spend all day memorising and reciting books, so that they are preserved and it does not matter if the copies are burnt. The final scene of the film shows adults and children memorising some of the great classics of literature.

memorising

We might like to think about which books people memorise nowadays. Many plays could probably be reconstructed, if all copies were burnt, from the memory of actors who had appeared on stage in those plays (although any one actor may not have memorised all the parts of any play). Similarly, people often memorise favourite poems, and those could perhaps be reconstructed from people's memories. However, the one book where we could be certain that there are enough people in the world today who know it by heart in order to be able to reconstruct a written version of it, is the Holy Quran.

The Quran was revealed to Muhammad (saw) by the angel Gabriel (Jibril) in

1 memory

pieces over a period of 23 years. Muhammad lived in 7th-century Arabia in a time when many people were not literate, and indeed Muhammad himself could not read or write.

The Quran was preserved in two ways. First, the Arabs preserved their histories, genealogies, and poetry by memory alone. Muhammad (saw) would memorise the ayat as they were revealed. In this sense, we can say that Muhammad was the very first hafidh (person who has memorised the whole Quran). When Muhammad repeated the verses of the Quran, his followers naturally preserved the words by memorising them, and thus his followers were the earliest huffadh (plural of hafidh). Memorisation required no expensive raw materials (in an age when there was no paper in the Muslim world). Memorisation was also considered more secure – a manuscript could easily be destroyed (as in the science fiction of *Fahrenheit 451*), but if the Quran was to be memorised by many huffadh, it would never be lost.

2 writing

Second, the Quran was preserved through writing. Whenever any revelation took place, it was written at once on tablets, palm branches, or animal skin, primarily by Zaid bin Thabit (ra), who was the main scribe out of the 42 scribes of the revelation. Muhammad (saw) set the order of the chapters under the guidance of Angel Jibril and ordered his companions to maintain that order. Abu Bakr (ra), the first caliph of Islam, compiled the Quran, and Uthman (ra), the third caliph, made numerous copies and sent one copy to each state capital. Even after Uthman collected and organised a written version of the Quran, recitation (from memory) of the Quran was still honoured and encouraged.

hafidh

Huffadh are highly respected within the Islamic community, and are tested on their knowledge. For example, in one test they are asked to continue the recitation of a passage taken randomly from the Quran. As they do not know which passage will be chosen, they must know the whole text in order to be sure of passing. In another test, a would-be *hafidh* might be asked to recite verses containing a specific word or phrase. Most *huffadh* have studied as children in Islamic schools (madrasahs), being instructed in tajweed (rules of recitation) and vocalisation as well as committing the Quran to memory.



During the holy month of Ramadan, tarawih prayers are read in the mosques every evening. *Tarawih* prayers include Quran recitation. Any *hafidh* who stumbles is sure to be corrected by another *hafidh*.

reward for hafidh

A number of scholars point to hadiths that state that a *hafidh* will be rewarded on the day of Qiyamah (Judgement Day), as will his or her parents, and will be granted the ability to intercede on behalf of ten family members: "Whoever reads the Quran and memorises it, while he regards what it makes lawful as lawful and its unlawful as forbidden (ie he practises according to it), Allah (swt) will admit him into Jannah and will accept his intercession on behalf of ten such persons of his family who were doomed to the fire of Jahannam" (Tirmidhi).

The memorisation of the Quran was very important to Muslims in the past and is also in the present. Yearly, many students master the Quran and complete

***the walking
Quran***

the book with *tafseer* (understanding) and also memorisation. One group of people in the Middle East who often become huffadh is prisoners. They are native speakers of Arabic, which makes memorising it easier. They have a lot of spare time on their hands. And insha Allah they realise the error of their ways, and feel that memorising the Quran is a way of repenting for their past sins and turning over a new leaf.

Muhammad (saw) was known as “the walking Quran”; that is, he had memorised the whole Quran and was a perfect example of how to live our lives according to it. There is no better way to follow Islam than to memorise the Quran. According to a survey, the number of huffadh today is more than 10 million.

The Quran is the only existing miracle; today, no other miracle of any prophet exists.

YMWA corner

Synopsis of a talk delivered at YMWA’s monthly study circle. The next study circle is 2 May; contact ymwa.nz@gmail.com for further information.

The importance of fajr prayer

Fajr means ‘dawn’ in Arabic. This prayer is performed between dawn and sunrise. Salat is one of the most important acts of a Muslim as it comes second (after faith) in the five pillars of Islam, and on the Day of Judgment the account for the prayers will have to be rendered first.

It is important to try to pray fajr prayer in congregation. Prophet Muhammad (saw) is reported to have said, “He who prays isha prayer in congregation receives the rewards of half the night’s worship. And he who attends both isha and fajr in congregation receives the rewards of the whole night’s worship.” (Tirmidhi)

All prayers are important, but the rewards for some prayers are greater than those for others. It is a must for every Muslim to offer every salat regularly but there are some prayers which cannot be performed punctually unless one takes special care of them. This is especially true of fajr, where you have to wake up specially, and asr. This is the reason some additional merits have been

***pray fajr in
congregation***

***rewards for
prayer***



Angels observing

mentioned in the following hadith of Prophet Muhammad (saw), so that people exercise extra effort for performing them.

"He who performs salat (prayers) before the rising of the sun and before its setting, will not enter Hell." (Muslim)

"He who observes 'al bardyan' asr and fajr prayers will enter Jannah." (Al Bukhari and Muslim)

"Angels come to you in shifts by night and by day. They meet at salat al-fajr and salat al-asr, then those who had stayed with you at night ascend, and are asked by the One Who knows better than they, 'How did you find My servants?' They say, 'We left them when they were praying, and we came to them when they were praying.'" (Al Bukhari)

Another hadith recorded by Al Bukhari states, "You will see your Rabb in the Hereafter as clearly as you see the moon – having no difficulty in seeing it. So try your best to perform the prayers before the rising of the sun (fajr) and that before its setting (asr)."

In another hadith, Prophet Muhammad (saw) said, "He who offers the dawn (fajr) prayers will come under the protection of Allah. O son of Adam! Beware, lest Allah should call you to account in any respect (for withdrawing) from His protection." (Muslim)

In these hadiths, fajr and asr prayers have been particularly mentioned because it is implied that one who takes special care of these two salat will not show any laxity in the other ones.

Muslims should also realise the great status of fajr prayer in the sight of Allah (swt). In the Quran, Allah (swt) says, "Establish regular prayers at the sun's decline till the darkness of the night, and the recital of the Quran in the fajr prayer, for the recital of the fajr is witnessed." (17:78)

While it is important for us to try not to miss any prayers, Prophet Muhammad (saw) again singled out particular salat: "The most burdensome prayers for the hypocrites are ishaa and fajr, but if they only knew what they contain, they would come even if they had to crawl." (Ahmad)

A final hadith emphasises that there are not only spiritual rewards for performing prayers, especially fajr, on time, but also physical benefits. Prophet Muhammad (saw) explained, "During your sleep, Satan ties three knots at the back of the head of each of you, and he breathes the following words at each knot, 'The night is long, so keep on sleeping.' If that person wakes up and remembers Allah, then one knot is undone. When he (or she) performs ablution (wudu) the second knot is undone. And when he (she) prays, all the knots are undone, and he (she) gets up in the morning lively and in a good mood. Otherwise he (she) gets up dull and gloomy." (Bukhari)

foiling Satan

Tips for waking up for fajr

1. Be sincere and pray just before going to bed. Make an intention of praying fajr and ask for the help of Allah (swt).
2. Invest in a good alarm clock.
3. Place your alarm clock far from your bed, so that you have to get up and switch it off.
4. Get to bed early. Prophet Muhammad (saw) used to go to bed early.
5. Ask someone in the house to wake you up, or ask a friend to ring you.

5 tips



Note the updated information

Adult Quran class

The Quran, as we know, is the most often read book in the world, and is revered by us Muslims as being the final scripture. Its words are beautifully recited and its contents are thoroughly memorised by Muslims all over the world. It is a guide to humanity, and as such, it is incumbent upon us to understand it and implement its teachings in our daily lives. Allah (swt) says in the Quran:

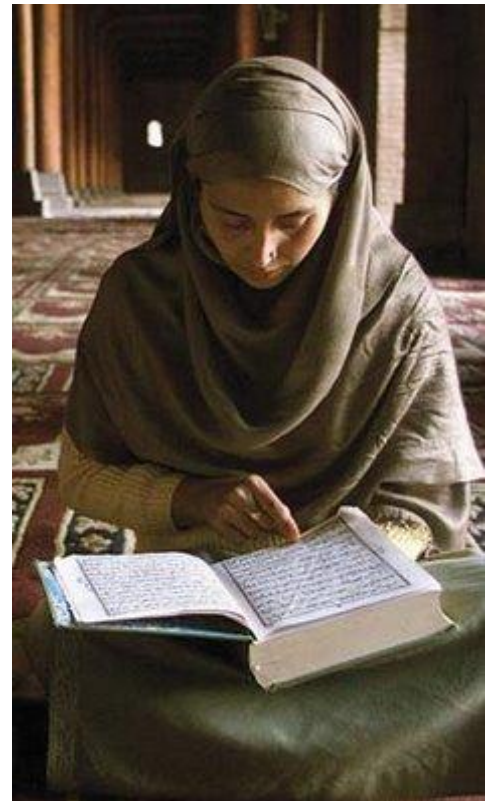
كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

“(This is) a Scripture that We have revealed unto thee, full of blessings, that they may ponder its revelations, and that men of understanding may reflect.” (Quran, 38:29)

The Mt Albert Islamic Centre is proud to introduce a course for adults in order to understand the glorious Quran in Arabic.

Please note the finalised day, time and venue for these classes, shown in red below. These have changed since the announcement in the last issue of *Rocket Science*.

- Programme : Arabic for Adults to understand the Quran
- Lecturer : Abdur Rahman Alim LLB (Hons)
- Duration : 3 years
- Goal : To understand the meaning of the whole Quran
- Participants : Brothers and Sisters
- Start Date : Saturday 7 May 2011**
- Venue : Senior Citizens' Association building, Rocket Park, New North Road, Mount Albert**
- Time : 9.00 – 11.00 am** weekly except during Ramadan period and Summer Holiday during December to January
- No. of classes : 2
- Class Size : 10 brothers, and 10 sisters per class, on a first come first served basis
- Enrolment : Please forward your Name, Mobile Phone Number, Home Phone Number, Postal Address, and e-mail address to:
- Brothers, please contact: sheed.ali@gmail.com
- Sisters, please contact: azoora@gmail.com



contact us

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 (peace be upon him). 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 (resuming transmission from 2 May, insha Allah)
- 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

7 & 8 May

Quran 1: 1-7

LECTURE: Essence of Islam Part 1 by Imam Afroz Ali

DOCUMENTARY: Allah is Known through Reason Part 2 by Harun Yahya

NO STONE UNTURNED: Hadeth by Shaikh Bilal Dannoun



Afroz Ali

14 & 15 May

Quran 1: 1-7

LECTURE: Essence of Islam Part 2 by Imam Afroz Ali

NO STONE UNTURNED: Men & Women by Shaikh Bilal Dannoun

MY PATH TO ISLAM: By Mousa Taher

21 & 22 May

Quran 1: 1-7

LECTURE: Essence of Islam Part 3 by Imam Afroz Ali

DOCUMENTARY: The truth about the life of this world by Harun Yahya

NO STONE UNTURNED: Qadr (predestination) by Shaikh Bilal Dannoun

28 & 29 May

Quran 1: 1-7

LECTURE: Essence of Islam Part 4 by Imam Afroz Ali

DOCUMENTARY: The fact of creation by Harun Yahya

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

Auckland prayer timetable for May 2011

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

“The first thing that will be judged among a person’s deeds on the Day of Resurrection is the prayer. If that is in good order, he will pass the test and prosper, and if that is defective, he will fail the test and will be a loser.”
(Hadith Tirmidhi)

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

Credits

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

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Why attend Rocket Park jumaat?

- ✓ Central location
- ✓ Plenty of free parking
- ✓ Bayaan (religious talk) before jumaat 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 mosque in New Zealand with air-conditioning and heating.

Subscribing/unsubscribing

If you have received this newsletter and want to unsubscribe (ie do not want to receive future issues), please send an email to masjidnews@gmail.com with "Unsubscribe" in the subject line. Vice versa, if you have received this newsletter indirectly, and would like to have future issues sent to your email address each month, please send an email to masjidnews@gmail.com with "Subscribe" in the subject line.

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)