



# Rocket Science



Safar/Rabial awal  
1432

February 2011

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

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## Who we are

Mount Albert Islamic Centre was inaugurated on 2 January 2009 for the purpose of conducting jumaat prayers. Our goal is to establish an Islamic Centre for the Mount Albert area where we can establish five-time daily prayers, conduct a Qur'an madrasa, Arabic, tajweed, hifl and adult classes, etc.

**Postal Address:** P O Box 16138, Sandringham, Auckland

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### **Rocket Science editorial board**

Editor in chief: Dr Adam Brown

Board members / writers: M C A Hasan, Hady  
Osman, Bakr Al-Saudi, Dr Sharif M A Fattah



### **Building project and general donation**

Mount Albert Islamic Trust was registered by the New Zealand Charities Commission on 27 November 2009 (registration number CC42957). We are thus a registered donee organisation, and New Zealand tax residents are entitled to 33% rebate from the IRD. We therefore encourage you to maximize your donation and claim the rebate from the IRD in accordance with Section LD1 of the Income Tax Act 2007. You can donate for the building project or as a general donation. Your building donation will contribute towards the purchase of the mosque land/building in the Mt Albert area. Your general donation will help towards meeting the day-to-day running costs of the mosque. These include hall hire for jumaat prayers and other sundry costs.

All donations are welcome and you are encouraged to contribute on a regular basis.

<b>Bank</b>	Kiwibank
<b>Branch</b>	St Lukes
<b>Address</b>	Shop 791 Westfield Shopping Ctr, St Lukes, Auckland 1025
<b>Bank phone</b>	(+64)(9) 846 3887
<b>Account name</b>	Mount Albert Islamic Trust
<b>Account no</b>	38-9009-0739910-01

Jazak Allah alkhair.

# Why attend Rocket Park jumaat?

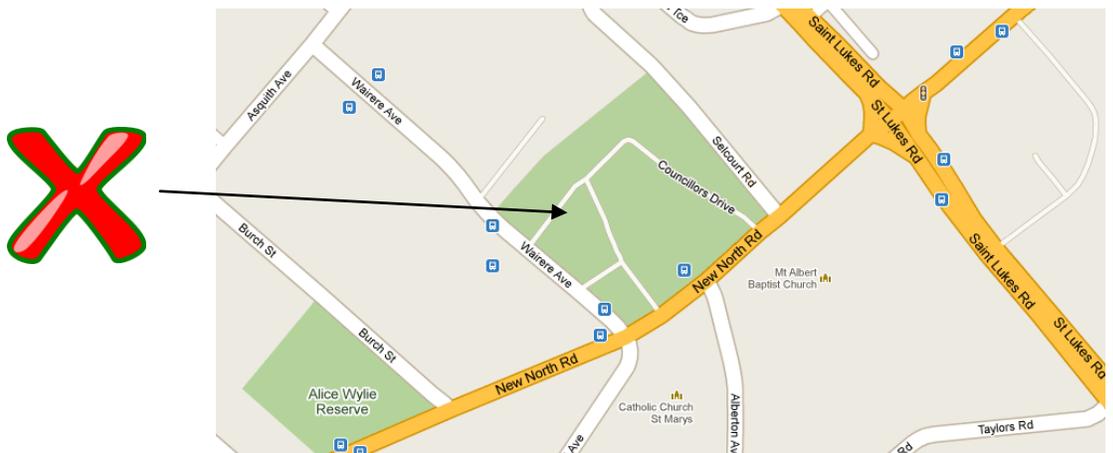
- ✓ Central location
- ✓ Plenty of free parking
- ✓ Bayaan (religious talk) before jumaat prayers
- ✓ All bayaan and khutbah in English

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

In December 2010, the Senior Citizens' Association building 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.

## Where we are

Friday prayers are held every week in the Senior Citizens' Association building beside Rocket Park. The bayaan starts at 1.00 pm (12.00 noon in winter), and the athan for Friday prayers is after that, at around 1.25 pm (12.25 in winter).



Senior Citizens' Association building, Rocket Park, off New North Road, Mount Albert. Entrance from New North Road or Wairere Avenue.

**Unsubscribing**

**Subscribing**

## 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 [mosquenews@gmail.com](mailto:mosquenews@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 [mosquenews@gmail.com](mailto:mosquenews@gmail.com) with "Subscribe" in the subject line.

## 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)

*swt*

*saw*

*as*

*ra*

*Jazak Allah  
alkhair for your  
kind words*

## Bouquets

Several members of the New Zealand Muslim community sent us congratulations on the launch of our newsletter last month. Thank you all for your kind words. Here are a sample:

Just wanted to say mabrook on your very first newsletter :)

I am impressed with the format and your aspirations. I wish you well in your endeavours.

Do not get tired of doing what is good. Don't get discouraged and give up, for we will reap a harvest of blessing at the appropriate time.

Great newsletter ma sha Allah.

Insha Allah your team is in the best of iman as you put together "Rocket Science" to celebrate the third anniversary of the Mt. Albert mosque. I would very much appreciate a copy of the magazine to inform our work on the Salam Show in Palmerston North.  
Sr. Fiona Lovatt Davis

Very well done and good effort. May Allah be merciful for your continuous effort.



## New mosque at New Lynn

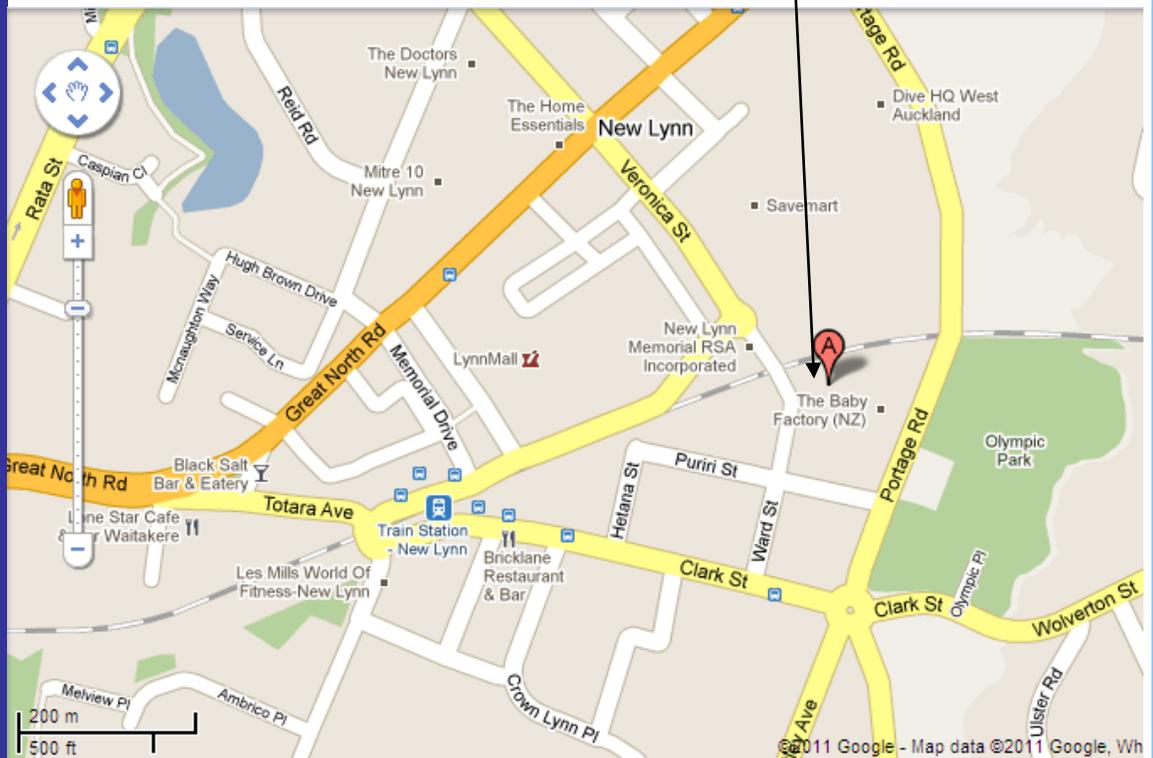
Alhamdulillah, premises for a new Islamic Centre have been purchased at 13 Ward Street, New Lynn. Prayers are already being conducted there.

In the last New Zealand census in 2006, there were 36,153 Muslims, about 0.8% of the total population at that time. However, this was an increase of 52.6% over the 2001 census figure of 23,631; that is, the Muslim population of New Zealand rose sharply in five years. The next census will be this year, 2011. It will be very interesting to see the figure for the Muslim population now. However, it is clear that it has continued to increase in the intervening years since 2006.

We therefore welcome the announcement that a new mosque has started functioning in New Lynn, to cater to the needs of the growing population of Muslims in southwest Auckland.

A large amount of the purchase price still needs to be raised, and Muslim brothers and sisters are being asked to help financially. If you would like to make a contribution, please contact:

- Haroon Hussien 0274-300177 or
- Shamim Khan 0274-876429



**Thikr**

**Religious belief  
improves health**

**“the human body  
and mind are  
regulated to  
believe in Allah”**

## Hearts find peace in the remembrance of Allah

(from Miracles of the Quran [www.miraclesofthequran.com](http://www.miraclesofthequran.com))

According to research by David B. Larson, of the American National Health Research Center, and his team, comparisons of devout and non-religious Americans have given very surprising results. For instance, religious people suffer 60% less heart disease than those with little or no religious belief, the suicide rate among them is 100% lower, they suffer far lower levels of high blood pressure, and this ratio is 7:1 among smokers. <sup>(1)</sup>

It was reported in one study published in the *International Journal of Psychiatry in Medicine*, an important scientific source in the world of medicine, that people who describe themselves as having no religious beliefs become ill more frequently and have shorter life spans. According to the results of the research, those with no beliefs are twice as likely to suffer stomach-intestine diseases than believers, and their mortality rate from respiratory diseases is 66% times higher than that of believers.

Secular psychologists tend to refer to similar figures as “psychological effects.” This means that belief raises people’s spirits, and this contributes to health. This explanation may indeed be reasonable, but a more striking conclusion emerges when the subject is examined. Belief in Allah is much stronger than any other psychological influence. The wide-ranging research into the connection between religious belief and physical health carried out by Dr. Herbert Benson of the Harvard Medical Faculty has produced surprising conclusions in this area. Despite not being a believer himself, Dr. Benson has concluded that worship and belief in Allah have a more positive effect on human health than that observed in anything else. Benson states that he has concluded that no belief provides as much mental peace as belief in Allah. <sup>(2)</sup>



What is the reason for this connection between belief and the human soul and body? The conclusion reached by the secular researcher Benson is, in his own words, that the human body and mind are regulated to believe in Allah. <sup>(3)</sup>

This fact, which the world of medicine has slowly begun to appreciate, is a secret revealed in the Qur’an in these words: “... Only in the remembrance of Allah can the heart find peace.” (Qur’an, 13:28) The reason why those who believe in Allah, who pray to and trust in Him, are psychologically and physically healthier is that they behave in accordance with the purpose of their creation. Philosophies and systems which contradict human creation always lead to pain and unhappiness.

Modern medicine is now tending towards the realization of this truth. As Patrick Glynn put it: “[S]cientific research in psychology over the past twenty-five

years has demonstrated that,... religious belief is one of the most consistent correlates of overall mental health and happiness.”<sup>(4)</sup>

1. Patrick Glynn, *God: The Evidence, The Reconciliation of Faith and Reason in a Postsecular World* (California: Prima Publishing: 1997), 80-81.
2. Herbert Benson, and Mark Stark, *Timeless Healing* (New York: Simon & Schuster: 1996), 203.
3. *Ibid.*, 193.
4. *Ibid.*, 60-61.

## Ali ibn Abi Talib (ra)

*The previous issue of Rocket Science contained an article about Uthman (ra), who was one of the ten companions of the Prophet (saw) who were given glad tidings of entering Paradise while they were still living on earth. This second installment describes Ali (ra), another one of the ten.*

The subject of this article is a blood relative of the Prophet (saw) and relative by marriage. He is Ali bin Abi Talib (ra). He had a high status among the Companions of the Prophet (saw). He was one who was included in the Statement of Allah (swt):

“... Allah wishes only to remove *ar-rijs* (evil deeds and sins) from you, O members of the family (of the Prophet, saw) and to purify you with a thorough purification.”

Ali (ra) was of noble lineage. His full name was Ali bin Abi Talib bin Abdul-Muttalib bin Hashim bin Abd Manaf. His father, Abu Talib (ra) was not well off, but he had several children. Muhammad (saw) wanted to help his uncle. So, he took Ali (ra) to live under his care while he was still a child. Ali (ra) was thus brought up in the house of Allah’s Messenger.

His father Abu Talib played an important role in protecting Allah’s Messenger in the beginning of his Message. The Quraish considered Abu Talib as a leader and chieftain. Everyone loved and esteemed him. He had a high status amongst the tribes of the Quraish. He was the only one amongst the paternal uncles of the Prophet (saw) who shouldered the responsibility of protecting and supporting the Prophet (saw) against the arrogance and haughtiness of the Quraish. Ali (ra) was his progeny who inherited Abu Talib’s traits such as courage, firmness in truth and determination.

Ali (ra) was born 23 years before the emigration and 10 years before the Prophet Muhammad (saw) was blessed with the Revelation. He was born in Makkah and his mother named him Haider (which means “lion”). The Prophet (saw) took him and cared for him, and it was implicit that Allah’s Messenger did this as a sign of gratitude to his paternal uncle, Abu Talib, who had cared for him during his childhood, and the Prophet (saw) was the best guardian after his father’s death.

The Prophet (saw) was his role model, and he picked up many of the Prophet’s habits. Because of this, he became an outstanding Muslim. Ali (ra) was impressed with the way the Prophet (saw) and his wife Khadijah (ra) prayed, so it was not long before he became a Muslim.

*brought up by the Prophet (saw)*

*the lion*

### ***marriage to Fatimah (ra)***

Ali (ra) was fair, wide-eyed and had a broad forehead. His hair was thick both on his head and in his beard area. But Ali (ra) used his strength in the way of Allah for supporting his religion. His physical strength helped him to do good deeds like praying, fasting, doing acts of charity.

For her merit and out of his love and gratefulness to the Prophet (saw), Ali (ra) married Fatimah (ra). She was 15 years old when he married her and he was ten years older than her. As for mahr (dowry), all Ali could offer was his armour which he had sold for 580 dirhams. The Prophet (saw) gave his daughter an ordinary cot, a mattress stuffed with palm leaves, a water bag, two grinding stones and two earthen pitchers.

Although they were poor, Ali and Fatimah were happy. They were given sons and daughters: Al-Hasan, Al-Husain, Muhsin, Zainab and Umm Kulthum. She was his only wife until she died.

There are many ahadith giving him the glad tidings of Paradise. His name was included in the famous hadith narrated by Sa'id bin Zaid who told that the Prophet (saw) said: "Abu Bakr is in Paradise. Umar is in Paradise. Uthman is in Paradise. Ali bin Abi Talib is in Paradise. Abdul Rahman bin Awf is in Paradise and Sa'd is in Paradise."

In the ninth year after migration to Al-Madinah, the Prophet (saw) led an army to Tabuk. He left Ali (ra) behind as a ruler of Al-Madinah in his absence. Ali was not satisfied with this mission and wanted to join the army. He thought that leaving him behind would be a shame to him. The Prophet (saw) told him: "Do you not like to be to me, like Harun was to Musa?"

The Prophet (saw) said to Ali (ra): "You are from me and I am from you".

In all other battles, Ali proved to be the man whom the Prophet (saw) and the Muslims could rely on. His bravery earned him the title "Lion of Allah".

### ***death of Ali (ra)***

Ali (ra) was assassinated by one of Al-Khawarij. Al-Khawarij were warriors on the side of Ali on the day of Siffin. When the soldiers of Mu'awiyah raised Al-Mushaf (the Noble Qur'an) requiring arbitration (it was a manoeuvre from their side), they (Al-Khawarij) fought against him under the pretext that Ali accepted the arbitration which was a major sin. They gave a verdict that the one doing a major sin becomes an unbeliever, hence he should be killed, so they decided to kill him.

Ja'far bin Muhammad narrated on the authority of his father that Ali used to carry a short stick with which to awake the people for the prayer. When Ibn Muljam hit him, Ali said: "Feed and water him. If I live, I will either kill or pardon him; if I die, kill him in the manner he killed me. Indeed Allah does not like transgressors."

Ali (ra) stayed alive Friday, Saturday and then died on Sunday night (eleven days before the end of Ramadan). Ja'far bin Muhammad narrated on the authority of his father: "Al-Hasan performed the funeral prayer for his father Ali who was buried in Al-Kufah near the ruler's headquarters. The grave was concealed lest Al-Khawarij would exhume it. He died at the age of 63 or 64."

Ali was killed while passing his life struggling in the way of Allah. He lived his life as a truthful worshipper and a patient warrior. He had lived an exemplary life and he died a martyr.

# What we Muslims can learn from converts

*British Muslims of Asian extraction are often weighed down by cultural baggage – converts can be a breath of fresh air*

(adapted from [www.guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk) 6 January 2011)

If Muslims have a bad reputation – and they do – converts to Islam have it even worse. Among their dreadful alumni are such characters as the “shoe bomber” Richard Reid, the 7 July bomber Germaine Lindsay, and Nicky Reilly who tried to blow up a restaurant in Bristol with a nail bomb. Yet despite these poor recruiting sergeants and in spite of the overwhelmingly negative media depiction of Islam, the number of people converting to Islam seems to be rising.

A report this week suggested the number of converts had doubled in the past 10 years from about 60,000 in 2001 to up to 100,000 with around 5,200 people converting to Islam in the UK last year. These figures come with a health warning – they are estimates derived from extrapolations – but if we accept that increasing numbers of British men and women are turning to Islam, it does lead to questions of why: why are people voluntarily signing up to a faith that is, if you believe what you read, a cesspit of misogyny, violence and hate?

The growth in conversions in the past decade is partly a reflection of social and geopolitical changes in Britain and the world during the past 10 years. Prior to 11 September 2001 there was relatively little press attention given to Islam. Following the attacks there was an understandable rise in focus on the faith, which led non-Muslims to want to find out more about the religion that was now so often in the news.

In addition to the global resurgence in interest in Islam, mixed-faith marriages are also now more commonplace than in the past. Often such marriages lead to “conversions of convenience” where the spouse will agree to convert to ease relations with the new Muslim in-laws. When I got married my family asked my fiancée to convert but she was rightly reluctant and I had always been uneasy about the cynicism of such conversions and felt it demeaned those people who had truly changed faith. In fact, I had always been suspicious of Muslim converts. I found the preponderance of hijabs (and in the survey the vast proportion of white female converts wore the hijab) among converts unsettling. It was as if these women needed to advertise their newfound faith in a way that my sister, mother and sister-in-law – none of them hijab wearers – did not need to.

The report suggests that it is white women who are driving the rise in conversions and when asked for their reasons the same themes recur: converts talked of feeling their lives had been lost and lacking in purpose, they voiced apprehension at the normalisation of immoral behaviour among an increasingly irreligious British public. They identified alcohol and drunkenness, a “lack of morality and sexual permissiveness”, and “unrestrained consumerism”. There are numerous ironies here – at a time when British Muslims of Asian extraction are increasingly drinking and engaging in sexual

**“overwhelmingly negative media depiction of Islam”**

**“conversions of convenience”**

**preponderance of women converts**

***“something was missing in their lives”***

permissiveness – if they’re lucky – white converts are fleeing towards piety. It also ought to be noted that it is far easier for a white woman to convert to Islam in Britain than, say, for a Muslim woman in Pakistan to convert to Christianity.

A common thread in converts’ stories was that something was missing in their lives beforehand and Islam then provided some stability in the midst of existential turbulence. This makes sense – there has to be some dramatic need that is previously unfulfilled that would demand someone change faith. The challenge for mosques and others is to ensure that those who are expressing keenness towards Islam get the right guidance so their curiosity does not turn them into cannon fodder at the hands of extremists happy to exploit the vulnerable.

If there are challenges there are also some opportunities that come with the increasing number of converts. I admitted earlier that I was rather suspicious of converts; I also somewhat envy them, for they know far more about Islam than most British Pakistanis. For us religion and culture were so entangled that it was hard to distinguish one from the other. The conservatism of our working-class Pakistani culture blurred into the way our families practised religion. This meant, for example, that marrying outside of the faith, accepted by Islam, is routinely not accepted in the culture. They are not weighed down by the same baggage and thus can be a useful bridge between cultures and in nudging other Muslims towards a more liberal and tolerant direction on issues such as mixing between men and women in mosques and mixed-faith marriages.

It used to be said that Asians – with their emphasis on family values, hard work and education – were “more British than the British”. It is a final irony that today it could be argued that converts to Islam, with their ability to disentangle faith from culture, are now more Muslim than their brown brothers and sisters in faith.



London Central Mosque, Regent’s Park

***cultural baggage***

# The Muslim world

This article is about an expression that is commonly used, in the media and elsewhere. However, it is not obvious that people have a clear idea of exactly what they mean by this expression. The expression is "The Muslim world", and this article gives some thought to the expression, and tries to give accurate figures to pin down where or what "The Muslim world" is.

In 2009, the number of Muslims in countries of the world was estimated by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. This institution, established in 1979, describes itself, on its website ([pewforum.org](http://pewforum.org)), as "a nonpartisan 'fact tank' that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world. ... It does not take

positions on policy issues." It is named after its four co-founders J. Howard Pew, Mary Ethel Pew, Joseph N. Pew, Jr., and Mabel Pew Myrin.



**1.57 billion  
Muslims**

Their 2009 report gives the number of Muslims worldwide as 1.57 billion ([pewforum.org/Muslim/Mapping-the-Global-Muslim-Population.aspx](http://pewforum.org/Muslim/Mapping-the-Global-Muslim-Population.aspx)).

We may wonder about the accuracy of these figures. Firstly, the Pew Forum may simply be inaccurate. However, they claim that their report is "based on the best available data for 232 countries and territories. Pew Forum researchers, in consultation with nearly 50 demographers and social scientists at universities and research centers around the world, acquired and analyzed about 1,500 sources, including census reports, demographic studies and general population surveys, to arrive at these figures – the largest project of its kind to date."

Secondly, most commentators state that Islam is the world's fastest growing religion. So, the figures, even if accurate, are likely to go out-of-date quickly. In the 2006 New Zealand census, there were 36,153 Muslims; however, that must have risen considerably in the intervening five years.

Thirdly, there are always large question marks over how such figures are arrived at. For example, in the New Zealand census, you are asked about various aspects of your life, including religion. But nobody ever checks the truth of your responses. A Muslim is defined as someone who says the shahadah. But there are good Muslims and bad Muslims. There are Muslims who say their five daily prayers, go to the mosque every Friday, fast during Ramadan, pay zakat, avoid haram things such as alcohol and riba; and there are others that don't. And so on.

So, where is this entity "The Muslim world"? For many, the expression seems to be used synonymously with "The Middle East" or "The Arab world". However, this is not the case. According to the Pew study, the countries of the world with the largest Muslim populations are as follows (all figures have been rounded to the nearest million):

1.	Indonesia	203 m
2.	Pakistan	174 m
3.	India	161 m
4.	Bangladesh	145 m
5.	Egypt	79 m

**self-reporting**

6.	Nigeria	78 m
7.	Iran	74 m
8.	Turkey	74 m
9.	Algeria	34 m
10.	Morocco	32 m

Three points stand out:

- Within the top ten, only three are Arab countries: Egypt (5), Algeria and Morocco (9 and 10, each with less than half the population of #8).
- Only two of the top ten countries are in the Middle East (Egypt and Iran).
- The top four (Indonesia, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh), with a combined total of 683 m, constitute about 44% of all Muslims worldwide.

After Morocco at #10 with 32 m, come a number of Arab and Middle Eastern countries:

Iraq	30 m
Sudan	30 m
Afghanistan	28 m
Ethiopia	28 m
Saudi Arabia	25 m
Syria	20 m

as well as countries in other parts of the world:

Uzbekistan	27 m
China	22 m

So, the expression "The Muslim world" certainly does not equate nowadays with "The Arab world" or "The Middle East".

This is not to belittle the Arab world or Middle East in any way except numerically. The Arabic language is very important in Islam. The Holy Quran was revealed in Arabic because it was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (saw) who spoke Arabic. The Middle East is also important. Prophet Muhammad (saw) lived in Makkah and Madinah, in present-day Saudi Arabia. Hajj involves travel to these places. The third holiest place in Islam, the Al Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, is also in the Middle East. However, nowadays, Islam has spread far beyond the boundaries of the Arabic Middle East.

Let us return to the expression "The Muslim world". Here are a couple of quotations from the internet using the expression.



Xian Mosque, China

***"The Muslim world"***  
***"The Arab world"***  
***"The Middle East"***

**Financial Express** ([www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com](http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com))

**US keen to work with Bangladesh in making bridge with Muslim world**

Bangladesh and the United States of America (USA) have significant opportunities to work together to make a bridge between the Muslim world and the USA, said US Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Judith McHale, as the Obama government is taking major steps to that end.

So, the Muslim world and the USA must be different places. The USA is not part of the Muslim world. And another quote:

**Gay Travels in the Muslim World** ([www.gaytravelsinislam.com/](http://www.gaytravelsinislam.com/))

Gay? Bisexual? Homosexual? ... The Middle East and the Muslim World is different from Europe, Canada and the United States.

So, Europe, Canada and the United States are not part of the Muslim world? Not according to the Pew report. There are several countries of Europe where Muslims make up at least 5% of the population, including surprising examples such as Cyprus, Montenegro, Bulgaria, France, The Netherlands and Denmark. Russia alone has 16 m Muslims. Germany has the largest Muslim population in central Europe (4 m) with France close behind (3.5 m). The United Kingdom has 1.6 m.

The United States can be considered part of the Muslim world, as it has 2.4 m Muslims. Canada, with a Muslim population of 657,000 out of a total population of 34 million, is nearly 2% Muslim.

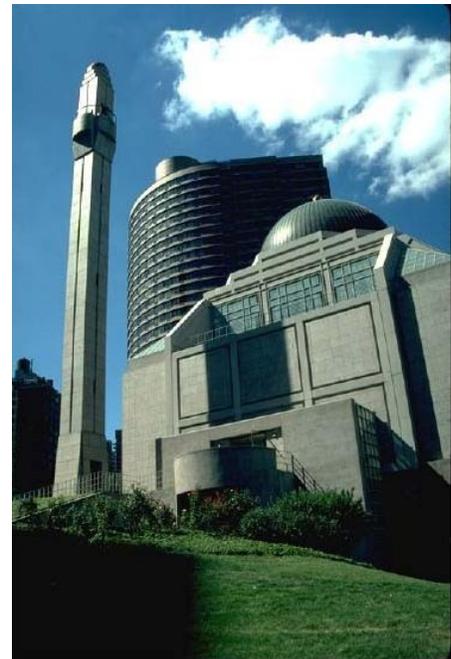
So, Europe, the USA and Canada have sizeable Muslim minorities.

And let us not forget Israel, which has a Muslim population of 1.2 m, 16% of the total population of 7.3 million. Closer to home, while some countries in Southeast Asia are Muslim-majority countries, others have sizeable Muslim minorities, such as the Philippines (5 m) and Thailand (4 m). Australia has 365,000 Muslims, 1.6% of the total population, a slightly higher percentage than New Zealand, with about 40,000.

**Conclusion**

These figures show that there are Muslims in practically every country in the world. Indeed, the only countries without any Muslims, according to Pew, are Aruba, Costa Rica, the Falkland Islands, Grenada, Iceland, Slovakia, Vanuatu, and the Vatican City.

Rather, these figures cast doubt over the meaning of the expression "The Muslim world". It is not synonymous with "The Arab world" or "The Middle East". If you hear someone use the expression "The Muslim world", you should ask them to explain what they mean by it.



New York Mosque, USA

## Iqra Academy

Our program focuses on learning basic Islamic values and principles to provide our children with a favourable environment so that they can practise Islam. Every week includes learning from the Qur'an and ahadith, practising taharah and salat, learning from the life of the Prophets, and Islamic history and culture, along with fun activities and special occasions.

Classes for 2011 start on Saturday 5 February, 2.30 – 5.00. For more details, timetable, etc, please contact:

### Contact us

- Muhammad Ali, Email: drasmali@gmail.com, Tel: 815 0700
- Sharif Fattah, Email: fattah56@gmail.com, Tel: 828 3348, 021 042 3938
- Marzan Amara, Nur Jahangir, Email: marnur@xtra.co.nz, Tel: 449 1898



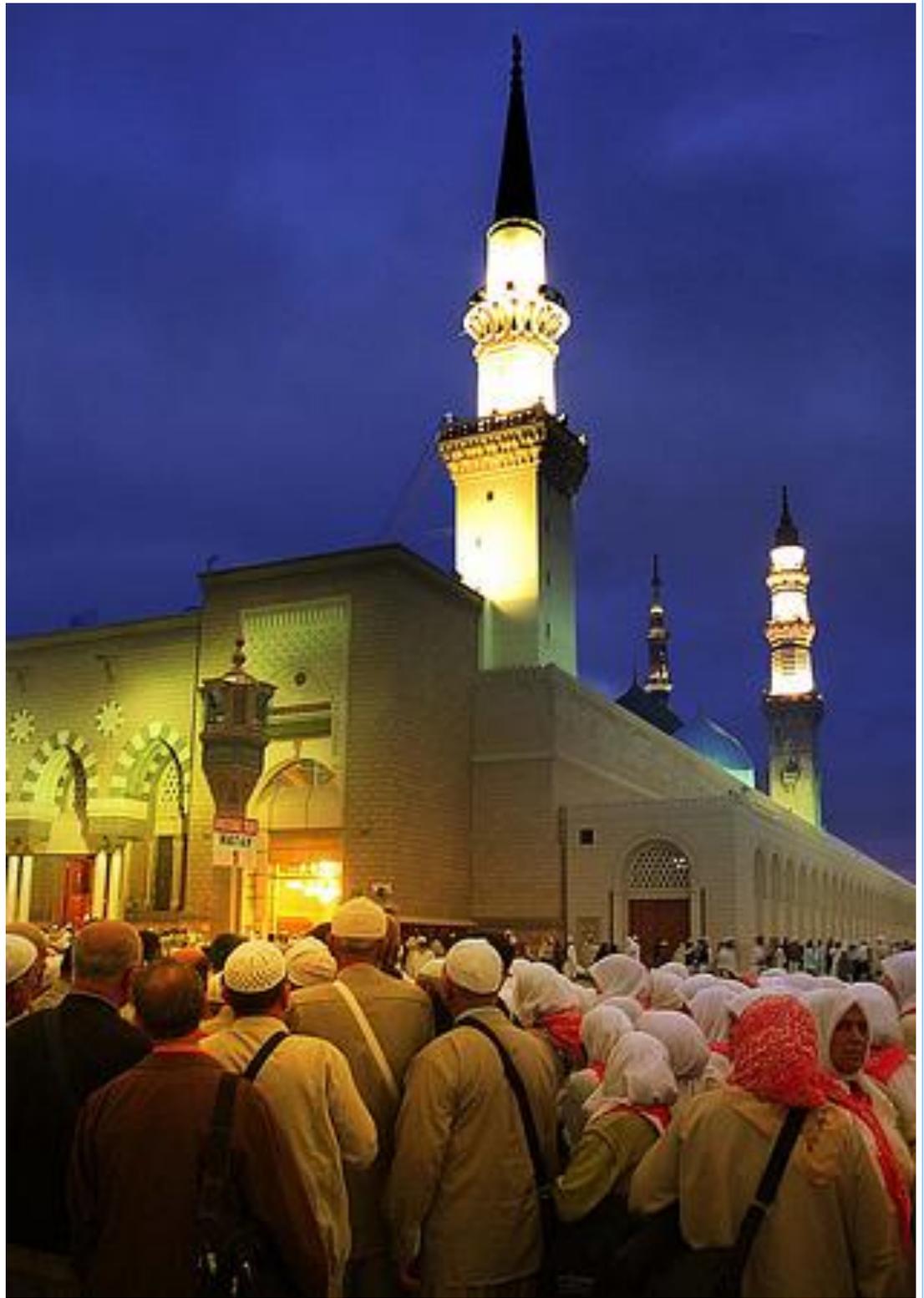
Iqra Eid-ul-Fitr reunion 2010



Children's lolly scramble at Iqra year-ending programme 2010

*Hajj mabrur*

Hajj mabrur (May Allah accept your hajj) to all those Muslim brothers and sisters returning from Makkah and Madinah.



The Prophet's (saw) mosque in Madinah