



# Rocket Science



Ramadan/Shawwal  
1432

August 2011

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

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*Ramadan  
mubarak!*

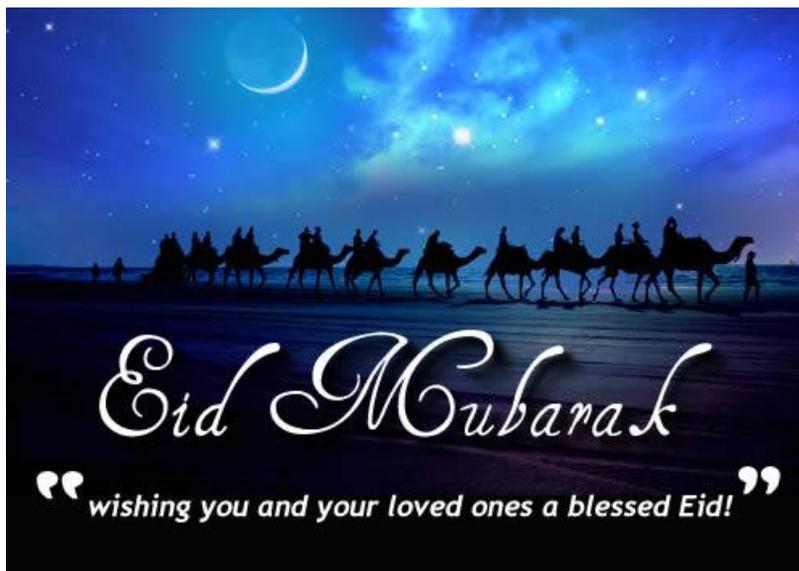
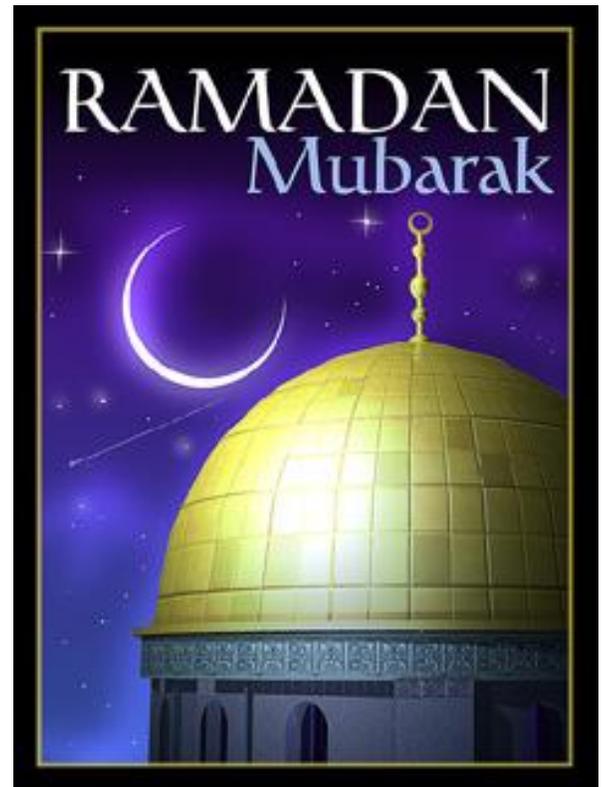
*Eid mubarak!*

## Ramadan mubarak!

FIANZ has announced that Ramadan will start in New Zealand on 2 or 3 August, depending on sighting the new moon.

Mount Albert Islamic Trust wishes Ramadan mubarak to all readers of *Rocket Science*.

We have made this issue of *Rocket Science* a special Ramadan issue, with articles on the significance of Ramadan, and how to make sure that you celebrate a fruitful and meaningful Ramadan, by completing not only the obligatory (fard) aspects of the month, but also all the extra optional duties you can fulfil.



In anticipation of the end of Ramadan and beginning of Shawwal (Eidul Fitr) at the end of August, we wish all readers Eid mubarak.

# Sighting the new moon

Allah's Messenger (saw) said, "Whenever you sight the new moon observe fast, and when you sight it break it and if the sky is cloudy for you, then observe fast for thirty days." So, how do you sight the new moon? The following explanation, from [www.bruneiastronomy.org](http://www.bruneiastronomy.org), is a clear and concise description of how the new moon comes about, and relates to sighting the new moon in Brunei Darussalam in September 2009.

At the end of the lunar month (normally the 29<sup>th</sup> day of the lunar cycle), the moon facing the Earth becomes totally dark, and the event is termed "the conjunction of sun and moon" or "birth of the new moon". From earth, it is impossible to see the moon at this instance since we are looking at the un-illuminated side of the moon. The lunar light can only be visible more than 12 hours after conjunction.

The new moon is a very thin crescent and if magnified, through a telescope, it would appear as a hair-thin light curve (see right), unlike a one-day old new moon which can be seen easily to the naked eye.

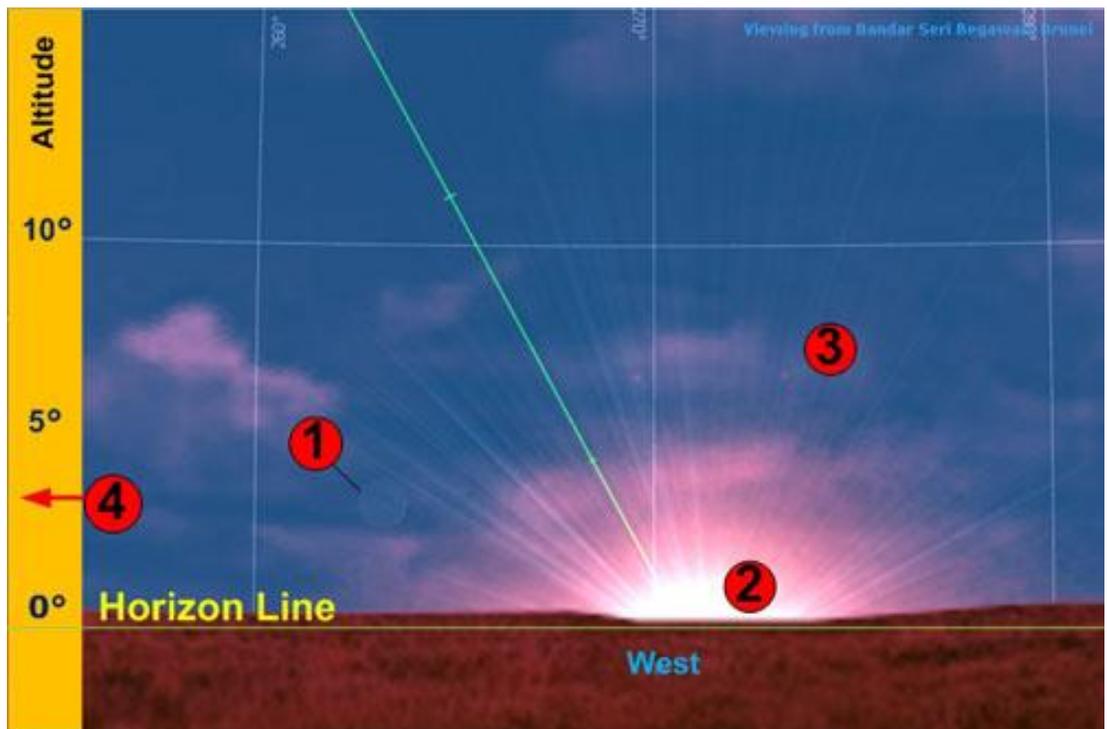
There are several factors (numbered in the diagram below) that determine how easy it is to see the new moon:

**1. Properties of the moon.** Generally, the age of the moon will tell the size and thickness of the crescent. A thicker crescent is easier to see.

**2. Sunlight.** At a new moon, the sun and the moon are very close. The naked eye cannot see the crescent due to brightness. However, the crescent can be seen with the help of powerful telescopes.



Very thin crescent new moon



*conjunction*

*crescent*

*age*

*light*

*clouds*

*height*

*bringing value to  
your soul*

*Quran, salat, dua*

**3. Weather.** On 19 September 2009, the sunset occurred while the moon was still above the horizon. This is the time when the new moon can be seen, provided the atmospheric conditions are favourable and there is clear weather.

**4. Height.** The position of the celestial bodies is determined by their altitude relative to the horizon. The higher they are, the longer the time we see them, hence increasing the amount of time one has to observe them. At dusk on September 19 2009, the moon was positioned very close to the horizon at an altitude of about 3 degrees. It remained above the horizon for only 18 minutes before setting.

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## **YMWA corner**

***YMWA's monthly study circle for August will be postponed till September due to the clash with breaking fast time. However we hope that this article will take its place as a reminder for Ramadan. Please contact us on [ymwa.nz@gmail.com](mailto:ymwa.nz@gmail.com) for any queries.***

### **Easy ways to a fruitful Ramadan**

The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "Every person starts his day out as a vendor for his soul. He either brings value to it or he debases it" (Sahih Muslim).

As we step towards another blessed month of Ramadan, we need to ensure that we make the most of it. Before we know it, the days will pass by and we will have reached the end of this precious month having brought no value to it. Practically speaking, the Prophet (saw) told us in the above hadith that we can either bring value to our soul each day or debase it. What better month is there to bring value to our soul than the month of Ramadan?

If you have not already done, make a plan of exactly what you want to achieve this month in terms of your spirituality, time spent on socialising, and other goals. This plan should be realistic, taking into consideration the iftar invitations, your daily chores, commuting time to work, school or the mosque, etc. There are many online resources available to help you plan your month if you need assistance breaking up your time. This article aims to give you some tips to make your Ramadan fruitful despite your busy schedules.

### **Increase your spirituality**

The first objective for us should be to draw closer to Allah (swt) during this blessed month of Ramadan. This can be done through recitation of the Quran, prayers and supplications. For those of us on the move, what better opportunity is there to supplicate to Allah than when commuting?

- Download the Quran into your iPod, MP3 player or phone, and listen to the recitation with meaning.
- Memorise a few ayahs on your way to work, school or university every morning and evening.
- Recite a supplication or make dhikr by having a target to reach each day.
- Spend your lunch hour on the recitation of the Quran to get ahead on your day's reading.



**congregational  
prayer**

The Messenger of Allah (saw) said "Whoever establishes prayers during the nights of Ramadan faithfully out of sincere faith and hoping to attain Allah's rewards (not for showing off), all his past sins will be forgiven" (Sahih Bukhari).

Making time for extra salat by attending the congregation at the mosque for taraweeh, qiyam-al-layl and tahajjud should be added to the list of night worship to strive for. We may have some nights with more energy than others, so do not be too hard on yourself. Remember that the key to a fruitful Ramadan is to aim high and think big! Focusing our minds on worship and concentrating on these beneficial acts will only draw us closer to Allah (swt).

**Increase your generosity**

Ibn Abbas said, "Allah's Apostle was the most generous of all the people, and he used to reach the peak of generosity in the month of Ramadan. Gabriel used to meet him every night of Ramadan to teach him the Quran. Allah's Apostle was the most generous person, even more generous than the strong uncontrollable wind (in readiness and haste to do charitable deeds)" (Sahih Bukhari).



**help the needy**

The Prophet (saw) throughout his life offered a helping hand to all those around him, and approached those in need, without them even asking for it. We are all trustees on this earth and do not own anything. Allah is the owner of all things. The Prophet (saw) always acted on this belief and hence never delayed in spending in Allah's path. This is the perfect month to increase your generosity!

**sponsor an  
orphan**

Have you ever thought about sponsoring an orphan (see the next article)? Or what about contributing to the YMWA to equip the female youth of NZ with the skills to lead the generations to come?

The Prophet (saw) said, "I and the person who looks after an orphan and provides for him, will be in Paradise like this," putting his index and middle fingers together. (Sahih Bukhari)

**a smile is charity**

Generosity does not need to be by way of money. Think about the small things that you can do to show your kindness and generosity to others. Here are some quick and simple ways to earn your points in this Ramadan:

- Smile every time you see a person and greet him. Abdullah Ibn Al-Haritha (ra) narrated, "I have never seen anyone who smiled more continuously than the Messenger of Allah (saw)" (hadith Al-Tirmidhi).
- Offer a helping hand around the house, especially during suhur and iftar time. Aisha (ra), the wife of Muhammad (saw) said, "Allah's Messenger (saw) used to patch his sandals, sew his garment and conduct himself at home as anyone of you does in his house. He was a human being, searching his garment for lice, milking his sheep, and doing his own chores" (hadith Al-Tirmidhi).
- Be gentle with your words and actions by taking precaution. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) said, "Indeed if gentleness is added to something it beautifies it, and when it is removed from something it makes it ugly and ruins it" (hadith Muslim).
- Give thanks to everyone even for the smallest thing they do for you. Abu Hurairah narrated that Rasoolullah (saw) said, "He who does not thank people, does not thank Allah" (hadith Ahmad, Tirmidhi).

**gentleness**

**"thank you"**

*seerah*

*rise and shine*

*joining  
Muhammad (saw)  
in Paradise*

## Get to know the beloved Prophet (saw)

Ali bin Hussain bin Ali bin Abi Talib, the grandson of Ali bin Abi Talib (ra), would say, "We were taught the seerah like we were taught Quran."

The entire significance of Ramadan is around the Quran, and the messenger of Allah (saw) was the messenger of this most precious and holy book. What better example can we have than the Prophet himself (saw)? By reading the seerah of the Prophet (saw), we are able to draw closer to him and our love for him grows.

Umar Ibn al-Khattab told the Prophet, "I love you more than anything, except my soul which is between my two sides." The Prophet replied, "None of you will believe until I am dearer to him than your own soul." Umar then said, "By the One who sent down the Book on you, I love you more than my soul which is between my two sides." The Prophet said, "Umar, now you have it!" (Bukhari)

When reading the seerah, also remember to send your blessings and prayers to the Prophet (saw) as Allah says in the Quran (Surah Al-Ahzab verse 56): "Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet: O you that believe! Send your blessings on him, and salute him with all respect."

## Make use of the early hours

Ramadan gives us the opportunity to rise early every morning. This bonus is something we should cherish and put to our advantage. Once you wake up for suhur, don't let your mind entertain the thought of going back to sleep straight after the fajr prayers. Instead take control of the situation and put it to good use. Remember that the Prophet (saw) used to wake up early every day and get a lot done in the early hours of the morning. He said, "The early morning has been blessed for my ummah" (Saheeh al-Jaami').

Use this time wisely to do tasks that require brain power such as memorisation of the Quran or recitation. You may wish to do your light reading later on in the evenings. In the Quran (Surah Al-Israa 17:78), Allah (swt) says, "Indeed, the Quran of fajr (dawn) is ever witnessed."



## Feed an orphan with "A dollar a day"

Alhamdulillah! The month of Ramadan has arrived. If our fasting in this month is accepted, there is no limit to the reward from Allah (swt). Every other effort we make has a limited reward; the reward is limited in terms of (i) so many times or (ii) the equivalent of such-and-such a thing, facilitating our entry to Paradise. However, there is one particular act (ibadat) that will not only make us enter Paradise but also make us be with our Holy Prophet (saw). Abu Huraira reported that Allah's Messenger (saw) said, "One who looks after the orphan, whether he is his relative or not, I and he will be together in Paradise like this", and Malik (explained it) with the gesture by drawing his index finger and middle finger close together (hadith Muslim).



*volunteers*

We now have the opportunity to look after an orphaned child for the sake of Allah (swt). The International Centre for Children Charitable Trust (ICCCT) was established in 1995 under the Mosques, Shrines, Trusts and Charities ordinance in Sri Lanka solely to look after orphaned Muslim children in Sri Lanka. Caregivers around the country look after over 300 orphans on their own premises supervised by volunteers. These volunteers are not given any payment as they spend their wealth and time for the sake of Allah (swt). They remind themselves of the commandment of Allah (swt) in the Quran: "And give to the orphans their property, and do not substitute worthless (things) for (their) good (ones), and do not devour their property (as an addition) to your own property; this is surely a great crime" (Quran 4:2).

The orphans receive (i) zakatul fitr that you donate and (ii) financial assistance that you send under the "A Dollar a Day" programme. When you donate to the charity, you are assured that every cent is spent for an orphan and for the development of orphanages.

*register*

### **Sponsor an orphan**

To sponsor a child, all you have to do is to donate NZ\$365 under the "A Dollar a Day" Programme:

- Send an e-mail to [icccharity@gmail.com](mailto:icccharity@gmail.com), giving your name, e-mail address, physical address and telephone number. Insha Allah, a picture of the orphan along with a report on the child will be sent to you.
- Arrange payment:
  - The most convenient way is to arrange payment by credit or debit card by following the instructions in the secure ICCCT website:  
<http://www.iccct.org/Donate.html>
  - Alternatively:
    - If you live in New Zealand, please set up the donation at the website:  
<http://www.iccct.org/Donate.html>
    - If you live outside New Zealand, please send the equivalent of NZ\$365 to the ICCCT bank account in Sri Lanka:

Name of Account: International Centre For Children Charitable Trust (ICCCT)

Name of Bank: Bank Of Ceylon

Name of Branch: Sammanthurai

Address of Bank: 49/1C, Amparai Road, Sammanthurai, Sri Lanka

Account Number: 6104186

Swift Code No: BCEYLK LX

*tax-deductible*

The charity in New Zealand is registered as a legal entity with the Charities Commission of New Zealand, and donations are therefore tax-deductible.

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*many rakaats*

## Concentration in prayer

As Muslims, we are required to complete a number of daily prayers. The compulsory (fard) prayers are two rakaats for Fajr, four for Thuhr, four for Asr, three for Maghrib, and four for Isha. That makes a total of 17 rakaats in a day. As this is Ramadan, we may well be performing far more than this minimum number. We may be taking the trouble to complete extra optional rakaats beyond the fard ones, to go to the mosque in the evening to perform tarawih and witr prayers, etc. In short, during Ramadan, Muslims say a lot of rakaats of salat, not to mention any duas you may add. As a result, it is very easy to lose concentration, because we are saying the same Arabic things over and over again.

The following two articles describe some suggestions for maintaining concentration during prayer, firstly by appreciating the meaning of Surat Al-Fatiha, and secondly by exploiting some other methods.



### Surat Al-Fatiha

Prophet Muhammad (saw) said "Whoever does not recite Al-Fatiha in his prayer, his prayer is invalid" (hadith Bukhari). We therefore not only complete 17 fard rakaats each day, but we also recite Al-Fatiha 17 times. Surat Al-Fatiha is a Makkan surah, comprising only seven ayahs. It is the fifth surah in the chronological order of revelation, but is the first surah in the order of compilation.

There are many questions to be raised: Why is Surat Al-Fatiha the first surah, beginning or introducing the whole Quran? Why is it called *Umm Al-Quran* or *Umm Al-Kitab* "the mother of the Holy Quran / Book"? Why do we recite it at least 17 times daily? Why is our prayer invalidated if we do not recite Surat Al-Fatiha in it? In short, why is Surat Al-Fatiha given special significance?

In the Quran, Allah (swt) also singles out Surat Al-Fatiha from the rest of the Quran for special mention: "And We have certainly given you, (O Muhammad), seven of the often repeated (verses) and the great Quran" (Surah Al-Hijr). "The seven of the oft-repeated verses" refers to Al-Fatiha because they are repeatedly recited.

*special  
significance*

*"seven oft-  
repeated verses"*

1

2

3

## The inherent secret of Surat Al-Fatiha

The inherent secret of Surat Al-Fatiha is that it comprises all the meanings of the Quran. Every meaning included in the Quran has been found in Al-Fatiha, and all the meanings and denotations of the Quran have been summed up in these seven ayahs. The content of the Holy Quran revolves around three pivots presented to those who believe in or recite it:

**1 Aqeeda** "belief": believing in Allah (swt) in the most appropriate way and on the basis of proper principles. "In the name of Allah , the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful. (All) praise is (due) to Allah , Lord of the worlds, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful, Sovereign of the Day of Judgement."

**2 Ibada** "acts of worship": worshipping the Lord in Whom you believe. "It is You we worship and You we ask for help."

**3 Manaheg al aya** "way of life": living the way chosen for us by Allah (swt). "Guide us to the straight path, the path of those upon whom You have bestowed favour, not of those who have evoked (Your) anger or of those who are astray."

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝ الرَّحْمَنِ  
 الرَّحِيمِ ۝ مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ۝ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ  
 وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ۝ اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ۝  
 صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ  
 عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ۝

And not only this, the surah reminds us of the basics of our faith:

- Allah's virtues "Lord of the worlds"
- Sincerity: that is why the word *iyakka* "only you" comes first before *na'budu* "we praise"
- Seeking righteous company: "the path of those upon whom You have bestowed favour"
- Warning us of bad company: "not of those who have evoked (Your) anger"
- The origin of Allah's relationship with us: *rahman* and *rahim* are mentioned twice
- Remaining steadfast and straight to what is right: "Guide us to the straight path"
- The akhira or end: "Sovereign of the Day of Judgement"
- The unity of the ummah: "guide us", "it is You we worship and You we ask for help". If a man is praying alone in his room, his prayers will not be accepted if he says, "You alone I worship, and You alone I ask for help" or "guide me to the right path".

*Allah replies*

### **Holding a dialogue with Allah**

In a Hadith Qudsi, Abu Huraira narrates that the Prophet (saw) said that Allah (swt) said, "I have divided the prayer into two shares between Me and My worshipper, and My worshipper will be endowed with whatever he asks. When the worshipper says, 'Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the alamin', Allah says, 'My worshipper has praised Me'. When he says, 'the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful', Allah says, 'My worshipper has lauded Me'. When he (the worshipper) says, 'The Possessor of the Day of Doom', He says, 'My worshipper has glorified Me'. Then, when he (the worshipper) says, 'Guide us to the straight path, the path of the ones whom You have favored, other than that of the ones against whom You are angered, and not (that of) the erring', He (Allah) says, 'This is for My worshipper, and My worshipper will be endowed with whatever he asks.'"

*pause between ayats*

When Umar Ibn-Abdul-Aziz (ra) used to recite Al-Fatiha, he would recite it one ayah after the other, with a pause between each ayah. When he was asked for the reason of these silent pauses he answered, "To enjoy Allah's reply (to my supplication)."

### **The significance of Surat Al-Fatiha**

The significance of Surat Al-Fatiha is summarized by Ibn-Al-Qayyem: "Allah (swt) revealed 104 books; he summed up their meanings in three books: the Torah, the New Testament and the Quran. And He summed up these three books in the Quran; And He summed up the Quran in Al-Fatiha; And He summed up all the meaning of Al-Fatiha in "You (solely) do we worship, and You (solely) do we beseech for help".

*"The Opener"*

So why was it called Al-Fatiha (the Opener)? There are two interpretations. Firstly, it is simply the opening surah of the Quran. However, a less conspicuous reason is that it holds the key to the meanings of the Quran. Al-Fatiha holds all the treasures of the Quran. If you understand Al-Fatiha, you will understand all the surahs of the Quran that come after it. One of the great attributes of the Quran is that all its surahs are sequential in their meanings and objectives. Each surah is related to the one preceding it according to the order of the Holy Quran, and it can only be related to the surah that precedes it – except Al-Fatiha, because it is the first surah.

*following on*

If you recite Al-Fatiha before any surah, you will find a related or complementing meaning within them both. Therefore, we start our prayer with Al-Fatiha followed by any surah, without losing the coherence in meaning. For instance, Surat Al-Fatiha states, "Guide us to the right path", and the following surah (Al-Baqara, #2) starts "This is the Book (the Quran), there is no suspicion about it, a guidance to the pious". Similarly, the ending of Surat Al-Fatiha is "not of those who have evoked (Your) anger (maghdubi) or of those who are astray" and Al-Baqara (#2) describes in detail an umma that is *maghduba* or has evoked Allah's anger, while Surat Ali Imran (#3) describes an umma that is *dala*, or been led astray.

### **Rahman, rahim**

Notice that Ar-Rahman Ar-Rahim "the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful" is repeated twice in the surah. We can feel from this accentuated meaning that Allah's mercy encompasses this life and the hereafter.

Unlike other surahs, "In the name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful" is the first ayat and an integral part of Surat Al-Fatiha. This ayah opens every surah of the Quran, but is not the first ayat, ie an integral part, of those surahs.

The second time it comes after "Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the alamin

**1<sup>st</sup> ayat of the  
Quran  
Last ayat of the  
Quran**

(mankind, jinn and all that exists)". Therefore, the alamin and everything in this life functions by virtue of Allah's grace or mercy. This is followed by "The Possessor of the Day of Judgement", to point out that the Day of Judgement shall take place only by virtue of Allah's omnipotence and graces. This surah appeases our fears and reminds us that the origin of this universe is Allah's grace, and that the basis of the relationship between Allah and His worshippers is mercy.

The beginning of the surah ("al-hamdu lillahir rabbil alamin") reminds us that Allah is the Lord of all the worlds. The final ayat of the final surah (An-Nas, #114) ("minal jinnati wan-naas") again reminds us that the Quran was not just revealed for Muslims but to guide the entire humanity.

### **Easy to read**

None of the ayats of Surat Al Fatiha has any difficult rules of tajweed, such as *ghunna*, *idgham*, and *mudud*. It is therefore easy for anyone to recite this surah correctly, even those who do not speak Arabic.

### **How to concentrate when reciting Surat Al-Fatiha**

The Prophet (saw) said, "The worshipper only earns for his prayer as much as he has been concentrating on it." So try to put in practice in each salat of yours every day, the focus of consciously thinking about every ayat that you recite from Surat Al Fatiha.

When you say "Praise be to Allah", think wholeheartedly about every endowment and grace that Allah has bestowed upon you, including the fact that you are a Muslim, the revelation of the Quran by the Prophet, your wealth, your health, sight and hearing, and your family.

When you recite "the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful", remember Allah's mercy on his creations, which extends from this life to the hereafter.

When you read "The Possessor of the Day of Judgement", ask Allah to have mercy on you on that day.

When you read "You (solely) do we worship, and You (solely) do we beseech for help", remember that you will not be able to worship Allah the way Allah should be worshipped unless He helps you.

When you read "Guide us to the right path", ask Allah to allow you to travel in His path, because the end of this path leads to Jannah, when you see the doors of Paradise.

When reciting "The path of the ones whom You have favoured", it should invoke in your mind all those on whom Allah has bestowed his grace before you. In the first rakaat, you can remember the prophets; in the second rakaat, the companions; in the third, heroes of Islam such as Salah Al-Deen; and in the fourth, you can contemplate the Muslims living around you and your righteous friends and contacts.

When you recite the second half of this ayah "not (the path of) the ones against whom You are angered, and not (the path of) the erring", it should remind you of the enemies of Islam, the non-believers throughout ages, those who strayed from the right way or lost their way and earned Allah's wrath.



## Overcoming lack of concentration in prayer

Sometimes our prayers seem to go like this: "Bismillahir rahmanir rahim. Alhamdu lillah ... this is a nice prayer mat. I wonder where that mosque is. It's not Makkah. Maybe it's the Prophet's Mosque. No it can't be – the colour of the dome is wrong. Perhaps it's just a generic picture of a mosque ... waladdaallin." Before you know it, you have said your prayers on automatic pilot. Although you may have said the right Arabic words, you have said them with very little concentration or understanding. It seems preferable to say one rakaat with total concentration, than 20 without.



What follows are some ideas for breaking the routine of saying prayers, thus allowing us to maintain concentration in our regular prayers. The suggestions are illustrated by Surat Al-Fatiha, although the principles can be applied to any recitation.

### Slow down

1

We always seem to say Surat Al-Fatiha at breakneck speed. This does not help us to contemplate its meaning. The first suggestion is thus to deliberately recite the surah at half speed: "B.i.s.m.i.l.l.a.h.i.r r.a.h.m.a.n.i.r r.a.h.i.m a.l.h.a.m.d.u l.i.l.l.a.h.i.r r.a.b.b.i.l a.l.a.m.i.n" It is not surprising that we cannot ponder the meaning of the verse if we say it so fast that it is over before we know it. Slowing down allows us to reflect on the meaning, especially if Arabic is not our native language. In the Quran, Allah (swt) says, "... and recite the Quran in slow, measured, rhythmic tones" (Quran 73:4).

### Pause at the end of each ayah

2

As mentioned in the previous article, Umar Ibn Abdul-Aziz (ra) used to pause between each ayah. This has two advantages. Firstly, it will help us to avoid speeding up. Secondly, it allows us to reflect on the meaning of the ayat we have just recited, and "to enjoy Allah's reply (to my supplication)."

### Translate it (in your head) as you go along

3

Most of us are not native Arabic speakers. Arabic is thus less meaningful to us than our native language (English, Urdu, Malay, etc). Another way to reflect on the meaning of the Quran, rather than to recite it as less meaningful sounds, is to say each line in Arabic, then translate it in your head into the language you are most familiar with.

(Recite) Bismillahir rahmanir rahim

(Think, in your head) "In the name of Allah, most Gracious, most Merciful"

(Recite) Alhamdu lillahir rabbil alamin

(Think, in your head) "Praise be to Allah, the sustainer of the worlds"

etc

This method also has the advantage of slowing down our recitation, as we will pause after each ayat, to translate it.

4

### Concentrate on correct Arabic pronunciation

If you recite the Quran slowly, you are more likely to concentrate on correct Arabic pronunciation. For instance, some people recite "Siratal laziina an amta alaihim". Zat is not ze right way to say zis sound! They probably do this because the *th* sound as in *this*, *that* and *the other* does not occur in their native language. Nevertheless, it is a regular Arabic consonant sound, and should be pronounced correctly. Umm Salamah (ra) was once asked by someone as to how Rasulullah (saw) used to recite the Quran. She said, "In a way that all vowel sounds were clear and the pronunciation of each letter was distinct."

If that is how the Prophet (saw) recited it, that is how we should recite it, to the best of our ability. Many of us are not native speakers of Arabic, and many are converts, and so learning to pronounce the Quran correctly is a struggle. A beautiful hadith describes the rewards for that struggle: Aishah (ra) relates that the Prophet (saw) said, "Verily the one who recites the Quran beautifully, smoothly, and precisely, he will be in the company of the noble and obedient angels. And as for the one who recites with difficulty, stammering or stumbling through its verses, then he will have twice that reward" (hadith Bukhari and Muslim).

### Think of gestures

As anyone who has taught oral presentation skills will tell you, an important channel that should be exploited in order to get the message across, and make it more meaningful and memorable, is to use gestures and other nonverbal features. While these cannot actually be used while reciting prayers, you can make them mentally in your head. While some examples are given below, you should think of whatever gestures are meaningful to you. Different people may think of different gestures. So for Surat Al-Fatiha, we might recite:

- maliki yaum middin (Think of a gesture expressing this, eg pointing forwards to show that the Day of Judgement is in the future for everyone)
- Iyyaka nabudu wa iyyaka nastain (Think of a gesture such as offering hands forward to show that we praise Allah, and then the reverse to show that we hope for help in return)

### Concentrate on the postures

While various of the things we say during salat are optional, all the postures are obligatory. We should therefore concentrate on making the postures accurately. For instance, in bowing (rukun), the back should be straight and parallel to the floor. One way of thinking of this is to imagine a glass of water on your back. You should not bow so much that the water would spill onto your head. Nor should you bow so little that the water would spill towards your legs.

### Vary how you perform prayers

Adding variety to the way you perform your prayers allows us to get away from the routine that destroys concentration. There are only five things that you must say during salat, for it to be valid: (i) takbir (*Allahu Akbar* at the start), (ii) Surat Al-Fatiha, (iii) the shahadah (the declaration of faith, when seated), (iv) salah upon the Prophet (saw), and (v) the salam, to close the prayer. Everything else is optional, and can be said or not said. So, vary which of the



6

7

optional parts you say each time.

### Recite surahs after Al-Fatiha

We all know at least a few of the shorter surahs from the end of the Quran. Reciting them after Al-Fatiha breaks up the routine of salat prayers. It may also help us to remember which rakaat we are performing. And we can always memorise more than just a few short surahs. Prophet Muhammad (saw) said, "He in whose heart there is no part of the Quran is like a deserted house" (hadith Tirmidhi).

## Iqra Academy corner

### Ramadan

Assalamo alikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuhu.

My name is Naima Mortuza. Today I will be talking about Ramadan.

Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam. During Ramadan, you can't eat or drink a single bit or you will break your fast during the day time. Fasting is when you don't eat or drink, but you have to break your fast at sunset which is Maghrib time, and you can eat again. If you are going to fast again, you have to wake up very, very early, before fajr salaah. That's called sahari.

Here is a list of things for Ramadan:



### *dos & don'ts*

✗ No	✓ Yes
<b>You cannot eat or drink</b>	Pray salat five times a day, on time
<b>Or fight and argue</b>	Go to the mosque
<b>Or swear</b>	Learn about Islamic things
<b>Or smoke</b>	Do lots of dhikr
<b>Or waste your time</b>	Do charity and help poor people

And it's also sunna to fast at other times too, and we have to do this to be a great Muslim and part of the Islamic family.

I hope you can fast this year and give zakaat also. I hope your Eid goes well too.

Allah hafeez

*Arctic*

*growing Muslim  
community of 100*

*build in Winnipeg,  
ship 4,000 km*

## The midnight sun mosque

Inuvik is an arctic town in Canada's Northwest Territories with a population of about 3,500 people. It's located right at the tip of North America facing the Arctic Ocean. With a polar climate and harsh living conditions, one wouldn't expect to find a town there, let alone a town with Muslims. But there is a Muslim community there and a growing one, too. So much so that the trailer that was being used as the mosque ran out of room and this community now needed a new masjid.

Building a masjid in the Arctic, however, is far more complicated than it is anywhere else. The scarcity of skilled labour and material makes the cost of such a project skyrocket and this undertaking is simply impossible for a small community of a 100 people. Their situation is akin to that of the Muslims in Edmonton, who despite all odds managed to erect Canada's first masjid in 1938. With faith in God anything is possible. At a time like this, the Inuvik Muslims could have simply prayed for a masjid to be shipped over. And that's exactly what they were about to get.



Al-Rashid mosque, Edmonton

Enter, the Zubaidah Tallab Foundation. The Zubaidah Tallab Foundation is a charity based out of Manitoba. The remarkable individuals at this organization decided to give the Inuvikans a hand and took it upon themselves to ensure that the masjid got built. After evaluating the cost of locally building the masjid, they came up with a plan which at first sight would easily be dismissed as insanity. Build the masjid in Winnipeg and ship it 4,000 kilometres away to Inuvik in the Northwest Territories. As insane as that may sound, this was the most economical way of getting the masjid built.

Part of the masjid's journey was going to be on roads (2400 km) and part on water (1800 km). The goal was to get the mosque on to the last barge heading towards Inuvik for the season. Not only was this going to be a logistical nightmare but it was to be a race against time as well. With receding water levels in the Mackenzie River, the shipping company decided to push up the departure date by three weeks.

The 1,500 square-foot masjid was built in Winnipeg and started its journey on a semi-trailer. The over-sized trailer made its way through back roads and country highways, struggling to make it to the barge in time; it was delayed further by Labour Day celebrations and highway regulations. To complicate matters even more, the bridge



*narrow bridge*

*nearly fell off trailer*

*three-week journey*

*minaret*

*Muslim spirit*

across Reindeer Creek proved too narrow for the trailer. The driver had to remove the back wheels and a second truck was brought in to balance the back of the flatbed as the masjid was moved carefully across the bridge.

But this wasn't the biggest scare. All hopes and dreams came close to being shattered when the masjid almost fell off the trailer into a creek near the Alberta border. The organizers managed to request the shipping company to hold the barge for two extra days and perhaps by divine intervention, the barge was delayed further due to poor weather. With lots of prayer and a little bit of luck, the trailer managed to get to the barge just in time. The masjid was loaded on to the barge and set off for its journey towards the North Pole.

The barge arrived in Inuvik, on September 24 2010. After an excruciating three-week journey, the little masjid arrived at its destination, all in one piece. The Inuvik Muslims gathered around the port to witness the historical event. They chanted prayers to praise and thank God as they waited. Some jumped around with joy while others were overwhelmed with gratitude and came to tears.

Numerous finishing touches needed to be added and it took about a month to get the mosque ready for use. Fathallah Fargat, a carpenter from St. Catherines, Ontario was inspired by the story and traveled all the way to Inuvik to help set up the masjid. He even helped build a 10-meter minaret to accompany the newly erected masjid.



The Midnight Sun Masjid, as it is now called, was inaugurated on November 10 2010 to become North America's northernmost masjid. All in all, the entire project cost about \$300,000. The Zaid Tallabah Foundation, which still has outstanding payments to make, is looking to raise another \$21,000.

The Inuvik masjid is a stellar example of what can be accomplished by unity, hard work and faith in God. For those let down by the petty attacks on masjid around the West, this story should rejuvenate your spirit and give you hope. If people can manage to build a masjid in the Arctic, then building one anywhere else should be far from impossible.

# 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
- 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

## **6 & 7 August**

Quran 2: 183-185

LECTURE: Welcome O Ramadan part 2 by Abu Hamzah

TID BITS: Tawheed by Sheikh Yusuf Estes

DOCUMENTARY: Solution – The values of the Quran by Harun Yahya

## **13 & 14 August**

Quran 2: 183-185

LECTURE: Welcome O Ramadan part Q & A by Abu Hamzah

MY PATH TO ISLAM: by Tayyibah Taylor

## **20 & 21 August**

Quran 2: 183-185

LECTURE: Fasting from ones desires Part 1 by Bilal Assad

FEATURE: The Quran by Abdur Raheem Green

DOCUMENTARY: Following the Prophet pbuh in the best manner part 1 by Harun Yahya

## **27 & 28 August**

Quran 2: 183-185

LECTURE: Food and Faith Ramadan by Sheikh Yusuf Estes

NO STONE UNTURNED: Festivals in Islam by Sheikh Bilal Dannoun

TID BITS: Zakat by Sheikh Yusuf Estes

DOCUMENTARY: Following the Prophet pbuh in the best manner part 2 by Harun Yahya



Bilal Assad

Watch VOI online, or order a free copy of the Quran: [www.voiceofislamtv.com](http://www.voiceofislamtv.com)

# Auckland prayer timetable for August 2011

(from [www.islamicFinder.org](http://www.islamicFinder.org). For other cities in New Zealand, see [www.fianz.co.nz](http://www.fianz.co.nz)). Ramadan is due to begin on 2 or 3 August, with only 29 days (**all subject to confirmation**). Ramadan dates (based on 2 August) are given in the first column.

*“The five prayers, and Jumua to Jumua is expiation for what is between them as long as a man has committed no major sins.” (hadith Muslim)*

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

## 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.

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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)