

Inside this issue

German public holidays	4
Austrian burqa ban	6
Swiss mosque restrictions	7
Chinese Quran ban	8
Voice of Islam	10
Prayer timetable	11

Rocket Science

November 2017

Safar / Rabi al-Awal 1439



In the name of Allah,
most Gracious, most Merciful

Why do bad things happen to good people?

We are living in a world where being a Muslim comes at a cost. We Muslims are often subject to racism and Islamophobia. Why do so many people hate us? Is it because of the way we act? Or the way we interact with other people? In short, why do bad things happen to good people? Do we deserve better?

This article looks at this question with references from the Quran and hadith.

Most of us have probably looked into this very question. We may have asked our elders or we may have even searched on social media or Google. One of the most common answers to this question is that life is always a test (fitna) from Allah (swt). There is no denying that this is indeed one of the correct opinions. However, is there more to it? Is there another reason that we Muslims are

portrayed in such a bad light around the world? Is there something that is within ourselves that is causing this image problem?

Changing ourselves

As always, if we look into the Quran we will find jewels. The Quran has a lot of answers to our daily problems. The answer to our problem we have today is found in Sura al-Rad where Allah (swt) says, "Indeed Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is within themselves" (13:11). We have probably heard this verse many times, but have we pondered the meaning behind it?

If we ponder this message, we will indeed start to think whether we need to change what is within ourselves, and what to change. Quite often we think ourselves to be perfect, and feel that we don't need to change ourselves.

When we feel we are victims of racism, are we not racist ourselves sometimes? Do we not condemn others? Think about the times we have said, "Those Arabs / Pakistanis / Bangladeshis / etc are like this" and so and so. Or we even go to the extent of criticising people of other faiths, saying such things as, "The Christians / Jews / etc are all behaving in such and such a manner".



The answer lies within ourselves. There are both good and bad people in every community, in every nation, and in every religion. If we look at our own close relatives, we will see some people are indeed very good, while others are less so. If we look at our friends, we will see some are truthful and nice, whereas others make it a daily practice to lie. We all have demons and angelic forces that are fighting with each other every moment of our lives. We need to take control our inner base instincts (nafs). It is a jihad with one's self.

Allah (swt) says in the holy Quran in Surah at-Tin (95), "By the fig and the olive, and [by] Mount Sinai, and [by] this secure city [Makkah], We have certainly created man in the best of stature; Then We return him to the lowest of the low, except for those who believe and do righteous deeds, for they will have a reward uninterrupted. So what yet causes you to deny the recompense? Is not Allah the most just of judges?"

As He says, we will be tested and put to the lowest of the low. The way out of this is for us to believe and do righteous deeds. We need to make an effort to purify ourselves, to remove the anger, vanity, hatred, jealousy, etc that we have against other people. We are often ready to forgive ourselves but not others. We need to forgive others so that we become better Muslims.

Part of His test is whether we are willing to change our bad habits into good ones. Let's put away our egos, and challenge our thinking that indeed we are better than other human beings.

When we start to make changes internally, then we will, insha Allah, receive blessings and the light from Allah (swt). It takes practice, and it is a long process. We can become critical of our own behaviour and start thinking "Will this please Allah or not?" This will help us correct ourselves and move towards improving our character.

What we can do

Put simply, we need to guard our tongue. The Prophet (saw) said, "He who believes in Allah and the last day should utter good words or remain silent." So we need to make sure that we do not demean others, make generalisations or criticise them. When we respect others, they will in turn respect us.

The Prophet (saw) also said, "Harm no-one, and no-one will harm you." This is the Golden Rule of reciprocity, and it has been taught by many famous people before us. Confucius (551– 479 BCE) said, "That which you find most hateful if it were done to you, do not do it to anyone else." Jesus (Isa, as) said, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (Bible, Luke 6:31 & Matthew 7:12). The Prophet (saw) also said, "A believer is not a believer until he desires for others whatever he desires for himself." This is the Golden Rule expressed in many different ways but with the same message.

The Prophet (saw) also said, "A Muslim is one from whom whose tongue and hands other Muslims are safe. A mumin (true believer) is one in whom the wealth and lives of all the people are safe."



Ming Dynasty (16th century) painting of Confucius (Kong Qui)

Let us start with those around us. Let us display the best character in our dealings with our non-Muslim neighbours. Let us speak good of others. Let us mix with non-Muslims so that they will understand who we really are and let us showcase our deen to them.

If we show good character, then those who criticise and hate us may, insha Allah, eventually turn around. They will see what we stand for and what our religion preaches, instead of relying on the media or the acts of a very few

people who claim to be Muslims. Let them get to know us better through our good words and actions.

At the time of Prophet (saw), a lot of people came into the religion of Islam because of the way Muslims acted and behaved around them. They were trustworthy, honest, friendly and displayed good character. So why not follow the footsteps of those before us and turn the world around for the better?

The Golden Rule

That nature only is good when it shall not do unto another whatever is not good for it's own self.



What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow man. That is the entire Law; all the rest is commentary.



Blessed is he who prefers his brother before himself.



Hurt not others with that which pains yourself.

This is the sum of duty: do naught to others that which if done to thee would cause pain.



No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother what he desires for himself.

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Muslim public holidays in Germany?

A proposal by the German Interior Minister in Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) government, Thomas de Maiziere, has reaffirmed the level of Islamophobia in the country¹. He confirmed, "I am ready to discuss the issue of whether we should also introduce a Muslim public holiday," without stating whether he was suggesting Eid ul-Fitr or Eid-ul-Adha. He pointed out that, in some German states where many Catholics live, there are already some religiously defined Christian public holidays, while in other parts of the country, they are not official (see below). Likewise, "In places where there are many Muslims, why cannot one discuss also [the introduction] of a Muslim public holiday?"

In the 2011 census, Muslims accounted for only 1.9% of Germany's population. However, because of mass migration since then, especially refugees seeking asylum, it is estimated that the figure may be up to 4.7 million (5.7%).

The proposal has received support from predictable bodies including the Central Council of Muslims in Germany. Aiman Mazyek, the head of the Central Council of Muslims in Germany, said that introduction of Muslim public holidays would foster integration. It has also received support from surprising quarters, including Martin Schulz, the leader of the Social Democratic Party and thus the CDU government's

political rival. Schulz recommended that the proposal should be discussed seriously and without anxiety.

Interior Minister de Maiziere's own ministry felt it appropriate to clarify his statement, saying that he had made it clear that our public holidays come from a Christian tradition and it should stay so. He was, however, ready to discuss certain Muslim holidays in some particular regions. [The minister] basically still holds to an opinion that our holiday culture has Christian roots and no other."

Reserved criticism has come from De Maiziere's fellow senior CDU member, Wolfgang Bosbach, who said that, even though everyone in Germany has every right to celebrate whatever religious holidays they want, the legal protection of non-Christian holidays is a different issue.

A predictable Islamophobic backlash has come from various politicians. Alexander Dobrindt, the head of the conservative Christian Social Union CSU faction in the German federal parliament, claimed, "Our Christian legacy is non-negotiable. Introduction of Muslim public holidays in Germany is out of the question." The idea of a monolithic, dominant Christian culture in Germany has been debated and ridiculed recently; see the suggestion that "Only sausages" united Germans².



Thomas de Maiziere

Religious public holidays in Germany

The following Christian festivals are public holidays in all the 16 states of Germany³:

- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Ascension Day (commemorating the Christian belief of the bodily Ascension of Jesus into heaven, 40 days after Easter)
- Whit Monday (the day after Pentecost, 50 days after Easter, commemorating the Christian belief of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles)
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day

However, the following Christian festivals are celebrated as public holidays only in certain states:

- Epiphany (commemorating the Christian belief of the visit of the Magi to the baby Jesus (Isa, as), 12 days after Christmas; three out of 16 states)
- Corpus Christi (literally “the body of Christ” commemorating the Christian belief of transubstantiation, the belief that the bread and wine offered in Christian ceremonies become in reality the body and blood of Jesus, 60 days after Easter; six states)
- Assumption Day (commemorating the Christian belief of the bodily Ascension of Mary (Mariam, ra) into heaven, 15 August; one state)
- Reformation Day (commemorating Martin Luther, 31 October; five states)
- All Saints’ Day (honouring all Christian saints, 1 November; five states)
- Repentance and Prayer Day (the Wednesday between 16 and 22 November; one state).

These are Christian beliefs, and do not correspond to Islamic festivals.

1 Muslim public holidays in Germany? Interior minister’s proposal met with furious backlash. RT, 14 October. www.rt.com/news/406707-germany-minister-muslim-holidays

2 ‘Only sausages’: Germans ridicule interior minister’s ‘dominant culture’ idea for integration. RT, 3 May 2017. www.rt.com/news/387033-sausages-germany-culture-maiziere

3 Public holidays in Germany. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_holidays_in_Germany



Burqa ban in Austria took effect in October

The question of supposed integration into nebulous country values is also seen in Austria.

A ban on the wearing in public places of anything that covers the face came into effect in October¹. It is claimed to be a ban on any face covering, and includes people caught wearing off-slope ski masks, surgical masks outside hospitals, and party masks or make-up. However, it is widely seen as targeting the burqa, and as another measure targeting Muslims in general. People breaking the 'Anti-Face-Veiling Act' will be subject to fines of €150.

The law does not apply to people who cover their faces for medical or safety reasons, including hazardous weather conditions such as smog. Participants of street carnivals and other "artistic, cultural or traditional events" are also exempt, along with athletes requiring face-covering gear.

Again, this is presented as a necessity for integration into Austrian society. The government has stated, "Acceptance and respect of Austrian values are basic conditions for successful

cohabitation between the majority Austrian population and people from third countries living in Austria."

Austria's Foreign Minister, Sebastian Kurz, who was instrumental in drafting the law, threatened, "Whoever wears [a] niqab or burqa in Austria has to deal with the consequence." He is also opposed to migration including refugees seeking asylum. "The immigration seen in recent years is changing our country not in a positive but in a negative way."

Not surprisingly, the ban has been opposed by The Austrian Islamic Religious Community (AIRC), who say that it is not conducive to integration. Carla Amina Bhagajati of the AIRC explained, "This open society is, in a hypocritical way, endangering its own values", adding that in Vienna only a "handful" of women will be affected.

French-Algerian businessman, Rachid Nekkaz, has promised to pay any fines incurred by Muslim women choosing to wear the veil. He already pays fines for Muslim women wearing face veils in other European countries. He even established a special organization called "Touche pas à ma constitution" ("Do not touch my constitution") that settles these bills.

Austria is estimated to have about 700,000 Muslims, 8% of the population.

1 Austrian burqa ban takes effect ahead of general election. RT, 1 October. www.rt.com/news/405214-austria-burqa-ban-law



Islamic Centre, Vienna

Restrictions on mosques in Switzerland

The Swiss government wants to enforce strict rules and regulations in mosques in the country¹. If the proposal becomes law, mosques will have to declare where they get their money from and report how they use it. They will also have to conduct all prayers in one of the country's four official national languages (German, French, Italian and Romansh).

Nils Fiechter, co-president of the youth wing of the Swiss People's Party (SVP), argued that "this new bill here in Switzerland is not against Muslims – it is against radical Islamic terrorists ... In Europe and also in Switzerland we have got a massive problem with radical Islamists ... We want that our policemen and our investigators have the possibility to understand what those imams are preaching. If they don't have the possibility, if they only hear Arabic words, or words they don't understand, then there is big safety problem for Switzerland."

Ajmal Masroor, imam, broadcaster and politician, countered that Swiss police in the streets also don't understand what regular Arab tourists are talking about in the streets, emphasising that such limitations will be a step towards "criminalising the Arabic language."

"What we do need to have is of course a measure of responsibility, and this should be self-regulated. Government doesn't need to enforce any rules and regulations, when it comes to speeches, sermons. We don't do that with

churches, we don't do that with any other faith leaders or institutions. The clerics should be free to speak their mind. In a multicultural pluralistic democracy, such as Switzerland, this to me sounds like and appears as secular fundamentalism, if nothing else, overly and extremely discriminatory towards Muslims."

Muslims in Switzerland are estimated to represent about 6% of the population. Famous Swiss Muslims include Tariq Ramadan (academic, philosopher and writer), Frithjof Schuon (author, philosopher and metaphysician), Titus Burckhardt (writer and connoisseur of Islamic art, architecture and civilisation), Isabelle Eberhardt (explorer and writer), and Daniel Streich (former Swiss People's Party member).

1 Crackdown on Swiss mosques: Safety strategy, discrimination or waste of tax money? RT, 1 October. www.rt.com/news/405174-switzerland-mosques-terrorism-debate



Mahmud Mosque, Zurich

Uyghur Muslims forced to hand over Islamic items

In its update on China in 2016 and 2017, Amnesty International said the communist Beijing government "continued to violate the right to freedom of religion, and crack down on all unauthorised religious gatherings" in the western Uyghur region, and to detain Uyghur writers. Beijing has blamed the problems on Islamist militants, though rights organisations say the violence is in reaction to repressive Chinese policy. Rebels claim the region has been illegally occupied since 1949.

In the latest episode in this oppression, the Chinese authorities are ordering Muslims in the country to hand over their prayer mats and copies of the Quran, or else face harsh punishment¹.

Dilxat Raxit, of the exile World Uyghur Congress reported, "We received a notification saying that every single ethnic Uyghur must hand in any Islam-related items from their own home, including Qurans, prayers and anything else bearing the symbols of religion."

This follows the Chinese government's attempt to wipe out religion by forcing Uyghurs not to observe Ramadan, by fasting and other activities such as tarawih prayers for the last few years². This was enforced by fines, and by requiring culprits to attend " compulsory reeducation classes".

1 Muslims in China say they are being told to hand over Qurans or face 'harsh punishments'. The Independent, 29 September.

www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/china-muslims-hand-over-qurans-uyghur-xinjiang-confiscate-islam-a7973191.html

2 A Ramadan That Uyghurs Will Never Forget. Radio Free Europe, 15 July 2015. www.rferl.org/a/ramadan-uyghurs-china-xinjiang-china/27129210.html

Muslim Uyghurs in China Fined, Sent to 'Study Classes' For Observing Ramadan. Radio Free Asia, 14 June 2017.

www.rfa.org/english/news/china/muslims-ramadan-06142017134547.html



Men walk to the Id Kah Mosque for morning prayers in Kashgar

YMWA GIRLS RETREAT

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A unique retreat with a world class conservation tour!

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- ✓ Self confidence workshop
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Value	Subsidy	You save
\$312	60%	\$187

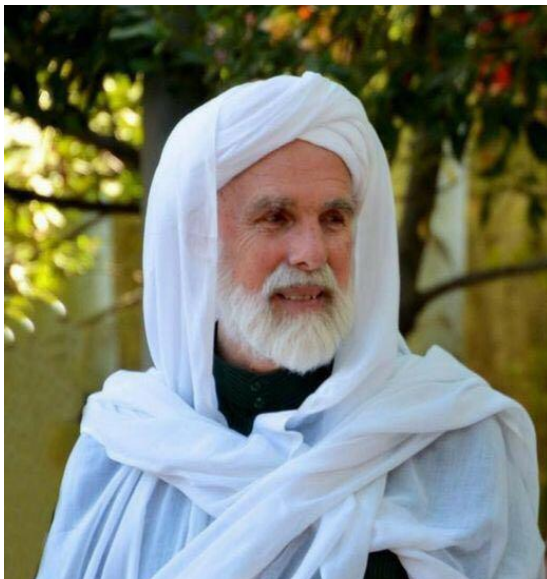
If you are 15 or under the retreat fee is only \$105

Value	Subsidy	You save
\$257	60%	\$154

Please visit www.ymwa.org/youthretreat for registration.
All registrations must be received no later than 8th November.
Places will be given on a first come first basis.
Youth 12+ are welcome to register.



The New Zealand Muslim Sports Association Inc will, insha Allah, be holding the last tournament of the year from 30 November to 3 December at Centre Park, Mangere. NZMSA would once again like to extend its invitation to all centres, madrasas and individuals to participate in this tournament in the kids and youth categories. There are under 10, under 13, under 15 and under 18 categories. All centres, madrasas and youth teams should confirm their participation (email mshaffu@gmail.com or tel 021 308 015) by 29 October. NZMSA is determined to work together with other organisations within our society and get together to achieve brotherhood and focus on the development of kids and youth.



SEEKERSHUB PRESENTS

Dr. Umar Faruq Abd-Allah

in Aotearoa
23-26 November 2017

<p style="font-size: 8px; margin: 0;">THURS - SAT 23 - 25 NOV</p> <p style="font-size: 8px; margin: 10px 0;">"Returning to the Spirit and Reframing Our Identity" Waihi Academy</p> <p style="font-size: 8px; margin: 10px 0;">SAT 25 NOV</p> <p style="font-size: 8px; margin: 10px 0;">"Who Are We and Why Are We Here?" 5.30pm-8.30pm Avondale Islamic Centre</p>	<p style="font-size: 8px; margin: 0;">SUN 26 NOV</p> <p style="font-size: 8px; margin: 10px 0;">"Cultural Fusion & Identity Confusion" 10am-2pm +</p> <p style="font-size: 8px; margin: 10px 0;">"Living Islam with Purpose" 4pm-6.30pm</p> <p style="font-size: 8px; margin: 10px 0;">Auckland University Basement 109-B28</p>
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Waleed Basyouni

Voice of Islam

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

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

4 & 5 November

Quran: 6:71 Guidance from God

Animation: Dress up for Allah

Lecture: Ask with humility by Nouman Ali Khan.

Inspiration series 5: Rules made not to be broken

Documentary: Time – 1 of Allah's great blessings part 4.

Tid bits: Pillars of Islam by Yusuf Estes.

11 & 12 November

Quran: 6:71 Guidance from God

Animation: Favours of our parents.

Lecture: Learning from our children by Waleed Basyouni.

Documentary: Time – 1 of Allah's great blessings part 5.

Tid bits: Holy books by Yusuf Estes.

18 & 19 November

Quran: 6:71 Guidance from God

Animation: Honesty – the first step to being a Muslim.

Lecture: Priests & preachers enter Islam by Yusuf Estes.

Inspiration series 6: The women in our lives.

25 & 26 November

Quran: 6:71 Guidance from God

Animation: I am too sinful and can never be forgiven.

Lecture: 10 ways to avoid the hellfire by Yasir Qadhi

Inspiration series 7: A slippery surface.

Documentary: The measure of beauty created by God – the golden ratio part 1.

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

Auckland prayer timetable for November 2017

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

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

If anyone of you enters a mosque, he should pray two rakat before sitting. (Hadith Bukhari)

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

Asr 2: Hanafi school (double shadow length)

Credits

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

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Why attend Rocket Park jumuah?

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

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

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

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SwT, saw, as, ra

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

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

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

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