

Inside this issue

<i>Is your life blessed?</i>	6
<i>French burkini ban</i>	8
<i>Holocaust study trip</i>	10
<i>Hajj by bike</i>	11
<i>Voice of Islam</i>	12
<i>Prayer timetable</i>	13

Rocket Science

September 2017

Thul Qaidah / Thul Hijjah 1438



In the name of Allah,
most Gracious, most Merciful

The practical side of hajj

Recently another convert and myself were attending a nikkah. We sat around the table with other friends eating the delicious Malay food and the conversation got around to the topic of hajj.

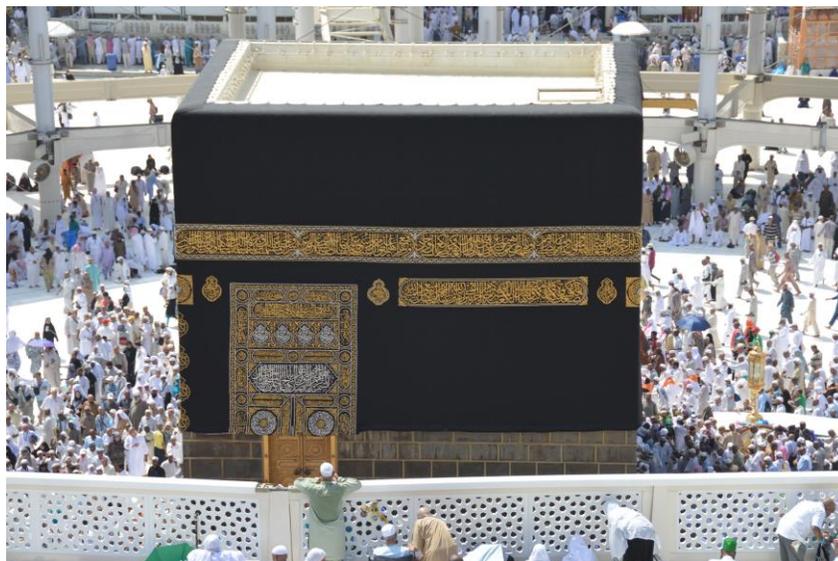
The other convert and I were blessed to have been given the opportunity by Allah (swt) to go from Auckland with our wives on our pilgrimage in 2013. Our friends had not yet undertaken their pilgrimage and they felt that our informal chat about it was informative in a way that a structured lecture cannot be.

They asked me to put my thoughts down on paper, and this is the result. Insha Allah it will encourage other brothers and sisters to undertake their own pilgrimage.

My wife and I had attended a short series of lectures at an Auckland mosque on the topic of hajj. They were excellent and I would encourage everyone to attend such lectures. They gave a good outline of what to expect, and the rituals required of pilgrims to perform hajj successfully.

Check with the organisers to ensure that lectures are being given in a language you understand, or that a full translation will be given simultaneously. Check, too, that appropriate arrangements have been made for sisters to attend – my wife was the other side of a curtain so she could not see the speakers or the little demonstrations. The arrangements for translation were also far from satisfactory, especially on the sisters' side.

Do not expect to remember everything you are told at this point. It is unnecessary. When you are on hajj you will receive almost daily briefings from the leaders of the group you are travelling with. On that subject, pick a reputable agent to go with; ask around among your hajji friends and discuss the service they received from the group they went with.



On hajj itself, we carried with us everywhere an excellent booklet called *Hajj of Change: A Guide to Performing Hajj, Umrah and Ziyaarah*. It detailed everything we needed to know to perform the rituals of hajj. See if you can get a copy. Keeping yourself well informed about what you should be doing at each step provides confidence and peace of mind that your hajj will be performed correctly and will therefore be accepted (hajj mabrur), insha Allah.

Hajj is an experience that almost defies description. It is huge by any measure. Masjid Al-Nabawi – the mosque of our Prophet (saw) in Madina – can accommodate three-quarters of a million worshippers under cover.

Each year, in excess of three million pilgrims are visiting the same sites at about the same time so you can expect massive crowds everywhere you go. The mosques in Madina and Makkah are so big that during prayers, an appointed person near the middle of the mosques repeats the imam's words "Allahu akbar" and "Rabbana lakal hamd" during prayers so people near the back can know for sure when to prostrate and so on.

So many people from every corner of the planet means that you can also expect to come home with a bug of one kind or another. I had a hacking cough that I called "Muzdalifah virus" because I was okay until I spent the obligatory night in that place. I prefer the description of another returned hajji, who aptly named it "camel cough". My wife had conjunctivitis in one eye. As they say in the ads, consult a doctor if symptoms persist.

We were warned beforehand that we could expect to see surprising or even shocking sights and this turned out to be true.

At Masjid al-Haram, some women insisted on taking wudhu at the men's outdoor wudhu station just outside the mosque, unwilling to go downstairs to their own area. For the first time in my life, I saw women other than my wife taking wudhu. It's impossible to avoid when you are at the next tap to the person.



Masjid Al-Nabawi, Madina

Women beggars entered our men-only tent at Mina more than once, and beggars generally are a problem. We were told, and I feel it is sound advice, not to give to these "professional beggars" but to give instead to the mosque cleaners, hotel staff and others who work for a pittance in Madina and Makkah. Ten Saudi riyal (roughly three New Zealand dollars) buys their food for one day, for example.

At Mina one night near our tents, a fight broke out between two groups of Sunni and Shia brothers. Whether their hajj was accepted only Allah (swt) knows.

But the oddest moment I had was when we met an Indonesian couple at a lift in a shopping mall next to Masjid al-Haram. The man spoke to his wife, saying that I must be a tourist. Maybe he forgot that Makkah is a city only Muslims can enter. Or maybe he couldn't get over a Muslim in jeans and tee shirt. It reminded me of the trick question: What is Muslim dress? The answer, of course, is that there is none. Muslim dress is anything that's loose-fitting and covers the awrat.

A word you will hear constantly in the context of hajj is sabr – patience. You need plenty of it to cope with the crowds; half-hour queues for toilets, wudhu and showers; travel hiccups; constant delays and hold-ups. Allow plenty of time for everything.

Most people are doing the best they can in the circumstances but moving three million people around for a single purpose must be a logistical nightmare so show some compassion for the officials, many of whom are part-time and do another job the rest of the year.

That said, I must confess to losing my cool with the airline check-in clerk who yet again seated my wife and I far apart. Despite checking in simultaneously as husband and wife, that airline (Emirates) managed to seat us separately on every single leg of the journey.

We negotiated each time with fellow passengers to swap seats so we could be together. This happens a lot and is ironic considering the emphasis on women travelling on hajj with their mahram. The first fellow pilgrim to offer to swap seats in this way for us turned out to be a Shia Muslim with beautifully refined manners, so the moral I took from that is not to rush to judge others.



Masjid Quba, the site of the first mosque built in Madina

We were advised that when doing tawaf (circumambulating the Holy Kabah in Makkah), we should refrain from talking as tawaf is an act of worship. Despite this, we saw many people chatting, chanting in groups and even uploading photos and taking video. It is disrespectful, to say the least – as indeed are all the cellphones ringing during prayers.

On that topic, we found that we were able to do without our phones for the entire trip. This was a great relief and saved us the expense of local SIM cards. Agreeing beforehand where to meet after prayers was our successful tactic.

On the ground floor it can get very crowded so we did all but the first of our tawafs on the roof. Go at

cooler times of the day, such as just before dawn. Just keep an eye out for fast-moving wheelchairs.

A friend I was with had a great suggestion for protecting our wives from being jostled by other men during tawaf. We had our wives walk immediately in front of us and we put our arms out stiffly on each side of our wives' shoulders so nobody could cross their path.

In crowds generally, hold your wife's (or mother's or daughter's or sister's) hand so you do not get parted. It can happen all too easily. If like us, you follow the school (madhhab) of Imam Shafi'i, then you will need to use Hanafi rules of wudhu for hajj. This is permissible during hajj and it allows you to hold hands for this purpose without breaking your wudhu.

Sadly, crowds attract pickpockets – especially outside Masjid al-Haram in Makkah. Take all necessary precautions because they are expert at parting you from your valuables. I alerted my friend to his unzipped pouch in time to prevent any theft from it, after which he let his wife carry it under her hijab.

There are many beautiful sights and you may wish to take photographs so you have a visual record of your hajj. The authorities have become more relaxed about this in recent years but don't push your luck in places such as the grave of our Prophet (saw) in Masjid Al-Nabawi. I saw men trying to take photos through the grille at the grave. It is bad manners; anyway, there is nothing to see.



The city of tents at Mina, on the outskirts of Makkah

I had my own rule about photography: do the necessary rites of hajj, then get the camera out if time permits and the circumstances are appropriate. Your primary intention at all times is to perform hajj successfully.

Hajj is an incredible experience. Clichés such as “the trip of a lifetime” hardly begin to do it justice. Try to perform it while you are still reasonably fit because it is physically, mentally and spiritually demanding.

I have the photographs to remind me of our Prophet’s mosque, which must be one of the most beautiful, tranquil places on Earth. Visiting his grave is not part of hajj but it is considered mustahab (highly desirable) by all four schools of thought to do so.

It’s worth being outside the mosque at dawn and at dusk to watch the enormous umbrellas opening and closing. They surround the entire mosque.

Speaking of beautiful sights, if you are on the roof of Masjid al-Haram during the day, look up. If you are lucky, high above the scores of construction cranes you may see birds of prey soaring on the thermals. I counted 12 on one thermal alone, gently circling high above the Kabah.

Of course, the main beauty comes from within: the joy of being able to spend many hours in quiet contemplation and reflection.

After nearly every one of the five daily prayers in the mosque, you will hear a call to janaza (funeral) prayers. It is good to remain an extra few minutes to perform these (they are very short) because of the blessings bestowed upon those who pray for the dead. If you are very near the front row of Masjid

Al-Nabawi, near the imam, you may be able to follow the funeral out to the adjacent famous cemetery, which is where some companions and family members (ra) of the Prophet (saw) are buried.

I made mistakes with our luggage. One was taking two sets of ihram sheets. They are quite bulky and heavy and one set would have sufficed. I also packed too many books to read; a Quran would have sufficed because we found an excellent bookshop at Madina and came home with such gems as *The Sealed Nectar* (a biography of our Prophet) and *Heroes of Islam* (about the companions and others in the early days of Islam).

I have not discussed the rites of hajj; I am not a scholar. You will learn about this side of hajj in due course from the appropriate sources. May that day come soon for you, insha Allah.



The Mount of Mercy (Jabal Ar-Rahmah) at Arafat on the outskirts of Makkah

Is your life blessed?

In this worldly life we may have wealth, health, children and friends. But often we are left wondering where the happiness went. Even though we have the best of things in this world, and live in a highly advanced age, or have the best friends, we do not always find contentment or happiness inside ourselves. Where has the happiness and contentment gone?

There is one important thing that is the cure for the lack of contentment in our lives. Without this, we may try our hardest, spend the most, but we will still fail to be happy. This important thing is blessings (barakah). What is the benefit of time, knowledge, food, and wealth, if there are no blessings in it?

Barakah is what Allah (swt) gives each soul, that leads to tranquillity, inner peace, and contentment. It is far from being the wealthiest person, or a celebrity or authority figure in your country. A sign of barakah is that a person continues to be in good health, and what he makes is more than enough for himself and his family.

It is not the number of zeros in your salary. There are people in the world who have a lot of wealth, but they are far from happy. Some cannot go to sleep, yet others have anxiety and depression ruling their lives. Some wealthy people have even committed suicide!

Consider barakah as the water that is poured on a plant. Just as it gives life to the plant, so barakah gives life to the soul. With barakah, a person might live in a small hut in Africa, but for him it will be like living in a palace. With barakah, a

person might only have a piece of bread for dinner, but he will be left feeling that his stomach is full and satisfied.

On the other hand, a person living in a palace with no barakah will feel it is like a prison for him. This is the direct result of a lack of barakah in his life. Therefore, barakah is something that increases the good in our lives.

We find that the developed world gives loans to developing and poorer countries, often with interest. And you find that even though they are given the loan, it does not benefit them. Sometimes it creates hardship rather than ease for them. As time goes by, the interest accumulates and they become unable to pay back their debt. So, they sell their assets to come out of this debt. Just as the person who keeps drinking salt water in the hope of quenching his thirst will get even thirstier, so these loans do not benefit them.



Compare this to the times of Prophet (saw). The lives we live today are lacking barakah, whereas in the time of the Prophet (saw) it was abundant. Even a piece of bread would suffice for him and his companions. Uthman ibn Affan (ra) was blessed with wealth that was enough to sustain the whole army.

These are some examples of our previous generations who were given Allah's blessings.

We need to ask two important questions:

1. Are we doing the things that will bring us barakah in our lives?
2. What are those things that take us away from barakah?

Here are some things we can do to get barakah.

1. Believe in Allah, his Messenger and the rulings of Islam. As Allah (swt) says, "If the people of the past had believed, He would have sent down blessings from the sky" (Quran, 7:96).
2. Be grateful and thankful to Allah (swt). Allah (swt) says, be grateful to Allah, he will increase your blessings. But if we deny His favours then indeed His punishment is severe. (Quran 14:7)
3. Have a halal source of income. Allah (swt) says He obliterates usury but He makes charity grow.
4. Stay away from extravagance

(israf) in spending lavishly. Allah (swt) says, indeed those who spend lavishly and extravagantly are the brothers of the devils. And that is why the Prophet (saw) has said the best of women for marriage are those who are the easiest in terms of expenditure.

5. Be truthful and straight. The Prophet (saw) said two people who are involved in a transaction will have a choice to go back on their deal as long as they do not separate; if they are truthful, then indeed they will be blessed in their trade.
6. Make supplications and be content with what you have.

We pray that Allah (swt) forgives our sins and increases barakah in all aspects of our lives.



Islamophobia in Europe: French burkini ban

In 2016 the French high court ruled that a proposed ban on burkinis was illegal. Nevertheless, the mayor of a small town in central France has gone ahead with such a ban. Lorette is a small town south of Lyon with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants¹.

In June, the town opened a new 4,000 m² leisure park with large gardens, fishing ponds, two artificial swimming areas, and a beach.

Article 4 of the Town Hall's decree governing the site says that swimmers must "have decent attire and a correct attitude. On the beach, monokinis, burkinis, veils that partially or totally conceal the face are banned." Since burkinis can hardly be called indecent, they are presumably considered to convey an incorrect attitude, although it is not stated what this means. The mayor Gerard Tardy defended his decision saying "We do not want aggressive and

provocative outfits", without explaining how a burkini is aggressive or provocative.

Aldo Oumouden, a spokesman for the Grand Mosque in the nearby city of Saint Etienne, said, "Wanting to ban the veil in this swimming area is an attack on the individual freedom of Muslims. The mayor does not realise that this decision will further increase stigma. It is not only unnecessary but also devastating for community harmony."

A sign at the park shows that burkini-wearing women are now on a par with dogs.

In similar vein, a Muslim woman going for a swim in a private vacation residence pool near Marseille has produced a way over-the-top reaction². The woman, named Fadila, swam with her children while wearing a burkini, on the first day of their vacation. However, on the second day, a staff member at the pool told everyone to get out of the water after spotting Fadila swimming in her burkini. The residence owner contacted Fadila saying he had received a complaint from the building's administration claiming that a woman wearing a veil had got into the pool while wearing her clothes and that she had refused to exit the water when requested to do so. Fadila says she was never asked to leave the pool.



The owner called Fadila's husband, asking that his wife stop swimming for the remainder of their holiday and telling the couple that they must pay for the pool to be emptied and cleaned, as well as for damages, as the pool was out of use for two days after Fadila swam in it. The husband refused to pay, pointing out that the pool was never emptied and that it was functional the next day. The owner then kept the couple's €490 deposit without producing any sort of invoice for pool treatment or other charges.

In an response to the owner's claims, United Against Islamophobia in France (Le Collectif Contre l'Islamophobie en France) insists the woman did not pose a hygiene risk because she was swimming in a suit made for the water, rather than in her everyday clothes.

Burkinis can be made of different types of material depending on the brand, typically "SPF [Sun Protection Factor] 50+ fabric, generally using a finely-knit polyester swimsuit fabric"³. The polyester is often mixed with spandex or lycra. In short, all materials that are commonly used in swimsuits and other exercise gear.

1 Burkini controversy renewed after swimsuit banned from French leisure park. RT, 28 Jun, 2017.

[/www.rt.com/news/394442-burkini-controversy-lorette-france](http://www.rt.com/news/394442-burkini-controversy-lorette-france)

2 Muslim woman fined \$575 for 'tainting' swimming pool with burkini – report. RT, 4 August 2017.

www.rt.com/news/398675-burkini-swimming-pool-france

3 Wikipedia. Burkini.

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burkini



Islamophobia in Europe: Poland

RT¹ report that 20 youngsters from the Theodor Heuss Community School in the Moabit district of Berlin went on a trip organised by the German-based House of the Wannsee Conference, a Holocaust memorial group, to Warsaw, Lodz, Lublin and Krakow, and the former concentration camps Majdanek and Treblinka. The trip aimed to educate the students on the Holocaust and how the Poles suffered in the course of the Nazi occupation.

Four girls from the group later told the German Deutschlandfunk radio station that they had suffered racial abuse while on the trip. Those wearing hijab were targeted most of all, the students' teacher Sabeth Schmidhals said, as reported by *Tagesspiegel*. One of the girls in particular said that a man spat on her in the street in Lublin, and police standing nearby failed to act.

One of the girls wearing hijab said, "We saw policemen smiling, and a Pole explained to us police didn't want to help." The police confirmed the incident, but said they misunderstood the students due to

the language barrier, hearing "from the people translating that there was no problem." A police statement concluded that "the trip participants did not report any complaints to Lublin police officers."

Some of the girls said that a market stall in Lublin refused to sell water to them because they were foreigners. One girl also said she was threatened with a knife, while another reported that a woman in Lodz threw a drink over her, telling her to "get out." Other Muslim students said they weren't let into a synagogue in Lublin.

The director of the Holocaust memorial body, Hans-Christian Jasch, said, "I'm especially shocked that this happened to youngsters in our care on this trip – indeed, on a trip dedicated to studying this very topic [racism]. Of course that's particularly sad."

1 Muslim students report racial abuse on Holocaust study trip to Poland. RT, 28 June 2017.

www.rt.com/news/394410-poland-muslim-girls-abuse



Hajj by bike

In the August issue, we featured eight Muslim brothers who intended to cycle from London to Saudi Arabia in order to perform hajj, and to raise money en route for medical aid in Syria. In one or two places, they had to take a boat. We are delighted to report that they have arrived in Saudi Arabia. May Allah (swt) reward them for this charitable act, and grant them all hajj mabrur.





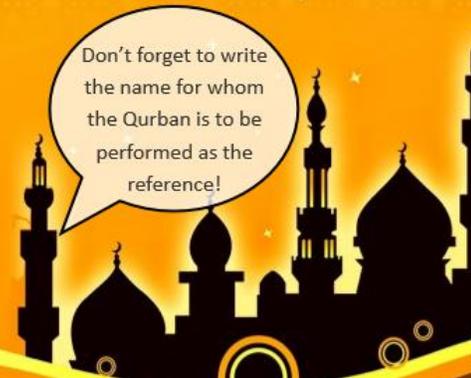
Qurban 2017

Sri Lanka

\$100 pp

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- 1 Bank Deposit**
 Name: ICCCT
 Account Number: 38-9007-0549566-00
- 2 Online** (Credit Cards/Debit Cards)
www.iccct.org/donate-now
- 3 Over the Phone**
 Hussein: +64 21 885 433
 Farook : +64 21 242 0593
 Firowze : +64 21 052 0324
 DR Muhammed Ali : +64 21 167 7292
- 4 In Person @**
 Halal Fried Chicken (HFC), 196 Stoddard Road, Mt Roskill, Auckland





Khalid Latif

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)

2 & 3 September

Quran: 2:255 Ayatul Kursi.

Clip: The power of Ayatul Kursi

Feature: Afterlife series part 5 – The end of the world.

Lecture: Understanding Islam by Nouman Ali Khan.

9 & 10 September

Quran: 2:255 Ayatul Kursi.

Clip: The power of Ayatul Kursi

Feature: Afterlife series part 6 – The day of Judgement.

Lecture: Making religion relevant by Khalid Latif.

Tid Bits: Pillars of Islam by Yusuf Estes.

16 & 17 September

Quran: 2:255 Ayatul Kursi.

Clip: The power of Ayatul Kursi

Feature: Afterlife series part 7 – The questions you will be asked.

Lecture: Divine light for living right by Mufti Ismail Menk.

Documentary: Never forget your only God is Allah part 3.

23 & 24 September

Quran: 2:255 Ayatul Kursi.

Clip: The power of Ayatul Kursi

Lecture: Giving thanks to Allah by Yasir Qadhi.

Documentary: Never forget your only God is Allah part 4.

Tid Bits: Quran by Yusuf Estes.

30 September & 1 October

Quran: 2:255 Ayatul Kursi.

Clip: The power of Ayatul Kursi

Lecture: Spending on others to achieve happiness by Yasmin Mogahed.

Documentary: Never forget your only God is Allah part 5.

Clip: Come back to Allah before it's too late.

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

Auckland prayer timetable for September 2017

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

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

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

Asr 2: Hanafi school (double shadow length)

Strictly guard your prayer (salah), especially the middle one (Asr), and stand humbly before Allah. (Quran, 2:238)

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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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)