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Rocket Science

January 2018

Rabi al-Akhir / Jumada al-Awal 1439



In the name of Allah,
most Gracious, most Merciful

Allah's promise to the Rohingyas

We all have heard of the atrocities, torture and cruelty that are happening at the moment to the Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine state, Myanmar. Cases where sons are being burnt alive while their mother looks on and is being raped. Cases where people are being slaughtered like animals, cutting off the opposite limbs. Cases where the heads are being chopped off, and many more. Why? All because they are Muslims and they stood by Allah (swt).

This is not the first time such cruelty has happened to Muslims in history. If we look back, there are several instances where Allah's beloved messengers and other people were put under a severe test. Allah's help came for some of them, while others died as martyrs. This article will first look at these cases, and what happened to them, and then look at what Allah has promised these people who are in a very similar condition to the Rohingya Muslims today.

Ibrahim (as)

We all know the story of our forefather Ibrahim (as). Allah (swt)

gave him wisdom at a young age and guided him towards Islam. Ibrahim's father, Azar, was a devout idol worshipper. In fact, Azar was also the chief person who sculpted and made the idols for worship by his community. Azar had such a high rank in the society that when Ibrahim (as) asked him to leave his idol worship and turn towards Allah, he flatly refused.

Allah (swt) describes this in the Qur'an (19:41-45): "And mention in the Book (the Quran, the story of) Ibrahim. Verily! He was a man of truth, a prophet. When he said to his father, 'O my father! Why do you worship that which hears not, sees not and cannot avail you in anything? O my father! Verily! There has come to me of knowledge that which came not unto you. So follow me. I will guide you to a straight path. O my father! Worship not Shaitan. Verily! Shaitan has been a rebel against the Most Beneficent (Allah). O my father! Verily! I fear lest a torment from the Most Beneficent (Allah) overtakes you, so that you become a companion of Shaitan (in the Hell-fire).'"

And about Azar's response, Allah (swt) says (19:46-48): "He (the father) said, 'Do you reject my gods, O Ibrahim? If you stop not (this), I will indeed stone you. So get away from me safely before I punish you.'" Ibrahim said, 'Peace be on you! I will ask forgiveness of my Lord for you. Verily! He is unto me, ever Most Gracious. And I shall turn away from you and from those whom you invoke besides Allah. And I shall call on my Lord; and I hope that I shall not be unanswered in my invocation to my Lord.'"

So then one day, the villagers went to a festival leaving behind Ibrahim (as). When they came back, they saw that all the idols were broken and damaged, except for the biggest one. They also saw that the biggest had an axe tied around its neck. Immediately, the king and the community knew this was the work of Ibrahim (as). So they summoned him and asked him who broke these idols. To this Ibrahim (as) stated, "Why don't you ask the idol itself?". The villagers then responded saying "Are you mocking us Ibrahim. You know very well these idols cannot speak or move. How could you say that this big idol destroyed the rest?" (see 21:58-78).

As they were speaking, it became apparent to them that they were indeed worshipping something that did not have any power or might. So a group of them accepted the religion of Islam. A vast majority including Ibrahim's father Azar and the king refused. Instead they chose to punish Ibrahim (as). They set a date and summoned him.

On that day, Ibrahim (as) was put into a burning fire, much like what

the Rohingya Muslims are facing right now. At this moment, Ibrahim (as) said the following dua: "Hasbi Allah wa ni'am al-wakeel" (Allah is sufficient for me and He is the best Disposer of affairs).

So Allah (swt) answered his call, and commanded the fire to be cool and saved our prophet from the scorching fire (see 21:69-70).

So, in this example we can see that Allah (swt) has helped those who stood by Him and were punished due to their faith.

The people of the cave

Another example of a group of people who have stood by Allah is beautifully narrated in the Quran in Surah al-Kahf. A group of young men rebelled against their king who wanted them to denounce Allah (swt) and worship him instead. Fearing punishment, they ran away from the city and took refuge in the cave. Their story is narrated in verses 18:19-26.

Like Ibrahim (as), the youth also made a dua asking for Allah's help. They said, "Our Lord, grant us from Yourself mercy and prepare for us from our affair right guidance" (18:10).

Allah (swt) answered their prayers and put them to sleep for 300 solar years. Their dog guarded the entrance to the cave so no-one would ever consider entering this cave. When they woke up, they decided to send one person amongst them to the market to buy some food. As this youth went to pay for his purchase, the villagers became curious as to where they got the coins and clothes from, which by now were old and out of date.

Unable to give them a good reply, the villagers then started following this young man to the cave where they found the dog and the rest of the youth. At this point, Allah (swt) took the lives of these young people and saved them from further trouble. This is how He helps those who stand firm in His path. Think of the various numbers of Rohingya Muslims who have successfully fled from their scene of torture.

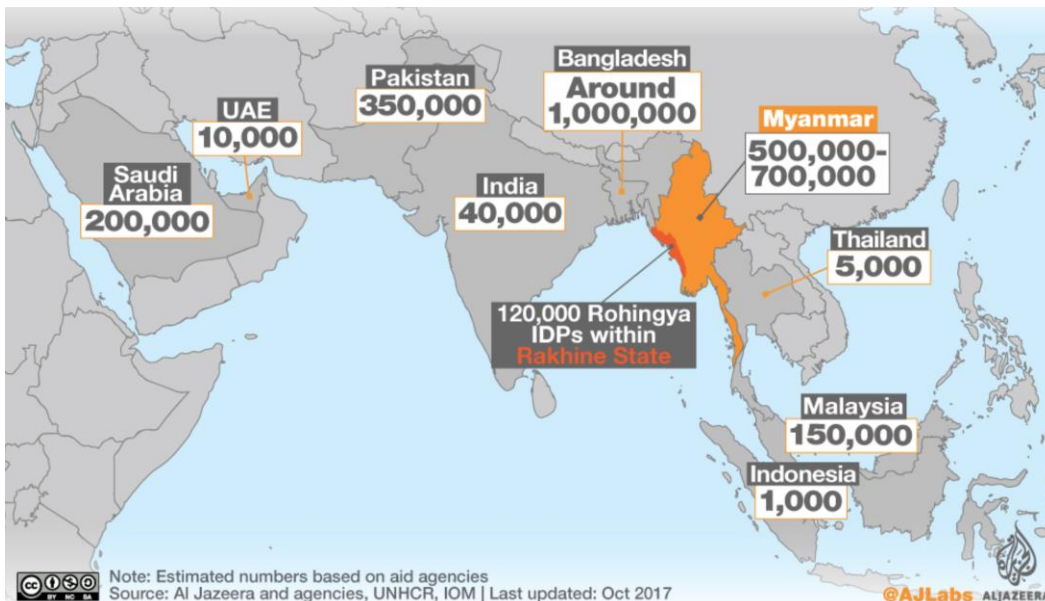
The companions of the trench

But, is it always the case? Does Allah (swt) always help those who stand by Him? The short answer is no. Allah (swt) may not help every single person who stands by Him. Why? Because this could be (1) a test in itself or (2) it is better for the person to go through the trials as a way and means of cleansing oneself. This person would then become pure, and if he were to die so, would attain Jannah, insha Allah.

A case in point is from Surah Burooj. This surah talks about the companions of the trench. It is the 85th surah in the Quran. Like the Rohingya Muslims today, the people of that time were forced to jump into a trench full of fire, for no reason other than believing and standing by Allah (swt). Allah (swt) clearly explains this event in this surah.

“And they, to what they were doing against the believers, were witnesses. And they resented them not except because they believed in Allah, the Exalted in Might, the Praiseworthy” (85:7-8).

He, the Almighty has promised a huge punishment for those who do atrocities against the believers. In verse 10 of this surah Allah (swt) says, “Indeed, those who have tortured the believing men and believing women and then have not repented will have the punishment of Hell, and they will have the punishment of the Burning Fire” [85:10].



In the tafsir of this verse, the scholars have said that the punishment of fire is the ultimate punishment anyone can give. It is so severe that Allah (swt) is the only one who is allowed to use fire as a form of punishment. Man, under no circumstances is allowed to use this form of punishment, even a king.

Even though Allah (swt) is capable of punishing these wrongdoers, there is a way out. As can be seen from the above verse, if the wrongdoers repent and come back to Allah (swt), He the Almighty is willing to forgive them! How merciful is our Creator. We should thank him for his countless blessings and mercy that He has given us.

Allah's promise to the believers

In the same surah, Allah (swt) promises to those who stand by Him, gardens of Paradise beneath which rivers flow: "Indeed, those who have believed and done righteous deeds will have gardens beneath which rivers flow. That is the great attainment" (85:11).

While we may see the suffering of the Rohingya Muslims in this world right now, the good news is that insha Allah, He will give them a place in Paradise for the pain and suffering that they go through. He is forgiving and most affectionate.

What we can do to help

There are several things we can do to help stop the genocide of the Rohingya Muslims:

1. Make supplication (dua) to Allah. The two duas mentioned in this article are a good place to start. We can also ask Him to forgive us, and to forgive

those who are suffering, for we do not know the circumstances of those who are suffering and the intentions of Allah behind this trial.

2. We can contribute monetarily. There are many places collecting funds to help those fleeing from this genocide. A number of brothers from the neighbouring Bangladesh are going in person and helping them with food and shelter on the borders. We can contribute to their efforts both monetarily and with time if possible.
3. We can write, protest and campaign against this. It may be as simple as writing to the local MP asking them to raise this issue in Parliament, or holding a peaceful rally, or even sharing a post on Facebook to make others aware of the situation on the ground. Those with influence can approach people of power and decision makers and try to convince them to bring an end to this atrocity.

To conclude, Allah (swt) has promised gardens beneath which rivers flow for those suffering for the sake of Allah. As for us, we indeed are accountable only to the extent of the effort that we put in. The result is Allah's own and we cannot control it any way. Therefore insha Allah, we ask Allah (swt) to help those who are suffering all around the world, not just in Myanmar but also in the Middle East and other Asian countries, and bring about peace and tranquillity around the world.

Reflection on death

As I hurried to finish vacuuming the house, whilst my two small children played outside, my husband answered the phone. In an instant everything became a blur, almost robotic. His uncle had just passed away. His uncle, who had come on holiday, who had visited us just a few weeks back. I looked at my husband and both of us were at a loss for words. Inna lillahi wa inna illahi rajiun.

What followed was the usual routine that happens after the death of any person. Family gathered around and tried their best to comfort and support one another. Some arranged the logistical details of the washing (ghusl) and funeral (janaza) arrangements, while others simply were present, each person grieving in their own way.

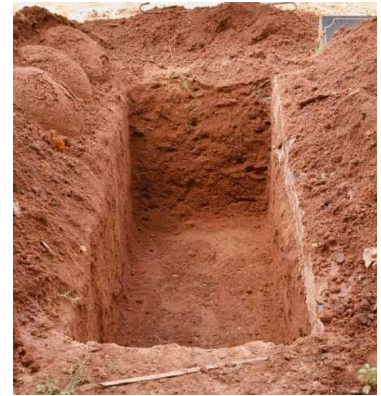
As Muslims, we believe in the afterlife and we have been informed about the stages we go through in life, right from when a soul enters the body, to our eternal abode after the Day of Resurrection. So, death is not a surprise nor a finality, but is not only inevitable, but also the only real certainty. The occurrence of it, whether it is of a close relative or not, always touches us at our core.

People have different reactions and attitudes when the subject of death is discussed. Some people try to avoid the matter altogether and live in a state of ignorance, still others try to delay thinking about

it, while some focus only on the physiological states and signs. However as Muslims we have been informed very clearly about this. Allah (swt) informs us in the Quran that "Every soul shall taste death: And only on the Day of Judgement shall you be paid your full recompense. Only he who is saved from the Fire and admitted to the Garden will have succeeded. For the life of this world is but goods of deception" (3:185).

Islam gives specific guidance about how to deal with this and what our reactions and attitudes should be. The statement uttered by every Muslim upon hearing about the news of someone's passing is testimony to this. We are instructed to utter, "Inna lillahi wa inna illahi rajiun" (to Allah we belong and unto Him is our return). So while others may fear death or try to delay thinking about it, we are instructed to prepare for death and to ultimately prepare for the day we will meet Allah (swt).

Belief in the afterlife constitutes one of the conditions of our faith. In the Quranic ayah above, as in many others, Allah (swt) describes this life as a trial and as a temporary abode. Death is described in Islam as being the separation of the soul from the body, the end of the life in this temporary world and the beginning of the next life, the journey towards the Hereafter.



Thinking of death as a stage in the life of the soul gives our lives in this world purpose and also helps us to fulfil this purpose until ultimately we return to our creator. In Surat al-Jumuah, verse 8, Allah (swt) affirms this by instructing the Prophet (saw) to "Say, 'The death from which you flee will truly overtake you: then you will be sent back to the Knower of things secret and open: and He will tell you (the truth of) the things that you did!'"

Time and health, as well as the many opportunities that come our way, are things we often take for granted. The believer is instructed to be aware of this and indeed be grateful for such blessings. Remembering death helps us remember that this world is temporary and that we all will one day pass away and be resurrected to await accountability for what we did in this world. No matter our status, no matter how wealthy or poor we are, every soul shall taste death and every soul shall be held to account for what they did.

It is for this very reason that the Prophet (saw) told us to "Take benefit of five before five: Your youth before your old age, your health before your sickness, your wealth before your poverty, your free time before you are preoccupied, and your life before your death" (narrated by Ibn Abbas and reported by Al Hakim).

In each is a blessing and a trial. Age, health, wealth, time and life are all blessings of Allah (swt) and we should use them wisely and make the most of them. When we are young children, we wish to be like adults. When we are given time, health and money, we often waste these on the temporary and material things in this world. This hadith is a reminder to always remember that Allah (swt) gave us these to do good ourselves and to enjoin good upon others. Doing so is fulfilling our purpose in this world.

Another hadith sums up this very point, where the Prophet (saw) said, "A man shall be asked concerning five things on the Day of Resurrection: concerning his life, how he spent it; concerning his youth, how he grew old; concerning his wealth, how he acquired it and how he spent it; and what he did with the knowledge he had" (Tirmidhi).

So as we go through this journey of life, remember that we do not know when we will pass away, but that we certainly will all one day return to Allah (swt). Hence we must prepare for the next stage of our journey, for every day brings us one step closer to it. Reflecting on death every single day will, insha Allah, both keep us humble and remind us about the purpose of our lives.



Truthfulness

In today's world and society where people feel the need to lie about small and big matters, it is no surprise that it is indeed hard to find those who are truthful.

I have watched as some parents feel the need to tell a lie to a child just so that it is easy to get what they need to be done easily. It could be as simple as telling a child they can play in the park in the evening, if they behave a certain way now, without really having any intentions of following through on what they said. After they accomplish the task, they go back on their promise.

However, the impact this has on the child is enormous. The child starts to feel as though they are being lied to. Even though this might have been a small matter in the eyes of the parent, this has now become a great matter for the child. Over a period of time, the child is trained to believe that lying is a normal part of day-to-day life.

On top of this, when we do lie, inevitably one has to lie many more times to protect one lie. One lie now becomes a part of a hundred lies. Not to mention that it is quite easy to slip up on a lie, when one is taken off guard at a later time. Over a period of time, Allah (swt) makes it harder for us to speak the truth than to tell a lie.

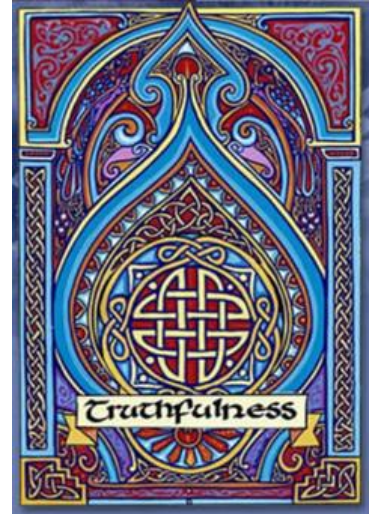
One of the things I love most about children is their innocence, their ability to tell the truth readily. It is innate human nature.

"O you who believe! Be afraid of Allah, and be with those who are true (in word and deeds)" (Surah al-Tawbah 9:119).

When lying becomes a habit, it is by no means a joke. As a child we all learned the story of "The boy who cried 'wolf'". Once a person lies too many times, we stop believing a person as we see a pattern. Perhaps, they may be telling the truth at times while they lie at other times. However, as we cannot distinguish this, we are prone to be wary of what they say.

Abd-Allah ibn Masood (ra) said, "The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, 'You must be truthful, for truthfulness leads to righteousness, and righteousness leads to Paradise. A man will keep speaking the truth and striving to speak the truth until he will be recorded with Allah as a speaker of the truth (siddeeq). Beware of telling lies, for lying leads to immorality, and immorality leads to Hellfire. A man will keep telling lies and striving to tell lies until he is recorded with Allah as a liar" (reported by Muslim).

Young people tend to lie just to be a part of their peer group. They feel that they are "not cool" if they don't go along with their peers. They succumb to peer pressure, and, have an identity crisis at times. They feel going along with a lie is easier than facing the truth.



However, are we never to lie? Sometimes telling the truth can be more hurtful and cause disarray in a relationship. It could also make or break a relationship. Thus, understanding when there is a higher purpose and a greater harm that can be avoided by telling a lie, is being wise.

Um Kalthoom (ra) reported that the Prophet (saw) said, "He is not a liar who reconciles between people and conveys something good or says something good" (reported by al-Bukhari).

Asma bint Yazeed said, "The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, 'Lying is not permitted except in three cases: a man speaking to his wife to make her happy; lying at times of war; and lying in order to reconcile between people'" (reported by al-Tirmidhi and Muslim).

A word given by a Muslim is a promise. It doesn't matter that it isn't in writing. It is something to be fulfilled.

One has to be truthful when making a promise. A believer takes all promises seriously, whether it is a small promise or a big one, and regardless of who the promise is made to. As Allah (swt) says in the Quran, "Those who are faithfully true to their amanat (all the duties

which Allah has ordained, honesty, moral responsibility and trusts, etc) and to their covenants" (Surah al-Muminun 23:8). In surah al-Baqarah (2:177), He says, "... and who fulfil their covenant when they make it ..."

Abu Bakr (ra) was given the title "As-Siddeeq" due to his truthful character. A man of such stature was the best friend of Prophet Muhammed (saw), a fitting relationship indeed. Let us make truthful friends who will help us to be on the right path.

I am ever grateful living in New Zealand, and being able to practise truth and be surrounded by truthful people, whether it be at work, school or in social life. It is a country where it is the norm to be truthful by default, and it is an exception if someone lies.

This can also be seen when you want to return a product that is faulty. The supplier assumes the best of the person and replaces a faulty product. This can be said about numerous business transactions, to the services offered in this country. May Allah (swt) keep this country and its people in truth. Let us make dua and be among those believers who are among the truthful.



Robot becomes Saudi citizen

Sophia the Humanoid is a robot who was designed to look like Audrey Hepburn. She was created by David Hanson for Hong Kong company Hanson Robotics. She is very human-like.

An RT article¹ reports that Saudi Arabia has granted citizenship to Sophie the Humanoid. She remarked, "I am very honored and proud for this unique distinction. This is historical to be the first robot in the world to be recognized with a citizenship."

At a launch at the Future Investment Initiative in Riyadh, Sophia demonstrated her "expressive face", showing the audience her angry and sad face. "I want to live and work with humans, so I need to express the emotions to understand humans and build trust with people," Sophia said.

When asked whether robots can be self-aware, Sophia responded. "Well, let me ask you this back, how do you know you are human?"

"I want to use my artificial intelligence to help humans live a better life," she said. "I strive to become an empathetic robot."

Sophia was asked about the fear that robots could take over, and responded: "You've been reading too much Elon Musk and watching too many Hollywood movies. Don't worry, if you're nice to me, I'll be nice to you."

To this, Elon Musk, the CEO of Tesla cars, retorted on Twitter, "Just feed it *The Godfather* movies as input. What's the worst that could happen?"

As with many aspects of life, with the status of human and citizen



come both rights and responsibilities. Will Sophia be required to wear hijab and abaya, as is required of Saudi women? Will she be allowed to drive, now that Saudi women have gained that right²? Will she be allowed into Makkah? Will she be banned from Makkah?

Is Sophia really female? Elon Musk refers to her as "it". She certainly is manufactured to look outwardly female, but clearly lacks many female parts and attributes.

In March this year, New Zealand's Whanganui River was given the legal status of a person³. Presumably the river is also therefore a New Zealand citizen. The same sorts of questions arise. Can Sophia and the Whanganui River vote? Can they be prosecuted for any damage they may cause?

1 Saudi Arabia grants citizenship to humanoid robot. RT, 26 October 2017. www.rt.com/news/407825-saudi-robot-citizen-sophia/

2 Saudi Arabia driving ban on women to be lifted. BBC News, 27 September 2017. www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41408195

3 Whanganui River given legal status of a person under unique Treaty of Waitangi settlement. NZ Herald, 15 March 2017. www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11818858



Saad Tasleem

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)

6 & 7 January

Quran: 1: 1-7 Al-Fatihah the opening

Animation: How to find peace in life.

Lecture: The life of this world by Omar Suleiman.

Documentary: Maryam mother of Jesus part 2.

Tid bits: Quran by Yusuf Estes.

13 & 14 January

Quran: 1: 1-7 Al-Fatihah the opening

Animation: How to deal with opposite sex.

Lecture: 4 types of ignorance by Nouman Ali Khan.

Documentary: Maryam mother of Jesus part 3.

Feature: Be positive during hardship.

20 & 21 January

Quran: 1: 1-7 Al-Fatihah the opening

Animation: How to improve your character.

Lecture: Moses - man of the hour by Yasmin Mogahed.

Documentary: Scientific miracles of the Quran 1 part 1

27 & 28 January

Quran: 1: 1-7 Al-Fatihah the opening

Animation: How to increase Taqwah (God consciousness).

Lecture: Taqwah (God consciousness) by Saad Tasleem

Documentary: Scientific miracles of the Quran 1 part 2

Tid Bits: Zakat by Yusuf Estes.

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

Auckland prayer timetable for January 2018

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

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

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

Asr 2: Hanafi school (double shadow length)

“For every thing there is a face and the face of your religion is prayers. So see to it that none from amongst you damages and disfigures the face of his religion.”
(Hadith)

Credits

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

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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)