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# Rocket Science

May 2017

Shaban / Ramadan 1438



In the name of Allah,  
most Gracious, most Merciful

## Ramadan mubarak



Insha Allah, Ramadan 1438 is likely to begin on Saturday 27 May (subject to confirmation). Alhamdu lillah, it is autumn/winter in New Zealand, and the period of fasting is only around 12 hours; for instance, on 27 May, fajr prayer (dawn) starts at 5.51 am, and maghrib prayer (sunset) starts at 5.15 pm, a period of only 11 hours 24 minutes.

All of us at *Rocket Science* and the Mount Albert Islamic Trust wish all our readers "Ramadan mubarak!" May Allah (swt) grant you the rewards for your fasting and your extra devotional activities during this special month.

We would like to remind readers that the Mount Albert Islamic Trust (Rocket Park) does not conduct tarawih or Eid prayers.



## The deeper meaning of fasting

In English, "fasting" means to abstain from food or from certain kinds of food voluntarily, as an observance of a holy day or as a token of grief, sorrow or repentance<sup>1</sup>. But fasting for Muslims is not simply abstinence from food, as we will see.

The practice of fasting can be found in most of the major religions. For example, in Hinduism, fasting is called "upavaasa" in Sanskrit. Devout Hindus observe fasting on special occasions as a mark of respect to their gods or as a part of their penance. They fast regularly or on special occasions like festivals. On such days they do not eat at all, eat only once or make do with fruit or a special diet of simple food<sup>2</sup>.

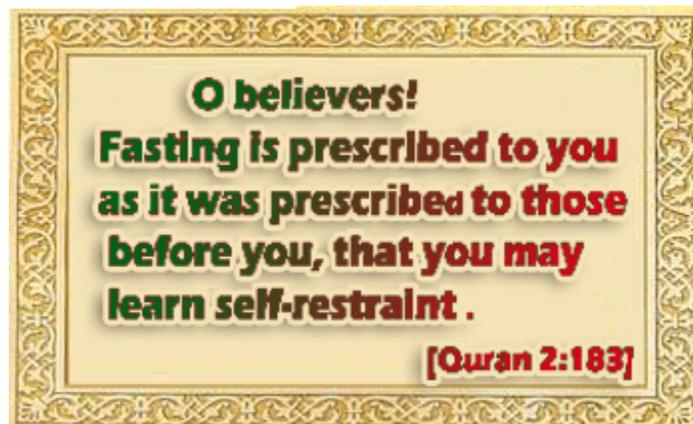
For Jews, Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) is the last of their 10 days of repentance. It is observed on the 10th of Tishri. It is forbidden on that day to eat, drink, wash, wear leather, or have sexual relations. In addition, prohibitions on working, similar to those on the Sabbath, are enforced<sup>3</sup>. It should also be noted that Moses (as) fasted according to the Torah: "And he was there with the Lord 40 days and 40 nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water" (Exodus 34:28).

Among the Christian denominations, Catholics observe a fasting season before Easter known as Lent. It is imitative of the 40-day fast of Jesus (Isa, as), who is recorded in the gospels to have fasted like Moses: "And he fasted 40 days and 40 nights and afterwards he was hungry" (Matthew 4:2 and Luke 4:2).

It is against this background that Allah (swt) stated in the Quran, "O believers! Fasting has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you in order that you become more conscious of God" (2:183).

Although in most religions fasting is for expiation of sin or atonement for sin, in Islam it is primarily to bring one closer to Allah (swt). Since God-consciousness is the prerequisite for righteousness, great emphasis is placed on fasting in Islam. Thus it is not surprising to find that when Prophet Muhammad (saw) was asked "Which is the best deed?", he replied "Fasting, for there is nothing equal to it" (An-Nasai).

Proper fasting should encompass several dimensions of human existence for it to have the divinely intended effect. The following are some of the major levels of fasting.



### The ritual level

This level of fasting requires that the basic rules for the fasting be fulfilled, which are avoiding food, drink and sexual intercourse between dawn and sunset for the 29 or 30 days of the month of Ramadan each year. On this level, one is basically following the letter of the law regarding fasting, without particular consideration for the spirit of fasting. It is the entrance level that must be fulfilled for the fast to be Islamically correct, but the other levels must be added for the fast to have any real impact on the fasting person. Fasting on this level alone will not benefit one spiritually, except from the perspective of submission to divine instructions, if one chooses to follow the ritual consciously and not merely according to tradition. Thus, by itself, the ritual level will not purify one of sin or atone for sin.

### The physical level

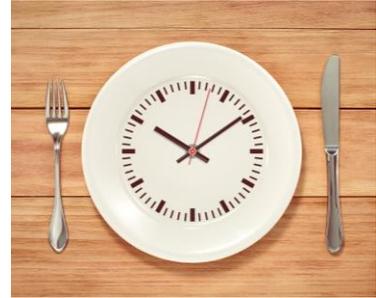
Fasting on the physical level causes the fasting person to experience thirst and pangs of hunger when the prophetic (sunnah) way of fasting is observed. Prophet Muhammad (saw) used to consume a very light meal before dawn (suhoor) and a moderate meal to break the fast at sunset (iftaar), while scrupulously avoiding filling his stomach. He is reported to have said, "The worst container a human being can fill is his stomach. A few morsels of food to keep a person's back straight are sufficient. However, if his desire overcomes him, then let him eat a third, drink a third and leave a third for breathing" (Ibn Majah).

Prophet Muhammad (saw) used to break his fast with a few fresh or dried dates and a glass of water just before beginning the sunset prayer (Abu Dawud). This level allows the fasting person to experience hunger and thirst, and thereby develop empathy with those unfortunate victims of poverty – those starving and dying of thirst in other parts of the world.

On the physical level, fasting affects neurotransmitters – chemicals in the brain that transmit messages and create feelings. Fasting encourages the endorphin neurotransmitter system, related to the feeling of wellbeing and euphoria, to produce more endorphins and, in fact, makes us feel better. This is similar to the effect of exercise (but without the physical work).

It has also been noted by medical experts that fasting improves physical health in numerous ways. One example is that during the fast, the body uses up stored cholesterol (fat) that is often deposited in the blood system, as well as in other fatty areas of the body. Thus it helps to keep the body firm and minimises the danger of heart attacks.

The difference between the ritual level and the physical level is that a person doing only ritual fasting may eat large meals prior to beginning the fast and immediately upon ending the fast, and thus not feel any hunger or thirst throughout the whole month. However, like the ritual level, if the fasting person does not incorporate the other level of fasting, the fast will only be physically exhausting. The Prophet (saw) said, "Perhaps a fasting person will gain nothing but hunger and thirst" (Ibn Majah).





### The libidinal level

This level of fasting involves training the fasting person to harness his or her sexual instinct and drives (libido). In these times, when the media continually plays on sexual desires to promote and sell products, the ability to control these powerful desires is a definite plus. Fasting physically reduces sexual desires and the fact that the fasting person has to avoid anything that could stimulate him psychologically helps to further lower the libido.

Prophet Muhammad (saw) said, "O youths, whoever among you is able to marry, let him do so, for it restrains eyes and protects the private parts. He who is unable to marry, should fast, because it is a shield" (Bukhari and Muslim).

By restraining oneself from sexual acts that are permissible, the fasting person makes it easier to restrain himself from forbidden sexual acts when he is not fasting.

### The emotional level

Fasting on this level involves controlling the many negative emotions, such as anger, envy, etc which simmer in the human mind and soul. Anger is among the most destructive emotions. Fasting helps to harness this sometimes uncontrollable emotion. Prophet Muhammad (saw) said, "When one of you is fasting, he should abstain from indecent acts and unnecessary talk, and if someone begins an obscene conversation or tries to start an argument, he should simply tell him, 'I am fasting'" (Bukhari and Muslim).

On this level, whatever negative emotions challenge the fasting

person must be avoided. One must abstain from lewd conversation and heated arguments, even when one is in the right; it is better to give up that right and keep one's emotional fast intact. Likewise, the negative emotion of jealousy is reduced, as every fasting person is reduced to the common denominator of abstinence. Nobody is externally superior to anyone else in this regard.

### The psychological level

This level helps the fasting person psychologically to control evil thoughts and trains him or her, to some degree, to overcome stinginess and greed. The Prophet (saw) was reported to have said, "Allah has no need for the hunger and the thirst of the person who does not restrain himself from telling lies and acting on them even while observing the fast" (Bukhari).

In this age of immediate gratification, when the materials of this world are used to fulfil human needs and desires almost as soon as they have them, the ability to delay gratification is an important skill. What lies between immediate gratification and delayed gratification is patience. During the fast, the believers learn patience, and the benefits of it.

From a psychological perspective, it is good to be somewhat detached from the material trappings of the world. There is nothing wrong with enjoying a good and full life – in fact, one can and should expect that. However, it is important that people are able to detach themselves from material things so that these temporal pleasures do not become the most important part of their lives.



Fasting gives one the opportunity to overcome the many addictions that have become a major part of modern life. Food, for many people, provides comfort and joy, and the ability to separate oneself from it gives fasting people the psychological benefit of knowing that they do have some degree of control over what they do and what they do not do.

### **The spiritual level**

In order to establish this – the highest and the most important level of fasting, the level of God-consciousness – Prophet Muhammad (saw) made the renewal of the intention for fasting a requirement before every day of fasting. He was reported to have said, "Whoever does not intend to fast before fajr (dawn) will have no fast" (Abu Dawud).

The daily renewal of this intention helps to establish a spiritual foundation of sincerity that is essential for the spiritual cleansing effects of fasting to operate. Sincere fasting purifies and atones for sin. As the Prophet (saw) said, "Whoever fasts Ramadan out of sincere faith and seeking reward from God, his previous sins will be forgiven."

He was also reported to have said, "From one Ramadan to the next is atonement for the sins between them."

Sincere fasting brings one closer to Allah (swt) and earns a special reward. The Prophet (saw) informed us that there is a gate in Paradise called Rayyan reserved for those who fast, and he also said, "When Ramadan comes, the gates of Paradise are open" (Bukhari and Muslim).

Fasting is primarily between the person and God, so no one can be sure that any person is actually fasting. Because of this intimate aspect of fasting, Allah (swt) was quoted by the Prophet (saw) as saying, "Every act of Adam's descendants is for themselves, except fasting. It is meant for Me alone, and I alone will give the reward for it" (Muslim).

When combined with the previous levels of fasting, this level transforms a person from within. It restores, revives and regenerates the fasting person spiritually, and radically modifies his or her personality and character. These are the precious products of a heightened state of God-consciousness.

***Taken, with slight adaptation, from a pamphlet written by Dr Bilal Philips for the Qatar Guest Centre.***

1 *Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language*, p.66

2 [Saranam.com/Hindu encyclopedia](http://Saranam.com/Hindu_encyclopedia)

3 *Dictionary of World Religions*, p.817





Heraa Hashmi

## Muslims do condemn

Heraa Hashmi is a 19-year-old American Muslim student of history at the University of Colorado. In one class in late 2016, she and the non-Muslim male student next to her were meant to be discussing the Crusades. However, he soon started crusading against Islam, and spouting the worn-out slogan "Not all Muslims are terrorists, but all terrorists are Muslims." (This has been debunked in the March 2016 issue of *Rocket Science*.) This eventually led to the worn-out complaint that Muslims were not doing enough to oppose the terrorism perpetrated by Muslims.

Heraa Hashmi found this puzzling, as she thought that Muslims were constantly denouncing acts of violence supposedly committed in the name of Islam. So she did some research of her own, and quickly produced a 712-page list of Muslims condemning such acts, backed up with references to source material. "I wanted to show people how weak the argument [that Muslims don't care about terrorism] is," she explained<sup>1</sup>.

She tweeted this list and found that, within a day, it had been retweeted 15,000 times. A couple of her online followers volunteered to help her turn her spreadsheet into an interactive website and thus, within a week, the website *Muslims Condemn*<sup>2</sup> was up and running. It has been expanded considerably since.

The website performs two invaluable functions. Firstly, since it contains webpage after webpage of referenced data, it clearly shows that any argument that Muslims don't do enough to denounce acts of violence is nonsense.

Secondly, it shows how ridiculous it is that Muslims are constantly expected to offer apologies for terrorist acts. She points out that Muslims are "held to a different standard than other minorities: 1.6 billion people are expected to apologise and condemn [terrorism] on behalf of a couple of dozen lunatics. It makes no sense." After all, Hashmi says, "I don't view the KKK or the Westboro Baptist church or the Lord's Resistance Army as accurate representations of Christianity. I know that they're on the fringe. So it gets very frustrating having to defend myself and having to apologise on behalf of some crazy people."

On Wikipedia, the Ku Klux Klan<sup>3</sup> (KKK) are described as an organisation advocating "extremist reactionary currents such as white supremacy, white nationalism, anti-immigration, and, especially in later iterations, Nordicism, anti-Catholicism, and antisemitism" using "terrorism, both physical assault and murder, against groups or individuals whom they opposed", the Westboro Baptist church<sup>4</sup> as being "known for its hate speech, especially against LGBT people (homophobia), Catholics (anti-Catholicism), Orthodox Christians (anti-Orthodoxy), Muslims (Islamophobia), Jews (antisemitism), American soldiers and politicians", and the Lord's Resistance Army<sup>5</sup> as an African movement "accused of widespread human rights violations, including murder, abduction, mutilation, child-sex slavery, and forcing children to participate in hostilities".

What follows is a very small selection of (extracts from) Muslim condemnations from the website.



**The Muslim American Society (MAS) and the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) condemn 9/11.**

*We reiterate our unequivocal condemnation of the crime committed on September 11, 2001 and join our fellow Americans in mourning the loss of up to 6000 innocent civilians.*

(see [web.archive.org/web/20011121152646/http://www.icna.org/wtc\\_pr.htm](http://web.archive.org/web/20011121152646/http://www.icna.org/wtc_pr.htm))

**The Association of British Muslims condemns the murder of British soldier Lee Rigby, May 2013**

*Our sincerest condolences to family and friends of the unarmed man, brutally martyred in Woolwich. We will be remembering you in our prayers. Violent thugs who callously murder people are not serving any god, they are outside the pale of all the religions of our Human Family. Neither Islam nor any other religion sanctions what these evil men have done. Far from it, Islam totally and utterly condemns murder and terrorism. Whatever they may think in their own deranged minds, these men are not Muslims, there is nothing at all Islamic about them.*

(see [aobm.org/statement-on-the-woolwich-murder-london/Association of British Muslims](http://aobm.org/statement-on-the-woolwich-murder-london/Association%20of%20British%20Muslims))

**The Islamic Supreme Council of Canada condemns Boko Haram, May 2014**

*The Islamic Supreme Council of Canada and the Muslims Against Terrorism have strongly condemned the recent kidnapping of the school girls in Nigeria. Although in the media the kidnappers are being reported as Muslims, every Muslim knows that kidnapping children (girls or boys) and selling them is against Islam. Islam abolished human trade 1400 centuries ago but if anyone who calls himself/herself Muslim and justifies slavery is dead wrong and commits a major crime in the eyes of Islam.*

(see [www.islamicsupremecouncil.com/boko-haram-kidnappers-are-criminals%E2%80%8F](http://www.islamicsupremecouncil.com/boko-haram-kidnappers-are-criminals%E2%80%8F))

**The US Council of Muslim Organizations condemns the Brussels bombings, March 2016**

*The US Council of Muslim Organizations (USCMO), a coalition of leading national and local Muslim organizations, strongly condemns the heinous terror attacks that took place early this morning in Brussels, Belgium and left at least 30 innocent people dead and many more injured.*

(see [www.uscmo.org/pressreleases](http://www.uscmo.org/pressreleases))

### **The US Council of Muslim Organizations condemns the Nice truck attack, July 2016**

*The US Council of Muslim Organizations (USCMO), the largest coalition of leading national and local Muslim organizations, stands in solidarity and mourning with the people of France and sends its heartfelt condolences and sympathies to the families of the victims and to the people of France. On Thursday night USCMO watched in horror as 84 innocent lives were taken and many more injured when a truck plowed through crowds during a Bastille Day festival and continued to open fire on people gathered to watch fireworks in the French city of Nice. USCMO vehemently condemns this deplorable act of violence and all such horrendous acts anywhere in the world.*

(see [www.uscmo.org/pressreleases](http://www.uscmo.org/pressreleases))

### **Muslims Australia condemns ISIS**

*The President of Muslims Australia (AFIC), Mr Hafez Kassem, condemned ISIS and criticised them for being in violation of Islamic laws and distanced Islam from the actions of this militant group, saying they "have nothing to do with Islam and its principles that call for justice, kindness, fairness, freedom of faith and coexistence." Mr Kassem denounced the "forced deportation under the threat of execution" of Christians, calling it a "crime that cannot be tolerated."*

(see [muslimsaustralia.com.au/muslims-australia-afic-condemns-isis](http://muslimsaustralia.com.au/muslims-australia-afic-condemns-isis))

### **FIANZ condemns attacks against Coptic Christians, April 2017**

*The Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand Inc. (FIANZ) and the Muslim community in New Zealand are shocked and saddened by the news of attacks on Coptic churches in Tanta and Alexandria of Egypt. This is a despicable act of terrorism by the so-called "Islamist". We strongly condemn the twin terror attacks ... We stand together with the Egyptian government against the scourge of terrorism and with its people at this time of grief.*

(see [fianz.co.nz/node/638](http://fianz.co.nz/node/638))

1 Arwa Mahdawi. "The 712-page Google doc that proves Muslims do condemn terrorism" The Guardian, 26 March 2017.

[www.theguardian.com/world/shortcuts/2017/mar/26/muslims-condemn-terrorism-stats](http://www.theguardian.com/world/shortcuts/2017/mar/26/muslims-condemn-terrorism-stats)

2 [muslimscondemn.com](http://muslimscondemn.com)

3 [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ku\\_Klux\\_Klan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ku_Klux_Klan)

4 [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Westboro\\_Baptist\\_Church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Westboro_Baptist_Church)

5 [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord%27s\\_Resistance\\_Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord%27s_Resistance_Army)



## Apologising in Islam

Amongst the creation of Allah (swt) are angels, jinns and humans. Unlike angels, humans were created with free will, meaning that they can choose between right and wrong. Unlike angels, humans therefore can and do commit sins. This is the wisdom of Allah (swt).

In a hadith, the Prophet (saw) said, "I swear by Him in whose hand is my soul, if you were a people who did not commit sin, Allah would take you away and replace you with a people who would sin and then seek Allah's forgiveness so He could forgive them."

In the Quran, Allah (swt) says, "... And mankind was created weak" (4:28).

The Prophet (saw) also said, "Every son of Adam makes a mistake and the best of those who commit mistakes are the ones who seek forgiveness and make repentance." From this, we understand that no human being is perfect.

So our freedom to choose can lead us to committing wrong. However, there is a way out – seeking forgiveness. This article looks at how the generations before us sinned and how they repented to our Creator. We can learn from our forefathers and apply it to our lives so that we can obtain the ultimate reward – jannathul firdaus.

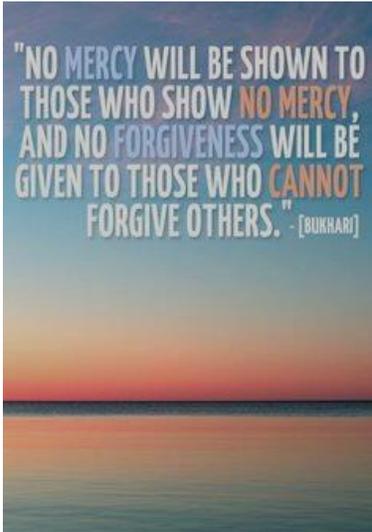
### How do we apologise when we make mistakes?

In worship (ibadat), there are prescribed things which we must do. For example, a mistake in prayer can be corrected (where allowed) by praying two prostrations (sadjah safwu).

In Hajj, we must give sacrificial animals to compensate. The Quran says, "O you who have believed, do not kill game while you are in the state of ihram. And whoever of you kills it intentionally, the penalty is an equivalent from sacrificial animals to what he killed, as judged by two just men among you as an offering [to Allah] delivered to the Ka'bah, or an expiation: the feeding of needy people or the equivalent of that in fasting, that he may taste the consequence of his deed. Allah has pardoned what is past; but whoever returns [to violation], then Allah will take retribution from him. And Allah is Exalted in might and Owner of retribution" (5:95).

Another example is that, if we kill a person by accident, we are required to pay blood money to their relatives. Allah (swt) says, "And never is it for a believer to kill a believer except by mistake. And whoever kills a believer by mistake, then the freeing of a believing slave and a compensation payment presented to the deceased's family [is required] unless they give [up their right as] charity" (4:92).

FORGIVE  
OTHERS  
SO THAT  
ALLAH  
WILL  
FORGIVE  
YOU.



### Prophets and their mistakes

We all know the best of human creation are our prophets (as). They are the role models, our yardstick. They worshipped our Lord like no others did and preached the religion of Islam. However, they were not without faults. From our first prophet Adam (as) to the last Prophet Muhammad (saw), they erred. And Allah (swt) captures this very nicely in passages in the Quran.

#### Adam

Adam (as) ate from the forbidden tree. The Quran says, "And We said, 'O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat therefrom in [ease and] abundance from wherever you will. But do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers.' But Satan caused them to slip out of it and removed them from that [condition] in which they had been. And We said, 'Go down, [all of you], as enemies to one another, and you will have upon the earth a place of settlement and provision for a time'" (2:35-36).

Unlike Iblis, Adam (as) and his wife Hawa (as) realised their mistake. Immediately they apologised and sought forgiveness from Allah (swt). "They said, 'Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves, and if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers'" (7:23).

This is a great dua by our father and mother, and many of us have memorised it. Insha Allah, let us use this dua to get closer to our Lord. Allah (swt) accepted this dua. He says, "Then Adam received from his Lord [some] words, and

He accepted his repentance. Indeed, it is He who is the Accepting of repentance, the Merciful" (2:37).

#### Moses

Moses (Musa, as) was sent to observe Al-Khidr during one of his journeys. However, Moses soon became impatient as the Quran relates in Surah Al-Kahf: "And they found a servant from among Our servants to whom we had given mercy from us and had taught him from Us a [certain] knowledge. Moses said to him, 'May I follow you on [the condition] that you teach me from what you have been taught of sound judgment?'" (18:65-66).

What happened in the end?

"[Moses] said, 'Do not blame me for what I forgot and do not cover me in my matter with difficulty'" (18:73).

#### Muhammad

Finally, we get to the last and best messenger of Allah (swt). He has such a high rank that Allah (swt) corrected him in the minutest of the mistakes: he frowned when a blind sahabi came to him seeking knowledge. As surah Abasa relates: "The Prophet frowned and turned away, because there came to him the blind man, [interrupting]. But what would make you perceive, [O Muhammad], that perhaps he might be purified? Or be reminded and the remembrance would benefit him? As for he who thinks himself without need, to him you give attention. And not upon you [is any blame] if he will not be purified. But as for he who came to you striving [for knowledge], while he fears [Allah], from him you are distracted" (80:1-10).

The Prophet (saw) apologised to Ibn Umm Maktum when these verses were revealed. And whenever he met him, the Prophet (saw) used to say to him, "Welcome to whom Allah blamed me for ignoring."

Even the Prophets (as) made mistakes. So where are we in comparison to them? They are the best creation of Allah. As the Prophet (saw) himself said, "O people! Repent to Allah and seek His forgiveness. I repent to Him in a day 100 times." Even saying "Astaghfirullah" 100 times once a day would put us miles ahead and win the pleasure of Allah (swt).

### **Obstacles to apologising**

There are two types of sins.

#### ***Sins that we commit between us and Allah (swt) (ibadat)***

A simple act of istighfar, whether it be two prostrations or a sacrificial animal, would suffice, and insha Allah, our Lord would forgive this mistake.

The Prophet (saw) has said, "Allah the Almighty has said, 'O son of Adam, so long as you call upon Me and ask of Me, I shall forgive you for what you have done, and I shall not mind. O son of Adam, were your sins to reach the clouds of the sky and were you then to ask forgiveness of Me, I would forgive you. O son of Adam, were you to come to Me with sins nearly as great as the earth and were you then to face Me, ascribing no partner to Me, I would bring you forgiveness nearly as great as its.'"

Let us not give up hope seeking forgiveness from Allah (swt).

#### ***Sins we commit on fellow human beings***

When we do wrong to our fellow humans, it would not be sufficient to ask forgiveness from Allah (swt). As it is a matter between two humans, Allah (swt) will tell us on the Day of Judgement for us to go and seek forgiveness from the other. He will not take away the right of the wronged person.

But there are obstacles to seeking this forgiveness:

***Ignorance.*** We don't realise that we have wronged another person. So we do not seek forgiveness from them. We do not know the teachings of Islam for us to realise and correct ourselves. We can overcome this obstacle by constantly seeking knowledge that is beneficial to us. As the Quran says, "My Lord, increase me in knowledge" (20:114).

***Our pride and arrogance.*** We somehow feel that we are a better person and do not need to seek forgiveness from the affected person even though we know we have wronged them. This is the story of Iblis (Shaitaan) who refused to prostrate to Adam (as) under the command of Allah (swt). Let us not be like him. Let us be humble and down to earth. Let us reflect on the days, months and years gone by, and seek the forgiveness from our heart before this Ramadan.

A simple "Sorry, I made a mistake" would be sufficient for most of our shortfalls. Let us bring that word into our vocabulary and win the pleasure of Allah (swt).

"The most merciful person is the one who forgives when he is able to take revenge."  
— Imam Hussain (as)



## Hijab in Chechen schools

The parliament of the Chechen Republic has passed a bill that all educational establishments must consider the students' right to wear clothes or symbols required by their religion or national traditions, provided this does not contradict federal laws and does not harm the children's health<sup>1</sup>. One effect of this is that Muslim schoolgirls will be allowed to wear hijab. The head of the Chechen parliament's Committee for Education, Science and Culture, Bekhan Khazbulatov, said, "The educational policies of educational organizations in the Chechen Republic must be conducted without any infringement to national traditions and religious beliefs of the students."

Chechnya is a federal subject (a republic) of Russia. Russia does not have a single school uniform, but standard school clothing can be introduced by local authorities at regional and municipal levels. In Chechnya, school uniforms were introduced in the capital city Grozny on 1 September 2016. The current model of the Grozny uniforms includes a red headscarf for girls. Red is one of the colours of the Chechen flag, the other being green.

1 Chechnya passes bill allowing schoolgirls to wear hijab in class. RT, 31 March 2017.  
[www.rt.com/politics/382954-chechnya-passes-bill-allowing-schoolgirls/](http://www.rt.com/politics/382954-chechnya-passes-bill-allowing-schoolgirls/)



Chechen flag



## Life imprisonment for beef curry

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is also the chief minister of the state of Gujarat. He is a Hindu nationalist and member of the right-wing Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, widely regarded as the parent organisation of the ruling party of India, the Bharatiya Janata Party. Under his leadership, the slaughtering of cows and the possession of beef was banned under a 2011 amendment to the 1954 Gujarat Animal Preservation Act. However, an amendment to this amendment has just been passed<sup>1</sup>, according to which:

- the slaughter of cows is punished with life imprisonment and a fine of 50,000 to 100,000 rupees (over NZ\$ 1,100)
- those found in possession of beef can be sentenced to seven to ten years and fined 50,000 to 100,000 rupees (over NZ\$ 1,100)
- those transporting beef will be jailed for ten years
- vehicles used to take animals to slaughter may also be seized

Gujarat minister Pradipsinh Jadeja, also a Hindu, justified this: "A cow

is not an animal. It is symbol of universal life. Anybody who does not spare the cow, the government will not spare him."

Gujarat has been controlled by the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party since 1995 and is preparing to hold local elections at the end of 2017, where it is again hoping to win a majority.

Hindus, who constitute the majority (80%) of the population of India, worship cows. However, there are 172 million Muslims in India (14% of the population), Islam having come to the country in the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE. Along with other minorities such as Christians (2%), Muslims have no prohibitions against eating beef. This has led to tensions between the various religious communities. In 2015, a 50-year-old Muslim man was dragged out of his house and lynched by a Hindu mob in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, who accused him of eating beef.

1 Holy cow! Butchers face life sentence in India for slaughtering sacred animal. RT, 31 May 2017.

[www.rt.com/news/383006-gujarat-life-sentence-cow-slaughter/](http://www.rt.com/news/383006-gujarat-life-sentence-cow-slaughter/)





## 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 May

Quran 107: 1-7 small kindness.

Clip: What is the matter with you.

Lecture: The prerequisites for Muslim victory by Nouman Ali Khan.

Documentary: Miracles of the Quran 1 part 3.

Feature: Why I wear hijab by sister Majede Najar.

### 13 & 14 May

Quran 107: 1-7 small kindness.

Clip: What is the matter with you.

Lecture: Mastering the art of patience – Ramadan by Yasir Qadhi.

Documentary: Miracles of the Quran 1 part 4.

Feature: Ramadan short reminder.

### 20 & 21 May

Quran: 2: 183-185 Ramadan.

Lecture: Ramadan in Allah's words: How to approach Ramadan part 1 by Nouman Ali Khan.

Documentary: Miracles of the Quran 1 part 5.

Feature: Ramadan the month of change by Waleed Basyouni.

### 27 & 28 May

Quran: 2: 183-185 Ramadan.

Clip: Fasting in Ramadan is not all about food.

Lecture: Ramadan in Allah's words: Spirit of Ramadan part 2 by Nouman Ali Khan.

Documentary: Miracles of the Quran 2 part 1.

Clip: Tricks of the devil.



Waleed Basyouni

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

## Auckland prayer timetable for May 2017

(from [www.islamicfinder.org](http://www.islamicfinder.org). For other cities in New Zealand, see [www.fianz.co.nz](http://www.fianz.co.nz)).

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

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

Asr 2: Hanafi school (double shadow length)

Maimuna (ra) reported, "When the Apostle of Allah prostrated himself, if a lamb wanted to pass between his arms, it could pass." (hadith)

## 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)