

Inside this issue

Preparing for Ramadan	2
Reality and truth	6
Voice of Islam	10
Prayer timetable	11

Rocket Science

May 2018

Shaban / Ramadan 1439



In the name of Allah,
most Gracious, most Merciful

Ramadan mubarak!



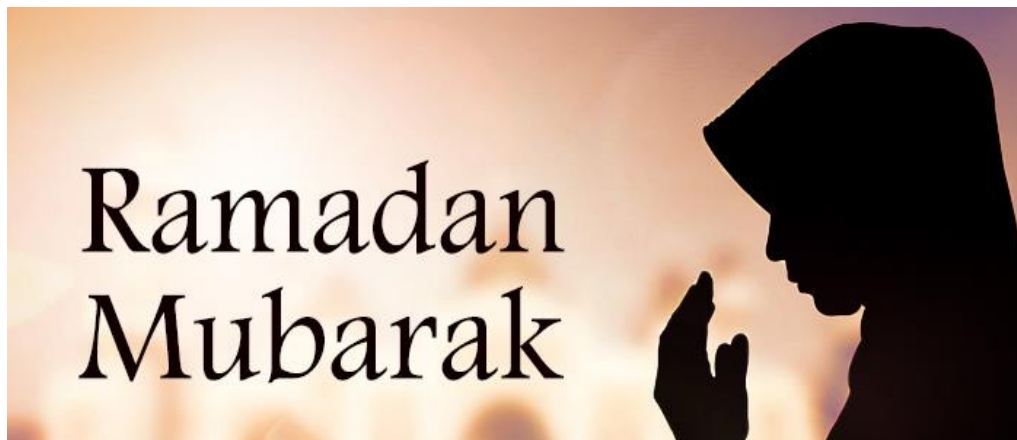
Insha Allah, Ramadan 1439 is likely to begin on Tuesday 15 May (subject to confirmation). Alhamdu lillah, it is autumn/winter in New Zealand, and the period of fasting is less than 12 hours; for instance, on 15 May, fajr prayer (dawn) starts at 5.43 am, and maghrib prayer (sunset) starts at 5.23 pm, a period of only 11 hours 40 minutes. By the end of Ramadan, it is even shorter, insha Allah.

In order to check when Ramadan starts, either:

- Receive a text from the Auckland Eid Day group to your smartphone, by registering free of charge at www.facebook.com/AklEidDay/app/128953167177144 (scroll down) or
- Access the FIANZ website at fianz.com

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.



Preparing for Ramadan

Ramadan will be upon us again shortly, insha Allah, and it is a good time to plan ahead for its arrival. Sure, we all intend to do more ibadah, be it praying additional prayers such as tarawih or qiyamul lail, reciting more of the Quran, and so on. This article talks about an important goal of Ramadan – improving our character.

Our beloved Prophet Muhammad (saw), said, "I have only been sent to perfect good moral character."

What is character? The *Oxford Dictionary* states that character is "the mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual". Islamically, character is about how we conduct ourselves with respect to our Lord (swt) and to other human beings.

Very often, without us knowing, we get into discussions about other people. This is either to pass the time, as gossip or to really degrade another human being. Sometimes, this can lead to backbiting. Backbiting is, according to the *Oxford Dictionary*, "Malicious talk about someone who is not present."

Backbiting, slander, gossip

There is a distinction between *gheebah* (backbiting), *butan* (slander), and *nameemah* (malicious gossip). Backbiting means speaking about someone in his absence and saying things that he would not like to have spread around or mentioned. Slander means saying things about someone that are not true, or in other words telling lies about him. Malicious gossip means telling one

person what another said in order to cause trouble between them.

It was narrated by Abu Hurairah (ra) that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "Do you know what gheebah (backbiting) is?" They said, "Allah and His Messenger know best." He said, "Saying something about your brother that he dislikes." It was said, "What if what I say about my brother is true?" He said, "If what you say is true then you have committed backbiting about him, and if it is not true, then you have slandered him."

Punishment for backbiting

It was narrated that Ibn Abbas said, "The Messenger of Allah (saw) passed by two graves and said, 'They are being punished, but they are not being punished for anything that was difficult to avoid. One of them used to walk about spreading malicious gossip (nameemah), and the other used not to take precautions to avoid getting urine on himself when he urinated.' Then he called for a green branch, which he split in two and planted a piece on each grave, and said, 'May their torment be reduced so long as these do not dry out'" (Bukhari, Muslim).

There is severe punishment for those who backbite. Allah (swt) says in the Holy Quran, "O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin. And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Accepting of repentance and Merciful" (49:12).

We all know the famous hadith where the Prophet (saw) said, "He who believes in Allah and the Last Day must either speak good or remain silent" (Muslim).

Habits

The powerful hadith above has a deep meaning. It is often best for us to remain silent unless we have something good to say. We need to be careful of our tongues, as the Prophet (saw) has promised Jannah for those who can guard it.

But for a person who has the habit of backbiting, whether intentionally or not, it may be harder for them to remain silent in times where it is required the most. This is something we need to work on, and what better time and space to practise this than Ramadan? Allah (swt) says that the devils are chained during this month of Ramadan, so any bad that we do is from our own habits from the past, and breaking the bad habits takes time.

It is said that to change a habit, we need to consistently work on it for at least 20 days for it to be taken out of our system and a new habit to be formed. We all should take this Ramadan as an opportunity to take stock of ourselves, ponder and reflect on our bad moral characters and then devise a plan to correct them.

Overcoming bad habits

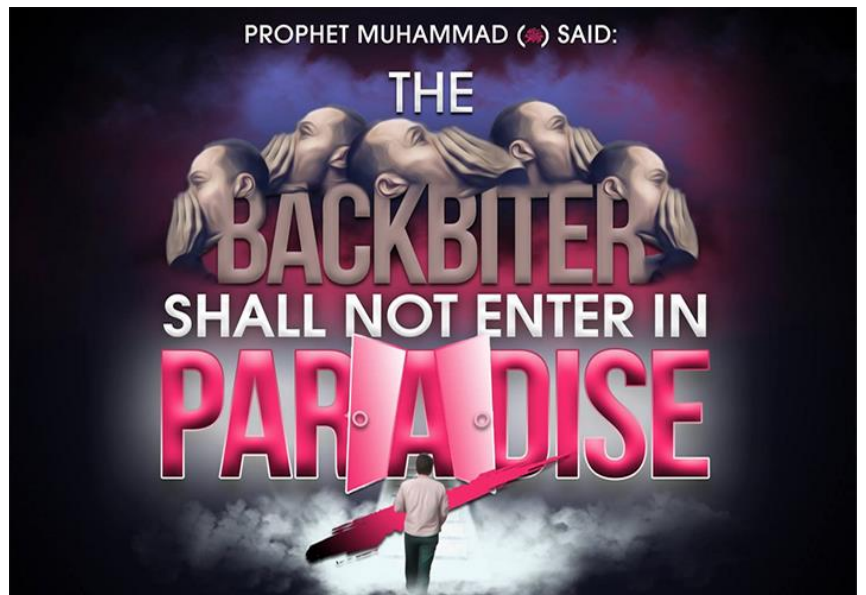
Bad habits will not go away overnight, but there is a higher chance of overcoming them during the month of Ramadan, as the devils are chained. Their influence on us will be limited and so it becomes much easier to tame our tongues.

Ramadan is a time to perfect our moral character, whether it be overcoming a bad habit such as backbiting, slander or gossip, or something else such as a sin or an addiction.

So, what is the solution for our past sins?

As usual, if we feel we have backbitten, slandered or gossiped about someone, we must first ask forgiveness from Allah (swt). The scholars say that if we know that our bad words have reached the person in question, then we must ask forgiveness from that person.

If, on the other hand, we do not know if it has reached the person, then it is sufficient for us to ask forgiveness from Allah (swt) and leave it at that. The scholars also say that if we were to ask forgiveness from the person affected, and if this would cause enmity, then it is sufficient to make dua for him, speak well of him and pray for forgiveness for him.



When is backbiting allowed?

In some circumstances, it is not easy to differentiate between backbiting, slander, gossip, and constructive conversation. We all may have had a situation where we needed to talk about the facts of a certain situation that occurred to someone who is not present, not with the intention of causing harm or spreading rumours, but with the intention of resolving matters between people.

Our intention should be sincere, whether it be reconciliation, naseesah (sincere advice) or problem solving. The scholars feel, in such situations we are allowed to talk about the person in his/her absence. But we need to be very careful with this.

In summary, the scholars have said backbiting is permissible in the following five instances:

1. **Complaining.** If someone is wronged, then it is allowed to complain about their situation to a judge or ruler with a view of getting justice for what has been done.

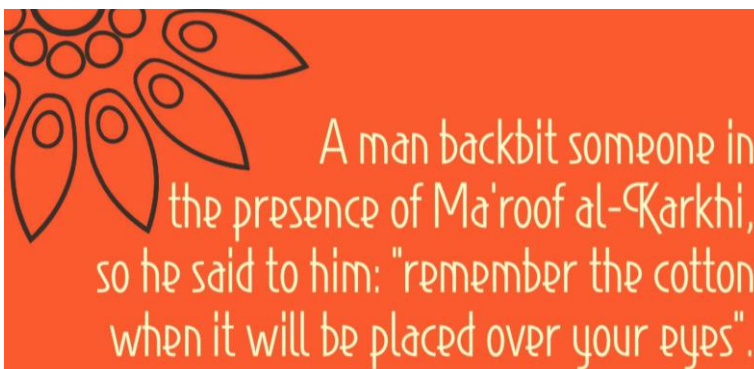
Abdullah ibn Umar (ra) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "Whoever fulfilled the needs of his brother, Allah will fulfil his

needs; whoever brought his (Muslim) brother out of a discomfort, Allah will bring him out of the discomforts of the Day of Resurrection, and whoever screened a Muslim, Allah will screen him on the Day of Resurrection."

2. **Putting people on the right path.** If we know someone who is going astray and leaving the religion, it is permissible to talk about him to someone who can help. As Allah says in the Quran, "O you who have believed, fear Allah as He should be feared and do not die except as Muslims [in submission to Him]" (3.102).
3. **Seeking advice/counsel.** Very often we may not have the knowledge about particular circumstances, especially things relating to Islam. In such situations we are allowed to ask for help from a reputed person such as an Islamic scholar.

"And those who have responded to their Lord and established prayer and whose affair is [determined by] consultation among themselves, and from what We have provided them, they spend" (Quran 42:38).

The key phrase here is *amruhum shoora bainahum*, which means consult among yourselves. We can consult an Islamic scholar in a matter that we have little knowledge about, with the intention of understanding the Islamic perspective of it. Or consult some professional such as a lawyer in a matter that needs rectification.



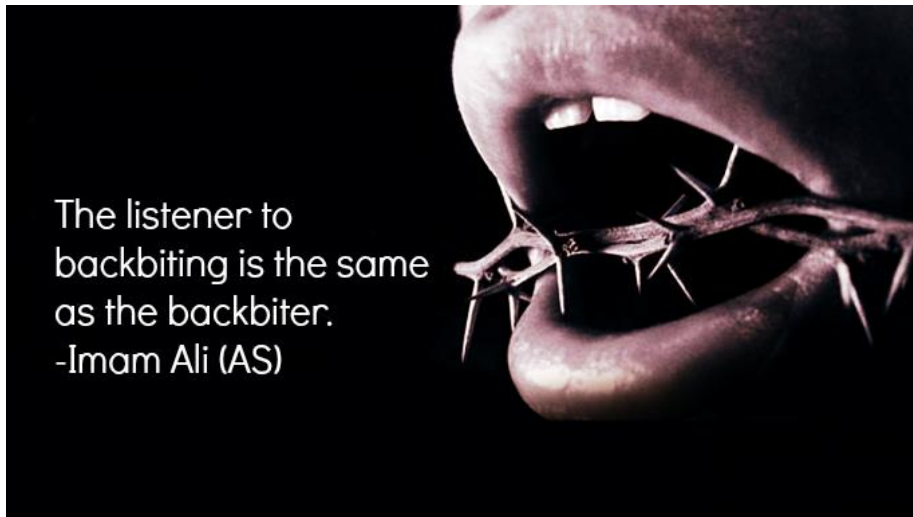
4. **Warning.** If we know that someone is of bad character, we can warn others who may be affected. This is especially true for someone who is a thief, who has bad business habits, or even in times of marriage. We should be careful that we talk with the intention of sincere advice, not to cause harm or mischief to the other person.

Nuh (Noah, as) was instructed by Allah (swt) to warn those at the time that Allah (swt) would punish them should they continue disbelieving in Allah (swt). "Indeed, We sent Noah to his people, [saying], "Warn your people before there comes to them a painful punishment" (Quran 71:1).

5. **For identification,** for example, someone with a nickname such as "dim-sighted one", or "blind man". But we must be very careful not use these names to belittle them, as it will be haram (prohibited) to do so. If we can identify the person in some other way, such as his birth name, that is of course much better.

Conclusion

With the approach of Ramadan, it is a really good time to perfect our character and improve ourselves. With the devils chained and our food restricted, what better way to spend our time than in working through our weaknesses?



The truth about *truth*

The word *truth* occurs frequently in English translations of the Quran. For example, in 10:35, Allah (swt) says, "Say, 'Can any of your partner-gods show the way to the truth?' Say, 'God shows the way to the truth. Is someone who shows the way to the truth more worthy to be followed, or someone who cannot find the way unless he himself is shown? What is the matter with you? How do you judge?'"

The Arabic word that is translated as *truth* here is *haqq*. However, *truth* is perhaps not the best English word to use for Arabic *haqq*. There is another Arabic word *sidq*, which is well translated as *truth*. So what is the difference between these two Arabic words, *haqq* (and grammatically related words) and *sidq* (and grammatically related words)?

Firstly, the words have different opposite words (antonyms) in Arabic. The opposite of *haqq* is *batil*, whereas the opposite of *sidq* is *kidb*.

Haqq

Haqq may more accurately be translated into English as *reality*. That is, it refers to things as they really are, things that actually exist. *Al-Haqq* is one of the names of Allah (swt) in the Quran.

"Say, 'Who provides for you from the heaven and the earth? Or who controls hearing and sight and who brings the living out of the dead and brings the dead out of the living and who arranges [every] matter?' They will say, 'Allah,' so say, 'Then will you not fear Him?' For that is Allah, your Lord, al-Haqq" (10:31-2).

In Sufism, *Al-Haqq* is often used to refer to God as the Ultimate Reality.

In the Quranic verse quoted above (10:35), the word in the original Arabic is *haqq*. The above verse may therefore be more accurately translated as, "Can any of your partner-gods show the way to what is real?' Say, 'God shows the way to what is real.'" That is, Allah (swt) is real, He really created mankind, the Hereafter really exists, etc.

There are similar passages in the Quran (22:62), for instance, "That is because Allah is Al-Haqq, and that which they call upon other than Him is al-batil, and because Allah is the Most High, the Grand."

Also "And do not mix reality (*haqq*) with unreality (*batil*) or conceal the reality (*haqq*) while you know [it]" (2:42).





Sidq

Truthfulness (*sidq*) refers to whether what one says about reality (*haqq*) is correct and accurate or not.

A famous hadith states, "He [Muhammad, saw] stood on Mount Safa and said to the people, 'If I were to tell you that there was an enemy behind this mountain ready to attack you, would you believe me?' They said, 'Yes. We have never experienced anything but truthfulness from you.' He said, 'O people of the Quraish! I warn you to fear God's punishment. Save yourself from the fire. My position is the same as that of the sentry who sees the enemy from afar and warns his people of the danger of their enemies. Does such a person ever lie to his people?'"

In this scenario, the reality (*haqq*) was that there was no army behind the mountain. If Muhammad (saw) had said that there was an army, he would have been lying. However, he was speaking hypothetically, in order to establish

that he is a person that always tells the truth (*sidq*). He then went on to say that there is a severe torture (Hell, Jahannam). He was being truthful (*sidq*) about the reality (*haqq*) of Hell.

So, *sidq* relates to people saying or writing whatever corresponds to reality. They are giving a truthful (*sidq*) description of reality (*haqq*). They are not lying.

The English word *truth* comes originally from the Old English *trēowþ* which in turn comes from the Proto Indo-European *dru-* meaning "tree" derived from *deru* meaning "solid, firm". This implies that truth is something set, solid, unchangeable, withstanding all kinds of weather. The root meaning of the Arabic word *sidq* is similar to that of the Proto Indo-European *deru*, namely strength and hardness.

This strength is shown by the fact that telling the truth is required of all Muslims. Muslims who are truthful can hope for Paradise (Jannah), insha Allah.



TRUE

In the Quran (5:119), Allah (swt) says, "Allah will say, 'This is the Day [of Judgement] when the truthful [*sidq*] will benefit from their truthfulness [*sidq*].' For them are gardens [in Paradise] beneath which rivers flow, in which they will abide forever, Allah being pleased with them, and they with Him. That is the great attainment."

In a hadith, Prophet Muhammad (saw) said, "It is obligatory for you to tell the truth (*sidq*), for truth leads to virtue and virtue leads to Paradise, and the man who continues to speak the truth and endeavours to tell the truth is eventually recorded as truthful with Allah. And beware of telling of a lie for telling of a lie leads to obscenity and obscenity leads to Hell-Fire, and the person who keeps telling lies and endeavours to tell a lie is recorded as a liar with Allah" (Muslim).

The emphasis that is put on telling the truth in Islam is shown by many ayats in the Quran:

- "O you who believe! Fear Allah and be with those who are true (*sidq*) (in word and deed)" (9:119).
- "Say, 'My Lord, cause me to enter with truth (*sidq*), and cause me to go out with truth (*sidq*), and grant me a power from Your Presence, to help me" (17:80).
- "Grant me a good reputation, being remembered for truthfulness (*sidq*), in later generations" (26:84).
- "The righteous are in the Gardens and rivers, on the seats of truthfulness (*sidq*) in the Presence of a Mighty King" (54:54-5).

Many people are described as being truthful (*sidq*). Abu Bakr (ra) was called *As-Siddiq* by Prophet Muhammad (saw), because his faith was too strong to be shaken by anything, and he thus always told the truth. *As-Siddiq* is thus a title, not a surname. Similarly, Abu Bakr's daughter and the Prophet's wife, Aishah (ra), is also called *As-Siddiqah*.

FALSE

Prophets are also described as truthful: "Make mention of Ibrahim (Abraham, as) in the Book: he was a most truthful (*sidq*) one, a prophet" (19:41).

After reciting from the Quran, Muslims sometimes say, "Sadaqa Allah al-Athim ("Allah the Almighty has spoken the truth")." There are differing opinions as to whether there is authority for this. Those who state that it is permissible quote as evidence the ayat, "Say (O Muhammad): "Allah has spoken the truth (*sadaqa Allah*); follow the religion of Ibrahim (Abraham, as) inclining toward truth (*sidq*)" (Quran 3:95). This means that Allah (swt) had spoken the truth in all that He had said to His slaves in the Taurat, the Injeel and all other revealed books.

Conclusion

We thus have two Arabic words, *haqq* and *sidq*. They are both often translated into English as *truth*. However, the difference in meaning between the two is perhaps best remembered by translating *haqq* as *reality*, and *sidq* as *truthfulness*.

In Islam, there are six things that Muslims acknowledge the reality (*haqq*) of: Allah (swt), His angels, His books, His prophets, the Day of Judgement, and predestination. These are known as the Articles of Faith. Some of them require no blind faith. We can all experience the reality of the Quran, by taking

it off our bookshelf, and reading and reflecting on it. Few people, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, doubt that Muhammad (saw) really existed. As Muslim preachers often state, "You may try to deny Allah, but you can't deny Muhammad."

Whether what one says or writes corresponds to reality (*haqq*) is a matter of truth (*sidq*). Dictionaries define *truth* as "that which is in accordance with fact or reality." Human beings have free will and can choose to say what corresponds with reality (they can be truthful) or not (they can lie). May Allah (swt) always guide us to reality, and help us always to tell the truth, and thus grant us places in Paradise.





Yasir Fazaga

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).

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- APNA TV (Freeview channel 36)(10.30 am Sun)
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- 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)

5 & 6 May

Quran: 3: 64 Worship 1 God.

Animation 01: How to raise your children.

Lecture: Ramadan – time to stop bad habits by Yasir Fazaga.

Names of Allah 01: Introduction by Yasir Qadhi.

Out of context series 09: Does racism drive Islamophobia.

12 & 13 May

Quran: 3: 64 Worship 1 God.

Animation 02: How to stop wasting your time.

Lecture: Ramadan in Allah's words part1 by Nouman Ali Khan.

Names of Allah 02 by Yasir Qadhi.

19 & 20 May

Quran: 3: 64 Worship 1 God.

Animation 03: How to teach kids prayer (salah).

Lecture: Ramadan in Allah's words part2 by Nouman Ali Khan.

Out of context series 01: Forget the pundits, ask a Muslim.

26 & 27 May

Quran: 3: 64 Worship 1 God.

Animation 04: How to wake up for fajr (morning prayer)

Lecture: Ramadan in Allah's words – How to approach Ramadan part3 by Nouman Ali Khan.

Names of Allah 03 by Yasir Qadhi.

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

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

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

Asr 2: Hanafi school (double shadow length)

"Whoever prays at night in it (the month of Ramadan) out of sincere faith and hoping for a reward from Allah, then all his previous sins will be forgiven."
(hadith Bukhari)

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)