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Rocket Science

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In the name of Allah,
most Gracious, most Merciful

New Zealand, like the rest of the world, is in the grips of COVID-19. And much of this issue of *Rocket Science* is devoted to that subject. So, let us at least start with some good news:

Ramadan Mubarak!

Insha Allah, Ramadan 1441 begins around 24 April (subject to confirmation). Alhamdu lillah, the period of fasting is still little more than 12 hours, and 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/AkIEidDay/app/128953167177144 (scroll down to the "Eid Day Alerts" tab)
- 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.

In the current circumstances of COVID-19, including the closure of all congregational prayers at mosques, please read the main article about the possibility of performing tarawih prayers at home.

Hygiene and Islam

The topic of this article is COVID-19. The purpose of this article is to examine it from the Islamic perspective, and to urge readers to take it very seriously and follow sensible guidelines.

Coronavirus¹ is an umbrella term for a large family of diseases. They range from, at the mildest end, the common cold to, at the most severe end, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV). SARS² was first detected in China in November 2002, eventually causing 8,098 cases, resulting in 774 deaths in 17 countries (a 9.6% fatality rate). Similarly, MERS³ (also known as camel flu) was first reported in Saudi Arabia in 2012. It resulted in about 2,000 cases and a one-third fatality rate.

Coronavirus particles are extremely small and can only be seen through an electron microscope. Coronaviruses are so called because of large, bulbous surface projections creating an image reminiscent of a crown (*corona* in Latin).

Coronaviruses cause diseases in mammals and birds. However, they may be transmitted to humans. In humans, "common signs of infection include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death"¹.

The current version of coronavirus is COVID-19 (short for *coronavirus*

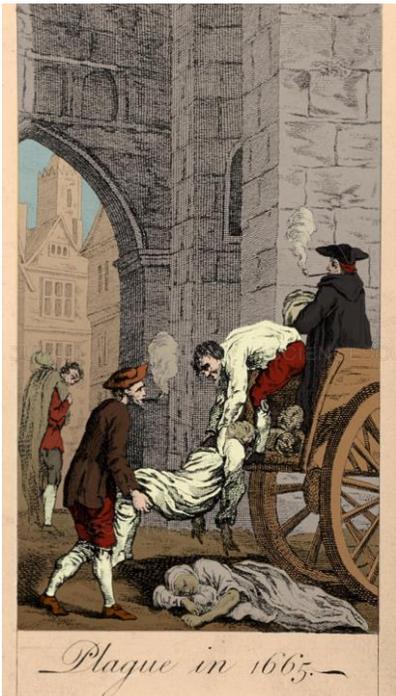
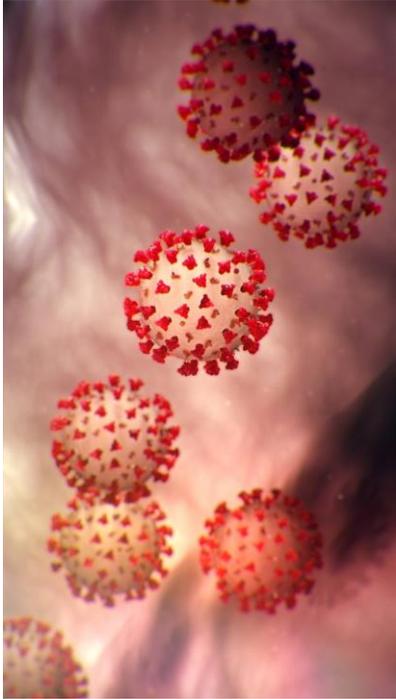
disease 2019)⁴. It was first identified in 2019 in Wuhan, China. However, at the time of writing, it has spread to over 200,000 cases in over 170 countries (over 85% of all countries), resulting in over 9,500 deaths (roughly a 4% fatality rate)⁵. Unfortunately, these figures are likely to rise in the coming days, weeks and months.

History of pandemics

COVID-19 has been declared a pandemic, that is, an epidemic that has spread widely or worldwide. A more old-fashioned word for this is *plague*. Plagues and pandemics have occurred at various times in history⁶, although many of them were caused by rats, which is not the case for COVID-19.

The earliest reliable report is of a plague transmitted by rats in the 6th century. It started in Egypt and was transmitted to Constantinople (present-day Istanbul) killing tens of thousand of residents, and eventually spreading as far as Mediterranean ports to the west and Persia (Iran) in the east. The Black Death of 14th century Europe killed two thirds or three quarters of the population in some parts, and is estimated to have killed a quarter to a third of all Europe, around 25 million. The Great Plague of London⁷ occurred in 1664-6, and caused nearly 100,000 deaths, nearly a quarter of the population. It may have been halted by the Great Fire of London in 1666⁸. Since then, plagues have erupted in:

- Cologne and the Rhine (1666-1670)
- the Netherlands (1667-1669)



- North Africa, Turkey, Poland, Hungary, Austria and Germany (1675 and 1684)
- the French port city of Marseille (1720)
- Turkey, North Africa, Egypt, Syria and Greece (18th and early 19th century)
- India (Gujarat, 1815; Sind, 1815; the Himalayan foothills, 1823; Rajasthan, 1836)
- Yunnan province, southwestern China (1850s)

The last outbreak above finally reached the Chinese ports of Guangzhou (Canton) and Hong Kong in 1894, from there spreading to many other ports around the world: Bombay (1896), Calcutta (1898), Cape Town and San Francisco (1900), Bangkok (1904), Guayaquil (Ecuador, 1908), Colombo (Sri Lanka, 1914), and Pensacola (Florida USA, 1922). Almost all European ports were also struck.

Before the outbreak of COVID-19, the Encyclopaedia Britannica⁶ wrote, "The effectiveness of these measures [scientific, medical discoveries] is told in the declining numbers of plague deaths over the following decades. From a maximum of more than one million in 1907, deaths dropped to approximately 170,000 per year in 1919–28, 92,000 in 1929–38, 22,000 in 1939–48, and 4,600 in 1949–53. Plague is no longer an epidemic disease of port cities. It is

now mainly of campestral or sylvatic (that is, open-field or woodland) origin, striking individuals and occasionally breaking out in villages and rural areas where *Yersinia* [bacteria which live in the guts of people and animals, especially pigs, birds, cats and dogs] is kept in a constant natural reservoir by various types of rodents, including ground squirrels, voles, and field mice. Some 1,000 to 3,000 people worldwide contract plague each year, and some 200 of them die. The main regions of plague are in western North America; the Andes region and Brazil in South America; a broad band across Southwest, Central, and Southeast Asia; and eastern Africa. Most cases today occur in Africa."

COVID-19

COVID-19 is a different type of pandemic, transmitted largely by human contact rather than, for example, rats. While previous epidemics spread from shipping ports to other ports, the modern equivalent is worldwide travel, mostly by aeroplane.

Governments have put in place guidelines for citizens, to avoid the spread of COVID-19, some more quickly than others. The New Zealand government has stopped anyone entering the country, apart from returning citizens and permanent residents. They have also issued the following guidelines⁹:



- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or by covering your mouth and nose with tissues.
- Put used tissues in the bin or a bag immediately.
- Wash your hands with soap and water often (for at least 20 seconds).
- Try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean.
- Avoid personal contact, such as kissing, sharing cups or food with sick people.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as doorknobs.
- Stay home if you feel unwell.
- Call Healthline on [NZ Freefone] 0800 358 5453 if you have any symptoms and have been recently been overseas or have been in close contact with someone confirmed with COVID-19.

Again, these may change, perhaps quickly, if the situation improves or worsens.

The purpose of this article is to discuss COVID-19 from the Islamic perspective. In other words, to see how these guidelines correspond to Islamic daily conduct. It may come as no surprise to Muslim readers that these guidelines are reflected in Quran ayats and prophetic hadiths. Even *The Washington Post* – not an Islamic publication – recently carried an article entitled “What Islamic hygiene practices can teach when coronavirus is spreading”¹⁰.

The following discussion is divided into two broad categories: personal

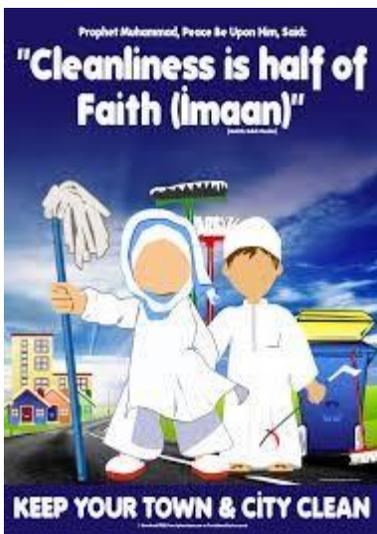
hygiene and isolation from community.

Hygiene

Personal hygiene is an integral part of being a Muslim. In a famous hadith, Prophet Muhammad (saw) states, “Cleanliness is half of faith (iman)” (Muslim).

Guidelines tell us to wash our hands regularly. Muslims already wash their hands regularly – it is the ablution (wudu) that must be performed before prayers (salat). In another often-quoted hadith, Prophet Muhammad (saw) explained to a group of people. “If there was a river at your door and he took a bath in it five times a day, would you notice any dirt on him?” They said, “Not a trace of dirt would be left.” The Prophet said, “That is the parable of the five prayers by which Allah removes sins” (Bukhari). From the spiritual point of view, this hadith explains that someone who does their five daily prayers should find it difficult to commit sins. From a more everyday hygiene angle, anyone who washes five times a day (as Muslims do in wudu) should have cleanliness as a result.

In the Quran (5:6), Allah (swt) makes clear the parts that need to be washed in wudu: “O you who believe! When you intend to offer prayer, wash your faces and your hands (forearms) up to the elbows, rub (by passing wet hands over) your heads, and (wash) your feet up to the ankles. ... God does not wish to place you in difficulty, but to make you clean, and complete His favour to you, that you may be grateful.”



As is often the case in Islam, the Quran states the principle, while hadiths describe in greater detail how Muhammad (saw), who was called The Walking Quran, carried out these actions:

Ata bin Yasar reported, "Ibn Abbas performed ablution and washed his face (in the following way): He ladled out a handful of water, rinsed his mouth and washed his nose with it by putting in water and then blowing it out. He then, took another handful (of water) and did like this (gesturing) joining both hands, and washed his face, took another handful of water and washed his right forearm. He again took another handful of water and washed his left forearm, and passed wet hands over his head and took another handful of water and poured it over his right foot (up to his ankles) and washed it thoroughly and similarly took another handful of water and washed thoroughly his left foot (up to the ankles) and said, 'I saw Allah's Messenger performing ablution in this way'" (Bukhari).

The importance of wudu, in both this world and the Hereafter, as a central part of the prayer procedure is also shown in several hadiths.

"Listen to me carefully! Shall I inform you about the deeds through which Allah eliminates mistakes and elevates your ranks? To make wudu fully and properly despite its difficulties ... " (An-Nasai).

"Whoever of you performs wudu carefully and then affirms [the shahadah], the eight gates



of Jannah are opened for him. He may enter through whichever of these gates he desires (to enter)" (Muslim).

Nuam Al-Mujmir reported, "Once I went up to the roof of the mosque, along with Abu Hurairah. He performed ablution and said, 'I heard the Prophet saying, "On the Day of Resurrection, my followers will be called *Al-Ghurr-ul-Muhajjalun* from the trace of ablution, and whoever can increase the area of his radiance should do so (i.e. by performing ablution regularly)'" (Bukhari).

Prophet Muhammad (saw) emphasised the importance of washing thoroughly in wudu.

Abu Hurairah (ra) said, "I have heard the Prophet say, 'In a believer, adornment will reach the places where ablution reaches'" (Muslim).

Uthman ibn Affan (ra) stated that Muhammad (saw) said, "He who performed ablution well, his sins would come out from his body, even coming out from under his nails" (Muslim).

Prophet Muhammad (saw) paid special attention to the feet and heels.



Abu Hurairah (ra), in reference to the Day of Resurrection, reported that Muhammad (saw), when asked if he would be able to recognise Muslims, said, "Yes, you will have a mark which other people will not have. You will come to me with a white blaze on your foreheads and white marks on your feet because of the traces of ablution" (Muslim).

Muhammad Ibn Ziyad reported, "I heard Abu Huraira saying, as he passed by us while the people were performing ablution from a utensil containing water, 'Perform ablution perfectly and thoroughly for Abul-Qasim (the Prophet) said, "Save your heels from the Hell-fire"" (Bukhari).

It is worth mentioning that some authorities have issued guidelines saying that you should wash not only your hands regularly, but also your forearms, up to the elbow. This corresponds to the third requirement of wudu; see the hadith narrated by Ata bin Yasar above.

Performing wudu is compulsory before prayer (salat). However, there are other situations in which wudu is recommended (mustahab). It is, for instance, recommended every night before going to bed.

"Whenever you go to bed, perform ablution like that for the prayer, lie on your right side, and say, "Allahumma aslamtu wajhi ilaika, wa fauwadtu amri ilaika, wa aljatu zahri ilaika raghbatan wa rahbatan ilaika. La malja wa la manja minka illa ilaika. Allahumma amantu bikitabikalladhi anzalta wa bina-biyikalladhi arsalta" (O Allah! I surrender to You and entrust all my affairs to You and depend upon

You for Your blessings both with hope and fear of You. There is no fleeing from You, and there is no place of protection and safety except with You, O Allah! I believe in Your book (the Quran) which You have revealed and in Your Prophet (Muhammad) whom You have sent). Then if you die on that very night, you will die with faith (ie the religion of Islam)" (Bukhari).

There are other hygienic practices that, while not compulsory (wajib) are also recommended (mustahab). One such practice is brushing the teeth.

"The miswak [a twig used for tooth brushing] cleanses and purifies the mouth and pleases the Lord" (An-Nasai and Ibn Khuzaimah).

"Were it not that I might overburden my followers, I would have commanded them to use the miswak before every prayer" (Bukhari and Muslim).

Self-isolation

Governments around the world have closed their borders, that is, prevented tourists and others from entering the country or, vice versa, prevented their citizens from travelling to other countries, for fear of spreading COVID-19. This corresponds to a hadith of the Prophet (saw) 14 centuries ago: "If you hear that a plague has hit a land, do not go to it; if it breaks out in a land where you are present, do not leave" (Bukhari).

The importance of isolation was made clear, not just for humans, but also for animals: "Do not put a sick one (animal) with a healthy one (animal)" (Bukhari).

In Islam, it is mustahab to visit the sick, to comfort them, pray for their recovery, and generally make them feel better. However, this recommendation does not apply if the visitor is in danger of catching a contagious disease. The overriding principle is the preservation of human life. A hadith captures this too: "Run away from the leper as you would run away from a lion. ... The sick should not be brought to the healthy (ie the owner of sick camels should not bring them near the healthy camels of another owner). ... Whoever hears that it (plague) has spread in a land should not go there." (Bukhari).

It is thus shocking that about 30,000 Muslims gathered on 18 March in Raipur, Bangladesh to pray "healing verses" from the Quran¹¹. This follows a similar gathering of 16,000 Muslims in Malaysia in February, which has been confirmed as the source of more than 500 infections, in neighbouring Brunei, Singapore and Cambodia, as well as Malaysia. This is clearly the opposite of the teachings of Muhammad (saw), professional medical advice, the guidelines of governments around the world, and common sense.

It is also strangely reminiscent of episodes from over a millennium ago. In a 21 March 2020 Facebook posting¹², the Pakistani-American scholar Yasir Qadhi references a work by the 9th century Egyptian writer Al-Hafidh Ibn Hajr, entitled *Being Generous with Assistance Regarding the Blessings of the Plague*. Yasir Qadhi narrates, "In the year 749, a plague ravaged the city of Damascus, and so the majority of the seniors of the city decided to go outside and offer a special prayer and dua. Yet, after



30,000 Muslims pray in Bangladesh

this special prayer, the plague actually worsened, and death increased, even though before they had all gone out, it was better!

Ibn Hajr comments that he also witnessed this, in the year 833, that a plague came to Cairo, and at the time less than 40 people a day would die. The people decided to organize a large gathering to offer a communal prayer in the desert outside the city, so they all went out and gathered to pray for a while, and then returned; within weeks of this gathering, over a thousand people a day were dying, or even more."

As Yasir Qadhi notes, such behaviour may have been acceptable in the 8th and 9th centuries, when medical knowledge was rudimentary. However, it is unacceptable today, when the channels of transmission of such pandemics are well understood.

Plight of the infected

Readers may have been surprised by the word *blessings* in the title of Ibn Hajr's book *Being Generous with Assistance Regarding the Blessings of the Plague*. How can a plague/pandemic be a blessing?



We must remember that, as Muslims, we believe that all things, both good and bad, are from Allah (swt). This is the Islamic principle of *qadha* and *qadar*, one of the articles of faith. Both good and bad are trials; the good is a trial to test whether you are grateful, while the bad is a trial to test your iman. There are many Quranic ayats and hadith that reiterate this message.

"And We test you with [the] bad and [the] good (as) a trial; and to Us you will be returned." (Quran, 21:35)

"Say, 'Nothing will ever befall us except what Allah has destined for us. He is our Protector. So let the believers put their trust in Allah.'" (Quran, 9:51)

"Know that what has passed you by, was not going to befall you. And what has befallen you, was not going to pass you by." (An-Nawawi)

Just as both good and bad come from Allah (swt), so the cure for the bad also comes from Allah (swt). In the Quran (26:80), Allah (swt) says, "And when I am ill, it is Allah Who cures me."

Thus, both the illness and the cure come from Allah (swt), and we should trust in Allah. A prophetic dua is, "O Allah, I seek refuge in you from leukoderma [an autoimmune disorder], insanity, leprosy and evil diseases" (Ahmad, Dawood, An-Nasai).

We should not expect this life to be one of unlimited pleasure. Rather, we should expect to have trials, including health issues. In a hadith reported by Muslim (with similar hadiths reported by Ibn Majah and

Al-Bayhaqi), the Messenger of Allah visited Umm Saib and asked her, "What ails you O Umm Saib? You are shivering." She replied: "It is a fever, may Allah not bless it!" He said to her, "Do not swear at fever for it cleanses out the sins of the sons of Adam in the same way that a furnace removes the dirt of iron."

Like everything else, is a pandemic from Allah (swt)? Yes. However, Allah's purpose in sending a pandemic is a matter for Allah (swt) to know. People have speculated that it is because of present-day immorality. Their evidence comes from hadiths, such as the following from Ibn Majah, in which the Prophet (saw) said, "O Muhajirun, there are five things with which you will be tested, and I seek refuge with Allah lest you live to see them: Immorality never appears among a people to such an extent that they commit it openly, but plagues and diseases that were never known among the predecessors will spread among them ..."

While we believe that everything comes from Allah (swt), this does not mean that we should not take sensible precautions. In other words, we should follow sound medical advice, and government directives based on that sound medical advice, and not invite the spread of a pandemic. An often-quoted hadith in respect of taking sensible precautions is the following: A man said, "O Messenger of Allah, should I tie my camel and trust in Allah, or should I leave her untied and trust in Allah?" The Prophet said, "Tie her and trust in Allah" (At-Tirmidhi).



We have all been instructed to self-isolate as much as possible, to wash our hands frequently, to avoid close contact with others, etc. Eventually, insha Allah (swt), COVID-19 will be defeated. However, it may take several months. So we must have patience (sabr), a central Muslim virtue. In a hadith, Aishah (ra) said, "I asked Allah's Messenger about the plague. He told me that it was a punishment sent by Allah on whom he wished, and Allah made it a source of mercy for the believers, for if one in the time of an epidemic plague stays in his country patiently hoping for Allah's reward and believing that nothing will befall him except what Allah has written for him, he will get the reward of a martyr" (Bukhari).

Similarly, while taking precautions, we should if necessary seek medical advice and take any prescribed medicine. Usamah ibn Sharik (ra) narrated, "I came to the Prophet, and his Companions were sitting as (quiet as) if they had birds on their heads. I saluted and sat down. The desert Arabs then came from here and there.



They asked, 'Messenger of Allah, should we make use of medical treatment?' He replied, 'Make use of medical treatment, for Allah has not made a disease without appointing a remedy for it, with the exception of one disease, namely old age'" (Abu Dawud).

Finally, visiting the sick is a practice normally encouraged in Islam. Al-Bara bin Azib (ra) reported, "The Messenger of Allah has ordered us to visit the sick, to follow the funeral (of a dead believer), to respond to the sneezer (ie by saying to him, "Yarhamuk-Allah" after he says, "Al-hamdu lillah") ..." (Bukhari and Muslim). However, in the present abnormal circumstances, this practice must be discouraged, as it may only lead to the visitor catching the same contagious disease.

In short, "Trust in Allah, but tie up your camel", that is, take all sensible precautions notified by the government and medical authorities.

Closure of mosques

Governments around the world have issued guidelines to their citizens as to how to avoid spreading the pandemic. Similarly, Islamic authorities around the world have issued similar guidelines to their congregations, including the cancellation of congregational prayers (including Friday prayers), and other practices that could spread the disease. The official statements from the New Zealand and Australian authorities are reproduced here.



Community Announcement

Covid-19 and congregational prayers

The protection of life is the highest principle in Islamic Law. Shariah permits a Muslim, faced with a life-threatening pandemic such as Covid-19 (coronavirus), to not attend the five daily congregational prayers and the Friday prayer.

This is especially important with Covid-19 because it is spread through close social interaction. The Government's recommendation is that we keep a distance of about 2 meters from other people. Clearly this means we cannot pray as we would usually.

Therefore, FIANZ recommends all Islamic associations and mosque managements throughout New Zealand to consider suspending all congregational prayers in mosques, halls and wherever else prayers may normally be conducted.

Groups of brothers should not be tempted to organize their own congregational prayers. Instead, we encourage Muslims to pray at home individually or with their family. A normal 4 rak'at Dhuhr prayer is permissible in the place of the Friday prayer.

In making this recommendation, we are following the lead of leading Islamic centres around the globe. Religious authorities and many reputed scholars have considered this deeply and issued fatwas accordingly. Measures like this are not without precedent in our history.

COVID-19, like the flu, can be spread from person to person. When a person who has COVID-19 coughs, sneezes or talks, they may spread droplets containing the virus a short distance, which quickly settle on surrounding surfaces. You may get infected by the virus if you touch those surfaces or objects and then touch your mouth, nose or eyes.

That's why it's really important to use good hygiene, regularly wash and thoroughly dry your hands, and use good cough etiquette.

How to protect yourself and others

- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or by covering your mouth and nose with tissues.
- Put used tissues in the bin or a bag immediately.
- Wash your hands with soap and water often (for at least 20 seconds).
- Try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean.
- Avoid personal contact, such as kissing, sharing cups or food with sick people.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as doorknobs.
- Stay home if you feel unwell.
- Call Healthline on 0800 358 5453 if you have any symptoms and have been to any countries or territories of concern or have been in close contact with someone confirmed with COVID-19.

The symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- a cough
- a high temperature (at least 38°C)
- shortness of breath.

We don't yet know how long symptoms take to show after a person has been infected, but current World Health Organization assessments suggest that it is 2-10 days.

Please get updates from Government sources. Ignore possibly incorrect information from unauthorized sources. Let us be united in stopping the spread of this disease and pray to Allah SWT that we get rid of this before the start of Ramadhan.

Tariq Saeed

Secretary FIANZ

Friday 20 March 2020

Australian Fatwa COUNCIL

مَجْلِسُ الْإِسْتِئَاءِ الْأُسْتِرَالِي



18th of March 2020

Important Notice & Fatwa Coronavirus Update

In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

This fatwa relies not only on Islamic legal proofs, but on the current reality we are experiencing as described and observed by trusted medical and health authorities, locally, nationally and around the world. Belief in the decree of Allah does not prevent a person from taking by the means of prevention of disease. These practical steps are also considered from among the decree of Allah. Indeed, these preventative measures also repel the decree of Allah with the decree of Allah.

Islamic Sacred Law protects the life of a Muslim and facilitates the taking of means to remove hardship in one's path. The Shariah permits for a Muslim, in the event of a pandemic that threatens one's life, such as COVID-19, which is spread through close social interaction, to not have to attend the daily congregational prayers and Friday Prayer (Jumu'ah).

A Muslim is permitted in such a case, instead of fulfilling the Friday Prayer at a Masjid or Public Prayer Venue, to pray Jumu'ah as a normal 4 Rak'at Dhuhr prayer in one's home.

We strongly urge Muslims to pray their 5 daily prayers at home and 4 Rak'at of Dhuhr instead of the Friday prayer. This is to avoid any places of crowded people.

We advise people to avoid crowded places and continue to follow the recommendations of our health authorities. We should also be making intense dua, prayers for forgiveness, and continuously repeating the specific 'Qunut' dua asking Allah to remove this tribulation from our land and people.

May Allah protect you from all forms of harm.

Issued by the Mufti of Australia and The Australian Fatwa Council

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Ramadan is due to start in April, insha Allah, and it seems likely that these conditions will continue during the holy month, including the cancellation of tarawih prayers in congregation. A hadith shows that tarawih prayers are not compulsory. Abu Hurairah (ra) reported, "The Messenger of Allah used to exhort (his Companions) to pray (at night) during Ramadan without commanding them to observe it as an obligatory act ... " (Bukhari).

It is permissible to perform tarawih prayers at home, whether in congregation (eg with your family) or alone:

Mujahid related that a man asked Abdullah ibn Umar (ra), "Shall I perform [tarawih] behind the imam in Ramadan." He replied, "Do you recite the Quran [by memory]?" He said, "Yes." So he said, "Perform them in your home" (Sharh Maani al-Athar).

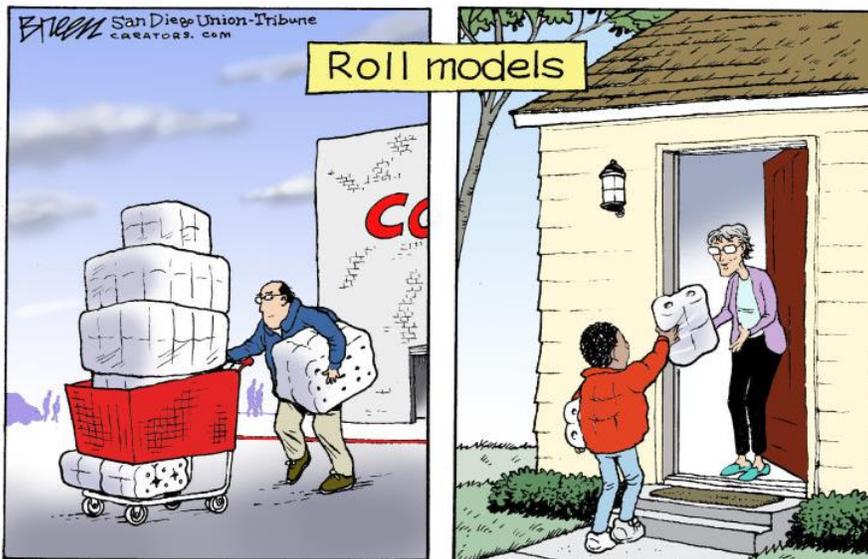
Ubayd Allah ibn Umar said, "I saw al-Qasim, Salim and Nafi all returning from the mosque [after

Isha], and they would not pray [tarawih] with the imam" (Sharh Maani al-Athar).

Under the present circumstances, praying tarawih at home seems like a sensible precaution.

May we all trust in Allah (swt), follow sound guidelines, take sensible precautions, and be protected from COVID-19.

- 1 www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus
- 2 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Severe_acute_respiratory_syndrome
- 3 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_East_respiratory_syndrome
- 4 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019
- 5 www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019
- 6 www.britannica.com/science/plague/History
- 7 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Plague_of_London
- 8 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Fire_of_London
- 9 www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-health-advice-general-public
- 10 www.washingtonpost.com/national/what-islamic-hygienic-practices-can-teach-when-coronavirus-is-spreading/2020/03/16/850de166-6786-11ea-b199-3a9799c54512_story.html
- 11 Coronavirus: Bangladesh mass prayer event prompts alarm. BBC News. www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-51956510
- 12 www.facebook.com/yasir.qadhi



Post-Christchurch community talk on togetherness

In view of the Christchurch mosque shooting tragedy, and a year into the healing process for Muslims in Aotearoa, Voice of Islam held free exhibitions and short talks by international guests around the country in a programme titled "Togetherness Tour Kotahitanga* March 2020".

On 29 February, three international guest speakers were invited to share the message of "togetherness in our communities" at Auckland University's Owen Glenn Building.

Fahad Tasleem: Goodness

Fahad is the founder of DC Seminary¹, an institute of spirituality empowerment, and Head of US Outreach for iERA² (the Islamic Education & Research Academy). He has an Economics degree (Michigan State University) and Master's in Business Taxation (University of Southern California). Having studied Arabic at Georgetown University, Fahad is currently studying Islamic Theology at the University of Texas, Austin in the Middle Eastern Studies graduate programme.

Citing religious sources, Fahad separated the three creations as follows:

1. Angels are created with reason but no desires and their purpose is to praise God.
2. Animals are created without higher reasoning/moral code and are governed by desires.
3. Humans are created with reason, desires and an inherent state of goodness.

Fahad proposed that human beings have the potential to be lower than animals, who give in to base desires at the expense of moral code, or higher than angels, where reason and spiritual aspirations overcome desires in an effort to please God.

He explained that the Christchurch attacker behaved lower than an animal in his vile actions. But as a community, we also saw how the people of New Zealand behaved like angels in their outpouring of sincere love and help. He called on the community to be like the angels.

We are reminded of wheelchair-bound brother Farid Ahmed's actions, after losing his wife and caregiver Husna in the attack. His actions of forgiveness, calm handling of painful questions, and tremendous patience are nothing short of that angelic quality to please his creator. Farid continues to travel extensively spreading the message of love in the face of hate.

Yusuf Chambers: Actions

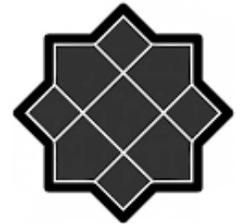
Yusuf Chambers is powerful advocate for Islam and an ambassador for One Ummah³, a non-profitable charity organisation that provides humanitarian assistance to those most in need around the world. Yusuf has travelled extensively in the Middle East, Africa and Europe and is

GUEST SPEAKERS ::

FAHAD TASLEEM YUSUF CHAMBERS JOHN FONTAIN

TOGETHERNESS TOUR KOTAHITANGA MARCH 2020

Let's spread the message of togetherness in our communities.	AUCKLAND
Voice of Islam presents free exhibitions and short talks by our international guests in regions around the country to bring our communities together in view of the tragic event in Christchurch last year.	Saturday Feb 29, 2020 5pm - 9pm Auckland University 12 Grafton Road, Owen G. Glenn Building, Level 0, Room 98
Through creating better understanding between communities we can stop hate.	Sunday March 1, 2020 3pm - 7pm Zayed College for Girls 44 Westney Road, Mangere
Voice of Islam (VOI) relies solely on your donations.	



DC SEMINARY



CONVEYING THE CALL

WWW.IERA.ORG

* Kotahitanga: unity, togetherness in Maori

1 www.
dcseminary.com
2 iera.org
3 oneummah.org.uk
4 www.
volunteersierraleone.
org



known for charity fundraisers and hands-on community work. He has worked with several leading Muslim organisations such as Peace TV, Muslim Aid, Al-Jumuah Magazine, Islam Channel and Unity TV where he conceived and presented "The Path to Guidance", a reverts interview programme.

In his talk, Yusuf posed the question "What have you done to actualise Islamic practices of the Prophet (saw)?"

Relating stories of goodness of the Prophets (saw) and his Companions, Yusuf concluded that unless we are prepared to act on what we preach, "Talk is cheap". Muslims need to "show the goodness of Islam".

Yusuf shared how Muslims in his city (Leicester) are working with faith communities and volunteers from all backgrounds to improve the social conditions of people who are homeless and hungry. Yusuf called on Muslims to feed the poor, house the homeless, volunteer to help and generally spread Islam through kind actions. His point is that, in order to change false negative impressions of our identity, we need to show what the religion teaches.

Modelling Islam in this way is to normalise Islam as a loving, peaceful and helpful religion. We need to work cross-culturally and have outreach programmes to help all those in need, regardless of their religion. The message is that Islam is for the whole of humanity.

John Fontain: Dawah

John Fontain, from Manchester, was first introduced to Islam when a Muslim offered him shelter during

a difficult time in John's life. After surviving a brain tumour in 2011, John turned to actively spreading the message of Islam. John is active in an organization called Volunteer Sierra Leone⁴ which has over 65 Muslim schools that aim to provide better education to over 14,000 students throughout Sierra Leone.

John talked of compassion and understanding. His main message was that "Our job as Muslims is not to convert; it is to convey the message of God."

John also expressed his amazement at New Zealand's response to the Christchurch tragedy. He was touched by the outpouring of love, compassion and protection. John joined other international Muslims who came to render support to Christchurch victims in March 2019 and reflected that Maori culture had Islamic values. He was struck by Maori kindness, hospitality, and respect for nature.

As minorities that have endured historical oppression, Maori can relate to the normalised abuse and hate rhetoric directed at the Muslim community of Christchurch. Muslims in New Zealand can work with Maori on strategies to address all forms of hate talk. With common values, we can share our beliefs, respect one another and still fulfil our responsibility as Muslims to share the message of the one God and his final Messenger (saw).

Christchurch remembered

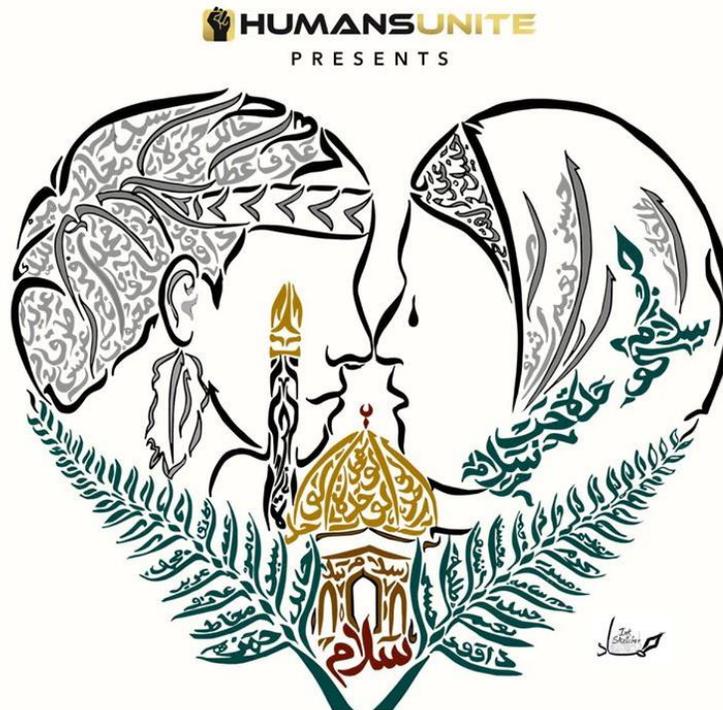
March marked the first anniversary of the Christchurch mosque shootings. The graphic below appeared in the 20 March issue of the *Australasian Muslim Times* (AMUST)¹. The commentary was written by a Christian, Rev Dr Patrick McInerney.

Our cover image is the Māori greeting, the *hongi*, two people rubbing noses together. This traditional gesture shows that we breathe the same air, share the same spirit, and are united – in grief, in joy, in humanity, in sharing planet earth, in faith in God.

This image is particularly poignant. The details in the design are the names in Arabic script of the 51 people killed in the Christchurch

mosques. The dark green in the woman's shawl – the Arabic words for peace, love and unity – forms the map of New Zealand. Above and below the entrance doors of the mosque, as if in welcome, is the Arabic greeting *Salaam* (Peace), repeated three times; the dome of the mosque has the Arabic word for "Unity" four times; and central to the minaret pointing towards God is the Arabic word for "Love".

1 www.amust.com.au/2020/03/christchurch-remembered/



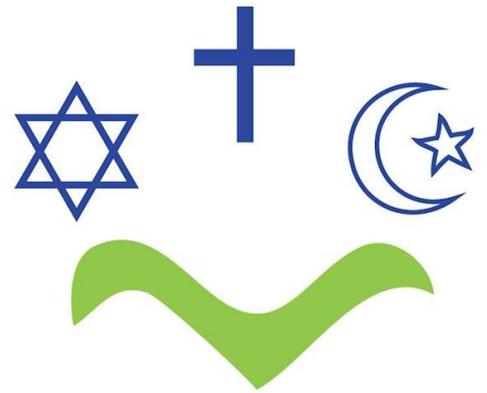
CHRISTCHURCH
REMEMBERED
14.03.2020

Wellington Peacenic launched

Emulating the established Auckland event, the inaugural Wellington Peacenic (picnic for peace) took place in Te Ngākau Civic Square on Sunday 23 February 2020.

Peacenic was launched in Auckland in 2016 by the Council of Christians and Muslims (CCM). It grew out of a desire to replace the polarising bad-news stories that dominate the media with real experiences of hospitality and friendship in our own backyard. They believe that the simple gift of sharing time and food together is rewarding in itself but goes beyond that to offer a glimpse of the world as it could be.

The event in the capital was launched by the Wellington Abrahamic Council of Jews, Christians and Muslims (WAC). Father Ron Bennett from Otari Parish is a Christian Co-chair of WAC. "There were some really



The
Wellington Abrahamic Council
Of Jews Christians & Muslims

lovely people there," he said. "I thought it went really well. It spells well for the future." Also present from WAC were Nick Polaschek (Roman Catholic), David Blocksidge (Muslim) and David Wardle (Salvation Army).

In New Zealand's increasingly multi-religious, multi-ethnic community, WAC want to help build bridges across the divisions that have historically separated Muslims, Jews and Christians. Peacenic attracted a mixed crowd of about two dozen people from the three faiths, which the organisers consider to be a good start.

The event included a short kata (choreographed pattern of movements) demonstration by some members of Goju-Ryu Karate Do Wellington, which meets regularly in Kilbirnie Mosque basement.



Father Ron Bennett (centre)





Shabir Ally

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). In order to save costs, it now only broadcasts on APNA TV. However, Voice of Islam programmes are available on YouTube.

5 April

Quran: 4: 156-159. Jesus not crucified.
 Animation clip 36. How to be confident.
 Lecture: Faith in Allah's action
 Islamophobia 1: 14. Etiquettes of interaction between males & females.
 Come fast with me: Abdur Raheem Green
 Q&A 12: Gospel of Barnabas. Shabir Ally.

12 April

Quran: 4: 156-159. Jesus not crucified.
 Animation clip 37. How to be content with your destiny
 Islamophobia 1: 15. Is it true that ex Muslims should be killed?.
 Share Ramadan: Abdur Raheem Green
 Lecture: Don't judge spread Islam.
 Benefits of fasting that will surprise you.

19 April

Quran: 4: 156-159. Jesus not crucified.
 Animation clip 38. How to be patient.
 How to fast & eat properly during Ramadan.
 Fulfilling our destiny. Omar Suleiman
 Come fast with me: Abdur Raheem Green
 Pearls from the Quran 01: Why do we worship Allah?

26 April

Quran: 2: 183-185. Fasting and Ramadan.
 Animation clip 39. How to control yourself.
 Things you should take seriously this Ramadan.
 Lecture 43: Remember me and I will remember you. Omar Suleiman
 Pearls from the Quran 02: Allah wishes ease for you.
 Ramadan the month of change.

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

Auckland prayer timetable for April 2020

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

Day	Fajr	Sunrise	Thuhr	Asr 1	Asr 2	Maghrib	Isha
1	06:10	07:34	01:26	04:44	05:33	07:17	08:36
2	06:11	07:35	01:25	04:43	05:31	07:15	08:35
3	06:12	07:36	01:25	04:41	05:30	07:14	08:33
4	06:13	07:37	01:25	04:40	05:29	07:12	08:32
NB: Put clocks back one hour for the end of daylight savings (winter time)							
5	05:13	06:37	12:24	03:39	04:27	06:09	07:30
6	05:14	06:38	12:24	03:38	04:26	06:08	07:29
7	05:15	06:39	12:24	03:37	04:25	06:07	07:27
8	05:16	06:40	12:23	03:36	04:23	06:05	07:26
9	05:16	06:41	12:23	03:35	04:22	06:04	07:25
10	05:17	06:42	12:23	03:34	04:21	06:02	07:23
11	05:18	06:43	12:23	03:33	04:20	06:01	07:22
12	05:19	06:43	12:22	03:32	04:18	06:00	07:21
13	05:20	06:44	12:22	03:31	04:17	05:58	07:19
14	05:21	06:45	12:22	03:30	04:16	05:57	07:18
15	05:21	06:46	12:22	03:29	04:15	05:55	07:17
16	05:21	06:46	12:22	03:29	04:15	05:55	07:17
17	05:23	06:48	12:21	03:26	04:12	05:53	07:14
18	05:24	06:49	12:21	03:25	04:11	05:52	07:13
19	05:24	06:49	12:21	03:24	04:10	05:50	07:12
20	05:25	06:50	12:20	03:23	04:09	05:49	07:11
21	05:26	06:51	12:20	03:22	04:07	05:48	07:09
22	05:27	06:52	12:20	03:21	04:06	05:46	07:08
23	05:28	06:53	12:20	03:20	04:05	05:45	07:07
24	05:28	06:54	12:20	03:19	04:04	05:44	07:06
25	05:29	06:55	12:19	03:19	04:03	05:43	07:05
26	05:30	06:56	12:19	03:18	04:02	05:42	07:04
27	05:31	06:56	12:19	03:17	04:00	05:40	07:03
28	05:31	06:57	12:19	03:16	03:59	05:39	07:02
29	05:32	06:58	12:19	03:15	03:58	05:38	07:01
30	05:33	06:59	12:19	03:14	03:57	05:37	07:00

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

Asr 2: Hanafi school (double shadow length)

"Many people who fast get nothing from their fast except hunger and thirst, and many people who pray at night get nothing from it except wakefulness."
(Hadith)

Credits

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

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Account no	38-9009-0739910-01

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)