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Rocket Science

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In the name of Allah,
most Gracious, most Merciful

Four promises of Allah (swt)

Allah (swt) makes a lot of promises in the Holy Quran. Each of them is valid, because Allah does not make false promises. This article looks at four of those promises made by Allah, what they mean to us, and how we can benefit from understanding them.

1 "So, remember me; I will remember you."

(Surah al-Baqarah, #2, verse 152)

What better way to explain this ayah than to refer to the Hadith by our beloved Prophet (saw).

The Prophet (saw) said, "Allah says, 'I am just as My slave thinks I am, (ie I am able to do for him what he thinks I can do for him) and I am with him if he remembers Me. If he remembers Me in himself, I too, remember him in Myself; and if he remembers Me in a group of people, I remember him

in a group that is better than they are; and if he comes one span nearer to Me, I go one cubit [an old-fashioned measure of length, the length of a forearm, about 50 cm] nearer to him; and if he comes one cubit nearer to Me, I go a distance of two outstretched arms nearer to him; and if he comes to Me walking, I go to him running'" (Bukhari).

There is no greater recognition than the recognition of Allah (swt). Imagine your name being mentioned in the gathering of the angels by Allah (swt) himself. And the angels give their greetings to you. And you are being referred to as one of the righteous followers of Islam. Subhan Allah! So let us make it a habit to remember our Lord in times of ease as well as difficulty.

2 "And Allah will not punish them while they seek forgiveness."

(Surah Al-Anfal, #8, verse 33)

Have you ever felt guilty of committing a sin? Or doing wrong to someone? Or that feeling in the middle of the night when we sit on our beds reflecting on our day, year or lifetime and realise that maybe some of the actions we did, the words we spoke or the things we did, do not quite seem right any more.



This is a normal human reaction. Our subconscious mind often works in the background processing things and one day we will start to realise some of the wrong we did. And we will start worrying how this is going to affect us in the future. Perhaps we may worry that the person we wronged may take revenge on us. Or that the fraud we committed might be found out and come back to bite us. Or that Allah (swt) might punish us for backbiting or not fasting in Ramadan.

We still need to pay back for our wrongdoing whether it be a simple "I'm sorry", or coming clean and admitting the fraud we committed. Or asking dua for the person who we have backbitten, or catching up on the missed fasts.

Asking Allah (swt) for forgiveness is the first step. Allah promises us that He will not punish anyone as long as they seek forgiveness. Allah's promise is that when we sincerely ask for forgiveness for breaking His laws and regulations, He will not punish us. He may even ease us from difficulty that we may face with worldly affairs. Allah says that he will forgive us for all our sins except assigning partners to Him (*shirk*).

He also says that when we wrong someone or something of his worldly creation, we need to settle our grievances with them directly, as it is the right of the person or creature to forgive us. They need to forgive us first for Allah (swt) to be able to correct our records. We can ease this process by sincerely asking Allah for forgiveness and He will make it easy for us to approach others and remedy our sins with them.

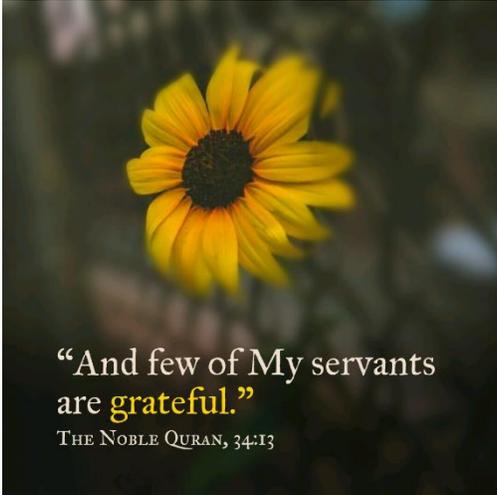
3 "If you are grateful, I will surely increase you."

(Surah Ibrahim, #14, verse 7)

The writer once wrote a post about sadaqah on Facebook saying, "Charity in times of difficulty, will make you rich". Someone replied saying that this is an oxymoron: how can you give charity when you have no money?

The answer is simple: try it! We may be in the most difficult times of our lives, not being able to put food on the table or pay the bills. Or we may be faced with a big unforeseen expense for which we do not have the money. If you ask anybody to give in charity in these difficult times, they will say that you are mad. "How can I give when I myself don't have enough?"





But have you tried it? Have you tried giving in sadaqah to the poor, the needy, the wayfarer, the traveller, the person in front of you who is clearly in need?

As Allah (swt) promises us, if we are grateful to him, he will increase you. You will see that you will get help and support from Allah from the most unexpected avenues by being grateful to Him, especially during times of difficulty.

The donation in sadaqah does not have to be money. How about your time, your skills or a kind word? What about a loving caring smile to a stranger or to your family?

4 "Call upon me and I will answer you."

(Surah Ghafir, #40, verse 60)

How often have we run into extreme difficulty, and the first – and maybe the only – thing that comes to our minds is "Please save me from this difficulty, oh Almighty." And can we recollect how often this call to our prayers has been responded to, sometimes almost instantaneously? This is what Allah (swt) has promised us: that when we call upon him, he will answer us.

An example is the story of Yunus (Jonah, as) who was swallowed by

a huge fish (Surah al-Saffat, #37, verse 139 onwards). In the darkness, having no other help, in the middle of the sea and underwater, what he did was amazing. He called upon Allah (swt) and Allah responded to him.

Yunus (as) said "There is no god but You, Glory to You; verily I was one of the wrongdoers" (21:87) with sincerity and utmost regret for his past actions. Allah (swt) responded to him by getting the fish to spit him back on land and keeping him safe afterwards.

Conclusion

This article has described four of the amazing promises that Allah (swt) has promised in his Holy Book, using his own words. Let us try and remember these promises in our daily lives.

Four actions are called for, from our part:

1. Remember Allah.
2. Seek Allah's forgiveness.
3. Show gratitude towards Allah.
4. Call upon Allah.

Let us take the recommended action for our benefit and for the benefit of mankind and His creations.

Call on your Lord with
humility and in private:
for ALLAH loveth not
those who trespass
beyond bounds.



Pride in Islam

The noun *pride* and the adjective *proud* are words that seem to be heard more and more nowadays. Almost everybody seems to want to express pride in something. The following extracts come from recent issues of the *New Zealand Herald*.

Editorial [about David Clark]: A health system we can depend on and be proud of¹

Shane Jones proud of driving economic growth in Northland²

Paula Bennett: "I am particularly proud of my work as Minister for Social Development and Child Youth and Family for more than six years."³

Why we should be proud of sportspeople taking a knee in George Floyd protests⁴

One context in which the word is extensively used is Gay Pride, for non-heterosexual parades. The word *Gay* has been dropped from this title, so that the word *pride* is often used exclusively for non-heterosexual events.

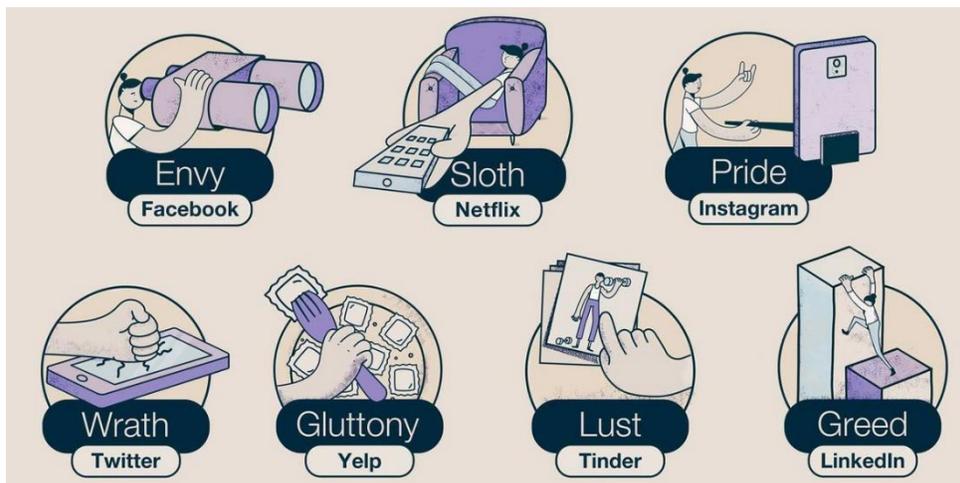
This has given rise to protests from heterosexual groups, who have proposed Straight Pride parades⁵.

The word *pride* has also been added onto the events and lobbying of various other groups, giving us Disability Pride⁶, Dwarf Pride⁷, etc.

The word *pride* is always used in these contexts, but there are several other English words that have very similar meanings: *arrogance*, *hubris*, *narcissism*, *vanity*, *haughtiness*. Some people make distinctions between these, but they all relate to a feeling of superiority in oneself and one's achievements.

The seven deadly sins

Pride has always been considered one of the seven deadly sins, along with greed, wrath, envy, lust, gluttony, and sloth⁸. Traditionally, these have been viewed as negative traits, to be considered personality faults. However, as Wikipedia notes, "Ferdinand Mount [a British *Sunday Times* columnist and political commentator, writing in 2010] maintains that liquid currentness, especially through tabloids, has surprisingly given valour to vices, causing society to regress into that of primitive pagans: 'covetousness has been rebranded as retail therapy, sloth is downtime, lust is exploring your sexuality, anger is opening up your feelings, vanity is looking good because you're worth it and gluttony is the religion of foodies'"⁸. That is, modern society, especially western society, and especially under the influence of western media, has turned vices into virtues.



This transformation has been solidified by occurring in several common English phrases: *pride and joy, pride of place, proud owner, proud parents, loud and proud, hurt your pride, swallow your pride, take pride in, swollen with pride, with your pride intact, a cause for pride.*

Pride in the scriptures

It may surprise readers that these seven deadly sins are not explicitly listed in the Bible. It is not clear where this list of seven characteristics to be avoided came from. However, there are plenty of verses in the Bible that show that the writers of the Bible viewed them as sins.

Old Testament

"Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth" (1 Samuel 2:3).

"They pour out their arrogant words; all the evildoers boast" (Psalm 94:4).

"The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate" (Proverbs 8:13).

"Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the Lord; be assured, he will not go unpunished" (Proverbs 16:5).

"Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18). This is believed to be the origin of the English proverb *Pride comes before a fall*, meaning that someone who is proud will encounter a setback. This setback could be Jahannam.

"I will put an end to the pomp of the arrogant, and lay low the pompous pride of the ruthless" (Isaiah 13:11).

New Testament

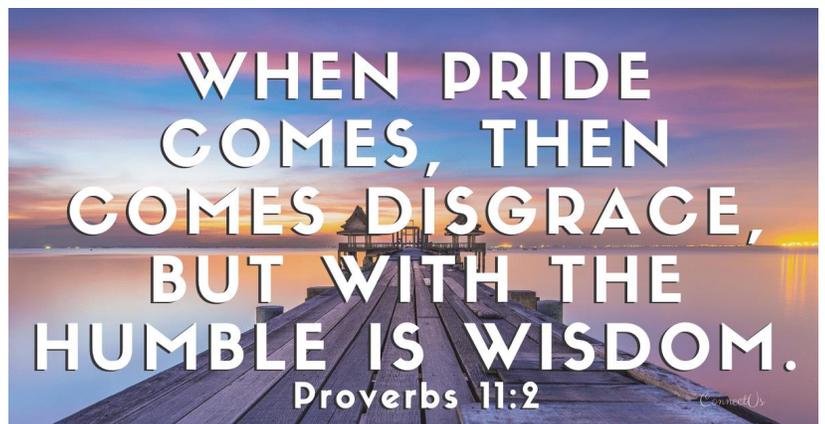
"And he said, 'What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person'" (Mark 7:20-23).

"For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 14:11).

"As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil" (James 4:16).

"God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble" (1 Peter 5:5).

Clearly, the writers of these books of the Bible saw pride as a sin, and the Bible as a whole emphasises this by repeating the message many times.



Quran

Similarly, in the Quran, Allah (swt) states in several ayats that pride and arrogance (*kibr* in Arabic) are sins.

"When We said to the angels, "Prostrate before Adam"; so they prostrated, except for Iblees. He refused and was arrogant and became of the disbelievers" (2:34).

"And when it is said to him, 'Fear Allah', pride in the sin takes hold of him. Sufficient for him is Hellfire, and how wretched is the resting place" (2:206).

"People advised him [Qarun], "Do not be proud! Surely Allah does not like the proud" (28:76).

"Disbelievers had filled their hearts with pride, the pride of 'pre-Islamic' ignorance" (48:26).

Muslim "pride"

And now we have people holding Muslim Pride parades⁹. These are erroneous in two respects.

Pride is not a Muslim characteristic

A Muslim is someone who says the shahadah, that there is only one God worthy of worship (Allah, swt) and that Muhammad (saw) is his final messenger. It also follows from this that Muslims believe the Quran to be the word of Allah, and that the hadiths of Muhammad (saw) similarly contain directives that are not to be ignored.

As has been shown above, the Quran contain many ayats prohibiting pride. However, we are all human and may subconsciously lapse into something resembling pride occasionally. This is totally the opposite of celebrating pride with a parade.

Similarly, there are many hadiths of Prophet Muhammad (saw) warning against pride.

"He who has in his heart the weight of a mustard seed of pride shall not enter Paradise" (Muslim).

"Allah will not look on the Day of Judgment at him who drags his robe (behind him) out of pride." Abu Bakr said, "One side of my robe slacks down unless I get very cautious about it." Allah's Messenger (saw) said, "But you do not do that with pride" (Bukhari).

Shall I inform you of the people of Paradise? They are every weak and humble person, if he takes an oath to Allah, it will be fulfilled. Shall I inform you of the people of the Fire? They are every cruel, violent and proud person."

[Al-Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad, at-Tirmidhi, an-Nasa'i, Ibn Majah]

Non-heterosexuality is not a Muslim characteristic

Likewise, there are many clear passages in the Quran that forbid non-heterosexuality.

The story of Lut (Lot, as) is described in the Quran, as it is in the Bible.

"And [We had sent] Lot when he said to his people, 'Do you commit such immorality as no one has preceded you with from among the worlds? Indeed, you approach men with desire, instead of women. Rather, you are a transgressing people'" (7:80-81).

The Messenger of Allah (saw) cursed the man who dressed like a woman and the woman who dressed like a man (Abu Daud).

Allah's Messenger (saw) cursed those men who are in the similitude (assume the manners) of women and those women who are in the similitude (assume the manners) of men (Bukhari).

Pride in business

Ted Rubin, a social marketing strategist, illustrates that pride is not beneficial in business, and introduces the opposite of pride: humility. "Beware the dangers of pride and arrogance in business. You never want to feel like you have 'arrived' – no matter how well things are going, how hard you worked to contribute to that success, and how much your team values your input. Confidence is a powerful, positive thing, but only when it's tempered by a healthy dose of humility"¹⁰.

Conclusion

Muslims all believe that, when we die, we will be judged for our behaviour on Earth (*dunia*). Behaviour that clearly contradicts the instructions of Allah (swt) will be judged accordingly.

Let us all outlaw the words *pride* and *proud* from our vocabulary, as they are not what Allah (swt) wants us to display.

Put aside your pride,
Set down your arrogance,
And remember your grave.
– Ali ibn Abu Talib (radiAllahu anhu)

1
www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=12340278

2
www.nzherald.co.nz/property/news/article.cfm?c_id=8&objectid=12367629

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en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Straight_pride

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www.nzherald.co.nz/lifestyle/news/article.cfm?c_id=6&objectid=12365103

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www.nzherald.co.nz/world/news/article.cfm?c_id=2&objectid=12362679

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www.bbc.com/news/newsbeat-49796967

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www.iris.xyz/index/sp-500-sector-watch

Jamia Millia Islamia



On-campus Gulistan-e-Ghalib ("Garden of Ghalib"), which features the statue of Mirza Ghalib, a prominent 19th century Urdu and Persian poet

BJP government in late 2019, but was criticised worldwide as it discriminates on the basis of religion, particularly for excluding Muslims. On 15 December 2019, Delhi police reportedly fired bullets and used tear gas on the university's CAA-protesting students on campus, badly damaging the library and restrooms, and injuring several students.

Central university

Jamia Millia Islamia is what is known in India as a central university. This means that it was established by an Act of Parliament. They are thus the best universities, with high status, and this is a major consideration for those seeking admission to a tertiary institution. Central universities are in contrast to state universities, "deemed to be" universities, private universities, and autonomous institutes and colleges².

There are only 54 central universities in the whole of India, including such famous institutions as Rajiv Gandhi University, Mahatma Gandhi Central University, Indira Gandhi National Open University, Jawaharlal Nehru University, University of Delhi, Pondicherry University and University of Hyderabad.

Top university

Jamia Millia Islamia has just been named India's #1 central university³, with a ranking of 90%, compared to Rajiv Gandhi University (83%), Jawaharlal Nehru University (82%) and Aligarh Muslim University (78%).

Jamia Millia Islamia is a university in New Delhi, India¹. It was originally established in Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, by Muslim leaders in the 1920s, inspired by the Non-Cooperation Movement against the British Raj. It moved to its current location in New Delhi in 1935.

The university's motto is "allam al-insan-a ma lam yalam" which Muslims will recognise as the fifth verse of Surah Iqra ("[Allah] taught Man what he did not know").

Another interesting fact is that the current Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor are both women: Najma Heptulla and Najma Akhtar.

CAA protests

The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) was enacted by the Hindu

1 www.jmi.ac.in

2 Ipsita Sarkar Gupta. *Autonomous, Deemed, Private, State & Central Universities: Know the Difference*. Shiksha, Aug 11, 2020. www.shiksha.com/mba/articles/autonomous-deemed-private-and-central-universities-know-the-difference-blogId-12295

3 timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/jamia-millia-islamia-tops-central-universities-in-government-rankings/articleshow/77515366.cms

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.

4 Oct

Quran: 2:286. No burden greater than you can handle.
Animation clip 05: Am I too sinful and can I never be forgiven?
Out of context 06: That all terrorists are Muslims.
Faith & mental health 04: Signs of depression. Yasir Fazaga.
The afterlife series 04: The questions.
Clip 02: Overcoming laziness.

11 Oct

Quran: 2:286. No burden greater than you can handle.
Animation clip 06: If God knows everything, why is it my fault?
Out of context 07: What kind of training is there for imams?
Faith & mental health 05: Coping with anxiety. Huma Saeed.
Lecture: Beware of a jealous heart.
Clip: He is Allah; look for Him

18 Oct

Quran: 2:286. No burden greater than you can handle.
Animation clip 09: Is Islam hard?
Out of context 08: Women's rights in the Quran
Faith & mental health 06: Coping with stress. Nabeel Rahman.
Lecture: Facing calamity with faith. Nouman Ali Khan.
Belief is rational 08: The reason for creation.

25 Oct

Quran: 2:286. No burden greater than you can handle.
Animation clip 10: Is the Quran man-made?
Out of context 09: Does racism drive Islamophobia?
Faith & mental health 07: Islamic spirituality & mental health. What is the link? Asim Yusuf.
Clip 04: Stop living in fantasy land
Lecture: Maintaining iman. Nouman Ali Khan.
Belief is rational 03: Does God exist?

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



Huma Saeed



Nabeel Rahman



Asim Yusuf

Credits

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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)