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Rocket Science

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In the name of Allah,
most Gracious, most Merciful

The bonds of love and brother/sisterhood in Islam

We recently celebrated Eid ul-Adha, and the hajj period. Muslims – far fewer this year, because of the COVID-19 lockdown – travelled to Makkah to perform the various rites of hajj, including the Day of Standing at Arafat on 9 Thul-Hijjah. On the day of Arafat, we reflect on the day when we will stand before Allah (swt) in the next life. We will be asked about many aspects of our life and how we lived it. One of the things we will be asked about is the love we showed one another.

On the 10th, all Muslims, whether performing hajj or not, celebrate Eid ul-Adha, remembering the willingness of Prophet Ibrahim (as) to sacrifice his son Ismail (as). However, having shown his willingness to obey Allah (swt),

Ibrahim was spared this, and a sheep was sacrificed instead.

This is described in the Quran (37:102-109): "When the boy [Ismail] was old enough to work with his father, Ibrahim said, 'My son, I have seen myself sacrificing you in a dream. What do you think?' He said, 'Father do as you are commanded and, God willing, you will find me steadfast.' When they had both submitted to God, and he had laid his son down on the side of his face, we called out to him, 'Ibrahim you have fulfilled the dream.' This is how we reward those who do good. It was a test to prove their true characters, we ransomed his son with a momentous sacrifice and we let him be praised by succeeding generations, peace be upon Ibrahim!"





Alhamdu lillah, this year Muslims in Auckland were able to celebrate Eid ul-Adha, in between the first and second lockdowns. New Zealand Eid Day took place at Eden Park, the home of the All Blacks, and hundreds attended, for early morning prayers, as well as socialising, eating, and generally celebrating the day. It was nice to see non-Muslims also attending, to see how Muslims celebrate. People are seen greeting each other – perhaps people they have not seen since the previous Eid – and hugging.

Friday prayers have been held, on and off, during the COVID period, for very valid reasons. At Friday prayers, Muslims are seen greeting each other, hugging, etc.

We are in a time where there is a dire need of love, and expressing love for the sake of Allah (swt). As brothers and sisters in creation, humanity, and faith, we need to have real, profound bonds of brotherhood/sisterhood that are rooted in our love for our Creator (swt). This is one of the greatest things we need to establish in

ourselves, building these bonds of community.

Expressing love in the Quran and Hadith

One of the Tabi'een saw Mua'dh Ibn Jamal (ra) teaching in Damascus, and he had an affinity towards him. So, he came to him and said "By Allah I love you" [Note this is something the earlier generations would not be hesitant to do.] Mu'adh asked "By Allah, do you really mean that?" He replied, "By Allah." He asked him again and the response was the same. He grabbed him by the cloak and bought him close and told him "I give you good news, I heard the Messenger of God (saw) say that Allah (swt) says 'My love is guaranteed for those who love one another for My sake.'" This teaching of Prophet Muhammad (saw) is a hadith recorded by Ahmad. It continues, "... who sit together for my sake, who visit each other for my sake, and who spend on each other for my sake."

The mutual love between the Tabi'een and Mu'adh is echoed in another hadith expressing the love between Prophet Muhammad (saw) and Mu'adh: "The Messenger of Allah took me by the hand and he said, "O Mu'adh, I swear by Allah that I love you. I swear by Allah that I love you" (Abu Daud).

How great a need we have for ourselves, in our connection to our Creator, and as a community, to have these deep bonds of brotherhood/sisterhood, By expressing this love: to say "Salam" to one another, to greet and hug one another, to smile at one another, to ask how someone is doing, especially if you haven't seen them for a while.



Modern society

Nowadays, depression and loneliness are rampant in society. In New Zealand, the number of suicides in the first half of 2019 was a total of 685¹. Proportionally, this is over three times the 2018 death toll on the roads. Suicide is especially prevalent among the young, males, and Maori and Pacific Islanders. One can only wonder at the effect the current COVID situation is having on these figures.

As a community of faith, we, as God's representatives on earth, should try to be there for one another. This should not be just lip service; we should actually love one another, and care for one another.

When we embody this type of character, not only does it increase us in our connection to Allah (swt), but it is also required in our faith. As the Prophet (saw) said, "The likeness of the believers in their mutual love, mercy, and compassion towards one another is like one body; when any limb of it aches, the whole body aches, because of sleeplessness and fever" (Muslim).

This doesn't just apply when there are problems happening elsewhere and around the world. It applies to the here and now, how we are living within our own families and within our own communities. Like one body, we need to express that love, compassion and mercy for one another.

Choose good company

There is plenty of darkness in the

modern world. Be a guiding light (noor) for your community and workplace. Look out for the youth, and bring people to the deen through that love and concern for one another.

We should express love and truly live this reality of faith. It is not just something that is limited to the prayer rug; it should be something that truly permeates our friendships and relationships. Be that person for someone else.

Action

The action is simple: tell a Muslim brother/sister that you love them. Reach out to family and others you have lost touch with. And know that this is one of the greatest sunnahs that we can revive in this day and age and is one of the greatest responsibilities of ours.

This is especially important in this day and age that is filled with hatred, enmity, and pitting human beings against one another. As the Prophet (saw) taught us this is the work of the Devil.

Know that, if you are someone who expresses genuine love and care for other people, Allah (swt) will reward you tremendously and you will be a force of goodness in this world. There will also be great rewards in the next world. As the Prophet (saw) said, "Allah Almighty said, 'Those who love each other for the sake of my glory will be upon pulpits of light, admired by the prophets and the martyrs'" (At-Tirmidhi).

Be part of the solution, not the problem. Islam is beautiful; don't make it ugly.

A reflection on trees

The writer contributes to *Rocket Science* and attends Rocket Park Friday prayers whenever possible.

A while ago we were honoured to be invited to Temple Sinai synagogue for the celebration of Tu B'Shevat, the Jewish "New Year for Trees". As Muslims, we learned a little about how Judaism regards trees and fruit.

One quotation that resonated with me was this midrash (scriptural textual interpretation) from Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer: "When a tree that bears fruit is cut down, its moan goes from one end of the world to the other, yet no sound is heard."

This particular quotation affected me deeply because of what happened in our previous garden in Auckland. The new owner cut down nearly all of the 60 or so fruit and nut trees my wife and I had planted in the seven years we lived there, as these photos show.



Another beautiful quotation from Jewish scripture is this: "One day, Honi the Circle Maker was walking on the road, and he saw a man planting a carob tree. He asked him, 'How long will it take this tree to bear fruit?' The man replied, 'Seventy years.' He asked, 'Are you quite sure you will live another seventy years to eat its fruit?' The man replied, 'I myself found fully grown carob trees in the world: as my forebears planted for me, so I am planting for my children.'"

Growing up in England, you'd hear a saying along the lines of, "You plant a garden not for yourself, but for the next generation."

A South African proverb states, "The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago."



Trees in Islam

The Islamic tradition is rich in references to our responsibility as Muslims to act as stewards of the environment. The Quran also has numerous passages that describe the lush gardens and trees in Paradise, highlighting their value not only in this world but their significance in the Hereafter. And Prophet Muhammad (saw) often drew analogies between righteous Muslims and productive trees.

Trees are to be treated with respect and not to be unnecessarily harmed. One hadith concerning a man called Rafi' says, "I was throwing stones at a date-palm belonging to some of the Ansar. They took me along with them to the Prophet (saw). He said: 'O Rafi'! Why were you throwing stones at their date-palm?' I said: 'Out of hunger, O Messenger of Allah!' He said: 'Do not throw stones at them. Eat what falls. May Allah fill you and quench your thirst'" (Ibn Majah).

And this is from our Quran (6:141): "It is He Who has brought into being gardens the trellised and untrellised – and the palm trees, and crops, all varying in taste, and the olive and pomegranates, all resembling one another and yet so different. Eat of their fruits when they come to fruition and pay His due on the day of harvesting. And do not waste (God's bounties): verily, He does not love the wasteful."

In a hadith recorded by Bukhari, Allah's Apostle (saw) said, "There is none amongst the Muslims who plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person or an animal eats from it, but is regarded as a charitable gift (sadaqa) for him."

Hadith No 10 from Imam Malik's Muwatta also refers to trees: Abu Bakr as-Siddiq was sending armies to ash-Sham. He went for a walk with Yazid ibn Abi Sufyan who was the commander of one of the battalions. Abu Bakr said, "I advise you ten things: Do not kill women or children or an aged, infirm person. Do not cut down fruit-bearing trees. Do not destroy an inhabited place. Do not slaughter sheep or camels except for food. Do not burn bees and do not scatter them. Do not steal from the booty, and do not be cowardly."

Conclusion

The next time you're taking shelter under a tree, or picking its fruit, or collecting its dead branches for firewood, remember what a blessing from Allah (swt) it is to have them gracing our planet.



Influential Muslim sportswomen

It is widely acknowledged that New Zealand punches above its weight in sport. Now there is a novel and welcome twist on this. Three women from New Zealand were selected to appear on a 2020 international listing of woman who are influential in their sport – and they are Muslims.

The listing is compiled by Muslim Women in Sport Network¹ whose mission is to amplify the voices of Muslim women in sport and inspire Muslim women globally.



Aysha Siddiqah Hussan

Their "Powerlist" features 32 women from around the world, including Aysha Siddiqah Hussan, a Kiwi-born Muslim of Fijian Indian descent. A young athlete who has already broken records at the tender age of only 13, she has competed locally, nationally and internationally.

Aysha is a recipient of several sports awards and a Sports Scholarship at her secondary school. Besides a career goal of

being a medical physician, she is hoping to become the first young Muslim woman to join the NZ Olympics team.

Auckland's AMMI Athletics Club congratulated Aysha, saying: "This is a beginning milestone of your victory against the face of nepotism and made-up barriers against females especially Muslim females in New Zealand sports. This will hopefully inspire others to keep persevering."



Aysha Hussan

Track and Field Athlete
Aotearoa New Zealand



Mazlinah binte Haji Mohamad Noor

The Muslim Women in Sport Network also has a list of "Ones to Watch 2020" and New Zealand appears here too, in the form of karate exponent Mazlinah binte Haji Mohamad Noor, set to become New Zealand's first female Muslim karate teacher.

Mazlinah belongs to a dojo (club) in Wellington affiliated to the Goju Ryu Karate Do New Zealand organisation (mission statement: Conditioning the body, cultivating the mind, and nurturing the spirit). Her teacher, Mike Dombroski, is a 3rd dan black belt.

As a senpai (senior student), she now teaches others and helps run the class; a primary school teacher by profession, Mazlinah relishes this role. It is good training for

when she becomes black belt 1st dan (insha Allah in November), at which point teaching others is obligatory. Mazlinah sees analogies with Islam, whose scholars have an obligation to pass on their knowledge.

Classes take place in the basement of Wellington's main mosque and are attended by children and adults, males and females, Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

Mazlinah is becoming increasingly involved in the organisation and running of the dojo, which has seen attendance and enthusiasm flourish thanks in part to Mazlinah's teaching skills and commitment to her sport.

Mazlinah is modest and humble yet realistic about her achievements: "I hope to inspire others. Age, sex and religion are not barriers."



Mazlinah binte Haji Mohamad Noor

Karate Teacher
Aotearoa New Zealand



Dr Nida Ahmad

Researcher/Sports Practitioner/Consultant
United States of America (Based in Aotearoa New Zealand)

Dr Nida Ahmad

The third name from New Zealand appears on MWISN's "Emeritus 2020" list and is Dr Nida Ahmad, an American living in New Zealand who has been collaborating with non-profit organisations, think tanks, and sports organisations for over a decade.

Her PhD is the first to explore how Muslim sportswomen use social media to self-represent aspects of their lives. Her research sits at the intersection of social media, sports, gender, religion, and ethnicity.

As a recipient of a Barbara Brown student paper award and the Gary Sailes Graduate Diversity Scholarship, Nida has been invited to participate as a speaker at

various conferences around the globe to speak to issues on diversity, inclusion and equality in sports. Currently, she is co-leading a project which is examining Muslim women's sporting practices in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Nida's research has helped to promote the varied, exciting, ground-breaking lives of Muslim sportswomen around the globe.

Over the years, Nida has sought out athletic challenges that pushed her limits – from "crack of dawn" outdoor workouts and obstacle races to Crossfit and learning how to surf, all while researching for her PhD.

1 mwisn.org

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.

6 Sep

Qur'an: 107: 1-7 small kindnesses.
 Animation clip 01: How to raise children
 Out of context 02: The media charter of coexistence
 The afterlife series 01: Introduction
 Clip 06: The sad reality of this life.

13 Sep

Qur'an: 107: 1-7 small kindnesses.
 Animation clip 02: How to stop wasting your time.
 Lecture: Ask questions with humility Nouman Ali Khan.
 Out of context 03: Rules of engagement in Islam.
 The afterlife series 02: The good soul.
 Belief is rational 03: Does God exist?

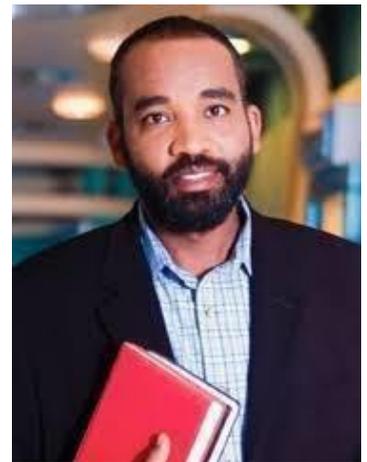
20 Sep

Qur'an: 107: 1-7 small kindnesses.
 Animation clip 03: How to teach kids salat.
 Out of context 04: Love thy neighbor Omar Suleiman.
 Lecture: Controlling anger Nouman Ali Khan.
 The afterlife series 03: The evil soul.
 Clip 03: Overcoming laziness
 Belief is rational 08: The reason for creation.
 Q&A: Where is satan and how does he mislead millions?

27 Sep

Qur'an: 107: 1-7 small kindnesses.
 Animation clip 04: How to wake up for fajr?
 Out of context 05: Sharia law versus penal code Omar Suleiman.
 Clip 10: Why you should go to bed early?
 Faith & Mental Health 03: Awareness Yasir Fazaga
 Lecture: Be grateful Nouman Ali Khan.

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



Yasir Fazaga

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)