

Inside this issue

Advice from a runner	2
Your spiritual WOF	4
Make your zakat count	6
A father's advice to his son	9

Rocket Science

April 2021

Shaban / Ramadan 1442



In the name of Allah,
most Gracious, most Merciful

Ramadan Mubarak!

Insha Allah, Ramadan 1441 begins around 14 April (subject to confirmation). Alhamdu lillah, the period of fasting is less than 13 hours, and by the end of Ramadan, it is less than 12 hours, 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 "TXT Alerts")
- 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.

When life imitates religion

It's often said that Islam is more than a religion, it's a complete *deen*, a way of life. With this in mind, it's interesting when you observe non-Muslims inadvertently – and sometimes even knowingly – producing evidence that supports our practices and beliefs.

This example comes from a very unlikely source, a recent issue of *Trail Run*, an Australasian magazine aimed at keen off-road runners, men and women who enjoy running very long distances along rugged bush tracks. Brad Dixon is a regular contributor to *Trail Run*. He is a New Zealand sports physiotherapist, coach and wellness evangelist.

The introduction to his latest column began with the question, "Want to take your running endurance to the next level?". He goes into the technical stuff about learning to burn fat more efficiently before going on to write about three things he does regularly to try and enhance fat-burning and improve endurance. Two of the three practices he writes about are straight out of Islam, and are also widely practised by people of other faiths and of no particular faith.

Briefly, the first thing he mentions is cold water. Apparently, a Bavarian priest named Sebastian Kneipp was using cold water therapy in the late 1800s to cure all manner of ailments, and Brad Dixon – a qualified physio – takes cold showers and swims in cold lakes and the ocean for the health benefits.

But what's really interesting are his other two recommendations. With

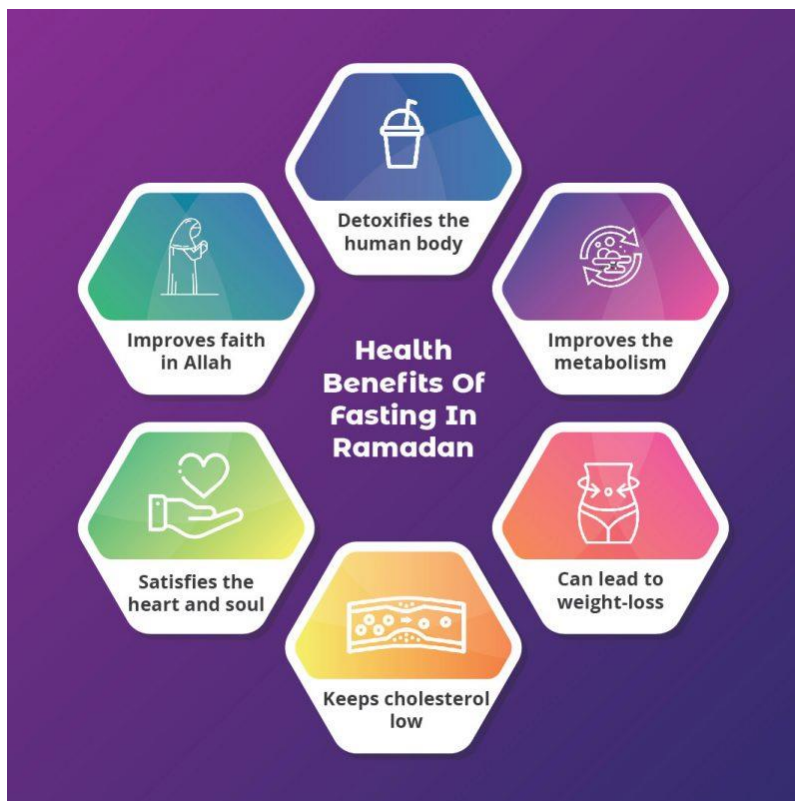
Ramadan coming soon, you can probably guess this next one, which is fasting. Brad fasts once a week for between 16 and 22 hours. He says that going without food for 16-plus hours allows the system to strengthen the fat-burning pathways, which supports the main thrust of his argument for fasting being beneficial for runners. He describes the main benefit of fasting, a process called autophagy. When fasting, the body is not having to commit resources to the gut for digestion purposes, so it turns its attention to cleaning house – scanning other cells to get rid of cellular debris and malfunctioning cells. This helps with general wellbeing and may even help us live longer.



His third recommendation is meditation, which many Muslims practise. The busyness of life gradually ramps up the sympathetic system – the fight, flight or freeze response. We're on edge like a coiled spring and the fuel of choice in this state is carbohydrate so we can spring into action quickly. Meditation interrupts this process. Meditation keeps us in the moment, not literally wasting energy on past mistakes or future worries. This nurtures the energy efficiency needed for trail running. Brad writes about increased calmness and better sleep.

He concludes that these three behaviours – cold water, fasting, and meditation – not only improve trail running endurance but also make us better human beings. When we feel better, he says, we look outwards and are more able to care for others and our natural world.

Ramadan, which starts in April, necessitates fasting. People have often compared salat, tarawih, thikr and itikaf to meditation. So Islam, if practised in the correct way, enhances health and wellness. Allah (swt) knows best.



Ramadan: your spiritual WOF

WOF

The Warrant of Fitness is a roadworthiness certificate issued by the New Zealand Transport Agency (Waka Kotahi). It is usually abbreviated to simply WOF, and pronounced "woff". For most (but not all¹) cars, it is an annual inspection.

The WOF inspection doesn't check everything about your car, merely the most important working parts, in order to confirm that it is safe to drive.

For those readers who own cars, how often do you check your windscreen wipers, or the depth of tread of your tyres? For many owners, the answer is "never" or "hardly ever". Many owners leave that to the WOF inspection.



Similarly, how often do you check your brakes? The answer to this is more likely to be "never". In between WOFs, you may realise, while driving, that your brakes don't seem to be working as well as usual. However, because inspecting the brakes requires taking off the wheels, this is a job best left to the professionals.

So, the WOF is an annual event, to confirm the roadworthiness of your car.

Ramadan

Ramadan is due to start in the middle of April, insha Allah. In many respects, Ramadan is like a spiritual WOF.

Like the WOF, it is an annual event. However, it is annual according to the lunar calendar. The WOF, like most modern things, is based on the 365-day solar Gregorian calendar, and so it needs to be renewed on the same date each year. However, a lunar month (the time between one new moon and the next) consists of 29.53056 days. A lunar year thus consists of $12 \times 29.53 = 354.36$ days. This makes it 11 or 12 days shorter than a Gregorian year. In this way, Ramadan moves through the Gregorian calendar, 11 or 12 days earlier each year. As a result, Ramadan (and other events in the Muslim calendar) does not become associated with any particular season.



This is not to say that the lunar year consisting of 12 lunar months is less valid than the Gregorian solar year. Indeed, it may not be obvious to some readers that the English words *moon* and *month* are related historically. If, instead of *month*, the word was written and pronounced *moonth*, this relationship would be clear. In many languages, the word for "moon" and for "month" is the same, (eg Malay/Indonesian *bulan*) or, like English, historically related and thus similar. The following list is not exhaustive; however, it contains languages from all round the world, and shows the traditional importance of lunar months: Afrikaans, Alabama Native-American, Armenian, Aymara (South America), Chechen, Cheyenne (Native American), Cree (Native American), Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Estonian, Farsi (Iran), Finnish, Frisian (Netherlands/Germany), Georgian, German, Greek, Hausa (West Africa), Hawaiian, Inupiat (Native Alaskans), Korean, Lithuanian, Mandarin Chinese, Norwegian, Old Irish, Persian, Quéchua (South America), Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Swahili (East Africa), Swedish, Tibetan, Tlingit (Native American), Turkish, Urdu, Welsh, Wolof (West Africa).

Ramadan is a time for checking your spiritual roadworthiness. Do you normally say all your

obligatory prayers (salat) on time? If not, here is your opportunity to make sure you do. Do you perform any optional fasts? If not, Ramadan reminds you of the benefits of fasting. Do you regularly give in charity, either in money, or in kind, or by performing charitable deeds? If not, Ramadan is the time to remember to give charity, as it is rewarded many times over.

The Prophet (saw) was asked, "Which is the best charity?" He replied, "Charity in Ramadan" (At-Tirmidhi).

Conclusion

Ramadan, if observed properly, is a month-long opportunity to renew your relationship with the pillars of Islam – apart from hajj. It clearly lets you fulfil the third and fourth pillars: fasting and paying zakat. By striving to offer your prayers correctly and on time, you reaffirm the central importance in Islam of salat, the second pillar. Itikaf, the habit of staying in the mosque for part of Ramadan, allows the Muslim to engage in intense reflection on Allah (swt), Muhammad (saw), the Quran, etc (thikr), and one's own relationship with these. It is a strengthening of the belief in one God, and Muhammad (saw) as his final messenger, which is the core of the shahadah, the first pillar.

1
<https://www.nzta.govt.nz/vehicles/warrants-and-certificates/warrant-of-fitness/>





Make your zakat count

One of the five pillars of Islam, zakat, is a way of purifying one's wealth, freeing one from the love of possessions by encouraging humility and discipline. An essential principle of Islam is that everything belongs to Allah (swt). We do not own our wealth, but have been entrusted with worldly possessions by Him.

Zakat means 'purification' and 'growth'. Possessions are purified by setting aside a portion for those in need and, like the pruning of plants, this cutting back encourages new growth.

There are two types of zakat, both of which are compulsory for Muslims who qualify. Zakat al-fitr is a fixed small amount, and must be paid during Ramadan, before the Eid prayer on Eid ul-Fitr. The amount you have to pay for zakat al-mal depends on the size of your wealth and savings. While it can be paid at any time during the (Islamic lunar) year, on savings held during that year, many Muslims find it convenient to pay it during Ramadan, at the same time as zakat al-fitr.

The annual payment of zakat is different from any charitable gifts given out of kindness or generosity, otherwise known as sadaqah. Zakat is a mandatory religious obligation, whereas sadaqah is voluntary, but strongly encouraged. Zakat al-mal forms the systematic giving of 2.5% of one's net wealth each year, benefitting targeted recipients on a sustained basis.

In the Quran (Surah at-Taubah, ayat 60), Allah (swt) says, "Alms [zakat] are only for the poor, the destitute, the orphans, those appointed to collect them, those

whose hearts have to be reconciled, for (the freedom of) slaves, for those in debt, for (those striving in) the path of Allah and for the traveller. An obligation imposed by Allah. And Allah is Knowing and Wise."

From this Quranic verse ordaining zakat, scholars have identified eight classes of recipient (asnaf):

1. Masakeen "The destitute"
2. Fuqaraa "The needy or poor"
3. Amil Zakat "The alms collectors"
4. Fi sabilillah "In the path of God"
5. Gharimun "People burdened with debt"
6. Ibn as-sabil "The wayfarers"
7. Riqab "People in bondage or slavery"
8. Muallaf "Those who have inclined towards Islam"

In practice, we have charities in our own community here in Auckland that fall inside one or more of these categories, so your support of them legitimises your zakat.

To take a varied sample, they would include, for example:

- Mount Albert Islamic Trust's support for an orphanage in Sri Lanka (iccct.org)
- Working Together Group's project to establish New Zealand's first Islamic orphanage/foster home (www.wtg.org.nz)
- Fatimah Foundation's work in helping needy families (www.facebook.com/Fatimah-Foundation-167690109942718/)



You can make your zakat work harder by donating your zakat to a registered charity, such as those above. The New Zealand government encourages charity by giving donors a tax credit on the donations they make to registered charitable organisations. The laws about this are as follows:

- The organisation must be registered as a Charitable Organisation with the Charities Commission (CC). A list of registered charities is given on the CC website (www.charities.govt.nz).
- It must also be recognised by the Inland Revenue Department (IRD) as a donee organisation. An organisation which is a Charitable Organisation may not necessarily be recognised by the IRD as a donee organisation. A list of donee organisations is given on the IRD website (www.ird.govt.nz/donee-organisations/donee-organisations-index.html).
- The donation must be more than \$5.
- The amount you can claim is the lesser of (a) 33.3% (one third) of the total donation, or (b) 33.3% (one third) of your taxable income. Thus, for instance, if you have donated \$200 and have a taxable income of \$100, then your tax credit will be 33.3% of \$100, and not \$200. The rate of credit is 33.3%, and is not related to the income tax rate of the donor.
- To be eligible to claim the donation, you should have a

taxable income during the tax year in which you have made the donation; should have been resident in New Zealand; should be an individual and not an entity such as an organisation or a company; and should hold a valid receipt issued by a donee organisation.

- The claim should be made on IRD form IR526 ("Tax credit claim form"), downloadable from the IRD website (www.ird.govt.nz).

Here is how it works:

- Imagine you want/have to give \$81 away in zakat al-mal.
- You give it to an organisation registered as a charitable organisation with the CC and as a donee organisation with the IRD.
- The charitable organisation issues you with a tax receipt.
- You declare this on IRD form IR526.
- The IRD gives you 33.3% back (\$27).
- However, now you have not given away \$81 in zakat; you have only given away \$54 (\$81 - \$27). So, you must give away the \$27 that the IRD returned.
- You give that \$27 to a CC- and IRD-registered charitable organisation, declare it (along with any other donations in that year), and the next tax year the IRD gives you \$9 back.
- You then have to give away that \$9 as zakat.



Inland Revenue
Te Tari Taake



And so on, year after year. Each year, by giving your zakat to a registered Muslim charity (that is involved in one of the eight asnafs), your donation is compounded. Your original \$81 donation has become over \$117 (\$81 + \$27 + \$9 + subsequent declarations)!

You do not win or lose: you have given away \$81 in zakat, although

you will, insha Allah, be rewarded for having fulfilled your zakat obligation. The IRD loses over \$36, because they are willing to give tax credit on any charity donation. The Muslim charity you have donated to wins, because it receives over \$117.

This Ramadan, consider giving your zakat to a registered Muslim charity.

ZAKAT & SADAQA



INTERNATIONAL
CENTRE FOR
CHILDREN
CHARITABLE
TRUST







**Pay your zakat,
zakat-ul-fitr
and sadaqa
to the orphans,
destitute
and the needy
in Sri Lanka**



Pay at icct.org

**Or deposit into our NZ bank account:
38-9007-0549566-00**

Advice from a father to a son

The March issue of Rocket Science included the first part of this article, which analysed Surah Luqman (#31), verses 13 to 17. This continuation analyses the final three ayats, 17 – 19.

These ayats relate a conversation between Luqman (as) and his son. Allah (swt) has recognised this conversation as so important that he immortalised it by including it in the Quran.

5 Encourage good, forbid evil

Verse 17 (continuation): "O my dear son! Establish prayer, encourage what is good and forbid what is evil, and endure patiently whatever befalls you. Surely this is a resolve to aspire to."

Whilst it is self-explanatory, a lot of us have trouble encouraging what is good. We know that we must pray five times a day, we know that we should control our anger, we know that we should speak good words or remain silent. But how often do we encourage these good behaviours?

By the same token, how often do we forbid evil? When we see someone cheat the system because the government is very kind to them, how often do we advise against it? How often do we teach our children to speak the truth and be honest about things? When we see people committing clear sins, how often do we have that conversation with them, saying that this is not good moral behaviour?

Or do we go the other way and encourage people to do wrong, by speaking lies for a worldly benefit?

6 Exhibit patience

The ayah above concludes by saying "endure patiently whatever

befalls you."

We all know what patience is. It is a very well emphasised topic in our religion. Patience is only hard when we need it the most. Whether it be a sickness that we are facing, or waiting for that item we ordered online to be shipped in 15 days, patience has its place in most aspects of our lives.

However, let's look at patience from our particular angle – dua. How many of us have asked dua from Allah (swt)? Asking for a solution to a problem or even to better our lives or a cure for a long-term illness. And how many of us have at least one dua that still hasn't been answered?

Now let's look at this from an Islamic point of view and try to reconcile the statement that "Allah answers all your duas". Scholars say there are three times when a dua is answered:



- 1 It is answered immediately. Today you have a headache and ask dua for it to be gone, and tomorrow you wake up fully recovered.
- 2 It is answered after a certain amount of time has elapsed. You ask dua that you want to be a hafiz (a person who has memorised all of the Quran), however, it hasn't happened yet. Allah, in all of his wisdom and glory, knows when it is the right time to answer the dua. We may feel that we want something straight away, and Allah knows that it may not be good for us right now. In the example of the hafiz, Allah may delay making you a hafiz till later on your life, as he knows that at that time you will have the wisdom, time and knowledge to teach others the Quran and lead prayers, whilst right now it may not benefit you as much and you may forget what you learn.
- 3 The third and final time he answers the dua is in the Hereafter. Allah knows that:

- a. It may not be good for you in this world to answer this dua, and/or
- b. He wants to see how pious and patient you are and will test you, as He has tested even the best amongst us (ie the prophets), and/or
- c. He wants to bring you closer to Him and/or
- d. He wants to give you something much better than what you've asked for.

This last point hits home with being patient. Imagine asking for a cure for your illness, and this dua is not answered in this world. That is an example of real patience.

7 Be humble

Verse 18: "And do not turn your nose up to people, nor walk pridefully upon the earth. Surely Allah does not like whoever is arrogant, boastful."

Whilst the English language encourages us to talk about pride in the example of "I am proud to be a Muslim", Islam teaches us the opposite – to be humble. The Prophet (saw) said, "None shall enter the Fire (of Hell) who has in his heart the weight of a mustard seed of iman and none shall enter Paradise who has in his heart the weight of a mustard seed of pride" (Muslim).

So we need to pay attention to the standard that Allah (swt) wants us to meet regarding pride and arrogance. Allah (swt) will not let anyone with even the smallest amount of pride into Jannah.



What can we do about it? Well, we can be critical of ourselves, and question each action: "Am I doing this out of pride?" If the answer is "yes", then we need to realign ourselves and change the intention to be purer. For those times in the past where we have "showed off" or acted in a manner of pride, we must ask for forgiveness from Allah (swt) immediately.

Don't get it wrong – it is not a sin to own a Lamborghini or Rolls Royce, but it is a sin to own a Lamborghini to show off or as an act of pride or arrogance.

8 Speak moderately

Verse 19: "Be moderate in your pace. And lower your voice, for the ugliest of all voices is certainly the braying of donkeys."

The last piece of advice by Luqman (as) to his son is to do things at a moderate pace and speak kind words in a good tone. Luqman (as) says that we should not be too much in a hurry to get things done, as hurrying to act is an act of Shaitan. The Prophet (saw) said, "Clemency is from Allah and haste is from Satan" (at-Tirmidhi).

It is sometimes very difficult for us to pause and take a moment before we do anything. Worse yet, controlling our speech in times of anger is another challenge. The ayat stresses that we should not be slow, yet not be fast as well, but take measured steps in our daily life. When we are in a hurry, it is better to sleep it off and take

decisive steps the next day rather than acting on impulses.

And when we speak, we should make sure that we communicate in a pleasant tone, not too rough like the braying of a donkey and not too soft that words are not heard. And don't forget that much of the message that you convey when you speak, and is understood by the listener, is expressed by (i) the tone of voice with which you say the words, and (ii) nonverbal features, especially facial expressions, but also gestures, stance, etc.

HOW TO SPEAK?	
<i>Quran Answers;</i>	
"Speak truthfully"	(Quran, 3:17)
"Speak with justice"	(Quran, 33:70)
"Speak moderately"	(Quran, 17:110)
"Speak positively"	(Quran, 2:83)
"Speak beautifully"	(Quran, 17:53)
"Speak gently"	(Quran, 17:28)
"Speak deeply"	(Quran, 4:63)
"Speak graciously"	(Quran, 17:23)
"Speak softly"	(Quran, 20:44)
"Speak effectively"	(Quran, 33:32)
"Speak humbly"	(Quran, 23:3)
"Speak bravely"	(Quran, 20:27)
"Speak without lie"	(Quran, 72:5)

Credits

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

Rocket Science editorial board

Editor in chief: Dr Adam Brown

Board members / writers: Dr Sharif M A Fattah, Sheed Ali, Wajahat Khan

Circulation manager: Sharif Nazre Hannan Saadi

Disclaimer: Any material or information posted on the *Rocket Science* mailing list is the sole responsibility of the writer or contributor. The Mount Albert Masjid Board of Trustees, *Rocket Science* list owner, moderator(s) and editor(s) have no obligation to, and may not, review or agree with any item of material or information that anyone makes available through the *Rocket Science* list, and the Mount Albert Masjid Board of Trustees, *Rocket Science* list owner, moderator(s) and editor(s) are not responsible for any content of the material or information.

Postal Address: P O Box 16138, Sandringham, Auckland

Phone: (+64)(9) 629 4222

Email: mtalbertmasjid@gmail.com

Website: www.mtalbertislamiccentre.org

Bank	Kiwibank
Branch	St Lukes
Address	Shop 791 Westfield Shopping Ctr, St Lukes, Auckland 1025
Bank phone	(+64)(9) 846 3887
Account name	Mount Albert Islamic Trust
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.

Subscribing / unsubscribing

If you have received this newsletter and want to unsubscribe (ie do not want to receive future issues), please send an email to masjidnews@gmail.com with "Unsubscribe" in the subject line. Vice versa, if you have received this newsletter indirectly, and would like to have future issues sent to your email address each month, please send an email to masjidnews@gmail.com with "Subscribe" in the subject line.

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)