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Rocket Science

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In the name of Allah,
most Gracious, most Merciful

The sunnah of visiting the sick

In a hadith recorded by Bukhari and Muslim, Prophet Muhammad (saw) said, "Every Muslim has five rights over another Muslim: to return the greetings, to visit the sick, to accompany funeral processions, to accept an invitation, to respond to the one who sneezes."

This article deals with the second of these five rights: the right to be visited by your Muslim brothers and sisters if you are sick.

We often hear of people around us – family, friends, work colleagues, etc – who are sick. Visiting them when they are sick not only fulfils the blessed sunnah; it also serves as a reminder for ourselves. Imagine you were the sick person. How would you feel if nobody visited you? This is especially important if the person is really sick, or in hospital.



Rewards for visiting the sick

Many hadiths describe the rewards for visiting a sick person, including the blessings of the angels, and Jannah (Paradise).

"When the Muslim visits his (sick) Muslim brother, he is harvesting the fruits of Paradise until he returns" (Muslim).

"Whoever visits a sick person or visits a brother in Islam, a caller cries out to him, 'May you be happy, may your walking be blessed, and may you occupy a dignified position in Paradise'" (at-Tirmidhi).

"There is no Muslim who visits a (sick) Muslim early in the morning but that seventy-thousand angels send blessings upon him until evening comes, and if he visits him in the evening, seventy thousand angels send blessings upon him until morning comes, and he will have a garden in Paradise" (at-Tirmidhi).

Etiquette of visiting the sick

There are various practices in the Islamic method of visiting the sick.

Intention: Before visiting the sick, you should make the intention of visiting the sick. In a well-known hadith, Prophet Muhammad (saw) said, "Actions are according to intentions, and everyone will get what was intended." In other words, you will only get rewards for visiting the sick if that is what you intended.

Timing: You should not turn up at a sick person's house or the hospital at any time of the day or night. You should check beforehand that the time you intend to arrive is convenient for the sick person.

Brevity: The person you are visiting is sick. They may be in pain, drowsy from drugs, or sleepy. You should therefore make your visit short, so as to not overburden the sick person. This is unless the sick person asks you to stay longer.

Gift: A thoughtful gift will always be appreciated by a sick person.

Needs: During the visit, it is good to ask the sick person if they have any particular needs, and then try to fulfil them. A hadith shows that Prophet Muhammad (saw) did this: "The Prophet (saw) visited an ill person and asked, 'Do you long for anything? Do you long for sweet bread (ka'k)?' The man replied, 'Yes.' So they sent someone to bring some ka'k for him" (Ibn Maja).

Duas: The person visiting a sick person should say duas for their full and speedy recovery. Perhaps more surprisingly, there are hadiths that state that the opposite should also occur. "If you

enter upon a sick person, then ask him to supplicate for you, for his supplication is like the supplications of the angels" (Ibn Maja).

Conversation: The conversation you use to talk to the sick person should be joyful and positive. The sick person may be in pain and downhearted, so happy topics should be used to cheer them up.

Conclusion

Living at a time when people are becoming more distant and disconnected from one another, it is increasingly important that we revive the sunnah of visiting the sick. Not only will this benefit the sick person and you, but it will also help build relationships and a beautiful community based upon prophetic mercy for one another. Can you imagine the impact on a non-Muslim if we visited them?

This was the way of our beloved Prophet (saw). Despite his many and varied responsibilities in the community and at home, he would always make time to visit people, keep the ties of kinship and bonds of friendship strong, and this was even more so when people were unwell.

"Allah will say on the Day of Resurrection, 'O son of Adam, I was sick but you did not visit Me.' He will say, 'My Lord, how can I visit You when You are the Lord of the worlds?' Allah will say, 'Did you not know that My servant was sick and you did not visit him, and had you visited him you would have found Me with him?'" (Muslim).

Four misunderstood words

This article explains four terms that have different meanings and interpretations for Muslims, and non-Muslims. Needless to say, this leads to misunderstanding by non-Muslims, and to frustration among Muslims.

Jihad

Probably the most misunderstood or misrepresented Islamic word is *jihad*. This was discussed in the February 2015 issue of *Rocket Science*¹.

It is not surprising that non-Muslims have a distorted understanding of the word *jihad*, when standard English dictionaries, such as the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*², define it as "A holy war fought by Muslims".

This incorrect definition is also used by US courts of law: "As used in this First Superseding Indictment, 'Jihad' is the Arabic word meaning 'holy war'. In this context, jihad refers to the use of violence, including paramilitary action against persons, governments deemed to be enemies of the fundamentalist version of Islam."³

This situation led the Egyptian-born American Muslim leader, Dr Maher Hathout, to write a book entitled *Jihad vs. Terrorism*, to set the record straight, because of "the discovery that everyone is defining us except us, everyone is explaining *jihad* except for Muslims."⁴ That is, the true meaning of the Arabic, Islamic word *jihad* is surely the one that is understood by Arabic-speaking Muslims (and indeed Arabic-speaking non-Muslims).

The noun *jihad* comes from the verb *juhud*, meaning "to strive, struggle". It does not mean "holy war". War in Arabic is *harb* and holy is *muqadassa*. In extreme cases, *jihad* may involve fighting, but with strict limitations.

There are many teachings of Prophet Muhammad (saw) (hadith) that show this.

Upon returning from battle, Prophet Muhammad (saw) explained, "We are returning from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad." That is, the greater jihad is the jihad against yourself, the jihad against Satan, the jihad to become a better person, the jihad to do more charitable deeds, etc. The lesser jihad is fighting.

In another hadith, Prophet Muhammad (saw) explained, "The greatest jihad is to battle your own soul, to fight the evil within yourself (nafs)."

He also said, "The most beloved jihad to Allah is a word of truth in front of a tyrannical leader."



Fatwa

To many non-Muslims, the word *fatwa* is equated with “death sentence”. The origin of this mistaken translation is usually the fatwa issued in 1989 by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini of Iran in connection with the book *The Satanic Verses* by British author Salman Rushdie. The fatwa called on “all brave Muslims” to kill Rushdie and his publishers.

In reality, a fatwa is an opinion issued by an Islamic scholar, on the basis of their knowledge of Islam, the Quran and hadith, Arabic language, *qiyas* (use of analogy), *ijma* (consensus among scholars), mathhabs (different schools of thought), etc. Only after lengthy consideration by an established scholar can a fatwa be issued, and it represents that scholar’s personal opinion.

Fatwas are not binding, as they only represent opinions on contentious issues. Abu Hanifa (ra), the founder of the Hanafi mathhab, said, “This knowledge of ours is opinion; it is the best we have been able to achieve. He who is able to arrive at a different conclusion is entitled to his opinion as we are entitled to our own.”

Nowadays, fatwas are issued on a number of issues relating to modern everyday life, such as vaccination, women’s rights, the wildlife trade, kidney donation, marriage, etc. In short, they do not call for the execution of another human being.

Mufti

People in New Zealand are familiar with this word, from the practice of

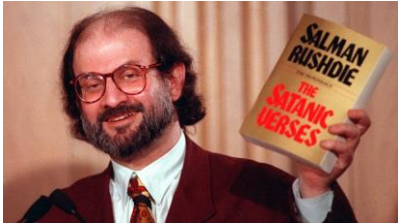
schools allowing their students not to wear school uniform on particular days. Usually, students who turn up in everyday clothes are expected to give a gold coin donation (ie \$1 or \$2), and the money collected is donated to a charity. A very admirable way of raising money for charity.

When used in this way, the word is normally pronounced muff-ti. However, many people may not realise that the word has Arabic origins, where it is pronounced moof-ti. The Arabic word *mufti* is related to the Arabic word *fatwa*. A mufti is therefore a religious scholar who issues fatwas. Probably the highest-profile mufti nowadays is Ismail Menk⁵ of Zimbabwe, who regularly appears in online talks, khutbahs, etc.

So, how are the two words (for everyday clothes, and for the Muslim cleric) related?

Heretaunga College in Upper Hutt, and Trident High School in Whakatāne, New Zealand, have recently⁶ changed their “Mufti Day”. Heretaunga are now calling it “Be Yourself Day”, and Trident have adopted the Māori expression “Kakahu Kainga” meaning “home clothes”. The schools decided to drop the word “mufti” after learning the origins from an article by the New Zealand online magazine and news site *The Spinoff*.

The article⁷, by historian Katie Pickles, describes how the term was coined. “Once upon a colonial time during the Raj in India, off-duty British military leaders adopted a subjugated culture’s



Mufti Ismail Menk

ceremonial clothing as their informal attire. It appears that officers started dressing in robes and slippers that they slightly mockingly thought resembled garments worn by Mufti. This happened at a time when, with the objective of rendering them obsolete and powerless, the authority of Mufti in India was being extinguished. From there, the British Army started using the word 'mufti' for their days out of uniform when they wore loose and comfortable clothing (including dressing gowns). One culture's power dressing was another's play clothes."

Mohammedanism

The final term recently appeared in the answer to a crossword clue in the New Zealand Herald newspaper. The clue was "religion" (and an anagram).

The term *Mohammedanism* "was commonly used in European literature until at least the mid-1960s. *Muslim* is more commonly used today, and the term *Mohammedan* is widely considered archaic or in some cases even offensive."⁸ It is archaic in that it was used by orientalists⁹ of over a century ago, who considered "that Western society is developed, rational, flexible, and superior" and, vice versa, that Islam is undeveloped, irrational, inflexible and inferior.

The term was coined on the basis that Jesus Christ (Isa, as) is the central figure of Christianity, and people go to Christian churches in

order to pray in front of statues of Jesus. Similarly, the Buddha is the central figure of Buddhism, and people go to Buddhist temples in order to pray in front of statues of the Buddha.

However, the analogy does not work. Prophet Muhammad (saw), while being a major figure in Islam, is not the most central entity to it; Allah (swt) is. And people do not go to Muslim mosques in order to pray in front of statues of Prophet Muhammad (saw). There are no statues of Prophet Muhammad (saw) or any other of Allah's prophets, as idolatry is haram in Islam. And no Muslims pray to Prophet Muhammad (saw). This would be considered *shirk*, associating someone as being on a par with Allah (swt). In many places in the Quran, Allah (swt) states that Muhammad (saw) is a human messenger, eg "Muhammad is only a messenger" (3:144).

The term *Mohammedanism* was not used by Muhammad (saw) himself or his early followers. The religion is referred to as Islam; in the Quran (5:3), Allah (swt) states, "This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion." Its followers are known as Muslims, as in the Quran (2:128): "Our Lord, make us Muslims (in submission) to You and from our descendants a Muslim nation (in submission) to You." Both words relate to the root "s - l - m", with the meaning of finding peace by submitting to the will of Allah (swt).

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Islam and science



For centuries, people have argued about whether religion is compatible with science¹. For instance, ever since the writings of Charles Darwin (1809 – 1882), his Theory of Evolution has been brought forward in evidence against the existence of a God (Allah, swt).

Equally, some scientists have brought forward evidence for the existence of a God (Allah, swt). In Islam, this often involves examining how what was written (Muslims would say “revealed”) in the Quran 14 centuries ago corresponds with scientific discoveries from the last century or two, ie at least a millennium after the revelation of the Quran. There is, they argue, no way in which anyone in the 6th or 7th century could have known these scientific facts. It is, they conclude, perfectly reasonable to suggest a non-human origin for these passages, ie they were not written by Prophet Muhammad (saw), but by a higher power (Allah, swt).

There are many resources on the internet that list Quranic passages and the scientific truths that they convey². It is not the purpose of this article to list them again. Instead, this article describes modern, largely western, scientists who have been surprised by the correspondence between Quranic verses and recently discovered scientific facts. As a result, some of these scientists have converted to Islam.

A word of caution

The Commission on Scientific Signs in the Quran and Sunnah³ was

established in 1984 by Sheikh Abdul Majeed al-Zindani with the backing of the Muslim World League. The commission, and its conference, has been criticised for its perhaps over-zealous reporting of eminent scientists, giving their statements a slant that could not be called neutral.

“Marine scientist William W. Hay complained of having fallen into a ‘trap’ in interviews, while embryologist Gerald Goeringer claimed ‘mutual manipulation’ between the scientists and conference organizers.”³

Other scientists complained that “they were misrepresented, their video quotes were taken out of context (often after days of preparation to get them to say words that could be used in the video), and were sometimes quoted in written works saying things they had no recollection whatever of saying.”³

In light of this criticism, the following discussion only details scientists who have been accurately reported, often in videos available on YouTube, etc.

The branches of science in which these scientists work are primarily embryology, astronomy and geology.

Embryology

The development of the human embryo in its mother’s womb is described in Surah al-Muminun (23:12-14):

"We (Allah) created man from a quintessence of clay. We then placed him as a *nutfah* (drop) in a place of settlement, firmly fixed, then We made the drop into an *alaqah* (*leech like structure*), and then We changed the *alaqah* into a *mudghah* (*chewed like substance*), then We made out of that *mudghah*, *izam* (*skeleton, bones*), then We clothed the bones with *lahm* (*muscles, flesh*) then We caused him to grow and come in being and attain the definitive (*human*) form. So, blessed be God, the best to create."

Keith L Moore⁴ (1925 – 2019) was Professor Emeritus of the Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology, University of Toronto, Canada. His Wikipedia page comments, "the Holy book claims that at one point the embryo looks like a small piece of meat which can be chewed, or *mudghah*, and Moore consents, "by golly, it does, sorta", agreeing and signaling to the knowledge we have about the structure and appearance of the actual embryo, which actually comes into a stage where it resembles the size of a small thing which can be chewed by teeth ie it is approximately 1.0 cm. Meanwhile in the *alaqah* stage, the embryo is forming and only 3.5 mm, which can't be chewed."

T. V. N. Persaud (born 1940) was Professor of Anatomy, and Professor of Paediatrics and Child Health, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. He echoed Keith Moore's observations: "It seems to me that Muhammad was a very ordinary man, he

couldn't read, didn't know how to write, in fact he was an illiterate. We're talking about 1,400 years ago, you have some illiterate person making profound statements that are amazingly accurate, of a scientific nature. I personally can't see how this could be mere chance, there are too many accuracies and like Dr Moore, I have no difficulty in my mind reconciling that this is a divine inspiration or revelation which led him to these statements."⁵

Similarly, E Marshall Johnson (born 1930) was Professor and Chairman of the Department of Anatomy and Developmental Biology, and Director of the Daniel Baugh Institute, Thomas Jefferson University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA. Commenting on the same description in the Quran, he states, "As a scientist, I



B. Gum



Keith L Moore



T. V. N. Persaud



E Marshall Johnson

can only deal with things which I can specifically see. I can understand embryology and developmental biology. I can understand the words that are translated to me from the Quran. ... if I were to transpose myself into that era, knowing what I do today and describing things, I could not describe the things that were described. I see no evidence to refute the concept that this individual Muhammad had to be developing this information from some place ... so I see nothing here in conflict with the concept that divine intervention was involved in what he was able to write."⁶

On another occasion, he stated, "To see any detail in it as is described in the Quran, I need an instrument that wasn't developed until the 1700s."⁷

Tejatat Tejasen was Chairman of the Department of Anatomy and the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Chiang Mai, Thailand. He observed, "I became interested in the Quran. ... From my studies and what I have learned throughout this conference, I believe that everything that has been recorded in the Quran fourteen hundred years ago must be the truth, that can be proved by the scientific means. Since the Prophet Muhammad could neither read nor write, Muhammad must be a Messenger who relayed this truth which was revealed to him as an enlightenment by the one who is eligible creator. This creator must be God, or Allah."⁸

Joe Leigh Simpson (born 1943) was Professor and Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, Texas, USA. He echoed the above opinions: "These hadiths (sayings of Muhammad) could not have been obtained on the basis of the scientific knowledge that was available at the time of the 'writer'. It follows that not only is there no conflict between genetics and religion (Islam) but in fact religion (Islam) may guide science by adding revelation to some of the traditional scientific approaches. There exist statements in the Quran shown centuries later to be valid which support knowledge in the Quran having been derived from God."⁹



Tejatat Tejasen



Joe Leigh Simpson



Astronomy

An often-quoted astronomical passage in the Quran is in Surah al-Anbiya (21:30): "Have not the disbelievers seen that the Heavens and the Earth were one piece and we parted them? And We made every living thing from water. Will they not then believe?"

This is the Big Bang theory of the origin of the universe, not proposed by scientists until the 1940s.

Yushidi Kusan (born 1920) was the Director of the Tokyo Observatory, Tokyo, Japan. He remarked, "I say, I am very much impressed by finding true astronomical facts in Quran, and for us modern astronomers have been studying very small piece of the universe. We have concentrated our efforts for understanding of very small part. Because by using telescopes, we can see only very few parts of the sky without thinking about the whole universe. So by reading the Quran and by answering to the questions, I think I can find my future way for investigation of the universe."¹⁰

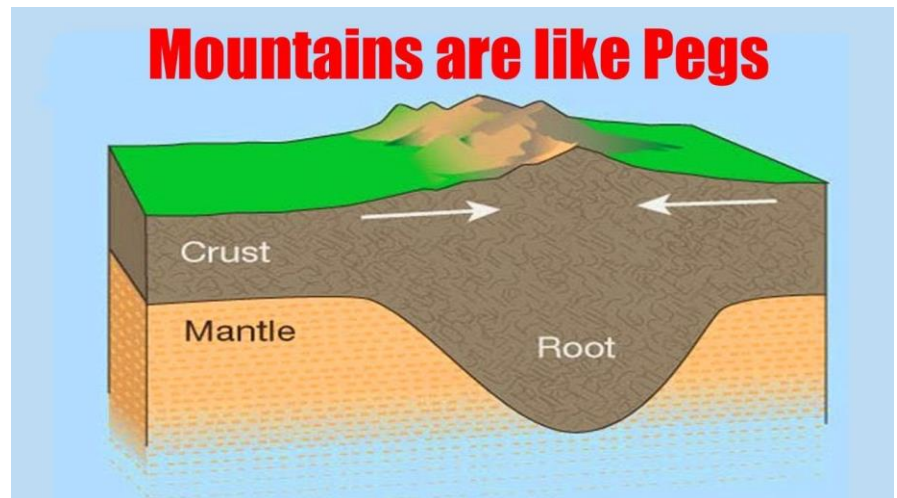
Geology

Discussions about geology in the Quran often mention the following verse from Surah an-Naba: "Have We not smoothed out the earth like a bed, and made the mountains as its pegs?" (78:7). The pegs referred to here are like tent pegs, not pegs for hanging washing.

Professor Siaveda is a Professor of Marine Geology in Japan. He observed that the shape of all mountains, whether they are on land or in the sea, is in the shape of a wedge. "Could anyone during the time of Prophet Muhammad have known of the shape of these mountains? Could anyone imagine that the solid massive mountain that he sees before him actually extends deep into the earth and has a root as scientists assure? A large number of geography books when discussing mountains, only describe that part which is on the surface of the earth. This is because they are not written by specialists in geology, but modern science informs us about it and Allah says in the Quran, 'And the mountains as pegs.'¹¹



Professor Siaveda



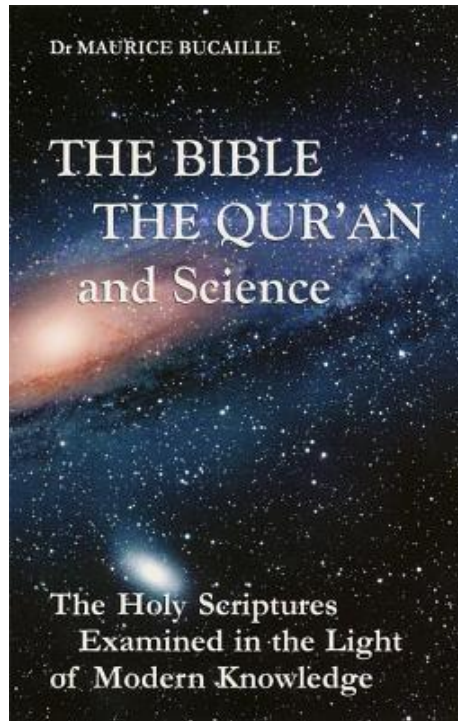


Dr Maurice Bucaille

Conclusion

Perhaps the most famous such scientist is Dr Maurice Bucaille (1920 – 1998), who was chief of the Surgical Clinic, University of Paris, France. He is famous for the 1976 book *The Bible, The Quran and Science*¹², originally in his native French, but subsequently translated into many languages. On page 119 of the book, he writes, “These scientific considerations, which are very specific to the Quran, greatly surprised me at first. Up until then, I had not thought it possible for one to find so many statements in a text compiled more than thirteen centuries ago referring to extremely diverse subjects and all of them totally in keeping with modern scientific knowledge.”

Does Islam have a problem with science? No.



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Muslim EPL players

In the March 2021 issue of *Rocket Science*, we listed all the Muslim players in the English Premier League (EPL). Almost every EPL team has some Muslim players, some of them being stars, such as Liverpool's Mohamed Salah and Manchester City's Ilkay Gundogan. Here we highlight four Muslim players who have recently shown their Muslim identity by their actions on the pitch.



April/May 2021 was Ramadan. Being able to fast, and to break your fast, was thus a difficult time for Muslim footballers. In the match against Southampton on 30 April, play was stopped in the 29th minute to allow Leicester defender Wesley Fofana to break his fast.



After Chelsea defeated Manchester City 1-0 in the UEFA Champions League final on 29 May, Antonio Rüdiger gave thanks to Allah for the result.



After their EPL match against Fulham on 18 May, Manchester United players Paul Pogba and Amad Diallo held up a flag in support of Palestinian rights.

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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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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)