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In the name of Allah,
most Gracious, most Merciful

Forgive and forget: The Islamic approach

Forgiving but not forgetting

Since we were young, we have often heard the phrase “forgive and forget”, so that we can move on from whatever hurt was caused to us. As we grow older, we realise however that we can learn to forgive but not always forget. It is important to know, and be able to separate, when remembering is of benefit to us.

In a Bukhari hadith, Prophet Muhammad (saw) said, “A believer does not allow himself to be stung twice from the same hole [by a scorpion, bee, etc].”

For example, if someone has done business with us and borrowed our money without giving it back, it is important to remember that, to ensure that we do not make the same mistake twice and lend money again to the wrong type of person and lose it.

It is similar to the modern English expression, “Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me.” That is, on the first occasion, you should be ashamed of having fooled or cheated me. But on the second and subsequent occasions, I should be ashamed of not having learnt from the first experience.

The same should be applied to personal situations.

You do not have to forget after you have forgiven something. This is not an Islamic approach. However, you should also make sure that you do not always remind that person of what they have done to you, and you do not expose them and their wrongdoing to everyone around you. This will cause people to form an opinion of that person who could have already repented for their sin and changed their actions.

We remember as a reminder for ourselves, not in order to remind other people.

**YOU DO NOT DO
EVIL TO THOSE
WHO DO EVIL
TO YOU, BUT YOU
DEAL WITH THEM
WITH FORGIVENESS
AND KINDNESS.**

- PROPHET MUHAMMAD

Benefits of forgiveness

What we should remember is the benefits of forgiving others, and use that as a motivator, even if we find it hard at times. It will not only lighten the burden on our hearts, but also lessen our stress and worry. When we are angry, we often tend to overthink and constantly remember the pain that was caused to us. This is like poison on our hearts that affects our daily life, and in effect our productivity, and at times even our character. If Allah (swt) always forgives us, who are we not to try and forgive others?

Forgiveness doesn't have to happen immediately, within seconds of what happened. It can be a gradual process of letting go, where we slowly come to terms with the ease that it gives us to excuse someone for what they have done to us.

A shining example of forgiveness is the case of Farid Ahmed, the wheelchair-bound Muslim whose wife Husna was killed in the Christchurch mosque shootings.

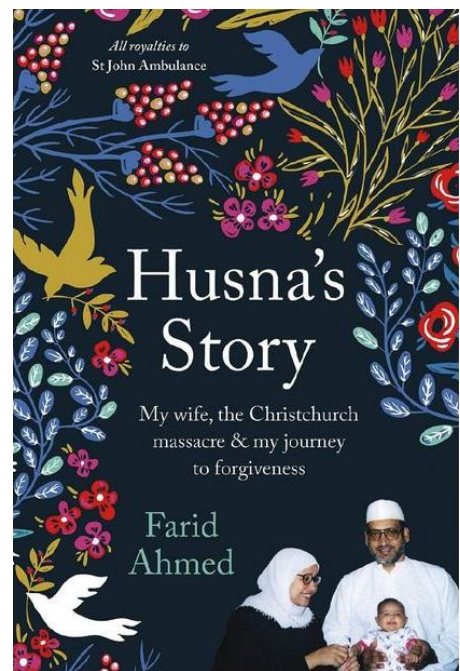
"One day after the attack on our mosque, a reporter asked me, 'What is your feeling towards the killer of your wife?'

The question caught me off guard, and I answered spontaneously. 'I love him as a human brother, but I do not support what he did.'

I explained that I had forgiven him, that it was what Husna would have wanted.

Then, a couple of weeks later on 29 March, a remembrance service was held in Hagley Park, and I was asked to speak. There, I reiterated my message of love and forgiveness.

'I don't want to have a heart that is boiling like a volcano,' I said. 'A volcano has anger, fury, rage. It doesn't have peace. It has hatred, it burns itself within, and it burns its surroundings. I don't want to have a heart like this, and I believe no one does. I want a heart that is full of love and care, and full of mercy, and will forgive lavishly, because this heart doesn't want any more life to be lost. This heart doesn't like that any human being should go through the pain I have gone through. That's why I have chosen peace, love, and I have forgiven.'"¹

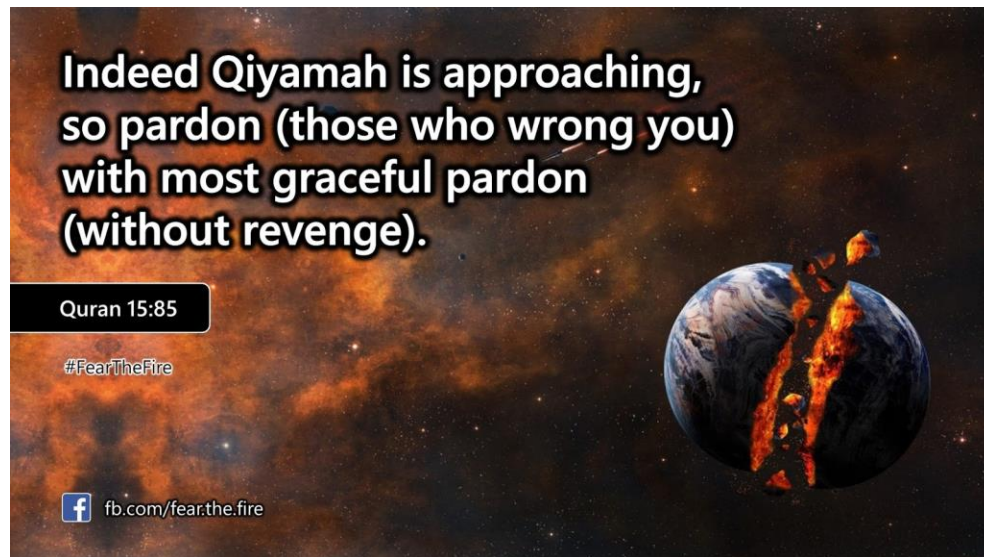


Conclusion

In a Muslim hadith, Prophet Muhammad (saw) said, "He who relieves a hardship of this world (dunya) for a believer, Allah will relieve (from him) a hardship of the Day of Resurrection. He who makes easy an indebted person, Allah will make it easy for him in this world and the Hereafter. He who covers a Muslim (meaning his mistakes and shortcomings), Allah will cover him in this world and the Hereafter."

Therefore, we must remember to forgive and forget minor issues, and forgive major ones. We remember the lessons and we don't hold a grudge against the person for an extended period of time, as it will poison our heart. May Allah (swt) help us achieve these goals.

1 Farid Ahmed (2020). *Husna's Story*. Allen & Unwin. Pp. 249-250.



Don't hesitate when you are offered a vaccine

An article entitled "Hygiene and Islam" appeared in the April 2020 issue of Rocket Science¹. It contained several quotations from the Quran and hadith showing that the guidelines for protecting ourselves from COVID-19 corresponded well with Islamic scripture from 14 centuries ago. That article appeared before a vaccine had been developed. The article below revisits the topic of coping with COVID-19 now that vaccines have been produced.

We have all heard words and phrases during the COVID-19 pandemic that are new to us. The word *pandemic* simply means "a widespread epidemic of a disease". In the case of COVID-19, "widespread" means globally, for almost nowhere on the planet has been left untouched by this virus.

We are told that we in New Zealand, as elsewhere in the world, must achieve "herd immunity" to protect our family of five million. *Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary* (31st edition) defines *herd immunity* as "the resistance of a group to attack by a disease because of the immunity of a large proportion of the members and the consequent lessening of the likelihood of an affected individual coming into contact with a susceptible individual."

What does "large proportion" mean in the case of COVID-19? With the original strain of virus, medical opinion was that about 80% of us would need to be vaccinated to

achieve herd immunity – that is, to protect our population. However, the COVID-19 virus mutated and became more easily and quickly transmitted. Viruses do this all the time – it's one of their survival and reproduction techniques. It's why we need a different vaccine every year against influenza ("the flu").

One COVID-19 mutation, called the Delta variant, is especially dangerous. For our population to achieve herd immunity against this variant, about 98% of us need to be vaccinated. That is nearly everybody. There are always a few people who cannot have a vaccine for medical reasons. You may know someone in your extended circle of friends and acquaintances who has cancer and perhaps has had a stem cell transplant, for example. Their immune system is compromised and for that reason they cannot be vaccinated for the time being. In all likelihood, once they are told it is safe for them, they would show no hesitancy in going for a vaccine.



Two words in the previous sentence come together in another new phrase we've heard often recently: "vaccine hesitancy". It's when someone is not absolutely against getting vaccinated, but for various reasons they are unsure about it and delay getting vaccinated even when it's offered to them.

For some, it is a distrust of authority. Some of our Muslim community have come from war-torn countries where they could not trust the authorities or the government as we can here in peaceful New Zealand. Medical care may also have been very basic indeed in their country of origin, compared to the world-class care freely provided here, so some may come to New Zealand bringing with them a lack of faith in doctors and other medical professionals. For Muslims, there are excellent reasons for us to overcome any vaccine hesitancy that go beyond these considerations.

In Islam, the preservation of life is regarded as one of the most sacred imperatives. Islam upholds the sanctity of life and places the priority of protecting and maintaining life second only to the preservation and safeguarding of the religion. Islam teaches us that everything in this world, including our life, is on loan from Allah (swt).

Every Muslim is thus under a religious duty to care for and maintain that trust (amanah) in not only guarding and defending their own life from harm, but also that of others. On that basis, getting vaccinated in order to protect ourselves and others is a simple religious duty, an obligation upon us.

We need also to have faith in the vaccine that scientists have created for our benefit. A hadith narrated by Abu Huraira (ra) is relevant: "The Prophet (saw) said, 'There is no disease that Allah has created, except that He also has created its treatment'" (Sahih al-Bukhari: Vol. 7, Book 71, Hadith 582). This same thought is also rendered: "The one who sent down the disease, sent down the remedy."

The Prophet (saw) considered that everyone has the right over every other member of the community not to expose them or anyone else to infection. Although exposing others to infection is included in the general rule that prohibits causing harm to oneself or others, we have further specific orders, with our Prophet (saw) quoted as saying, "Do not let those infected transmit their disease to those who are healthy" (related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim on the authority of Abu Hurairah).



He (saw) further says, "There shall be no contagion and no evil omen" (related by Al-Bukhari on the authority of Abdullah ibn Amr and Anas ibn Malik). This hadith implies an order of prohibition, in the same way as the hadith stating, "There shall be no infliction of harm on oneself or others" (related by Ibn Majah, Malik, Al-Daraqutni and others).

Scholars over the ages have written on this topic. Abu Ishaq Ibrahim ibn Musa al-Shatibi (1320 - 1388 CE) said, "Health protection is ensured through two distinct matters. The first is to strengthen its structure and consolidate its foundation, which means to take good care of what we have of health, while the second is to protect it against any negative development, present or future, which means to take care lest it withers away" (Al-Shatibi, *Al-Muwafaqat*, Vol. 1, p. 48).

No less a body than the World Health Organization has published on this topic, and placed it firmly within the context of our religion. Writing in 2004 ("Health as a Human Right in Islam", World

Health Organization, Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean: ISBN 92-9021-345-0), Dr M H Al-Khayat said, "I believe that it is the right of everyone over a person with an infectious disease that such a person should refrain from frequenting public places, including mosques, until he or she has reached the stage when they can no longer transmit the infection to others."

Vaccination will help us to avoid the infection, or at least lessen its impact.

More locally, and right up to date, in a tacit acknowledgement of the worsening situation in Australia, on 20 August Dr Mohammad Afzal Kahloon of the Australian Islamic Medical Association made a statement recommending that Muslims should be vaccinated.

Muslims in New Zealand should heed his words, given our own situation, and start to treat vaccination as a religious duty.

1 mtalbertislamiccentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Rocket-Science-Apr-2020.pdf













COVID-19 ALERT LEVEL 4 – APPLICABLE TO MUSLIM FUNERALS (18/08/2021)


The strict funeral directives for Alert Level 4 have been introduced by the Government taking effect from 11:59 pm on Tuesday, 17 August 2021. The information below is **subject to change** as per directives from the Ministry of Health & Auckland Cemeteries.

ALERT LEVEL 4 DIRECTIVES: Stay at Home and remain in your bubble. All gatherings in your home, mosques or public places have been curtailed. Please maintain a Social Distance of 2 meters during emergency movement outside your bubble. **Only a registered funeral director will handle the entire funeral process.** The Funeral home will follow a strict set of guidelines and we are obliged to follow these. A maximum of 2 qualified Muslim Funeral Service providers may be allowed to perform ghusl (ritual washing) and kafan (shroud wrapping) subject to the directives and wellbeing of the funeral home. No viewing by the family or friends will be allowed at the Funeral Home. This entire procedure will take place under the discretion, supervision, and control of the funeral home. As Muslims, we need to play our role for the safety of all with respect for the rules implemented. May the Rahma (mercy) of ALLAH (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) be with all of you during these challenging times as this variant is more contagious, virulent, deadly, and easily transferable.

- 1  **1. When you have a death in the family contact your Muslim Service provider for them to arrange the appointed Funeral Home to handle the entire janaza.**
- 2  2. The body should not be handled if death occurred at home. The Funeral Home will move and transport the Body to their premises. The funeral director will operate strictly according to their prescribed directives from the Ministry of Health which we need to observe with respect.
- 3  3. If it is a confirmed COVID-19 death, the body may be placed in a sealed body bag and not to be opened for ghusl and kafan unless the funeral director is directed otherwise by the clinical disease experts. The body will be transferred directly to the Cemetery, wrapped in ritual shroud for final prayer and burial. **If permitted** for ghusl and kafan to take place, only the selected Muslim representatives with proper PPE will be allowed in. All procedures with the preparation will take place under the Funeral Home's supervision, directives, and confined space. Names, address, and contact details of the representatives to be provided to the Funeral Home. No family will be allowed to attend this preparation phase. The appointed Funeral Home will provide you with all their latest directives, restrictions, and rules of engagement.



4		<p>4. If it is a non-COVID-19 death the body will also be taken to the appointed funeral home. Only the selected Muslim representatives will perform the preparation under the Funeral Home's supervision, directives, and allocated space. Contact details need to be provided to the funeral home. Full PPE will be supplied by the Funeral Home. No kissing of the deceased will be allowed. Gender sensitivity to be observed. If you don't observe the funeral home rules you could be reported to a support authority.</p>
5		<p>5. The funeral home will provide you with directives and restrictions of the Cemetery for burial. We need to follow their directives and obey their rules strictly as they are accountable to follow all the directives of COVID-19 Level 4 Lockdown. Janaza salaah can be held at the Funeral Home.</p>
6		<p>6. The deceased will be transported to the cemetery by the funeral home in their hearse. No family members will be allowed at the cemetery. This is subject to the discretion of the Funeral Home as well as the latest directives from the Health and Cemetery authorities.</p>
7		<p>7. Burials will take place as quickly as possible. No family or friends will be allowed at the cemetery. The deceased will be lowered into the grave by the appointed Muslim Service members, with the assistance of the cemetery sextons, into a Muslim allocated grave resting on its right shoulder facing Qibla. A final supplication will be read by the Muslim service members present.</p>
8		<p>8. Funeral director will be present to supervise the burial at the cemetery with the assistance of the Muslim Service Provider. There will be minimum contact with the bereaved family. No one can visit the bereaved family's home to sympathise nor attend any reception, memorial services or functions taking place indoors or outdoors. NO CONGREGATIONS.</p>



STAY HOME 🌸 OWN BUBBLE 🌸 STAY SAFE 🌸 SAVE LIVES 🌸
WE ARE ALL IN IT TOGETHER TO KEEP EVERYONE SAFE FROM COVID-19

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Abdalqadir as-Sufi passes away

In the February 2021 issue of *Rocket Science*, an article described how the title for the Eric Clapton song *Layla* was suggested by Abdalqadir as-Sufi, a Scottish convert originally named Ian Dallas.

It is with sadness that we report that he passed away peacefully in his sleep recently¹ at the age of 90.

The British Muslim writer and academic, Yahya Birt, said, "Like only a few of his predecessors who had converted to Islam in Britain, Sheikh Abdalqadir not only embraced the religion (in 1967 at the Qarawiyyin in Fez) but undertook to make the British peoples aware of Islam, and in more than 50 years of unstinting effort he spread the message of the primordial Islam of Medina, the first realised Muslim community, with clarity, commitment and frankness.

"Hundreds if not thousands came to Islam through his hands. Sheikh Abdalqadir and the worldwide movement he established lay at the juncture between Islam and the countercultural movement of the 1960s; in a way, it was a radical return to tradition that had turned full circle.

"Two other elements remained distinct in his critique of secular modernity: his insistence that traditional Islam could only be truly revived with its political and economic foundations intact and integral to its spiritual heart. He was no quietist Sufi but a prophetic voice who was often prepared to stand up for the truth regardless of how much it would irk the liberal elites."

1 5pillarsuk.com/2021/08/02/prominent-sufi-leader-dr-abdalqadir-as-sufi-dies



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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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)