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In the name of Allah,
most Gracious, most Merciful

Thinking the best of other people

Islam teaches us to be optimistic and think the best of other people. When we are encountering a situation, where the meaning is not apparent to us, Islam teaches us to give other believers the benefit of the doubt. That is, we do not think evil of the other person, we do not associate an event with a bad interpretation, we do not give a negative meaning to the person or his behaviour, etc. Rather, we ensure we always give them the benefit of the doubt, or suppose a positive interpretation of the situation.

Allah (swt) says in the Quran (49:12), "O believers! Avoid many suspicions, for indeed, some suspicions are sinful. And do not spy, nor backbite one another. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of their dead brother? You would despise that! And fear Allah. Surely Allah is the Acceptor of Repentance, Most Merciful."

Allah instructs us to avoid most of the assumptions, as some assumptions are sinful, and Allah (swt) will discredit you, or possibly punish you for your sinful assumptions.

Prophet Muhammad (saw) said, "Beware of suspicion, for suspicion is the worst of false tales; and do not look for others' faults and do

not spy, and do not be jealous of one another, and do not desert (cut your relationship with) one another, and do not hate one another; and O Allah's worshippers! be brothers (as Allah has ordered you!)" (Bukhari).

This beautiful hadith begins by instructing us to avoid suspicion, as suspicion is a form of possible lying or telling false tales. He goes on to say that we should not spy on each other or be jealous, but rather be brothers to one another in good company, as Allah (swt) has ordered us.

You may remember the incident involving Aishah (ra), often referred to as the "incident of the slander". She accompanied Prophet Muhammad (saw) on one of his campaigns, but while returning, she lost a necklace in the desert, and lagged behind the caravan alone to search for it. The rest of the caravan continued, assuming that Aishah was amongst them. However, Aishah returned to the previous campsite and remained there hoping that people would eventually notice that she was missing and come looking for her.

A sahabi named Safwan was riding behind the army, met Aishah, and let her ride his camel, leading it

on foot, to the next campsite. People then started spreading slanderous rumours about Aishah and Safwan, understandably causing distress to Aishah, Muhammad and Abu Bakr (ra, her father).

In response to this episode, Allah (swt) revealed in the Quran (24:11-12), "Indeed, those who came up with that outrageous slander are a group of you. Do not think this is bad for you. Rather, it is good for you. They will be punished, each according to their share of the sin. As for their mastermind, he will suffer a tremendous punishment. If only the believing men and women had thought well of one another, when you heard this rumour, and said, 'This is clearly an outrageous slander!'"

Allah (swt) is asking why they did not think of the good, positive interpretation of this incident when they heard about it, especially taking into account the good moral character of Aishah and the sahabi. Why did they have to resort to a bad, negative, evil assumption about this event? Allah goes on to say that people who spread suspicions, slander and lies will be punished severely for spreading false tales.

Steps to avoid suspicion

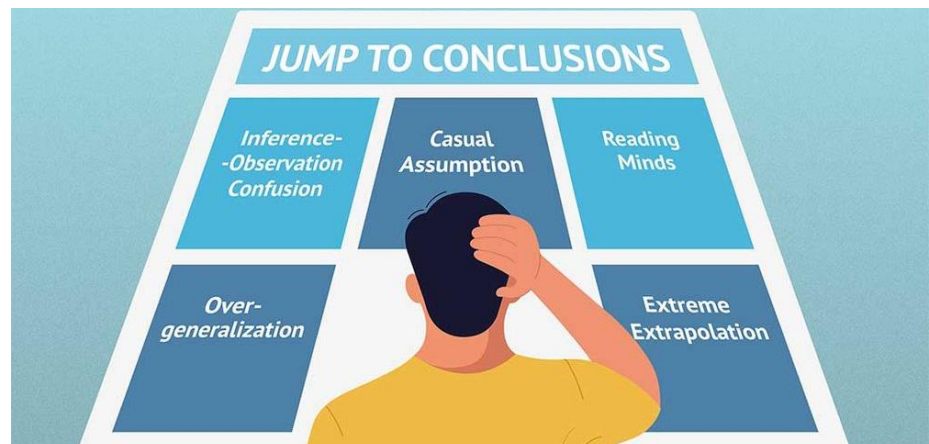
Stop being inquisitive

Stop caring about other people's lives. What they do and don't do is their business. We do not need to get involved in it, unless specifically asked by them. This reduces the amount of suspicion and interpretation of events in other people's lives.

Prophet Muhammad (saw) said, "Part of the perfection of one's Islam is his leaving that which does not concern him" (At-Tirmidhi).

Control your ego

Often we interpret a generic statement as being about ourselves in a negative manner. The person who said it may not have been referring to you at all. It is our ego that starts wondering if this statement was about us. We then start to investigate and interpret these statements, sometimes in a negative, suspicious matter. The best defence is to have a thick skin and tell yourself that "It isn't about me" or "I do not have the full context, therefore I will give him the benefit of the doubt."



Find an explanation that gives you a way out

If you think strongly that the statement was about you, then give yourself a positive statement about the event. Say things to yourself such as "Maybe he meant A, B or C when he said that, not me."

Psychologists have a technique where they ask their patients to think of the situation that bothers them, and then to think of evidence that supports their thoughts, and finally evidence that is against their thoughts. This helps them open up their mind, and assign positive or balanced meanings to the event so that they can get past this worry.

As reported in a hadith of Muslim, a desert Arab came to Allah's Messenger (saw) and said, "My wife has given birth to a jet black skinned child and I have disowned him." Thereupon Allah's Messenger said, "Do you have you any camels?" He said, "Yes." He said, "What colours are they?" He said, "They are red." He said, "Are there any *awraq* (silver-coloured) ones amongst them?" He said, "Yes." Allah's Messenger said, "How has it come about?" He said, "Messenger of Allah, it is perhaps due to a hereditary gene of it being drawn out." Whereupon the Holy Prophet said, "This child may be due to a hereditary gene of the child being drawn out."

Verify and confirm

If the suspicious thought is still within you, you need to verify and confirm your assumption. If somebody comes and says something to you, you need to ask someone else who was at that

gathering or knows about the story, and verify and confirm that your understating is correct. This may be a last resort before talking to the person himself.

An article in the April 2022 issue of *Rocket Science*¹ emphasised the importance of checking sources of information, and asking someone with authority, qualifications and experience, who you can rely on to give the correct answer. This is especially important with material taken from the internet and social media, as anyone can write anything there, without it being edited or checked.

Allah (swt) says in the Quran (49:6), "O believers, if an evildoer brings you any news, verify it so you do not harm people unknowingly, becoming regretful for what you have done."

Ask the person

As a final resort, you should ask the person (confront them) in a warm, gentle manner about the incident and ask for a clarification. It is important to have an open mind when approaching the person, so as not to be influenced by your own assumptions. It may save your relationship with them. "Brother, this has occurred, and I want to understand what this is and want some clarification from you."

The Prophet (saw) never made a judgement without verifying the statement. Ubaidullah bin Abi Rafi (ra) reported that he heard Ali (ra) say, "Allah's Apostle sent me, Az-Zubair and Al-Miqdad (ra) somewhere, saying, 'Proceed till you reach Rawdat Khakh. There you will find a lady with a letter. Take the letter from her.'

"So, we set out and our horses ran at full pace till we got at Ar-Rawda where we found the lady and said (to her), 'Take out the letter.' She replied, 'I have no letter with me.'

"We said, 'Either you take out the letter or else we will take off your clothes.' So, she took it out of her braid. We brought the letter to Allah's Apostle and it contained a statement from Hatib bin Abi Balta'ah (a sahabi, ra) to some of the Meccan pagans informing them of some of the intentions of Allah's Apostle. Then Allah's Apostle said, 'O Hatib! What is this?'

"Hatib replied, 'O Allah's Apostle! Don't hasten to give your judgement about me. I was a man closely connected with the Quraish, but I did not belong to this tribe, while the other emigrants with you had their relatives in Mecca who would protect their dependants and property. So, I wanted to recompense for my lacking blood relation to them by doing them a favour so that they might protect my dependants. I did this neither because of disbelief nor apostasy nor out of preferring disbelief (kufr) to Islam.'

"Allah's Apostle said, 'Hatib has told you the truth.'

"Umar (ra) said, 'O Allah's Apostle! Allow me to chop off the head of this hypocrite.'

"Allah's Apostle said, 'Hatib participated in the battle of Badr, and who knows, perhaps Allah has already looked at the Badr warriors and said, "Do whatever you like, for I have forgiven you"" (Ibn Kathir).

The lesson to be taken from this hadith is that, even with an event as serious as treason, the Prophet (saw) did not issue a judgement without first verifying it.

Conclusion

Everybody, at one time or another, will knowingly or unknowingly make an assumption about a situation or someone. Most of the time, these are not serious and we can brush them off after a bit of time or some clarification. At other times, these can bother us severely and we need to actively take steps to ensure that we do not fall into the traps of Shaitan and assume the worst about a person or situation. In this way, we can avoid the punishment for spreading lies, and continue to maintain good relationships with these people. We ask Allah (swt) to open our minds, and help us see a situation for what it is, and think the best of other people.

1 mtabertislamiccentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Rocket-Science-Apr-2022.pdf



As human beings we suffer from an innate tendency to jump to conclusions; to judge people too quickly and to pronounce them failures or heroes without due consideration of the actual facts and ideals of the period.

— Prince Charles —

AZ QUOTES

Eid Mubarak stamps

NZ Post recently issued the first set of stamps depicting Islamic art. They went on sale at the beginning of April to coincide with the holy month of Ramadan.

The stamps were designed by Muhammad Waqas and his wife Sameera. Originally from Pakistan, they live in Wellington and have carried out similar graphic art work for FIANZ.

“Such initiatives are great examples of inclusivity and recognition of the minorities amongst us,” Muhammad Waqas says. “We feel very blessed, proud and honoured that we have been part of this historic project. New Zealanders will be able to see the beauty of Islamic art through these stamps. New Zealand is such an amazing country and Wellington has a great community who will help you with anything.”

NZ Post Collectables Programme and Content Manager Lynette Townsend said the stamps were visually powerful and were a great example of how we are representing New Zealand’s ethnic diversity. “These stamps not only represent the dozens of nationalities, languages, customs and traditions within the New Zealand Muslim community, but also reflect NZ Post’s commitment to acknowledging the diversity of New Zealand’s population.”

Unless stocks are exhausted earlier, these stamps will remain on sale until 5 April 2023. First day covers will remain on sale until 5 June 2022.





Sadio Mané



Mo Salah



Naby Keita



Ibrahima Konate

Liverpool FC recognises Ramadan

Sadio Mané is a Senegalese footballer who plays as a striker for Liverpool FC. We have mentioned him several times in *Rocket Science* because he is a devout Muslim and has built a school and hospital for his village in Senegal¹, as well as contributing to the Senegalese government in the fight against coronavirus.

The Liverpool squad contains other Muslim stars: Egyptian Mohamed (Mo) Salah, Guinean Naby Keita, and Frenchman Ibrahima Konate of Malian descent.

In an interview with beIN Sports^{2,3}, Mané discussed the fasting situation. During Ramadan (April), sunrise in Liverpool was before 6 am and sunset was around 8.30 pm. This imposed problems for training, and for playing matches. Mane explained, "It's not easy because playing and training and doing Ramadan is not easy at all. But before Ramadan we tried to speak with the captain to tell the boss, 'Maybe can we change the schedule and train in the morning?'"

The Liverpool captain Jordan Henderson spoke to manager Jurgen Klopp on behalf of the Muslim players, and the manager agreed to move training sessions from the afternoon to the morning. Mané reported, "We train in the morning, so it's easier for us. If you train in the morning, you have time to rest and go home for the day.

"It'll be tough if not because if you train around 2 pm, 3 pm, it's going to be tough. I think that makes things easier and we're trying to do our best.

"I think we and Liverpool, to try and make things easier for us, speak with our nutritionist especially before the game. She makes everything easier for us to make sure we can do our Ramadan."

Mané was speaking before the 27 April first leg UEFA Champions League tie against Villarreal. As the match started at 8 pm, players broke their fast during the game. Fasting clearly did not affect their performance, as Liverpool won 2-0. Salah and Konate played the full match, while Mané scored the second goal and was substituted in the 73rd minute. Keita made a 20-minute cameo in the second half after replacing Henderson.

1 [mtaltbertislamiccentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Rocket-Science-Jun-2020.pdf](https://www.mtaltbertislamiccentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Rocket-Science-Jun-2020.pdf)

2 https://twitter.com/beINSPORTS_EN/status/1519292779943403520?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etwembed%7Ctwterm%5E1519292779943403520%7Ctwgr%5E%7Ctwcon%5E1_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.si.com%2Ffannation%2Fsoccer%2Ffutbol%2Fnews%2Fsadio-mane-on-ramadan-for-muslim-liverpool-players

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Blackburn Rovers FC recognises Ramadan

Blackburn is a large industrial town located in Lancashire, 50 kilometres from Liverpool. It has a population of 115,500, making it the largest

borough in the wider Lancashire area. 31% of the residents are Muslim, and there are more than 40 mosques.



Masjid e Tauheedul Islam, Blackburn

Blackburn Rovers are the local football team, currently playing in the Championship. The club has had its ups and downs, the highlight being winning the Premier League title in the 1994–95 season, with Kenny Dalglish as manager and several high-profile players, notably striker Alan Shearer.

This year, Blackburn became the first football club in the UK to host Eid prayers. About 2,000 people celebrated Eid ul-Fitr on the pitch of their ground, Ewood Park.

A report from the Lancashire Telegraph¹ stated that buses had been laid on by organisers to encourage people to travel together to and from the stadium.

Yasir Sufi, integration manager at the club, said, "We live and breathe, one town, one club, one community. An event like this shows this better than anything else. It shows that we are all one. No matter who you are or what your identity is, the football club is somewhere where you belong."²





1 [indianexpress.com/article/sports/football/blackburn-becomes-first-english-football-club-to-host-aid-prayers-at-the-stadium-7898234/](https://www.indianexpress.com/article/sports/football/blackburn-becomes-first-english-football-club-to-host-aid-prayers-at-the-stadium-7898234/)
2 www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-lancashire-61300097

Why you should avoid catching Covid

COVID-19, as its name suggests, has been with us for a couple of years; the 19 stands for 2019, when it was first detected in China. COVID-19 quickly became simply COVID, and then was respelt as Covid, without all capitals. Nowadays, people use the term Omicron almost as much as they do Covid.

Naming Covid variants

The virus that causes COVID-19 is called SARS-CoV-2 by scientists, hardly a name that trips off the tongue. Readers may remember SARS (an acronym for severe acute respiratory syndrome) from 2003, when it originated in China, and spread to many countries, mostly in East and Southeast Asia¹. Al hamdu lillah, it did not last beyond 2004.

The current virus has mutated into variants. For example, the highly transmissible variant of coronavirus that emerged in India in 2020 was labelled B.1.617.2 by scientists. Clearly a less technical term was needed for general use, and so the World Health Organisation² decided to name the variants after letters of the Greek alphabet, and called the Indian one Delta, the fourth letter.

Omicron is the 15th letter of the Greek alphabet. The word *omicron* means "small o", that is, a short o vowel sound. This is in contrast to *omega* "big o", a long o vowel sound.

Does that mean that we have had 14 previous variants? Not quite. There have been 12 previous variants. The Greek letters Nu and

Xi were skipped. The WHO confirmed³ that Nu was considered too easily confusable with *new*, and Xi is a common Chinese family name (and also coincidentally the name of the Chinese president, Xi Jinping).

The Islamic viewpoint

The April 2020 issue of *Rocket Science*⁴, at the start of the outbreak, contained an article outlining what the sources of Islam, the Quran and the hadiths, say about how Muslims should behave and feel during outbreaks. Some of those quotations are reproduced here.

In the Quran (5:32), Allah (swt) explicitly states the overriding

Αα Alpha <i>al-fah</i>	Ββ Beta <i>bay-tah</i>	Γγ Gamma <i>gam-mah</i>	Δδ Delta <i>del-tah</i>	Εε Epsilon <i>ep-si-lon</i>
Ζζ Zeta <i>zay-tah</i>	Ηη Eta <i>ay-tah</i>	Θθ Theta <i>thay-tah</i>	Ιι Iota <i>eye-o-tah</i>	Κκ Kappa <i>cap-ah</i>
Λλ Lambda <i>lamb-dah</i>	Μμ Mu <i>mew</i>	Νν Nu <i>new</i>	Ξξ Xi <i>zz-eye</i>	Οο Omicron <i>om-e-cron</i>
Ππ Pi <i>pie</i>	Ρρ Rho <i>roe</i>	Σσς Sigma <i>sig-mah</i>	Ττ Tau <i>taw</i>	Υυ Upsilon <i>oop-si-lon</i>
Φφ Phi <i>fie</i>	Χχ Chi <i>k-eye</i>	Ψψ Psi <i>sigh</i>	Ωω Omega <i>o-may-gah</i>	

principle of preserving life: "Whoever saves a life, it will be as if they saved all of humanity." The preservation of life – both one's own, and that of others – relates to the taking of sensible precautions, in the case of Covid, by being vaccinated, wearing a mask, etc.

The importance of patience in times of trials is emphasised in many places in the Quran, eg "Be patient. Indeed, Allah is with those who are patient" (8:46), "Only those who are patient shall receive their rewards in full, without limit" (39:10).

The Quran tells the story of several peoples and tribes, and catastrophes that befell them, in order to emphasise the importance of learning from them, with understanding. For example, Surah al-Ankabut describes the people of Lot (Lut, as), Midian, Ad, Thamud, and the Pharaoh, all of whom suffered calamities. Allah (swt) comments, "And such are the parables We set for mankind but none will understand them except those who have knowledge" (29:43). "Thus, it is the duty of humans to understand all that is happening (including disasters) and find their solution, for living and survival"⁵. The solution to Covid will, insha Allah, be found in the research data and vaccines produced by qualified scientists, some of them Muslim – not in the unsubstantiated claims and opinions of bloggers.

Personal hygiene in general is emphasised for all Muslims: "Cleanliness is half of faith (iman)" (Muslim).

Specifically, washing hands, as all Muslims do before the five daily prayers, is stressed. Prophet

Muhammad (saw) explained to a group of people. "If there was a river at your door and he took a bath in it five times a day, would you notice any dirt on him?" They said, "Not a trace of dirt would be left." The Prophet said, "That is the parable of the five prayers by which Allah removes sins" (Bukhari). From the hygiene point of view, the hands are cleaned (at least) five times a day, and the regular use of sanitiser to ensure that no Covid is transmitted via the hands is similarly important.

Muslims wash other parts during wudu before prayer: hair, face, hands, arms, feet (and optionally ears and nose). This is a ritual washing but also ensures these parts are hygienically clean.

Prophet Muhammad (saw) instructs us to avoid spreading a virus: "If you hear that a plague has hit a land, do not go to it; if it breaks out in a land where you are present, do not leave" (Bukhari).

Anti-vaxxers should take heed of Prophet Muhammad's advice in the following hadith. Some desert Arabs asked him, "Messenger of Allah, should we make use of medical treatment?" He replied, "Make use of medical treatment, for Allah has not made a disease without appointing a remedy for it, with the exception of one disease, namely old age" (Abu Daud). Highly-qualified scientists (virologists) at the world's leading universities and medical institutes have worked hard to develop vaccines that provide good protection against Covid. Research has produced data that show the reduction is 95% (infection cases)⁶, 96% (hospitalisations)⁷, and 80 to 90% (hospitalisations and deaths)⁸.

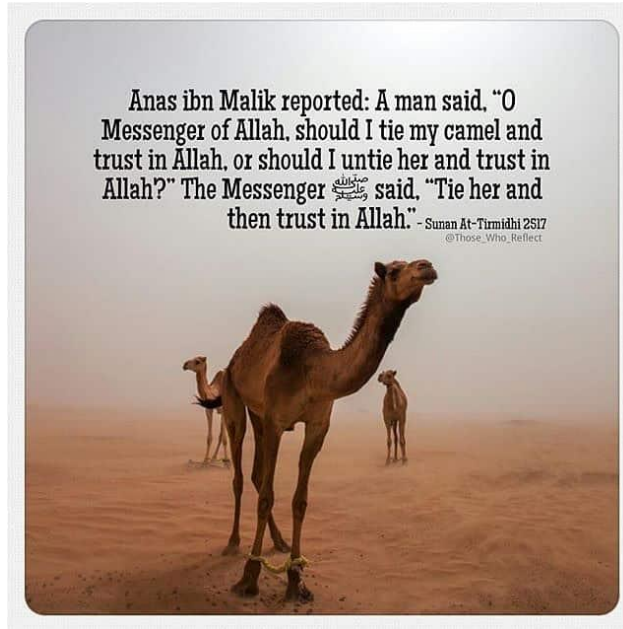
In short, as Prophet Muhammad (saw) advised, "Trust in Allah, but tie up your camel", that is, take all sensible precautions notified by the government and medical authorities. This includes being vaccinated, wearing a mask, sanitising your hands, and avoiding direct physical contact with others, eg do not shake hands and hug other Muslims, as you might do under non-Covid conditions.

It is disappointing to note that some mosques in New Zealand have had to shut for about a week, and be deep cleaned, because worshippers have flouted these guidelines from the government, medical authorities, FIANZ, the Quran and hadiths.

The danger of complacency

When COVID-19 first broke out, in 2019, everyone was very worried about it. It was The Unknown, and nobody knew exactly what it was, where it came from, how easily it was transmitted, how deadly it could prove, etc. We all took quickly to the conditions of lockdown, wearing masks, staying at home as much as possible, avoiding contact, etc. Asians may have been particularly acutely aware of this, and thus have followed the guidelines very strictly, as they may have had first-hand experience of the SARS outbreak in 2003.

However, after two years, fatigue and complacency have set in for some people. We now know much better what Covid is and what we should do to avoid it. Nevertheless, there are still large numbers of infections and deaths per day in New Zealand. At the time of writing, there were over 8,000 new daily cases, and over 20 daily



deaths. Since the outbreak began, there have been nearly a million cases in New Zealand – nearly a fifth of the population – and there continue to be large numbers of new cases every day.

Long Covid

You still hear people say, "I had Covid and I'm glad I got it over with". Or, worse, they say "I wish I could catch Covid and get it over with."

They may not know that 5% to 10% of people catching Covid will later develop "long Covid"⁹ (more formally called post-acute sequelae of Covid-19, or PASC).

Weeks after the initial Covid infection has passed, long Covid can occur. Health Navigator NZ¹⁰ points out, "There is no test for long COVID and the symptoms people experience are highly varied and may be different from the typical COVID-19 symptoms. There appears to be no specific time course, symptoms may improve one week and relapse the next." It lists the following reported symptoms of long Covid.

General symptoms

- Fatigue (extreme tiredness)
- Fever
- Pain
- Gastrointestinal symptoms
- Abdominal (stomach) pain
- Nausea (feeling sick) and vomiting (being sick)
- Diarrhoea
- Weight loss
- Reduced appetite

Cardiovascular symptoms

- Chest tightness
- Chest pain
- Palpitations (skipped, extra or irregular heartbeats)

Neurological symptoms

- Cognitive impairment ('Brain fog', loss of concentration or memory problems)
- Headache
- Sleep problems
- Pins and needles, or numbness
- Dizziness
- Delirium (in older people)
- Mobility impairment
- Visual disturbance
- Musculoskeletal symptoms
- Joint pain
- Muscle pain

Ear, nose and throat symptoms

- Tinnitus (ringing in the ears)
- Earache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste and/or smell
- Nasal congestion (blocked nose)

Respiratory symptoms

- Breathlessness
- Cough

Long Covid can cause organ damage even in those who think they're fully recovered from their original bout of Covid. A report in the *British Medical Journal*¹¹ revealed a 33-fold increase in the risk of blood clots and a surge in other post-Covid complications such as heart problems and stroke.

It even affects your brain.

Researchers at the University of Oxford¹² comparing brain scans of people before and after a Covid infection showed greater brain shrinkage and damage than in an uninfected control group.

Some people with long Covid can still function and live a semi-normal life, some have been unable to return to work, and others are bedbound. It's affecting millions of people around the world.

It's untrue that only those with severe Covid will develop long Covid. Many people had a mild initial case; some had asymptomatic Covid (no symptoms at all) before developing long Covid.

The "Omicron is mild" narrative misleads people into thinking they will be alright as long as they don't end up in hospital. However, the transmissibility of Omicron means the number of people developing long Covid is actually increasing.

Something else that people forget is that even if you have had Covid once, you may still get it again. Some people have had it three times. It is not like diseases like chickenpox where, if you catch it once (often in childhood), you are unlikely to catch it again in your lifetime. People who hoped for herd immunity for Covid (through a combination of exposure and vaccines) reckoned without the growing number of repeat infections of Covid, which further increases the individual's risk of long Covid. And vaccines – vital as they are – only reduce the likelihood of long Covid by about half.

Very few people are speaking out about long Covid, perhaps because it goes against the narrative of “learning to live with the virus” and “getting back to normal”.

Karl Lauterbach is professor of health economics and epidemiology at the University of Cologne, and currently the German Federal Minister of Health. He is something like the German equivalent of New Zealand’s Dr Ashley Bloomfield, as “during the COVID-19 pandemic, his name became well known in Germany, through his frequent appearances on television talk shows as an invited guest expert”¹³.

He is certainly speaking out about long Covid. In a tweet (in German) he warned “In a few years we will see [the] full extent of long Covid. Now everyone should try to avoid infection. Even if the course is mild, there is a risk that life will change. Nobody likes to hear it, but that’s the way it is.”¹⁴

We all need to continue to take precautions. Get vaccinated. Have the booster. Wash your hands thoroughly. Wear masks in crowded places. Minimise physical contact. Covid is not like the common cold or flu.



Karl Lauterbach



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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.

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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)