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# Rocket Science

December 2022

Jumad al-Awal / Jumad al-Akhir 1444



In the name of Allah,  
most Gracious, most Merciful



## Goodbye

This is the final issue of *Rocket Science*. For various reasons, it has been decided to discontinue it.

Notable events

### *Christchurch earthquakes*

*Rocket Science's* first issue was January 2011. This was not long after the first Christchurch earthquake on 4 September 2010<sup>1</sup>. The 7.1 magnitude quake caused considerable damage but limited human casualties: Two people were seriously injured, one by a collapsing chimney and a second by flying glass, and two deaths during the quake, one of a heart attack and the other after a fall.

This was followed six months later by a second earthquake<sup>2</sup> which, although smaller at 6.3 magnitude, caused greater damage and 185 deaths, because of the previous quake, and because of its shallowness beneath the earth. The local – especially Somali migrant – Muslim community helped in the aid effort to those affected, by handing out free food. A Somali **community leader said**, "We come from a disaster country. We know how to survive and how to help each other. That way we can help our host community that helped us and welcomed us."<sup>3</sup>

### *2011 Rugby World Cup*

As the world knows, New Zealand is rugby-crazy. The 2011 Rugby World Cup was held in New Zealand by the International Rugby Board. The All Blacks won the cup, and one of its star players was Sonny Bill Williams<sup>4</sup>, who had converted to Islam two years earlier.

### *Homosexual "marriage"*

In 2013, the New Zealand House of Representatives passed a bill making homosexual "marriage" legal. Several *Rocket Science* articles around that time pointed out that it is totally contrary to the teachings of Islam, and is fundamentally different from heterosexual marriage.

### *Conversion stories*

*Rocket Science* has often carried stories of conversions to Islam. Among the most surprising of these are people who were originally vigorously anti-Islam. Arnoud van Doorn was a member of the Dutch Party for Freedom, which produced anti-Islam films under the leadership of Geert Wilders. However, after finding out about Islam, he converted<sup>5</sup>. His son, now known as Iskander, converted shortly after<sup>6</sup>.



A few years later, yet another member of Wilders' party also converted, Joram van Klaveren<sup>7</sup>.

In Germany, a member of the right-wing anti-Islam Alternative for Germany party, Arthur Wagner, also converted<sup>8</sup>.

It seems that the best way to convert Islamophobes is simply to inform them about Islam.

### Design

On the fourth anniversary of *Rocket Science* (January 2015), it was decided to change the design to one that has been used ever since.

### 2019 Christchurch shootings

The major event that shook Christchurch, New Zealand and the world was the mosque shootings on 15 March 2019<sup>9</sup>. It was difficult to know what to say in the face of the naked hatred that was unleashed on the Friday prayer congregations at two mosques. A total of 51 worshippers were killed in the attacks, this tally rising to 52 when a relative died at a funeral, reportedly from a heart attack. A further 40 worshippers suffered injuries of varying severity, some still receiving medical care. To this number can be added the families and friends of those who died, who are still suffering the loss.

### Covid

Coronavirus struck in early 2020. We repeated various Quranic ayats related to hygiene, such as wudu, as well as hadiths including **"Cleanliness is half of faith", and "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."**

### Credits

We would like to thank all those people who contributed to *Rocket Science* over the last 12 years:

Editor in chief: Dr Adam Brown

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### What next?

Now that *Rocket Science* will no longer appear, here are some suggestions for keeping up-to-date with modern Islam:

- Access the *Australasian Muslim Times* ([www.amust.com.au](http://www.amust.com.au)), a weekly online and printed newspaper.
- Bookmark (some of) the organisations listed on pages 25-27 which report current affairs, hold campaigns, initiate petitions, etc on Islamic matters.
- Read. The ayats first revealed to Prophet Muhammad (saw) started **"Iqra"** ("Read").

Also note that all the back issues of *Rocket Science* – 144 of them – are available on the Mount Albert Islamic Trust website:

[mtalbertislamiccentre.org/newsletters](http://mtalbertislamiccentre.org/newsletters)

1 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2010\_Canterbury\_earthquake  
 2 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011\_Christchurch\_earthquake  
 3 mtalbertislamiccentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Rocket-Science-April-2011.pdf  
 4 mtalbertislamiccentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Rocket-Science-Oct-2011.pdf  
 5 mtalbertislamiccentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Rocket-Science-Dec-2013.pdf  
 6 mtalbertislamiccentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Rocket-Science-May-2014.pdf  
 7 mtalbertislamiccentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Rocket\_Science\_Mar\_2019.pdf  
 8 mtalbertislamiccentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Rocket\_Science\_Feb\_2018.pdf  
 9 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christchurch\_mosque\_shootings

## Science, and belief in the unseen

Early in the Quran, Allah (swt) declares unambiguously that without believing in the unseen (having iman bil-ghaib), one cannot have the right guidance from the holy book: **"This** is the Book – there is no doubt about it, a guidance for those who are muttaqun (having taqwa, being God-conscious). Those who believe in the unseen, establish prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for **them**" (Surah al-Baqarah #2: 2-3).

The term **"unseen"** (ghaib) here includes many things: the Creator, the hereafter, angels, and the mysteries behind all kinds of worldly and heavenly phenomena. Significantly, the term of address **"Those** who believe in the **unseen"** occurs frequently in the Quran and Hadiths.

A basic Muslim belief

Belief in the unseen (iman bil-ghaib) is a precondition to becoming a Muslim, and becomes a part of the life of a believer. However, the extent of its meaning and significance becomes clearer only when one looks closely at the entire living and non-living world, and heavenly existence and phenomenology.

There is an apparent contradiction here. Muslims are not supposed to raise questions regarding this central element of faith, for to do so runs the risk of weakening **one's** iman.

However, living in this postmodern era with scientific realities and

riddles a part of our daily life, it is feasible to look at things from the different perspective of real-world events, as long as it benefits our understanding of the core concept of faith.

Indeed, Islamic teaching encourages us to observe natural phenomena to discover signs of the Creator. Allah (swt) urges in particular the people of understanding and reason to look deeply at the natural phenomena happening around us every day to comprehend the creation and the Creator. People of reason and understanding includes scientists, experts and philosophers. Allah repeatedly asks them to look around, and carry out research for **mankind's** benefit.

Allah (swt) encourages readers to use their reason: **"Indeed,** in the creation of the heavens and the earth; the alternation of the day and the night; the ships that sail the sea for the benefit of humanity; the rain sent down by Allah from the skies, reviving the earth after its death; the scattering of all kinds of creatures throughout; the shifting of the winds; and the clouds drifting between the heavens and the earth – in all of this are surely signs for people of **understanding"** (2: 164).

Similarly, **"Indeed,** in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of the day and night, there are signs for people of **reason"** (3: 190).

Albert Einstein was arguably the greatest scientist of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He wrote, "Science without religion is lame, religion without science is **blind**." Had Einstein studied the Quran, he might have modified his statement, as the Quran offers much by way of science. The Quran alone is sufficient as the ultimate source of knowledge to provide guidelines or explain any difficult phenomenon (worldly or heavenly).

Science remains unable to explain some complex issues of worldly life and celestial phenomena, and continues to make discoveries, whereas Islam is complete. In the Quran, Allah (wt) says, "Today I have perfected your faith for you, completed My favour upon you, and chosen Islam as your **way**" (5:3).

Many scientific research projects have come up with conclusive evidence that confirms the Quranic viewpoint<sup>1</sup>: the availability of iron on Earth, the hydrodynamics and thermodynamics of sea waves, the meeting of seawater of differing salinity without mixing, the ever-expanding universe, black holes,

the stages of development of the human foetus inside a **mother's** womb, among others.

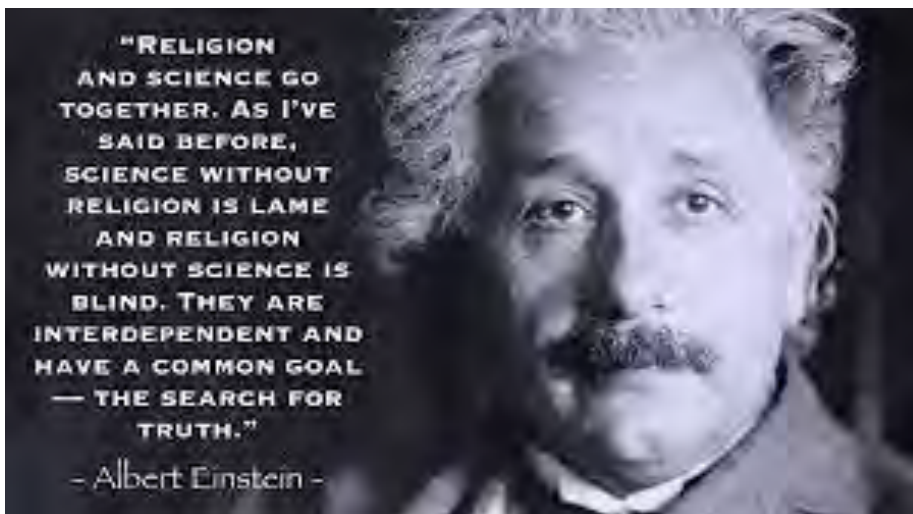
Each new scientific discovery raises new questions. New riddles surface for the scientific community (let alone ordinary members of the public), which can affirm **Muslims'** belief in the existence of the unseen. The recent discovery of a huge number of galaxies by the James Webb Space Telescope<sup>2</sup> is only one example.

Thus if modern science is unable to explain any difficult worldly life event or any extraterrestrial phenomena, it is because of human limitations.

#### Quantum Theory

According to the experts, Quantum Theory is the most outstanding contribution that scientists have made to the postmodern human life. Quantum Theory explains the atomic structure, why the elements react, why the alpha particles channel out of the nucleus, the stability of DNA formalism, etc. It gives accurate predictions of the operation of lasers and microchips. Quantum Theory is the basis around the explanation of almost all elemental interactions taking place every day around us in the world, our universe and beyond.

The basic principle of Quantum Theory was proposed in December 1900 by Max Planck, a German physicist. However, it was not well accepted by the scientific community until the Dane Neils Bohr at the October 1927 science conference in Brussels, Belgium, concluded the probabilistic interpretation of Quantum and established the set of ideas among the contemporary scientists.



However, Albert Einstein, who was present at the conference, debated that Quantum Theory defied the commonsense principle and was incomplete. When Hitler came to power in Germany in 1933, Einstein – a Jew – migrated to the USA and worked at Princeton University. With two junior colleagues (Boris Podolsky and Nathan Rosen) he was able to demonstrate by theoretical experiment that Quantum Theory is incomplete. Bohr did not accept the demonstration of **“incompleteness”**, claiming Einstein had assumed local conditions in the atomic system, meaning that all intra-atomic phenomena take place based on local factors.

The question remained whether this remarkable property of non-locality, or the existence of **Einstein’s** separateness, could ever be proven.

Three decades later, a Belfast physicist named John S. Bell developed an ingenious Inequality Principle, that nature is non-local, meaning that external factors are affecting the elemental interactions happening all around the multiverse, of which we are an integral part.

Further experiments carried out by John Clauser and others at the University of California Berkeley in 1978, and in particular by Alain **Aspect’s** group in Paris in 1982, verified **Bell’s** work.

**“Be”** and it is

This means that, in spite of local appearances of phenomena (physical and chemical, worldly and heavenly), they are in fact

supported and influenced by an invisible reality which is unmediated and allows communications faster than light, even instantaneously. Interactions under non-local invisible reality do not diminish with distance, but can act instantaneously (faster than the speed of light) linking locations without crossing space. This strongly favours the non-locality of nature (of our world and of the universe).

This strongly resembles the Holy **Quran’s** descriptions of this kind of phenomenon:

**“The** Originator of the heavens and the earth! When He decrees a matter, He simply tells it, **‘Be!’** And it **is!**” (2: 117)

**“Verily,** His command, when He intends a thing, is that He says to it, **‘Be!’** And it **is!**” (36: 82)

The question remains: Is this the invisible superpower unable to be seen or located (non-locality) having influence or control over all that modern science is believing in?

ESP

A popular example of non-locality that comes to mind is extrasensory perception (ESP). This phenomenon (also called the sixth sense) encompasses a wide range of paranormal abilities including telepathy and precognition. This **“superpower”** influences the phenomena taking place around us all the time and is another reminder to us of the Quranic directive of the existence of the unseen, and the need for belief in the unseen.

### Conclusion

John Archibald Wheeler (1911–2008), emeritus professor of Physics at Princeton University, was at the cutting edge of 20<sup>th</sup> century Theoretical Physics for over 60 years. He was noted for his endless efforts to comprehend all aspects of Quantum Theory. He has emphasised the central role of the observer in creating reality.

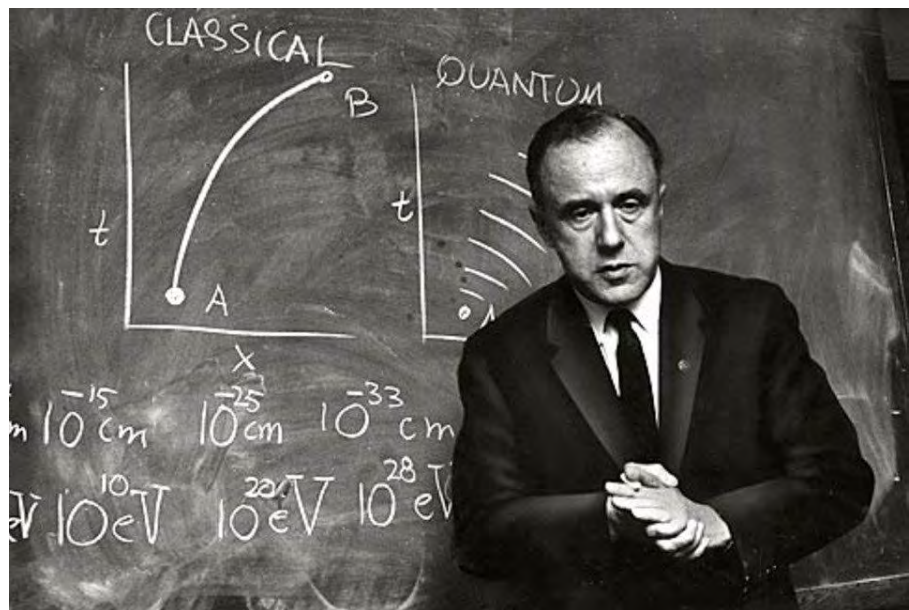
In 2000, he stated: "**December 2000** is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the greatest discovery ever made in the world of Physics, the Quantum. To celebrate, I would propose the title '**The Quantum: The glory and shame**'. Why '**glory**'? Because there is not a branch of Physics which the Quantum does not illuminate. The '**shame**', because we still do not know how come the **Quantum**?" This statement in itself is equivalent to surrendering to the unseen and unknown.

Muslims believe the Quran is the ultimate source of knowledge from Allah (swt), the Almighty, the Wise, All-Knowing, who has knowledge of the past and future, the vastness and complexities of the seen and unseen of nature (in contrast to human limitations).

In the Quran, belief in the unseen is stated as an essential precondition for one to attain proper guidance. Without this surrendering attitude to the unseen superpower, humankind is not able to achieve the goodness of this world and the Hereafter. The Quran encourages people of wisdom and knowledge to look around, and make efforts to comprehend the signs of the Creator, which will lead them to conviction on the essence of iman.

1 [www.islam-guide.com/frm-ch1.htm](http://www.islam-guide.com/frm-ch1.htm)

2 [webb.nasa.gov](http://webb.nasa.gov)



John Archibald Wheeler

## The All-Seeing

The starting point for this article is the panopticon. Most readers, on reading the word, will wonder what on earth it is, and what it has to do with Islam.

### Etymology

The historical origin (etymology) of the word is from Greek. *Pan* means "all", as in *pandemic*, a disease that does, or could, affect all people, such as *Covid*. *Optic* means "related to the eyes, or vision", as in an *optician*.

So, a panopticon is something with all, or at least many, eyes.

### Greek mythology

In the mythology of the ancient Greeks, the term was applied to Argus, a giant.

**"Argus Panoptes ... guardian of the heifer-nymph Io and son of Arestor and probably Mycene ... was a primordial giant whose epithet *Panoptes*, "all-seeing", led to his being described with multiple, often one hundred, eyes.**

**"The epithet *Panoptes*, reflecting his mythic role, set by Hera as a very effective watchman of Io, was described in a fragment of a lost poem *Aigimios*, attributed to Hesiod:**

**"And set a watcher upon her, great and strong Argus, who with four eyes looks every way. And the goddess stirred in him unwearying strength: sleep never fell upon his eyes; but he kept sure watch always."<sup>1</sup>**

So, the original panopticon was an all-seeing giant in Greek mythology, with many eyes – perhaps four, perhaps a hundred – at least some of which were awake

at any one time. The underlying essence is that it is all-seeing and keeping watch.

### In nature

One animal contains the epithet *panoptes* – the *Varanus panoptes*, also known as the yellow-spotted monitor, or Argus monitor, a kind lizard found in Australia and New Guinea. Its body is covered in many spots that resemble eyes.

Other animals have *argus* as the second part of their scientific names, again because they have many eye-like spots, for instance:

- the *Eremias argus*, commonly known as the Mongolia racerunner lizard
- the *Argusianus argus*, commonly known as the Great Argus pheasant, of Southeast Asia



Yellow-spotted monitor



Mongolia racerunner lizard



Bluespotted grouper



Great Argus pheasant



Eyed cowrie

- the *Cephalopholis argus*, commonly known as the bluespotted grouper, of the Indo-Pacific
- the *Arestorides argus*, commonly known as the eyed cowrie, a sea snail of the Indo-Pacific

### Bentham's panopticon

The concept of an all-seeing entity constantly keeping watch was used by the 18<sup>th</sup>-century English philosopher and social theorist Jeremy Bentham<sup>2</sup>. He applied it to the design of institutional **buildings, especially prisons**. "The concept of the design is to allow all prisoners of an institution to be observed by a single security guard, without the inmates being able to tell whether they are being watched. Although it is physically impossible for the single guard to observe all the inmates' cells at once, the fact that the inmates cannot know when they are being watched means that they are motivated to act as though they **are being watched at all times.**"<sup>2</sup>

The purpose is therefore to force inmates to regulate their own behaviour, because they cannot be sure when they are, and are not, being observed.

The prison was designed as a circular building, like a ring donut, with an inspection house at the centre. From the centre, the guard can monitor any of the prisoners, without any one prisoner knowing whether they are being monitored at any one time.

There are clear moral issues to such surveillance. However, it has been used since the 18<sup>th</sup> century for utilitarian considerations. For

**instance**, "In 2006, one of the first digital panopticon prisons opened near Amsterdam. Every prisoner in the Lelystad Prison wears an electronic tag and by design, only six guards are needed for 150 prisoners instead of the usual 15 or more."<sup>2</sup>

### Big Brother

The use of surveillance for the purposes of controlling a population has been called Big Brother<sup>3</sup>. This phrase comes from **George Orwell's 1949 novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four***. Big Brother is a – real or fictional – personification of Oceania, a totalitarian state where the ruling party wields total power. The people are reminded in displays **that "Big Brother is watching you."**

The phrase has come to refer to "any prying or overly-controlling **authority figure**"<sup>3</sup>, that is, any sinister surveillance without the **people's knowledge, approval or permission**.

### *The Truman Show*

Such sinister surveillance is behind the 1998 film *The Truman Show*<sup>4</sup>, starring Jim Carrey as Truman **Burbank**. "Truman Burbank is the unsuspecting star of *The Truman Show*, a reality television program filmed 24/7 through thousands of hidden cameras and broadcast to a worldwide audience. Christof, the show's creator and executive producer, seeks to capture Truman's authentic emotions and give audiences a relatable everyman. Truman has been the star of the show since he was born and the studio officially adopted **him.**"<sup>4</sup>



Jeremy Bentham's body is preserved in University College London



(Spoiler alert, in case you haven't seen the film) Truman gradually realises that his life and the city that he lives in are, in some way, fake. He escapes from his house, despite the ubiquitous cameras, sets sail in a yacht, but eventually crashes into the wall of the gigantic dome that is the set for the programme. He discovers a staircase leading to an exit door and, although Christof tries to convince him to stay, he leaves the set, presumably to find freedom and lead a more normal life on the outside.

#### Baby monitors

Baby monitors<sup>5</sup> are another form of surveillance. They are radio systems consisting of a microphone placed close to the sleeping baby, that transmits sounds to a receiver unit (nowadays often a smartphone) monitored by the parent or babysitter. When the baby wakes up and starts making sounds, the caregiver can immediately go to the bedroom and tend to the baby.

Some baby monitors have video as well as audio facilities, known as a baby cam.

#### Summary

All the above are surveillance systems that allow one person to observe another. However, there are important differences between them.

#### *With vs without knowledge*

Truman was blissfully unaware of the fact that his every movement was being monitored. Eventually, so many strange things happen

that he begins to suspect that his life is not all that it seems. His surveillance is without his knowledge.

**In Bentham's panopticon prison,** inmates know that they may be being observed, but cannot know whether they really are being observed at any one time. This surveillance is with their knowledge.

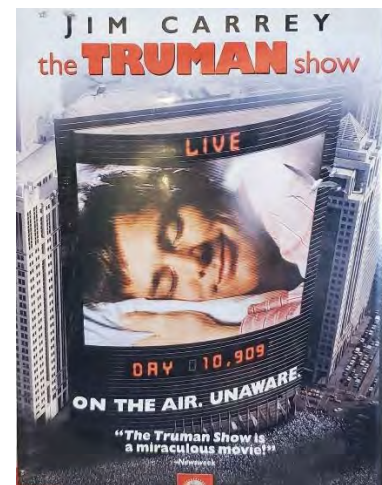
Nowadays, there are closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras in banks, airports, shopping centres, etc. As shoppers, we may not be aware exactly where they are located, but it does not surprise us to learn that we are being observed and videorecorded whenever we go into such places.

#### *Benevolent vs sinister purpose*

Most of these CCTV cameras are used for benevolent purposes. In banks, they give us a videorecording of a bank robbery, so that the robbers can be identified and arrested. In shopping centres, they can identify shoplifting. In airports, they can spot when unauthorised persons are in restricted areas.

Baby monitors are also clearly benevolent, in that they allow the caregiver to know when the baby has woken up, and go and check that all is well.

At the other extreme, the purpose of **Orwell's Big Brother is to control** their behaviour according to the desires of the totalitarian state.



For Truman, his freedom is curtailed in that he cannot leave the dome (although he does not know that he is in a dome). He has been conditioned to have a fear of the sea, as a result of a (faked) boating accident when he was young; this prevents him from trying to sail away. For him, the surveillance is unaware and controlling. However, from the **worldwide viewing audience's point of view**, *The Truman Show* provides round-the-clock entertainment and comfort, so may be construed as more benevolent.

#### *Consequences*

The consequences of rebelling **against Orwell's Big Brother** are dire. They are sent to the dreaded **"Room 101"** as a looming punishment. Room 101 is the basement torture chamber in the Ministry of Love (a name that is the exact opposite of what it really is), in which the Party attempts to subject a prisoner to their own worst nightmare, fear or phobia, with the objective of breaking down their resistance.



**The purpose of Bentham's** panopticon is to make prisoners behave as if they are being watched 24/7. In short, compliant, peaceful behaviour is aimed for, because undesirable behaviour (fights, escape attempts, etc) may lead to longer imprisonment.

A historical example<sup>6</sup> of the consequences of (lack of) observation relates to the Argentina vs England quarter finals match of the 1986 FIFA World Cup, when Diego Maradona put the ball in the back of the England net for a 1-0 lead. However, England players immediately complained to the referee that Maradona had punched the ball into the net with his left hand, and slow-motion replays on television confirmed this.

The referee, Tunisian Ali Bin Nassar, did not have a clear view of the incident<sup>7</sup>, and transferred the responsibility of awarding the goal (or not) to the linesman, Bulgarian Bogdan Dotchev. Neither the referee or linesman disallowed the goal. So, a worldwide TV audience of many millions could see it clearly, but the goal was awarded. Dotchev, who passed away in 2017, admitted that "the ghost of this match will probably haunt me to the grave. ... Linesmen didn't have the powers they have now to disallow goals, call fouls for **cards etc.**"<sup>7</sup>

In any case, it is doubtful that Maradona would have been able to head the ball into the net, as he was one of the shortest players on the pitch at only 1.65m, and the England goalkeeper, Peter Shilton, was 1.83m and could use his raised hands.

After the match, which Argentina won, Maradona brushed off allegations of cheating by stating it was **"a little with the head of Maradona, and a little with the hand of God."** This is untrue, as the ball did not touch Maradona's head in this incident, and it is doubtful that God would approve of such cheating.

Maradona would not have got away with such cheating today, because of VAR (video assistant referee). This is the technological system used in the top division of most countries, whereby all the cameras that are recording the play are linked to a control room, with a fourth official. Incidents can be replayed, and a decision made as to whether a goal was legal, a player was offside, a foul was worthy of a yellow/red card, etc. If necessary, the referee can be called to view the incident in slow-motion reply on a monitor at the side of the pitch, and make the final decision.

**In today's environment (and especially in a match as important as a World Cup quarter-final), VAR would have been consulted, the goal disallowed for handball, and Maradona probably shown a yellow card. The actual consequence in 1986 was that the goal was allowed and Argentina eventually won the World Cup.**

Maradona himself later admitted that he punched the ball into the net. When asked what would have happened if VAR had existed in **1986, he replied, "I would have been arrested,"**<sup>8</sup> for cheating in front of 80,000 in the stadium, and the worldwide TV audience.

Maradona, who passed away in 2020, will always be known as a

cheat for this incident, despite his otherwise excellent football skills.

### The All-Seeing in Islam

So, what has all this to do with Islam? The *asmaul husna*<sup>9</sup> are 99 names/epithets that describe the nature of Allah (swt). Among them is Al-Basir, **"the All-Seeing"**. Also among them are Al-Sami, **"the All-Hearing"**, and Al-Alim, **"the All-Knowing, Omniscient"**. That is, Muslims believe that Allah (swt) is in control of this world and sees, hears and knows everything, whether it is open or hidden.

If you like, we could say that Allah (swt) is a benevolent panopticon, CCTV or VAR. We are not of course saying that Allah literally has eyes that are like our eyes, or the eyes of animals. Instead, we are saying that He is informed of whatever happens, and whatever you do and think.

If we believe that Allah knows what you do and think, then clearly we should be doing whatever pleases Allah, with good intention. That is, our behaviour should be influenced by the fact that Allah is watching.

We know that Allah is watching, so we cannot claim that this is being done without our knowledge. He is watching us so that we may do the right thing and live a good life, following the halal and avoiding the haram. If, despite knowing this, we choose to do the wrong, haram things, we know the consequences. On the Day of Judgement, our good and bad deeds will be shown to us. Insha Allah, we will have done enough to be allowed to enter Jannah, rather than Jahannam.

# إِحْسَان

## Ihsan

All the above is covered by the Arabic term *ihsan*<sup>10</sup>. Its literal meaning is "beautification, perfection, excellence". It is often mentioned alongside Islam and iman. Islam is voluntary submission to God, expressed in practising the five pillars of Islam. It is thus what we should do. Iman is belief in the six articles of faith. They therefore explain why we do the five pillars. The concept of *ihsan* is explained in the following well-known hadith related by Umar (ra) and recorded by Muslim.

**"While we were one day sitting with the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), there appeared before us a man dressed in extremely white clothes and with very black hair. No traces of journeying were visible on him, and none of us knew him. He sat down close by the Prophet (peace be upon him), rested his knee against his thighs, and said, 'O Muhammad! Inform me about Islam.'**

**"The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, 'Islam is that you should testify that there is no deity except Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger, that you should perform salah, pay the Zakah, fast during Ramadan, and perform Hajj to the House, if you are able to do so.'**

**"The man said, 'You have spoken truly.' We were astonished at his questioning him (the Messenger) and telling him that he was right, but he went on to say, 'Inform me about iman.'**

**"He (the Messenger of Allah) answered, 'It is that you believe in Allah and His angels and His Books and His Messengers and in the Last Day, and in qadar (fate), both in its good and in its evil aspects.' He said, 'You have spoken truly.'**

**"Then he (the man) said, 'Inform me about ihsan.' He (the Messenger of Allah) answered, 'It is that you should serve Allah as though you could see Him, for though you cannot see Him yet (know that) He sees you. ...'"**

This is often called the hadith of Gabriel<sup>11</sup>, as the questioner was Jibril (as). It succinctly explains the meaning of Islam and iman. It also gives a memorable and simple definition of *ihsan*: serving Allah and doing good, even though you do not see Him, because you believe that he is always watching you.

We thus have three levels of belief. Firstly, people may be Muslim (related to Islam) because they practise the five pillars. However, that is the bare minimum.

Secondly, Muslims may additionally be **mu'min (having iman) because** they believe in the articles of faith, some of which are unseen. Finally, Muslims may additionally be **muhsin (related to ihsan), that is, righteous people, doing good, the highest level.** "Those who are *muhsin* are a subset of those who are *mu'min*, and those who are *mu'min* are a subset of **Muslims.**"<sup>10</sup>

May we always bear this in mind, and strive to attain the highest level, and be *muhsin* (people who observe *ihsan*).

- 1 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argus\_Panoptes
- 2 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panopticon
- 3 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big\_Brother\_(Nineteen\_Eighty-Four)
- 4 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\_Truman\_Show
- 5 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baby\_monitor
- 6 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\_hand\_of\_God
- 7 www.forbes.com/sites/asifburhan/2022/11/02/ali-bin-nasser-says-he-would-not-have-given-maradona-hand-of-god-ball/?sh=af111cd157e8
- 8 en.as.com/en/2018/06/01/soccer/1527856430\_846226.html
- 9 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Names\_of\_God\_in\_Islam
- 10 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ihsan
- 11 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadith\_of\_Gabriel

## Bajram (Brian) Murati

Bajram Murati (1933-2013), known in New Zealand as Brian, is widely regarded as one of the most significant Muslims in New Zealand history.

His decades of community leadership in the New Zealand Council of the World Muslim Congress and multiple newspaper interviews were so rich with profound insights into human psychology (especially the interplay between various aspects of the social and political structures of modern society), that he was respected both as a philosopher and successful businessman. His discourse brought into question how well Muslims really know themselves and their faith, what they really want, and how they go about contemplating and attaining these goals – as well as the costs of following impossible ideals and false delusions such as socialism. His intuition and warnings about human nature (at both the individual level and collectively) were not only ahead of his time, but still arguably overlooked counsels very relevant to this day.

### Background

Murati was born in 1933 in Vlorës, a large seaport in southern Albania. His father, Sherif Murat Haxhimuhaj, a moderately prosperous businessman, was from Podgorica in neighbouring Montenegro. His upbringing was an era of political turmoil and when he was eight years old, fascist Italy invaded and the king fled the country. Murati left home after the Communists seized power in 1945

and murdered both his father and grandfather three months after his 14<sup>th</sup> **birthday. Young Murati's** proximity to the war and ideological conflicts, the conditions of Albania during the 1930s and 1940s, and his upbringing in a family with strong faith in Islam, likely all culminated in some amount of the early foundation of what would go on to become his unique but highly pragmatic voice within the New Zealand Muslim community in later years.

### New Zealand

After arriving in New Zealand in 1951 on the refugee boat MS Goya, Murati turned his hands to many jobs and set himself up as a businessman in Auckland. However, as a means of engaging in his native intellectual passions, he also attended meetings of the Albanian Civic League in New Zealand and began to participate in the affairs of the New Zealand Muslim Association (NZMA). As this passion for his faith soon increased further and further, he would focus more time as the years progressed. By the 1970s he was the chairman of the New Zealand Council of the World Muslim Congress.



MS Goya

In February 1964 he was first reported in the newspapers across New Zealand, attending an international Islamic conference in Kuala Lumpur. How he got there and who invited him remains a mystery, but the article is especially significant because it was his first public pronouncement on this earth and an important reflection of his religious testament.

The Christchurch Press noted, "A New Zealand Muslim has called for a modernisation of the teaching of Islam. Mr Bajram Murati, originally from Albania, is representing New Zealand at a South-East Asian Muslim conference here. The 30-year-old property dealer told reporters the only medium for instruction in Islam remained Arabic. 'Unless there is a change in this method, our religion will not prosper,' he said. 'We are at a standstill. We must catch up with the times.' Islam should be spread by intelligent multi-lingual missionaries, and there should be wide translations of the Koran."<sup>1</sup>

His comments were viewed favourably by the wider general public at the time and he clearly had a talent for communication. A sympathetic 1970 newspaper interview described the foreign refugee as a "genial Albanian".<sup>2</sup>

#### House building

At some point between 1971 and 1973, Murati built a house in Orewa and called it the Villa Barakat ("House of blessings" in a curious mixture of Latin and Arabic). Around the same time, he purchased a holiday resort at Puriri Beach, Rodney.

In 1974, Murati contested the Auckland mayoralty. The newspapers reported, "Mr Brian Murati has sealed his wife and family off from the violence of Auckland. One of five candidates for the mayoralty, Mr Murati has promised to adopt a strong law-and-order platform."<sup>3</sup> The newspaper photograph featured him at his home with his wife and children.

The article went on to describe his remarkable residence: apparently, he had dug the foundations for the Moorish style house himself. Located on a 4250sq foot plot, the property possessed eight-foot walls and wrought iron gates. Most of the floor of the house was covered in turquoise carpet.

In another newspaper article, the candidate for the Auckland mayoralty (described as a "hard-headed hotel owner") talked about expansion plans for his 23-acre Orewa holiday resort property, "only half a mile from his glamorous Moorish home". His proposal involved "flooding about 25 acres of a 150-acre park. Dotted in the artificial oceans he sees clusters of islands, the home of birds, animals and Disney-like attractions for all the family." He was unable to state where or when exactly, and insisted the project – nicknamed "Murati-land" – preceded his bid for the Auckland mayoralty. This time the newspaper featured the Albanian beside a lone donkey resident in his park.<sup>4</sup>

He retired from the mayoral contest, citing stress, before the formal vote in October 1974.<sup>5</sup>

## Mosque building

Partly as a consequence of his prosperous financial situation, in the 1970s, while in his forties, Bajram Murati became associated with efforts to construct a mosque in Auckland. In July 1975, the New Zealand Council of the World Muslim Congress made the front page of the main Auckland newspaper, the *New Zealand Herald*, with their spectacular public proposal to build a \$3 million **mosque in Freeman's Bay funded** by the headquarters of the World Muslim Congress in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. They stressed that the design would fit into existing New Zealand architecture, and then elaborated the exceptions such as traditional Islamic building features, a 50-foot dome, a 60-foot minaret, a 200-space carpark, and a library of Arabic and English books on Islam.

Several years later, in 1983, Murati described the New Zealand Council of the World Muslim Congress to the *National Business Review* as the "watchdogs of Islam".<sup>6</sup>

Funding never emerged and the project lapsed. Following this, Murati retired somewhat from the limelight in the 1980s, preferring to attend meetings and speak his piece when and where it was helpful.

## His views

Over the decades, the Albanian refugee would undertake multiple media interviews in newspapers, and on radio and television. Throughout his interviews, his discourse contained a tone of scepticism towards any and all ideological proclivities, and reflected a highly perceptive comprehension of the human



## Disneyland no dream

**BRIAN MURATI** plans to create a scaled-down Disney-style theme park on the Pacific coast and believes the venture will involve flooding about 25 acres of land. Mr Murati already has a small-scale menagerie on his property.

psyche. He was never interested in any utopian ideals of society, and instead, his focus was always turned inward, toward psychological and spiritual explorations. Some of his comments are still regarded as some of the most significant observations ever articulated by a New Zealand Muslim to this day.

One of the more pronounced subjects he demarcated was his insights into the importance of human rights and freedom of speech, and on the reality of human suffering. He was especially disturbed by the long-term implications of cutting religious and spiritual anchors, and the fact that both individuals and societies were often left to construct and protect their idiosyncratic worldviews in an era of arrogant and unrestrained rationality.

For example, in a lengthy personal interview in the *Auckland Star* newspaper<sup>5</sup>, in September 1981, Murati explored and critiqued many modern western ideals: progress and rationality as a means toward impeccable happiness and virtuousness. For the Albanian, struggle is a basic tenet of all human life: there is no existence, nor material or social conditions for life, that can occur without suffering. So almost all the accomplishments and efforts of progress (at both the individual level and collectively) serve simply to alter the mechanical details of the particular things that our suffering is derived from, but never eliminate all suffering comprehensively.

For Murati, a staunch anti-communist, since there could never be a material or social structure that rid all humanity of grief or suffering, any utopian project to create a perfect world was doomed to fail. Through the interview, Murati largely critiqued and cautioned against pursuing lofty ideals drawn from books, particularly those that combine

nihilism, rationalism, and egoism; ideals that culminated into the quasi-religious beliefs that there is no transcendent or inherent meaning to life, and that all morality and actions should be predicated on knowledge and reason alone (with egotism as the driving force.) Murati favoured enterprise and hard work, and argued that with our deeply flawed and irrational human nature (especially when void of genuine spiritual faith) such worldviews would invariably become destructive.

The socialist processes and '**solutions**' to age-old problems will inexorably foster new – unforeseen - problems that in turn necessitate even more new solutions. The more ambitious and elaborate the solutions, then the more complicated and destructive the new problems. It was an ant death march spiral. This was not to argue that efforts towards self-improvement, or social and technological advances should be repudiated, but rather that they are seldom capable of achieving what they purport to accomplish. Further, if these issues are not considered within the full realisation of the serious constraints of the human condition, then their relentless motion can serve to make matters worse.

#### Self-knowledge

In 1982 he was interviewed by the *Metro* magazine: "New Zealand is a country I adopted by choice. My loyalties are 100% to it. But I am proud to have been born an Albanian. I have a great feeling for the principles we lived by, for our **traditions. I am Moslem, I'm proud to be Moslem.**"<sup>7</sup>





In this Murati interview he further explored this concept of self-knowledge, or the absence thereof. His discourse centred around faith and hard work. For the Albanian, humankind was both rational and irrational, and individuals constantly pursued a sense of autonomy – not perfect happiness. Thus, even if a mechanically perfect society could be created, the citizens would go insane or destroy its perfect formulaic conditions.

Folk think they want happiness, but what they really want is an identity nested within a functional social hierarchy. We are aware of this fact when our conscious mind seems to inform us that we want true happiness and tranquillity, but we know that we make mistakes or deliberately undertake foolish actions. For Murati, humans do not know themselves as well as they would like to think they do and they struggle with the truth. Human history demonstrates this repeatedly.

Through notions of guilt and torment, Murati critiqued the concepts of reason and self-interest as adequate methods of assessing and determining morality. He repeatedly critiqued the beliefs of egoism, rationalism, nihilism and utilitarianism, in which all relevance and faith is placed solely on the individual, and all efforts are undertaken in pursuit of rationality and self-interest. His discourse here focused on the

complexity of the human mind. Murati was alert to the fact that individuals are frequently inconsistent and detached from who they really are. Moreover, their perception of who others are is often nebulous. The wily Albanian refugee inferred that for all its outstanding merits, parts of modern Western culture possess totally confused, inverted and inaccurate views of the self – misguided by the ongoing conflict and internal tensions of their inner psyche (and their miscomprehension of said psyche.)

For all citizens (Muslim or otherwise), the complicated interplay between our conscious mind and unconscious mind, combined with the world outside of ourselves, is often quite chaotic, contradictory, muddled, and perhaps beyond full comprehension. Few individuals are truly distant from those they dislike or fear, and ultimately, they do not know themselves as thoroughly as they might think. Folk pursue material things they do not really need, and frequently dread what we really want (or need.) Humans are far less rational than they think; they manifest some type of insanity every year and in every generation. Political and idealistic philosophies that reject notions of the divine set people up to fail; science and technology may be efficient, but they cannot save our souls from anxiety.

Murati firmly believed all this to be the case, and, on at least some levels, he was quite correct. His discourse always reflected his personal belief that through faith and hard work, nihilism could be overcome.

#### Conclusion

The *Metro* article<sup>7</sup> added, "Brian Murati is active in Auckland's Moslem community, and is proud that his English-born wife, Gillian, of her own accord, chose to convert to Islam. He is particularly passionate on the subject of Palestinian refugees, for whom he feels deeply. His own experience as a displaced person strengthens his natural feelings of solidarity with these fellow Moslems."

In this, Murati arguably alludes to the concept that although life is frequently tragic, belief and goodness are possible, and effort and struggle are fundamental to **accomplishment**. Although Murati's biography and discourse is sometimes presented as dark and tragic, in an eastern European tradition, it also contains much about redemption.

Whether one agrees with Murati or not, his deep insights and intelligent observations can help remind folk to feel the same beauty in personal faith and appreciate depth in life, while there is still time.

Murati passed away in 2013 in Gold Coast, Australia<sup>8</sup>.



- 1 "Islam Teaching Retarded", *Christchurch Press*, 1 February 1964, p.15.
- 2 Trevor Berry, "Publican's Prize", *Auckland Star* (evening edition), 11 April 1970, p.35.
- 3 "Relief in their Orewa seclusion", *Sunday Herald*, 25 August 1974, p.60.
- 4 "Disneyland no dream", *Sunday Herald*, 1 September 1974, p.64.
- 5 Graeme Kennedy, 'The Casino dream man who has had enough', *Auckland Star* (evening edition), 19 September 1981, p.6.
- 6 Warren Berryman, 'Insensitivities created halal meat difficulties', *National Business Review* (19 December 1983), p.13.
- 7 "The Immigrants: Brian Murati", *Metro*, Number 16, October 1982, p.46.
- 8 [notices.nzherald.co.nz/nz/obituaries/nzherald-nz/name/bajram-murati-obituary?pid=166108946](https://notices.nzherald.co.nz/nz/obituaries/nzherald-nz/name/bajram-murati-obituary?pid=166108946)

## The characteristics of a Muslim funeral

In 1789, the US president Benjamin Franklin famously said, "Nothing is certain except death and **taxes.**" **This article is not about taxes.**

His quotation echoes an often-quoted ayat from the Quran (3: 185), in which Allah (swt) says, "Every soul shall taste death, and only on the Day of Judgment will you be paid your full recompense." That is, the one certainty about life, is death. We cannot know when it will happen to us. However, it is not something that we should fear, provided we have prepared for it by living a good life according to the guidelines of Islam.

This article describes a Muslim funeral, from the point of view of practical considerations, and from the community perspective.

### The dos and don'ts

Here is a brief list of the main points regarding a Muslim funeral.

When a Muslim passes away, they should be buried as soon as is practicably possible, usually within 24 hours. This makes clear sense from the hygiene standpoint. Nobody wants a rotting body to be left out, especially, as in the time of the Prophet (saw), in hot

climates. If foul play is suspected, then the body may be buried later, after the cause of death has been established.

Cremation is not allowed in Islam.

The body should be buried at a cemetery close to where the person has died.

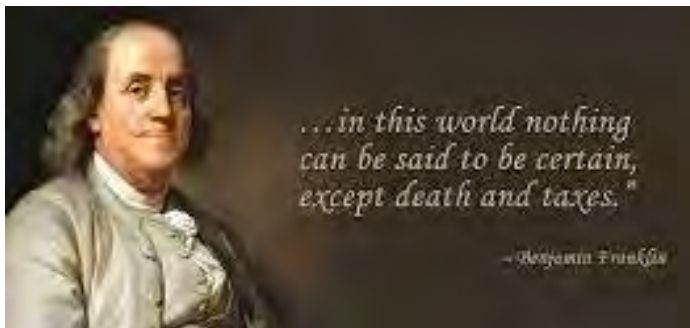
Burial at sea is also not allowed, unless the person has passed away at sea and it is not possible to bring the body back to land before decay.

The body is washed as soon as is practicable. Those doing the washing may be adult members of the immediate family. Men wash male bodies, and women wash female bodies.

The body is wrapped in a shroud (kafan).

It is then taken to a mosque, or other location, for the funeral prayer. In a Bukhari hadith, prophet Muhammad (saw) said, "When you see a funeral procession, you should stand up, and whoever accompanies it should not sit till the **coffin is put down.**"

The funeral prayer consists of four additional takbirs, with no bowing (ruku) or prostration (sujud).



The body is taken to the cemetery for burial. It is placed in the grave at right angles to the qibla (direction of Makkah), with body on its right side, so that the person faces Makkah. A layer of wood is placed on top of the body, and those present are invited to pour three handfuls of earth into the grave. The Quranic verse (20: 55) "We created you from it, and return you into it, and from it we will raise you a second time" may be recited.

Additional duas may be recited.

While mourning is allowed, excessive mourning in the form of wailing is discouraged.

The community perspective

While most people think of funerals as very sad occasions, we should also consider the aspects for which we should be thankful.

*We belong to a beautiful ummah*

In another often-quoted hadith, recorded by Bukhari and Muslim, Prophet Muhammad (saw) said, "**Every Muslim has five rights over another Muslim** (ie he has to perform five duties for another Muslim): to return the greetings, to visit the sick, to accompany funeral

processions, to accept an invitation, to respond to the sneezer (ie to say *Yarhamuk-Allah* 'May Allah bestow His mercy on you' when the sneezer praises Allah)."

So, a Muslim owes to a dead Muslim the responsibility of performing the funeral process. This means not only attending the funeral, but also actually taking part in the body-washing, shrouding, prayers and burial.

In Islam, obligatory acts can be divided into fardu ain and fardu kifayah. Fardu ain acts are obligatory on each individual Muslim, such as the five daily prayers. Fardu kifayah acts, on the other hand, are obligatory on each Muslim community. Such obligations include building hospitals, having trained doctors and nurses, and establishing Islamic courts and judges. Attending and helping at funerals is similarly a fardu kifayah. It is not the responsibility only of the immediate family.

Muslims should therefore help as much as they can, and rush towards the funeral proceedings in order carry out their fardu kifayah duties.



### *The funeral is very rewarding*

In another hadith, Prophet Muhammad (saw) said, "If a Muslim follows the Muslim dead body with faith and the hope to receive rewards from Allah until the janazah prayer and then the burial, he will return with two qirat of rewards, and each qirat is equivalent to the weight of Mount Uhud" (Muttafaqun Alaih).

**Allah (swt) didn't have to make it rewarding for us, but through His mercy, He offered Muslim participants richness in rewards.**

### *Muslims are like one family*

In a family, when one member dies, the other members make dua to Allah (swt) for the deceased, asking for forgiveness and places in Paradise (Jannah). The family members do it as their duty. What about other Muslims? Do they need to make dua only for their own family members? Not at all. Here again, Allah (swt) made the rule that all Muslims must make dua for the deceased and for the rest of Muslim ummah.

### **Here is one such dua: "Allah!**

Forgive our living and dead, those of us present or absent, our little

ones and our older ones, our males, and our females. Allah! Those from us You keep alive, keep us alive with Islam, and those from us You give death, give us death **with iman" (Ahmed, Abu Daud, At-Tirmizi, Ibn Majah).**

### *Love among Muslims*

This love is not optional, but a requirement for entry into Paradise (Jannah). This love will make Muslims happy participating in the funeral of another Muslim without feeling any burden. In a Muslim hadith, prophet Muhammad (saw) said, **"You can't enter Paradise until you have faith (iman), and you can't have faith (iman) unless you love one another."**

### Conclusion

**Allah's mercy never ends.** Alive or dead, His mercy to us continues. **That's why we must thank Allah all the time until our last breath.**

Funerals are occasions that remind us of our own mortality. However, they are also occasions by which we can strengthen the cohesion and love of the community, and gain rewards by participating in this fardhu kifayah.



## Popular support for US policy on Israel on the wane

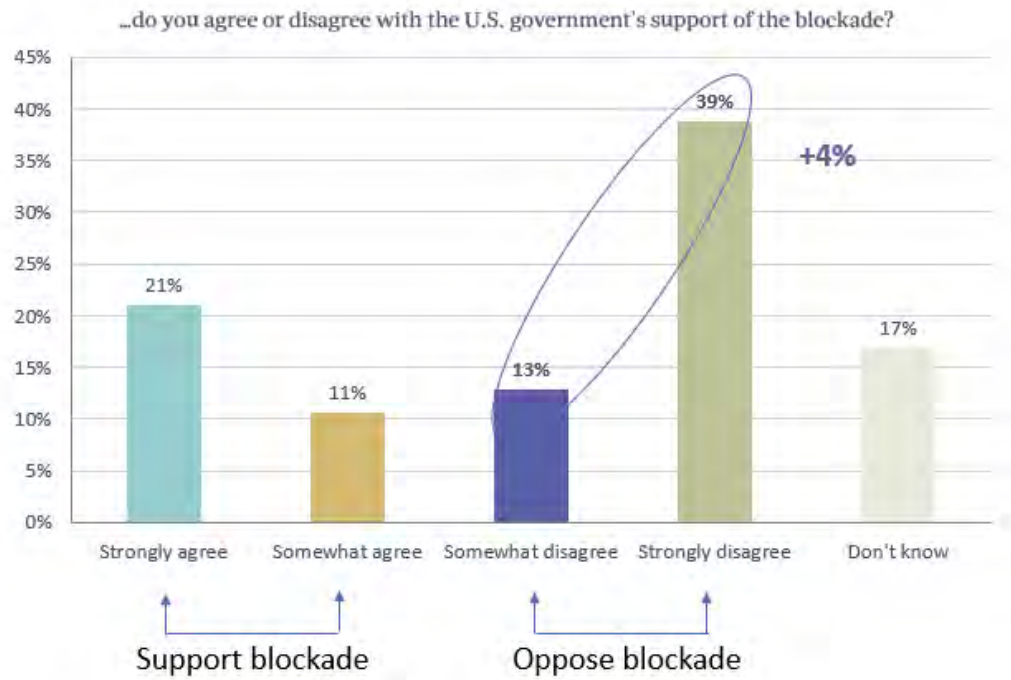
### The blockade of Gaza

In the May 2022 issue of Rocket Science<sup>1</sup>, a report by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), a US Quaker body, was summarised. They surveyed 1,000 US adults on their opinion of the blockade of Gaza, and the US\$3.8 billion of military aid annually to Israel from the US government.

Results showed that nearly half of the respondents (48%) opposed the blockade, this figure rising to 52% when more information about the blockade was shared. This contrasts with 32% who supported the blockade.

After hearing about the US\$3.8 billion annual military aid, 42% of **respondents agreed that “this sustains the Israeli occupation ... [and] encourages a dangerous arms race that fuels instability in the region.”**

Nearly half of respondents (49%) answered that the USA should provide humanitarian aid to Palestinians, and call on the Israeli government to end the blockade of Gaza. This contrasts with 28% who oppose humanitarian aid.



US attitudes towards Israel

Research data from Gallup polls and the Pew Research Center now shows that a sea change is occurring regarding US attitudes towards Israel and Palestine.

FiveThirtyEight is a US body, currently owned by the **Walt Disney Company, using "data and evidence to advance public knowledge — adding certainty where we can and uncertainty where we must."**<sup>2</sup>

Its core values are empiricism, accuracy and completeness, transparency, inclusivity, humility and personality.

A recent article<sup>3</sup> reported the results of a recent Pew Research Center study<sup>4</sup>. The article starts with a paragraph that succinctly captures the problem in the USA. "Twenty years ago, Tallie Ben Daniel was a college student wandering the campus of the University of California, Santa Cruz, when she came across a **bumper sticker that read 'Free Palestine.'** Born to an Israeli family in Los Angeles, Ben Daniel had **never heard the phrase before.** 'I had zero context for what that meant. And I didn't understand,' she recalled. 'Free Palestine from what?'"

Her past confusion makes sense against the backdrop of the early 2000s. The 9/11 attacks – condemned worldwide by Muslim countries and institutions – only strengthened US support for Israel

**against such "Muslim terrorism".**

According to the 2011 Gallup poll, 51% of Americans sympathised more with the Israelis, against 16% for the Palestinians.

That situation has changed considerably over the intervening two decades. Data from this year shows that younger Americans are far more sympathetic towards Palestinians than their elders. The data, while synchronic (at one point in time: March 2022), reflects change that is diachronic (though time) by breaking down answers according to age groups. We go from the older age groups (reflecting attitudes that were established some decades ago) to younger groups (reflecting modern attitudes more accurately). The members of the older age groups will die, leaving the younger age groups. Thus the data shows trends that are likely to continue into the future.

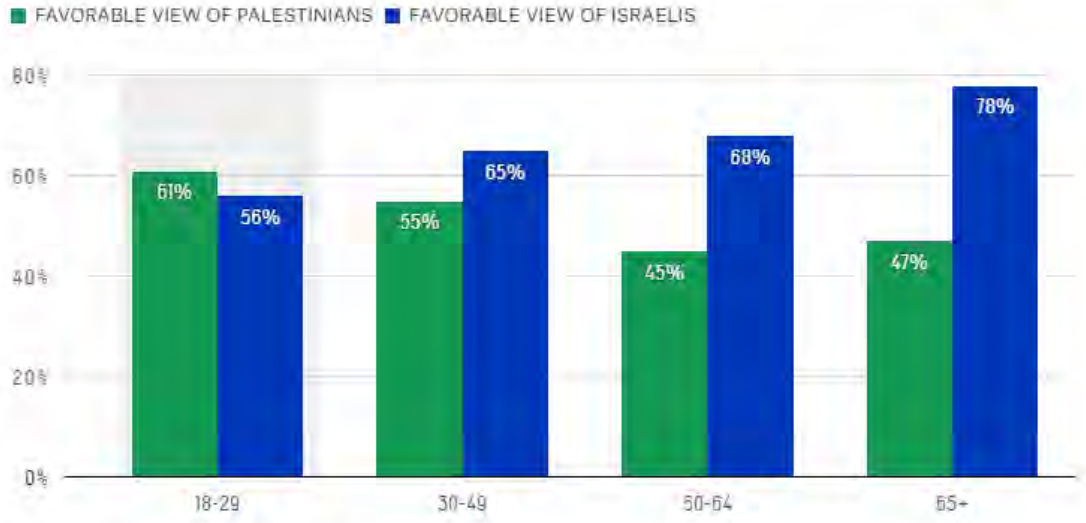
The results show that favourable views of Israelis are declining: 78% (65+), 68% (50 – 64), 65% (30 – 49), 56% (18-29).

Vice versa, favourable views of Palestinians are increasing: 47% (65+), 45% (50 – 64), 55% (30 – 49), 61% (18-29).

In short, young Americans between 18 and 29 hold more favourable views of Palestinians than of Israelis (61% vs 56%). The difference is currently not great, but the trend is clearly towards Palestinians.

### Younger Americans express warmest views of Palestinians

Share of adults by age group who report having favorable views of Palestinians and favorable views of Israelis, March 2022



Survey data from the American Trends Panel (March 7-13, 2022).

FiveThirtyEight

SOURCE: PEW RESEARCH CENTER

In each age group, the percentages add up to more than 100%, indicating that some people have favourable views of both Palestinians and Israelis.

Several factors can be held responsible for this sea change:

- the failure of the "War on Terror"
- ongoing Israeli violence towards Palestinians, with disproportionate numbers of casualties
- ongoing Israeli settlement activity, illegal under international law
- the spread of information through social media channels, including firsthand accounts by Palestinians, that differ from traditional media reports

- growing civil rights movements in the USA
- the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement, with similar social justice aims
- the dying off of older people, who hold the most pro-Israeli views

#### Conclusion

Younger Americans are learning more about the history and current situation in the Middle East. As has been shown in the previous study, when people learn this information, their attitudes tend to shift towards the Palestinian side.

And Tallie Ben Daniel? Having found out about the situation, she is now the managing director of Jewish Voice for Peace<sup>5</sup>, an organisation that challenges the way the Israeli government treats Palestinians.

1 mtalbertislamiccentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Rocket-Science-May-2022.pdf  
 2 fivethirtyeight.com/about-us  
 3 fivethirtyeight.com/features/democrats-israeli-palestinian-conflict-divide/?sourceid=1001761&emci=dc9c7b4f-b949-ed11-b495-002248258d38&emdi=29209ec0-574a-ed11-b495-002248258d38&ceid=99386  
 4 www.pewresearch.org/religion/2022/05/26/modest-warming-in-u-s-views-on-israel-and-palestinians/  
 5 www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org



## Websites you should bookmark

The following list contains several organisations, with their website URLs and an introductory paragraph (from their websites). The organisations initiate petitions and storms by email, Twitter, etc to persuade governments and corporations to stop sponsoring violence against Muslims. Their websites often include eye-witness accounts of events in these hotspots.

We suggest readers bookmark these URLs and refer to them regularly for updates or register for automatic updates. They are given here in alphabetical order. The descriptions come from their websites.

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) ([www.afsc.org](http://www.afsc.org)) promotes a world free of violence, inequality, and oppression. Guided by the Quaker (Protestant Christian) belief in the divine light within each person, AFSC nurtures the seeds of change and the respect for human life to fundamentally transform societies and institutions.

American Muslims for Palestine ([www.ampalestine.org](http://www.ampalestine.org)) is a grassroots organization dedicated to advancing the movement for justice in Palestine by educating the American public about Palestine and its rich cultural, historical and religious heritage and through grassroots mobilization and advocacy.

Australasian Muslim Times (AMUST) ([www.amust.com.au](http://www.amust.com.au)) is a weekly online and printed newspaper, produced professionally in Australia with a wide circulation amongst all Australians presenting news and views from an Islamic perspective as well as serving the needs of the fast growing Muslim community whose first language now is English.

Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) Movement ([bdsmovement.net](http://bdsmovement.net)) works to end international support for Israel's oppression of Palestinians, and pressure Israel to comply with international law.

Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) ([www.cair.com](http://www.cair.com)) aims to enhance understanding of Islam, protect civil rights, promote justice, and empower American Muslims.



Eyewitness Palestine ([eyewitnesspalestine.org](http://eyewitnesspalestine.org)) arranges immersive trips to Palestine/Israel so that participants can learn directly from Palestinian and Israeli human rights defenders, community organizers, and citizens.

Friends of Hebron ([www.friendsofhebron.com](http://www.friendsofhebron.com)) focuses specifically on the Palestinian community in Hebron and supports the nonviolent resistance taking place on the ground there. It provides hope and support for the community living under some of the most difficult parts of the occupation.

Mondoweiss ([mondoweiss.net](http://mondoweiss.net)) is an independent website devoted to informing readers about developments in Israel/Palestine and related US foreign policy.

MPower Change ([www.mpowerchange.org](http://www.mpowerchange.org)) is the largest Muslim digital advocacy organization in the US with a membership over a quarter of a million. It is a mass movement of US Muslims and allies prepared to win a future free from Islamophobia and White Supremacy.

Palestine Institute for Public Diplomacy (PIPD) ([www.thepipd.com](http://www.thepipd.com)) is an independent, non-governmental organization in Palestine, the US, Canada, and Jordan, that aims to shift discourse and policy with movements and decision-makers around the world through people's engagement and advocacy. It is based in Palestine and is led by a board of prominent Palestinians from the private sector, academia, and civil society.

Palestine Solidarity Campaign ([www.palestinecampaign.org](http://www.palestinecampaign.org)) is a community of people working together for peace, equality, and justice and against racism, occupation, and colonisation. It is the biggest organisation in the UK dedicated to securing Palestinian human rights.

Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) ([bdsmovement.net/pacbi](http://bdsmovement.net/pacbi)) advocates for a boycott of Israeli academic and cultural institutions for their deep and persistent complicity in **Israel's denial of Palestinian rights that are stipulated in international law.**

US Campaign for Palestinian Rights (USCPR) ([uscpr.org](http://uscpr.org)) provides resources and strategic support to the U.S.-based Palestine solidarity movement, channeling grassroots power into positive change in U.S. policy and public opinion.

Uyghur Human Rights Project ([uhrp.org/](http://uhrp.org/)) promotes the rights of the Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslim peoples in East Turkistan, referred to by the Chinese government as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, through research-based advocacy.



Being Jewish by birth, and being Zionist by ideology, are two separate things. There are many Jews and Jewish organisations, in Israel and worldwide, who oppose the actions of Israel. Indeed, a Wikipedia page ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Jewish\\_anti-occupation\\_groups](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Jewish_anti-occupation_groups)) lists many of them.

Jewish Voice for Peace ([www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org](http://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org)) is a community of people dedicated to supporting and leading winnable campaigns to change US policy, shift US discourse, and even the playing field in order to create the political conditions that will allow Israelis and Palestinians to achieve a just and lasting peace.

Refuser Solidarity Network ([www.refuser.org](http://www.refuser.org)) (for young Jewish Israelis who refuse to serve in the military) provides crucial support to Israel's military refusers in the toughest of political circumstances. We provide funds for demonstrations outside prison, for legal fees, for media campaigns that tell **conscientious objectors' stories to the general public**, for education programs for Israeli and American audiences about their important resistance to the occupation.

Recent reports

**Summary of the UN Special Rapporteur's Report on the Palestinian Right to Self-Determination and colonialism dismantling** ([law4palestine.org/summary-of-the-un-special-rapporteurs-report-on-the-palestinian-right-to-self-determination](http://law4palestine.org/summary-of-the-un-special-rapporteurs-report-on-the-palestinian-right-to-self-determination))

**The full report "Situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967"** ([www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/A.77.356\\_210922.pdf](http://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/A.77.356_210922.pdf))

United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory "Commission of Inquiry finds that the Israeli occupation is unlawful under international law" ([www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/10/commission-inquiry-finds-israeli-occupation-unlawful-under-international-law#:~:text=The%20UN%20Human%20Rights%20Council,leading%20up%20and%20since%2013](http://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/10/commission-inquiry-finds-israeli-occupation-unlawful-under-international-law#:~:text=The%20UN%20Human%20Rights%20Council,leading%20up%20and%20since%2013))

Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory illegal: UN rights commission ([news.un.org/en/story/2022/10/1129722](http://news.un.org/en/story/2022/10/1129722))

**Outrage as UN debate on China's alleged Xinjiang abuses rejected: China claims 'victory' as UN Human Rights Council votes not to discuss allegations of abuses against minority Uighurs** ([www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/10/7/un-human-rights-council-rejects-debate-on-treatment-of-uighurs](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/10/7/un-human-rights-council-rejects-debate-on-treatment-of-uighurs))

India: Surge in Summary Punishments of Muslims: Discriminatory Demolitions of Property, Public Flogging. ([www.hrw.org/news/2022/10/07/india-surge-summary-punishments-muslims](http://www.hrw.org/news/2022/10/07/india-surge-summary-punishments-muslims))



## Credits

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

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## Why attend Rocket Park jumuah?

Prayers are held at the Senior Citizens' Association building, Rocket Park, New North Road, Mount Albert.

- ✓ Central location
- ✓ Plenty of free parking
- ✓ Facilities for ladies
- ✓ Heating and air-conditioning
- ✓ Bayan (religious talk) before jumuah prayers
- ✓ All bayans and khutbahs in English

NB We are only open for Friday prayers – not for the five daily prayers.

## 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](http://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)