#### In the name of Allah, the most Compassionate, the ever Merciful



RENEWAL OF COVENAN'

# IONA MASJID Community Newsletter

December 2021 | Rabi Al-Akhar - Jumada Al-Awwal 1443

- \* Announcements......2
- \* Synopsis: Islam is Built on Five......3
- Sisters Helping the Most Vulnerable - Why We...... 4
  Kids Corner: The Story of

From His Glorious Book

"But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah Knows, while you know not"

[Al-Baqarah, 2:2]

#### From the Tradition of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)

"On the Day of Resurrection, Allah, the exalted, will say: 'Where are those who have mutual love for the sake of My Glory? Today I shall shelter them in My Shade when there will be no shade except Mine."

[Riyad as-Salihin]

### **SUNDAY SCHOOL** STILL ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

SEE PAGE 2

# Muslim Foster Care

Support Afghan children coming to Michigan without parents

SEE PAGE 2

# **IONA Center**

encourages you to continue supporting the Center during

the pandemic

by donating to the

Masjid Budget

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# Road to Salvation

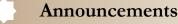
Volume 15, No 12

Every Sunday Morning, Registration is required

See Page 2

Join us Live for both Virtual Friday Sermons 12:10 & 1:30 PM







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26

27

28

29

30

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#### 2021 - 2022 SUNDAY SCHOOL

We are accepting students ages 5 to 13 (limited space available).

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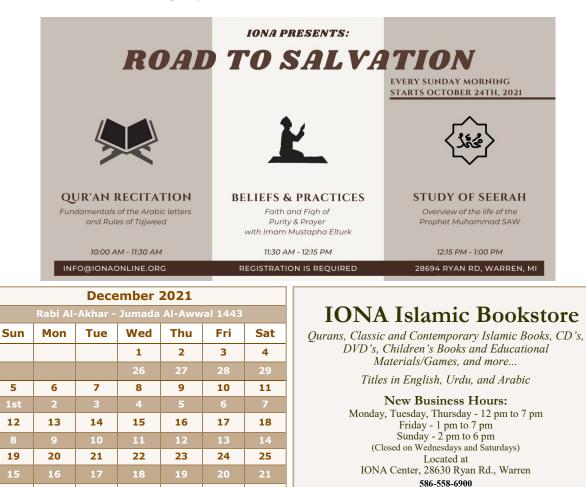
\$400 per child per year plus \$50 non-refundable registration fee.
\$650 for two siblings plus \$50 non-refundable registration fee.
\$900 for three siblings plus \$50 non-refundable registration fee. **School hours** are from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. **Subjects Taught:** Qur'an, Arabic, and Islamic Studies (Hadith, Sirah, etc.) **Dress code:** Proper Islamic dress is required for both boys and girls. Girls must wear a navy Jilbab and a white scarf and boys must wear navy pants (blue jeans allowed) and white shirts or T-shirts. No shorts allowed.

To apply, please visit ionamasjid.org and click on Education tab and follow the link to Sunday School.

For more information, please contact the principal, Sr. Souad, at 248-872-2169.

# Muslim Foster Care

Afghan children coming to Michigan without parents, need your help with tutoring, rides to the masjid and possibly providing a foster home. If you or anyone you know speaks Pashto or Darri language, and would like to help these kids in this difficult situation, please reach out to **www.MuslimFosterCare.org** or you can contact us later for more information.



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31

#### Islam is Built on Five

well-known *hadith*, the essence of which is familiar to most Muslims states, "Islam is built on five (things): testifying that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, establishing the *salah* (prayer), paying the *zakah* (obligatory charity), making the *hajj* (pilgrimage) to the House, and fasting in Ramadan."

Despite this *hadith* being so famous, it is often misunderstood, and is thought to be just defining what Islam is. While it is correct to say that the five things mentioned in this *hadith* are integral to the Islamic faith as known from *Hadith* Jibril, which has been discussed in detail in the previous khutbas, yet this *hadith* talks more about the structure of Islam. The word ( $\dot{\mu}$ *buniya*) in the *hadith* is made up of the three letters root  $\dot{\mu}$  which means 'built on.' From the same root letters, we also have the word ( $\dot{\mu}$  *binayah*), which means a building, structure, or edifice. This *hadith* is at times mistranslated as 'Islam is based on five (pillars),' whereas there is no word in the *hadith* that means pillars. This *hadith* has also come to be known as '*Arkan ul Islam*' (the Pillars of Islam).

If we were to visualize Islam as it is presented in this *hadith*, it would be appropriate to conceive it as a structure with a foundation and pillars to support it. Islam is not just the pillars, but the floors, walls, roofing, and other bits and pieces that go to construct it into a proper building—one that would shelter us and keep us safe and secure from the storms of *shirk*, *kufr*, and other evils. Islam in its generic meaning includes the concepts of peace and submission, and from a spiritual perspective may be defined as attaining peace through submission to God alone. This concept of peace embraces peace within and peace without—peace with the Creator, peace with His creation, peace with oneself, and peace with one's surroundings.

Unfortunately, Islam has been reduced to connote only its 'five pillars.' It took Prophet Muhammad (SAW) 13 years at Mecca to lay the foundation of Islam, and 10 years at Madina to construct its pillars and other levels. It was only after 23 years that the edifice of Islam was constructed to its perfection with Allah's approval; an approval that resonates with the voice of assurance: "Today I have perfected your deen for you and completed My blessing upon you and I am pleased with Islam as a deen for you" (al-Ma'idah, 5:3). This Islam is the only way of life (deen) that is acceptable to Allah (SWT). "Truly, the deen in the sight of Allah is Islam" (Aal 'Imran, 3:19).

Regrettably, this great structure of the *Deen* of Islam, so assiduously constructed by Muhammad (SAW) and his companions has been, over the past several hundred years and more notably after the demise of the Ottoman Caliphate decreased from a *deen* to just a religion. The essential components of human life—the political, economic, and social

affairs, or the public and civic affairs, were taken out of the domain of Islam, reducing Islam to just a religion. In essence, Islam was reduced to merely a set of beliefs—the belief in One God, Angels, Books, Prophets, Resurrection, Judgment Day, and Heaven and Hell; a set of rituals such as *salah*, *zakah*, *sawm*, and *hajj*; a set of social customs detailing celebration and mourning of major life events such as birth, marriage, and death, and one's personal and private affairs. Divine Guidance has no place in the collective affairs of people in the contemporary secular world.

As opposed to this, Islam demands that Allah (SWT) be at the center of all human affairs, the private and the public; the individual and the collective. Islam is a complete structure with a politico-socio-economic order based on the ideology of tawheed. Traditionally and simply expressed, tawheed is the conviction and witnessing that "there is no god but God" (la ilaha illallah), and this brief statement, preached, practiced, and manifested in the life and teachings of the Messenger of Allah-Muhammad (SAW) is the foundation of the structure of Islam. Along with this foundation (the *shahadatan*), the other four constituents—salah, zakah, sawm, and hajj are integral to Islam and go together to support the super structure or the entire edifice of Islam.

Essentially, the structure of Islam consists of three levels: the sub-level foundation, the plinth, and the structure above it. Faith (*iman*) as we know has to do with attestation by the tongue (the visible part of the foundation, plinth), and conviction in the heart (the invisible part of the foundation). The three levels on which Islam is to be built are basically our duties toward the deen of Allah (SWT). The last two ayat of Surat al-Hajj go hand in hand with the *hadith* under discussion. Thus, "O you who believe, bow and prostrate and worship (make 'ibadah to) your Lord, and do good, so you may be successful. And strive hard for (the cause of) Allah as is His due" (al-Hajj, 22:77-78). One has to be a believer in God (a Muslim) to begin with, and has to bow and prostrate to Allah (SWT). These gestures of bowing and prostrating according to the exegetes of the Qur'an (*mufassirun*) are indicative of fulfillment of the modes of worship of salah, zakah, sawm, and hajj. This covers the foundation of the building as well as its pillars.

The second command, "*and worship (make 'ibadah to) your Lord*" may be perceived as the fist level of the structure of Islam. At this level, one should become mindful of God, accept Him as one's true Master, surrender oneself completely to His will, and become His true slave (*'abd*).

Doing good unto others as commanded in this *ayah* goes toward completing the second level of the structure of Islam. The command to do good



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"Today I have perfected your deen for you and completed My blessing upon you and I am pleased with Islam as a deen for you"

(al-Ma'idah, 5:3)



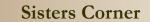
Continues on page 6

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#### Helping the Most Vulnerable - Why We Must (Islamically) Support Orphans

Just tis so easy to feel overwhelmed by the sheer number of Muslim orphans worldwide, which seems to grow by the day with teach worsening humanitarian conflict – Palestine, Syria, China, Myanmar and in so many areas of the world, the number of orphaned children is growing at an alarming rate. But we CANNOT allow ourselves to become desensitized to these growing tragedies. It is our obligation as Muslims to take care of the orphans as we would our own children and parents, as mentioned in Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 215:

"They ask you [Oh Muhammad] what they should spend. Say: Whatever you spend of good must be for parents and kindred and orphans and al-Masakin (the poor) and the wayfarers, and whatever you do of good deeds, truly, Allah knows it well."



Samah Syed, a volunteer with the Rayyan Institute in Toronto, Canada, writes that the way orphans are specifically mentioned in the same line as parents and the kindred means that they are as much of a priority as our immediate families. As formal orphanages did not exist in the Prophetic era and the centuries that immediately followed, the entire community took it upon themselves to care for and raise orphans.

This tradition is what gave rise to the likes of Imam Shafi'i, Imam Bukhari, and Imam Suyuti – all of whom were orphans!

While it may not be feasible today to go out and adopt every orphan we hear about, we should still embody the caretaker spirit towards orphans in our everyday life. There are practical things we can to collectively ease their burden and bring about some stability to their lives. Where can you start?

First things first: Do not volunteer at orphanages abroad! Former orphanage volunteer Anna McKeon very pointedly describes how she was motivated to do good to help "poor orphans" in Thailand, only to realize that she was ill-prepared for the challenges that awaited her, ones that would have been more effectively addressed by social workers and trained staff. Furthermore, her limited stay in the orphanage only perpetuated the orphans' sense of instability because she had become close to them only to up and disappear from their lives forever – like so many other volunteers before her.

A better alternative is to support organizations already working on the ground with vulnerable children and families, advocating on behalf of their needs, and working to educate and empower them with skills to be independent and self-sufficient. One such organization is Bloom Charity, which works to improve the lives of orphans in Morocco.

That being said, our obligation to help orphans doesn't just stop at donating money to worthy causes. We have to actively WORK and be involved in the care taking process as well, even if we can't adopt orphans into our homes ourselves. You can do this by assisting local families who take care of foster youth or orphans and offering them a few hours of your time every week right where you live.

If you don't know any personally, check out the Muslim Foster Parents group to see if there are families in your area. Anything the family needs help with, try to help, whether it's bringing groceries, taking the kids out, helping them with homework.

Additionally, set aside some money every month to sponsor an orphan through organizations like Islamic Relief USA or Zakat Foundation of America. They have great programs and orphan sponsorship opportunities. It's the very least we can do.

The reward for taking care of orphans is nothing short of astounding. According to our Prophet (saw), "The custodian of an orphan and I will be like this on the day of judgment." He then showed his index and middle finger together with only a slight gap in between (Muslim, narrated by Abu Hurayrah). Remember, the Prophet (saw) himself was an orphan!

In these difficult times, when we are all in some way struggling to live our lives during this global COVID-19 pandemic, those who are most vulnerable and need our support the most should not be forgotten. Whatever little we have to give by way of our donations and our support from a distance, we should strive to give it. May we all find our own meaningful ways to protect orphans the way the Prophet (saw) did.

Alina Din Courtesy of: hautehijab.com



# The Story of the Woodcutter

nce upon a time a very strong woodcutter asked for a job in a timber merchant, and he got it. The pay was really good and so were the work conditions. For those reasons, the woodcutter was determined to do his best.

His boss gave him an axe and showed him the area where he was supposed to work. The first day, the woodcutter brought back 18 trees.

"Congratulations," the boss said. "Go on that way!"

Very motivated for the boss' words, the woodcutter would try harder the next day, but he only could bring 15 trees back. The third day, he tried even harder, but he only could bring 10 trees.

Day after day he was bringing less and less trees.

"I must be losing my strength", the woodcutter thought. He went to the boss and apologized, saying that he could not understand what was going on.

"When was the last time you sharpened your axe?" the boss asked. "Sharpen? I had no time to sharpen my axe. I have been very busy trying to cut trees."

Our lives are like that. We sometimes get so busy that we don't take time to sharpen the axe. The state of our imaan greatly depends on how much we sharpen it food that feeds the soul. If we go on with our lives too busy to feed our soul, it will lose strength and we will not be motivated to perform good deeds. So, take a moment everyday and "sharpen" your soul by listening to the Quran, lectures, remembering Allah, etc.

 $Courtesy\ of: https://islamcan.com/islamic-stories/the-story-of-the-woodcutter.shtml$ 



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unto others as understood within the context of this *ayah* is not restricted to helping the poor and the needy only, but extends to calling humanity at large to the message of Islam and to trying to save people from the eternal doom in the hereafter. This involves calling people to the worship and obedience of One God rather than other deities, be they one's lusts, one's wealth, or the numerous man-made 'isms' such as secularism, socialism, communism, humanism, materialism, to mention only a few.

The third and final level has to do with striving in the path of Allah. "Strive hard for (the cause of) Allah as is His due" (al-Hajj, 22:78). This is to ensure that the entire way of life (deen) becomes wholly and totally as ordained by Allah. "And the deen is Allah's alone" (al-Anfal, 8:39). This is also the manifestation of the prayer 'Thy Kingdom come. Thy shall be done on earth as it is in Heaven," so ardently chanted in the 'Lord's Prayer' by Christians of all denominations. God's Kingdom refers to God's Rule, the consequence of which is justice, here, on earth. Who is to bring about this justice on earth; only those who profess to believe in Allah. This calls for making the word of Allah reign supreme. "And the word of Allah is supreme. Allah is Almighty, All-Wise" (al-Taubah, 9:40).

Sadly, the structure of Islam alluded to in the *hadith* is not comprehended by the majority of Muslims. Generally, they are self-satisfied with the mere performance of rituals and other mundane activities geared towards promoting their name, fame, status, and wealth. It is little wonder that there is no real Islam anywhere in the world. Islam in reality is following the Messenger of Allah (SAW) in all matters related to belief (*aqidah*) and implementing Allah's laws (the *shariah*). The very purpose of our creation is to do *ibadah* (worship and obedience) of Allah. "*I created jinn and mankind only to worship Me*" (*al-Dhariyat*, 51:56).

Islam has been the core of all Prophetic teachings throughout human history. Every Prophet and his followers who lived by the *shariah* revealed by Allah were Muslims. "For each among you We made a divine law and a way"(al-Ma'idah, 5:48). Ibrahim (AS) was an upright Muslim. "Ibrahim was neither a Jew, nor a Christian, but he was an upright Muslim" (Aal 'Imran, 3:67). So were all prophets and their true followers. The Islam that we see as a deen which came 14 centuries ago was the final dispensation of Islam. The revelation bestowed upon Muhammad (SAW), the last and final Messenger of Allah contained the last and final shariah that supplants all other previous shariahs revealed through earlier divine scriptures. Therefore, it is now the eternal and universal shariah.

To utter the testimony of faith (*shahadatan*) is to declare and live by *tawheed* and to believe in the final messengership of Muhammad (SAW) who was sent by Allah as a mercy to all the worlds. "We have only sent you as a mercy to all the worlds" (al-Anbiya', 2:107). His mercy manifested itself in the just social order of 'al-Islam' that he established during his life time. Islam took people out from darkness into light; from misery into prosperity. Muhammad (SAW) was sent to the entire humanity. "Say, 'O people, I am Allah's Messenger to you all" (al-A'raf, 7:158). It was he who constructed Islam

brick by brick. Even though many of us may be familiar with the blessed *sirah* of Muhammad (SAW), especially with things that deal with his habits, attire, and his conduct, not many of us are aware about the efforts he made at a human level to build the edifice of Islam.

As for the four constituents mentioned in the *hadith*, the *salah* is a medium to connect spiritually with Allah (SWT); to implore Him, to seek His forgiveness and His help. It pacifies the soul and helps one to exercise self-restraint when one finds oneself overwhelmed by base desires. *Salah* is an obligatory duty to be performed at all times, during times of war or peace, health or sickness. *Salah* cannot be done without unless one is insane, or has become absolutely senile, or is in the throes of death.

Zakah purifies one from the niggardliness of one's soul. Allah asks the Prophet (SAW) to take zakah from people's wealth. Zakah is spent in charitable causes and in Allah's path. "Take alms (zakah) from their wealth to purify and cleanse them and pray for them" (al-Taubah, 9:103). There is a stern warning for those who are tight-fisted. "Those who are tight-fisted with the bounty Allah has given them should not suppose that that is better for them. No indeed, it is worse for them! What they were tight-fisted with will be hung around their necks on the Day of Rising. Allah is the inheritor of the heavens and the earth and Allah is aware of what you do" (Aal 'Imran, 3:180).

*Sawm* or fasting during the month of Ramadan is like taking a break for one month from the construction of Islam in order to get rejuvenated and in order to rededicate oneself to the ongoing task of construction. There is a *hadith* which says, "Whoever fasts Ramadan out of faith and in the hope of reward, his previous sins will be forgiven." Besides the ordained compulsory fasting, the Prophet (SAW) used to fast on other days as well, such as Mondays and Thursdays, first ten days of Zul-Hijjah, during the month of Shaban, and other days.

*Hajj* too is an obligation to be done once during one's life time provided one has the bodily and financial capacity to do so. The Prophet (SAW) said, "Whoever performs *hajj* to this Ka'ba and does not approach his wife for sexual relations nor commit sins (while performing hajj), will come out as sinless as a new-born child, (just delivered by his mother)."

Thus, all the five things (*shahadatan, salah, zakah, sawm, and hajj*) are vital in the process of constructing the edifice of Islam. Hence the wording of the *hadith*, "Islam is built on five (things).."



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Dr. Israr Ahmad Translated and edited by Dr. Munawar Haque Islamic Organization of North America (IONA)

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# IONA Masjid - Salah and Iqama Timings for December 2021

DAT	ΓЕ	Fajr	Iqama	Sunrise	Zuhr	Iqama	Asr (S)*	$\operatorname{Asr}(H)^*$	Iqama	Maghrib	Azan	Isha	Iqama
Wed	1	6:07	6:45	7:42	12:26	1:00	2:41	3:18	3:45	5:03	5:08	6:30	7:45
Thu	2	6:08	6:45	7:43	12:27	1:00	2:41	3:18	3:45	5:03	5:08	6:30	7:45
Fri	3	6:09	6:45	7:44	12:27	1:00	2:41	3:18	3:45	5:02	5:07	6:30	7:45
Sat	4	6:10	6:45	7:45	12:27	1:00	2:41	3:18	3:45	5:02	5:07	6:30	7:45
Sun	5	6:11	6:45	7:46	12:28	2:00	2:41	3:18	3:45	5:02	5:07	6:30	7:45
Mon	6	6:11	6:45	7:47	12:28	1:00	2:41	3:17	3:45	5:02	5:07	6:31	7:45
Tue	7	6:12	6:45	7:48	12:29	1:00	2:41	3:17	3:45	5:02	5:07	6:31	7:45
Wed	8	6:13	6:45	7:49	12:29	1:00	2:41	3:17	3:45	5:02	5:07	6:31	7:45
Thu	9	6:14	6:45	7:50	12:30	1:00	2:41	3:17	3:45	5:02	5:07	6:31	7:45
Fri	10	6:15	6:45	7:51	12:30	1:00	2:41	3:17	3:45	5:02	5:07	6:31	7:45
Sat	11	6:16	6:45	7:52	12:30	1:00	2:41	3:17	3:45	5:02	5:07	6:32	7:45
Sun	12	6:16	6:45	7:53	12:31	2:00	2:41	3:18	3:45	5:02	5:07	6:32	7:45
Mon	13	6:17	6:45	7:53	12:31	1:00	2:42	3:18	3:45	5:02	5:07	6:32	7:45
Tue	14	6:18	6:45	7:54	12:32	1:00	2:42	3:18	3:45	5:03	5:08	6:33	7:45
Wed	15	6:18	6:45	7:55	12:32	1:00	2:42	3:18	3:45	5:03	5:08	6:33	7:45
Thu	16	6:19	6:45	7:56	12:33	1:00	2:43	3:19	3:45	5:03	5:08	6:34	7:45
Fri	17	6:19	6:45	7:56	12:33	1:00	2:43	3:19	3:45	5:03	5:08	6:34	7:45
Sat	18	6:20	6:45	7:57	12:34	1:00	2:43	3:19	3:45	5:04	5:09	6:35	7:45
Sun	19	6:21	6:45	7:57	12:34	2:00	2:44	3:20	3:45	5:04	5:09	6:35	7:45
Mon	20	6:21	6:45	7:58	12:35	1:00	2:44	3:20	3:45	5:05	5:10	6:36	7:45
Tue	21	6:21	6:45	7:59	12:35	1:00	2:45	3:21	3:45	5:05	5:10	6:37	7:45
Wed	22	6:22	6:45	7:59	12:36	1:00	2:45	3:21	3:45	5:06	5:11	6:37	7:45
Thu	23	6:22	6:45	7:59	12:36	1:00	2:46	3:22	3:45	5:06	5:11	6:38	7:45
Fri	24	6:23	6:45	8:00	12:37	1:00	2:46	3:22	3:45	5:07	5:12	6:38	7:45
Sat	25	6:23	6:45	8:00	12:37	1:00	2:47	3:23	3:45	5:08	5:13	6:39	7:45
Sun	26	6:24	6:45	8:01	12:38	2:00	2:48	3:24	3:45	5:08	5:13	6:39	7:45
Mon	27	6:24	6:45	8:01	12:38	1:00	2:48	3:24	3:45	5:09	5:14	6:39	7:45
Tue	28	6:25	6:45	8:01	12:39	1:00	2:49	3:25	3:45	5:10	5:15	6:40	7:45
Wed	29	6:25	6:45	8:01	12:39	1:00	2:50	3:26	3:45	5:10	5:15	6:41	7:45
Thu	30	6:25	6:45	8:02	12:40	1:00	2:50	3:27	3:45	5:11	5:16	6:41	7:45
Fri	31	6:25	6:45	8:02	12:40	1:00	2:51	3:27	3:45	5:12	5:17	6:42	7:45
Sat	1	6:26	6:45	8:02	12:41	1:00	2:52	3:28	3:45	5:13	5:18	6:42	7:45

\* S = Shafi'i, H = Hanafi

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IONA's objective is to help the Muslims of North America understand and fulfill their divinely ordained obligations, in order to please Allah (SWT) and thereby achieve success and salvation in the Hereafter. The aim is to seek the forgiveness and mercy of Allah (SWT) in the hereafter.

On the basis of the best scholarly understandings of the *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah* IONA has recognized that our divinely ordained obligations are as follows:

(1) the cultivation of a strong and authentic faith;

(2) the loving and sincere obedience to the will of Allah (SWT);

(3) calling all of humankind towards Islam in the most beautiful and convincing way; and,

(4) engaging in the struggle to establish social, political, and economic justice.

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