



# NEWSLETTER

Volume 17 | Issue 5  
May 2023 | Shawwal - Dhul Qadah 1444

“And when My servants ask you, [O Muhammad], concerning Me - indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me. So let them respond to Me [by obedience] and believe in Me that they may be [rightly] guided.” (al-Baqarah, 2:186)

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“Whoever fasts Ramadan and follows it with six days of Shawwal, it will be as if he fasted for a lifetime” (Muslim)

## SUMMER SCHOOL 2023 REGISTER NOW!

June 26th - August 17th

For Students ages 5-13

Promoting a strong sense of Islamic identity

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## 9TH ANNUAL WOMEN IN ISLAM CONFERENCE

Saturday, May 13th 3:00 PM

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### Monthly Family Dinner May 19th, 7:00 PM

Bring your family and friends to spend an evening with your community!



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### Maintaining the spirit of Ramadan

Ramadan has concluded with a well-deserved celebration. After a month long of abstention from...



More on page 2

### IONA Summer School

Enroll your child(ren) today!  
Qur'an, Hadith, Arabic, Sirah

# Announcements

## IONA's 9th Annual Women in Islam Conference

Saturday, MAY 13th | 3:00 PM

### Empowering the Muslim Woman in her Spiritual and Mental Wellbeing

#### Speakers:

Alimah Zarin | Melanie Elturk (CEO Haute hijab) | Ustadah Hazel Gomez  
Noor Salem (MS in Nutrition and Integrative health.)



Register to join us for dinner

Scan Me To Register

Link: <https://forms.gle/JYR4gn8TqnfQCXZe9>

## SUMMER SCHOOL 2022

Registration is open for IONA's summer school. The school begins on Monday, June 26th and will end on Thursday, August 17th, in sha' Allah. Children ages 5 to 13 may enroll. School hours are Monday through Thursday from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Qur'an, Hadith, Arabic, and Sirah will be taught. The tuition per child per summer is \$400. The tuition for two siblings is \$650 and \$900 for three siblings (brothers and sisters only). There is a \$50 non-refundable registration fee. Please note that 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 (or blue jeans) and white shirts or t-shirts. Shorts are not allowed. Register now, limited seats are available. Registration forms may be obtained from the IONA Center and submitted to the Principal, Sr. Souad Soubra, who is available on Sundays between 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM at the IONA Center. You may also register online at [ionamasjid.org](http://ionamasjid.org)

For more information, please call: 248-872-2169 or e-mail Sr. Souad Soubra at [suelturk@gmail.com](mailto:suelturk@gmail.com)

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# SYNOPSIS OF AMEER MUSTAPHA'S FRIDAY KHUTBAH

## Maintaining the Spirit of Ramadan

**R**amadan has concluded with a well-deserved celebration. After a month long of abstention from food and drink, enduring long hours of fasting and staying up in prayers past midnight, we pray that Allah (SWT) accepts our fasts, prayers, righteous deeds and answers our supplications. O Allah! You are the Pardoner, You love to pardon, so, pardon us.

It is from Allah's mercy that He enjoined upon the believers various types of worship in Ramadan, from fasting to prayers, charity, joining ties of kinship, etc. for an entire month. The essence of Ramadan is taqwa. *"O you who believe! Fasting is ordained for you as it was ordained for those who came before you, so you may attain taqwa."* (al-Baqarah, 2:183) The objective behind Ramadan is to become closer and closer to Allah (SWT) and to be conscious of Him.

What happens to our taqwa after Ramadan? Why does the masjid suddenly become desolate? Why do we stop paying zakat? Why do we hastily return to worldly activities that prevent us from remembering Allah like we did during Ramadan? What happened to our taqwa? Why has it suddenly weakened and in some cases entirely diminished? Let us not be Ramadaniyyun (those who worship Ramadan), and let us be Rabaniyyun (those who worship the Lord, God almighty.) For this, we need to understand the very essence of Ramadan and that is taqwa.

We typically understand taqwa to mean Godliness, piety, righteousness, God consciousness, and fear of God among other meanings. It is important, however, to understand the meaning of the root of taqwa to fully understand the concept of taqwa and thus appreciate Ramadan as the month of taqwa.

The root of taqwa is, Waw-Qaf-Ya, 'waqaa' from which the word wiqayat is derived. Linguistically, according to Imam al-Raghib al-Asfahani's 'Mu'jam Mufradat Alfaz al-Quran, 'the Lexicon, words and phrases, of the Qur'an,' it means, 'to preserve something from that which would injure and harm it.' According to Meriam-Webster dictionary the word 'preserve' means, 'to keep safe from injury, harm, or destruction, to keep alive, intact, or free from decay.' As a term used in jurisprudence, wiqayat means, 'to protect oneself from sinful acts by leaving the forbidden.' The old adage, 'prevention is better than cure' holds true.

Therefore, if one desires to become a muttaqi (one who has taqwa), he or she must first, preserve his/her body from any unlawful food or substances that may cause harm and injury to the body. Smoking, drugs and intoxicants among other substances are scientifically proven to harm and injure the body. The physical taqwa is to protect and preserve one's body from all injurious and harmful consumptions.

Additionally, to preserve the soul is to abstain from all unlawful and sinful acts, such as lying, cheating, slandering, backbiting,

riba (interest and usury), disobedience to parents, and the list continues. This is the spiritual taqwa. It is to become aware of all God's do's and don'ts (awamir and nawahi), and doing our utmost to honor God's injunctions thus saving ourselves from the wrath of Allah and doom on the Day of Judgment. For this reason, in a plea to humanity, Allah (SWT) reminds us of our purpose, *"O mankind! Worship (and obey) your Lord, who created you and those before you, so that you may be saved (tattaqun)."* (al-Baqarah, 2:21)

Omar (RAA) once asked a very prominent companion and one of the scribes of the Prophet, Ubai Ibn Ka'b (RAA), whom he (SAW) acknowledged to be among those who had a deep understanding of the Qur'an, about taqwa. In response to Omar's query, Ubai asked Omar, "Have you ever walked through a thorny bush path?" Omar replied, "Yes, of course." Ubai then asked, "What did you do?" Omar answered, "I tucked in my garment and struggled my way through." Ubai then said, "This is taqwa."

To have taqwa is to struggle and protect oneself from the thorny paths of life – the temptations and attractions that lure man toward satisfying his base desires through forbidden means. It is a constant struggle against one's own soul, satan and the wrong trends of society. Ali bin Abi Talib (RAA), defines taqwa as, "Fear of Allah, to adhere to His commandments, be content with what Allah provides one with and to get ready for the Day of Judgment." Taqwa is to have a healthy balance between fear of Allah and hope for His mercy. Allah (SWT) prepared Paradise for the God-conscious people (al-Muttaqun). *"And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a garden as vast as the heavens and the earth prepared for the God-conscious."* (Aal Imran, 3:133)

Although at times taqwa and iman are considered synonymous, they are not. Taqwa in essence is the driving force that moves one's faith from one level to another. This phenomenon is explained in surat al-Ma'idah. While addressing the concern of the companions of the Prophet (SAW) regarding the consumption of wine during the period between the final decree of its prohibition and the time the news reached the companions, Allah (SWT) reveals,

*"Those who believe and do good deeds will not be blamed for what they have consumed (in the past), so long as they have taqwa (are mindful of God), believe and do good deeds (state of Islam), then they have (more) taqwa (awareness of God) and believe (state of Iman), then they have (even more) taqwa and devoted themselves to excellence (in worship-Ihsan). And God loves al-Muhsineen (those who reach the state of spiritual excellence-Ihsan)."* (al-Ma'idah, 5:93)

Thus, God-consciousness (taqwa) is the only driving force that can help us endure the struggles in this world and draw us close to Allah (SWT). The last and highest level of faith after Islam and Iman that one may attain is Ihsan. It is, according to the Prophet (SAW), "To worship God as though you see Him, and while you

Continues on page 6

## SISTERS CORNER

### Life after Ramadan - 8 Ways to Carry On This Month's Worship Habits Throughout the Year

Ramadan is a time of heightened worship and deepened spiritual reflection, and one of the best things we can do as the blessed month comes to an end is plan how to carry the lessons and habits developed during this time into the rest of the year. They say it takes 30 days to develop a solid habit, and if you've been working to make any aspect of your ibadah a habit in Ramadan, you are primed to, Insha'Allah, continue it beyond this month.

Don't leave it to chance! Make a practical plan to continue worship, charity and self-improvement after Ramadan ends. It's one of the best gifts we can give ourselves and our relationship with Allah (S). Here are suggestions for eight things you can do after Ramadan to maintain your spiritual momentum and continue your journey of self-improvement:

- 1. Continue your daily prayers:** Prayer is an essential pillar of Islam. Maintaining regular and consistent prayers is fundamental to a Muslim's faith. Keep up with your daily prayers, including the obligatory five daily prayers and voluntary prayers like the sunnah and nafl prayers. Maybe waking up for Fajr was a challenge before Ramadan, but you've been doing it all this month. So, set that alarm on Eid and the day after Eid and the day after that, and keep it going! If you've been praying extra prayers during Ramadan, why not continue this practice? Keep up the momentum and stay connected with your faith, whether it's night prayers or any other additional prayers.
  - 2. Keep reciting the Quran:** The Quran is a source of guidance and blessings, and its recitation is highly encouraged in Islam. Make it a habit to recite the Quran daily, even just a few verses or pages. Reflect on its meanings, and implement its teachings to continually grow spiritually. Read it in Arabic if you can, and if you can't – read it in English. And then consider starting the journey to learning how to read it in Arabic.
  - 3. Maintain fasting:** Although fasting during Ramadan is obligatory, voluntary fasting outside of Ramadan is highly recommended. Consider fasting on Mondays and Thursdays and the White Days (13th, 14th and 15th) of each lunar month. Fasting can help you maintain your spiritual connection and self-discipline. Be sure to make up your missed fasts from this Ramadan as soon as possible before the next Ramadan comes..
  - 4. Engage in voluntary acts of worship:** Continue to engage in voluntary acts of worship, such as dhikr and istighfar (seeking forgiveness from Allah (S)). These acts of worship can help you
- maintain closeness to Allah (S) and increase your spiritual rewards.
- 5. Practice continuous self-improvement:** Ramadan is a sacred month for deep introspection and personal growth. Insha'Allah you've taken advantage of this time to better yourself by steering clear of harmful habits, cultivating patience, demonstrating kindness and generosity and expanding your knowledge about Islam. These efforts can and should continue throughout the year in whatever ways possible. Sure, it may be difficult to keep up all of the things you were doing in Ramadan, so choose one or two and keep going. Remember: Self-improvement is a continuous journey that begins with small steps. And while we should try to carry on the good habits we've grown this month, we should also remember to try and not fall back on things we gave up for the sake of Allah (S). (Or at least, do a little less of those things, like mindlessly scrolling social media or the like.)
  - 6. Engage in acts of charity and community service:** Continue to give back to your community and help those in need through acts of charity and community service. Make a positive impact on the world by volunteering and donating to charitable causes. Maybe there was some volunteer work you did in Ramadan that really spoke to your heart, so continue on with it. Whether locally or globally, extend a helping hand and be part of the change you wish to see.
  - 7. Stay connected with your community:** Stay in touch with your fellow Muslims and the local and online communities that positively influence your life. Attend community events, gatherings and in-person or online lectures to continue learning, sharing knowledge, and fostering a sense of brotherhood/sisterhood among fellow Muslims.
  - 8. Set and work towards new goals:** Reflect on your achievements during Ramadan and set new goals for yourself. Whether it's related to your spirituality, personal growth, or other aspects of your life, set realistic and achievable goals and work towards them with determination and consistency. The month of Ramadan may be almost over, but the spirit of this holy season can stay with you all year round. Consistency is crucial to worshiping, self-improvement and acts of kindness. So, don't let your efforts end with Ramadan; continue on the journey towards self-improvement and closeness to Allah (S). May He bless you and guide you on this path. Ameen!

Layla Abdullah-Poulos  
Courtesy: Hautehijab.com



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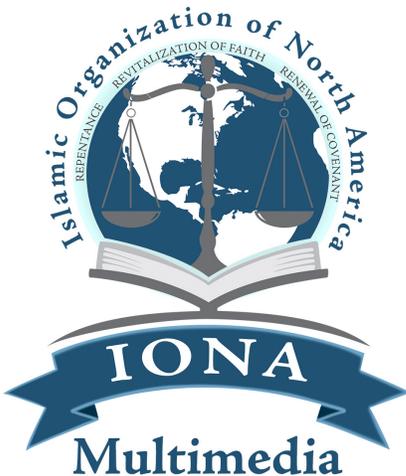
# SINCERITY OF A SIX YEARS OLD



There was a little girl (six years old) who was fasting in Ramadan, even though it is not obligatory on people below the age of puberty. She was in school, and at lunch time, when all the other children went out to eat and have lunch, she sat in the classroom, because she was fasting. Her (non-muslim) teacher thought that she was too young to fast, and so said that it was

not necessary, and she could eat a little. The girl still didn't eat. Then the teacher said: "Your parents are not here, it doesn't matter if you eat a little". The girl replied: "I am not fasting for my parents, I am fasting for Allah". This simple statement had such a profound effect on the teacher, that later she accepted Islam.

Courtesy of islamcan.com



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# Maintaining the Spirit of Ramadan (cont'd)

don't see Him, then indeed He sees you.”

While Islam denotes one's outward manifestation of faith, iman has to do with one's inward state of faith. The Prophet (SAW) once said, “Islam is publicized and Iman, faith, is in the heart.” He would then point toward his heart and say, “Taqwa is here, taqwa is here.” Only Allah knows what is in the heart of a person. “*Surely, He is All Aware of what lies in the hearts*” (Hud, 11:5)

In other words, if one's motive and intention is to remain conscious of Allah, both the inner drive and outer action are required. The inner desire to revere, worship and obey Allah is the taqwa the prophet mentioned while pointing to his heart. This innate desire to love and adore God (fitra) must be nurtured and raised to the level of the most beautiful worship of Allah, i.e. Ihsan.

At this level of Ihsan, Allah is constantly on the mind of the believers. They are mindful of Him at every place and at all times, not only in the masjid or during Ramadan. We are commanded by the Prophet (SAW) to be cognizant of Allah wherever we may be. He instructed, “Have taqwa (be conscious) of Allah wherever you may be; follow a bad deed with a good deed, it will wipe it out and behave well toward the people.”

One must always be conscious of Allah and do what pleases Him, whether one is alone or in public, dealing with one's spouse or children, a ruler or ruled, an employer or employee, etc. It is obvious that we, as humans, are bound to commit sins or mistakes. A conscious believer who inadvertently sins is quick to atone his sin by seeking forgiveness from Allah and following it up with a good deed. Similarly, having good manners and behaving well toward people regardless of who they may be is a sign of God-consciousness or taqwa.

Keep in mind that a son is not equal or above his father, an employee is not above or equal to his/her employer, a student is not equal or above his/her teacher, and a servant is not equal or above his/her master. Each have certain rights and responsibilities, yet all deserve the best behavior and treatment, ‘and behave well toward the people.’

Lack of taqwa weakens one's faith, reduces one's self esteem, hardens one's heart, makes one suspicious, divides people and destroys communities. Indeed, lack of taqwa is detrimental to the spiritual and moral aspects of our lives. Is it any wonder Allah (SWT) commanded that we remain conscious of Him? “*O you who believe, have taqwa of Allah as is His due and die not except as (true) Muslims.*” (Aal Imran, 3:103)

As Muslims, we must acknowledge this weakness and make a sincere effort to turn this weakness into a strength so we may serve Allah (SWT) and His cause. To do this, one must understand the benefits of being a muttaqi, a God-conscious believer. The following three benefits are sufficient to motivate us into becoming more conscious of Allah (SWT).

1. As mentioned earlier, Allah (SWT) has prepared Paradise only for those who are conscious of Him, i.e. those who have taqwa.
2. To have taqwa is to have Allah (SWT) on your side at all times, day and night, alone and in public, at work and at home, wherever you may be. “*Indeed, Allah is with those who are conscious of Him and do good.*” (al-Nahl, 16:128) Who would not want the most powerful, the most kind, the most generous, the most forgiving, the most compassionate be on his or her side? We must first make an effort to get close to Him and He will run toward us, for “*Verily, those who are on God's side there is no fear, nor shall they grieve. (They are) those who believe and are (always) conscious of Him (yattaqun).*” (Yunus, 10:62,63)
3. Conscious believers know that Allah fulfills His promises. They know that when they are distressed it is He who will relieve them from their distress, it is He who will make their difficult matters easy and when they are in a financial bind, it is He who will provide for them. “*Allah will find a way out for those who are mindful of Him, and will provide for him from where he could not imagine (and expect); for God is sufficient for those who put their trust in Him...And whoever is mindful of Allah (has taqwa), He will make his matters easy. That is the Decree Allah has sent down to you. Allah will (certainly) expiate the sinful deeds of anyone who is mindful of Him and reward him greatly.*” (al-Talaq, 65:2-5)

As humans, full of sins, we have only one way out, and that is to increase our awareness of our Creator and Master, Allah (SWT). The prophet (SAW), in the beginning of his sermons, would often say, “I enjoin upon myself and you the taqwa of Allah.”

Al-'Irbad Bin Sariyah in a hadith says, “The Messenger of Allah delivered a very eloquent sermon, it made our hearts tremble and brought tears to our eyes. We said, ‘as though it was a farewell sermon, so advise us.’ He (SAW) said, ‘I enjoin upon you the taqwa of Allah...’”

Allah (SWT) created us to serve and be mindful of Him at all times. He, however, does not expect us to go beyond our means. He made it clear, considering our limitations, “*Have taqwa (be mindful of Allah) as much as you can.*” (al-Taghabun, 64:16) Allah alone knows our capabilities. He knows what is in ourselves. He knows what we are capable of accomplishing. Let us push ourselves to the maximum, let us leverage on the energy we stored up during Ramadan and keep the battery of taqwa charged up. Always remember that taqwa is the driving force to reaching the highest level of faith, i.e. Ihsan and that Allah loves al-Muhsinin, those who reach the state of spiritual excellence.

May Allah (SWT) help us attain taqwa proportionate to our capabilities in a manner pleasing to Him, ameen.

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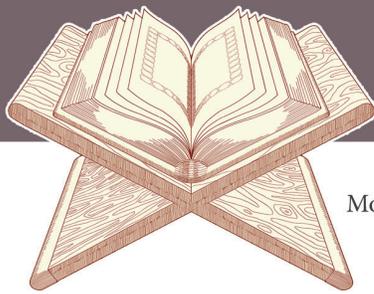
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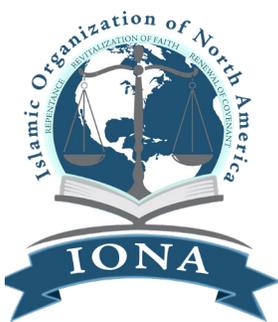


# MAY 2023

## IONA Masjid - Salah and Iqama Timing

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

\* S = Shafi'i, H = Hanafi | Athan is 10 minutes before Iqama except for Maghrib  
 First Friday sermon starts at 12:10 PM and second sermon is at 1:30 PM



IONA aims at transforming its members and surrounding communities to righteous, God-fearing people, who collectively strive for the highest moral standard and constantly seek God's forgiveness to earn His pleasure. IONA members seek His mercy and grace in this life and in the hereafter. They rejuvenate their souls through internal struggle (jihad) and spiritual exercise in worship of the Creator, God most glorified. The strength of their belief in God almighty gives them the courage to promote good and forbid evil, and to engage in the struggle to establish social, political, and economic justice.



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IONA center is always in need of funds in order to keep the Masjid running and maintained at all times. Your continued support is always appreciated.