



NEWSLETTER

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Eid Al-Adha MUBARAK

"Every people has its Eid and this is our Eid" Ibn Majah

EID AL-ADHA MUBARAK

Friday, June 6 - Wishing you a Blissful and Joyous Eid.

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The Amazing Story of Hajar

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Ihsan Through Taqwa—Part III

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Announcements

IONA Wishes Everyone Eid al-Adha Mubarak

According to Saudi authorities Eid al-Adha will be on Friday, June 6, in sha Allah. We wish you a very blessed and a happy Eid.

First Prayer Takbeer begins at 7:30 AM, Salah starts at 8:00 AM Sharp

Second Prayer Takbeer begins at 9:30 AM, Salah starts at 10:00 AM Sharp

Please park in the designated parking areas only. Parking on people's driveways or streets is not allowed. Please keep your children with you at all times Wishing you and your loved ones a very happy and joyous Eid. Eid Mubarak

May the blessings of Eid al-Adha fill your life with happiness, peace, and prosperity. On this joyous occasion, let's remember the legacy of Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and embrace the spirit of sacrifice, unity, and devotion to Allah (SWT). Wishing you and your loved ones a blessed and joyous Eid!

SUMMER SCHOOL 2025

Registration is open for IONA's Summer School

- The school begins on Monday, June 23rd, and ends on Thursday, August 21st.
- We are accepting students ages 5 to 13 (limited space available.)
- **Tuition and Fees:**
 - \$450 per child per year plus \$50 non-refundable registration fee.
 - \$675 for two siblings plus \$50 non-refundable registration fee.
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- **School Hours:** Mondays thru Thursdays - 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Registration: You may also register online at ionamasjid.org. For more information, please call: **248-872-2169** or e-mail Sr. Souad at suelturk@gmail.com

Islamic Organization of North America (IONA) Presents 17TH ANNUAL ISLAM CONFERENCE



Faith and the Law:

What Every Muslim Should Know About
U.S. Laws and Islamic Principles



Atty. Sayed Ibrahim Mostafa

Friday, June 13, 2025 | 7:00 PM

Living as a Muslim in the U.S. means being spiritually grounded and legally informed.

Join us for this year's Islam Conference with attorney Sayed Ibrahim Mostafa, as we explore the essential areas of U.S. law that directly affect Muslim individuals and families—including wills and trusts, immigration, family law, criminal justice, Social Security, and national security. We will also examine how Islamic legal ethics intersect with these areas—such as the obligation to write a will (wasiyyah), ensuring justice in family matters, and the Qur'anic emphasis on fulfilling contracts and respecting the law of the land.

The Hajj and the Legacy of Ibrahim (AS)

Every season of Hajj reminds us of the legacy of Ibrahim (AS), who, along with his son Ismail (AS), raised the Ancient House (al-Bayt al-Ateeq) or Ka'bah from its foundations to restore the worship of the One God.

Ibrahim (AS)'s search for truth began when he was a teenager living in the household of Azar — his father, who was engaged in the making and worshipping of idols. Guided by his pure nature, sound intellect, and rational mind, Ibrahim (AS) questioned his father about idol worship, pointing out that he and his people were clearly in error. *"Mention (O Prophet) when Ibrahim said to his father, Azar, 'Do you take idols as gods? I see that you and your people are clearly misguided.'"* [al-An'am, 6:74]

Testifying to Ibrahim (AS)'s firm belief in tawhid, Allah (SWT) likens him to an entire nation or community (ummah), affirming more than once that he was not among the polytheists (mushrikeen). *"Ibrahim was a community in himself, devoted to Allah and true in faith. He was not one of the polytheists"* [al-Nahl, 16:120]. Ibrahim (AS)'s unwavering stance eventually led him to distance himself from his household and his people. *"When Ibrahim said to his father and his people, 'I am free of everything you worship, except for Him who brought me into being. He will certainly guide me.'"* [al-Zukhruf, 43:26-27]

Allah (SWT) blessed Ibrahim (AS) with a discerning mind, enabling him to clearly distinguish between the Creator and His creation. By keenly observing the heavenly bodies — particularly the stars, the moon, and the sun — and using his intellect, Ibrahim (AS) reinforced his faith in the Creator of everything, who alone should be worshipped.

Possessing an intuitive and unwavering faith in Allah (SWT), Ibrahim (AS) discovered God through his rational faculty and could not help but proclaim, *"I have set my face with single-minded devotion towards Him who has created the heavens and the earth, and I am not one of the polytheists."* [al-An'am, 6:79] To those who argued with him, he responded, *"Are you arguing with me about Allah, while He has guided me?"* [al-An'am, 6:80]

As evident from the Qur'an, Ibrahim (AS) faced severe trials and tribulations in his quest for truth. He succeeded in all the tests he encountered, and as a result, Allah (SWT) made him the leader of humanity (Imam al-Nas).

Disgusted with idols and idol worship, and eager to teach his people a lesson about the powerlessness of their false deities, Ibrahim (AS) smashed the idols. Similarly, we must examine whether we have enslaved ourselves to modern-day idolatry — consumerism and materialism in all their forms. Our salvation lies in freeing ourselves from the grip of these contemporary idols and becoming true, humble, and obedient servants of Allah (SWT) alone.

In his youth, Ibrahim (AS) used his power of logical reasoning when confronting Nimrod, the king, in a debate about the existence of God, leaving Nimrod dumbfounded. Islam is a faith that aligns with reason, with no conflict between reason and revelation. There are occasions when we must rely more on our logical reasoning than on our intuition. Among Ibrahim (AS)'s trials was being thrown into a blazing fire. In His infinite mercy, Allah (SWT) ordered the fire to become cool and safe for Ibrahim, miraculously leaving him unscathed. Another severe trial for Ibrahim (AS), in compliance with Allah (SWT)'s orders, was to leave his wife Hajar and his infant son Ismail in the harsh, desolate desert land of Mecca, where there was no water, cultivation, or human presence. Once again, in His infinite mercy, Allah (SWT) saved both mother and child by making the spring of Zamzam gush forth from that desert land. The seven rounds (al-Sai') between the hillocks of Safa and Marwa that Hajar took in search of water for her baby son have become one of the essential rituals (manaasik) that pilgrims perform during Hajj.

Finally, Ibrahim (AS) faced one of the most severe tests when he was commanded by Allah (SWT) to sacrifice his young son Ismail. Both father and son, displaying complete obedience and steadfastness, willingly complied with Allah (SWT)'s command. Miraculously, Allah (SWT) replaced Ismail with a ram, which was sacrificed instead, establishing the offering of a sacrificial animal as an important ritual of Hajj. In reality, the Hajj season traces back to the legacy of Ibrahim (AS) and his quest for truth. He established the center of tawhid, which remains to this day the Qibla for all Muslims around the world.

Imam Mustapha Elturk — reprinted



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Ihsan Through Taqwa - Part 3

The Three Levels of Faith (Iman)

Having examined the three types of souls, we now turn our attention to the three levels of faith (Iman) as outlined in Hadith Jibril. These three levels are Islam, Iman, and Ihsan, each representing a progressive deepening of one's faith and connection with Allah (SWT).

1. Islam: The Foundational Level

Islam is the entry point into faith and the most basic level. A person becomes a Muslim by declaring the *Shahada*: "I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger."

At this level, one accepts the fundamental tenets of belief, including faith in Allah, His angels, His scriptures, His prophets, the Hereafter, and divine decree (*qadar*). Additionally, a Muslim submits to the obligatory acts of worship: Salah (prayer), Zakat (charity), Sawm (fasting), and Hajj (pilgrimage).

However, merely identifying as a Muslim does not necessarily mean one is practicing or immune from sin. Many who profess Islam may neglect their religious duties or engage in unlawful actions despite adhering to its basic tenets. Therefore, Islam alone does not guarantee strong faith. It is the first step, but it must be nurtured and developed further.

2. Iman: A Higher State of Faith

The second level is Iman, which signifies a deeper conviction beyond just outward adherence. A *Mu'min* (believer) has faith that is firmly established in the heart. The comprehensive definition of Iman (*al-Iman al-Mujmal*) is, "I believe in Allah, as He is in His names and attributes. I accept all of His commands – attesting with my tongue, believing with my heart (certainty in the heart: *يقين في القلب*), and demonstrating my faith through actions."

At this stage, faith is no longer just a verbal statement but a certainty that influences behavior. When negative thoughts or temptations arise, a *Mu'min* is conscious of Allah (SWT) and actively resists sin. Their faith is internalized, guiding their decisions and actions even in private moments when no one is watching.

A believer at the level of Iman continues striving for spiritual growth, engaging in worship with sincerity and performing good deeds consistently. However, the journey does not end here; there is still a higher level to attain, Ihsan.

3. Ihsan: The Pinnacle of Faith

The highest and most refined level of faith is Ihsan, which represents spiritual excellence and the closest connection to Allah (SWT). The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) defined Ihsan in Hadith Jibril, "It is to worship Allah as if you see Him, and even if you do not see Him, know that He sees you."

At this stage, an individual has reached a state of heightened God-consciousness (*Taqwa*) and unwavering devotion. A *Muhsin* (a mature *Mu'min*) worships Allah with full sincerity, as though they are in His direct presence. This awareness profoundly shapes their thoughts, emotions, and actions.

They perform acts of worship with deep sincerity (*Ikhlas*),

ensuring that their prayers, fasting, charity, and daily interactions are done for Allah (SWT) alone. They abstain from sin not only out of fear of punishment but out of love for Allah, knowing that He is always watching. They treat others with excellence, embodying humility, patience, and kindness in all aspects of life.

This is the level of true spiritual enlightenment and fulfillment, where one's heart is completely aligned with the divine will, and one finds tranquility and joy in servitude to Allah (SWT).

The journey of faith is not static; it is a progression from Islam to Iman to Ihsan. While Islam establishes the foundation of faith, Iman strengthens conviction, and Ihsan represents its perfection. Every Muslim should strive to move beyond the mere formalities of Islam, deepen their Iman, and ultimately reach the level of Ihsan, where they worship and live with full awareness of Allah's presence. This is the path to true spiritual success and closeness to Allah (SWT).

The Driving Force Behind Spiritual Elevation

A fundamental question arises: What is the driving force that enables the soul to ascend from the state of *al-Nafs al-Ammarah bil-Su'* (the soul that inclines toward evil) to *al-Nafs al-Mutma'innah* (the tranquil soul)? Similarly, what empowers an individual to progress from the foundational level of Islam to the highest state of Ihsan?

The answer lies in *Taqwa*, consciousness and mindfulness of Allah (SWT). This concept is beautifully illustrated in *Surat al-Ma'idah*, where Allah (SWT) addresses the final stage of the prohibition of *khamr* (intoxicants). Some companions had unknowingly consumed *khamr* before its absolute prohibition, and to alleviate any distress they may have felt, Allah (SWT) revealed the following *ayah*:

"There is no blame upon those who have consumed (intoxicants) as long as they have *Taqwa* (are conscious of Allah), believe, and do good deeds (Islam). Then, they increased in *Taqwa* (deepened their consciousness of Allah) and believed (Iman as conviction), and then further increased in *Taqwa* (elevated their consciousness of Allah even more) and attained Ihsan. And Allah loves the *Muhsinin* (those who achieve spiritual excellence)." [al-Ma'idah, 5:93]

This *ayah* highlights a crucial spiritual progression:

1. **Taqwa at the level of Islam** – A general awareness of Allah that leads one to faith and good deeds.
2. **Taqwa at the level of Iman** – A deepened consciousness that transforms belief into unwavering conviction.
3. **Taqwa at the level of Ihsan** – A heightened state of spiritual awareness where one worships and lives as if seeing Allah (SWT).

From this, we can conclude that *Taqwa* is the driving force that elevates the soul—from the lowest state of *al-Nafs al-Ammarah* (which is inclined toward sin) to *al-Nafs al-Lawwama* (the self-reproaching soul) and ultimately to *al-Nafs al-Mutma'innah* (the tranquil soul). Likewise, *Taqwa* is the essential catalyst that propels an individual from Islam to Iman to Ihsan, culminating in the highest level of spiritual excellence.

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 15, 2025

Today, we remember the Nakba — the catastrophe

Today is the anniversary of the 1948 Nakba, the catastrophe. Over 750,000 Palestinians were expelled or fled from their homes. Hundreds of villages were depopulated or destroyed. Generations have since grown up in refugee camps, diaspora, and under military occupation — denied the right to return to their ancestral lands.

For 77 years the Palestinians have endured displacement, occupation and oppression. The Nakba is not a chapter closed in history books — it is an ongoing reality. Starvation is weaponized, Displacement continues. Families are evicted, lands are confiscated, lives are lost. And yet, the resilience of the Palestinian people endures.

To remember the Nakba is to honor truth over erasure. It is to stand with justice over oppression. It is to uphold the basic human right of a people to live freely, with dignity, on their own land, Palestine.

May we never forget. May we raise our voices for those silenced. May we see a day where justice and peace prevail.

END



An Urgent Appeal to Our Beloved Community

Dear Community Members,

Alhamdulillah, despite the many challenges we have faced, and by the grace of Allah (SWT), our Expansion Project is progressing steadily. We are deeply grateful for your continued support, commitment, and generosity.

As we move closer to our goal, we kindly ask for your renewed support in one of the following ways:

1. If you have made a pledge and have not yet fulfilled it, please do so as soon as possible. Your commitment is essential to our progress.
2. If you have already fulfilled your pledge and are able to give again for the sake of Allah, please consider donating to this noble cause. It is Sadaqah Jariyah — an ongoing charity whose rewards will continue to benefit you in this life and the next, *in shā' Allāh*.
3. If you are a first-time donor, we warmly invite you to join this blessed effort by donating generously.
4. Please note: This project is zakatable. Your zakāt can be used to support its completion.

The Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) said: “Whoever builds a mosque for Allah, Allah will build for him a house in Paradise.” — [*Sahih al-Bukhari & Sahih Muslim*]

Our goal is to complete the shell of the new addition — including the lower level, first floor, and second floor — by November.

This 10,000-square-foot expansion will provide much-needed space for our growing congregation, including a dedicated prayer area for our sisters. It will be a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment where all members of our community can come together to worship, learn, and grow in faith.

Every donation — large or small — makes a difference. By giving to this project, you are helping to build a legacy of faith, unity, and service for generations to come.

Please give for the sake of Allah (SWT) and be part of something that will outlive us all. Please visit: ionamasjid.org/donate.

May Allah reward you abundantly, accept your charity, and bless you and your loved ones in this life and the Hereafter. Ameen.



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The Amazing Story of Hajar and How it is Relevant to You

I want you to imagine something, please.

Imagine a husband telling his wife to get dressed because they're going out.

She obeys and follows.

They get in the car.

He drives far away... until they reach the middle of literally nowhere; a completely deserted area with absolutely nothing around.

The husband then asks his wife to step out of the car with their baby.

She asks him why.

He doesn't respond.

She gets out.

He takes off!

She runs after him with the baby asking why he is doing that.

He tells her that he is fulfilling a religious duty; God inspired him to do that!

Let's allow this to sink in for a moment...

This is not a hypothetical scenario, a bed time story or a legend.

This is- more or less- what happened to Prophet Ibrahim (peace and blessings upon him) and his wife Hajar (may Allah be pleased with her).

We all know the story to a certain extent. But maybe we do not stop to contemplate on how this is relevant to us today; how it's relevant to dealing with our own problems and our own hardships.

This story actually responds to some major spiritual, emotional, psychological, and even existential quests of many people.

"Why me? Why is this happening to me? What did I do? Why do believers have to suffer while those who're less religious have everything they want? What's the point? Where is the wisdom? Where is the mercy?"

So many questions go through people's minds when they're facing a difficulty.

But Allah doesn't leave our quests unanswered. He sent us messages, He sent us Messengers and He sent us those who go through what we go through (or even worse) so that we learn, grow, remain steadfast and keep moving gracefully towards Him until we meet Him!

"There was certainly in their stories a lesson for those of understanding. Never was the Qur'an a narration invented, but a confirmation of what was before it and a detailed explanation of all things and guidance and mercy for a people who believe." (Qur'an 12:111)

Now let's go back to Hajar's story and slowly think about a few points.

Prophet Ibrahim took Hajar and their baby to a valley that was completely deserted. He was inspired to take them there, then leave. As he was leaving, Hajar went after him and kept asking why he is doing that. When he didn't respond, she got the message! She asked him, "Has Allah commanded you to do

so?" He said: "Yes." She said: "Then He will not neglect us." [Al Bukhari]

This is such a heavy statement.... "He will not neglect us"! This woman doesn't have anywhere to go. Her husband -who is supposed to take care of her- left her. She doesn't have enough food or drink. Her child will soon start crying desperately, beyond what any mother could bear. She doesn't know what will happen to them or how this will be resolved or if they'll remain in that place indefinitely...

Truth be told, many people in her place would have started doubting Allah Himself. They would have said: "why would this hardship be placed on us; the good believers? The disbelievers are comfortable in their homes, and we're the ones suffering! Why is this happening? How is this fair? Where is the mercy?"

But Hajar didn't do that. She asked whether what happened was the decree of Allah, because if it was, then there is definitely goodness in there. Why? Because Allah's Name is The Most Merciful and whatever He does is essentially merciful even if it doesn't look like it to us immediately. His Name is The All-Wise and whatever He does has wisdom even if we fail to see that immediately.

This is the message in this ayah: "...and despair not of relief from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people." (Qur'an 12: 87)

Why is giving up linked to disbelief? Because giving up and losing hope essentially mean we don't truly know or believe in Allah's Names and Attributes. We don't believe that He is The Provider, The Protector, The All-Wise, The Source of Peace, The Giver of Peace, Relief and Victory....

That's an essential point to remember as soon as one is hit with a hardship...Remembering to trust Allah, have good expectations of Him, knowing that His relief will definitely come, even if it seems impossible at the moment.

The second lesson to take heed of is in what happened to Hajar next. You know, it is easy to utter words of belief, but acting upon them is something else.

When Hajar was faced with this seemingly inexplicable hardship, she immediately said "Allah will not neglect us."

But did the hardship immediately go away when she said that? Not at all. She "talked the talk", but she literally had to "walk the walk."

The food and drink she had eventually ran out and her baby started crying desperately. She could have started doubting the relief of Allah then. But she didn't.

She started taking the means, walking to a mountain hoping to find anything or anyone there. But there was nothing. She could have doubted the relief of Allah then. But she didn't. She walked again to the other mountain seeking help, seeking anything to save her and her child. But there was nothing. And she really could have doubted Allah then. But she didn't. She went back again, and again, and again between those two mountains.... And she

| Continued on page 10

Zara's Big Eid Surprise

Zara woke up to the sound of the rooster crowing and the warm smell of her mama's sweet date cookies. She stretched, yawned, and looked out the window. The sun was just rising, painting the sky with gold and pink.

"Eid Mubarak, Mama!" Zara called, jumping out of bed.

"Eid Mubarak, my love," Mama said with a smile, wrapping her in a big hug. "Get ready. We're going to the mosque for Eid prayer!"

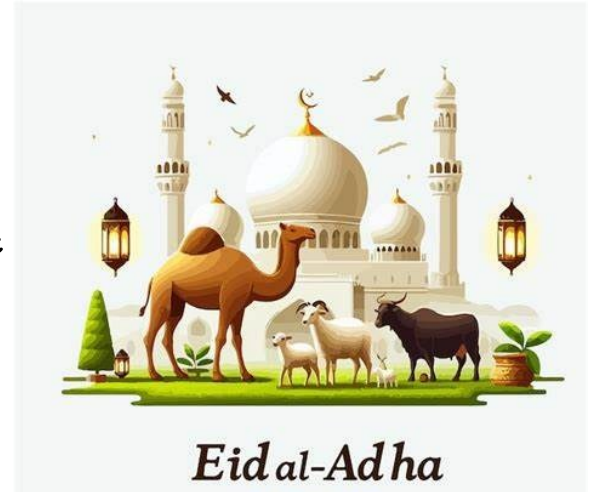
Zara quickly put on her new dress, shiny shoes, and sparkly hijab. She loved Eid—there was always something special about it. But this year, Mama said there would be a big surprise.

At the mosque, Zara stood beside her family, praying and listening to the Imam's khutbah. He talked about Prophet Ibrahim and his son Ismail, and how Allah tested their faith. Zara listened carefully.

"He was willing to give up what he loved most," whispered Baba. "But Allah replaced the sacrifice with a ram. That's why we give a qurbani, or sacrifice an animal, on Eid al-Adha."

Later, they went to a farm. There were goats, sheep, and cows! Zara watched as a beautiful sheep was prepared for qurbani.

"Are we getting meat?" she asked.



"Yes," Mama said, "but we're also giving. One part we keep, one part we give to family, and one part we give to those in need."

Zara helped pack meat in bags with her cousins. They drove to homes where people didn't have much. One little girl hugged Zara tightly when she received the meat.

"Thank you," she whispered.

That night, after delicious food and games with her cousins, Mama tucked Zara into bed.

"Did you like your Eid surprise?" she asked.

Zara smiled. "Was the surprise... giving?"

"Yes," Mama said softly. "Eid isn't just about gifts and food. It's about sharing, remembering Allah, and being thankful."

Zara closed her eyes. "Next year, can I give even more?"

Mama kissed her forehead. "In sha' Allah, my sweet girl."



By giving your generous contribution to IONA masjid, you can empower the heart of our community, fostering spiritual growth, educational opportunities, and a place of solace for all. Together, let's build a stronger foundation of faith and service. Donate to the masjid today and make a lasting impact on the lives of countless individuals.

By Lily

Ihsan Through Taqwa - Part 3 (cont'd)

Taqwa plays a central role in transitioning from a state of moral weakness to a state of spiritual tranquility. It is through *taqwa* that one cultivates *ihsan*, the highest level of faith, where a person worships Allah as if they see Him.

Thus, *taqwa* is not only a means of restraining oneself from sin but also an instrument of self-purification and spiritual elevation. It fosters a state of constant awareness and reverence for Allah (SWT), ultimately leading to *ihsan*, the pinnacle of faith and moral excellence.

Walking the Path of Taqwa – A Lesson from Umar and Ubayy

To further elaborate on the essence of *Taqwa*, a well-known conversation between Omar ibn al-Khattab (RAA) and Ubayy ibn Ka'b (RAA) provides a profound analogy. Ubayy, one of the scribes of the Prophet (SAW) who recorded divine revelation, was highly regarded for his knowledge of the Qur'an. The Prophet (SAW) himself honored him with the title, "*Aqra'uhum likitabillah Ubayy* - أَقْرَأُهُمْ لِكِتَابِ اللَّهِ أَيُّ بَنِ كَعْبٍ - *The one most proficient in the recitation of the Book of Allah is Ubayy.*"

In their conversation, Omar (RAA) asked Ubayy about the nature of *Taqwa*. Ubayy responded with a question, "Have you ever walked on a thorny path?" Omar replied, "Yes, I have." Ubayy then asked, "What did you do?" Omar answered, "I tucked in my garment and carefully navigated my way through, ensuring that I did not get pricked by the thorns." To this, Ubayy said, "That is *Taqwa*."

This analogy beautifully encapsulates the essence of *Taqwa* – it is about navigating the journey of life with vigilance and care, being conscious of the many spiritual and moral "thorns" (temptations and sins) that can harm the soul. Just as one carefully treads a thorny path to avoid being injured, a believer exercises caution and restraint in life, avoiding actions that would lead to disobedience to Allah (SWT).

Lessons from the Analogy: This analogy teaches us three fundamental aspects of *taqwa*:

1. Awareness of the Path

- Just as a traveler is aware of the dangers on a thorny path, a believer must be conscious of the trials, temptations, and sins in this world.
- The Prophet (SAW) said, "Indeed, in the body, there is a piece of flesh; if it is sound, the whole body is sound, and if it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt. Truly, it is the heart." (Bukhari & Muslim)
- Taqwa* begins in the heart—it is the awareness of what pleases and displeases Allah (SWT) and acting accordingly. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, "(*At-taqwa hahuna* - التقوى ها هنا) - *Taqwa* is here three times while pointing to his chest." The statement emphasizes that *taqwa* (God-consciousness or piety) is rooted in the heart.

2. Caution and Self-Discipline:

- Just as a traveler lifts their garments and carefully chooses each step, a believer must be mindful of their actions, words, and decisions to avoid sin.

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- b. Allah (SWT) says in the Qur'an, "And whoever has *taqwa* of Allah – He will make for him a way out and will provide for him from where he does not expect." [al-Talaq 65:2-3]
- c. *Taqwa* is not just avoiding major sins but also being cautious of small missteps that can accumulate and lead to heedlessness.

3. Staying on the Straight Path:

- a. The thorny path represents life's challenges and trials. Just as a traveler is careful not to get entangled, a believer must remain steadfast in avoiding what displeases Allah.
- b. The Prophet (SAW) said, "The most beloved of actions to Allah are those that are consistent, even if they are small." (Bukhari & Muslim)
- c. *Taqwa* is not a one-time act but a lifelong journey of striving to do what is right.

How to Cultivate *Taqwa* in Daily Life?

1. Guard Your Speech: The Prophet (SAW) said, "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak good or remain silent." (Bukhari & Muslim)
2. Be Mindful of Your Surroundings: Choose your company wisely, for the Prophet (SAW) said, "A person is upon the *deen* (way) of his friend." (Tirmidhi)
3. Strengthen Your Connection with Allah: Regular prayer, recitation of the Qur'an, and sincere supplication keeping the heart aware of Allah's presence.
4. Practice Self-Accountability: Reflect daily on your actions. Umar (RA) said, "Take account of yourselves before you are taken into account."

Taqwa is the key to success in this life and the next. Just as a traveler carefully walks a thorny path, we must navigate this world with mindfulness, self-discipline, and sincerity. If we cultivate *Taqwa*, Allah promises us guidance, ease in hardships, and eternal success in the Hereafter.

Let us strive to embody *Taqwa* in all aspects of our lives, for as the Prophet (SAW) said, "The most honored among you in the sight of Allah is the one with the most *Taqwa*." [al-Hujurat, 49:13]

The Path of Struggle and Divine Guidance

The journey towards Allah (SWT) is filled with trials and temptations. However, Allah assures the believers in the Qur'an, "As for those who strive for Our cause, We shall surely guide them to Our paths. And Allah is indeed with the *Muhsinin*." [al-Ankabut, 29:69]

This *ayah* reinforces the idea that *Taqwa* is not a passive state—it requires effort, struggle, and perseverance. Those who actively strive against their desires and obstacles for the sake of Allah (SWT) will find divine guidance illuminating their path and more importantly loved by Him.

The ultimate reward for those who strive to reach *Ihsan* is the Love of Allah (SAW), "And Allah loves those who reach the level of *Ihsan*." When Allah loves someone, He declares this love to the angels, "When Allah loves a servant, He calls upon Jibril and says, 'O Jibril, I love so-and-so, so love him.' Then Jibril loves him, and he announces in the heavens, 'Allah loves so-and-so, so love him.' Then the inhabitants of the heavens love him, and acceptance is placed for him on earth." (Bukhari and Muslim)

The question then arises: Who would not want to be loved by Allah?

Moreover, Allah (SWT) promises in the Qur'an, "Surely, Allah is with those who have *taqwa* and those who are *Muhsinin* (those who strive for spiritual excellence)." [al-Nahl, 16:128]

Remarkably, Allah (SWT) does not mention *Muslims* or *Mu'minin* in this *ayah* but rather *Muhsinin*—those who reach the highest level of faith, *Ihsan*. This implies that the true companionship of Allah is with those who continuously refine their faith, elevate their consciousness of Him, and strive towards excellence in worship and character.

In conclusion, by consistently increasing *taqwa*, one gains the ability to navigate the thorny path of life, resist temptation, and ascend from the lower inclinations of the soul towards a state of true submission and contentment in Allah (SWT).

May Allah (SWT) grant us true *Taqwa* and make us among those who walk the path of righteousness with wisdom and sincerity. Ameen.

END



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could have given up completely at any moment, she could have fallen in despair and anger and rebellion... But she didn't! She didn't. Until... "She saw an angel at the place of Zamzam, digging the earth with his heel (wing), till water flowed out from that place. She started to make something like of a basin around it, using her hands in this way and began to fill her water-skin with water with her hands, and the water was flowing out until she had scooped some of it....

"Then she drank (water) and suckled her child. The angel said to her: 'Do not be afraid of being neglected, for this is the site on which the House of Allah will be built by this boy and his father, and Allah will never let neglected His people.' [Al Bukhari]

Remember those words: "Do not be afraid of being neglected...Allah will never neglect His people!" This woman faced her difficulty saying "Allah will not neglect us"; she experienced physical struggle, emotional struggle, psychological, spiritual and even existential struggle... She could have doubted the words of faith she uttered at the beginning. But she remained steadfast. The relief eventually came with an angel repeating her same words "Allah will never neglect His people".

This is a live embodiment of this hadith: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, "Allah the Exalted says: 'I am as my slave expects me to be'" [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]. She had good expectations of Allah. Allah didn't only meet her expectations, but He has given her beyond what she would have imagined or prayed for.

The place that was deserted became the honorable location of the House of Allah Himself where millions upon millions of people will gravitate towards year after year until the end of time. The little water she was looking for, turned out to be a well that brought life to the entire area; a purified, blessed source of water that doesn't run out until the end of time. The moments of faith, patience and hard work she experienced became a fundamental part of a faith followed by billions of people.

She initiated the ritual of sa'ee (walking) between Safa and Marwa, without which our Hajj and Umrah won't be complete. A pillar of Islam won't be complete without following this woman. This is not merely in the physical sense of walking between Safa and Marwa, but also in the spiritual sense of trusting Allah in the severest of moments, continuing to pursue Him and have hope in Him despite everything that we may be facing...

Many of us go to Hajj and Umrah, perform those acts but hardly reflect on the meaning; we hardly reflect on how this is relevant to us, our own hardships, trials and tribulations.

But THIS is a foundation of our deen. Faith is not just a word. It is not a fleeting moment of spiritual excitement. Faith is much deeper, much heavier and much more worthwhile than anything we can experience in this life. This is what we were created for.

It is essential to remember the message: We will continue to trust Allah, pursue Him and remain on His path no matter how difficult/sad/dull/gloomy/impossible our situations may seem... we will continue to seek Allah. And He will always support His believers! "Indeed, We will support Our messengers and those who believe during the life of this world and on the Day when the witnesses will stand." (Qur'an 40: 51)

Those who are patient and follow the path of the Prophets that Allah taught us, they will surely learn the wisdom, get rewarded beyond their expectations and create an incomparably deep bond with their Creator that they will take with them for eternity in Jannah when they're near Him—because that's the place of those who are truly, genuinely and wholeheartedly faithful!

"Unquestionably, [for] the allies of Allah there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve. Those who believed and were fearing of Allah. For them are good tidings in the worldly life and in the Hereafter. No change is there in the words of Allah. That is what the great attainment is" (Qur'an 10: 62-64)

You know, we send peace and blessings upon Prophet Ibrahim and the family of Prophet Ibrahim every day in *tashahud* in every prayer... But it is essential to remember who we're sending prayers to, and why Allah made their remembrance part of our daily worship and connection with Him...

What are few lessons Hajar taught us about dealing with hardships?

1- Good perception of Allah. Good perception of Allah. Good perception of Allah!

2- True faith through words AND action.

3- Patience. It might take time. It might take effort. But it will get resolved...

4- Working hard and taking the means are important acts to keep us going. The actual solution might come from where we never expected, and it might be bigger and better than what we imagined or prayed for.

"For indeed, with hardship [will be] ease. Indeed, with hardship [will be] ease." (Qur'an 94: 5-6) This is just food for thought...


'O Allah, send prayers upon Muhammad and upon the family of Muhammad, as You sent prayers upon Ibrahim and the family of Ibrahim, You are indeed Worthy of Praise, Full of Glory. O Allah, bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad as You blessed Ibrahim and the family of Ibrahim, You are indeed Worthy of Praise, Full of Glory'.

Written by Dina Basiony

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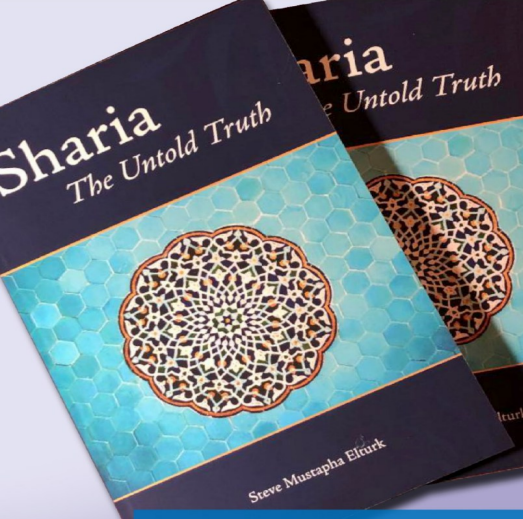
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JUNE 2025

IONA Masjid - Salah and Iqamah Timing

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

* S = Shafi'i, H = Hanafi | **Athan is 10 minutes** before Iqamah except for Maghrib
First Friday sermon starts at 12:10 PM and second sermon is at 1:20 PM



IONA is dedicated to transforming its members and surrounding communities into righteous, God-fearing individuals who collectively strive for the highest moral standards and continuously seek God's forgiveness to earn His pleasure. IONA members earnestly seek His mercy and grace in both this life and the hereafter. They rejuvenate their souls through internal struggle (jihad) and spiritual exercises in the worship of the Creator, the Most Glorified. Their deep faith in God Almighty empowers them with the courage to promote good, forbid evil, and engage in the struggle to establish social, political, and economic justice.

