



North American Imams Federation

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The Fourth Annual Body Meeting November 18-20, 2006 Towards Improving Imams' Professionalism and Community Outreach

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Welcome Note

Assalamu Alaykum, Wa Rahmatu Allahi, wa Barakatuhu

My Dear Respected Imams,
We would like to welcome you all to NAIF's Fourth Annual Body Meeting held by The Federation of Imams for Imams. Our choice of the theme of the conference this year stemmed from our keenness on enhancing our dear respected Imams' professionalism and equipping them with the skills needed to communicate effectively with the different groups that make up their communities.

As one of NAIF's basic concerns is to take Imams' interests and suggestions into consideration, we have made it a point to dedicate more time this year for your viewpoints through group discussions and expression of your suggestions and proposals after each keynote speech. In addition, in compliance to your requests, we have incorporated Community Night in our program.

Further, out of our commitment to improvement and development, we decided to issue two booklets for the conference this year. This one is meant to acquaint our dear members with our modest efforts to gain some benefits for

them. It also introduces to the community of Imams some of the members who responded positively to our eagerness to publish their profiles in this booklet as well as on our website. The booklet also includes some mosques that are thought exemplary Islamic centers due to their great involvement in providing different and important community services.

The other booklet is meant for you to kindly fill in and give back to us. It is meant for promoting the mutual potential cooperation between NAIF and its members with a view to achieving further development of both sides. Your answers will give us an opportunity to explore your personality, your interest in our services and the needs we can pursue on your behalf. It also tells us how you can assist us in fulfilling our mission to realize the prosperity of Imams in North America. Hence, We hope you kindly dedicate a slot of your valuable time for filling in this booklet and giving it back to us before your departure in shaa Allah.

Finally, We hope that this conference proves to be an enriching experience for all

the attendees. We also hope that you seize this opportunity to share your personal experiences, ideas, and proposed projects with your fellow Imams from all over the States.

Please consider us your trustees and help us to help you. Kindly voice your concerns, interests and needs and rely on us in taking them into consideration



and seeking the best way for pursuing them. Your evaluation of the conference and suggestions for improvement are highly recommended and will be highly appreciated.

Welcome again to our conference and I hope it proves to be an unforgettable experience.

Conference Program

Saturday Nov. 18th

4:40 P.M.: Maghrib and Isha'a Salat
Led by Sheikh Waleed Al-Meneesey
5:00 P.M.: Opening Remarks by
Imam Dr. Mohamad Al-Ghalaieni
(Grand Blanc, MI)
5:15 P.M.: NAIF's Accomplishments
Imam Dr. Omar Shahin (Phoenix AZ)
5:30 P.M.: Host Speech by Imam
Waleed Al-Meneesey and Imam Dr.
Farouk Assamura'e
5:45 P.M.: Imam Introductions (Two
minutes introduction by all Imams)
6:30 P.M.: Dinner
7:30 P.M.: Imams and Media by
Imam Abdul-Malik Muhammed
8:30 P.M.: Workshop and Open Dis-
cussion about Imams and Media
8:45 P.M.: Presentation about Mercy
USA (Sponsor)
9:00 P.M.: Data Collection and
Form Filling by Imam Mohamad Al-
Homsy (DDS) (Augusta GA)
9:30 P.M.: Duaa and Adjournment

Sunday Nov. 19th

06:00 A.M.: Fajir Salat Led by Imam
Bassam Obeid (Charlotte, NC)
06:15 A.M.: Short Talk by Imam
Muhammad S. Adly (Columbia, SC)
06:30 A.M.: Breakfast
07:30 A.M.: Presentation about
PEACE (Sponsor) by Imam Abdur-
rahman Almanasrah (Chicago, IL)
07:45 A.M.: Study Abroad Program
by Imam Adam Fofana (Islamic Uni-
versity of Malaysia)

08:00 A.M.: Imams and Interfaith
Dialogue by Imam Dr. Bashar
Arafat (Baltimore, MD)
08:15 A.M.: Workshop and Open
Discussion about Imams and Inter-
faith Dialogue
09:15 A.M.: Break
09:30 A.M.: Data Collection and
Form Filling
10:00 A.M.: Imams and Politics by
Congressman Keith Ellison (first
Muslim Congressman newly elected
Nov. 2006)
10:15 A.M.: Workshop and Open
Discussion about Imams and Politics
11:15 A.M.: Islamic American University
11:30 A.M.: Project for Imams and
Masjids by Imam Dr. Omar Shahin
11:45 A.M.: Presentation about
"LIFE" by Dr. Khalil Jasim (Sponsor)
12:00 P.M.: How Islamic Centers
Can Get Grants by Mr. Ihsan Al-
Khatib (Attorney)
12:15 P.M.: Muslim Legal Fund of
America (Sponsor)
12:30 P.M.: Break and Zuhr and
Asr Salat Led by Imam Ahmad
Sheqarat
01:00 P.M.: Lunch Break
02:30 P.M.: Imam and Mosque
Administration by Imam Siraj
Wahhaj (NewYork, NY)
02:45 P.M.: Workshop and Open
Discussion about Imams and Ad-
ministration
03:45 P.M.: Imams and Responsi-
bility towards Women by Imam Dr.
Salah Assawy
04:00 P.M.: Imams and Guidelines
in Dealing with Women by Imam
Dr. Mohamad Al-Ghalaieni
04:15 P.M.: Workshop and Open
Discussion about Imam and
Women
05:15 P.M.: Dinner and Break



Community Night

07:00 P.M.: (Imam Siraj
Wahhaj, Imam Dr. Omar Sha-
hin, Mr. Keith Ellison)
08:30 P.M.: Magrib and Isha'a
Salat with the Community Led
by Imam Waleed Al-Meneesey

Monday, Nov. 20th

6:00 A.M.: Fajir Salat Led by
Imam Mahmood Sulayman
6:15 A.M.: Short Talk by Imam
Hatem Alihaj (MD)
6:30 A.M.: Breakfast
7:15 A.M.: American Open University
7:30 A.M.: ISNA leadership Training
7:45 A.M.: Imams and Youth by
Imam Dr. Nabeel Sadoon
8:00 A.M.: Workshop and Open
Discussion about Imams and
Youth
8:45 A.M.: Final Remarks by
Imam Dr. Abdullah Idrees
9:00 A.M.: Form Filling
9:45 A.M.: Encouraging Words
by Imam Al-Harbi, Imam Bassam
Obeid and Dr. Zubeir
10:00 A.M.: Closing Remarks by
Imam Dr. Omar Shahin and
Imam Dr. Mohamad Al-

Themes of the Conference



Imams and the Media

Islam is now almost constantly on the news, and Imams must be capable of dealing effectively with the media. Good communication skills encompass being able to respond to media inquiries, fielding questions from journalists, addressing misinformation about Islam in the media, generating positive story ideas, and writing commentaries and letters to the editors when necessary, among other things. Communication with the media should not just be limited to responding to misconceptions, but Imams should also take advantage of opportunities to highlight activities in local mosques and the contribution of Muslims to local communities.



Imams and the Youth

Muslim youth living in Western societies face unique challenges and encounter influences and values that may be disparate with Islamic teachings. Imams must be able to recognize the issues that impact youth within this context in order to be able to initiate a dialogue with them, to educate them and to facilitate their growth as young Muslims. It is necessary to discuss appropriate ways to address problems that youth face specifically, as well as to maximize opportunities to help make the youth active members of the masjid and Islamic community centers.



Imams and Non-Muslims

Imams interact with non-Muslims in many settings such as inter-faith meetings, dawah projects, social work and community events among other things. It is imperative that they be able to communicate the message of Islam with diverse audiences, answer questions, clarify, teach, and dispel misconceptions. There should be an understanding that non-Muslims do not all have the same levels of knowledge about Islam and also have different types of attitudes regarding the religion - therefore the professional imam is one who is able to strike a balance and find ways to reach out to different types of audiences.



Imams and Masjid Administration

Imams must be able to collaborate well with the masjid administration for the smooth operation and progress of the masjid as well as the wellbeing of the members. Unfortunately in some communities, so called "masjid politics" have created rifts between the imams and the administration, leading to unnecessary conflict

and divisions. Imams must find ways to work with administration under various circumstances and implement constructive solutions to resolve any problematic issues especially when there are contrasting opinions.



Imams and Women Groups

Muslim women play an important role in the advancement of local communities. In many areas, they not only attend the masjid for salat and halaqat, but are also actively involved in dawah work, adult and children's educational programs, administration and community outreach. Imams must therefore be able to foster an environment that is not only inclusive of women, but is also supportive of their specific needs and concerns and is in accordance to Islamic guidelines.



Imams and Politics

Many Muslims around the United States are involved in political activities at different levels. Recognizing the sensitivity of political issues and the potential for divisiveness within the communities as a result of divergent political views, Imams must be able to provide Muslims with the proper

guidance and educate them on the etiquettes of any political involvement within the Islamic context. Questions also arise on whether Imams and Islamic centers should be involved in politics at all and what the extent of this involvement should be, therefore Imams should have the ability to address these concerns. Overall, it is important that Imams are aware and understand the general political climate of their communities and be especially conversant with the issues that affect Muslims.



The Community Night

For the first time, NAIF will host a "Community Night" for Imams to meet and interact with community members. The event is scheduled for the last night of the conference, after ishaa. Considering that part of this year's theme is "Community Outreach" and NAIF's overall goal to foster strong relationships between Imams and their communities, this event is just one opportunity to engage in open dialogue with the public. There will be short, informal talks and question-and-answer sessions to allow community members to get to know the imams and benefit from their knowledge. In turn, inshaallah, we hope the imams will also gain from these interactions with a diverse group of Muslims. Refreshments will be served.

NAIF's Accomplishments and Plans

Establishing a Link with a Contact Person in Each State

NAIF has arranged contacts with an Imam in each state who will act as the liaison with the federation. Through this contact person, NAIF follows up with the matters related to Imams interests, concerns and problems in a particular state.

Participation in AMJA Workshops

Forty Imams, who are members of NAIF, participated in two sessions arranged by The Assembly of Muslim Jurists of America (AMJA). These workshops were part of AMJA Fourth Annual Conference held in the end of last July. The workshops were entitled "Islamic Financial System: Institutions and Mechanisms in USA" and "Applying Interest to Emergent Events that Face Muslim Communities: Political Participation in Western Societies". Interesting discussions about these two crucial issues took place, and important conclusions were reached through participation in such workshops.

Launching Seven Fundraising Initiatives

As NAIF is a not-for profit institution, some fundraising initiatives were arranged by some of its members at different places to help cover the expenses needed to run the organization and keep it going to pursue its mission.

NAIF Office in DC

NAIF has established a new office at a prestigious location in Washington DC. (1250 24th St. NW Suite 300 Washington DC 20078-9710). An assistant is available during regular office hours to receive all phone calls made to (202) 835-1698. Callers can be forwarded to any officer of the organization through this office.



Callers also have the privilege of calling NAIF by dialing the toll-free number (888) 771-8880. Moreover, donors can enjoy the easiness of mailing their donations to NAIF through its postage-paid business reply envelopes. Our website address has been changed to an easier to remember domain name: ImamsOfAmerica.com

Preparing a Directory of Imams and Masjid

NAIF is currently preparing a directory of the masjid and Imams in North America. This directory will include the names and contact information of both. Some of the material has been added while more information is being incorporated.

Establishing a Strong and Regular Phone Conference System

NAIF has established a strong conference system through which members of each committee can hold meetings over the phone to discuss contingent issues, follow up on putting goals into effect, setting tasks, discussing decisions, etc. Imams can join the conference by dialing :(712) 432-4990 ext: 516694# , or by dialing Toll Free (888)771-8880 ext: 1

Coordinating the Work of Imams through NAIF Virtual Office

NAIF is making arrangements to coordinate the Imams' work by using Zoho services. Zoho Virtual Office is a groupware that provides a virtual collaboration platform. Through it, NAIF hopes that Imams can communicate, cooperate, share information, and coordinate efforts through the use of different efficient applications such as Contacts Manager, E-mail Client, Instant Messaging, Virtual Storage for Documents, Personal and Group Calendar, Task Scheduler, Discussions Forums, etc. This will help to increase the NAIF's efficiency. With the use of NAIF Virtual Office, time and distance will no longer be an issue. Whether Imams are at their workplace, their homes, or anywhere with access to the Internet, they can collaborate with their peers or team.

A Retirement Fund for Imams

Currently, less than 5% of the Imams have a retirement plan. Hence, NAIF is contacting a various legal organizations with the aim of establishing a pension system for the Imams' benefit upon retirement. This system meant to secure for Imams who reach a certain age or who have served for 30 years or so a pension after retirement. This pension would be based on money derived from four basic sources:

- A percentage contributed by the Imams' from their salaries
- A percentage paid by the employers
- Fundraising
- Different Donors

Health Insurance for Imams

Presently, only about 20% of the Imams have health insurance. Accordingly, NAIF is contacting different health insurance companies to explore the possibility of establishing a group health insurance system for Imams who would

like to benefit from such a system.

Reviewing the Imams' Contracts

NAIF has put in charge a committee that is now responsible for reviewing Imam's contracts. The mission of this committee is to put the contracts in a standard form that would help avoid future problems resulting from equivocal terminology in the contracts.

Scholarships

Through its constant attempts to benefit the Imams, broaden their Islamic background and earn some gains for them, NAIF has managed to get five grants for Imams to continue their education at the Shari'aa Academy. The Same has been offered by the Islamic Open University and the Islamic American University.

English Language Courses for Imams

With a view to improving Imams' communicative skills and enabling them to preach in English, NAIF has contacted several universities to discuss the possibility of their offering short- and long-term English programs for Imams

The short-term programs are intensive courses that would last for about one or two weeks. Along this line, a suggestion being considered is to have some professors at these universities host Imams in their homes for the one or two week period to help the latter get first hand experience with the American English language and culture outside an academic setting.

The long-term programs are one-term courses that would last for three or four months.

Both the long and short term programs are meant to improve the Imams' skills in reading, writing and conversation in English.

Psychology Courses for Imams

NAIF is also hoping to make arrangements with universities to enable Imams to study some psychology courses. This is meant to improve Imams' counseling skills so that they can better serve their communities' needs and help solve their psychological problems.

NAIF Study Abroad Initiative

The North American Imams Federation (NAIF) has established a Study Abroad Initiative with the MSA Atlanta Council and the International Islamic University of Malaysia. The Study Abroad Initiative is congruent with NAIF's goals as it will foster community development, provide specialized training for Imams, and establish relations with international institutions abroad.

Community development is realized by creating opportunities for people interested in learning more about Islam to travel abroad and 'experience' it in a real sense. This program is indeed a life-changing experience for participants as they are submerged in a Garden of Knowledge and given the opportunity to breathe in the spirit of Islam while studying Arabic, Tajwid, Sirah, Hadith, Fiqh as well as Islamic Aqidah and Worldview. Additional lectures provide introductory information in Psychology, Islam - Knowledge & Civilization, Islamic Economics, Political Science, Architecture, and Comparative Religion. Empowering our communities by investing in education today will ensure our success in the future.

Improving the qualifications of Imams through training and con-

ferences in all areas essential for them to handle their duties is an important objective of NAIF. The Study Abroad Initiative will serve the Imams by sponsoring a group of them to travel to Malaysia and participate in specialized training programs organized by the International Islamic University of Malaysia. Involvement in this program will open the doors for the Imams of NAIF to take advantage of educational opportunities in undergraduate and graduate courses offered by the university. Providing the Imams of NAIF with educational opportunities will better equip them for serving their individual communities.

Establishing relationships with institutions abroad will allow NAIF's Imams to take part in successful programs implemented by Islamic organizations. This, in turn, will help them better serve our Ummah in North America. The Muslims in the West have a lot to offer the Islamic world, and there is much to be learned from our brothers and sisters across the globe. This Study Abroad Initiative will forge the road for NAIF's Imams to participate in international conferences as well as visit Islamic organizations and Institutions around the world. Particularly, this year's program will provide special trips for the Imams of NAIF to visit Islamic institutions in Malaysia and Singapore.

NAIF encourages each Imam to promote this project by sponsoring at least one student from their local communities to participate in this Study Abroad Program.

Post-graduate Study Programs

NAIF is seeking opportunities for Imams to pursuing post-graduate degrees in Islamic studies. So far, an agreement was signed with The Graduate Theological Foundation, Cloverdale College, which stipulates that Imams can apply

for an M.A. or a Ph.D. degree there if they were members of NAIF. In addition, the NAIF programs such as, workshops and conferences that the Imams attend will be counted for them as credit hours in the post-graduate degree program pursued at this foundation.

Imams' Assessment

Through the federation, each Imam can have a chance for self-reflection that may enable him to enhance his positive sides and reconsider those that need improvement or development. NAIF will soon conduct a survey to assess communities' general understanding and expectations of the Imams' role and services for the community. On the basis of the study's results, an assessment form will be developed for the Imams and the form will be posted on our website.

Community members can fill in the form indicating the degree of the Imam's fulfillment of his expected role and services. This assessment will be strictly confidential. NAIF will not share the results with anyone except the Imam in question. The assessment percentage will be based on scores assigned to different sections in the assessment form.

Accordingly, "The Imam of the Month" will be chosen and NAIF will award Imams who get top positions in their evaluation certificates of merit for distinguished performance. Upon his request, the "Imam of the Month" can be announced on the website. If the records of an Imam are favourable, they can be useful in the application of future jobs.

Posting Imams' Opinions by Media Releases about Denouncing Violence

For sometime now, Islam has been constantly on the media accused of terrorism and claimed

to be encouraging acts of extremism and violence. Hence, NAIF thought it necessary to take some action against this and publicize messages supporting peace and moderation.

In this regard, NAIF intends to select a number of Imams to be in charge of this task of responding to the media. Each Imam will be responsible for one or more specific week(s) of the year. Given the unfortunate state of the world, it is likely that during each week there will be an opportunity to condemn extremism and violence. The Imam in charge of this week would write a short message, perhaps 50 to 200 or 300 words, responding to the specific event released in the news during their week. Then, this message would be sent via e-mail to all the Imams on NAIF mailing list seeking their approval or disapproval of the event that occurred. Afterwards, an official statement representing NAIF's stance condemning violence and extremism would be issued.

NAIF would then phone the editorial page editor or the city page editor of the local newspaper or a local broadcast station, and tell him that – in response to some recent event – NAIF condemns violence and extremism. To encourage the local newspaper or the local broadcast station to post Imams' official statements, NAIF would tell this editor that his newspaper or broadcasting station will have sole and exclusive right to print or broadcast the message within the next 24 hours. Afterwards, the message will be sent to the national media. This necessitates that a list of e-mail addresses for national media resources (New York Times, Chicago

Tribune, Los Angeles Times, Washington Times, CNN, Fox News, ABC, CBS, NBC, PBS, NPR, Associated Press, Time magazine, Newsweek, etc.) would be developed.

The merits of this initiative are that it, first, would make it possible to reach out to the media and express Imams' opinion regarding violence, extremism and terrorism. Second, an electronic copy of each message sent and the date on which it was sent to the media will be filed. Accordingly, when someone in the local or national media complains that Imams do not condemn extremism and violence, this claim would be refuted on the basis of the official statements issued earlier.

NAIF's By-laws

"We, the Founding Imams of NAIF, met in the city of Phoenix in the State of Arizona on the 21st of October 2003 do agree to adopt the present constitution and do hereby form and maintain an organization to unite, empower, and represent the Imams in the North American continent."

Article 1: Name of Organization. The name of the Organization shall be the North American Imams Federation to be referred to hereafter as NAIF or Organization.

Article 2: Objectives and Purposes The purpose of the Organization is to serve the best interest of the member Imams through uniting and empowering them for the common good of the communities they serve.

Article 3: Nature and Structure NAIF shall be registered as a non-profit non political organization under section 501 (C) (3) of the federal Tax Code, and shall maintain an office in the United States of America. Further it shall have and maintain at all times a Board

of Trustees, an Executive Committee, and a General Assembly

Article 4: Membership Membership in NAIF shall be open to all qualified Imams residing in the North American continent who believe in and are willing to serve its purposes.

Membership in NAIF shall be determined through a written request to its Board of Trustees who shall have the authority to determine the eligibility and qualification of potential members. All members shall have equal rights and privileges with respect to the election of officers.

Article 5: Board of Trustees The Board of Trustees shall consist of 7 members elected from and by the Founding Imams. The Board of Trustees shall be permanent.

The Founding Imams shall vote in a member to fill any vacancy for the Board of Trustees.

Article 6: Officers and Duties The Executive Committee officers of the Organization shall consist of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and five Members at Large who shall together conduct the daily business of the Organization.

The Executive Committee term shall be three years.

All officers of the Organization shall be elected through a free election process.

A general meeting shall be called for the specific purpose of electing officers.

Elections are conducted by a present member, or proxy, or registered mail.

Each participant shall elect nine names from the list of all members.

Officers shall assume responsibility once the election has finalized.

The President shall call for all meetings, regular or otherwise, and shall serve as the chairman of such meetings. In addition, the President shall, with the approval of his Executive Committee, coordinate

and execute all of NAIF events and activities.

In the absence of the President, or should the President prove unable or unwilling to perform the duties described in 5.03 above, then the Vice President shall assume the responsibilities of the President. In addition, the Vice President or any other Executive member shall also perform other duties as the president may assign or delegate from time to time.

The Treasurer shall be responsible for maintaining of records of the Organization and shall be allowed to request checks or purchase orders on behalf of the Organization. The Treasurer with the President shall prepare and present any budget request to relevant committees. The officers shall ensure that all funds are properly kept within the Organization's accounting system

The Secretary shall be responsible for maintenance of NAIF records, as well as recording accurate minutes of any meeting regular or otherwise. The Secretary shall also record all votes of the General Assembly or the Executive Board. The Secretary shall be responsible for communication and /or other notice to the membership informing them of any meeting or other gathering of the Organization, and shall at all times maintain an accurate list of the membership of the Organization.

Any officer of the Organization may resign at any time by delivering a written notice to the President. The President's resignation shall be submitted to the Vice President.

Vacated offices shall be filled by top candidates from the previous election. No need for an election in this case.

Any officer of the Organization may be removed from such office by majority vote of 5 out of 7 of the Board of Trustees.

Article 7: Meetings Regular meetings of the Executive Committee shall be held for at least four physical meetings a year

with a simple majority at such time and place as determined by the President.

All members shall be notified of any meeting and the nature of the business to be transacted at least seven days before such meeting.

The General Assembly of the Organization shall meet at least once every two years at such time and place as determined by the Board of Trustees. At such General Assembly meetings of the Organization, a quorum shall be deemed to be the attendance of fifty percent (50%) of the active members of the Organization. The Board of Trustees shall meet annually with a simple majority.

Article 8: Decisions

Decisions shall be taken by voting. Each member shall have one vote.

There shall be no absentee voting under any condition.

All motions require an affirmative vote of a simple majority of the membership to be effective.

All votes of the Executive committee shall require a majority vote to be effective.

Article 9: Miscellaneous

This constitution shall be presented to the Founders of the Organization and shall be ratified by a majority vote thereof.

This constitution may be amended or repealed by a two-third majority vote of the General Assembly.

Any amendment to this constitution shall be attached hereto and made part hereof for all purposes.

This constitution and any amendment and changes hereto shall be kept on record with the Secretary at all times and shall be available to any member of the Organization for inspection during reasonable office business hours.



Member profiles and Projects

Abdullah Wajid Masjid Ar-Rasheed

The spirit and happiness attained from the efforts done in the area of Islamic da'wa is one of the greatest pleasures in Imam Abdullah Wajid's life. He is keen on exploring the best methodology for making Islamic da'wa work miracles with people from American cultural backgrounds. 100,000 is the least number of people he targets to approach this year.

Imam Abdullah Wajid's incessant efforts in the field of da'wah encompass conducting a weekly radio broadcast as well as open house meetings in the masjid for non-Muslims. In addition, he participates in a monthly panel discussion in the Barnes and Nobel book store, travels to other religious communities representing Islam and participates in local TV interviews and debates.

"Conveying the true Islamic image and standing up to the anti-Islamic propaganda of the media are the most critical challenges that Imams face today", says Wajid, "while the lack of finances to maintain family life, making it necessary to have a regular job and reducing the Islamic effort in most cases to be only a part time mission, is the most important barrier that impedes Imams from fulfilling their mission optimally".

Imam Wajid considers his work as an Imam in North America, which has started 5 years ago, as joyful but challenging sometimes. Being an African American, born in Greenville, South Carolina, and brought up in America, the experience is not as difficult as it is for non-American Imams. However, it is sometimes difficult to find an appropriate fatwa to handle matters related to life in America, e.g. the issues of cigarettes and voting.

Moreover, apart from leading the prayers and delivering khutbas, the role of Wajid sometimes extends to acting as a social worker or judge between community members - "a challenging test that requires knowledge, fairness and strength", says Wajid. He is also in charge of a lot of the masjid administration work.

It is true that English is vital for Imams to communicate with their communities in the States; however, Imam Wajid highlights the great need for Spanish now too. Besides, gaining a firm grasp of the Arabic Language is one of his crucial goals as it is essential in some cases like leading the salah and really gaining a comprehensive knowledge of Islam.

Imam Wajid attended the elementary and junior high school in the South Bronx as well as the Metropolitan High school

in Manhattan, obtained an Applied Science technology), Science technology), of Information

from Bronx Community College, City University of New York and DeVry Institute of Technology. Currently, he is pursuing an MBA degree at Keller Graduate School of Management of DeVry University as well as a degree in Islamic studies at Hartford Seminary.

Besides, studying at Hartford Seminary, Wajid has been really keen on enhancing his Islamic knowledge through traveling every weekend from Beacon, New York, to Newark, New Jersey, to take an Arabic class (75 miles each way). Moreover, he attended two Arabic training sessions with IAS staff in Virginia and has 18 credits of Islamic studies with the American Open University. Wajid's favourite subjects are tafsir, dawah, Arabic Grammar, comparative religions and languages.

Wajid's role model is Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his favourite Qur'anic sura is Al Ikhlas. His motto is summed up in the hadeeth, "You will not enter paradise until you believe, and you will not believe until you love one another". He highly recommends the book entitled A Brief Illustrated Guide to Understanding Islam for non-Muslims as it gives an excellent introduction to Islam. For Muslims, he believes that Ideal Muslim is a great problem solver and a beautiful practical book that they can apply in their lives.

According to Wajid, his masjid has been successfully paid off. Plans are made to add an additional floor for children's classrooms as well as other services. Wajid's goals include completing his Master's degree in Islamic studies, completing his MBA, developing the masjid, and establishing an Islamic school.

AHMED ABDUL MUJEEB NADWI Masjid Umar Al Farooq Seetle, WA

"To create unity in diversity, to clarify confusion, invite and satisfy the curiosity of a rainbow community" is the noble and great undertaking that Imam Ahmed Mujeeb has taken upon himself to pursue in the US which is characterized by a heterogeneous Muslim Community.

Despite the challenge of dealing with the diverse Muslim population in the United States, which is drawn from different nationalities, ethnic origins and cultural backgrounds, Imam Mujeeb considers it a very pleasant and rewarding experience to be engaged in the cause of educating his community religionwise. He



Member profiles and Projects

is so enthusiastic about his vocation and believes that such an engagement widens his mental horizon and opens for him new vistas for the acquisition of knowledge and experiences.

Basically, it was a blessing from Allah (SWT) that self-motivated Mujeeb to excel in religious studies. His motivation also stemmed from his upbringing in a spiritual religious environment as well as from parental support and, above all, the encouragement and inspiration provided by his distinguished teachers throughout his academic career.

Mujeeb is a native Indian. He was born and raised in a religious family in the well known educational, cultural and historical city Hyderabad. Since his migration to Seattle (WA, USA), five years ago, he has been engaged in teaching youth and adults, males and females, a variety of subjects. Mujeeb's studies have fully equipped him for the religious cause he set out to pursue.

After basic education at home, Mujeeb joined the recognized religious school "Darul Uloom Sabeelussalam", Hyderabad. There, he studied from elementary grades to the highest Aali-miat class. Later, he joined Dar-ul-Uloom in Deoband, India, and completed the "Fazeelat fil Hadith" degree in 1989. In 1991, he earned another degree, namely a "Specialization in Arabic Literature" from Dar-ul-Uloom Nadvat-ul-Ulama in Lucknow, India. He was privileged by being a disciple of the nationally recognized scholar, Sheikh Maulana Khalid Saifulah Rehmani, at whose hands he learnt "Fiqh" and "Ifta".

Mujeeb had a teaching experience in the interpretation of Uloom-e-Shariah, Hadith, Fiqh, Usul Al-Fiqh, Arabic Literature, and Arabic grammar at "Darul Uloom Sabeelussalam". Though well versed in Islamic Studies, Tafseer, Fiqh, Usul Al-Fiqh, and Arabic literature are his favorite subjects.

Dawud Walid Masjid Wali Muhammad Detroit, Michigan

"Difficult, like having a second wife" is how Imam Dawud Walid describes his experience as an Imam in North America despite the warm response with which his first khutbah for Eid al-Fitr was received.

Imam Dawud elaborates saying that sometimes one faces really difficult situations. For example, it is difficult to reach a decision as to whether Muslims should vote for or against affirmative action. In such situations, he says, he refers to the opinions of scholars in America and measures the concepts based upon justice.

Besides, after 9/11, many Muslims started to face a lot of

problems and harassed, which led to the ten-dency of some to identity. Imam upon himself to lims to hold firm their iden- be sacred to display their Islam.

Walid grew up in a mainly Christian environment in Richmond, Virginia. His childhood hero was Malcolm X. He was always more interested in politics and religion than his Christian peers. "In my elementary school, there were hardly any Muslims. The majority of the school was white and Christian", says Dawud.

Dawud is an African-American born in Detroit, Michigan. He attended Virginia Union University studying Business in Richmond, Virginia. He also attended Wayne County Community College and Wayne State University obtaining a degree in Elementary Education. He is currently pursuing a degree in Muslim World Studies.

About his connection with Islamic studies and how it started, Dawud says,

"My studies started through taking classes in Arabic grammar in a masjid. Then, this sparked my interest in taking private classes in tafsir as well as in `iraab al-Qur'an and al-hadeeth". It was listening to speeches of Shaykh Ahmad Kuftaro (RH) about the need of Muslims to give da'wah that prompted him to become an Imam.

Imam Walid believes in the necessity of communication between peoples of different cultures and backgrounds. He takes support for his philosophy from ayah 13 of surat Al-Hujurat (The Rooms) which reads, "O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and then rendered you nations and tribes so that you might know one another. The most honourable among you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most pious. Allah is indeed Ever-Knowing, Ever-Aware" (49: 13).

Imam Walid believes that Allah has endowed him with a special skill to communicate with the youth born in America. This takes a great deal of his attention. In his khutbas, he focuses on the topics of how to harmonize between the laws of Islam and life in America, through the concept of zuhd; Islam being against racism and sectarianism, extremism; lawful earnings; and the dangers of secularism. Crisis in the Muslim Mind by Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman is his most recommended book. He is also interested in expressing the Muslim viewpoint to the media.

Dawud is involved in da'wa with non-Muslims and interfaith activities. According to him, one of the most important aspects that attract non-Muslims to Islam is the concept of social justice.

"Extremism in the Muslim World, which is a by-product of corrupt Muslim presidents and kings, is the most important chal-

were being led to the ten-conceal their Walid took it prompt Mus-steadfast, af-tity, and not to



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lenge facing Islam nowadays", says Dawud, "while the most serious barrier that hampers Imams' fulfillment of their mission as required in Noth America is their ignorance of American history and culture".

Imam Walid aspires for arranging a unique Muhajreen-Ansari Program to unite Muslims of the different ethnic groups.

Hatem Elhagaly (Al-Haj) Dar Abi Bakr

After 9/11, all of us, Imams and khateeb, need to be more careful than ever before with our words so that no part of our speech may be used to demonize Islam or the Muslim community. Since then, I have been more careful with the way I phrase my message to the people but with no change in the content. That is not to say that my message was excessive, nor was I harsh prior to 9/11.

These words by Imam Hatem Al-Haj highlight one of the new responsibilities that the events of 9/11 imposed on Imams, especially in America. Imam Al-Haj is one of the basic founders and the current president of the The Building Blocks, an organization that provides da'wah, educational, social and other services to the Muslim community in Minnesota.

Egypt is the homeland of Al-Haj who is a pediatrician by profession. However, since the age of 9, he has studied Islamic sciences at the hands of several scholars in Alexandria, Egypt. His main direct teacher was Shaykh Yasser Borhamy. In 1991, he graduated with Honors (Equivalent to MD) from the Medical School in Alexandria, Egypt. During his years as a medical student, he served as an Imam and speaker at various mosques in Alexandria. In 2000, he became certified by the American Board of Pediatrics

In 2001, he got the Ijazah (certificate of memorization and accurate recitation of the Holy Qur'an according to the Hafs mode of recitation). In 2004, he earned a Master's degree in Islamic Sharee'ah (jurisprudence) from the American Open University (Suma Cum Laude.) Currently, he is a Ph.D. student of Islamic Studies (Usool-ud-Deen) at al-Jinan University, Tripoli, Lebanon. Fiqh and Aqeeda are his most favorite subjects.

From 1991 to 1994, Al-Haj worked as a full time Imam in Masjid al-Birr of Astoria, NY. Currently, he is mainly involved in da'wah in Minnesota. He gives lectures at different masjid and other places, including the university campus. Like the majority of Imams, he takes his share in family counseling and arbitration between members of the Minnesotan

Muslim community, both in capacity and as Islamic Juris-cil of Minne-

muslim commu- his own personal a member of the prudence Coun- sota (IJCM).

Al-Haj believes jurisprudential

that social or tasks are an indispensable and integral part of the work of any Imam. "Over all, it gives me immense satisfaction to reconcile between two Muslims, particularly a husband and wife. I would not give up this role despite its hardships and inconveniences", says Al-Haj, "however, I do sometimes, though, hope that the people are more considerate and more understanding of our time constraints".

Imam Al-Haj believes that due to relatively new existence of Muslim communities in the West, there are various issues that do not have extant fatwas issued on them by past or contemporary scholars in the Muslim world. These issues require the knowledge and expertise of the grand Muslim scholars in the Muslim world combined with that of their counterparts, Imams, preachers and other experts from the West. This is the work that the Assembly of Muslim Jurists of America (AMJA) attempts to undertake.

Among the most important subjects that Al-Haj likes to tackle in his khutbas are Aqeeda (creed), Fiqh (jurisprudence) and Raqa'iq (heart refinement), with a particular focus on the issues that pertain the most to the Muslim communities in the West, such as the raising of children, Islamic family values, loyalty to Islam and the Muslim Ummah.

Al-Haj stresses the enormous role that Imams have towards youth. He believes that it is Imams that make the youth love or hate the masjid, and the consequences of both are obvious. "Their lack of interest in the youth will be reciprocated from the other end. That is not going to be in the best interest of the youth or the community at large". About his short and long term goals, Imam Al-Haj states:

I wish I can attain the pleasure of Allah by spreading the authentic knowledge of Islam and motivating people to live by it and come closer to Allah. I aspire to do that through my involvement with the community, my lectures at the various mosques and other places as well as my role as an instructor at the Shari'a Academy of America. I also wish I can contribute to the success of the Muslim organizations and institutions that will serve the cause of Islam and the Muslim community in America and the world such as NAIF, AMJA and our local organizations in Minnesota (The Building Blocks and IJCM).



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Ramzi Mohammad **The Islamic Centre of Detroit** **Detroit, Michigan**

"The youth should be given particular attention in Islamic da'wa since they represent the future generation of the Ummah. Besides, old people are very difficult to change", says Imam Ramzi Mohammad.

Imam Ramzi Mohammad is an Iraqi who got is a naturalized American citizen. On the one hand, he earned his Ph.D. degree in Molecular Biology/Cancer Biology from U.S.A. On the other hand, Islamic studies and Hadeeth represent his other favourite areas, and he studied them intensively in both Iraq and U.S.A.

He is interested in public speaking and commenting on the current concerns and daily issues facing the American Muslims in the U.S. as well as in social and community building.

About his experience as an Imam in North America, Imam Ramzi says that it is quite different from home. The Imam in the U.S. has so many responsibilities besides leading the prayers and giving khutbas and lectures. Such responsibilities include conducting marriage ceremonies, solving problems between community members, interacting with the youth in addition to making public appearance and taking part in interfaith activities. Imam Ramzi adds:

"Sometimes, you have to act as a social worker or judge between community members. You try hard to reach a fair decision; then, it depends upon the community members whether they take it or leave it. Some abide by the Imam's decision as a judge while a lot others do not. I have no authority to enforce my decision on them."

Further, he explains that due to the nature of life in North America, sometimes one finds it quite difficult to handle certain situations, for example the interferences of community members in the Imam's job and the limited authority given to him by the board of the Islamic centre.

"After 9/11, I became more active, especially in public speaking, interfaith activities and engagement in current issues – maybe 3 times busier than before 9/11", Ramzi says about how this event affected his role and duties as an Imam.

He aspires for completing the expansion of the masjid where he works and targets establishing a full time Islamic School on the long run.

SHPENDIM NADZAKU **MCC Greater Rockford**

Imam Shpendim Nadzaku never wanted to become an Imam, but he felt it was his Islamic obligation to follow this path.

"I recall during my search for Islam I went to many different masjids and tried to speak with many different Imams and was let down in many ways," he says, "They could barely speak English. I know how much that hurt me, so I felt the need to do my best to fill the position so that I can strive to fulfill these critical duties for others that I once myself couldn't have."

Imam Shpendim, who has been an Imam for two years now, grew up in New Jersey. Although he was born in Ohrid, Macedonia, his parents immigrated to the United States when he was just a year old.

He attended elementary and high school in the New Jersey area, after which he received a degree in biology at the County College of Morris in Randolph, NJ. He then studied Arabic and Islamic studies at the Islamic University in Madinah. Tafsir, Aqidah, Usulul-Fiqh and poetry were some of his favorite subjects while he was a student.

As an Imam, his obligations are not just restricted to leading salah. He has to attend to multiple duties in the course of his work ranging from teaching daily classes on Hadith, weekly Arabic classes and leading a sister's halaqa to monthly visits at local jails, family and marriage counseling and even Internet counseling via e-mail. He hosts community service classes for non Muslims, occasional Islamic studies classes at two local colleges and he must fulfill also his administrative duties that include masjid board meetings. "I'm probably not much different from other Imams that are expected to be supermen," he said.

As he works within his community, he says he places emphasis on the six pillars of iman, the five pillars of Islam, the importance of 'ilm and aml, self refinement, love of Allah (swt) and the Prophet (pbuh) and achieving their love.

While the Imam has gladly taken on this calling, he admits that being an Imam in America is tough and he describes it as "a migraine and stomachache."



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Some of the work, such as marriage counseling, presents its own unique challenges. "They never taught us this stuff in school, so it is all hands-on training. Allahul-musta'an," he said. In addition, not everyone is always willing to listen to the Imam when he takes on the role of social worker or mediator between community members. "I wish I had a stick like Umar (ra) and beat them over the head when they deserve it," he said.

It is also difficult at times to give Americans a true picture of Islam, especially when there are many Muslims who do un-Islamic things, he says. The Imam notes that currently, Muslims are on different levels in terms of their perspectives and their practice of Islam. "Once we can convince Muslims to be Muslims, I believe we will have better success with non-Muslims," he said. However, he takes every opportunity given to do da'wah with non-Muslims and teaches a class in the fall and spring to retirees at a local college. "I try to be a proper representative for Islam and make it a point to dress in traditional Islamic clothing now and then to be visible," he said.

Imam Shpendim says key factors that may deter Imams in their work include the burden of having too much work and responsibility on one person's shoulders and conflicting viewpoints between the boards and the Imams.

Nonetheless, he takes his work in bringing people closer to their religion very seriously. While he mainly uses English to reach out to the diverse members of his community, the Imam feels it is vital that people learn Qur'anic Arabic so that they may understand Islam from its direct sources.

As for his future plans, Imam Shpendim wants to finish his MBA and possibly pursue a master's or Ph.D. in Islamic Studies. He wants to complete memorizing the Qur'an, help the children in his classes to understand it and complete their Arabic studies. He also hopes he can do something for other Imams. He wants to write a clear guide for new Imams - "kind of a 'dummies guide to being an Imam in America," he said.

Saad Hammid, M.D. Islamic Center of Savannah Savannah, GA

"And whoever fears Allah, He will make a way for him to get out of every difficulty..." (At-Talaq, 2) epitomizes a strong conviction of Imam Saad Hammid, the Imam of the Islamic Center of Savannah. His confidence is not only based on unquestioned belief in the truth of Allah Almighty's words, but he has seen it practically governing matters in his own life as well as that of those around him.

Imam Saad originally a pediatrician in Damascus, currently pursuing Islamic studies at Open University. His favorite subjects are Islamic History.

His interests are centered on social and community building, family counselling, and public speaking. The most important issues that his talks to his community usually tackle are aqeedah, the importance of Sunnah, raising up children, and Islamic history. Besides, he is actively involved in helping in Sunday School, giving lectures and halaqas, Arabic classes, youth activities, speaking to non-Muslim gatherings, addressing the media and writing letters to newspapers.

According to Imam Saad, an Imam's job sometimes obliges him to undertake non-dispensable but very difficult responsibilities, e.g. acting as a social worker or judge between community members. Hence, every Imam should seek gaining extra skills in arbitration and counselling because Islamic knowledge alone is not enough in this respect.

Saad aspires achieving a balance between his Islamic mission and working in his specialization. He targets graduating from the American Open University as well as pursuing post-graduate studies in this field, continuing to serve his local and global community besides continuing his work as Pediatrician.

Taqiuddin Ahmed Islamic Society of Central New York Syracuse, NY

"Say, [God says], My servants who have harmed yourselves by your own excess, do not despair of God's mercy. God forgives all sins: He is truly the most forgiving, the Most merciful" (Az-Zumar, 53), an ayah that has a special significance for Imam Taqiuddin Ahmed. "It gives great hope to a person and removes desperation", says Taqiuddin.

Counselling, teaching Arabic, tafsir, a lecture series entitled "Introduction to Islam" at Syracuse University and programs organized by the education committee of the Inter-religious Council (IRC) are among Imam Taqiuddin Ahmed's key preoccupations.

Moreover, he is an active member of the Cabinet of Faith Leaders and the Education Committee of IRC. As a member of the Board of Directors of ACTS (Alliance of Communities Transforming Syracuse) and Clergy Caucus, he participates in their

Hammid is a pediatrician born in Syria, but he is pursuing a degree in Islamic studies. His favorites are Seerah and



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programs pertaining to the rights and issues of minorities, equal opportunities, standing against discrimination, etc.

"I enjoy the diversity of the community and great opportunity of da'wa. It is very exciting. However, finding an appropriate fatwa about halal meat, organ donation, travelling without mahrem, etc. are but some of the challenges that face one here", says Taquiuddin about his experience as an Imam in the States.

After 9/11, Imam Taquiuddin got involved in interfaith activities in attempt to realize further outreach to the larger community with a view to increasing awareness about Islam.

Imam Taquiuddin was born in Patna, Bihar Province, India and is a Canadian citizen. He obtained an M.S. and a Ph.D. degree in Chemistry as well as a Master's degree in Sharia (Shahadat-el-Alamia). His favourite subject is Fiqh.

Taquiuddin has great aspirations and a lot that he wants to achieve for the Muslim community. Among his short term goals are integrating the community and reducing the gap between various ethnicities, involving youth in masjid affairs, training sisters to help the new female converts in practicing their faith as well as establishing a welcome team comprising various ethnicities to take care of the new converts. With regards to long-term goals, he looks forward to building a youth center for sports and educational activity, establish a Muslim cooperative businesses and insurance system as well as an interest free student loan system.

Yasser Al-Khooly **The Islamic Society of** **central Louisiana** **Alexandria, Louisiana**

"It was duaa in the Haram during umra; then, Allah made every thing easy", says Imam Yasser Al-Khooly about how he beseeched the Almighty to give him an opportunity to pursue Islamic da'wa, or calling to the path of Allah, in the States. "Feeling responsible for my obligation to take part in this at the age of 14, I decided to pursue the path of becoming an Imam one day", says Al-Khooly.

He grew up in a stable and religious family in the Daqahleyah governorate in Egypt. His father was keen on teaching him the Qur'an since his early childhood. He spent the first three years of the elementary stage in Saudi Arabia and the other three years in Egypt. "The whole six years didn't have much impact on me", he says. However, he started memoriz-

ing the Qur'an religious books the age of 14.

He graduated in Education, Engment, in 1991. Then, he got two Diplomas in English Language Teaching and Curricula. He was about to start his MA degree, but he traveled to work in Saudi Arabia for some time. In 1994, he obtained a diploma from the Higher Institution for Islamic Studies. Later, he spent two years study in the Institution for Qur'an Recitation and got "Ijazat At-tajweed" in 2002. In 2005, after three years of further study, he got The Higher Recitation Certificate.

Though he is basically specialized in Qur'an memorization, Islamic da'wa, Islamic spiritualities, teaching methods and foreign languages, Al-Khooly's favorite subjects in Islamic studies are Fiqh, Sirah, and Tafsir.

The most important subjects that his khutbas revolve around are Muslims and western civilizations, lawful earnings, secularism and its dangers, and death. Apart from Islamic issues, he is mostly concerned with social and community building, the shari'a and fiqh of America, family counseling, and public speaking.

In line with his original impetus to work as an Imam feeling his responsibility for da'wa, Al-Khooly has started a khutba series about da'wa being the responsibility of everyone. He is eager to motivate his community members to pursue the same mission and teach them how to defend Islam against accusations. Besides, he thinks that giving due attention to the youth is most likely to bring about real change over time.

Having an English major, Al-Khooly has no problem giving his Khutbas in English as well as Arabic, but he gives all his lessons in English. He believes that this is very important to get the message through in the North American community. He relies on the fact that Allah has not sent a messenger except in the same tongue of his people.

One of the most important challenges facing Islam nowadays, according to Imam Al-Khooly, is "the ignorance of most Muslims to the extent that they permit the local culture to override their own culture. Subsequently, they melt in the society rather than affect it". One of Al-Khooly's most important goals is trying his best to get the Muslim community together.

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Isam Rajab
Masjid Hamzah
Houston, Texas
irajab@gmail.com

Having the fifth position on the level of the entire state upon graduation from high school, Imam Isam Rajab had full opportunity to study anything he wanted. However, it was the Hadith, "Whoever Allah wants to do good for, He makes him have a firm grasp of religion" that prompted his pursuit of his vocation.

Hence, Imam Isam, who is Syrian born in Kuwait, joined the Islamic University of Madina Shari'a school where he obtained his B.A. in Islamic studies. He was not satisfied with this and sought continuing post-graduate studies. Currently, he is working on his Ph.D. Though his major is basically Qira'at (Qura'nic recitations) and Inheritance, Fiqh, Hadith, Tafsir, and Quranic sciences are among his favorite subjects. "In Pursuit of Virtue by Ibn Hazmi is the best book I have ever read save the book of Allah. It should be in the house of every Muslim let alone Imams! ", says Isam.

Rajab got a license from the Prophetic masjid for memorizing the Qur'an and another license from the Prophetic masjid in the Inheritance System in Islam. Besides, apart from Islamic studies, he has some computer interests that enabled him to get the MCP (Microsoft Certified Professional).

"Working as an Imam is a new thing in my family; however, the Messenger was the Imam of all Muslims, Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, prayed to be the leader of the Muslims, so becoming an Imam is one step to be so", says Rajab about what inspired him to work as an Imam.

"I used to have 3 jobs and make lots of money before I came here, but I noticed that there is a great need for Imams in the states, especially those who master the English language and who are relatively young and active. Hence, I decided to come here though being an Imam is becoming very difficult post Sept. 11th". This is how the idea of his coming to the States emerged.

As an Imam, Isam always faces situations where he needs to give his community members solutions concerning their problems that emerge on account of the western culture or fatwas regarding certain issues. "Alhamdulillah, I have been able to answer most questions so far, but I still have one fatwa pending with regards to "a man who changed himself to become a woman then she/he accepted Islam, what gender he/she is and how to deal with him/her", says Isam.

Imam Rajab underscores the importance of English for the success of Imams in the States though Arabic is indispensable in leading the prayers and reciting the Qur'an. After all, he says, "And we have not sent a Messenger except with the language of his people to clarify to them'. Language is essen-

tial and an Imam may realize some without it, but fully successful".

Non-Muslims Islam may be However, "it is "that Muslims are mostly ignorant of how to convey the message of Islam and how to take the initiative and lead the way". He adds, "a recent study by CAIR shows that 10% of Americans think that Muslims worship the moon!!" The spread of ignorance between both Muslims and non-Muslims is one of the most serious challenges facing Islam today according to Imam Isam. Hence, unlike most Imams in the States who have da'wah with non-Muslims as one of their first and foremost goals, this is not Isam's priority at the moment. Right now, he targets educating a large number of Muslims who can take care of this issue later.

A second challenge, according to Imam Isam, is the lack of organization and cooperation among Muslims. Further, some impediments hamper Imams from fulfilling their responsibilities in the desired manner. Unfortunately, some of these obstacles are self-incurred, e.g. lack of self-worth. Imams must realize that they have a very special gift. Imam Isam believes that change for the better never comes unless people should strive hard for change, "Indeed Allah does not change the status of people until they change what's within themselves" (sura, ayah)

One significant achievement of Imam Isam is the project which he has started to benefit his Muslim community, namely Arees Institute. It is the first Islamic Institute in the world to use Webex technology along with on-site classes just like the American Universities (www.arees.org). Through www.islamicnetwork.com, Rajab offers a service of online fatwa where he answers an average of 10 questions daily.

Currently, Isam is giving priority to his Ph. D. but on the long run, he aims at:

Producing 50 well educated American Muslims males and females to be teachers, professors, professionals and Imams to lead the way and change the Muslims in America.

Establishing the Best and first Islamic University in America where students get REAL knowledge.

Mohamad Hicham Alhomsi **Islamic Society of Augusta** **Agusta, Gerogia**

"However, We shall be sure to guide to Our ways those who strive hard for Our cause: God is with those who do good" (Al-Ankabut, 69)

Despite his interest in and engagement with Islamic studies since his early childhood, he never thought of coming to the States, let alone work as an Imam here. However, he once met Imam Zaid Shaker, who was studying Arabic in Syria, and the latter brought

in America achievements he will not be

ignorance of understood. sad," says Isam,



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up the issue of visiting the States. The idea thrilled him for the opportunity it offers for *da'wah*. Hence, he decided to pursue this for a couple of weeks or so then return back to Syria, his homeland. Just before going to the airport, he visited his tutor, Sheikh Ahmad, the Grand Mufti of Syria, who advised him to read *surat Al-Ankabut, The Spider*, during his flight as it encourages struggle for the sake of Allah. He promised to follow his tutor's advice and left thankfully. Upon coming to the States, he came to know that many prisoners convert to Islam in prison, so he thought that this would be a very fertile environment for *daw'ah*. The resonance of *ayah 69 of Al-Ankabut*, which Sheikh Ahmad recited to him upon leaving, was the stimulus that sparkled the interest of the Imam of the Islamic Society of Augusta to stay in the U.S. for *da'wah*.

His job gives him overpowering happiness. To his community, he is more than a leader of the prayers or a religious instructor; he is rather a friend and advisor. He has great hope to help and serve Muslims in the U.S. One of the most serious challenges he perceives is the dangers of losing their Muslim identity when the Muslim youth go to high school. "In general, American life is not as liberal as we see it in movies; however, high schools in particular are even worse than movies. You can find there all sorts of things – murder, drugs, Alcohol; you name it. Many parents are not aware of this matter, I always advise them to volunteer in their children high schools so that they know what is happening to their kids", says Alhomsi. He adds, "we Imams need to reach outside the walls of the masjids and connect to our community in their work environments. Many times, I personally volunteer to do some tasks related to the businesses of my community and share with them all their activities. I do not alienate myself from them".

Since he has made his decision to stay in the States, Imam Mohamad has been quite active in *da'wah* with non-Muslims. "Da'wah is the job of the Prophets and is for sure the most rewarding of all the Islamic work. It should focus on introducing Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to the people who do not know him well", he says. At his masjid, some Jews pronounced *Shabada*, and they were great inspiration to the Muslim community in Augusta. He believes that Christians and Hindus are also very ready to accept Islam when it is presented to them in the right manner and in easy simple terms. Further, Alhomsi perceives a wonderful opportunity for *da'wah* with the agnostic people who are searching for the truth. "The joy of giving *Shabada* to a new Muslim is greater than any other honor a human can get in his life." This is how Imam Al-Momsi describes his feeling about his vocation.

Alhomsi was self-motivated to pursue Islamic studies since his early childhood. The beginning of the story can be traced back to joining an Islamic school - *Al-Ma'had Al Sharee lil da'wah wal Irshad* - in Damascus from the 7th grade to the 12th. This school is specialized in Shari'a, Qur'an, Hadeeth, Fiqh and all types of Islamic areas. Since his parents wanted him to have a normal degree too, Alhomsi went to a normal school in the evening and the Islamic school during the day.

At that time also, Imam Mohamad had the talent of composing poetry. From the 7th to the 12th grade, each year, he used

to compose a poem and to of the grand big gathering each Eid day. small group of youths whom he going to the mas-Qur'an, etc. He

strong bonds with this group till now, and they even went to Hajj together in Alhomsi learnt the rules of recitation (*Tajweed*) and memorized the entire Holy Qur'an throughout 8 years (199 - 1998) at the hands of Sheikh Muhammad Sukkar, *Sheikh Qur'aa Al-Diar As-Shameyya* or the best of Qur'anic reciters in Syria..

When he finished high school, his grades enabled him to join the Dental School. However, he wanted to carry on with his Islamic studies, so he studied simultaneously at the Dental school and the Faculty of *Usul Al-Deen*. He got his Bachelor of Arabic and Islamic Studies in 1997. Within one year after that (1998), managing to obtain his Bachelor of Dental Sciences and earning his Master's degree in Hadith and Sunnah Sciences simultaneously was more than just a significant feat. His supervisor in the Master's degree was Nureddin 'Etr, the most famous specialist in Hadith in Syria. Throughout his educational journey, Alhomsi has attempted moving along both the Islamic as well as non-Islamic fields in parallel. Starting 2002, he studied for two years at the American Dental Association (USA), passed the National Dental Board Examination (NDBE) and was licensed to practice in the State of MN.

On the one hand, *In the shades of the Qur'an* is Alhomsi's most favorite book as it gives a very good way of contemporary tafsir and focuses on the themes. On the other, Al-Hadith Al-Qudsi "My servants, I have made oppression unlawful for Me and unlawful for you, so do not commit oppression against one another ..." is the most influential on his life.

If he were not engaged with any of his multiple commitments or community members, Imam Mohamad would usually be bound behind his computer screen at the Islamic Society of Augusta seeking the latest in computer technology. At his computer empire there, he enjoys any short free times trying to find ways of running his work most efficiently. He is a technology fan in the full sense of the word.

Alhomsi has multiple short- and long-term goals related to his education, serving Islam and social life. As far as his education is concerned, he looks forward to starting his dental practice next June in shaa Allah and to go on with it alongside with his work in *daw'ah* as well as finishing his Ph.D. in Islamic studies. He also wants to learn Turkish and Spanish. Regarding serving Islam, Imam Mohamad aspires continuing to support NAIF to make it one of the most active and well-known organizations representing Imams in the U.S. Alhomsi also hopes to manage developing a very effective computer program that will revolutionize the way students memorize the Qur'an and maximize their abilities of memorizing it. Socially, he desires enrolling his two kids in a good Islamic school so that they can learn Islam and Arabic as well as taking his parents to Hajj inshaa Allah.

nice Arabic recite it in front scholars in the they held on There was a nice Muslim used to join in jid, reciting the still maintains

Featured Mosques and Islamic Centers

NAIF has more than 150 members serving in masajid of all sizes, which offer their communities the religious, social and cultural service services that are integral to their lives as Muslims. We are currently creating an online database that will include profiles of Imams and their mosques. This will enable the Shuyookh to be aware of imams working in other areas, helping to encourage communication between them, and to also allow them to see the types of activities different masajid have initiated, thereby drawing ideas and insights of the services available for Muslims and the potential for new projects. Listed below are just some of mosques that have NAIF members as imams. (Information about the mosques is courtesy of the masjid websites and the Pluralism Project, www.pluralism.org. Please note that the masajid were selected at random to represent different regions of the United States and as a reflection of the exemplary work that we believe all masjid and imams in general do wherever they may be.)

For more of our listings of imam and masjid profiles, please visit our website at www.imamsofamerica.com in the near future. Be sure to also fill out our profile forms so that we can learn more about you and the communities you work in.

Islamic Society of Boston

Imam: Nehla Basyouny



The Islamic Society of Boston (ISB) was organized in 1981 as a collaboration between the Muslim student organizations

at Harvard University, Boston University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Northeastern University, Wentworth Institute, Suffolk University, and Tufts University. As the number of Muslims in the Boston area grew, the ISB eventually became a separate organization, serving Muslims in the Cambridge area.

According to its website, it seeks to "practice and promote a comprehensive, balanced view of Islam. We strive to embody the "middle path" to which our scriptures call us - a path of moderation, free of extremism, and representative of the Islamic vision of a healthy community." Its core values center around commitment to the Qur'an and the example of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w), sincerity in intentions to make all deeds pleasing to God., upholding and affirming the sanctity of all human life, respect for the individual, condemnation of all forms of bigotry, including racism, sectarianism,

anti-Semitism and class discrimination, equality of genders and service and engagement with the broader society.

Like many masajid around the world, it provides both a religious sanctuary and an environment for education. Besides serving as a space for the five daily prayers, the ISB offers classes throughout the week for both English and Arabic speakers. There is a "new Muslim" class for recent converts, advanced classes in Qur'anic sciences, hadith and Qu'ranic recitation. English as a Second Language classes for non-native English speakers and Arabic classes for those who do not speak Arabic are also offered.

The ISB website is a communication hub for the community, with an online announcement and message board and bulletin boards for people to post ads for everything from employment to housing. ISB is also actively involved in various relief efforts, gives loans and emergency assistance to members in the community in need, as well as other social services. Members can also pay their zakat online through the ISB website.

Between 70 to 100 people visit the mosque daily, with nearly 1,000 in attendance at Friday prayers - there is such a high demand during this time that the people often spill into the parking lot in the back.

In the summer of 2004, construction began on a new Islamic cultural center in Roxbury near Northeastern University and Roxbury Community College. The new facility includes a mosque that can accommodate 1,200 men and 400 women in prayer rooms, as well as an Islamic school serving kindergarten through fifth grade. It has 18 classrooms that accommodate 20 to 23 students each. There is also a library, a section for washing the dead, a media and dawah center and a store for Islamic art and books.

Islamic Center of Cleveland

Imam Mohamad Samer Altabaa



The Islamic Center of Cleveland has been a source of religious inspiration for the residents of Cleveland for almost 40 years. It was founded in

1967 by a small group of Muslim residents of Greater Cleveland. Initially members met in different places including the Cleveland YMCA and a remodeled duplex before construction on a permanent mosque began in 1989. The masjid was built mainly through dedicated local funding. It is now an Islamic architectural landmark in the area and a community educational

Featured Mosques and Islamic Centers

center has been added as well.

Currently it is open daily for individual or group salat, Jumua, Eid prayers and other religious observances. Community events include potluck dinners, picnics, lectures in English and interfaith programs. The masjid holds a family session every Sunday to allow residents to meet and interact, helping to build social ties and a sense of unity.

There are Saturday and Sunday schools for children and the center also publishes a newsletter to keep its members up to date. Adults can also benefit from other educational opportunities including classes of different levels of Arabic, Islamic studies, Islamic history, Quran recitation and tajweed. The imam also gives a lecture on the rules of worship every Friday before the main Khutba.

Women are also actively involved at the mosque and the women's committee meets once a month. Muslims from many parts of the world are often present. The language most often heard is English - almost 500 members attend and the ethnic composition includes Arab-American (largest), Indo-Pakistani American, all nationalities of the Muslim world, and African American (smallest).

Islamic Center of New England

Imams: Imam Khalid Nassar and Imam Muhammad Masood

Drawing its inspiration from the Holy Quran and the Sunnah, the Islamic Center of New England works for the betterment of Muslims



and the society at large. It was incorporated in the state of Massachusetts in the early 1960s and has one masjid at Quincy and another in Sharon. The Quincy branch was initiated in 1963 and then in 1993, ground was broken for the 55-acre Sharon property.

Membership at the two centers is almost 1000, with 75-100 attending services every day. As the oldest Islamic center in New England, it embraces all Islamic traditions and its members are from more than 20 nations around the world. According to its website some of its goals include: to promote the principles of Islam using the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) as the source of guidance, to maintain masajid at Quincy and Sharon, to promote education in the Islamic way of life and to foster unity among

Muslims and a better relations between Muslims and other

Recognizing the importance of teaching and spreading Islamic knowledge, the center has established Al-Bayan, a weekend school that offers quran memorization and recitation classes for children and tajweed classes for teenagers. The school includes seven levels of instruction and has more than 160 registered students. Currently, there also Arabic classes for adults and members also have access to a library at both masjid with Islamic texts.

The Center also sponsors public lectures, participates in interfaith regional and national religious organizations, and publishes a quarterly newsletter.

Islamic Center of Columbia

Imam: Sheikh Muhammad Adly



The Islamic Center of Columbia, SC, known as Masjid al-Muslimiin, was

founded in 1981 and presently serves about 500 Muslims. It is a source of Islamic activity and guidance to both local and international Muslim students due to its close proximity to University of South Carolina.

Members benefit from many essential services. About 60 children attend the weekend school on Sundays where volunteers teach Qur'anic Arabic, Hadith Studies, Islamic Manners & Behavior, Qur'anic Recitation, and Islamic History. The school runs for approximately nine months each year.

The Center is also engaged in providing weekly da'wah services at the South Carolina Department of Corrections prisons on a volunteer basis. The services consist of Islamic lectures, study classes, and counseling. Transitional living assistance is also provided for those ex-offenders who are Muslim and who have been released.

The Center sponsors a Muslim women's forum for educational development, health, and welfare as well as social and recreational activities designed to provide an Islamic environment for Muslim women. It also sells and distributes for charity audio/visual productions and literature and sponsors regular guest lectures by noted Muslim speakers. These events are at times co-sponsored with the Muslim Students' Association of the University of South Carolina, and they are a valuable source of Islamic knowledge and information for the whole community.

The center has been active in propagating the message of Islam

Featured Mosques and Islamic Centers

to diverse audiences. Da'wah efforts include street teaching, social events, free literature distribution, local media presentations and community-wide lectures. In addition, the center has a forum and organization for Muslim youth, coordinated by responsible adult members, where weekly and monthly activities are hosted to encourage active participation and to provide the youth with a healthy social and inspirational outlet for their energies. The center is hoping to develop a food co-op and also establish living quarters for ex-offenders who have become Muslim since their incarceration, as well as to accommodate new Muslims.

Islamic Society of Greater Houston

Imams: Sheikhs Akbar Saleem, Sayed Abdul-Aziz, Sayed Abdullah, Dilawar Shah, Mahmoud Moustafa, Zoubir Bouchikhi, Isam Rajab, Hosam Farag



For many Muslims in the Houston area, the Islamic Society of Greater Houston continues to have a significant impact in multiple facets of their lives. It was formed in 1968 and currently, the society has one main center and 16 regional branches in different zones around Houston. It also operates 3 full-time schools, which are licensed and recognized by the State of Texas. Dar-ul-Arqam schools provide education similar to that offered by public schools as well as basic Islamic studies in the Islamic environment necessary to nurture the youth in an appropriate manner. There are currently about 325 students and classes are offered through 9th grade level, with plans to expand the schools to 12th grade level and to open another school.

One of key project that was originally initiated under the ISGH branch, is the Houston Shifa Services Center. Opened in 1997, it offers several health-related services to community members regardless of their background. The ISGH Majlis Al-Shura became concerned about the medical liability related to the operations of the free medical clinic at the center and decided to disassociate itself from the clinic, administratively. So the center now operates as an independent organization and offers the following:

Free Health Care with Medical consultations & exams, flu vaccinations, and laboratory tests such as Blood Lipid Profile, Diabetes and High Blood Pressure Screening are offered on periodic basis.

Islamic Center of San Diego

Imam: Sheikh Taha Hassane



The Islamic Center of San Diego is located in Clairemont and is the

largest mosque in San Diego County. Its mission is to serve the religious needs of the San Diego Muslim population and work with the community to help the less fortunate and to educate and enlighten people about Islam.

The regular activities include the five daily prayers, Friday prayer, and a variety of educational talks and seminars. Lectures are usually held every Friday evening, and one of the shuyookh also hosts a special session for sisters only on Wednesday evening. The center also works with other mosques in San Diego county to host events for the local Muslim community.

Members are committed to addressing social causes so the center collaborates with numerous San Diego organizations to initiate and undertake projects for community improvement and development.

There is a school on Saturdays for children to provide instruction in Quran, Islamic Studies, and Arabic language instruction. The school, called Al-Rashid, enrolls students from the ages of 4 to 14. In addition, a women's committee has been working to produce programs that target women. These include Islamic lectures in English and Arabic, Quran memorization for beginning and advanced learners and Arabic language in both beginning and advanced levels. The women have also been trying establish an Islamic book club, organize Quran and Islamic knowledge contests in Ramadhan for women and children, build an audio/visual library to exchange resources and offer translation services. Youth welfare is also an integral part of the mosque's objectives and this is achieved through active work on a regular basis with the youth group.

On the center's website is an interactive blog where members can post comments, announcements and ask questions to which the imam responds. The imam also frequently makes presentations on Islam to different groups. ICSD also publishes a newsletter with a list of activities at the masjid and the imam's activities. Recent activities at the center have included a fiqh workshop, presentations on Islam for San Diego County employees, fundraisers for Muslims in Palestine and Lebanon, and participation in the annual Clairemont Family Day.

Featured Mosques and Islamic Centers

Masjid Al-Huda - Islamic Cultural Community Center

Minneapolis, MN
Imam Dr. Farok As-
samarai



Masjid al-Huda, also known as the Islamic Cultural Community Center is one of the main centers of Islamic activities in the Twin Cities.

The masjid is open for the five daily prayers and and jumuah sessions, and has had to accommodate a growing number of attendees. In addition, it has a rich variety of halaqat that happen on many days of the week. Every Saturday, many members flock to the masjid for a study and analysis of the life of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w), which is held after Isha and is very well attended. There are also daily halaqat on tafseer after fajr prayer, and the tafseer of Surah Baqarah on Fridays after Isha. Lectures are given in Arabic with translations or in English.

Sisters also have also had their own halaqat on spirituality, purification rulings, worship rulings, marriage, women issues and more, and the mosque occasionally hosts other sisters' education classes. Other education opportunities are available through the center's Sharia Institute, which offers classes in both English and Arabic.

In addition, the ICCC also hosts classes by other groups such as a bi-weekly class on Saturdays centered on Islamic fiqh, etiquettes and manners as described in the book Minhaj al Muslim and the tafseer of the 30th juz.

During Ramadhan, the masjid provides iftar for the community every day, as well as suhoor during the last ten days of Ramadhan for those attending Qiyam-ul-layl. There are montly Qiyam ul-layl prayers held on the first Saturday of every month.

The center also operates the Al-Ihsan School, which was "established in the spirit of the traditional schools, Al-Katateeb", according to the website.

There is a recognition that "being in the masjid and folding the knees to acquire knowledge, has a great barakah in developing the senses, intellect, and education of the children." Youth from the age of 6 and up are enrolled and grouped based on their existing knowledge of Islamic studies and

Quran. The center also has an Islamic bookstore on its premises.

Islamic Community Center Tempe Masjid

Tempe, AZ
Imam: Sheikh Ahmad
Shqairat



Tempe masjid was established just north of the campus of Arizona State University in Tempe in 1984. Its beautiful architecture is modeled after the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem – the eight-sided structure has a minaret and a gold dome. Before the community was able to to build the center, Muslims would gather in local homes or travel to Phoenix masjids for Friday prayers.

The masjid observes the five daily prayers and Jumuah. There are weekly halaqat on different topics held Friday evenings in English and in Arabic, as well as many classes, such as Arabic lessons, Quran recitation and memorization, and Seerah. The masjid hosts tours and open workshops for those interested in learning about Islam. Every Sunday, there is a "Fundamentals of Islam" class for new Muslims and non-Muslims. Women also have a bi-weekly halaqa.

The center also operates the Phoenix Metro Islamic School (PMIS), which caters for elementary school-age children. It opened in 1998. In addition, the school has a full-day care center on site. Students are involved in community service projects such as collecting food for the needy during Ramadhan.

Community members can also get help with issues such as Islamic finances and funerary arrangements - the masjid has its own cemetery.

Most of the members are students, faculty and staff at nearby Arizona State University. Therefore it is also closely associated with the university's Muslim Student Association. There are more than 75 different nationalities. While the members speak a range of languages such as Farsi, Urdu, French and Spanish, Arabic and English are the two languages used most commonly.

Featured Mosques and Islamic Centers

Islamic Society of Augusta

Augusta, GA

**Imam:
Mohamad Al-
homs**

The Islamic Society of Augusta (ISA) is the largest center in the area and is located in the suburb of Martinez, Georgia. It has pursued an aggressive policy of community outreach and education especially after September 11. The center's mission is to "to create a peaceful, clean and harmonious environment, to nurture and facilitate the practice of Islam by all those who enter" following the guidance of the Holy Qu'ran and the sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).



Jumua prayers are always well attended and the khutbas focus on contemporary issues in the context of Quranic teachings and the Sunnah. There is also a religious education program for children and teenagers older than six years of age during the school year. Several other types of specialized classes are offered for adults and youth, including a class for new Muslims and a women's class, which meets to study and discuss different surahs. In addition, the youth have a class that specifically addresses the challenges facing the Muslim youth in the U.S and misconceptions about Islam.

The ISA also hosts lectures from visiting academics and has organized open houses for the wider community. More people have been interested in attending these sessions especially after Sept. 11. An open house in 2002 was attended by over four hundred visitors. In addition, the center has sent teams to local police departments and public schools to conduct sensitivity training. Churches and other groups have also been invited to the masjid for presentations on Islamic awareness.

About 130 families come to the mosque. The congregation is diverse and consists mainly of professionals: doctors, engineers, students from the Medical College of Georgia, and there is also a presence of those affiliated with Fort Gordon Army base

Masjid Al-Ribat Al-Islami

: Imam Saad Eldegwy

Masjid Al-Ribat Al-Islami is a charitable, non-profit organization that was established in 1985 to serve the San Diego Muslim community. Its goals include calling others to the Islam in the way of the noble prophets, preserving and defending the authentic Is-



lamic beliefs, principles, and teachings and building mosques, institutions, and schools to help Muslims unite. It also focuses on supporting a generation of pious and able Muslim youth to carry the torch of Islam and organizing meetings that help to foster Muslim unity and encourage dialogue. It seeks to provide scholarly and financial help to empower Muslims all around the globe.

About 400 families frequently come to the masjid for prayers and for social activities such as aqeeqas and waleemat. There is a monthly Qiyam-ul-layl program. The center offers its patrons various services including classes for Arabic, Quran memorization, Fiqh, and Tafseer. Families can also meet the imam for counseling and the masjid also offers wedding and funeral services. Its website features an online calendar for community announcements and events, as well as an audio archive of Islamic lectures.

As a means of education and outreach it distributes books and publications to the Muslim and non-Muslim populace. The masjid also has a library where people can access Islamic publications of different kinds.

Directory of Members



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Islamic Mission Of America
917 400 8275
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Masjid Ar-Rasheed
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Jackson Heights Islamic Ctr.

Mohammed Abdelaal
Hampshire Mosque
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Mohammed Absullatif Azom
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Islamic Center Of North Detroit (Masjid Al-Falah)



Mohammed Alotoum
Student Mosque
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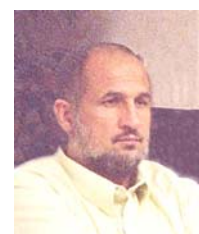
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**[16:125] Invite (all) to the Way
of thy Lord with wisdom and
beautiful preaching**



**[3:103] And hold fast, all together,
by the Rope which Allah (stretches
out for you), and be not divided.**



A Thank You Note for All Donors and Fundraisers

The Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee of NAIF would like to extend sincerest thanks and gratitude for all those who sponsored the 2006 conference through their generous donations, thus making it possible and in a better form this year than before. In this regard, we would like to thank:

All the Imams who sent donations from their community members.

The Muslim communities in Minneapolis MN , Flint MI, and Phoenix AZ.

**LIFE
PEACE
Mercy USA
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All the masajid which hosted NAIF Imams' fundraising initiatives:

Grand Blanc Islamic Canter: Fundraiser Imam Mohamad Mwafaq Al-Ghalaieni

Islamic Centre of Charlotte: Fundraiser Imam Bassam Obeid

Dar Al-Farooq: Fundraiser Imam Waleed Edrees Menese

Masjid Annoor: Fundraiser Imam Mohamad Alhoms

Islamic Center of Des moines: Fundraiser Imam Abdel Rahman Manasra

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Masjid Assalam: Fundraiser Imam Attyeb Abu Elyaman

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Through donations to NAIF, you not only sponsor our conferences but also:

Support Islam as you help us offer the world with a better image of our faith by

Hosting courses and workshops to enhance the professionalism of its ambassadors.

Help NAIF, a not-for-profit organization, offer the representatives of your Muslim community services that would make them in a better position to serve you.

Contribute to the Imams Retirement Endowment Fund to honour your community servants upon aging.

Help us reach out to the media and voice Muslims' perspectives.

Sponsor research on critical issues of Muslims' life in the States to be published by NAIF.

May Allah reward you all for your kind deeds and compensate you for your charitable contributions.



**Allah (SWT)
says,**

Those who spend their wealth in God's cause are like grains of corn that produce seven ears, each bearing a hundred grains. God gives multiple increase to whoever he wishes: He is Limitless and All-knowing. Those who spend their wealth in God's cause, and do not follow their spending with reminders of their benevolence or hurtful words, will have their rewards with their Lord: no fear for them, nor will they grieve.

(*Al-Baqara*, 261-262)

Organizing Committee

All thanks are due to the Organizing Committee members and their volunteers for their extensive work in planning the logistics and the program for this conference. NAIF would particularly like to extend its hearty thanks to the following members:

• **Twin Cities Logistics Team Coordinators**

Br. Ibrahim Hafidh: Overall Event Management:

Br. Nabi Naser: Welcome Committee

Br. Afzal Mohideen: Transportation

Br. Razi Masoo: Video Recording

Br. Mashood Yunus: Community Night

Br. Sudqi Salaymeh: Chaperone:

(We cannot but pray that Allah would reward you all for your great efforts to make this event come true in the best possible way.)

Publication Team

Sr. Dahlia Sabry (Without your ceaseless sincere efforts day and night, and masterly coordination between all the members, this significant event would have come out lacking a great deal

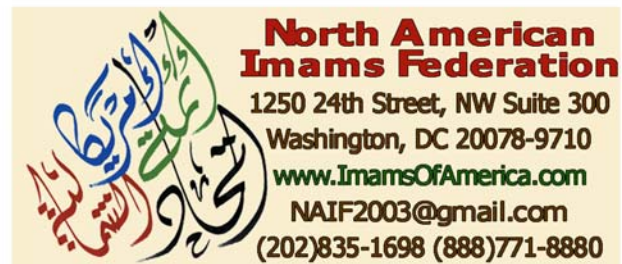
of its grandeur and organization)

Sr. Ayisha Yahya (Your sincere dedication for data collection and editing the parts you helped with in this publication is unmatched)

Sr. Safiya Sallam (Your contribution to our publication is undoubtedly a wonderful addition)

Br. Louis Muhammad : (You were indeed God-sent! Without you, we wonder how our publications would have seen the light in such wonderful layout and design!)

Jazakum Allah Khairan. He will surely reward your kind-



It has been our great pleasure to have you with us here this year, and we hope this conference proves to be a worthwhile event that prompts you to recommend it to other fellow Imams.

One of the ultimate underlying goals of our conferences is to bring our Imams together to share

experiences, problems, challenges, seek solutions and set goals. Hence, we hope that attending the conference would not be the be all and end all. We rather hope that it is a stimulating step to generate a plan of action to be followed up with till the next conference in shaa Allah. Hence, we

Action Plan

recommend the following initial action plan:

First : All Imams should give a khutba to their communities about the unity of Imams and their role in unifying the Muslim community to be able to stand up to the challenges facing them.

Second: Each Imam should look for Imams in his locality, and they form together a sort of network. He should tell those who did not attend the conference about it, about NAIF, its mission and its services for Imams; encourage them to be members of NAIF; and teach them what he

learnt at the conference.

Third : Each network of Imams should arrange mini-conferences within its locality for Imams to follow up with the issues discussed in this conference and pursue goals.

Fourth : Each Imam should attempt to generate some funds to be used for future activities.

Finally, your attendance, suggestions and participation have been a great contribution and a propelling factor in the success of this event. We hope to see you all again soon in shaa Allah.