



## an-Noor Educational Foundation: Yearly Report: Muḥarram 1428

“*Wa māā ʿarsalnāka ʿilla raḥmatal-li-l-ʿālamīn*”  
And We have not sent you save as a mercy to all the worlds.  
Qurʿān 21:107

“*La yuʿmim billāhi hatta yuhibā li akḥihi ma yuhibā li nafsih.*”  
No one is a believer in Allāh until he loves for his fellow being  
what he loves for himself.

RasūlAllāh ﷺ

These two statements contain the essence of our teaching, along with the understanding that ʿIslām proceeds from peace with yourself and with Allāh. This peace can be reached by anybody who puts the teachings of Allāh and the Prophet ﷺ into practice.

The Prophet ﷺ tells us to love for other people what we love for ourselves, and the proof of that love is the actions that we take or don't take in this world. In other words, the proof of ʿiman is the ʿamal that is ṣālih - that action whose benefits can be seen. To teach children the alphabet of the place where they live is more beneficial than putting guns in their hands. This is why we call ourselves an educational foundation - the foundation of all this is education.

The most sublime text that we can study, of everything we know of in the world, is the Qurʿān. Because it is carefully preserved, we can be sure we are reading what Allāh has to say rather than what people have to say. Because people are people and Allāh is Allāh, our primary interest in education is that which is based not on personality, but on the words of Allāh, as well as what we know by mutual consensus to be roughly the sunnah of the Prophet of Allāh ﷺ. This message is self-revelatory, that is, Allāh will explain it to you by your doing it. Allāh has told us to do these things, His first command being to “READ”, and if we do, good will come out of it and we will find ourselves changed. Thus we concentrate on reading the Qurʿān, both in the Sunday School program and the adult program. We teach in the masjid every week, have teenage classes all week long, and hold adult classes on Sunday night and at conferences and on long weekends. This report will cover seven areas in which we attempt to apply the Qurʿān and its teachings in our work: Khutāb, conferences & gatherings, electronic communications & publishing, prison work, charitable work, and education.

### Khutāb

On a broad level, what we try to do is to communicate the essence of how to develop as loving, peaceful, just and merciful human beings week after week to a diverse and fluctuating jamāʿt that embraces many aspects of contemporary Muslim American life. Our constituency includes university students, who regularly gather in jamāʿāt of about 150 people; prison populations who number around 50; a mainly working-class immigrant community outside of Washington DC; a combination of tech workers, taxi drivers, social workers, college students, mothers and fathers of sons and daughters who've come to live with them for the end of their lives, in the West end of Richmond; an almost purely Afro-American group situated in the last town in America to end school segregation, and mixtures which include everyone in the neighborhood. This is a fairly broad cross-section of the Muslim community. We try to communicate to them first, mercy, that Muhammad, upon whom be peace and blessings, was a prophet of mercy, and second, to love one

another, to be good and to do good. This is the basis of the sunnah, 'iman and 'amal. If you want to follow the sunnah of the Prophet, be merciful as best you can. 'Islām is peace, predicated upon justice, modified by mercy, which springs from love, which grows only in freedom.

The following chart shows to whom, where, and how often the k̄hutāb have been given in 2006:

Masjid	No. of Fridays	No. of People in jamā'at approx
Augusta, Virginia [mens' prison]	2 plus 'Eid	50
World Community, Virginia	1	30
Buckingham, Virginia [men's prison]	6	50
Farmville, Virginia	11	30
Fluvana, Virginia [women's prison]	35 [Weds only]	12-15
'Islāmic Society of Greater Richmond [ISGR]	11 plus 'Eid	300
Masjid Bilal [Richmond, Virginia]	2	100
North American 'Islāmic Foundation [NAIF]	6	300-350
North American 'Islāmic Trust, Chicago]	1	300-400
The Peace Farm, Maryland [Shādhuli]	1	150
Princeton, West Virginia	1	50
Shādhuli Center, Northern California	4 plus 'Eid	150-200
Virginia Commonwealth University [MSA]	5	250

Our Jumu'ah messages now directly address over 1600 people on a regular basis. Many of these k̄hutāb have been recorded and a wide sampling of them is available at the Green Mountain School website: <http://www.GreenMountainSchool.org>. under 'audio selections'.

### Conferences & Gatherings

We addressed the 9th Annual Mawlid an-Nabi sponsored by 'Islāmic Studies and Research Association [ISRA] in Atlanta and the subsequent gathering for the Lalyatu-l-'Isrāā wa Mi'rāj again sponsored by ISRA and held at the Shady Grove Campus of the University of Maryland. ([www.IsraInternational.com](http://www.IsraInternational.com)) Additionally we addressed the students at both VCU and Duke University during Ramaḍān and took part in large 'iftar gatherings which connected Muslims and non-Muslims who had fasted for a whole day in solidarity with other Muslim co-students

Recently we have been invited by Shaykh Hazrath Khawaja Ghulam Qutub ud-Deen Faridi, the Sajjadah Nashin of Gharhi Shareef near Khanpur, whose grandfather is the Khalifa-e Akbar of Khawja Ghulam Farid (RA) of Kot Mithan Shareef, to attend and speak at the all-Pakistan Mashaikh Conference on Sayyidina Nizamud-Deen Awliya (RA) in Lahore. We hope to be able to report on this visit after our return, 'inshā Allāh.

We have participated in a number of community interfaith programs at various churches and schools as well as a nearby center, Yogaville, founded by Swami Satchitananda, and old friend in the interfaith movement. We represented 'Islām at an eight-week local interfaith program, and took part in the New Year's Eve peace prayer interfaith service. We also gave several talks at the University of Virginia, and another at St. Anne's Belfield, a private school where several of the children have scholarships.

Shaykh Muḥammad al-Jamal of Palestine invited us to three of his teaching sessions in California, Chicago and Maryland to teach on the subject of the Qualities and Attributes of Allāh, as well as to continue with the classes in Reading, Writing and Reciting Qur'ānic 'Arabic with the intention of learning to read the Qur'ān in Arabic and working towards fluency in Qur'ānic Recital. We have been conducting these classes in California, Texas, Chicago, Michigan and Maryland over the past three years, and along with the fifty or so students who have already learned to read and recite, in this year there are five new readers and fourteen more in process.

The Shaykh also requested us to spend the last ten days of Ramaḍān with him working with his students in Prayer and Retreat and Recital in California, a trip which concluded with the Blessed °Eid al-Fitra. For many of those who attended this was their first Ramaḍān and °Eid celebration.

It is one thing to talk about “new Muslims” and it is another to do the follow-up necessary to communicate and demonstrate basics and essentials along with more detailed fine points of taharah, ṣalāt, and ṣawm. There are many new Muslims who, whilst they may have attended an °iftar, have no idea of the suḥūr, and likewise many who have prayed the tarawīh prayers in sets of eight or twenty but still remain unclear as to when the ṣafa and the witr are prayed, and who may know of the salāt of tahajjud but have never heard of salāt at-tasbīh and so forth. Education is forever!

## Communication and Publishing

Over half of the first edition of *The Transliterated Tajwidi Qurʾān* ([www.an-noor.org](http://www.an-noor.org)) is now in circulation. More than 2,500 copies have gone just by word of mouth, the on-line °Islāmic book store, our website, two conferences and a handful of yearly gatherings.

The corrections have, as mentioned in a prior report, all been transferred to one corrected hard copy. These corrections were made on the basis of an algorithm [created by Dr. J. Cooks, a professor of mathematics and linguistics at Oxford University] in which every letter in all of its possible manifestations and permutations is assigned a numerical value which allows any electronic text of Qurʾān to be checked against it for accuracy. This has saved us many man-or-woman years of work on the part of proof readers. In terms of accuracy there are no mistakes that any of our readers have reported that have not also shown up in the version on corrections based on the algorithm, and there are more in the algorithm than our readers have found.

With the exception of costs against storage and overhead, all of the returns from the *Transliterated Tajwidi Qurʾān* are going back into a fund for re-printing. Unfortunately the dollar is at an historic low against European currencies. If we use the printer and binder we used last time we would have to pay in expensive pound sterling and euros. We are therefore thinking of printing the next edition in Southeast Asia, and hope to make inquiries whilst in Pakistan.

We have also done a lot of work on producing a paperback English-only translation for the mass market (and specialized sectors like prisons and schools) which we can offer without fear of people desecrating the Arabic text. For this both the transliteration and Arabic text have been stripped away, leaving only the English, which is now awaiting formatting. We are actively looking for a printer who can produce a paperback, and donors to help publish.

The second edition of *Orisons* has been issued. It was printed as a result of the hard work of a brother of ours in Singapore, Jaffar Mohamed, who persisted in this project for more than three years, investing his own time, energy and money in finding a printer and binder who could come near to matching the original hand-bound hard cover edition done in Egypt. He found a printer in the form of Hajji Koya of The Other Press in Kuala Lumpur, and a Chinese binder in Singapore.

Working from the original imprints, Br. Salim in Michigan had scanned a high resolution PDF document that made it possible to print in Malaysia an almost perfect replica of the original Egyptian edition, with a few modifications which include a slight reduction of size from A4 to Letter Size, printing from a web press rather than the proof presses we used in Egypt, and a small alteration in the center to accommodate the number of pages in the signature so that everything would come out right. This has no effect on the text, which exactly mirrors the first edition. One thousand of these were printed, of which 500 came to North America and 500 were left with Sayid Jaffar Muhammed for readers and seekers in South East Asia, Indonesia and Australia.

Editing work on *Kitab at-Tanwir fi Isqat at-Tadbir* or *The Book of Illuminating Guidance on The Dropping of Self Direction* has been, alḥamdulillāh, completed in this past year. We hope, °inshā-Allāh, to have it ready for the upcoming Mawlid.

Book three on Shaykh Ibn Ata'llah of *Volume Two: Origins* still remains in the computer awaiting final formatting as does Sh. Ibrahim al-Batawy's *Signpost for the True Muslim and the Watchwords of the People of Allāh*. On the other hand, two new very timely and important books have been published in limited edition only, as we are continuing to further edit and refine them: *Dhikru-Allāhu 'Akbar* by Sh. Dr. Mohsen al-Labban, a study of some of the dimensions of divine invocation (dhikr) and meditative reflection (fikr) mentioned in the Qur'ān and life-pattern of the Prophet ﷺ, and Br. Ibrahim al Hakim's *In Defense of the Sunnah* which is a rebuttal based on Qur'ān and well-established Sunnah of the Salafi/Wahhabi/Takfiri view on such subjects as the Mawalid, The Light of the Prophet ﷺ, Dhikr, Graves of the Righteous and Practices connected to them, Extra Worship in Rajab and Sha'cān, etc.

Alḥamdulillāh all of the 'little' books of essays continue to move and be read, but people have been asking for more as well as the consideration of current events. In the present my time for writing is limited. I do, however, deliver a khutbah on a weekly basis. Because Jumu'ah prayer in America means that those gathered are all very concerned to get back to their jobs, I have to be very concise in delivering what may be, for many, the only source of Qur'ān and ḥadith that they will consider for another week, all in twenty or twenty-five minutes. In the notes I prepare for these khutāb there is about as much material, with Qur'ānic quotes and ḥadith cited, as there is in a short essay.

For a while we were compiling these for our prison mailing list and they have proved very useful in giving the reader in a few pages some a way of looking at both eternal and current events in a way that they may not have considered before.

A young man studying with us who is the son of one of our oldest friends who passed a way a few years back in Morocco, Allāh have mercy on him, has asked to take on the work of entering the khutāb onto the computer so we may have some more titles to add to the essays.

At the same time it has become clear to us that one may talk and actually appear, at least virtually, before potentially millions of people through the new techniques developed for communication over the internet and the digital world that is spun off in thousands of sub-sets.

## Electronic Communications

We established two web sites:

<http://an-noor.org/home.htm>

<http://www.greenmountainschool.org>

The first site has the purpose of describing and ordering The Tranliterated Tajwidi Qur'ān. It allows the visitor to see, and download, sample copies of parts of the text as well as the accompanying notes and charts. A younger brother is working on an addition to the web page which would allow the visitor to hear the 'āyāts read. This is now, alḥamdulillāh, in beta form and viewable at the site.

If we are content to have the an-Noor site remain informational, passive and only for the Qur'ān, we would like the Green Mountain School site to really function as an archive and as a way both to speak to many people simultaneously in real time and to be retrievable electronically.

Our base conviction is that the message of 'Islām as Peace, Justice, Mercy, Love and Freedom is the message that many people are looking for in order to better understand how to make sense of the global post-modern Muslim world as well as the larger world of diverse customs and beliefs that prevails in places as diverse as UK, India, Egypt, USA, etc.

It also bears mentioning that the majority of the Muslims are less than 28 years old.

Young people are seeking the Truth, and use computers constantly. Who will define that Truth for them and in what form? Or, who will at least offer a definition based upon those virtues mentioned above, stressing the essential mercy (*rahmah*) of that message entrusted to the blessed Prophet ﷺ

from which they flow, in tandem with the saying of the Prophet ﷺ, that no one is a true believer from (*mu'min*) until they love for their fellow being what they love for themselves.

Who among the human beings does not want peace and justice and mercy and love and freedom, save for the psychotic sociopaths who seek to define ʿIslām in another way and, unfortunately, have caught the ear of the media and the attention of the people? There is no use in complaining; rather, our job is to find a better way to speak specifically to the young. It appears the minds of many in the older generations are made up and there may not be so much hope of changing them.

We have been held back by not knowing how to use the various programs which allow for uploading and changing the web site as well as being able to project live visual images or to participate in multi centric “conferencing” live and on-line. For a while both Inayat and Da’ud were able to help us but this next step really requires someone who is physically present, who understands what to do and is capable of doing it. We are hoping that Noor Upshaw will be able to provide the necessary talents we are seeking in this regard.

I became aware of many possibilities while doing radio shows with Salam McLaughlin (three of us have done shows with her which were streamed all over the world), and realized just how much you could do from almost anywhere to anywhere at present. Given not hugely expensive equipment and programs people can meet and speak with one another across continents. In the next year we intend to expand our work in this direction, ʿinshā-Allāh.

## Prison Work

Alḥamdulillāh, the work in the womens’ prisons continues, having resulted in 21 ṣhāhadas over the years. We have mailed out many Qurʾāns to various facilities, including 13 boxes (of 6) to the prison system in Florida, two boxes to New Mexico, and one to Oregon as well as many single Qurʾāns in response to requests from individual inmates.

We also responded to a request from Augusta State Penitentiary to attend their big ʿEid feast and to speak to them then. However, aside from that and a few individual visits here and there, the past year has seen an almost complete cessation of our prison work in mens’ facilities. This a direct result of the infiltration, at least in that part of the system in which I was involved, of ṣalafī literalists who insist on the primacy of the ṣalafī perspective over any other possible understanding of ʿIslām, shouting down, threatening anyone, guest or inmate, who may disagree with them.

It is worth mentioning that most of the incarcerated ‘reverts’ who identify themselves with the salafis are men who became Muslim within prison walls and have never met a Muslim other than an incarcerated one. They read what they can get, almost entirely from the ṣalafī publishers who are well funded and very active in distribution.

Speaking in the prisons has become especially difficult since our publishing of Br. Ibrahim Hakim’s work, *“In Defense of the Sunnah”*. This book offers to the majority of the inmates an inclusive, and, dare I say, joyous, view of ʿIslām compared to the exclusive view of the harsh ṣalafī approach. But members of the ṣalafī group believe that they are the only ones to decide, based on their very limited understanding, who is and who isn’t Muslim. To them, our book is anathema.

The idea, for instance, that millions of Muslims all over the world celebrate the Birthday of the Prophet ﷺ with great joy and out of a tremendous love for him and his family and sincere companions is something utterly unknown to ṣalafī prisoners, and they think that all those people in Morocco, Egypt, Iran, India, Pakistan, Indonesia etc. cannot be *really* Muslim. From their perspective, only kafirs would be involved in such innovations and so anyone who celebrates the Mawlid is, by extension, kafir. This is the takfiri way of things. It follows logically then that a kafir could not be called upon to give the khutbah and lead the Jumu‘ah prayers, so they have told all the other inmates, some of whom were very receptive to us, “We must cease to invite this kafir to address the community.”

Also, since by definition a Muslim is a person from whom other Muslims are safe in their being and their wealth, when you make someone a kafir —takfir someone — that person no longer has any guarantee of safety. We know from ʿIslāmic history that is not a good position for an ʿimām who must turn his back on all in order to face Allāh in communal prayers.

Thus we have had confrontations with more outspoken members of the ṣalafi community who have, in turn, exerted pressure upon the prison ʿimāms and even, it would seem, on the authorities who are for obvious reasons interested in maintaining ‘quiet’ in the incarcerated Muslim community. We have tried to point out to them the obvious political implications inherent in ṣalafism, particularly in relation to the jihadis. We feel that some of these people exert a very dangerous influence in the prisons, and we in turn have tried to exert pressure to make them less powerful, but to little or no avail.

In short, due to the fact that we were only able to maintain a program of one Jumu‘ah every five weeks, due to our wider commitments, we were simply not able to prevail over the fitna that arose from the spreading ṣalafi virus especially in its encounter with *In Defense of the Sunnah*. The book in essence proved to them that we were exactly what they said: innovators of the worst type who not only celebrated the birth of the Prophet ﷺ but repeated names of Allāh out loud, not to mention insisting on the efficacy of Niṣf aṣḥ-Shabān and such like.

Hopefully that too will pass and the friends we have made over the many years of service in the prison jamā‘āt will bring a turnabout, but we are not very convinced on this score. As long as ṣalafi literature is made available at little or no cost by well-funded organizations, governmental and semi-official, who flood the prisons with their materials, the fire will be fanned. The only way that things could be at least neutralized, and considering at what stage of play we are at present that seems far fetched, would be for the Dept. of Corrections to refuse to accept for distribution written materials from ṣalafi organizations. This is very unlikely because they would get involved in freedom of speech and First Amendment issues, which would only tie us up in further arguments.

For these reasons we have chosen to minimize our work inside the men’s prisons until the plague runs its course. We continue to correspond with individual inmates, and to send out copies of the Tajwidi Qur’ān free or wholesale to any who ask.

### Charitable Work

People may pay their zakāt or make free will offerings of sadaqa to an-Noor Educational Foundation and we pass these on directly to people in need.

It sounds simple and is simple, in line with our policy of thinking and acting locally. We have distributed food and clothing to the many refugee families of children who are connected to the school, and occasionally we help financially in emergencies for these families or others whose needs are brought to our attention. The rent may be overdue or one of the children needs glasses.

At the time of the ‘Eids food is taken to each family and many people are now paying their ‘Eid zakat al-Fiṭr in the form of food rather than money, as was the practice of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. A new development this year was the sacrificing of sheep and the direct distribution of the meat for the celebration of ‘Eid al-Adha. Two of the older boys were taught to perform the sacrifice, with du‘a’ and in peace. This was a very big experience for them.

As people find that we have a means of distribution for their gifts, they are beginning to send them on a regular basis. Zakat even comes from an inmate in the women’s prison who learned ʿIslām in our classes and now sends between \$8 and \$10 a month, carefully calculated from her small earnings, alḥamdulillāh. Since gifts are tax-deductible, the obligation to Allāh and the need to pay taxes to the government can both be covered at the same time.

## Education

This is one of the principle functions of the Foundation. The educational aspects of the work have been greatly enhanced by the renting of the ʿIslāmic Study Center, which provides a space for all kinds of teaching and learning for both children and adults (please see the enclosed brochure). Basically there are three areas of education: the Sunday School, the after-school mentoring program for high school and jr. high, and adult education. There are 36 children enrolled in the Sunday School, with 4-5 volunteer teachers. This year as a group they have reached to the recitation of half of the Juz' ʿ Amma, and the older ones are reading in Arabic in the Qurʿān.

The mentoring program involves about eight college students from the University of Virginia and several other adults, who work with about 20 of the teenagers who are not able to attend the Sunday School, mainly because they are obliged to work on the weekends to help their families. The mentors help them with their homework and also with study skills. They also recite and study the Qurʿān. This program needs to expand into a basic educational afterschool school, because of the language difficulties experienced by almost all of the children. We are seeking ways for them to study and learn on line, since they love the computers, and now we have connections with their schools and teachers who are sharing with us assignments and reading and textbooks.

The university students and several other adults also attend a Thursday evening Qurʿān class, and the women students from the MSA have their Friday Ḥalaqa at the Center as well. We held a three week summer school for all ages of the children, with crafts, games, Qurʿān recitation, food and fun. It was much beloved by everybody and we hope to expand it next year if we can find a few more volunteers.

We find a great lack of knowledge among even the second generation kids here on all kinds of basics, even on how to pray by any maḏhab. And after that basic ʿIslāmic knowledge, we must teach the knowledge of how to survive here in America as Muslims, other than filling a role in the underclass. Education, we tell them, is the key to economic survival. Qurʿān is the key to eternal survival. How does a Muslim dress? How do you prepare for prayer? What do you say in the prayers? One sets out to teach Qurʿān, but then sees that they need all the rest of the dīn, and then the education for living here. Ṣalāt is a rare occurrence in many houses. And for the orphans there is no fatherly example and moms are working two or three jobs and are not at home to help even if they knew the language and could. This problem has led us to this kind of educational social work with immigrants from war-torn countries, many of whom are orphans.

## Conclusion

In all our work we are trying to communicate the basic message of ʿIslām : mercy, justice, peace, love and freedom. Some people call what we do “conflict resolution”. Some call it application of the Qurʿān in daily life. We call it ʿIslām , the eternal message of Allah through all the prophets, the message of peace, justice, mercy, love and freedom, the message perfected by our beloved Muḥammed, peace and blessings be upon him. Speaking as one who lives here in America, nobody makes it impossible for us to be Muslim. Here you can do these things, can educate yourself, can try to understand without somebody telling you what it is. You have the freedom to understand. Then you make up your mind. And you won't know unless you can read the Book, which is self-activating but you have to activate it.

The political, social and religious models offered to Muslims today are lacking. They will not bring about what the people who advocate them imagine. Neither political nor cultural ʿIslām will change the situation. The solution is a spiritual solution, based upon “...*Truly Allāh does not change the condition of a people until they change what is in their selves...*”Q13:11p We hope and pray that some of these people who are touched by the work, particularly the children, will grow up to see ʿIslām as the universal message it is, and be able to drop the sectarian and cultural baggage that perpetuates conflict among Muslims and work in their turn for the benefit of all.