



an-Noor Educational Foundation Yearly Report: Muḥarram 1429 (2008)

“Wa māā ʾarsalnāka-ʾillā raḥmatal-li-l-ʿālamīn”
And We have not sent you save as a mercy to all the worlds.
Qurʾān 21:107

“La yuʾmim billāhi hatta yuhibā li akḥihi ma yuhibā li nafsih.”
No one is a believer in Allah until he loves for his fellow being what he loves for himself.
The Prophet ﷺ

These two statements contain the essence of our teaching. They are coupled with the understanding that real ‘Islām proceeds from making peace between your self and Allāh by putting into practice what Allāh ﷻ has revealed and the Blessed Prophet ﷺ manifested through his life and actions [*sunnah*].

He ﷺ tells us to love for other people what we love for ourselves, and the proof of that love is the actions that we do or don’t take in this world. The proof of ʾimān is *amal*, or action that is *ṣaliḥ* – action which benefits the self or others. For instance to nurture, encourage and teach children is ultimately more beneficial than to put guns or, even, money in their hands. This is why we call ourselves an educational foundation.

In the past we have written extensively about our work on the Transliterated Tajwidi Qurʾān and the establishment of the Islamic Study Center. This last year has seen more development in teaching using the Tajwidi Qurʾān, and very active use of the Center as an educational focus for both children and adults. We want to report on these activities as well as our ongoing efforts in lecturing, *khutāb*, prisons, conferences, media applications, counseling, charitable work, and travel *fi sabili-llāh* that make up the life and the work of the Foundation.

The Islamic Study Center

The Study Center has matured this year. On weekdays from Monday through Thursday, it is the scene of intense activity in several languages. The Muslim university students who serve as our tutors and mentors have been very faithful, ʾalḥamdulillāh, in taking time between their studies to come for several hours a week, each, to work one-on-one with the children from refugee families. The children include, at present, Afghans, Somalis and Burmese, and vary in age between 9 and 18. They come straight from school, some on foot and some picked up by us from their homes all over town. They work for an hour or two with their tutors, eat a snack, pray, study Qurʾān, work out on the eight up-to-date computers we now have, and get taken home around 6:30 P.M.

The results of these efforts, some of which has been going on for years now, are outstanding. Several of the older Afghan boys have good positions at Whole Foods and other local markets. One of these students has risen to a managerial position and is now a

salaried employee with full benefits. Another one is attending the local community college, two others are doing very well on scholarship at the best local private school. Several of the girls are at the top of their classes, and the teachers in the schools are full of compliments for the program. We feel that this aspect of things has been a success for the young refugees as well as a blessing too for the UVA Muslim students who get the chance to do something for people less fortunate and to use their accumulated knowledge and experience for good. Also those of us adults who volunteer our time for the center feel encouraged and rewarded by seeing the pleasure and success of the kids.

So we wish to thank all of you who have contributed generously to pay the rent, the utilities, the van and generally to make things possible. We could use some more help this year, especially since we hope to run a summer Qur^{ān} and Sirah school, ^{in shāā} [°]Allāh. Our lease on the Center runs out next winter, and we will see if we have to move or are allowed to continue where we are. Please see the pictures we have included.

On the weekends the Center assumes a different face. Every Sunday, as we have done for years, we hold a sort of open house for all the adult students, visitors, family and friends, which includes sobhet with the ṣhaykh, eating together as a family, prayer (*ṣalat*), Qur^{ān} recital and remembrance.

Out of this ‘family’ in the last year have come three weddings, [°]*alḥamdulillāh*, all held at the Center in a simple, dignified and beautiful way. It has come to be called, in the words of our oldest member who is also the first Muslim who came to Charlottesville in the 50’s, ‘this precious room’.

Weekend seminars:

We have planned and carried out a number of one and two-day weekend programs:

“*Where Are You Going?*” [*°ayna tadḥabūn* 81:26] was directed particularly at the graduating class of Muslim college students, on the subject of finding one’s Muslim identity in choosing paths in life which are in accord with [°]Islām and *amal ṣaliḥ* based on the principle of *maṣlahah*. This was led by Ṣhaykh Nooruddeen, Ṣhaykh Ahmad Abdur-Rashid <http://www.circlegroup.org> and Imam Muḥammad Touré from Portland.

“*Change 1*” was a seminar based on the [°]*āyat* “Allāh does not change a people until they change what is in themselves” [13:11] and “*Change 2*” was based on the [°]*āyat*, “Allāh would never change the Grace that He bestowed on a people until they change what is in themselves.” [8:53]. Both of these two weekend seminars were taught by Ṣhaykh Nooruddeen, Ṣhaykh Abdur-Rashid and Dr. Timothy Abu Mustafa Gianotti, assistant professor of Religious Studies at UVA. These seminars investigated a number of threads, including the finding and the practicing of one’s [°]Islām in America in the 21st Century and learning to discriminate between cultural [°]Islām and actual [°]Islām, as well as ways and means of changing oneself and what one ‘does’, because only by changing oneself can one begin to change the world. This teaching can best be summarized in the saying “only peaceful people can make peace”, just as only just people can truly render justice, and only merciful people can implement justice so it is that loving people who truly love are naturally merciful and when mercy tempers justice it promotes peace for all.

The core of all of this teaching is the implementation of the *ḥadīth* mentioned at the beginning of this report, “True *ʿimān* (belief) consists of loving for your brother (or fellow human being) what you love for yourself.”

“Which of the Favors of your Lord will you deny?” was another weekend seminar based on *ʿāyat* 13 of *Sūratu-r-Raḥmān* (55:13) taught by *Shaykh* Nooruddeen, *Shaykh* Abdur-Rashid, and Dr. Timothy Abu Mustafa Gianotti (see above). In their presentations the speakers drew attention to the concepts behind the *Qurʿān* Tadwini, or the actual written (*diwān*) *Qurʿān*, and the *Qurʿān* Takwini, or the *Qurʿān* of the creation (*kun faya kūn*), referred to in the *ʿāyāt*: “Behold! In the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the alternation of the Night and the Day; in the sailing of the ships through the Ocean for the profit of mankind; in the rain which Allāh sends down from the skies, and the life which He gives therewith to an earth that is dead; in the beasts of all kinds that He scatters through the earth; in the change of the winds, and the clouds which they trail like their slaves between the sky and the earth;— (here) indeed are Signs for a people that are wise.” (2:164) “We shall show them Our Signs on the horizons and in them selves until it becomes clear to them that [this Message] is the Truth.” (41:53) All three presenters spoke along the line that everything is a sign of Allah and then went deeply into the practical means of com-prehending it. Peace (*sakinah*) in the heart arises through the direct realization that all signs, including difficulties and apparent setbacks, are Blessings of Allāh. There was also much discussion on the need to take responsibility for our part in the creation as believing members of the community of all beings.

“Light on The Ceasing of Self-Direction” (*al-Tanwīr fī ʿIsqāti-t-Tadbīr*) was an outstanding weekend featuring *Shaykh* Muhammad Ninowy from al-Madinah Masjid in Atlanta ><http://www.alhaqq.net/><. *Shaykh* Muḥammad began his study under his father, Sayyed Yahya, (*raḥmatu-Llāhi ʿalayh*), memorising the Glorious *Qurʿān* and acquiring knowledge in many of the Islamic disciplines, including *ʿAqīdah*, *Fiqh*, *Ḥadīth* and al-*ʿIḥsān*, with *ʿijazāt* (license to teach). He particularly specializes in the fields of *Ḥadīth* and *Tawhīd*. *Shaykh* Nooruddeen and *Shaykh* ʿAbdu-r-Rashid’s presentations augmented *Shaykh* Ninowy’s. This seminar was based on the book of the same name by *Shaykh* ʿibn ʿAṭāʿillāh as-Sakandari which we have just published, of which more later. There were so many people that we were literally out the door. People came from north, south and all over.. We fed nearly a hundred for each breakfast, lunch and dinner. The seminar, as always, was free, and by Allāh, what people freely gave covered the costs.

“Winter Arabic Intensive” was a five-day program held over the winter break, timed to give students and others something of value to do in the midst of the December shopping frenzy and religious exclusivism. There were classes in beginning Arabic, including how to read transliteration, intermediate *Qurʿānic* Arabic, classes in Arabic writing, and *tajwīd* taught by *Ustadh* Ḥunafāʿa from Georgia, a highly trained *Qurʿān* reader, reciter and teacher of *tajwīd* as well as a reciter of the *Burdah* *Sharīf* and other inspirational *qaṣāʿid* and *naʿat*. Recitation of the *Wadhifa* of the *Ṣalatu-l-Mashīh* was also taught daily. Three students graduated into reading the *Qurʿān*, and one received *ʿijazāt* from the *Ustadh* to teach beginning *tajwīd* in his community at the northern end of the Shenandoah Valley, a group of American Muslims who are building and cultivating a ‘Farm of Peace’. This was very rewarding to us, as the student had begun his studies in our early Arabic classes three years ago. There were inspiring afternoon recitations with *Ustadh* Ḥunafāʿa in

which everyone participated in reciting the names of Allah ﷻ, names of the Prophet ﷺ, and other beautiful du‘ā’ and na‘at. One day three Multāni friends from northern Virginia, themselves accomplished reciters, drove down to join us. These sessions were all recorded and are available on CD and are amazing sounds and songs of prayer and praise coming from our small center here in Charlottesville.

“*The Zvek Ensemble*” (www.zevk505.com) was another winter offering, a lovely performance by old friends Rabia and Benyamin van Hattum from Abiqui, New Mexico. They sang and played Islamic folk songs, which they have collected from travels in Turkey, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, and other lands of the Middle East and Central Asia, and also told and enacted stories from Mullah Nasruddin, which were particularly appreciated by the children as well as the many adults who attended.

We also co-sponsored a program called “*Pathways to Understanding*” held at Shea House on the University of Virginia campus. This was an evening of Arabic music and poetry, Ṣalawāt, Na‘at and Qawwali presented by a very talented group of multi-national and multi-ethnic musicians and poets.

Khutāb:

Week after week, Ṣhaykh Nooruddeen travels from masjid to masjid on a regular rota communicating a message of love, peace, justice and mercy to a community which now numbers almost 1000 people and includes university students, professionals, ex-cons, taxi drivers, immigrants, indigenous reverts, IT workers, doctors, engineers, mechanics and – in general, a great variety of races and faces and professions and attitudes. Most of these khutāb are recorded and are available on line at www.greenmountainschool.org. The an-Noor van clocks about 15,000 miles each year traveling to these masājid and conferences. The masājid where Sh. Nooruddeen speaks include Virginia Commonwealth University, the Islamic Society of Greater Richmond, the North American Islamic Foundation (two locations, one in Sterling and one in Manassas), Masjid al-Huda in Manassas, the Islamic Center in Farmville, VA, Masjid Bilāl in Richmond and, from time-to-time, the World Community in Bedford, VA as well as prison jama‘at.

On special occasions he also travels to distant places to give the khutbah such as the ‘Eid khutbah at the Shadhḥuli Center of Ṣhaykh Muḥammad al-Jamal in Pope Valley, California, which came at the end of a ten-day Ramadan retreat (‘*itikāf*) attended by over a hundred students of who spent the day and most of the night in study and worship. Ṣhaykh Nooruddeen also gave the khutbah for ‘Eid al-‘Adha in Richmond on a farm where the Islamic Society of Greater Richmond > <http://isgr.org/>< had organized tents, food, and a set-up where farmers and pastoralists could bring their farm raised range fed animals (*tayyib*) to a well organized, clean and orderly place for sacrifice.

For many people it was a first time to actually perform the sacrifice (*dḥabiha*), experiencing the taking of life and the distribution of the wealth, and for many young people the first time to even see a sheep (which needless to say are not seen at the various conference centers where, increasingly, ‘*eids* are held. This is all part of a conscious attempt to regain some of the lost or half-forgotten *Sunnān* of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, and was very much appreciated by those who attended.

Another *sunnah* that Shaykh Noorudden is very keen to see revived is the actual physical sighting of the new moon (instead of the “no” moon), and he is in direct contact with a growing network of people all over the country [www.hilalsighting.org] who are participating in sharing and recording their actual new moon sightings, to make the marking of the Islamic months and celebrations, such as the two ‘Eids, conform to the process ordained by Allāh ﷻ rather than the mental process of mathematical calculations.

Conferences and Gatherings:

A major trip this year was to Pakistan, at the kind invitation of Hazrat Khawaja Ghulam Qutūbu-d-Dīn Faridī, to attend and speak in Lahore at the all-Pakistan Mashaykh conference on Khawaja Nizamu-d-Dīn Awliya (RA) in the Data Ganj Baksh compound. We were treated with great hospitality, and after the conference, which was attended by thousands, traveled throughout Pakistan speaking on the radio, to government officials, at schools, and with individuals. The full report of our trip, with pictures, is available on the website. After Pakistan we traveled to Dubai and visited with friends teaching in the University in Sharjah, and then on to Egypt where we were guests of Shaykh Ibrahim al Batawi, and gave several talks there in Misr Jadīd at the Shaykh’s masjid. We also visited the Awliya in Cairo and in Tanta, and had many pleasant visits with the Shaykh’s family.

Every year we attend and speak at the two conferences of the Islamic Studies and Research Association (ISRA). Last year the 10th Annual Mawlid was in Atlanta, and the conference for ‘Isra wa Mirāj was held at George Washington University in Washington D.C. We were featured speakers at both of these meetings.

In August we attended and spoke at a three-day conference called *A Cry For Spiritual Revival*, sponsored by the Masjid Muḥajirun wa-l-Anṣar of Shaykh Harun Faye in Moncks Corner, SC. This is a large community which has gathered around the Shaykh, who is originally from Senegal. Many people attended from all across the South.

At the end of Ramaḍān we went, at the invitation of Shaykh Muhammad al-Jamal, to his community in northern California, (which we have visited and taught at several times in the past) to observe *‘itikāf* during the last ten days of Ramadan and to continue our teaching of basic Islam and Qur’anic Arabic. The students (and the shaykh) were busy from 4 AM with recitation of the Names of Allah until 11 pm when after the tarawih prayers we recited the *ṣalātu-t-tasbih* led by Shaykh Nooruddeen. In between were classes, recitations, study and very little rest. It was a remarkable experience for all concerned and ended with an ‘Eid parade, in the rain, Shaykh Nooruddeen’s ‘Eid khutbah, and a wonderful feast.

We also attended Shaykh Muḥammad’s school on the East coast in Pennsylvania, where Shaykh Nooruddeen again worked with Shaykh Muhammad in leading and teaching the ṣalāt, lecturing on Islām, and teaching the Qur’ān.

Right now we are working on three new conferences. The first, a Mawlid, we are doing in conjunction with the North American Islamic Foundation (www.naifcenter.org). In April we are organising a weekend seminar on Green issues as they relate to Muslims and as Muslims relate to them. Finally we hope to have a return visit from Shaykh Ninowy

for a weekend conference on the *Hikam* of Shaykh ʿibn ʿAtāʿillāh as-Sakandari as a sequel to our earlier weekend seminar on “*Light on The Ceasing of Self-Direction*” (*al-Tanwīr fī ʿIsqāṭi-t-Tadbīr*). Please see our website for latest details on these programs

Communication and Publishing:

This past year we have made a more concerted effort to save and record Shaykh Nooruddeen’s talks, *kḥutāb*, and commentary, as well as those of the visiting Shuyukḥ. We have also recorded some of the *dhikr*, *naʿat*, *ṣalawāt* and devotional recitations as they occurred at the Center. Many of these recordings have been transferred to the web sites, where they can be heard, and some are available on CD and DVD. We hope, Allāh willing, to expand this process and to make all talks available on the web and CD and DVD as well as in print. At this point there are not enough hands or hours in the day to do this. We also need better duplicating and video equipment. However, slowly, this part of the operation is coming into focus.

Some of the talks and conferences have been truly outstanding, yet our physical space is relatively small. Our hope is to expand the audience with these audio and video offerings, so that the true ʿIslāmic message of love, peace, justice and mercy can spread more widely. Several talks by Shaykh Nooruddeen and others of us have reached the web on *YouTube* and *My Space*, and have been picked up and sent all over the world. It is remarkable how effective and fast the net can be. We have plans for the future including possibly a weekly webcast (see below), live with questions, from the desk of the Shaykh, and many more videos, both short and long, of the happenings at the Center.

The Tajwidī Qurʾān continues to sell, every week a few individual orders, and in wholesale quantities to several online bookstores including (www.islamicbookstore.com) (www.islamicity.com) and the Shadḥḍhulī Bookstore in California. All monetary returns on these are being set aside for the next printing, *ʿin shāʿa Allāh*. The ‘little green books’ of the Shaykh, along with the separate *suwār* of the Qurʾān, sell very well at conferences and we now have them on permanent display at the Center. His major work on the Shadḥḍhuliyah, *Orisons*, nearly went out of print but was reprinted by a staunch supporter and good friend in Singapore. We just received the final shipment of 200, which are available on the web, at the center and at the conferences we attend.

A major accomplishment this year has been the rendering of, first, the Juz ‘Ammā, and now Yā Sīīn, ar-Raḥmān, al-Faḥ and the rest of Panj Ganj and other *suwar* in an interactive transliterated tajwidī Qurʾān program on the net that is done by a student of the Shaykh, Sidi ʿAbdu-r-Raḥim Linder. Please visit the website at www.an-noor.org to see this new and very useful feature. This is an amplification of our work and allows the person using it to hear the *ʿāyāt* read while seeing them highlighted on the screen either in Arabic or Trans-literation exactly as they appear in the Transliterated Tajwidī Qurʾān. It is proving to be a great teaching resource which many have found useful.

The major publication of the year was *al-Tanwīr fī ʿIsqāṭ al Tadbīr* or *The Illuminating Guidance on the Dropping of Self-Direction*, by Shaykh ʿIbn ʿAtāʿillah as-Sakandari. This is a major piece of scholarship, which has not been available to the English-speaking world except in a rather flawed translation mis-titled as “*The Book Of Illumination*”

which gives the reader very little idea of the real subject of the book which in truth is the dropping or cessation of self-direction or ceasing trying to do for your self what Allāh ﷻ has already arranged for you in a far better manner. Our translation is by Shaykh Nooruddeen's student ʿIbrahim Hakim ash-Shaghouri, and is edited by the Shaykh. We now have it in print and for sale, and a friend has offered to cover the costs of printing it on line. We intend to do this both to reduce the cost and to increase the circulation. The book is now in its third printing and has sold out each time within two weeks.

Other new books include another title by ʿIbrahim Hakim ash-Shaghouri, *The Defense of the Sunnah in Relation to Tassawuf*, which, now in its final form, is a thorough refutation of those who would reduce ʿIslām to a set of rigid and often cruel rules based on misunderstanding and opinion whist characterizing those who do not share their view as a , infidels, non-Muslims, kafar or worse.

The Shaykh has been using this book in his prison service to try to offset the confusion and depredations brought about by the salafi/wahabbi cult which has mis-led many incarcerated Muslims. Unfortunately, because the book is very direct in its approach, it led to threats of violence to the Shaykh and worse.

As a side note the shaykh, after being called a *kafir* and threatened by death after a *ta'lim* session in one of the maximum security prisons in which he works, has now returned to simply teaching reading, writing and reciting Qurʿān as a less confrontational way, ʿinshāllāh, of communicating with inmates whilst at the same time continuing through this teaching his efforts to make known to the inmates, most of whom come to ʿIslām in prison, knowledge of the wider dimensions of the world of traditional ʿIslām..

We are hoping that “*The Defense of the Sunnah*” reaches a wide audience, as there is a tremendous need for a book which helps to refute this pernicious sect which, through the resources provided by petro dollars, has spread its teachings far and wide.

This year we have also published an excerpt from the *Mémoires* of the shaykh. This was done at the request of the conference organisers in Pakistan, as they wanted him to talk about Sufism in America. He wrote about he came to both ʿIslām and Sufism in India and Palestine. The title is *Some Reflections on the Beginnings of My Path to Allāh and by Allāh*. Another essay soon to be published is *ʿIslām and Technology*, from an essay written by the Shaykh in the 80's for the Islamic Education Quarterly, edited by the late Dr. Seyed ʿAli Ashraf (ra) of Cambridge University.

Several people are now working on transcribing the weekly khutāb, which should be very useful. We haven't yet decided whether to make these available as separate small pamphlets or to gather them all together in a larger collection. In the mean time many of these can be found on our website. The work of transcription is slow work, but it is coming along. We hope, ʿin shāʿa Allāh, to publish at least some of the khutāb, as well as to prepare the second, corrected edition of the Qurʿān for printing, which is another formidable job. We are also working on formatting and adding the final selection of *Origins* on the life and work of Shaykh ʿIbn ʿAtaʿillah as-Sakandari and hope to completely revise all of the formatting of *Origins*, publish several essays on education, marriage and women in ʿIslam, that have never been transcribed, and to do the final

editing of the first volume of the *Mémoires, Embracing Islam*. May Allāh ﷻ give us life and energy and hopefully more people to help us continue the work.

One area we have not mentioned is radio — an old-fashioned but very effective medium. During our stay in Pakistan we did a number of interviews and talk radio and have joined with a number of Islamic personalities in doing several programs for a program called “Sufism, the Heart of Islam” which is broadcast by Salam Wendy McLaughlin weekly on public radio station [KWMR 90.5 Point Reyes Station, CA](#) which streams live on the web throughout the world.

This last has given a large pause for thought and we are presently trying to work out how to do essentially the same thing right from the Center. The technology now exists by which one can webcast live to the whole world both orally and through video. As they say on the radio — please stay tuned.

Conclusion:

If you have read this far and are familiar with earlier our annual reports you can see that our work has matured and spread to reach ever larger audiences. °Alḥamdulillāh.

If you have taken the time to read this report you can see we are continuing and even redoubling our efforts on many different fronts.

To do this we need first of all the help of Allāh ﷻ, more helpers, and we also need money to pay the rent, the utilities, insurance, gas money for the school van and so forth. The help that we receive from mentors, tutors, drivers, cooks, cleaners etc. is all volunteer help and nobody gets paid for the work they do on behalf of the Foundation but fixed expenses don't go away so...we are asking you for your help, for without your help we can not do all that we are doing.

The easiest way to help is to give 1,300 dollars, which covers one month's operating expenses. If you can give more that would really be a big help, and if you find you can only give us a part of a month's fixed expenses, it will surely be appreciated. Also if 1,300 dollars to big a one time bite you cann spread it it out over the year. In short any way you can help will be most appreciated

We are, as most of you know, a 501 (c) (3) tax exempt educational foundation, so what ever you give can be deducted from your taxes.

Please, if you see that this work is useful, help us to continue.

May Allāh bless you and your families and thank you for taking the time to read this.

Sincerely with very best wishes and our du^cā^o for you in this world and the next,

Sh. Abdullah Nooruddeen Durkee on behalf of an-Noor Educational Foundation