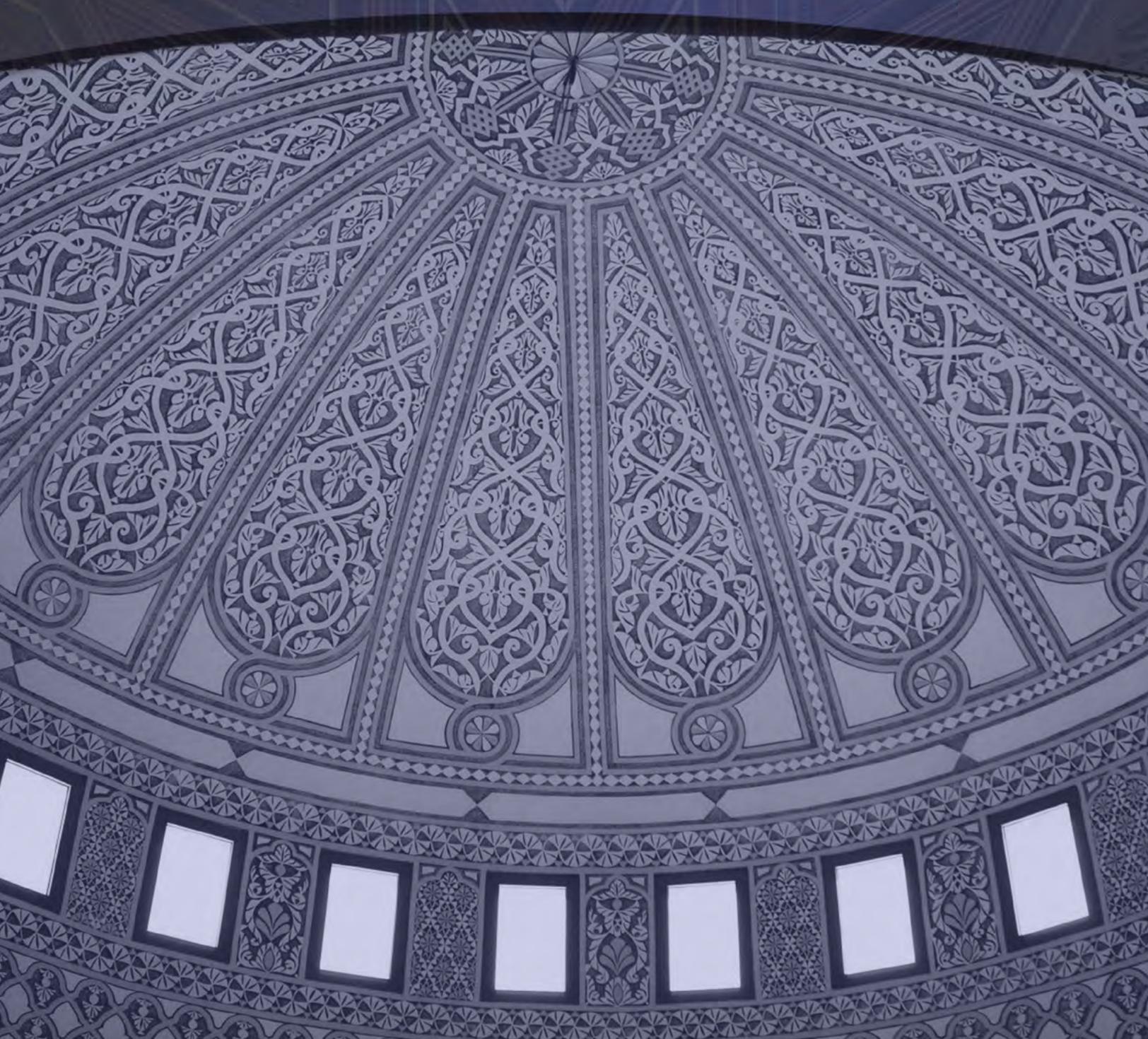


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One of the most exciting experiences Muslims in the West get to live is the building and opening of new masjids. I personally feel blessed having witnessed many masjid-building projects coming to completion. In this special edition of this magazine by Masjid al-Wali, we delve deeper into the role of the masjid, and how to maximize it. It is simply an invitation for all sincere well-wishers to couple their good feelings with good thoughts, and to share those thoughts so that we can realize the dream of our community in having a center of Islamic enlightenment at the heart of the city of Edison.

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When we work fi'sabilillah (for the sake of Allah), we don't look right or left. We don't expect any appreciation or thanks from anybody. If things do not always happen the way we want and according to our taste, we should not not feel bad and left out.

If we all follow these principles, insha'Allah we will not be hurt, and will remain motivated to work with our fellow brothers, sisters, and administration. Because we are working fee sabilillah, we expect the higher reward from Allah and not from anybody else.

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Reviving the Role of the Masjid

As the primary religious institution, the masjid has the greatest role in community building, and its success in performing its role is essential for the wellbeing of the community, particularly where Muslims live as minorities. Sadly, the role of the masjid in many Muslim communities around the globe has recently been reduced to being a physical place where prayers are offered. It is time for reversing that trend, and reviving the role of this institution to where it was in the early history of Islam. Such a revival cannot be fully realized without first developing a clear understanding from the revelation, the Qur'an and Sunnah, about the importance, virtue, and role of the masjid in Islam.

The Messenger of Allah said,

" يُرُ الْبِقَاعِ الْمَسَاجِدُ وَشَرُّهَا الْأَسْوَاقُ "

“The best patches [of earth] are the masjids and the worst are the markets.” [Reported by Ibn Hibbân] Thus, Allah chose His Prophets to establish them, He said,

"وَأِذْ يُرْفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ"

“And [mention] when Abraham was raising the foundations of the House and [with him] Ishmael.” [Q 2:127] And He commanded them to purify them and keep them clean, He said,

"وَعَهَدْنَا إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ أَنْ طَهِّرَا بَيْتِي"

“And We charged Abraham and Ishmael, [saying], “Purify My House.” [Q 2:125]

Furthermore, Allah made the reward of building the masjids most abundant. Regarding this, the Messenger of Allah said,

"مَنْ بَنَىٰ لِلَّهِ مَسْجِدًا وَلَوْ كَمَفْخَصِ قِطَاةِ بَنَىٰ اللَّهُ لَهُ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ"

“Whoever builds a mosque for Allah, though it be the size of the ground nest of a sand-grouse, Allah will build for him a house in Paradise.” [Ibn Mâjah]

Allah made the masjids a refuge for the hearts of His righteous servants, as the Prophet said, “There are seven [types of people] whom Allah will protect with His Shade, on the Day [of Resurrection] when there will be no shade except His Shade.” Of them is, “A person whose heart is attached to the masjid.”

It should suffice the caretakers of the masjids that Allah praised them with this description,

"إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَلَمْ يَخْشَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَعَسَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ أَنْ يَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ"

only to be maintained by those who believe in Allah and the Last Day and establish prayer and give zakah and do not fear except Allah, for it is expected that those will be of the [rightly] guided.” [Q 9:18]

It was not a coincidence that the Messenger of Allah started his mission in Madinah by building the masjid, which he made in its center.

The masjid takes its name from one of the actions of salât (prayer), which is sujood (prostration). It is the action wherein the believers show the utmost humility to Allah. The salât is the best of our actions, as the Prophet told us in the hadith of Thawbân. However, the role of the masjid is not limited to the performance of salât. The masjids should be places wherein Muslims learn how to prostrate their hearts before Allah, and not only their bodies. They are places of tarbiyah (refinement) of the Muslim character. To the Prophet and his Companions, the masjid was not only a place where they prayed, but it was also a place where they learned, recited the Qur'an, made dhikr

(remembrance) and du‘ā’ (supplication), met with each other, socialized, received the delegations, prepared the expeditions, and raised funds for various good causes. In fact, it was sometimes even a place for tending to the sick, and a shelter for the homeless. In the physical world, it was at the center of their lives. At the same time, it was the cradle of their learning and spiritual growth.

Whatever can be said about the importance of the masjid for Muslim communities throughout the world is even more magnified when we talk about the Muslim minorities, to whom the masjid is truly the ark of Noah. In America, for example, Muslims are a small minority scattered throughout a large continent. For some of them, weeks or months may pass by without getting a chance to see another Muslim except in the masjid. The masjid, therefore, constitutes the link between them and their deen (religion). In it, they bond with their community, and that bond is vital to the wellbeing of their allegiance to the ummah and faith in Allah. Many youth may find in the masjid the role models they lack at home. In addition to this, the Muslims seeing a masjid – and especially the younger one who did not grow up in Muslim countries – is vital because it’s the most evident symbol of Islam in their tangible world.

The pressing question now is: how to revive the role of the masjid in our times, particularly where Muslims live as minorities. Here are some of the things we need to do as a community.

1. We need to educate ourselves regarding what may be done at the masjid

To begin with, one must assert that the primary actions in the masjid are: salât (prayers), dhikr (mention of Allah), du‘ā’ (supplication), tilâwah (recitation), and ta‘leem (education). In light of that, priority must be given to the main jama‘at (congregants) of the masjid and activities led by the designated imam. Those who do anything else, or do something other than what the main jama‘at does, should not cause disruption. Abu Sa‘eed narrated that the Prophet ﷺ was in i‘tikâf and heard them raising their voices with recitation, so he said,

"ألا إن كلكم مناج ربّه، فلا يؤذينيّ بعضكم بعضاً، ولا يرفع بعضكم على بعض في القراءة" أو قال: "في الصلاة"

“Each one of you is in munâjâh (soft conversation) with his Lord, so don’t bother one another, and don’t raise your voices above each other in recitation (or salât).” [Abu Dawood]

If it is prohibited for someone who is praying or reciting the Qur’an to bother the other worshipers, then it is more prohibited for someone doing something inferior to that to bother them.

Having said that, there is still room for much to be done at the masjid, and while many actions are prohibited in it, such as conducting business, advertising, announcing lost items, many other practices are thought to be prohibited when they are not. Some of us, Muslims, have this mental image of the masjid as a sterile extremely quiet place where people pray together and disperse thereafter. This causes them to enforce many restrictions in the masjid that would eventually make it an unwelcoming place for children and families, and even to adult men. However, a tour through the masjid of the Prophet ﷺ during his time may help us rid ourselves of this false conviction.

2. Talking and socializing in the masjid of the Prophet ﷺ :

Jâbir ibn Samurah (may Allah be pleased with him) said,

"كان لا يقوم من مصلاه الذي صلى فيه الصبح أو الغداة حتى تطلع الشمس، فإذا طلعت الشمس قام، وكانوا يتحدثون فيأخذون في أمر الجاهلية فيضحكون ويتبسّمون"

“He would not rise from his place where he prayed subh (the dawn prayer) until the sun rises, and when it rose, he would then stand up. They used to chat with one another, even about matters that happened to them in jahiliyyah (before Islam), and they would laugh and he would smile.” [Reported by Muslim and Ahmad, and in Ahmad’s report, Jâbir said that he witnessed this more than one hundred times]

3. Eating in the masjid of the Prophet ﷺ :

‘Abdullâh ibn al-Harith (may Allah be pleased with him) said,

"كنا نأكل على عهد رسول الله ﷺ في المسجد الخبز واللحم"

“We used to eat bread and meat in the masjid during the time of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.” [Ibn Mâjah]

4. Playing in the masjid of the Prophet ﷺ :

Ā'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said,

"لقد رأيت رسول الله ﷺ يوماً على باب حجرتي والحيشة يلعبون في المسجد، ورسول الله ﷺ يسترني بردائه، أنظر إلى لعبهم"

"I have seen the Messenger of Allah ﷺ one day at the door of my house, while the Abyssinians were playing in the masjid, and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was covering me with his garment to watch their playing." [Agreed Upon]

5. Sleeping over and staying in the masjid of the Prophet ﷺ :

Abdullah Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) told us that before his marriage, he used to sleep in the masjid of the Prophet ﷺ. [Agreed Upon; al-Bukhâri collected it in "The Book of Salat: Chapter on Men Sleeping in the Masjid," and Muslim collected it in "The Book of the Virtues of the Companions: Chapter on the Virtues of Ibn 'Umar]

Ā'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) also told us that a tent was set up for an emancipated black girl in the masjid. [Collected by al-Bukhâri in "The Book of Salat: Chapter on Women Sleeping in the Masjid]

It is also known that Ahl as-Suffah used to stay in the masjid, and they were about seventy men, as reported by Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him). [Collected by al-Bukhâri in "The Book of Salat: Chapter on Men Sleeping in the Masjid]

6. Tending to the sick in the masjid:

Ā'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said,

"أصيب سعد يوم الخندق فضرب عليه رسول الله ﷺ خيمة في المسجد ليعوده من قريب"

"Saad [ibn Mu'âdh] was wounded on the day of the [battle of] trench, so the Messenger of Allah ﷺ set up a tent for him so that he may be close to him to visit him [often]." [Agreed Upon; Collected by al-Bukhâri in "The Book of Salat: Chapter on Setting Up a Tent in the Masjid," and Muslim collected it in, "The Book of Jihad"]

7. Women at the masjid of the Prophet ﷺ :

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was well aware of the praiseworthy protective jealousy of the men of his nation. Still, he

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was careful not to let this protectiveness become a reason for Muslim women to be deprived of the chance to visit the house of their Lord. On the authority of Ibn ‘Umar (ra), the Prophet ﷺ said:

"لَا تَمْنَعُوا إِمَاءَ اللَّهِ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ."

“Do not prevent Allah’s slave-women from going to Allah’s masjids.” [Muslim]

Even though the Prophet ﷺ indicated in an authentic hadith (reported by Abu Dawood, al-Hakim, Ibn Khuzaymah, and others) that it is better for a woman to pray in her home than to pray in the masjid, the mothers of the believers and the believing women used to go out to the masjid of the Prophet ﷺ! They wouldn’t do what is inferior, so they must have understood that this instruction is to say that women are not meant to go to the masjid five times a day like men, and assure women who need to be at home, that they will not miss the reward of jama’at. The reward of their praying at home will be greater than their prayer at the masjid, but this applies to situations when there is nothing to do at the masjid but prayer. But if there are other benefits such as learning, for example, then it may be overall better to pray that time at the masjid.

8. Children at the masjid of the Prophet ﷺ :

Imam Ahmad reported from Abi Bakrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that he said,

"كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يصلي بالناس، وكان الحسن بن علي رضي الله عنهما يثب على ظهره إذا سجد، ففعل ذلك غير مرة"

“The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to lead the people in prayer, and al-Hassan ibn ‘Ali would jump on his back when he prostrated, and he did that more than once.” [Ahmad]

Al-Bukhari and Muslim also reported from Abu Qatadah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ prayed at the masjid while carrying Umâmah bint Zaynab, and he would put her down when he made sujood.

As expected, it was not only the Prophet ﷺ who brought his children to the masjid. The Prophet ﷺ would even shorten his prayers at times when he heard the crying of a child, out of mercy for his mother.



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9. Non-Muslims entering the masjid:

It is known that the Prophet ﷺ used to receive the delegations in the masjid. It has also been reported that a delegation of the Christians of Najrân stayed over at his masjid. It was also collected by al-Bukhari in “The Book of Salat: Chapter on Major Ablution,” that Thumâmah ibn Uthâl was kept in the masjid for a few days.

Muslims should reach out to everyone around them, and we should invite them to the masjid. Seeing it from inside, and watching the Muslims pray together, is likely to remove much of the fear generated by the anti-Muslim forces to define peoples’ perception of Islam and its people. The masjid should be a center for Sharia-compliant interfaith communication and dialogue. Furthermore, we should initiate, participate in, and further all activities of benefit for the communities we live in. If the Islamic center has the appropriate facilities, meetings to discuss issues of common interest should be held at the masjid, such as neighborhood safety endeavors, drug-free zones, and the likes.

Having said all of that, it is paramount that we put all of these reports in their right context and understand that the main function of the masjids is still salât and dhikr. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to the man who urinated in the masjid,

”إن المساجد لم تبين لهذا وإنما بنيت لذكر الله وإقامة الصلاة.”

“The masjids have not been built for such purposes; they were built for the remembrance of Allah and establishment of the prayers.”

The Prophet ﷺ forbade all activities that will impede the proper establishment of these functions, to the point that he forbade people who ate garlic or onion from coming to the masjid to provide the best environment for those who seek to worship their lord and engage in His munâjah (subtle conversation). It is therefore important that we keep the masjids clean and decrease the distractions as much as possible. If we could move some of these functions outside the prayer hall (masjid proper) to nearby rooms, then that would be warranted. The children must also be

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instructed about the etiquettes of the masjid. If possible, we should designate areas for them where they could be best tended to and positively entertained.

10. We need to build them right

By building them right, I don't mean to build them fancy and luxurious. In fact, there are strict warnings against this in the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Imâm al-Bukhari entitled one of the chapters in his authentic collection: "Chapter on the Building of Mosques," where he proceeded to report the following from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him):

"كان سقف المسجد من جريد النخل - يعني مسجد النبي - ، وأمر عمر ببناء المسجد وقال: أكن الناس من المطر، وإياك أن تحمر أو تصفر فتفتن الناس"

"The roof of the masjid (of the Prophet ﷺ) was made of palm branches. Umar ordered that the mosque be rebuilt and he said, "Protect the people from rain, but beware of using red or yellow (for decoration), thereby distracting the people."

Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said,

"يتباهون بها ثم لا يعمرونها إلا قليلا"

"They build masjids and boast about that, but they do not use them for worship except rarely."

Similarly, Ibn 'Abbâs (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

"ما أمرت بتشبيد المساجد"

"I have not been commanded to build lofty mosques."

About this, Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) commented:

"لتزخرفنها كما زخرفت اليهود والنصارى"

"You will surely [fall into] decorating them (the masjids) just as the Jews and Christians did." [Reported by Abu Dawood with an authentic chain]

The building of the masjid needs to be utilitarian and functional. The architecture of the Islamic centers should



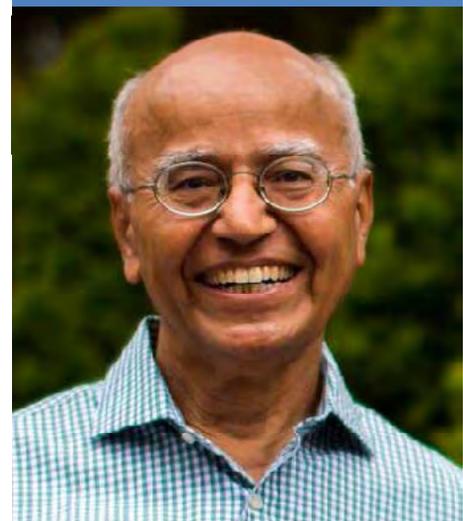
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be inspired by the good understanding of their various roles and aim to accommodate them. In addition to the prayer room (masjid proper), there should be – whenever possible – facilities to allow for the place to be used for didactic learning, socialization, sports, hosting the wayfarers, and even shopping for certain items that may not be readily available in the markets.

Traditionally, the scholars disagreed over the rulings concerning attachments of the masjid. Some viewed that they should take the same rulings of the masjid. However, since there is no clear authentic text of revelation to decide the right position, the use of maslahah mursalah (consideration of public interest) may be invoked here. Most of our Islamic centers, and even the newer masjids in Muslim countries, have restrooms inside the building of the masjid. By consensus, the use of the lavatory is not permitted inside the masjid. We have basically agreed by building those restrooms inside the building that contains the prayer hall (masjid proper) that the rulings of the masjid are not extended to the entire physical facility that contains it. This will give us the flexibility of having announcements, and even advertisements for the benefit of the community, in the lobbies of our masjids. It will also give women during their period a chance to come to the Islamic Center without having to worry about the controversy over entering the masjid, as long as they don't stay in the prayer hall (masjid proper). Moreover, many functions that may cause some discomfort to some members of the congregation, if done in the prayer hall (masjid proper), could still be done within the center but outside the prayer hall.

11. We need to keep them open

Unless there is a legitimate fear of harm to the masjid and its congregation, the masjid should be open at all times and accessible to the worshippers.

Allah said,

"فِي بُيُوتِ الَّذِينَ أُذِنَ لَهُمْ أَنْ يُزْفَعُوا فِيهَا وَيُذَكَّرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ فِيهَا بِالْأَعْيُنِ وَالْأَصْوَالِ * رَجَالٌ لَا تُلْهِيهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ يَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَالْأَبْصَارُ"

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“[Such niches are] in mosques which Allah has ordered to be raised and that His name be mentioned therein; exalting Him within them in the mornings and the evenings [Are] men whom neither commerce nor sale distracts from the remembrance of Allah and performance of prayer and giving of zakah. They fear a Day in which the hearts and eyes will [fearfully] turn about.” [Q 24:36-37]

The Muslims should always feel welcome to their local masjid, and wherever they travel, they should count on being able to use the masjids on their way. Without the masjid being open at all times, its role will be limited, even if its caretakers believe in theory that masjids have a comprehensive role. Many provisions could be made to facilitate keeping the masjids open. Having a book store attached to the masjid, or in the lobby, is one way to help ensure the presence of someone at all times. Larger masjids should be capable of hiring attendants that will keep the masjid open and look after the facility. For the smaller masjids, having video monitoring and/or alarm systems may provide enough security.

12. We should staff them right

There is no doubt that most of the work to be done at the masjid should be done by volunteers. However, the role of dedicated staff is vital to the wellbeing of larger and more active masjids, for the purposes of stability, consistency, organization, and providing comprehensive services to the community. There is no Baytul-Mâl (Muslim Treasury) here in the West (not even in Muslim lands) to look after the needs of those who shoulder these collective duties. Therefore, it becomes incumbent on the communities to facilitate the dedication of some of their members for this work. There should be an emphasis on providing comprehensive services, such as keeping the masjid open, providing guidance and counseling to the visitors, answering their questions, resolving conflicts between members of the community, conducting marriages, overseeing funerals, and the likes. Such functions could be extremely time consuming and far beyond what could be realistically asked of volunteers. Add to that the upkeep of the facility, paying of bills, dealing with various agencies, handling official paperwork, and so on. In many churches,



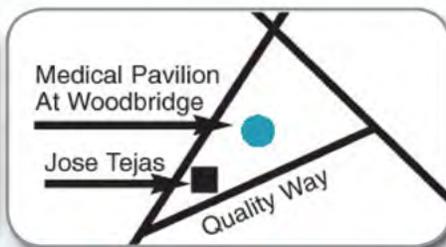
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the staff is between ten to twenty full time employees. If we could save on some positions through volunteer work, there are others where it is vital to have complete dedication.

It is also important for the masjids to understand the need to diversify their workforce. This will only happen when we realize the broadness of the mission of the masjid. Most of us like the “all-in-one” devices. They are certainly convenient, but not always the best. When it comes to human resources, it is even harder to come by those “all-in-one” imams who are scholars, well-grounded in knowledge, eloquent in both languages, convincing to the elders and befriended by the youth, and at the same time computer savvy and capable of administrative tasks. The larger masjids may need to have several people to perform all of those functions. As for the smaller masjids, with fewer resources, the caretakers of the masjids need to be creative in using the resources available in their region, and in sharing with other masjids.

It is vital that we have cadres among the youth to take charge of the Islamic organizations, and that we empower them for that. There is so much that needs to be done to ensure that the position of an imam is inviting to those talented and accomplished individuals with high aspirations. The Messenger of Allah said,

”مَنْ وُلِيَ لَنَا عَمَلًا وَلَيْسَ لَهُ مَنْزَلٌ ، فَلْيَتَّخِذْ مَنْزِلًا ، أَوْ لَيْسَتْ لَهُ زَوْجَةٌ فَلْيَتَزَوَّجْ ، أَوْ لَيْسَ لَهُ خَادِمٌ فَلْيَتَّخِذْ خَادِمًا ، أَوْ لَيْسَتْ لَهُ دَابَّةٌ ، فَلْيَتَّخِذْ دَابَّةً ، وَمَنْ أَصَابَ شَيْئًا سِوَى ذَلِكَ فَهُوَ غَالٍ”

“He who will do work for us and has no house, let him have a house, and if he has no wife, let him have a wife, and if he has no servant, let him have a servant, and if he has no riding animal, let him have one. Whoever takes more than that, he is an embezzler.” [Reported by Ahmad from al-Mustawrid ibn Shaddâd]

Notice that the Prophet instructed that those who do service jobs for the benefit of the ummah be sufficed, including having a servant (which was the norm for the middle class in their time). This is vital for those workers to concentrate all of their thoughts and efforts on their work, so that they may excel, reach their potential, and achieve the best results possible. At the end of hadith, the Prophet reminded the actual workers of the importance



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of 'afâf (self-restraint). This is an important reminder for anyone who assumes a public position within the ummah, and most important for those who assume the positions of imams and da'ees (preachers).

It is not a secret that many of our youth who went overseas to study for six or seven years came back and refused to work as imams. Many of them cite problems imams encounter with the boards and the way they are treated as lower ranking employees with many bosses. This is a great waste of the resources of this ummah. It is time our masjids make the positions of imams, youth directors, resident scholars, teachers, and administrators all inviting to the best talents of our communities.

There is no doubt that a big part of the problem of our Muslim countries has to do with the lack of righteous governance and skilled management. These two problems have been sadly inherited by many of our Muslim organizations in the West. Management and administration are not all intuitive, but rather have become a science, and Muslims who live in the West have the opportunity to learn from the experts. There are even free classes offered on how to run non-for-profit organizations. There are known principles of good management that we could learn how to apply, because when we speak of them at an abstract level, we all agree. You won't find any one contesting the importance of clarity of vision, consistency of procedures, transparency, clear identification of roles, empowerment of workers, timely reevaluation, and the likes. The problem is in applying those principles.

Finally, the community of the masjid needs to agree on their ultimate reference. If it is other than the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger, as transmitted, understood, and applied by the Companions, righteous predecessors and great imams, the masjid may be moving fast, but it would also be moving in the wrong direction. Let us all pray for our new Masjid al-Wali to reach its potential, be a beacon of enlightenment, and progress in the right direction at a healthy speed.

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Respecting the Houses of Allah: Status and Etiquette of the Masajid

Yusra Owais (Amatullah)

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During the month of Ramadan, our masajid are filled

When we know the status of something, it is easier to honor it. Unfortunately, Muslims today do not honor the mosques as they should be honored. We know that the masjid is the House of Allah, but we fail to internalize the nobility this title holds. When any object or person is connected to the Grand Name of Allah, it shows prestigious rank. For example, Allah calls some of His exclusive slaves, “*ebaadur-Rahman*”, the slaves of the Most Merciful. By connecting them with His Name; Allah is honoring them. Similarly, the masajid are known as “*Buyutullah*”, the Houses of Allah. Of all the places on this earth, the Prophet informed us that the mosques are the most beloved placed to Allah . Think about it: Our Lord loves the masajid! Even the name holds great honor; “*Masjid*” literally means “*place of prostration (sujud)*”. They are the greatest places to worship Allah and to remember Him. Allah says, “*And the mosques are for Allah (Alone).*” (72:18)

Allah also says, “*In houses (mosques), which Allah has ordered to be raised, in them His Name is glorified in the mornings and in the afternoons or the evenings.*” (24:36) This ayah teaches us the two main rulings of the masjid:

a) “*To be raised,*” meaning to build them, to honor them and to clean them.

b) “*In them His Name is glorified,*” meaning we worship Allah in the masajid. This includes all acts of worship such as praying, reading Qur’an and also learning and teaching.

Not only does the masjid itself have a great honor, but Allah has honored certain people because of their relationship with the masjid.

1- On the Day when there is no shade, Allah will give shade to a group of special people. Of these noble people is a person whose heart is attached to the masjid. (Agreed Upon)

2- For those who attend the masjid for learning purposes, the Prophet said, “*Any group of people that assemble in one of the Houses of Allah to study the Qur’an, tranquillity will descend upon them, mercy will engulf them, angels will surround them and Allah will make mention of them to those (the angels) in His proximity.*” (Muslim)

3- For those who attend the masjid continually for prayer, the Messenger said, “*If anyone goes back and forth to the mosque [to attend the prayers], Allah will prepare for him a feast in paradise as often as he goes back and forth.*” (Bukhari and Muslim) Another narration states, “*If anyone purifies himself in his house, and then walks to one of the houses of Allah to fulfill one of the obligations laid down by Allah, then [each one] of his steps will erase one of his sins and the next will raise his degrees.*” (Muslim)

4- Sincerely building a masjid for the sake of Allah guarantees a house in Paradise. The Prophet said, “*Whoever builds for Allah a mosque, seeking by it Allah’s grace, Allah will build for him a house in paradise.*” (Bukhari and Muslim) In yet another narration, the size of this mosque is clarified, “*Whoever builds for Allah a mosque, even if it be tiny, like a bird’s nest, Allah will build for him a house in paradise.*” (ibn Hibban)

In the Qur’an and Sunnah, we find how we as Muslims should honor and act in our mosques. By learning and acting upon these etiquettes we will, God Willing, instill within ourselves the love and respect they deserve.

10 Etiquettes of the masjid

1) Honor and revere it. Allah says, “And whoever honors the symbols of Allah – indeed, it is from the piety of hearts.” (22:32)

2) You are Allah’s guest, so act in the best way. It is stated in a Prophetic narration that, “[The one who goes to the masjid] is the guest of Allah.” (Tabarani) Where else can you be a guest of Allah?!

3) Leaving your house with wudu’ (ablution). In the same narration as above, the Prophet said, “Whoever performs wudu’ (ablution) in the best manner, then leaves to the masjid, then (know) that he is a guest of Allah, and it is incumbent on the guest to honor his host.” (Tabarani) The first two etiquettes are mental preparations while this one is a physical preparation. In another narration, the Messenger of Allah said, “He who purifies (performs wudu’) himself in his house and then walks to one of the houses of Allah for performing an obligatory prayer, one step of his will wipe out his sins and another step will elevate his rank (in Paradise).” (Muslim)

4) Dressing with nice clothes that are clean. Allah says, “O Children of Adam! Wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer.” (7:31) imam Sa’di explains this ayah by saying, “[wear your clothing] meaning cover yourself properly with clothing that is clean and nice. This is beautiful because firstly you are covering your private parts and secondly you are doing so with clothing that is clean and pleasant.” Usually the discussion of clothing in Islam is centered around women, but this ayah is addressing both genders. Both genders should refrain from wearing form-fitting clothes, clothes that emanate the odor of food, and clothes that do not cover us properly.

5) Reading the Prophetic supplication for leaving to the masjid. http://makedua.com/display_dua.php?sectionid=12 Why does this supplication keep mentioning “nur” (light)? The scholars say because the Prophet mentioned in a narration that, “Salah (prayer) is light”. This means that prayer is a light in the heart of the believer, and it will be light for him in the hereafter. In this supplication, the believer asks Allah to increase him in this spiritual light and to surround him with light from all directions.

6) Parking properly. The Prophet said, “Iman has sixty odd or seventy odd branches. The uppermost of all these is the Testimony of Faith: ‘La ilaha illallah’ (there is no true god except Allah) while the least of them is the removal of harmful object from the road. And shyness is a branch of iman.” (Bukhari and Muslim) Shaykh ibn Uthaymeen says in his explanation of this narration, “If removing harm from the path is a sign of iman, then placing harm there is a deficiency in iman. Today, some people park their cars wherever they want for long periods of time and in the middle of the road, no matter if the area is wide or narrow, but this is not a trait of a believer. A believer is one who has modesty in his heart and is empathetic to the needs of the people; loving for them what he loves for himself. How can you be an example while you park your car in the center of the road and you do not think about the hardship it causes the people? Sometimes they will block the path and will park in front of the masjid’s entrance, constricting the road and bringing about difficulty for the people when they leave the Friday prayer. This is incorrect.”

7) Reading the supplication for entering the masjid, and entering with your right foot. http://makedua.com/display_dua.php?sectionid=13 Upon leaving the masjid, reading the supplication for leaving http://makedua.com/display_dua.php?sectionid=14 and leaving with your left foot. Anas said, “It is from the sunnah (Prophetic tradition) that we enter the masjid with our right foot and leave with our left foot.” (Hakim)

8) Greeting the masjid. How do you greet the masjid? The Prophet said, “When one of you comes to the mosque, he should pray two rak’at before he sits.” (Agreed Upon)

9) Lowering voices and refraining from disturbing those who are praying. Abu SaEid al-Khurdi (may Allah be

pleased with him) reports that the Prophet was making seclusion (i'tikaf) in the mosque and he heard the people reciting aloud. He removed the covering and said: "Verily, each of you is in a private conversation with his Lord so you should not disturb each other. And you are not to raise your voices against each other in the recitation." (Abu Dawud) The Companions did not like to raise their voices in the masjid. Umar advised two men to keep their voices down while in the masjid of the Prophet. (Bukhari) This does not mean we cannot talk in the masjid, but it is yet another way to revere the House of Allah. The author of Fiqh us-Sunnah, Sayyid Sabiq says, "It is not allowed to raise one's voice in such a way that it disturbs others' prayers, even if it is done while reciting the Qur'an. Teaching or imparting knowledge (to others) is exempt from this."

10) Maintaining the masajid by keeping it clean and smelling nice. 'Aishah reports that the Prophet ordered that mosques be built in residential areas and that they be cleaned and perfumed. (ibn Hibban) We also learn from a narration in Bukhari that a woman used to clean the masjid of the Prophet died. One day, the Prophet asked about her and the Companions told him that she passed away. He went to her grave and prayed the funeral prayer for her. This hadith shows us how much the Prophet loved this woman for cleaning the masjid.

Now imagine practicing all of these etiquettes while going to the masjid...How will we act? Will it make us respect the masajid more?

These etiquettes are taught to us by Allah and His Messenger, so we should practice them diligently in hopes of coming closer to Allah and being among those whose hearts are attached His Houses.



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Babies in the Masjid

By: Asma Bint Shameem

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The Khutbah had already started. She knew that she was late, but she wanted to attend the Jumu'ah prayer anyway. She quickly picked up her baby and stepped anxiously into the masjid, looking to the left and the right. After all, this was the first time she was here; she had just moved to the area and didn't know anybody. As she sat down in the Sister's Prayer Hall with the baby in her lap while her heart was thumping in her chest. She could feel curious eyes turn in her direction, but she stared hard at the ground, too nervous to meet their gaze and tried to concentrate on what the imam was saying. But her baby was nervous too. He didn't know this new place...all these new faces and all the curious eyes. He had never been in a masjid before. He wanted to go home. She knew her baby would be uncomfortable in the new setting, but she thought she could manage. She herself had not been very 'practicing' all her life, but now that she was a mother herself, she felt the importance of an Islamic upbringing. She was determined to teach her baby all about this religion right from the very beginning, but first she had to work on herself. She wanted to learn, she decided that the best place to start learning about Islam would be the masjid and this was her first visit to a masjid.

But the baby was getting restless and she could see that he had already started to whimper. Yet, she hoped she could console him long enough to last through the Prayer. However, much to her dismay, just as the imam finished the khutbah and said, "Allaahu Akbar," her baby started crying. At first it was low wail and a whine, but then he let it all out. And she was certainly not prepared for the ear-splitting howl that followed, or the hysterically loud sobbing that accompanied it. WAAWWW!!!

Oh my GOD! What a terrible noise he was making! What should I do?

She thought to herself, panicking. She didn't want to break her prayer. She tried to pick him up, but he was squirming too much. She realized that he was wailing loudly, but there was nothing much she could really do. "After all, he was a baby!" she said to herself. "I am sure they all understand."

She wished that the prayer would be over quickly so that she could console her baby. But before the imam had hardly finished saying the 'Salaam', that they all jumped on her!

"WHY DON'T YOU KEEP THE BABY QUIET!"; they screamed! "DON'T YOU SEE WE ARE PRAYING?"

"Why did you come to the masjid?" Someone muttered, grinding her teeth.

"Stay Home, Next Time!" Another one hissed.

"Bb...But...umm...I...uh...I'm so sorry," she whispered.

With her head bent low, her eyes downcast, she blinked hard to fight back the tears that suddenly welled up in her eye as she tried so hard to swallow the huge lump in her throat. She thought this was the masjid. This was the place where she and her baby would be welcomed; this was the place she wanted to be, to learn Islam and to teach it to her child.

How can they be so mean to her like that? Didn't they realize that it wasn't her fault that the baby started crying!

Without saying a single word more, she hurriedly gathered her things, picked up her baby and quickly left the masjid, without even looking back once.

Now let's go back to another scenario, 1400 years ago, in a better time, in a better place, in another masjid...by relating to this hadith:

A bedouin urinated in the mosque, and the people rushed to beat him. Allah's Apostle ordered them to leave him and pour a bucket or a tumbler (full) of water over the place where he has passed urine. The Prophet then said, "You have been sent to make things easy (for the people) and you have not been sent to make things difficult for them." [Bukhari]

This illustrates for us the perfect example of how our behavior should have been. It shows us an unwavering principle of Islam, that is, if in our social life, when any unpleasant incident takes place, we should keep our cool and show tolerance and patience. We should concentrate on finding a solution to the problem and not just think in terms of what punishment to hand out to the problem-maker. We should find means that would alleviate rather than aggravate the

problem.

Where is our sense of tolerance and patience? Where is our feeling of compassion and mercy? When and where will we show it, if not in the masjid, of all the places? The Prophet (saw) said:

“He, who does not show mercy to others, will not be shown mercy.” [Bukhari]

Did the sisters forget the time when they had little babies of their own and they cried too?

The Prophet (saw) understood the agony that a mother goes through at such times. That’s why he (saw) said:

“When I enter the prayer I intend to prolong it. Then I hear the crying of a child, so I shorten it knowing the difficulty his mother will have with him crying.” [Bukhari]

And aren’t we supposed to warmly receive a newcomer, and make them feel wanted and welcomed...especially one who is just coming back to Islam? Isn’t being kind and tolerable, the very basis of our deen...the very essence of our Da’wah?

As Allāh says to the Prophet (saw):

“By the grace of Allāh, you are gentle towards the people; if you had been stern and ill-tempered, they would have dispersed from round about you” [159 Al-’Imraan]

Aren’t we supposed to behave courteously towards one another? Didn’t the Prophet (saw) tell us:

“He is a bad person in the sight of Allāh who does not behave courteously and people shun his company because of his bad manners.” [Bukhari]

SubhanAllah!

Was this the way to behave with the new sister?

Why weren’t we gentle and merciful to her?

Why couldn’t we be patient with her and her little baby?

Couldn’t we have dealt with the situation better?

Were we a means of pushing her away from coming to the masjid?

These are some of the questions that we seriously need to ask ourselves.

Masha’Allah, Alhamdulillah La Quattailabillahilalliulazeem.



For years Edison residents have patiently and selflessly supported and prayed at Masjids in the surrounding areas. It seems that Allah Subhana’wa’taalah has with His rehmah given us a beautiful masjid, Masjid Al-Wali. It is indeed a gift from our Rab.

Congratulations to the entire congregation and those who contributed their time, effort and provided financial support.

Masha’Allah the construction phase of the project is coming to a successful conclusion and we pray that the masjid

- Is always filled with congregants
- Holds diverse activities that glorify Allah and serve the Ummah
- Invites non-Muslims to Islam
- Becomes the central focus of our community and brings us all closer to each other

With Dua’s

Sameema and Khurram Kazi

**Dr. Mohammad T. Javed
M.D., F.A.C.C., F.S.C.A.I.**

Dr. Aleem A. Ameen, M.D.

377 Jersey Ave., Suite 410
Jersey City, NJ 07302
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Diplomate American Board
of Internal Medicine

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North Plainfield, NJ 07060
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Fax: (908) 756-5214

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Diplomate American Board of Neurology
and Clinical Neurophysiology

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What Next?

A lhamdulillah, may Allah reward all of you for your continuous support and generous contributions. This was a dream of many that began many years. Today, by the grace of Allah and with years of tremendous effort of our community leaders, it is a reality. We have almost completed the construction of our magnificent structure, this masjid and community center, in the heart of central Jersey.

With that, our first responsibility of building the masjid is almost done. However, our next most important responsibility begins now. That is the responsibility towards our masjid, community and our next generation.

Masjid Al-Wali is beyond just a masjid. It is a brimful complete community center with - a youth development center, a senior citizen center, place to rejuvenate our iman, a place to share our happiness, a place to quell our sorrow and worries, a place to educate our future generation, and more.

Now it is our duty and obligation to participate, benefit, and make this place a focal point of our lives. Please bring your family and invite all your friends and neighbors who are not already part of this center. Please take this responsibility seriously and as a high priority.

Our masjid has already started many activities and plans to start more. Our website and Facebook page is frequently being updated with these programs, and emails are sent out regularly. Please subscribe to our emails and visit our website and Facebook regularly. Finally, we would like to hear from you about your needs, suggestions and feedback. Please contact us personally or email us at info@masjidalwali.org.

Insha'Allah, together we will make this a vibrant and happening Islamic community center. See you in our next edition.

Communications Committee
Masjid Al-Wali



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Weekly Programs

The following programs are being held every week. Please bring your family and friends.

Friday – After Isha

40 Nawawi Hadith Lecture – by Dr. Hatem al-Haj

Saturday – After Fajr

The Quran Reflections – by Dr. Hatem al-Haj

Saturday – After Isha

1st & 3rd Sat – Signs of Prophethood – by Br. ElShinawy

2nd Sat – Seerah – by Dr. Islam Elfayoumi

4th Sat – Virtues of Hijri Months – Dr. Ahmad Mitwally

Saturday – 10 AM

History of Legislation – by Dr. Hatem al-Haj

Sunday – After Maghrib

Various Topics – by Dr. Abu Zayd & Br. Moiz

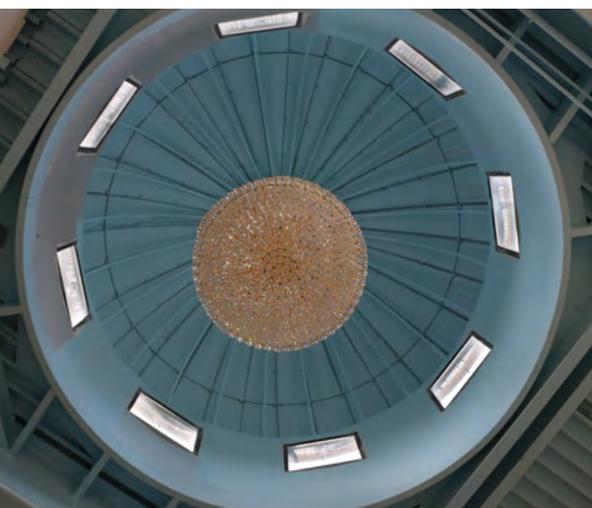
Every First Friday-Saturday of the Month

Monthly Etekaaf for Youth and others. From

Friday Maghrib to Saturday Maghrib

Masjid Al-Wali, 10 Olsen Ave, Edison, NJ 08820. www.masjidalwali.org

MASJID Al-Wali



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