

IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE MOST BENEFICIENT, THE MOST MERCIFUL

# SALAAM!

Stamford Islamic Center

## Civic Involvement: An Islamic Imperative

Improving the world in which we live is an Islamic imperative. God says in the Qur'an, "You are the best of communities brought forth for mankind." (3:110) Abu Su'ud describes this verse in his commentary: This means the best people for others. This is an unambiguous expression which states that the good [mentioned here] lies in benefit provided to the people. This is also understood from the expression, "brought forth for mankind" — namely, brought forth to benefit them and advance their best interests.[1] Our Prophet Muhammad, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him, said, "God will continue to assist the servant, as long as the servant is assisting his brother." [2] We can thereby understand that divine aid and succor will accrue to this community as long as we are providing the same to fellow members of the human family.

### Historical basis for involvement

In today's socio-political environment, concern and benefit can be understood as civic involvement. The word "civic" is derived from the word "city." Hence, civic involvement refers to the meaningful ways in which a private citizen is best involved in the life of his or her city. Despite its appearance in a largely agrarian context, if we consider the nature of the dominant means of economic production at the time of its emergence, Islam is best associated with the city. Our Prophet, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him, is identified with the city. God mentions in the Qur'an, "I swear by this city, and you are a free man of this city." (90:1-2)

The Prophet's migration was from Mecca to Medina, from one city to another. Islamic learning and culture is associated with great cities — Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo, Isfahan, Samarqand, Bukhara, Tashkent, Qayrawan, Fez, Cordova, Seville, Granada, Istanbul, Sarajevo, Zabid, Timbuktu, Delhi, and many others.

It was the involvement of Muslims in the lives of these cities, many of which were established before the arrival of Islam, which defined them in their historical contexts. As Muslims, our involvement in the life of our cities should similarly leave a lasting and positive mark on them. Surely we have much to offer in that regard. It is not without purpose that God has placed us in significant numbers in and around the great metropolises of America. Now is the time for our constructive involvement in the lives of these cities to commence.

Such involvement is especially critical in these times of political transformation and the redefinition of both the role and scope of government here in America. As the two major political parties become increasingly responsive to special interest groups, particularly those associated with big business, large unions, and wealthy individuals, their role as facilitators of democratic and civic involvement is being eroded. This shift in responsiveness is leading to what is referred to as a dealignment of those parties. This dealignment causes private citizens to search for new institutions to serve as their primary means of political involvement, which consequently results in the proliferation of smaller, grass-

roots civic organizations. The collective weight of these organizations and their facilitation of direct citizen involvement in local politics is viewed by some as the reinventing of American democracy.[3]

### Position of Muslims and contributions

Rudimentary efforts undertaken by Muslims to counter this trend have already begun. Organizations such as the Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN) in Chicago combine the material and intellectual resources of suburban Muslims with the organizational expertise and networking potential of inner-city Muslims to create a dynamic synthesis that is having an ever greater impact on the life of both Muslim and non-Muslim communities. In Los Angeles, the Umma Community Clinic demonstrates how the vision and focused action of suburban university students can create a major center that provides one of the few venues where poor residents of the South Central Los Angeles community can receive free basic medical care and referrals for more advanced treatment.

In the Washington, DC area, The Zakat Project initiated by the All Dulles Area Muslim Society (ADAMS) builds bridges of goodwill and helps to initiate avenues of communication and coordination between the wealthy Muslims of suburban northern Virginia and the poorer communities of inner-city Washington, DC.

In Richardson, Texas, the Islamic Association of North Texas (IANT) provided the funding to renovate one of the oldest mosques of inner-city Dallas.

In Santa Clara, a suburb in the southern San Francisco Bay Area, the Rahima Foundation works in collaboration with Masjid Warithuddin of inner-city Oakland to help feed three hundred families a month.

If we can expand and develop these efforts, a new and unprecedented model of civic involvement can emerge. This development is in no way limited to the social service sector. Mobilized social capital would inevitably engender deeper models of citizen involvement that involve greater forms of self-governance and enhanced collaboration with other economic, social, and political actors.

May blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah, as long as those who remember him continue to do so...



In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

<sup>1</sup> Abu Su'ud Muhammad b. Muhammad, *Irshad al-'uqul al-salam ila mazaya al-Kitab al-Karim* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1999), 2:17.

<sup>2</sup> al-Nawawi, *al-Minhaj*, 9:24, no.2793.

<sup>3</sup> See Carmen Sirianni and Lewis Friedland, *Civic Innovation in America: Community Empowerment, Public Policy, and the Movement for Civic Renewal* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), p.1.

The above excerpt is from a newly published book by HAMZA YUSUF and ZAID SHAKIR, *Agenda to Change Our Condition*, Zaytuna Institute, Hayward, California, 2007. Taken from [www.Islamicamagazine.com](http://www.Islamicamagazine.com)

# Stamford Islamic Center, Inc.

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## Prayer Timings for August 2008

Day	August	Rajab/Shab'an	Fajr	Sunrise	Zuhr	Asr	Maghrib	Isha
Friday	1	29	4:22	5:50	1:01	6:03	8:10	9:40
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Sha'ban</b>	<b>4:24</b>	<b>5:51</b>	<b>1:01</b>	<b>6:02</b>	<b>8:09</b>	<b>9:39</b>
Sunday	3	2	4:25	5:52	1:01	6:01	8:08	9:38
Monday	4	3	4:26	5:53	1:01	6:01	8:07	9:37
Tuesday	5	4	4:28	5:54	1:01	6:00	8:06	9:36
Wednesday	6	5	4:29	5:55	1:01	5:59	8:05	9:35
Thursday	7	6	4:31	5:56	1:00	5:58	8:03	9:33
Friday	8	7	4:32	5:57	1:00	5:57	8:02	9:32
Saturday	9	8	4:33	5:58	1:00	5:57	8:01	9:31
Sunday	10	9	4:35	5:59	1:00	5:56	8:00	9:30
Monday	11	10	4:36	6:00	1:00	5:55	7:58	9:28
Tuesday	12	11	4:37	6:01	1:00	5:54	7:57	9:27
Wednesday	13	12	4:39	6:02	12:59	5:53	7:55	9:25
Thursday	14	13	4:40	6:03	12:59	5:52	7:54	9:24
Friday	15	14	4:41	6:04	12:59	5:51	7:53	9:23
Saturday	16	15	4:43	6:05	12:59	5:50	7:51	9:21
Sunday	17	16	4:44	6:06	12:59	5:49	7:50	9:20
Monday	18	17	4:45	6:07	12:58	5:48	7:48	9:18
Tuesday	19	18	4:47	6:08	12:58	5:47	7:47	9:17
Wednesday	20	19	4:48	6:09	12:58	5:46	7:45	9:15
Thursday	21	20	4:49	6:10	12:58	5:45	7:44	9:14
Friday	22	21	4:51	6:11	12:57	5:44	7:42	9:12
Saturday	23	22	4:52	6:12	12:57	5:43	7:41	9:11
Sunday	24	23	4:53	6:13	12:57	5:42	7:39	9:09
Monday	25	24	4:55	6:14	12:57	5:40	7:38	9:08
Tuesday	26	25	4:56	6:15	12:56	5:39	7:36	9:06
Wednesday	27	26	4:57	6:16	12:56	5:38	7:35	9:05
Thursday	28	27	4:58	6:17	12:56	5:37	7:33	9:03
Friday	29	28	5:00	6:18	12:55	5:36	7:31	9:01
Saturday	30	29	5:01	6:19	12:55	5:34	7:30	9:00
Sunday	31	30	5:02	6:20	12:55	5:33	7:28	8:58

Please donate generously to the Stamford Islamic Center, Inc., The Masjid needs your help!

Now register your email [www.islamicvalley.com/sic](http://www.islamicvalley.com/sic) to receive automatic updates on Prayer timings.

### What Is Five Thousand and Six Hundred Dollars?

Did you know that the Stamford Islamic Center accepts monthly automatic donations? Did you know that you can donate easily using your credit card? Did you know that the quickest way of attaining sawab is to automatically donate without thinking about it every month? And did you know we've been accepting credit card donations for over a year, and the program has been extremely successful? Do you know how much we've collected in donations? \$5600 has been collected in automatic recurring monthly credit card donations in this year alone! That's right - nearly six thousand dollars. And half the year is left! You can sign up now and

donate any amount you'd like using your credit card or bank card with a MasterCard, Visa, American Express, or Discover logo. All we need is your home address and billing address! The easiest way of helping your masjid grow and take care of monthly expenses is by signing up TODAY. We are scheduled to collect \$12,000 in credit card donations by the end of this year! With your help, we're aiming to collect \$15,000. Can you help? Email [sicpledges@gmail.com](mailto:sicpledges@gmail.com) today for more information! Donate \$5, \$50, or \$500 per month - any amount you wish to give. Every dollar you donate helps secure you a home in jannah!