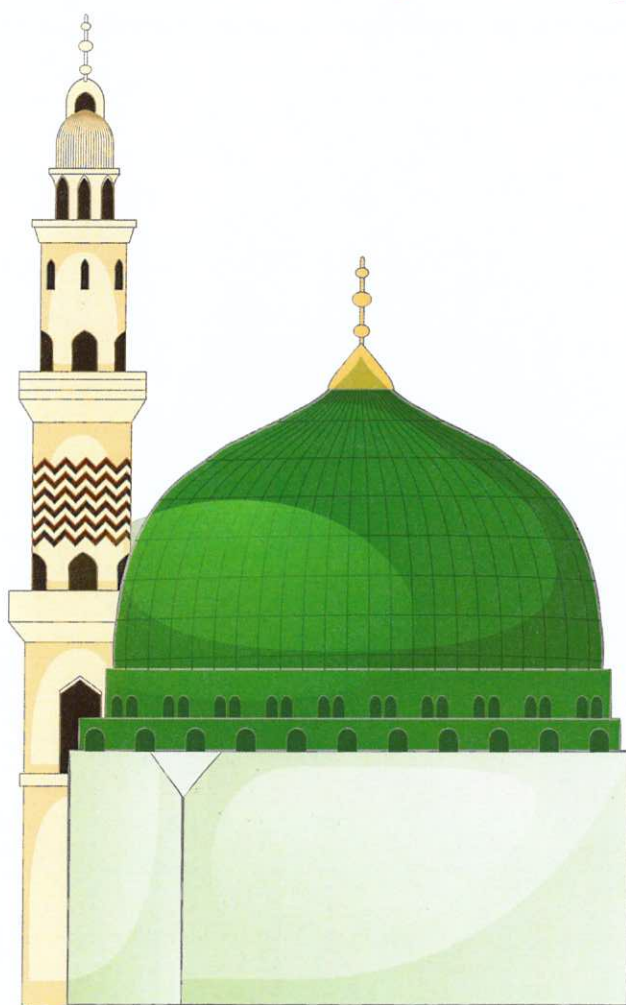


In the Name of Allah The Gracious, The Merciful

The Green Masjid Project



Green Ramadan Campaign

<http://www.isna.net/>

ISNA

Green Masjid Task Force 2015
Islamic Society of North America

The Green Masjid Project

Human activities consume resources and as a result produce waste. Both human population and wide consumption of resources have increased astronomically. Non-renewable resources including fossil fuel derived energy, water, and productive land (forests, pastures, cropland, fisheries etc.) are dwindling fast. The human originated (anthropogenic) activities have also resulted in producing enormous amount of non-biodegradable waste. Ecological Footprint estimates show that it now takes the Earth one year and six months to generate non-renewable resources that we use in a year. Fossil fuel produced energy and the scarcity of water are now our great environmental challenges – posing existential threats to future life on our planet. Therefore, conservation and preservation of these life sustaining resources must be our priority by adopting frugal consumption practices, and waste reduction.

Quran and Hadith/Sunnah are rich in statements, proverbs and precepts that speak of Allah's design for creation and the responsibility given to human beings to maintain and sustain the environment in good condition. Both of these primary sources emphasize protecting and valuing the environment as a central component of our faith. There are more than 700 verses in Quran which directly or indirectly refer to the environment. Similarly, there are many Ahadith which refer to this subject. The following are just a sample of a few Quranic Verses:

"He (Allah) is the one who made you Khalifa (inheritors/guardians) in the earth"
(Fatir 35: 30 – Translation)

"But waste not by excess: for Allah loves not the wasters"
(An'am 6: end of 141–Translation)

"Consider the water which you drink. Was it you that brought it down from the rain cloud or We? If We had pleased, We could make it bitter. Then why do you not give thanks?"
(Waqi'a 56: 68-70 – Translation)

Ahadith of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH):

"If a Muslim plants a tree or sow the seeds, and then a bird, or a person or animal eats from it, is regarded as a charitable gift (Sadaqah) from him"(Anas bin Malik – Bukhari)

He who cuts a lote tree (without justification), Allah will send him to hell fire
(Abdullah ibn Habashi – Abu Dawood)

Never waste water even if you were at a running stream (Ahmed)



In 2015, ISNA launched the first ever Green Ramadan Campaign at the National Level including a web page and informational webinar with the view to enlist the Masjids across the nation in adopting specific Green Environmentally friendly practices during Ramadan. There were 37 Masjids that responded and adopted some of these practices. In the coming year we look forward to many more Masjids and Islamic institutions to participate. This initiative is designed to create awareness and providing guidance in making our Masjid environmentally friendly and practice sustainable. We believe that as Muslims we have a special responsibility to take care of our environment. With this view in mind that we are taking up the cause and building upon various local and regional grass roots efforts (e.g. Green Muslims of new Jersey; Green Muslims; Wisconsin Green Muslims; The Eco Muslims and a number of other individuals and organizations) already in place in establishing the prophetic green mosque campaign at the national level. It will be appropriate to call the eco-friendly Masjid along with the traditional role as Green. Accordingly, the ideal Green Masjid will be the one that is:

- Spiritual center strengthening the faith of Muslims through greater connection and integration into the natural world of which we all are a part.
- Follow environmental conservation and preservation principles.
- Create an oasis of calm and sustainability in an urban and sub-urban environment by being eco-friendly and inclusive to all its Community.

Unfortunately, most of our Masjid communities do not follow environmentally friendly practices and as such could not be called a Green Masjid. There is considerable waste of food and energy and have no programs for conservation of valuable resources. Alhamd-u-Lillah many of our Masjids do serve important community needs like providing a space for obligatory prayers, weekend and full time Islamic schools, and venues for social activities like community dinners. Yet the manner in which these services are provided to meet these needs, most of the time, do not take into consideration their environmental impact and sustainability. For example, the most common practice in almost all of the Masjids/Islamic centers in the USA is to arrange for and organize frequent community dinners, especially during Ramadan. A substantial amount of food is wasted during these events. “ISNA Green Ramadan Campaign” in 2015 can be used as a model for adopting environmentally friendly practices. Alhamd-u-Lillah it was a great success!

In developed countries almost 220 lbs. per person per year food is wasted. Non-degradable plastic bottles, Styrofoam plates and cups, Aluminum cans, and other items go to trash and then to the landfill.



According to estimates almost 73 billion disposable cups and plastic water bottles (about 230 per person) in USA ended up in landfills in 2010. Similarly not many of them have any recycling, energy and water conservation programs in place. If adopted, these programs would not only lessen our negative impact on the environment but in many cases will also save money. ISNA calls upon and urges everyone (especially Masjid leadership) to participate in “Green Masjid” campaign by pledging to improve the environment and by adding environmentally friendly activities that increase the awareness and involvement of the community in sustainable and conservation practices. Let us begin by taking some small steps which, Inshallah, will result in big positive changes.

3 R's (Reduce, Recycle, Reuse) to 4 R's (Reduce, Recycle, Reuse & Re-think)

To begin with let us adopt 3R (Reduce, Recycle, Reuse) principle for the use of water, consumption of food, and energy utilization. Let us adopt recycling programs for plastic, Aluminum, and other recyclable items. Let us also add a fourth “R” i.e. Re-think all purchases as to their necessity and potential negative impact on the environment. Collectively all these efforts will fulfill our Islamic obligation to improve the environment but also reduce expenses and save money for other needed projects.

Water Conservation

As stated earlier, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has said “Do not waste water even if you were at a running stream (Ahmed).

Millions of people around the world do not have access to clean water. It is important that water is not wasted. Some simple and not so costly steps can go a long way to conserve water. Water consumption can be reduced and minimized by adopting some or all of these practical and common sense actions:

- Installation of water reducing aerator caps and sensory taps (faucets), especially in Wudu areas. It is estimated that about 0.65 gallon of water is used when washing hands using standard faucet while only 0.2 gallon is consumed when sensor operated faucets are used (70% of water saving). This can result in saving 500 gallons of per year per faucet along with the associated cost savings.

- Efficient toilet water systems – dual flush systems save water. Each full flush uses 1.6 gallon of water while each half flush saves 0.8 gallon of water.
- Minimizing water wastages – leaky faucets or plumbing joints waste about 20 gallons of water per day per leak.
- Re-using the water, wherever possible. For example, the water from the Wudu area (with appropriate filtration) can be used for gardening and watering the plants. This also reduces the water going to the sewer system; or sink water can be re-used (with appropriate filtration) for toilet flushing water.
- Rain water can be collected and could be used for gardening and other uses. For example, for toilet flushing water and sinks (with appropriate filtration).

In all scenarios for water re-use please consult your local/state laws for allowance.

Bottled Water

Reduce the use of bottled water as much as one can and eventually stop its habitual use. Regulatory standards for tap (municipal) water are more stringent than those of bottled water. However, erroneously the public perceives bottled water is safer than the tap water due to heavy advertisement by bottled water producing companies. It is not a well-known fact but approximately 40% of all bottled water is taken from tax payer supported municipal water sources. The cost of bottled water ranges between \$0.25 and \$2.0 per bottle, while tap water costs less than a cent per gallon. Ninety percent or more of the cost of the bottled water goes to bottling, packaging, shipping, marketing, retailing and profiting. An informative You Tube video “Story of water –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Se12y9hSOM0> may be worth watching.

By not using bottled water during community activities the Masjids/Islamic Centers will save money but will also reduce the generation of waste among other benefits. Therefore, it is highly recommended to not use bottled water during any activity and provide regular water for drinking. Use reusable BPA free water bottles instead. Some Masjids have installed water fountains with a spout for refilling water bottles. The use of bottled beverages should also be minimized. They are unhealthy, especially for children.



Recycling

Adopting recycling program helps the environment. Plastic bottles are one of the avoidable environmental pollutants. In 2011 an average American drank 29 gallons of bottled water. About 70% of these bottles are not recycled and end up in the landfill. They take a very long time to decompose and their disposal costs a lot of money to the local governments and in turn to the tax payers. Contact your own municipalities for more information on the type of recycling programs that are available in your area and then start recycling. Recycling bins with prominent signs are to be kept at convenient places. Education and frequent reminders are also a must for community members to adopt recycling practices until it becomes second nature and habit.

Biodegradable products

The use of biodegradable products will be ideal but unfortunately not many cities and towns, so far, have facilities for receiving these materials. The cities that have such facilities, most of the time, also charge additional fees to dispose bio-degradable products. Please confirm with your local jurisdiction for disposing biodegradable products.

Recycling and avoiding the use of non-degradable items should be among the priorities of a Green Masjid. It is best to use washable cups, plates, and other utensils if your facility has the means to dishwasher. Otherwise the next best option is to use degradable items rather than made from plastic and Styrofoam. Plastic and Styrofoam items are commonly used items during community dinners and are not readily degradable. It takes at least more than half a century for their degradation and are major environmental hazards.

It should be noted that biodegradable products are not accepted by recycling facilities. To properly dispose of biodegradable confirm that there is an 'Industrial Composting Facility' in your area which accepts biodegradable products and there may be a fee for it. Check the regulations in your State regarding biodegrading (or composting).

In addition, every product has a start life and an end life. Purchasing of both biodegradable or recyclable products is good, yet better is the purchase of biodegradable products than recyclable products, because they are plant based and not petroleum based. So by buying plant based products you are reducing petroleum based products and their manufacturing from the waste stream.

Energy Conservation

Energy conservation on a larger scale requires careful planning and investment. This investment will be paid off in the long term with substantial economic benefits and environmental conservation. However, a few small steps can conserve some energy before even considering a large scale energy conservation project. Improving insulation, using energy efficient appliances and heating/cooling systems, lights with sensors, energy use regulators and smart thermostats will save energy and money as well. In relative hot regions tinting of the windows can also save energy and money. Standard incandescent bulbs waste 80-90% of energy as heat while LED and CFL bulbs are more energy efficient. Most of the utility companies offer free energy audit programs. Contact your utility company and have your Masjid audited for energy efficiency. The audit results will include ways in which you can take simple steps to save energy and money.

Solar Energy

Solar Energy is one of the options of the renewable energy which can be adopted by the Masjid/Islamic Centers for long term energy conservation and expense reduction. Rooftops are quite suitable for installation of solar panels. Mosque Foundation building in Bridgeview, IL became the first solar Mosque (Masjid) in USA in July 2008. This was a joint project with Faith in Place (a non-profit group helping religious organizations in Energy conservation in IL) through a grant from Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation and a rebate from State of Illinois. Each State has different energy conservation programs and other sources of financial assistance. Each community should explore all the possibilities of assistance and rebates before undertaking such a project. The following are some of the financing models for non-profits to go solar (Source: RenewableEnergy.World.Com):

- Solar Power Purchase Agreements (Solar PPA's) for non-profits
- Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) for non-profits

Crowd Funding (financed by community members who receive return on their investment). Please note that for some of the small buildings this may not be an economic option.

Community Participation

The Green Masjid is more than just adopting the mentioned 4R principles. In addition to being spiritual center for strengthening the faith of Muslims they must have active programs that will inculcate the sense of ownership and active participation in protecting and preserving the environment. Educating the children and youth in this regard is a necessity. Ecological projects should be made as part the teaching curricula.

Community service and conservation activities including recycling projects, clean up and even cleaning of the surrounding areas along with the adults should be a regular part of Masjid activities and community life. These types of practical hands-on activities are a highly valuable experience and provide a sense of service for adults and children both.

Planting of trees and beautifying the surrounding areas has been a hallmark of Islamic Architecture and does not need more emphasis.

Prophet (PBUH) said:

- *If the hour (the day of resurrection) is about to be established and one of you was holding A palm shoot, let him take the advantage of even one second to plant it. (Al-Albani)*
- *Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (Peace be upon him) as saying: He who is presented with a flower should not reject it, for it is light to carry and pleasant in odor. (Muslim)*

Wherever possible, allocate garden space for vegetables, herbs, fruits, and flowers. The produce can be shared with local food banks. It is worthwhile to educate the community about gardening and its benefits.

In Summary

It is recommended that a Green Masjid should adopt at least some of the following ten ideas/projects/practices:

- Sustainable Materials – High Recycled Content, Reuse, Reduce, Refurbish
 - Efficient lights and appliances, insulation, solar panels (if feasible)
 - Water management and conservation
 - Recycling and Waste management
 - Trees and community gardens
 - Food management during Ramadan and other community activities
 - Litter cleanups in around the Masjid/Islamic Center
 - Involve children in preservation and conservation projects through education and participation.
-
- Re-use or donate rather than throw in trash
 - Educational programs including workshops, Juma Khutba's about protecting and preserving the environment, especially in Ramadan

Due to special needs of building a Masjid/Islamic Center it may be worthwhile to consider obtaining the services of Muslim Architects and Engineers who are well versed in Green Building principles.

Our challenge and yours is to raise awareness, education, adaptation, community involvement and above all behavior modification to be better, Greener Muslims which is the greater accomplishment of all.

*"Hence do not spread any corruption on earth after it has been so well ordered.
And call unto Him with fear and longing: verily, Allah's grace is ever near unto
the doers of good!" (Al-A'raf 7:56 – Translation)*

**Programs currently under development by ISNA's
Green Masjid Task Force to be launched in the near
future:**

- 'Green Masjid Certification' Program
- The 'Green Imam' Program
- Green Masjid Guideline 'APP' for your smart phone
- ISNA Green Masjid Logo Design

**'37 Pioneer Organizations' who participated in the
National ISNA Green Ramadan Campaign 2015**

| | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Islamic Society of Western Massachusett, MA | Islamic Ctr of Evansville, IN |
| Islamic Assoc Greater Hartford, CT | Muslim Community Assoc., MI |
| Muhammad Islamic Ctr, CT | Islamic Ctr East Lansing, MI |
| Islamic Ctr S. Jersey, NJ | Islamic Ctr Cedar Rapids, IA |
| Islamic Society Central Jersey, NJ | Milwaukee Islamic Dawa Ctr, WI |
| New Brunswick Islamic Ctr,NJ | Masjid Al Quran, WI |
| Mosque of Islamic Brotherhood, NY | Islamic Society of Milwaukee, WI |
| Masjid Al Iman, NY | Islamic Ctr of Madison, WI |
| Islamic Community Ctr, PA | American Islamic Assoc.,IL |
| Islamic Ctr of Morgantown, WV | Spokane Islamic Ctr, WA |
| Muslim Community of Knoxville, TN | Islamic Assoc Carrollton, TX |
| Muslim Assoc Cleveland East, OH | Islamic Assoc N. Texas, TX |
| Islamic Ctr of Greater Cincinnati, OH | Masjid as-Sabur, NV |
| Dayton Mercy Ctr, OH | Islamic Ctr Perris, CA |
| IQRA Center, IN | Medina Education Center, CA |
| Masjid al-Fajr, IN | SALAM, CA |
| Muslim Community Ctr, IN | Islamic Ctr of Federal Way, WA |
| NW Indiana Islamic Ctr, IN | Green Deen TnT, Trinidad & Tabago |
| Masjid Noor ul-Islam, IN | |

'Each community received a Tree Sapling gift from the Pen and Inkpot Foundation
in recognition of each Masjid's participation in the ISNA Green Ramadan Campaign

"Thanks for being Green Pioneers!"

HOW GREEN IS YOUR MASJID?



If your Masjid & Community would like to be placed on the email list to be kept informed of these activities or have relevant expertise and experience in the area of the Environment and Sustainability and would like to assist in the development of these programs contact us at: isnagreenmasjid@gmail.com

This ISNA brochure was prepared by the following founding members of the ISNA Green Masjid Task Force: Huda Alkaff, Ihsan Bagby, Saffet Catovic, Nana Firman, Uzma Mirza, Saiyid Masroor Shah (Chair).

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