

2

SACRED
ROOTS



A YEAR IN
REVIEW

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Cultivate

A cluster of green fern leaves arranged in a circular pattern around a central white circle.

[click here to
support our
work](#)



IN A
WORD



We begin by the Name of God, the Compassionate and Merciful

Friends, family, brothers and sisters,

On behalf of the Sacred Roots Team, I would like to thank you for your support throughout our first year of community building. While world events required us to alter our approach, I am confident in saying that our first year as an institution was a success due to the efforts and work of the many hands involved in our community.

IN THE BEGINNING

The idea for Sacred Roots began during a pleasant autumn walk in the Hyde Park neighborhood of Chicago in 2019. Ahmed Saheb and I reflected on the countless hours of debate and discussion about community building amongst our circle of friends. Toward the end of the walk, he suggested that we should approach the problem head-on and create something that represents our ideals. The seed was planted: to create an organization to

reflect the teachings of the Prophet (s) and his family ('a) in the city.

Many hours were spent consulting with mentors and local scholars, working on needs-assessments, formulating our mission, and preparing the communal groundwork for our launch. And then, **on the verge of launching for the month of Ramadan and just a week before signing a lease, news of COVID-19 began to spread.**

The team was undeterred and nimble—we decided to host our programs virtually (not without a few hiccups) hoping that the global pandemic would pass within months. We ended 2020 with great momentum and continue to march on with virtual programming, and safe in-person programming. **Since our launch in April 2020 we have developed and sustained a core network of community members in Chicago, across the Midwest, nationwide, and even internationally.** In the pages below you will find the details of our 2020 programming.



IN THE FUTURE

We are excited to continue building together and have a more robust virtual programming schedule planned for 2021 which is underpinned by our mainstay discussion and reading sessions, our commentary on the Prayer of Kumayl, and the Prophetic Legacy lecture series. Locally, **we are planning outdoor physically-distanced socials throughout the year.** We are also preparing new initiatives to inspire our community's artistic and literary expression.

This year we also aim to create community resources to further meet our community needs:

- ❖ Reading guides to help people navigate the web's plethora of articles and books
- ❖ Educational literature and care packages for new Muslims
- ❖ English-language prayer resources and art
- ❖ Podcasts with a dynamic group of guests

Most importantly, we are praying and preparing for the end of the pandemic. We are monitoring the vaccine rollout and **plan to secure and open a location in Chicago to call home when the health situation is stable.** For our community outside of Chicago: we intend to **continue our virtual presence through hybrid programming** and hope to host you all in Chicago soon.

Personally, I could not have asked for a more rewarding experience over the past year. I've grown so much through collaborating with the Sacred Roots Team, learned from so many of you in our many hours of community discussions, and been blessed to get to know many of you through personal correspondence and conversations.

With prayers for you and yours,



Trenton Carl

Sacred Roots' Co-Founder
& Resident Scholar



and the Sacred Roots Team:

A red ink signature consisting of a stylized 'A' followed by a horizontal line.

Ahmed Saheb

A red ink signature in a cursive style.

Ali Khan

A red ink signature in a stylized, bold font.

Nour Abdul-Razzak

A red ink signature in a cursive style.

Saif Kazim



Apple Picking at Royal Oak Apple Orchard, Harvard, IL





IN THEORY



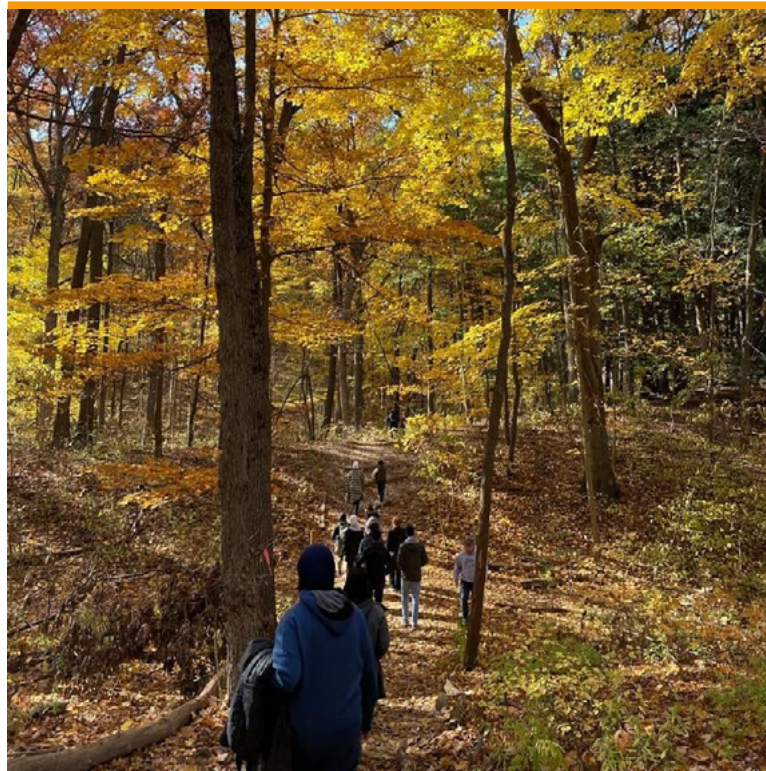
VISION

To be a home for Muslims and the spiritually curious

MISSION

Sacred Roots works to nourish a community of Muslims rooted in the teachings of the Prophet (s) and his Family ('a). We connect people of various backgrounds and experiences and together explore the spiritual and intellectual heritage of Islam through acts of devotion, study, and service.

"So orient yourself to the religion as one inclined to the Truth - the Divine nature with which God created humanity."
— The Qur'an, Surat ar-Rum 30:30



Hike in Ann Arbor, Michigan



CORE PRINCIPLES



The Chicago Lakefront

Devotion

To foster an atmosphere that embodies commitment to Islamic conduct, etiquette, and decorum

Diversity

To create a culture that fosters meaningful and lasting connections between individuals from diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences

A Spirit of Openness

To cultivate an environment that is open to all Muslims, people of other faith traditions, and people without affiliation with a faith tradition

Study

To preserve and navigate the Islamic tradition as lived by the Prophet and his Family

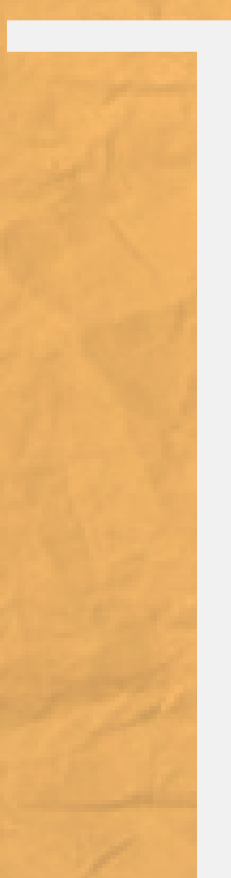
Community Engagement

To engage the needs of our local community





IN
A NUTSHELL





Sacred Roots
Instagram Page

Total 2020 Programs

66

Unique Zoom
Visitors

445+

Instagram
Followers

538

Facebook
Followers

515

WhatsApp Group
Members

~150

Unique Website
Visitors

6,000

Page Views

15,000

Top 3 States

IL, MI, TX





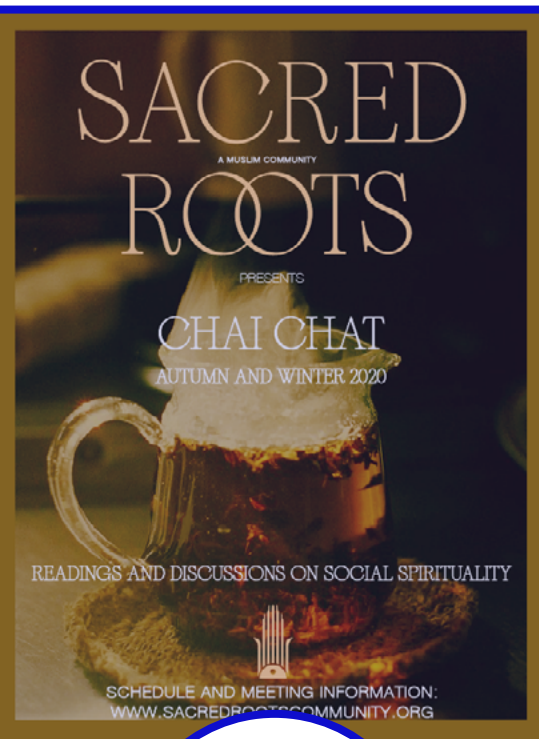
IN
ACTION



MONTHLY

Chai Chat

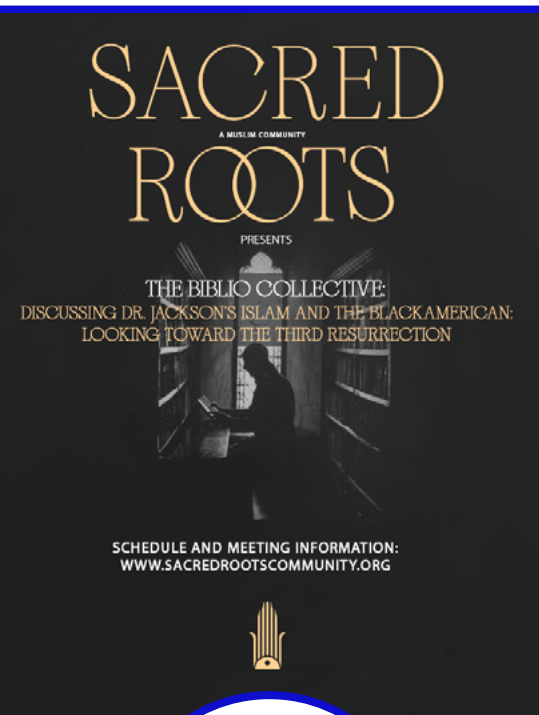
- ❖ The backbone of our community building efforts
- ❖ An open space to activate creative thinking and learn from each other's individual experiences
- ❖ We leverage collective learning by inviting community members to lead
- ❖ Topics explored include:
 - The Muslim Spiritual Heritage
 - The Question of Technology
 - Consumer Ethics
 - Modern Racism
 - Re-imagining the Nuclear Family
 - Social Isolation and Mental Well-Being
 - Nature and Childhood Education
 - Community and Counterculture
- ❖ These sessions fostered discussions that continued in our Whatsapp group and formed friendships across the globe



12
gatherings



MONTHLY



15
gatherings

The Biblio Collective

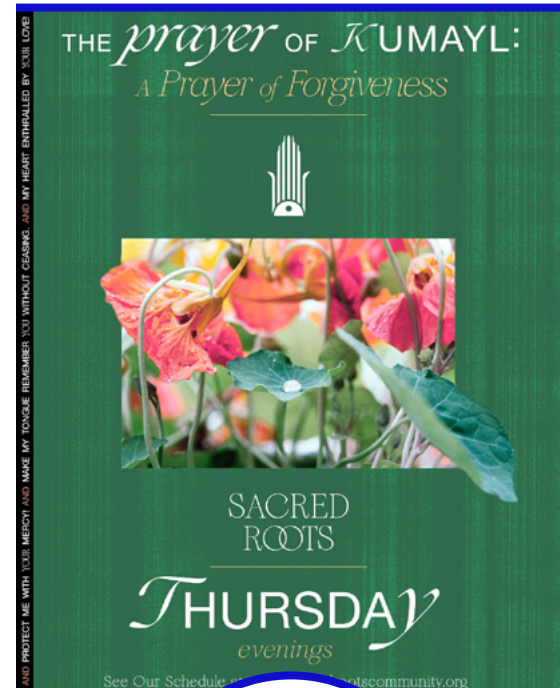
- ❖ A discussion-based book club that typically meets every other week
- ❖ We read, discussed, and critically analyzed three books in 2020
 - [The Qur'an in Islam](#) by 'Allamah Tabataba'i
 - [Islam and the Blackamerican: Looking Toward the Third Resurrection](#) by Dr. Sherman Jackson
 - [Shi'ism in America](#) by Dr. Liyakat Takim
- ❖ In 2021 we will be reading Shaykh Shahid Murtada Mutahhari's [Training and Education in Islam](#)



MONTHLY

The Prayer of Kumayl

- ❖ To further augment our spiritual programming, we kicked-off **The Prayer of Kumayl: A Prayer for Forgiveness** during the last months of 2020
- ❖ We read the eloquent Du'á' Kumayl in English to focus on facilitating our community's comprehension of the depth and meanings of the **prayer of Imam'Alí ('a)**
- ❖ For 2021, we've added a commentary series to the program to begin **building Arabic vocabulary** and linking the prayer to other Islamic teachings



MONTHLY

The Community Film & Discussion Series

- ❖ The Community Film and Discussion Series brings us together to examine documentaries that tell the stories of Muslim communities
- ❖ We view these films and stories to expand our ideas about community and we come together to share how we envision our future as a Muslim community in America
- ❖ In 2020, we watched and discussed
 - **Le Moulinet** - documenting a close-knit group of French converts in the French countryside
 - **New Muslim Cool** - documenting a Puerto Rican Muslim's journey through religion, culture, and community
 - **Somos Musulmanes** - documenting a community of Tzotzil Muslims affiliated with the Zapatista movement in Mexico

The Community
Film & Discussion Series



LE MOULINET

A French Revert Community
Wed. Sep. 23, 7:30pm CDT
www.sacredrootscommunity.org

3
gatherings



SEASONAL

The Month of Ramadan

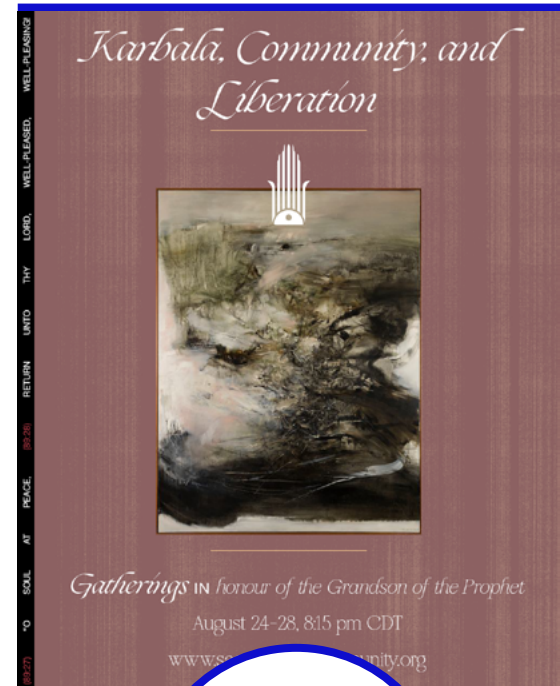
- ❖ This was a Ramadan like none have ever experienced before! Without access to mosques and large community gatherings, **our Ummah was forced to adjust and rethink Ramadan**
- ❖ Our **first ever programming** was focused on the Holy Month of Ramadan - beginning with a series of Sha'ban programs focused on how to prepare for the Holy Month
- ❖ During the month of Ramadan we held three gatherings a week to **encourage a sense of community** through readings, discussions, and early morning suhúr programs
- ❖ This was our first taste of Zoom programming and created the **building blocks of our newfound community relationships**



SEASONAL

The Season of Mourning

- ❖ For nights 6 through 10 of the month of Muharram, we hosted gatherings in honor of Imam Husayn entitled: *Karbala, Community, and Liberation*
- ❖ Each night, we set the tone with English lamentation poetry recited by poets from across the country
- ❖ Our lecture series focused on an Islamic critique of spiritual decay and domination
- ❖ On 'Ashura we hosted a program called *'Ashura and the Qur'an Embodied: A Retelling of the Tragedy* that wove Qur'anic verses into the narrative of the uprising and martyrdom of the Prophet's grandson
- ❖ We held our 'Arba'in program entitled *Karbala, Dissent, and the Future of the Muslim Community* on how Karbala shapes our engagement with society and structures of power



7
gatherings



ANNUAL

On August 15th & 16th we held our first annual Horizons Conference: a two-day (virtual) community building initiative inspired by Qur'an 41:53

سَرِّهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّى
يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ

We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and in themselves, till it is clear to them that it is the truth

The conference focused on exploring key material and spiritual issues related to cultivating the Muslim community in the United States.

In addition to the panels, we had two special sessions centered on culture: one on Coffee (*The Art and Ethics of Coffee*)-including an interactive coffee brewing tutorial- and another



212
participants

on Food (*Comfort Food: Cultural Nourishment*).

We hosted over 200 participants across the two days and built relationships with educators, professionals, and scholars who spoke from around the United States and Europe from across our Ummah.



HORIZONS' PANELS

Our 2020 Panels:

❖ The Muslim Marketplace

- A conversation, moderated by The Muslim Vibe's Salim Kassam, with Amany Killawi of LaunchGood and Ahmed Saheb of Penny Appeal discussing ways to strengthen our community's economy

❖ Fast Fashion and Philosophy

- Examining ethical imperatives around consumerism with Shaykh Mahdi Shahkolahi and Hoda Katebi

❖ Amplifying Our Values: Chaplaincy

- With Professor David Coolidge on University Chaplaincy, Chaplain Muhammad Ali on Prison Chaplaincy, and Sayyid Sameer Ali on Hospital Chaplaincy

❖ Empowering Education

- Exploring holistic childhood and young adult education with Hannah El-Amin on a Community-Centric Approach to Early Childhood Education and Latifa Barnett on Muslim Youth, Belief and Belonging

❖ The Lodestar Address

- Our keynote speech with Dr. Sayyid Sulayman Hassan exploring key Islamic priorities for charting the Muslim community's course toward a deeper relationship with God and establishing a more just social order



SACRED ROOTS PRESENTS HORIZONS 1ST ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Saturday, August 15

All times in US Central Time

- 10:30-10:50 Recitation of the Qur'an and Introduction
- 10:50-11:00 Break
- 11:00-12:00 The Muslim Marketplace
- 12:00-1:00 Conversation on The Muslim Marketplace
- 1:00-2:30 Lunch and Prayer Break
- 2:30-3:30 The Art and Ethics of Coffee - Brewing Tutorial
- 3:30-3:45 Break
- 3:45-4:45 Fast Fashion and Philosophy
- 4:45-5:45 Conversation on Fast Fashion and Philosophy

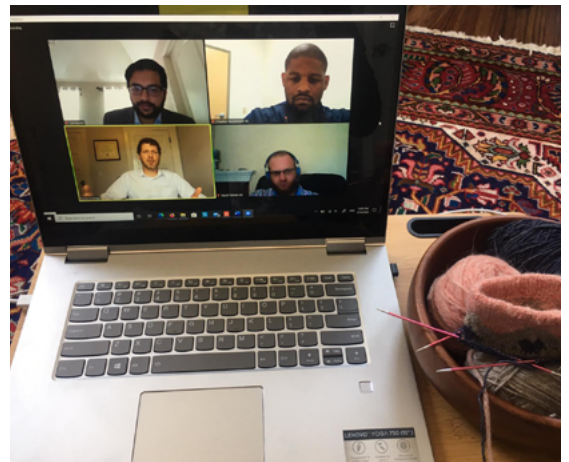
Sunday, August 16

- 11:00-12:00 Amplifying Our Values: Chaplaincy
- 12:00-1:00 Conversation on Amplifying Our Values
- 1:00-2:00 Lunch and Prayer Break
- 2:00-3:00 Empowering Education
- 3:00-3:45 Conversation on Empowering Education
- 3:45-4:00 Break
- 4:00-5:00 The Lodestar Address
- 5:00-5:45 Conversation on The Lodestar Address
- 5:45-6:00 Break
- 6:00-7:15 Comfort Food: Cultural Nourishment
- 7:15-7:30 Final Remarks



Above: Conference Schedule

Right: Conference photos submitted by participants from all around the country



In Action

SEASONAL

Special Events

- ❖ Prior to the pandemic, we held **seven soft-launch events** at local homes, the University of Illinois at Chicago, Loyola University, and the University of Chicago
- ❖ Sacred Roots and the Manara Collective of Detroit hosted an event with Imam Dawud Walid to discuss **Islamic solutions to America's history of racial injustice**
- ❖ Shaykh Rizwan Arastu hosted us at his family farm to meet his animals and discuss **Islamic ethics of farming**
- ❖ We held several social events including apple picking, visits to coffeeshops, and a bike ride along the Lake Michigan lakefront
- ❖ These social events **built and strengthened friendships within our community**





IN
FISCAL
TERMS



\$107,093

Total 2020 Donations

\$39,586

Total 2020 Realized
Expenses

Breakdown of 2020 Expenses

Religious Director &
Social Media Manager

\$15,000

Initial Organization
Setup

10,219

Program Costs

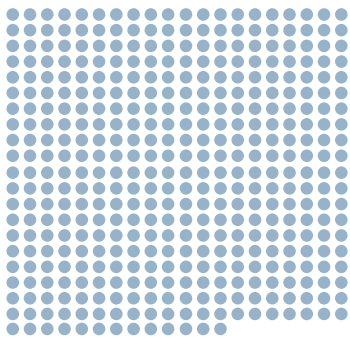
9,044

Operations

3,523

Marketing

1,800



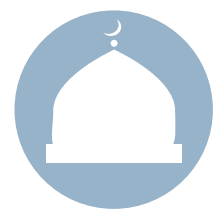
413

Total Number
of Donations



\$259

Average Donation



\$45,000

Expected Annual
Space Cost 2021



CULTIVATE *your* SACRED ROOTS

HELP **DONATE** TO CHICAGO'S SACRED
ROOTS MUSLIM COMMUNITY.

A HOME FOR MUSLIMS AND
THE SPIRITUALLY CURIOUS!



As we enter 2021 and beyond, the Sacred Roots Team is building on the momentum that we have created thus far. We have many exciting initiatives lined up to create resources and programming that support our community and underpin our mission including:

- ❖ **Securing a physical location** in the city of Chicago to better host community gatherings and programs - (Pandemic permitting)
- ❖ **Horizons Conference 2021**
- ❖ Development and **distribution of convert welcome kits** including
 - introductory educational materials
 - items for prayer
 - resources for Halal foods
 - and more
- ❖ Further **supporting Muslim focused artists and creatives**

Sacred Roots operates off of the prayers, moral support, and wisdom of our growing community members.

As such, we kindly ask that you also please consider financially supporting Sacred Roots where your generous donations will not only help enhance the potential of the Chicago Muslim Community and beyond, but provide the foundation needed to effectively meet the growing needs of our nascent Sacred Roots community!

Always at your service,

The Sacred Roots Team

