

2023



A YEAR IN
REVIEW

CONTENTS

Click on page number to jump to section

3



In a Word

6



In Theory

9



In Fellowship

13



In Action

30



In Fiscal Terms



Design by: Raazia Z. Hussain

*Praise belongs to God,
the First, without a first
before Him, the Last,
without a last behind
Him. Beholders' eyes
fall short of seeing Him,
describers' imaginations
are not able to depict
Him. He originated
the creatures through
His power with an
origination, He devised
them in accordance
with His will with a
devising. Then He made
them walk on the path
of His desire, He sent
them out on the way of
His love.**



IN A
WORD

3

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Tbegin by the Name of God, the Compassionate and Merciful

Our young community firmly dug itself into our home in 2023 – physically and spiritually.

PHYSICALLY

Last year we were blessed to renovate our home with new carpeting, lights, an extended kitchen, the necessary coat closeting, and a live-stream focused A/V system that facilitates real-time interaction with our national community members. The space feels fresh and comfortable for our diverse community to utilize for contemplative programming and informal socials alike.

SPIRITUALLY

In 2023 we were provided many new opportunities to commune with a growing circle of Muslims. We learned from over 13 scholars, academics, and chaplains from Chicago and across the country.



We established ties with our local alderman and the Pilsen area Faith Table Interfaith Coalition. Our Friday Prayers provided a regular meeting place for Muslims from a variety of cross-sections of Chicago life representing different branches of the Islamic tradition.

If there is one event that represents a capstone to the year, it is Convergence - A Convert Gathering. We hosted about 40 converts from across the country to participate in a three-day social and educational retreat with convert scholars and educators. The conference reverberated from the rich experiences and wisdom of the multi-ethnic and multi-generational cohort of believing brothers and sisters. It was a spiritual recharge for everyone involved—especially for me.



You will find in the following pages a brief snapshot of the evolution we collectively undertook in 2023 through a presentation of our events and accomplishments. What is not captured here are the bonds of love that were forged beyond the four walls of Sacred Roots: the many hangouts, dinners, phone calls, and informal study circles that emerged from the exchange of numbers and meeting of hearts at Sacred Roots events.

We thank God for the opportunity to know you all through this work and we thank you for your continued support of Sacred Roots.



With prayers for you and yours,

Trenton Carl

Sacred Roots' Executive Director &
Community Scholar



Poetry recitation in Muharram 2023





IN THEORY



*Make my certainty the
most excellent certainty,
and take my intention
to the best of intentions,
and my works to the best
of works!*

*O Allah! Complete my
intention through Your
gentleness, rectify my
certainty through what
is with You**



VISION

To be a home for Muslims and the spiritually curious

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

MISSION

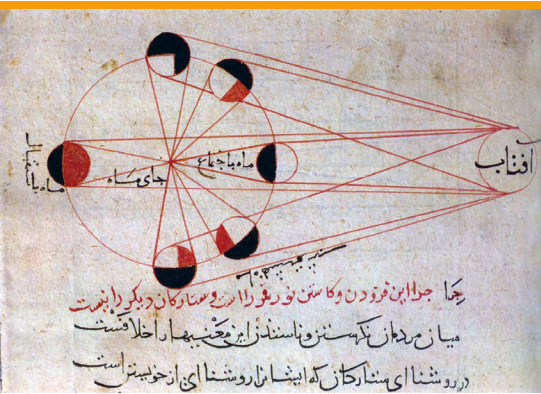
Sacred Roots works to nourish a community of Muslims rooted in the teachings of the Prophet (s) and his Family ('a). We connect people of various backgrounds and experiences and together explore the spiritual and intellectual heritage of Islam through acts of devotion, study, and service.



Convergence Conference



CORE PRINCIPLES



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

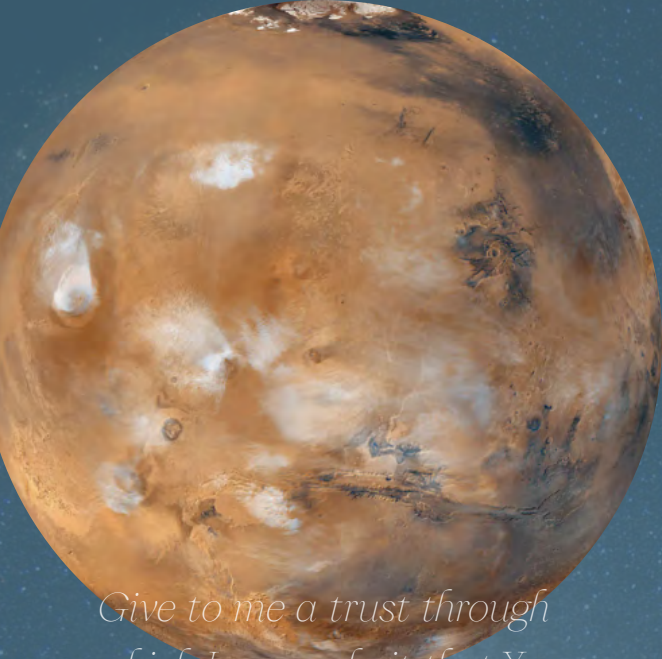
Study

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





*Give to me a trust through
which I may admit that Your
decree runs only to the best,
and let my gratitude to You
for what You hast taken
away from me be more
abundant than my gratitude
to You for what You hast
conferred upon me!... for the
noble is he whom obedience
to You has ennobled and the
exalted is he whom worship
of You has exalted!**

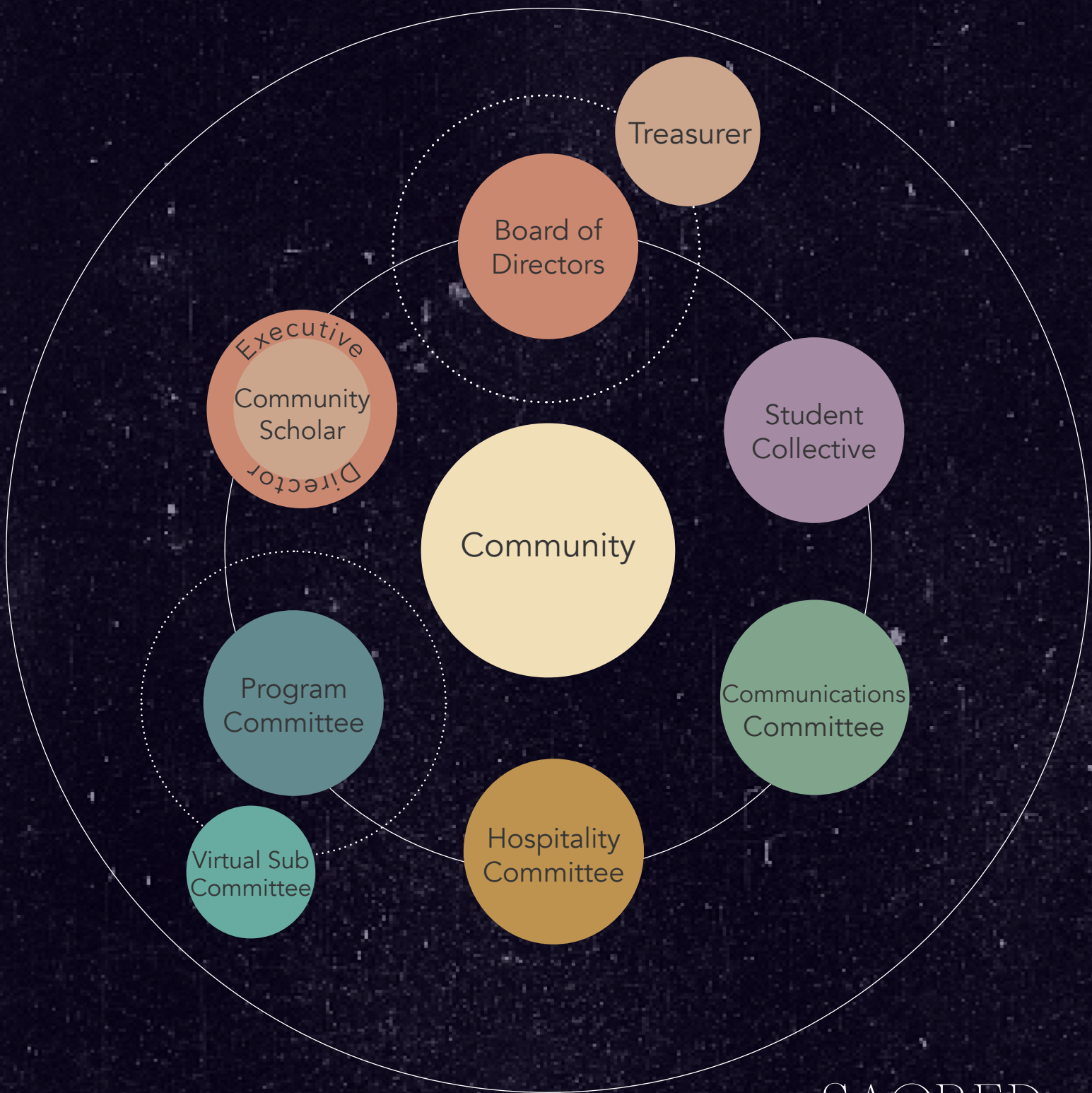


IN FELLOWSHIP



*In satisfaction when he looked upon
the companions of this world

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



SACRED
ROOTS

ROLES

The Board of Directors

is composed of the founding members and initial steering committee. This team ensures the organization stays true to its founding mission and vision.

- Shaykh Trenton Carl
- Ahmed Saheb
- Brad Rajek
- Nour Razzak
- Saif Kazim

Executive Director and Community Scholar Shaykh Trenton Carl

Shaykh Trent helps lead the committees through strategy execution while ensuring that Sacred Roots is meeting its stated mission and values on a day-to-day basis. In addition, he serves as spiritual advisor and plays an educational role, locally and nationally to our wider Sacred Roots community.

The Program Committee

is responsible for creatively brainstorming, planning and managing Sacred Roots programs that meet and address the community needs.

- Maryam Razvi-Rajek (Chair)
- Asad Ali Kalyan
- Azeeza Hasan
- Farwa Naqvi
- Jawad Naqvi
- Jafer Haider
- Saeeda Kalyan

In addition, we have a **Virtual Programming Sub-Committee** to help make sure we maintain our links with our national community.

- Amirah Abulughod (VA)
- Amirah Nelson (MI)
- Fizza Arif (CA)
- Hanadi Badaoui (MI)
- Raazia Zehra (TX)



ROLES

The Hospitality Committee is responsible for creating a warm, inclusive and caring atmosphere that helps create a space conducive for our community to learn and grow.

- Ebrahim B. (Chair)
- Fatima Bagheri

The Communications Committee helps keep the community engaged and aware of all the great programming and activities that we have planned throughout the year across all key online and offline forms of communications.

- Eman Abdul-Razzak (Chair)

The Sacred Roots Students Collective is the driving force behind the various student-led programming both on campus and at the Sacred Roots community center.

- Kawthar Alzurufi
- Alizey Durrani
- Amir Fakhari
- Hiba Rizvi
- Mohammad Aun
- Sakina Ghatalah
- Zahra Nabavi



○ He remembering whom
brings honour to those who
remember! ○ He thanking
whom brings triumph to
those who give thanks!
Divert our hearts through
remembering You from
every act of remembrance,
our tongues through
thanking You from every
act of thanksgiving, our
limbs through obeying
You from every act of
obedience!*

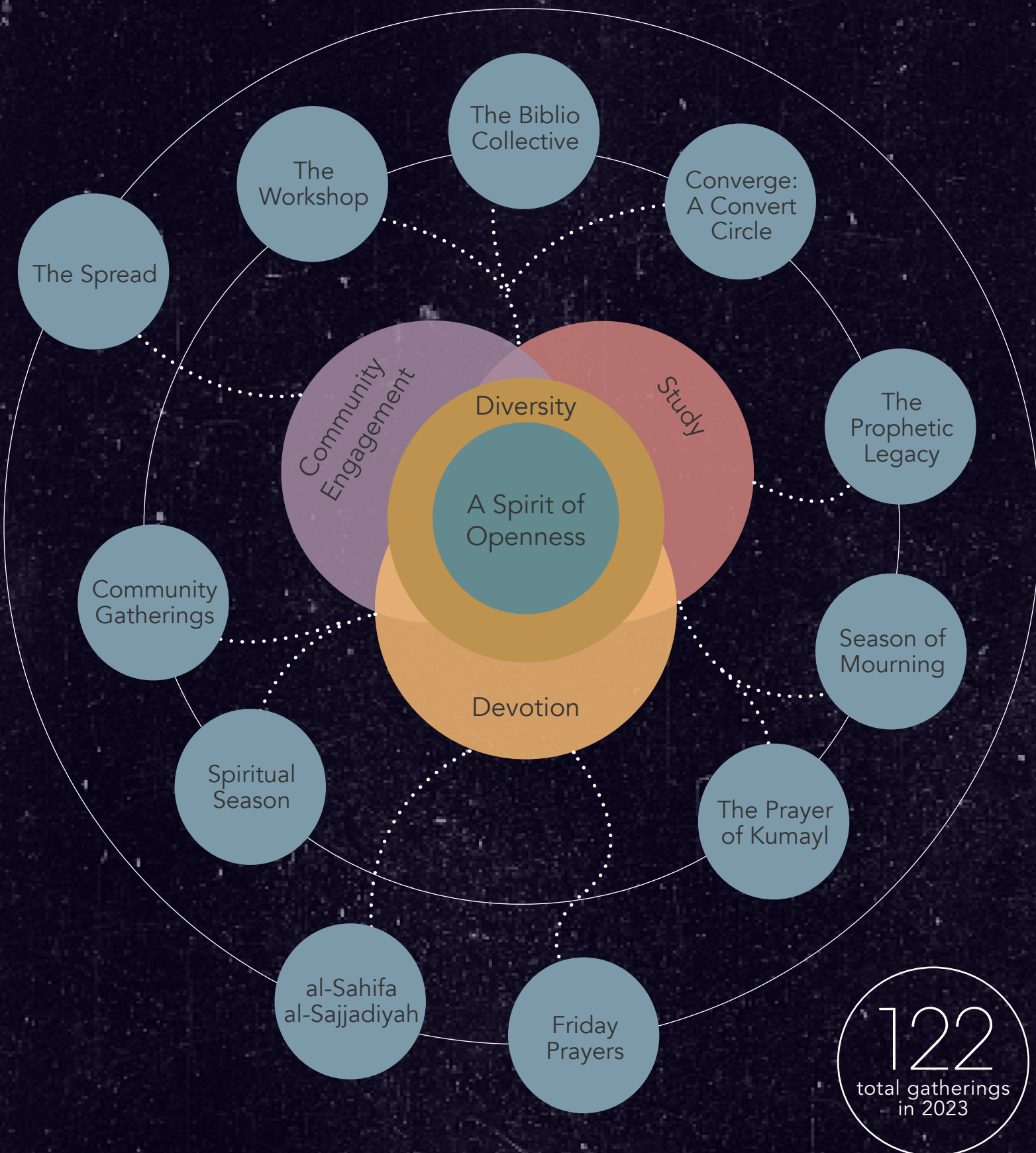


IN
ACTION

13

*His supplication for good outcomes

PRINCIPLES IN ACTION



CONVERGENCE A CONVERT GATHERING



Convergence 2023 was a three-day gathering focused on building a strong community of “converts” across Chicago, the Midwest, and the nation. It was open to new Muslims, veteran converts, and legacy Muslims who later adopted the teachings of the Family of the Prophet.

The conference provided space for frank conversations, vulnerable reflection, creative problem solving, and building friendships.

Topics included family struggles, the dynamic between culture and religion, alienation in sacred spaces, fully integrating Islam, raising the children of converts and future capacity building.



“I found a place that felt like I had finally come home, and that the brothers and sisters were family. Although our journeys to Islam were varied, I could relate to so many of the experiences... I felt like I was not by myself in some of the things I had experienced.”

- Naima Salahuddin



CONVERGENCE 2023



CONVERGENCE

WORDS FROM OUR FRIENDS

"For three days we benefited from convert shaykhs and scholars alike and were given love, support, resources and encouragement to face the unique challenges of being minorities in our homes, workplaces and religious spaces. It was a uniquely safe space wide enough to contain our diverse viewpoints and approaches, and gentle enough to allow us to collectively grieve for our personal losses and to grieve for Syed Asad Jafri. May Allah bless the organizers, presenters and attendees and keep us all steadfast on *sirratul mustaqeem*."

- Nichole Burruss



"Visiting Sacred Roots Community Center gave me the exceedingly rare opportunity to meet and to visit with other converts from diverse backgrounds and from all across America. I felt a part of a larger community that was a very uplifting experience. In addition to the difficulty of isolation, I have mostly learned what I know of Islam from reading books and listening to lectures on YouTube. It was a blessing to listen to Shaykhs Trenton Carl and Jafar Muhibullah. I hope that the Convergence (conference) will continue and possibly take place in other cities."

- Mustafa McPherson

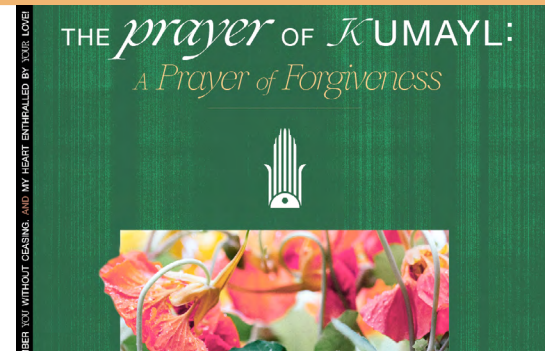


DEVOTION

Together we foster an atmosphere that embodies commitment to Islamic conduct, etiquette, and to travel the spiritual path

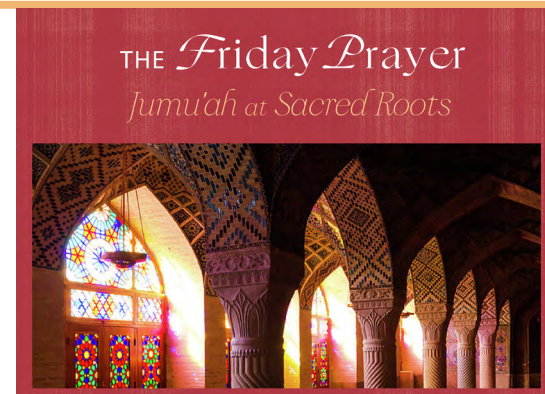
The Prayer of Kumayl

Twice monthly we read the Prayer of Kumayl in English translation to link us to the depth of meaning of the prayer attributed to Imam 'Ali ('a) followed by refreshments and communal reflection on the du'a.



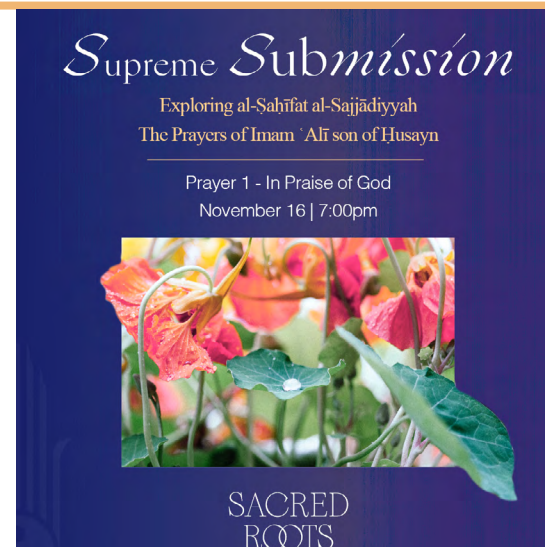
The Friday Prayer

We gathered weekly for the Friday Prayer. Its two sermons are meant to inspire the audience to strengthen their steps toward God and a dignified life. The sermons are followed by a communal prayer to tie the hearts of the community together in worship.



Seeking the Divine - Exploring al-Sahifah al-Sajjadiyyah

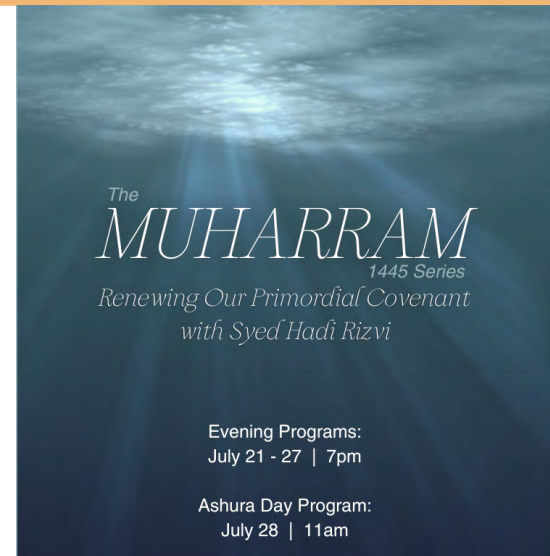
We began to explore the prayers of Imam Sajjad, Ali the son of Imam Husayn. The prayers in the al-Sahifah al-Sajjadiyyah are expressions of supreme submission to the Creator. As one scholar puts it: "Here we have one of the greatest spiritual luminaries of Islam so overawed by the sense of God's goodness, mercy, and majesty as to express his utter nothingness before the Creator..."



DEVOTION

Renewing our Primordial Covenant with *Syed Hadi Rizvi*

The human exchange with the Divine began with a heartfelt affirmation of God's sole lordship. Whilst in that moment humankind uttered the trust words of their existence, the union with the material self led to many forgetting their origin story. In this series, we explored how to revisit that moment and reconnect with that self. In doing so, we attempted to become more familiar with the many facets of God's lordship, as described in the Quran. We took assistance from the epic of Husayn b. Ali and his journey to martyrdom.



Palestine Healing Circle with *Dr. Shaykh Faiyaz Jaffer and BAYAN Seminary*

Originally a program billed for spiritual purification, the events in Palestine required us to take a moment, hold each other spiritually, and think about what justice looks like for Palestine in the future.



STUDY

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



The Ascent: A Four-Part Prayer Workshop

A series of workshops on prayer (al-Salāh) based on the Ja'fari school of thought—founded upon understanding the Qur'an, the Prophetic Way (Sunnah), and the teachings of the Family of the Prophet (Ahl al-Bayt).

The Ascent: Prayer Workshop

We held a four-part series of workshops on prayer (al-Salah) based on the Ja'fari school of thought—founded upon understanding the Qur'an, the Prophetic Way (Sunnah), and the teachings of the Family of the Prophet (Ahl al-Bayt).

SACRED
ROOTS

Civic Realities and Mahdawi Ideals

with Dr. David Coolidge

Tuesday, March 7th | Sha'ban 15th

Dinner | 7pm
Talk | 8pm

Register: bit.ly/civic-mahdi



15th of Sha'ban - Civic Realities and Mahdawi Ideals with Dr. David Coolidge

We marked the 15th of Sha'ban through a reflection on the nature of Muslim social and civic engagement.

Dr. David Coolidge presented an analysis of the current state of Muslim social activism and share a vision of the future that is informed by the hope inherent in the attestation of the return of al-Imam al-Mahdi ('a).

SACRED
ROOTS

Preparing for Ramadan: Mental Health and Spirituality with Sayyid Sameer Ali

Saturday, March 11th
6pm
Prayer | Talk | Dinner

Preparing for Ramadan: Mental Health and Spirituality with Sayyid Sameer Ali

A presentation on the relationship between managing mental health and treading the spiritual path using a prayer attributed to Imam Ali b. Husayn Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) as a backdrop to the discussion.



STUDY

SACRED ROOTS

*Preparing for Ramadan:
An Overview of Ramadan Rules*
with Shaykh Rizwan Arastu

Preparing for Ramadan: An Overview of Ramadan Rules with Shaykh Rizwan Arastu

A refresher of the foundational guidelines that make for a successful spiritual journey during the month of Ramadan with Shaykh Rizwan Arastu.

The Ramadan Gatherings

SACRED ROOTS

We have two streams of reflections this Ramadan

One, a series of reflections on Imam 'Alī b. Husayn Zayn al-'Abidin's *Treatise on Rights*, entitled *Risālat al-Huqūq* in Arabic. The treatise is the "text of a letter on the duties that one has towards God, religion, the ruler, oneself, as well as other human beings." We will explore contemporary spiritual and cultural implications of the teachings of the great-grandson of the Prophet Muhammad.

The other, a series of reflections on topics pertaining to food, consumption, and social ethics on select Mondays—spearheaded and organized by the Sacred Roots Student Collective for the whole community.

www.sacredrootscommunity.org

The Ramadan Gatherings: Society of the Spiritual: Humility

A series of reflections on Imam 'Zayn al-Abidin ('a)'s Treatise on Rights, entitled *Risalat al-Huquq* in Arabic. The treatise is the "text of a letter on the duties that one has towards God, religion, the ruler, oneself, as well as other human beings."

We explored contemporary spiritual and cultural implications of the teachings of the great-grandson of the Prophet Muhammad.

LIFE at SACRED ROOTS

Living Islam Faithfully and Ethically

Her Place in the Qur'an: Women and Prayer

a gathering for women with

Ustadhah Fatemah Meghji

Friday, June 16th
Dinner - 7:00pm CT
Talk - 8:15 pm CT

Registration: www.bit.ly/life-sr

LIFE at Sacred Roots: Her Place in the Qur'an: Women and Prayer - A Gathering for Women with Ustadhah Fatemah Meghji

An exploration of Quranic paradigms of feminine spirituality, focusing on prayer. The workshop examined various case studies and angles which provided a comprehensive understanding of Quranic depictions of feminine spirituality and connection with God.



STUDY

Eid al-Ghadir

an exploration of poetic tributes to
Imam Ali ('a) through space and time

Presentation by Asad Ali Jafri

Sunday, July 9 | 5 - 7 PM | at Sacred Roots

Eid al-Ghadir: Exploring Poetic Attributes to Imam Ali Through Space and Time

An event celebrating Eid al-Ghadir and exploring poetic tributes to Imam Ali (A.S.) through space and time with Asad Ali Jafri



A Special Meeting with Sayyid Kashmiri of IMAM

Sayyid Kashmiri visited the Sacred Roots community, offered a brief message of advice from Sayyid Sistani to believers in the US, and listened to the concerns and priorities of the community.

IN Memoriam: *The Arba'in of al-Husayn*



Molding the Heart

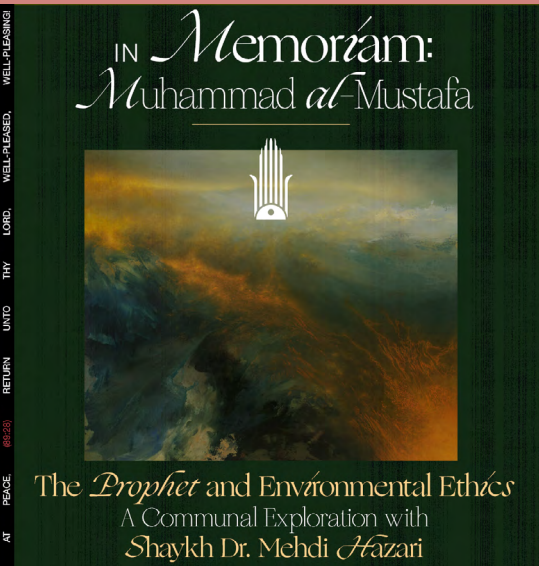
The Imam, the Self, and Society

In Memoriam: The Arba'in of al-Husayn - Molding the Heart: The Imam, the Self, and Society

We memorialized the grandson of the Prophet (s), Imam Husayn ibn 'Ali ('a) through an exploration of ethics (akhlaq) in light of Imam al-Husayn's mission. A sound heart is pivotal for nurturing both the self and society. Ethics is the discipline of molding the heart, which is essential for sustaining al-Husayn's ('a) legacy.



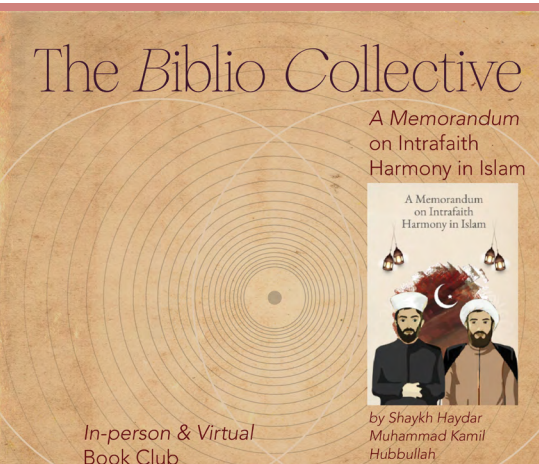
STUDY



The Prophet and Environmental Ethics - A Communal Exploration with Shaykh Dr. Mehdi Hazari

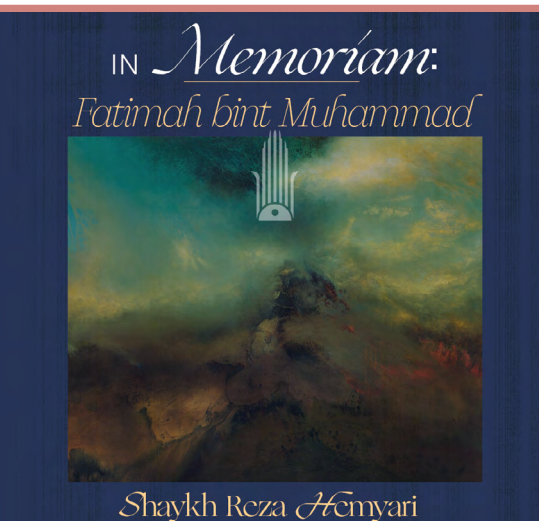
What does the Islamic intellectual heritage have to say about "the environment"? What does it mean to be a steward of the earth?

Shaykh Dr. Hazari joined us to memorialize the passing of the Prophet (s) through reflecting on Islamic teachings regarding the Environment.



The Biblio Collective

Muslim Unity is key for building a strong Muslim community. So we based our Biblio Collective series on [A Memorandum on Intrafaith Harmony in Islam](#) by Shaykh Haydar Hubbullah. We met in-person in a hybrid setting with virtual participants.

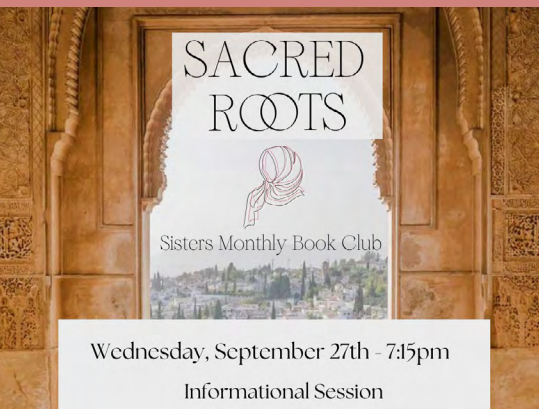


In Memoriam - Fatimah bint Muhammad with Shaykh Reza Hemyari

We marked the death anniversary of the daughter of the Prophet and Lady Khadijah: the truthful one, the pure, Sayyidah Fatimah al-Zahra. Shaykh Reza Hemyari offered reflections on the spiritual power of her legacy and the spiritual lessons we can draw from her life and death.

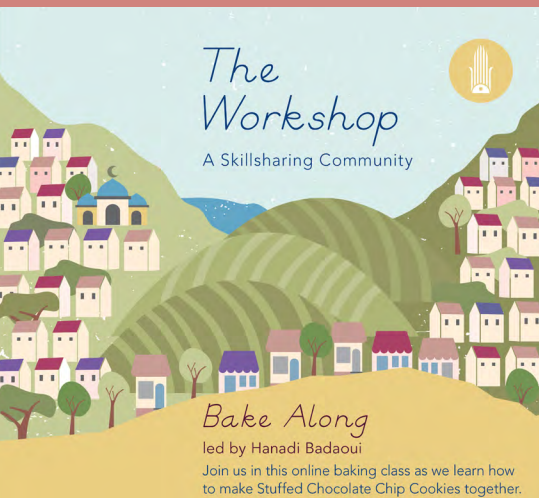


STUDY



Sacred Roots Sisters Book Club on God's Emissaries - Chapter on Prophet Jesus

God's Emissaries weaves together Qur'anic verses and traditions that have come down to us from Prophet Muhammad and his family into an epic story of God's tireless efforts to guide humankind through the stories of various Prophets.

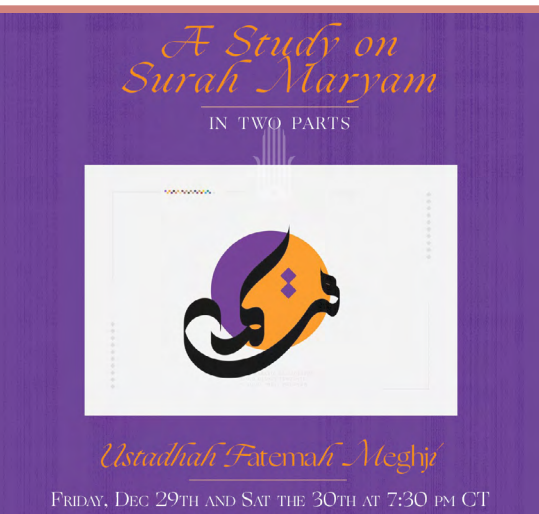


The Workshop

A series of skill sharing workshops offered virtually

In 2023, we learned the following skills

- **Creative Mending** by Katherine Doenier and Raazia Hussain
- **Low Waste Ramadan** by Summar Saad
- **Pitmaster Barbeque** by Ali Badaoui
- **Muharram Poetry Writing** by Tasbiha Batool

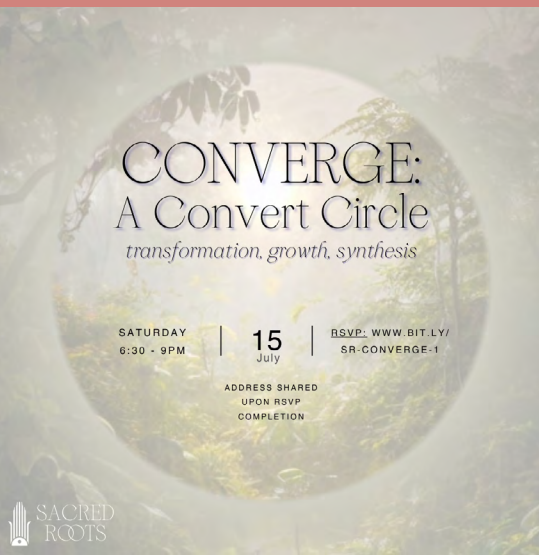


A Study of Surah Maryam with Ustadhah Fatemah Meghji

A two-part study of Surah Maryam with special guest Ustadhah Fatemah Meghji. She covered the major themes and dove into some of the beautiful details of the 98 verses of Chapter 19 of the Qur'an.



STUDY

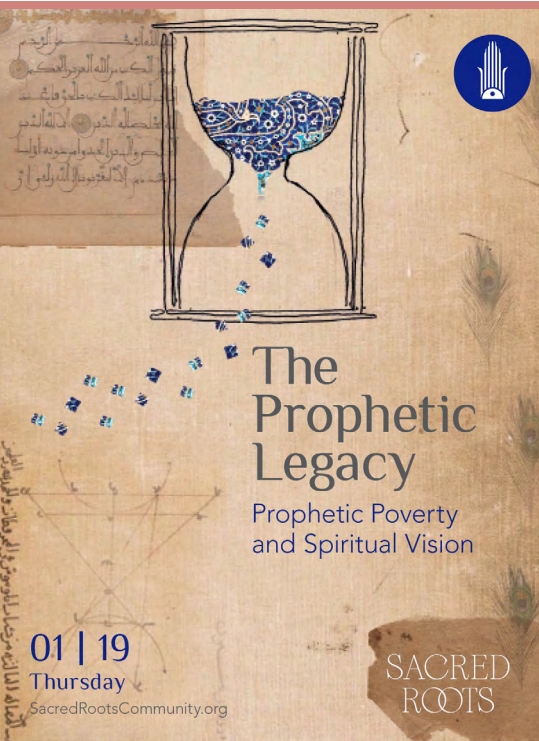


Converge: A Convert Circle

Converge is a space for:

- New Muslims who follow Islam as taught by the Family of the Prophet (Ahl al-Bayt)
- Legacy Muslims who have adopted the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt
- Anyone curious about Islam

We gather to socialize, share wisdom, exchange stories, and deepen our understanding of Islam.



The Prophetic Legacy

A series of reflections focused on the lives and spiritual wisdom of the Prophet (s) and his purified Family ('a)

In 2023, we explored

- Prophetic Poverty and Spiritual Vision
- Sayyidah Fatima: The Sacred Heroine and Ethical Perfection

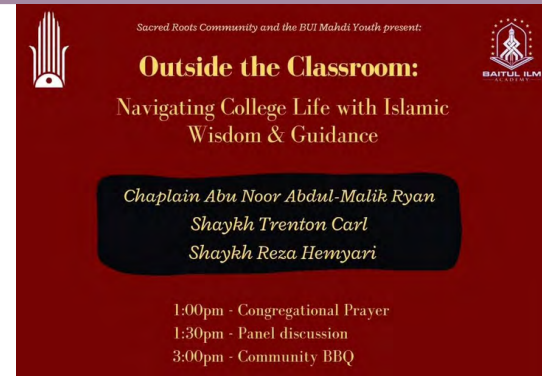


COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Together we seek to recognize and engage the needs of our local community

Neighborhood BBQ

We celebrated the birth anniversary of Prophet Muhammad (s) with a BBQ at Harrison Park. We shared brisket tacos with our neighbors, introduced our organization, and put a smile on the faces of folks in the park and playground.



Outside the Classroom: Navigating College Life with Islamic Wisdom & Guidance

We hosted an event with Chaplain Abdul-Malik Ryan (DePaul), Shaykh Reza Hemyari, and Shaykh Trent to explore the opportunities and challenges of moral and spiritual growth during the college experience. Chaplain Tauseef Akbar of the University of Chicago and Chaplain Saleem of UIC were also present and offered their reflections. Afterward, we gathered for BBQ.



Sacred Roots & Who is Hussain Cornerstone Community Outreach

Our community of students gathered at the Cornerstone Community Outreach and prepared food at the soup kitchen before serving the community.



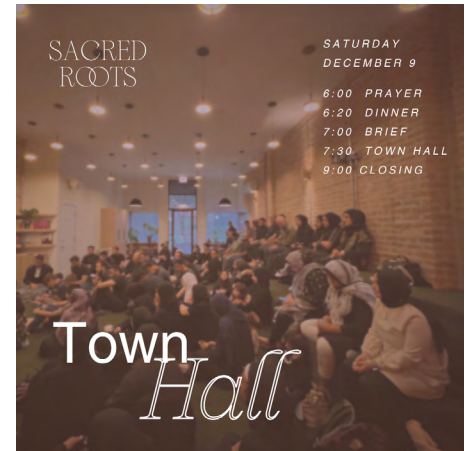
SPIRIT OF OPENNESS

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

We held a Town Hall to collectively cultivate a vision for the future.

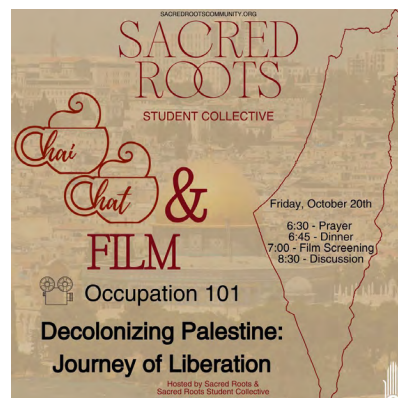
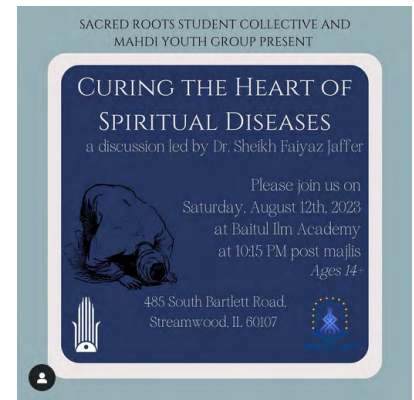
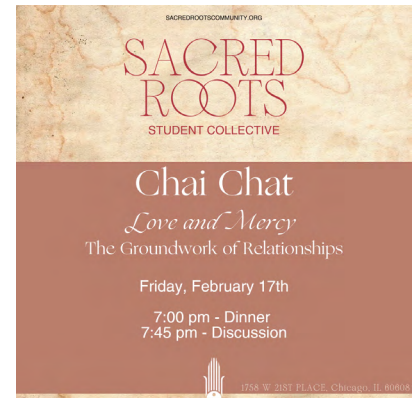
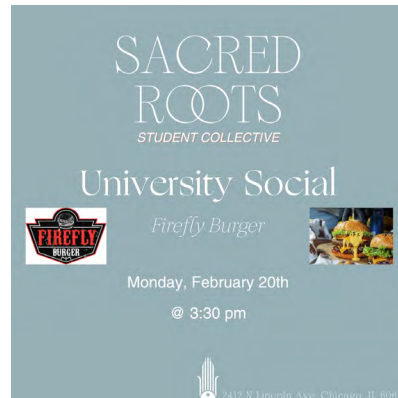
With God's grace, our community has grown since our establishment in April 2020 and since opening our space in February 2022. To prepare for the future we listened to our community's suggestions, critiques, and proposals.

In addition, Shaykh Trent presented a State of the Community Brief and shared opportunities to plug in to Sacred Roots initiatives.



SACRED ROOTS STUDENT COLLECTIVE EVENTS

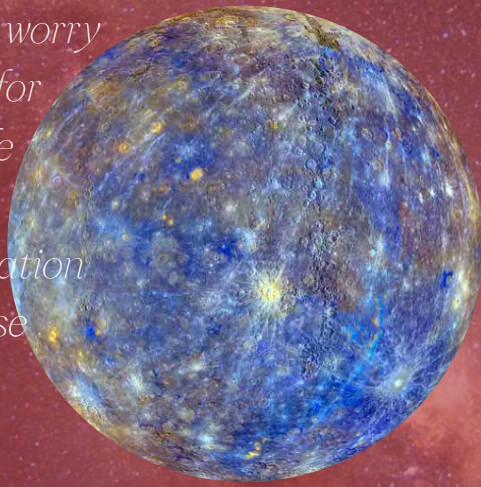
The Sacred Roots Student Collective (SRSC) is a student-led branch of Sacred Roots that aims to provide college and university students with opportunities to explore the spiritual heritage of Islam and to build a community of Muslim students in the Chicagoland area.



STUDENT COLLECTIVE EVENTS



*Give us a true certainty
that will suffice us the
burden of seeking, and
inspire us with a sincere
trust that will release
us from the hardship of
exertion! Cut off our worry
about the provision for
which You hast made
Yourself responsible
and sever our occupation
with everything whose
sufficiency You hast
guaranteed!**



IN
FISCAL
TERMS

30

*When provision stinted

Total 2023
Donations

\$194,334

Average
Donation
\$285

Total Number
of Donations
680

2023 EXPENSES

Wages
\$67,000

Total 2023
Realized Expenses

\$229,904

Program
Operations
cost
\$100,513

Security
System

2024 PROJECTED EXPENSE CATEGORIES

Library

Salary &
Visiting
Scholars

Rent &
Utilities

Ustadhah
Fatimah Meghji
Fellowship

Programming
Costs

A FINAL WORD

2024 and beyond are set to be years of nurturing our current community and gently branching out into our local social environment. This year we plan to:

- Finalize our space **needs for security** and **ease of access** through an app-based entry and camera system
- Enhance our **educational programming** in response to input from 2023's town hall through more **class offerings** including Arabic, Theology (kalam), and law (ahkaam).
- Establish **Islam 101-type courses** for seekers curious about Islam and people looking to refresh their commitment.
- Build on our successful Convergence Convert Retreat from 2023 through **hosting another annual retreat** and building other convert resources.
- Deepen our **bonds with our core audience** and **bring newcomers** into the fold.

Sacred Roots is fostered by the prayers, moral support, and financial support of our community.

As such, we kindly ask that you consider financially supporting Sacred Roots. Your generous donations allow us to effectively meet our community's growing needs and enhance the potential of the Chicago Muslim ecosystem!

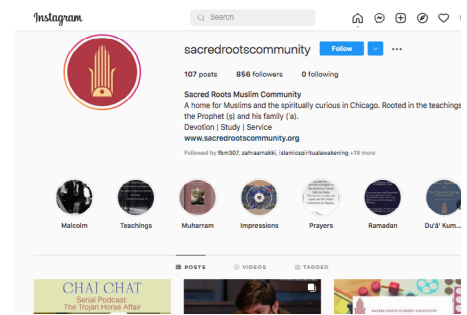
With prayers,

The Sacred Roots Team



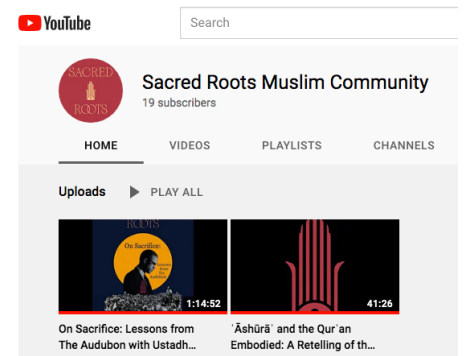
STAY CONNECTED

Click on the images to join us on our online platforms



Our Website: Find our event calendar and prayer times, support our work, sign up for our mailing list, and more

Our Instagram:
@sacredrootscommunity



Our Facebook:
Sacred Roots Muslim Community

Our YouTube:
Sacred Roots Muslim Community

