

Journey to the Divine

REDISCOVERING FAITH & PURPOSE

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- **Date:** Friday Jan 3 - 5, 2025
- **Location:** Maryville Retreat Center, 18307 Taylor Lake Road, Holly, Michigan 48442
- **Registration:** Deadline 12/19/24. Spots limited.
- **Cost:** \$300 per participant
- **Target Audience:** College Students, Young Professionals

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An Overview

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of all worlds, the One who grants us guidance, mercy, and countless blessings. We glorify Him and thank Him for the opportunity to gather in this sacred retreat, seeking His pleasure and striving to draw closer to Him. We ask Allah to illuminate our hearts with knowledge, strengthen our bonds as a community, and make this retreat a means of growth, reflection, and spiritual renewal.

We send our heartfelt salutations and blessings upon our beloved Prophet Muhammad and his pure and immaculate family, the beacons of guidance and the embodiment of divine mercy. May their example inspire us to walk the path of righteousness and sincerity, and may their intercession avail us on the Day of Judgment.

Dear brothers and sisters,

It is with great joy and gratitude that you showed the interest in this retreat. This is a time for us to step away from the distractions of daily life and immerse ourselves in remembrance, reflection, and connection—both with our Creator and with one another. Together, let us strive to nurture our faith, deepen our understanding, and leave here more committed to the values that anchor our souls and our community. The following is a detail overview of the retreat and all its components. We hope you find it useful.

About the Retreat

The Mainstay Foundation presents an immersive retreat designed to deepen faith, foster personal growth, and connect participants with timeless Islamic principles. Over the course of this spiritual journey, attendees will engage in acts of worship, thought-provoking discussions, and moments of reflection. This retreat integrates spiritual teachings, contemplative free time, and sessions focused on self-development, drawing inspiration from the lives of the Prophets, Imams, and key Islamic values. By the end of the retreat, attendees will leave spiritually rejuvenated, equipped with actionable insights, and ready to embark on a continued journey of self-discovery and divine connection.

Learning Objectives

Deeper Spiritual Connection

- Strengthened relationship with Allah through acts of worship, supplications, and reflections on divine principles.

Greater Understanding of Islamic Principles

- Enhanced knowledge of core concepts such as *Tawheed*, *Imamah*, *Willaya*, and *Jihad al-Nafs* and application to personal growth and societal responsibilities.

Strengthened Faith and Identity

- Clarity in their role as active followers of Islam, particularly in awaiting the Imam of the Time (aj).

- Inspiration to embody Islamic values in personal and communal life.

Tools for Self-Development

- Strategies for self-purification and overcoming internal struggles (Nafs)
- Awareness of spiritual opportunities during sacred times like Rajab, Sha’ban, and Ramadan.

Community Building

- Opportunities for meaningful discussions, networking, and building lasting relationships and developing a sense of belonging

Motivation for Positive Action

- A commitment to implement lessons learned in daily life to enhance personal character and community while preparing spiritually and practically for the advent of the 12th Imam (aj).

Retreat Requirements

1. **Commitment to Participation:** Attendees must commit to engaging in all scheduled sessions, prayers, and activities to fully benefit from the retreat experience.
2. **Open Mindset and Willingness to Reflect:** A genuine desire to deepen spiritual understanding, reflect on personal growth, and contribute to group discussions.
3. **Basic Islamic Knowledge:** Familiarity with foundational Islamic principles and practices, as discussions may delve into advanced spiritual and theological concepts (Optional sessions or materials could be provided for attendees needing a refresher.)
4. **Appropriate Attire:** Modest clothing in line with Islamic principles, suitable for prayers, reflection, and outdoor walks between the buildings of the retreat center.
5. **Physical and Mental Readiness:** The ability to participate in a full schedule of activities, including group discussions, prayers, and reflection sessions (Any specific health or dietary needs should be communicated in advance.)
6. **Personal Items:** Attendees should bring personal prayer items, a Quran, and any essentials for comfortable participation (e.g., notebooks, writing tools, and toiletries).
7. **Transportation and Arrival Commitment:** Responsibility for arranging transportation to and from the retreat site, ensuring timely arrival and departure
8. **Pre-Retreat Preparation (Optional but Encouraged):** Suggested readings or reflections provided before the retreat to set the tone for the sessions.

Speakers Bios

Shaykh Aous Asfar

Shaykh Aous is an educator, a lecturer and an author. He is the founder of Knowledgeseekers, an educational non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization that focuses on inspiring, educating and elevating the youth to realize their intrinsic self-worth and purpose in life, helping them lead purposeful lives that are ethical and well-rooted in knowledge. A graduate of McGill University (Montreal, Canada) and a student of Bahth Kharej (advanced studies) under the supervision of the office of Ayatullah Sistani in the Holy City of Najaf.

Shaykh Ali Nazzal

Shaykh Ali Nazzal is a graduate of Wayne State University and the University of Michigan-Dearborn. From 2016 onward, he has lived in Qum, Iran, where he has pursued a formal seminary education in such sciences as Fiqh and Uşul al-Fiqh.

Ilwiyah Israa Safieddine

Ilwiyah Israa Safieddine is a teacher and educational consultant from Michigan who specializes in Islamic instruction and educational training. A graduate of the University of Michigan, she earned an MA in public administration with a focus in assessment and evaluation. She also studied at Jami`at al-Zahra in Qom, as well as al-Qaem Institute in the US. Between 2016 and 2018, she taught theology at the Hawza Ilmiyya of England. She is a founding member and an instructor for Workshops for Islamic Educators (WIE), as well as the interfaith coordinator for Risalat International Institute. In the summer of 2022, she co-founded the Oasis Institute for Outreach & Education, an initiative dedicated to meeting increasing demands for Islamic programs and courses (edoasis.org).

Shaykh Basill Al-Haddad

Biography is not yet available.

Hajj Jalal Moughania

Hajj Jalal Moughania is an international lawyer, speaker, and author. He has written and translated several original works on Islam such as the late Grand Ayatollah M.S. al-Hakeem's 'Marjaeya: A Candid Conversation'. He is the co-author of 'The Pope Meets the Ayatollah: An Introduction to Shi'a Islam' and author of 'Ali: The Elixir of Love'. His most recent work is a historical narrative of the life of Imam Husayn ibn Ali, 'Husayn: The Saga of Hope'. Hajj Jalal holds a doctorate in law and serves as principal attorney and chief communications officer of ATLaw. He is a co-founder of the Mainstay Foundation and serves on its board of directors.

Session Briefs

Duaa al-Samat Participants will recite and reflect on this powerful supplication, which beseeches Allah through His divine names. The session emphasizes the mercy and grandeur of the Creator.

Duaa al-Ahd A beautiful invocation of loyalty and devotion to Imam Mahdi (AJ), this session focuses on the meaning and importance of daily commitment to the awaited savior, strengthening the bond with Allah's representative.

Duaa: Munajat Engage in the intimate act of supplicatory whispering (Munajat). This session fosters a deep spiritual connection with Allah, emphasizing personal repentance and closeness.

The Journey Within A reflective session on personal spiritual journeys, guiding participants to explore their inner selves, confront their shortcomings, and strive for growth in their faith and character.

Laws of Gravity Rewritten Explore how faith challenges materialistic limitations and empowers believers to transcend worldly constraints through reliance on divine power and trust in Allah.

Awaiting the 12th Holy Imam Learn about the spiritual and practical dimensions of awaiting Imam Mahdi (AJ). This session examines how Intidhar (awaiting) is an active process that inspires continuous self-improvement and societal betterment.

Wilaya & Occultation An exploration of the concept of Willaya (divine guardianship) and the Imam's occultation. This session will highlight the role of divine leadership in shaping communities and the individual's journey in connecting with the unseen Imam.

Tawheed: The Pillar of the "I" Explore the concept of divine oneness and how it shapes individual identity. This session will delve into the transformative power of Tawheed as the cornerstone of understanding oneself and achieving balance in life.

Signs of the Time: Now or Not! A thought-provoking analysis of contemporary events in light of Islamic eschatology. The session invites reflection on whether current global trends align with signs of the end times.

313: The Myth & Reality! An exploration of the historical and theological significance of the 313 companions of Imam Mahdi (AJ). This session separates fact from fiction, inspiring participants to strive for excellence in their roles as potential supporters of the Imam.

Prayers Review This session is designed to help attendees review their prayers with the presenter, who will go over the main pillars and essential components of the prayer. It provides an opportunity for anyone with doubts about the validity of their prayers to seek clarity and use this retreat as a time to strengthen their understanding and practice.

Self-Struggle An introspective session on Jihad al-Nafs (struggle against the self). Participants will learn strategies to overcome internal challenges and align their actions with Islamic ethics.

Prophetic Guidance This session focuses on lessons from the life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Participants will uncover the relevance of his guidance in navigating modern challenges, emphasizing mercy, justice, and resilience.

The Whispers of the Nafs: A discussion on the subtle yet persistent influence of the self (Nafs). Participants will learn how to identify and counteract destructive inclinations to maintain spiritual purity.

Ziyārah Jāmi'ah A comprehensive and eloquent salutation narrated from Imam Ali al-Hadi peace be upon him, the tenth Imam of Shia Muslims. It is one of the most profound and widely revered supplications used to address and send salutations upon all the Imams of the Ahlulbayt collectively. The Ziyārah highlights the unique spiritual, moral, and divinely appointed leadership of the Imams, emphasizing their role as the divinely guided representatives of Allah on Earth.

Gems of Prayers: An examination of the treasures within the daily prayers (Salah). This session unveils how each component of the prayer can elevate the individual spiritually and strengthen their connection to Allah.

Imamah: Shaping the Nafs: A discussion on how belief in Imamah (divinely appointed leadership) serves as a transformative force for self-purification and character development.

Rajab, Sha'ban & M of Ramadan This session focuses on the unique opportunities of the three holy months of Rajab, Sha'ban and the Month of Ramadan for spiritual growth. Attendees will learn how to maximize the benefits of fasting, prayer, and reflection during these holy months.

Discussion Time: An open forum for attendees to share insights, ask questions, and reflect on the topics covered. This session fosters community building and collective understanding.

Schedule

Agenda	Friday 01/03	Saturday 01/04	Sunday 01/05	
06:00 am		Prayers	Prayers	
06:30 AM		Dua: Al-Ahd	Dua: Al-Ahd	
08:30 AM		Breakfast	Breakfast	
10:00 AM		Awaiting the 12th Holy Imam	Rajab, Sha'ban & M of Ramadan	
10:30 AM		Wilaya & Occultation	Reflections	
11:00 AM		Pillar of the "I"	Signs of the Time!	Open Discussion with Speakers
11:30 AM		313 – the Myth & Reality!		
12:30 PM		Prayers	Prayers	
1:00 PM		Lunch	Depart Retreat	
1:30 PM		Free Time		
2:00 PM				
2:30 PM			Prayers Review	
3:00 PM	Arrival & check in		Mandatory 4 Everyone	
3:30 PM	Free Time	Self-Struggle Males	Self-Struggle Females	
4:00 PM		Prophetic Guidance Males	Prophetic Guidance Females	
4:30 PM		The Whispers of the Nafs		
5:00 PM	Dua: Al-Samat			
5:20 PM	Prayers	Prayers		
6:00 PM	Dinner	Dinner		
8:00 PM	Dua: Munajat	Ziyārah Jāmi'ah		
8:30 PM	Reflections	Imamah Shaping the Nafs		
9:00 PM	The Journey Within	Gems of Prayers		
9:30 PM	Laws of Gravity	Open Discussion with Speakers		