



## **2012 FIRM FOUNDATIONS RETREAT**

***An Intensive on Individual Obligations***

**March 24th - March 28th, 2012**

### **The Firm Foundations Retreat**

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SeekersGuidance welcomes you to join us for our very first Firm Foundations educational retreat. The retreat is a 5-day long program designed to enable students to be firm in their knowledge and understanding of the individual obligations (fard'ayn) required of all Muslims. This intensive-style retreat will provide students with a comprehensive knowledge base to the three branches of our religion; belief (Iman), actions (Islam), and excellence (Ihsan) as well as a vibrant environment for connecting with teachers and fellow students.

This program is geared for those students wanting to ensure the soundness of their knowledge and practice, as well as newcomers to the Islamic Sciences. Our teachers and volunteer team are committed to serving and facilitating learning for students of all levels. Please note that teachers and students will be keeping a rigorous schedule during the retreat and all students will be expected to attend all lessons, group prayers and meals.

#### **Program Objectives:**

- Students will gain a comprehensive overview of individual obligations
- Learning will have an emphasis on knowledge → action, ensuring that students return home with the tools to practice what they have learnt.
- Students will have an opportunity to build a positive network of fellow students and teachers, as well as enjoy their companionship in a beautiful location.

In addition to engaging, practical classes, students will also have the opportunity to take part in group activities such as rock climbing, archery, stargazing and basketball.

## The Teachers

### Shaykh Faraz Rabbani



While completing his Bachelors in Economics and Commerce at the University of Toronto, Shaykh Faraz developed a deep interest in Islamic learning, studying with local scholars such as Shaykh Talal al-Ahdab and Shaykh Faisal Abdur-Razak. After graduating from the University of Toronto in 1997, Shaykh Faraz travelled to Damascus and then to Amman, where he studied with leading Islamic scholars, including Shaykh Adib Kallas (Allah have mercy upon him), Shaykh Hassaan al-Hindi, Shaykh Muhammad Jumuah, Shaykh Akram Abd al-Wahhab, and Shaykh Nuh Keller. After ten years overseas, Shaykh Faraz returned to Canada in the Summer of 2007.

In May 2008 he founded SeekersGuidance to deal with the urgent need to spread Islamic knowledge--both online and on the ground-- in a reliable, relevant, inspiring, and accessible manner. In 2009, Shaykh Faraz was named one of the 500 most influential Muslims by the Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Center. Shaykh Faraz also serves as a partner and legal advisor with StraightWay Ethical Advisory. His personal interests include reading, both in English and Arabic.



**Shaykh Yahya Rhodus** was born in Kansas City, Missouri. At the age of 19, he embraced Islam in Santa Clara, California and began his study of Islam with Shaykh Hamza Yusuf and visiting Mauritanian scholars such as Shaykh Khatri wuld Baybba and Shaykh Abdullah wuld Ahmadna. In 1998, Ustadh Yahya traveled to Mauritania to pursue a full-time course of study, where he learned from some of Mauritania's greatest scholars, including the distinguished, Murabit al-Hajj. In 2000, Ustadh Yahya moved to Tarim, Yemen to continue his studies at the prestigious learning institute, Dar al-Mustafa. There, he spent his formative years studying with the renowned scholars, Habib 'Umar bin Hafiz and Habib 'Ali al-Jifri, along with other local scholars. He studied various sciences including Tafsir, Hadith, theology, jurisprudence, legal theory, the Prophetic biography, and Arabic poetry.

In the latter part of 2005, Ustadh Yahya returned to the U.S. and served as a full-time teacher at Zaytuna Institute. He subsequently returned overseas to further his studies while he also participated in religious programs worldwide, lecturing, teaching, and translating.

In 2010, Ustadh Yahya returned to California and completed his Bachelor of Arts in Near Eastern Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. He also offers on-line instruction through SeekersGuidance and teaches locally at Taleef Collective. Currently, Ustadh Yahya is a full-time instructor at Zaytuna College and is pursuing a Masters Degree in Islamic Studies at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley.



**Imam Tahir Anwar** is an American Muslim Imam (religious leader) who has been around Imams since the day he was born. Namely his father and grandfather (his first teachers), and his two brothers, who are also both Imams in California.

Born in London, Imam Tahir moved to the San Francisco Bay Area in 1983 and made San Jose his home. Upon completing his religious studies in India, he has been serving as the Imam of one of the oldest masjids in the country, the Islamic Center of San Jose, since 2001. He is also the head of

the Islamic Studies Department, and a teacher at Granada Islamic School in nearby Santa Clara, an institution in its 26th year. After serving on the Human Rights Commission for the City of San Jose for over 5 years, Imam Tahir now serves on the Human Relations Commission for the County of Santa Clara. He also sits on Zaytuna College's Management Committee as well as other panels and boards.

Imam Tahir has been leading a group to perform Hajj for several years, with CNN twice covering this pilgrimage. These days, he travels around the globe to deliver the message of Islam to the masses, and currently resides in San Jose, California with his wife and two sons.



### **Shaykh Muhammad Mendes**

After returning to the United States, Ustadh Muhammad Adeyinka Mendes established the Annual Rawdah ([www.therawdah.org](http://www.therawdah.org)), a grassroots educational initiative. Shaykh Mendes has studied with various scholars in Houston and Pittsburgh, and has focused on translating and teaching rare Arabic manuscripts concerning theology, jurisprudence, ethics, and spirituality authored by some of West Africa's greatest spiritual and intellectual giants.

Muhammad Mendes challenges people to learn the fundamentals of theology, worship, and spiritual evolution in accord with Revealed Scripture and Reason, appreciate their commonality as human beings, celebrate the God-given diversity that makes each one of us valuable, and to live lives of spiritual and material significance that leave their corner of the world in a better condition than that in which they found it.

Currently, he and his family reside in Atlanta where he teaches at the Risala Institute on weekends, works full time, and continues his studies with various scholars.

## Dates and Student Fees

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### Dates:

Saturday March 24th - Wednesday March 28th

### Fees:

Student* Early Bird**	\$249
Adult Early Bird	\$299
Student Standard	\$299
Adult Standard	\$349
One Night Attendance	\$99

\*Full time students only

\*\*Registration received before 9pm PST on December 31st 2011

Student spaces will be limited in order to ensure an intimate learning environment. Unfortunately, we are unable to accommodate children at this retreat. All students should be prepared to follow the set program and participate.

## Educational Program & Activities

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The primary goal of this retreat is to provide students with the tools to return home and practice the obligatory aspects of the religion in a way that is sound, and brings lasting benefit to the worshiper by improving their state with Allah. This retreat is recommended for anyone wanting to ensure that they have a firm foundation in the religion.

### Subjects Covered:

- Belief ('aqida)
- Actions (fiqh)
- Spirituality (tasawwuf)
- Surat Al-Fatiha (first chapter of the Qur'an)
- Living Islam practically

### Additional Activities:

The 'Alpine Meadows' retreat center offers additional activities such as Rock Climbing\*, Archery, Basketball, Volleyball, and other activities. \* additional fee may apply

**Sample one-day Program Schedule:**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Session</b>
5:45 a.m.	Fajr Adhan and Wake Up
6:15 a.m. - 6:30 a.m.	Fajr Prayer
6:30 - 6:45 a.m.	Group Remembrance and Supplication (wird al-Latif)
6:45 - 7:45 a.m.	Tajwid and Qu'ranic Recitation
7:45 - 8:30 a.m.	Rest, Freshen up
8:30 - 9:15 a.m.	Breakfast
9:30 - 10:30 a.m.	Class - Islamic Beliefs
10:30 - 10:45 a.m.	Tea / Coffee Break
10:45 - 11:30 a.m.	Class - Islamic Law and Practice
11:35 - 12:30 p.m.	Class - Islamic Law and Practice
12:30 - 1:15 p.m.	Lunch
1:30 p.m.	Dhuhr Prayer
1:45- 4:15 p.m.	Group physical activity such as Hiking, Rock Climbing, Basketball, Volleyball, Soccer, or Archery
4:15 - 5:15 p.m.	Class - Living Islam
5:15 - 5:30 p.m.	Asr Prayer
5:30 - 6:30 p.m.	Dinner
7:10 p.m.	Maghrib Prayer
7:30 - 8:30 p.m.	Class - Beliefs/Islamic Law and Practice
8:35 - 9:30 p.m.	Class - Islamic Spirituality
9:30 - 9:45 p.m.	Isha Prayer
10:00 - 10:30 p.m.	Campfire / Stargazing
11:00 p.m.	End of Day and Lights Out

## Venue, Travel, and Transportation

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Nestled in the beautiful San Bernardino Mountains of Southern California, the 'Alpine Meadows' retreat center is the ideal site for the Firm Foundations retreat. The site offers fresh air, mountain vistas, gorgeous wooded acreage, and modern facilities.

The site is located just two hours from Los Angeles, San Diego and Orange County.

Students will be housed in groups, in heated, carpeted log cabins. All cabins have an en-suite bathroom. All sleeping accommodation will be male-only or female-only. Unfortunately we are unable to accommodate married couples separately. However, for groups of males or groups of females (such as friends or families), we will do our very best to accommodate you together. Students will be required to bring their own sleeping bag and pillow, as well as towels.

All meals are prepared according to the highest standards of kosher. Vegetarian options will be available. Please contact us if you have any specific food allergies or meal requests.

Specific Information and directions to the retreat site can be found here:

[http://www.alpinemeadowsretreats.com/about\\_location.htm](http://www.alpinemeadowsretreats.com/about_location.htm)



### **Travel Information and Transportation:**

Students flying in from out of town should plan to arrive at Ontario International Airport (ONT) no earlier than Saturday morning, March 24th. Anyone who arrives earlier will be responsible for his or her own transportation to 'Alpine Meadows' (unless arranged earlier). Transportation from the airport to 'Alpine Meadows' Retreat Center will be provided on Saturday afternoon, so if booking a flight arrange your arrival time accordingly.

## Frequently Asked Questions

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Q: Can I attend for part of the retreat?

A: Whilst it is preferred that students aim to attend the full retreat, part attendance is possible. The fee for attending part of the retreat is \$99 per night. Please note that we are unable to organize transfers to and from the airport during retreat times. If you would like to attend for a part of the retreat only, please contact us to arrange special registration at [socalretreat@seekersguidance.org](mailto:socalretreat@seekersguidance.org)

Q: Is WIFI and cellular coverage available at the retreat center?

A: WIFI is not available anywhere at the retreat center. Cellular coverage is available on all major cell phone carriers. Students are encouraged to make minimal use of cell phones and other electronic devices whilst at the retreat.

Q: What weather conditions can we expect?

A: Weather during this timeframe is expected to be sunny yet brisk in the day time, and cold at night. Prepare to bring long sleeve/pant attire during the day and coat/sweater and insulated leggings at night.

Q: What do I need to bring?

A: A sleeping bag or blanket

Pillow

Towel

Qu'ran

Toiletries (only toilet paper will be provided)

Flashlight for getting around at night

Warm jacket for cooler evenings

Good walking shoes / boots

Athletic attire for playing sports/camp activities

Pen and paper for taking notes

Q: Can I park my car on site?

A: Yes, you will be able to park your car in the designated parking lot.

Please contact us at [socalretreat@seekersguidance.org](mailto:socalretreat@seekersguidance.org) if you have any questions about this retreat.

To register, please visit [www.seekersguidance.org](http://www.seekersguidance.org)

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