

Syfineus

From Europe

Kinship Pledge

In the name of God, In the name of all the
masters, saints and prophets,
In the name of all those who have dedicated
themselves to the service of God in humanity,
In the name of Pir-o-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan,

I pledge myself and dedicate myself to the
service of God in humanity;
by promoting Kinship among all beings,
by wherever appropriate, fostering conflict
resolution in love, tolerance and respect,
by relieving suffering and pursuing the
way of justice

Amen



Friendship and kinship

This edition of SufiNews from Europe is dedicated to friendship and to Kinship.

Pir Vilayat's Kinship pledge is a pledge to serve; We are One being, and as long as one of our fellow beings suffer, we all suffer.

"The way of the sufi is the way of expansion; as he draws within, so he widens his outlook on life. So that in the end when he has touched his innermost being, by that times he has embraced almost all that is living. The sufi comes with open arms to welcome all who come. For in every person s/he sees the spark of the divine being"

- Hazrat Inayat Khan: "The Soul's journey"

We offer our deep gratitude to the contributors of this newsletter and to all those who joyful and with open hearts serve their fellow beings



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"The whole idea of compassion is based on a keen awareness of the interdependence of all living beings, which are all part of one another, and all involved in one another."
- Thomas Merton -

he Kinship Activity: Our Interconnection with Each Other

By Saki Lee, the Netherlands
European Focalizer of the Kinship Concentration

First of all, I would like to thank all who have contributed so willingly to the theme of Kinship in this issue of the European Sufi Newsletter, especially as English is not the mother language of many of the writers. Such diversity of experiences and views will hopefully give you, the reader, a feeling for the far-reaching scope of this work.

In the teachings of Hazrat Inayat Khan, we find the original term Brotherhood used to describe this lesser known activity of the Sufi message. For the sake of gender inclusivity in language, this name was later changed in the Sufi Order to "the Kinship Activity."

"There is one human Brotherhood, the Brotherhood which unites the children of earth indiscriminately in the Fatherhood of God." - 6th Sufi thought -

"If the great Teachers have given a Message to humanity, it is no doubt the Message of Brotherhood. God cannot be found in temples, for God is Love; and love does not live in temples but in the heart of (wo)man, which is the temple of God. The true religion would be to recognize it as such, and to tolerate, to forgive and to love each other".

"Remember my friends, that if you studied Sufism and all the problems of metaphysics and philosophy for twenty years, and if that spirit of brotherhood were not developed in you, no progress has been made. Or if you meditated

for thirty years in solitude, and if you communicated with God, and yet if the spirit of brotherhood had not developed in you, no progress is made."

One of the many possible reasons why the Kinship activity is relatively unknown and overlooked by many in the Sufi Order is that it cannot be confined to a singular definition, doctrine, methodology or practice. There is no formalized membership, initiatic degree or hierarchical structure involved as there is in all the other concentrations of our Sufi work. And because Kinship strives to bring together east and west and all seeming contradictions and differences towards greater awareness and harmonization, its activity is also non-partisan and non-political.

A lot of spiritual practice focuses on the vertical aspect of transcending the limitations of our finite world. But the horizontal aspect, which is the heart's recognition of interdependence with all of life, is what completes us. Our spiritual training must also orient us towards a greater sensitivity, compassion and acceptance of the human and earthly condition, which are imperfect and transient. The realization of our inseparable connection with every living thing, and the suffering and pain that are part of life on earth, leads to a natural desire to love and serve. This is Kinship.

Pir Vilayat reminded us that our times



required a shift from focusing on the awakening of consciousness to the awakening of our conscience. This is the path of kinship. The truest awakening of unity consciousness asks of dedicated people to build a culture of love, service and conscious relationship with every being. So kinship is a love offering of the fruit of our personal spiritual practice that we give to others without thought of personal gain or reward.

There are, as the poet Rumi said, hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground. So the task at hand can be very daunting, even overwhelming, to find which particular way is each of our way for sacred service. However, joining up with others who share a similar vision and ideal is a most powerful - and perhaps the only way - to create a vortex of love and wisdom that can impact the world today.

Kinship and Need for Community Building
Community is so important in our

time because by its very definition, a community is a group of interacting beings who share something together. The word "community" is derived from the Latin *communita* (*Cum* = with/together and *munus* = gift). So our human communities are meant to unfold the purpose of our coming together in sharing our gifts. Such beautiful

interdependence is the very foundation of all our relationships.

“There is one human Brotherhood, the Brotherhood which unites the children of earth indiscriminately in the Fatherhood of God.

6th Sufi thought -

The social fabric of any healthy human community is

formed by expanding a shared sense of belonging to include all of its members. Where there is belonging, there is a conscious valuing, awareness and attentiveness on connecting and caring for the wellbeing of the whole, as well as for the individuals who are part of that whole. The materialistic western value “each man for himself” only perpetuates a sense of isolation, competition and self-interest within our communities. Isolation and the experience of separation create



a susceptibility to fear, suspicion, doubts, jealousy, and negativity to arise. When the mind and heart lose their flexibility and openness to the natural harmony and kindness which holds communities together through the stormy cycles of change, the tendency is to focus too much on a community's lacks and deficiencies, rather than celebrating the amazing gifts embodied in each other. So community building begins by nurturing the connection of heart to heart, which enables us to extend

genuine care and affection to each other. We can then work together creatively to bring forth vision and empowerment into life.

I feel that we all need to engage in some deeper self-inquiries in order to see how we could contribute to community building. At the end of this article, I will suggest some inquiries to pose before our hearts. But first, we could consider that there are various inter-penetrating domains of kinship in our lives in which



we could always focus on:

- **Social Kinship:** embodying kinship within a socio-cultural context in our volunteer or professional work, and in this way spreading the Sufi message within a social context.

- **Interdisciplinary Kinship:** bringing the esoteric interpretation of the message of kinship for people outside the Sufi Order, the world at large.

- **Inner Kinship:** living, practicing and supporting kinship within our own Sufi

communities, our spiritual families.

Kinship and The Five Activities of the Sufi Message

But let us begin by looking at the level of Inner Kinship, since this is relevant to as well as implicit in all of the Sufi activities. We share common basic principles, teachings and values.

The Esoteric School: Personal transformation is not an end in itself. Inner work is preparation for the embodiment of the divine to become visible and present in the outer world. Fine tuning the art of personality allows the light of the soul's truest potentials and gifts to radiate out in compassionate and meaningful ways. Pir Vilayat often spoke nostalgically about his longing to retreat to the peace and solitude of the cave, but of course, he really lived what he taught: we awaken beyond life in order to fully awaken into life! And, he would say "We are not here for ourselves alone."

The Healing Order: In order to become living streams of love in the world, we need to heal our own pain and woundedness. With a luminous witnessing of our own sorrows and pain, and bringing compassionate presence into practice with ourselves, we take a huge step towards a true response to the cries of humanity and the broken heart of God. We need to address our own disconnectedness and alienation before we can serve as a true healing presence for others. Commitment to addressing whatever keeps our own hearts closed and contracted, opening up, letting go of defensiveness and judgment, are fundamental in the awakening of humanity to a greater realization that Pure Spirit is the source of healing.

The Universal Worship: Our prayer to "rise above the distinctions and differences which divide us" is not only about our relationship with formal ways of religious worship and revelation that are different from our own. It's also about extending

a peace-making spirit to those moments when we can still witness unity when we are confronted by those who hold quite opposing views to our own personal beliefs and what we hold to be sacred. Recognizing the heart as the sacred shrine of God in which we see the divine in each other is the truest form of worship. The homes of those from different faiths, cultures and social backgrounds which we visit and learn from are the sacred shrines of the world.

Ziraat: Our hearts are nature's sanctuary and the sacred ground in which we can learn from the mistakes of the past as well as to plant new seeds for the future. Each of the ancient cycles of sowing, growth, fruition and harvesting can remind us of the ongoing and dynamic processes involved in cultivating a conscious relationship with all aspects of life – inner as well as outer. At this critical time in human history, we need to stay very present and connected with the deep cries of the Earth, and to listen to what we are being asked of her. Sacred ecology demands response-ability and co-stewardship so that we can find new ways to bridge the gap between the spiritual and physical realms of life. We need to remember that the natural world is the larger sacred community to which we all belong and take our part in finding ways to address sustainability for our future generations.

Some Inquiries on Our Practice of Kinship

I feel that each of us can ignite the spark of kinship individually as well as within our Sufi community and help it to have more presence within our collective heart-work. Here are a few questions that we could choose from. Share this with your friends, co-mureeds and co-leaders. I am interested in hearing what some of you discover:

- How do we live kinship as mureeds or

leaders in the Sufi Order?

- What kind of support can we create for each other as a community? How can we be more caring and of service to each other?

- What ways can we find to bridge the generation gap between the different age groups in our large Sufi community?

- How can we support and care for the elderly within our Sufi communities, especially those who are living alone, are not financially well off, or are ill?

- How can we overcome rivalry, jealousy, disharmony amongst the members of our community, and recognize the gifts that each bring?

- How can we strengthen our heart connections with each other and cultivate honest

and open communications, trusting relationships and kindness amongst ourselves?

- How can we reach out to those mureeds or leaders who left our communities after being hurt by or disillusioned through someone or something in our organization?

- How can we develop kinship as a way in which we can bridge the esoteric with the exoteric dimensions of our lives and bring the Sufi message of love, harmony and beauty more into the world?

"Spiritual realization is attained in practical life by observing the ideal of brotherhood. At this time when the world needs the ideal of brotherhood more than ever before in the history of the world, it is our privilege and destiny to do all we can to bring about this ideal in our own lives first, and thus to spread it in the world. Any problem or theory, or doctrine studied, is of no value unless it be practiced."

– Hazrat Inayat Khan -

The camp

You may already know about what we simply call the Camp, also known under all the names listed above. In this article I will simply refer to it as the Camp. Many of you reading this article may already have been part of the Camp or at least heard about it. The Camp started out as the brainchild of Pir Vilayat; he once told me that the idea came to him while participating in the mid-50s in a European sponsored cultural youth festival on the island of Lorelei in the river Rhine. He thought to himself "why not have meditation camps for young people?", and so it started – the Camp.

THE CAMP, THE SUFI CAMP, THE ALPS CAMP, THE ZENITH CAMP

By Zahir Rohrs

In the early years (1961) the Camp took place in various locations in the Austrian, Swiss and French Alps: At that time it consisted of young people, and the numbers were much smaller; in the beginning 10 to 15 participants sharing a barn or something similar, for meditations and accommodations. This changed in the early 70s, when the Camp found a home in Chamonix high up in the mountains; 2000 m above sea level and way above the tree line. When I first found my way there, we were about 100-150 people of various ages. I had come to have a look for two or three days and to see what this was all about; I ended up staying four weeks and after that for the next 40 years, I hardly missed a year. What an amazing sight it was; people of all ages, of many nationalities. All coming together to spend time in this hard, but fantastic nature, meditating under the direction of

Pir Vilayat, dancing and singing in circles, facing Mont Blanc. The vibrancy of Pir Vilayat and other teachers, although not as many as today; the breathtaking setting of the Camp and last but not least - just as today, the community of participants and staff is something that not just myself will never forget. Friendships lasting for life were founded here, and still today, when some of us meet at the Camp or in other places, the spirit of Chamonix is with us. Now of course, we are not the young crowd anymore, our children and in some cases grandchildren took their first steps, were baptized in the big tent and are in large part still an active part of the Camp today.

In later years the Camp moved to different locations all in the French Alps and it continues to grow. 25 camps ago we found this wonderful place Campra,



near Olivone. Here the Camp found an almost permanent home, and it kept growing for many years, but we all became older and needed a different kind of infrastructure, which we were able to slowly develop in this location. The Camp was always known as Pir Vilayat's camp, and he used to lead the sessions; sometimes group retreat for one week, from six in the morning until ten at night. As he became older, he could not do that anymore, but many of those who had participated in the early camps and trained with him in the Sufi Order, took on leadership roles and started teaching their own workshops at the Camp. Pir Vilayat always called the Camp his favorite place, and when he started having difficulties walking in the mountain terrain, we simply built a beautiful carriage for him, and volunteers were delighted to carry him from the car to the big tent. With his passing in 2004 we were faced with the situation of running the Camp and keeping it going without his physical presence, although many of us feel his presence at different times and especially in the big tent.

The Camp today.

I have been responsible for the Camp and its organization for the last 25 years, so it is not so easy to write about it in an objective way; I will therefore give you my own personal perspective. This issue of the newsletter is dedicated to Kinship, and what better example is there, at least in our circles, than the Camp? Every year in mid-June, we start building. You might or might not be aware that the whole Camp is constructed and dismantled in the course of the summer. Every platform, water pipe and whatever else is stored away at Campra during the winter. The building process takes 5 weeks, and for many of us this is the real community time. It is when we as a group stretch ourselves to our limits, physically, sometimes mentally and spiritually. It is a time when young and old, speaking different languages, but all there for the purpose of service, come together. As the Camp has grown over the years, as our needs for more comfortable settings have increased, the workload and the necessity for good planning and implantation has grown too. Fortunately, over the years we have become a solid

core group that is committed to making it all happen, year after year, where we can rely and trust each other. Besides the process of building and running the Camp in the summer, there is plenty of work to be done during the year. But now let's get to what actually happens at the Camp. In contrast to the early years, which were centered on the teachings of Pir Vilayat, we now have many different workshops, seminars and retreats, as well as the possibilities for individual retreats. In order to accommodate these various activities we have several workshop tents of different sizes. There is also a great meeting place for the participants

in the Tea tent. For individual retreats and smaller group retreats the Retreat Area offers a unique opportunity to delve into deep inner travels under the guidance of the retreat guides present. The Retreat Area has its separate facilities, like dining tent etc.; the language in this part of the Camp is the language of Silence.

The weekly programs:

Meditation and Retreat are still the main focus of most weeks; Pir Zia leads programs during 2 of these weeks. Dance, Movement and Music form an integral part of the Camp, they are just as much a part of our spiritual journey and experience. Some of the high points in the Camp are sessions shared by the participants of the different activities during any particular week, and this includes not only the participants, but also the Young Adults, the Teens, the Children and the Staff. This shared time is often filled with joy and laughter, with astonishment discovering the talents of others and watching the attentiveness and wonderment of the children. And the children have become a very important part of the camp. In the early years they were barely tolerated, and many of them felt this, but over the last

few years this has changed. The children have their own activities in the children's area during the workshop times and most of them love the freedom of being in nature, no cars to watch out for, the nearby river, the mountains, the trees, the other kids and the very engaged staff. In addition we started a Teen Camp and the Week for Young Adults: Both of these are very dear to us, because they build the bridge between Children's Camp and the Adults' Camp. For quite some time the average age of the participants

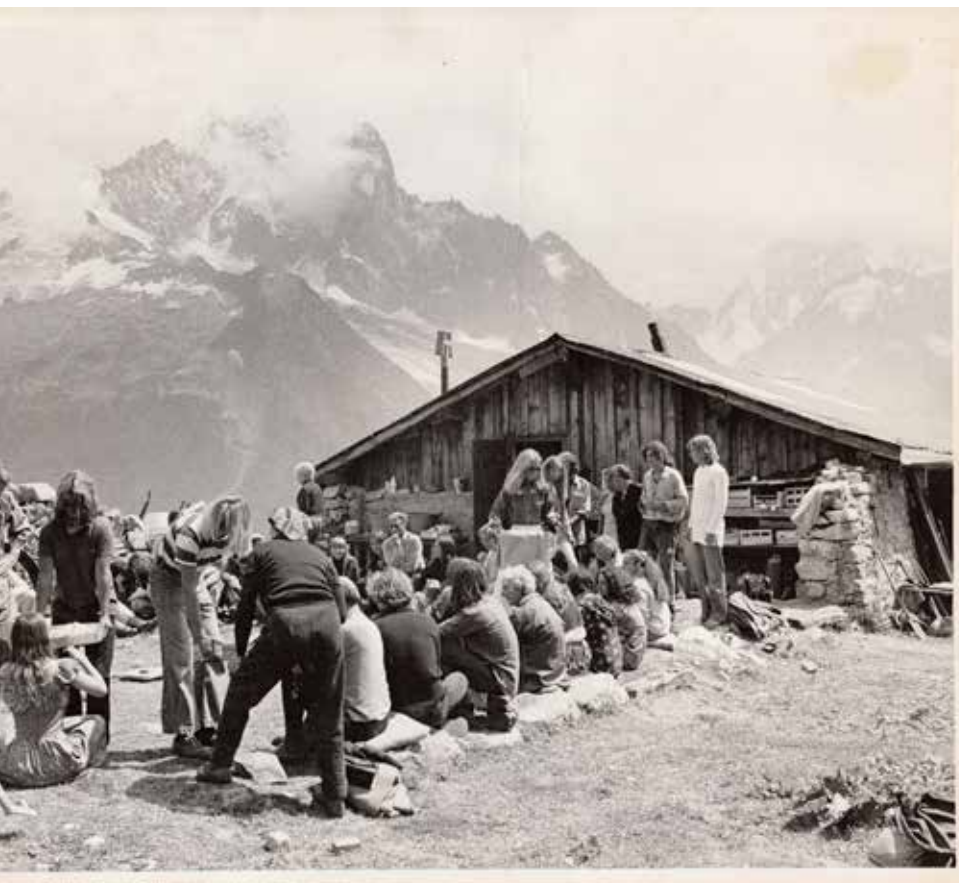
increased every year, but if you look around today, there are many young staff members and participants.

“ Friendships lasting for life were founded here, and still today, when some of us meet at the Camp or in other places, the spirit of Chamonix is with us.

It's a joy to see that the Caravan keeps moving, that we do have something to offer to the next generations, something to share with them, things to teach them and things to learn from them that might keep us young for a little while longer. The Camp is deeply rooted in the Message of Hazrat Inayat Khan; it offers the possibility to present this Message in many different forms and expressions, with various accents, in a multitude of languages. Yet it strives to present this Message in an open, not limited to insiders, non-sectarian way. We welcome all seekers of the one Truth in an atmosphere of tolerance, joy, awareness for each other and nature, and a deep attunement to the individual and the All.

From my personal story.

After the Chamonix Camp, where I came out of curiosity for the first time at the age of 20, I was never again just a participant, but always on staff. This was not always smooth, and after the 3rd and last year in Chamonix, I decided that I never, ever again wanted to have anything to do with Sufis. They were in my opinion just too chaotic and crazy. So the next winter Waliha Cometti and I went to India in search of different experiences. After a very short time



there she decided to go into an Ashram and study Yoga. I ended up staying with Sufi friends and was soon staying in the same apartment as Pir Vilayat in Delhi near the Dargah of Hazrat Inayat Khan. The following summer I was co-director of the Camp; so much for getting away from those Sufis! After several years co-directing the Camp, and just before the birth of my daughter, we moved to the USA. In 1987, while I was living at the Abode, I visited my parents in Germany, and during this visit I went to Pir Vilayat's Christmas seminar in Germany to meet with old friends. As soon as Pir Vilayat saw me there, he asked me to take over the Camp and move it to Switzerland, where Waliha had found a new home for the Camp near Olivone. My head said "no way", I live at the Abode in the USA, I have nothing to do with the European Camp, but what can you say....., after some reflection I agreed to do it for one year; well that was 1987! Waliha and I incorporated Zenith Institute as a legal association to run the Camp, and now 25 years later, I never (or mostly never) regret not getting away from these chaotic and crazy Sufis.

Last year I had some serious health problems and was not sure I would make it to Camp, but when I finally did, after 2 days, I felt new born, and with the help of my co-camp leaders managed just fine. There is a magic about this Camp, its ideals, its setting, its Kinship and the nature that welcomes and accommodates it year after year. I can only encourage you to come and join us, whether you are a newcomer or have been there many times before. Come, come whoever you are, come join our Caravan, as participants or as a member of the staff community, maybe even sharing the whole summer from the unpacking and building, to running it and accommodating the participants, to putting everything back into storage. For information on the camp and next summer's program please go to www.zenithinstitute.com or write to me at zahir@zenithinstute.com.

Pir Vilayat's theme was **"To create a beautiful world for beautiful people."** and it's still the Kinship contribution of The CAMP!



Kinship- alive in the summer camp with the children

Swiss Alps 2012

By Majida Christine Heiss

Living side-by-side in the camp is a wonderful opportunity to experience brotherhood and sisterhood. In the children's camp; which is mostly populated with teenagers and young adults, we have deliberately contemplated kinship this year.

Participants of all ages come together in colorful groups; their deep friendships form a close community week after week, camp after camp. The relationships that have deepened over many years, the honesty and warm welcome which new arrivals are greeted with...all is an expression of a living kinship. At camp, we are subjected to nature - her beauty and also her power –and it is up to us to create an exhilarating atmosphere in the camp. It is wonderful to witness how everybody may contribute to our community. We try to develop awareness of giving and receiving and by doing so we learn, not only about our capabilities, but also about our limitations. To be intimate with empathy is just as important as the feeling of being a member of the whole family.

Many of the young people who work as members of the staff today have grown up coming to camps. Our teenagers and young adults work and help wherever they are needed. Thereby they serve the community and return the gifts which they have received over time. Brotherhood and sisterhood in the camp is very strong. This is a protected space in which we look out for one another; and eventually to carry this kinship out into the world and into our homes.

"But then again it is hard for me to walk around town and think of all the strangers



as my sisters and brothers...In my opinion a lot depends on good communication and honest behavior when we meet new people. Just being friendly and offering help to strangers can go a long way", says J. 20 years of age. "It fascinates me how friendly and open-minded everybody welcomes you around the camp. I feel comfortable and protected just as in a big family. To me kinship is being friendly, respectful and polite wherever people come together", says

“ It fascinates me how friendly and open-minded everybody welcomes you around the camp. I feel comfortable and protected just as in a big family.

A., 21 years old.

"Kinship teaches us to listen to the connection between our souls. We're not really separated from each other." S., 24 years of age.

Some fruits of the development.

Enjoy!

- "Kinship, what's that supposed to be?" asks 9-year-old A.

- "Let's discover it together and start by looking at each other as brothers and sisters."



The first reactions are astonished faces and wide eyes, a nudge into the side of a 'real' brother, followed by several exclamations, "That's amazing because I don't have any siblings.", "But who's going to go grocery shopping if we're all brothers and sisters?", 7-year-old M. wonders. At the idea of Majida being a sister of the children, they start giggling in an unbelieving way. It is obvious that the mental image of a brother and sister family is starting to stir in the children's' minds. Nine year-old L. states, "But isn't that weird for the parents?" The following question is inevitable, "Well, who are the parents then?" V. 9 years of age

give the answer," It's obvious! God is the father and there also is a God mother." Although the children aren't used to the idea of God being father and mother, the logical consequence is still clear to everybody: We are a human family. "Sometimes I fight with my sister", says 10-year-old J, "but afterwards we make up because we belong together" The topics of dispute, war and reconciliation surface. "Nobody would kill his brother or sister", exclaims A, 13 years of age.

In our community we do experience disagreements and quarrels; but even when we fight, we can practice kinship by trying to understand and feel the other person as well as looking at the problem through his or her eyes. Therefore kinship also is helping to solve a conflict peacefully.

To the young people being part of the community in the camp is like "living in a family". They relate kinship to love, solidarity and helping each other. For the children it is also closely related to friendship, which leads us to the title of the poster we have designed together: "What fruits can we harvest by living in kinship and friendship?" The answers of the children aged 5-12 are the following: "joy, peace, loyalty, love, solidarity, patience, appreciation and understanding, listening, helping each other, reconciliation." If those experiences are firmly established in children, who are still so pure and open,, kinship will grow to be a fundamental attitude. They will spread it throughout the community and further. Their frank attitude will entail fruitful results. And what's that going to look like? We can be excited/ Let us be curious!

From my heart I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the review for this newsletter.
Much love, Majida. Christine Heiss

Knighthood of Purity

THE KNIGHTHOOD OF PURITY OF THE HAZRATIYE ORDER

Futuwwat-i Safwa-yi Silsila-yi Hazratiyya

By Pir Zia Inayat Khan

Sufism (tasawwuf) and chivalry (futuwwa) have traditionally gone hand-in-hand. Sufism is primarily concerned with consciousness whereas chivalry is primarily concerned with conscience. In the classical period, Sufi orders and chivalric orders existed side-by-side, and often overlapped. When Sayyid Abu Hashim Madani initiated Hazrat Inayat Khan as a Shaikh, a master of tasawwuf, he simultaneously qualified him as an Akhi, a master of futuwwa. In medieval Christendom, knighthood came to represent in the secular sphere what the monastic orders represented in the religious sphere.

On September 13, 1926, when Hazrat Inayat Khan consecrated the cornerstone of the Universel, he laid the groundwork for two new orders: one hieratic and the other knightly. The first was the Confraternity of the Message. He made his son Pirzade Vilayat the head of this line. The task of its members was, and remains, to observe the prayers of the Confraternity daily. The second line was not named, but twelve ordinations were given: eight Naqibs, and four Sahaba us-Safas (all four of whom were women). The former were called Heralds and the latter were called Knight of Purity (the London Sufi Order having at first been called

alternatively, "The Order of Purity"). Murshid thus established the basis for an order of chivalry. Exactly eighteen years later, on September 13, 1944, Pirzadi Noor-un-Nisa gave her life for the cause of freedom. Her last word was "Liberte." In her courageously self-denying heroism, she became the paragon of the chivalry of the Sufi Message for all posterity.

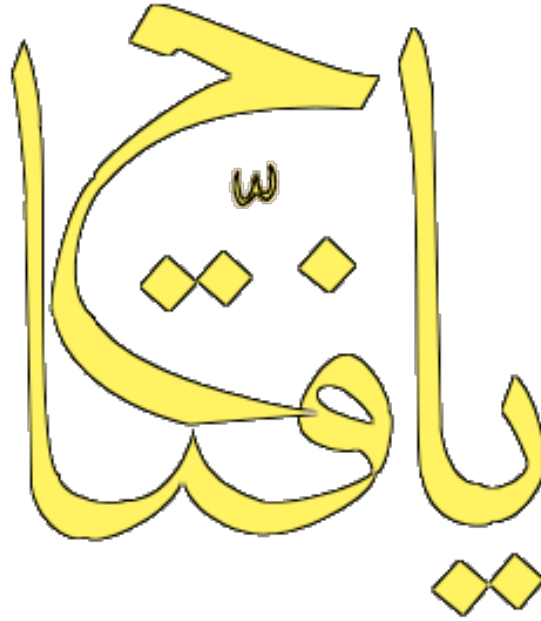
On the eve of September 13, 2010, we had the honour to announce the revival of the chivalric order instituted by Hazrat Inayat Khan and personified in the heroism of Noor-un-Nisa. The essential features of the order are outlined below. Inquiries may be directed to Hassan Suhrawardi Gebel: sg@sufiorder.org

May the Message of God reach far and wide!

Description of the Knighthood:

The Knighthood is composed of two degrees: Herald and Knight of Purity. All who are inspired by the Sufi Message of Hazrat Inayat Khan and sincerely committed to enacting its ideals are eligible to receive the ordination of Herald (Naqib(a)). Ordination is by application to the Chancellery.

Upon ordination, the Herald commences



his or her task. The task is to recite the Iron, Copper, Silver, and Golden Rules, and to apply their morals in daily life. Each rule is recited once a day, in the morning, over a forty-day period. The completion of one set of rules thus takes four hundred days. The completion of all four sets takes 1600 days (four years and 140 days). Heralds are asked to notify the Chancellery upon the completion of each set.

Upon completion of the entire task, the Herald is qualified to receive the accolade of Knight of Purity (Sahab(a) us-Safa). Initially, Shaikh al-Mashaikh Mahmood Khan and Pir Zia Inayat-Khan will be solely responsible for giving the accolade. Subsequently, ordained Knights will be authorized to give the accolade.

Shaikh ul Mashaikh Mahmood Khan, graciously allowed us to record and freely disseminate his talk on Sufi Chivalry, which he gave at our Sufi center in the Hague this past November. Click on this link to download or listen: <http://SufiOrderRetreats.net/RgtArchive/SufiChivalry/>

Noor's light shines ever more brightly in the UK



By NoorShahab Terry London

Thanks to the hard work of mureeds Injil Dixon, Latifa Shahab Laker and Gulrukh Patel, an inspired Universal Worship Service was held at Springhill Prison on October 25th 2012. The service took place in conjunction with the unveiling of a new Gym built entirely by the prisoners and dedicated to Noor Inayat Khan in recognition of her heroic deeds.

Springhill was the training centre for the Special Operations Executive during the Second World War, and where all of Noor's radio transmissions would have been received. In 1953 Springhill became the first open prison in UK and is now a resettlement prison, where detainees are

prepared for re-entry into society. Injil is acting chaplain there and initiated talks with the Governor about offering a Universal Worship in honour of Noor. During preliminary discussions he came up with the idea of dedicating the gym as a tribute to her. Naturally we were all delighted that the prison had taken Noor's story into its heart.

The worship was conducted in the presence of prisoners, guests and brothers and sisters from the SOI and Sufi Ruhaniat International. Guests and prisoners from different faiths were invited to recite scriptures from their respective traditions. One of the prisoners also made

an offering from Noor's Jataka Tales. Shrabani Basu, the tour de force behind the Noor un Nisa statue campaign opened the evening with a short talk on Noor's life. Shrabani enthralled the prisoners with stories of Noor's bravery and astonishing resilience. The service honoured the individual note from every faith with readings and musical attunements, where all were joined in one voice through song. This created a harmonious symphony, in whose atmosphere we were encouraged to reflect upon our unique lives. Gulrukh gave a most inspiring sermon in which she conveyed Noor's last word 'liberte'. She then asked us all to contemplate what our last words might be. Then, once we'd recognised them, to enquire whether our lives were being lived in alignment with these words. Gazing around the congregation, I saw many eyes lighting up at this invitation. I then felt the power of participating in this self-enquiry together.

The feedback from the prisoners and staff was really positive; they remarked what a great opportunity it was to share in Noor's inspirational story and that having the Universal Worship had illustrated the need and possibility of further interfaith dialogue. I circulated amongst the prisoners during the refreshments and received many questions and compliments about the service. There was a genuine interest. May the message of God reach far and wide.

Britain's first memorial to an Asian woman.

Two weeks later during remembrance week, the unveiling

of a bust of Noor Inayat Khan by HRH The Princess Royal in London's Gordon Square took place. The Khan family once lived on the square, and Noor would have strolled in its gardens. Veterans of both the SOE and WAAF including Irene Warner, 91, who trained with Noor, were among the 300 who came out to honour her. This momentous occasion was the result of 2 years of fundraising and campaigning by Shrabani Basu and her collaborators, whom she lovingly calls 'Team Noor'.

After the unveiling, which was met with great applause, Princess Anne honoured Noor's sacrifice saying; stories such as Noor's are 'remarkable in their own right' but have a real connection to make with the modern age through their 'multi-cultural aspect'. HRH added that she hoped that the statue would serve as a reminder, encouraging people to ask; who was she? Why was she there? And, what could be achieved in her memory? Her address was followed by a beautiful rendition of Hidayat Inayat-Khan's Invocation Opus 38, after which followed a poem 'Lamp of Joy', written by Noorunnisa when she was just 14. Then the musicians offered a further musical tribute; 'Song to the Madzub Opus 40', written by Noorunnisa when she was 15. A deeply moving closing message from Hidayat Inayat-Khan then followed, read with great tenderness by his grandson Omar Inayat Khan. In his address Pia Hidayat paid tribute to his beloved sister's passionate call for liberty, for which she paid the ultimate price. He appealed to us to keep at heart the great ideals of harmony, which are so much needed in this troubled world today. A world in which



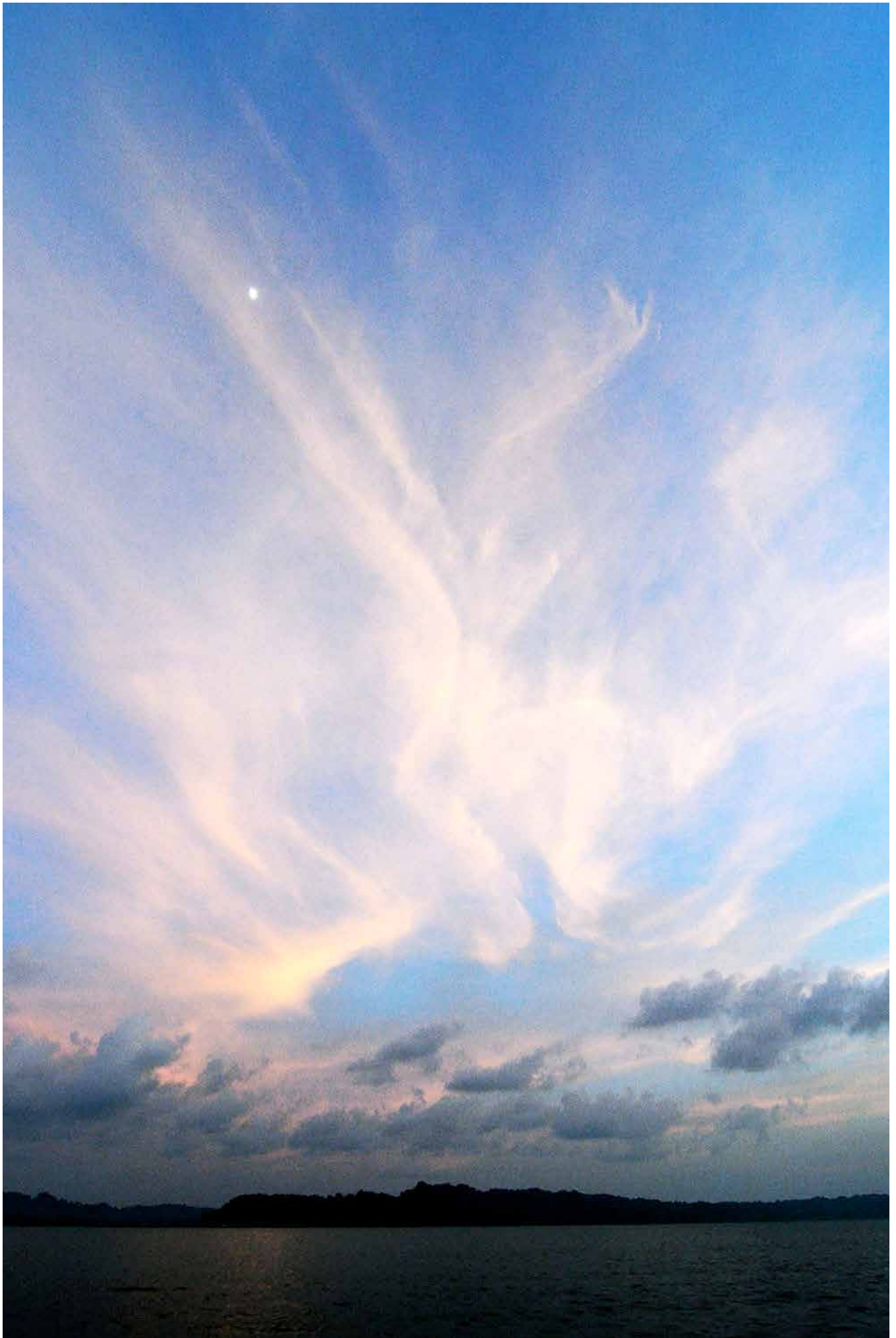
concepts of human rights have not yet been understood by all as being the only truest guaranty for an everlasting peace among nations. Through his heartfelt address, Pia Hidayat extended to us his gratitude and emotion.

Sheikh ul Masheikh Mahmood Khan and his wife Harunissa came from their home in the Netherlands to be present. In an interview he commented; 'Everyone – British, Indian and beyond – can take pride in what Noor did.'

It's difficult to convey my feelings surrounding this occasion as at times I was overcome with emotion, but perhaps I could best describe the atmosphere as being pervaded with the dignity, courage, graciousness and nobility of soul that was Noor's very essence. This feeling was shared by other mureeds who also spoke of feeling a palpable presence of Murshid and of Pia Vilayat amongst us. Finally, I'd like to mention the numerous

generous donations received from all the Hazratiye Sufi lineages around the world and also to extend a warm thank you to Fateah Saunders from the Ruhaniat who kindly coordinated invitations and information regarding the event. Fateah thoughtfully circulated messages of goodwill sent in from our global community. To give you a flavour, one such communiqué from Amida Cary in USA declared; 'the heavens rejoice', stating how Noor's love, wisdom and passion for truth will live on well into the future, paving the way toward a culture of love, harmony and beauty. Another from Sherdil Wilhelm of Austria, who's generosity and support has been gratefully received, proffered; 'May the statue inspire people over decades and maybe centuries to come'.

Noor's message of liberty encompassed the spiritual, the political and the social, ideals that are embedded in the notion of Kinship.



Sunset, The Andaman Islands, India.

Photo: Marit Lundby

Dhondup:

Encountering a Tibetan Buddhist in the Bardo



Photo: Marit Lundby

By Jaan Karl Klasmann, Austria

Heinrich, an old friend of mine, who had played a crucial role at a turning point in my life 30 years ago, asked me to come to a demonstration before the Austrian parliament: "We need to draw the public attention to the growing number of Tibetans burning themselves in these days, because they don't have any perspective left under the continuing and increasing weight of the Chinese oppression. But we're not enough yet, not even the number needed to hold up a poster for each of the 54 who have died that way to date."

I arranged to come, but was a little late. The rally had already begun, and the

ORF (the state-owned Austrian TV- and radio station) was recording and making interviews, so I grabbed the lonely poster still lying there and joined the quite numerable group of mostly Tibetan silent protesters. My first demonstration in decades, but with feelings radically different from those I remember from my teens or twenties; shouting and stamping and angrily repeating rather questionable slogans. Here was a sense of solemnity and importance - like being on duty: A cherag of the Sufi Order standing up for spiritual liberty for all mankind?

The secretary general of the Austrian



Photo: Marit Lundby

branch of the Free Tibet-movement was speaking of the despair that must have triggered so many people to give their lives - without any aggression towards others; in compliance with the Buddhist commandment of non-violence. He underlined that the Dalai Lama had never encouraged suicides, but yet had such deep respect for these men and women.

I looked around at the posters the demonstrators held. Each had the name of one who had burned him/herself, their age, the place, and the number in the sequence of these sad events.

Dhondup, 61

I glanced at the poster I was holding myself, and a shiver ran through me: "Dhondup, 61, Monastery of Labrang, no.57, immolated himself on Oct.22nd, died the same day". This was only

yesterday. Just 24 hour ago, Dhondup was still alive, maybe meditating; busy with the preparations for his last deed on this earth. Suddenly, this event had come so close to me that I could feel it within. As I murmured Pir-o-Murshid's Prayer for the Dead, the defensive walls of my I-ness started to melt. Tears came up as the veil between this world and the invisible one tore open, and my soul encountered Dhondup's soul.

What I experienced then, was to my utter surprise and one of the most moving and instructive revelations that had ever come to me. It's hard to find the right words; please read the missing parts between the lines: Dhondup's was not a soul in despair as I had expected, but one burning with love. This was not a person caught in a consciousness of separation, who ended his life because he saw no way out, but a great soul aware of the unity of all Being; making a conscious choice. Out of deep love and compassion – towards his people, his culture, his religion, the primordial value of freedom. Out of a life-long quest of dedication to the liberation of all sentient beings, he had received a his heart's call to offer this last and ultimate sacrifice; his physical body (according to his creed the vessel indispensable for obtaining Buddhahood; thereby also sacrificing the possibility of reaching this veneered goal in this lifetime).

While feeling the torture of a most painful physical death, he had remained totally conscious,

radiating loving kindness; virtually dissolving himself in love for the sake of a goal he considered higher and more important than his own earthly existence.

I was trembling as my heart let go of any pain- and love-avoiding armouring and took me to a place far beyond any thoughts of tactics or personal interest. For some moments, I could feel the power of the blessing created by this

“ It is about love – unconditional love, and the consequence such love might (not must) have in a specific situation for a given person.

deed. As I write down these lines, my heart is still in aching awe. In doing so, I also realize the deep wisdom in the Dalai Lama's position: Respect, but no outward encouragement, let alone a call for self-sacrifice. Its meaning seems clear to me, and the crucial word here is love: This is not about political agitation, nor about some hyper-neurotic longing for becoming important, not even about some spiritual-magical technique to obtain a certain

desired result following some calculated and elaborated plan. It is about love – unconditional love, and the consequence such love might (not must) have in a specific situation for

a given person. To hear such a call and the decision to follow it cannot but be a most intimate quest, no other person's business; nothing anybody else may rightfully encourage, let alone call for. But those who hear such a call and walk this path deserve our deep respect. They might inspire us to listen more closely to our own heart, to dedicate ourselves more unconditionally to its call, and even if our task most probably won't be to burn our bodies (avoid the traps of the super-ego!), to more determinedly be ready to have our false egos burned by whatever loving task the Divine wants to manifest through us.

This experience happened on Oct. 23rd. Meanwhile (Nov. 25th), the number of self-immolations has increased to 78, and will continue to rise. I do not know if all these Tibetans act on the same motivation and with the same consciousness as Dhondup, but I trust that most of them do and continue to recite the Prayer for the Dead for Dhondup

Trying to figure out the Divine intention behind this encounter/revelation, I so far feel two aspects: One is that such

a breathtaking manifestation of Divine qualities needs to be witnessed; as an act of doing justice to it, because it was done unconditionally. In the first encounter, when Dhondup still seemed to be in the process of feeling and transforming the intense emotional and physical pain of his passing, it might have been soothing for him to feel another sentient being by his side, not running away but lovingly being with what

he was going through. This is the dimension of encounter which „I“ cannot „make happen“ or „reproduce“ at will. „It“ had taken over. By some Divine grace, „I“ was swept out of the

way.

Secondly, back at the level of this „I“, I feel that the Prayer for the Dead is, by Pir-o-Murshids' providence, not only an instrument to serve a soul which has left this planet, but at least as much a tool serving ourselves. By its means, we get access to the souls of recently passed ones and might be able to contribute some support to one who has departed from the earth at this crucial phase of transition, but likewise to learn from him or her by resonance, without disturbing their journeying on.

As for you, Dhondup: I'm deeply grateful for the grace that allowed me to be your witness. The closeness and openness this rendered to me are priceless gifts. My soul looks into the eyes of yours with wonder, and my I bow before you in love. May the Divine compassion do justice to you and your people and all sentient beings.

Useful links:

www.savetibet.org

www.flameoftruth.net

“ This was not a person caught in a consciousness of separation, who ended his life because he saw no way out, but a great soul aware of the unity of all Being; making a conscious choice. Out of deep love and compassion – towards his people, his culture, his religion, the primordial value of freedom.



Caterpillar in Indian jungle.

Photo: Marit Lundby

BEING A VOLUNTEER IN THE HOPE PROJECT IN INDIA



**By Christian Schuerings,
from Germany**

I am 20 years old, born at the 07th of July 1992 and live in a small town, Selm-Bork, near Dortmund in West Germany. I just finished school and did my Abitur (similar to finishing high school). After my trip to India I am probably going to study environmental chemistry in Jena, a small town in the east of Germany.

**I first spoke to my father
about doing a pilgrim's
journey through India.**

Then the idea to work in the Hope Project matured. This thought came, because I am really interested in the Sufi order and Sufism itself, and I want to support it.

Last summer I spoke to Samiur, the executive director of Hope, and he told me that it is possible to work there for 1 - 2 weeks, 1 month or even 1 year. We had some really good talks. After this I thought that it might be a good idea to work there, because I could combine my interest of India, its culture etc with supporting the Sufi Order, or at least the Hope Project founded by Pir Vilayat. My motivating power behind the decision to work in the Hope Project was that I had wanted to go to India since I was a little child. When I try to write a report about my time here in India and how it is to volunteer at the Hope Project, there are a lot of things in my mind. Some of them are really difficult

to put into words, so I will start at the beginning. Especially the first few days were really special, as I didn't know anybody in the Project or India. I arrived in Delhi early in the morning, took a taxi to the Project and had to wait there for about 3 hours until it opened. During this time I absolutely didn't feel good because there was nobody to welcome me, and because the volunteers who had been in the project before me left already 1 or 2 days before my arrival. Within this first 3 hours I saw a lot of things happening; people sleeping in the streets; dogs trying to find something to eat; people searching in the garbage or people slaughtering animals on the street. These first



experiences were really shocking to me. I therefore think it must be helpful to have some volunteers working at the project already, because they can help newcomers settle in smoothly.

However after about 1 week I felt very good. I worked as an English teacher at the project; which was quite difficult because I didn't speak any Hindi, and their English was on a very low level. I also helped in the Health Center and supported Masoom, a teacher in the computer class and Volunteer-Coordinator. I really started to feel at home, because I could go to the Dargahs of Pir Vilayat and Murshid every day and could feel the atmosphere there, which is quite similar to the one in Summer Camp in Switzerland. This was very important and helpful for me at that time.

After 2 weeks other volunteers arrived, and since then I have people to share experiences with.. Further it is very nice that there are visitors in the project nearly every day, and I meet a lot of people I know. For example Shahabuddin was in

India for about 1 month in October and visited the project regularly. Now after 3 months I feel completely at home here at the Project and in India, and I have got used to everything which shocked me in the beginning. It is very nice to see that even if the people are poor here, they have so much joy, and it is much easier to make them happy by smiling at them instead of ignoring them. As I took Hindi-lessons for 2 months I am now able to understand some Hindi, and it is much easier to communicate. It is amazing how easy it is to get in contact with strangers on the street here in India. Everybody wants to speak with you and you can get in contact to so many people. I really like this directness of the Indians. The only thing I do not like is the separation between men and women. It is very difficult to get in contact with girls/women, especially in the poor areas like the Basti.

As I am a foreigner with white skin I am somebody special everywhere. A lot of people are staring at me and a lot of people invite me to their homes, parties, etc. On the one hand the white colour opens a lot of possibilities, but on the other hand it is very difficult to find a place where you can feel like a normal person. It is nice to be a VIP sometimes, but not all the time.

I am here in India for a very long time (9 months) and able to experience the "normal" life of the Indians, because the people invite you to their homes or even home towns and you are able to see their normal life. After 3 months I know the project very well, and because of this I have a lot of responsibilities like to show the project to foreigners or to guide new volunteers, or to join meetings. This is very nice and I really enjoy it. Further it became much easier to teach English to the students, because I can speak some Hindi and translate some words to teach them.

Thus I feel very good at the project and in India and really enjoy my time here. I think it is a great opportunity between school and studies.

Support for the Sufi Saint School in Ajmer

how to begin an engagement



By Nelly Hagen, Förderverein Sufi-Saint-School.

It had long been my desire to work for a cause. But for what? And how? It seemed I lacked the courage and confidence to arouse myself.

On my trip to India in 2003, I learned of the Sufi Saint School in Ajmer, Rajasthan. I had the opportunity to live a week in the house of the Sufi Master and founder of the school Inam Hassan and his wife Amina, and also spent much time with the children at the school.

The school was poor - some classrooms only had a tin roof and two exterior walls - but it had about it a very special 'glow' and was filled with a loving and peaceful atmosphere.

In my conversations with Inam Hassan I learned little by little more about the school: as a young man Inam Hassan had founded the school in the early 90s. Deeply shocked by the violence between Hindus and Muslims it had become clear to him that, as a Sufi, he must get up and do something. Indeed, he had the vision of a school where boys and girls of different religions, castes and ethnicities come together in a harmonious place, learn loving respect for others, and get a thorough education to be able to escape from poverty, violence and being caught in the caste system.

Immediately he had begun to teach his first class of Muslim and Hindu children – in the 'Chillah' under a tree, on carpets brought from home. By and by, with the help of donations, he had built up a very simple school on a plot of land owned by his family, upon which is also the burial site of several Sufi-Saints (the Chillah). Thus, the school was named 'Sufi Saint-School'.

In 1993 the school had been recognised by the state and it continued to grow, adding new classes year on year. In 2001 Inam Hassan had married his wife Amina, who committed herself fully to the welfare of children and took on the role of director of the school.

Meanwhile, the first students had already completed their schooling at the Sufi Saint-School and were able to find a job or prepare for a profession and for having a

better future. For the many students from the very low castes, a qualification (and also the self-confidence gained at the school), is especially important, meaning liberation from lowly work and allowing a rise towards a life of dignity.

I have been touched by Inam and Amina Hassan's love for the children, their courage to transform society from below, and their enormous volunteer effort which springs from a pure source of deep spirituality. After returning from India, it was suddenly very obvious to me that I would get involved for the school according to my abilities. I started, quite informally, to find sponsors for students from poor families and raise funds for the school. Savitri Berger, the head of the Kinship-branch of our Sufi-Order supported me in this, so we were already two. She also visited the school several times and allowed me to have a break after I had given birth to my second child. Even though we initially only collected a few thousand euros a year, it was of great value and supported the schools steady development.

Since the study conditions in the makeshift school building - especially in monsoon- and winter-time - were unbearable, Inam Hassan was brave enough to take out a loan with which he built a new school building. In 2008 all 300 students could be moved there. To Savitri and I, it had become clear that our informal initiative offered only very limited fundraising opportunities and that the creation of a support association was necessary. It struck me, at first, that it would not be easy for me to address this challenge. My children were very young and I had to learn many new skills and get myself organised. In March 2009, encouraged and supported by my husband, Savitri and I finally founded the "Sufi-Saint-School Support Association" (Förderverein Sufi Saint-

School") with a couple of friends and neighbours as founding members in my house in Hanover. In addition, we made a website (with the help of a supporter), printed flyers and became able to issue donation receipts. In this way we gained many new supporters and were able to receive much higher donation amounts. By the end of 2010, our donations had already quadrupled.

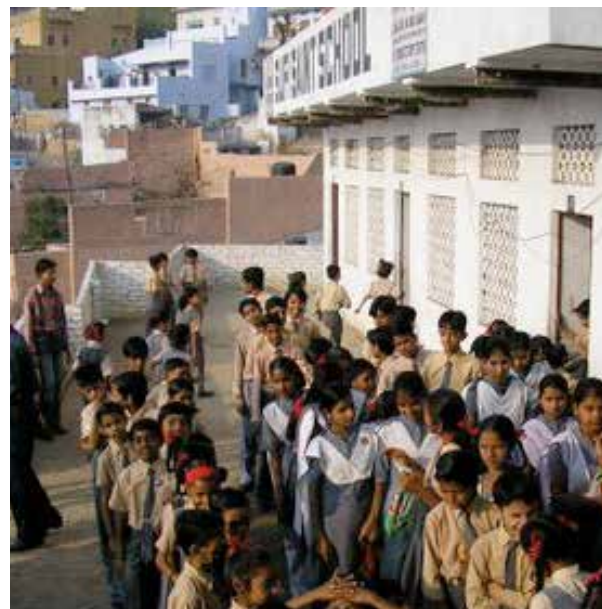
In February 2011, after a gap of eight years, I was finally able to travel to Ajmer again and visit the Sufi Saint-School. It was very touching to see how much the school had moved on – funded to a large extent by the support of our donors: With the solid new building it had become a real school, the quality

“ Deeply shocked by the violence between Hindus and Muslims it had become clear to him that, as a Sufi, he must get up and do something.

of teaching had improved, about 50 % of the students had a sponsorship, there was a small kitchen in which school-

meals were prepared one or two times a week, and there were workshops on music, dance, arts and crafts, in which students prepared for monthly performances or exhibitions.

I had arranged my visit to Ajmer so as to attend the Day of World Peace, the largest and most important annual school event. At that day the parents of the students and some guests were invited, and there were many wonderful performances: around 120 students aged 3 to 18 years appeared on the school stage, performing poems, songs, dances and little plays related to the core values of the school, namely the equality of all people and the theme "building Peace". I marvelled at the talents the students showed and how proud, happy and inspired they were. The "being seen" in their abilities and the confirmation of the applause is very important for these children from very poor families (about 70% of the students come from families with a monthly income of 30-50 Euro).



In addition to gathering new impressions of the school I could also deepen my friendship with Inam and Amina Hassan during this visit to Ajmer. During numerous conversations the questions that I had brought with me were clarified. Naturally, I asked Inam Hassan about his vision for the future of the school. He told me that he had been developing ideas for some time, with the aim of re-organizing the school, hitherto entirely dependent on donation funding, such that it could be more and more independent and develop on its own. The first major milestone of this would be to build an assembly hall. This, already much needed by the students, could also be rented out as a venue for events, providing funds for the school, as there is a great need for such a space in Ajmer. According to Inam Hassan, the total estimated cost of the assembly hall was 50,000 Euros.

From this trip to Ajmer I especially took home - apart from the many satisfying encounters and impressions - Inam Hassan's vision. But for such a large sum we needed new fundraising ideas and support from corporations and foundations. Firstly, we managed to get 10.000 Euros from a foundation. Then, in late 2011, we started the "1=2 Support-Initiative Assembly-Hall Project" with the goal that corporate donations could provide match funding to all the

private donations such that the funds raised for this project would be doubled. Since my husband was able to win over some business partners as sponsors for the match funding and through the great support of private donors we had collected almost 60% of the total costs by the autumn of 2012. Hence, at the end of the monsoon rains, in October 2012, the school was able to start building the assembly hall.

I am very happy and grateful for this sometimes tedious, but very exciting work for the school. And I would like to encourage anyone who wishes to get involved in a good cause to do so. One learns a lot in this way, facing new challenges and seeing how wonderful people from around the world can come together and experience that it is possible to make a difference, sometimes even more than one would have thought possible ...

Mail to:
foerderverein@sufi-saint-school-ev.de
www.sufi-saint-school-ev.com

For any questions please contact us. We are delighted if you wish to support the Sufi-Saint-School and ensure that 100 % of all donations reach the school.



Kinship and Dances of Universal Peace

From Noor Helweg-McGuigan, The Netherlands

In the time of Hazrat Inayat Khan, Dances of Universal Peace did not exist. It was Samuel Lewis, (1886 – 1971) initiated in 1923 by Inayat Khan, who founded these dances in the mid-1960's. Pir Vilayat gave him the last push to bring these Dervish or Mantric or Angelic or Mystery Dances into the public. In 1970 I met S.A.M. Lewis for the first time at a seminar of Pir Vilayat in my home town, N.Y.C. And for me the dances and the Sufi Order have always been woven together.

Kinship is a way of reaching out to people who are not ready or conscious of even wanting to follow an inner path. Within The Dances all the 5 schools are represented.

Kinship extends into public life and among various social levels, exchanges are opened.

As the dances come from all Traditions, we experience the Universal Worship. The altar is alive as chants and mantras are sung and danced. We attune to our rich heritage as World Citizens. Healing occurs as we hold hands in a circle or with a partner. Life force flows through our body, moving energy and helping to bring/sustain harmony. Pir Vilayat often spoke of opening up and letting The Light come in and through us. Ziraat and the balance of the elements are present as we dance with the fire of Shiva, Hindu, or with the waters of Nessa, Grandmother Moon – indigenous, and so on. In some dances we are ploughing, getting ready and in others we are thankful and harvest our good work.

In the Esoteric path some people have a direct experience with their inner being. Others may notice change during their sleep or upon waking the next day. Spiritual teachings can be given and received in various ways. The Dances have a low threshold. This simple form of meditative singing and dancing can have a deep impact.

Being a mureed for more than 40 years and a teacher within the Sufi Order and for The Dances has shown me a deep aspect of Kinship. Extending my physical and spiritual hand toward the other has often opened up new paths and worlds, thus enabling the spreading and growth of Love, Harmony and Beauty.



SULUK A FLAG FOR KINSHIP

By Mubarak and Khabir (Gulab class)

We were 49 – women and men: students at the SULUK Academy – the first European class in Europe called GULAB class, ROSE class. From 2009 – 2011 we spent forty days together – holy days! – together with our beloved teachers, mentors and other wonderful helpers on our journey; and together with Pir Zia; half way he started calling us “friends”, and in doing so, he made us feel closer to all who offered their knowledge given from their hearts and made us feel even more engaged in the purpose of our studies: enhancing our ability in Concentration, Contemplation and Meditation, to bring forth everybody's flowering time of Realization; making GODDESS and GOD a reality through our very individual input on earthly life. We students and our beloved companions - sixty-two in all - entered a new phase of enhanced awareness, contact with ourselves and others, experiencing big challenges and joys. 49 individual processes unfolded; all unique, soft and passionate. To be pioneers were not always easy, but we wanted it, we enjoyed it; sometimes puzzled; (which homework is optional, which one facultative - or did I get everything wrong?), sometimes overwhelmed until shedding tears; (my body is too small to harbour my feelings!), sometimes like children giggling, playing around; (there are so many possibilities!), feeling lost; (am I right here - could you help me, please?); and we helped each other!

Gulab flags

Approaching our goal of Realization and to close our studies in SULUK, Pir Zia asked us to create an ending ceremony, in which we could commit ourselves even more to Realization and give back to the world what we had received during our studies – and go on with this without the help of SULUK - but by the help of our beloved sisters



and brothers. That was the point where we committed ourselves to the spirit of Kinship with even more engagement. Forty-nine students trying to come to a consent as to presentation, subjects and continuation after SULUK ... can you imagine our class process while looking for projects that we could all agree to?! One of our projects are the so called GULAB flags: all students made one flag according to what she/he wanted to show from inside to the others during the ceremony, according to one's taste and manufacturing abilities; all flags were fixed to a satin ribbon, which all of us possessed one little part of and had carried with us during the two years. In the ceremony we made all the flags tied together and pass in front of everybody – SULUK members and guests – forty-nine little flags: all definitely unique in their form and their message – and yet transporting one spirit: SHAKUR! We chanted “shakur” while passing the flags from one hand to another – from one heart to the others. The high spirit of gratitude was in us, around us, in the air way up high to the heavens.

“ SHAKUR! We chanted “shakur” while passing the flags from one hand to another – from one heart to the others.

Bringing the spirit down to earth: wasn't that our intention? We asked the HOPE project to manufacture the little flags, so we could give work to the people in India – “Shared happiness is double happiness” Samiur Rahman of the HOPE offered us the idea of printing the “Ninety-nine Divine Names” in Arabic calligraphy on coloured flags –and that is where we are now: trying to contact

our SUFI sisters and brothers all over the world so that they may join the flag activities. With every little flag we

hope to connect the owner with the development of the story, with the blessing presence of the Divine Qualities and the spirit of “shakur” – may the GULAB flags help spreading inspiration, love and support amongst all fellow sisters and brothers on earth; strengthening our care for all beings!

*Flags are sold in sets (5 flags of different colours);*1 set costs 7,50 €;*

**Postage needs to be paid extra; *Orders are sent to Ulrich.franzen@t-online.de*

Kinship in Suluk

By Latifa, Suresnes



I would like to testify to the subtle and profound friendship that develops during the Suluk Academy course. This ten-session program was created by Pir Zia and combines teachings in the morning and group discussions in the afternoon, over the course of four years. The deep affinity that results from it, is of great importance to Pir Zia. At the beginning of the course he asks "Do you have good friends in Suluk?", which was very surprising to me at first, because I did not yet understand how the bond later developed between us during the sessions, would quickly become strong, deep and blessed. Furthermore I must admit that my purpose in coming to this spiritual course was not to make pals.

Let me mention two examples of this

friendship that took place last summer. My son was sent to psychiatric hospital on the first day of the summer session. To remain focused during a meditative process in such a painful situation could be a challenge. Everyone's support, even in silence, was wonderfully helpful during this trial. One day, I had to leave the group to meet a doctor and see my son. A member of the group immediately offered to accompany me, so that I would not be disconnected from the internal tuning of this very special moment, which we were all sharing. Thank you to him and thank you to all. Friends all around me in this time of grief helped me stand fast!

At the end of the session one of our friends was in tears at breakfast. She had planned to stay in France a few days after the session, but the person she was supposed to visit, fell deeply sick. As I live near Paris, I suggested with pleasure that she could stay at my home a few days. This unexpected adventure became a getaway to Brittany, where we visited my mother. When my son was released from hospital, we were all happy to spend some days on the beach; to visit the menhirs (standing stones) and dolmens, and to take in the sea breeze. We visited our friend who had accompanied me to the hospital while at Suluk. Her daughter had just returned from the summer camp in Campra, and she shared her Sufi experience with my son... He requested to be initiated when he returned home late August. Pir Zia was luckily still in Suresnes.

I wanted to share these events with you and to thank Pir Zia for reminding us how essential this bond between us is, brothers and sisters on the spiritual path. In love of the Message
Latifa from Suresnes

Open Sundays



Joy Azima and Qalbi Maarten Bronkhorst.

We created the Open Sundays in the fall of 2010; shortly after we had started a new association called Unissons, with an aim to use a part of our house for meetings, concerts, exchanges, and meals together. Around that time, Pir Zia Inayat Khan, founder of the Seven pillars of wisdom project, sent out the themes to meditate on; (establishing the foundational architecture for our "house's" work in the months and years to come. The Seven Pillars" invite every person to undertake an exploration, individually and collectively, of the seven pillars' process. This journey through the seven pillars illuminates the experiences of life and facilitates the emergence of a living wisdom that can help us address the urgent social and ecological needs of our time, with integrity and beauty.)

The intention of the association Unissons is to create the Open Sundays events as a way to explore these themes as well as to share art, music and dance, inspiration and wholesome food .In such a way we are "setting the table around which lovers of wisdom of all backgrounds are invited to come together to converse and to collaborate ".

The format

In the morning we start with a walk in nature around where we live. Then we meet for reflection and sharing

on a theme that we chose from the proposals sent from the Seven Pillars project. (We decided explicitly on not having a debate or discussion) Then there is a shared lunch followed by a presentation by a guest artist or creator that we invite to share the story of their life journey. We have had so far musicians, a potter, sculptor and painter/ landscape gardener sharing their story in their own unique way. The potter that came showed us small pots he had made from the age of eight - right through to his present age of sixty-five, and explained how his art reflected his inner state at the time of the creation. The theme that morning was "how do we see the history of the universe, how do we create our own universe?" and that's exactly what he showed us in a very moving manner." Another touching moment was when an artist painter who was also a landscape gardener came. He told us about how he first paints his creation. He will go and visit a place, reflect on how he could make it beautiful and then paint it before creating it in the landscape. That was on a day when in the morning we meditated on "the cloud of witnesses" freely put as "what inspires us", and the main theme of everybody's inspiration was Nature. But we did not know what the artist -painter-landscape gardener in the afternoon was going to say! That was a very special moment of synchronicity... A third time we had another long time friend who shared her life journey as a mother, a teacher of art, an artist and singer. She started with slam poetry; (a kind of rhythmic poetry similar to rap but shorter) which reflected her struggles, moving to inspirational poetry sharing the beauty and sacredness of motherhood. We close the day with dances from different traditions and/or listen to live music followed by tea and cake. The aim is to participate in the development of new paradigms as co-creators of our futures. As we do not keep records of what has been expressed during the meetings, it is greatly touching to experience one another's input. Let's take it from there. We hope to carry on creating a sense of solidarity and unity, of sacredness within our community through this project.

If anyone is interested in coming to spend some time with us please contact. We are always open to new faces and to live Kinship daily with like minded people.

Contact: unissonsmaintenant@gmail.com
La Geriais, 44460 Saint Nicolas de Redon in Brittany, France





“BED & DHIKR“

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touching pleasant
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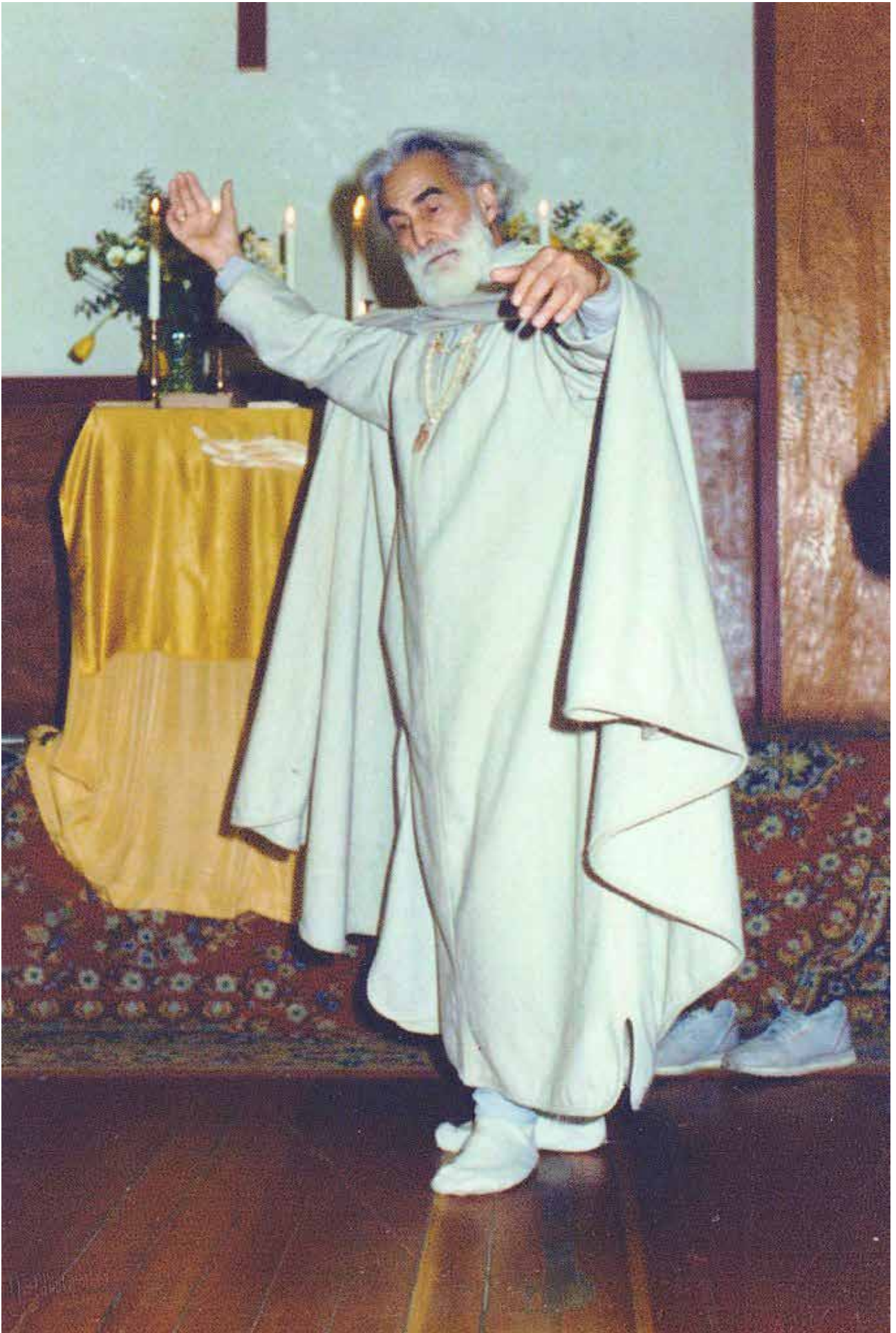
In spring 2012, the idea was born for a new project in the Kinship of the Sufiorden, which already found an overwhelming resonance after a first short presentation at the Zenith camp 2012. People from Germany, Switzerland, Great Britain, Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands and the USA, from almost all over the world have already expressed their interest in a participation . . .

Many of us use to move around Germany, Europe, the world for all sorts of reasons: the need of fresh wind in your hair and relaxation at a foreign place, further educations or business trips, invitations for family and friends meetings... However, we always need a night accommodation at a strange place. How about is beautiful idea; wherever I need to go there is a bed, a sofa, a mattress waiting for me at the place of a member from my spiritual family? And this goes with the opportunity to meet each other, get to know new life worlds, realize how much we share with our guests or hostesses, perhaps to make friends . . . There is a platform arising with the Kinship initiative “Bed & Dhikr“ for offering and finding overnight stay and meeting possibilities among brothers and sisters in the Sufi family, or people who are in connection with the Sufi path, inspired by the world-famous example “Couchsurfing“.

On the new web site of the international Sufiorden in Germany a database shall be available, where each Murid on the Sufi path and people in contact with the Sufi path can find a bed and perhaps even the possibility of a common Dhikr at the desired destination. Since nowadays an internet access is easily available for everybody over friends or Internet cafés etc. , this is a mere supply in the www. The possibility to use this platform shall be at all Sufi related people's disposal independently of whether they can offer overnight accommodations themselves. The Sufi order does not claim further supplies to the respective sleep places; such as meals or joint activities. All this becomes clear in the real meetings between us.

Gayatri Cibelius (bedandzhikr@sufiorden.de) is available for the care of the database like also for the expansion and optimization of the idea altogether. She collects the contact data of the hostesses and guests (name, place, email address, the relation to the Sufi path), provides the regular update of the accessible list on the Internet and receives questions and comments. The data is only accessible to registered people who receive a password to login on the German Sufi order's website. There won't be public access.

Lightfull greetings from Gayatri



Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan

In the spirit of the Universel

After the terror on 11.September, I created an interfaith sharing group for peace, which meets once a month at the group member's houses. I also started a meditative creative writing group in June 2010, which meets in the same fashion. Two types of groups that are very open, not specifically sufi groups, but in the spirit of the Universel.

Amitiés .

Marie-José / Mohasibi

On Kinship

Like most good ideas, Kinship defies any single definition. We can think about it in many different ways, each perspective highlighting a different aspect.

From a Sufi perspective, we might say that kinship reflects the Unity that lies behind the diversity of the Universe. We might choose to regard this as Divine or we might prefer to avoid a label; all we know for sure is that fully grasping this idea is beyond our ability. The notion of 'Unity behind diversity' is also reflected in current scientific thinking: Big Bang theory postulates that our Universe started with all of the energy concentrated at a single point (a singularity). Thus it should be no surprise that Nature is so inter-connected and interdependent.

But these are just ideas of little value unless they translate into practical action. From a practical perspective, kinship can be seen as the practice of unconditional love. According to the dictionary, "Kinship" has various meanings concerning relationships within both families and broader social groups. The Sufi path helps us to be aware that "our family" includes everyone – all human beings and the whole of Nature upon which we depend for our existence. With this definition, we don't have to ask: "When is kinship relevant?" It can be a guiding light for our lives, reminding us to be compassionate to ourselves even when we are feeling low and to be compassionate to those around us, especially those with whom we think we have nothing in common. If we are able to conduct our lives in a spirit of kinship, we will help to create a world of love, harmony and beauty – heaven on earth.

Mark Latif Ashiq Hope, Scotland

Reflections on Suresnes Pilgrimage

The Pilgrimage weekend which I attended on 5/21/2011 was highly inspiring, happy and communicative for me, because of the variety in program and participants as well as the unity in everyone's purposes and perceptions. I appreciated very much the reciprocal understanding between Pir Zia, Murshid Karimbakhsh and Murshid Mahmood during their panel-like conversation about the growth in unity between the Order and the Movement. I appreciated also the other conversations, the sacred dances and the being together at Fazal Manzil. 'Suresnes' is a place to meet life-long friends and one has to frequent it...!

The 2013 Pilgrimage Days are again and for sure noted in my calendar.

For me the 5/21/2011 date is most unique and remarkable because then and there, under the tree that was planted by Noor un Nissa, I became initiated as mureed by Pir Zia...

Leo Sosef, the Netherlands

Pilgrimage

By Satya



Two days, merged in eternity, around a specific gathering on the 21st and 22nd of May 2011,

Moments of Happiness - in the presence of Pîr Zia, his wife and his two children - in which Beauty, Harmony and Love entered together in dialogue....Deep thanks are expressed to the members of the European Council of the KINSHIP for having given to us two very beautiful days, full of serenity, of joyful and fruitful sharing, mainly thanks to the preparation and organization that they have set up, coordinated and adjusted with delicacy and radiating harmony!

This session has been totally special, for it was a gathering of the various "Branches" stemming from the Teaching of Pîr-O-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan for the first time in many years, This meeting could appear obvious, but it was not.

It was a result of a long process for many years with difficult work; undertaken in view of getting closer. This session came out of many encounters, discussions and exchanges elaborated notably by Pîr Vilayat Inayat Khan. In his turn, Pîr Zia has set up a project that might appear unbelievable: that a spirit of real unity might appear at the core of the 4 Branches of teaching which stemmed from the preliminary Teaching of Pîr-O-Murshid . On the 21st and 22nd May 2011, this project has become a "reality" with this gathering in Suresnes! For the Murids from the years 1980 and 1990, this meeting has aroused a great resonance and a deep gratitude is expressed to Pîr Zia. It has been a great delight to be able to share with the members of these 4 Branches, present during these two days of feast...a unique session...

Moments of strong intensity have prevailed, dedicated on the 21st of May to Chivalry, respectively presented by Pîr Zia, Sheikh ul-Masheikh Mahmood Khan and by Murshid Karimbaksh. We are sorry that time being limited, it has not been possible to ensure a more effective translation for the French participants who, for some of them, have not been able to receive, on site, the striking and determining points of these interventions. As for the evening, it has been some exquisite musical moment, thanks to the presence of Mehmet and of Nawal who merged us in some enchantment.

The Sunday 22nd of May offered to all of us great surprises: "The Sacred" came to visit us with the Cosmic Celebration, ceremony of great beauty thanks, more particularly, to our friends from the Kinship and of those of Suresnes who have welcomed them. This ceremony took place in the Khanqah. A round and translucent table - that very one which was at the center of the Universel on the day of the Inauguration, on the 5th of July 1990 - has been displayed at the center.

With Pîr Zia at the core of the Celebration and of all of us, a very deep attunement was prevailing, with sacred music and melodious singings. An invisible "Presence" and Blessings were perceptible...

The 22nd of May was also the 40th anniversary of Pîr Zia. What a beauty all this homage offered by some and others to Pîr Zia with, at his side the so much "beautiful presence" of his family, and with all the flowers radiating with luminous beauty as having been chosen, by each one, with Love! So many feelings circulating between all of us, for behind this anniversary, there was the presence of Pîr-O-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan This encounter had been so much waited for, and this Pilgrimage is stemming from so many uncompleted wishes ; however so much desired. And now, this meeting has taken place on the property of Fazal Manzil, becoming presently a "true reality"!

In addition, there have been beautiful sharings and exchanges in the garden around many sweets prepared kindly by the Kinship and some of the participants for the dinner on the 21st, as well as for the lunch on Sunday 22nd. There has been also the offering to Pîr Zia of a beautiful and sweet birthday cake for him and his family, savored and enjoyed in peacefulness amidst the tranquility of the garden, in total simplicity, near all of us...

That for the future: this meeting might remain deeply "alive" in our hearts and souls...

That we might wish to gather together to "unify" ourselves inside the various activities of the Teachings...

That we might be able to meet and to share in Harmony and Love....

In Homage to Pîr Zia, with deep gratefulness. Satya

**The European Kinship Council of the Sufi Order International
Warmly invites you to**

A Caravan of the Lovers of Beauty: A Pilgrimage to Fazl Manzil

Rue de la Tuilerie 23, Suresnes, FRANCE
April 27 – 28, 2013

This will be an opportunity for mureeds from all Hazratii Sufi lineages, as well as friends inspired by the teachings of Pir-o-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan to meet, meditate and share presence and friendship together at Fazl Manzil in, Suresnes, where Murshid lived and taught.

The weekend will include a limited programme of teaching, allowing most of the time for music, silent meditation in the Oriental room or Universel, and informal sharing amongst mureeds in the khanqah and garden. Sheikh ul Masheikh Mahmood Khan, the nephew of Hazrat Inayat Khan, will be present with us for sohbet (spiritual conversation), and for an informal Universal Worship. The programme for the weekend will also include Dances of Universal Peace, zikr, and an evening of musical attunement. On Sunday, the Mayor of Suresnes will come to Fazl Manzil for the annual flower ceremony in honor of Noorunisa's heroic work with the French Resistance during WWII.

It is important to pre-register for this special weekend, as we need to prepare for this. Coffee, tea, and refreshments will be available throughout the weekend, and an Indian meal will be provided on Saturday at an estimated cost of €10 - €15. Upon registration, we can send you a list of hotels in the area as well as route description to Fazl Manzil. We can also send you the programme for both days.

Please note that accommodations and other meals are NOT provided during this weekend. You do have the possibility to sleep in the Khanqah (with your own sleeping bag and mattress) but please let us know when you register.

There is no fixed fee for this weekend, but your generous donation would be gratefully accepted. This will help to cover the costs of refreshments, the Saturday evening meal, and other organizational expenses. Any profit remaining will be donated to the Hope Project.

We look forward to seeing you in April.

In loving service,

The European Kinship Council

(Saki, Noor Shahab, Savitri, Majida, Joy Azima and Latif Ashiq)

For questions and registration please return this form to: lightsong@gmail.com

Name:

Country:

I will attend the Pilgrimage weekend

Yes / No

I will be sleeping at the Khanqah

Yes / No

I would like to share in the Saturday evening meal

Yes / No

PROGRAMME

Friday April 26

18:00 – 21:30 Oriental Room and Universel open for silent meditation
(see sign up sheet)

Saturday April 27

09:30 Welcome, Music Attunement and Dances of Universal Peace
with Kinship Council friends

11:30 Shaikh ul Mashaikh Mahmood Khan sobhet and meditation

12:30 – 15:30 Oriental Room open for silent meditation (see sign up
sheet)

Free time for informally meeting each other and going out for lunch
(see note below)

16:00 -17:00 Zhikr with Mehmet and Ali

17:00 – 18:00 Oriental Room open for silent meditation (see sign up
sheet)

18:00 – 20:00 a shared Indian vegetarian meal - pre-registration
required! Suggested donation for the evening meal is €10- €15-

20:00 – 21:30 evening music program

Sunday April 28

9:00 – 10:15 Oriental Room open for silent meditation

10:15 – 10:45: attunement together

11:00 Flower ceremony in front of Fazl Manzil: the Mayor and
citizens of Suresnes honouring Noor Inayat

12:00 – 13:30 Oriental Room open for silent meditation (see sign up
sheet)

Free time for informally meeting each other and going out for lunch
(see note)

14:00 –15:30 Cosmic Celebration: An Informal Universal Worship to
close our weekend

**NB. those who wish to bring food to share for lunch will be welcome
to use the garden during the lunch breaks**

Giving

You give but little when you give of your possessions.
It is when you give of yourself that you truly give.
For what are your possessions but things you keep and guard –
for fear you may need them tomorrow?
And tomorrow, what shall tomorrow bring to the over prudent dog
burying bones in the trackless sand as he follows the pilgrims to the holy city?
And what is fear of need but need itself?
Is not dread of thirst when your well is full, the thirst that is unquenchable?

There are those who give little of the much which they have - and they give it
for recognition and their hidden desire makes their gifts unwholesome.
And there are those who have little and give it all.
These are the believers in life and the bounty of life, and their coffer is never
empty.
There are those who give with joy, and that joy is their reward.
And there are those who give with pain, and that pain is their baptism.
And there are those who give and know not pain in giving, nor do they seek joy,
nor give with mindfulness of virtue;
They give as in yonder valley the myrtle breathes its fragrance into space.
Through the hands of such as these God speaks, and from behind their eyes
He smiles upon the earth.

It is well to give when asked, but it is better to give unasked, through
understanding;
And to the open-handed the search for one who shall receive is joy
greater than giving.
And is there naught you would withhold?
All you have shall some day be given;
Therefore give now, that the season of giving may be
yours and not your inheritors.



*You often say, "I would give, but only to the deserving."
The trees in your orchard say not so, nor the flocks in your pasture.
They give that they may live, for to withhold is to perish.
Surely he who is worthy to receive his days and his nights,
is worthy of all else from you.
And he who has deserved to drink from the ocean of life
deserves to fill his cup from your little stream.
And what desert greater shall there be, than that which lies in
the courage and the confidence, nay the charity, of receiving?
And who are you that men should rend their bosom and unveil their pride,
that you may see their worth naked and their pride unabashed?
See first that you yourself deserve to be a giver, and an instrument of giving.
For in truth it is life that gives unto life while you,
who deem yourself a giver, are but a witness.*

*And you receivers... and you are all receivers... assume no weight of
gratitude, lest you lay a yoke upon yourself and upon him who gives.
Rather rise together with the giver on his gifts as on wings;
For to be over mindful of your debt, is to doubt his generosity
who has the freehearted earth for mother, and God for father.*

Khalil Gibran





