

Chivalry

in our time.







DEAR COMPANIONS ON THE PATH,

Noor-un-Nisa said, "Whosoever may go this way whose heart is pure, whose mind is clear, and who is ready to follow the path of sacrifice."

These words perfectly describe the aspiration of the herald and knight on the path of Sufi chivalry. In conjunction with a daily practice of meditation, the contemplation of the Rules clarifies the mind and purifies the heart, dissolving agitation and hubris, and reorienting the soul's light and life to the glorification of the One and the service of the One's creation. Giving up one's narrow self-concern is a sacrifice, but the joy and peace that is gained by pledging one's life to the Infinite is inestimable. There is, moreover, a deep communion in pursuing this aspiration in the company of others who are drawn to answer the same call. So let us mount horses of hope, grasp reins of courage, and ride toward the horizon of never ending beauty.



*Yours ever,
Sarafil Bawa*

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THE KNIGHTHOOD OF PURITY OF THE INAYATIYYA

Futuwwat-i Safwa-yi Silsila-yi Inayatiyya

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.

HAZRAT INAYAT KHAN was a master of spiritual chivalry. When he 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 Knights of Purity. Murshid thus established the basis for an order of chivalry.

Exactly eighteen years later, on September 13, 1944, Pirzadi Noor un-Nisa, his daughter, gave her life for

THE KNIGHTHOOD OF PURITY IS OPEN TO ALL WHO ARE INSPIRED BY HAZRAT INAYAT KHAN.

the cause of freedom. Her last word was "Liberte." In her courageously selfdenying heroism, she became the paragon of the chivalry of the Sufi Message for all posterity.

13.SEPTEMBER 2010, Pir Zia and Shaikh al-Mashaik Mahmood Khan announced the reestablishment of the chivalric order established by Murshid. The Knighthood of Purity is open to all who are inspired by Hazrat Inayat Khan. It is composed of two degrees: Herald and Knight.

ALL WHO ARE sincerely committed to enacting its ideals are eligible to receive the ordination of Herald (Eastern name: Naqib/a). Ordination

is by application to the Chancellery. Upon ordination, the Herald commences his/her task. The task is to recite the Iron, Copper, Silver, and Golden Rules, and to apply them 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. One can also use the name Sawar-i Rah-i Safa' which means Cavalier of the Path of Purity. All ordained Knights will be authorized to give the accolade.

Application may be made to Chancellor Hassan Suhrawardi Gebel at: sg@inayatiorder.org •

One can of course also work with these rules on one's own – without any accolade or registration. They are printed in Murshids book Vadan and are also to be found in this newsletter.



Illustration by Moira Stark



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Hassan Suhrawardi Gebel

IN 2018 YOU MAY ALSO BECOME MORE ACQUAINTED WITH CHIVALRY AND THE PATH OF CONTEMPORARY KNIGHT:

23.07-28.07:

Camp Zenith in Switzerland: NOOR'S LEGACY.

Drawing inspiration from Noor's courage and kindness, we will delve into the ethical practice of Sufi chivalry. At the same time, we will explore Noor's play, Aede of the Ocean and Land, approaching it as an allegory of the soul's journey modelled on Homer's Odyssey. <http://www.zenithinstitute.com/home>

21. 09– 23.09:

THE MODERN KNIGHT.

An alchemical retreat in Murad Hassil, the Netherlands. In the retreat we will explore chivalry and our inner knight. Contemplating and applying these rules in our lives help us evolve as planetary

citizens - caring for each other and for our home - the planet. Through them, we rediscover our inter-relationship with all beings.

Info: alia.kirsten@gmail.com

05.10-07.10:

GATHERING IN FAZL MANZIL IN SURESNES

We welcome you to a gathering of knights, heralds and others contemplating the 40 rules and the contemporary path of chivalry. The purpose of the gathering is to refresh our spirit/strengthen our hearts through meditations and attunements, to shape a direction for this activity in The Inayatiyya and in the world, and to form friendships and a social network.

Info: alia.kirsten@gmail.com



The Astrological Chart of Pīrzade Noor un Nīsa Inayat Khan

By Hassan Suhrawardi Gebel

MEETING NOOR un-Nisa as a young woman before the war, one would probably not have imagined her as a knight. She was quite shy and gentle, and her voice was high pitched and thin.

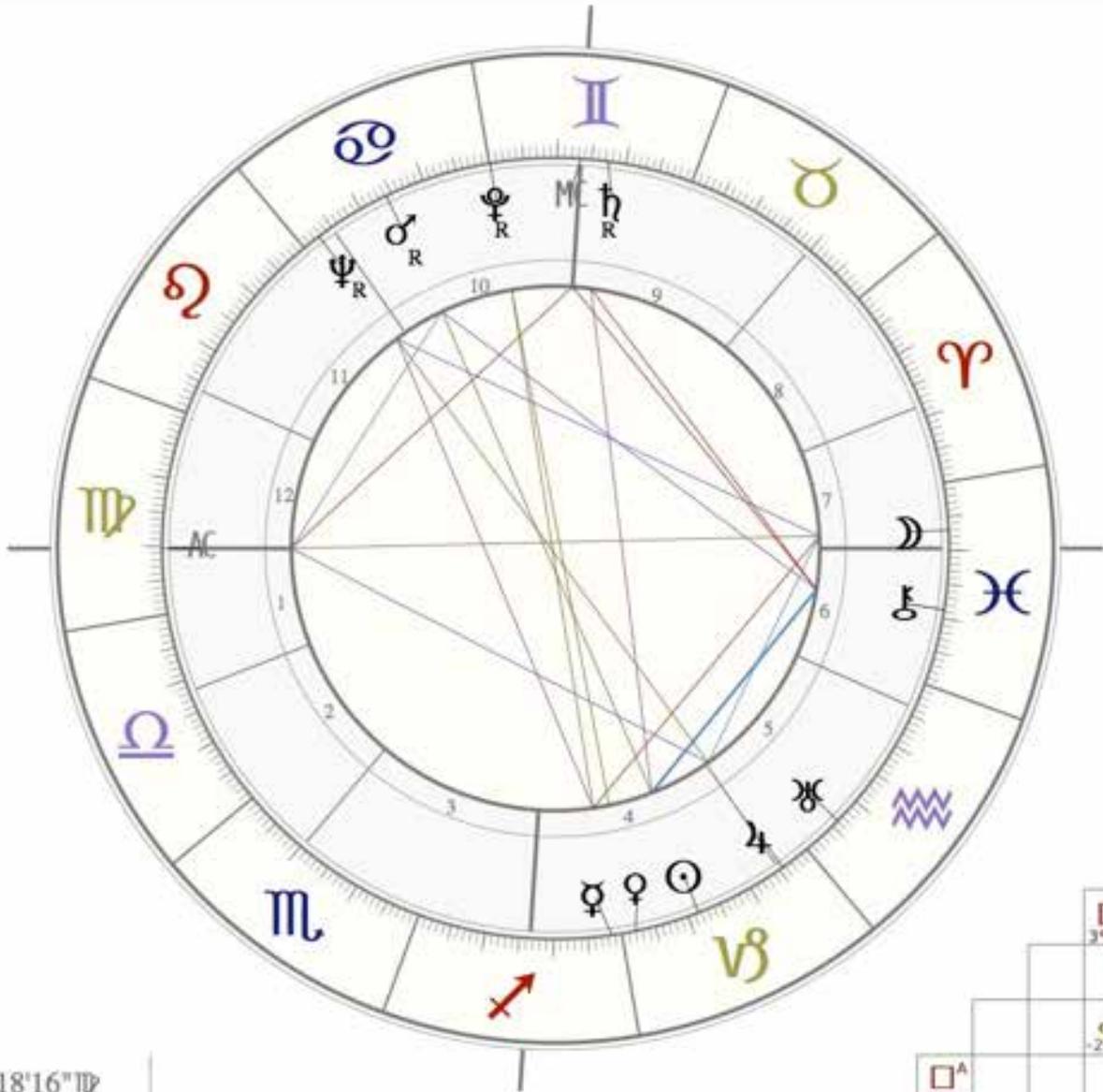
Her biographer Jean Overton Fuller said that she was “extremely tender-hearted and tended to ‘collect’ ineffectual people and to mother them, as she did with sick animals.” She was dreamy, observed fairies in the garden and wrote children’s stories and poetry. Her brother Vilayat said of her, “Noor un-Nisa is a saint, but she is still a negative saint. There is an innocence which is literally ignorance, and there is the ignorance of knowledge. Noor’s still the first...Noor does not see evil. It is a kind of blindness in her.”

DOES NOOR’S astrological chart say anything that might shed light on how such a refined and otherworldly soul would prove to be a true knight enduring the precarious life of a spy and the nightmare of captivity by the Nazis?

NOOR WAS BORN in Moscow at 10:15 in the evening on January 2, 2014 by the Gregorian calendar. Her three principal astrological signs are ascendant in Virgo, Sun in Capricorn, and Moon in Pisces. Her chart has a peculiar symmetry, a cluster of planets in the fourth house at the bottom of the chart and another cluster at the top, centered on Cancer. The fourth house at the bottom represents the intensity of home and family life, and

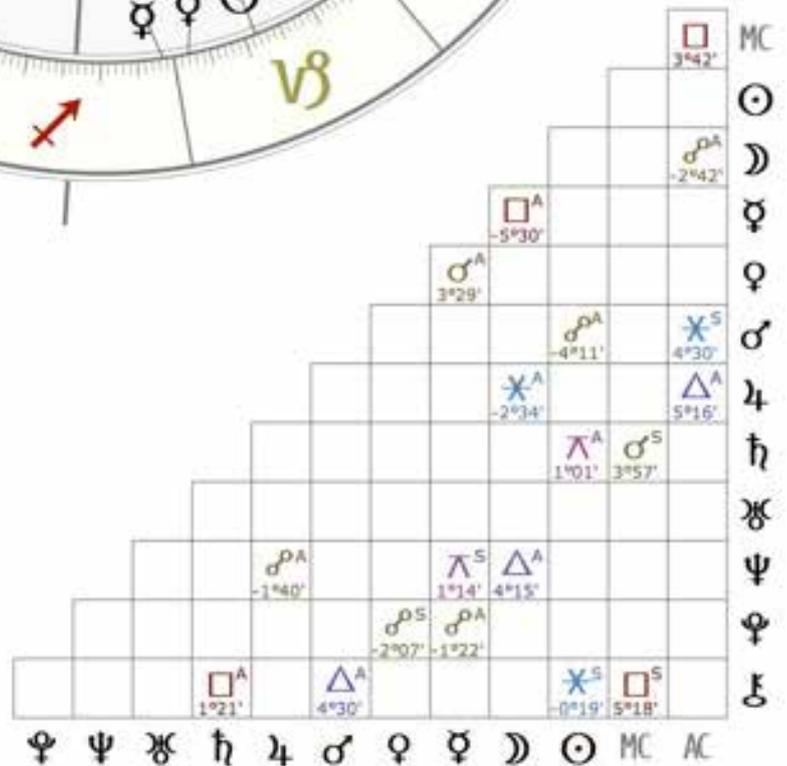
the tenth house at the top signifies her public life. The Moon in Pisces sits in a balancing position, midway between top and bottom, opposite the rising sign in Virgo.

THE RISING SIGN in Virgo indicates how she appears to others, quiet and shy, younger than her age, thin, of a nervous disposition, and practical. Internally she would have a tendency to feel inadequate. Her Sun sign reveals her true nature, not necessarily seen outwardly. The Sun in Capricorn indicates a leader with strength, patience, persistence, practicality, willingness to work hard, dependability, and confidence. Sun in the fourth house of home and family means strongly emotional, outspoken



AC 20°18'16"♍
 MC 16°35'17"♈
 ☉ 11°36'13"♊
 ☽ 23°00'23"♋
 ♀ 28°30'31"♌
 ♀ 2°00'30"♊
 ♂ 15°47'29"♏
 ♃ 25°35'08"♊
 ♅ 12°38'10"♈
 ♁ 6°07'11"♏
 ♃ 27°15'42"♏
 ♀ 29°53'18"♈
 ♃ 11°16'37"♋

Fire: 3
 Earth: 14
 Air: 8
 Water: 9
 Cardinal: 14
 Fixed: 1
 Mutable: 19



NOORS CHART: Sun in the fourth house of home and family means strongly emotional, outspoken about justice despite timidity, depth of understanding, and well grounded. It suggests a strong bond to mother that would be hard to cut. The Moon signifies the inner life. With the Moon in Pisces we have a dreamer who is romantic, sensitive, and mystical. It brings great gentleness and sympathy for the underdog. It also foretells much emotional suffering in life.

“Her knightly strength and determination were brought out by her commitment to justice and compassion for the victims of the war.”

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NOOR'S SUCCESS as an author of inspiring stories for children was an early promise of her public life. The challenge of war and Nazi tyranny called out a hidden part of her nature that wasn't obvious from the impression of her personality.

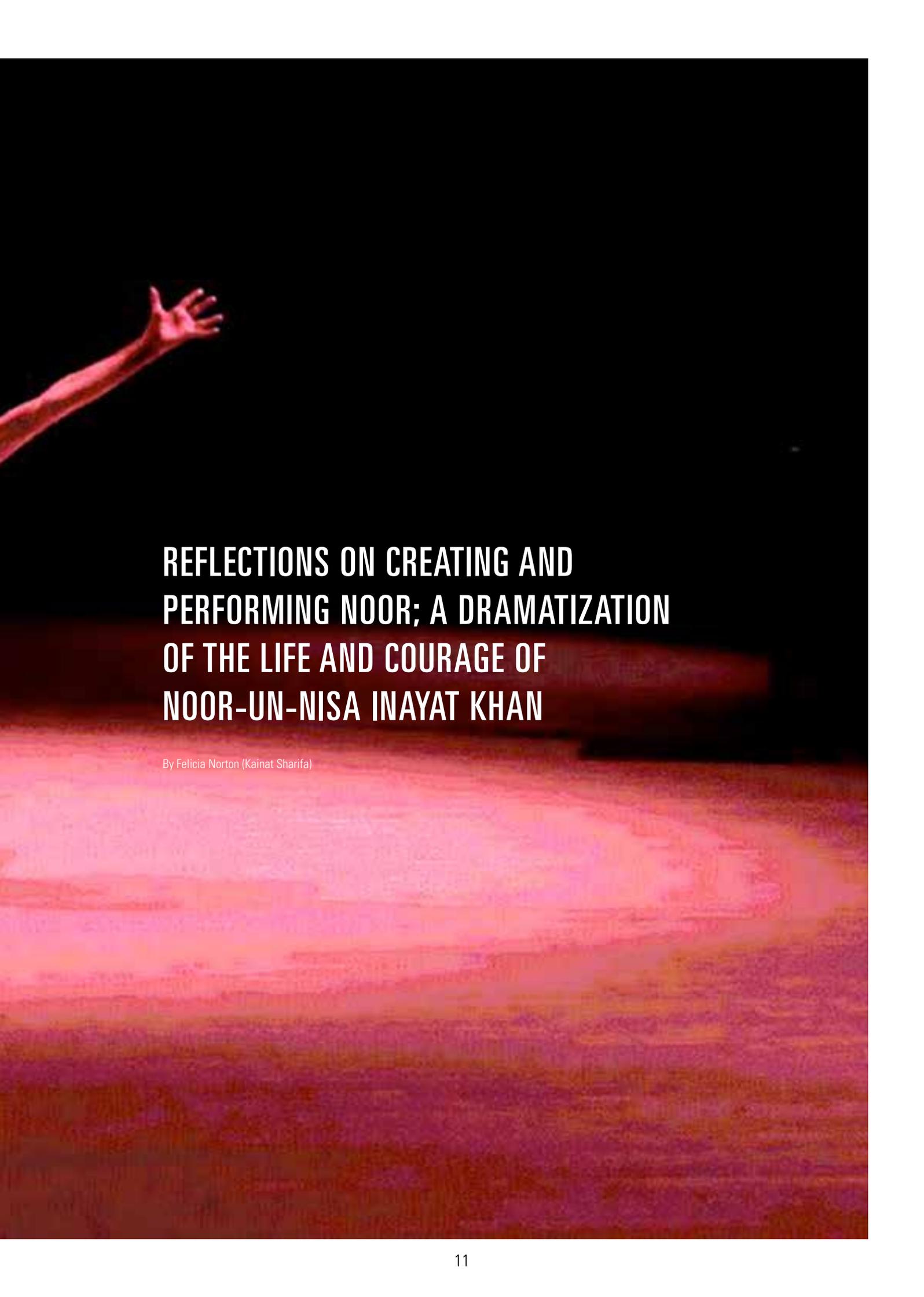
THE AXIS running from fourth to tenth house is emphasized by two oppositions in her chart between Sun and Mars, and between Jupiter and Neptune. Mars is not well placed in Cancer. It means the forcefulness of Mars is withheld and turned inward. However, comparing her chart with the chart of her father, one finds that her father's Sun in Cancer sits very close to her Mars in Cancer and shines down on her Sun in Capricorn. One could imagine that Hazrat Inayat Khan's blessing has liberated the powerful energies of Noor's Sun sign, her hidden knightly nature, and activated a kind of maternal fierceness through her Mars in Cancer. Furthermore, the expansiveness of Jupiter is cramped in the sign of Capricorn. Instead of bringing good fortune in the realm of home and family, its beneficial effect is transferred to Neptune in Cancer, a sign of self-sacrifice from a high

spiritual motivation. The Moon in Pisces, in a harmonious relation to both Jupiter and Neptune, contributes to the internal emotional attunement to compassion and service.

IT APPEARS from her chart that her knightly strength and determination, although they found quiet expression in the way she took charge of the family and cared for her mother when her father died, lay dormant until they were brought out by her commitment to justice and compassion for the victims of the war. Then despite the fragility of her outward appearance and the heightened sensitivity of her emotional nature, the spirit of knighthood under the blazing beam of her father's benevolent gaze gave her the strength and endurance to be true to the end and utter her final affirmation, "Liberté." •





A hand is shown in the upper left corner, reaching out towards the center. The background is dark, with a soft, pinkish-red glow emanating from the bottom, creating a gradient effect. The overall mood is contemplative and artistic.

REFLECTIONS ON CREATING AND PERFORMING NOOR; A DRAMATIZATION OF THE LIFE AND COURAGE OF NOOR-UN-NISA INAYAT KHAN

By Felicia Norton (Kainat Sharifa)

“During the dance performance I was brought into the world and life of this remarkable woman, who was so devoted to humanity that she sacrificed her life for us.”

🌀 *I HAD THE CHANCE to be in Suresnes when Kainat performed her dance piece there some years ago. At that time, I knew very little about Murshids eldest daughter, except for the photos of her in the Kkankah. During the dance performance I was brought into the world and life of this remarkable woman, who was so devoted to humanity that she sacrificed her life for us. In the previous editions of SufiNews from 2014 and 2015, you can read more about her. Also there are 2 biographies: "Noor-un-Nisa Inayat Khan: Madeleine" by Jean Overton Fuller and The Late Baroness Ward of North Tyneside and "Spy Princess: The Life of Noor Inayat Khan" by Shrabani Basu*
(Editor's note)

Lamp of Joy
Light of Beauty, Poetry and Music
Light of womanhood
Light that bravely descended into the dark underworld of Nazi occupied France in World War 2 to help counter the forces of fascism and tyranny
Light of Sacrifice
Light of Chivalry
Light of Courage
Light of the Awakened Soul

I WAS ALWAYS deeply moved when Pir Vilayat spoke about his sister Noor. I wondered how this refined, sensitive, poetic soul, who wrote children's stories, saw fairies, composed music and played the harp

and vina, had the courage to enter the dark world of Nazi occupied France and do the extremely dangerous work of a SOE agent, whose expected lifespan was six weeks. Noor lived in a household immersed in the ideals of futuwaa and chivalry. Ideals of honor, truthfulness, performing one's duty to one's fellow human being and sacrifice of self in service to a more universal whole prevailed. Noor was inspired by the French heroine Joan of Arc at a young age. She translated the 'Twenty Jataka Tales', Buddhist fables of animals who performed acts of sacrifice to help others in need. Both of these interests were a foretelling of her own life's path destiny.

AS A PERFORMING ARTIST, I was inspired to bring Noor's story to life through creating a solo theatre /dance work so that her story might be shared more widely with the public.

I worked with Sasha Spielvogel, director of Labyrinth Dance Theater who helped with production and arranged for an original sound score, created by Emmy nominated composer David Majzlin which evoked Noor's inner spiritual world and the harsh outer world she put herself up against. Actors/actresses voices were recorded as part of the score playing various parts in the scenes which provided a narrative to perform with that included Noor's poems and music compositions, letters between Noor and her brother Vilayat, poetry of Tagore, Churchill speeches, The Jataka Elephant Tale and more. 'NOOR' premiered at the oldest synagogue turned arts center in New York City. Afterwards I performed it at 🌀





☞ The Nehru Centre in London, UK with Shrabani Basu giving an introduction, and at Fazal Manzil in Suresnes, France, Noor’s family home. Shrabani later invited me to perform ‘NOOR’ for the Noor Memorial Trust Benefit Concert in London, UK, a fundraiser for the installation of a bust of Noor in Gordon Square, London, UK. While attending the unveiling of the bust of Noor by Princess Anne in Gordon Square, London UK, in 2012, I had an opportunity to interview Shaikh al-Mashaikh Mahmood Khan. I asked him about the connection of Noor’s life and chivalry. Below is an excerpt of what he shared:

“Futuwa is ‘transmitting whatever you have acquired in your inner being to the outer world’. A knight joins mysticism with morality. [to] reach a level of spiritual attunement... if you don’t reach an ethical attunement you stand still... This is fulfillment at the highest level and is the liberty of the soul from narrowness. In this way, chivalry implies the partnership between oneself and a larger whole served by a larger vision. Not for their own benefit alone but in dedication, loyalty and service to something greater than oneself... The impact of Murshid’s teachings was this spirit of liberty, honor and sacrifice; the Jataka tales exactly express these and emphasize the enormous strength and power to withstand. Noor lived this”.

NOOR’S MESSAGE was very alive when I performed ‘NOOR’ at St Mark’s Church in New York City in November 2016, a few days after the US election. A

lively talkback session ensued afterwards with 250 people in the audience about human rights, Noor’s bravery, and the ideal of liberty, tolerance, and sacred activism.

‘NOOR’ now runs 45 minutes as a solo full evening length work. It has been a gift to perform it in France, in London, UK, at The Edinburgh Fringe Festival, and at The Storytelling Centre in Edinburgh, Scotland, at various venues in NYC, Florida, Colorado, Chautauqua Institution, NY and recently at Sarah Lawrence College, NY in December 2017.

Immersing myself into Noor’s being and consciousness is indeed an awesome and deep experience. It involves engaging with landscapes of her soul from childhood to death within physical, subtle and emotional levels. A ‘resurrection section’ follows her death; a *baqa* after the *fana*. The seeds of awakened consciousness and conscience that Noor planted on the earth are given back into the whole rising into a transformed consciousness. Noor is a holy force, who lived and upheld the Sufi Message of liberty within the most extreme of circumstances. She exhibited great skill, subtlety, refinement, courage, and mastery in her work as an agent. An ongoing guide she continues to ‘transmit’ light and wisdom for our time.

May Noor’s being inspire us to practice true chivalry in the midst of our world and to uphold light in the darkness. •

<http://www.felicianortondance.org> (see ‘Noor’)







CHIVALRY

– *Tradition and influence*



By Shaikh al-Mashaik Mahmood Khan

BAKHSHE - shamanic elements in Hazrat Inayat Khan's paternal ancestry.

In response to numerous enquiries related to Murshid's Health and Healing teachings, and also regarding the Sufi futuwa (chivalry) values in his paternal ancestry, it may be helpful here to present some particulars.

MURSHID'S OWN connection with his forefathers' Bakhshe culture is clear, even though he personally was above all, oriented toward ancient Indian civilisation. However, Murshid's paternal ancestry came from Central Asia-Turkestan, and for all we know, it would have been of composite Turanian-Iranian descent. In this area, they were known as *yuzkhans* and *bakhsbes*. *Yuz* literally means horde: a unit of mounted nomads, but (much to my younger days' regret) there is no oral tradition whatsoever of such romantic beginnings. On the contrary, the name *Yuz* came to be applied to lands held by a particular kinship group. It was intended to convey an independence such as that of a mounted nomad group. This means that they were not tributary to any overlord, so the term would mean a tax-free land ownership —at least in theory! ☞



Musharaff Khan and Maheboob Khan



☞ **KHAN OF THE YUZ** denoted chieftaincy, or a direct descendance and potential succession to clan leadership. *Bakhshes* were the kinship group's patriarchs, the 'wise men' of the family unit. They were the 'shamanic' practitioners of "magical, medical, musical" traditional skills. In India, those first two developed into mystical and healing activities, and incantation and recitation evolved into Indian classical and sacred music. As landowners, they escaped Timur Lenk's ravages in Central Asia, and whilst acquiring new lands in the Punjab in this period. (Had they been nomad horsemen, they would simply have joined Timur's army even if at first resisting it).

IN PUNJAB THEY became *khan-zamindars*; landed gentry, and as such

they fully absorbed Indian civilisation. Outgrowing the far too large and loose tribal system, they became an Indian *khasset*, kinship caste, even though as Muslims they rigorously rejected the inequality of human beings through horizontal status layers. And of course, being free of Hindu caste divides, they tended happily to equalize their *bakhshes* and subsequent *mashaik(h)s* to the Brahmin and their *khans* and later *mirs* with the Rajput kshatriya caste communities.

IN BOTH CASES, the very dharma value of moral duty and sacred obligation, was later found explicitly in Hazrat Inayat Khan's Sufism - both as general obligation and specific tenet. At one time they were known as '*bakhsheane yuz*;' which means the horde of the bakhshes, and later on

they were called the *Jam'ashahan-mashaikhan*, which is really nothing but a translation of the Turkish *yuzkhan* and *bakhshes* but has wrongly been associated by the highly talented polyhistor Martin and poetess-author Bloch with one of the ancient Punjabi saints *Jumasha*.

As landowners, they sought to maintain the Indian joint-family holding of property over against the arab-muslim law of property division between single heirs. This gave them a socio-economic motivation for Indian assimilation, as well as for a liberal Sufism apt to distance itself from the narrower outlandish impositions of shariat orthodoxy.

MASHAIKHAN, Arab plural into Persian singular, was a distinctive Sufi-mystic qualification, although in line



with both the spiritual and temporal character of caste, it also sprouted the corresponding worldly connotation of grandsheikhs as mahasheikhan. Whilst *bakhshe* turned into *mashaikh*, like *khan*, it continued as a possible personal title. In this way Murshid's cousin and brother-in-law, husband of his sister Jenabiy, was *Mehr-bakhshe* (and not the Persian *bakhshe* as in *Maula Bakhshe*). Mashaikh Rahemat khan took his two young sons, Inayat and Maheboob, to the last family survivor in the Punjab: their father's old cousin or uncle Dey Umar-bakhshe for the revering *qadam-boseh*, which literally means a feet-kiss ceremonial introduction.

BOTH THE bakhshe-tradition in Sufi mysticism and Indian music flourished richly through every

generation after the migration to India, of which Inayat khan was the 16th, and in each generation it was supposed to have at least one fully practicing mystic. In the generation before Hazrat Inayat khan, this was his ascetic Paternal uncle Mashaikh Ja'far khan Tayaji, (the father of Mehr bakhshe.)

IT IS NOT CLEAR how much of the healing aspect was of central-Asian or Indian origin respectively, but passages in Murshid's *Health and Healing* lectures suggest at least a joint heritage and certainly a shared attitude and aptitude in regard of healing practices. Pir-o-Murshid Jagirdar Muhammad Ali khan Thopezay was trained in a healing tradition which clearly has close connections to the martial arts, and although this was outside the family context, it suggests a parallel

immigrant skill.

FUTUWA - THE KNIGHTHOOD MORAL TRADITION

The related Futuwa, the knighthood moral tradition, was already part of Hazrat and his brothers' early education, and thence became part of Hazrat Inayat khan's later Sufi teachings.

This is a more familiar subject, because the interchange of Islamic and European chivalric attitudes is well attested in history. The literature on Andalusia and (pre-)crusade Syria is huge; the intercultural connections in both Syria and Spain, despite periods of violent hostilities, and the contacts between Christians and Muslims within both societies was unique in the West. And knighthood produced

*“Allow sound to arise out of your own
silence quite spontaneously, not consciously allow
the shadow of expectation to intervene.”*

the first personalised secular arts in heraldry and troubadour/trouvere vocal music.

Islamised Andalusians (proto-Spaniards) developed an even older vocal tradition; which through Muslim and *mozarab*, i.e. arabised Christian contacts with Aquitania, spread far and wide. To my knowledge, an early Cartagena singing tradition is only referred to in Latin literature; and how this was continued by much the same people upon Islamisation, still remains a curious theme to be researched. It has been noted that its singing-girls were as popular then as they are today. According to specialists, their influences, too, must have been significant in spreading the chivalric Troubadour style of music in European courts and castles. Hence, even gender enthusiasts may acquiesce in this highly masculine art form!

MEDITATIVE MUSIC

Meditative music to Hazrat Inayat Khan and his brothers was the Indian classical one.

Murshid set out from classical Indian music and its age-old spiritual dimensions, which he renewed so strikingly. To him music became the contemplative instrument for mysticism, and the two approaches mingled and proceeded alongside one another until the enthusiastic and utterly devoted Theosophical, then 'Theosufistic' mureeds swung an important section of Sufism into what today we call a 'neoreligious'



Mohammed Ali Khan

direction. This meant that aesthetic-contemplative music, one of Hazrat's Sufism two wings, atrophied, but was maintained by all the four Brothers throughout their lifetimes in the circles where that dual Indian mysticism in its Sufi method and values continued to be cultivated - with or without the trappings of the "exoteric" or "Message Activities".

The singing by Md. Ali Khan of Shaikh-ul-Mashaik Maheboob Khan's compositions of verses from Murshid's *Gayan - Vadan - Nirtan* gloriously revived Sufi music. They brought their listeners from aesthetic contemplation into mystical meditation through their music. In Suresnes and Holland I have seen halls of mureeds transported into deep instatic conditions through

interiorised attunement that could never be attained by other means of contemplation.

OF COURSE, with proper attunement any great music can prove effective. Murshid Ali Khan used to say that Baroque music is like gracefully flowing waters, and I have occasionally advised those unable to absorb Indian classical music to focus on the Brandenburg concertos. Much Baroque and Classical composed music, from e.g. Haydn and Mozart is helpful as well, but especially for beautiful melodies there is one condition: one must already know and enjoy them before progressing from fascination to absorption- on first or second hearing the sheer beauty may delight but detract, or lead to ecstasy rather than interiorization! Above all, audition should never be forced. Allow sound to arise out of your own silence quite spontaneously, not consciously allow the shadow of expectation to intervene. Upon conclusion of the music, let it continue inwardly. That too can often prove inspiring.

MUSIC AND MYSTICISM

were Hazrat Inayat Khan and his brothers' joint heritage. Murshid revived and recreated a dual ancient tradition into a both highly personal and highly general modern mode of contemplation of beauty - apt to lead listeners to the absorbing meditation of mystical fulfilment. •

Photo of Maheboob Khan



Hazrat Ali, a Model of Futuwwa

By Hassan Suhrawardi Gebel

Illustration by Moira Stark

A PRIME EXEMPLAR of futuwwa or chivalry in the Sufi tradition is Ali ibn Abu Talib. Ali was the son of Abu Talib who was the uncle of Prophet Muhammad. Therefore, Ali was a cousin of the Prophet. He came into the custody of Muhammad early in life and was brought up by him like a son. He was the first to embrace Islam when Muhammad asked for the support of his family and clan. He was a witness to the revelation of the Holy Quran. He became the primary protector of the new religion when it was being persecuted. Besides the well-known story that illustrates his courage and faith, in which he slept in the bed of Muhammad to defeat the assassins who wanted to murder the Prophet in his sleep, he faced many famed warriors on the battlefield in one-on-one combat and defeated them all. He was instrumental in turning around crucial battles and rallying the outnumbered Muslim forces to achieve unlikely victories. His bravery and chivalry on the battlefield won even the praise of his enemies. Though he was a renowned warrior, he always preferred to avoid war if a way out could be found through negotiation.

BEFORE THE PROPHET died, he left many indications that Hazrat Ali was to be his successor. Nevertheless, following Muhammad's death there was a scuffle for power. Ali had no taste for political maneuvering and withdrew from contention to pursue other projects. Three Caliphs, Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman succeeded the Prophet. Uthman was assassinated and left behind an administration that was riddled with corruption. The com-

munity turned in desperation to Ali who reluctantly accepted the role of the fourth Caliph. During six tumultuous years in that role, he reorganized the army and government. He instituted a fair system of taxation and for the first time, each Muslim was given the same allotment from the revenues, regardless of status. Slaves received the same as their masters. This leveling of status resulted in resentment and rebellion among the privileged. When a colleague pointed out to Ali that his system was alienating those who had power to help him and helping the poor who had no power, Ali replied, as for the entitled who rebel, good riddance. He said he was not seeking advantage from any party but doing what he felt was right in the eyes of God.

ALI LEFT BEHIND a large number of sermons and a selection of letters which have been published in English under the title Nahjul Balagha. My impression from reading many sermons and a few letters is that Ali saw the worldly life as filled with temptations to overcome. He saw this life as an opportunity to prepare for the next life when one's fate will be sealed, and change will be much more difficult. If this life is devoted to pleasures, comforts and self-seeking, one will be ill prepared for the next life. On the other hand, if one seeks to do good in this life, helping others and behaving in an upright manner, one will be rewarded in the next life.

AT A TIME of crisis during his rule, Ali thought he might not survive and wrote a long letter of guidance to his

son. I have made selections from that letter which contains much chivalric teaching. I also changed the language to make it gender inclusive which sometimes makes for awkward phrasing. Here are a few samples from a longer list of selections. To read all of the selections, please contact sg@inayatiorde.org

Take care to provide well for your future abode. Do not barter away eternal blessing for pleasures of this mortal and fleeting world.

Fight, whenever required, to defend the cause of Allah. When you think of defending the cause of Allah, do not be afraid that people will laugh at you, censure your action or slander you. Fearlessly and boldly help truth and justice. Bear patiently the sufferings and face bravely the obstacles which come in your way when you follow truth, and when you try to uphold it. Adhere to the cause of truth and justice wherever you find it.

Develop the habit of patience against sufferings, calamities and adversities. This virtue of patience is one of the highest values of morality and nobility of character, and it is the best habit which one can develop. Trust in Allah and let your mind seek God's protection in every calamity and suffering, because you will thus entrust yourself and your affairs to the Best Trustee and to the Mightiest Guardian.

The greatest achievement of your character is that the hostility of another against you does not overcome the consideration and friendship you feel towards that one, and his or her ill-treatment of you does not overbalance your kind treatment to him or her. •



IRON RULES

My conscientious self:

Make no false claims.

Speak not against others in their absence.

Do not take advantage of a person's ignorance.

Do not boast of your good deeds.

Do not claim that which belongs to another.

Do not reproach others, making them firm in their faults.

Do not spare yourself in the work which you must accomplish.

Render your services faithfully to all who require them.

Seek not profit by putting someone in straits.

Harm no one for your own benefit.

COPPER RULES

My conscientious self:

Consider your responsibility sacred.

Be polite to all.

Do nothing which will make your conscience feel guilty.

Extend your help willingly to those in need.

Do not look down upon the one who looks up to you.

Judge not another by your own law.

Bear no malice against your worst enemy.

Influence no one to do wrong.

Be prejudiced against no one.

Prove trustworthy in all your dealings.

SILVER RULES

My conscientious self:

Consider duty as sacred as religion.

Use tact on all occasions.

Place people rightly in your estimation.

Be no more to anyone than you are expected to be.

Have regard for the feelings of every soul.

Do not challenge anyone who is not your equal.

Do not make a show of your generosity.

Do not ask a favour of those who will not grant it you.

Meet your shortcomings with a sword of self-respect.

Let not your spirit be humbled in adversity.

GOLDEN RULES

My conscientious self:

Keep to your principles in prosperity as well as in adversity.

Be firm in faith through life's tests and trials.

Guard the secrets of friends as your most sacred trust.

Observe constancy in love.

Break not your word of honour whatever may befall.

Meet the world with smiles in all conditions of life.

When you possess something, think of the one who does not possess it.

Uphold your honour at any cost.

Hold your ideal high in all circumstances.

Do not neglect those who depend upon you



CHIVALRY AND THE PEOPLE OF BLAME

How the encounter with “The people of blame”, an early Sufi movement in Khorasan/Iran, brought me to the knighthood of purity. And how all this relates to copper rule number two.

By Nurunnahar Ingrid Dengg
Foto by René Prohaska

IN THE FALL 2016, I attended an online class by Himayat Inayati about early Sufi mystics, as I was preparing myself for a journey to Khorasan, an Iranian region which during the 9th and 10th centuries was one of the most important centers of early Sufism, besides Baghdad. The first lecture was about Dhu'l Nun al-Misri, the Egyptian. He had close connections to the Sufi mystics living in Khorasan. One of his friends was Fatima of Nishapur, one of the most important female Sufi mystics of 9th century Iran. It is told that he several times asked for her advice¹.

Dhu'l Nun was not only a widely known and appreciated Sufi master, but also the first who spoke theoretically about gnosis; stations (Maqamat) and states (Hal) on the spiritual path.

Some of these stations are listed as faith, blame, penitence, remorse, renunciation, purification, patience, subsistence, union, grace, freedom, peace, glorification and mercy. During Himayat's course, we were asked to place ourselves in one of these stations. I considered several, but there was one station which caught my attention again and again; “the station of blame”. To me, blame always had a negative connotation. It was related to projections towards others or excessive self-criticism. In retreats I did the practice of reciting “I am blameless”; calling upon my pure inner being, my true self and my soul's purity. “The station of blame” seemed to me equivalent to “Nafs al-Lawwama”, the self-critical nafs which we must conquer to advance on the spiritual path. 





Photo by Regina Totz

☞ The station I had chosen irritated me ... but that which irritates us most, also attracts us, and in my research on “the station of blame”, I came across Cecilia Twinch’s article “Created for Compassion”², which is about Ibn Arabi’s work on Dhu’l Nun: *Attar and others considered him (Dhu’l Nun) to belong to the people of blame....They walk in the market, talk with people, and none of God’s creatures see any of them being different in any way from the general public, yet ...they are free and devoted servants of their Lord, seeing Him always in their eating and drinking, their waking and sleeping, and their speaking with Him among the people. They are the people of blame, al-Malamiyya, the highest of men who have achieved the station of chivalry and good character with God, and not with any other.*³

THE PATH OF RESPONSIBILITY

Inner freedom, chivalric conduct, taking responsibility for one’s life and withdrawing projections; I wanted to know more about these people! The Malâmatiyya had its origin in Khorasan in the 9th and 10th

centuries. At that time the city of Nishapur was the political, economic and spiritual center of this region in Northeastern Iran. The region was dominated by very excessive forms of asceticism and a kind of externally shown spirituality. From Sara Sviri’s article on the Malâmatî Movement⁴: *The Malâmatiyya represent an extremely introverted reaction to extroverted and ascetic forms of spirituality (zuhd). The people of blame were against the outwardly carried signs of spirituality. They were against excessive and superficial asceticism and spiritual arrogance, and their aim was to combat the lower self by being humble and to dedicate their life to adab and to chivalry. They warned against the danger of spiritual pride, that would have a tendency to be more excessive than ordinary pride. In an article about the “Path of blame” on a Chishti Website I found this quote by Shaykh Hamdun al-Qassar (the founder of the path of blame): *The beauty of the poor person is in his humility, but in case he gets proud because of it, then his pride is more excessive than the pride of a rich person.*⁵*

Maybe “blame” is a rather misleading (though common) translation of the term “malâma”. Himayat wrote in the discussion forum of our online class: *Blame does seem like a harsh word to our sensibilities. Perhaps using the word “responsibility” in place of “blame” may be useful. For actually, the station of blame and the path of blame are explicated through consideration and taking responsibility for many problems of our life rather than believing others are responsible.*

The “people of blame”, or “people of responsibility”, avoided everything which could lure them into self-delusion. They tried to conquer hypocrisy, vanity and ego inflation. Their goal was *ikhlâs* (sincerity), *a state in which one’s actions and perceptions become free of the contamination of the ego or the lower self (Sviri)*. And they had close connections to the tradition of futuwwa (chivalry), a system of closed societies of crafts and professions in medieval Persian towns. These exclusive and esoteric circles required high ethical standards from their members. The highest of these norms was *ithar*, extreme altruism or



Photo by Regina Totz

self-sacrifice, which they shared with the people of blame. Sviri writes: *The Malâmatiyya masked their mystical life under the guise of the social futuwwa. Many of the Malâmâtî teachers and disciples bore epithets indicating crafts and professions: al-Haddâd (the ironsmith), al-Qassâr (the bleacher), al-Hajjâm (the cupper), al-Khayyât (the tailor).* ⁶ Outwardly they lived normal, seemingly unimpressive lives, but inwardly they strived to be constantly connected with God, to be immersed in the presence of the divine. This touched me deeply. This is my goal too.

THE BRIDGE TO COPPER RULE 2: BE POLITE TO ALL

This urgent need to work consequentially with my lower nafs and to transform it, brought me to the Knighthood of Purity and the task of contemplation. And then came the moment, when I started on copper rule 2: *My conscientious self, be polite to all.* It is one of those rules, where one must dive deep to fully understand them. First one might think; how could I be polite to all, even to those who hurt me or whom I do not like? Isn't this falseness,

deceitfulness and of no value? But Pir Zia gives this rule a surprising turn in his commentary. I was amazed to discover that he begins this commentary with a quote from one of the main representatives of the Malâmatiyya, Abu Hafis al-Haddad, who said: *'At-tasawwuf kullahu adab' Sufism, at-tasawwuf, is entirely adab, is entirely beautiful manner.* ⁷ Here they were again, my friends from Nishapur. What touched me most in Pir Zia's commentary, was the following passage, The saying *'be polite to all' is not only an imperative that we should act politely. What is required here is to establish the conditions in our life whereby politeness can manifest naturally.* But what are these conditions, where politeness can manifest naturally, where one is able to handle surprises and unexpected challenges and emergencies, resting in a state that is rooted in equanimity? It is a state of inner connectedness, a state of inner refuge in one's own divine nature. A state of being immersed in the divine presence, that is the goal of all spiritual striving. A state, where one does not re-act out of emotional

disturbance, but acts from a place of inner freedom. Or to put it in other words, a place of freedom from the lower nafs.

With this insight, the rule Be polite to all suddenly became an all-encompassing spiritual goal, a goal which is worth to strive for during a whole life. Often, I stumble, and then again, I reach these moments of connection. And the moments of inner connection eventually increase, they linger on, and slowly I feel able to stay connected, or to re-connect also in difficult life situations. I am far from realization yet but advance towards the goal of being polite to all, living Adab; following the path of responsibility. •

¹) Helminski, Camille Adams: *Women of Sufism. A hidden treasure. Writings and stories of mystic poets, scholars & saints.* Shambala Publications, Boston 2003, p. 47f.

²) Twinch, Cecilia: *Created for Compassion. Ibn 'Arabi's work on Dhul-Nun the Egyptian. Presented at the international congress 'Ibn 'Arabi in Egypt: Crossroads of East and West', held in Cairo, 13–16 December 2008.* www.ibnarabisociety.org/articles/created-for-compassion.html

³) Twinch, 2008.

⁴) Sviri, Sara: *Hakim Tirmidbi and the Malamati Movement in Early Sufism.* In: *The Heritage of Sufism* vol. 1, ed. L. Lewisohn, Oxford, Oneworld Publications 1999. http://imagomundi.com.br/espirtualidade/tirmidbi_malamati.pdf

⁵) *The path of blame, anonymous article on the website of the Chishti Order:* <http://www.chishti.ru/path-of-blame.htm>

⁶) Sviri, 1999.

⁷) Pir Zia Inayat Khan, *Commentary on the Rules.* <https://inayatiorder.org/teachings/commentary-on-the-rules/copper-rules/#tab-9b995ab-8b771e680615>

THE BARN

Helping to create and sustain an arts centre.

By Mark Karim Hope

ONE OF MY main occupations for the last 25 years has been helping to develop a community arts centre in Aberdeenshire. This has been a collaborative venture with my partner and wife, Sajeda, and many other volunteers. It has involved progressively improving farm buildings which became redundant for farming during the 1980s. The less visible side of the work has been supporting the growth of the many communities involved the Barn, not least the small organisation that runs it.

Extend your help willingly to those in need

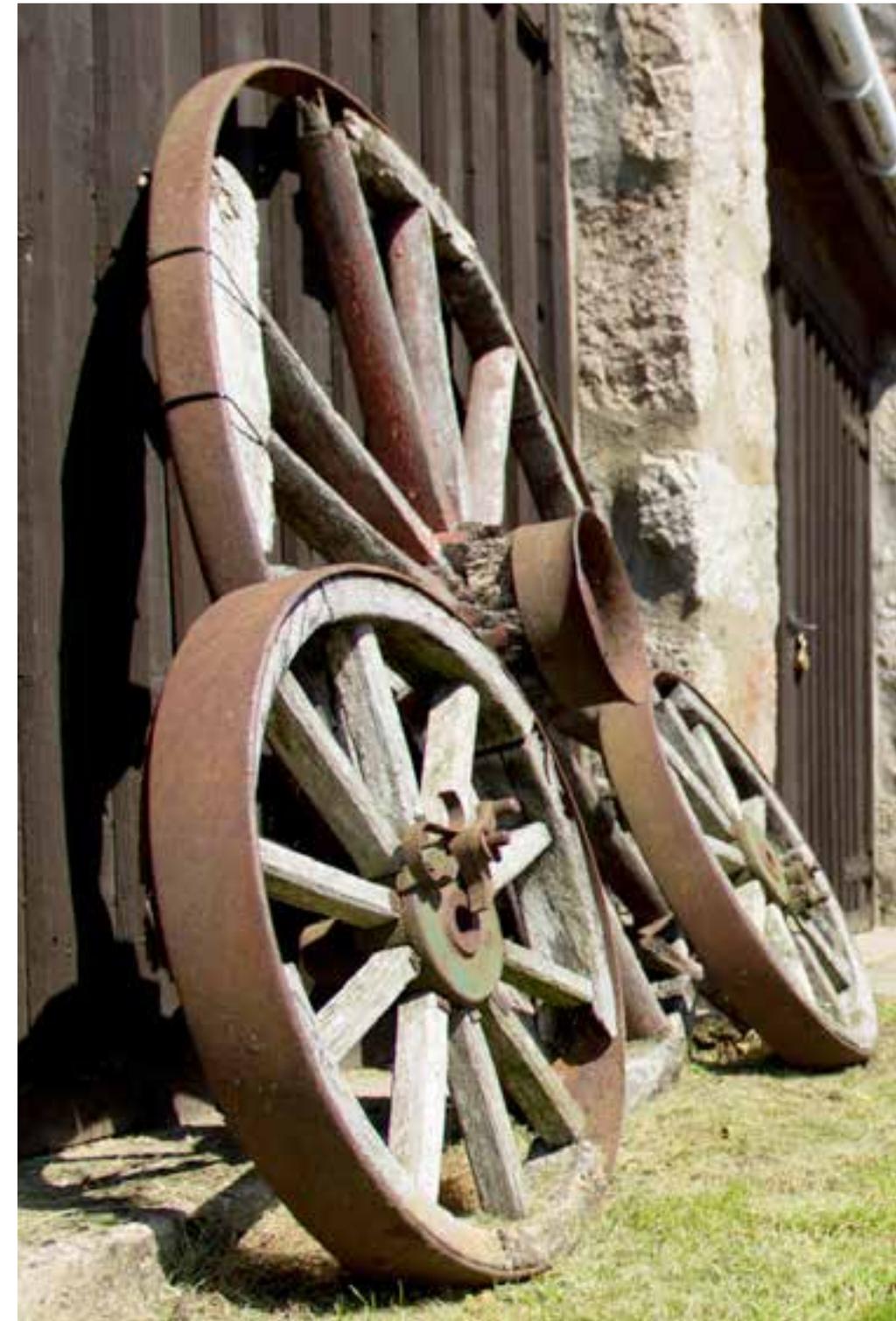
Have regard for the feelings of every soul

I have been reflecting upon my work at the Barn in relation to two pairs of rules. The first pair concern how we act in the external world.

Sajeda and I had recently moved to Banchory from London and we were keen to help promote more creative activity around our new home, because there was no arts centre near Banchory and also very limited opportunities for art and craft workshops.

IN 1992 A LOCAL group was formed to develop a new arts centre in the old farm buildings.

Like most communities, Banchory consists of many overlapping communities of different shapes,

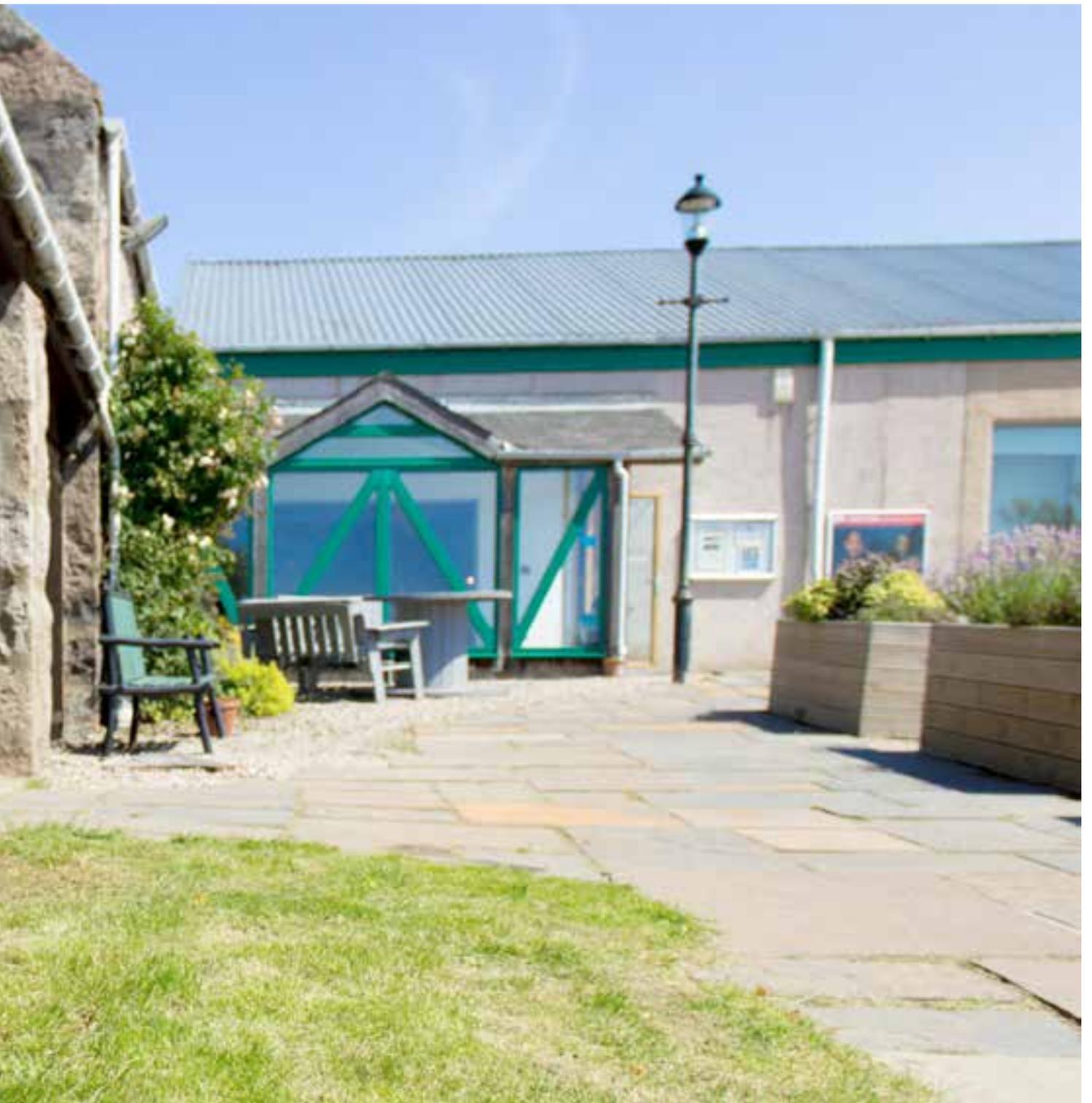


sizes, interests, ages and cultural backgrounds. And within every community, each person will have particular habits, likes and dislikes and so on. In addition, there's the problem that people may not know what they're missing when things are unavailable.

FROM THE OUTSET there were questions around intentions. Who would benefit from the new centre?

What would the programme be? With what objectives? How would it be managed and run? There were of course many different and sometimes conflicting answers to these questions and there were many lively conversations and discussions.

WHEN WE consider extending help willingly to those in need, the word need can mean very different



things to people. Even the need for food and drink, which might seem straightforward, can be complicated – what food and drink is wholesome? In what quantity? How is it sourced and transported?

When it comes to social and emotional needs, the position can be even more complicated. Sajeda and I share a passionate belief in the importance of both creativity and community in

nurturing human happiness, so we see everything through this lens whether it is “right” or not in any absolute sense.

EXTENDING HELP is also less straightforward than it might seem. Sometimes the help people need is obvious, and they are asking us to provide it. At other times, help is not being asked for, and we make our own judgement about what’s needed. This

is difficult territory and is where I find the rule Have regard for the feelings of every soul a helpful guide. Sometimes people don’t want my help and sometimes the help I think they need is not the help they think they need. It is easy to see why people often walk by on the other side, ignoring the need for help, unlike the Good Samaritan in Luke’s gospel. They might be uncaring or too busy, or they might think that ☺

"MY EARLIEST MEMORIES INVOLVE BEING IN NATURE AND FEELING PART OF THE WORLD AROUND ME."

☞ they are unable to help effectively. The rule encourages us to be deeply empathetic and to be slow to form judgements, especially judgements about others.

NATURE

For me personally, the rule Have regard for the feelings of every soul is not simply about human souls. My earliest memories involve being in Nature and feeling part of the world around me – including the animals, trees, flowers as well as the wider landscape of fields, woods and hills. My education led to me feeling separate from the natural world, but music and my spiritual practice have, over the decades, restored my awareness of deep connection.

To raise awareness of our dependence on Nature, the Barn has developed a special interest in ecology (<https://www.thebarnarts.co.uk/learning/arts-ecology>) It currently supports the largest community of new allotments in Scotland, a wild garden and a yet-to-be developed walled garden, building biodiversity and supporting programmes of work that address environmental issues. The wider site is shared with an independent slow food café, Buchanan's Bistro, who share the same interests in ecology, promoting locally grown and produced organic

food (<http://www.buchananfood.com>).

Let not your spirit be humbled in adversity

Meet the world with smiles in all conditions of life

Sajeda and I have been very lucky to have had the opportunity to help develop an arts centre in our community. It has been hard work with many obstacles, but overall it has been hugely rewarding. It has been a constant challenge to try to balance the need to listen, consult and enquire with the need to take decisions that allow action. In moving to action, should one always follow the views of the majority, or should one follow one's intuition?

WE HAVE found no rule or formula to answer this question. Indeed, I have no faith in the notion of "right answers" except in relation to trivial questions. Serious questions tend not to have a simple answer; instead they open up interesting dilemmas and further questions.

HOWEVER inclusive and consultative I try to be, I cannot please everyone, and I cannot avoid mistakes. If decisions I take turn out to be right, some people will resent being proved

wrong. And when decisions turn out badly, the "I told you so" of others only adds to my own self-criticism which is well rehearsed!

SO PERHAPS the main requirement when trying to create something new is endless patience and resilience. Even if I am feeling stressed and exhausted and all my work seems fruitless, I need to remember that my spirit is still flying with the Divine – it is only my physical body/mind which is temporarily bogged down in the vicissitudes of the world.

AND IF I CAN tune into the divine and eternal nature of my spirit, how can I fail to meet the world with smiles? I know that all conditions of life are temporary, and I have very many blessings for which to be grateful.

IN THE PRESENT state of the world, these two rules feel like special blessings. They remind me that although the conditions outside of me are mostly beyond my control, the conditions within me are within my control provided I can keep in touch with Divine presence: that timeless Unity within which the whole of the Universe dwells. •



The link between Chivalry and Zira'at

By Faza'l Mai

IN ADDITION to the sense of service to the elements, we must serve the Earth as a living entity, a living soul. This being is perceived at all times as a mother: The first archetype of the Earth is the mother. Thus this chivalrous tradition is an adaptation, a revival of the ancient tradition of the knights, oriented towards the feminine ideal of the Virgin. It may be that the mother's ideal is the foundation of Zira'at chivalry. (Pir Zia)

THE ELEMENTS

The link between Sky and Earth allows creativity. Too much earth or too much sky does not work well. A good balance between the two is much more productive.

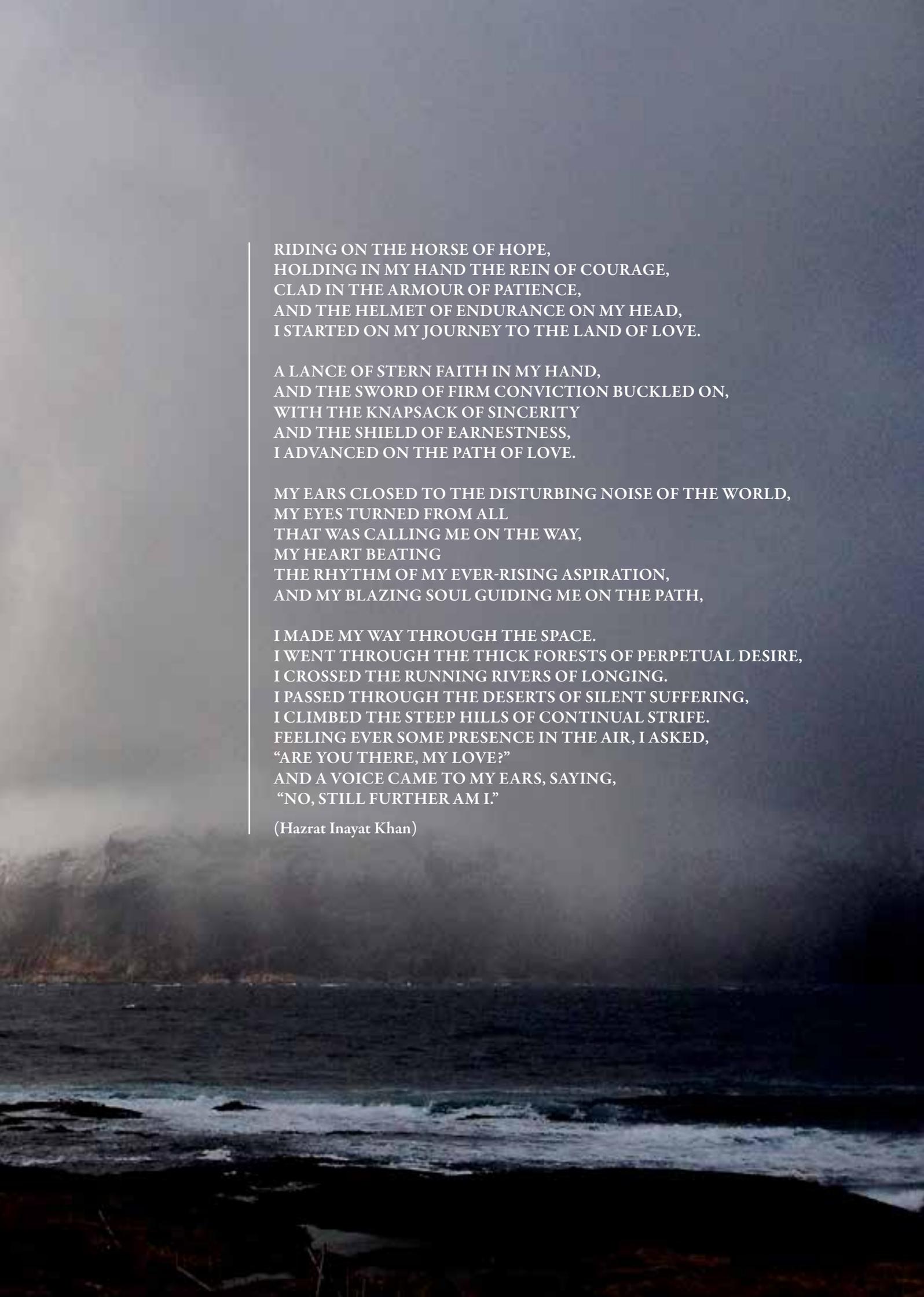
When you walk, the earth's energy penetrate the plant of your feet through your mocassins, while the heavenly energy enter through the crown of your head. These two energies come together inside your heart. And tell yourself that these are not just ideas. They are facts to be explored. There are too many people today who are separated from themselves ; from their innermost being. It is this being, with a capital B, that we need to rediscover in us. (Text amerindian)

From underneath, the tree eats the earth and drink the water with its roots. From overhead, it takes the fire and breathe the air by its leaves. Each tree is a cosmic pillar that gives foundation to Heaven in the fertile ground of the Earth, and inspires in the Earth the soul of Heaven. (Pir Zia)

THE HUMILITY of the Earth allows the descent of the will of the Holy Spirit by the Water. The Christian rise of Fire illuminates the heart, and leads to the welcome of happiness of the free air. Then by an indispensable serenity the Ether opens.

THE LINK Sky-Earth, particularly highlighted in the Zira'at, and in the path of Chivalry, is related to the meaning of our incarnation. In one of its aspects, the incarnation is given to us to serve as a channel and to enable us to act in the service of this link. As soon as we realize that we are a channel, we start with much more efficiency and consistency. Trust is a very important element in this communion. (Tawaquil)

You must be calm in the midst of chaos. Zira'at is an active peace. (Pir Vilayat)



RIDING ON THE HORSE OF HOPE,
HOLDING IN MY HAND THE REIN OF COURAGE,
CLAD IN THE ARMOUR OF PATIENCE,
AND THE HELMET OF ENDURANCE ON MY HEAD,
I STARTED ON MY JOURNEY TO THE LAND OF LOVE.

A LANCE OF STERN FAITH IN MY HAND,
AND THE SWORD OF FIRM CONVICTION BUCKLED ON,
WITH THE KNAPSACK OF SINCERITY
AND THE SHIELD OF EARNESTNESS,
I ADVANCED ON THE PATH OF LOVE.

MY EARS CLOSED TO THE DISTURBING NOISE OF THE WORLD,
MY EYES TURNED FROM ALL
THAT WAS CALLING ME ON THE WAY,
MY HEART BEATING
THE RHYTHM OF MY EVER-RISING ASPIRATION,
AND MY BLAZING SOUL GUIDING ME ON THE PATH,

I MADE MY WAY THROUGH THE SPACE.
I WENT THROUGH THE THICK FORESTS OF PERPETUAL DESIRE,
I CROSSED THE RUNNING RIVERS OF LONGING.
I PASSED THROUGH THE DESERTS OF SILENT SUFFERING,
I CLIMBED THE STEEP HILLS OF CONTINUAL STRIFE.
FEELING EVER SOME PRESENCE IN THE AIR, I ASKED,
“ARE YOU THERE, MY LOVE?”
AND A VOICE CAME TO MY EARS, SAYING,
“NO, STILL FURTHER AM I.”

(Hazrat Inayat Khan)

The power of three words

By Deepa Gulruk Patel

I REMEMBER the day I realized that being a knight was not what I had imagined it to be. My eyes were glued to one of those emails where all my defenses were up and instead of breathing calmly I wanted to shout at the person on the other end. It took nearly a day before I remembered the rules and then I found myself bouncing between “do not reproach others, making them firm in the faults” and “uphold your honour at all costs”. In the middle of composing a reply I became aware that since my knighting ceremony I didn’t always repeat the words “My conscientious self”. When I first took up studying the rules these three words had acted as an anchor to the part of me that I believed followed the rules with clarity and patience and yet here I was unsure that I even understood who “My conscientious self” was. I felt like I was back at the drawing board and the only way to find a creative way out of this was to re-examine my relationship with each word.

IN THE WORD “my”, I found the part of me that had made the commitment to living a more conscientious life. Here I could feel my sense of ownership to this commitment. Over the next weeks the way I said ‘my’ changed. I went from seeing this as the least important word to feeling that this word was like a clarion call that awoke all the parts of myself and brought them to a place of attention. But not like the Guard standing outside Buckingham Palace

no, this was the attention we have when we are about to meet a lover. My senses started tingling with delight as to what would come next. In the word “conscientious” I was exposed to the fact that my own experience of this word was very strongly connected to that of the conscientious objector, a person willing to stand for and in some cases even die for what they valued in the face of cultural and societal norms opinion. And while this was important now something was missing. And so I began the journey of opening to the vastness of this word. My main inspiration was Murshid’s teaching on feminine chivalry, which while deeply old fashioned gave me access to the relationship between my masculine and feminine. In particular it showed me how to achieve union between my doing and reasoning nature and my being and feeling nature through the acceptance of my feminine self.

MURSHID TALKS ABOUT three types of feminine chivalry: In Naz, which he describes as “a beauty that shines out if lighted by the deference of a man” I learnt that my “doing” self needed to be in deference to my “being” self. In doing so I started to experience the beauty that is ever present when things are said and done conscientiously. In Nayaz, where he says “this tendency is seen expressing itself in the gallant and courageous response that a woman will make to her admirer; or it may express itself in a gentle, yielding forbearance towards him” I learnt how

to be bolder in relationship to that which I desired and at the same time I started to become gentler towards my mistakes and shortcomings. In Nakhra where he says “when a woman possesses this quality, nothing can hide it; it shines out unwavering and undimmed, natural, without self-consciousness. No effort on a mans part is needed to disclose it; nor on the other hand is it the result of any conscious effort of her own” I tasted the sovereignty of my soul, my “queendom” for which I had to do nothing. It was in the discovery and sensing of these three qualities in my relationships and the living of my daily life that the “self” was revealed and not just any self but “myself”.

BECAUSE OF THE insights that were hidden in these twists and turns I went back to the rules with a realisation that “my conscientious self” was the artist and the rules the colours by which I could paint my responses to my relationships and to life. These three words have shown me the power of feminine chivalry for as Murshid says, “In it there is no pointing with a dart, no aiming with an arrow, towards some target of admiration or reward.” In these three words I finally found the one answer I could have sent back to the person that had pushed my buttons and they were these three words: “I love you.”

*My Conscientious Self:
Observe Constancy in love. •*





My conscientious self, judge not another by your own law.

By Mikhail Mark Perrow

“Let the one who is without sin cast the first stone”

John 8:2-11

I HAVE BEEN ROLLING this rule around in my mind for months like a loose tooth on the tongue. It troubles me. And that is because of my sense of self, and all my personal and cultural accretions, and because it can't be dealt with in the arena of the mind; it makes sense only if you come at it from a completely different place.

So let's start with the difficulty.

Rules, and the judgements we make in order to define them are, it seems to me, an intrinsic part of what it is to be human. They define us, and they are the building blocks of our society. To be honest I love rules. I still have my boarding school rule book somewhere with its gems such as “Boys may only leave the school grounds with permission from their Housemaster, with the exception of the central area of the village...” Not for nothing was I dormitory captain at 12, rising to the ranks of Head of House at 18. At home I still get to be Lights Monitor each night, a role I take on with only a zephyr of irony. And for years I thrived within an organization which was bound by a strong common ethic, shared values and a striving together for an agreed purpose. We had rules too, and I liked them. The School Rule Book; the UK Highway Code; the Rule of St Benedict; These all sit on my shelves. The magazine you are reading now is all about rules.

AND WHERE THERE are rules there are also judgements. Actually, we sit in an echo chamber of judgement. And it's getting increasingly negative. Ask yourself what social media would be like if everyone on it followed this precept: *Judge not another by your own law.* It

would be transformed. But I am conscious that my whole upbringing and experience, and the culture in which we swim, is intrinsically judgmental. *Judico ergo sum.* I judge therefore I am.

And yet I know that the world of judgement is a distorted world. And that you cannot crack the egg of judgement with logic or philosophy. I can see that judging another human is an offence against the universe. It is exactly this: One wave rises from the sea on its journey towards the shore. As it crests and grows a crown of foam, it looks ahead at lower waves already subsiding towards the sand and judges them for their poverty of stature, their age, their lack of grace, the dirt already besmirching their lower form. No matter that our wave is heading inexorably toward the same shore; no matter that our wave is only the risen sea as each wave can only be; this transient expression of the sea judges in effect its own being. It's not a pretty sight.

BUT KNOWING THIS in the mind does not get you very far on the motorway; listening to the latest news bulletin on Brexit or Syria, or on a crowded underground train for all the reasons we agreed earlier. It's in our social DNA. We have a code, and we judge others against it continually. If you don't believe me, try cycling in a crowded city at rush hour and watch as the judgmental mind ticks up the offences of others – drivers, cyclists, pedestrians like an infernal metronome (yet it is strangely mute on its own errors or infractions.) Epistemology does not get you out of goal here. We need another key.

MURSHID WRITES about overlooking. It is both seeing and not seeing. You might register an awareness, from your own perspective, of a shortcoming, but you look over it to the broader landscape beyond – in a sense deeper into the person. It is a more mindful approach, and (I think this is )

"I think it is because being angry can make you feel so strong; there is a dark attraction in the anger of the self-righteous, the fury of the just, the rich certainty of being right."

the heart of the matter) a more compassionate one.

LET US TRY COMING at this problem from a different angle. We put down a pole. At one end there is anger, and at the other compassion. At the angry end there is the judgement that fuels social media, much of our political discourse, and a lot of our social discourse too. Sometimes our relationships. I think it is because being angry can make you feel so strong; there is a dark attraction in the anger of the self-righteous, the fury of the just, the rich certainty of being right.

Which brings us to the story of Jesus and the Pharisees from John. I read a book thirty years ago which speaks to the problem of judgement. It is by a Jesuit priest who was also a Zen master, a Catholic raised in Japan. In his book the writer* notes that the way Jesus deals with the question put to him is very much like a Zen Koan – he does not answer it with an answer; rather he takes the question and turns it inside out - into something else altogether. And he notes the stillness of Jesus from which this answer comes. By answering as he does, he challenges the awareness of his listeners in a way which is transformative. Let's enter the story. I expect you know it well.

IT IS THE TEMPLE, early in the morning. Jesus is teaching. His enemies, the Pharisees, the guardians of religious law lay a trap for him. They present a woman who is guilty of adultery to him and ask the question: Should we stone her as the law of Moses demands? The trap is that if he says yes, he is within the law, but his teaching of the new covenant of mercy is dead in the water; If he says no, he has preserved his new covenant, but he has broken the law and ceded authority. It's a legalistic question from clever men. And note they bring along a bunch of pious people all too ready to enjoy the righteous anger, the dark misogynistic intoxication of stoning the woman. After all it's the law. Rules are rules. The trap is set.

Jesus does no answer. He bends down and silently writes on the sand. They press him for an answer, so in the end he stands up, looks at them, and he says this: "Let the one who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at

her".

And then he bends and starts writing on the ground again. Silently.

The aggression begins to drain out of the crowd, as if a plug has been pulled.

WHAT HAS JESUS DONE? He has turned the question around, taking it out of the public arena into the private space, actually into the heart. Imagine you are standing there, stone in hand, feeling its weight and heft and its rough edges in the palm of your hand, cold in the warming sun, good to go with the entertainment, just waiting for someone else to throw the first stone, full of righteous anger. What a rush. And then he goes and says that, and you look within, and there is a sharp, painful moment of self-recognition, and suddenly it is impossible to proceed.

And what happens? This awareness infects the crowd like a virus. Slowly the mob starts to drift away and disperse. People drop their stones back on the sand and go home for lunch. And the accused woman, who is still standing there, who had expected to be stoned perhaps to death, ends up alone with Jesus who is still quietly writing on the ground. More time passes. He looks up and asks her where they all are. "Has no one condemned you?" And she says no – no one. "Then neither do I condemn you" he says. And we have taken a journey from the pole of judgement and fear, which is intoxicated and angry and powerful, to the pole of compassion, which is simply light. The question of judgement has been taken out of the mind altogether and lifted into the heart. And she is free.

THIS IS SUCH A MOVING STORY. I think it is telling us that the answer to the judgement problem, to the rules problem, is not a better rule book or an appeals process or a different court; it is to lift our relationships out of judgement altogether, into a different world built out of compassion, warmed by grace. Now that would be a world worth living in. •

*JK Kadowaki SJ; *Zen and the Bible*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980



Rules are not my way

By Amaité Willand

THE PROJECT OF our Parvana-Suluk class was a printed notebook with the forty rules of the Knighthood of Purity, and I helped with a new German translation. When doing such intense work, you come closer to the subject. So, in the final session of my Suluk training, after a long struggle with myself, I decided to set off for the path of Chivalry and give myself the chance to really investigate my „conscientious self“ through those 40 rules, that are designed to help us to act in ways that do no harm to ourselves and our fellow creatures.

TODAY I KNOW that probably my first fault was to try to go with them in this regulated form of the Knighthood. My freedom loving personality doesn't like to follow rules and schedules.

SO, USUALLY I did not struggle with the content of the rules, but with the setting. And it took me two years to finally allow myself to quit this experience. But this, in itself, was rewarding, since the struggle of allowing myself to hand back a once given promise in a manner that did not do harm to my integrity, was a deep and very liberating experience. I am very thankful for this journey which taught me a lot by the starting up, going with it and finally taking the liberty to quit again.

SO, I TRIED and know now for certain, that I am not apt for the role as a “Knight of Purity”. In former times, before I met the Sufis, I was called to become a “Priestess of Purity” (as the highest goal of a woman) - and I suppose this is much more likely something I could grow into. But in fact, if any, I feel that trotting the mystic path and exploring this world of wonders and of light, gives inner meaning and an ever-growing understanding of what love really is to me.

Ishk Allah Mabu'ud Allah



Dear Subrawardi,

This letter is not easy to write for me, but it is about time to clear the space in my heart.

I finished the Iron Rules by now, and induced by the impressions of the Knighting Ceremony at the Alps Camp, I came to the conclusion, that I need to quit the „heraldship“ in this path. The Ceremony is beautifully designed – but nothing, that I would ever like to experience myself on me.

It is clearly my hearts command. This is not my path!

The form of: "Don't do this or that" is giving food to my nafs-al-awwama (the criticizing part of our ego) - and I am not willing to give them more food. They have had already too much!

Personally, it never gave any better results to my contemplation, when I did the rules for four weeks minimum than my first two or three deep contemplations did. And the one rule, that I was fighting with for more than a year, was only healed, when I stopped blaming myself. And the repeating of the formula was not helpful for that. I needed to stop this, to be able to fulfill the idea behind it much better, by now.

„Do not reproach others, making them firm in their faults“. — Well, if this is a deeply engraved pattern in you, then this rule or advice is by itself exactly, what it says, you shouldn't do. The rule was reproaching me constantly and affirmed my fault. I needed to skip it and do my wazaif - and finally was blessed by an incredible retreat, that gave me the allowance to be, as I am. After that, my idea to reproach others "to help them become better" could slowly soften.

So, please dear Subrawardi, accept my leave from this program and erase me from the list of the heralds. The Love of God will guide me into the freedom of my soul and is flowing constantly through me, as the blowing of the wind. The wazaif deepen my insight and increase the light and love, that wants to come into the world through me. My conscientious self is no longer in charge to rule my actions. It is my heart alone. How could you ever want to harm or overrule another one or not like to be of service, when you truly love?

I hope that others have a lot of benefit from this path and wish you and them all the best!

Thank you for all your commitment and loving service for our community!

Sincerely in service

Amaité

Dear Amaité,

Thank you for your inspiring words. The motivation that attracted you to try the herald practice has not changed. The method didn't work for you. And you have found the right way for you to live according to the inspiration of your heart. I applaud your courage in freeing yourself from unnecessary limitations and finding the way to live according to your own guidance. I will take you off the herald's list but not off the roll in my heart of those seeking a high ideal. All blessings to you in following the path of the heart.

Love, Subrawardi

KNIGHTLY NOTES —

A CLASS PROJECT AT SULUK ACADEMY IN EUROPE

By Rosa Sa'ida Steinbrenner

Knightly Notes is a notebook of 128 pages where all the 40 rules of conduct are presented together with pages for notes. Maybe you have seen it somewhere? It has been available since 2013.

THE PROJECT

The book was created as part of the final class project of the Parvanas at Suluk Academy 2011 - 2013. The word Parvana means moth; the tiny insects that fly into the light to be consumed by the fire. Approaching the end of our training, we were asked to give something back to Suluk. It should symbolize the realization of what our class has received during the training. And It should not be just splendid, lofty ideas, but the creation of something very concrete to present at our graduation.

There were many ideas that came up during this time of preparation, but one proposal sounded especially fascinating: a creation of a book with the 40 rules in the ten different European languages that were spoken by our Parvana classmates.

We dreamed of making a notebook for those who were to start the contemplation of the Rules, to have the book as a tool to work with. It should be spread far and wide throughout Europe.

Each rule was to be printed in English, German, French, Norwegian, Spanish, Greek, Lithuanian, Dutch, Italian and Russian, followed by 5 empty pages where the reader could write or paint whatever came as inspiration to her/him from the 40 days of contemplation of each rule.

Time was pressing. Could we make it? Who among us was experienced enough to realize a project like this? Together we had the skills and the motivation. We decided to go for it! First came the financial realization:

we decided to have all of us pay our share in accordance with our financial abilities. Then we assigned these tasks among us: calculate the costs and possible income, translation of the rules into the different languages, design and layout, and the cover design (thanks to Din Ilahi Geesing-Madsen), finding a printing firm, write the foreword and the imprint.

THE REALIZATION

All the tasks were accomplished – one after the other, and finally we could order the notebook in Poland, with the requirement that it was to be delivered to the monastery in Epernon, France where our seminar and last session took place. The day of the delivery was very exciting, because no one from the Faculty or the Administration knew about our plans. Some of us had to leave in the middle of a session to carry the boxes with 500 books into the basement in the monastery!

On our graduation day at Fazl Manzil, we presented the notebook accompanied by the spoken Invocation in our different languages. I remember the shining, surprised face of Pir Zia and the moved expressions of the Administrators, when we brought out the books and announced that all income from the sales would go to the Suluk Scholarship Fund.

It was a very beautiful moment!

THE SPREADING

Our first book was released in 2013, and the 500 copies were sold out in 2 years for 8 euros a piece.

A new edition in 20 languages and

in a new design was made in 2015 by one woman, assisted by a small book committee of some of her previous classmates in Germany. The additional languages are Arabic, Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian, Czech, Farsi, Hebrew, Hindi, Polish, Portuguese, Turkish and Urdu. So now our book is also spread to the countries further east and south – far and wide!

We had 1.000 copies printed, and this time we decided to give it away by donations only. The income should still benefit the Suluk Academy Scholarship Fund. But we have decided also to support the new activity “The Knighthood of purity” with some of the income from the donations. And the time has also come when we must start thinking about a third edition!

Bringing the notebook to Sufi centres and to friends have made our project spread to many countries and have made the Knighthood of Purity and the rules known to many new people. If you want a notebook; whether for working with the rules, or just for writing, or as a gift to someone, you can order it by email at knightlynotes@web.de.

And if you want to support us financially for making the third edition, please use this email too.

FINALLY, I want to express my gratitude to Pir Zia, Suluk Academy and my classmates for all the inspirations and efforts that made the Knightly Notes come alive and to grow. •



A CONTEMPLATION ON THE RULES

By Idris, the translator

WHEN I WAS YOUNGER it occurred to me that negative formulations influenced what happened to me in a way that was contrary to my conscious decisions. When I decided to travel by ship from Europe to South America – but NOT to Brazil, the only ship that would take me on board went straight to Brazil; at school I had told everyone that I wanted to study anything but NOT medicine, but that's what I ended up doing; I did NOT want to divorce, but that's what ended up happening. Of course, I could have resisted the flow of life even more and could have denied the messages and chances life presented to me, but finally I found out that there was much more benefit in programming myself positively. I understand there are different human characters with different inclinations and ways of functioning – either more according to the right brain, which is predominantly holistic, musical, vibrational and pictorial, or according to the left brain functioning predominantly in linguistic, dualistic and logic ambivalences. When I found out that I was mainly a right brain type, I started to program my life and inner talk accordingly, whereas I use my left brain to figure out the best solutions for specific tasks.

WHEN I MET Murshid's rules I loved their meaning but did not want to imprint my unconscious mind with negative images that I

then would consciously have to resist. I had seen people who had given so much energy to the inner pictures of negative suggestions that they needed an enormous additional amount of energy to resist and fight those magically evoked pictures – sometimes to the point of a burn out. So, I asked Murshid for permission to reformulate them in a purely positive way, and after he agreed I decided to follow them according to my own formulation. It was as if I had already gone through the training and integrated the rule's message at a non-verbal and non-dualistic level of the soul. (This way of programming one's path, starting with the result is often used in the resultant vehicle of tantric Buddhism).

IT IS NOT by mere chance that of all the iron rules, 9 are negatively formulated, of the copper rules 6, of the silver rules 5 and of the golden rules only 2. There is apparently a pedagogic intent and progression that leads to a state of less need for interdictions. The rules are perfect as they are. But after the training in the golden rules, a further step could be done by individually formulate all rules in a creative and positive way, in a unitarian state of mind and see what happens while working with those phrases.

I CONTEMPLATED my formulations in the Presence of Murshid, but they were originally

*"whenever someone looks up to
you, answer by looking up at
the Divine in him or her"*

formulated in German. They are totally individual and might or might not inspire one's own reflection and creativity. Other knight's reactions to any proposition of creative formulation have so far been astonishingly diverse. For that reason and for your own benefit, please continue to read the following only in a state of open mind and heart. God bless you!

Here are my formulations that resonate with my own holistic heart and mind:

My conscientious self,

- only speak out truth. - only speak favourably of others in their absence. - if anyone is ignorant about something, use that only for their own benefit (or to teach wisdom and compassion for the benefit of all).
- always stay humble and consider your good deeds a gift of God. - only claim what belongs to you.
- confirm others in their good deeds and thereby strengthen their character and good intentions (as much as you can). - give yourself more than fully to the work you must accomplish. - always help others to your best and create good conditions for their growing. - seek your own benefit only by helping others and in win-win situations.

- always listen to the voice of consciousness and follow your inner guidance. - whenever someone looks up to you, answer by looking up at the Divine

- in him or her. - judge others only according to their own higher Self. - forgive even your worst enemy as if it was your best friend. - influence others only to do right. - meet everyone with open heart and mind.

- be to others only as much as you are expected to be. - only challenge someone who is your equal. - keep your generosity to yourself. - only ask a favour to those who will grant it to you. - in adversity always keep your spirit uplifted (by remembering your Divine inheritance).

- keep steadfast to your word of honour whatever may befall. - always take care of those who depend upon you.

Murshid kindly smiled at me and encouraged me to practice according to my own formulation. All other rules I applied them as they are. In this way I succeeded in living according to all rules confident to simultaneously strengthening a state of unity in my own mind. I shared my experience here with the only motivation to benefit sentient beings on the Path. May this inspire and encourage whoever had had similar thoughts and experiences and not worry anyone else.

Alhamdulillah! •

PS: I am thankful for any feed-back in the spirit of the rules: felixbaritsch@t-online.de, www.baritsch.de



The path of the knight is a path of service,
and her body is the temple of God

Illustration: Moira Stark



My thoughtful self; bear all and do nothing, hear all and say nothing, give all and take nothing, serve all and be nothing

During the period as golden heralds, we are given these words of Murshid every day to contemplate before the knighting ceremony. I have continued the practice because the words inspire me in my daily life.

By Kirsten Alia Arnesen

MY THOUGHTFUL SELF

In the beginning I mostly contemplated the idea that I was no longer communicating with conscience, but with thoughts. A subtle difference that in some way connected me in another way to this vast entity that the Sufis call the Spirit of guidance; where the continuous flow of inspiration and guidance come from friends and masters, the divine mothers and loving angels.

"I follow in Thy footsteps which will lead me to the eternal goal"

BEAR ALL AND DO NOTHING

My first response contemplating this phrase was a relief, because it inspired me to let go of an inner voice who always had urged me to do something; and to do more and even more, until I was at times both exhausted and frustrated. The frustration had the last years been increasingly triggered by a need to protect my mind from the cries of help coming from seemingly everywhere; the horrible treatment of animals, the death and decay in our sacred nature, the bomb disasters, the barriers that were put up against desperate refugees and so much more. But I did not want to become insensitive to the needs of the world!

"Do not spare yourself in the work you must accomplish" (Iron rule nr 7)

I realized that this work included the task of protecting myself from taking in too much of outer

impressions. So, I stopped watching the news, I did no longer read the daily newspapers, but found other channels of keeping myself updated. I listened to the voice of my thoughtful self: *Take a break now! Take one step at a time- you'll get there – eventually, and if you don't; breathe, smile and enjoy the gift of life!*

My thoughtful self - teach me to respect the limitations of body and mind to create balance in all fields of life. But let my heart open and grow so wide that it may hold all pain and suffering in silent compassion.

HEAR ALL AND SAY NOTHING

The room was packed during the knighting ceremony... We were 18 golden heralds that bright and joyous Sunday in Suresnes. So many congratulations and warm wishes; so much ecstatic joy created by our love of unity!

The deep awe stayed within me after the ceremony. It was easy to float in the love and bliss of our Sufi community – so easy to feel strong and faithful to the tasks of the Knight. Ya Fattah!

Back home; how to share an experience like this? To family or friends, to all those who never went to Suresnes– to whom that world is hidden in the deep dream state, and this world is the only one they experience? How to convey to them the joy and ecstasy of that world?

My thoughtful self – listen with your heart, and may you reach their longing hearts with tender 



"Why should I take something when all I need is given to me freely - out of infinite compassion and wisdom? What can I call mine when all is Yours?"

☞ smiles and sweet memories of Her eternal bliss. Let my heart be a silent container, where all words of bitterness and grief may turn into small seeds of hope and awakening.

GIVE ALL AND TAKE NOTHING

On this planet there is an endless abundance, but also seemingly endless needs. And so many of them come from the soul's longing for the source. All the saints and illuminated beings blessed us and inspired humanity with their deep remembrance. They were manifestations of the eternal source of abundance; spreading the message of infinite love, joy and peace

Give Us all you have, and We shall give you all We possess.
(Gayan)

When the mind becomes peaceful, and the heart opens, the questions can rise from within: What can I take that does not already belong to me? Why should I take something when all I need is given to me freely - out of infinite compassion and wisdom? What can I call mine when all is Yours?

Source of all life – reveal to me the purpose for which I was born.

SERVE ALL AND BE NOTHING

The path of the ancient knights was a path of service to their masters and kings and their religions.

I believe there are millions of knights on Gaia today! They serve our evolving humanity in many ways; as helpers, caregivers, peacemakers and joy makers. They support, teach, guide, help and relieve the pain of their fellow humans. Their inner selves urge them to be there for those who need them. They are the builders of the temple on earth for compassion. Their inner being know that whenever someone suffers, we all suffer, and wherever we create joy, joy manifests all around us.

We are the builders of the temple of unity. The word dignity in Norwegian is *verdighet* – which means to possess and acknowledge our inner value. I believe that all life is created for a purpose and have its value. Working with the rules help me to recognize the unity of being. We each have our note to play in the great composition that is called Mother Earth.

My thoughtful self – be watchful of your thoughts, words and actions so they are in tune with all beings.

Let Thy wish become my desire –let thy will become my deed.

Let thy words become my speech, beloved and let thy love become my creed.

Let my plant become thy flower, let my fruit produce thy seed.

Let my heart become thy lute, beloved and my body thy flute of reed

(Hazrat Inayat Khan) •



Parzival

Knight and Human Being

Since the time Parzival lived, he has been considered to be an outstanding example of knighthood, a knight above reproach. At the same time Parzival is one of the most human heroes of any mythological story. His path towards becoming the Grail King was long and full of failures, broken illusions and despair.

By Jeremy Heiss

WHEN PARZIVAL LEFT his mother Herzeloide in order to become a knight, he was fully focused on secular fame. He wanted to become a knight of King Arthur's Round Table, longing to be famous and adored. But his heart was blind and narrow at that time. First it seemed like everything was going well for him. He became educated in superficial knightly manners and values by Gurnemanz, married the stunningly beautiful queen Condwiramurs and became a member of King Arthur's Round Table. He was well known as the Red Knight, wearing a completely red armor that he got from Ither, whom Parzival had killed accidentally out of rage.

PARZIVAL WON many battles and survived many adventures, but he forgot to cultivate love, compassion and surrender; even though he finally was called by the Holy Grail to become Grail King of Munsalwaesche. But when he came to Munsalwaesche, the castle that can only be found by the one who is called by the Holy Grail, he failed. And this failure makes him human. Since his heart was not yet fully loving, and he did not regard every human being as his brother or sister, he did not ask the suffering Grail King Anfortas what the reason for his suffering was, and how he could help him. 



*"Parzival helps me to "shatter my
ideals on the rock of truth" as Murshid puts it."*

This question would have taken the curse from Anfortas and would have made Parzival the new Grail King. Parzival was tested, and he failed for the first time in his life. This was a shock to his whole system.

BANISHED AND CURSED by the residents of Munsalwaesche, he was neither able to go back to his wife, nor to the Court of King Arthur. Traumatized as he was, he went through a dark night of his soul. Parzival refused every offered help of friends and rode through the land all on his own. He lost all faith and was very angry with his God, because he could not understand why He/She let him fail and thus suffer so miserably. Blaming God for his suffering, he became harder and harder, instead of becoming soft and asking why this had happened to him, and what he could learn from his experience. At one moment his ego defended his behavior at Munsalwaesche, and at the next he tormented himself with self-reproach.

AFTER FIVE and a half years of dark odyssey, Parzival met a hermit called Trevrizent, who turned out to be his uncle. Parzival offloaded all his feelings of being forsaken, all his anger and despair on Trevrizent's shoulders, who offered them to the most merciful and compassionate God. At Trevrizent's cave, Parzival confessed the murder of Ither and his failure at Munsalwaesche. When Parzival complained that God had forsaken him, Trevrizent replied that if God had truly forsaken him, he would not have found Trevrizent's place. Parzival stayed with Trevrizent for fifteen days, doing a retreat of surrender. He truly let his pride and hardness soften.

AFTER PARZIVAL'S heart finally

cracked open and he cultivated love; the values of kinship and compassion arising in his heart, his knighthood was completed. Parzival left his red armor at Trevrizent's cave and replaced it with a simple and light chain armor. Then the Holy Grail once again called for Parzival. He let his horse find its way, and when he came to Munsalwaesche for the second time, he immediately asked Anfortas out of profound compassion what his suffering was, and how he could help him. That removed the curse from Anfortas, and Parzival, the now completed knight, became Grail King. He dedicated himself to a knighthood in which one only fights for love's sake.

ISN'T IT amazing how someone who failed so badly in his life is yet considered to be a hero through all times of history? Parzival is not a hero who always acts in a perfect way. On the contrary, he "sinned," was lost in secular matters and banished God. Parzival was not born as a super strong, noble and soft-hearted knight. He had to pass through an alchemical process, refining his heart and making his love equally profound as his warrior skills.

WHEN I connect to Parzival, he meets me in every state I am in. No struggle that I have is too inferior to him, none of my failures makes him turn his face away from mine. I have super high ideals, many of them are verbalized in Hazrat Inayat Khan's 40 knightly Rules. Most of the time I push myself to reach these high ideals, and often enough I blame myself for not being able to live them in a perfect way. This is exactly when Parzival supports me. I can turn to him when I accuse myself for being tired and lacking in concentration while trying to meditate, or when I realize before I go to bed

that I haven't done a single conscious breath during the day. He helps me to sit with desires that I consider as inferior, such as longing to be admired, success in my job or appetite for sexual pleasure. I experience him to be one of the most human guides of all the illuminated souls who serve as guides on the spiritual path. He knows what disappointment feels like, he knows how it is to feel lost, he knows how easy it is to lose oneself in superficial matters. When I started working with Parzival, I used to search for him in divine spheres, on the top of the mountain of completed souls. But there I barely felt his presence. It was right next to me, at the very bottom of the present moment, where I found Parzival. He was sitting right next to me watching me, when I searched for him in the heavens.

PARZIVAL HELPS ME to "shatter my ideals on the rock of truth" as Murshid puts it. Parzival shows me how to accept my humanness in every form it reveals itself: in tiredness, hunger, thirst, sexual desire or in limitation, imperfection and failure. I can share every struggle I have, for example when I don't feel the presence of God, even though many people told me that God is closer to myself than my aorta. Or when I realize that I did not only fail in living one of Murshid's Rules but even haven't kept the Rule in mind at all. It is not the completed Grail King Parzival who meets me then. It is the young Parzival, the one who struggled and failed on his way to completion and who bravely went through the alchemical process of refinement. For me, Parzival is an outstanding example of how to meet one's humanness and how to try, to fail, to make amends and to try again on the path towards the One. •

*Let courage be thy sword
and let patience be thine shield*

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