



Sufi Newsletter

South African Newsletter 008
March to May 2015

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**“Spiritual attainment
is the true purpose of
every soul.”**

Gayan: Song

By Hazrat Inayat Khan

A note from the Editor

From Wikipedia, a Retreat (spiritual) refers to:

A religious or spiritual term for time taken to reflect or meditate

In this newsletter we explore the ins and outs of retreating! May your interest be sparked!

Love and Light
Caroline

An extract from The Sufi Message

The Teaching of Hazrat Inayat Khan. Volume 15 – The Smiling Forehead

One might ask in what way harmony can be established between the inner journey and the outward action. What generally happens is that a person is so much absorbed in his outward action that his inner attitude becomes obscured to his view. The first thing necessary is to remove the screen that hides the inner attitude from one's sight. Everyone is conscious of what he does, but not conscious of his inner attitude. In other words, everyone knows what he is doing, but everyone does not necessarily know towards what he is going. No doubt the more one is conscious of this, the less becomes one's action, for thought controls action -- but it only gives a rhythm, a balance to life. Compared with a person who is capable of running without knowing where he is going, he is better off who is walking slowly but knows towards what he is going.

There are two distinct parts of one action: there is an action of our inner life and there is an action of our outer life, the inner being and the outer being. The outer being is physical action, and the inner action is our attitude. Both may be actions of free will, but in a certain way they both prove to be mechanical or automatic actions. No doubt the inner action has a great power and influence upon the outer action. A person may be busy all day doing a certain thing but at the same time, if the attitude is working against him, he can never have success in his work. By his outward action a person may deserve a great prize, but for his inner action he may not be deserving it. Therefore if these two actions are contrary to one another, there is no construction and there is no attainment of the desired results. The true result, the result that is desirable, comes through the harmony of these two activities.

The Sufi Volumes are available for purchase at the Sufi centres around the country.

Sufi Inner School

**Programme for Wednesday evenings at the Sufi Temple in Cape Town.
These meetings are for mureeds or by invitation:**

All meetings start at 19h30.

March 2015

04 Mar	Confraternity & Teachings for mureeds
11 Mar	Healing & advanced meditation
18 Mar	Confraternity & Message evening
25 Mar	Healing & advanced teachings

April 2015

01 Apr	Confraternity & Teachings for mureeds
08 Apr	Healing & advanced meditation
15 Apr	Confraternity & Message evening
22 Apr	Healing & advanced teachings
29 Apr	Healing and Confraternity services (forms part of the Urban Retreat)

May 2015

06 May	Confraternity & Teachings for mureeds
13 May	Healing & advanced meditation
20 May	Confraternity & Message evening
27 May	Healing & advanced teachings

This programme will be up on the notice board in the Sufi Temple.

To find out more about the Sufi Inner School and if anyone is interested in attending these Sufi Order (=inner school) meetings please chat to either:

- Waldo on 083 555 5002 / essen@bucknet.co.za
- Louis on 083 271 3797 / info@therippleeffect.co.za
- Magda on 082 449 8058 / itsmagda@iafrica.com
- Frances on (021) 671-8807
- Nisa on 082 200 6751



“Remember that the Sufi Message which is being given just now, is the real interpretation of all scriptures, many of which, by various versions and translations and by very many reasons, have not remained the same. Therefore receiving and preserving of the Message which is now being given and the spreading of it, is like giving the Message of all the Prophets and teaching all religions”

By Hazrat Inayat Khan



Events & news from Sufi centres

Holland:

Every year the International Sufi Movement organizes a Summer School in the Universel Murad Hassi, Katwijk aan Zee. This year's theme is inspired by a saying from Hazrat Inayat Khan; "the closer one approaches reality, the nearer one come to unity". The Summer School is open to members of the Brother-Sisterhood Activity and mureeds of the International Sufi Movement. For more information visit www.soefi.nl

South Africa:

Cape Town

An Interfaith evening was held at the Sufi Temple on Monday 16th February as part of the Cape Town Interfaith Initiative meetings and was attended by people from all different faiths. The topic: Faith and Family. The speakers from different faiths explored family values and how important the family unit is. For example "a family that prays together stays together" and "treat your family with reverence which includes trust, love and respect."

Another unifying event saw the marriage of Amir Kiyaei and Brechje Wijsanbeek at the Sufi Temple in Cape Town on Sunday 1st February. The Sufi Wedding Ceremony brought together 100 friends and family from East and West & North and South which resonates so beautifully with the Sufi ideal. Amir's father wrote a poem in Persian which he then translated and read out to the wedding couple.

In true eastern style Persian carpets were spread on the floor of the Sufi Temple to welcome both guests and the wedding couple. One of these stunning carpets was donated to the Temple and now forms part of our welcoming!

"In companionship and happiness - may you be like milk and honey
in union and fidelity, just like sugar and halva.

May the blessings of those who toast and the one who pours the wine
anoint the ones who said Amen and the one who said the prayer."

Rumi -- Past and Present, East and West (Translation by Franklin D. Lewis)



Cape Town

As you all know The Sufi Movement in South Africa is holding the 26th bi-annual South African Sufi Retreat in Cape Town:

Date: Saturday 25th April to Saturday 2nd May 2015

Theme: "A Grain of Corn"

Venue: The Sufi Temple
183 Campground Road
Newlands

Cost: There is no charge for attending the retreat.
Cost of meals and incidentals will be at supplied at a later date.

R.S.V.P Please let Magda or Waldo know if you intend to attend, this will greatly assist with the planning.

Enquiries: Magda at itsmagda@iafrica.com / magdaalberts@gmail.com
Or
Waldo at essen@bucknet.co.za

The Purpose of a spiritual retreat with warmest Sufi love from Waldo:

Murshid Hazrat Inyat Khan has said that there has never been an age in which humankind has so lost its hold on the higher side of life, nor one that was absorbed as this age is, in the material side of existence. The eyes of humankind at the present time are fixed upon the earth. During every waking and even sleeping moment of our lives we are conscious only of the earthly life in which we happen to be caught up in, to the exclusion of the entire spiritual world. In fact it is very hard to imagine that there is such a reality as the inner spheres such as the mind world and the heavenly spheres.

The whole idea of a spiritual retreat is to give oneself a break from these constant earthly ties and to rise inward and upward toward the very real spheres of the spirit in which lie all consolation, happiness and peace.

If one can experience one deeply moving experience per day of a retreat, it becomes a cumulative deepening effect which you will remember with gratefulness for the rest of your life.

After returning from such elevation experiences one feels as though one is walking on air for months afterwards. One's problems seem to evaporate as mist before the sun and one rises above the outer life in a state of contentment and peace.

If one is in the privileged position to have time to do one's spiritual practices when you return to your normal life, there is no reason why one cannot stay in this blissful condition and even continue to rise to the highest heavens, which is the purpose for which the whole of existence was created.

A Sufi Retreat by Magda:

What is an Urban Retreat?

Up to now our bi-annual Sufi gathering has been called the South African Summer School. Yet it has never been held in summer as it is too hot in our country at that time. So our 2015 gathering has a new name: "Urban Retreat". A retreat in a city is different from one in the country where everyone stays together in an isolated and inspiring place. The challenge of an urban retreat is to hold the participants in its sway in spite of their comings and goings and the attractions of the city.

So why do we choose to have an urban retreat with this challenge? Simply because the Sufi Temple is there. It is an inspiring venue, with its unusual Temple building and its peaceful surrounding gardens. For over 35 years the Sufi atmosphere has been building here. Each meeting held there benefits from this and also adds to the strength of the space.

Why our retreats were always called "Summer School"?

The answer goes deep into history. The bringer of the Sufi Message, Hazrat Inayat Khan, spent from 1910 to 1926 spreading what he called the Message of God in the western world. During this time he travelled far and wide, but in the last three years he gave the essence of the teachings at three month-long Summer Schools in Suresnes, outside Paris, where he was based for these last years. Shortly after the 1926 Summer School Inayat Khan returned to India, where he passed away, aged only 44, on 5 February 1927. Perhaps one could have called the Suresnes gatherings "urban retreats" too, but the name "summer school" is firmly entrenched in the Sufi annals of that time.

What were the Suresnes Summer Schools like?

Across the road from Murshid's home was the venue: a large green field with a few paths and trees and a small lecture hall. People came to attend from all over the western world. Most came for just a few days. Others stayed longer. Much as Murshid minimised the importance of his personality, he was the source and inspiration of the wisdom and outpouring of love, harmony and beauty which took place. Many aspired to a private interview with Murshid, and for quite a number who had this privilege, even though the interviews had to be very brief, their little time with Murshid was a defining moment in their lives.

There were a number of regular activities. Some were simply called "lecture" – where Murshid spoke - always off the cuff – on the many subjects later published in the volumes known as "The Sufi Message". There were also "collective interviews", where trusted mureeds were given teachings not (yet) suitable for the more public meetings. In the "Message Evenings" the focus was on the importance of the Message itself. There were esoteric teachings, there were Silences, there was Zikr and other practices – all aimed at deepening the understanding of the mureeds. And of course there was the Universal Worship that we know so well, reaching out to all of humanity. The whole of it seemed to answer the plea from the prayer Khatum:

Open our hearts, that we may hear Thy voice, which constantly cometh from within.
Disclose to us Thy Divine Light, which is hidden in our souls,
That we may know and understand life better.

After Murshid's passing the Summer Schools continued, as they had to, but of course it was never quite the same. Yet the Message was not just for Murshid's time, it was for hundreds of years to come, and the work for the Message had to continue. And this is the wonderful thing: during a Sufi gathering of a few days or longer, with a programme which includes some of the activities that were held in Murshid's time, where Murshid's words and the format of the original meetings are followed, it is possible, God willing, to experience something close to the spirit, the wisdom, the outpouring of love, harmony and beauty of Murshid's time on earth. This may sound ambitious, and it is. Yet we know from past experience that over the days of a Sufi gathering an atmosphere builds, a feeling arises that is indescribable. One finds oneself in a space where it is possible to feel the quality, the essence and the strength of the Message, which is so very much alive.

This is the reason for coming together as we do, and for keeping to a traditional programme as much as we do.

Does it all sound very serious?

Well, we have moved on ninety years from the original Summer Schools in France, and as we move along the decades, greater informality develops, there are different ways of experiencing "brotherhood", of socialising, of living out the Message. Our aim in the 2015 Urban Retreat is to combine traditional activities with some that are different and less formal. And we are on the whole a happy bunch who know the pleasure and the value of laughter.

What happens during this Sufi Urban Retreat?

The programme of events will be available shortly. It will not be onerous, as a heavy programme would work against the ideal of experiencing not just the words, but the essence. In between events there will be time for conversation and socialising, for quiet time in the garden meditation corner. There will be music! Also a reading nook, with new and second-hand books (and some other items) for sale. There will be teas and some meals in the Temple garden, and others in nearby restaurants. There will be outings!

Against this backdrop we hope new friendships will be forged, old friendships and acquaintances will be deepened, we will have some fun, and as all this is happening, we will be steeped in the Message!

The South African connection:

Three of Hazrat Inayat Khan's pupils moved to Cape Town in the late 1940's and early 1950's. There was Sirkar van Stolk, the organiser of the Summer Schools in France in the 1920's. Then there was Wazir van Essen who as a young man not yet 20 assisted Sirkar at the Summer Schools in France. And there was Zohra van Essen who was only 13 when Inayat Khan passed away. Each of these, in addition to attending Summer Schools, had very personal contact with Hazrat Inayat Khan. Together they began the Sufi work in Cape Town in the 1950's. On Sirkar's passing in 1963 a building fund was started in his memory, which culminated in the building of the Sirkar Sufi Universal, our Temple, over 35 years ago. Wazir passed away in 1980 and Zohra in 2011, and like Sirkar, they devoted themselves to the Message till their last day.

In 1964 the first Summer School was held in South Africa. During Wazir's opening remarks he suddenly had difficulty speaking. He was not an emotional person, but I realised then that for him it was an awesome occasion, as he drew together the Suresnes Summer Schools in which he had been involved in the 1920's, and this Sufi presence at the tip of Africa some 40 years later. At the time I was too young to understand fully why this was such a big moment.

Now I'm much older than Wazir was then, and I'm still growing in my understanding of the importance of such gatherings, even if this one is called an Urban Retreat! With this new name, may the old tradition continue, intermingled with some enhancing modernity!



Tip from the Editor (Retreating!)

Whatever you think a retreat is going to be like, it will probably be different.

While spiritual truths can be seen every day of our ordinary life, the stillness and simplicity of a retreat brings a wonderful and unique possibility for renewal.

With no diversions there is nothing to distract us. Since there is no place to hide from ourselves, there is a good possibility that we will know ourselves better after a retreat than we did before.

By cultivating the power of awareness, clarity and kindness, we will discover our path to a peaceful heart.

I believe the Sufi Urban Retreat will be deeply refreshing and healing and even life-transforming.

A task on leaving the retreat will be to return to our communities and bring a reawakened spirit of awareness and compassion to all we touch.

See you all there!



Universal Worship Dates
for Cape Town
10h30 to 11h30

March 2015						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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April 2015						
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May 2015						
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Contact

If you would like to give some feedback on the newsletter, or contribute to this newsletter please contact Caroline at sufinews1@gmail.com