

Caravan of the Message

A Centre of the Sufi Order International

Winter/Spring 2009

A Serendipity of Flowers

by Zainab Paula Ford

Hope is in the air...maybe it's the slowly returning light, the snow-drops beginning to poke up here and there, and the knowledge that Spring will come soon, or maybe it's the refrains of "yes we can!" from south of the border and the renewed optimism that seems to have rippled out across the globe.

Hope can be infectious; that's why I want to share a couple of stories with you about hope and optimism. The first was sent across cyberspace and arrived in my computer (and maybe yours too). The author of the following "Daffodil Principle" was sadly left anonymous by the sender.

The Daffodil Principle

Several times my daughter had telephoned to say, "Mother, you must come to see the daffodils before they are over."

I wanted to go, but it was a two-hour drive.

"I'll come next Tuesday", I promised a little reluctantly on her third call.

Next Tuesday dawned cold and rainy. Still, I had promised, and reluctantly I drove there. When I finally walked into Carolyn's house I was welcomed by the joyful sounds of happy children. I delightedly hugged and greeted my grandchildren.

"Forget the daffodils, Carolyn! The road is invisible in these clouds and fog, and there is nothing in the world except you and these children that I want to see badly enough to drive another inch!"

My daughter smiled calmly and said, "We drive in this all the time, Mother."



Photo art by Chloë O'Loughlin

"Well, you won't get me back on the road until it clears, and then I'm heading for home!" I assured her.

"But first we're going to see the daffodils. It's just a few blocks," Carolyn said. "I'll drive. I'm used to this. It's all right, Mother, I promise. You'll never forgive yourself if you miss this experience."

We drove for about twenty minutes, turned onto a small gravel road and I saw a small church. On the far side of the church, there was a hand lettered sign with an arrow that read, "Daffodil Garden." We got out of the car, each took a child's hand, and I followed Carolyn down the path. Then, as we turned a corner, I looked up and gasped. Before me lay the most glorious sight.

It looked as though someone had taken a great vat of gold and poured it over the mountain and its surrounding slopes. The

flowers were planted in majestic, swirling patterns, great ribbons and swaths of deep orange, creamy white, lemon yellow, salmon pink, and saffron and butter yellow. Each different coloured variety was planted in large groups so that it swirled and flowed like its own river with its own unique hue. There were five acres of flowers.

"Who did this?" I asked Carolyn. "Just one woman," Carolyn answered. "She lives on the property. That's her home." Carolyn pointed to a well-kept small A-frame house, modestly sitting in the midst of all that glory.

We walked up to the house.

On the patio, we saw a poster. "Answers to the Questions I Know You Are Asking", was the headline. The first answer was a simple one. "50,000 bulbs," it read. The second answer was, "One at a time, by one

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"Love develops into harmony, and of harmony is born beauty."

Hz. Inayat Khan

Schedule of Events: Winter - Spring 2009



This winter and spring we continue our Thursday evening gatherings and monthly Universal Kirtans, until our summer break at the end of June. As always, there can be some changes in the schedule from time-to-time which we will give you e-mail notification about if you are on the "Caravan Update" e-list (to subscribe, please e-mail amir@sufiordervancouver.org).

Our Programs

Thursday Evening Gatherings: the teachings of Hazrat Inayat Khan and others illuminate Sufi practices of meditation, music, prayer, and spiritual psychology.

Location: Amir & Chloë: 4464 James Street (2 blocks west of Main St. between 28th and 29th) 604-874-5323

Amir's Thursday evening series ("The Soul's Journey") on incarnation, dying and death, the afterlife and the nature of the soul will reach its conclusion after two years in early March. For the rest of this calendar, Amir's classes will be on the subject of "Divine Manner" (known to Sufis as 'adab'). Zainab will give a variety of classes under the banner of "The Inner Life". Other centre members will from time to time take a turn at the helm ("Awakening"). As well on Thursday, look for evenings of Chishti Inayati-Zikr in which we meditate and pray through musical repetition of sacred phrases.

Universal Kirtan: Evenings of beautiful music, chants and songs of ecstasy, devotion, and peace from the world's many traditions. Universal Kirtan is almost always on the first Saturday evening of the month (note that in April, we will hold Universal Kirtan on the 2nd Saturday due to Shahabuddin's zikr retreat in Seattle, see listing). Yoga on 7th, almost always the 1st Saturday.

Location: Yoga on 7th, 156 East 7th (just west of Main Street), entrance on the side.

***Please keep a copy of the calendar handy for your reference. If you don't get our e-mail updates yet and would like to, please notify us at peterchloe@shaw.ca. If you are ever unsure of a location or time, don't hesitate to call us 604-874-5323 or 604-877-0022. All of our events are open to all, with the exception of the "Mureeds' mini-retreat" mornings which are for Sufi Order initiates only. If you are interested in finding out more about initiation in the Sufi Order International, please speak with Amir.

Our Thursday evening gatherings are always free of charge. We appreciate any donations, which help us sustain our local work and that of the Sufi Order International. A small admission (\$10) is charged for the Universal Kirtan evenings, as these events are used to raise money for one of our charities (at present, Doctors Without Borders).

All events start at 8:00 pm except where noted. Please try to be on time. All events are at Amir & Chloë's, unless otherwise indicated:

February

05—The Urs Of Hazrat Inayat Khan
07—Universal Kirtan (Yoga on 7th)
12—The Soul's Journey
19—The Soul's Journey
26—The Inner Life

March

05—The Soul's Journey
07—Universal Kirtan (Yoga on 7th)
12—Chishti-Inayati Zikr

19—The Inner Life
21—Mureeds' Mini-Retreat
(8:30 a.m. initiates only)
26—The Divine Manner (Adab)

April

02 to 05—Shahabuddin Seattle Retreat
02—Awakening
04—*Note!!: Universal Kirtan is on 2nd Sat., this month, April 11*
09—The Inner Life
11—Universal Easter Kirtan (Yoga on 7th)
16—The Divine Manner (Adab)
23—The Divine Manner (Adab)
30—The Inner Life

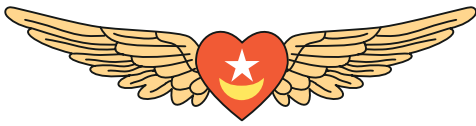
May

02—Universal Kirtan (Yoga on 7th)
07—The Divine Manner (Adab)
14—Chishti-Inayati Zikr
16—Mureeds' Mini-Retreat
(8:30 a.m. initiates only)
21—The Inner Life
28—The Divine Manner (Adab)

June

04—The Inner Life
06—Universal Kirtan (Yoga on 7th)
11—The Divine Manner (Adab)
17—Urs of Pir Vilayat, t.b.a.
18—The Inner Life
20—Mureeds' Mini-Retreat
(8:30 a.m. initiates only)
25—Chishti-Inayati Zikr





Caravan of the Message

The Caravan of the Message is a centre of the Sufi Order International (www.sufiorder.org).

For information about our activities contact:

Amir O'Loughlin at 604-874-5323, email: peterchloe@shaw.ca, or Zainab Paula Ford at 604-877-0022, email: paula@seva.ca, or visit our website: www.sufiordervancouver.org

The Caravan of the Message Sufi Centre would like to thank the following people for their time, talent and efforts in creating this newsletter:

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Please keep us updated with your current e-mail address. We are now publishing the Newsletter solely in electronic form, with apologies to those who don't have computers. We will print a limited number and have them available at some of our events.

Contributions (either content for our Newsletter or financial contributions) to the Caravan of the Message Sufi Centre are greatly appreciated! You can send cheques or relevant articles/poems/photos to:

Caravan of the Message
4464 James Street
Vancouver BC
V5V 3J1



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woman. Two hands, two feet, and one brain."
The third answer was, "Began in 1958."

For me, that moment was a life-changing experience. I thought of this woman whom I had never met, who, almost fifty years before, had begun, one bulb at a time, to bring her vision of beauty and joy to an obscure mountaintop. Planting one bulb at a time, year after year, this unknown woman had forever changed the world in which she lived. One day at a time, she had created something of extraordinary magnificence, beauty, and inspiration. The principle her daffodil garden taught is one of the greatest principles of celebration.

That is, learning to move toward our goals and desires one step at a time, often just one baby step at a time and learning to love the doing, learning to use the accumulation of time. When we multiply tiny pieces of time with small increments of daily effort, we too will find we can accomplish magnificent things. We can change the world.

"It makes me sad in a way," I admitted to Carolyn.

"What might I have accomplished if I had thought of a wonderful goal thirty-five or forty years ago and had worked away at it 'one bulb at a time' through all those years? Just think what I might have been able to achieve!"

My daughter summed up the message of the day in her usual direct way. "Start tomorrow," she said.

She was right. It's so pointless to think of the lost hours of yesterdays. The way to make learning a lesson of celebration instead of a cause for regret is only to ask, "How can I put this to use today?"

Use the Daffodil Principle. Stop waiting...

*Until your car or home is paid off
Until you get a new car or home
Until your kids leave the house
Until you go back to school
Until you finish school
Until you clean the house
Until you organize the garage
Until you clean off your desk
Until you lose 10 lbs.
Until you gain 10 lbs.
Until you get married
Until you get a divorce
Until you have kids*

*Until the kids go to school
Until you retire
Until summer
Until spring
Until winter
Until fall
Until you die...*

There is no better time than right now to be happy.

Happiness is a journey, not a destination.

So work like you don't need money.

Love like you've never been hurt, and,

Dance like no one's watching.

Wishing you a beautiful, daffodil day!

Don't be afraid that your life will end, be afraid that it will never begin.

§



Zainab Paula Ford

So what is it that YOU want to do, that you long to accomplish? Maybe you want to get in touch with an old friend...maybe your desire is to create beauty in your own unique way, like the woman of the story... maybe you want to travel to a particular place, start a business, or complete a cherished project. Your wish might be anything you know that you can do if you put your will to it.

Maybe your object is even a little daunting. Hazrat Inayat Khan counsels, "Seeking after that which is beyond one's reach is the oil which feeds the flame of hope."¹ Hope is the essence of life. Even in the face of adversity, hope "is a feeling which, almost by its own force, may bring sureness and certainty."²

Hope is the starting point, the springboard which can propel us toward our goal. Hope stands on the foundation of patience, faith, trust, and concentration. Holding our goal

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"Perfection forgives, and limitation judges."

Hz. Inayat Khan

THE MANNER OF FRIENDLINESS

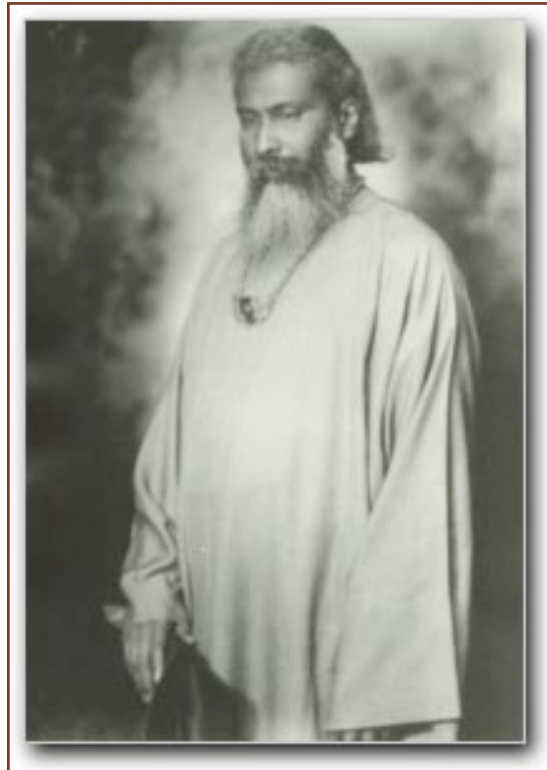
by Pir-O-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan

Editor's Note: The following essay on 'Adab' (or 'Divine Manner') is from the esoteric papers of Pir-O-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan entitled 'The Gathas (III, Suluk)'. For those interested in this subject and how it forms the foundation of what Sufis sometimes call "The Art of Personality", I will be offering a series on this subject at our Thursday evening gatherings beginning in March (see schedule).

The manner of friendliness is considered as the main part in the study of Sufism, for the Sufi in all ages has given great importance to the art of personality. As Sufism is the religious philosophy of love, harmony and beauty, it is most necessary for a Sufi to express the same through his personality. No doubt in the East, manner is given great prominence in life. The courts in the East were schools of good manners, though a great deal of artificiality was combined with it, but in the path of Sufism the same manners which are used at court were learned with sincerity. According to the Sufi idea all beauty comes from God, so a beautiful manner is a divine expression. In these modern times people seem to be against manners because of their agitation against aristocracy, as there are many who are against religion because they are cross with the priests. When man agitates against beauty he cannot be on the right path, and the movement of today against all beauty that exists in the form of culture and manner is a battle with civilization.

The Sufi calls the manner that comes from the knowledge of unity, from the realization of truth, from the love of God, Akhlaq Allah, meaning the manner of God; in other words, God expressed in man shows in the action of that man the manner of God.

The following are the different aspects of the manner known by the Sufis as Ilm-i Adab: adab = respect / khafir = consideration / tawazu = hospitality, or welcome / inkisar = humility, or selflessness / khulq = graciousness / matanat = seriousness / halim = tenderness of feeling / salim = harmoniousness / wafah = fidelity, loyalty, constancy / dilazari = sympathy / kotah kalam = moderation in speech / kam sukhun = sparing of words / motubah = self-respect, keeping one's word, proving trustworthy in dealings / buzurgi = venerability / ghairat = honor, or pride / haya = modesty.



Also bravery; experience; generosity; forgiveness; large-mindedness; tolerance; to take the side of the weak; to hide the faults of others, as one would one's own, out of sympathy and respect for another.

A respectful attitude is the first and principal thing in the development of personality, not only respect toward someone whom one considers superior but respect for everyone one meets in life, in proportion to what is due to that being. It is through conceit that a person gives less honour where more honour is due, and it is by ignorance that a person gives more respect than what is due. Respecting someone does not only require a desire to respect but an art of respecting. One ignorant of this art may express respect wrongly.

It is self-respect which makes one inclined to respect another. The one who has no respect for himself cares little if he respects another or if respect

is at all necessary in life. To respect means to honour. It is not only bowing and bending, or external action, which expresses respect. A disrespectful person may bow his head before another and strike him on the face by his word. True respect is from the attitude which comes from the sincere feeling of respect. The outward expression of respect has no value without inner feeling. Inspired by a respectful attitude, one expresses one's feeling in thought, speech, or action, which is the true expression of respect. A sincere feeling of respect needs no words, even the silence can speak of one's respectful attitude.

There are three different expressions of respect. One is that when the position or rank of a person commands one to respect, whether one is willing or unwilling, and under the situation one cannot help having respect, which is nothing but an outer expression of respect. The second expression of respect is when a person wishes to please another by a respectful manner, to let that person feel how respectful one is and what a good manner one has. By this expression one

“When the shell of my heart breaks, pearls are scattered around.”

Hz. Inayat Khan

has two objects in view: firstly, to please another, and the other to please oneself by one's way of pleasing.

The third way is the true feeling of respect which rises from one's heart, and if one tried to express it one could not express it enough. If one were not able to express it fully it can always be felt, because it is a living spirit of respect.

The mark of people having tradition behind them, by birth, nation or race, shows in their respectful tendency. To them, disrespect either on their part or on the part of another means absence of beauty. Life has many beautiful things—flowers, jewels, beauty of nature, of form, of line, of color—but beauty of manner excels all, and all good manner is

rooted in a respectful tendency. It is a great pity that this subject is not regarded as the most important one to be considered and to be developed—especially today, when the stream of the whole world is running in the direction of commercialism, which tends to the beauty of matter in gold and silver instead of beauty of character and personality.



Photo of the Mishras by Amir O'Loughlin

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A Serendipity continued from page 3

always before us, we can plant our fields of daffodils patiently, one step at a time, in faith and trust that it will be accomplished.

“Hope can prolong life and lack of hope can shorten it. The joy that one gets from hope is greater than the joy that comes from the possession of the object hoped for. Therefore there is a Sanskrit saying that Brahma in the creation took honey from all the flowers and that this honey was hope. The interpretation is that out of all things that are beautiful and that give joy and happiness the essence is taken and that essence is hope.”³

Daffodils have been a symbol of hope, and planting flowers and trees have symbolized hope for generations of humanity, perhaps now more significantly than in the past for obvious ecological reasons. Con-

sider the legend of Johnny Appleseed, the story of *The Man Who Planted Hope and Grew Happiness* by Jean Genet, or even *Miss Rumphius*, by Barbara Cooney. I'll not tell all those stories here, but you might enjoy reading them in your library or on the internet. Planting flowers and trees takes us beyond ourselves, toward a vision of beauty and of the betterment of humanity and the earth.

Now for the second story: While I was preparing this article, I chanced to meet a gentleman at Yellow Point Lodge (is there a color theme here?) who told me his wonderful story about daffodils. Sitting in front of the huge fireplace in the lodge, Robert told me that where he grew up, just outside Liverpool,

there was a farmer who used to grow daffodils—huge fields of melted gold. As a boy, each year he used to sneak into the field and pick a bouquet of daffodils and take them to his mother, with whom he was very close. Robert told me that his mom died when he was 16 years old, so he regretted never having known her as an adult. Daffodils have always brought him cherished memories of his mother.

A few years ago, Robert, now in his 60's and living in Vancouver, was taking his daily walk around Stanley Park's sea-wall. Devoutly religious, he was pondering the notion of confession, and thought about all those daffodils he had stolen as a boy and which he'd given to his mother. How could he make restitution for his past misdeeds? What came to him was that he could plant daffodils here and there near the sea-wall in Stanley Park, as restitution and in remembrance of his dear mother.

So he bought 50 daffodil bulbs and planted them in old tree stumps and other cozy places, from the Discovery to the mermaid on the rock, he told me. The following year he planted at least 100 more, filling in the gaps. And I expect he's not done yet.

During the last round of planting, a Stanley Park gardener caught him in the act, and after learning what Robert was doing,

offered to provide him with more bulbs!

The next time you're walking on the sea-wall in spring, you can send a “thank-you” to Robert for this expression of his love (and repentance) that we may appreciate. Now, taking his turn around the sea-wall has become a walking meditation for him. He told me that the daffodils are, for him, a prayer of forgiveness and of celebration of his love for his mother, and by extension, love for the Divine.

One at a time, by one man...

“Let the beauty you love be what you do there are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground!”⁴

I'll leave you with a poem by Wordsworth, who wrote this in 1802 when, strolling with his sister, Dorothy, they came across a field of daffodils.

I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD

*I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.*

*Continuous as the stars
that shine and twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretched in never-ending line
along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
tossing their heads in sprightly dance.*

*The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
in such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
what wealth the show to me had brought:*

*For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.*

§

1. Hazrat Inayat Khan, *Gayan, Vadan, Nirtan*, #1217, p 142

2. Hazrat Inayat Khan, *The Gathas, Tasawwuf* I:3

3. ibid

4. Rumi, trans Coleman Barks

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“Kindness is like snow; it beautifies everything it covers.”
Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Zikr: A Spiritual Practice for Awakening Divine Presence

With Shahabuddin David Less

April 2–5, 2009

Seattle

For Sufis, Zikr, which is the practice of the remembrance of God by chanting, is among the most important ways to change the personal consciousness and to change the experience of the personality. Over the centuries variations on this practice have brought about deep awakenings in individual spiritual development. This four-day intensive will focus on many of the forms of this practice to effect a shift from the personal consciousness to a more heart-centered collective consciousness.

Who should come to this seminar? Experienced practitioners who know the profound value of group Zikr done with a spiritual teacher. Those just beginning the path should also join, as practice of Zikr softens the covering over the heart and prepares the body and mind for deeper spiritual experience.

Another benefit of Zikr is the effect that this group recitation has on the global mind. A community of spiritual seekers activating their collective soul-heart-mind can bring about a positive and healing result for the human family.

Shahabuddin David Less has been convening Zikr circles worldwide for 38 years. His love and enthusiasm for this practice is transmitted to all who share with him.

For further information contact Amir @ 604-874-5323 or Zainab @ 604-877-0022, or e-mail the registrar, Jelilah Judith Allen at: domesticwarrior@gmail.com



Photo by Amir O'Loughlin



Shahabuddin David Less

THE DOORS

by Kathy Danielson

You asked me what I would like to have
More than I would like to have knowledge
More than I would like to have certainty—
I would like to have a door, opening

Into a wide field filled with the songs of
small birds,
Filled with light,
Filled with dancing and gladness,
And far across the field—
Another door, opening...

Into summer, into wilderness,
A greening of imagination.
And, finally at a great distance—

Another door, opening...

(submitted by Suria Arychuk)

SUFI LIBRARY

We are planning to establish a Sufi Lending Library. If you have any Sufi books which you have borrowed in the past and forgotten to return, please let us know. Also, if you have any books to donate, it would be much appreciated. The library will be at Amir and Chloë's home and Sharifa will look after the borrowing of books. We will have the library up and running soon, with established guidelines, re: length of loan, etc. If you have any questions, or books to donate, please phone Sharifa at 604-731-8789, or email sharifasart@hotmail.com.



“Sincerity is the jewel that forms in the shell of the heart.”

Hz. Inayat Khan