

THE ARAMAIC LORD'S PRAYER
28th February to 2nd March 2003
with Wali and Ariënne van der Zwan
Report on the weekend by Glenda Huggons



This was the first weekend event led by Wali and Ariënne in the UK.

It would be easy to assume that a weekend entitled "The Aramaic Lord's Prayer" would have been largely academic, but on the contrary, this weekend was very experiential, its contents weaving a beautiful basket of understanding

which created a container in which we could endeavour to experience the prayer cycle to its fullest.

By the time we had all settled into this comfortable and nurturing venue and finished our first meal there was already a strong sense of unity despite the fact that many of us had never met. The energy and atmosphere generated by the Dances on Friday evening was very strong indeed.

We explored the Lord's Prayer using Dances of Universal Peace from different traditions with linked themes and listened to short stories which illustrated these themes further. We looked at the similarities in the Sura Fateha and most of us chose to gather and sing this beautiful prayer before breakfast on Saturday and Sunday, learning by being led in a simple call and response style which left us amazed, but delighted, that we'd learned the Arabic pronunciation so rapidly!

The climax was the Dance Cycle of course, with the ritual bread and wine. Some people had never experienced DUP before, and some had their first glimpse of the Aramaic Lord's Prayer and the work of Saadi this weekend. Although I've danced this cycle many times, it continues to fascinate me how easy it is to engage oneself fully in this cycle with the minimum of instruction.

For me, the weekend was profound on many levels, and my experience remains with me. I would like to share some direct quotations from the comments sent to me by others.

"Apart from the beauty of the dances and the gentle but focussed way Wali and Ariënne led us through the weekend, what struck me most was the quality of the communication between people. Here I met total strangers in a way that was so caring and intimate

that it touched me deeply within. And all around me I saw the same - open and respectful and compassionate connections were made between people. If it could just be like that in "real life". I know it can be, and weekends like this are a big contribution to our overall quality of life".

"Coming home from the Aramaic weekend, I was made aware of the gifts that I had received. In my work with people with learning difficulties I was so moved to see the 'transmission' of these gifts through the receiving of them by two people in particular. Through the mirror of another, I marvelled at unconditional love, that is received in whatever way is needed. The ease of such 'transmission', the ease of such sharing of blessings is a sign to me of what is real, what is important in this life, in my life. The gratitude that arises is another blessing in itself - the cup overflows".

"Having experienced a closing down in my heart centre a few weeks beforehand, it was a gentle re-awakening.....By the end of the weekend I felt the joy returning".

Wali and Ariënne will be returning for another Aramaic weekend in February 2004.