

## PEACE IN MOTION NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2017

Dear all,



Summer is almost over and harvest is knocking at the door. Time for our Newsletter.

Our Samark Summer Week ended a few weeks ago. A week later we were off to the Netherlands to pick up our daughter and two grandchildren. They stayed with us in Germany for a week before returning to India. As you can imagine, this has been really holiday and quality time for us!

Meanwhile, this Newsletter was waiting to be finished. So here it is.

As usual, we look back upon the first half of the year and ahead towards our new adventures. As you will read, we keep being inspired by the Buddhist tradition. After twice focusing on Sokei-An, we now return to Thich Nhat Hanh.

Our new Manuals **Unity and Diversity** (on the world traditions) and **The Art of Dance Leading and Mentoring** (our syllabus accompanying the past Dance Training Program) are now available in both English and German. We are deeply grateful to Hans-Peter and Regina, the translation and correction team.

Looking ahead towards the planned Retreat on the Bhagavad Gita in Goa, January 21 -31, 2018, we share from the Unity and Diversity manual an introductory chapter on the Gita.

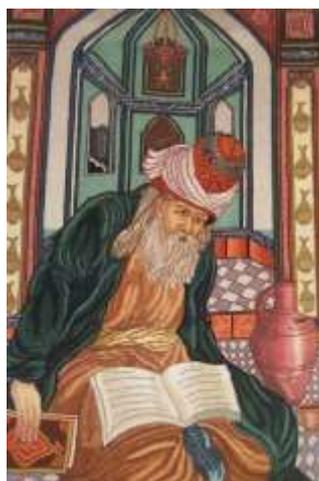
A major part of our homework this spring consisted in writing the manual for our upcoming Sufi Year Group, **The Sufi Path of Love and Understanding**. This program inshallah will bring together many teachings on the stages of the nafs, fana and baka and so many other Sufi ideas that we shared with other seekers on the path in retreats and workshops. We are very much looking forward to sharing all these experiences over five weekends with the participants.

In a next Newsletter, we may share a chapter of this manual, which we hope to publish (English first) by the Summer, 2018.

Toward the One!

Love, Wali & Ariënne

### Rumi's Seven Advices



For the Samark Summer Week, we focused on Rumi's seven advices. This enabled us to work with personal issues that transcend theory and are directly translatable to our psychological make-up, behavior and daily life. In order to enhance this process of reflection, we worked as usual for the Summer Week with small groups and simple questions, leading us deeper into the world of unconditionality, honesty and generosity. For instance, what is your balance between honesty and spiritual correctness? Do you give (material items, but also your love) for the sake of giving or do you want something back (love, friendship, attention, sympathy or being liked)? What comes first, your criticism or your compliments? Each advice brings up many questions for self-assessment.

Below, we reworked a part of the introduction on these advices, taken from Wali's third Dutch book on Rumi's Mathnavi stories.

Googling Rumi will soon drown you in quotes, each line of love poetry even more beautiful than the other. Rumi's poetry is popular. That is wonderful, but if you want to know more, internet leaves you empty-handed. References to the source of Rumi's poetry are rare.

This is not a new phenomenon. The main source of what we know of Rumi's life – besides his own letters and the writings of his son Sultan Veled – is Aflaki's *Menaqibu l-'Arafin* (the Feats of the Knowers of God) from 1353.

Aflaki too does not abound in footnotes referring to the source of his quotes. Why would he? His writing was a tribute, a hagiography full of wonderful stories that – as was usual in these days – may not necessarily be true, but are meant to describe the greatness of Rumi. Maybe

not much different from people who upload Rumi's quotes nowadays.

Googling Rumi, you will also find his seven advices. They are put together by a Turkish commentator who based his work on Aflaki.

The advices aren't direct quotes and it is not easy to find them in Rumi's writings. But you can find the themes easily in Rumi's stories. These stories are invariably teaching stories, meant to admonish his audience to follow the straight path. Rumi doesn't shun the odd sermon, but also draws from everyday life and grasps his audience – and now his readers – with unforeseen twists, plots and puns.

Anyone even vaguely familiar with Rumi will immediately understand his advices are not easy to live by. Take the last one: Be [inwardly] as you present yourself or become how you present yourself. Not an easy one to chew!

Of this advice, we know for certain it is not a *Rumi Original*, for Rumi's great example and predecessor, the Persian poet 'Attar, already had the 9<sup>th</sup> century Sufi saint Byazid of Bistami say the same thing. Just as Moineddin Chisti, the founder of the Indian Chisti Order (11<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> century) supposed to have admonished his students to be 'generous as a river, hospitable as the earth and loving as the sun'. What we now call plagiarism, in those days was a well-accepted and honorable way of honoring your ancestors.

But let's get back to the seventh advice. Aflaki describes how Rumi meets a beautiful prostitute who kneels for him in full devotion. Rumi honors the woman by calling her Rabia, after the great female Sufi saint. Thereupon a man scalds Rumi:

'It is not proper for such a great man to be involved with prostitutes of the tavern and show them these kindnesses.'

Mowlana [Rumi] replied: 'That woman presently goes about in a single color and she displays herself as she is without deception. If you're a man, you also do the same and abandon the quality of possessing two colors (hypocrisy) so that your exterior becomes the same color as your interior. If your exterior and your interior do not become the same, whatever you do is false and vain.'

Aflaki, p. 384

Here's a story of Rumi on hypocrisy from his Mathnavi, showing how this advice works out in his Mathnavi (III 732 – 765):

### The man who greased his mustache



A poor man was fed up with having other people look down upon him. He decided to do something about it, bought a sheep's tail and used it to grease his mustache every morning. Stroking his mustache, he'd mingle with the rich and say; 'That was a well-greased meal I just had!'

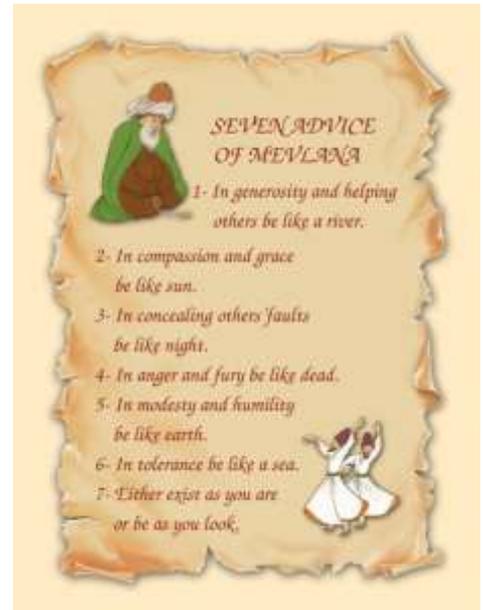
His belly protested and prayed the sweet Lord to end these lies: 'I'd love to see the end of his mustache! All this boasting leads to no good and certainly not to a full belly. Without this greasy mustache, certainly someone would have invited him for dinner and my stomach would be full!'

Not long after, the prayer was heard. A cat went off with the tail. The daughter of the poor man called to her father: 'I am so sorry, father. A cat took the sheep's tail you always use to grease your mustache. I ran after it, but the cat was too fast.'

Everyone roared with laughter, but many also felt compassion.

From that day on, the poor man was invited to many a dinner table and didn't have to suffer anymore.

There's more bread in the truth than in a lie!



## Anya Haqima: Ya Hayyo Ya Qayyum



April 2017. We're sitting at a table of Mu-mu, the famous Moscow restaurant chain, in Domodedovo Airport, waiting for our flight back home. The two of us and Arjuna, who once again joined us to enjoy the Russian dance & Sufi circle. We learned about Mu-Mu through Anya Haqima and this was our rendez-vous place with her whenever we were stopping over in Moscow and she couldn't join us for the retreat.

Last time we saw Anya was April 2016, in this very Mu-Mu. We talked about her fear that someone would take her life.

Little did we know it was a hunch that would become a reality only a few months later.

As this was our first visit to Moscow since her passing, we carved out extra time to visit Anya's grave after the retreat. Symbolically, the cemetery is located at the end of the subway. In our society, graveyards are always outside of town or village. Would it be for practical and hygienic reasons or also we don't want death to interfere with our everyday life?

We placed the stone Heart-with-Wings that used to hang above the entrance door to our living room at the top of the cross over her grave. Hands aching with cold, but we managed to attach it firmly, after which we sang a Ya Salam chant with our small group of five.

Later, over a coffee and the traditional *blini* (pancakes) one is supposed to eat when visiting a grave, we share how we first met. This was after our very first Russian Dance Camp in the train, talking about her initiation (by her then teacher).



Trains run through our joined stories, as she was our train guide from Moscow to the Volga Area. Ariëne and I ended up initiating her on one of these train journeys (see our 2007 Newsletter) and Anya became Anya Haqima.

We shared how she used her considerable Venus qualities (and a bottle of whisky) to get the necessary stamp and signature for our stay in Moscow, how she prepared for her trip to England and many more stories. We felt how every story made her more alive for our small party.

We didn't need the stories ourselves, as Anya never really left us. So when leading the *Rebounding Zikr*, we remembered she brought this dance to Russian from the Czech Republic – then the location for our Winter Retreat – while she brought the *Angel Moi Dance* to the Czech dancers in return. It's

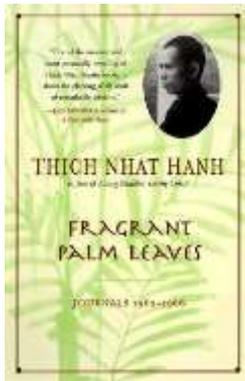
has been popular there ever since.

In those and other dances – the way she led the *Ya Hayy Ya Haqq Dance* is inimitable – she lives on, albeit mostly on an unconscious level by most. That's okay, for that is how things go. On another level, she'll live on for those who knew her for her inner qualities. Her sharp psychological view (hence her Sufi name *Haqima*), her never failing sense of humor. Even in the last difficult years of her life, troubled by family worries and other matters, she never lost touch with this sense of humor, which made her a living example of Hazrat Inayat Khan's warning never to give in to self-pity (Bowl of Saki for January 29).

As the Sufis say: *Ya Hayyo Ya Qayyum*. The physical body disappears, but the memory and results of our lives will continue to live on, as they are an integral part of creation with us as co-creators, adding our own unique story to the unfolding story of the Cosmos.

## Equanimity and Thich Nhat Hanh

*During our Moscow Retreat, we led a ritual in dance on the Four Immeasurables (click here for more on this). At the dinner table, a participant asked us if life in upekka – the state of*



*equanimity – wasn't boring without any ups and downs. It isn't, it makes one only more really and authentically human, but how to explain this state of the lotus flower, immaculately floating above the water (the world of emotions) and fed by the mud at the bottom (our shadows)? As Thich Nhat Hanh (Thay) says: 'No mud, no lotus.'*

*In his Mathnavi, Rumi uses the metaphor of an unborn baby, not willing to leave the womb. As all is so wonderful inside, it cannot possibly be better outside. Indeed, how can we know about states and stations where we haven't been?*

*The only way is to follow the example of people we trust and who have been there. By serendipity, this example came the very morning after the retreat, while reading Thich Nhat Hanh's Fragrant Palm Leaves – his autobiographical journals from 1962 -1966. Below, we'll share some of this journal. We're sorry our truncated and abbreviated version doesn't do justice to the style of this Vietnamese Zen Buddhist monk, a painter and calligrapher with words.*

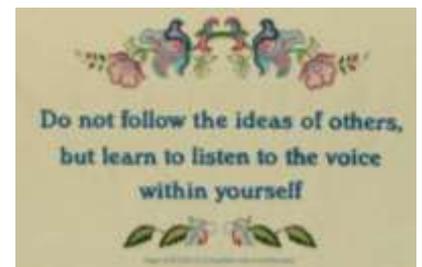
In his journal for December 20, 1962, Thay admits La Fontaine's shocking statement that the argument of the strongest party is always the best, to be at least partly true: 'Truth without strength cannot stand firm... Without strength, how could those with no more than a pen challenge powerful authorities?'

On December 21, he looks at the austere and stripped trees: 'The icy winter is unforgiving to all things young, tender and insecure. So one must grow beyond youthful uncertainty to survive. Maturity and determination are necessary.'

Unspoken, Thay realizes he needs to mature and become stronger. On December 23, 1962, he observes:

'It's funny how much our surroundings influence our emotions. Our joys and sorrows, likes and dislikes are colored by our environment so much that often we just let our environment dictate our course. We go along with "public" feelings until we no longer even know our own true aspirations. We become strangers to ourselves, molded entirely by society... Sometimes I feel caught between two opposing selves – the "false self" imposed by society, and what I would call my "true self". How often do we confuse the two and assume society's mold to be our true self.

Battles between our two selves rarely result in a peaceful reconciliation. Our mind becomes a battlefield... Trees topple, branches snap, houses crash. These are our loneliest moments. Yet every time we survive such a storm, we grow a little. Without storms like these, I would not be who I am today.'



Thay then relates how he passed through such a storm the autumn before. A storm lasting well over a month. It reads as an authentic sharing of a *die before death* experience, as the Sufis would call it. Observing himself, 36 years of age but still 'young', he realizes:

'Youth is a time for seeking truth... You aspire to see the truth, but once you've seen it, you cannot avoid suffering. Otherwise, you've seen nothing at all. You are still hostage to arbitrary conventions set up by others. People judge themselves and others based on standards that are not their own... But when the criteria used to arrive at such judgments are not your own, they are not the truth. Truth cannot be borrowed. It can only

be experienced directly... For each person, it is different.

And it is different today than it was yesterday. When we discover something to be true today through our own direct experience, we will see that our previous assumptions were wrong, or at least incomplete. Our new way of looking transcends yesterday's desire, prejudices, narrow-mindedness and habits.'

The day after, having read Bonhoeffer, he writes (the *italics* are ours):

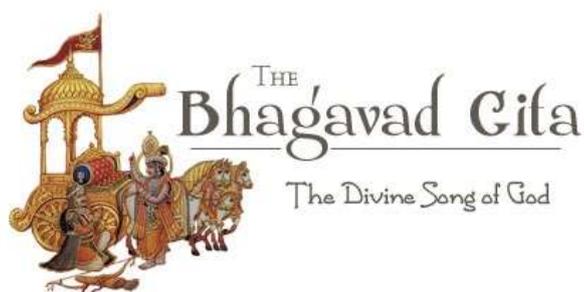
'After experiencing such a night, I will never complain about life again. My heart was overflowing with love. Courage and strength swelled in me, and I saw my mind and heart as flowers. All feelings, passions, and sufferings revealed themselves as wonders, yet I remained grounded in my body. Some people might call such an experience "religious", but what I felt was totally and utterly *human*... Life is miraculous, even in its suffering.'

On his birthday, his deep experience is over, as is his youth. He comes out stronger than before, ready to face the world and fighting with his pen for his truth and for a socially engaged and humanistic Buddhism.

## The Bhagavad Gita

*In January, we have planned to offer a retreat in Patnem, Goa (India), combining teachings on the Bhagavad Gita with the exquisite nature and sunny beaches of this tropical resort. We'll stay in The Secret Garden, a resort run by Indian Sufis and followers of Moineddin Chisti.*

*Here is already a short introduction to the Gita, taken from our new manual Unity and Diversity on the main traditions, written especially for dance leaders and cherag(a)s, leading a Universal Worship.*



The Bhagavad Gita (the Song of the Lord) is a spiritual classic, not only for Indian people, and is generally seen as part of the world's wisdom library. The Gita is part of the Mahabharata (Book VI: 25 - 42) and is probably written around 200 BCE.

The central theme of the book is the advice from Lord Krishna as charioteer to the warrior Arjuna. Arjuna is about to engage in a war with his very

own family and is reluctant to do so.

In order to explain Arjuna his duty, Krishna explains the spiritual background (*yoga*) behind this duty (the *dharma* leading to his *karma*).

Arjuna finds it all very confusing and hard to understand:

O Krishna, You seem to be saying that the path of wisdom is greater than action. You praise this great knowledge, which indicates I need to give up action altogether and just sit and meditate, so why do you ask me to act in this terrible way? Surely, the two are incompatible. Shouldn't I just focus on spiritual wisdom and forget about my duty? Why act at all? (III: 2)

Somewhat later, Arjuna sighs and tells Lord Krishna:

This stillness of divine union that you describe is completely beyond me. Not only is my mind restless and turbulent, it is also powerfully obstinate. Trying to control it is like trying to tame the wind! (VI: 33)

Everyone who entered the path of meditation will recognize what Arjuna is saying here, but Lord Krishna tells Arjuna not to give up or waver:

No doubt the mind is restless and difficult to control, but it can be done, Arjuna! For an undisciplined man, yoga is hard to achieve. What you need is regular practice and detachment, self-control and great determination. (VI: 34 - 36)

If your mind doesn't waver or is looking for someone else, but is in constant meditation, it is focusing on me. When you are engaged in devotion for me, you will surely reach the highest Purusha [here: Krishna, God]. (VIII: 8)

The Gita version of 'toward the One' asks for acting, not from personal insight, but from divine understanding. This divine sense of direction can be achieved through devotional meditation. Meditation here means not meditating on some item, but taking your very own self

as the laboratory for your inner research in order to probe deeper in your true nature, that part of you that is always connected with the Source of Being.

Attachment, so also attachment to the outcome of your actions, block the doors to your innermost depths, so the Gita asks us to act without being attached to the outcome of our actions. Acting unconditionally is, like unconditional love, very difficult, but Lord Krishna never promised the path would be easy.



There are many ways to read the Gita. The story is about a battlefield where Arjuna is taught about the deeper sides of life. You need to read the Mahabharata in order to understand the actual reason for the battle, only to see that it is the same old story again: good against evil.

As often in sacred texts, the very first verse already explains the full meaning of the text. In the Gita, the battlefield is described as 'the field of dharma' (*dharma-kshetra*), the field that 'always maintains its sanctity and brings victory to the righteous'.

So the Gita doesn't just talk about a battle, but about a *dharma battle*. On a more personal and deeper level, the battlefield is in us and we are asked to fight against the parts in us that keep us away from our duty and tasks on earth.

No wonder Arjuna is asked to fight his very own family. His opponents live in himself as the warring parts in him that keep him from his *dharma* and *karma*!

The actual battle isn't described in the Gita, for the Gita is not about who wins the outer war. It is about the mental and spiritual attitude of Arjuna, fed by Lord Krishna's teachings.

The whole battlefield is an allegory of our inner struggle to find meaning, sense and direction in life.

By living the *dharma* way, we can learn what our *karma* is. It is the perpetual battle between the dominance of our earthly attachments against the longing for deeper insight.

Arjuna's battle is the fight of good against evil, which we find in fairy tales. In old and well-known fairytales, but also in new ones, featuring Batman, Superman, Spiderman, James Bond and all the other modern heroes who try to rescue the world from evil.

With one big difference: our modern heroes are phantasies, drawing from our archetypal needs and understanding of good and evil. When you really need them, they are nowhere in sight.

The battle between good and evil on the field of *dharma* is no fairy tale. When you really are in need of support, *dharma* and *yoga* will help you. If only you learn how to access your very own inner self, where divinity and the Source of all lie waiting for you.



*Below, you will find the program for the rest of 2017 and the preliminary program for the first half of 2018. We're still working on our program, so feel free to check our website for updates.*

*On our website, we also regularly update our list of dance write-ups.*

*Check it out!*



# Fall & Winter 2017 -2018

## Wali & Ariënne



### September

7 – 10

#### **Sufi Year Group** (Khankah Samark)

*The Sufi Path of Love and Understanding*

In this first weekend of a series of 5 on the Sufi Path, we will explore some of the main themes of classical and universal Sufism. Through the Sufi psychology of the *nafs* (ego), we will work with our own inner being, trying to find our way 'toward the One'.

The first weekend is open for all, depending on availability. The other weekends only for those who subscribe to the whole series.

*English/German spoken*

23 – 24

#### **Dance Weekend Hamburg** (Germany)

*Send us the Peace* Yoga Centrum Hamburg.

Contact [Heinz Scheffler](#) *German spoken*

29 – Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>

#### **De Weyst Weekend** (Handel, Eindhoven area, Netherlands)

*The Art of Remembrance* *Dutch spoken*

### October

12 – 15

#### **Sufi & Buddhist Retreat EIAB** (Waldbröl, Germany)

*The Heart of compassion*

with Wali & Ariënne and Bi Nghiem (Sister Ingrid)

We will partly follow the daily routine of the monastery and its sisters and brothers. We will mix this experience with the teachings of Hazrat Inayat Khan & Murshid SAM, who was both a Sufi and a Zen Master. Participants pay for their stay in EIAB. Honoraria is dana (self-chosen donation).

Registration: [E-mail](#) *German spoken*

19 – 22

#### **The Sufi Path of Love and Understanding** (Khankah Samark)

Second weekend of a series of 5.

Only open for participants to the whole series.

### November

16 – 19

#### **Samark Sesshin** (Khankah Samark)

*Zen & Zikr*

From Thursday evening dinner until Sunday, late lunch.

In a Sesshin, we alternate dancing with meditating. To further the inner process, part of the weekend will be in silence. *German spoken*

25 – 26

#### **Dance Weekend UK** (England)

*Rumi and the Buddha*

In this weekend, the Buddha and Rumi join hands to help us realize that learning about your deeper motivations can help you to learn about yourself and to also help others. Contact Diana at [E-mail](#) *English spoken*

### December

Dec. 28 – Jan 1

#### **Silvester Celebration** (Khankah Samark)

*New Year Retreat & Celebration*

Retreat and celebration to look back in gratitude for what 2017 has brought us and to look forward to unfolding of some of our next steps in

life in 2018. *German or English/German spoken.*

## 2018

January 21 – 31

### **Diving in the Ocean of Mother India** (Goa, India)

We hope to travel with you and discover something of the outer beauty of Goa, with its beautiful beaches and warm Indian Ocean, and of the inner beauty of the Indian culture and spirituality, sheer by being present and diving into everyday Indian life, and through the program offered, an introduction to 'Indian Gospel', the Bhagavad Gita. *Only two places left.*

March 9 - 10

### **Dance Weekend Bremen** (Germany)

Theme to be announced.

Contact Renate at E-mail *German spoken.*

April 12 – 15

### **The Sufi Path of Love and Understanding** (Khankah Samark)

Third weekend of a series of 5.

Mai 18 – 21

### **Pentecost Retreat** (Khankah Samark)

Theme to be announced

June 7 – 10

### **The Sufi Path of Love and Understanding** (Khankah Samark)

Fourth weekend of a series of 5.



**Wali and Ariënne** are senior mentors in the Mentor Teachers Guild and they guide students in mostly Western and Eastern Europe. By co-teaching, they interweave of masculine and feminine energies and combine strength with beauty, depth with lightness, joy with energy, clarity & focus with ease.

Wali and Ariënne follow the Sufi path for their spiritual depth, background and support and are khalif and sheikha in the Ruhaniat, the Sufi Order of Samuel Lewis and Inayat Khan. They

have two adult children, living in the Netherlands and India.

**Khankah Samark** is situated in the Oberbergisches Land, a rural area East of Cologne, far from the maddening crowd yet in close range to motorway and train. We advise you to book early if you want to participate, as some events tend to sell out quickly and have a waiting list.



## Registration

We're happy to say we don't need to raise our prices. Also, we can keep some reduced places, in case money is a problem for you. For all events at Khankah Samark:

Long Weekends (Thu. – Sun.)	€ 90 lodging	€ 290 Honoraria & food
Reduced price (not for single room)	€ 90 lodging	€ 220 Honoraria & food
Weeks (Sa. – Sa.)	€ 210 lodging	€ 310 Honoraria & food
Reduced price (not for single room)	€ 210 lodging	€ 220 Honoraria & food
Surcharge single room (limited availability)	€ 50 (weekend)	€ 100 (week)

We don't want money to be the reason for not being able to visit the Khankah. Apart from the reduced price, we always try to keep some places with extra reduction for visitors from low currency countries: Weekends: € 260,=; weeks: € 320,= all in. Write us for more details.

You secure your place with a down payment with name of the workshop to:  
W. van der Zwan; IBAN: DE59 3705 0299 0341 5533 26, BIC: COKSDE33

Weekends: €50 / €100 for single room. Weeklong events: €100 / €150 for single room  
Please see our website for cancellation policy, for updates & for other events.

Wali & Ariënne van der Zwan

[E-mail](#)

[Website](#)