



*Sufinews from Europe*

2 - 2009



## **Muta Qabla Anta Mutu**

Rumi called the Beloveds: «Come, come, whoever you are, even though you have broken your vows a thousand times, come, come again».

Seekers long for the Divine Presence and feel the call to turn within, to the essence of self. The retreat is the heart of our journey. One dies to be reborn again in the alchemical process.

It is a deep purification and yet a nourishment to the body, heart and soul. Discover the beauty, love and peace of the inner world. Welcome to the spheres of light and self-realization.

Come, come again!  
Aziza Scott

*Dear sufi friends, greetings!*

In this newsletter you will mainly find articles on the alchemical retreat process and the retreat guide training possibilities, but also other material that we hope will be of interest to you.

I was this summer able to participate in the retreat guide training at the Abode summer camp in USA. Among many inspiring sharings between the experienced retreat guides present there, was the theme of offering retreats to persons with no sufi-experience, but with a deep need for solitude and withdrawal from their urban stressful life. To me this need for withdrawal seems to be an increasing need in our time, and is really an opportunity for us to open up our “treasure-house” to our fellow human beings.

Our next sufi newsletter will be out in January.

Please send your contributions to [ki.a@online.no](mailto:ki.a@online.no) before 1st of January. We look forward to publish your favourite poems or pictures, heart-experiences, upcoming events, philosophical thoughts about being a sufi in our modern world, stories from your Suluk training ....

In loving service, Alia

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# *Retreatguide Training with Munir in Germany*

**Retreat work has been at the heart of the teaching activities of Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan**

## **Retreat time**

is an opportunity to temporarily withdraw from the outside world, to reduce the worldly activities to a minimum for some time, to restrain the chat within one's mind, to keep silence and concentrate on the inner worlds. Silence is the key to experience new dimensions of one's Self. During reclusion we reconnect with our spiritual source and regenerate our subtle energies. The paralysing routine of everyday life is interrupted.

Concentrating on the spiritual exercises, we undergo a transformation process of our personality. This is the time when we are confronted with our shadows, our fears and other obstacles within. We learn to develop the quality of the forger and other useful instruments in order to heal the inner pains and proceed on the path. Our aspiration is for the eternal source above diversity, the unfathomable light, the ecstasy of the Divine beyond any idea, indescribable and yet more real than anything we had experienced with open eyes. It is a gift to drink the wine of Divine bliss which we thankfully cherish, but this is not the goal of the Sufi. When we reconnect with the inner source we discover fresh perspectives on all kinds of topics and problems. That is why we feel as if reborn at the time when the retreat is finished, and we return into the world.

## **The retreat process in the esoteric school of the Sufiorder is carefully structured.**

The retreatant keeps in close contact with a retreatguide of his / her choice. Usually both would meet in the mornings, sit together in meditation for some time before the retreatant has the opportunity to speak out anything he / she considers worthwhile to communicate, any worries, questions, desires. Finally, the retreatguide would recommend to him / her

certain exercises for the day.

This guide has not only been trained in the particular Sufi exercises. Moreover, he / she is qualified to intuitively recognize the inner conditions of the other person. He / she must be clearly aware of the spiritual and psychic processes that are at stake. He / she must be able to distinguish if the retreatant was in danger to transgress the limits of balance of his / her psychic capacities. The guide must be alert to any problems which might arise: physical, mental, psychical, spiritual, emotional, what not else.

## **During the retreatguide training**

special attention is directed to stabilize one's intuitive awareness, to carefully communicate the inner perceptions, to recommend suitable exercises, and to understand the ups and downs of the retreat process as such. The training is addressed to mureeds experienced in meditation who wish to improve their insights and to attend to fellow seekers on the Sufi path.

## **In Germany, regular trainings for retreatguides have been carried out**

**since 1984.** Since more than two decades the trainings have been conducted by Munir Voss, the head of the esoteric school of the German Sufiorder. Twice a year the trainings regularly take place, in March near the town of Tübingen in Southern Germany, in November at the "Grube Louise", a center in the forests midway between Cologne and Frankfurt.

In 2009 the retreatguide training at the "Grube Louise" will be 13-18 November, new participants are welcome. Further information is available from [munir@gmx.org](mailto:munir@gmx.org), Phone +49-6221-866942, or [sekretariat@sufiorden.de](mailto:sekretariat@sufiorden.de).



# *Personal sharing: Glimpses from my 40 day retreat*

By Saki Lee

This summer I could finally realize one of my deepest dreams: to be guided on an individual retreat for 40 days! I was sensitively, and skilfully guided by my dear friend Aziza in her beautiful retreat centre in Massachusetts, not very far from the Abode. the beauty of nature - in spite of a lot of rain! - supported me throughout this retreat. Such blessings and baraka! Every day was a revelation and unveiling of my soul. Indescribable beauty and light, torrents of tears shed in both ecstasy and release, a deepening acceptance and integration of the shadow, and the recovery of the subtle and unspeakable memory of the mystical journey through all the planes of consciousness...

I actually cannot fully give voice to what this retreat really meant to me! There was incredible grace, gratitude, and ceaseless flow of baraka . . . and the presence of the archangels, Murshid, Pir Vilayat, Kuan Yin and Mary with me every step of the way.

What I longed for at the start of my retreat was a deeper connection with the divine intention and guidance operating through my life. I needed to begin by letting go of the forms and concepts of spirituality and Sufism I had identified with for so many years, in order to become more firmly aligned with the essence of the inner life that was guiding me through the unmapped terrain of the soul. This included letting go of subtler ego identifications I had built up over the years with my roles and functions in the Sufi Order as a guide, leader and teacher. I also needed to bring healing presence to the deeper unconscious wounds and beliefs I had about myself, others, and Reality. From the start of this long retreat, my heart was being spun and opened. The silence, the music of the river, rustling leaves in the trees, and birds helped me to hear the voice of guidance coming from within.

Pir Vilayat was so present with me throughout this retreat. In the beginning, I grieved his

presence here on earth, and when Aziza brought me a white rose from the Urs celebration at the Abode, my heart broke open and I received the perfume of Pir's eternal presence within me.

Throughout my retreat I experienced as never before the sheer preciousness, transformative power, and spiritual gems of Pir Vilayat's legacy to the Esoteric School of our Sufi Order: the alchemical retreat work. Both personally and as a retreat guide myself, I have been witness to and experienced over and over again the accelerated spiritual unfoldment that a retreat catalyzes.

## **PASSING THE TORCH...**

And so, at the end of my retreat, I also realized that this sacred transmission which Pir Vilayat has given to those who serve as retreat guides is something that needs to be passed on, like a torch passed from hand to hand to light the path of those following us. It's not just for ourselves, for the immensity of this work cannot be narrowly confined to ourselves, but is meant to be shared and carried further in its next phase of evolution.

Being a retreat guide requires passion; it's a genuine calling that requires a high level of training, commitment and attentiveness to ongoing personal inner work as well as knowledge and experience in the skills, spiritual practices, and attunements of our Esoteric School. To continue this work in our Sufi Order (and beyond), competent, inspired, sensitive and attentive retreat guides are needed to facilitate the often vulnerable and open condition of those seeking a safe and sacred space for the deep inner work of spiritual retreat.

Aziza and Pir Zia have approved of my offering retreat guide training in Europe. Although this is just the beginning stage of planting seeds for this, I would like to invite a few ➤



of you who not only feel deeply called to this work, but who have the time, commitment and dedication that are required in order to actually be trained as candidates in this work to contact me for an initial assessment together to see what will be involved in this. I would also like to invite those who are currently active retreat guides and feel the calling to be included in a larger pool of retreat guides who could offer mentoring, opportunities for sitting in on retreats or other retreat guide trainings to contact me. With love and blessings, Saki

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## *Retreat guide training online.*

### **An offer from the Sufi order Esoteric school**

Our goal is to offer a variety of trainings that are flexible in response to an individuals energy, time, learning style, finances, and level of retreat experience.

This ranges from large conference calls taught by various teachers, to small mentor groups, personal mentors, intuition practices, sitting with experienced Retreat Guides, email exchanges, in person group trainings, guiding short retreats with supervision, and personal learning plans with the students own goals.

We are still exploring various models. Emphasis is placed on continuing to do ones own individual retreats and practices while working with a personal mentor.. We are supporting students to complete a solid curriculum foundation, at their own pace, while developing their own unique style and expression. Students are encouraged to attend Leader`s Camp at the Abode and also guide retreatants with supervision during the Silent Retreat.

Our current class is a commitment of two years, and the next one will begin sometime after January 2010. It is our intention to support the International Community to be a part of this process. We are in the process of creating a Retreat Concentration Website, which will be inclusive internationally. It will have sections for the public explaining what a Sufi Retreat is, how to locate a guide, testimonials, frequently asked questions, and a calendar of group events. There will also be a section for Retreat Guides and Trainees that will be password protected.



The primary cost to students are training materials, long distance phone calls, paying for personal/group retreats or camps, and travel. The teachers and mentors do not charge for the teaching conference calls, their time in mentor groups or individual mentoring relationships. If you are interested in applying to the next training, please contact RickiAvant@gmail.com.

## Hayat Ricki Avant

«Our purpose in offering spiritual retreats is to allow a seeker of truth to take a break from everyday life, to develop greater self-understanding and to rekindle the inner light of wisdom. This unique experience of the hermit, a time for reflection and replenishing one's magnetism, is needed in our world today to maintain balance. The work of the retreat guide is a great gift in guiding a retreatant's soul unfoldment". sitat Aziza Scott

## *A "Dream of guidance" from a sufi retreat*

by Hadi Dimitri Mangriotis

Often during a retreat process, a dream comes along which releases the retreatant from old traumas, purifies them from worries and anxieties, and guides them to safety. If this is an integral part of the larger process called Solutio, the retreatant feels as if they just "go with the

can become potent agents of transformation. It is an abridged version of the dream of S., a mureed in our Order. The dream came on the last night of her retreat, after an intense battle with the shadow:

*In the dream I was in a calm state of despair... Then, I was approached by a skinny man, about 45 years old, with light brown hair and a beard. When he came close to me, he extended his hand to greet me.. He told me that he was St. John the Baptist, but I said that he did not look anything like him as he is depicted on icons. He replied that none of those who had made the icons had seen him or knew how he looked...*

*... all of a sudden we found ourselves standing on the brink of a rock, which was towering over a boundless desert landscape. The sight of the desert had a calming effect on me, but at the same time I was cold – not physically but on the inside. I asked the man if he was indeed St. John the Baptist, and he replied that he was the only one who was in a position to know who he was. I nodded in agreement, and at that very moment a dark red sun came up on the horizon, and I finally felt warm inside. Then, we were immediately transported from the big rock to a huge river which was flowing across the desert without there being any sign of trees, animal life, or vegetation of any kind on its shores. He asked me to fall into the river*

flow", or as if they are part of a much larger movement. These dreams naturally also come at other times in one's life, but during the retreat process they take on a very special meaning and





*and to abandon myself to it (which I reluctantly did)... however something inside me was resisting, so further down the river I stepped out of the water and I sat alone on the arid, dry soil of the river bank, sad and empty of all thoughts...*

*... then I heard a voice asking: "Are you the baby that would not come out?" I turned around to see who had spoken. I saw a man smiling- his attitude was playful. I asked him what he meant, and he said: "Are you the baby that would not come out of its mom's womb, the baby that did not want to be born?" ... I just said: "Yes, I am that baby! Who is asking?" He replied that he was St. Phanourios, and once again I noted that he did not look like the saint as depicted on icons. He laughed and informed me that it was he who made me decide to come out of my mom's womb, so I could see the light of the day; that way my mother, who was about to die, could live... and before I knew, an old man appeared who was thin, almost transparent. He asked me if I was the one who once jumped out of a narrow window from the second floor, and I said: "Yes it was me! Who are you old man?" "I am St. Anthony. That night I was there with you and this is why you are still around!" I started having a feeling of sweetness in my heart, and he told me to fall into the river, and to go where I ought to go... I stood up and entered the river, not knowing what else to do, not knowing what else to think, not knowing where else to go. I laid down on the river surface, the waters of which were now swollen, and I let myself be swept away by them...*

Guidance in this dream takes on many different faces from the iconography of the Eastern Orthodox Church. We encounter skinny, biblical figures, bearded men with long hair who are so thin "they are almost transparent". St. Anthony was the leading light of the first Christian monastic community in the Egyptian desert (4th Century AD). As for St. Phanourios, he is the patron saint of all those who have lost an object and want to get it back. His name means "the one who is appearing, or makes things appear", but the root of the word is also connected to the pre-Christian figure of "Phanis", the Shining One, and ultimately with

phaos - phos or light, to let the light enter into all dark corners, to be bathed in the light, and, Insha'Allah, to be transformed by the light. It is indeed in the stark, empty landscapes prevailing in this dream devoid of any "signs of vegetation or animal life" that the Spirit can incarnate in a form the name of which is known, but whose inner secret remains unfathomable. The spirit can then shower us with the mercy of guidance. In connection with the above, it is worth mentioning that the incidents mentioned in the dream by the figures of St. Phanourios and St. Anthony, are real incidents in the life of S.





# Retreat guides in Europe

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## *Links*

<http://www.sufiorder.org>  
<http://www.nekbakhtfoundation.org>  
<http://www.sulukacademy.org>

Norway: <http://www.sufi.no>  
Switzerland: <http://www.sufismus.ch/>  
United Kingdom: <http://www.sufiorderuk.org>

Austria: <http://www.sufiorden.at/>  
Belgium: <http://www.universel.ee>  
Denmark: <http://www.sufi-danmark.dk/>  
France: <http://www.ordre-soufi-international-france.org/>  
Germany: <http://www.sufiorden.de>  
Holland: <http://www.lightsong.info/>



## *The sufi order in Denmark.*

In Denmark we have one meditation group in Copenhagen which meets every second thursday except in the summer season. It includes Githa class and meditation and is led by Nini Fattah Leick. There are 3 more sufi groups in different parts of the country: in Aalborg, Naestved and Naskov that meets once a month. We have an introduction group in Copenhagen for interested newcomers once a month.

In August we offer individual 3 – 10 days retreats in a beautiful place in the country side. This past August we had 10 retreatants. Inger Alima and Nini Fattah guide the retreats. Inge Habiba offers individual retreats on demand in another lovely landscape.

Aziza Scott comes regularly to Copenhagen to lead weekend retreats. Joy Liengaard has on several occasions assisted her leading the singing. The retreats are open to all and usually draw 35-40 participants. Aziza is a continuous inspiration and resource in our work.

Two mureeds participate in the Suluk Academy, and Nini Fattah leads a mentor group there. Inger Alima is an active retreat guide mentor. We have ongoing training of coordinators and of one cherag-to-be.

Danish mureeds participate in the Zenith camp in Switzerland, sometimes with children or grandchildren. Leaders and coordinators participate in the Leaders Training in Suresnes and also in Aziza's retreat there.

Inger Alima Mundt leads a healing group in Copenhagen every second week. The group is stable and solid and has seven members. They participate in group retreats with Aziza and take annual retreats. Several of them participate in the European Sufi Healing Order gathering. There are two conductors in the SHO in Copenhagen. Alima is a Shaffyat in Denmark. She offers assistance to the Norwegian sufi community and participate and teach in European healing seminars as well.

**Our homepage is [www.sufi-danmark.dk](http://www.sufi-danmark.dk). Many newcomers find us via this website.**

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### **INGER ALIMA MUNDT**

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## Events

### October

Retreat on Iona – with Noor-un-nisa Jacobs. Individual retreats possible during October on this beautiful island, described as ‘the mirror of the soul’ and with a strong a vivid connection to the Divine Feminine Mysteries.

Contact [noor@kenosis.org](mailto:noor@kenosis.org)

4. Universal Worship at London Sufi Centre 5.30pm

Info: [info@sufiorderuk.org](mailto:info@sufiorderuk.org)

2. - 16. at Agios Pavlos, southern Crete: Healing retreat with Saki Lee

info: [info@yogaplus.co.uk](mailto:info@yogaplus.co.uk)

15.- 18. in Bad Bevensen, Germany Gruppenretreat mit Sarfaraz & Kabir.

Info [verein@caduceus.de](mailto:verein@caduceus.de)

23.- 25. in Copenhagen, Denmark: Retreat with Aziza Scott: “Spirituality into daily life”

Info: [nini.leick@image.dk](mailto:nini.leick@image.dk)

30.10 - 1.11 in Oslo, Norway. Retreat with Aziza Scott: “The secret of concentration”

Info: [ki.a@online.no](mailto:ki.a@online.no)

30.10 - 1.11 in Tübingen, Germany: “Purpose of Life” Retreat with Saki Lee.

info: [zamyat@web.de](mailto:zamyat@web.de)

### November

• 1. Universal Worship at London Sufi Centre 5.30pm

Info: [info@sufiorderuk.org](mailto:info@sufiorderuk.org)

• 6. - 9. in Hannover, Germany “Luminous Heart Retreat” with Saki Lee

info: [shamseddin@arcor.de](mailto:shamseddin@arcor.de)

• 13. - 18. Retreat guide training in Germany with Munir Voss

info: [munir@gmx.org](mailto:munir@gmx.org)

### December

4. - 6. in London, UK: Retreat with Aziza Scott

Info: [info@sufiorderuk.org](mailto:info@sufiorderuk.org)

4. - 8. in Vienna, Austria: «Awakening the inner guide» Retreat with Zumurrud Butta

info: [info@zamrada.org](mailto:info@zamrada.org)

11. - 13. in Naarden Holland: Annual Winter Residential Retreat; with Saki Lee

info: [lightsong@gmail.com](mailto:lightsong@gmail.com)

28.12 - 1.1 in Bad- Meinberg, Germany: “Intensiv-Retreat ins neue Jahr”

with Munir Voß, Malik Hirschberg & Batin Hermes

info: [seminare@zenit-ev.de](mailto:seminare@zenit-ev.de)

28.12 - 1.1 in Gersfeld, Germany: “Der Tanz des Lebens – Spiritualität im Alltag” with

Aeostra Balke, Savitri Berger, Ishtar Dvorák, Kabir Findeisen

musikalische Begleitung Alev Naqiba Kowalzik

info: [info@gersfeld.de](mailto:info@gersfeld.de)

### January

3. - 6. in Vienna, Austria. “New Year>s retreat” with Zumurrud Butta

info: [info@zamrada.org](mailto:info@zamrada.org)

25. - 26. in Suresnes: Retreat with Aziza Scott

info: [secretariat@sufiorder.org](mailto:secretariat@sufiorder.org)



## *To be of use*

The people I love the best  
jump into work head first  
without dallying in the shallows  
and swim off with sure strokes almost out of sight.  
They seem to become natives of that element, the black sleek heads of  
seals bouncing like half submerged balls.

I love people who harness themselves,  
an ox to a heavy cart, who pull like water buffalo,  
with massive patience, who strain in the mud and  
the muck to move things forward,  
who do what has to be done,  
again and again.

I want to be with people who submerge in the task,  
who go into the fields to harvest and work in a row and  
pass the bags along, who stand in the line and haul in their places,  
who are not parlor generals and field deserters  
but move in a common rhythm when the food must come in  
or the fire be put out.

The work of the world is common as mud.  
Botched, it smears the hands, crumbles to dust.  
But the thing worth doing well done  
has a shape that satisfies, clean and evident.  
Greek amphoras for wine or oil,  
Hopi vases that held corn, are put in museums but you know  
they were made to be used.  
The pitcher cries for water to carry  
and a person for work that is real.

~ **Marge Piercy** ~

(\*Circles on the Water\*)