



May 2021 Leaders Guild newsletter

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Ya Salaamo Sara Morgan

by Saadi Neil Douglas-Klotz

Sara pictured here with Ram Dass

Dear Friends,

As you may have seen or heard, our dear friend and inspiring teacher Sara Morgan, an original student of Samuel Lewis, has passed.

I have known Sara for many years, since the early days of the Dance Network. She came to our early Lama Camps a number of times to share about her time with SAM. It is from her that we received the important confirmation from a letter that Murshid SAM wrote to her. As she reported in an article for the Foundation Dance Manual:

'I have one letter which Murshid wrote to me while I was away from San Francisco. It is, of course, a treasure to me. In it I asked him one of the typically dumb questions of a young disciple: should I stay here and do this, or come back there and do that, a kind of mindmesh drama.

His response was as follows:

"I have to tell you what I have told----- (name) and others. To me action is righteousness. What you do, God is doing through you and with you. To me, non-action is sin and action is virtue, but this is a private conclusion."

And, finally, the closing lines of this letter have always been a kind of koan for me in my work with the dances. I would like to share it with all of you:

"Actually, although we seem to be in a world of song and dance, we are most concerned with peace on earth."

We had been in touch throughout the years and again just before the Jamiat Khas in 2018. In September of last year she wrote to me, asking to use me as a check-in for her Sufi practices, due to a shared heart attunement to the Salat prayers, which she loved:

'I have felt a great and happy knowing that you loved something I so love, and which is a deep part of my inner life (as well as the path of my most beloved son and his wife and children, who live and pray in Marrakesh). I have only accepted 3 mureeds in my life, and am extremely happy with who they have each become. I'm not a very ambitious anything, and have in the last decade or so become far more interested in being nobody, than somebody.

However once I complete a book I have been working on, slowly, for some years, (about the transformational potential of a life threatening illness - the working title: *The Peace Beyond Suffering*), I have a feeling I will either be able to fly out of here, which would be fine with me, or have another assignment in giving back some of the enormous blessings and teachings I have received. I just retired this Spring, (just about in time for Covid to stop most everything in its tracks) from teaching and directing a program on "Trauma, Grief and Renewal" at a graduate school of Transformational Psychology, in Santa Fe, NM. I loved working with young people! (My true focus was, and remains, helping people to make friends with death and dying.)

And beyond, when appropriate.'

In November, after receiving a diagnosis of pancreatic cancer, she moved to Marrakesh to be with her son and his family. We were regularly in touch via phone or Zoom since then, including just before her passing. It was a blessing to me and hopefully a help to her. Her integrity and compassion were and are inspiring. In her last text, she wrote:

'Oh dear Saadi

Seems like the "end", and the final chapter, short of something entirely unexpected, is drawing near.

I barely get out of bed and have zero interest in eating, etc. Somehow it seems a bit too soon. But Allah makes what He/She makes...

Sending you such gratitude.

Feel free to Call, Facetime etc. Anytime. I'm rarely anywhere but HERE.

As RamDass said often, 'Where could I go?'

"Life is like a flash of lightening in the dark of night" Think that's words of His very Holiness, the Dalai Lama...'

Just after receiving this, we spoke by phone together with her son Hamza and said several suras together plus Ya Hayyo Ya Qayoom.

In life, in dying, in death, she was an example and a true teacher.

May the One preserve her secret. *ilal-Ilahi marjiukum jamian*. "We are all returning toward the One together!"

Ya Salaamo, Sarala Tara!

Saadi

"Oh lovers, where are you going?"

Who are you looking for?
Your Beloved is right here.
...While you go looking for trinkets
The treasure house awaits you in your own
being.
There is no need for suffering. God is here. "
Rumi

4th Global Dances of Universal Peace with youth leaders



CONNECT WITH LOVE, HARMONY AND
BEAUTY AROUND THE WORLD WITH YOUTH
LEADERS FROM DIFFERENT CONTINENTS!

Online on Zoom

Above and Beyond... a personal story of the Online Global Youth Gathering

by Sheri Sayar, Dance leader in training, Istanbul

In September 2019, I accidentally attended the training camp organized by the Beyond initiative, but we all know there is no such thing as an accident in the path to truth. For those who have searched for some meaning all their life, experiences as such are not at all new. You end up somewhere and your life is changed. Then you discover that all your life you were searching for what you already had within...

Flash back to the training camp where I met many young adults walking the path of dances more or less as newly as myself and mentors traveled from across the globe to spend their time and energy to train them gave me courage to step forward and take the initiation of becoming a dance leader. After all this was the mission of the Beyond initiative movement to bring the dances to places beyond its original place.

I still remember the profound memories of the Turkey Caravan on the hill tops of Armutlu in the countryside of Istanbul where we danced in the circle of more than 100 keen souls merging into one as we prayed and danced under the wooden roof tops of the dome of Alister Yurdu. I took it as my mission to start a dance circle in Istanbul and when I went back, I managed to organize five sessions of dance circles with other leaders, Carlos, Akmaral, Ernesto and Alper. The circle was too young and new when the pandemic started and in the rush of fear and restriction, it scattered and I was left by myself in an abyss. Cut to 2021 January, the memories of the dances felt like a sweet sweet dream and I was not sure when I would be dancing again...



This is the story of many of us, left in darkness and scattered with no guiding light while the crowned virus rampaged around the globe and kept us away and isolated. I know in some places people found

each other and got connected but for many of us, 2020 has been a long and never-ending walk on lonely roads. I ask myself now: Isn't it how the path to truth should be? Hazrat Inayat Khan says, *"There can be no rebirth without a dark night of the soul, a total annihilation of all that you believed in and thought that you were."* We have our answers.

Soon when I was almost losing hope, I heard of an online gathering organized by two dance leaders from the Czech Republic, Youth Global, and it was like a twinkling star in the dark night. I suddenly jumped and reached out, wanted to get involved, shaking in excitement to be part of the dance

family one more time. Before I knew it, I found myself volunteering to become the organizer of the third and fourth and hopefully the fifth which indeed was possible with the help of all who stepped in and volunteered to either lead a dance or provide the space or educate me and others about technical foreground.

So full of gratitude for the online platform that made us connected once more, I reached out to all my mentors, all brothers and sisters in four corners of the world, got myself in the middle of this amazing web of connection, love, tears of joy, pools of emotions and oceans of kind words and gratitude which were pouring into my empty living room after many months of living in isolation and solitude.

We took it as a commitment to keep going with the momentum created by my sisters, Petuka and Jana Jahanara in the Czech Republic and this was an inspiration for many more online gatherings organized as we discovered this amazing potential of being connected again in the virtual world...



The fourth gathering of Youth Global has just taken place on 25th of April 2021 and it meant a lot to many of us.

Those being isolated and disconnected from the community, those who didn't have access to mentors or a circle of dancers to connect or practice came back together and shared their stories, worries, what was happening in

their respective countries and shared dances and prayers while celebrated and encouraged by mentors and members from all around the world.

Some of these dance leaders were young adults who have been introduced to the dance community through Beyond Initiative Caravans which took place in 2018 and 2019 and brought a new blood to the dance community and introduced the dances to those who haven't heard of them. These young adults have taken the words of dances to their own communities and some of them are struggling with restrictions to stay connected and bring people together in a dance circle, at the same time gain more experience in leading and learning more dances. However the acceptance of the virtual reality - as much as it won't give the dancers a real feeling of connection to the circle - has given a new hope to those Young dance leaders - age wise and experience wise - and a fresh perspective of how this new potential can be actualized in spreading the words of dances around the world. It has brought them back in communication and connection with the entire community and their mentors in ways that we could not have imagined a few years ago. Sitting in Istanbul I found myself in connection to Germany, Norway, Italy, India, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Chile, New Zealand, USA and Ecuador at the same time, defying the time and distance gaps, hosting leaders in training and receiving advice, training and blessings from mentors and masters; Narayan, Lakshmi, Ilona, Dakini, Malika, Tara Andrea, Pir Shabda and many more.

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the DUP IN management team especially Aziz, and the Ruhaniat Community, especially Pir Shabda and Rahmana for supporting the Global Youth, Jana Jahanara and Tara Andrea for being the Zoom host of events, Petuka for initiating this gathering and all the dance leaders who showed up, shared their love and

prayers and made us feel connected once again, above and beyond our physical boundaries, in heart and in soul level.

This is an open invitation for all of you:

- young dance leaders to reach out if you want to lead a dance in the next month gathering,
- anyone new to dances who would benefit from being part of this event,
- mentors and experienced dance leaders to recommend it to their mentees and join the event for comment and support.
- volunteers to help with the organizing and hosting.

Looking forward to connecting on the dance floor.

Ya Fattah

Sheri Sayar

Istanbul

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'Next gen' dancers seem to be getting younger

Here is April from Colombia re-living her experience of the dances in Atlantida at Easter.



Ya Salaamo Regina Gerber

Ishk Allah Mabud Lillah
Ya Habiba Allah
Ya Habib Allah

In the garden of my heart
I find you at the source
where all the flowers bloom
and the nights are shining.
B.Küng

* 15. Juni 1959 † 03. April 2021

Our dear dance-friend and Sufi sister Azima Regina Gerber-Scherer completed her life's journey on Easter Saturday, 3 April 2021, freed from her difficult illness to return to her spiritual home.

We offer our deepest sympathies to her dear husband Felix, her three daughters Esther, Ruth, Miriam and all her wider family.

Dear Azima,

You were for all of us a true friend and companion in the Swiss dance network and on the Sufi Ruhaniat path.

Professionally qualified as a teacher and later as a special needs teacher,

you dedicated your life as well to the dances of universal peace from the start of the 1990's.

As a **co-founder of the German-speaking Dance Network in Switzerland** you were committed right up to your last breath as a dance leader, mentor and team-member, radiating responsibility, enthusiasm and authenticity, both in our own network and in the worldwide one.

You initiated and were the driving force behind the really lively 'Dance-Creative-Days' for children and adults in Switzerland, combining your love and your organisational skills.

You were for many years President and representative of our organisation, and offered your practical help and support, and your focused presence to all members of the team.

We will always remember you and feel close to you through the beautiful dance 'Toward the One' that came through you.

In your natural, simple and honest way, grounded in an open heart, you achieved your service in life in quiet and unspectacular ways, and touched all our hearts.

With great respect, love and gratitude for your presence, for the opportunity to share a stage of our lives with you and for sharing together we will hold you always in our hearts, dear Azima.

Your life has left deep and fruitful traces, and we miss you greatly.

Ya Salamo

On behalf of the German Dance Network team

Barbara Fatima Küng



Memories of the Czech Dance Camp 2020

Despite the pandemics and the strict regulations forbidding face-to-face meetings of people and live dance events in many countries around the globe, in the Czech Republic, our last summer was like a precious island both in time

and space, which allowed for our regular summer Dance Camp to happen in an almost usual way. Thanks to the Divine, the enthusiasm of the organization team, and the common interest of all participants, we managed to organize this live dance meeting for 130 people, from kids to elders, even under these extraordinary general circumstances.

To avoid any unwanted health transmission occurring during the camp, we lowered the number of participants to about two-thirds of the usual number, we used hand disinfection before and after the Dances, and we took special care about how dishes were washed and food served. Thanks to all these measures and support received, seen and unseen, there were no health problems during or after the camp, and we are deeply thankful for that.

As each year, the program was composed of dance sessions led by both experienced leaders and leaders in training, including new teenage leaders, all accompanied by amazing musicians. There was also much laughter during improvised theatres each morning. Parents appreciated a rich program prepared both for children and teenagers. In the afternoons, there was time for polyphonic singing workshops or good chat by a warm cup of

tea in the garden, in the evenings for free dance and drumming, and we also spent one entire evening by a big campfire, like one big family – supported by a night café with cakes, a surprise from the organization team for the participants.

The camp program also traditionally included a market of homemade products and a creative afternoon with auction, helping us gain funds for the next year's dance camp discounts and laughing our lungs out by the creative performances prepared by the participants. Overall, this camp was very special – we were all very well aware that we have a unique privilege of meeting and dancing like this after a long time – and this contributed significantly to our shared feeling of one big and grateful dance and human family....



The Dances of Universal Peace came to the Czech Republic almost 30 years ago thanks to Ludmila Chrástánská, who invited Rahmana Dziubany to teach the dances in her yoga group. Since that time, the popularity of the DUP in the Czech Republic is ever-increasing, and there are many dance events at many places during the year, with the Czech Dance Camp being the biggest one. It was thus beautiful to see our big dance tribe meeting in the dances again.

At this moment, we sincerely hope to see each other again this summer at the Czech Dance Camp 2021 (16. 7. - 23. 7. 2021), again in the beautiful countryside of Nesměň retreat center in southern Bohemia.

May all the ways be open, Ya Fattah!
Heartfelt regards to all friends from dance families from all over the world! :-)
Czech Dance Camp team

Leader recognitions

The Guidance Council would like to congratulate and acknowledge all the Walks and Dance leaders who have been certified or recognized as Mentors in Training since our last newsletter:

Mentor in Training

Florence Aliya Guest MT, USA

Azad Volckhausen NY, USA