

About the Sufi workshops with Tamsin Murray.

I began the Sufi work in New York in 1987. I smoked 40 cigarettes a day, drank endless cups of coffee, lived on junk food and drank and took drugs too much. I attended a weekend workshop with Adnan Sarhan, a Sufi Master from Iraq, who had been teaching in the US for many years. After two days of his workshops I stopped the habits without any effort. It was as if I had awakened from a bad dream. Healing from the tendency towards unhealthy living, feeling and thinking is part of the Sufi path.

I studied with Adnan and attended as many workshops as I could and began teaching in New York in 1994. Since then I have held workshops in Houston, Los Angeles, New Mexico, Australia, Spain, and have been invited to teach at Spirit and Consciousness Conferences in New York, Switzerland and Texas. In 1999 I began to travel full time with Adnan throughout Europe and the US attending and assisting with workshops each weekend and on his long intensives in Spain, New York and New Mexico. In 2005 I published a series of books called *Inside the Time, A Sufi Path*, which blend personal experience with Adnan's teachings and the traditions and historical path of Sufism. My business *Nahari Silk Veils* has allowed me to travel and teach and develop the use of the veil as part of the Sufi work. The classes blend the joy of moving freely with the power of concentration to open the moment.

The Sufi work as I have experienced is like a source of healing and beauty. Merging the breath with gentle soft movements, chanting the names of God in Arabic, and moving with music that is deeply connected to spirit shifts our consciousness from a state of separation and contraction to unity and expansion. In the expansion a healing takes place and many people experience positive changes in their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. Sufism extracts from the moment the life force and energy of the cosmos through the power of concentration. It creates an atmosphere of harmony that draws us into a natural meditation and has a deep magnetic power. In Arabic this state is called "Al Hathirah" – the state of presence. In this state the being shifts into a complete transcendence and subtle ecstasy.

In the work with my teacher Adnan Sarhan many people have given up bad habits, overcome illnesses that doctors have said are incurable, have renewed an inner strength and focus allowing them to make profound changes in their lives and then also found a beautiful and musical way to express their yearning for a spiritual connection with the cosmos, with God, with their soul. In Sufism this yearning of the soul to freedom is a cumulative path where the intelligence of the heart develops and brings a refinement to the centers within a human being.

Sufism has inspired the most loving of spiritual prose and poetry and made known the seeker as the lover and the divine as the beloved. Ecstasy is a natural phenomenon of those absorbed in spirit and when done through effort and spiritual purity it releases the being from the limitation of the ego and the lower desires and awakens new centers in the being.

In Sufism the healing of all disease and suffering comes by purifying the heart of all the negative impulses of the soul so the positive nature of the heart can emerge and flourish. In Sufism they say God is not in heaven, God is in the moment and whenever you come into the moment you enter a state of healing. Sufism uses the healing power of rhythm and breath to shift the quality of vibration in the centers and we can experience the very distinct contrast between the vibration of fragmentation and separation and the vibration of unity and spiritual intimacy. It draws us toward the divine by the capacity of our senses to perceive love as a palpable force in the space, and we experience contentment, peace. Modern medicine is beginning to acknowledge the importance of happiness, music, concentration, and spiritual connection in people's ability to heal.

All the exercises combined in a creative way are designed to use the senses to awaken the spirit. In the classes we do slow movement, dance, chanting, rhythmic breathing and sometimes whirling.

In spiritual movement there is the presence of the mind, slowly and deeply yielding to the influence of opening and shifting beyond the limitations of the ego. When the feeling aligns with the movement, with the breath, with the emotion, with the psyche then we experience a contentment that people are chasing through material possessions, relationships, stimulants and many other things. As we find it within us to feel contentment without attachment, we find ourselves, the selves within us, and the breath becomes the path to it, leading us out of suffering and confusion.