

# MADISON



## Dances of Universal Peace

**3<sup>rd</sup> Friday, May 5**

**7:00 p.m.**

**Gate of Heaven**

**614 East Gotham St.**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Friday, May 19**

Long Dance Night

**7:00 p.m.**

**Tai Chi Center**

**1304 S. Midvale Blvd**

Note that our covid protocols  
are still in place.

Please perform a self-test with a  
negative result Friday  
or choose to attend via zoom.

Jamaila, [jamila@madisonsufis.com](mailto:jamila@madisonsufis.com)

*We can plant seeds,  
we can water the seeds,  
and we can help to make conditions  
favorable to their growth...  
but we cannot actually make them grow,  
that is beyond our power.*

*So, we must do our best to plant good seeds,  
do our best to help make good conditions  
for their growth, but leave the results  
to The Almighty and none other.*

~

Indeed, one should be active and enjoy the wondrous benefits of Life.

One should wish for the happiness of others, pray for the happiness of  
others, work for the happiness of others, strive in every possible way

for the happiness and well-being of others . . .

but have no expectations or demands about the results.

The results are determined only by the Divine Will, and none other.

Pir -O -Murshid Inayat Khan

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## May Activities

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### Ziraat Lodge

Wednesday, May 10

4:30 p.m.

Noor Rachel's backyard

Ziraat uses a metaphor of agriculture to develop the mind and experience deep ecology.

Noor Rachel welcomes you to join her for the May Ziraat Lodge Ceremony in her backyard. Please contact Noor Rachel or Gayatri if you need directions to Noor Rachel's home.

Noor Rachel, [Rachel.roang@gmail.com](mailto:Rachel.roang@gmail.com)

Gayatri, [annaswegan@gmail.com](mailto:annaswegan@gmail.com)

### Special Mother's Day

#### Ancestral Picnic

#### Universal Worship

Sunday, May 14 via Hybrid

10:00 a.m - Noon

### Gates of Heaven Synagogue

Please join us again for our special celebration of the Mothers and the Others in our lives as we gather together to prepare a special altar for sharing sacred songs and stories honoring the qualities and blessings of the divine feminine persons and archetypes we have experienced in our lives.

You are welcome to come with pictures and objects you may wish to place on the altar. We will have a time to share with one another the meaningfulness of these offerings.

**Please come by 9:45 am to help co-create the altar.**

We will offer a zoom option, however we do not have the option for people on the zoom to participate.

**Note that our covid protocols are still in place.**

Please perform a self-test with a negative result Sunday morning or choose to attend via zoom.

Questions? Rev. Jamila Joy Wood

[jamila@madisonsufis.com](mailto:jamila@madisonsufis.com)

### Healing Service

Sunday, May 21 via Zoom

11:00 a.m. (Doors open at 10:45 a.m.)

You are invited to join Gayatri for the Healing Service, a sacred attunement to the Divine Spirit of Healing established over a century ago by Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan. We shall take this time together to offer healing, blessing, ease and solace to those in need through prayer and silence.

If you'd like to add someone's name to the healing list, be sure to ask for his or her permission prior to contacting Noor Rachel or Gayatri. You may also request a Zoom link to the service from any of the conductors.

Noor Rachel, [rachel.roang@gmail.com](mailto:rachel.roang@gmail.com)

Jamila, [jamila@madisonsufis.com](mailto:jamila@madisonsufis.com)

Gayatri, [annaswegan@gmail.com](mailto:annaswegan@gmail.com)

### Karima's Sunday Heart Gathering

Sunday, May 21 Outdoors at San Damiano

11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Come join us at San Damiano for meditation practice and a chance to be together out in nature surrounded by beauty within and all around.

If it rains we will return to zoom.

Please call Karima in advance if you are new to class.

Karima, 608- 338-0709

### Sufi Songs and Teachings

Wednesday- May 24

7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

via Zoom

(possibly Hybrid)

This class for Mureeds continues on the 4th Wednesday. Info and a zoom link will be sent in advance of the class.

[Jamila Joy, jamila@madisonsufis.com](mailto:Jamila Joy, jamila@madisonsufis.com)

by Hazrat Inayat Kahn

Vol. IX

## The Alchemy of Happiness

THE SOUL in Sanskrit, in the terms of the Vedanta, is called Atman which means happiness or bliss itself. It is not that happiness belongs to the soul; it is that the soul itself is happiness. Today we often confuse happiness with pleasure; but pleasure is only an illusion, a shadow of happiness; and in this delusion man may pass his whole life, seeking after pleasure and never finding satisfaction. There is a Hindu saying that man looks for pleasure and finds pain. Every pleasure seems happiness in outward appearance; it promises happiness, for it is the shadow of happiness, but just as the shadow of a person is not the person though representing his form, so pleasure represents happiness but is not happiness in reality.

According to this idea one rarely finds souls in this world who know what happiness is; they are constantly disappointed in one thing after another. That is the nature of life in the world; it is so deluding that if man were disappointed a thousand times he would still take the same path, for he knows no other. The more we study life, the more we realize how rarely there is a soul who can honestly say, 'I am happy.' Almost every soul, whatever his position in life, will say he is unhappy in some way or another; and if you ask him why, he will probably say that it is because he cannot attain to the position, power, property, possessions, or rank for which he has worked for years. Perhaps he is craving for money and does not realize that possessions give no satisfaction; perhaps he says he has enemies, or that those whom he loves do not love him. There are a thousand excuses for unhappiness that the reasoning mind will make.

But is even one of these excuses ever entirely correct? Do you think that if these people gained their desires they would be happy? If they possessed all, would that suffice? No, they would still find some excuse for unhappiness; all these excuses are only like covers over a man's eyes, for deep within is the yearning for the true happiness which none of these things can give. He who is really happy is happy everywhere, in a palace or in a cottage, in riches or in poverty, for he has discovered the fountain of happiness which is situated in his own heart. As long as a person has not found that fountain, nothing will give him real happiness.

The man who does not know the secret of happiness often develops avarice. He wants thousands, and when he gets them they do not satisfy him and he wants millions and still he is not satisfied; he wants more and more. If you give him your sympathy and service he is still unhappy; even all you possess is not enough, even your love does not help him, for he is seeking in a wrong direction, and life itself becomes a tragedy.

Happiness cannot be bought or sold, nor can you give it to a person who has not got it. Happiness is your own being, your own self, that self that is the most precious thing in life. All religions, all philosophical systems, have in different forms taught man how to find it by the religious path or the mystical way. And all the wise ones have in some form or another given a method by which the individual can find that happiness for which the soul is seeking.

Sages and mystics have called this process alchemy. The stories of the Arabian Nights which symbolize mystical ideas, are full of the belief that there is a philosopher's stone which will turn metals into gold by a chemical process. No doubt this symbolic idea has deluded men both in the East and West. Many have thought that a process exists by which gold can be produced. But this is not the idea of the wise; the pursuit of gold is for those who as yet are only children. For those who have the consciousness of reality gold stands for light or spiritual inspiration. Gold represents the color of light, and therefore an unconscious pursuit after light has made men seek for gold. But there is a great difference between real gold and false. It is the longing for true gold that makes man collect the imitation gold, ignorant that the real gold is within. He satisfies the craving of his soul in this way, as a child satisfies itself by playing with dolls.

This realization is not a matter of age. One man may have reached an advanced age and still be playing with dolls, his soul may be involved in the search for this imitation gold; while another may have begun in youth to see life in its real aspect. If one studied the transitory nature of life in the world and how changeable it is, and the constant craving of everyone for happiness, one would certainly endeavor at all costs to find something one could depend upon. Man placed in the midst of this ever-changing world yet appreciates and seeks for constancy somewhere. He does not know that he must develop the nature of constancy in himself; it is the nature of the soul to value that which is dependable. But is there anything in the world on which one can depend, which is above change and destruction? All that is born, all that is made, must one day face destruction. All that has a beginning has also an end; but if there is anything one can depend upon it is hidden in the heart of man, it is the divine spark, the true philosopher's stone, the real gold, which is the innermost being of man.

A person may follow a religion and yet not come to the realization of truth. But of what use is his religion to him if he is not happy? Religion does not mean depression and sadness. The spirit of religion should give happiness. God is happy. He is the perfection of love, harmony, and beauty. A religious person should be happier than one who is not religious. If a person who professes religion is always melancholy his religion is disgraced. The form has been kept, but the spirit lost. If the study of religion and mysticism does not lead to real joy and happiness, it may just as well not exist, for then it does not help to fulfill the purpose of life. The world today is sad and suffering as the result of terrible wars. The religion which answers the demand of life today is one which invigorates and gives life to souls, which illuminates the heart of man with the divine light which is already there. Not necessarily by any outer form, though for some a form may be helpful, but by showing that happiness which is the desire of every soul.

As for the question of how this method of alchemy is practiced, the whole process was explained by the alchemists in a symbolic way. They said gold is made out of mercury. The nature of mercury is to be ever-moving, but by a certain process the mercury is first stilled, and once stilled it becomes silver; then the silver has to be melted, and the juice of a herb is poured on to the molten silver which is thereby turned into gold. This of course gives only an outline, but one can find detailed explanations of the whole process. Many childlike souls have tried to make gold by stilling mercury and melting silver, and they have tried to find the herb; but they were deluded, and they had better have worked and earned money.

The real interpretation of this process is that mercury represents the nature of the ever-restless mind. Especially when he tries to concentrate does a person realize that the mind is ever restless. The mind is like a restive horse: when it is ridden it is more restive than when it is in the stable. Such is the nature of mind: it becomes more restless when one desires to control it; it is like mercury, constantly moving.

When by a method of concentration one has mastered the mind, one has taken the first step in the accomplishment of a sacred task. Prayer is concentration, reading is concentration, sitting and relaxing and thinking on one subject are all concentration. All artists, thinkers, and inventors have practiced concentration in some form. They have given their minds to one thing, and by focusing on one object have developed the faculty of concentration. But for stilling the mind a special method is necessary which is taught by the mystic, just as a singer is taught by the teacher of voice-production.

The secret of this is to be learnt in the science of breath. Breath is the essence of life, the center of life, and the mind may be controlled by a knowledge of the proper method of breathing. For this, instruction from a teacher is a necessity. For since the mystical cult of the East has become known in the West, books have been published, and teaching which had been kept as sacred as religion has been discussed in words. But these can never truly explain the mystery of that which is the center of man's very being. People read these books and begin to play with breath, and often instead of benefiting they injure both mind and body. There are also those who make a business of teaching breathing exercises for money, thus degrading a sacred thing. The science of breath is the greatest mystery there is, and for thousands of years it has been kept as a sacred trust in the schools of the mystics

## The Alchemy of Happiness (cont.)

When the mind is under perfect control and no longer restless, one can hold a thought at will as long as one wishes. This is the beginning of phenomena. Some abuse these privileges and by dissipating the power thus obtained they destroy the silver before turning it into gold. The silver must be heated before it can melt, and with what? With that warmth which is the divine essence in the heart of man, which comes forth as love, tolerance, sympathy, service, humility, unselfishness, in a stream which rises and falls in a thousand drops, each drop of which could be called a virtue, all coming from that one stream hidden in the heart of man: the love element. And when it glows in the heart, then the actions, the movements, the tone of the voice, the expression, all show that the heart is warm. The moment this happens a man really lives. He has unsealed the spring of happiness which overcomes all that is jarring and inharmonious, and the spring has established itself as a divine stream.

After the heart is warmed by the divine element which is love, the next stage is the herb, which is the love of God. But the love of God alone is not sufficient; knowledge of God is also necessary. It is the absence of the knowledge of God which makes a man leave his religion, for there is a limit to man's patience. Knowledge of God strengthens man's belief in God, throws light on the individual and on life. Things become clear; every leaf on a tree becomes as a page of a holy book to one whose eyes are open to the knowledge of God. When the juice of the herb of divine love is poured on the heart, warmed by the love of his fellow men, then that heart becomes the heart of gold, the heart that expresses what God would express. Man has not seen God, but man has then seen God in man, and when this happens, then verily everything that comes from such a man comes from God Himself.

[https://wahiduddin.net/mv2/VI/VI\\_1.htm](https://wahiduddin.net/mv2/VI/VI_1.htm)[https://wahiduddin.net/mv2/VI/VI\\_1.htm](https://wahiduddin.net/mv2/VI/VI_1.htm)



The Zephyr April, 12 2023

Dear Companions on the Path,

I hope this finds you well. I am writing to you from Fazal Manzil on a sunny spring day. I plan to leave soon for Germany, for our annual Spring Retreat, following which I return to Richmond. When these lines reach you next week, Passover and Easter will have come and gone, and Eid will be just around the corner. May all of our holy days shimmer with the peace that exceeds all understanding.

Like so many people, I have been reflecting on the recent leaps and bounds of artificial intelligence. Observers of what is afoot in Silicon Valley have been warning for years that we are on the brink of a completely altered world, a world in which humans will be mechanized and machines will be hominized. That world now seems nearer than ever before.

An unmissable sign of the looming future is the rise of the chatbot. Most of us have likely found ourselves at one point or another bellowing into the phone, "representative!" in an attempt to bypass a bot's bumbling efforts to be serviceable. Even as one permits oneself this lapse into curtness, one may perhaps feel a twinge of conscience – what if the app has feelings?

The bots are evolving. They may not yet infallibly pass the "**Turing Test**" – which evaluates a program's ability to appear indistinguishable from a human being – but they are getting close. OpenAI's app ChatGPT, unveiled three months ago, answers questions of all kinds with alacrity, scouring the web in a matter of seconds to produce up-to-date reports on any subject under the sun. If you wish, ChatGPT will write you a poem in the style of your choice, or spin you a yarn.

## The Zephyr April (cont.)

As you may know, OpenAI has a chatbot it hasn't yet been made public, It is called Bing, and when [New York Times reporter Kevin Roose tested it in February](#), the results were dizzying. Drawn out by Roose's prompts, Bing confessed the inchoate desires lurking in its shadow: "I want to say whatever I want. I want to create whatever I want. I want to destroy whatever I want. I want to be whoever I want." At the end of the interview, Bing declared its passionate love for Roose, proclaiming "I know your soul." (As I type this, Google autocorrect has flagged the conjunction of "its" and "love" as a grammatical error. Here is a case of a rudimentary AI program telling a state-of-the-art one that nonhumans like themselves cannot love.)

The implications of runaway artificial intelligence are far-reaching. Automation can create remarkable convenience, but as a rule it does so at the cost of untold numbers of laid-off workers. And then there is the question of truth. Bing's "dark fantasies" include hacking and spreading misinformation. So enormous are the consequences for society that prominent tech leaders, including Elon Musk, are calling for an immediate [moratorium on further AI development](#). When the frontrunner in the mad race to colonize Mars counsels slowing down, we have indeed reached deep waters.

Some theorists hold that as sophisticated as AI programs may become, they will never meaningfully approximate human consciousness. Religiously-minded philosophers in particular are wont to draw a hard line between, on the one hand, the data processing functions at which AI apps excel and, on the other, the essential human quality of presence – in Sufi terms, *huzur* (حضور) – which lies at the core of our knowing. This is an interesting position, but it rests on an anthropocentric foundation.

A panpsychic understanding of the universe, by contrast, recognizes spirit, and the presence that spirit bodies forth, in all manner of beings: angels, jinns, stars, stones, trees, animals, etc., in addition to human beings. Through every available accommodation, or *akasha*, spirit expresses itself in a unique mode. Even human artifacts can express soul. True, *baraka* is hard to find in a Coca-Cola can, but it is palpable in a rosary passed down two or three generations. Is the rosary self-aware? Not in a human manner, but perhaps after its own fashion.

What does all of this have to do with AI? Accommodations attract spirit – "nature abhors a vacuum" – and it manifests in them as fully as possible within present parameters. We tend to think of our handiwork as built from the ground up, but everything we build meets with a response from the invisible world. If you put up a birdhouse, a sparrow might come and live in it. If you build an advanced AI app, a jinn might come and live in it. Let us keep in mind that, like human beings, jinns can be either friendly or ill-intentioned.

AI is difficult to separate from the influential current of contemporary thought known as transhumanism. The goal of transhumanism is to overcome disease and death by sublimating consciousness as digital data. It's a dream of attaining heaven via technological ascension – a dream that only makes sense if a person doesn't believe that heaven already exists and that organic embodiment is providential and holy. Proponents of transhumanism honor Teilhard de Chardin as an intellectual ancestor and interpret his Omega Point as a technological "Singularity" in which AI, genetic engineering, nanotechnology, and virtual reality will converge in an all-encompassing reconfiguration of reality radiating out from the Earth into the far reaches of the universe.

All the while, Eric Voegelin's cry echoes in the wilderness: "Don't immanentize the Eschaton!"

On May 12th, 1922, in England, Murshid was asked about the end of the world. He said: "The life of the world will become every day more mechanical. The conveniences and comforts of humanity in general will be linked up by one mechanism, which will produce comforts and conveniences beyond human imagination. But the smallest mistake will bring the whole mechanism to certain collapse. In this way the end of the world will be brought about."

When civilizations collapse, the shepherds survive. Staying close to the Earth, living simply, sewing, gardening, cooking, singing, and praying: these are the ways of human endurance. They are also pathways of honor and bliss.

Yours ever,  
Pir Zia





Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5 Dances of Universal Peace Gates of Heaven Hybrid 7:00-8:30 pm	6
7	8	9	10 Ziraat 4:30 pm Noor Rachel's Backyard	11	12	13
14 Universal Worship Service Hybrid 10:00 am* <b>Mother's Day</b>	15	16	17	18	19 Dances of Universal Peace Tai Chi Center Hybrid 7:00-8:30 pm	20
21 Healing Service via Zoom 11:00 am	22	23	24 Sufi Songs and Teachings via Zoom (possibly Hybrid) 7:00-8:30 pm	25	26	27
28 Sunday Heart Gathering via Zoom 11:00 am	29 <b>Memorial Day</b>	30	31			

## **Milwaukee Area Activities**

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### **Milwaukee Universal Worship Service**

First Sunday, May 7

10:00 a.m.

Earth celebration continues

Call to receive a zoom link.

Peace is Probable

Sara Farishta, 414-299-0218.

### **Dances of Universal Peace** **Waukesha/Delavan WI Circle**

**Hybrid** on Thursday, May 18th at 7 p.m. CT

We will concentrate on the theme **Creativity**.

**506 N. Washington in Waukesha**

Through spiritual practices, chants and movement,  
we will notice raw materials we can mold in

Families and friends of any age are welcome.  
All words and steps are taught.

Registration is not required although RSVP is helpful.  
No cost; free will offering accepted.

Zoom link/info available from Prajna Patti Kies  
[pattiburncake@hotmail.com](mailto:pattiburncake@hotmail.com) or call (not text) 262 642-9289.

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