

Unterbirkholz, September 2009

Dear all,

We hope this Summer has served you well and gave you the food for harvesting in the Fall and digesting in Winter, so new sprouts and branches may grow next Spring.

It has been a while since you heard from us, though of course we met some of you 'live' during the summer at one of the Camps.

The summer has been good to us and the Camps served us well with lots of new inspiration. Possibly due to the financial situation, the camps were smaller than before, as was our reimbursement. Luckily inspiration flowed, so let's focus on this:

Haus Regenbogen Camp

After a small Dance Camp and the Jubilee, this was the first Camp of its kind in Haus Regenbogen, where we have been working for over ten years and are now well on our way in the second dance training program. All German speaking (a great language course for us!) and with lots of different programs running simultaneously. Life is about making choices.

We were asked to do the opening evening and close the Camp with the Aramaic Lord's Prayer. For the rest we socialized, made new contacts, talked about future plans (astrodrama for one) and learned a lot about Shamanism (Haus Regenbogen is a Shamanistic Center, also focusing on Family Constellation). This is not a yearly Camp. It will happen again in 2012.

Czech Dance Camp

Allah is a trickster! The Czech Camp was scheduled a few days after the Haus Regenbogen Camp, so we could drive on, not having to return to Belgium. Living out of the suitcase longer in the end is less tiring than packing and unpacking.

Little did we then know however that by now we'd live on our way from Haus Regenbogen to the Czech Republic. So we slept one night at home – better than a hotel! – and moved on to the next Camp. Not ideal, but we again learned that if you want to make Allah laugh, tell him your future plans.

The Czech Camp was at a new location. A very feminine and gentle countryside with shallow, rolling hills, the camp site itself being sheltered from the outside. And a great cook who had time for everything and was always smiling. A smile does help.

The Camp went very deep. Maybe because of the feminine feel of it, or maybe because of the small numbers making us into an intimate sanga. Or maybe we shouldn't try to explain why and just be grateful for what is happening.

Due to the time schedule, we now had the weekend people at the start, rather than at the beginning. This proved a good decision, serving all to their needs.

This experience again showed that participants need time to mature and grow into a camp. A camp is more than a program and camping out. So the first weekend was camping out and enjoying the program, after which the people who stayed all embarked in a deep and spiritual journey, supported by also Ludmilla (Lida decided to use her full name in future) and our New Zealand friends Sally and Prem.

As the afternoon program showed some gaps, we had to improvise and Wali was enthused to offer a voice class, working with the voice as an expression of the four elements. It went well and was inspirational, so we decided to work more on it, styling this class (or rather these classes, there's more to it than 'just' singing with the elements).

We were grateful to be able to certify two of our local mentees. It exemplifies the growth of the Czech Republic as a dance nation that we have felt for a long time. Our gratitude goes to Ludmila, who has been spreading the light for so long and keeps on doing so.

Rumi Camp in the Crimea



The Rumi Tekke in Efpatoria (Ukraine) and its caretaker Alifia Hanum inspired us to a new Rumi program, diving deeper into spirituality and Sufism in seven steps – one per day – guided by Rumi's teachings. Alifia Hanum is well on her way establishing a Mevlevi Order Efpatoria to safeguard the tekke and making it more than a museum. Our yearly coming is a support for her, as we do actual spiritual work in the tekke each year. We also feel our connection grow each year. Even though we can only communicate through an interpreter, our hearts are able to understand each other.

Somehow the not so easy combination of a retreat program and a holiday Camp (we enjoyed the Black Sea at 30° or more centigrade) went surprisingly well. We are grateful to the superb organization (Maria Amina and Natalia), leaving almost no questions or issues unanswered and creating the space in the pow wow to enter spiritual issues most of all. We were happy to again welcome a visitor from the West, After and the USA last year, this time Aad Arjuna from the Netherlands. He kept the Dutch honor high, diving into the Russian spirit and going for the nightly swim in the Black Sea while we stayed in our room, preparing the next day.

The experience of this Camp confirmed us in our choice to work towards working in a khankah at home, as a khankah is (among other things) a place for spiritual work in the setting of a group of people who decide to live together for a certain period.

Actually all Crimea Camps (this was the fifth) had something of the miraculous. For us it is the tekke doing the miracle. This way the camp also serves us – like the Winter Retreat does – by enabling us to go deeper each time. Around the year we can go back to this depth for inspiration for separate workshops.

So we hope to present similar programs or parts of the larger program around Rumi elsewhere. We feel the camp also as good preparation for the Desert trip into the Tunisian Sahara. Allen Ahmed Heeks invited us for this trip next year October (15th – 26th).

Before that we again- *inshallah* of course – will visit the Ukraine (same place) for another Camp Retreat around Rumi, this time focusing on one of the steps (working with the layers of the nafs).

Wali again presented his voice classes and also was inspired to take a step further into the mystery of music for the dances, explaining the *affect* (relation between music and words) and applying this – and the elements – to strumming patterns. We hope to develop this further also in separate classes at home, once we are ready to work there.



Samark



Jochem & Ralph before the wall, half broken down

So how is home in Germany, the Khankah Samark?

We haven't been home much lately, but every time we come home we feel we made the right decision. The house has a lovely atmosphere and the first visitors (working friends who help us out) feel at home and we feel at home with them. With visits from our sun Jochem and Michel (twice), we made some great steps, guided by Ralph, who keeps the overall view.

The house itself is ready, all rooms are furnished and we can lodge 14 – 16 people.

What rests is the basement being turned into kitchen and dining rooms and the house is all done. This now will be our first priority.

Michel made wonderful progress with the dance room. This will be in the barn with three uneven levels. He dug maybe 10 m³ of earth to level with the lower part of the barn, so now all is (almost) ready for the final steps.

In the present time-out for working in the house itself, Ariëne felt inspired to work on our 'evening garden', so in future we can enjoy the great sun setting at our leisure. Michel used the dug up earth to level part of the garden (easier for mowing), thus reusing all material from the barn.

Much is still to be done: electricity, water, heating to name a few items, but we feel all is on its way. Only one problem: the work is going, but the money is going much quicker!



Michel digging, the wall now completely torn down.

Future

We hope to see some of you at our Winter Retreat, where we will focus on the Invocation of Hazrat Inayat Khan. We are deeply inspired to focus on these words and also want to take further steps in the concentration on the Walks, possibly towards walking the charts of Inayat Khan and Murshid SAM.

As we are invited to offer a training retreat in Australia, we will be 'out of town' a lot: in February we will embark on a trip to New Zealand and Australia, coming home late April in time for the new German training year and our yearly visit to La Verna, Amsterdam.

Then summer with the Camps and then the Desert. But let's first enjoy this coming winter!

Love, Wali & Ariëne