

Report Outreach Portugal

December 1-3, 2006



What an arrival. We were tired, as it was still very early. Our host Ana had prepared brunch for us, but we first admired the garden, where we picked fresh oranges and tangerines, right from the tree. The bananas weren't ripe yet. What a paradise for us Northern people! Inside fado music was playing and after the meal a carob cake was served. The beans grew from a tree opposite the street. Carob as itself, so not trying to be chocolate is lovely!

This was our first time in Portugal, which reminded us very much of Tunisia, just opposite the Mediterranean. We immediately felt at home. We jested Portugal, like Holland has

fought against Spain (4 centuries ago!) and Portugal is about the size of Holland or Belgium and 10 million inhabitants, but maybe we just felt connected to the people, who were very open and welcoming.

Part of Portugal is booming through the Euro, but – like in many places – the balance is lost: Portugal seemed not much cheaper than Holland or Belgium, yet the minimum wages are € 350, about a third of in Holland. It is a struggle to live in this country, much like we know from Estonia or (in a different way) Russia. The recognition of this also made us feel at home, as we feel we understand.

A special feature of the Algarve is the great number of foreign people living there part time or full time. Interesting for this report is that a number of German people and one Austrian woman attended the workshop. All had left their home country ten or more years ago in search for sun, adventure and a spiritual life, most spoke more or less fluent Portuguese and all saw the dances as an extra way to integrate both inside and with the Portuguese community.

At the end of the weekend Lila asked for support in organizing the next event. It came immediately with Fátima (a common name in Portugal, not because of the daughter of the Prophet, but because of the appearance of Mary in the village of Fátima).

All in all we felt the opportunities for the dances here as we have not felt very often on a first occasion. We felt as Murshid SAM visiting Kew Garden, London. The local gardener told him how sorry he was the plants weren't blooming as it was fall. 'You're kidding', said SAM (I paraphrase from memory), 'I am a gardener myself, I can imagine the flowers as they will be in spring even though the plants aren't blooming now.'

December 10th Wali & Ariëne



We went to Portugal to find out more about the situation of the Dances in Portugal, which is also relevant for Wali's role as WW-Networker, now Southern France is also opening up and relations with Spain (Spanish Teia is also part of the French training group) are becoming stronger. Finally an opening in Southern Europe!

We found ourselves in a group of 20 with half a dozen German dancers, now full time living in Portugal. They are part of Lila's regular group. It is obvious that the group is dedicated to Lila.

Even though she has done her amount of spiritual work, she takes the profile of the dance leader as facilitator and not as a teacher on the path. She told her group beforehand that our event would be the occasion for spiritual questions, related to the dances. We had plenty! At the end many were surprised that the dances have such a deep spiritual background and profound spiritual impact. Lila has done a great job so far and we feel the importance of coming on a regular base to both train her and deepen the understanding of the



Dances, connecting them to the teachings of Murshid SAM and Hazrat Inayat Khan and the Prophets and Masters of all times. We ended Sunday morning with a danced Universal Worship, which was a good opportunity for Lila to also lead two dances, after the one she lead on the first Friday evening.