

Report Training Crimea, Sept. 1 – 7, 2002 followed by the Crimea Dance Camp Sept. 8 – 15, 2002

*On our request the organizers (notably Shahodat) provided us with an extensive report, which enables us to outline and evaluate the camp in a less extensive manner. By grace one of our visions towards uniting East and West was fulfilled during this period. We wrote this down in an article for *Toward the One*, enclosed here.*

Again we want to express our gratitude towards Oneness Project for enabling us to do this work in this part of the world. Also we will try to answer the question: 'Why Ariëne and Wali for this outreach work?' from our standpoint.

The training

Outer circumstances

The outer circumstances were very poor to start with. No decent lodging, no running water, the area too windy and sandy to put up the dance tent (which when put up later did shelter from the sun and occasional rain, but was far from being a comfortable tent), no light for evening dances.



The first morning practices and classes were done in the *cafeteria*, open to other public as well, which during the two weeks catered our food, provided us with R & R, reggae, old-time pop classics and sometimes the new age tapes people had brought. Yes, on request the music was turned down during classes.

Then the organization found and rented (after quite some bargaining) a villa near another part of the beach with running water, a stove and a hot shower. This not only was a welcome housing for us and the other teachers, it also enabled us to lead dances on the beach before the house, using the electricity to lighten up the beach. We originally had to pay \$100,= of our personal money for rent, but the success of the training with 50 people attending (only 20 had signed up beforehand!), there was ample money for us to stay in the house for free.

With this housing all went smooth and well. We had the beach for our leisure, the tent for Dances & workshops, the cafeteria for our food and the beach before the mansion for the evening dances: four different locations to our disposal. Another proof for us Westerners that we maybe tie our camel too often and lack some trust in Allah and leave nothing open for 'coincidence' (possibly another word for the One) to organize for us? Maybe, though we haste to say we organize our camps not this way.

Having said this, let's emphasize over and over again we really had a wonderful time from the moment of arriving. No complaints whatsoever. By now we know visiting places like this is a training in itself for us in letting go of our expectations, having trust and being flexible, going with the flow. And Shahodat by all standards is an excellent organizer and *karma worker*. She was like a mother to the camp, sacrificing her own time and leisure to the well being of all.

All in all 'nomen est omen' (the name is a forbearing): the village where the training and camp were held is named Mirnyi, meaning village of peace...



An additional asset of the camp being held at the Crimea, basically a place where the Dances are unknown, is the promotional value. Through the camp people now know about the dances and SAM's legacy and actually have a Dance students in their midst (Anton). Our visit aroused a lot of publicity (as it did earlier in a far away place as Archangelsk); newspaper and local television were present when we visited the nearby town Efpatoria (2,500 years old at

least and loaded with history). We asked the organizers to try and get a copy of the broadcasting for archiving and further publicity. Inshallah we will see it one day too...

Theme & Format

For this training we used the successful format and the theme of the Estonian Winter Camp. Please see our report on this for a general outline of the way we tend to work within the framework of the weeklong theme 'Unity of Religious Ideals'.

The Crimean sun, beach and sea (with a sand castle contest!) made this a different experience altogether however. Of course the timetable allowed for swimming. You don't want to compete with that. The outdoor character and the sun had its influence and created a more outward atmosphere, which we gladly used in our teaching and dancing, making this training an altogether different experience from Estonia. More camp like, less retreat like so



to speak. The food at the cafeteria with its loud music brought us back to everyday reality three times a day, but that didn't prevent us campers from picking up the atmosphere of the Dances and entering 'sacred space'.

As part of our program we offered the participants an early morning practice of chanting the Fatiha in the version that Saadi gave the world as a way towards understanding and peace. We chanted the prayer every morning as our preparation for September 11. In the attached article for WCA you can read how this prayer opened doors in the Crimea.

The participants

Although all spoke Russian, this training was truly an international training, measured by distance of traveling and differences of culture. As such it is completely different from the training offered in Estonia. The organizers said the success of the training (many said it was their most beautiful and deep Dance experience and the number of 50 also exceeds any former training) is due to the unique combination of the Crimea (in Soviet times a well known holiday resort), the training and camp back to back and - so they said - having us doing the training and being at the camp also.

We enjoyed having the amount of musicians (Andrey or Bo on Marina's guitar, Marina herself, Armaity, Shahodat and others on drums) and were overwhelmed by the quality of Dance leading. People like Bo and Katja, who we've known over a number of years as Dancers, proved to be quite accomplished teachers as well. Moscow Anna lead her first



Dances ever as if she had done so all her life and Marina (also Moscow based) definitely is a talent.

In our last afternoon session we offered a class on questions from the participants. The hunger for more in depth training was apparent and we were happy to be able to address themes like the need for a mentor through their questions. As said in our application for the Estonian training:

'We use our trips to emphasize the need for a mentor and hope to work towards a structure th at region wide will support itself more and more. Ideally foreign visiting teachers are extra, the cream on top, and not necessary as still is the case in these regions. We understand that these ideals will not become a reality in two or three years, but hope our efforts towards this ideal will bring it closer to a reality. The only two Russian mentors (Vitaly and Vasudeva) are not active in offering trainings or guiding students. Olga, the first Russian mentor, has virtually left the Dance community (which the community



still regrets deeply, she's still missed). As serving the Dances and the Network we try to be as careful as possible in choosing time, place and wordings for this, so our advices in this are general and do not steer directly towards us mentoring more people.'

One student actually addressed the subject directly and expressed the need for a generally accepted Russian mentor. We can only emphasize this need and hope to be able to in future help towards training the best option Russia has towards mentorship.

The Camp

The main teachers for the following camp were Shahodat (who received her certification on the last day of the camp), Jamila and Karima. All three master enough Dances, are willing to take some risks and do try outs and carry to some extent the necessary charisma, musicianship and group handling qualities to lead a camp. As promised we kept aside and supported the camp with guitar, advice (repertoire, choice of Dances, movements & esoteric background etc.) and our presence (we attended all the sessions). It would have been easy to 'take it over', but what next? A camp on the long run really only flourishes when carried by 'local' teachers with the international teachers as the additional cream on top, not the other way around.

On request we lead one more teachers feedback session, a musicianship class and a class on the elementary walks, while we continued our morning practices with the Fatiha. Wali's guitar support proved very fruitful for the other guitarists and the drummers, as he could give them private advice & feedback on the spot, empowering them on the spot and making them feel more self secure. Ariëne proved a secure and stable checkpoint for movements and pronunciation of the mantras.



Our presence in the villa with Mila (the translator), Jamila and Karima (Shahodat had to stay with the campers for a better overview of the whole camp) was worth a lot. We spent much time talking about the Dances and related issues and Karima confided she'd never been so close to a teacher for such a length of time. It was a deep teaching experience for her and for us as well.

At the beginning of the camp Wali in his capacity as new World Wide Networker organized a meeting with all present Russian network members and Dance teachers about 'issues, problems and other business'. One of the issues apparently is that the network doesn't really have any power, so can't function well as an organizing and steering body, whereas it is the only body which – to a certain extend – has no personal power and actually can oversee the Dance climate without an agenda or personal issues at stake. As in most countries money and power

are very big issues, especially when in the hands of few.

In the meeting those present decided to have an extended Russian Network meeting with all teachers, the organizing team of the Solstice camp and the Inlakesh Camp and possibly others as well in order to review the situation and come to more harmony and structure. This meeting took place Saturday October 28 and we see it as a direct outcome of our trip to the Crimea with its beach villa.

Ya Hayyo Ya Qayyum: why Ariëne and Wali?

At the Jamiat Khas Peter Munir dropped the question: 'Why always Wali & Ariëne, is no one else going there?' We feel part of this question is something we need to ask ourselves over and over again while doing this work, especially when traveling with the dances as an ambassador: 'Why do we do this work?'

We may hope people ask us to teach because they like our teaching and us and they and their Dance circles will benefit from our presence. As we are being asked back over a number of years and as this indeed is our own experience (limited as it is in viewing oneself), we hope and trust this is the case. As we explained elsewhere we believe that there is value in diversity (asking different teachers to come over), we also want to stress the importance of

continuity. This is needed to serve one's own students, but also to give a growing country the necessary stability.

We have a personal issue in traveling, as we see it as part of expressing our spirituality. As Rumi says:

*Travel that ye may gain advantage,
For by traveling the Moon becomes splendid,
Through travel the pawn becomes a noble queen
And through travel Josef gained a hundred objects of desire
(Mathnavi III 534 etc.)*

With this in mind, we can only travel and be grateful to our hosting countries, helping us in letting go of our prejudices and adding to our flexibility and understanding. For us this means we don't travel to come and do our thing, but rather to be present, learn from the situation and offer what in our judgment or opinion the situation may need on its way towards Unity. This way we believe we create a win-win situation where both parties profit and honor and acknowledge each other.

From the moment we started traveling to Russia etc., we found fertile ground for both our learning process & growth and the way we teach the dances. As we frequented some of the places (notably the Baltics and St-Petersburg) it became apparent that we indeed have something to offer to the Dance climate and circles in terms of our approach.

The other part of the question implies another question: 'Why not someone else?' Basically this 'someone else' should answer that question. With Rumi in mind, we did try to enthruse other teachers to walk in these footsteps, but unfortunately haven't been able yet to find international teachers (ones that can act as ambassadors for the Dances) in Europe who want to dedicate so much time to traveling to one specific part of the world, like we are doing and Saadi, Kamae and Amida have been doing in the past.

Traveling to a country once can work in terms of giving the present teachers and circles a quantum leap forward, but for in depth training we feel a deeper commitment of at least some years is needed, so people can really deepen the sense of the teachings and get accustomed to a leadership style. This eventually will help them to understand some of the mechanics of Dance leading. When you arouse enthusiasm by saying Ya Hayyo, we feel you can't leave out the Ya Qayyum.

For this some demystification is needed: As it is now, people in Russia sometimes mistake the quality of the leader for the quality of the Dance. (Almost) any Dance can be excellent in the hands of a good teacher, done at the right time and place. Copying the dance at an unapt moment will only reveal the weakness of that teacher, who tries to emulate the fine example. No blame on the students who are doing their tassawuri, no blame on the teachers, who did their (inner) work towards magnetism, but we hope our presence can also show at least some of the students in the Dances that the real magic is done by the deeper (Foundation) Dances, with additional grace from above.

October 2002, Wali & Ariëne

Report about Training for the Emerging Teachers in Crimea 1 to 7 of September 2002

Great thanks to the Oneness Project for the help in organization of the Training (Retreat, Workshop) for the Emerging Teachers, that took place from 1 to 7 of September 2002 in Ukraine, Crimea, in Mirnyi, near Yevpatoria (as shown on attached map in Addendum II). This Retreat was naturally followed by one week Festival of Dances of Universal Peace - "Mir" ("Peace" - in Russian). In a sense they comprised one big Dancing Camp.

Our plan was to combine:

- Spreading Dances of Universal Peace over Ukraine, where they are not enough known.
- To take advantage of wonderful Nature, Climate and Sea of the place, so that the Camp would have not only a spiritual, but also a healing purpose.

For about the year we have been working on advertisement of the Workshop and the Festival, and finally we were looking into about 20 participants of the Retreat, therefore 70 participants (both emerging leaders and dancers at the Workshop and Festival) were a pleasant surprise for us. People came to the Camp from all ends of Russia (Moscow, St. Petersburg, Ufa, Perm, Petrozavodsk, Kaliningrad, Baltiysk, Tver, Vladimir, Jaroslavl, Saratov, Samara); Latvia (Riga); Ukraine (Lugansk, Chernovtsy, Yevpatoria) which really made it international event.

A few words about the organization: we managed to rent a beautiful villa on the seashore for the Teachers, translators and dance leaders. The villa had a special room for meditation and a space right outside of it for dances. It was wonderful to have dances on the beach in the evenings, while during daytime our esoteric classes took place in the tent.

The theme of Workshop was "Unity of the religious ideals" with each day being dedicated to certain religious tradition. Each emerging teacher had an opportunity to lead a dance from the appropriate tradition with a following feedback of the Teachers helped us to deepen the understanding and awareness of the method of Dances of Universal Peace. The esoteric classes gave us an opportunity to go deeply into the meaning the symbolism of different religious, of the dance movement, of mantras. Energy work and spiritual walks gave us a better attunement to the Dances of Universal Peace. The overall effect of our Workshop and Festival is the growing popularity of Dances of Universal Peace in the vast spaces of Russia and Ukraine, the deepened understanding and a more spiritual approach to the Dances.

Thanks to our Teachers Wali and Arienne we were able to build a true community of like-minded people, who are going to further spread the message of Dances of Universal Peace. During the Camp we took part in a miraculous event which was in deep connection with the message of the Dances of Universal Peace. Several years ago the ancient Mevlevi Tekkie was rediscovered in Yevpatoria which dates at least to the 14-th Century. This is a place of magnificent power and beauty and we were lucky enough to held the Dances and Prayer for Peace two times: first during Retreat and second on the 11 of September (during Festival). We are sure it was a very deep spiritual experience for all of us.