



# The Inayati Order

A Sufi Path of Spiritual Liberty

NORTH AMERICA

## KEYNOTES 2017



PHOTO BY LETITIA SMITH

Suluk Jabalqa Graduates 2017



PHOTO BY JANE FELDMAN



## RELOCATION

Our most significant news of the past year has involved our mystical inspirations, inner directives, and intensive preparations for the move of our North American Headquarters to Richmond, Virginia. A few highlights:

- Over eighteen months, engaged in an extensive scouting mission, considering 12 cities and happily choosing Richmond. Focused the search in Richmond to first leasing, and then purchasing, our new headquarters called *the Astana*, meaning “threshold.”
- Secured financing from our bank, also utilizing our own cash reserves, but ultimately a private donor came forward and generously offered a low interest loan for 15 years at two percent interest. We are incredibly grateful that members of our community so kindly helped to make this purchase possible.
- In addition to the Astana, secured a new home for Pir Zia and his family. Determined that renting was the best decision for the next three years while Pir Zia’s son, Ravan, finishes high school.
- Managed a large-scale move from New Lebanon, New York to Richmond, Virginia. Sought bids, selected a moving company, and managed all downsizing, packing, related travel, unpacking and set-up.
- Furnished the building, with a focus on creating a true Sufi aesthetic, with Moroccan and Indian accents. This part will be ongoing as we intentionally select and purchase new furniture and artwork for this very special space.
- Coordinated the selection of an architectural firm and general contractor to design and build necessary renovations including a new Meditation Room with an adjacent Audio/Video Room, as well as interior painting, new carpeting, signage and furniture. The layout includes:
  - **Ground Floor:** reception, coat room, archives, storage, half-bath
  - **First Floor:** meditation room, audio/video room, library, kitchenette, half-bath
  - **Second Floor:** Pir Zia meeting room, Executive Director office, open office workspace, full kitchen, full-bath
  - **Carriage House:** Downstairs – living room; Upstairs – open area with small bedroom, kitchenette, full-bath and laundry facilities.
- Prepared to open the Astana for our first public event: *Wisdom of the Prophets: Sufism & Christianity*, November 2-5, 2017, with a dedication that Saturday afternoon.
- Pir Zia will be the primary teacher at the Astana (at least for now as we set the initial attunement) and in November will begin to hold *Gatha Classes* Sunday afternoons, and a *Daily Service, Silent Meditation & Zikr* on Wednesday evenings. We will continue to fill out our schedule, with special Astana Open House Weekends, Suluk Academy, leadership, and other programs.

For more details about the Astana please visit [www.inayatiorder.org/astana](http://www.inayatiorder.org/astana) where we will add regular updates.

## PROGRAMS

Over the past few years, we have continued to refine our programming, creating events that gather our spiritual community, both in-person and online. A sampling:

- *Season of the Rose* continues to be the Inayati Order’s anticipated annual summer gathering, designed to provide a Sufi transmission within the context of friendship and community.
- In 2016, *Season of the Rose: Essentials of the Sufi Path* was held at Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon, beautifully co-organized by Suluk graduates, Maryam Bonfonti and Khairunnisa Sanchez, together with local leaders, Samuel Vilayat and Nasiban Schatz, and many Portland friends. Over 150 people came for music, zikr, teachings, and fun exploring the campus. Teachers included Taj Inayat, Gayan Macher, Devi Tide, Netanel Miles-Yépez, Mirza & Satya Khan, Amir O’Loughlin and Pir Zia.
- This past summer, *Season of the Rose: The Spirit of Guidance* brought us back to our favorite spiritual home, the Abode of



PHOTO BY LETITIA SMITH

**Aziza Scott and Naima Brown at Season of the Rose 2017**

the Message. More than 100 murids and friends came to spend time with Aziza Scott, Himayat Inayati, Naima Brown, Netanel Miles-Yépez, Amina Hall, Kainat Norton, and Yaqin Aubert, with a special purpose of seeing Pir Zia and his family off as they left for Richmond the last morning of the program.

Season of the Rose audio and photos can be found at [www.inayatiorder.org/multimedia](http://www.inayatiorder.org/multimedia) and [www.inayatiorder.org/season-rose-2017-audio-photos](http://www.inayatiorder.org/season-rose-2017-audio-photos).

- As Pir Zia completed work on his new book, *Mingled Waters: Sufism & the Mystical Unity of Religions*, he continued to share related teachings through his *Wisdom of the Prophets* six-part series. In 2016, we saw parts two and three, on Buddhism and Zoroastrianism, with parts four and five in 2017, on Judaism and Christianity. (Part six on Islam is next May 2018.) If you have not yet taken part in the series, video, notes and other details can be found under [www.inayatiorder.org/multimedia](http://www.inayatiorder.org/multimedia).
- Over the last year, the Inayati Order has broadened its online programming, offering courses with Suhrawardi Gebel, Aziza Scott, and Pir Zia, including the first part of a multi-year effort studying the *Sufi Message Series* of Hazrat Inayat Khan, on the topics “The Inner Life” fall 2016 and “The Soul Whence & Whither” spring 2017. Next up is the “Mysticism of Sound & Music” with Pir Zia and special musical guests May 2018.
- We continue to evolve and grow Inayati Order leadership activities with an emphasis on successorship and inclusion of all varieties of people. Each March we host a gathering of the *Jamiat-Khas* (our most experienced esoteric leaders)

and also an *Inayati Leadership Spring Training* for teachers and guides within the Order. Additionally, we offer a series of weekend modules, online and in-person, on core themes including Breath, Guidance, Concentration, Contemplation and Meditation.

- *Suluk Academy* graduated its 10th North American class, called *Jabalqa*, matching its sister class in Europe, called *Jabarsa* (the two emerald cities). This past June 2017, 23 Salik(a)s graduated, under the mentorship of Naima Brown and Ashoka Johnson, and administrative stewardship of Jalila Maddox.
- A *Two-year Emergent Leadership Training* is to launch spring 2018 with faculty including Pir Zia, Taj Inayat, Gayan Macher, Aziza Scott and Himayat Inayati, with special support from Naima Brown, Suhrawardi Gebel and Yaqin Aubert. Applications will be available late fall 2017 and to enter the program one must already be accepted into *Inayati Coordinator* or *Representative Training*. If you are interested in being a leader within the Inayati Order Esoteric School, please see our new online application: <http://leaderstraining.inayatiorder.org>.

## COMMUNICATIONS

Also as part of the relocation project, we are gearing up for expanded communications. We are building a special Audio/Video studio for multimedia production and livestreaming, and will be hiring a full-time Communications Manager in the next couple of months.

This past year we have focused on maintaining systems built in 2015. In the upcoming year we hope to:

- Fine tune and expand our web presence by adding functionality and information to [inayatiorder.org](http://inayatiorder.org), integrating [sulukacademy.org](http://sulukacademy.org) into our primary website, upgrading the “Teacher’s Corner,” adding online sales and advanced audio, video and social media activities.
- Launch *The Zephyr*, the new monthly newsletter of the Inayati Order in North America offering regular content by Pir Zia and others.
- Update our calendar and online promotions to show the full array of activities within the Order, at all levels: local, regional, national, international and online.
- Roll out a new series of booklets on topics such as *Prayer, The Silsila, Initiation in the Esoteric School, Initiation of Blessing*, and many more.
- Continue to develop our Archives, with paper files at the Astana and an emphasis on creating a digital system within the next few years.

## PEOPLE

All of our work has to do with people – those who find Hazrat Inayat Khan on the internet and email our office looking for information or spiritual guidance, Inayati leaders who desire resources or connection with other leaders, murids signing up for a class or looking for a book, board members volunteering their time to help us with a vital organizational project or task. Here are a few examples:

- **New Staff** – Over the summer, as part of the move, we began to staff the new headquarters with the help of Inner Harbor Partners (IHP), a human resources consultancy based in Florida. For close to pro bono, IHP oversaw the recruitment and hiring of Kenneth Sparks, our new Executive Assistant, and Muhasaba Wender, our new Program Manager. This fall IHP is advising on the hiring of an Administrative Assistant and Communications Manager, bringing us to six vital staff positions in total: Pir, Executive Director, Executive Assistant, Program Manager, Communications Manager and Administrative Assistant. For details on our staff please see [www.inayatiorder.org/staff](http://www.inayatiorder.org/staff).
- **Board of Trustees** – The Inayati Order of North America has a small board, with ten members with expertise in organizational development, legal, resource development, human resources, program design, technology, communications, and in the teachings of Hazrat Inayat Khan. Over the past year, we have seen long-time board members retire, including Taj Inayat, Fazl Peay, Hadi Reinhertz and Amina Hall, as well as Mahbood Seligman who served for two years as our elected Murids’ Representative. New board members who joined us include Jahanara Marquis, Tajalli Roselli, Isfandarmuz Hanna, Raqib Kogan and Hakima Normand. A new Executive Committee was appointed: Roshan Peay, Chair,

Huzur Nawaz German, Vice Chair and Treasurer and Tajalli Roselli, Secretary, along with Pir Zia who is a Permanent Member of the Executive Committee. Yaqin Aubert was also appointed as the Vice President. The Board is always looking for qualified murids to help carry the organizational work of the Order. Please see here for a full board list with bios: [www.inayatiorder.org/board](http://www.inayatiorder.org/board).

- **Six Activities** – A quiet project core to our work is the integration of the “Six Activities” – Esoteric School, Healing Order, Kinship, Ziraat, Universal Worship and Knighthood of Purity – into the work of the Inayati Order’s headquarters. Our hope is to fully collaborate, coordinate and integrate where possible, in order to show a clear, unified picture of Hazrat Inayat Khan’s teaching and related offerings in North America. Board member, Mellen Kennedy, has been facilitating this effort, with our first area of focus being full integration of the Esoteric School – creating systems, processes, clarity of purpose and products, for audiences including those new to Sufism to our most experienced leadership.
- **Young Adults** – Our new Inayati Order Young Adults Council was formed by founding members Akbar Miller, Ariella-Sophie Sternberg and Avraham Maistri. General membership for this group is ages 18-39. Over the summer, this group helped co-host a very successful young adult track at *Season of the*

Rose, with over 30 participants under age 40 (almost 1/3 of the program), and they are also working on an ongoing series with Gayan Macher in the Pacific North West, a Young Adult gathering in Sarasota this November, and a leadership gathering with Pir Zia at the Astana this December.

- **Inayati Centers** – This past spring, Rabia Povich, a longtime Inayati leader in Charlottesville, Virginia (and former Inayati Order Board Chair), helped us assess the activities and needs of Inayati Order Centers throughout North America. We identified that we have 73 active centers in 28 US states and three Canadian provinces, and are in process for designing how to more fully support our centers. A full list of North American Centers can be found at [www.inayatiorder.org/centers](http://www.inayatiorder.org/centers).
- **International** – Even though our primary focus is North America, we also peripherally support the Inayati Order’s international activities, including Pir Zia’s travel schedule, assisting inquirers and murids worldwide, and by providing a partial stipend to an International Coordinator, a position held until recently by Gulrukh Patel. As the Inayati Order’s worldwide administration makes changes, over the next year we will continue to look at how we provide support on an international scale.

## SUPPORTING OUR WORK

If you feel the benefit of the teachings of Hazrat Inayat Khan in your life, in your work, and in your relationships, we invite you to financially support the work of Pir Zia and the Inayati Order. We know that you may already contribute monthly, annually or regularly in some way that works well for you, and for this we are tremendously grateful. We hope you give again this year, and consider increasing your gift.

There has been a fundamental shift in how we represent and support Murshid’s legacy in the world. Please consider supporting this shift in one of the following four ways:

**MONTHLY TITHING** – Make a commitment to give a monthly tithe of any amount.

**ONE TIME GIFTS** – Make a gift any time, of any size, based on your internal guidance and direction.

**MAJOR GIFTS** – Make a commitment of \$5,000 a year for five-years.

**ESTATE GIFTS** – Consider listing the Sufi Order dba Inayati Order (Federal ID 23-7159641) in your will, kindly letting us know your intention to do so.

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Additional details, including financial reports and benefits for each level of giving, are shared on our website at [www.inayatiorder.org/donate](http://www.inayatiorder.org/donate).

Please contact Jennifer Alia Wittman to make a Major Gift commitment, to donate your estate, or with any questions: [alia@inayatiorder.org](mailto:alia@inayatiorder.org) or **518-588-6316** mobile/text.



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