

Sufi Way International presents

The Open Path

Ten-Month Trainings in Nondual Spirituality

with Pir Elias Amidon

2009—2010

The 2009-2010 Open Path Trainings take place over a period of 10 months, with three 4-day seminars, extensive written materials and practices received by email, and frequent group and individual telephone conferencing.

Purpose

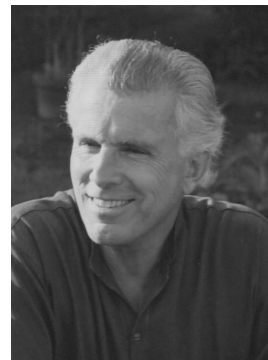
The purpose of the Open Path Trainings is to provide opportunities for awakening to the transparent presence of pure awareness that is our natural state. This awakening is known by many names—realization, enlightenment, primordial mind, Buddha nature, God-Consciousness, nondual awareness, etc. Paradoxically, we arrive at this goal by recognizing it is already here, and in this recognition the idea of a spiritual path vanishes. Our work includes both sides of this paradox—path and non-path—allowing this paradox to reveal the Open Path of effortless freedom.

Approach

During the seminars we make use of a variety of methods: orienting talks, guided meditations, deconstructive conversations, contemporary psychological methods for releasing mental and emotional fixations, silence, musical meditation, practices and forms of contemplation and inquiry from Sufism, Zen, Advaita Vedanta, and Tibetan Dzogchen traditions, and from the inspiration of many historic and contemporary Western nondual teachers. Between seminars, participants receive a series of essays that include

Pir Elias Amidon

*Elias Amidon is the spiritual director (Pir) of the Sufi Way International (www.sufiway.org). He teaches and holds retreats on nondual spirituality and Sufism throughout Europe and the United States, and is known for his direct, engaging and non-sectarian approach to spiritual realization. He has worked for many years in the field of peace and environmental activism in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, and with indigenous tribes on land-rights issues. Currently he is working with the Abraham Path Initiative (www.abrahampath.org) to open a 1500 kilometer walking trail through the Middle East. He is co-editor, with his wife Rabia, of the books *Earth Prayers*, *Life Prayers*, and *Prayers for a Thousand Years*.*





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exercises and meditation practices, along with readings, contemplations, and a bibliography of relevant nondual teachings. Throughout the course there is frequent contact by telephone conferencing with working groups of participants, and individual and group calls with Elias.

Content

The work of the Open Path is a direct approach to releasing our identification with self-concepts, self-doubts, opinions, and other mental and emotional patterns. As we relax from these habitual identifications we begin to experience glimpses of the open awareness that is our natural state—what we are when we have no thoughts about what we are. Gradually we learn to extend the duration of these glimpses beyond periods of quiet meditation into the full range of our life's experience. In the first half of the training, emphasis is placed on identifying and releasing the repetitive mental and emotional patterns that obscure our natural state. In the second half of the course, while these psychological dimensions may still be encountered, the work has a more mystical emphasis. Throughout the training we are guided by direct experience rather than conceptual or belief-centered theories.

Who Is This Training For?

The Open Path Training is appropriate for people who are psychologically stable, emotionally resilient, and who are invested with a deep spiritual calling for realization. Of course, everyone experiences ups and downs in his or her life—the stability and resilience pointed to in this description is the capacity you have to deal with these natural ups and downs honestly and wholeheartedly. In engaging with this course it is also helpful to be someone who has a strong love for all life and who has a natural generosity—these qualities serve to support your commitment to the learning involved, as well as deepen the contribution this work can make to the wellbeing of your family, friends and community.

While it is often beneficial to have had a background in meditation practice or in a spiritual tradition, it is not necessary. Most important is a steadiness of commitment over time and an honest curiosity to explore your direct experience of being.

How Much Time is Involved?

In addition to the three 4-day seminars, the Open Path Training involves a minimum of 20 to 30 minutes each day in a contemplative practice over the ten months of the course. You will also spend about one or more hours each week in reading and in exercises done independently or shared with other participants. In addition, you should be prepared to spend two to three hours each month on the group and individual telephone calls. You may also wish to do readings from the bibliography outside of the course work. You will need to determine if your current life situation will allow this level of commitment of time and energy to the course.



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Places and Dates

Two separate Open Path Trainings will be held in 2009-2010—one in Europe and one in North America:

<i>Europe</i>	<i>North America</i>
<i>Himmelreich Retreat Center Achberg (Lake Constance), Germany</i>	<i>Aldermarsh Retreat Center Whidbey Island (near Seattle), United States</i>
<i>SEMINAR DATES: May 28-June 1 '09; Nov. 4-8 '09; April 7-11, 2010</i>	<i>SEMINAR DATES: May 20-24 '09; Sept. 23-27; March 24-28, 2010</i>

Himmelreich Retreat Center is a small, beautiful retreat center near Lindau, Lake Constance, Germany, near the Swiss-Austrian border. Lindau can most easily be reached by train, or by flying to Zurich and taking a train directly from the airport to Lindau (1 ½ hours). Himmelreich has a peaceful atmosphere, and is surrounded by fields and forests, with a lovely river nearby.

Aldermarsh Retreat Center is equally beautiful and serene, and is located on Whidbey Island about 1 1/2 hours from Seattle, Washington. Detailed information about traveling to Aldermarsh, and to Himmelreich, will be sent upon registration.

Unless you live nearby the retreat centers, we ask that you arrive on the evening (for dinner) on each of the first dates listed above. For example, for the May 28-June 1 seminar at Himmelreich, plan to arrive by 7 PM on May 28. The seminars will start at 10 AM the following morning, and will conclude at 4 PM on the final day. Arriving the evening before the start of each seminar will give us four full days together, and will allow for a more relaxed stay. There will be a break of 4 weeks in the telephoning aspects of the course from mid-December to mid-January.

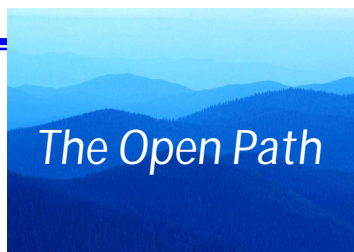
Open Path Training Fees

The Open Path Trainings are partially subsidized by the Sufi Way International—this makes it possible for us to offer the training on a sliding scale. In Europe the fee scale is from 600€ to 1500€. In the U.S. the fee scale is from \$750 to \$2,000. We ask that you determine the amount that is appropriate for your life situation. A 100€ or \$125 deposit is required with your registration; the balance is due on or before the first day of the first seminar. You may also pay by credit card on-line at the Sufi Way website: www.sufiway.org.

Accommodation and Food Costs

Himmelreich

The cost of all meals, snacks, and accommodation (most rooms are double occupancy) at Himmelreich for each of the seminars (4 nights stay) is 300€. (If you wish to stay an extra night at the close of a seminar the cost will be 30€.) Please be prepared to pay this cost by check, travelers check, or cash upon arrival at Himmelreich.



Aldermarsh

The cost of all meals, snacks, and accommodation (most rooms are double occupancy) at Aldermarsh for each of the seminars (4 nights stay) is \$400. Those living locally may arrange to pay for meals only. Please be prepared to pay for all accommodation and meals costs upon arrival at Aldermarsh.

Application and Registration

There will be a maximum of 22 participants in each of these trainings. If you wish to apply for a place you will need to print and fill out the attached application form. Instructions for sending in your completed application are on the form. You may also fill out the application form on-line (after Dec. 10, '08). We will notify you soon after receiving your application if there is space for you in the training. We recommend that you apply early because of the limited number of places available.

If you have taken an earlier Open Path Training you do not need to fill out an application form; for the Aldermarsh training simply write to Dahan Bakker at dahan@sufiway.org of your wish to participate, or for the Himmelreich training, write directly to Dieter Schmidt at dieter-kurt.schmidt@gmx.de.

If you have specific questions about the training in the U.S. contact Elias at elias@sufiway.org. For the training in Germany contact Dieter Schmidt at dieter-kurt.schmidt@gmx.de.



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Sufi Way International

Sufi Way International is a non-sectarian inner school devoted to spiritual awakening and service to others. The Sufi Way is not associated with any particular religion or set of beliefs, but welcomes people from all spiritual traditions and personal views. The lineage of the Sufi Way was first established in the West in 1910 by the Indian mystic Sufi Inayat Khan. For more information visit www.sufiway.org.



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OPEN PATH TRAININGS

2009—2010

Application/Registration *(Please print)*

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Day _____

Evening _____

Email _____

Occupation _____

I would like to apply for the 2009-2010 European Training at Himmelreich

U.S. Training at Aldermarsh

Please answer the following questions:

Why do you want to participate in this Open Path Training?

Please describe briefly your previous experience with meditation and spiritual practice:

Do you have any current medical or mental health issues that we should know about?



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Is there any major issue going on in your personal life at this time which might affect your ability to engage whole-heartedly with the work of this training?

As mentioned in the course description, the Open Path Training involves attending three 4-day seminars, a daily contemplative practice of 20-30 minutes over the ten months of the course, about an hour (or more) each week of reading and exercises done independently or shared with other participants, and telephone conference calls and consultations (about 2-3 hours per month). Do you feel you have the time during the coming year to commit to this amount of work?

Do you have any special food needs? Other needs?

Fees

The ten-month Open Path Training is partially subsidized by the Sufi Way. This allows us to offer the course on a sliding scale. The scale for the training in Europe is from 600€ to 1500€. The scale for the training in the U.S. is \$750 to \$2,000. Please determine the amount appropriate for your life situation. Once you hear back from us that your application is accepted, send a deposit of 100€ or \$125 (or pay on-line); the balance is due on or before the first day of the first seminar. In the U.S. you may pay by check written to *Sufi Way International*, and in Europe or the U.S. by bank transfer or by credit card on-line through PayPal (for bank transfer information and PayPal see www.sufiway.org).

I plan to pay _____euros/dollars/pounds, by check/bank transfer/on-line via PayPal.

Accommodation/meals Costs at Seminars

Costs for accommodation and meals at the seminars (detailed in the course information) may be paid in advance or upon arrival at each seminar. Accommodation fees for the Himmelreich training should be paid directly to Himmelreich upon arrival at the seminars. Accommodation fees for the Aldermarsh training should be paid to the Sufi Way, either by check in advance or upon arrival at Aldermarsh.

Sending Your Application

For the Himmelreich training, mail the completed application to:
Sufi Way Headquarters, 2 Sente de la Pierre au Roy, 60240 Tourly, France.

For the Aldermarsh training, mail the completed application to:
Sufi Way US Headquarters, 2434 Mapleton Avenue, Boulder, CO, 80304.

(If you have filled out this form on-line there is no need to mail it.)

We will confirm your registration and provide additional information once we receive your application.