

This year the Federation of the Sufi Message celebrated its 12th retreat. Brothers and sisters from all branches of the Inayati family came together in the Universel Murad Hassil in Katwijk in a joyful meeting, which was hosted by Soefi Contact and the International Sufi Movement and also attended by Sufi Way, Sufi Ruhaniat International and Sufi Order International.

The day before, leaders came together who already knew each other from the beginning of the Federation Retreats. What a difference from that beginning. In that time we really experienced how much we were on the same path, even though we had thought already that we were. But before knowing each other we had all sorts of thoughts (and quite some of them 'negative') about 'the other', and this time 'the other' didn't exist any more; it has become 'us', even though we have so many differences – difference in interpretation and form – still we are of the same family and treasure that feeling.

A happy meeting of the leaders, therefore, who had the opportunity to speak openly with each other in a warm atmosphere about all sorts of subjects, which are near to our hearts, and a happy meeting also from April 6 – 9. Nawab Parnak made us talk together in small groups, about questions which everyone more or less recognized. The task was: get to talk with each other about your ideas, and exchange them.

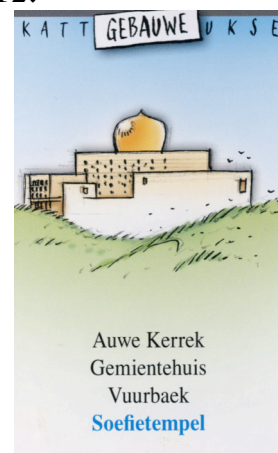
In my little group we were confronted with the story of two groups, and had to answer the question as group 1 and as group 2. There was a group of oldies who had a stabilized membership but wondered whether there would not be the possibility of attracting 'young' people, and youngsters – by the name of Dead Gold - who were taken in by the message of Hazrat Inayat Khan and were sure that with the new media they could attract youth from all over the world and make the message known world-wide. I am not doing justice to the careful way that Nawab made up this story, but this is just to give an indication. It was great fun, and also interesting and we got to know each other better.

Naturally there were speeches, intermingled with music and dances. Some of the Leaders that were present: Michael Schouwenaar (SC), Shabda Kahn (SRI), Suhrawardi Gebel (SOI), Karimbakhsh Witteveen (ISM), Kadir Troelstra (SC), Nawab Parnak (ISM), Yono Chavanne (SW), Frank van Leer (SW), Zia Inayat-Khan (SOI), Hidayat Inayat-Khan (ISM). They talked about

- The challenge of how to communicate the Message, which has ignited our hearts already for years.
- Can we, and are we willing to spread peace, in the Middle East? The Abraham Path Initiative (abrahampath.org)
- We joined the Federation of the Sufi Message last year. We discovered that we loved each other when we didn't know it.
- But even though SOI was not member, they hosted the Federation a few times, which shows great liberty of spirit.
- We are in harmony within so many religions, and here we are in a Federation of different versions of universal Sufism, living it in different ways, but always in openness for the inner light.
- Beyond the differences there is one heart
- The oil that keeps the light burning: it is a luminous oil, that is luminous of itself. When consciousness is not conscious of itself, it is pure intelligence.
- We are as olives that are crushed to become the oil that keeps the lamp burning.
- Our soul is blessed with the impression of the glory of God, whenever our lips praise the all-pervading presence of the Divine within.
- On the Day of Judgment, when leaving our body behind... our names will be forgotten, our bodies received by the earth, but the note that we have sung will be part of the symphony of the Message. My own wish, therefore, is to live, moment by moment, day by day, in the consciousness of the eternal question: why did I come, what did I come to experience, and which service can I offer.

Concluding: It was a very happy and satisfying meeting.

For next year it has been agreed, that the Sufi Order International will be the host of Hazrat Inayat Khan's Urs in Delhi (February 2012) en also of the Federation Retreat at the Abode of the Message, April 24 - 29th, 2012.



the Universel also in the happy families of Katwijk