

LEADERS GUILD GUIDELINES

DANCES OF UNIVERSAL PEACE AND WALKING CONCENTRATIONS



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This PDF version was prepared in December of 2022 to facilitate printing of copies for those Leaders Guild members who so desire. The version posted on the Dances of Universal Peace International website under 'Leaders Guild' includes any revisions that may have been approved subsequently by the Guidance Council.

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WELCOME

Dear Leader of the Dances of Universal Peace,

Whether you are just beginning your dance leadership journey or have been leading and mentoring for many years, these Guidelines have been prepared for your benefit and assistance. We hope that they will inspire and support you in fully developing and expressing the depth and breadth of your dance leading capacity. Please make this publication your companion and friend.

The Dances of Universal Peace and Walking Concentrations are transformative spiritual practice in motion. They were birthed through a stream of universal Sufism, which was brought to the West from India by Hazrat Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan in 1910. His disciple, Samuel L. Lewis, began envisioning and bringing forth simple, sacred Dances in the late 1960s. A universal note was struck; the Dances flourished and have spread throughout the world.

Today, a network of entities stewards this precious legacy so that the transmission of these Dances of peace, joy, and unity maintains its integrity as it becomes available to growing numbers of people in diverse cultural settings now and in the coming years. The Dances and Walks are held in trust by the Sufi Ruhaniat International – the order established by Murshid Samuel Lewis. The Pir of the Ruhaniat serves as Spiritual Guide and appoints a group of senior mentors to be the Guidance Council. That body has the responsibility for guiding dance leaders and mentors by encouraging their spiritual expansion and personal development, supporting learning opportunities, determining requirements for level acknowledgment, and upholding standards of conduct and human relationship. These Guidelines are for exactly that purpose.

All of us as dance leaders – collectively, members of the Leaders Guild – represent and transmit this living stream globally, carrying and nurturing the Dances and Walks through leadership that reflects ongoing spiritual and personal development. Leaders Guild members pay a modest annual fee which, along with donations, sustains this network of services and supports. Dance mentors offer teaching and guidance in a person-to-person relationship with their mentees, encouraging them to develop and lead from their spiritual depth. The mentoring path also includes service to the lineage of the Dances of Universal Peace, helping to uphold, nurture and sustain these practices for future generations. The discussions of the Mentors Guild – the collective body and forum of mentors – advise and assist the Guidance Council in all aspects of its work.

Dances of Universal Peace International, a public benefit non-profit organization governed by volunteer dance leaders, provides the necessary legal and financial structure and administrative support, including a website with numerous resources developed especially for dance leaders and mentors.

The Dances of Universal Peace, as Samuel Lewis envisioned them, are a way to make liberating life-energy and the "peace that passes all understanding" a reality for all who come in contact with them. It is our great privilege as dance leaders to be nourished by these practices as well as to share them with others. Much depends on developing and nurturing our capacity, transmission, sacred atmosphere and attunement. May these Guidelines assist you in this worthy endeavor! Blessings on your path!

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DANCE LEADER'S JOURNEY

An Approach to Study and Training for Dance and Walk Leaders

What does the dance do for us? First and foremost, it inculcates the sense of rhythm and enhances our response to rhythm. This is really a response to life. It makes us more living, which is to say, more spiritual. It brings out beauty of form and movement, and envelops our personalities in the enjoyment of them. It takes us beyond ourselves, bringing an initial state of non-being, which is really a balm for the soul. (Samuel L. Lewis, [1](#))

If you find that the Dances and Walks engage your whole heart and being, immerse yourself in them. Before you can pass them on to others you need to cultivate them within yourself. Dance often and with as many experienced leaders as possible. Become an experienced dancer. Allow the dance transmission to find a home in your heart. Then, if you continue to be drawn to this path, find a mentor with whom you can travel. Throughout human history, any transmission of the sacred has taken place through person-to-person relationships, regardless of institutions or organizations.

To pursue this path requires great and sustained commitment. It is, in actuality, a form of self-transformation in public. Beyond self-development, the path of dance leading is essentially one of service for the benefit of others. The foundation elements requisite to one's development on this path are listed here and described in [Elements of Mastery](#).

- The Dance Lineage
- Experience, Assimilation, Transmission
- The Walks
- Breath
- Heart
- Embodiment
- Rhythm
- Voice
- Magnetism and Atmosphere
- Concentration
- Meditation
- Silence
- Attunement – Tasawwuri, Fana, Effacement
- Elements
- Personal Evolution
- Working with Energy
- Musicianship
- Working with Musicians
- Group Facilitation Skills and Leadership Qualities
- Knowledge, Experience and Understanding of a Variety of Spiritual Traditions

Finding a Mentor – The Mentored Leader

Although the transmission of the legacy of Murshid Samuel Lewis is the responsibility of the [Sufi Ruhaniat International](#), training in leading the Dances of Universal Peace and Walking Concentrations is open to persons of all spiritual streams.

Like native mysticism, this tradition is communicated directly from teacher to student, thus ensuring that subtleties – such as the transmission of sacred atmosphere and attunement, which are impossible to systematize – can be effectively embodied. By linking to a mentor one connects with the power of the lineage of this body of work. Attuning to a teacher creates a direct experience of lineage transmission, which gives authenticity to presentations and representations of any particular stream of blessing. All aspiring dance leaders need to find a mentor; this will be someone who is not a spouse, partner or any other relative of the dance leader.

New leaders naturally look for a mentor to whom they feel attuned, one who has developed qualities they themselves would like to cultivate. Mentors work in different ways with their students (mentees); e.g., some mentors offer training programs or mentoring groups, and others work individually. New leaders

are encouraged to inquire of mentors regarding their methods. For a current list of mentors, visit www.dancesofuniversalpeace.org/lgmentors.asp.

Once the mentoring relationship has been formed and the mentor has communicated the details to the Community Coordinator, the mentee becomes a Mentored Leader and is admitted to the Leaders Guild (subject to remaining current with the annual fees). Mentored Leaders are expected to stay in a working relationship with their mentor and abide by the Leaders Guild Guidelines and [Agreements](#). Especially in the beginning stages of learning to lead the Dances and Walks, the importance of Mentored Leaders actively communicating with their mentor, and inviting and considering their mentor's advice and guidance, cannot be overstated.

Mentors may charge for time, expenses and travel in relation to training. Payment or exchange arrangements are made between mentor and mentee.

First Steps in Leading the Dances

Before you try to lead a Dance, make sure you have experienced it. It is impossible to offer someone an experience you yourself have not had, and the Dances are, first and foremost, a matter of experience.

Learning to lead the Dances takes time. Don't try to learn too many Dances too quickly. To begin, learn one Dance thoroughly. Choose from one of the various Mantric Dances. Ideally, there will be no English words in your first Dance. It can be a partner Dance or not. Once you have learned the Dance music and movements, then develop a strong relationship to the mantra, the sacred phrase. Get to know it well. Take it into meditation practice. Breathe with it in the heart. Walk with it, getting a sense of the rhythm of the mantra and your walk. Intone it on one note. Sing the melody. Dance the Dance so that it becomes effortless to do. Internalize completely the mantra, music and movements. Once you have a Dance "in your body" in this way it's unlikely you will forget it. Then create the opportunity to lead it with a group of people.

Many people begin leading the Dances by sharing a Dance or Walk in a local community gathering or meditation group. Commitment increases as one simultaneously chooses and feels chosen by the Dances and Walking Concentrations as spiritual practice. The Dances are freely given and freely received, so there is no restriction on sharing a couple of Dances with friends. However, as with any other discipline, if you want to manifest the fruit of the practice you need to cultivate deep roots. These roots are nourished through patience, practice and sincere motivation.

Choosing Certification – The Certified Leader

Choosing certification and working toward this with a mentor furthers the process of learning to lead the dances. As one moves through the various stages of learning, which includes learning about oneself, there is feedback and validation from a more experienced teacher. One also learns how to set goals and accomplish them with concentration, in a process that Hazrat Inayat Khan calls "Sadhana: the Path of Attainment". Murshid Wali Ali Meyer has commented, "This path is not about becoming a teacher; it's about becoming awake."

It is necessary to be in an active mentoring relationship to pursue certification. The responsibility for seeking this certification lies with you, the mentee. When you are inspired to become a certified dance leader bring this up with your mentor. Together, you and your mentor find the best way to work toward this goal.

While certification recognizes a certain level of skill and commitment to the Dance and Walks transmission, it is not an end in itself. Certification is a commitment to continue growing as a dance leader and deepening in one's responsibility to the lineage of the Dances and Walks.

The time required to complete certification as a dance leader varies with each person. Most mentors expect that at least three years of dedicated study and dance leading experience are required; it more often takes longer. Experience is gained not so much through time but through practice and developing the inner self. The number of times one leads in a year will vary and have an effect on this estimate.

Leaders each unfold in their own unique way. Mentees are considered and reviewed individually. The student leader may be certified when the mentor is satisfied that the mentee has achieved what is appropriate specifically for them in relation to the required criteria. When that moment arrives, the mentor informs the [Community Coordinator](#) and requests that the mentee now be registered as a Certified Leader.

The mentoring relationship continues beyond certification, and indeed is ongoing at every stage on this path of mastery. This is the hand-to-hand, heart-to-heart connection through which the Dances and Walks live on. As dance leaders mature, their ongoing course of study becomes more independent, and the relationship may shift to that of a check-in support.

Criteria for Certified Leader

Traveling with one's mentor, maintaining an active spiritual practice, studying the [Elements of Mastery](#), developing the capacity for unflinching self-witnessing, and maintaining membership currency are the prerequisites for certification.

The mentor will evaluate the student's commitment to spiritual practice, attunement, knowledge of Dance history, and technical proficiency in leading the Dances and Walking Concentrations.

To be certified as a leader one will be committed to the following criteria:

1. At Least One Sacred Path or Spiritual Tradition

In-depth experience with at least one of the many sacred traditions of the earth is required. Included here is the principle of dharma (spiritual path), that is, having a regular practice and/or prayer life. A one-to-one relationship with a guide is encouraged. This guide or teacher may be the same as the person's dance mentor or not. The intention is that personal deepening in inner life and experience of fana (effacement of the ego) will be promoted under guidance from an embodied being.

This relationship may include ongoing apprenticeship with spiritual teachers of any tradition, but must be a genuine relationship, not merely occasional attendance at workshops, retreats, or rituals. The relationship may include the formal giving of practices and initiation, an active committed engagement with a congregation or spiritual community, or an informal "working-with" relationship. Ongoing psychotherapy and counseling, while they may be helpful to the growth process, are not substitutes for this sacred relationship.

2. Self-Knowledge

The Dances are powerful vehicles of energy. When they pour through us they touch not only our highest realities, but also stir places still unlit and unresolved. Developing leaders understand this and acknowledge shadow potentials in order to work with unconscious projections that naturally arise. They need to be aware that their role as leaders may influence dancers' perceptions, and they need to be able to self-witness their own afflictive emotions as they arise in order to work with them consciously. In a good

working mentoring relationship, the student will be receptive to the reflections and feedback of the mentor in dealing with these issues.

3. Attunement, Transmission, Sacred Atmosphere

It is essential to walk in the footsteps of experienced Dance and Walks teachers in order to develop an attunement to the blessing stream of Samuel Lewis (Murshid SAM). The ability to attune and the willingness to surrender to this stream of blessing are the most important aspects of leading the Dances and Walks. The certified leader is able to demonstrate the capacity to convey a sacred atmosphere consistent with the tradition and feeling of the Dance being presented, effacing their ego-personality in order to let grace flow through. Presence, magnetism and balance are spontaneous and apparent.

4. Technical Proficiency, Knowledge of Traditions, Dance Repertoire

Sufficient technical proficiency to “get the job done” is required. Mentor and mentee acknowledge any additional work needed with rhythm, voice or sound and have an agreement for how this work is occurring.

For certification, the dance leader will have mastered at least 4 of the Original Dances of Murshid Samuel L. Lewis. In addition, the dance leader will be able to present with appropriate attunement a minimum of 20 Dances from a variety of traditions. No more than 3 Dances may contain sacred phrases in the vernacular language of one’s country (i.e., “the plain variety of language in everyday use by ordinary people”). (Please refer to Foundation Dances and Walks Manual.)

No dance is a Spiritual Dance because it is called that; it does not mean a certain form or technique, nor a ritual. ... What must remain is the sacred phrase; this, the sacred phrase, and not the form, is the foundation of development along this line. (Samuel L. Lewis, [2](#))

A phrase arising from a Divine Messenger has several values. Its very nature points toward God realization. The multitude of its repetitions are marked in the cosmos itself. The devotee becomes attuned to this tremendous cosmic magnetism. Therefore it is often more beneficial to repeat phrases that have been uttered many times than to use familiar terms which are translations of these phrases but do not have the same echoes in the universe. (Samuel L. Lewis, [3](#))

One will also have the ability to lead a partner Dance with progression, a Dance in combination with a Walk practice, and several Dances consecutively, building on a central tone or sacred atmosphere.

The leader will be familiar with the writings of Murshid Samuel Lewis and Hazrat Inayat Khan through reading and study. Also highly recommended is *Wisdom Comes Dancing*, the selected writing on spiritual dance of Ruth St Denis. Murshid Samuel Lewis wrote that the Dances were "initiated in to the akasha by Hazrat Inayat Khan and Ruth St Denis, who first brought these teachings jointly in 1910." (Please refer to the [Bibliography](#) and [Study Materials and Resources](#).)

5. Walks Embodiment

The Walking Concentrations are embodiment practices that have the potential to integrate into everyday life the states experienced in the Dances. Whether a dance leader leads Walks in every session is not as important as mastering the effects of the Walking practices in their own being.

A certified dance leader will be able to lead the “Toward the One” Walk, the Center Walks, the Element Walks, and the Sun and Moon walking practices from the Planetary Walks or Astrological Yoga. (See Foundation Dances and Walks Manual.)

6. Social Responsibility

A dance leader does not lead in a vacuum but in a mandala of dancers, musicians and other leaders. It is expected that a dance leader who works in ongoing circles will become aware of a wide range of social responsibilities to the circle, and to one's greater surroundings, and will attempt to become skillful at communication, conflict resolution, mediation, and team building. Dance leaders and mentors are encouraged to avail themselves of training in these interpersonal skills, through workshops offered by the Mentors Guild or through other opportunities.

We wish to follow the example of Murshid SAM whose life emphasized open-hearted service and generosity rather than a desire for recognition, wealth or power. Throughout the existence of the Mentors Guild, dance leaders and mentors have worked in positions of service in their own Dance communities and in the International Dance Network at large. They have donated generously of their time, money and resources in order to further the work in benefit to all beings. We encourage dance leaders and mentors to continue this tradition of service and generosity in whatever way they feel moved to do so.

“We think we are about singing and dancing, but we are really about creating peace.” (Murshid SAM, paraphrased by one of his early students).

Deepening in Dance Leadership

Certification marks a basic level of competence in dance leadership skills. All certified dance leaders are asked to commit to study and practice as long as they are actively leading the Dances of Universal Peace and the Walking Concentrations. They continue to stay connected with their mentor, follow the ethical guidelines and Guild [Agreements](#), and deepen in their own spiritual practice and in the [Elements of Mastery](#). One can only transmit and share what one has experienced and integrated.

Other than certification, there is no further outer recognition to mark advanced levels of development as a dance leader. Instead, feedback and recognition is reflected through the results of one's own actions, and is also reflected through one's mentor, with whom the certified leader continues to walk.

An advanced dance leader is known by increased presence, magnetism, and balance in his/her leadership and has an expanded dance repertoire including many foundation Dances drawn from a broad range of spiritual traditions. Such a leader leads many of the original Dances of Murshid Samuel L. Lewis, has the ability to represent the *baraka* of Murshid Samuel L. Lewis through his Dances and Walks, and has the ability to lead several of his advanced Dances.

The Walks repertoire of such a leader will eventually expand to include all the Planetary and Elemental Walks, as well as a variety of Wazifa Walks. An advancing dance leader is encouraged to learn the advanced Walking Concentrations, including Tasawwuri Walks, advanced Planetary Walks, advanced Centering walks, and advanced Elemental Walks.

Numbers of Dances and Walks are not an end in themselves, but merely an indication that the leader has continued to deepen in mastery of this path. Most importantly, over time, the advancing dance leader increasingly comes to embody the truth and transmission of the sacred phrases with grace and humility. Through the Dances and Walks, s/he is able to convey an unbounded vision of human freedom and become a vehicle for the awakening of humanity. This capacity usually comes from engaging in a deep and dedicated manner with one's inner impressions, conditioning, and obscurations through a dynamic spiritual path.

Through the experience of the Dances of Universal Peace and the Walking concentrations, through study and applied spiritual practice, through effacement of the ego, and through life's experiences, one continues to grow spiritually and as a dance leader.

Dance Write-ups and Recordings

The DUP International website offers an on-line resource library for Leaders Guild members containing originator-approved Dance write-ups, recorded Dance music tracks and other resources. This password-protected library, funded by Leaders Guild fees, includes the contents of the Foundation Dance Manual and many of the previously published Dance booklets, as well as newer Dances. As such, it is a valuable and authentic reference. Nevertheless, in providing this resource it is distinctly not intended that Dance write-ups and recordings become the means for learning and then leading new Dances that one has not experienced in person. And please do not lead a Dance after only viewing a YouTube video of it. It is especially important in this digital age to remain true to a person-to-person, hand-to-hand and heart-to-heart transmission of these Dance practices. The spiritual transmission of the Dances remains experiential, passed from one human being to another.

Leaders Guild

The Leaders Guild is the collective body of all mentored dance leaders. Leaders Guild members are responsible for carrying and nurturing the living stream of the Dances of Universal Peace and Walking Concentrations through leadership that reflects ongoing spiritual and personal development. When someone becomes a mentored dance leader they automatically become a member of the Leaders Guild, if they abide by the [Agreements](#) in the Leaders Guild Guidelines, keep an active relationship with their mentor, and remain current with annual Leaders Guild fees. (Note: For convenience, the payment of one's Dance Region dues in most cases includes the applicable Leaders Guild fee, which is then remitted by the Region to DUP International on the member's behalf. See [Leaders Guild Fees](#) in the **Agreements** section for further information.)

Dance Mentors and the Mentors Guild

Dance mentors are experienced dance leaders who have been invited to become teachers and guides to newer leaders, encouraging their mentees to develop and lead from their spiritual depth. The Mentors Guild is the collective body of all mentors. The Mentors Guild provides a forum for communication on such matters as transmitting, nurturing and protecting this body of work, the training of Dance and Walks leaders, and upholding the [Agreements](#) in the Leaders Guild Guidelines. In addition, the discussions of the Mentors Guild advise and assist the Guidance Council in all aspects of its work.

Further information on dance mentoring is published in [Mentoring Path](#).

Guidance Council

The Guidance Council holds in trust the transmission of the Dances of Universal Peace and Walking Concentrations in the lineage of Murshid Samuel L. Lewis. Four to six Senior Mentors are appointed on a rotating basis by the Pir of the Sufi Ruhaniat International, who is the Spiritual Guide of the Dances of Universal Peace. The Guidance Council has the responsibility of guiding leaders and mentors by encouraging their spiritual expansion and personal development, supporting learning opportunities, determining requirements for level acknowledgment, and upholding standards of conduct and human relationship that are in keeping with the transmission of the Dances of Universal Peace. The Guidance Council keeps in communication with the Spiritual Guide, who provides assistance as required.

Communicating and Networking – All Dance Leaders

Once a mentoring relationship is agreed to, the mentor provides to the [Community Coordinator](#) the following data about the new mentee: name, mailing address, phone, e-address, beginning date of mentoring. The Community Coordinator will confirm registration of the mentoring relationship to both mentor and mentee. Apart from the above, it is the responsibility of every mentored leader to ensure that any changes to their personal information are communicated both to the [Community Coordinator](#) and to their mentor.

Walking with One's Mentor – An Ongoing Path

All leaders, no matter what level of skill and mastery they have attained, continue walking with their dance mentor and deepening in the [Elements of Mastery](#), thus forming long-term – in some cases life-long – relationships. Nevertheless, it may be appropriate to dissolve a mentoring relationship when, over a period of time, fruitful working conditions have been challenging to establish. Any mentor or mentee may discontinue a particular mentoring relationship if after reasonable effort there is failure to connect. Once a new mentor has been identified, the dance leader will ask their former mentor to contact the new mentor to describe the leader's dance leading experience and progress in dance training, and to make recommendations. The new mentor will not accept a transferring mentored leader without making this contact with the leader's former mentor. The new mentor is responsible for communicating the transfer to the [Community Coordinator](#), who will confirm the change of registration to both mentors and the mentee.

AGREEMENTS

For All Members of the Leaders Guild

The Name “Dances of Universal Peace”

The Dances have been called by different names through their history; at this point they are formally identified as the Dances of Universal Peace. Other names used by Murshid SAM are Dervish Dances, Mantric Dances, Sufi Dances, Christian Dances, Angelic Dances, Mystery Dances, Spiritual Dances. He referred to the entire body of this work as the Dances of Universal Peace ... “I am teaching ‘Dances of Universal Peace’.” (Samuel L. Lewis, [1](#))

Respect for the Dances

Mentored leaders agree to respect the integrity of the Dances and Walks created by Murshid SAM and those following this line of transmission. Dance leaders are asked to first learn Dances the way they were originated and have been transmitted by their originators, and to honor the request of originators who have specifically asked that their Dances not be changed. These requests are made in order to feel clearly the transmission of the sacred phrases as they have been brought through, even though occasionally it may be necessary to modify a Dance to suit special circumstances and populations (e.g., working with children, the elderly or those challenged in some way).

Permission to represent more advanced Dances and cycles in public may be obtained directly from their originators, or from one’s mentor if they have permission from the originator.

Being a dance leader does not give permission to lead Zikr. Zikr is a Sufi lineage practice. Permission to lead this form of sound and movement meditation is given by one’s Sufi guide; it is not taken on one’s own initiative. (Note, however, that Dance Leaders may include Zikr Dances as part of a Dance program or event.)

Use of the On-line Dance Resource Library

Leaders Guild members agree to download Dance Resource Library materials only for their own use.

Leaders Guild Fees

To be an active member in good standing of the Leaders Guild requires remaining current with one’s annual Leaders Guild fees. (Note: For convenience, the payment of one’s Dance Region dues in most cases includes the applicable Leaders Guild fee, which is then remitted by the Region to DUP International on the member’s behalf. Otherwise, the Leaders Guild fee can be paid directly to DUP International through the website of that organization. See www.dancesofuniversalpeace.org/donregional.shtm for further information.)

In cases of financial hardship, Leaders Guild fees are partially or fully remitted from a fund established for that purpose through donations.

Logo Policy

The circle of hearts logo may be used by all members of the Leaders Guild, as well as for official business of the organization. Please review the policy [www.dancesofuniversalpeace.org/duplogo.shtml] before using the logo.

Ethics Policy

Ethics Guidelines

1. We recognize that we are all affected by the less healthy parts of our individual selves and our culture around issues of power, sex and money. Out of respect for the Dances of Universal Peace, for ourselves, and for those who dance with us, we regard ourselves as responsible to act in the most ethical manner possible at all times. We are all in this together and no one is exempt from these influences of our society. We also recognize that mistakes and accidents happen. In this regard, we will continue our own process of healing and surrendering to the Only Being. We will uphold basic ethical guidelines common to the precepts of the sacred paths and religions.
2. We will do our best to be sensitive to the dynamics of interpersonal relationships, particularly when an imbalance of power may exist or be perceived to exist. We agree not to use our roles as leaders or mentors to manipulate or indulge in favors that otherwise would not be given freely. As Dance leaders we agree to hold with integrity the whole circle's safety, realizing that our personal connections with members of the circle are in service to the circle as a whole.
3. The Dances are a spiritual practice that can awaken many qualities within us, including romantic and sexual feelings. As leaders and teachers we understand that even though these feelings may arise, we will not act on them. We agree not to pursue a sexual or romantic relationship with participants in the circle during a Dance event or retreat. We will not act in any way that could take advantage of any participant's vulnerability.
4. Mentors agree to refrain from sexual activity with their own mentees. It is requested that the mentoring relationship be mutually acknowledged as ended, and that the mentee find a new mentor before a mentor and mentee decide to explore a romantic or sexual relationship.
5. We will be honest and straightforward in our dealings with money and do our best to be explicit about fees we charge or contributions that we expect as reasonable compensation for time, expenses and travel in relation to dance leading and mentoring.
6. We will be honest in our communications with each other and with participants, and do our best to practice respectful, clear, and direct communication.
7. We will not use intoxicants or be affected by them during the leading of any Dance event.
8. When ethical issues arise, we will do our best to bring them to resolution, including among other things by self-inquiry, attentive listening, skillful speech, seeking and receiving guidance and support, and practicing effacement. We agree to consult with our mentor for guidance and objectivity whenever concerns of an ethical nature arise, whether we are the person with the concerns or the person whose behavior is the object of the concerns.
9. We agree to handle difficulties of an ethical nature in accordance with the Ethics Policy.

Ethics Co-Chairs or Chair

The Guidance Council (GC) and the Spiritual Guide will select from the body of mentors two Ethics Co-Chairs – or if only one is available, an Ethics Chair – ([EC](#)) designated to receive reports of abusive incidents and violations of ethical guidelines. The GC in consultation with the Spiritual Guide will annually confirm the EC appointments.

Ethics Complaint Process

1. In the interests of acknowledging and supporting the capacity of the local communities, we encourage anyone with concerns about the ethical behavior of a member of the Leaders Guild to address these concerns directly with the person involved and try to resolve the issue informally, with assistance of local resources. Should those efforts fall short of resolution to the satisfaction of all concerned, we encourage the concerned person to discuss this further with their mentor and consider a preliminary discussion of the issues involved with the [EC](#), prior to determining whether to file a formal ethics violation complaint.
2. If a decision is made to make a formal ethics violation complaint, it is to be filed with the EC, which will inform the GC and the respective mentors.
3. The EC will ask the concerned person if they have tried to address and resolve the issue directly with the person(s) involved, and if they have sought support from their own mentor. If they have not, the EC will encourage them to do so. If requested, the EC will offer consultation and suggestions for referral for conflict resolution or mediation.
4. If the above steps do not resolve the issue, the GC Chair and the EC will consider forming an Ethics Committee.
5. The Ethics Committee will be comprised of the mentor and the spiritual guide/ teacher/ initiator (if they have one) of the person in question, the EC, the GC Chair, and another Mentors Guild member selected by the GC Chair. The Ethics Committee will address each situation with the hope of arriving at a creative solution that will be beneficial to all involved.
6. If anyone is dissatisfied at any point in the above process, they may request proceeding to the next step.
7. Neither the GC nor the Ethics Committee is a legal or quasi-legal body. We work on the basis of trust, collaboration, consent and mutual respect. If the EC or the Ethics Committee perceives that legal issues may be involved, the parties will be referred to the appropriate authorities.
8. All persons acting in any ethics complaint process will maintain the strictest confidentiality of all reports of alleged violation of ethical guidelines, with the understanding that the above-named persons (Mentors, EC, GC Chair, Spiritual Guide, et al.) will be involved and will also hold this information in confidence.

Note: Dance leaders may choose to make this Ethics Policy available at regular public meetings and other ongoing classes in the Dances of Universal Peace and Walking Concentrations.

Guiding Circles and Events

Part of being a dance leader is about leading and safeguarding the participants in their dance circles and dance events. Guiding a circle may sometimes be difficult. A purpose of the Dances, according to Murshid SAM, is to increase joy. Any behaviors, comments or attitudes in a circle or event that diminish safety and joy to the circle and the individuals in the circle are antithetical.

Dance leaders are responsible for the circle. That doesn't mean walking a patrol; yet it does mean being attuned both to the individual participants and the circle as a whole. In order for us to expand our consciousness and free ourselves from the restrictions of personality and social conditioning, we want to be safe and free! If anyone's behavior encroaches on that feeling of freedom and safety, that needs to be dealt with.

Each individual, leader, circle and situation is unique. The leader simply has to be willing to be attentive, willing to inquire if there are warning signals, and willing to take necessary action if required. Action can include outlining guidelines, commentary, and sometimes intervention.

The way dance leaders maintain this safety net is up to them, and each dance leader (or dance team) will handle delicate or difficult situations in their own way, but here are some suggestions:

1. Dance leaders might want to let participants know that they are expected to be sensitive to each other's boundaries, while at the same time responsible for setting and maintaining their own boundaries.
2. Sometimes dance leaders may feel the need to let participants know exactly what behavior is expected and accepted in the categories of sexual misconduct, drug and alcohol use, provocation, verbal aggression, and power dynamics.
3. During DUP events, leaders might want to designate and make known to the participants a person or team that is available to those who need physical, emotional, or spiritual support. Sometimes the amount of energy generated in a dance awakens energies that are not always easy to integrate. As well there are times when someone feels challenged by something that has happened in the event. Those who feel challenged should know that there is someone they can talk to.

ELEMENTS OF MASTERY

Learning to lead the Dances involves much more than simply getting to know their movements and melodies. This may be the starting point, but there is much more to be experienced and assimilated before one can masterfully lead Dances from this body of work.

As prospective dance leaders we all begin with strengths and opportunities for growth. We manifest mastery in dance leading by devoting ourselves to this path and effacing ourselves in the Dances and their associated practices ... and by study. There is no end to this process.

The Elements of Mastery listed here can be studied in depth to further one's development as a dance leader and mentor. The descriptions offered only begin to touch on these topics. Nor is this a linear process. These foundation elements are developed simultaneously, rather than sequentially, with each both standing alone and informing the others. All mentored leaders are invited to participate in an exploration that goes far beyond what is alluded to here. References are given throughout for deeper study and practice.

The Dance Lineage

The Dances of Universal Peace and Walking Concentrations were birthed through the being of Samuel Lewis (Sufi Ahmed Murad Chisti or Murshid SAM), who became the Spiritual Director of the Sufi Ruhaniat International. He taught and transmitted direct experience of the Divine as manifest through all the qualities, the Beautiful Names of God. The Dances and Walks came to him in dreams and visions, and moments of synthesized inspiration, as a way to transmit and embody direct spiritual experience.

Murshid Samuel Lewis, whose root teacher was Sufi mystic Hazrat Pir-O-Murshid Inayat Khan, was also a student of several other spiritual teachers and mentors. They include Swami (Papa) Ramdas, Mother Krishnabai, Roshi Nyogen Senzaki and Ruth St. Denis. These beings form the living strand of the Dance lineage.

Murshid Wali Ali tells us that Murshid SAM consciously transmitted his spiritual awakening in how he conveyed the Dances and Walks to others. Murshid SAM trained his students to follow in his footsteps after he left the body, and to continue this transmission of blessing. He would tell those whom he had empowered as teachers of the Dances and Walks that before the meeting they should simply remember his presence and his energy, and then come from the same place. This ever-present lineage stream has enabled the Dances and Walking Concentrations to carry his living blessing, and to be precious vehicles for spiritual realization.

In a sacred apprenticeship relationship, self-discipline, consistency, willing surrender and service are the key themes and prove the existence of genuine growth, attainment and ultimately the ability to carry the magnetic-love current called transmission or lineage in various traditions. ... The "source" in the area of the Dances and Walks, is ultimately the heart of God. The essential nexus or connection to it [this heart] is the being of Murshid Samuel L. Lewis and his successors in this line. There is no transmission in this area without a genuine connection to this being, ...albeit his personality ... is only a doorway to an attunement with his ongoing, living presence... Ultimately organizations do not and cannot hold spiritual authority for a transmission; only human beings can, and do. This is a consistent theme of Murshid Samuel Lewis' writings and life. (Saadi Shakur Chishti, [1](#))

The transmission of the Dance and Walks lineage is entrusted to a Guidance Council, a Mentors Guild, and a Leaders Guild, with the Pir of the Sufi Ruhaniat International serving as Spiritual Guide. Great care is taken in the training and mentoring of Dance leaders so that the blessing stream of the Dances of

Universal Peace that originated with Murshid SAM continues to spread around the world, hand to hand, heart to heart.

Today the teacher brings living presence into the midst of disciples. The Teacher animates them with spiritual fervor. They are drawn to the Teacher and to one another by sacred love. They become a compact unit, which can and should act as a unit in all things. This is the ideal pattern after which other lesser patterns have been made. And it is thus that Hierarchy operates upon the planes above and below, with the seen and unseen beings. (Samuel L. Lewis, [2](#))

Experience, Assimilation, Transmission

For leaders of the Dances and Walks it is essential to develop an attunement to the blessing stream of Murshid SAM. His Original Dances (see Foundation Dances and Walks Manual) are one of the cornerstones on the road to mastery. His writings are a profound source of inspiration and wisdom. Walking in the footsteps of experienced Dance and Walks teachers is an intrinsic element towards deepening in this attunement.

We can only share with others what we have experienced and mastered in ourselves. If we assimilate what we have experienced and begin to transmit from our own understanding and realization, we will develop our own, authentic style. Dance as often as possible. Work with accomplished teachers who are attuned to this spiritual stream. Develop your inner connection to the living blessing stream of this lineage. Trust your own experience.

We have these words in the prayers. We have these teachings in the literature. But we do not always have accomplishments. There is a procession of spiritual vitality, passed from soul to soul, so to speak, in what may be called dharma transmission on one hand and procession of Baraka [blessing] on the other. (Samuel L. Lewis, [3](#))

The Walks

So the Walks become a world, a realm unto themselves. They offer us a whole course in spiritual development: concentration, breath practice, centering, self-effacement, attunement and devotion, which is the whole picture of a path. (Wali Ali Meyer, [4](#))

The Walking Concentrations are a form of potent spiritual practice in motion. Spiritual practices which previously have been done in static meditative postures were transformed by Murshid SAM into embodied walking practices. They are practices of concentration, self-mastery and realization.

The Element Walks are practices working with the elements, Earth, Water, Fire, Air, and Ether. Center Walks focus on the energetic centers of the body: Feet, Hara, Heart, Third Eye, and Crown. The Planetary Walks use the language of astrology to develop the capacity to tap into various aspects of our intrinsic energy body. The different walks, breath and spins attune one to the Sun, Moon, Venus, Mars, Mercury, Saturn, Jupiter, Uranus, Neptune, or Pluto. An advanced practice includes walking combinations of the planets, which may specifically unfold one's personal walks (i.e., Karma and Dharma walks). Divine Attribute (Wazifa) Walks are walking practices and body prayers that invoke and embody the Divine qualities of the One Being (the 99 Beautiful Names of The One). Tasawwuri Walks are attunement and embodiment practices in which one literally imagines the teacher or realized being in front of or within one as one moves and breathes. (See Foundation Dances and Walks Manual.)

Mastery of these Walks aids in the development of the whole personality. They are practices that help develop the ability to master internal energy and to shift consciously between various energetic states.

While it is not essential that one regularly lead the Walks with others, it is essential for development as a dance leader that one master them in one's own being.

Breath

The breath can be used inwardly in meditation and outwardly in the walk and dance. It becomes the channel for blessings, and all the forms of magnetism discussed in the teachings. (Samuel L. Lewis, [5](#))

Rhythm is the principal thing to be considered in breath, as it is on the rhythm of the breath that the working of the whole mechanism depends, and the chief reason of irregularity of the beats of the heart or head is lack of rhythm in the breath. (Inayat Khan, [6](#))

Breath is not to be confused with air. Develop awareness of the breath as energy, as life force itself. The breath is the channel for many kinds of magnetism. Increase your understanding of the breathing process and how it affects everything you do.

Simple rhythmic breathing, with balanced inhalation and exhalation, is the basis of all development. Watch the breath and learn from it. Develop awareness and control of the flow of breath. Practice rhythmic breathing and the Element Purification Breaths (see Foundation Dances and Walks Manual). Refine your breath. Breathe the sacred phrases of the Dance in rhythm. Tune yourself to the swirling and flow of the breath of the whole dance circle dancing "On the breath!"

One cannot lack energy and magnetism if one's breath is full of energy. Therefore, before developing any other means of healing, the power of the breath should first be developed. (Inayat Khan, [7](#))

Heart

Those who have found [their] center of being in the heart obtain the most joy in dancing. (Samuel L. Lewis, [8](#))

The heart is more than simply a physical organ. Mystics and some scientists maintain that the heart is a sensory organ and a sophisticated center for receiving and processing information. The heart generates the body's most powerful and most extensive rhythmic electromagnetic field. Through the heart one can develop and refine one's feelings, intuition and will.

When you sing, feel the sound resonate in the heart. As you breathe in rhythm, feel the awareness in the heart. Breathe sacred phrases with the concentration in the heart, for instance "Bismillah" or "Toward the One." Walk with concentration on the heart center. As you dance, center your awareness in the heart. Notice the effects in your being of all these practices. Notice the differences in feeling when you do not focus in the heart.

Erasing each undesirable impression from the heart in time enables one to purify one's heart, "to polish the rust from the heart," as the Sufis say. The heart can become a clear mirror for reflectivity of the Divine Essence. In this line of development one is awakening one's own heart and awakening the hearts of others.

The first and last instruction for the spiritual guidance of dancers is that they find the center of their own being. This is in the heart, but as has been explained, this heart is really much greater than the physical heart. The dancer can benefit greatly by concentrating upon this heart center in all aspects. For instance, there is the physical aspect of regarding the heart as the center of gravity in movement. There is another physical aspect of regarding heart as above the center of gravity and using it as a center of attraction to elevate one. There is the use of heart as center of feeling, and most of all, as center for intelligence. (Samuel L. Lewis, [9](#))

Embodiment

The watcher is the prayerful devotee, but the dancer becomes divine. (Samuel L. Lewis, [10](#))

The Dances are meditation in action. The discursive mind is not involved. We may rest in pure awareness and sense what is actually taking place. How is our breath moving and how is our body moving? What is being expressed through our movements? Do our movements become more refined? Do our mudras (arm and hand postures) feel expressive of devotion? This is an opportunity for self-witnessing and self-awareness. How do we bring devotion and wisdom into form?

The Dances and Walks make possible the embodiment of spiritual states and spiritual blessings. Feel and embody Joy ... radiate this out to the whole dance circle. Feel and embody Peace ... radiate this to the dance circle. Feel and embody Mary, Quan Yin, Tara, Krishna, Rama, Moses, Murshid SAM, Hazrat Inayat Khan -- or another being or teacher to whom you feel an attunement. As a dance leader one needs to learn how to shift effortlessly between such states and, through one's own embodiment, create the space for the dancers in the circle to enter through those doors. Allow yourself to be a channel for the bestowing of blessings.

Rhythm

Rhythm is of utmost importance in our lives. It is born of the earth and brings us the strength and qualities of earth. It characterizes our respiratory and circulatory systems which respectively bring and hold vibrations and forces from the external world, perhaps from the internal world also. When there is defect in rhythm, there is a lack of balance, and then, whatever movements we may indulge in, produce loss of psychic power. (Samuel L. Lewis, [11](#))

To regulate rhythm one must first understand rhythm. We make use of music and dancing and breathing exercises for this purpose. (Samuel L. Lewis, [12](#))

Life itself is based on natural rhythms. For a dance leader a good sense of rhythm is an essential prerequisite. Learn to cultivate rhythm in all aspects of one's life ... in one's spiritual practice, in one's daily habits, between activity and repose. In the activity of one's mind, in the Walk and in the Dance learn to unite thought, feeling in the heart, and body movement. Especially develop rhythm in one's breath. Developing rhythm and balance in the breath may be the starting point. Maintaining this balanced rhythm under all circumstances is the goal.

The work that a Sufi considers his or her sacred work has nothing to do with any particular creed nor with any particular religion; it is only this simple thing which I have just said: to be in rhythm with life's conditions and to be in tune with the infinite. (Inayat Khan, [13](#))

Voice

The voice has all the magnetism which an instrument lacks; for voice is nature's ideal instrument, upon which all other instruments of the world are modeled. (Inayat Khan, [14](#))

So from heart-cultivation is life-cultivation, and what is voice? Voice is expression of life, and the more life one has the more variable the quantitative and qualitative aspects of voice, the more word-control, breath-control and self-control. Then one can use voice; one can employ sound for the fulfillment of life's purpose and for the expression of the divinity from within. (Samuel L. Lewis, [15](#))

The articulation of the sacred phrase with the voice is a primary component of the Dances. Voice is breath amplified. The voice is the indicator of one's inner weather. At the very least, as a dance leader one needs to have or develop the ability to sing in tune and to hold a tune on one's own.

Spiritualize the voice. Place the voice in the heart. Develop the tone of voice. Round off the rough edges of the voice. Feel the vitality. Deepen the resonance. Explore the various qualities of the voice, *Jelal* (power) and *Jemal* (beauty). Rediscover the natural voice. Through regular practice one's voice will evolve.

When one sings and thinks of what [one] is singing, be it a single note, [one] can hold it much longer. Then [one] can put power and magnetism into it, convey [one's] sentiments thereupon and not be so fatigued. (Samuel L. Lewis, [16](#))

Magnetism and Atmosphere

The great work of the initiates henceforth will be to spread Baraka [spiritual magnetism]. By so doing they will purify the general atmosphere, and by that the Message which belongs to the sphere itself will gradually touch the hearts and minds of all who pass through it, who breathe the air or go to the places where the seeds of Baraka have been sown. Thus is the selfless propagation of the Message. (Samuel L. Lewis, [17](#))

The Dances can create sacred atmosphere wherever and whenever they are done. The whole atmosphere can become charged with magnetism. As a dance leader one is the conduit for that magnetism. Learn to develop magnetism in your being. Through your breath and heart become a channel for *baraka*, that love-magnetism-blessing power.

Magnetism is also in a sense a giving of permission to dancers to experience the Dances with one's entire being. Through the radiance of the breath and heart to the whole circle one creates the optimum conditions for spiritual experience. It also involves the principles of attraction. The resonant heart is able to tune others to the same frequencies.

Creating sacred atmosphere is a tuning of the space, a weaving of all the elements present. That one dances is important, but so is where one dances. Learn to clear the space before you start if it is necessary. Some dance spaces lend themselves immediately to the dance experience; in other spaces one has to work at it. Clear the inner space and attune to your guidance and your teachers. If you are distracted or not in full health this will be felt at some level by the whole circle.

We are finding that repeating the Names of God, whether referring to essence (Zat) or attributes (Sifat) becomes most helpful. The devotees who repeat these names find changes going on in themselves, they begin to realize the divine attributes, they become absorbed in the attributes and in the blessings thereof and from this comes an ever increasing magnetism at all levels. (Samuel L. Lewis and Moineddin Jablonski, [18](#))

Concentration

In spiritual concentration, the whole consciousness is focused upon heart that it may be awakened and its living qualities flood the personality. (Samuel L. Lewis, [19](#))

Some form of training in concentration practice will develop the ability to stay focused and centered under any and all circumstances one might encounter in the dance circle. The secret of concentration is in having steadiness of mind and the development of relaxed focus. Develop the ability to focus your energies fully on the activity in the moment to the exclusion of everything else.

Practice of Fikr [a sufi practice, breathing sacred phrases in rhythm with the natural movement of the breath] is of great assistance to concentration. Also to keep the heart and mind on “Toward the One” with each inhalation and exhalation (Darood). This should be continued until all inhalations are equal and all exhalations are equal and there is a balance between inhalation and exhalation. Although this seems very simple it is one of the most important factors in the process of concentration and its very simplicity often causes it to be overlooked. (Samuel L. Lewis, [20](#))

Meditation

In the terms of Vedanta, life is likened to the sea, where there is a continual rising and falling of the waves. Every man by nature seeks peace and in peace alone is his satisfaction. But often he seeks it wrongly, therefore instead of producing peace he creates more struggle in life. (Inayat Khan, [21](#))

Meditation stills the mind and helps one build capacity. When one dwells in awareness, one can begin to distinguish the difference between thoughts and the process of thinking ... not trying to stop the natural process of thinking, but able to lay aside the content. Gradually, one learns to determine what actions are valuable and important, purposeful and beneficial. Mastery of self in repose can lead to mastery of self in action.

Choose a practice that works for you and study with an accomplished teacher. Development of the inner life will enhance one’s dance leading capacity significantly.

The basic purpose of spiritual training is to free the individual from this self-created “self,” so to speak, and let them live as a God-created “self,” which was the intention of creation. (Samuel L. Lewis, [22](#))

Silence

Open our hearts that we may hear Thy voice which constantly cometh from within. (Inayat Khan, [23](#))

Create the conditions in your life for outer silence and cultivate inner silence. Can we find space between the thoughts? Can we enter into the world of direct experience, rather than being distracted by the stories we tell ourselves about our experience? Dwell in pure presence. Savor the silence at the end of a Dance.

Peace is the positive condition under which life can be experienced without discord. There are two aspects of it, the silent life and the life of activity. These conditions are not so opposite but are the reverse of each other like the inside and outside of a bag. One can look into the kaleidoscope and see forms and movements and activities and not be affected by them. So is the silent life, one in which one sees all the life within and yet is not affected by it. (Samuel L. Lewis, [24](#))

Attunement – Tasawwuri, Fana, Effacement

So by attunement one learns to walk like the teacher, to obtain his or her rhythms and then to apply them otherwise. But this takes away neither freedom of mind or of spirit. On the contrary it adds to them. One becomes a living light, not a mere shadow. It may look like imitation but this is just the winding. And in that way the spirit of the teacher may work through the disciples. (Samuel L. Lewis, [25](#))

The willingness and ability to attune and surrender to the blessing transmitted through the Dances is the single most important aspect of dance leading. Ultimately, most mentors regard this as the ability to efface one’s ego-personality (even, and especially, when the personality is still present) in order to let grace flow through. It cannot be over emphasized that when working with the Dances “externally” they will have “internal” effects.

Devotion and pristine attunement with transparent ego will transmit an experience beyond small variations of form. (Saadi Neil Douglas-Klotz, [26](#))

The science and art of tasawwuri is to enable the devotee to follow a course of elevation and nobility established by the illuminated souls who form the embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance. This refers alike to personalities on earth and to personalities who have left this sphere. The greater the evolution of a [person], the greater [their] ability to impress the atmosphere and surroundings where [they] have lived. (Samuel L. Lewis, [27](#))

Elements

The science that existed in the time of the ancient Vedas was the science of the elements. The five elements (earth, water, fire, air and ether) are constantly working in nature, and in every person one element is especially dominant.

The Element Breaths and Walks (see Foundation Dances and Walks Manual) help us to cultivate an embodied understanding of the influence of the elements in our being. There are many aspects to be considered (such as the sound, color and vibration of each element). We are shown their nature by attuning to the elements with breath, movement, rhythm, and direction. The quality of *Earth* is to spread out in every direction, covering surface. The nature of *Water* is to flow downward, around all obstacles. *Fire* rises and excites. *Air* is a zigzag direction in its flow. *Ether* is no particular form; all forms originate from it and return to it. (For further details see Inayat Khan, [28](#))

Through the Element Breaths and movement concentrations, we awaken to an understanding of the corresponding influences in our being and on consciousness, energy and life itself. This teaches us the ability to intentionally move from state to state, rather than being unconsciously impacted by the energies of the elements.

Through our conscious experience of the Element Breaths, we become aware of which elements dominate at different times and how this affects the way we feel, act and lead. We also begin to notice this in others. A deeper dimension is added to our dance leading when there is awareness of the element(s) that may be predominant in us in a given moment, and how the different elements manifest in the Dances and in the dance circle.

The concentration and practice of the science of these elements is of tremendous value in the training of body, emotions, and mind. When mysticism is taught as a science, as the Vedantists and Sufis would have it, the student learns to employ these elements as servants, and thus one perfects one's own nature and helps others. (Samuel L. Lewis, [29](#))

Personal Evolution

Making a commitment to dance leading and deepening in one's spiritual path naturally includes the refinement in one's ego personality ... cultivating emotional balance and developing any missing interpersonal skills. Shadow potentials in one's self and others must be understood and acknowledged. A dance leader needs to be able to be skillful when natural sensual energies arise, and know how to mediate when tensions are present in the dance circle.

Mastery in any field needs persistence in overcoming rejection and setbacks. Develop the necessary self-confidence and self-reliance to persevere.

Enjoy the journey!

Working with Energy

There are two aspects to be considered in the study of electricity: capacity and potential. Capacity is the ability of a container to receive energy, and potential is the ability of a conductor to carry it. These same two principles appear in the human body.

Capacity is increased by meditation and, in general, by heart action, by maintaining the rhythm of the heart-beat, by feeling the consciousness in the heart, by directing all activity from the center to the circumference and by maintaining unity in feeling, thought and action. It is connected with inspiration.

Corresponding to electrical potential or motive power is what the mystics also call power. This arises from the control of the breath and the ability to apply and utilize the breath. All the mysteries arise from these subjects. (Samuel L. Lewis, [30](#))

There is an ocean of breath in which we live and move and have our being. Through the Dances we create certain patterns of energy. Life energy comes to us and through us all as we dance. The skilled dance leader can learn to weave this energy for the upliftment of everyone in the circle, through intuition, increasing refinement of one's own breath, and listening to the Spirit of Guidance.

We live and move in a realm of psychic forces, and they move in and through us. The aura changes in size and luminescence according to our emotional condition. It appears to react to other influences and to expand in moments of exaltation ... and cosmic love. Indeed as our outlook expands, so does it expand. When we fall into self-pity, it contracts. As our thoughts tend toward the earth, it [the aura] assumes one colour, and as they rise toward heaven, it takes on another colour. Emotions also affect its hues.

The aura is not developed by direct means. It follows us, not we it. As we change physically, emotionally, mentally, morally, or spiritually it becomes altered. When our development attains to a certain height, it becomes as a lamp of pure light. Then even a sensitive will recognize it. And many who are not clairvoyant can, in a sense, feel a developed aura. (Samuel L. Lewis, [31](#))

Musicianship

[K]nowledge of the emotions is most valuable; and if [one] controls and directs the emotions through the breath and thought, [one] becomes able to convey life itself through music. ... [One] benefits most by feeling the life within the heart; and [one] can also gain by some proper mystical training in singing and dancing. The ability to concentrate, the faculty of feeling and the knowledge of sound vibrations are all most valuable... (Samuel L. Lewis, [32](#))

Instrumental accompaniment is not essential to the Dances and indeed some Dances may work better without it. Yet instruments such as guitar and drum can create the rhythmic and melodic foundation for a Dance and help hold together the different components of a Dance.

To play for the Dances, it's helpful to distinguish between the outer techniques of playing the instruments (different rhythms, notes, scales, chords) and the inner techniques of attunement (concentration on the sacred phrase, listening, focusing on the breath and heart, being mindful of the energy of the circle).

Dance musicians who are called to cultivate and participate in this concentration more deeply are invited to take a mentor for that purpose. This is a "walking with path". In this case the mentoring process focuses on deepening in dance musicianship and attunement rather than dance leadership, and does not necessarily lead to certification.

A [guitar] player, for instance, in addition to becoming acquainted with all the complications and nuances of style, melody and rhythm, must also acquire the psychic power in [the] fingertips and [the] hands and also feel a close attunement to the instrument as if the instrument were to become part of [one's] very being, so to speak. (Samuel L. Lewis, [33](#))

Working with Musicians

Ideally, dance musicians will have experienced dancing the Dances before they begin playing for them. Dance musicians serve the Dances. Choose your musicians carefully. They are asked to set aside personal styles of playing that draw attention to themselves, and that end up wandering from the heart of the Dance.

Musicians should emphatically resist going off on their own. The sacred phrase must be uppermost in their concentration. The music should accentuate the natural rhythm of the sacred phrase. (Wali Ali Meyer, [34](#))

The choice of musical instruments beyond the guitar (for melody) and the drum (for rhythm) may enhance or detract from the integrity or experience of the Dance. These are considerations that the Dance leader works out with their musicians.

Dance leaders need to develop rapport with their musicians. Leaders expect musicians to focus their attention on the Dance and attune to them. Be clear with your musicians. Instruct them to watch your feet; coach them in the different dynamics of a Dance; have them watch and listen to you for directions, including non-verbal cues. Leaders may want to include their musicians in practice sessions with them, especially in the beginning stages of playing for the Dances. This is beneficial for the new Dance musician who is learning to be attentive to the leader, become more familiar with Dances, and be present in “heart space” when playing for the Dances.

Group Facilitation Skills and Leadership Qualities

When leading the Dances one leads a group of people. Learn to communicate clearly and effectively. Be polite and considerate to everyone. Put people at ease. People in the group will notice if you are coming from the heart or the head. Be authentically yourself. Notice how the group responds. Notice whether you are reaching the group.

The Dances are a form of experiential learning. Develop an understanding of group dynamics. Learn to guide the group process. Watch the group synergy. In the first few Dances of a session see, hear and feel where people are. Are they in their bodies? Are they fully present? Do they move in rhythm? Are they singing fully? Are the voices coming from the heart? Are they open or closed to each other? Do people listen? Are they attuned to you?

Effective leadership is about service, not status. Leadership is inspiring people to willingly do what you ask them to do. Development of such qualities as integrity, wisdom, openness, assertiveness, fairness, sense of humor, vision, dedication can help one in this role. Put the ego to one side, but at the same time allow yourself to become a strong leader.

A Leader should lead. By that I don't mean that he or she should necessarily say something profound, I mean that the leader should be in a positive state of heart magnetism and transmit this power without a lot of self-consciousness and in a voice that is sun like. (Wali Ali Meyer, [35](#))

Knowledge, Experience and Understanding of a Variety of Spiritual Traditions

Whatever their faith, the wise have always been able to meet each other beyond those boundaries of external forms and conventions which are natural and necessary to human life but which none the less separate humanity. (Samuel L. Lewis, [36](#))

Murshid Samuel Lewis studied and gained realization in a number of different paths including, Sufism, Zen Buddhism, Bhakti Yoga, Jewish and Christian Mysticism. As a result of this lifelong exploration he offered the Dances as a way for others to taste the universality of spiritual experience.

Your roots will perhaps be in one spiritual tradition of the many streams, but ideally you will have direct experience and knowledge of a number of the major paths. Studying the different spiritual traditions is key to developing breadth and depth in the Dance work, but all doesn't come from books or the Internet. Make connections with practitioners of various traditions in your area. Experience for yourself the sacred in a variety of forms. Create opportunities to join in the spiritual practices and ceremonies of different spiritual streams, and experience their way of doing things.

STUDY MATERIALS & RESOURCES

Articles & Papers

- A Deeper Side of Dance (*Saadi Neil Douglas-Klotz*)
 Background and Purpose of the Walks (*Wali Ali Meyer*)
 Dancing with Murshid S.A.M. (Sufi Ahmed Murad Chisti) (*Wali Ali Meyer*)
 Group Dance as Transformational Movement (*Saadi Neil Douglas-Klotz*)
 Spiritual Dancing (*Samuel L. Lewis*)
 Steps Toward Peace Through Spiritual Dance and Walk (*Samuel L. Lewis*)
 Ten Keys to Dancing (*Wali Ali Meyer*)
 The Dances and Sacred Transmission: Nurturing Growth for the Coming Generations
 (*Saadi Shakur Chishti*)
 There Is No Sufi Here (*Tasnim Hermila Fernandez*)

Books

- An Unfinished Life (*Ruth St. Denis*)
 Blessings of the Cosmos (*Neil Douglas-Klotz*)
 Bowl of Saki Commentary (*Inayat Khan and Samuel L. Lewis*)
 Complete Sayings of Hazrat Inayat Khan (*Inayat Khan*)
 Desert Wisdom (*Neil Douglas-Klotz*)
 Divine Dancer: A Biography of Ruth St. Denis (*Suzanne Shelton*)
 Genesis Meditations (*Neil Douglas-Klotz*)
 Hidden Gospel (*Neil Douglas-Klotz*)
 In the Garden: Murshid SAM (*Samuel L. Lewis*)
 Introduction to Spiritual Brotherhood: Science, Mysticism and the New Age (*Samuel L. Lewis*)
 Jerusalem Trilogy (*Samuel L. Lewis*)
 Like a Dream, Like a Fantasy (*Nyogen Senzaki; dharma talks and poetry edited by Eido Shimano*)
 Lotus Light (*Ruth St. Denis*)
 Mentoring – The Tao of Giving and Receiving Wisdom (*Chungliang Al Huang and Jerry Lynch*)
 Murshid: A Personal Memoir of Life with American Sufi Samuel L. Lewis (*Mansur Johnson*)
 Physicians of the Heart: A Sufi View of the 99 Names of Allah (*Wali Ali Meyer, Bilal Hyde, Faisal Muqaddam, and Shabda Kahn*)
 Prayers of the Cosmos (*Neil Douglas-Klotz*)
 Siva Siva! / Crescent & Heart (*Samuel L. Lewis*)
 Spiritual Dance and Walk: An Introduction to the Dances of Universal Peace and Walking Meditations of Samuel L. Lewis (*Samuel L. Lewis; edited by Neil Douglas-Klotz*)
 Sufi Vision and Initiation: Meetings with Remarkable Beings (*Samuel L. Lewis; edited by Neil Douglas-Klotz*)
 The Music of Life (*Inayat Khan*)
 The Sufi Book of Life: 99 Pathways of the Heart for the Modern Dervish (*Neil Douglas-Klotz*)
 The Sufi Message of Hazrat Inayat Khan (*Inayat Khan*)
 Vol. 1: The Inner Life
 Vol. 2: Cosmic Language
 Music
 The Mysticism of Sound
 Vol. 4: Health (on Breath)

Vol. 9: The Unity of Religious Ideals

Wisdom Comes Dancing: Selected Writings of Ruth St. Denis on Dance, Spirituality and the Body
(Edited by Kamae A. Miller)

Esoteric Papers

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201 Suras on the Breath: An Original Sangatha
Bestowing of Blessing
Book of Peace
Spiritual Dancing
The Metaphysics of Sound

Other Resources

Eat, Dance & Pray, DVD
Foundation Dances and Walks Manual, with CD — compilation of 101 “Mantric” Dances, Original Dances of Murshid Samuel L. Lewis, and five sets of Walking Concentrations. Also included are short essays addressing attunement to the major spiritual traditions and atmosphere of sacred phrases.
Guitars of Universal Peace, guitar instruction by Anahata Iradah
Musicianship for the Dances of Universal Peace, paper by Munir Peter Reynolds

CDs

Dancing with the Aramaic Jesus – The Beatitude Way (Neil Douglas-Klotz)
Keeper of the Heart (Wali Ali Meyer; short stories, attunements and Dances)
Native Middle-Eastern Cycle – Seasonal Invocations of the Goddess (Neil Douglas-Klotz and Kamae A. Miller)
Prayers of the Cosmos (Neil Douglas-Klotz)

Links

Abwoon Resource Center: www.abwoon.com
Omega Publications and Suluk Press (The Inayati Order): www.OmegaPub.com
Sufi Ruhaniat International: www.ruhaniat.org

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The Commentary Papers listed here were transcribed from talks or written by Hazrat Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan between 1911 and 1926. Further elaboration on the subjects was added later by Murshid Samuel L. Lewis at the request of his teacher, Hazrat Inayat Khan. This Bibliography reflects material cited from the original teaching or from the later commentary according to the name listed first.

All Commentary and Esoteric Papers written by Murshid Samuel Lewis are held in trust by the Sufi Ruhaniat International, copyright 1978. They are available through SRI to members of the Leaders Guild.

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