

CULTIVATING ZIRAAT

Cultivating Ziraat Schedule 2024: <https://inayatiyyaziraat.org/event-announcements/>

Ziraat website: <https://inayatiyyaziraat.org/>

Session 3 – Pir Vilayat and Pir Zia’s Contributions to Ziraat Attuning to Nature

8 June 2024 – presenters Nehmat, Zubunissa, Saraswati

[LINK Session 3 Recording](#) Passcode: hJ+19jm4

Attuning to Nature: today we offer some teachings and practices from Murshid the Great Farmer and the Two Most Experienced Farmers: Pir Vilayat and Pir Zia; to illustrate the unfolding and enriching of Ziraat over the last 40 years, expanding on the three focus areas of Ziraat described in Session #1.

Pir Vilayat envisioned new directions for Ziraat – linking spirituality with science, ecology and the unfolding discoveries of deep space and quantum physics.

Pir Zia continues to expand and embed these themes with his teachings and practices about **Life in the World today**. The very groundwork of Ziraat – is our inter-connection with all of life and how we live with and respond to the serious issues facing the planet today due to the impact of humans.

How can we help bring about changes for the better – and restore the sacred relationship with Nature?

There’s a place for everyone in Ziraat, regardless of background. We all learn from each other.

Nehmat describes her pathway into Ziraat – through attunement to the elements and cycles of nature and struggles with the farming language. She now resonates with the symbology of the cycle of work on the farm and draws parallel cycles in gardening, and managing any kind of project or task that requires sustained effort over time. There will be more about Symbology in Session 4.

Ziraat Lodge – Opening – Invocations, Greetings & Salutations (10:38)

1. Attuning to Nature: through the teachings of Pir-o-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan

Ziraat was set up as a “Mystery School” established by Murshid in 1926. Membership and attendance at Lodges was **strictly secret** in those early days. Attunement to Nature has always been an essential component of the Sufi path, and it appears throughout Murshid’s teachings – and especially in Ziraat ritual with the Salutations to the Elements.

Quotes:

There is one Holy Book, the sacred manuscript of nature, the only scripture which can enlighten the reader.
– The Third Sufi Thought

Nature is the soul’s nourishment. – Volume XI

This passage also describes the broader aspects of Nature that the Mystic observes. – refer to Session #1 Notes

The deeper we look into life the more it unfolds itself, allowing us to see more keenly. Life is revealing. It is not only human beings who speak; if only the ears can hear - even plants and trees and all nature speak, ... nature reveals itself, reveals its secret. In this way we communicate with the whole of life.

– The Alchemy of Happiness

Mental Purification and **Connection with the Whole of Creation** are two aspects of the spiritual path emphasised in Ziraat Lodge and Teachings - (Session #2). Murshid recommended two practices for all Murids, **Prayer** and the **Elemental Purification Breaths**, and these continue as foundational practices in Ziraat.

Elemental Purification Breaths and Prayer Nayaz (~17:48)

In the Ziraat ceremony we pay homage to the elements because they are living beings, holy beings.

Rumi said, *“Air, earth, water and fire are God's servants. To us they seem lifeless, but to God living.”*

In the purification breaths, we invoke their power to purify our breath, our bodies, hearts and minds, restoring rhythm and balance in the body and mind. We can also use this practice as a renewal of the covenant with the elements as Pir Zia has written.

Purification is the innate tendency of every soul, but it purifies only that part of its being of which it is conscious. When striving to purify the body and mind, one often fails to find the real source of their purification. Really speaking, the breath is the source which keeps body and mind alive. – Murshid

These reflections [of each element] convey a clear perception of the elements as imaginal forces that shape our participation in the living cosmos. As truly as humans inhabit the environment, the environment inhabits us. – Pir Zia

Although the elements may be called earth, water, fire, air and ether, this must not be taken literally... 'Ether' is not ether in the scientific sense; it is capacity. 'Water' is not water as we understand it in everyday language; it is fluidity. 'Fire'... means glow or heat, dryness, radiance, all that is living... Every activity of the outer world is a kind of reaction. In other words, a shadow of the activity which is behind it and which we do not see. – Murshid

Practice:

For each element there is a quote from Murshid, followed by a very short meditation. We invoke the power of these elemental beings to purify our breath, our bodies and minds and we notice that each succeeding breath is more subtle than the one before.

Earth – (Breathe in and out through the nose five times)

By breathing on earth, [the Sufi] will give all his impurities to earth, and will attract purity from earth.

Breathe in the elemental being of the Earth and allow your whole body to be permeated by this living being. Sense your rootedness through the feet and the coccyx and feel your body drawing in the nutrients of life into every cell. As you exhale, allow all impurities of the body to flow into Earth.

Water – (Breathe in the nose and out the mouth)

By breathing before water, she will purify her breath and will give out impurities to water.

Breathe in the elemental being of the Water and allow your breath and your whole body to be washed and purified. Feel the water element washing your inner fluids as well as your outer body, removing all impurities.

Fire – (Breathe in through the mouth. Breathe out through the nose)

By breathing before fire, the Sufi purifies his breath to that element.

Imagine you are standing before a large fire and breathe in the energy of the fire element, allowing it to burn away all impurities of your body and mind.

Air – (Breathe in and out through the mouth)

One must purify one's breath by breathing in the open air, which is the air of purification.

Breathe in the elemental being of air and feel it as a cool breath that sweeps through your body removing all impurities.

Ether – (Breathe in / out through the nose and mouth -gentle, subtle breath that carries all the elements within it)

And life in the open space enables one to purify one's breath by the ether, which pervades the whole space.

Together these elements enliven the world of form. They are the life within the life of form—the all-pervading life. Breathe in the subtle ether and feel the life force gently flowing through your breath and your body and mind.

Take a moment and notice your breath. Notice how your body is feeling and offer gratitude to the elements for purifying and revivifying your body, heart and soul. Traditionally, we complete the Purification Breaths with the Healing Prayer, **Nayaz**.

*Beloved Sovereign, Almighty God
Through the rays of the sun, Through the waves of the air
Through the all-pervading life in space, Purify and revivify us, and we pray,
Heal our bodies, hearts and souls.*

The Elemental Purification Breaths can be done in conjunction with the Salutations as a personal daily practice and Ziraat attunement, or as a stand-alone breathing practice.

2. Attuning to Nature – through the teachings of Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan (~30:05)

Quotes:

Ziraat is in line with the whole trend of our time: ecology, respect for the earth, re-establishing a covenant with nature. ... We need to establish a covenant of mutual respect with the earth.

It's urgent! And hence the importance of Ziraat. – Ziraat: Establishing a Covenant with Nature

The silent voice of the Divine Presence, of the Divine Message, is whispered by all beings as they announce their names respectively as their contribution to the symphony of the spheres. – Pir Vilayat

If one only knew what intelligence, what emotion, what beauty - lies beneath the spectacular display of life on the planet, one would realize what one misses by reducing nature, considering it just matter. So much is gained by discovering and contacting this world of the soul, which has its correspondence in us, and comes through the forms and behavior of nature as the unwritten law of life – The Meaning of Ziraat – May 1981

Humanity's need for oneness with nature is not fulfilled simply by hiking or camping in nature, but by penetrating into the consciousness of the trees and the flowers, of the planet and the atoms, experiencing what it would be like to be that flower or tree and getting into the spirit of the wind on a landscape or of a musical note. – Introduction to Nature Meditations

Pir Vilayat has left a legacy of practices imagining landscapes of light and inviting us to explore “what transpires behind that which appears.”

Practice: Creative Imagination - Attuning to a tree - from Shahabuddin (~33:35)

Visualise a Tree - to ground us in earth, develop in love, expressing beauty.

- Tree has roots, fibers threading through soil: **PEACE**.
- From soil trunk rises, receiving energy, water, minerals: **LOVE**.
- Year by year, trunk expands, ring by ring, breath by breath perseverance, - strong and steady: **LOYAL**.
- Opening of limbs and branches - Leaves, needle tender growth sensing photosynthesizing, taking carbon dioxide from air - sweeping: **GREAT JOY**.
- Blossom / Fruit / seeds start process again.
BEAUTY reigns in the fruit the outer manifestation of the Divine.
- Praise be to the Tree, our friend and teacher grounded in earth, in Ziraat.
Thanks for the feeling of Unity -



3. Attuning to Nature – through the teachings of Pir Zia Inayat Khan (~38:55)

Bawa continues the spiritual ecology approach of his father and connects Ziraat with the spiritual attunement, response and stewardship required for the world today - lifting the consciousness of humanity and restoring the sacred relationship with the Earth, Elemental Beings / Nature Spirits (*unsuriyya*).

Quotes:

The purpose of Ziraat is to foster the reconciliation of humanity and the living earth.

Greening Ourselves and the Earth – Zenith Camp Ziraat Retreat 2023

—whether or not you are an initiate of Ziraat – the greening of ourselves and the Earth is for all of us. In fact, it is a great need of our time. There's a need to realise this symbiosis that is possible between ourselves and the Earth, lest in our misalignment we and the Earth destroy each other. We who are meant to give life to each other.

We are beginning to better understand our footprint – each of us is leaving a physical mark on the earth – a footprint and what Ziraat teaches is that we also leave a mind-print and a soul-print. That imprint may manifest life and light and love or not; it may be for the flourishing of the earth or it may not.

To understand the mind-print and the soul-print we need to understand that the Earth has more than a body. We have this physical body but we also have a subtle body, we also have a mind and we also have a soul. Why should it be any different with the Earth?

Earth has its own subtle body – Earth has its own mind and its own soul.

What is the relationship between our subtle body and the subtle body of the earth?

How does our mind relate to the mind of the Earth and our soul to the soul of the Earth?

– we need to understand this. This is why Ziraat exists – and this is why we are here.

It's interesting to note that green is the color assigned to the SIRR, the subtle center of the central heart, so in Ziraat we are working with our hearts, as well as our minds – individually and collectively. Green is also the color of the element water. Pir Zia refers to the “movement of a wave” - in describing some of the themes covered in his new book, “Tears from the Mother of the Sun”

All of this involves a revival of knowledge that has always been here, but often has been forgotten. But this revival need not take the form of a kind of antiquarianism. We will do so in the spirit of the wave of guidance that is coming to humanity at this very moment. So, it is not just a matter of going back to the past, but it is a matter of integrating the past in the full light of the wave – Murshid says that in history a wave comes from the unseen as a kind of tide. And we believe that such a wave is now coming.

– from transcript of Leaders Gathering in Germany 2024

Practice: Emerald Contemplations (~46:35)

The [Emerald Contemplations](#), are part of the [Knights of Purity Activity](#), were recently created to bring us closer to the Emerald green living Earth, to the divine nature within and without, and to raise our consciousness of the ecological crisis quickly unfolding. Each of the ten contemplations represents the Truth of who we are. We are this living Earth, unfolding through the millennia. Unfolding as earthworm, bird, tree, river, mountain, human, star, galaxy. *(Please listen to the recording for the full guided contemplation.)*

Repeat these phrases silently on the breath and sense your connection to the earth and unfolding life:

*My conscientious Self: **Know yourself as a tendril of the living Earth.***

Breathing in: **Know yourself**
Breathing out: **as a tendril of the living Earth.**

Inhale: **This is my body**
Exhale: **The body of Earth**

4. Attuning to Nature - On a practical level – here are some things we can all do: (~55: 15)

- Consider the way we walk and live on the Earth
- Spend time in nature, participate in rituals and ceremonies
- Show Respect for the Earth
- Reciprocity – foster a sacred relationship with Nature and Nature Spirits
- Praying, singing and dancing

Close the Lodge: Salutations - in silence, Ziraat departing Statements

Prayer - Irish Blessing ([Link to Video](#))

Ziraat Resources: See Books section on the website: <https://inayatiyyaziraat.org/resources/#books>

- **Nature Meditations** (currently out of print. [1980 pdf is available](#))
- **Holy Mysteries of the Five Elements** – Pir Zia [Link to Suluk Press](#)
- **An Emerald Earth** – Kainat Felicia Norton and Muinuddin Charles Smith – [Link to website](#)
- **Universal Meditations-Recipes for a Peaceful Mind** – Shahabuddin David Less - [Link to Amazon](#)