

# CULTIVATING ZIRAAT

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

## Session 5 – Addressing the Eco-Crisis and the Dawning of a new Epoch

23 June 2024 – presenters: Saraswati Burke and Wali Via

LINK: [Session 5 Recording](#) Passcode: 2M@Y^=AD

### Next week is the final class – It will be a formal Ziraat Lodge – with Initiations

This is an opportunity to receive initiation into Ziraat as a Worker, if that is of interest to you. All of the presenters and other members of the Ziraat Council, are authorized initiators. Please make contact with them prior to next week's class if you wish one of them to be your initiator. If you prefer an "in person" initiation, contact Wali – who will explore options in your area.

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If initiation interests you – you can read more about it on the Ziraat website. <https://inayatiyyaziraat.org/initiation/>

### Addressing the Ecological Crisis and Dawning of a new Epoch

**Introduction by Saraswati** - speaking from the land of Bandon Oregon (west coast USA) ...indigenous land of the ancient Nasomah People and currently held in sacred trust with the Coquille tribe.

#### Lodge Opening – Ziraat Invocation & Salutations to the Elements

In Session 3 we heard that both Pir Vilayat and Pir Zia have encouraged the Ziraat Activity to address the ecological crisis. The Ziraat Website has a number of resources listed on the [Environmental Training and Planetary Service](#) page that you are welcome to explore. (If you know of other resources that may be useful to include on the website – email Nehmat.)

I've been involved with Ziraat for a long time. This Activity has brought me to a deep attunement, not just from the wonders of Nature, but as an activity of spiritual practice. First introduced in early 90's at a Dance camp – where Wakil Forest Shomer was out in the grasses collecting seeds ... (he's a seed keeper). I was absorbed by this motion of collecting precious life and at that moment I was initiated into this beautiful practice. Ziraat has nourished me and healed me. Ziraat is not just a metaphor of illumination, but a path of compelling concern for the planet, upon which we are all dependent.

Sustainability of the inner life is dependent on the sustainability of the outer world and vice versa. As long as we walk on the Earth, there is this inter-dependence, this inter-relation.

## A. Ecological Crisis (~8:45)

We all recognize and know that there's many imbalances and endangerments to the biological life as the result of human activity and development. All of my adult life this awareness has influenced my own choices. As a young adult I choose a vegetarian diet, and became a practitioner in alternative spiritual traditions and as a parent, I tried to raise my children with the consciousness of walking softly, and taking less.

Still, the eco crisis has grown in the last four decades and I have often been extremely distressed, and taken refuge in the Only Being - through the teachings of the Sufi lineage. I'm curious to know how this eco-crisis has affected your inner life.

**How has the eco-crisis changed your relationship with Earth?**

**How has the eco-crisis affected your inner life?**

*Group Sharing*

## Sufi Thoughts – Hazrat Inayat Khan (~21:45)

Turning to the Sufi Thoughts, Murshid gives guidance as how to walk in the world, despite of all its challenges.

- ***There is One Holy Book, the sacred manuscript of nature, the only scripture which can enlighten the reader.***
- ***There is One Law, the law of reciprocity, which can be observed by a selfless conscience together with a sense of awakened justice.***
- ***There is One Brotherhood and Sisterhood, the human brotherhood and sisterhood, which unites the children of earth indiscriminately in the Parenthood of God.***

When I contemplate these words of Murshid, it reminds me that I'm not alone in the external world and beyond my Sufi companions, there's many "friends of humanity" who have made contributions through service to the well-being, healing and harmony of life on earth – humanity, plants, animals, the elements.

There's two people, who have offered a tremendous support in my life and I wanted to bring them forward in this class: **Johanna Macy** (Buddhist, Eco-Activist) and **Michael Dowd** (who describes himself as a Christian Eco-Theologian).

**Joanna Macy** Website: <https://www.joannamacy.net/main>

A tool for climbing out of despair: "**The spiral that reconnects**" has a similar feeling to the Sophic Whorl that Pir Zia has been bringing into our bodies, minds and hearts.

Read about her work: [The Work that Reconnects.](#)



**Michael Dowd**

Website: <https://postdoom.com/>

Has done a lot of work to help people become empowered in their communities in understanding and finding a place to live at peace with what's happening in the world. Michael passed away last October, of a sudden heart attack. It was a reminder that any moment could be our last breath.

So much of his teaching - is just Ziraat. If you are looking for another external support in the world, I encourage you to watch and listen to his teachings. Here are some quotes:

*“Any human being exists only as a member of the wider community of life, air, water, and soil.*

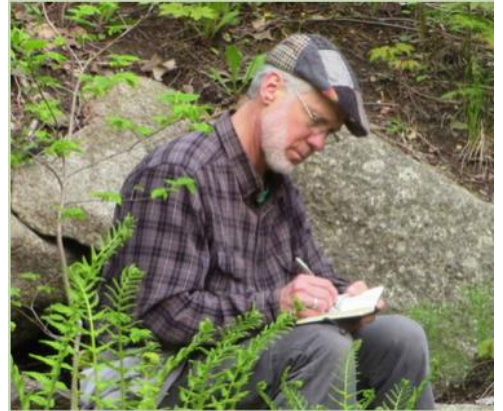
*“We have no existence apart from the earth. We are the earth.  
What we do to the earth, we do to ourselves.”*

*“The biosphere is **a greater Thou**, not a lesser it.”*

**Is there a person, or a Leader who has made a difference for you?**

(Here are some entries from the chat).

- CLIMATE CHAIN of people gathering along Dutch coastline this Sunday ... Hadi Joseph (Netherlands)
- Vandana Shiva with Navdanya seed keepers ... Qahira Kat Person



**Murshid says: ... “to the mystic, Nature is everything”.** (~28:45)

*No wonder that the mystics, sages, and prophets of all ages sought refuge in nature from all the disturbing influences of daily life.*

*They considered the caves of the mountains to be better than palaces; they enjoyed the shelter under a tree more than beautiful houses; they liked looking at the running water better than watching the passing crowds; they preferred the seashores to the great cities; they enjoyed watching the rising and the falling of the waves more than all the show that the world can produce; they loved to look at the moon, at the planets, at the stars in the sky more than at all the beautiful things made by [humans] man.*

**Vol XI – Philosophy, Psychology and Mysticism Part III-Chap VII Nature** [https://wahiduddin.net/mv2/XI/XI\\_III\\_7.htm](https://wahiduddin.net/mv2/XI/XI_III_7.htm)

### **Nature Meditations:**

Murshid dictated these phrases, in 1921, during extensive walks with his mureeds in the countryside around Wissous (veesu) - France. He called these meditations **“the cream of the Message”**. In each sentence the reader experiences the One Being, in whom “we live and move and have our being”.

*Nature does not teach the glory of God; it need not teach this, as nature itself is the glory of God.*

**Vol XI –Part III-Chap VII Nature** [https://wahiduddin.net/mv2/XI/XI\\_III\\_7.htm](https://wahiduddin.net/mv2/XI/XI_III_7.htm)

The [Nature Meditation](#) are accessible on the Ziraat website for everyone.

*My heart stands in waiting and hope (inhale)  
as the trees stand still through the darkness of night. (exhale)*



## B. Seeding a New Epoch (~32:35)

Pir Zia said: *it's important for us to sow seeds for the new epoch during this time.*

This sowing is clearly part of Ziraat's work. Bawa's words led me to ask, what constitutes an epoch? I found that epochs are defined in various ways. Here are several of particular relevance.

- **There are geological epochs.** Officially, according to geologists, the current epoch is the Holocene, which began 11,700 years ago. It followed the last glacial period and marked the time that humans spread out around the globe.

Some have proposed that we have already entered a new geological epoch called the Anthropocene, a period where human actions have come to define the global landscape. When we look at the effects of global warming, mining, industrial farming, nuclear weaponry, and the wide-scale pollution of the air, water, and land it is hard to disagree with this proposition.

- **Then there's cultural epochs** – such as the Ancient Indian, Ancient Persian, and Greco-Latin cultures and many others. Today we are witnessing how mass media and new technologies are influencing cultures around the world, perhaps moving us toward a global culture.
- **There are religious epochs** often corresponding with a prophet. The teachings and crucifixion of Jesus, or the revelations of Mohammed are examples of these.

Many believe that rather than relying on a prophet/savior to come again, to show us the way, we now are in a time where prophethood is a collective responsibility, making it up to us to creatively and wisely find our way forward.

- **Finally, there are epochs of consciousness.** Today a significant portion of humanity is immersed in a consciousness of materialism, where the spiritual underpinnings of matter are not recognized nor regarded. Yet, we also are witnessing many souls opening to the realization of the essential unity of all beings and all of life. This dichotomy of perspectives often earmarks the transition from one epoch to another.

All these epochs, and probably others, point to the immense changes that we are experiencing today.

### What does Murshid say about these changes?

I have selected portions of Murshid insights. You can read the full text in [Volume V2-VIIIa-3-12, Sufi Teachings](#), titled

#### **The Birth of the New Era.**

*That the new era will not be worse is plain enough, for when the worst has happened there cannot be anything beyond that. The worst condition ends the cycle, and the new cycle must necessarily begin better. If we look back with keen sight and with a true sense of justice, it is clear that as individuals, as communities, as nations, and as races, the world has been going from bad to worse in the way of selfishness.*

At this point Murshid expounds on the deterioration of society, which I have omitted. He goes on to describe the new epoch, what's to come – written 100 years ago (approximately).

*The races in the coming era will mix more and more every day, developing finally into a world-wide race. The nations will develop a democratic spirit, and will overthrow every element which embitters them against one another. There will be alliances of nations until there is a world alliance of nations, so that no nation may be oppressed by another, but all will work in harmony and freedom for common peace.*

*The followers of one religion will be able to pray by offering the prayers of another, until the essential truth will become the religion of the whole world and diversity of religions will be no more.*

*Education will culminate in the study of human life, and learning will develop on that basis. Trade will become more universal, and will be arranged on the basis of a common profit. Labor will stand side by side with capital on an equal footing.*

*Bigotry in faiths and beliefs will become obsolete. Women will become freer every day in all aspects of life, and married women will be called by their own names. Medicine will take away the need for surgery, and healing will take the place of medicine. The world will continue to improve in all aspects of life until all vain talk will cease, and when everywhere will be heard the cry, 'Peace, peace, peace!'*

Murshid offers us a hopeful vision of the future. We are already seeing some of what Murshid describes unfolding in the world, but we clearly have a very long way to go.

In the coming years there will likely be greater suffering than we have already witnessed, as is common when epochs end. To prevent falling victim to immobilizing despair, we will need to maintain a broad perspective that recognizes that in order for a new epoch to emerge, there has to be a dissolution of what has been.

### **We must keep hope alive for a brighter future. (~40:50)**

This is the test that humanity is facing today. So, let us ask ourselves:

#### **How do we assist? How do we seed this new epoch?**

Each of us will find our unique way to contribute, but I can say with confidence that if we strive to bring our highest ideals into our lives, into our consciousness, and into our thoughts, feelings and actions, we will be doing our part. If we stay true in following our inner guidance, we will find our way.

#### **Meditation:**

Let's turn within. Pay attention to your breath. Allow the rhythm of the inhalation and exhalation to massage and open your heart. Tune into your inner guidance. Let your soul find the peace that can be found in the Abode of your heart. In this calm, tune into your inner guidance .... and ask yourself:

**What ideals do you hold paramount?**

**How do you wish to express these ideals in your life?**

Make a silent vow to do your best to uphold this ideal, or offer a prayer asking for support in doing so. This is our work – these are the seeds which we must sow. It is our gift, it's our contribution – it doesn't mean it's easy.

*Group sharing*

### **Ziraat Lesson: Doing Your Own Work. ([Link to Lesson 5](#))**

*The spiritual force that is pouring out on the world today is quickening every kind of seed in the human heart. If the seeds are quickened, the harvest must be reaped. That is the law.*

*We cannot help until the field is again clear. What we can do is to sow fresh seeds and nourish them until they are quickened. But the reaping thereof will be for other hands.*

*There are Ploughers in the field and there are Reapers of the harvest. All are different, and one cannot do the work of the other. But all are working out the divine plan and all are necessary to the others.*

*To a little band of Sowers has been given a handful of living grain. Faithfully, it must be sown, surely, it will be reaped; and the harvest shall be for the sustenance of all who are hungering for the "Bread of Life"*

#### **Emerald Contemplation:**

My conscientious self:                      Strive to protect and restore the natural world.

#### **Lodge Closing and Prayer Khatum**

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**Homework:** Review [Initiation](#) material on the Ziraat website.