

A Six-Month Open Path Training
with Pir Elias Amidon

T H E O P E N P A T H

Recognizing Nondual Awareness

Himmelreich Retreat Center, Germany

Seminar I: April 26 – 29, 2018
Seminar II: October 18 — 21, 2018

The Open Path training is a non-sectarian approach to spiritual realization. Its purpose is to introduce you to the awake openness of our original nature, free from religious interpretations and obligations. With this unadorned recognition we experience release from our insecurities and judgments of others. As a result we are able to respond spontaneously to whatever comes up for us with equanimity, creativity, and with a kind heart.

“One of the most joyful moments in the life of the spiritual seeker is when seeking finally ends: when we recognize that the long sought-for goal of the spiritual quest is already present within us as our natural awareness. We recognize that what we seek, we are—this transparent, pure awareness at the center of our being is a clear window into oneness. With this recognition comes the realization that there is nothing more that needs to be done. Nothing needs to change. We don’t have to improve ourselves. Each one of us is already worthy of illumined awareness because it is our innate nature. This realization opens in us an indescribable sense of relief and freedom from self-judgment. We understand in these moments of realization that we are completely one with all of reality and have always been so, and that this natural state is utterly safe, free, kind, and radiant with a supernal beauty. We don’t have to do anything to make this be true. It does it all by itself.”

– from the book **The Open Path**

The Open Path Training

The Open Path training, held primarily in English, spans a period of six months. It consists of two four-day residential seminars — in the semester between seminars we connect with each other by telephone on a regular basis. This telephone work is a central aspect of the training. There are group conference calls with Elias every three weeks, and individual calls with Elias and other Open Path guides several times during the semester. In addition, each student has one or more partners in the class to work with by telephone on exercises and inquiry work.

The textbook for the course is *The Open Path — Recognizing Nondual Awareness*, available in both English and German editions. The essays and practices in the book focus our work together.

The Open Path training has been held frequently in the US, UK, Holland, Austria, and at Himmelreich in Germany over the past 11 years. The atmosphere at Himmelreich is especially supportive of the deep inquiry and openness required by this work.

In its essence, the training is an opportunity to reconnect with your original innocence and presence — an experience of what is often called *the natural state* or *pure awareness*. It is a process of natural enlightenment that belongs to everyone. Usually this experience begins with short glimpses of its lucid clarity. As these glimpses are pointed out, you learn to open to them again and again. The natural ease they reveal becomes increasingly familiar. This familiarity allows you to sustain and integrate the realization of the natural state in your daily life.

In the Open Path training we are committed to *direct experience* rather than studying *about* the recognition of the natural state. We acknowledge that the mind's tendency is to make up stories and interpretations about what is real, and that these interpretations give us a measure of security. We try to be gentle with ourselves here, neither blaming ourselves for objectifying our experience with concepts nor exerting tremendous effort in attempts to stop our habits of thinking and conceptualizing.

The key to our “work” in the Open Path is to allow ourselves to relax from the need to figure out what is true. This relaxation - often called *unknowing* - is not laziness or dreaminess. It is an openness to direct experience of the present moment in all its spontaneity and mystery.

While we do explore many exercises and practices, and share many “pointing out” conversations and written material, the heart of this Path is not didactic. Our explorations are primarily devoted to evoking each person's direct experience of the natural state – timeless awareness – without relying upon belief or cognitive understanding to convince ourselves of its presence.

How Much Time is Involved?

In addition to the two 4-day seminars, the Open Path training involves a minimum of 20 minutes each day in a contemplative practice over the six months of the course. You will also spend about one to two hours (or more as you wish) each week in reading and in exercises done independently or shared with other participants. In addition, you should be prepared to spend about two hours each month on the group and individual telephone calls. You may also wish to do readings from the bibliography outside of the course work. If you are not sure you can devote this amount of time to this work over the six months of the course, we recommend that you wait until your life schedule will allow it.

The Open Path: an Introduction

A Weekend Workshop in Munich

with Pir Elias Amidon

October 7-8, 2017

For information, visit:

www.spiritcircles.de

Who Is This Training For?

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

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

The Lineage of the Open Path

The Open Path is a contemporary and non-sectarian approach to the journey of awakening that is at the heart of all mystical traditions. The particular style of the Open Path emerges from the lineage of western universal Sufism expressed by the Sufi Way (www.sufiway.org).

This “style” is inclusive in its methods, non-dogmatic in its view, and dedicated to direct experience. The methods we make use of in the trainings are drawn from many sources: classical and modern Sufi practices, contemporary psychological methods for releasing mental and emotional fixations, Buddhist meditation practices, forms of inquiry from Zen, Advaita Vedanta, and Tibetan Dzogchen and Mahamudra traditions, and from the inspiration of many historic and contemporary Western nondual teachers.

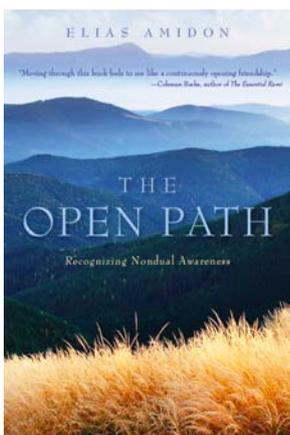
Elias Amidon



The Open Path Training is taught by Elias Amidon, the spiritual director (Pir) of the Sufi Way. Elias teaches and holds retreats on nondual spirituality and Sufism throughout Europe and the United States, and is known for his direct and experiential approach to spiritual realization. He has worked for many years in the field of peace and environmental activism in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, and with indigenous tribes on land-rights issues. He is the author of *The Open Path: Recognizing Nondual Awareness*, *Free Medicine: Meditations on Nondual Awakening*, and *Munajat: Forty Prayers*.

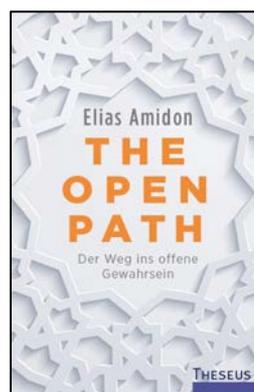
Himmelreich

The Open Path seminars will take place at Himmelreich Retreat Center near Lake Constance, Lindau, Germany. Himmelreich is a beautiful and gracious home for our seminars and is known for its sacred atmosphere. Lindau is easily reached by train (1½ hours from Zurich) or by plane (Zürich or Friedrichshafen - 1/2 hour drive from Friedrichshafen).



The Open Path
Recognizing Nondual Awareness
Pir Elias Amidon

Sentient Publications, 2011
Available on Amazon



The Open Path
Der Weg ins offene Gewahrsein
Pir Elias Amidon

Theseus, Kamphausen
Available in September, 2017

Fee for Six-Month Open Path Training

The fee for the 2018 Training is €1200. This fee includes: Two 4-day seminars • Open Path individual practices and shared exercises • A copy of the book *The Open Path* (in German or English) sent upon registration • Contemplative readings • Conference calls with Elias every three weeks • Individual calls with Elias and other Open Path guides during the semester • Weekly calls with a practice partner.

The fee for those who have previously taken the training is €850. (Note: students frequently choose to take the training twice (or more); repetition of the Open Path experience and material helps to deepen its realization.)

A deposit of €200 is required to secure your registration. The balance is due two months prior to the first seminar. You may also pay the balance in installments.

A scholarship fund has been established through the generous donations of past students; it is our hope no one will be prevented from attending Open Path programs for financial reasons. To apply for a partial scholarship, write to openpath@sufiway.org, describing your financial circumstances and the amount you feel able to pay. If you can contribute toward the scholarship fund we would be most grateful.

Costs for Room and Board at Himmelreich

The cost for room (double occupancy) and board at Himmelreich for each of the seminars is €330. There are a few single rooms available for a small extra charge. All room and board costs (per seminar) are paid directly to Himmelreich at the beginning of each seminar.

Registration

To register, go to: www.regonline.com/OpenPathTraining2018

Comments on *The Open Path* book:

"*The Open Path* is a powerful evocation of nondual awareness by a great teacher and friend to the world."

- **Roshi Joan Halifax**, founding abbot, Upaya Zen Center

"Among many mysteries explored here: spontaneous prayer, kindness, emptiness, starting from where you are, the freedom of the universe, awakening, is one that Elias barely mentions — friendship. Moving through this book feels to me like a continuously opening friendship."

- **Coleman Barks**, translator, *Rumi: The Big Red Book* and *The Essential Rumi*

"It is rare and wonderful when a man, who has been such a force for good in our world, opens to us his inward path. For those who would explore the teachings of nonduality, Elias Amidon will be gratefully recognized as a valuable resource and guide."

- **Joanna Macy**, author, *Active Hope*

"This is one of the clearest and most practical books I have ever read on the subtleties of recognizing nondual awareness. Elias's heartfelt clarity carries the signature of someone who has walked the journey himself and discovered there is no road."

- **Roger Housden**, author of *Sacred Journeys in a Modern World*, and the novella *Chasing Rumi*.

"Elias Amidon offers us a lucid and practical gift: how to open our hearts to awareness, to what is real. This is a loving and helpful offering that will unquestionably serve those who read it. It is truly a beautiful book."

- **Roshi Pat Enkyo O'Hara**, Abbot of the Village Zendo, Manhattan