

Pathfinding Debrief Summary 25th November 2018

Follow-up to the Pathfinding Presentation on 28th October 2018

Four weeks ago, as part of the Living Sufism 'Adventures in Being Here', I presented on Pathfinding, which some of you, perhaps many of you, listened to - or read the transcript which is posted on the Living Sufism website.

For those of you who have not, and to recap because time has passed, I shall give a brief summary of what I presented and the chilla I offered. This will give a context for our purpose today: which is for you to share something of your experience of undertaking the Pathfinding Chilla:

In my presentation I began with reflecting on the significant paths we may have taken in our life. I gave some examples of what may prompt us to question the path we are on: feeling it no longer fits, or a change in circumstances demanding a new direction, or a wish to deepen and take a fresh approach without necessarily embarking on a new path.

Pathfinding is about opening ourselves to make this shift or change, even if we do not know how it will turn out. That actually is the point; and I would say pathfinding begins when we respond to the call of the unknown and befriend the uncertainty that goes with it. The process may involve letting go some of the narratives we love dearly and use to define ourselves. Certainly it helps to loosen expectations as we move into the unknown. When we activate our pathfinder we harness intuition and creative imagination, we encounter the unexpected, and in the process we may be asked to dig deep into whatever qualities are needed – courage is one that comes to mind - to work through fear or resistance..

In my talk I shared stories to illustrate some journeys of pathfinding, and these involved intensity, relocation and upheaval. However, pathfinding isn't necessarily about undertaking an outward journey – although it can certainly help

to dislodge 'stuckness' or shake up our point of view. A new path can be as subtle as opening our awareness to shift our perception so we understand ourselves or where we are differently. Or it can involve making a seemingly simple connection with someone with a profound outcome. As Proust said: 'we do not need new landscapes, we need new eyes'.

I find it useful to think of Pathfinding having various stages, similar to the cycle of change, for those of you who are familiar with Damasio's model: the initial phase of contemplation, in which we begin to recognise change needs to occur or is calling us; the gestational phase where intuition and creative imagination become active, often enhanced by dreaming; and the implementation phase where we act on the possibilities which have presented themselves and in so doing, shape a new way.

I offered a chilla* to further your pathfinding. I am going to present it as I did before, and it is posted on the website for you to read:

Pathfinding Chilla

1. This is a pathfinding chilla designed to help you look at your life path today and think deeply how you want it to be.
2. In preparation, think about the path you are on and reflect whether you would like either to clarify this path or to find a new path for yourself. Notice if you are open to fresh possibilities.
3. As the next step in your chilla, choose and visit an art museum. Once inside allow yourself to wander intuitively rather than targeting certain exhibits or collections, especially if you are familiar with the museum. One of the artworks holds a secret for you about your way forward. You are to find this piece of art, which you will recognise because it compels you, grabs your attention, says: 'look at me'
4. Sit with the artwork for at least an hour or more, until it reveals to you the

- secret about your path. You may make notes about what comes up, but allow at least 30 minutes to silently and fully receive your vision.
5. After that, and as soon as possible, make a record of your experience. This can include writing, drawing, or whatever media allows you to express what you have experienced.
 6. Over the next three days begin to take steps in your life to follow the instructions embedded in what was revealed by the artwork.

I would now like to invite those of you who did the chilla to share something of your experience and what may have arisen since being with the artwork. To be clear: this is not the forum to debrief in detail individual chillas, hopefully that has already occurred with someone or has been arranged, but if not, you are still welcome to do so with one of the guides. Also, chillas are deeply personal experiences so I would like you to feel assured what you share here will be held respectfully in this protected space. However, we are being recorded so if you do not want what you share to remain on the recording, you can email sufiway@openpath.org and ask for your comments to be deleted. This must be done within the next 24 hours.

Some comments/ideas expressed by those sharing their experience of doing the chilla:

- The walk through the museum, and seeing various artworks, primed receptivity to the piece that was chosen
- Contemplating the artwork, sitting with it, opens up a deeper understanding
- The interweaving of paths, mazes and maps in pathfinding
- An artwork can prompt us to question how we view our past both personally and collectively
- The power of an image to convey narrative and invoke depth of feeling
- Appreciation of subtlety in reflection, which opens the senses

- As the observer we bring past into present, rendering it alive in the moment

The above does not adequately reflect the speakers, so I recommend listening to the recording if you have not already done so.

Listening to each person's sharing, and how meaningful the experience of the chilla had been for them, was really moving. A rich and intimate communal space was created and hopefully this momentum continues into the next chilla on Purification.

Thank you all for your participation as well as your thoughtful and inspiring contributions.