

with Pir Elias Amidon and Friends

OCTOBER 2020

*A retreat with online teachings and conversations,
online small group discussions, written materials and individual practices.*

Being mortal is a sacred privilege, but it's not easy. Along with the love, pleasure, and achievements of our lives comes loss, sickness, old age, and death. We know this, but we avoid turning our minds and hearts toward it.

In the last two or more decades of our lives, we begin to notice unmistakable signs of our aging and realize more acutely than ever that our time here is limited. This is a challenging period, but it comes with a precious gift—it offers us the opportunity to deepen our lives and come into greater wholeness and open-heartedness.

Of course, the journey of aging and dying brings with it an inevitable sadness—the sadness of losing our capabilities and attractiveness, and ultimately of leaving our loved ones and this extraordinary life—but it also brings us the chance to live more vividly than ever, to be more present and loving with each other, to care for and comfort each other, and to awaken spiritually to the awesome mystery of Being that we are part

of. This retreat is dedicated to nourishing this happening for each of us.

What is still needed for you to find grace in this part of your life? What would it be like for you to “die well”? What does this even mean?

During this retreat we will ask ourselves to acknowledge and accept the impermanence of our lives. We will explore the resistance and fear we may have to dying. We'll ask how we can know when it's wise to continue fighting an illness and the loss of our capacity, and what “acceptance” means.

We'll consider the importance of having “The Talk” with our loved ones and how to initiate it. We'll question the enigma of faith and doubt, how to be with the unknown, and how to prepare for our dying time. And through a number of practices and guided meditations we will open ourselves to the pure presence that is our basic nature, a skill that will serve us well in our last days and moments.

The Setting of the Retreat

Many of us are experiencing “Zoom fatigue” as we’ve had to turn to online platforms to stay connected during the global pandemic. Indeed, there are limits to learning and engaging with each other on a screen, especially with a subject as emotionally intense, embodied and personal as ours. Recognizing this, the work of the retreat will happen both online and offline, together and in solitude, and in large and small groups. The online sessions will be interspersed with guided meditations, inner practice, and silence.

We will meet online for two hours on Saturdays and Sundays over four weekends in October (see schedule below). Recordings of the sessions will be made available within a few hours in case you cannot attend the live event. These online sessions will be presented primarily on the Zoom Webinar platform, which is different from Zoom “Meeting” in that your video and audio will not be live. This helps provide a calm and focused atmosphere to our gathering. Pir Elias will be joined at various times by one or more “conversants”—senior teachers and friends of the Sufi Way—to add their perspectives and experience to our retreat.

Because everyone taking part in this retreat has a unique contribution to make to our mutual deepening, once a week there

will be a one-hour, small-group session held on the Zoom Meeting platform. This format gives the opportunity to discuss issues that are arising for us personally.

The retreat will also occur offline. In-between the first and last two weekends there will be an open weekend with no online sessions. During that open weekend (October 17-18) you will be asked to set aside time to engage in three contemplative exercises that can deepen your experiences.

Also offline, you will have the opportunity to engage in a daily practice of about 20 minutes a day during the month of October—several practices will be suggested which you can choose from, or you can carry on with your own practice if you have one. You will also receive contemplative readings during the month, suggested writing practices, and a bibliography of books that may be helpful.

All of this may seem like a lot to fit into your daily life during the month of October. At best you’ll be able to treat this as a month-long retreat focused on one of the most important times in your life. However, that may not be possible, and you’re welcome to find your own level of engagement with what is offered here—there are no tests! We ask only that you bring your sincere presence to the sessions you attend and to this momentous topic that we will explore together.

The Schedule

Saturday, Oct. 3: 2-hour online session

Sunday, Oct. 4: 2-hour online session

Mid-week: Small group meeting

Saturday, Oct. 10: 2-hour online session

Sunday, Oct. 11: 2-hour online session

Mid-week: Small group meeting

Saturday, Oct. 17: Offline exercises

Sunday, Oct. 18: Offline exercises

Mid-week: Small group meeting

Saturday, Oct. 24: 2-hour online session

Sunday, Oct. 25: 2-hour online session

Mid-week: Small group meeting

Saturday, Oct. 31: 2-hour online session

Sunday, Nov. 1: 2-hour online session

The weekend sessions will start at 9am Pacific, 10am Mountain, 11am Central, 12pm Eastern, 5pm UK, 6pm CET. Recordings of the sessions will be available in case you miss one.

The mid-week small group sessions will be divided into US and European participants so that each group can determine a time most suitable to their location. Recordings of these sessions will also be available to members of the individual groups.

Retreat Fee and Registration

The fee for the Being Mortal Retreat is €220 / £200 / \$250. No deposit is required when you register. Full payment is due by October 1, although if necessary, you can arrange to pay the fee in installments until the end of 2020 by contacting us at openpath@sufiway.org. If you have to cancel, please let us know as soon as possible since we will be arranging the small groups and we hope to have seven people in each group. If you cancel and have already paid the fee, you will be refunded the fee minus a €45 (£40; \$50) administration fee.

A scholarship fund has been established through the generous donations of past students; it is our hope that no one will be prevented from attending this retreat 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 to the scholarship fund, we would be most grateful.

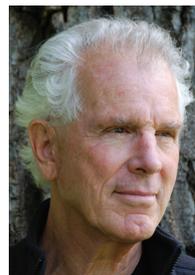
To Register:

There are three separate portals for registering: Euros, Pounds Sterling, and US Dollars.

For Euros, go to: <https://sufiway.regfox.com/being-mortal-eu>

For Pounds, go to: <https://sufiway.regfox.com/being-mortal-uk>

for Dollars, go to: <https://sufiway.regfox.com/being-mortal-us>



Pir Elias Amidon is the spiritual director (Pir) of the Sufi Way (www.sufiway.org), a contemporary and non-sectarian inner school in the lineage of Sufi Inayat Khan. Pir 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. For over 20 years Elias led vision quests with his wife, Elizabeth Roberts, in the deserts of Utah, Spain, and the forests of

northern Thailand—a rite-of-passage that embraces the mysteries of our mortality. He also 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*; *Munajat: Forty Prayers*; and the forthcoming *The Book of Flashes*. He is co-editor with Elizabeth of the three anthologies *Earth Prayers*, *Life Prayers*, and *Prayers for a Thousand Years*.