

The Joy of Dancing -- 11 Keys

Here are some keys which will help the dancing be more meaningful for you. To do even one or two of these will have a profound effect:

1. LISTEN

Do not simply recite the sacred phrase. Listen to the other voices. Listen to the person directing the dance. When you begin to listen, your voice will automatically harmonize. Find the center of the sound.

2. FEEL

The dances are designed to take us more and more into the universe of feeling. Stay with your feeling. If you go off into the world of thoughts, don't judge yourself; simply bring your concentration back to feeling. The heart center, found in the middle of the chest, is the natural place to begin.

3. CONCENTRATE ON THE SACRED PHRASE

The sacred phrase, sometimes referred to as Wazifa or Mantra, centers the dance. We all say this together. The Grace of Allah (God) can operate through the sacred phrase if we are willing to receive it, to let it be. With each repetition, feel the phrase touching your being in a deeper and deeper way.

The Dances of Universal Peace and the Walks of Divine Attributes use the Names of God and sacred phrases from the major religions of the world. We recommend that you enter the circle with open heart and mind, suspending judgments and prepare yourself for a direct experience.

These are sacred dances, but nothing is sacred simply by calling it so. A sense of sacredness comes from within. It is an attitude with which one may approach any activity.

4. DON'T BE AFRAID TO STOP THE DANCE

This is for dance leaders, if the dance gets out of control, or just isn't making it, it is much better to stop and begin anew. Learning is much more important than just doing.

5. SIMPLE RHYTHMIC MUSIC

This can be a great aid. Guitar and drum are especially helpful. Musicians should emphatically resist going off on their own. The sacred phrase must be uppermost in their concentration. The music should accentuate the natural rhythm of the sacred phrase. Drummers especially should bear this in mind. The simpler the better. Don't dominate the space. The sacred phrase should by far be the loudest sound. If you play your instrument correctly, no one will even notice you. Isn't that wonderful?

6. MOVE TOGETHER

Restrain the exuberant impulse to make an individual expression. You will be amazed how much higher/deeper the dances are when you use the same energy to harmonize with the others in the circle. Feel your body fully. Then gradually or suddenly become the whole circle.

7. WATCH YOUR BREATH

Breath is life. Breath is movement. Voice is breath. Let breath breathe. Return to awareness of breath in silence between dances. Notice the subtle changes in breath brought about by each dance.

8. ECSTASY

These dances can lead to states of ecstasy. Joyously invigorating! In dances where you are brought to the center of the circle, especially soar. But soar with your whole being. Taste all the planes at the same time. If your feet are grounded on the earth, then your head can be in the heavens.

9. DEVOTION

This is a grace. To willingly submit ourselves to The One in whom we live and move and have our being. How wonderful it is when we actually feel like bowing in humility before the Eternal Truth. These dances can be worship: the celebration of the Divine Presence. The Sufis call this Akhlak Allah -- acting as if in the divine Presence of Allah (God), and knowing that even if you don't see Allah, verily Allah sees you.

10. AMIN (ah-meen)

This means "so be it." We say this at the conclusion of many dances. (Other phrases such as the Sanskrit "Svaha" are also used.) The important thing is not to say it, but to mean it, to affirm with one's whole being.

11. SILENCE

There may be a silent meditation before the dance starts, but if the participants are not experienced in this, they may learn the meditation through dancing and also learn the dancing through meditation.

As the sound and music of the dance stop, enter the silence. This is your opportunity to hear what has been created. In this silence one can absorb the qualities evoked during the dance. This is the most important part of the dance. It becomes all-encompassing.

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