



... toward peace through the wisdom of
the middle eastern traditions

Dear Friends of Abwoon,

Greetings and blessings on the turning of the year!

While the year turns at different times in various traditions and cultures, winter in Scotland is the time when I reflect upon the year gone by and look ahead to what the next year may bring.

This year, I am very aware of various friends of this work who have passed in the last twelve months. I will miss them greatly. I am also grateful for the continued close companionships of my partner, friends and colleagues, as well as for the support of so many of you whom I have never met. Thank you all!



As I look towards next year, I am completing the major revision of my 1995 book *Desert Wisdom*, a project that has been supported by the Abwoon Resource Center, with assistance of a grant from the Kalliopeia Foundation. The project has proved more extensive than I anticipated, with many new translations, as well as rewriting most of the meditations and notes. I would find it easier in some ways to write an entirely new book than revise one that was begun nearly 20 years

ago. The whole process has caused me to reflect on the changes in the world, and my own life, since then.

In some ways, many things remain the same. The “problem” of the Middle East — in politics, religion, psychology (and book publishing) has not vanished, nor does it promise to do so anytime soon. When the book was first published, most bookstores didn’t even have a section for “native Middle Eastern spirituality,” so ended up placing it on the floor near “religion.” At the same time, I believe that the arguments for the ecological approach of *Desert Wisdom* remain as strong today as they were fifteen years ago.

I’m grateful that this book has been used to help inspire many peace-making projects over the years, more than I even know about. One example: when I took a group to Israel-Palestine in 2001, a young Jewish man emailed asking to meet me. He said he had been inspired by reading *Desert Wisdom* and was beginning an interspiritual peace movement in Israel, along the lines I suggested, one that would bring together spiritual practitioners of all faiths to use actual spiritual practice and other processes to prepare the ground for reconciliation. As those of you who have read the book know, it contains a version of the ‘peace plan’ of Murshid Samuel Lewis for the region. That young man was Eliyahu McLean, and the group he helped begin is now called “Jerusalem Peacemakers.” It is one of the most active forces for peace and reconciliation, person-to-person, in the region.

In 2003, my Scottish colleague Neill Walker and I invited Eliyahu and Ibrahim Abuelhawa to Edinburgh to give a talk and workshop on the eve of the start of the Iraq war. They described their work to an audience who were amazed by what they shared, for instance, meetings between rabbis from the Jewish settlements and sheikhs from Hamas to find common spiritual ground for peace. None of the major news media had reported anything like this. Neill and I then decided to begin an annual event in Edinburgh to provide a forum for alternative news and views, about the Middle East as well as about other issues reflecting what I call the “Middle East” within. That event, the **Edinburgh International Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace** (www.mesp.org.uk), is now in its eighth year. We began with no funding, and have in the past received support from the Scottish and Edinburgh governments, as well as various UK and international foundations. We continue with a very small, volunteer management staff that also includes Fateah Saunders.

Continued on page 2.

A New Edition of Desert Wisdom To Be Released April 15!

A Guide to Life’s 13 Biggest Questions for the Modern Nomad...

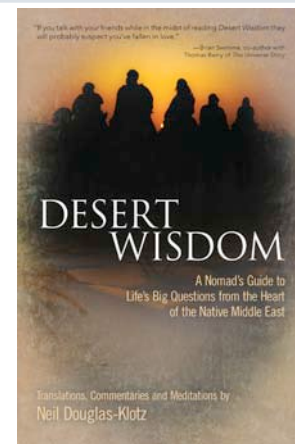
Part oracle, part meditation book, and part Aladdin’s cave of Middle Eastern myth and sacred story, *Desert Wisdom* offers a fresh way to hear the ancient visionary voices of the Middle East that generated three (or more) of the world’s great religions.

Renowned Sufi scholar and teacher Neil Douglas-Klotz, author of *The Sufi Book of Life* and *Prayers of the Cosmos*, has revised his acclaimed 1995 classic for the 21st century. Praised by scientists, poets and mystics alike for its ecological approach to “hearing” the native wisdom of the Middle East on its own terms, *Desert Wisdom* takes us on a journey from ancient Egypt throughout the Middle East to Sufi poets like Rumi and Hafiz. In between, we spend time hearing Genesis the way a storyteller might have told it and sit at the feet of the Aramaic-speaking prophet, Yeshua of Nazareth.

Through it all, *Desert Wisdom* presents us ancient wisdom about life’s biggest questions like: Why am I here? Who am I? And how do I love?

“If you talk with your friends while in the midst of reading *Desert Wisdom* they will probably suspect you’ve fallen in love.”

—Brian Swimme, co-author with Thomas Berry of *The Universe Story*



Paperback; published by
Create Space; \$18.95.
Pre-order by April 15 from
www.abwoon.com for \$13.95.

Letter from Neil Douglas-Klotz continued from page 1.

These stories give me heart. They show that a) one or two people can do much and b) at the same time, it is rarely acknowledged and even more rarely reported.

Many of you have written to Abwoon Resource Center in Columbus, Ohio, describing the ways in which this work has changed your life, as well as the ways you have shared it in your communities. We value this more than you can imagine!

Looking toward 2011, after I finish the new *Desert Wisdom*, Natalia and I will be going to **South Africa**. I have been invited to lecture on the Aramaic Jesus there as the guest of the Academy of Self Knowledge (www.askonline.co.za) at their annual conference. This Sufi group has found helpful both the Aramaic Jesus work as well as my translations of the “99 Beautiful Names” in *The Sufi Book of Life*. That book has also now been translated into Turkish, which has led to a workshop invitation to Istanbul for spring 2012.

Shortly after this, in May, I will begin two new **Abwoon Inter-spiritual Leadership** groups, one in the USA and the other in Germany. These groups aim to help those deeply inspired by the work apply it to their own spiritual practice and begin to share it with others. The past groups have included ministers, religious sisters, teachers, therapists, and retreat guides, as well as people who simply have the passion to want to go deeper. Information about the leadership groups, as well as the rest of my 2011 schedule can, as usual, be found at www.abwoon.com. While the German group has a waiting list, there are a few more places available in the USA one.

As an outgrowth of the Edinburgh Middle East Festival, we are also sponsoring another **World Sufi Symposium** in early October, in conjunction with the International Association of Sufism (www.ias.org). For those inclined to visit Edinburgh at a beautiful time of the year, when the summer wave of visitors has subsided a bit, we invite you to join us!

In November, I am grateful to again share a retreat with my longtime colleague and friend, and co-founder of Dances of Universal Peace International, **Murshida Tasnim Fernandez**. We'll be conducting a retreat in Prescott, Arizona, USA on “Returning to the Heart of the Dances.”

Finally, many thanks to Munira Elizabeth Reed, Amy Alwood and all the volunteers who help Abwoon Resource Center continue. Much of the work I described above — citizen diplomacy, the Edinburgh Festivals, my visit to South Africa, correspondence supporting students, colleagues and various peacemakers using the work — happens on a volunteer basis, and probably always will. The most important efforts usually happen on a “giveaway” basis. With my travel and workshops I hope to ignite and empower others in their own efforts. Abwoon Resource Center shares the results of my writing and teaching on an even more extensive basis than I alone can manage. So we value any contribution you can make!

While there is always more work than any one person, or group of people, can do, we encourage everyone inspired by this work to share a breath of peace and wisdom wherever you go. Don't wait for someone else to organize or ignite it. Each of us can fulfill the purpose of being human in our own way. There is plenty of work for all.

Love and blessings to you all,

Neil Douglas-Klotz

Thinking About ‘Upgrading’ to Desert Wisdom 2?

What's new in the second edition of *Desert Wisdom*:

- Seven new translations from the Aramaic words of Jesus
- Ten new translations from the Hebrew (Genesis, Zohar and Dead Sea Scrolls)
- Three new translations from the Qur'an
- Reorganized for better use as an oracle in a similar format to *The Sufi Book of Life*
- Meditations rewritten and keyed to “Life's Big Questions”
- All notes and commentary revised and updated
- New “Quick Start Guide” and Preface
- Complete indexes to meditations and textual strands, plus a new general index
- Translations from the first edition revised and updated with improved transliteration of original texts

Keeping in Touch with You!

The Abwoon Resource Center communicates primarily through the Internet with news announcement through Constant Contact. This is a secure server and allows you to opt in or out as you wish. Please share your Constant Contact announcements with friends who might be interested in this work so they can opt in if they choose.

To receive our ongoing communications, please send an e-mail message to resourcecenter@abwoon.com.

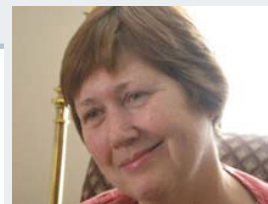
Prefer Postal Mail to Email?

To receive a copy of our annual newsletter by postal mail please send your name and postal address to:

Abwoon Resource Center
881 High Street, Suite 206
Worthington, OH 43085

You can also leave a message on the ARC voicemail at: 614-429-4009.

Mary Qahira Richardson
answers all phone messages
at ARC



Desert Flowers E-mail Study Group

Desert Flowers is a community of people around the world using the readings, body prayers, meditations and insights offered by Dr. Neil Douglas-Klotz. It is open to all and there is no charge to join this online group.

We deepen our connection to the One by sharing our experiences by e-mail during fixed check-in times, “meeting” quarterly for two-three weeks. To join or for information, visit www.abwoon.com or contact Richard McMurtry at rmcmurtry@baymoon.com.

Online Meditation Courses

Rev. Elizabeth Munira Reed has written two online meditation courses:

- *Breathing with the Divine Breath: Deep Inner Healing in "The Beatitude Way"* This course has 12 sessions.
- *A Healing Journey with the Aramaic Lord's Prayer: Reclaiming the Mysticism of Jesus through His Native Language.* This is a 20-session course co-authored with Neil Douglas-Klotz.

Both courses have sessions based on the books and recordings of Neil Douglas-Klotz and are offered through SelfHealingExpressions.com. You can receive lessons by e-mail twice a week, once a week or every other week.

Please use the link at www.abwoon.com to go to www.selfhealingexpressions.com for information and registration. Abwoon receives a donation whenever the link from our site is used.

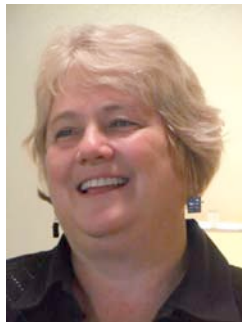
The Abwoon Circles and the Abwoon Resource Center

The work at Abwoon Resource Center supports a network of spiritual activists — ministers, teachers, meditators, retreat directors, therapists and healers — who are creating interspiritual communities around the world. Under many different names, these "Abwoon Interspiritual Communities" are actively working towards similar goals including:

- Realizing and spreading the global consciousness of unity;
- Bridging understanding between the traditions of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar through shared story, meditation and interspiritual ritual;
- Building communities of peace through the celebration of sacred diversity;
- Sharing the vision of purpose, creativity and empowerment that prophet Yeshua calls *malkuta*, which is known in Hebrew as *malkuth* and in Arabic as *al-Malik*.

This work during 2010 (both ongoing and special projects) included:

- **Bookstore operations:** provided an efficient and responsive on-line bookstore through the Abwoon website; sales were up almost 10% over last year, indicating a greater interest in this body of work.
- **Communications:** New formatting at the website was accomplished to make the site more user-friendly; also periodic electronic news announcements are sent throughout each year through Constant Contact. For 2011 and beyond the printed newsletter (available at events, with bookstore orders, and by request through postal mail) will now be produced in house.
- **Workshops and Events:** produced the annual spring event in Columbus, OH. Staffed book/resource tables in Madison, WI and Mendocino, CA. Volunteers staffed book displays in southern CA and in North Carolina at events.
- **Abwoon Interspiritual Leadership Program:** provided administrative support to the 2 USA AILP groups and currently finalizing work towards a new group beginning spring 2011.



Rev. Elizabeth A. Reed, Ph.D.
(Munira) Managing Director for
Abwoon Resource Center, a project
of the Shalem Center.

- **Southern Libraries Resources:** continued to place resources in libraries in southern states made possible through an individual donor. (Also provided free resources as able to prison ministries.)
- **Networking:** responds to inquiries (from the website, postal mail, and phone calls) for information on resources, local contacts, workshops, and groups on the Abwoon work; responding to those seeking support and permissions for using inspiration from this work in other creative projects.
- **New Resource Development:** continued to work with Neil Douglas-Klotz to produce more resources for supporting individuals and groups who are "building communities of peace." During 2010 two more of the Guitar and Drum Demonstration DVDs were produced. These two resources will help those who are working to lead Dances of Universal Peace dance cycles and/or body prayers on the Beatitudes.
- **Video Recording and Arcival Project:** through the generosity of donors, we have state-of-the-art recording equipment and are now able to provide workshop recordings to Neil Douglas-Klotz' live teachings in the USA. The recordings of events and trainings with Neil Douglas-Klotz in the USA are downloaded to storage drives and archived at the Abwoon Resource Center. These may be used in the future for some other educational resource.
- **Funding:** Wrote grants to secure funding for new programs as well as ongoing operations; the Abwoon Angels group met regularly (in face to face meeting and by conference calls) to look at long-range funding as well as the short range funding for projects and programs.



Amy Alwood
Bookstore Manager and
Administrative Assistant

The Abwoon Resource Center part-time staff includes the **Rev. Elizabeth Munira Reed, Director**, and **Amy Alwood, Bookstore Manager/Administrative Assistant**. They are happy to receive your questions, concerns, and feedback and are committed to the larger vision of Unity that this work serves.

News from AILP

There is an exciting movement taking place with the translation and spiritual practice work of Neil Douglas-Klotz. The first Abwoon Interspiritual Leadership Program (AILP) group completed its three and a half year series of modules in spring 2010 and approximately 35 people were “graduated” to continue their local work in interspiritual leadership. The U.K. AILP Group completed its series in the fall (see photo) and another group of interspiritual leaders crossed the threshold of “graduation.”

We look forward to the second USA-based group completing its series in the spring of 2011.

Two new groups are now forming in the spring of 2011: one in the USA and one in Germany. Prior reading and an application form are required. The program consists of two modules held each year; one held in spring and another in fall. Each module focuses on a particular aspect of the Abwoon Circles work and offers leadership training in body prayer, contemplation, chant, voice, walking meditation and the Dances of Universal Peace connected with that aspect, as well as deepening for those who want to establish a personal spiritual practice.

Visit www.abwoon.com for the full description of the AILP program. Individual modules are open to a limited number of participants who are not enrolled in the entire program. However no one can participate in Modules 6 or 7 without being a part of the full/ongoing training group.

For information, please contact:

- The Rev. Elizabeth Reed, at Shalem Center at 1-614-441-9773 or munira@abwoon.com for information about modules offered in the US.
- Qadima Sabine Brandt at Sabine-Brandt@freenet.de for modules offered in Europe.



UK AILP Group Nov. 2010

Local Abwoon Circles

Interested in more in depth work with Abwoon materials? Begin a local group!
Nothing required. Simply begin.

For help, consider purchasing *Abwoon Circles: Starting a Local Group* for models and suggestions for group sessions. Also look for local volunteer connectors listed at www.abwoon.com.



Donate to the Work of the Abwoon Resource Center

The generosity of individuals and foundations continues to maintain the work of the Abwoon Resource Center. We are grateful for all donations of whatever size given to ARC for its programs and outreach. Without your support we would not exist! We now have a group of “Abwoon Angels” (Ellen Bush, Maryn Boess, Lucy Oliver, and Pat Lloyd) who are engaged in long-range planning for fundraising for administration and project support. We continue to recognize the Kalliopeia Foundation for its generosity that supports the ongoing work of Abwoon.

Donations are fully tax deductible as Abwoon Resource Center is a program of Shalem Center, a 501(c)(3) organization. Donations can be made by check, credit card, PayPal, or on-line bill pay. Call Rev. Elizabeth Munira Reed at 614-441-9773 for information.

To contribute to the work of ARC:

- Credit card payment through PayPal. Use the “Donate” page at www.abwoon.com or donations@abwoon.com.
- Donor-initiated automatic monthly contributions through your online bank bill-pay
- Check payable to Shalem Center and marked “for Abwoon” sent to:

The Shalem Center
881 High Street, Suite 206
Worthington, OH 43085

If you require a receipt for your donation, please let us know.

Abwoon Mailing List

Please send any updates or changes to your contact information in an e-mail message to resourcecenter@abwoon.com. Subhana Elizabeth Ferrio maintains the database for Abwoon and regularly updates the postal mail and e-mail address changes that we receive. To contact Subhana directly concerning your information, send a message to subhana@abwoon.com.

Note: You may opt out of the Constant Contact e-newsletter through a link in any of our e-mail news announcements.