

The Relationship Between Buddhism and the Dances

The following interview is one from a series of teleconferences that took place to share ideas and connect with Dance Circle leaders, musicians, and dancers from around the North America region. This discussion, recorded on June 26, 2012, was between Darvesha Victoria McDonald, a sheikha and guide in the Sufi Ruhaniat International and Shivadam Adam Burke, musician, Dance Leader and DUPNA board member.

To start the conversation, Shivadam welcomed everyone and recited the invocation together with Darvesha. After that, Darvesha added her favorite Buddhist refuge prayer as a dedication of intention as follows:

I take refuge in the Buddha, unfathomable mind, all pervasive, manifesting at this moment as the magical dance of appearance and emptiness.

I take refuge in the Dharma, incomparable expression of the profound path, which I enter now at this moment.

I take refuge in the Sangha, the community, the vessel of the Dharma of which I am at this moment a part.

Through my practices and positive actions of body, speech, and mind may I participate in the cause of awakening of all sentient beings.

Svaha

Shivadam welcomed Darvesha and introduced her as follows: Darvesha Victoria McDonald is a sheikha and guide for the Sufi Ruhaniat International, a Ziraat experienced farmer for the Ruhaniat, and a Buddhist practitioner. What Darvesha teaches is based on her understanding and experience of interdependence, arising originally in her Buddhist practice. Her teaching encompasses themes of sustainability, deep ecology, simplicity, sensory awareness, movement awareness, mindful eating, and feminine

spirituality. She draws on practices from all three branches of Buddhism and from the Inayati lineage of Pir-o- Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan.

Darvesha is a senior mentor of the Dances of Universal Peace. She has served as chair of the Guidance Council since June 2007, and as president of the current DUP International Board of Directors since January 2008. Darvesha has spearheaded revision of the Leaders Guild Guideline completed in 2010. She was a member of the original DUP International board, known then as PeaceWorks, at the time of its inception in 1987.

She's traveled extensively worldwide leading the dances. Her major focus for the last twenty years has been seeding the Dances in South America and encouraging local leadership and mentorship. She is cofounder of Wilderness Dance Camp. Her areas of special interest in leading are the Aramaic work of her Sufi Guide, Sadi Neil Douglas Klotz, and Dances of the Divine Feminine, and Zikr.

To learn more about Darvesha and her teaching schedule or to view videos, see her website at www.darvesha.net.

“Walking into a Dance was like walking into a swirling Zendo.”

Shivadam: In the previous interview with Pir Shabda, he helped to clarify the relationship between Sufism and the Dances of Universal Peace. Because Buddhist practices are central to your life, your leadership and teaching, we're grateful that you'll help us understand the relationship, some of the common ground, between Buddhism and the Dances. Will you speak to us about when you discovered Buddhism, and the Buddhist traditions and practices that inform your life now, for those who want to learn more?

Darvesha: I can't remember how long ago it was. It was a long time ago that I went to the Himalayas to trek, and the sherpas were Tibetan Buddhists, and the places we walked to were all inhabited by Tibetan Buddhists, and the places we went into were Tibetan Monasteries.

Mostly through the transmission of the people, the practitioners that I met on the trail, I began to soak it up. Noticing, for instance, that the sherpas wore one set of clothing in the morning when we got up – the ice was frozen in our water bottles. In the middle of the day we were close to the sun at 18,000 ft. and they were in the same polyester pants. So they just waited for things to change. I must have had fourteen changes of clothes by the end of the day. And if I would ask how far something was, they would answer, “You get there when you get there.” So little things like that became the tip-off for me that there was something here. And then dramatic things like going into the monasteries, the gompas, and seeing these tantric paintings that were mesmerizing....hypnotizing.

Then I went on to do, what has become famous, the Kopan November Course, for a month in Kopan Monastery. On that trip I stayed in Asia for a year studying and doing practices. Eventually I went down to the plains and began to study Vipassana, realizing I really wanted first to learn how to meditate before I returned to the Tibetan practices, which are so elaborate with mantra and visualization. I basically never returned to that. I just started to do long Vipassana retreats. I did quite a bit of practice for a number of years before I stumbled into a Dance circle.

To make the jump from my own history to the topic today, I just want to say that walking into a Dance was like walking into a swirling Zendo for me. It was just another place to practice. My practice had become one of self-witnessing, self-awareness, and so by going into a place where there's not an emphasis on discursive thought or conceptual thought, there's an emphasis on what's arising directly, direct experience. Well, that's the invitation in the Dances; there's no talking so it poses right into the perfect practice setting, as far as I'm concerned. The only difference being that long Vipassana retreats I had done, although there is the dance of interaction with people in silence without touching or eye-gazing. So this was the same practice basically, but with the addition of a more direct relationship with others.

Shivadam: And with music and sacred phrases, rather than silence.

Darvesha: Yes. I'd say that for me the essence of Buddhism is what is called

Paticcasamuppada, which translates as co-dependence or co-arising, meaning nothing exists separately unto itself. Nothing is self-inherently existent; it exists only in co-dependence with all other causes, conditions, and component parts. One constellation comes together and arises and then it disperses. It also informs the next constellation. So to me, the Dance Circle is the living manifestation of the teachings of Paticcasamuppada. We're right in there where we see there's not a circle without each hand holding, there's no teacher without a dancer, there's no music without everybody's voice and all the instruments. There's this co-created, co-arising constellation that is always moving and always changing, with everything contingent on everything else. So it's a swirling Zendo for me, the Dance Circle.

“The practice of mindfulness is to be applied across the board in everything we do.”

Shivadam: It seems that in the past five to ten years, maybe more, there has been a new hybrid between what would be the Vipassana practice and the Dances of Universal Peace - what we're calling Sufi Sesshins, or retreats where we will dance and then sit, and dance, and sit. And I know that you've led some of those retreats. Can you talk a little bit about the sesshin?

Darvesha: I think that it had become clear in our Sufi lineage that we were strong on music and action and dance but weak on interiority, so the encouragement now to bring more attention to interiority is how this has developed. And it is clearly a wonderful combination. Vipassana and long retreats always alternate between some kind of movement and sitting practice. I just want to emphasize that in Vipassana, or self-awareness, self-witnessing, it's done sitting because that's the easiest way to develop a deep absorption, a deep state, but the practice of mindfulness is to be applied across the board in everything we do, including walking, and eating as it is in Zen and Vipassana retreats. We're adding, as I already said, when we get to the Dances, the music, the singing, the activation of our own voices and the touching, and the contact with each other through the eyes. The practice of self-witnessing that's actually arising in the body/mind inwardly - in the interior - that, as far as I'm concerned, should go on. That's the practice that I do when I'm Dancing or leading dances, or rather that I aspire to do. It would

be crazy to say that I do it, but I aspire to be doing it in everything I do.

Shivadam: In this way there is no discontinuity between your Buddhist practice and the Dances of Universal Peace. You're practicing Vipassana all the time. When you move and sing and lead others in the DUP, your practicing continues through that.

Darvesha: Right. I think that originally in any tradition we may start with a formal practice in order to cultivate power of concentration and possibly some kind of realization. What we're pointing to is not to compartmentalize our lives in any way, but to be living and breathing our practice. Just as in more primitive cultures you'll see less compartmentalization between say, work and play, and people are more relaxed as they work and less frantic to finish and go home. I don't think compartmentalization is a good thing in our lives, and certainly not for our spiritual development.

Shivadam: As a Dance leader I know that I want to bring as much awareness as I can to what I'm doing while I'm leading a Dance. I'm having to pay some attention to a broad scope of elements, such as my voice's melody, volume and tone and my guitar's volume, rhythm, chords, and tuning, and the way I'm moving and continuing to model the movements as the Dance progresses; all the while observing and feeling into the needs and dynamics of the group and endeavoring to follow the Dance's direction and let the Dance lead me rather than forcing it to do what I want it to do. It's a lot to be aware of all at once! Do you see this as a form of mindfulness practice, the process of leading the Dances of Universal Peace?

Darvesha: Absolutely. I actually think that's one reason I chose to go into that leadership role because it ups the ante, so to speak. You're doing your practice in action, and you know immediately in public if you slip up, if you've repeated that one phrase three times when it was supposed to be four, because you got lost in thought even for a minute. You know immediately when you've gotten lost and when you've had a thought, because there's this wonderful public feedback system going. I danced for years without ever thinking about leading and I think that's one of the reasons I chose to go into leading. It does up the ante for your practice.

Shivadam: There's a question I would like to ask you. From time to time I sense that a greater depth of awareness is available or possible for me, and then the other side of that is my habitual personality and tendencies. And so, as I'm preparing to lead an evening of Dances, I may have a routine of practice that I go through and I may have particular ideas about Dances I want to lead. Some of those things are, I would say, connected to habitual personality patterns. What I'm hoping to do as a Dance Leader is to lead authentically, from the deepest place. For a Dance leader who is moving in that direction – I'm sure we all are - are there any specific recommendations or practices that you would give that may come from the Buddhist tradition, aside from the process of Dance leading itself, something that can enhance our personal awareness and deepen us as leaders?

Darvesha: I thought your question was going to go - How to access that depth on the spot when you're leading. I'm prepared to say that if you're dwelling in this awareness, the presence is spontaneous, the skillful actions, the right action, arises from that presence rather than from that habituated personality. I think it is, in fact, just how present you are in each moment, and if you are in presence, spontaneous and right actions arise without separate endeavor.

My bias is for Vipassana; that is the practice that I have settled on. Self-witnessing would be another way to call it, mindfulness or just being present. I think that the most basic thing that people will have to understand, and I don't think often do, is learning how to distinguish between their thoughts and the actual direct experience they are having, which arises in the senses, the direct experience appearing in sound and moving that are so wonderful in the Dances.

But then, when we make something of it, or describe it, or remember it, or start planning the next movement - we're in thought all of a sudden again. For a dancer – not for a leader - there is a real invitation there not to go into discursive conceptual thoughts. That's why when a meditator, whether they're dancing or sitting, has a concentration where there is not interruption of discursive thought, they immediately do go into a deeper state, as an absorption. The byproduct of absorption is always peace. That's why

everybody's enjoying themselves so much, not only because they're moving and singing and feeling their energy in their blood, but because they're in a concentrated state, and concentration always brings peace; they are not thinking. So the Dance leader has to bring more thought into what they're doing, of course, but the less they do that and the more they can just stay present to this moment, and to go back to the first thing I said, this co-arising, this constellation is the information, it's the contingency for the next one. Everything just simply flows out of the last moment, one moment conditions the other.

That's what is meant by karma: It's not necessarily, or even at all, about if you were the Queen of Egypt, Cleopatra or not, (laugh). It's about what you're doing in this moment informs the next moment. If I am full of goodness in this moment, chances are I'll have happiness in the next moment. So, not to worry about what's coming, just to stay present and open-hearted and open-minded to all that's arising in this moment, and what arises in the next moment will be good, will be skillful.

Shivadham: I think that answers my question, because I know that that happens in leading Dance. I will have come into the room with a list of Dances to lead, but what arises in a particular Dance leads to a Dance that I hadn't planned to lead for the next Dance. Something about the dynamic of the circle, maybe I sense that the circle wants to deepen, and I might have had a more lively Dance planned for the next slot, but I follow what arose in the previous Dance and select something different to move into.

Darvesha: That's exactly it. That's the co-dependent arisings. When you're planning it, you don't have the Dance circle, you don't have the sound, you don't have the moment, you don't have the room. All the different causes and conditions are not there in your mind when you're thinking about it ahead of time. And so, suddenly you're in the present moment with all the factors and this wonderful constellation that is arising - all to be reckoned with, all to be incorporated, all to be part of what's creating the moment.

Shivadham: Beautiful. You and I share an appreciation of Joseph Campbell. Recently, I was listening to a video recording of one of his lectures, and he

says, “The whole thing of Buddha consciousness means getting to know, ‘You are IT!’ That takes a lot of work, principally because society keeps telling you that you are not IT’.” It seems like that’s what the Dances are all about, helping us get past all the societal influences and habitual patterns that keep us separate, that keep us unaware of the interconnectedness, or interdependence.

Darvesha: Right. I was a little thrown by his use of the word “it,” because I’m not sure what he means by that. We definitely are not the center of the constellation. Our sense of self expands to include the whole constellation, or the whole universe, but nor are we outside of it. For instance, David Abram says this experiment of treating the world as if it were an object of which we are not a part hasn’t work so well. It’s not that we are not in the constellation, but we are not in the center of it, but however, what we are aware of is the center of our reality for sure. I’m not sure what he means when he says, “We are it.”

Shivadam: My sense is he maybe referring to...that all beings are essentially enlightened, and the Buddha is the one who is aware of that. So by “it,” he may be referring to the condition of Buddha consciousness.

Darvesha: Yeah, I'm not sure.

Recently I was listening to the historian Michael Wood, who has a wonderful video series called “The Story of India” where he talks about the period in India’s history when Buddhism died out for a time because it was not well received among Hindus, being an essentially atheistic path.

Darvesha: Right, and Shankaracharya brought some of that back in. Exactly, they had to punt there. There are so many lineages and flavors of Buddhism, and definitely some have retained the essential thing that the Buddha taught, which is this co-dependant origination. It never claimed to be anything but a promise, a remedy to relieve unsatisfactoriness. It wouldn’t be called a religion; it’s a beautiful technology of happiness. The wide spectrum in Dzogchen, they talk about Radiant Mind, or Buddha Mind, as if you could hardly tell that they weren’t talking about God - radiant light, mind, self-

effulgence... As in all the other religions, there's a wide place where anybody can hook in. People who want that kind of a sense of a deity can find it, and those who like this clean kind of technology of how to alleviate suffering, they can go down that road.

Shivadam: Right, and that's so much like our Sufi path.

Darvesha: Yes. There's something for everybody.

Shivadam: Yes. As Pir Shabda says, "Sufis have no need for form, nor do they have any objections to form." And the same can be said for Buddhism, the scope of its many manifestations.

Darvesha: As you mention Shabda, our Pir, I'd also like to emphasize that he has a very deep and long practice of Buddhism, very close to his Buddhist teacher. Wali Ali has continued the Dharma night that Sam Lewis started. Sam Lewis, of course, was a student of Nyogen Senzaki, and said he would have taught Buddhism, but there were already too many Buddhist teachers, so he decided to teach Sufism. So I just want to point out that the connection to Buddhism is very strong in our SRI lineage founded by Sam Lewis.

"That is my emphasis in anything I teach - that we're here to give to the whole and if we give to the whole, we will flourish, as a byproduct without separate endeavor."

Shivadam: At this point I'd like to introduce some questions that have come up, that have been sent in, and to read some of those for you. The first one - *"Is there a way to incorporate any Ziraat practices in the Dance experience?"*

Darvesha: I can only say for myself personally, this interdependence, which is called emptiness, but is much easier to understand by using the word interdependence. When I found that, it was such good news for me. It's so similar to what the Native People call interconnectedness. Our Ziraat is another topic - a strict, straight sense of Ziraat is so close to our Sufi practices. My Ziraat, I've expanded to really emphasize the relationship we

have to the rest of our constellation, that which is supporting us - the Earth, the Universe. For me, Ziraat is the teaching of interdependence, alongside of the more straight Sufi practices that are embedded in what Hazrat Inayat Khan gave us.

Some of us have really expanded our understanding of Ziraat. Hazrat Inayat Khan didn't finish that one; that was the ray that he started working on, but never really completed. I like to think it's because that is so essential right now, and that he left that open to us who are living in these times to be able to expand it to emphasize the importance of each practitioner, each dancer, each leader, to really understand interdependence so that they can work on behalf of the Earth, the Universe, the Water - the root, it's called in the Vedic tradition - and that means that you don't water the leaves, you water the root, you water the whole. That is my emphasis in anything I teach - that we're here to give to the whole and if we give to the whole, we will flourish, as a byproduct without separate endeavor. But if we're busy trying to just take care of ourselves, we will not flourish.

Shivadam: The Dances encourage that kind of awareness because we're operating in a circle with other beings.

Darvesha: Yes. The Dance is the manifestation of this concept. It's an embodiment of this concept, of what we're talking about.

As it was handed down to us, Ziraat is simply a purification of the heart. It's simply another way of talking about polishing our hearts, wiping the rust from our hearts. Metaphors are from the imagery of farming, but it's simply an interior cultivation. The word alchemy comes from the Arabic word *Alkim*, which means fertile earth. Ziraat is a metaphor to make ourselves fertile for the benefit of the world by cleaning the rust from our heart, by using imageries of tilling the soil, taking out the rocks, taking out the clots of earth, then planting the beautiful seeds, good seeds, then sustaining them, caring for them, and then flowering for the benefit of all. The practices are Sufi practices of purification.

Shivadam: Some of the Dances that we do seem to use the same types of

metaphors, such as, ‘May I Take Peaceful Steps Upon the Earth.’

Darvesha: I was thinking of that today too, in light of this interview.

Shivadam: And, Murshid Sam, did he not take the metaphor of farming and of gardening quite literally into his life? He was an avid gardener and was doing that very consciously as a method of polishing the heart, wouldn't you say?

Darvesha: Yes. Well, I don't know, because it's the byproduct. I believe that gardening and caring for the earth is a byproduct of a spiritual practice.

Shivadam: Because, naturally, when we awaken, when we polish the rust off the heart, we become more aware of the intimacy of the relationship between all beings, between ourselves and the plants. We become aware of that, so the care and concern arises for those beings.

Darvesha: Exactly.

“That is one of the main realizations one comes to in deep Vipassana practice. That everything that arises will pass away.”

Shivadam: Another question - *“Zikr and so many of the Dances are an ecstatic practice. How does that blend easily with the Buddhist approach?”* I'd like to phrase that in a slightly different way: That during the Dances, say, right after a particular Dance, a range of emotions or sensations may arise, from spiritual states of ecstasy or bliss, to even processing sadness or grief. So in order to deepen in awareness in order to really integrate the Dance experience, what can we do with these experiences as they arise and also as we move out again into our daily lives?

Darvesha: I'm going to take that as two different questions. The first one, I wonder if it's coming from some kind of misunderstanding of Buddhism. I don't know why they're making the distinction that Zikr is an ecstatic

practice. Are they asking whether Buddhism is too, or are they insinuating that Buddhism is not? Do they think that Buddhism is serious and doleful? I know that some people do. The sublime is beyond concept or idea. It's only ever experienced in the pulsing heart of the here and now, so that's why we do Zikr, because it encourages us to get out of that conceptual mind and be here in the pulsing heart of the here and now. That's why we do the Dances and that's why we do Buddhist practices, and that is what Buddhist practices are about. They all lead to *satchidananda*, to wake up into the bliss-conscious state of the Buddha mind that we are. If you've done Buddhist practices, you are training yourself how to accommodate and integrate bliss. You're not only studying about sorrow. Buddhism is about the end of sorrow. I want to emphasize that.

Then to go into what to do if you're feeling ecstasy, or any other state at the end of a Dance, as I said about compartmentalization earlier, I think that the reason why we're doing these practices is to become, as you used the word, authentic. And by authentic I also mean integrated. We want to be able to integrate the pain that we know in our lives and the ecstasy without going out of whack like manic-depressives. We want to carry this bliss state internally without having to demonstrate it, or to get out of whack. What do you do at the end of a Dance when you see these various states? You don't do anything except for open to them, you're aware of them. You definitely don't want to try make a story about them, or make them into something more than they are. You simply want to be present to that too. We want to be open-hearted and open-minded to whatever arises in that poignant silence afterward. Open to it, embrace it, but don't cling to it either, don't make something, don't want it to continue. Nothing. Just watch it, be with it, and open to it as it arises, and watch it pass away, because it will. That is one of the main realizations one comes to in deep Vipassana practice is that everything that arises will pass away. The two things you're really trying to learn are to viscerally understand interdependence and impermanence. And, from the Buddhist perspective, that is what breeds wisdom. Wisdom is called 'Light' in some Buddhist traditions. It's wisdom. Wisdom arises as we viscerally know interdependence and impermanence.

Shivadam: These experiences that we have in the Dances are a beautiful

practice to help us to open, so then we naturally move into the world in a more open state.

Darvesha: Yes, I think so. Having had that programmed, that experience, so it's a reference in our cells. Having that open-heartedness, the love, is something now that we have in our cells, that we're accustomed to, so there's an easier access.

Shivadam: Yes. I know in my experiences of the Dances that originally, many years ago, I came to the Dances as a drummer and I was happy to sit in the center mostly and not interact, not have to gaze into someone else's eyes, or hold them, or sing into their ear, because I was uncomfortable with that. There was a lot of rust on my heart at that time. The Dances, more than maybe anything else in my life, have opened me, and allowed me to be more relaxed around that, so that now I really enjoy that when I dance.

Darvesha: Nice.

Ok, let's move to another question - *“One of the tenants of Buddhism is accepting things as they are without trying to change them. The Dances, by their very nature, can be a way of changing things that arise by allowing you to focus on the external of the Dance rather than your inner process. Or put another way, the Dance can create an artificial reality. How do you reconcile those?”*

Darvesha: I think that question may, again, be coming from a superficial understanding of Buddhism. I would not say that it's a Buddhist practice to accept things as they are without trying to change them. I wouldn't put it that way. I feel, first off, it's an inside job. What ever arises in the interior, we must open to it. We can't repress it, and we can't hide it or cling to it; we just want to open to it, and the condition that is causing it. You could say, it is arising, and you could use the Zen saying, “It is what it is.” Okay. You want to open to it as it is - That's that.

Once you've opened, once you're fully present with it, it goes back to your question earlier about how to lead a Dance authentically. If you're in that moment present... We are activity, we're verbs, that's certainly essential

understanding of Buddhist practice. We are not objects at all. We are processes in interdependence so the spontaneous moment, and the skillful movement will come, the action will arise out of that. In Tibetan Buddhism, they have a trinity just like Christians. Their trinity is: Manjushri for wisdom, Chenrezig for compassion, and Vajrapani for skillful means, or skillful action. When I first started in Kopan, I kept saying, "I get the first two, but what is Vajrapani?" My first teacher, Jon Landow said, "Vajrapani is who arises when Manjushri and Chenrezig are present." In other words, Buddhism always says there are two wings, there is the wisdom and compassion, and the bird will not fly without both of them. Hazrat Inayat Khan says the same thing: it's not all prayer and bhakti, but it's not all wisdom either. When compassion and wisdom are there, the skillful means arises.

We have a whole Buddhist fellowship that Thich Nhat Hanh founded on right action. It's true that there are some Buddhists that aren't active, but in this modern culture, most of the front-runner Buddhist teachers are talking about how we relate to the earth, how we relate to our fellow beings. It's about action. It's a Sufi theme, you merge and then you emerge. It's the same in Buddhism. You understand the oneness, or the interdependence, and then right action comes from that. We definitely move on to try to keep making things better.

The other part of that question which was very strange was that the questioner said something about the Dances, by their nature, are focused on the external rather than their inner process. I just want to say, that's not what the Dances are for me. The Dances are my inner practice, my inner process. We don't want to use the Dances as an entertainment or a distraction. The Dance mandala is a practice Zendo. You enter the Dance and you are doing your practice, you're focused on everything that's arising within you and without. You enter into a state of awareness and concentration because you're not being distracted by the thinking, conceptual mind.

Shivadam: Beautiful. Something about what you were saying about the skillful means spontaneously arising when there's compassion and wisdom reminds me that many Dance circles close with Joe Miller's, or some other form of the prayer, "May all beings be well. May all beings be happy," which

is closely associated with the Buddhist tradition. Sure we pray for that while we're in the dance meeting, the idea is that we also carry that out into the world and our actions with other people. That the Dances help us become compassionate and wise, so that we may carry out skillful means in our lives.

Darvesha: Yes, and a wonderful, direct experience of what it's like to be with people in such a loving way. I think that Dance leading itself is kind of Bodhisattva action. I think that was part of my motivation for Dance leading in the first place. If we are trying to participate with the awakening of all beings, leading the Dances is a platform. It's a way of trying to be of benefit to all. It's a Bodhisattvic action, at least it can be if it's done for that motivation.

Shivadam: Would you recommend any additional readings or books, or resources, teachers, retreat centers for ongoing study and practice?

Darvesha: I think for anybody, certainly for people newer to this philosophy, anything that Pema Chodron or Thich Nhat Hanh have written. They seem to be able to put it in their own words in such a fresh way that touches everybody. My hero is Steven Bachelor, but I think he's pretty esoteric. Another book that anybody would and could love is Suzuki-Roshi's, "Beginners Mind". Two books that really emphasize our relationship to the earth through a Buddhist perspective are Joanna Macy's, World as Self, World as Lover and Gary Schneider's, Practice of the Wild. Those two books are gems. There are retreat centers everywhere, and that would have to be a local choice. I do recommend Vipassana retreats to anybody who has any interest. I can't say enough good things about that particular practice.

Shivadam: Thank you for so graciously agreeing to share your wisdom with us. I do want to conclude with one final email - *"I don't have a question for Darvesha but would like to pass on to her three heartfelt Ya Fattahs along with deep gratitude for the many, many years of loving service she has given to the Dances of Universal Peace and to the organizational containers which have held the Dances. Ya Fattah Ya Fattah Ya Fattah!"*

Darvesha: Thank you, Shivadam. Let's do close with a dedication that if there

has been anything of benefit, may it be used, may it be beneficial to all beings. Svaha

You can hear this interview, on the website
www.dancesofuniversalpeaceNA.org

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