

Brunch Update Issue 73 - August 2015

Sufi Service Committee of Boston

Addressing the most pressing needs of our community



Serving roasted chicken

"It is very important that service, even when it is utterly selfless, be guided by spiritual understanding, for selfless service, when unintelligently handled, often creates chaos and complications. Many good persons are ceaselessly active for public causes through social institutions. But what does that activity lead to? For one problem which it solves, it often creates ten other problems owing to the unforeseen and uncontrollable side-results of such activity."

— Meher Baba

Happenings



Nader and Meiko happily cut up chicken.

Late June and early July saw a continuation of our weekly brunch service and transportation of food donations. We also spent a morning helping to move donated furniture for a resident of Pine Street Inn subsidized housing who is now moving to her own apartment. Due to summer dehydration concerns, we are raising our budget for fruits.



Macaroni and cheese hot and ready to go.



Peaches, strawberries, and bananas.

The Belmont branch of Santander bank has designated a table for our literature to help to recruit more volunteers. Thanks to branch manager Mack Masse for helping to facilitate such exposure for us.

This month's volunteer (including Aliya of New York and Dr. Nader Gandevari) enjoyed their participation more than at any other time. As always, volunteers were welcomed by a colorful organic breakfast.



Santander bank promoted our charity initiative.



Tender roast beef and vegetable dish prepared by Fazi.

Later this summer, we'll be installing the first Sufi Service Committee clothing donation box at Noor Oriental Rugs (769 Concord Ave in Cambridge). Watch this space for news of the official "ribbon cutting" ceremony. If you have artistic skills and would like to help "decorate" the bin, let us know!

This month, we have resumed our efforts to provide water bottles for the homeless. Special thanks go to our donors who mentioned "for water" on the memo section of their checks.

Quotes of Note

"I am thrilled to see that you pick up the leftovers and do so enthusiastically! You share otherwise trashed bakery goods with the most vulnerable, the ill, the needy, the elderly, and the infants. We are speechless in appreciating your efforts to help fight food insecurities and enhance the quality of lives in your local community." - Russ of MA

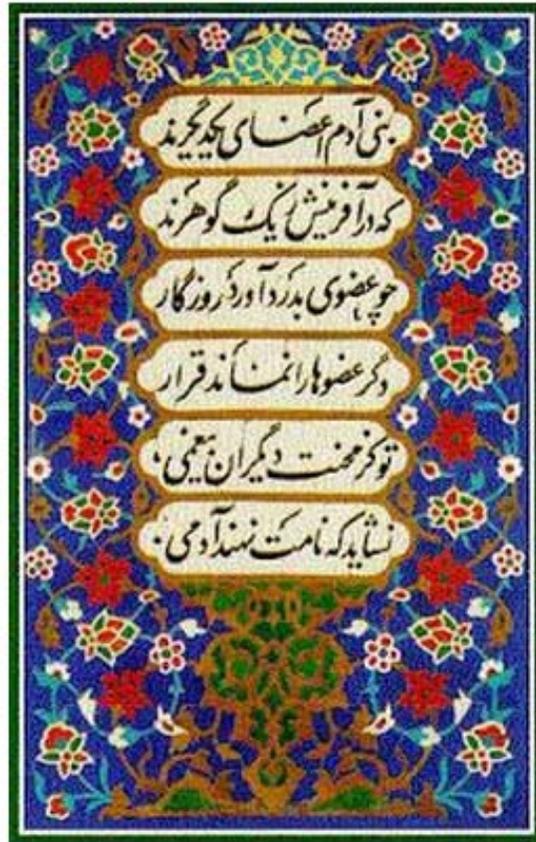
"Your volunteers are so loving, kind, and affable! Are volunteers good persons or are good persons volunteers?" - Sasha of New York

Volunteer Reflection - Part of a Whole: Society as Our Body

A famous Saadi poem, and one that decorates the gate of the United Nations' headquarters in New York, reads,

“Human beings are members of a whole,
In creation of one essence and soul.
If one member is afflicted with pain,
Other members uneasy will remain.
If you have no sympathy for human pain,
The name of human you cannot retain.”

(Gullistan: Chapter 1, Story 10)



Part of a whole.

The ethos of this poem is the all-encompassing oneness of humanity. Saadi, a famous 13th century Persian poet and man of letters, gathers all human beings under his umbrella and plainly proclaims that harm to one is harm to all. His message is drastically different from the ones we often receive from corporations, movies, and even our parents. In our individualistic society, we are told to pursue our own happiness and that this happiness has little to do with others. Teachers and parents often teach us to pursue our “self-interest” and to compete. Clearly, this “me me”

philosophy creates anything but happiness. The poem reminds us that our happiness is in fact linked to everyone else's happiness. When one of us suffers, we all become uneasy no matter how much we hide it. If Saadi is right, then many of our actions' are indeed misguided and ill-conceived. As we can see from human behavior, whether in family conflict or wars, we often drift away from Saadi's truth.

Perhaps we can think of each other as parts of a real human body. Our community, whether religious, urban, or tribal, is the entire body. If we look at the way a community functions, it's clear that we fulfill roles that benefit everyone else. A doctor heals the sick. A lawyer fights for the rights of his or her client. An imam, sheikh, pastor, or priest provides spiritual and worldly direction to his or her flock. Our communalism is integral to our happiness. As much as we try to be better than each other or advance on the social ladder, we must also take a step back and remember that hurting someone else, hurts our self. Our true self is the "one essence and one soul" to which we all belong. Using the body as an example, we can see that pain in one limb causes suffering for the person, not just for the limb. Having a problem in the liver can cause damage to various other organs and systems. An athlete with a calf injury will try to compensate by using other muscles, creating more imbalance and more injuries. In the same way, pain in one person is pain in everyone. It's therefore essential to look at our surroundings and do anything that uplifts others or alleviates pain.



Story of the Month: "I did break the fast but I did not break the hearts!"

Once during Ramadan, the month of fasting for Muslims, Hallaj¹ happened to walk in a part of town where people with the contagious disease leprosy were confined. The lepers, as they were known, were having lunch. The group invited Hallaj to eat with them. Without hesitation Hallaj sat down and ate a few bites. The lepers told him that others do not sit down to eat with them, but instead run away from them for fear of catching their disease.

At the end of that day, Hallaj prayed, "Oh Lord! May You accept my fasting." But his friends objected to this supplication, contending that he had not fasted the full day because they had seen him eating lunch.

Hallaj responded, "Yes, I did break the fast, but I did not break the hearts!"

ⁱ **Mansur al-Hallaj** (c. 858 – 26 March 922) was a Persian Sufi . His full name was Abu al-Mughith al-Husayn ibn **Mansur al-Hallaj**.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED



1. Volunteer! Sunday Brunch is a time commitment of only a few hours. Help us cook and clean or just spend time with our friends in need!

2. Monetary and in-kind donations: If you would like to make a contribution to the Sufi Service Committee Inc., you can write a check, use any credit card, or wire money through PayPal. We are always in need for milk, eggs, fruit, plastic bags, etc. for our Sunday Brunch. We also accept donations of clothes, household goods and furniture. Currently we need more clothes than household items. All donations are tax-deductible.

3. Drive! We need volunteers throughout the week to pick up bakery and food donations and deliver them to food pantries and shelters.

Contact:

Moh Noorae
Sufi Service Committee of Boston
84 Pembroke Street, Boston, MA 02118
sufiserviceboston@gmail.com
www.nimatullahisufiboston.org/charity.html