

In Venice 3 days 3 nights *Music & Sufi Dance* *Sema*

16th-19th of May



Dear friends,

in Spring time, **from 16th to 19th of May**, a **Sema gathering** will take place in Venice, in a beautiful farm in the small city of Marcon, near to Venice.

This gathering is inspired by **Hiz. Mevlana**, internationally known as **Rumi**.

- In Sema gathering our intention is to continue sema, music and zikhr without stopping. Therefore the semazens (dancers) and the musicians will be in service in turns.
- Our gathering is open to everyone who wishes to experience sema (sufi dance), who has a genuine interest in Mevlana's Sufism/Teachings and appreciates it.
- This gathering is a great value opportunity for new people, who don't know sema, but also an extended practice for all those, who want to experience this spiritual joy.

As **R. Oruç Güvenç** used to say "Sema is a form of prayer in a turning movement which has been practiced in various forms in various folk groups for centuries. This rhythmic rotational movement helps the person to reach different levels of consciousness and find an opportunity to enter the spiritual source within himself. "

In his book entitled "The Legends of the Wise" **Ahmet Eflaki** narrates that **Hiz. Mevlana** has done **3 days & nights, 7 days & nights, 16 days & nights and 40 days & nights non stop sema**.

The sema during the time of Hiz. Mevlana has been narrated to be a widely-participated event based on trance. Today the sema ceremony, which is officially known as mukabele, has become an event limited to 30-35 minutes. The reason for that change was a Mevlevi sheikh, Adil Çelebi, who lived 350 years after Hiz. Mevlana, has received a vision during a meditation and modified sema to the form we see today.

Our heartfelt teacher **R. Oruç Güvenç** has brought the days and nights continuing sema tradition, which has been ongoing since Hiz. Mevlana, to the present.



The feature of the sema gatherings organized by our teacher Oruç Hoca is: they are based in understanding the tradition during the time of Hz. Mevlana, and aim to awakening and experiencing the essence of sema. It's a meditation in movement and an inner journey retreat where people from many different countries are joining.

In these meetings, the principles of the Ancient Turkish Music and Movement Therapy Tradition are performed, which have been used in Central Asia.

R. Oruç Güvenç, within the activities of **Tümata**, organized **3,5,7,9,16, 40,6,99,114 days and nights sema gatherings** with the participation from 89 different countries.

We dedicate this gathering to our beloved master **Rahmi Oruç Güvenç**, who, in **2014 in Turkey** during the **99 days & nights**, expressed to **Francesca Ferah** the desire **to bring Sema to Venice**.

In 2017 Francesca Ferah decided to move to Venice and began searching for a place to fulfill **Rahmi Oruç Güvenç's** desire.

Welcome

People from different countries and cultures will take part in the gathering. It is very important to follow some guidelines to maintain the atmosphere and harmony, allowing us all to enjoy this Sufi gathering and dive deep into the meditation.

Our community has its basis in the Islamic tradition and inspiration of Rumi.
We wish that the values of the tradition are respected and the participants try to adapt.

We kindly ask that you read this text before attending the gathering

About R. Oruç Güvenç, Sufi Master

Oruç Güvenç is a worldwide known musician, music and movement therapist, ethnomusicologist, psychologist, sociologist.

Sufi master Rahmi Oruç Güvenç was born in 1948, in Tavşanlı, Kütahya. His musical career began with a dream he had at the age of 12 and he took violin lessons from Fethi Bey in middle school.

After studying in Kütahya High school, he completed his degree at Istanbul University, Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Literature, writing a philosophy book entitled "The Beloved of Allah – Hz. Mevlana". In the meantime, he continued studying music and learnt ud, rebab, ney and tanbur.

Following the degree on Philosophy, he obtained his doctorate in Clinical Psychology at Cerrahpasa Faculty of Medicine researching music therapy with the supervisor Prof. Dr. Ayhan Songar and became the only expert in this subject. Then he founded the 'Centre for Research and Application of Turkish Music' at Cerrahpasa Faculty of Medicine.

In 1975, he founded TUMATA (Group for the Research and Promotion of Turkish Music) and throughout his life, he worked on Music Therapy, History of Turkish music and Sufism, in Turkey and abroad.

With all this work, a Research group was founded, including musicians, dancers and singers who enlivened and began using the historical materials as it is mentioned in the description of ancient methods. He collected more than 400 musical instruments from Central Asia and Anatolia.

At the same time, he trained many students in the Traditional Music Therapy courses he did in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Spain and Belgium. Many of the graduates have still been working in medical, pedagogical and rehabilitation foundations and institutions and applying this knowledge in practice.

On July 5, 2017, during the 114 days and 114 nights of Sema, he had an important operation and due to a heart attack he passed on to eternal life, leaving behind a very valuable legacy, the work he did for the Turkish and human history.

About Francesca Ferah and Soul Circle

Francesca Ferah Dalla Bernardina is a Sufi researcher, a dancer with Italian and Bosnian roots, and the founder of Soul Circle.

The meeting between East and West has always been part of her life and this awareness has led her to travel between the two worlds. In 2013 she moved to Istanbul, a bridge between East and West, where in 2014 she met the Sufi Master Oruç Güvenç. In 2014, during the 99 days and 99 nights of Semâ (16.05.2014-23.08.2014) in Turkey, **Sufi Master Oruç Güvenç gave Francesca the Sufi name Ferah**, which means "tranquility". Looking back Francesca discovers that this dance has always been part of her, starting from her origins: her mother is from Bosnia and Herzegovina, from a village near Mostar, where there is the Blagaj Tekija, an ancient Dervish Monastery dating back to the Ottoman Empire.

On July 5, 2017, halfway through the 114 days and 114 nights of Semâ, Sufi Master Oruç Güvenç passed away. The sense of bewilderment was very strong, but Francesca Ferah, along with many others, was at the center of efforts to conclude the 114 days and 114 nights of Sufi practice.

Rahmi Oruç Güvenç often used the image of the "caravan": the caravan of musicians, researchers and dancers continues to live in the world with the strength of music, of the songs of the steppe, of the dance of the shamans and dervishes, of the mystical poetry of Rumi and of the sacred songs (Ilahiler) of the Sufis. In 2017, **Azize Güvenç, the wife of the Sufi master**, asked Francesca Ferah and other Turkish and foreign students to be part of this caravan and **to help revive the Sufi tradition worldwide**.

The name **Soul Circle** was born in 2018 from a vision of Ferah: from the image of a luminous circle created by people who meet to practice Sufi dance Semâ. When the circle was first formed, it was quite small. However, it has grown little by little, expanding with each new practice meeting. The energy increases and the beautiful light spreads, nourishes and warms the hearts in the circle of souls and in all the circles that unite, even from afar, building bridges between various worlds.

About the place

Farm/Fattoria
Il Rosmarino
Marcon, Venezia

We would like to thank the people from the Farm “Il Rosmarino” for opening the doors of their beautiful place for the Sema Gathering.

We will use the seminar hall of this area on the first floor as Semahane (Sema House), which is normally used as a retreat area and for Ecovillage circle meetings, and the restaurant on the lower floor as a dining hall and a meeting area for various activities.

The farm provides space for setting up camping tents (you must bring your own), as well as shower/toilet facilities and dining options.

The farm only offers the possibility of camping with your tent. If you wish to stay in a room, there are some agriturismo options in the surrounding area. It is necessary to reach them by car.



Important Points to be considered about the Place:

- Please don't touch or disturb the farm animals.
- Since we will be in nature, we should pay special attention to not litter – including cigarette butts – and refrain from making fires.
- Please take food only in designated areas and bring plates, glasses, etc., back to the kitchen.
- Please do not throw anything in the toilets, but into the containers next to it.
- There is hot water on the farm. The boiler is wood fired that needs to be replenished once a day in the morning to ensure hot water. We ask you to be mindful of your water usage, taking short showers and being careful not to waste any hot water. Once the hot water runs out you have to wait until the following day.
- Normally, there are no mosquitoes in May, but occasionally there can be, so please take precautions against mosquitoes.
- Let's leave our animal friends at home at this meeting.
- The parking area inside of the Farm is reserved for the organization team. There is another area near the farm where you can park your vehicle, including campers. The area will be indicated.
- Security units working in the city may visit the site, so it's necessary to register with the farm's association and the gathering's list by providing a personal document, phone number, and email.
- During the night the entrance gate will be closed.
- You may need a flashlight during the night to reach the camping area.

Registration

All participants should be registered by providing: Name, Surname, Passport, Phone Number, Email

Donation

We don't have sponsors for our gathering. All expenses like the rent of the place, food etc. have to be covered by donations from the participants.

We provide an estimate of the minimum donation necessary to cover the expenses for the rent of the entire place, general expenses (electricity, water, gas, cleaning materials, etc.), food, and various aspects of the gathering's organization.

The suggested minimum donation is 250 euro, plus an additional 5 euro at the place to register with the Farm's association. If somebody has difficulty to support the suggested minimum donation we beg to contact us.

50% of the donation should be given in advance to the following IBAN, this iban is only for participants from Italy and from Europe. **If possible the first donation within the middle of February** in order to confirm the farm for the event, by giving a payment in advance.

The bank is UNICREDIT, to Francesca Dalla Bernardina

IBAN IT7400200832974001786359907

BIC/SWIFT UNCRITM1VF6

Participants from Extra Europe can not use the above mentioned IBAN, I beg you to contact us and we will give another IBAN allowed to receive payment from other countries like Turkey, America etc.

We kindly ask you to include **your name and surname and the note "Fondo Spese per Raduno"** (which means: fund for gathering expenses) with your payment. **The costs for making the transfer must remain your responsibility (paid by participants)**

Please inform us about the payment by sending an email to soulcircleproject@gmail.com or a message to +39 3923483634, indicating your name, surname, and the amount paid.

Silence:

It is important to maintain silence in and around the Semahane, in the accommodation areas, and in the general meeting areas. Silence is an essential part of this spiritual practice.

We kindly request that no music is played outside of the Semahane, including the campsite.

In order for the Sema to continue 24 hours around the clock, participants must be able to sleep undisturbed. Please avoid making any noise.

Mobile phones should be set to silent mode and should not be used inside the Semahane.

Filming and sound recording are not authorized without permission. Specific times for these activities will be determined and announced.

Clothing:

As we decided to adhere closely to the tradition of our beloved Oruç Güvenç, we follow the dress code for men and women that is accepted among Sufis.

This includes covering the shoulders, chest, back, waist, and legs, and avoiding wearing tight and transparent clothes.

The dress code applies to the entire area.

Please also pay attention to the way you speak and sit.

When you come to the Sema meeting, please remember to bring socks.

We kindly request that participants avoid physical intimacy during the gathering.

Cleaning

The responsibility for cleanliness in the showers and toilets lies with all of us.

Please keep all areas, including toilets and showers, clean.

Please do not throw paper or anything else into the toilets. Instead, dispose of these items in the containers provided next to the toilets.

Kitchen and food

During the gathering, there will be three vegetarian meals served each day: breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Only the staff and the kitchen team are permitted to enter the kitchen and food storage room.

If you wish to help, it is important to coordinate with the kitchen team. Assistance is welcome in preparing three meals a day, washing dishes, and preparing water, tea, and coffee, as well as snacks for the day and night.

Music & pray

Music, zikhr and Sufi dance should never stop in order to ensure continuity from the beginning of the gathering to the end.

Musicians will alternate on a hourly or two hourly basis

If you would like to play, please inform us during the registration and we will introduce you to the responsible for music organization

Please avoid to play loud rhythms

We request all participants not to make music outside the sema area.

In the Semahane (the main seminar hall)

Please perform ablution before entering the Semahane. If you're unsure how, someone experienced can show you.

Before entering the Semahane, please take off your shoes and place them on the shoe racks near the door.

We bow down to greet the spirit of the Sema at the entrance to the Semahane. When leaving the area, we depart with the same gesture.

There should be no talking in the semahane, except when is absolutely necessary.

We kindly ask you not to bring food or drinks to the Semahane. You may bring water in a bottle. Mobile phones should be set to silent mode and should not be used for conversation inside the Semahane.

Filming and sound recording are not allowed without permission. Specific times for this will be determined and announced.

In the main hall, there will be some carpets and a limited number of pillows. We suggest you bring your pillow.

Smoking use

Please limit smoking cigarettes to the designated area only. Dispose of cigarette butts in the designated receptacles.

What is not welcome and not allowed

- No drugs are allowed.
- Alcohol is also prohibited, as it does not align with our main purpose in this gathering. Its use will not be tolerated, and anyone not adhering to this rule will be asked to leave the gathering.

We believe that Sema requires a clean soul, a clean mind, and a radiant heart. Substances like nicotine and other biochemical stimulants can negatively affect the body, mind, and spirit

Spiritual journey is a service. Each of us here, uses our most precious gifts to find the right path

For some it is the voice, so they sing, others like to cook, play an instrument or support in other aspects.

In all Sufi meetings, teamwork is very important to maintain harmony in the place.

We invite all participants to volunteer and share on this path. You can indicate in which area you would like to volunteer when declaring your participation: registration, kitchen, cleaning, order, semahane, music, information, shopping.

Arrival and departure:

You can arrive at the farm as early as the 15th of May (only to sleep in your own tent).

This allows you to visit the wonderful city of Venice. The two train stations (Gaggio Porta Est and Quarto d'Altino) are just a few kilometers away from the farm, and from there, you can reach the historical city of Venice in just 20 minutes by train.

For those who prefer to rent a room around the farm, we can provide contacts for two Agriturismo:

Agriturismo ai Carpini (you can reach the farm in 10 minutes on foot)

www.agriturismoaicarpini.com

Agriturismo Fondo Gioconda Marcon (accessible only by car) www.fondogioconda.com

Our meeting will start with a communal dinner on the evening of the 16th of May at 18:30 and will end on the evening of the 19th of May. On the morning of the 20th of May, after breakfast, we will leave the place after cleaning the area.

We aim to have a harmonious gathering in peace, promoting love, tolerance, and nonviolence

How to get there?

The Farm *Il Rosmarino* is situated in Via Pialoi 68, Marcon, Venezia

The airport Venezia Marco Polo is 7 km far from the farm

The airport Treviso is 15 km far from the farm

It is possible to reach the farm by taxi

For further information please contact:

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Instagram [francesca_ferah_soulcircle](https://www.instagram.com/francesca_ferah_soulcircle)

www.soulcircle.it

