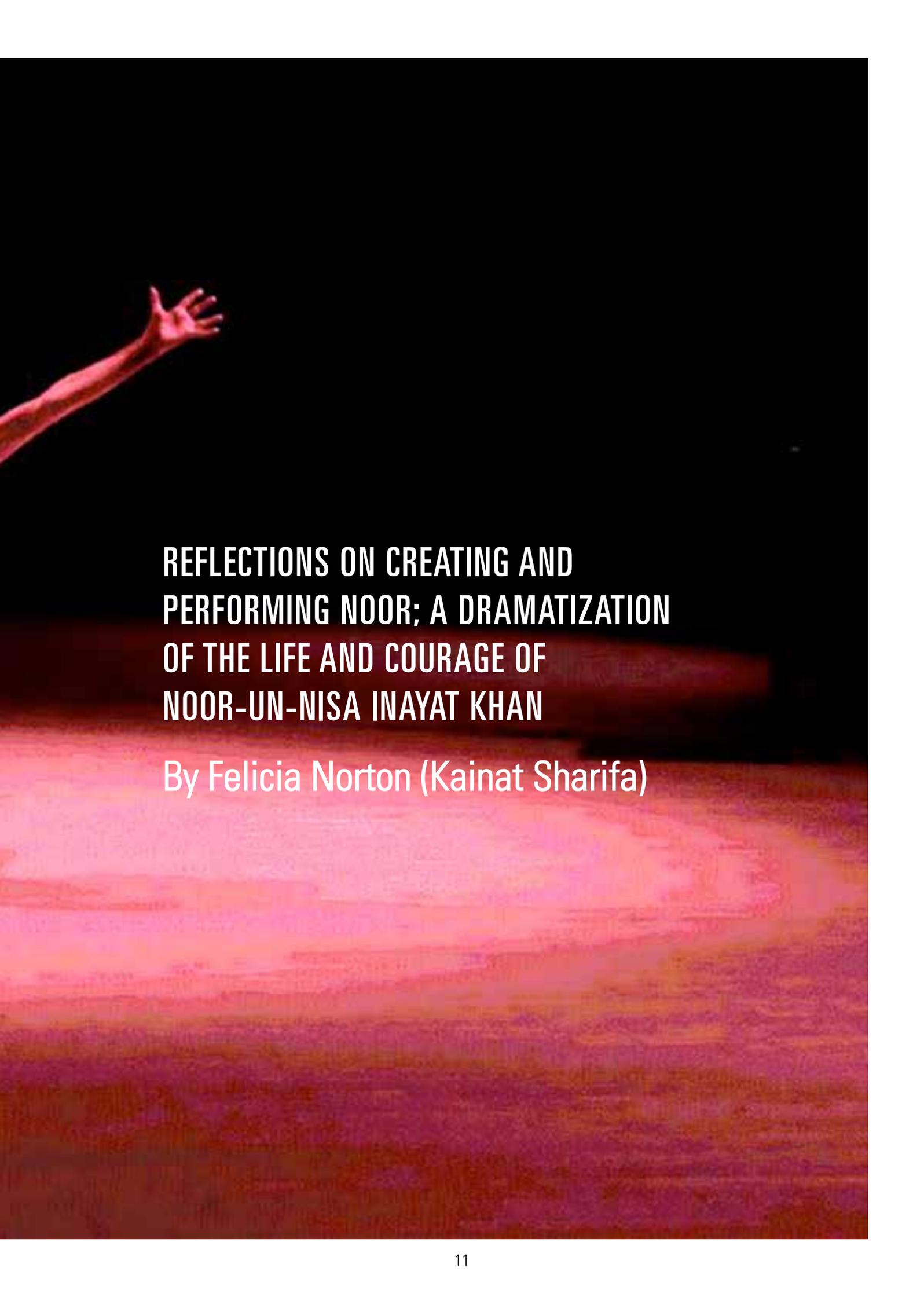


# Chivalry

*in our time.*





A hand is shown in the upper left corner, reaching out towards the right. The background is dark, with a soft, pinkish-red glow emanating from the bottom, creating a gradient effect. The text is centered in the middle of the image.

**REFLECTIONS ON CREATING AND  
PERFORMING NOOR; A DRAMATIZATION  
OF THE LIFE AND COURAGE OF  
NOOR-UN-NISA INAYAT KHAN**

**By Felicia Norton (Kainat Sharifa)**

“During the dance performance I was brought into the world and life of this remarkable woman, who was so devoted to humanity that she sacrificed her life for us.”

🌀 *I HAD THE CHANCE to be in Suresnes when Kainat performed her dance piece there some years ago. At that time, I knew very little about Murshids eldest daughter, except for the photos of her in the Kkankah. During the dance performance I was brought into the world and life of this remarkable woman, who was so devoted to humanity that she sacrificed her life for us. In the previous editions of SufiNews from 2014 and 2015, you can read more about her. Also there are 2 biographies: "Noor-un-Nisa Inayat Khan: Madeleine" by Jean Overton Fuller and The Late Baroness Ward of North Tyneside and "Spy Princess: The Life of Noor Inayat Khan" by Shrabani Basu*  
(Editor's note)

Lamp of Joy  
Light of Beauty, Poetry and Music  
Light of womanhood  
Light that bravely descended into the dark underworld of Nazi occupied France in World War 2 to help counter the forces of fascism and tyranny  
Light of Sacrifice  
Light of Chivalry  
Light of Courage  
Light of the Awakened Soul

**I WAS ALWAYS** deeply moved when Pir Vilayat spoke about his sister Noor. I wondered how this refined, sensitive, poetic soul, who wrote children's stories, saw fairies, composed music and played the harp

and vina, had the courage to enter the dark world of Nazi occupied France and do the extremely dangerous work of a SOE agent, whose expected lifespan was six weeks. Noor lived in a household immersed in the ideals of futuwaa and chivalry. Ideals of honor, truthfulness, performing one's duty to one's fellow human being and sacrifice of self in service to a more universal whole prevailed. Noor was inspired by the French heroine Joan of Arc at a young age. She translated the 'Twenty Jataka Tales', Buddhist fables of animals who performed acts of sacrifice to help others in need. Both of these interests were a foretelling of her own life's path destiny.

**AS A PERFORMING ARTIST**, I was inspired to bring Noor's story to life through creating a solo theatre /dance work so that her story might be shared more widely with the public.

I worked with Sasha Spielvogel, director of Labyrinth Dance Theater who helped with production and arranged for an original sound score, created by Emmy nominated composer David Majzlin which evoked Noor's inner spiritual world and the harsh outer world she put herself up against. Actors/actresses voices were recorded as part of the score playing various parts in the scenes which provided a narrative to perform with that included Noor's poems and music compositions, letters between Noor and her brother Vilayat, poetry of Tagore, Churchill speeches, The Jataka Elephant Tale and more. 'NOOR' premiered at the oldest synagogue turned arts center in New York City. Afterwards I performed it at 🌀





☞ The Nehru Centre in London, UK with Shrabani Basu giving an introduction, and at Fazal Manzil in Suresnes, France, Noor's family home. Shrabani later invited me to perform 'NOOR' for the Noor Memorial Trust Benefit Concert in London, UK, a fundraiser for the installation of a bust of Noor in Gordon Square, London, UK. While attending the unveiling of the bust of Noor by Princess Anne in Gordon Square, London UK, in 2012, I had an opportunity to interview Shaikh al-Mashaikh Mahmood Khan. I asked him about the connection of Noor's life and chivalry. Below is an excerpt of what he shared:

"Futuwa is 'transmitting whatever you have acquired in your inner being to the outer world'. A knight joins mysticism with morality. [to] reach a level of spiritual attunement... if you don't reach an ethical attunement you stand still... This is fulfillment at the highest level and is the liberty of the soul from narrowness. In this way, chivalry implies the partnership between oneself and a larger whole served by a larger vision. Not for their own benefit alone but in dedication, loyalty and service to something greater than oneself... The impact of Murshid's teachings was this spirit of liberty, honor and sacrifice; the Jataka tales exactly express these and emphasize the enormous strength and power to withstand. Noor lived this".

**NOOR'S MESSAGE** was very alive when I performed 'NOOR' at St Mark's Church in New York City in November 2016, a few days after the US election. A

lively talkback session ensued afterwards with 250 people in the audience about human rights, Noor's bravery, and the ideal of liberty, tolerance, and sacred activism.

'NOOR' now runs 45 minutes as a solo full evening length work. It has been a gift to perform it in France, in London, UK, at The Edinburgh Fringe Festival, and at The Storytelling Centre in Edinburgh, Scotland, at various venues in NYC, Florida, Colorado, Chautauqua Institution, NY and recently at Sarah Lawrence College, NY in December 2017.

Immersing myself into Noor's being and consciousness is indeed an awesome and deep experience. It involves engaging with landscapes of her soul from childhood to death within physical, subtle and emotional levels. A 'resurrection section' follows her death; a *baqa* after the *fana*. The seeds of awakened consciousness and conscience that Noor planted on the earth are given back into the whole rising into a transformed consciousness. Noor is a holy force, who lived and upheld the Sufi Message of liberty within the most extreme of circumstances. She exhibited great skill, subtlety, refinement, courage, and mastery in her work as an agent. An ongoing guide she continues to 'transmit' light and wisdom for our time.

May Noor's being inspire us to practice true chivalry in the midst of our world and to uphold light in the darkness. •

<http://www.felicianortondance.org> (see 'Noor')

