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Santa Barbara

Sufism in Moroccan Public Life: Teaching Ethics and Performing Piety

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirement for the degree Doctor of
Philosophy in Religious Studies

by

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September 2021

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ABSTRACT

Sufism in Moroccan Public Life: Teaching Ethics and Performing Piety

By

John C. Thibdeau

This dissertation unpacks the role of Sufism (*taṣawwuf*) in the Moroccan state's current efforts to regulate religion not only to shed light on relationships of religion and power in Morocco, but also to bring into relief the embodied aspects of *taṣawwuf* as a practical tradition often elided in scholarship that conceives of Sufism as Islamic mysticism. I argue that as a practical tradition, *taṣawwuf* involves the cultivation of virtuous piety (*iḥsān*) and that in its role as an element of Moroccan religious identity, *iḥsān* constitutes a form of public piety in which spiritual development and social reform operate in conjunction with one another. In my comparative analysis of three Sufi organizations, I analyze different dimensions of *iḥsān* through their varied curricula of ethical education (*minhaj al-tarbiya*) used in the formation of pious subjects and the disciplining of bodies capable of entering into relationships with themselves, others, and the divine. More broadly, I show how the public performance of Sufism as an ethical tradition simultaneously shapes and gives expression to alternative modes of political affiliation that cut across existing national or regional distinctions.

Over the past twenty years, under the leadership of King Mohammed VI, Morocco has implemented a program of regulating and reforming the religious field (*al-ḥaq al-dīnī*) domestically and regionally. In the process, the state has established an array of governmental and quasi-governmental institutions aimed at constructing and propagating a

Moroccan religiosity as an alternative to other global brands of Islam (e.g., Saudi Wahhabism, Iranian Shi'ism, militant Jihadism). While defined as Sunni, Maliki, and Ash'ari, this authorized Moroccan Islam is distinguished from others primarily by its inclusion of *taṣawwuf* as a constitutive element. As a result, Morocco has explicitly sponsored *taṣawwuf* as part of a strategy to combat the influence of alternative authorities within the country and to cultivate ties regionally as part of a tactic of spiritual diplomacy.

Within the context of Morocco's sponsorship of Sufism I ask: (1) What effect has Morocco's policy of promoting Sufism had on local practices?; (2) How have Sufi groups in Morocco rearticulated and redeployed traditional practices to present visions of reform?, and (3) How do these visions at times align with and other times critique an authorized Moroccan Islam? To answer these questions, I conducted eighteen months of fieldwork in Morocco through the Fulbright-Hays program in 2017-2018. The dissertation focuses on three groups: Karkariyya-Fawziyya, 'Alawiyya, and International Academic Center for Sufi and Aesthetic Studies (IACSAS). The ethnographic aspect involved extended stays in Sufi lodges in conjunction with observation at weekly gatherings and annual festivals, as well as interviews with members and leaders of Sufi orders and NGOs. I add to the ethnography a detailed engagement with texts published by the groups, as well as public materials published on websites or distributed at events. These public materials include video testimonials of visionary experiences published on the Karkariyya website and journals published by research institutes such as the journal *Qūt al-Qulūb* published by the Imam Junayd Center for Sufi Studies. I also incorporate a historical perspective that captures on the one hand the transformations wrought by these recent policies and on the other hand the continuities that are maintained through discourses of reform and renewal.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures.....	11
CHAPTER ONE: Introduction	1
i. Virtuous Piety: Iḥsān in Islamic Traditions	8
ii. Practical Sufism	12
iii. Researcher's Notes.....	17
iv. Outline of Dissertation	22
CHAPTER TWO: Sufism as Ethical Tradition: A Theoretical Introduction	26
i. Introduction	26
ii. Sufism and <i>Akhlāq</i>	30
iii. Sufism and <i>Adab</i>	33
iv. Literature Review.....	38
v. Ethics	47
vi. Tradition.....	62
vii. Summary	69
CHAPTER THREE: Sufism and Performing Public Piety: A Theoretical Introduction.....	73
i. Introduction	73
ii. Public Piety	77
iii. Performing Piety	90
iv. Sufism, Civility, and Citizenship	109
v. Sufism and the State.....	125
vi. Summary	129
CHAPTER FOUR: Sufism, Politics, and Modernity: Constructing the Religious Field	131
i. Introduction	131
ii. Sufism and Modernity.....	132
iii. Religion and Politics in Morocco: A Review of Literature	147
iv. 1956-1980: Nationalists and Socialists	161
v. 1980-2003: Islamists	170
vi. Shaykh Yassine and <i>Jama'at al-ʿAdl wa al-Iḥsān</i>	176
vii. Party of Justice and Development.....	186
viii. Summary	190
CHAPTER FIVE: Reforming and Regulating: Moroccan Religious Policy After 2003	192
i. Introduction	193
ii. Sponsorship of Sufism	195

iii. <i>Tariqa</i> Qādiriyya Būdshīshiyya	205
iv. Institution Building and Educational Reform	224
v. Cooptation of Salafis	247
vi. International Orientations	251
vii. Summary	261
CHAPTER SIX: Wandering through Repentance: Shaykh Muḥammad Fawzī al-Karkarī as <i>Walī Allah</i>	265
i. Introduction	265
ii. Sainthood in Islam	269
iii. Sainthood in Moroccan Sufism	278
iv. Repentance and Return: Biographical Sketch of Shaykh Fawzi	290
v. Spiritual Heritage	301
vi. Curriculum of Ethical and Spiritual Education (<i>minhaj al-tarbiya</i>)	314
vii. Summary	321
CHAPTER SEVEN: Ethics in a Visionary Order: The <i>Minhaj al-Tarbiya</i> of the Karkariyya-Fawziyya	323
i. Introduction	323
ii. Curriculum of Ethical Education (<i>minhaj al-tarbiya</i>)	324
iii. The Commitment (<i>al-‘ahd</i>)	325
iv. Dhikr and Mudhākara	332
v. Ṣuḥba	348
vi. Ḥaḍra	356
vii. Muraqqa‘a	377
viii. Summary	387
CHAPTER EIGHT: Retreating into the Name: <i>Mushāhadāt</i> in the Karkariyya-Fawziyya	388
i. Introduction	388
ii. The Name (<i>al-Ism</i>) and Secret (<i>Sirr</i>)	390
iii. Visionary Experiences: <i>Mushāhadāt</i> and <i>Nūr</i>	397
iv. Spiritual Retreat: <i>Khalwa</i>	403
v. Summary	429
CHAPTER NINE: Pilgrimage, Politics, and Piety: Performing the <i>Siyāḥa</i> in the Karkariyya	431
i. Introduction	431
ii. Journeys and Visitation: <i>Riḥla</i> and <i>Ziyāra</i> in Sufism	434
iii. Pilgrimage in the Karkariyya: <i>Siyāḥa</i>	440

iv. Pilgrimage and Politics in Karkariyya Discourses	463
v. Pilgrimage across Borders: An Algerian Case Study.....	482
vi. Summary	496
CHAPTER TEN: Journey to <i>Iḥsān</i> : Spirituality and Ethics in the IACSAS.....	498
i. Introduction	498
ii. Spiritual Orientation.....	502
iii. Ethical Orientation	511
iv. Summary	536
CHAPTER ELEVEN: Bringing the Zawīya into the World: Shaykh Khālīd and the <i>Tariqa</i> ‘Alāwīyya.....	538
i. Introduction	538
ii. Criticism as Ethical Project.....	540
iii. Sufi as Critic	548
iv. Shaykh Khālīd bin Tūnis and the <i>Tariqa</i> ‘Alāwīyya:.....	557
v. Social Criticism and Reform in Shaykh Khālīd’s <i>Tarbiya al-Yaqza</i>	563
vi. Implementing the Vision: Minhaj al-Tarbiya al-Taṭbīqī.....	569
vii. Summary	588
CHAPTER TWELVE: Conclusion.....	591
i. Overview	591
ii. Sufism as an ethical tradition	595
iii. Sufism as public piety	597
iv. Sufism as transnational ethical grammar	603
v. Sufism as political tool.....	599
References.....	725

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Zawiya pictured from the back with tent on the right morning after 'īd al-Nabawī (Photo by Author)	328
Figure 2. Approaching zawiya on foot (Photo by Author)	328
Figure 3. Disciples during ḥaḍra at 'īd al-Nabawī (Photo by Author)	332
Figure 4. Disciples and visitors offering money in return for prayers from Shaykh Fawzi (Photo by Author)	332
Figure 5. Disciples seated in group for study session (Photo by Author)	352
Figure 6. Disciples returning from Wednesday gathering (Photo by Author)	352
Figure 7. Disciples seated after first cycle of ḥaḍra (Photo by Author)	377
Figure 8. Painting of ḥaḍra in zawiya (Photo by Author)	377
Figure 9. Tea and Sweet Bread after ḥaḍra (Photo by Author)	377
Figure 10. Disciples performing ḥaḍra (Photo by Author)	377
Figure 11. Zawiya at night with 'Allah' illuminated on roof (Photo by Author).	390
Figure 12. Diagram of the name from Shaykh Fawzi's Lectures.	390
Figure 13. Disciple Naim's drawing 'The Union'	411
Figure 14. Entrance to khalwa room in zawiya (Photo by Author)	411
Figure 15. Picture by Naim based on vision	424
Figure 16. Picture by Sohayl based on vision	424
Figure 17. Disciples on siyaha	463
Figure 18. Disciples at crossroads signs pointing toward Taza and Oujda	463
Figure 19. Disciples resting during siyaha	463
Figure 20. Disciples arriving in Al-Aroui	463
Figure 21. Members of Karkariyya in front of Parliament in Rabat. The sign reads, "The Zawiya Karkariyya supports the initiative of autonomous governance of the Western Sahara under the leadership of Muhammad VI."	476
Figure 22. Algerian newspaper with title, 'The Karkariyya Sect ... why now?' (France 24 News)	482
Figure 23. Algerian newspaper with title, "Wide Denunciation of the dawa activities of the Karkariyya in Algeria" (France 24 News)	482
Figure 24. Chart taken from Kobaiti's Manual labeled "Purification of Tongue: Step of Enlightenment"	524
Figure 25. Chart taken from Kobaiti's Manual labeled "Purification of Tongue: Step of Cleansing"	525
Figure 26. Chart taken from Kobaiti's Manual labeled "Strengthening Sincerity"	531

NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION

In the main text of the dissertation, for the most part I follow the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* standard system of transliteration for Arabic. However, I diverge slightly from this formatting for many words common to readers in Islamic and/or Middle Eastern Studies, for which I have omitted the full transliteration in favor of simplified versions, but most will appear in italics. These words include: *zawiya*, *tariqa*, *ulama*, *hadith*, *jihad*, *sharia*, Quran, *sunna*, Muhammad, and schools of Islamic law (e.g., Maliki). I have also chosen to anglicize plural forms of Arabic words, for example, using *zawiyas* instead of *zawāya*.

In Moroccan dialect (*dārija*), there is substantial variation in terms of pronunciation in Arabic as well as standards for transliteration. Regarding pronunciation for example, it is common to hear a ‘*qāf*’ pronounced as a ‘g,’ rendering words like ‘*qāl*’ (to speak) as ‘*gāl*.’ Moroccan dialect as spoken also tends to omit many of the short vowels in pronunciation. I have, however, elected to stick with the standard Arabic spelling and vowelings rather than transliterated speech where possible. In addition, the influence of French as a formerly official and currently omnipresent language in Morocco also influences styles of transliteration. Thus, for example, the Arabic letter ‘*shīn*’ is often rendered as a ‘ch’ rather than an ‘sh’ – as is the case with place names such as Marrakech or Chefchaouen. This French influence also impacts the transliteration of vowels with ‘aou’ often replacing ‘aw’, as seen in the example of Chefchaouen, as well as ‘e’ instead of ‘i’ for the short vowel *kasra*. For the most part, I have stayed with the common spellings of places in Morocco instead of the formal transliteration system, but occasionally if a place name is used in a text I will provide a full transliteration as it appears in the text.

With regard to names of people, I have attempted to differentiate between names of interlocutors and authors through my choices of transliteration. For interlocutors, I have elected to use common versions of names (e.g., Mohammed instead of Muhammad). For authors, I have fully translated names even in cases where the author was also an interlocutor (e.g., ‘Abd al-Hāfiẓ instead of Abdel Hafiz). As for other references, I have used my judgment regarding transliteration, sticking with simplified versions for figures such as (Al-Ghazali or Ibn Arabi) while fully transliterating other names from Islamic and Moroccan history.

All translations from Arabic into English for field notes, videos, texts, websites, and other materials are my own, though as many of my interlocutors also spoke English there were open discussions about how to translate certain words - *iḥsān* (the central concept of this work) being perhaps the most open for debate.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

As I sat on the overnight train from Nador to Fes listening to the lessons and recording my notes from the previous week at the *zawiya* Karkariyya on the outskirts of the small town of al-Aroui, two women and a young girl entered the cabin, shattering the air of silence that had been present. Across from me an older woman dressed in a traditional Moroccan *quftān* had sat with her head against the glass partition enclosing the cabin while I sat next to the darkened window concealing the rugged terrain of the Rif mountains of northern Morocco. Catching us both by surprise with their entrance because we had not stopped recently, the two women and the small child struggled with their luggage before I offered to help them place it on the shelf above the seats. I then returned to my work as the three women struck up a conversation and the young girl started exploring the cabin. After a few minutes, I overheard the two women ask the third if I was Moroccan and they started guessing my nationality as I listened to Shaykh Fawzi's lessons on my iPhone. I smiled, removed the earbuds from my ears, and laughingly said that I was a researcher from the United States. I was a little confused about why they had switched cabins so I asked, and they responded that they were afraid of a thief and asked if they could move to a new cabin.

The woman across from me, dressed in an elegant black *kaswa* and *hijāb*, attempting to open a drink for her daughter asked, "What do you study?" Later in the conversation I would learn that she is a member of the Būdshīshī Sufī order, she received her master's degree in Islamic Studies, and was trained at the Muhammad VI Institute for Training Religious Guides. As such, she spoke as a product of multiple state-sponsored institutions that have sought to construct Sufism as the moral foundation of modern Moroccan citizenship and identity. "Sufism..." I replied, "... Religious Studies."

"Which Sufism (*ashmin taṣawwuf*)?" asked the woman to my right, a question I took to be about which Sufi order I studied. She was wearing jeans and a t-shirt, turning the cabin into a kind of cross-section of religious attitudes in Moroccan society.

Before I could respond, the older woman across from me interjected, "Like saints and visiting tombs for blessings (*tabarruk*)?"

"That is not real Sufism (*mashī al-taṣawwuf al-ḥaqīqī*)!" declared the woman across from me. "What is Sufism (*shnū al-taṣawwuf*)?" she asked rhetorically. "Sufism is the level of *iḥsān*..." I smiled because I had heard this lesson numerous times before, a lesson that would start with the 'Hadith of Gabriel.' After summarizing the *hadith* in which the angel Gabriel comes to the Prophet Muhammad to teach the religion (*dīn*) by asking about *islām*, *imān*, and *iḥsān*, the woman reiterates, "*Iḥsān* is to worship Allah as if you see him, and even if you do not see him, know that he sees you. This is the highest level and this is the level of the Sufis." This explanation, while unfolding in front of me, was not directed toward me. She was speaking directly to the other women in the cabin, providing an impromptu religious lesson as she was trained to do. Perhaps it was a performance, but at this point I had not had the opportunity to offer any explanation of my research.

The lesson continued by moving to a second text, that of [ʿAbd al-Wahid] Ibn ʿAshir [d. 1631 CE]. From memory she states, "These are the three parts of the religion (*dīn*) as Ibn ʿAshir said in his guide (*murshid*). 'Know that *islām* is what you do with your body / *imān* is what believers have in their mind and hearts / *iḥsān* is seeing and feeling Allah with the soul.' We take these from the creed (*ʿaqīda*) of Ashʿarī, the legal school of Malik, and the Sufism (*sālik*) of Junayd." In this moment, she effectively encapsulates the Moroccan

religious discourse by framing ‘Moroccan Islam’ as Ash‘arī, Maliki, and Sufi, while further specifying Sufism as Junaydi.

“Why (‘*alash*)?” she asks again rhetorically. “Listen (*sma ‘ilī*), because they include moderation (*alḥaqash kayshamlu al-waṣaṭa*). What do we mean by the Ash‘arī? They were opposed to the Mu‘tazilī ... in the end, the Ash‘arī was the middle path between the rationality [of the Mu‘tazilī] and the extremism (*tashaddud*) [of others] ... What about the Maliki? ... The Maliki are the middle way (*al-ṭarīq al-waṣaṭ*) between theory and practice (*al-naẓariyya w-l-‘aml*). Their rulings are from the behavior of the people of Medina, but make room for reason (*al-‘aql*). And what about Junayd? He is accepted by all for his moderation (*al-i ‘tidāl*) and adherence to the sharia. He was not like many eastern Sufis (*al-ṣufiyya al-sharqiyya*) but like the Moroccan Sufis (*al-ṣufiyya al-maghribiyya*) ... He united the sharia and the *ḥaqīqa* (*jama‘ bayn al-sharī‘a wa al-ḥaqīqa*) in his commendable character (*khuluq aẓīm*) – modesty (*tawāḍu‘*), temperance (*i ‘tidāl*), observance of the sharia (*tashrī‘a*), and ethical action without abstraction (*al-‘aml al-ṣāliḥ bilā tajrīd*).”

The other two women sat there as I scribbled her lesson as quickly as I could in my notebook, noting her interchanges of Moroccan dialect (*dārija*) and formal Arabic (*fushḥā*). The woman to my right responded with a question in French, to which the *murshida* (female religious guide) replied in Arabic. They spoke for a few more minutes covering topics such as faith (*īmān*), dress, women’s rights and the family law of Morocco, and language. Eventually, she turned to me asking, “What do you think (*shnū rayik*)?” This work is a reflection on that question, not so much an answer but a consideration of the historical conditions out of which this repeated rhetoric has emerged in contemporary Morocco.

Over the past twenty years, the Moroccan state under the leadership of King Muhammad VI has engaged in myriad strategies aimed at the regulation of what it calls the religious field. In response to domestic attacks in 2003 in Casablanca and the global war on terror, the Moroccan state implemented policies that monitor and manage religious discourse and practice as part of an overarching strategy to combat Islamic extremism. As ample research has illustrated, these policies have included a restructuring of religious bureaucracy, the formation of institutions, and state sponsorship of Sufi organizations, along with more repressive policing techniques.¹ In the process, the Moroccan state constructed the normative

¹ See Ann Marie Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam: Morocco and the War on Terror* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Malika Zeghal, *Islamism in Morocco: Religion, Authoritarianism, and Electoral Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Mohammed Tozy, “Le prince, le clerc et l’état: La restructuration du champ religieux au Maroc,” in *Intellectuel et militants*, ed. Kepel and Richardson (Paris: Seuil Press, 1990); Mark Sedgwick, “In search of the Counter-Reformation: Anti-Sufi Stereotypes and the Budshishiyya’s Response,” in *An Islamic Reformation*, ed. Charles Kurzman (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2004); Fait Muedini, *Sponsoring Sufism: How Governments Promote Mystical Islam in their Domestic and*

framework for an authorized ‘Moroccan Islam’ in which Sufism plays a pivotal and distinguishing role, the contours of which were outlined in the conversation above with an emphasis on character traits such as modesty (*tawādu*), moderation (*i’tidāl*), tolerance (*tasāmuḥ*), and solidarity (*taḍāmun*) that collectively embody virtuous piety (*iḥsān*).²

Foreign Policies (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); A. Idrissi, “The Political Participation of Sufi and Salafi Movements in Modern Morocco Between the 2003 Casablanca Terrorist Attack and the Moroccan Spring,” in *Sufis and Salafis in the Contemporary Age*, ed. Lloyd Ridgeon (London: Bloomsbury, 2015); P. Haenni and R. Voix, “God by All Means ... Eclectic Faith and Sufi Resurgence Among the Moroccan Bourgeoisie,” in *Sufism and the Modern in Islam*, eds. Martin Van Bruinessen and Julia Day Howell (London: Tauris, 2007); Rachida Chih, “Sufism, Education, and Politics in Contemporary Morocco,” *Journal for Islamic Studies*, no. 32 (2012): 24-46; Abdelilah Bouasria, *Sufism and Politics in Morocco: Activism and Dissent* (New York: Routledge, 2015); Khālid Bekkaoui and Richard René Larémont, “Moroccan Youth Go Sufi,” *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 2, no. 1 (2011): 31-46; and, Driss Maghraoui, “The Strengths and Limits of Religious Reforms in Morocco,” *Mediterranean Politics* 14, no. 2 (2009): 195-211.

² Since the Moroccan state generally deploys the term ‘Moroccan religiosity’ (*al-tadayyun al-maghribī*) in its official discourses, I want to take a moment to clarify my choice of the term ‘Moroccan Islam’. Firstly, by ‘Moroccan Islam,’ I am not referring to a timeless essence, as several anthropologists have done, nor do I consider it an ‘invention,’ as historians like Edmund Burke III suggest. Rather, what I am referring to is a specific crystallization of components that has been made possible by the Moroccan state’s efforts to centralize religious authority and control the production of religious knowledge. While the configuration may be new, the components drawn upon have historical precedent in Morocco specifically and Islamic history more generally. In short, my use of the term is intended to engage with existing scholarship on ‘Moroccan Islam’ with the understanding that it is neither an invention nor a permanent cultural schema of political authority. Secondly, my use of the term ‘Moroccan Islam’ points to the role of the Moroccan state in defining what it does refer to as ‘correct Islam’ (*al-islām al-ṣaḥīḥ*), a term which does frequently appear in Moroccan state discourses. Thus, I employ the term to indicate that the Moroccan state has worked to establish itself as a center of knowledge and power that has the authority to define ‘correct’ Islam, and therefore what makes it ‘Moroccan’ is not a geographical designation but a particular configuration of power and knowledge. Importantly, these contemporary configurations are not merely transpositions of earlier colonial and state institutional structures; rather, they constitute a diverse and dynamic network of state, quasi-state, and non-state institutions that are part of what some have called Mohammed VI’s ‘neoliberal authoritarianism’ (Emilio Spadola and Alice Catanzaro, “Sufism and Moroccan Political Culture: From the Theatrics of Domination to Neoliberal Development,” *Hespéris-Tamuda* LV, no. 3 (2020): 81-101). For the present I point out their insistence on using the term ‘Moroccan religiosity’ rather than ‘Moroccan Islam’ since the former is explicitly used in Moroccan state discourses. However, while they take issue with the use of ‘Moroccan Islam’ in secondary scholarship, their article fails to ask the straightforward question – why does the Moroccan state choose not to use Islam in its formulation when the reference of ‘Moroccan religiosity’ is Sunni, Maliki, Ashari, and Sufi? In other words, what is the state trying to achieve in its shift in rhetoric? Is it possible that the shift to ‘religiosity’ is intended to signal or to reinforce Morocco’s attempts to represent itself as a pluralist nation-state that practices freedom of religion, since on the surface this ‘religiosity’ could refer to any religion? However, government practice in Morocco continues to prevent citizens from establishing or practicing in Christian churches, as pointed out in a 2019 report by the US State Department, and as mentioned the content of this religiosity is explicitly and exclusively Islamic. Therefore, to insist on the use of the government’s terminology without attending to how that terminology fits into its political project seems to reinforce a vision of Morocco as tolerant of religious difference despite evidence to the contrary.

The connection between Sufism, *iḥsān*, and contemporary ‘Moroccan Islam’ is exemplified in the following comment from the king. In 2009, Morocco’s King Mohammed VI wrote a letter to open the Sidi Chiker National Gatherings of Sufi Partisans (itself an excellent example of state patronage of Sufism) that read, “This gathering is being held under my patronage to show how deeply I care for Sunni Sufism in my capacity as Amīr al-Mu’minīn [Commander of the Faithful] and Guardian of the Faith. *Sufism is indeed one of the characteristic spiritual and ethical components of the Moroccan identity*; it is fully consistent with the blessed *sunna* and the pristine Islamic *sharia*.”³ Invoking his authority as the religious leader of the community of the faithful, the king describes what he calls ‘Sunni Sufism’ as a spiritual and ethical tradition that forms the foundation of Moroccan identity.

This work is a study of the practices and discourses of three Sufi communities as they have developed within the context of this state sponsorship of Sufism. As I will argue, Sufism as an ethical tradition provides pedagogical resources for the cultivation of a public piety, characterized by *iḥsān*, that is situated within the framework of an authorized Moroccan Islam. However, contrary to arguments that the regulation of the religious field by the Moroccan state has decreased diversity and produced a banal interpretation of Islam, the focus of this project is on the diverse articulations and performances of this religiosity.⁴ Through a comparative analysis of three Sufi organizations based on eighteen months of fieldwork in Morocco, I bring into relief the spaces of creative enactment of Sufism as an

³ Cited in Muedini, *Sponsoring Sufism*, 81.

⁴ “The Moroccan case suggests that the War on Terror is reducing the diversity of religious doctrines available to practicing Muslims, as states employ overwhelming resources to support or oppose particular doctrines” (Wainscott *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 3). She concludes later, “It has flooded the Moroccan religious sphere with a relatively banal interpretation of Islam, one unlikely to excite young people or effectively counter the media-savvy messages of the Islamic State” (Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 240).

ethical tradition and how they articulate with the conditions of possibility framed by the state's authorizing discourses and institutions.

My goals in this project are two-fold. The first is to use contemporary manifestations of Sufi discourse and practice to reflect on the relationship between Sufism and ethics. By taking *ihsān* as a centralizing concept in this work, a concept that I will explore in more detail later in the introduction, the purpose is to look at the ways in which spiritual and social virtues interact in the formation of the ethical subject. Moreover, insofar as it has a multiplicity of meanings and nuances, *ihsān* serves as a centralizing but not fixed point for comparison as it affords alternative possibilities for interpretation and emphasis. Therefore, the principal aim of this work is to illustrate how variations in interpretations of *ihsān* correlate with different programs for cultivating and performing piety. For example, the *tariqa* Karkariyya-Fawziyya places great emphasis on *ihsān* as a vision of the divine, and as a result visionary experiences play a critical role in their pedagogical program. Alternatively, the International Academic Center of Sufi and Aesthetic Studies emphasizes *ihsān* as a mastery of the self through practices of self-reflection and accountability. Finally, the 'Alāwiyya frames *ihsān* as a way of engaging the social world, stressing social practices like teaching and charity in their pedagogical program as part of a vision of socially engaged spirituality. In short, these case studies refract three dimensions of *ihsān* as an embodied relationship with the divine, with oneself, and with society. Despite the differences in these three refractions of *ihsān*, taken together they illustrate *ihsān* as an embodied virtue that underpins and permeates pious forms of life.

The second goal of this work is to think through the relation between Sufism and Moroccan identity posited by King Mohammed VI in his statement above. However, in

addition to domestic concerns, the consolidation of a religious bureaucracy has provided the institutional resources necessary for producing religious knowledge and defining correct practice within and across the boundaries of the Moroccan nation-state.⁵ Through the creation of training institutions, think-tanks, and collaborative religious centers alongside governmental reforms, Morocco has established itself as a significant religious authority. For example, Morocco provides training for religious leaders (*imāms*) in West Africa and Europe, constituting a feature of its policy of ‘spiritual diplomacy.’ Thus, on top of constructing a religiosity that underpins citizenship, Morocco’s consolidation of authority enables it to effectively export this piety, a process that potentially fosters friendly relations between nation-states. In this sense, Sufism provides a mechanism for establishing shared sensibilities that reinforce alternative modalities of identification not directly tied to the nation-state, as in the case of using ‘Maghribi’ or ‘Andalusian’ to bind people in West Africa, North Africa, and the Iberian Peninsula. Put otherwise, while Sufism is deployed as a component of Moroccan identity and religiosity, it also operates in transnational contexts.

Through an analysis of the ways in which Sufi communities orient and situate themselves domestically and internationally, that is, how they operate within and across borders, I demonstrate the possibilities and challenges for Sufi organizations as they take shape in the contemporary world. For example, the *tariqa* Karkariyya-Fawziyya has a predominantly international make-up, but as its headquarters is in Morocco, it must abide by the rules of the Moroccan religious field (e.g., pledging allegiance to the king). However,

⁵ “As a start I would propose what the ulama are doing is to attempt a definition of orthodoxy – a (re)ordering of knowledge that governs the ‘correct’ form of Islamic practice. In effect, what we have today is essentially part of the same process by which long-established indigenous practices (such as the veneration of saints’ tombs) were judged to be un-Islamic ... there are conceptual and institutional conditions that must be attended to if discourses are to be persuasive” (Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reason of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 210).

this act of allegiance can be problematic for the order and its members who attempt to practice, for instance, in Algeria. In other words, how is an Algerian member of a *tariqa* that is tied to Moroccan identity supposed to think about or imagine her own identity? As a result of this question I ask, can Sufism operate simultaneously as a component of Moroccan identity, i.e., as something that binds together Moroccan society, and as a component of ‘global’ Islamic identity, i.e., as something that provides a source of solidarity across national borders? My goal is not to answer this question, but to show the different ways in which these domestic and international orientations articulate with one another. In order to mediate between these national and transnational aspects of Sufism, I consider Sufism in light of research on Islamic publics and counterpublics in order to bring into relief the intersections of the national and international that give rise to this ‘Moroccan Islam.’⁶

In short, there are two predominant concerns in this work: Sufism as an ethical tradition and Sufism as public piety, where ‘public’ in this context is not defined strictly as the public sphere tied to the nation-state. Thus, the current work is not a study of ‘Moroccan Islam’ as such since there are multiple modalities of religiosity (and secularity) in Morocco and this study does not take the nation-state as its constraining context. Rather, the communities with which I worked were largely international but insofar as they were operating in Morocco, their discourses and practices were taking shape in this context. Furthermore, the current work is not specifically an analysis of ‘Sufi orders’ in the classic sense. Instead, the object of analysis across the case studies is what is called the ‘curriculum

⁶ Dale Eickelman and Jon Anderson, *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003); Charles Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); Dale Eickelman and Armando Salvatore, *Public Islam and the Common Good* (Leiden: Brill, 2004); and, Armando Salvatore, *The Sociology of Islam: Knowledge, Power, and Civility* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016).

of ethical education’ (*minhaj al-tarbiya*), that is, the set of disciplinary and discursive exercises that are assembled and taught as part of a holistic program in which the ethical and spiritual development of disciples are integrated.

With this overall framework in mind, I ask the following questions: (1) What effect has the construction of Moroccan Islam had on the local practices and articulations of Sufism? (2) How do Sufi communities reconfigure and redeploy traditional practices and principles within this highly regulated field to provide competitive models of piety? (3) How do these distinct formulations and implementations of piety align with and/or critique state policies?

i. Virtuous Piety: *Iḥsān* in Islamic Traditions

The convergence of the ethical and the spiritual that runs throughout this work is evident in the concept of *iḥsān*. In a general linguistic sense, *iḥsān* is a verb meaning to do, to create, or to be good or beautiful.⁷ More generally, “The [Quran] and the Prophet consider *iḥsān* as one of the most desirable human qualities. The [Quran] connects *iḥsān* to everything good and praiseworthy and makes its possessors the inhabitants of paradise.”⁸ It also entails a particular relationship with God, as defined in the *hadith* of Gabriel by the Prophet when he said that *iḥsān* was “to worship Allah as if you see Him, for if you do not see Him, He sees you.”⁹ In this sense, it is connected to goodness giving it an ethical dimension, to beauty and ‘seeing’ giving it an aesthetic dimension, and to worshipping the divine connecting it to pious lifestyle.

⁷ Sachika Murata and William Chittick, *Visions of Islam* (St. Paul: Paragon House, 1994), 269.

⁸ Murata, *Visions*, 273.

⁹ Murata, *Visions*, 267.

The foundation of *iḥsān* in the context of the *ḥadīth* of Gabriel is worship. However, worship in this context is not mere submission, but a willing obedience or a voluntary servanthood.¹⁰ As a result, *iḥsān* is closely related to intentionality (*niyya*) and sincerity (*ikhhlās*). The cultivation of *iḥsān* is a process of adjusting one's own inner attitudes such that they align with 'God's will,' as can best be discerned through discussion and intellectual endeavor and acting in accordance with that internal state. "*Iḥsān* demands that people be aware of God's presence and act appropriately, but it also demands that they think, feel, and intend appropriately. It is not enough for outward activity to be correct ... rather, inward thoughts and attitudes must conform exactly with outward activity."¹¹ Thus, the kind of sincerity (*ikhhlās*) discussed here is a balance and harmony that is achieved between one's internal attitudes and outward behavior in relation to the divine. *Iḥsān* in this sense refers to the synchronization of inner and outer life, that is, behaving in the right way, at the right time, and with the proper intention. In this regard, it resonates strongly with notions of ethics (*akhlāq*) and proper conduct and comportment (*adab* pl. *ādāb*) that will be discussed in the next section.

While beginning with worship, *iḥsān* reflects a perfection of or excellence in worship, effectively making all aspects of one's life a form of worship through the recognition of the unity of God (*tawḥīd*). This recognition is often characterized as being in a state of constant remembrance (*dhikr*), a state of being related to the Quranic injunction 'Oh you who have believed, remember Allah intently' (Q 33:41). Thus, *iḥsān* involves the cultivation of a state of mindfulness that underpins pious wariness and awareness of God (*taqwā*). Relating this

¹⁰ For 'willing obedience' see Talal Asad, "Responses," in *Powers of the Secular Modern: Talal Asad and His Interlocutors*, eds. David Scott and Charles Hirschkind (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 212. On 'voluntary servanthood' see Murata, *Visions*, 275.

¹¹ Murata, *Visions*, 278.

back to the *hadith*, this piety (constant remembrance of the divine) is a ‘God-wariness’ that refers to behaving ‘as if one sees Him.’ Even if one does not see God, one should act as if God sees one throughout one’s daily life, i.e., as if He is present in all affairs. *Ihsān* in this sense connotes a way of being that assumes the presence of the divine in all aspects of life and entails a pious lifestyle.

The way God is remembered and made present, along with the nature of that encounter, has been the subject of continuous debate in Islamic traditions. As the *hadith* suggests, some form of ‘seeing’ is possible since it includes the conditional phrase, ‘if you do not see Him.’ Consequently, *ihsān* also refers to some mode of perceiving the divine and debates about this mode of perception have tended to relate to issues of transcendence and immanence, or what was also described as essence (*dhāt*) and attributes (*ṣifāt*). Ibn Arabi (d. 1240), for example, had a two-fold approach to *ihsān*, differentiating on the one hand observance (*murāqaba*) and on the other hand witnessing (*mushāhada*).¹² Observance, as discussed above, relates to the attentiveness associated with the ‘as if you see Him.’ At the level of witnessing, he describes witnessing of the attributes and witnessing of the essence. While the latter is generally reserved for the afterlife, the witnessing of Allah’s attributes is an attainable goal, especially for Sufis, through sets of exercises aimed at the embodiment of those attributes.¹³

The attributes of Allah are contained in what are called the ninety-nine ‘Most Beautiful Names of Allah’ (*asmā’ Allah al-ḥusnā*). Note here that ‘most beautiful’ (*al-*

¹² This formulation was presented during lessons with a member of the Tijaniyya during my studies in Fes. The discussion relied upon manuals with excerpts from various scholars that are distributed amongst the Tijani disciples.

¹³ “In contrast, the Sufis, who stress tashbih, said that it was possible to see God in this world, not with the eye of the head, but with the eye of the heart” (Murata, *Visions*, 277).

ḥusnā) is closely related to *iḥsān* in its connotations of goodness and beauty.¹⁴ Insofar as *iḥsān* involves doing, perceiving, and being what is good and beautiful, and these attributes are the most beautiful, *iḥsān* involves the embodiment of these attributes as virtues.¹⁵ Furthermore, as an ongoing way of being in and engaging with the world, with oneself, and with the divine, *iḥsān* is not merely an inner state but a process of transformation in which one draws nearer to Allah. Sufism in its myriad forms seeks to articulate paths for this transformation, and the diverse methodologies that emerge from various social and historical contexts form part of the basis of Sufi *ṭuruq* (sing. *ṭarīqa*). Approaching Sufism through *iḥsān* therefore connects it to a tradition of ethical instruction, signaling what Chittick and Murata call ‘practical Sufism.’ They write, “Practical Sufism is fundamentally concerned with human character traits ... Ibn al-Arabi tells us that Sufism is to assume God’s character traits as one’s own.”¹⁶ Thus, as a tradition closely related to the science of ethics (*akhlāq*), this ‘practical Sufism’ consists in diverse methods and programs for teaching ethics and refining character.

What I wanted to illustrate in this section is the semantic range of the notion of *iḥsān*. This range includes social practices like art, poetry, and charity (doing good and beautiful deeds), as well as spiritual practices of prayer and remembrance (*dhikr*). It involves honing an ability to act, feel, and perceive appropriately in novel situations, an ability that is realized through the coordination of dispositions, thought, and behavior. In this framework, *iḥsān* is in a sense a telos of Sufism as an ethical tradition, insofar as the *iḥsān* pertains to possibilities for human beings that are by necessity limited in respect to the divine. In short, thinking

¹⁴ “The [Quran] also uses the word *husna* as a noun, meaning ‘the best, the most beautiful,’ that which comprises all goodness, beauty, and desirability” (Murata, *Visions*, 168).

¹⁵ “To embody the beautiful is to embody the qualities of God” (Murata, *Visions*, 308).

¹⁶ Murata, *Visions*, 304.

about Sufism through *iḥsān* invites us to think about Sufism in terms of virtue ethics and tradition.

ii. Practical Sufism

Sufism (*al-taṣawwuf*) is notoriously difficult to define for academic and Islamic scholars alike. In this work, I approach Sufism as an ethical tradition. This section is intended to unpack this approach by beginning with a discussion of theoretical approaches to Sufism. I will unpack my approach to ethical tradition in Chapter Two. With regard to theoretical approaches, building on recent critiques of the common definition of Sufism as ‘Islamic mysticism,’ I argue that approaching it as a tradition enables us to see the way in which Sufism is enmeshed in social and spiritual relationships that buttress one another through discourse and practice (e.g., mentorship, friendship, advice). Through a consideration of its practices, I argue that Sufism is concerned with proper conduct and comportment (*adab*), as demonstrated in the oft-cited phrase ‘Sufism is entirely *adab*,’ which is not just rules for conduct but conduct in coordination with attitudes and sensibilities. Therefore, as *iḥsān* and as *adab*, Sufism points to applied programs of ethical development that work on the individual in their intertwined social and spiritual trajectories. The goal of this work is to investigate how those programs are being developed and deployed within the social and political contexts of contemporary Morocco.

While its geographical and temporal diversity make Sufism hard to define without essentializing, there are shared historical trajectories and a number of common characteristics. By way of definition, I start with Nile Green’s approach to “Sufism as a powerful tradition of Muslim knowledge and practice bringing proximity to or mediation

with God and believed to have been handed down from the Prophet Muhammad through the saintly successors who followed him.”¹⁷ From a historical perspective, this definition links Sufism with the normative historical traditions of Islam, suggesting for Green that it is better to speak of ‘Sufi Islam’ instead of ‘Sufism.’

As this historical outline goes in its bare form, during the ninth century in Iraq and in Khorosan, in the context of multiple religious and political disputes, a number of early Sufi figures emerged who drew on the Quran and traditions of the Prophet to produce intellectual and textual resources that would later be systematized.¹⁸ In the process, Sufism (*taṣawwuf*) came to mean “a distinct method of acquiring knowledge.”¹⁹ Over time, these methods became increasingly formalized and individuals who developed and taught these methods began to acquire disciples. This in turn led to the emergence of the Sufi order (*tariqa*), literally meaning ‘path.’ Thus, the *tariqa* referred both to the ‘path,’ or the specific method followed, and to the ‘brotherhood,’ or the form of social organization. These brotherhoods, as social institutions, were integral to the spread of Islam in its global context, gradually acquiring significant influence and material wealth in certain locations.²⁰ As they acquired more influence, they became increasingly integrated with social and political structures, playing important roles in trading routes, functioning as social and political critics, and

¹⁷ Nile Green, *Sufism: A Global History* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 8.

¹⁸ “Whether taken as entire books or as their constitutive elements by way of a legitimate and wide-ranging terminology, the textual output of the early Sufis of Baghdad created one of the crucial resources with which later generations of Sufis would construct a ‘tradition,’ which is to say a body of beliefs and practices that draws legitimacy and prestige from its relationship to a venerated past” (Green, *Sufism*, 43).

¹⁹ Green, *Sufism*, 42.

²⁰ “It is important to recognize, then, that to a very large extent, Sufism was Islam in its medieval form, an Islam of saints and miracles supported by the intellectual efforts of scholars no less than the rustic enthusiasms of tribesmen” (Green, *Sufism*, 126).

directly advising leadership. With this accumulated influence, the brotherhood became a source of authority, forming part of a process of ‘sanctification.’²¹

These brotherhoods were named after particular figures that became known as ‘friends of Allah’ (*awliyā` Allah* sing. *walī Allah*) for their proximity to and relationship with the divine. This proximity was manifest, in part, through the performance of miraculous deeds (*karamāt*), the possession of spiritual power (*baraka*), ecstatic states (*aḥwāl* sing. *ḥāl*) and spiritual genealogy (*silsila*). Accounts of these ‘friends of Allah’ were recorded in biographical dictionaries and formed an important component of the disciple’s education. Though the precise relationship between Sufi and saint (*walī Allah*) is not coextensive, the ideal Sufi and the saint shared a number of these characteristics. Consequently, the veneration of saints was incorporated into many localized forms of Sufism in the form of the visiting shrines (*ziyāra*), giving rise to construction of shrines that operated as nodes in a global network of pilgrimage.

The practice of pilgrimage was in turn situated in a system of exercises aimed at the annihilation (*fanā`*) of the ego (*nafs*), which facilitates a direct encounter with the divine presence and may also elicit ecstatic experiences. While the nuances of these concepts have been a point of debate and contestation, Sufis such as Al-Qushayrī (d. 1072 CE), Al-Sarrāj (d. 988 CE), and Al-Sulamī (d. 1021 CE) helped to consolidate the diverse teachings on these matters and make them more widely available. Before turning to the practices, I want to pause briefly on this relationship between annihilation and ego, in order to illustrate that annihilation is a process of transformation not eradication. Within the general Sufi

²¹ “For, as chains of descent and capital-gathering institutions, the brotherhoods were able to both reproduce new masters in every generation and provide them with public spaces to be buried in on their deaths ... Possessing abundant access to the necessary components of charisma, commemoration and capital, the brotherhoods thus operated as highly effective institutions for saint-making” (Green, *Sufism*, 92-3).

psychology, there are multiple (usually three) levels to the ego (*nafs*). The lowest level of ego, the commanding self (*al-nafs al-ammāra*) is closely associated with vice, egoism, and worldly desire. The second level is the blaming self (*al-nafs al-lawwāma*), which involves a state of reflection on and awareness of one's own reliance upon the lower ego. The third level, the reassured self (*al-nafs al-muṭma'inna*), refers to the achievement of a state of contentment and tranquility. The movement between these levels of the self is therefore a transformation (rather than an elimination entirely), and this transformation is facilitated by specific techniques. These techniques were in turn connected to movement along a path (*tariqa*) through a series of stages (*maqāmāt* sing. *maqām*) that involved the embodiment of particular virtues (e.g., patience, trust, repentance) and the adoption of accompanying modes of conduct.

While each Sufi *tariqa* constitutes distinct methodology with its own stages and practices, which is not necessarily fixed but undergoes reform and renewal, they tend to share common practices. The program of exercises includes, in addition to the basic strictures of the Islamic tradition such as prayers (*ṣalāt*), supererogatory prayers (such as a night prayer), repeated invocations of divine names or phrases (*dhikr*), spiritual audition and the performance of poetry (*samāʿ*), pledge of allegiance to a master (*bayʿa*) and collective rituals of rhythmic movement and chanting (*ḥaḍra*). Other practices, such as meditation retreats (*khalwa*) or forms of self-mortification (*darb al-shīsh*), were incorporated into some methodologies but not others. Underlying these practices was an ethical program that Green argues involved “the cultivation of moral virtues (*iḥsān*) through the observance of formal rules of etiquette (*adab*).”²² As a project designed for the cultivation of virtue and associated

²² Green, *Sufism*, 8.

patterns of conduct, this tradition of ‘practical Sufism’ does not stand apart from a ‘mystical Sufism’; instead, it forms the embodied possibilities out of which mystical experiences arise and are understood. In other words, I am not arguing that a mystical and ethical/practical strand stand in dialectic tension with one another, the dynamics of which gives rise to the generativity of the tradition. This is not to say that there are not mystical elements in Sufism; rather, it is to point to the need to situate those elements with respect to historical contexts (i.e., structures of power and knowledge) on the one hand, and embodied practices on the other hand.²³ As Green argues, “This sense of the historicity of mystical experience does not aim to reduce it, but rather to locate it in the temporal character of human existence.”²⁴ In the present study, I try to take this into account by framing the practices of Sufi communities within the context of the state’s consolidation of religious authority and authorizing discourse.

In summary, I approach Sufism as a discursive, ethical (embodied), and material tradition. The three are, of course, related in different ways so I do not present them as independent dimensions; instead, they point to the types of resources afforded by Sufism as a tradition. As a discursive tradition, it consists of discourses on theological or speculative issues, as well as debates about proper practice. It also includes the volumes of hagiographical literature and the poetry composed and performed by Sufis. All of these serve as resources for contestation and authorization. As a material tradition, it consists in the places and structures, such as shrines, that form a valuable component for the

²³ As Green states, “The emphasis placed here on tradition over mysticism is not to deny that many Sufis underwent mystical experiences which they subsequently held in high value. It is rather to make the point that these private experiences only acquired meaning and credibility through being absorbed into the collective and collaborative venture of different generations of Muslims who over the passage of time remained highly conscious of one another’s exemplary actions and teachings” (Green, *Sufism*, 4).

²⁴ Green, *Sufism*, 4.

maintenance of tradition. At various points in time, the ownership of the shrines has provided a substantial source of income for Sufi orders and Sufi lodges have been integral nodes in vast transnational trade networks. Moreover, this material infrastructure provided not only sacred spaces of worship, but also spaces of education for disciples and local communities. As an ethical tradition, Sufism is a set of practices aimed at the transformation of the self and its relationships through the acquisition of moral virtues. These sets of practices and their accompanying theoretical elaborations form ‘curricula of ethical education’ (*manāḥij al-tarbiya*), and the goal of this work is to illustrate how these take shape in reference to tradition but also in response to the demands of contemporary society.

iii. Researcher’s Notes

This project is based on eighteen months of fieldwork between 2017 and 2018 in Morocco funded by a Fulbright-Hays Fellowship. During this time, I lived primarily in the old city of Fes (known as *Fes al-Bālī*), just down the road from Bathā’, spending free time in local cafes with many individuals for whom piety (practicing religion in daily life) was not necessarily a priority. Thus, in addition to my research itself, my fieldwork experience allowed me to experience the diversity of lifestyles present in Morocco. In addition to traveling extensively throughout northern Morocco in order to visit shrines and attend religious events, I also spent extended periods of time in the northern Moroccan city of Nador and the nearby town of al-‘Aroui. Each of these three locations (al-‘Aroui, Fes, and Nador) serve as the basis for my comparative study of three Sufi communities: the Karkariyya-Fawziyya, the International Academic Center of Sufi and Aesthetic Studies (IACSAS), and the ‘Alāwiyya.

My project began as an attempt to study practices of charity in Sufi communities in Fes, and though some of these activities were present, my time spent with various groups over the first couple months of fieldwork did not fully materialize. This was due largely to the fact that such practices were inconsistent (i.e., seasonal) and I was not granted access to some of the places where it was performed due to the fact that I am non-Muslim and Moroccan law prohibits entrance into mosques. Some Sufi groups extended this to their *zawiyas* while others did not, making it difficult to engage with certain groups. These difficulties were accompanied by dead ends with other religious communities over the course of the summer of 2017 (such as the AWI). While I was able to make some contacts in this group and they were hospitable, access to the group itself was limited. Moreover, as a western white male, I encountered degrees of suspicion as I attempted to develop contacts and interview people. As a result, the groups studied here are framed by certain relations of power and history that foreclosed possibilities for investigation and therefore I do not present the groups in this study as representing Moroccan religiosity and identity in its entirety. Morocco is a diverse nation and the goal of this study is not to distill that diversity to a singular essence, but to use the multiple manifestations of a shared ideal to reflect on aspects of that diversity.

In addition to issues of religious and national identity, my research is also affected by my positionality as a male in an Islamic society. Consequently, it was difficult for me to gain access to women directly or to experience their modes of piety. For example, at the *zawiya* of the Karkariyya, there were many women present, about as many as the men under normal circumstances. They lived on the top two floors of the *zawiya*, above the Shaykh's residence, while the men lived on the first two floors. Although I saw women come down from time to

time, this was an entire world to which I quite simply did not have access and therefore is a significant blind spot in the research itself. Furthermore, since I was not able to conduct ethnographic fieldwork with this part of communities in a systematic fashion or to have extended conversations with individual women, I do not include an investigation of the role of women in these groups as an explicit theme. While I consistently asked people about approaches to gender, hoping to be able to compare gender expectations and performances of piety between the groups, I did not want to provide another male-dominated discourse about women. I recognize this is a major absence in the work and I have tried to include discussions of issues of gender and piety where I can, but it remains a partly shadowed area due to my own positionality.

I also recognize that Sufism in Morocco is itself highly diverse and contested, especially as it is practiced in different geographic regions. Thus, the choice to study communities in the northeastern coastal region of the Rif mountains limits possibilities for generalization, but it also supplements existing scholarship that focuses on Sufism in the Atlas mountain region. Selecting communities that are situated within the Shādhiliyya lineage also gives rise to certain similarities that, while prominent in Morocco, nevertheless are not shared by all Sufi groups. In this sense, I have not approached the practices and principles of these three groups as constitutive of a singular ‘Moroccan Sufism,’ but instead attempt to situate them as one among a number of ‘calls of Islam,’ to use Emilio Spadola’s phrase.²⁵ In other words, this work is not a ‘cross-section’ of Moroccan Sufism; rather, I use the idea of Sufism as *iḥsān* to highlight distinct refractions that demonstrate diversity in religious belief and practice in public life.

²⁵ Emilio Spadola, *The Calls of Islam: Sufis, Islamists, and Mass Mediation in Urban Morocco* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).

The final research issue I want to point out is language. Although I was able to develop my fluency in Moroccan Arabic, most of my conversations took place in Modern Standard Arabic. French would have been an alternative as well, and in northern Morocco Spanish was useful at times, but I tried to keep the language of conversations consistent such that I could effectively compare terminology across groups. However, this also forced some individuals out of their natural voice or language, and I recognize that doing this has an impact on what it was possible for interlocutors to say. I feel that having people from different groups comment on their understandings and practices of the same term is important for consistency. For example, *iḥsān* is variously translated into English as benevolence, virtue, and even spirituality, and into French as *philanthropie* or *bienfaisance*. Therefore, rather than translating *iḥsān* into distinct languages, a translation that would add or subtract connotations, I kept it (along with other key concepts) in their standard Arabic. My point is not that such an approach is better, for I do believe that allowing people to speak in their own languages allows them to better share their own lifeworlds, but that I made this conscious choice and have attempted to frame my project accordingly.

Thus, while this work is based on ethnographic fieldwork, I do not situate strictly as an anthropology of religion in the sense of a study in the subjective life and lived religiosity of an individual's lifeworld. Although this had been the intent of my original project, I had to rework my approach because people would not allow me to record our discussions. They were all happy to talk and allowed me to take notes, but my interlocutors were consistently skeptical of any recording devices. Because I could not record these conversations, I was hesitant to base my project entirely on my reconstructions of the statements of my interlocutors. Therefore, in addition to my ethnographic notes, I made the conscious choice

to incorporate other sources of data. One way I attempted to overcome this was by concentrating on ‘public performances,’ that is, discourses, writings, and events that were available to the public (i.e., on the internet or spoken to public audiences). By using material that is in a sense already public, I also attempted to overcome the issue of interlocutors performing a discourse for me. For example, it was very difficult early on to get people to engage with my questions in depth and they tended to provide vague answers about how Sufism was all about love and Islam is all about peace. I tried to overcome this by studying not what people had to say to me, but what they had to say to each other. I also worked around it by bringing texts to people, asking them to interpret passages and then using the texts as a catalyst for future discussions.

This research technique also tied into a method and theory question about the relationship between texts and practice in these communities. While a shaykh may write texts and prescribe practices or principles, the way in which those texts are used by disciples, as well as how they correlate to the practices themselves is not always entirely clear. This observation emerged from my readings of Edwin Hutchins’s cognitive anthropology on navigation, in which he shows how the performance of navigation in Navy ships is executed in a manner different from the procedure formulated in the handbook.²⁶ Therefore, while one may be able to read the text and describe the practice, its performance-in-action does not always follow that explicitly. Likewise, while a religious text may describe a practice in detail, it is still a question of whether such a practice is followed in that form. In short, I tried to use texts not only as a medium for conversation, but also to better understand how disciples themselves used and understood those texts. In this sense, many of my own

²⁶ Edwin Hutchins, *Cognition in the Wild* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995).

interpretations of textual materials are not entirely my own but arise out of collaboration with members of these groups.

iv. Outline of Dissertation

The dissertation is composed of four parts, each consisting of between two and four chapters. The first section (Chapters Two and Three) is the theoretical section. In it, I outline the two theoretical approaches that frame my comparative project. In Chapter Two, I develop my approach to Sufism as an ethical tradition using examples from within the Islamic tradition as well as secondary literature in the anthropology of Islam. In Chapter Three, I discuss my approach to Sufism as a mode of performing public piety. Specifically, I link the cultivation of piety in Sufi traditions to conceptions of the public good while also engaging scholarship on performance. My goal is not to separate out Sufism as an ethical tradition and Sufism as a performance of piety, but rather to lay a theoretical foundation in which the cultivation of moral character entails public performances of piety while the ways in which that piety is constructed delimit possibilities for styles of performance. In other words, how do cultivation and performance interact in different groups such that the spiritual progress of the individual is accomplished through engagement with the social world?

In the second section, I provide a historical overview of Sufism in Morocco over the course of the twentieth and twenty-first century. In short, my question here is how Sufism emerged in the twenty-first century as a component of Moroccan Islam authorized by the Moroccan state. Chapter Four deals with the relationships between Sufism and politics in Morocco as presented by anthropologists and historians, as well as the attitudes towards Sufism in the protectorate and post-independence period. The subsequent Chapter Five

addresses the development of Morocco's policy of sponsoring Sufism as part of a general reformation of the religious field in which religious authority was increasingly bureaucratized in governmental ministries and quasi-governmental organizations. My main argument in this section is that the normative formulation of Sufism as *ihsān* emerged in response to domestic and international concerns, turning Sufism into an ethical foundation of Moroccan citizenship. The remaining sections present distinct iterations of *ihsān* as a form of public piety.

The third section consists of four chapters and focuses specifically on the *tariqa Karkariyya-Fawziyya*. Headed by Shaykh Muḥammad Fawzī al-Karkarī and formed as a branch of the Karkariyya-Shādhiliyya in 2007, the group frames itself as a visionary order, emphasizing a variety of esoteric sciences characteristic of 'mystical' orders. My central question in this section is how, despite its apparent focus on the mystical dimensions of Islam, do the Karkariyya deploy traditional practices and principles related to Sufism as a practical ethical tradition of character development? Chapter Six deals with this question through the narratives of Shaykh Fawzi and his predecessors not simply as possessors of divine power, but more importantly as ethical exemplars and educators. Chapter Seven looks at how this ethical education is implemented in practice through an array of practices. Chapter Eight is an analysis of visionary experiences produced through the practice of spiritual retreat in which I use narratives of experiences to bring into relief the conceptual and theoretical dimensions of Shaykh Fawzi's writings. My argument here is that *ihsān* is understood in relation to this visionary experience, but that the cultivation of *ihsān* also involves the development of affective and perceptual aptitudes and propensities. Chapter Nine is a discussion of the role of the pilgrimage in the Karkariyya as a spiritual exercise

with political significance. In particular, I show how the performance of the pilgrimage in Algeria exacerbated tensions between the two nations in order to illustrate how Morocco's sponsorship of Sufism for political purposes has the potential to cause conflict between national and religious authorities.

The fourth section consists of two comparative chapters that draw out alternative dimensions of *iḥsān* as public piety and variations in the ensembles of practices that cultivate *iḥsān*. Chapter Ten focuses on the International Academic Center of Sufi and Aesthetic Studies (IACSAS) headed by Dr. Aziz al-Kobaiti. Based in Fes, this educational organization is not a *tariqa* in the traditional sense, but nevertheless redeploys a number of Sufi practices in its efforts to articulate a curriculum of ethical education applicable outside of the *zawiya*, i.e., in the public more generally. In it, I unpack the method of spiritual and ethical education developed by Dr. Kobaiti in order to show how *iḥsān* is framed first and foremost as a responsibility toward oneself. In this sense, the curriculum is aimed not at eliciting visionary experiences, though those do play a part, but at the excellence of the individual in all aspects of one's life. My central question in this section is how practices traditionally used in the context of the *tariqa* are adapted to a more generalized model of public ethical education. Chapter Eleven focuses on *tariqa* 'Alāwiyya currently led by Shaykh Khālīd bin Tūnis, a highly international Sufi order with a significant following in Europe. In Chapter Twelve, I discuss Shaykh Khālīd's role as a social and political critic, his vision of social reform, and the means for implementing that vision. Specifically, I demonstrate how *iḥsān* is framed as service to the other that is both honed and enacted through practices of education and charity. Overall, this section aims to elucidate how Sufism is situated as the basis of a socially engaged spirituality in which the values of Sufism as a

universal spirituality are articulated as a vernacular cosmopolitanism that underpins global Islamic publics. As such, it points to my next work which will address in more detail the transnational dimensions of Sufism as the basis for shared forms of life that enact transnational ethical grammars tied to universal conceptions of humanity while nevertheless being grounded in Islamic and Sufi practice.

Taken together, my goal is to provide a comparison of three manifestations of Sufism as a practical ethical tradition linked not only to the development of individual piety, but also the maintenance of the common good. Regarding *iḥsān* specifically, I demonstrate its three dimensions as relationship to the self, to others, and to the divine to show how it underpins a contemporary pious subjectivity and form of life. I also use the notion of Sufism as *iḥsān* as a lens to illustrate alternative interpretations and competing methodologies that are distinct despite their shared framing within an authorized Moroccan Islam. In doing this, I aim to demonstrate how a religious tradition can provide spaces of creativity and diversity in a highly regulated political context, allowing individuals to work on themselves and others so as to cultivate a social world grounded in ideas of shared ethical values and humanity.

CHAPTER TWO: SUFISM AS ETHICAL TRADITION: A THEORETICAL INTRODUCTION

i. Introduction

As discussed in the Introduction, the approach taken to Sufism in this work is derived from scholarship on ‘practical Sufism’ as a manifestation of *iḥsān* in Islamic traditions. This practical Sufism intersects with sciences of character development as developed not only in traditions of Quranic and Prophetic interpretation, but also in Islamic philosophy and law. Recent scholarship has expanded upon this approach through textual, historical, and ethnographic work, gradually bringing into light features of Sufism that were hidden under the veil of mysticism. These works suggest that Sufism, as a practical tradition of character development, shares a great deal with Islamic philosophical ethics, which in turn draws heavily from Greek ethics. As I will argue, this framing of Sufism opens possibilities for approaching Sufism as an integral part of the Islamic tradition.²⁷ Importantly, my goal is not to say that Sufism is simply a transposition of virtue ethics. Instead, I suggest that the two may share certain structural features that make ‘virtue ethics,’ as opposed to other ethical theories, an appropriate (in the sense that it emerges out of the tradition) and productive theoretical framework that has been used in historical and anthropological studies of Islamic piety.

In addition to its historical roots in the Islamic tradition, the formulation of Sufism as a practical tradition of ethical education aimed at the attainment of *iḥsān* is central to current presentations of Sufism in Morocco. As I will argue throughout this work, Sufism is framed as an ethical tradition in Morocco’s attempts to regulate the domestic religious sphere and

²⁷ Scott Kugle, *Rebel Between Spirit and Law: Ahmad Zarruq, Sainthood and Authority in Islam* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).

define a distinct version of Moroccan Islam. However, while this contemporary articulation of Moroccan Islam based in Sufism has to a certain extent been ‘invented’ through the consolidation of religious authority by the Moroccan government, I am not arguing, as other scholars have, that a practical Sufism oriented toward matters of worldly concern (i.e., social goods as opposed to spiritual and other-worldly goods) is a modern invention.²⁸ Nor am I arguing that the ‘Moroccan Islam’ discussed here is an essential, timeless type of Islam indelibly engrained in the cultural history and psyche of Morocco.²⁹ Instead, my argument is that the Moroccan state redeploys a traditional understanding of Sufism as the attainment of *ihsān* in order to construct an authorized piety and orthodoxy that is intended to counter alternative visions of Islam. Moreover, while this authorized piety and orthodoxy certainly places limits on possibilities for pious lifestyles and practices in contemporary Morocco, it does not eliminate diversity entirely. Thus, one of the central questions in this work is how, within this highly regulated religious field, Sufi communities draw upon and reformulate traditions such that they meet the criteria of this authorized piety and orthodoxy while nevertheless providing creative and compelling religious ideas and practices. In this regard, my argument is that a qualified diversity emerges through alternative interpretations of the

²⁸ For example, in their introduction to an edited volume, *Sufism and the Modern in Islam*, Julia Day Howell and Martin van Bruinessen suggest that modernity has produced a form of neo-Sufism characterized by “a this-worldly ethical and devotional practice free of the Sufi orders” (Bruinessen, *Sufism and the Modern*, 11). More specifically, I am referring here to arguments that contemporary Sufism reflects a protestant, neoliberal ethic. For example, Spadola and Catanzaro state, “In short, Sufism’s role in contemporary Moroccan political culture is to make economic self-sufficiency and entrepreneurial conduct a spiritual virtue. At the same time, we maintain that if Moroccan Sufism reflects more a global Calvinist work ethic than a master-disciple paradigm, it is equally conducive to authoritarianism in its new neoliberal forms” (Spadola and Catanzaro, “Sufism and Moroccan,” 81). Although my fieldwork does illustrate these trends in *some* Sufi orders, we see here a clear essentialization of ‘Moroccan Sufism’ that subjects it to the domination of global neoliberalism within Muslim societies. My approach subjects the individual practices of Sufi groups neither to the state entirely nor to the domination of neoliberalism entirely; rather, I focus on the agency of individual groups in situating themselves relative to local, national, and global trends.

²⁹ Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971); Dale Eickelman, *Moroccan Islam: Tradition and Society in a Pilgrimage Center* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976).

central characteristic of Morocco's authorized piety, *iḥsān*, that are in turn embodied and performed through distinct programs of ethical education, *minhaj al-tarbiya*.

I have two goals in this chapter. On the one hand, I aim to demonstrate the ways in which Sufism as a practical tradition intersects with Islamic sciences of character development through notions of *akhlāq* and *ādāb*. To this end, I discuss primary and secondary sources in order to show how Sufism constitutes an integral component of Islamic ethical traditions. On the other hand, my goal is to develop a theoretical approach to Sufism as an ethical tradition that facilitates the comparison of what contemporary Sufi leaders call 'curricula of ethical education' (*manāḥij al-tarbiya*). Derived from Michel Foucault's later work on ethics, this approach considers these curricula in light of scholarship in the anthropology of ethics on 'pedagogies of autopoiesis,'³⁰ as well as the anthropology of Islam on the formation of pious Muslim subjects.³¹ While this latter research deals with non-Sufi Islamic communities, my hope is that by first tying Sufism to a version of virtue ethics that is integral to the Islamic tradition, the theoretical points made by these scholars can help us to better understand contemporary trends in Sufism. Furthermore, insofar as the deployment of Sufism in Morocco is directed against Islamic groups similar to the Muslim Brotherhood, a degree of structural resonance between the two is to be expected, that is, a substitute ethical framework would likely share a number of features with that which is being substituted. In other words, as the current 'Moroccan Islam' has taken shape in response to these developments in the global Islamic community it has incorporated the ethical paradigm of modern Islamic movements.

³⁰ James Faubion, "Toward an Anthropology of Ethics: Foucault and the Pedagogies of Autopoiesis," *Representations* 74, no. 1 (2001): 83-104.

³¹ Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

Specifically, before turning to theoretical considerations of ethics and tradition, I want to demonstrate some of the ways in which Sufism has been tied to virtue ethics. Scholars have related Sufism to philosophical ethics (*akhlāq*) on the one hand, and proper conduct and comportment (*ādāb*), on the other hand. Thus, for example, Cyrus Ali Zargar (2018) in his analysis of storytelling as a mode of ethical education argues that there is a parallel between Sufism and virtue ethics in the emphasis on character development and habituation.³² While he maintains that Sufism cannot be reduced to virtue ethics alone, it nonetheless consists of a model in which disciplinary techniques are deployed in order to cultivate correlations of internal states with external behavior that enable the fulfillment of a moral good, or *telos*. Within the Islamic ethical framework, this ultimate moral aim is happiness (*sa'āda*) in the afterlife, as laid out clearly by al-Ghazali (d. 1111). However, there are intermediary 'goods,' such as the perfection of character that culminates in the state of *iḥsān*. Thus, as Zargar argues, "Sufism is the realization of a perfection in character, which ... involves a constant awareness of God ... in its most ideal form [it] is the fruit of a virtuous individual's best efforts, solidified as character traits, combined with a much larger moral evolution that has taken place in the collective character traits of the society around that individual."³³ Sufism therefore carries with it a sense of the cultivation of piety, understood as sets of spiritual virtues like the 'constant awareness of God,' as well as a sense of the refinement character that ties the individual to one's surrounding environment. As such, Sufism as a practical tradition entails the disciplining of both social and spiritual virtues

³² "There exists a parallel between practical Sufism and virtue ethics, in that both focus on the agent's character and progress to some moral aim, using practices and habituation" (Cyrus Ali Zargar, *Polished Mirror: Storytelling and the Pursuit of Virtue in Islamic Philosophy and Sufism* (London: Oneworld Press, 2018), 8).

³³ Zargar, *Polished Mirror*, 9.

that enable the individual to live a pious life enmeshed in relationships to oneself, to others, and to the divine.

As for *ādāb*, in their introduction to *Ethics and Spirituality in Islam: Sufi Adab*, Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen and colleagues argue, “In the 3rd/9th century, *adab* conforms in its multiple roots to an Islamic ethic, that Sufism endows with methods (education of *nafs*) and an ethic (*al-akhlāq*) that draws from the Prophet’s *sunna* [and] from Greek ethics (Miskawayh’s *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, adapted from Aristotle).”³⁴ I will return to the question of *adab* later, but for now I want to point out the connection being made between Sufism and *akhlāq*. In short, Sufism is connected here to both *akhlāq* and *ādāb*, connections that I will explore in the next two sections.

ii. Sufism and *Akhlāq*

Akhlāq (sing. *khuluq*) is generally translated as morals, with its singular form referring to something akin to character, as exemplified in its use in the Quran to refer to the exemplary moral character of the Prophet Muhammad.³⁵ Similarly, as narrated by Mālik, the Prophet described his mission as the teaching of moral character when he said, “I was sent to perfect (*utammim*) good character (*ḥusna al-akhlāq*).” In other words, the concept of *akhlāq* is central to the Islamic tradition as a whole and therefore debates about the method of teaching character have been integral to the historical development of Islam.

One space where the science of character development, or ‘refinement of character,’ took shape at the intersection of Sufism and philosophy. According to Chittick and Murata, “What differentiates the philosophers from the Sufis is the stress that the latter place upon the

³⁴ Francesco Chiabotti et al. (eds.), *Ethics and Spirituality in Islam: Sufi Adab* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 4.

³⁵ Q 68:4: “Verily, you [Muhammad] are of great moral character (*khuluq ‘azīm*).”

Prophet as the embodiment of perfect character and on his *sunna* as the framework within which beautiful character traits can be actualized.”³⁶ The Islamic philosophers, specifically Miskawayh (d. 1030), drew upon Greek ethics (especially Aristotle) to articulate a prescriptive framework of virtue ethics that was then assimilated in some respects by later scholars, such as al-Ghazali. While the two methodologies of the science of character development differ in important ways, particularly in epistemological matters, they also share a number of features.³⁷ For Zargar, “This is because Miskawayh’s virtue ethics deeply affected Ghazali’s ethics, and Ghazali’s ethics affected countless Sufi writers.”³⁸ My point here is that although there are important differences and transformations that take place between Greek virtue ethics, Miskawayh’s reading of those ethics, Ghazali’s reframing of Miskawayh’s reading in a normative Islamic framework, and subsequent appropriations of Ghazali’s methods in Sufism, secondary literature points to structural interrelations between the two. Thus, approaching Sufism through the lens of virtue ethics has a grounding in the tradition and is not merely a theoretical imposition. Such a grounding in the tradition was reaffirmed through my fieldwork, as evidenced in the emphasis placed on Sufism as a path of ethical and spiritual progress toward *iḥsān*. This is not to say that Sufism at all places and times takes this particular form; instead, my argument is that the kind of Sufism authorized in the contemporary Moroccan context draws upon this tradition, that is, Sufism as an ethical tradition.

³⁶ Murata, *Visions*, 305.

³⁷ “Although many Sufi writers opposed the epistemological foundation of philosophy and rejected rationalism as a way to ultimate reality...” (Zargar, *Polished Mirror*, 55).

³⁸ “Part of Miskawayh’s ingenuity was to present a ‘Greek’ virtue ethics that was ‘Islamic’ enough for Ghazali to incorporate his insights into a monumental book that aimed to revive the entirety of religious learning ... Miskawayh’s book on character became the framework by which Ghazali constructed a very original and long-lasting amalgam of ‘secular’ ethics, scriptural ethics, and the teachings of Sufis ... The transition from Miskawayh (and other philosophically minded writers) to Ghazali, despite their differences, is exciting from a historical perspective” (Zargar, *Polished Mirror*, 66).

Within Sufi discourses of practical Sufism, that is, Sufism as an applied craft of ethical education, the embodiment of these good character traits is framed as a path through multiple ‘mystical stations’ (*maqamāt*). While various iterations of paths articulate or order stations differently, examples include repentance (*tawba*), trust (*tawakkul*), contentment (*riḍā*), gratitude (*shukr*), sincerity (*ikhlās*), fear (*khawf*), and scrupulousness (*waraʿ*).³⁹ The point is not that each of these is in-itself a virtue but that “there exists a parallel between practical Sufism and virtue ethics, in that both focus on an agent’s character and progress to some moral aim, using practices and habituation ... Sufi writers formalized the paths to perfection, which is proximity to God and intimate knowledge of him.”⁴⁰ As I will demonstrate at various points in my analysis, the ethical cultivation of individuals is not done for its own sake, but is directly tied to opening up possibilities for experiences (i.e., proximity) and knowledge of the divine.

Atif Khalil brings out this resonance in his work on repentance (*tawba*) in early Sufi literature. He writes, “Aristotle’s understanding of the ideal virtuous man is not entirely different from the realized Sufi in Makki’s thought, at least in relation to the question of the soul’s inclination and attraction to what is virtuous. Just as for Aristotle the ethically accomplished man finds it pleasurable to all that is good, the advanced Sufi, for Makki, finds obedience to God pleasant.”⁴¹ What he is describing here is a form of willing obedience in

³⁹ Al-Ghazali’s fourth volume of his ‘Revival of the religious sciences’ is on the ‘ways to salvation,’ and includes books on stations such as repentance, patience, thankfulness, fear, hope, poverty, abstinence, faith, trust, love, contentment, and sincerity among others.

⁴⁰ Zargar, *Polished Mirror*, 68.

⁴¹ He goes on to writes, “Both the virtuous man and the ideal Sufi possess a purity of soul actualized through laborious practice. The performance of good deeds, and the avoidance of evil ones, is second nature to both of them, ingrained into the substance of their beings. For both Makki and Aristotle, it is not enough simply to know a virtue, or to practice it with a heart that delights in its exact opposite. The one who strives to attain ethical or spiritual perfection must actualize the latent goodness of his soul, so that it comes to find all that is morally good to be sweet, and all that is evil to be repugnant” (Atif Khalil, *Repentance and the Return to God* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2019), 159).

which the intention of the individual is reoriented, thereby making obedience a pleasure. As discussed in the section on *ihsān*, the perfection of worship (i.e., the cultivation of willing obedience) entails the acquisition of a set of character traits. Therefore, while the specific virtues (*akhlāq*) were detached from their Greek roots through the emphasis on traits of the Prophet that were considered manifestations of divine qualities, as practical approaches to ethics they shared a concern for the cultivation of virtues through practice, repetition, and learning over time.⁴² Sufi leaders have and continue to provide variations on the precise regimes of practice as well as their pedagogical methodologies, recombining and reforming practices in response to particular social or cultural conditions. The different streams of spiritual instruction, although they draw from the same reservoir, reflect the ways in which Sufi leaders creatively engage their historical conditions, simultaneously drawing on a tradition and adjusting it to meet the needs of the moment. It is for this reason that many of the individuals with whom I worked in Morocco quoted the phrase, “A Sufi is a child of one’s time” (*ṣūfī ibn waqtihī*), meaning that they are always adapting to and critically monitoring the self and society. They are also ethical educators operating in formal and informal contexts, providing training in the scholarly sciences while subtly shaping the moral fabric of communities in which they were situated.

iii. Sufism and *Adab*

Like many of the terms discussed up to this point, *adab* (pl. *ādāb*) is also a difficult term to define and translate. For the most part, I will use the term in its plural form on the one hand to signify its diverse manifestations, and on the other hand to highlight that it

⁴² Furthermore, I would argue that Aristotle’s notions of phronesis and aesthesis and their relation to his ethical theory parallel relations between ethics and modes of discernment and perception.

consists of multiple types of external behaviors and internal dispositions. Moreover, scholars of the Arabic language debate the roots of the term itself, though its origins appear to relate it to the notion of ‘an invitation to a banquet.’⁴³ In a general sense, it relates to proper conduct and comportment, etiquette, being ‘cultured,’ well-read and educated. As it was deployed in Persian contexts, it was associated with courtly behavior and the etiquette of princes. During the modern period, it came to mean ‘literature,’ often divorced from the religious sciences and tied to specific forms of writing. In a recent edited collection on the topic of Sufism (spirituality) and *adab*, Catherine Meyer-Jaouen and colleagues claim that the plasticity of the term, as it is used in primary literature and defined in secondary scholarship, is due to the fact that, “*Adab* is not a stable entity, handed down from generation to generation. Rather, it is a configuration and a constellation that is constantly shifting according to the moment and the place, which are not simply decorative contexts.”⁴⁴ Attempting a broad definition or specifying content for the term is therefore quite difficult, so my goal in this section is to discuss some of the ways in which it is deployed within Sufi discourses. What I want to highlight is the way in which it operates within Sufi practice not only as rules (i.e., as a moral code) but also as form of discipline analogous to the refinement of character. Additionally, a number of scholars have relied on the idea of *adab* to describe the formation of subjects in modern contexts, so I will use my discussion here as a basis to engage their work in the section of Sufism and public life.⁴⁵ For Salvatore in particular, *adab* underpins a form of

⁴³ Chiabotti, *Ethics and Spirituality*, 3.

⁴⁴ Chiabotti, *Ethics and Spirituality*, 25. For a full discussion of the term see their introduction.

⁴⁵ Salvatore, *The Sociology of Islam*, 2016; Ellen McLarney, “The Islamic Public Sphere and the Discipline of Adab,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43, no. 3 (2011): 429–449; Ellen McLarney, “Freedom, Justice, and the Power of Adab,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 48, no. 1 (2016); and, Paulo Pinto, “Sufism and the Political Economy of Morality in Syria,” in *Sufism and Politics*, ed. Paul Heck (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2007).

civility that facilitates sociality, thereby fostering a shared public life that brings together the diverse communities of the Islamic ecumene.

A common saying I heard in my fieldwork, and reiterated in Sufi texts, states that ‘Sufism is entirely *adab*’ (*al-taṣawwuf kulluhu adab*).⁴⁶ For Mayeur-Jaouen and colleagues, Sufism and *adab* share in their concern for education, their disciplining of internal states and external conduct, their constitution in networks of relationships, and their relationship to ethics (*akhlāq*). With regard to education, they argue that *adab* not only relates to disciplines of refinement (*tahdhīb al-akhlāq*) and exercises of the self (*riyaḍat al-naḥs*), but also to the acquisition of forms of knowledge through texts, poetry, and anecdotes (*hikayāt*).⁴⁷ They wrote, “Far from being limited to a science, *adab* brings the sciences together and gives them their ‘general tone’, their meaning, and for the Sufi, their mystical goal.”⁴⁸ In terms of education, therefore, *adab* constitutes a holistic curriculum in which ethical transformation is linked to knowledge and experience. *Adab* in this sense reflects the Sufi’s concern for both the inner and outer dimensions of life, the worldly along with the other-worldly, and knowledge with action.

The internal-external divide has played a prominent role in the analysis of Sufism, with the claim being that Sufism pertains to the internal realm while *sharia* manages external behavior. However, as the editors of the volume argue, “Another point in common between Sufism and *adab* [is] the refusal to separate the ‘exterior’ and the ‘interior’ ... In general, the *adīb* [one who has and does *adab*] conforms to the Greek ideal, and when adorning his mind, he must not neglect his appearance or bodily care. On another level, this is a principle shared

⁴⁶ They argue that it can be attributed to Abu Hafs al-Haddad al-Nisaburi via Sulami.

⁴⁷ “Adab and Sufism are thus linked to knowledge ... Such knowledge is linked to science (‘ilm) and gnostic knowledge (ma’rifa)” (Chiabotti, *Ethics and Spirituality*, 5).

⁴⁸ Chiabotti, *Ethics and Spirituality*, 5.

by the Sufis; interior states can literally ‘be seen’ from outside. The exterior beauty of *adab* suggests the existence of an interior *adab*.⁴⁹ *Adab* in the context of Sufism therefore refers to internal states of piety (framed around the *maqamāt*) as well as norms of behavior and publicness that are both the means to and expression of those states of piety.⁵⁰ In this sense, *adab* gives form to public piety and insofar as Sufism intersects with *adab* in this manner, Sufism therefore also constitutes a form of public piety, where public piety connotes this entangled internal-external sense of self.⁵¹ As a result, I take the various modes of public engagement, as well as the differences in attitudes towards public engagement, as components in programs of ethical education and performances of piety that help shape public spaces. My point here is that by linking Sufism to *adab*, the distinctions between internal and external that scholars map onto distinctions between Sufism and *sharia* begin to collapse such that Sufism emerges as an integral ethical tradition, as opposed to one set apart from other Islamic traditions. Moreover, Sufism cannot be considered merely a private religiosity as it is also dependent upon the performance of social acts embedded in the idea of *adab*, a point that runs contrary to many modern formulations of Sufism as more compatible with secular society as a form of interiorized religiosity.

For example, Paulo Pinto, in his analysis of Sufism in contemporary Syria, suggests that practicing these forms of sociability (*adab*) constitutes a ‘moral performance’ that

⁴⁹ Chiabotti, *Ethics and Spirituality*, 6.

⁵⁰ In this regard I draw upon Saba Mahmood who writes, albeit in a different context, “What is significant in this program of self-cultivation is that bodily acts – like wearing the veil or conducting oneself modestly in interactions with people (especially men) – do not serve as manipulable masks in a game of public presentation, detachable from an essential interiorized self. Rather, they are the critical markers of piety as well as the ineluctable means by which one trains oneself to be pious” (Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*, 158).

⁵¹ Lara Deeb defines public piety in the following way. “Public piety is the public practice of faith based on upon an interpretation of Islam that I term ‘authenticated Islam’” (Lara Deeb, *An Enchanted Modern: Gender and Public Piety in Shi’i Lebanon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 8). While Deeb elects to use the term ‘authenticated Islam,’ I refer to the construction of piety by the state in Morocco as an ‘authorized discourse’ to emphasize its basis in power.

organizes and transforms the public sphere. He states, “The enactment of *adab* as moral performance creates a framework of public morality through which are built social evaluations and subjectivities. It is not by chance that such enactment is usually coupled with a notion of *akhlāq* (morals).”⁵² I will return to ‘moral performance’ in the next chapter on performing public piety as it provides important insights for framing the relationship between Sufism and the public. For now, I want to point out that *adab* as embodied correctness is coupled with *akhlāq* insofar as *adab* is seen not only as conformity to rules of conduct, but also the manifestation of internal qualities, i.e., it is a performance of piety that enacts and makes possible certain social relationships.

In addition to moral education and internal-external integration, Sufism and *adab* are founded upon the formation and maintenance of myriad social and spiritual relationships. As discussed above, the practice of Sufism depends on mentorship and friendship and there are specific attitudes and rules of conduct that govern those relationships. Likewise, Sufism is founded on a relationship to God, which in its perfected form (*iḥsān*) I have suggested consists in a form of willing obedience understood as the alignment of one’s will with that of God. This can be accompanied or facilitated by a variety of other attitudes or affective states, and part of the perfection would be to develop oneself such that the appropriate attitude is activated in the right context. It also entails a relationship with oneself, which may take the form of repentance (*tawba*) or remembrance (*dhikr*), for example. In the former, one may dwell on one’s previous sins thereby relating to oneself as a sinner, whereas in the latter one may seek to remember Allah in all moments, forgetting the self (*nafs*) as one reminds oneself of Allah’s presence. Approaching Sufism through *adab* requires recognition that all of

⁵² Pinto, “Sufism and the Political Economy”, 126.

these relationships are operative simultaneously, and that the object of this type of practical Sufism is not the development of one of these relationships at the expense of others, but the balanced transformation and maintenance of all in order to achieve a state of excellence (*iḥsān*).

iv. Literature Review

In the previous section I highlighted some of the ways in which Sufism, *akhlāq*, and *adab* are related in order to make two points. The first was that these three terms overlapped in the ‘craft of character development,’ linking the ethical transformation of the self to forms of knowledge and ways of being. This ‘practical Sufism’ maintains the ‘mystical’ goal of divine union and knowledge but situates that goal within a regime of disciplinary practices that cultivate the embodied conditions of possibility for that encounter. The second was that in addition to the focus on individual character development, the ‘perfection’ of character is dependent upon the social conditions in which one lives, for to live a wholly virtuous life requires that one engage in worldly life, not merely flee from it. The performance and cultivation of virtues in Sufism takes place, therefore, not only in isolation through practices of *dhikr*, for example, but also in social interaction through practices such as companionship (*ṣuḥba*), charity (*ṣaḍaqa*), and advice (*naṣīḥa*). These modes of sociability form an integral component of the overall education or character development of the disciple as they become spaces for the training and enactment of traits such as patience (*ṣabr*) or gratitude (*shukr*). The process of character development is enmeshed in social relationships and interactions and that those also become spaces for learning, performing, and transforming pious lifestyles.

This section is intended to extract these diverse practices through a review of anthropological and historical studies on Sufism.

Several historical projects in the Moroccan context specifically highlight not only the social (as well as economic and political) significance of Sufi orders, but the role of that social work in their spiritual methodologies. In his seminal study of premodern Moroccan Sufism, Vincent Cornell states, “The most basic type of premodern Moroccan saint was the *ṣāliḥ*, a Quranic concept that goes back to the very origins of Sufism ... To the authors of Moroccan hagiography, the *ṣāliḥ* exemplified the ethical authority of sainthood ... As an ideal type, the *ṣāliḥ* stood above all for social virtue.”⁵³ In this regard, ethical purity served as a source of authority for the saint (or Sufi figure) who also operated as a kind of moral exemplar to be imitated insofar as the saint was seen to embody divine or prophetic virtues. Furthermore, since their authority was derived from their ethical character, they also functioned as critics in Moroccan society, offering advice to rulers and accusing elites of corruption, yet another form of social practice.

Scott Kugle takes up the notion of the Sufi as ‘social critic’ in his study of Ahmad Zarruq in early modern Morocco, referring to him as a ‘conservative rebel.’ Kugle writes, “They rebel against the social and political forces that are seemingly dominant in their community. Yet they rebel by turning to the past, to restore ideals from their community’s tradition, ideas that will address their society’s current crisis ... the conservative rebel looks forward while pointing backward.”⁵⁴ According to Kugle, Zarruq criticized the forms of Sufism, and particularly sainthood, operative in his time for being corrupt and overly

⁵³ Vincent Cornell, *Realm of the Saint: Power and Authority in Moroccan Sufism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), 277.

⁵⁴ Kugle, *Rebel*, 26.

invested in dynamics of power. In contrast, he articulated a vision for the (re)integration of Sufism and Islamic legal reasoning in which Sufism was understood as a practice of ethical cultivation.⁵⁵ Both Kugle and Cornell therefore point to the historical precedent of Sufism as an ethical tradition in Morocco, as well as the socially active role performed by Sufi critics and reformers.

In addition to social and political critics, or more generally moral reformers, the Sufi lodges in Morocco (*zawiya* pl. *zawāya*) also had significant roles as social institutions. They served as schools, hostels for travelers, and resting points along extended networks of trade and pilgrimage routes. As sources of primary religious education, Sufi lodges in Morocco were responsible for the ethical and intellectual formation of the youth, making them an integral component of Moroccan society. Furthermore, as hostels they served as important outposts for traveler, providing them with meals and places to stay. Hospitality was not only a disposition or trait, but also central practice to the disciplining of disciples. In his historical analysis, Francisco Rodriguez-Mañas investigates hospitality in Moroccan lodges through the practice of giving food (*iṭ'ām al-ṭa'ām*).⁵⁶ In this context he argues:

... Leaders of *zawiyas* began to think of the [*zawiya* 's] role as soup-kitchens not merely as a fulfilment of their self-assigned charitable mission (a facet of the activity of these institutions much encouraged by early Sufi ideologues) ... alongside other philanthropic activities such as almsgiving, but rather as an integral part of their order's sets of rules. Often, for instance, diligence while handing out meals to sympathisers and unbounded generosity are qualities that Sufi shaykhs try to instill into their disciples. The ability to both contrive a copious meal for a batch of unexpected visitors and show no qualms about using up one's own resources evinces one's rank the Sufi spiritual hierarchy. Willingness to practise the *iṭ'ām* whole-

⁵⁵ Kugle writes, "This integral Islam would include Sufism as ethical cultivation, Islamic jurisprudence as the means to create consensus, mutual respect for disagreements in ritual and dogman, and restraint in refusing to brand other Muslims as unbelievers" (Kugle, *Rebel*, 17).

⁵⁶ He writes, "In Morocco, Sufis seem to have attached enormous importance to this practice, particularly to its most 'tangible' manifestation, that is the distribution of meals among visitors, since at least the second half of the twelfth century..." (Francisco Rodriguez-Mañas, "Charity and Deceit: The practice of *iṭ'ām al-ṭa'ām* in Moroccan Sufism," *Studia Islamica*, no. 91 (2000): 61).

heartedly, even if this entails putting at risk one's own survival, is regarded as a prerequisite to advance in the mystical quest.⁵⁷

This extended quote highlights several key points I want to reiterate. Firstly, there is a recognition that social virtues of charity, hospitality, and generosity are at play within early Sufi discourses and that those general attitudes get formalized in specific Sufi orders as part of an effort to cultivate those attitudes. Secondly, these attitudes of charity and generosity must be habituated so that they can be performed spontaneously, as expressed in the ability to respond to 'unexpected visitors.' Finally, the development of these attitudes, or the cultivation of the virtues of charity and generosity, are 'prerequisites to advance in the mystical quest.' These forms of social practice and the virtues they inculcate are therefore not detachable from the context of the overall spiritual project, and an account of that spiritual project must take the embodied preconditions cultivated and performed through social practice into consideration.

In addition to these historical considerations, several recent anthropological studies have explored these social and performative dimensions of Sufism. In the context of the Naqshbandiyya in Turkey, Brian Silverstein states, "For the practitioners who I came to know, Sufism is essentially an ethical discipline (the term they used was *terbiye*, Arabic *tarbiya*), a self-reflexive effort to constitute moral dispositions ... in oneself through repetition according to precedents considered to be binding and authoritative."⁵⁸ Focusing on companionship (*sohbet* in Turkish), he highlights how this moral education unfolds through multiple modalities of social interaction, as well as how transformations in the media of interaction affect those modalities.

⁵⁷ Rodriguez-Mañas, "Charity," 61.

⁵⁸ Brian Silverstein, *Islam and Modernity in Turkey* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 43.

Amira Mittermaier provides an ethnographic account of the modalities of giving in Sufi *khidmas* that highlights the entwinement of the social and spiritual. Describing the sentiments of her interlocutor, Mittermaier writes, “The kind of gift enacted by Nura is provocative because it evades the logic of reciprocity so often highlighted in the anthropology of the gift ... To her the point is not attending to the Other as an Other, but being enmeshed in social and spiritual relations.”⁵⁹ As she argues, gifts and hospitality, in this case providing food, enact an “ethics of immediacy” that challenge temporalities of modern capitalist society. However, for the present purposes, I simply want to highlight how giving operates as a Sufi practice in different contexts. One aspect of my current project is to illustrate different modalities of giving, in part by thinking of giving not only in material forms, as Mittermaier and others tend to do, but also in other forms like education or sharing a divine light. In this regard, my work aims to rethink the concept of *ṣaḍaqa* through the lens of an oft-cited *hadith* that begins, “Smiling to your friend is charity (*ṣaḍaqa*), encouraging the good and forbidding evil is charity (*ṣaḍaqa*)...” In other words, kind acts, sharing knowledge, and helping others are all forms of giving that, among the Sufi groups I worked with, were critical components of a curriculum of ethical practice and education.

Likewise, Rudiger Seeseman’s study of Sufi charities in Sudan attempts to address the relationship between Sufism and social welfare. Through a comparative analysis of the activities of two Sufi shaykhs, he argues that they have undertaken a project of formalizing ‘traditional Sufi welfare structures,’ transforming previous structures like the Sufi lodge into a formal charity hospital for example, as a way to address issues of social welfare.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Amira Mittermaier, “Bread, Freedom and Social Justice: The Egyptian Uprising and a Sufi Khidma,” *Cultural Anthropology* 29, no. 1 (2014): 72.

⁶⁰ “In addition, both shaykhs have initiated social welfare projects that can be described in terms of a formalization of informal social security systems as represented by the Quranic school and ‘traditional’ healing

However, as he argues, “This notion of social welfare does not contain ideas that can be described as peculiar to Sufi doctrine... it is in the actual performance rather than the doctrine that allows us to identify Sufis as actors in the field of social welfare.”⁶¹ His point here is that what makes it ‘Sufi social welfare’ is that it is done by a ‘Sufi,’ rather than there being a coherent idea of ‘Sufi social welfare’ that is then enacted by individuals. While he is in part making a methodological argument, my point is that these anthropological accounts provide points of entry for thinking about how social acts like companionship, giving, and forms of social care and welfare fit into the lives of individuals who consider themselves Sufis.

What I have been trying to demonstrate with these examples is that there are a whole set of social practices and relationships that operate as potential spaces for ethical education and spiritual transformation. How those spaces are incorporated into an overall program, however, is a major point of difference between orders. While letters were at one time important means for cultivating master-disciple relationships, certain uses of the internet have become mechanisms for ‘communicating the cardinal social virtue of friendship,’ for example, enabling disciples spread across the globe to develop a relationship with each other. Alternatively, forming organizations that perform charity or education provides opportunities for members of Sufi communities to perform and hone their own piety, while also improving conditions for others or educating youth. Thus, the development of personal piety is entangled with programs of social reform and community service. While the studies

methods” (Rudiger Seeseman, “Sufi Leaders and Social Welfare: Two Examples from Contemporary Sudan,” in *Social Welfare in Muslim Societies in Africa*, ed. Holger Weiss (Stockholm: Nordic African Institute, 2002), 113).

⁶¹ Seeseman, “Sufi Leaders,” 113.

discussed above point to an underlying ethical tradition of Sufism as well as the significance of practices within that tradition, they often present a fragmented approach.

Part of the reason for this fragmentation is that rather than assuming a thoroughly rationalized and coherent religious or ethical framework enacted in people's lives, the ethnographic accounts assume a degree of complexity in the lives of individuals subjects. As Paola Abenante argues, "The 'piety turn' ... has in fact stressed the normative aspects of religious tradition and self-cultivation over many other aspects of a person's everyday life, emotions, and experiences."⁶² I take this as a valid observation, although the degree to which people's lives are regimented by specific discursive registers will depend on the context. However, in contrast to writing an ethnography, my object of study is not the 'life-world' of individuals. Instead, the object is the reform (*iṣlāh*) or renewal (*tajdīd*) of an 'applied curriculum of ethical education' (*minhaj al-tarbiya al-taḥbīqī*), a concept and set of practices that was a common point of discussion across Sufi communities in Morocco. While the current work draws on ethnographic experience and examples, my goal is not to portray the lived experience of religion of individuals as a means to reflect on the nature of Moroccan Islam or contemporary Sufism. My aim is instead to bring into relief formulations of these curricula as they are practiced within three contemporary Sufi groups in relation to the 'authorizing discourses' of 'Moroccan Islam' that are operative in the Moroccan religious

⁶²The criticism of the 'piety turn,' characterized in the work of Mahmood and Hirschkind, continues, "In order to counter the risk of essentializing the culture of virtue, some authors have lately argued that self-fashioning and religious discipline are just one part of individuals' lives and subjectivities. They have discussed the much too coherent image of individuals' commitment to projects of self-reform, showing how people are shaped by different discursive regimes of identity and thus continuously enact multiple selves (Ewing 1997) and make use of competing discursive registers... yet other studies have kept their attention directed towards religious vocabularies and theological discourses focusing, nonetheless, on their intimate relation with people's individual expectation and the existential stakes brought about the predicaments of political discourses, social constraints, and everyday life" (Paola Abenante "Inner and Outer Ways: Sufism and Subjectivity in Egypt and Beyond," *Ethnos* 78, no. 1 (2012): 492).

field due to the structures of power and knowledge that have been transformed over the past twenty years. As I argue, these curricula adopt a shared goal of cultivating *ihsān* as a form of public piety, though this piety is interpreted and manifest through different practices and performances. The goal is therefore to bring into relief the diverse styles of performing *ihsān* as a public piety, as well as the alternative ensembles of exercises aimed at the cultivation of that piety. In the view of the communities with which I worked, society (Moroccan and global) is in dire need of applied programs for ethical education due to an underlying moral corruption permeating contemporary society, so the articulation of these curricula becomes an important mechanism for performing and contesting virtuous piety that can combat the decadence of capitalism and the dangers of radicalism.

The focus on curricula not only stands in contrast to ethnographic studies of Sufism as lived in its subjective singularity. It also counters the tendency to focus on the Sufi order (*tariqa*) as a social organization. In this regard, I follow Rashida Chih who, criticizing the focus on Sufi orders with clear organizational structures, states in her study of the Khalwatiyya in Egypt, “I therefore propose to explore another approach to the study of the *tariqa*, focusing on the types of spiritual affiliation between a master and his disciples, the forms of social relations between them, and those between companions of the same ‘path’ that these affiliations imply.”⁶³ What I take her to be arguing here is that the study of the *tariqa* needs to take into account the modalities of affiliation, the ways of relating to one another, the forms of conduct that govern those relationships, and the attitudes that underpin those modes of interaction. Her point in the context of the Khalwatiyya is to illustrate how

⁶³ Rachida Chih, “What is a Sufi Order? Revisiting the concept through a case study of the Khalwatiyya in contemporary Egypt,” in *Sufism and the Modern in Islam*, ed. Martin van Bruinessen and Julia Day Howell (London: IB Tauris, 2013), 22.

attachment to the shaykh, rather than membership in a ‘brotherhood,’ is the constitutive feature of being a Sufi. She writes, “When one asks Sufis what distinguishes them from those who are not Sufis, one receives answers such as ‘love of the shaykh’ (*maḥabba li-l-shaykh*), ‘attachment to the shaykh’ (*mulazamat al-shaykh*), or ‘putting oneself at the shaykh’s service’ (*khidmat al-shaykh*). This relationship is what the classical Sufi manuals call *suhba*, ‘companionship’, and it is modeled on the reciprocal affective relationship between the Prophet and his companions.”⁶⁴ These modes of attachment to the shaykh (love, commitment, and service) serve as the basis for initiation and progression in a spiritual path. Therefore, as Chih insightfully asserts, the *tariqa* as a spiritual path is necessarily connected to modes of social relationship and types of social interactions.⁶⁵ My point is that Chih’s work shifts attention away from the *tariqa* as a formal social structure and toward the *tariqa* as a spiritual path with constitutive social relations. Thus, rather than comparing the groups based on their formal characteristics, i.e., their social structure, I compare these groups in relation to their methods and programs of instruction that include formal ritual practices, informal social engagements and relationships, and sets of spiritual disciplines that together makeup what, in the context of my fieldwork in Morocco, was called a *minhaj*.

As an applied method of spiritual education (*al-tarbiya al-ruḥiyya*) predicated on a variety of social relationships, the *minhaj* consists of bodily techniques, disciplinary exercises, discursive practices, and public performances aimed at the formation of ethical and pious subjects. Consequently, it invites possibilities for investigation in terms of Foucault’s ethics and Talal Asad’s formulation of embodied tradition. Together, these frameworks

⁶⁴ As Chih asserts, “It is not possible to fully separate analysis of the *tariqa* as a spiritual path and as a pattern of social relationships” (Chih, “What is a Sufi Order?” 28).

⁶⁵ Chih, “What is a Sufi Order?” 38.

constitute my approach to Sufism as an ethical tradition. The move to analyze contemporary Moroccan Sufism through Foucault is exhibited in Abdelilah Bouasria's examination of the processes of subject formation in contemporary Morocco through *parrhesia* and 'care of the self.'⁶⁶ *Parrhesia*, he suggests, is a corollary of the Islamic notions of 'commanding the good and forbidding the wrong' and advice (*naṣīḥa*). In the Moroccan case, he cites the example of Shaykh Yassine's criticism of King Hassan II (in the form of a letter) as an act of censure that embodies the spirit of *parrhesia*, that is, speaking truth to power as a duty. Moreover, 'care of the self,' Bouasria argues, "constructs a subject that sees himself as imperfect, sick, and in need of healing by a competent person like a saint ... the Sufi paradigm points to hidden diseases of the soul that are hardly noticeable by the 'patient.'"⁶⁷ The treatment of these diseases therefore requires a qualified doctor with a proven method, but these distinctive methods vary not so much in their aim (*telos*) but in the 'ethical work.' Taking a cue from Bouasria's analysis and these previous scholars, I approach Sufism in the mode of ethical inquiry suggested by Foucault, to which I now turn.

v. Ethics

As I demonstrated in the previous sections, Sufism as a practical craft concerns the acquisition of virtuous character and moral dispositions (*akhlāq*), knowledge of various genres of literature and ability to conduct oneself properly (*adab*), and perfection in one's practice (*ihsān*). Other scholars have suggested that in its teleological orientation and attainment of qualities of character through repeated practices of the self, this practical Sufism can be approached as a form of virtue ethics. The goal was to make the case that the

⁶⁶ Bouasria, *Sufism and Politics*.

⁶⁷ Bouasria, *Sufism and Politics*, 20.

emphasis on ethics in the contemporary discourses in Morocco is not an invention or shift away from ‘mysticism’; rather, it is part of a set of discourses and practices that tie Sufism to the Islamic tradition more broadly. In addition to having roots in Sufi traditions, my approach is also derived from theoretical considerations in anthropology, particularly strands of the anthropology of ethics that draw on Michel Foucault’s work.⁶⁸ This section will unpack some of those theoretical considerations in order to clarify the sense of ethics being used in this study with attention to the disciplinary work performed by embodied practices.

Foucault’s ethical framework in conjunction with its anthropological applications to the Islamic tradition provides a way of organizing regimes of embodied practices and the work they do in forming pious Muslim subjects, thereby providing a basis for the comparison of the ‘curricula of ethical education’ (*manahij al-tarbiya*) of three Sufi communities.⁶⁹ In describing his vision of moral inquiry, Foucault writes:

A history of the way in which individuals are urged to constitute themselves as subjects of moral conduct would be concerned with the models proposed for setting up and developing relationships with the self, for self-reflection, self-knowledge, self-examination, for the decipherment of the self by oneself, for the transformation that one seeks to accomplish with oneself as object. This last is what might be called a ‘history of ethics’ and ‘ascetics,’ understood as a history of the forms of moral subjectivation and of the practice of self that are meant to ensure it.⁷⁰

This ‘history of ethics and ascetics,’ as he puts it, focuses not on a history of ‘codes’ or the degree to which actual behaviors are consistent with those codes and their attendant values, but on the ethical formation of individuals. In a broad sense, morality in Foucault’s

⁶⁸ Asad, *Genealogies*; Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003); Talal Asad, “Thinking about Tradition, Religion, and Politics in Egypt Today,” *Critical Inquiry* (2016); Faubion, “Toward”; James Faubion, *An Anthropology of Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); James Laidlaw, *The Subject of Virtue: An Anthropology of Ethics and Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*; and, Cheryl Mattingly, “Two Virtue Ethics and the Anthropology of Morality,” *Anthropological Theory* 12, no. 2 (2012): 161-184.

⁶⁹ Faubion, “Toward.” He calls this a comparative anthropology of pedagogies of autopoiesis.

⁷⁰ Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure: Volume 2 of the History of Sexuality*, translated by Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990), 29.

framework corresponds on the one hand to the set of values and rules of action (social norms established through a number of social institutions) and on the other hand the correspondence between everyday actions and those values and codes. Ethics, however, refers to how (the manner in which) individuals in their relative spaces of freedom are able to constitute themselves as particular types of subjects.⁷¹ This ethical formation consists of four components: ethical substance, mode of subjectivation, ethical work, and telos.⁷²

The ethical substance refers to the part of the individual that is taken as the object of ethical work and transformation. For example, in Sufi traditions, the heart (*qalb*) is taken as a seat of moral action to the degree that ethical education is considered a ‘science of the heart’ in al-Ghazali. The mode of subjectivation deals with the normative dimension of moral codes, that is, how one relates to rules of behavior. For example, in a particular Sufi order, individuals may pray in one form (*qabd*) rather than another (*sadl*) because instructed to do so by the shaykh or because they consider themselves to be emulating the Prophet’s example (*sunna*). Ethical work consists in training the self to comply with given rules and norms, as well as efforts “to transform oneself into the ethical subject of one’s behavior.”⁷³ Often referred to as ‘ascetics’ or ‘technologies of the self’ these are, “Techniques which permit individuals to perform, by their own means, a certain number of operations on their own bodies, on their own souls, on their own thoughts, on their own conduct, and this in such a way that they transform themselves, modify themselves, and reach a certain state of

⁷¹ Saba Mahmood writes, “Foucault distinguished ethical practices from morals, reserving the latter to refer to sets of norms, rules, values, and injunctions. Ethics, on the other hand, refers to those practices, techniques, and discourses through which a subject transforms herself in order to achieve a particular state of being, happiness, or truth” (Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*, 28).

⁷² Foucault, *The Use*, 30-34.

⁷³ Foucault, *The Use*, 27.

perfection, of happiness, of purity, of supernatural power and so on.”⁷⁴ In other words, they are the embodied means by which individuals actualize their aim (*telos*), the final component of Foucault’s ethical framework. In short, ethics in its positive formulation consists in sets of practices and discourses that enable individuals to acquire certain states of being and attain a state of perfection. Sufism, I attempted to illustrate, is framed around the same model insofar as it entails the use of disciplinary practices to move through certain states (*maqāmāt*) in order to attain a state of excellence (*ihsān*) that also opens up epistemological (*ma‘arifa*) and aesthetic (*mushāhada*) possibilities. Studying the ‘curricula’ entails an analysis of the configurations of practice and discourse that organize these ‘ethical’ components with attention to the role of embodied practices (disciplines and techniques of the body) in making possible forms of experience and knowledge.

Disciplinary practices, in Foucault’s framework, create ‘docile’ bodies, that is, bodies that are taught and practiced and therefore capable of a range of skillful activities and states of being. In his analysis of disciplinary practices in Christian monastic communities, Talal Asad illustrates how the regime of practice and discourse employed within those communities operated to produce the virtue of willing obedience. As Asad writes, “The primary object of that transformation was the development of the Christian virtue of willing obedience, a process that did not “reduce peoples’ perception of available choices” (Paine) but ideally reorganized the basis on which choice were to be made.”⁷⁵ Even a case like Christian monasticism where the common interpretation focuses on the denial or renunciation of the self’s will that is replaced with the will of an other for the purpose of

⁷⁴ Michel Foucault, “Technologies of the Self,” in *Technologies of the Self: A seminar with Michel Foucault*, ed. and trans. Luther Martin, Huck Gutman and Patrick Hutton (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 154.

⁷⁵ Asad, *Genealogies*, 135.

keeping order, Asad demonstrates that the disciplinary program must be addressed with respect to the formation of the dispositions and desires that do not naturally inhere in individuals, such as the desire to willingly obey. In short, the production of willing obedience is not the destruction of the self but a reorientation and reconfiguration such that alternative forms of feeling, thinking, desiring, and perceiving are made possible.⁷⁶ Therefore, for Asad the daily disciplinary practices of the monks did not result in the monk's loss of sense of self and consequently its unconditional submission to the authority of the monastery, but instead worked to restructure ways of relating to and understanding one's self, i.e., will, desires, thoughts, actions, as a member of the monastic community and in relation to a specific monastic program.⁷⁷

The monastic subject, through the disciplinary program, is therefore actively engaged in a process of transformation and change in modes of feeling and thought, i.e. in actively altering its relationship with the world, in order to make possible the forms of communal (and individual) life authorized by powers.⁷⁸ Furthermore, Asad emphasizes that the disciplinary practices involved in these monastic programs, such as penance, manual labor,

⁷⁶ With regard to the function of the monastic program Asad writes "The rites that were prescribed by that program did not simply evoke or release universal emotions, they aimed to construct and reorganize distinctive emotions – desire ... humility ... remorse – on which the central Christian virtue of obedience to God depended. This point must be stressed, because the emotions mentioned here are not universal human feelings, not "powerful drives and emotions associated with human physiology" ... They are historically specific emotions that are structured internally and related to each other in historically determined ways. And they are the product not of mere readings of symbols but of processes of power" (Asad, *Genealogies*, 134).

⁷⁷ "The Christian monk who learns to will obedience is not merely someone who submits to another's will by force of argument or by the threat of force – or simply by way of habitual, unthinking response. He is not someone who has "lost his own will," as though a man's will could be truly his only when it remained opposed to another's. The obedient monk is a person for whom obedience is his virtue – in the sense of being his ability, potentiality, power – a Christian virtue developed through discipline" (Asad, *Genealogies*, 125).

⁷⁸ A point that Asad makes here is that power not only functions to authorize knowledge by deciding on interpretation, but also more generally authorizes the rules by which the production of knowledge can be verified. By defining the practices that produce knowledge, power can also define the language, grammars, logics, histories, desires, intentions, beliefs, etc. that are allowed in the production of knowledge. How do structures of self authorized through practices make possible forms of knowledge employed in the observation and regulation of individuals within communities?

liturgy, recitation, and memorization also underwent significant changes that “constitute what we today would describe as discursive interventions in the practice of a social psychology that aimed at reforming its categories to make them coherent and effective.”⁷⁹ They therefore responded to the exigencies of the situation in diverse ways while nonetheless being subjected to modes of authority. Amongst and within these communities there existed an authoritative discourse surrounding these practices that responded to the institutional and historical circumstances faced by monastic communities, such as the growing number of initiates with prior lay experience.⁸⁰ One of the categories or domains of intervention in the process of forming monastic subjects became the reconfiguration of the monk’s relationship to those previous experiences, particularly in the case of sensual desire. The question at hand for the monastic authorities was not the suppression of memories or desires, but the transformation of sensual desire into the desire to obey God, and one of the primary means for this transformation was the performance of liturgy and the recitation of sacred texts.⁸¹

The formation of the monastic subject therefore did not involve the establishment of a straightforward relationship of domination and submission, but instead a complex rearticulation of the monk’s relationship with self, fellow monks, monastic authorities, and God that enabled the monk to live properly in the monastic community. However, what defined proper living, in the sense of the way practices and duties were to be performed, was not a monolithic form of life that spanned all the monastic communities. Instead, the monastic authorities within the communities, which were each faced with different sets of

⁷⁹ Asad, *Genealogies*, 164

⁸⁰ Asad, *Genealogies*, 112, 151.

⁸¹ For Asad, “In this context, speech is not simply a mode of communication or of conventional representation. It is not an instrument of “social control.” Speech in this context is a dialogical process by which the self makes (or fails to make) itself in a disciplined way” (Asad, *Genealogies*, 144). The rite of confession, although distinct, is based around this kind of dialogical process in which the monk’s desire and memory are observed and reshaped in the process of verbalizing them within a ritual context and through authoritative language.

problems, capabilities, and necessities, developed alternative readings of sacred texts in ways that adapted to their institutional circumstances.

The power of disciplinary practices to produce patterns of desire and emotion is echoed in Saba Mahmood's analysis of the women's piety movement in Egypt. Regarding the virtuous disposition of modesty (*hayā*) she writes, "To begin with, what is striking here is that instead of innate human desires eliciting outward forms of conduct, it is the sequence of practices and actions one is engaged in that determines one's desires and emotions. In other words, action does not issue forth from natural feelings but *creates* them."⁸² Consequently, she highlights the work disciplinary practices do in creating and transforming pious subjects. Disciplinary practices turn our attention away from questions of interpretation and symbolic meaning and instead enable us to look at how the formation of subjects, whether they be religious, moral, or political subjects entails not merely processes of subjugation and repression, but also productive processes that transform the subject's relationship with themselves and with authorities.

On top of producing desires and attitudes, disciplinary practices produce certain aptitudes and abilities. Contrasting the embodied approach to disciplinary practices with 'ritual as an anthropological category' Asad writes, "... Apt performance involves not symbols to be interpreted but abilities to be acquired according to rules that are sanctioned by those in authority: it presupposes no obscure meanings, but rather the formation of physical and linguistic skills."⁸³ In other words, disciplinary practices also train individuals to be able to use their body (including language-in-action) in dynamic ways, the standards of which are

⁸² Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*, 157.

⁸³ Asad, *Genealogies*, 62.

determined by certain social structures of authority.⁸⁴ In his 1935 essay on ‘techniques of the body,’ Marcel Mauss describes this as an ‘art of using the human body,’ pointing out the ways in which people of different societies have alternative ways of using their bodies in their everyday lives, from styles of walking, running and swimming to techniques for care of the body. This ‘art of using the body’ overlaps with aspects of *adab* discussed previous, particularly as it manifests in activities like eating or sitting. For example, in main lodge of the Karkariyya-Fawziyya in Morocco, the meals were served to a group without utensils and everyone sat on the floor. However, not all the members of the order were Moroccan, and even some from other Islamic nation-states took time to adjust and learn the techniques of using the body during meals. Thus, the *ādāb* of this group acquires its specific content, at least in the matter of meal etiquette, through its entrenchment in a particular social context. While simple and mundane, they all form aspects of the embodiment of *ihsān*.

Applying the study of techniques of the body to the context of regimes of disciplinary practice in religious contexts, Asad writes, “Thus, the possibility is opened up of inquiring into the ways in which embodied practices (including language in use) form a precondition for varieties of religious experience. The inability to enter into communion with God becomes a function of untaught bodies.”⁸⁵ The mystical encounter, in other words, is dependent upon bodily techniques (ways of using the body) and affective dispositions (ways of relating to self and others). These ways of using the body and of relating to the self are of

⁸⁴ Mauss writes, “In all these elements of the art of using the human body, the facts of education were dominant. The notion of education could be superimposed on that of imitation ... What takes place is prestigious imitation ... It is precisely this notion of the prestige of the person who performs the ordered, authorized, tested action vis-à-vis the imitating individual that contains all the social element. The imitative action which follows contains the psychological element and the biological element. But the whole, the ensemble, is conditioned by the three elements indissolubly mixed together” (Marcel Mauss, “Techniques of the Body,” *Economy and Society* 2, no. 1 (1973): 73-4).

⁸⁵ Asad, *Genealogies*, 76-7.

course always articulated relative to some authorizing discourse that in turn is situated in a particular social and historical context, but my point here is that the analysis of ethical practices does not foreclose investigations of the spiritual aspects of Sufism. In fact, in my study of the Karkariyya-Fawziyya, my goal is to demonstrate how a regime of practices and discourses form the embodied preconditions for the attainment of visionary experiences.

In taking this approach I take inspiration from Charles Hirschkind's work on the piety movement in Egypt, in which he analyzes the popular practice of listening to taped sermons as a disciplinary practice that reshapes the individual and social sensorium. As part of the Islamic homiletic tradition, listening (*samā'*) has had a privileged role as a modality of ethical action, being both a means to ethical formation and, when done properly, a performance of ethical excellence.⁸⁶ Thus, he describes the formation of an 'aural subject' whose sensibilities and bodily habits/habitus (ways of using the body and relating to oneself) underpin modes of deliberation, debate, and public piety that constitute an Islamic 'counterpublic'.⁸⁷ While I will return to his discussion of public religiosity in the next chapter, for the present I highlight his framing of the practice of listening as a type 'aural therapy' that is connected to the 'science of the heart' described by Ghazali as an ethical project of 'character refinement' discussed earlier.⁸⁸ Comparing the modern practice of

⁸⁶ "To summarize, within the homiletic tradition I describe here, listening is privileged as the sensory activity most essential to moral conduct ... The sermon grounds a collective discipline but also provides what Foucault terms a 'technology of the self' ... a set of procedures by means of which individuals can work on their souls and bodies to achieve a distinct ethical or aesthetic form, in this case, one conducive to a proper relationship with God" (Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape*, 39).

⁸⁷ "As opposed to the private reader, whose stillness and solitude became privileged icons of a distinct kind of critical reasoning within the imaginary of the bourgeois public, it is the figure of the ethical listener – with all of its dense sensory involvements – that founds and inhabits the counterpublic I describe here ... the form of public reason and sociability I describe remains dependent upon and positively oriented toward its own affective, gestural, and kinesthetic conditions" (Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape*, 107).

⁸⁸ He writes, "... many of the rhetorical techniques deployed by preachers today are borrowed directly from Sufi traditions, especially the repetitive chanting of the names of God, the practice of extending vowels (madd) so as to more deeply move the listener, and breathing techniques" (Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape*, 33).

listening with its role in Sufi tradition he writes, “And while the sermon listeners do not seek to achieve the experience of *fanā*’; (the dissolution of the self in the face of God described by mystics), the goal of honing one’s moral sensibilities so as to be able to draw near to God is common to both practices.”⁸⁹ In drawing this parallel, Hirschkind not only provides insight into an integral practice in Sufism (the performance of *samā*’), but also articulates a theoretical approach to embodied ethical practices in Sufism.

In doing so, he demonstrates the ways in which listening to cassette sermons imbues the body with certain gestural habits, affective dispositions, and perceptual capacities through repeated and attentive listening.⁹⁰ He writes, “Listening invests the body with affective potentialities, depositing them in the preconscious folds of kinesthetic and synaesthetic experience and, in doing so, endows it with the receptive capacities of the sensitive heart, the primary organ of moral knowledge and action.”⁹¹ These perceptual and affective qualities then serve as the embodied preconditions for reaching a state of *dhawq* (lit. tasting), which refers to an affective quality of knowledge that is not grasped by the rational faculties.⁹² Within this movement, the affective experience of death associated with listening to these sermons serves as a constitutive element of moral subjects and moral agency insofar as it provides the possibility for conducting social engagements with a pious fear.⁹³ Fear, in this

⁸⁹ Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape*, 37.

⁹⁰ “... the contribution of this aural media to shaping the contemporary moral and political landscape of the Middle East lies not simply in its capacity to disseminate ideas or instill religious ideologies but in its effect on the human sensorium, on the affects, sensibilities, and perceptual habits of its vast audience” (Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape*, 76).

⁹¹ Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape*, 76.

⁹² “One of the primary tasks of the khutaba is to afford listeners such a taste of death, to portray death in its manifold dimensions and ramifications with a vividness and moral depth so as to root it in their sensory experience, to constitute it as a habit of thought, heart, and body” (Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape*, 176).

⁹³ Hirschkind writes, “That is to say, an experiential knowledge of death is a condition of moral agency. The qualities of fear and sadness that accompany such knowledge open up a distinct way of living as a human being” (Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape*, 176).

sense, is one among a number of virtues that makes possible ethical action. Hirschkind writes, “As an ethical emotion, such fear does not simply inhibit wrong behavior or limit human agency but allows one to achieve excellence in the performance of the moral acts one undertakes.”⁹⁴ In other words, listening produces affective and perceptual dispositions that form the embodied conditions for the achievement of excellence in conduct. In this way, he ties the acquisition of these qualities back to the formation of the ethical subject, a formation that entails the sedimentation of virtues and that acquires its ideal from moral discourses within the Islamic tradition broadly speaking and within the *da’wa* movement specifically.⁹⁵ As he points out, the virtues in this context include: fear (*khawf*), regret (*nadam*), repentance (*tawba*), and tranquility (*sakina*).⁹⁶ The practice of ethical listening reinforces these affective attributes, creating shared moral orientations that underpin modes of social interaction and reasoning, out of which emerge frameworks of normative piety.⁹⁷

The point here is that in order to examine the forms of religious experience and public piety within religious traditions, it is necessary to attend to the techniques through which the body is used and trained by practitioners as the practical means for achieving these forms of experience and pious living, as well as how those techniques relate to authoritative discourses

⁹⁴ Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape*, 181.

⁹⁵ “The faculties of the ethical listener – an appreciation for and attunement to the affective and expressive dimensions of divine speech – now comes to define the proper attributes of a public subject” (Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape*, 121).

⁹⁶ “Sermons are understood to evoke in the sensitive listener a particular set of ethical responses, foremost among them, fear (*khawf*), humility (*khushu’*), regret (*nadam*), repentance (*tawba*), and tranquility (*itmi’nan* or *sakina*)” (Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape*, 74).

⁹⁷ “For the affect invoked and refined through sermon audition does not refer to the category of subjective experience but of ethical action: they are actions of a heart properly disposed toward God, actions that accompany and serve to refine practices of moral conduct and reasoning. Rather than standing opposed to reason, they provide it affective-volitional substance – the epistemic and passional conditions for its proper exercise; not interior states accompanying ethical action but the honed repertoires of expression by which actions acquire moral excellence. For this reason, we might say *da’wa* public discourse presupposes and performatively enacts not shared affects but a shared moral orientation, one that finds embodiment in a coordination of gestures, bodies, and hearts fashioned as a mode of pious sociability and public engagement” (Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape*, 122).

and standards about proper forms of behavior, emotional states, and bodily comportment.

Considering cassette-sermon listening as a bodily technique thereby enables an analysis of how the embodied conditions underlying the aural subject's affective-volitional disposition, i.e. modes of thought, experience, and action, are constructed and authorized in the context of the Islamic aural traditions and modern liberal discourses.

These disciplinary practices and bodily techniques therefore constitute a key element in the study of ethics, which for Foucault, “permits individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being.”⁹⁸ In certain contexts, these technologies of transformation constitute for Foucault a type of spirituality. He writes:

... we could call spirituality the search, practice, and experience through which the subject carries out the necessary transformations on himself in order to have access to the truth. We will call spirituality then the set of these researches, practices, and experiences, which may be purifications, ascetic exercises, renunciations, conversions of looking, modifications of existence, etc., which are, not for knowledge but for the subject, for the subject's very being, the price to be paid for access to the truth.⁹⁹

Spirituality, for Foucault, is therefore the process and attendant ensemble of practices that transform individuals in their relation to selves and others such that they can attain forms of life in the world. It assumes that work must be done on the self through repeated bodily practice that produces changes in our relationships and thus our being as ethical subjects.

What I want to add here is that such transformation is also done ‘with the help of others,’ and is therefore built upon and embedded in social relationships, such that ethics and spirituality

⁹⁸ Michel Foucault, “The Ethics of the Concern of the Self as a Practice of Freedom,” in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow, trans. Robert Hurley et al. (New York: The New Press, 1997), 225.

⁹⁹ Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France 1981-1982*, trans. Frédéric Gros et al (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 15. He adds, “In short, I think we can say that in and of itself an act of knowledge could never give access to the truth unless it was prepared, accompanied, doubled, and completed by a certain transformation of the subject; not of the individual, but of the subject himself in his being as subject” (Foucault, *Hermeneutics*, 16).

are aspects of an overarching process of transformation. In other words, spirituality and ethics are interdependent processes in the disciplining of the subject and the cultivation of piety.

Insofar as they entail these ethical aspects, spiritual exercises are not practiced in isolation and can be grounded in certain claims to tradition and authority. As Foucault writes, “In the practice of the self, someone else, the other, is an indispensable condition for the form that defines this practice to effectively attain and be filled by its object, that is to say, by the self. The other is indispensable for the practice of the self to arrive at the self at which it aims.”¹⁰⁰ Within the historical contexts he investigates, Foucault identifies two important relationships in this regard: the master-mentor and the friend.¹⁰¹ He adds, “Individual guidance could not take place without an intense affective relationship of friendship between the two partners, the guide and the person being guided. And this guidance implied a certain quality, actually a certain way of speaking, a certain ethics of speech, I will say, which I will try to analyze [as] ... parrhesia.”¹⁰² My point here is not necessarily about the practice of parrhesia, though parallels can possibly be drawn between it and forms of language use like *naṣīḥa*; rather, I want to highlight the ‘affective relationship of friendship.’ As Chih pointed out in relationship to the master-disciple relation and Silverstein with respect to companionship, these sets of social relations form a critical component of the ethical formation of Sufi disciples insofar as they are the space for the enactment and refinement of good character. The types of relationship in turn afford possibilities for styles of teaching, and insofar as disciplinary practices are learned and

¹⁰⁰ Foucault, *Hermeneutics*, 127.

¹⁰¹ “... there was a partially institutionalized social network in friendship that, outside of the cult communities I was just talking about, was one of the major supports of the practice of the self” (Foucault, *Hermeneutics*, 114).

¹⁰² Foucault, *Hermeneutics*, 137.

improvable, they are also dependent on certain modes of authority for their formulation and implementation. For instance, while a Sufi saint may have access to mystical practices in the training of disciples, a legal scholar may have recourse to pedagogical techniques like the *fatwa*.

Hussain Agrama ties Foucault's practices of the self to the Islamic tradition in his analysis of Islamic legal courts in modern Egypt. He writes, "I suggest that the practice of the fatwa be understood as a mode of the care of the self, as a practice, by which selves, in the multiplicity of their affairs, are maintained and advanced as part of Islamic tradition. In this, the authority of the mufti is that of guide."¹⁰³ For the mufti, the fatwa is a pedagogical tool, a way of engaging the questioner in a process of ethical formation. In this sense, "... The fatwa is involved in a practice of *tarbawayya* – ethical cultivation, that is highly attentive not just to questioners' particular situations but also their weaknesses, drives, desires, hopes, fears, and sufferings ..."¹⁰⁴ My point here is not to suggest that the fatwa forms part of the pedagogical repertoire of the groups I studied in Morocco. Rather, I want to highlight how Agrama connects Foucault's care of the self to the cultivation of Muslim subjects through *tarbiya* that takes places under the guidance of an authority.¹⁰⁵ Agrama's analysis also points toward the question of authority and its relation to pedagogical practices. For example, the availability of the fatwa as a teaching device is dependent upon the mufti's authority, which in the Egyptian case involves both governmental and religious legitimacy.¹⁰⁶ For a Sufi

¹⁰³ Hussain Agrama, *Questioning Secularism: Islam, Sovereignty, and the Rule of Law in Modern Egypt* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 180.

¹⁰⁴ Agrama, *Questioning*, 180.

¹⁰⁵ *Tarbawayya* and *tarbiya* share their root in a sense of pedagogy and ethical upbringing, so I use them interchangeably here.

¹⁰⁶ Agrama calls the council a space of 'asecularity,' "That is, it is uninvolved in the distinctively modern game by which secularity and religiosity is defined and redefined in relation to identifying and securing fundamental rights and liberties" (Agrama, *Questioning*, 187).

shaykh in contemporary Morocco, however, the fatwa may be neither an available nor effective teaching practice. However, as an individual endowed with distinctive qualities, the Sufi master may have at his disposal alternative teaching techniques, such as *dhikr*. This is not to draw a distinction between Sufis and jurists, but to point to the ways in which certain claims to authority constrain and afford possibilities for pedagogical practices. In the context of the groups discussed in this dissertation, these claims are articulated with reference to aspects of the Islamic tradition, as well as recently institutionalized forms of state religious authority.

Talal Asad takes up the question of authority in his analysis of the Islamic tradition, which I will discuss in the next section. To summarize this section however, Foucault posits an analytic framework for the study of ethics that, with the help of elaborations on the part of anthropologists, underpins my approach to the study of Sufism as an ethical tradition. Ethics in this context refers to not only rules of conduct, values, and obligations (morals), but also topographies of the self (ethical substances), ways of subjecting oneself to those rules and values (modes of subjectivation), and disciplinary practices (ethical work) aimed at transforming the self and cultivating certain attitudes. Ethical pedagogies are instructional programs that crystallize in particular contexts and are taken to be legitimate based on claims to authority.¹⁰⁷ It is precisely to signal this pedagogical dimension of exercises that I translate *minhaj* as ‘curriculum,’ though program or method also work. Such pedagogies, or ‘curricula of ethical education’ (*manāhij al-tarbiya*), can be compared relative to types of disciplinary practices and forms of subjectivity they give shape to, as well as with regard to

¹⁰⁷ Mahmood writes, “... the utility of Foucault’s analytical framework lies in the fact that it raises a series of questions about the relationship between moral codes and ethical conduct, questions that are answerable only through an examination of specific practices through which historically located moral norms are lived” (Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*, 30).

how they draw upon tradition and are affected by concurrent discourses and structures of power. In other words, the contents of a given ethical curriculum, insofar as it entails norms and means for embodying those norms, are legitimized through authoritative discourses that define piety and its proper performance.

In the Moroccan context, the state has gradually laid claim to the authority to define piety and its proper performance through an institutional restructuring of relations between power and the production of knowledge. Through this institutionalization, the Moroccan state has developed the capacity to produce an ‘orthodox Islam’ that it defines as Moroccan Islam. The curricula of ethical development studied in this dissertation must situate themselves within this normative framework, and therefore they differ not only according to embodied practices but also in their orientation toward state discourses of religiosity. As such, the comparative study of these curricula is also a study in modalities of navigating the contemporary religious field and adapting to contexts of contemporary society as projects of reform and renewal of tradition. This approach therefore relies on a notion of tradition that serves as a site of authoritative reference and as an ensemble of discourses and embodied practices.

vi. Tradition

In the previous section, I outlined Foucault’s analytical framework for ethical analysis in order to provide a basis for approaching ethical education (*tarbiya*). As other scholars have demonstrated, his framework is helpful for thinking about embodied practices and the construction of the pious Muslim subject in a variety of contexts. Although the specific exercises and the kinds of subject produced differ, practical Sufism as a craft of character

development shares a number of features with the traditions of ethical pedagogy described above, including its reliance on the repeated performance of embodied practices under guidance in the cultivation of virtuous qualities. This framework therefore provides a backdrop for my approach to the ‘curriculum of ethical education’, in that the curriculum consists of sets of these types of embodied practices, as well as their placement within an overall program of ethical formation. In the context of this study, these curricula are singular configurations so they will differ in their particular contents, but they will also differ in the ways in which they invoke past discourses, events, examples, and practices to creatively formulate and implement a form of ethical education that is responsive to the sensibilities of contemporary society and state discourses of religiosity. The competing ways of drawing on tradition and claims to authority reflected in the diverse curricula studied here therefore require a notion of tradition that connects the embodied dimensions of pious life to the discourses and structures of power that authorize the forms of conduct and emotional being that constitute such a pious life.

While Talal Asad is most commonly cited for his assertion that Islam is a ‘discursive tradition,’¹⁰⁸ his more recent work revisits this idea in order to clarify the senses in which he uses the term:

I have used the term ‘tradition’ in my writings in two ways: first, as a theoretical location for raising questions about authority, time, language use, and embodiment; and second, as an empirical arrangement in which discursivity and materiality are connected through the minutiae of everyday living. The discursive aspect of tradition

¹⁰⁸ Asad writes, “What is a tradition? A tradition consists essentially of discourses that seek to instruct practitioners regarding the correct form and purpose of a given practice that, precisely because it is established, has a history. These discourses relate conceptually to a past (when the practice was instituted, and from which the knowledge of its point and proper performance has been transmitted) and a future (how the point of that practice can best be secured in the short or long term, or why it should be modified or abandoned), through a present (how it is linked to other practices, institutions, and social conditions). An Islamic discursive tradition is simply a tradition of Muslim discourse that addresses itself to conceptions of the Islamic past and future, with references to a particular Islamic practice in the present” (Talal Asad “The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam,” *The Center for Contemporary Arab Studies* (1986): 20).

is primarily a matter of linguistic acts passed down the generations as part of a form of life, a process in which one learns/relearns ‘how to do things with words’ ... and learns/relearns how to comport one’s body and how to feel in particular contexts. Embodied practices help in the acquisition of aptitudes, sensibilities, and propensities through repetition until such time as the language guiding practice becomes redundant. Through such practices one can change oneself.¹⁰⁹

Asad therefore proposes two senses of the term tradition, one of which is as an ‘empirical arrangement.’ This empirical arrangement consists of a discursive dimension consisting in ‘learning how to do things with words’ as part of a way of living, as well as an embodied and material dimension that consists in modes of bodily comportment and feeling and their related practices. Discourse and embodiment are of course not distinct types of tradition but the means for learning and improving that are part of any tradition.¹¹⁰ For Asad, learning within the context of tradition refers to the development of a form of life based on models taken from the past. As such, tradition evokes questions of temporality, that is, how the past is made relevant to the present, as well as questions of authority, that is, who determines and teaches the proper ways of speaking, acting, and feeling learned through tradition.

Tradition in this framework is open to alternative formulations and these renderings of tradition, i.e., competing claims to authority or temporalities, give rise to internal criticism within tradition. Asad argues, “Critique is central to any living tradition; it is essential to how its followers assess the relevance of the past for the present, and the present for the future.”¹¹¹ In addition to evaluating the relevance of the past in a particular present with consideration for the future, critique also encourages the recognition possibilities of

¹⁰⁹ Asad, “Thinking.” I take this approach to stand in contrast to Eisenstadt, for example, who defines tradition in the following way: “Tradition can perhaps best be envisaged as the routine symbolization of the models of social order and of the constellation of codes, the guidelines, which delineate the limits of the binding cultural order, of membership in it, and of its boundaries, which prescribe the ‘proper’ choices of goals and patterns of behavior” (Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, *Tradition, Change, and Modernity* (New York: Wiley, 1973), 139).

¹¹⁰ “Discursive and embodied tradition to not refer to two separate types of tradition, two mutually exclusive principles of social organization ...” (Asad, “Thinking”).

¹¹¹ Asad, “Thinking.”

transformation within traditions, often through encounters with other traditions.¹¹² With the ever-present possibility of immanent and imminent change being a feature of tradition, time is always in a sense incomplete. Asad writes in this regard, “The conception of time here stands in clear contrast to the linear time of historical progress. In the former, time can be completed, the past bound to present and future; in the latter, there is no completion, only continuous improvement into an indefinite future...”¹¹³ While this illustrates the basic idea that tradition is plastic, i.e., changeable and not fixed or static, the point is that tradition entails a critical scrutiny of itself and therefore a sense of incompleteness that grounds its temporality.¹¹⁴ It is therefore open to possibilities of reform and renewal.

This approach to temporality is useful in approaching issues of ‘reform’ (*iṣlāḥ*) and ‘renewal’ (*tajdīd*) as they operate in my work specifically, and the Islamic tradition more broadly. According to a well-known *hadith*, a ‘renewer’ (*mujaddid*) will come every century to reform the faith and practice of the Islamic community. In each century, various individuals have claimed to be this renewer, al-Ghazali perhaps being the most famous. However, even for those who do not claim to be ‘the renewer,’ discourses of reform have been an integral component of the Islamic tradition, enabling people to interpret the past in light of the present in different ways. In the context of this work for example, all the groups conceptualize their projects as ‘reform,’ thereby making reference to a past that has to be adapted to the present, but they do not agree on how that ought to be done. This difference, however, does not merely reflect plurality within tradition; rather, it points to the ways in

¹¹² “It is also essential for understanding the nature of circumstance, and therefore the possibility of changing elements of circumstances that are changeable” (Asad “Thinking”).

¹¹³ Asad, “Thinking.”

¹¹⁴ Critical here is not used to reflect an epistemological project, but an ethical ‘historical ontology of the present.’

which traditions are constituted through these multiple, competing interpretations and implementations, the space for which is opened up by the principles of renewal and reform embedded within the tradition.

Contestation is therefore another feature of tradition in this sense, as Muhammad Qasim Zaman argues in his analysis of modern Islamic reform. He writes, “Criticism... is as integral to the life of a tradition as it is to claims to authority.”¹¹⁵ The competing visions of reform operate as versions of internal criticism, seeking to “unsettle and refashion particular ideas,” and define proper practice.¹¹⁶ In order to put forward these competing visions, i.e., projects of reform, individuals (or groups) must lay stake to some form of authority, that is, some legitimate grounds for their capacity to interpret and impart tradition for others. These alternative versions of a tradition therefore rest on competing and contested claims to religious authority.

Zaman discusses religious authority as the capacity to shape beliefs and practices using references to ‘religious’ justifications.¹¹⁷ Of course, as Zaman notes, what counts as ‘religious’ will be vary between contexts, but this is precisely his argument, i.e., that claims to authority are always challenged, context-based, and continually contested. He writes, “So far as claims to authority are concerned, the significance of contestation lies rather in reminding us that authority is not a stable endowment but one that is always exposed to implicit or explicit challenge and that it waxes and wanes in response to the pressures bearing upon it.”¹¹⁸ Religious (or traditional) authority is therefore not absolute and ‘preemptive,’

¹¹⁵ Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *Modern Islamic Thought in a Radical Age: Religious Authority and Internal Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 34.

¹¹⁶ “Inasmuch as internal critics seek to unsettle and refashion particular ideas, they would presumably like nothing better than the preemptive or exclusionary authority with which to do so” (Zaman, *Modern Islamic*, 35).

¹¹⁷ “The aspiration, effort, and ability to shape people’s belief and practice on recognizably ‘religious’ grounds” (Zaman, *Modern Islamic*, 29)

¹¹⁸ Zaman, *Modern Islamic*, 33.

but is exercised in specific contexts and through actual relationships within a field of competing claims and criticisms. There are a variety of given factors why any individual would recognize an individual or institution as authoritative, but as I discussed earlier, the dispositions that elicit such recognition are one of the objects of disciplinary practices.

In addition to this interactive feature of authority, those making claims are also situated in a larger field of power and discourse that operates to constrain what counts as a legitimate claim to authority.¹¹⁹ By constraining possibilities for claims to authority, structures of power also limit potential articulations of tradition, thereby narrowing difference and potentially producing homogeneity. Under such institutional conditions, for example, when state governmental power merges with the production of religious knowledge and discourse, ‘orthodoxy’ may appear as “a (re)ordering of knowledge that governs the ‘correct’ form of Islamic practices.”¹²⁰ Orthodoxy, like tradition, is not a fixed entity consisting of abstract propositions. Rather, as Samuli Schielke argues in his study of Sufi festivals in modern Egypt, “Orthodoxy is produced, not given. Orthodoxy is hegemonic power to define the legitimate arguments and dispositions that can be expressed in relation to religion.”¹²¹ Orthodoxy therefore reflects the powers to define conceptions of what constitutes proper religious practice and discourse, or in other words, the ideal pious subject. Authorizing discourses, which provide the grounds upon which claims to religious authority can be made and recognized, therefore operate not only to exclude certain forms of discourse

¹¹⁹ Asad writes, “It is too often forgotten that the process of determining orthodoxy in conditions of change and contest includes attempts at achieving discursive coherence, at representing the present within an authoritative narrative that includes positive evaluations of past events and persons. Because such authority is a collaborative achievement between narrator and audience, the former cannot speak in total freedom: there are conceptual and institutional conditions that must be attended to if discourses are to be persuasive” (Asad, *Genealogies*, 210).

¹²⁰ Asad, *Genealogies*, 210.

¹²¹ Samuli Schielke, *Perils of Joy: Contesting Mulid Festivals in Contemporary Egypt* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2012), 11.

and practice, but also to produce models of religiosity.¹²² As Asad writes, “Wherever Muslims have the power to regulate, uphold, require, or adjust *correct* practices, and to condemn, exclude, undermine, or replace the *incorrect* ones, there is the domain of orthodoxy. The way these powers are exercised, the conditions that make them possible (social, political, economic, etc.) and the resistances they encounter (from Muslims and non-Muslims) are equally the concern of an anthropology of Islam ...”¹²³ In other words, how tradition can be drawn upon in any given context is contingent upon conditions of power in which certain features of tradition and claims to authority are authorized as normative.

In the Moroccan context, authoritative discourses made possible by political and institutional structures define orthodox Islam through four pillars: Sunni, Maliki, Ashari, and Sufi. Within this framework, the normative version of Sufism is further specified as ‘Junaydi Sufism,’ referring to the ninth-century scholar known for his ‘sober brand of Sufism.’¹²⁴ From a historical perspective, Junaydi Sufism emerged out of contestations as constructed model of orthodoxy and various practices are evaluated with respect to this model of ‘normative’ Sufism. ‘Junaydi Sufism’ therefore constitutes a type of hegemonic power insofar as it becomes the dominant discursive device used as a shared point of reference for discussions of proper Sufi practice. However, this discourse is not aimed at the complete homogenization of practice, but instead creates a space of acceptable difference in which practices are deemed to ‘diverge’ (using various formulation of *inḥirāf*) to varying degrees

¹²² Asad writes, “The discourses in which the teaching is done, in which the correct performance of the practice is defined and learned, are intrinsic to all Islamic practices. It is therefore somewhat misleading to suggest, as some sociologists have done, that it is orthopraxy and not orthodoxy, ritual and not doctrine, that matters in Islam. It is misleading because such a contention ignores the centrality of the notion of ‘the correct model’ to which an instituted practice – including ritual – ought to conform, a model conveyed in authoritative formulas, in Islamic traditions as in others” (Asad, “The Idea,” 21).

¹²³ Asad, “The Idea,” 22.

¹²⁴ Sobriety is understood here as returning from intoxication experienced during annihilation of self.

from the normative model.¹²⁵ The creative capacity of groups to respond in this situation need not be limited to terms of resistance (or mere submission to hegemonic power) and in this regard, this discursive space affords a set of resources that can be reassembled and applied in competing ways. As I have suggested, the normative framing of Sufism stresses a ‘practical Sufism’ geared towards character development and ethical education and entails regimes of disciplinary practices. My point here is that the emergence of distinct ‘applied curricula of ethical education’ is in part influenced by this normative vision and thus the way Sufism is enacted as a tradition is shaped by the authoritative discourses and institutions that are particular to contemporary Morocco.¹²⁶ Thus, in line with Asad’s approach to tradition, I consider the embodied practices and associated discourses of legitimation, interpretation, and pedagogy in light of the ways in which they are situated with respect to the past (temporality) and to structures of power (authority), both of which relate to issues of reform and renewal.¹²⁷

vii. Summary

What tradition brings to bear on the study of Sufism for my purposes here is that the dimensions of ethical analysis are always situated in specific historical and cultural contexts.

Iḥsān, as a telos for example, is currently being presented through state discourse and

¹²⁵ Asad describes the authorizing discourse in medieval Christianity as follows: “The medieval Church did not attempt to establish absolute uniformity of practice; on the contrary, its authoritative discourse was always concerned to specify differences, gradations, exceptions. What it sought was the subjection of all practices to a unified authority...” (Asad, *Genealogies*, 38).

¹²⁶ I say in part here because ‘ethical education’ derives from a variety of debates, i.e., not just Sufism. For instance, ethical education is framed as a mechanism to fight terrorism, i.e., as a strategy for moral and therefore social order.

¹²⁷ “An anthropology of Islam will therefore seek to understand the historical conditions that enable the production and maintenance of specific discursive traditions, or their transformation – and the efforts of practitioners to achieve coherence” (Asad, “The Idea,” 23).

institutional authority as a pious ideal constitutive of Sufism, and Moroccan religious identity more generally. As such, the incorporation and centrality of *iḥsān* in contemporary Sufi discourse is in part framed by the state's authorizing discourse. However, *iḥsān* is also framed by traditional discourses within Sufism specifically, and Islam more broadly, creating possibilities for alternative articulations because the term itself carries a range of meanings. Thus, there are a multiplicity of ways that one can adopt *iḥsān* as an ideal, in addition to the myriad regimes of practice that can be undertaken to cultivate and perform it. While configurations of ideals of piety and their embodied performance are highly contextual and fluid, the Moroccan state's production of an authorizing discourses operates to constrain articulations of piety while leaving space for competing ways of performing that piety. In other words, the pious subject is neither fully determined by nor entirely free from power; rather, it is enmeshed in a field of possibilities (for thought, experience, and conduct) operated on by practices and discourses that work in the formation and transformation of ways of living, interacting, and thinking. Foucault's mode of analysis allows for a recognition of the multiple ways of aligning and maneuvering within an authorizing discourse and the accompanying structures of power and knowledge out of which that discourse emerges.¹²⁸

Using these theoretical insights, I approach Sufism as an ethical tradition. As a tradition, it includes a set of discourses, practices, and material objects and spaces, continually contested and open to criticism, aimed at the establishment of shared norms along

¹²⁸ Saba Mahmood writes, "I find Foucault's analysis of ethical formation particularly helpful for conceptualizing agency beyond the confines of the binary model of enacting and subverting norms" (Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*, 29). Or as Foucault puts it, "We must escape from the dilemma of being either for or against. After all, it is possible to face up to a government and remain standing. To work with a government implies neither subjection nor total acceptance. One may work with it yet be restive. I even believe that the two things go together" (Foucault, "Technologies," 154)

with the rules for generating and debating those norms, as well as at the honing of certain attitudes, aptitudes, and sensibilities. As an ethical tradition, Sufism consists in various practices of the self that seek to form the individual as an ethical subject, making possible types of moral conduct, that is, certain ways of conducting oneself in relation to certain authorities, codes and values. While these practices of the self are the means through which a Sufi disciple can effect a transformation on oneself in order to attain the ultimate goal of annihilation of the self in the presence of the divine (i.e., the mystical telos), they also take place within and through a variety of social contexts including, but not limited to, the master-disciple relationship, companionship between disciples, and other communal relationships. Thus, Sufism as an ethical tradition involves not only the cultivation of specific spiritual virtues, but also the development and performance of a variety of social virtues. The former may be achieved through the types of practices that have tended to be studied such as *dhikr*, *khalwa*, and *samāʿ*, while the latter, which have often been neglected due to the focus on Sufism as an internal mode of religiosity, are enacted through practices such as *ṣaḍaqa*, *naṣīḥa*, and *ṣuḥba*. Together, these constitute a program of *tarbiya* that aims at refinement of character (*akhlāq*) and instruction of proper conduct and comportment (*ādāb*). It is these latter practices and their deployment within a variety of curricula of ethical training aimed at the attainment of the level of *iḥsān* that are the focus of this work. My goal is to use the lens of the curriculum to think about the *tariqa* as a shared sociability and set of practices that fosters alternative senses of solidarity in an increasingly fragmented world. As an ethical tradition grounded in certain types of social relationship, Sufism provides alternative models of community and identity. Through these social aspects, it is possible to see Sufi *ādāb* and ethics as sources of shared embodied sociabilities that underpin global Islamic publics.

CHAPTER THREE: SUFISM AND PERFORMING PUBLIC PIETY: A THEORETICAL

INTRODUCTION

i. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I outlined my approach to Sufism as an ethical tradition, that is, as a practical craft of character development closely tied to moral character (*akhlāq*), conduct, and comportment (*ādāb*). By focusing on Sufism as a tradition in this manner, I aim to bring into relief the ensembles of embodied exercises designed to cultivate both spiritual and social virtues. While the former pertain to one's relationship to God in the form of reliance (*tawakkul*) or fear (*khawf*), the latter may pertain to one's relationship with others in the form of companionship (*ṣuḥba*) or altruism (*īthār*), as well as one's relationship to oneself in the form of sincerity (*ṣidq*) or intention (*niyya*). These come together in the concept of *iḥsān*, or virtuous piety, the attainment of which involves the formation of these relationships and the character traits that make them possible. The embodied disciplines that cultivate these qualities may vary in their specific form, but there are also many well-known practices shared across Sufi communities, such as *dhikr*, *ḥaḍra*, and *samāʿ*. While these ritual practices have been well documented in scholarship on Sufism, I also suggested that several other practices have been integral to Sufi programs of instruction, such as *ṣadaqa* and *naṣṭha*. In short, just as the form of piety cultivated through Sufi practices spans the social and the spiritual, so too do the embodied practices deployed in Sufi curricula of ethical education (*manāḥij al-tarbiya*) bring together social and ascetic practices. How these curricula are formulated, the specific practices brought together, and the justifications for

them vary across group, but my argument is that this approach opens up a space for comparing Sufi groups in terms of their embodied practices.

In the contemporary Moroccan context, Sufism is defined along these lines, that is, as an ethical tradition aimed at the attainment of *iḥsān*. Moreover, Moroccan religious authorities define Sufism as the ethical foundation of modern Moroccan citizenship. Thus, the ethical qualities developed on the path to *iḥsān* are also the ethical qualities that underpin the ‘good citizen.’ Furthermore, this ‘good citizen’ is deemed necessary for the moral order of society, an order that in turn ensures the stability of the Moroccan nation-state. Therefore, Sufism as an ethical tradition aimed at the cultivation of *iḥsān* is also a form of religiosity connected to the ‘public good.’ In other words, Sufism as an ethical tradition entails certain forms of public sociability and social action, and through these a normative version of the virtues of the pious Sufi are transplanted onto the values of Moroccan religious identity by an authorizing governmental discourse that has accompanied the regulation and restructuring of the religious field in Morocco over the past twenty years. The aim in this chapter is to investigate ways of approaching Sufism as a style of public religiosity enacted and performed for different audiences through a variety of embodied practices. To return to the king’s words cited in Chapter One, “Sufism is indeed one of the ethical and spiritual components of Moroccan identity.” This ethical-spiritual feature of Sufism is reflected in the idea of *iḥsān*. As such, in addition to looking at how *iḥsān* is cultivated, I also aim to illustrate the various ways in which *iḥsān* as a form of public piety is performed for multiple public audiences.

My point here is not that the issues of public piety are detached from the issues of ethical tradition; rather, the forms of public piety and the modes of sociability they afford are dependent upon and make possible the ethical formation of the individual through embodied

practices. As Saba Mahmood argues with regard to the relationship between cultivation and performance, “What is significant in this program of self-cultivation is that bodily acts – like wearing the veil or conducting oneself modestly in interactions with people (especially men) – do not serve as manipulable masks in a game of public presentation, detachable from an essential interiorized self. *Rather, they are the critical markers of piety as well as the ineluctable means by which one trains oneself to be pious.*”¹²⁹ Certain ways of conducting oneself in social relationships is therefore not necessarily the expression of a fully formed virtue, but a technique for cultivating that virtue, which also indexes a model of embodied piety.

For example, as I will discuss later, the disciples in the Karkariyya-Fawziyya wear a multi-colored patched robe (*muraqqa’a*). As a disciplinary practice, it aims at the formation of virtues of patience (*ṣabr*) and modesty (*tawādu’a*). However, as a type of clothing worn in a disciple’s daily life, it is also a public performance of piety that constitutes the *tariqa* as a community and at times intersects with debates about normative practice in the public domain. Certain Sufi practices are therefore also performances that display and construct sensibilities and attitudes (i.e., subjectivities), and in the Moroccan context as part of a concerted effort to draw on Sufism as a source of public religiosity, Sufi performances have become integral to the staging of Moroccan culture and religiosity.

The staging of Moroccan religiosity, particularly in the form of Sufi music festivals, has become one among a number of governmental technologies for constructing piety domestically, and for exporting that piety internationally. Sufism, in this international context, provides an important means of establishing relations with several international

¹²⁹ Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*, 158 (italics added).

partners, as evidenced by the improving relations between Morocco and West African nations through Sufi orders like the Tijaniyya. ‘Moroccan Islam’ therefore does not operate as just a national religiosity but is constructed as a model that shares in multiple identities. For example, in addition to referring to a religiosity tied to the nation-state of Morocco, it may also refer to one characteristic of the ‘Western Islamic world.’¹³⁰ In the context of the western Islamic world, this religiosity would have been shared across large parts of north and west Africa as well as Andalusia (modern-day Spain), likely including the practice of Maliki law with Sufism. Despite this localization, it also takes part in the global aspects of the Islamic tradition and as a result, ‘Moroccan Islam’ is also in competition with other transnational discourses and movements. Finally, as with any contemporary international discourse, it is also shaped by political discourses (e.g., War on Terror, National Security) and therefore participates in the global construction of Muslim identities (e.g., moderate/progressive/liberal versus radical/fundamentalist Muslims). The point here is that Sufism provides an important transnational component of ‘Moroccan Islam’ insofar as Sufi communities are not limited to the boundaries of the nation-state. Its performance therefore cannot be limited to a single domestic audience, i.e., the ‘public sphere,’ but rather includes overlapping ‘publics’ constituted by a variety of intersecting and divergent subjectivities, identities, and expectations.

In this chapter I take up each of these three issues in order. Firstly, I discuss the concept of public piety as it emerges from other work in order to frame the approach to piety as the embodiment of *iḥsān* and public as a space infused with dynamics of power. Secondly, I review scholarship related to Sufism and performance in order to demonstrate the

¹³⁰ Al-maghrib has both meanings.

modalities of public Sufi performances and their relation on the one hand to ethical cultivation and on the other hand to transforming public spaces. Thirdly, I consider the transnational aspects of Sufism in light of theoretical discourses on ‘civility’ and ‘vernacular cosmopolitanism’ in order to illustrate how Sufism as an embodied ethical tradition can serve as the basis of a shared sociability (i.e., source of community bond and solidarity) that is not bound to a nation-state while also being dependent (for authority) upon certain institutional affordances actualized within the context of a specific nation-state.

ii. Public Piety

In a basic sense, I define piety as the concern and attempt to practice, embody, and perform a religious tradition in one’s daily life. In this regard, I take inspiration from Rachel Rinaldo who, in her analysis of women’s piety movements in Indonesia, writes, “Piety – meaning an emphasis on practicing religion in daily life – is integrated into and expressed in multiple social and political arenas.”¹³¹ Piety is therefore not an isolated activity or set of beliefs, but a way of being in the world learned over time through repetitive practice and effort. In short, piety is the practiced (i.e., trained or disciplined) embodiment of a religious tradition understood as an orientation to the world in which one finds oneself and the possession of embodied aptitudes and habits for navigating the novel and quotidian alike.¹³²

While it is possible that this piety may only be a matter of self-concern, numerous scholars have pointed to the ways in which one’s personal piety intersects with issues of

¹³¹ Rachel Rinaldo, *Mobilizing Piety: Islam and Feminism in Indonesia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 3.

¹³² In the Islamic tradition, *dhikr* is precisely this kind of orientation. It is derived from the Quranic injunction ‘To be ever mindful (or to constantly remember) Allah,’ but connotes far more than an act. Rather, it is a way of being in the world such that one is oriented toward Allah (in thought, intention, and action) at all times. Such an orientation is also embedded in the concept of *ihsān*.

social and public concern. For example, in her study of Shi'i Muslims in modern Lebanon, Lara Deeb describes the ways in which practices of public piety underpin an 'enchanted modern,' that is, a community in which discourses of social and spiritual progress are entangled such that they create what she terms the 'pious modern.' While my focus is not on narratives of modernity and progress, I take her theoretical elaboration of the notion of 'public piety' as an important starting point for thinking about Sufism in Morocco. She defines it as follows: "Public piety is the public practice of faith based upon an interpretation that I term 'authenticated Islam.'" ¹³³ 'Authenticated Islam' in this case refers to the continuation of processes of internal criticism and contestation characteristic of the Islamic tradition as they unfold in relation to discourses of modernity. For Deeb it is a process of defining the correct meaning and form of practice through a systematic and historical verification. ¹³⁴ This authenticated Islam has therefore adapted to the contexts of modernity in that seeks to delineate proper practice and correct knowledge through a process of systematization and as a result highly values historical accuracy and scientific rationalism, that is, through a process of 'Weberian' rationalization and bureaucratization. ¹³⁵ The modernization that accompanies the systematization and authentication of Islam, Deeb asserts, does not, contrary to the popular theory of modernity and secularization, produce a

¹³³ Lara Deeb, *An Enchanted Modern: Gender and Public Piety in Shi'i Lebanon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 8.

¹³⁴ "... A process of establishing the true or correct meaning, understanding, or method of various religious and social practices and beliefs" (Deeb, *An Enchanted Modern*, 20).

¹³⁵ She writes, "... the values of public piety include understanding and practicing Islam 'correctly'; sacrificing one's time, money, and life to help others; and supporting the Resistance against Israeli occupation" (Deeb, *An Enchanted Modern*, 8). On the relation between authentication and modernization she writes, "... authentication has also accompanied a process of bureaucratization and institutionalization akin to Weberian rationalization" (Deeb, *An Enchanted Modern*, 27).

disenchanted, impersonal society.¹³⁶ Rather, the forms of religious practice and the public piety they inform integrate spiritual progress into daily life, thereby bringing that project of spiritual reform to bear on issues of social reform and community development. In other words, the public discussed by Deeb is imbued with a host of ethical and spiritual relationships (i.e., pious subjectivities) that suggest multiple types of public life. These alternative publics are distinct from the notion of ‘public sphere’ in Habermas’s sense of a ‘zone free of power,’ and to unpack some of these differences I turn to the concept of ‘counterpublic’ developed by Michael Warner and elaborated by Charles Hirschkind.

In this discussion of publics, I want to make two points. Firstly, insofar as performances are always constituted in relation to the audience, public performances of piety must be studied in relation to the publics to which they are addressed. However, these publics are not ‘zones free of power,’ but are infused by various dynamics and power relationships. As a result, the structures of power that shape publics feedback to affect styles and contents of public performances, meaning that the possibilities for certain types of public religious performance and discourse are afforded and constrained by those power dynamics. Secondly, while the notion of the ‘public sphere’ is often tied to a nation-state, resulting in discussions of the public sphere in the singular, my goal is to think through the multiple publics at play in the performance of piety in Morocco. Festivals, pilgrimages, and online video testimonials do not simply speak to a Moroccan public sphere; rather, they emerge as performances through their interaction with different publics – European, Amazigh, Andalusian, or African. These publics are not distinct entities however, since individuals

¹³⁶ Deeb writes, “In a sense, the inseparability of the two in their speech speaks to their refusal of the assumption that modernization leads to an impersonal society and their embrace of a modern that prioritizes face-to-face human relationships” (Deeb, *An Enchanted Modern*, 8).

may simultaneously belong to multiple publics. Publics are, therefore, overlapping and intersecting arenas imbued with their own dynamics of power, each of which is built upon certain expectations and grammars governing possibilities for public performance and discourse.¹³⁷

In order to move away from the idea of the public in the singular that is tied to the nation-state, and that is considered an arena of ‘rational argumentation’ freed from the constraints of power, I begin with a consideration of the concept ‘counterpublic.’ In his study of the *da’wa* movement, the anthropologist Charles Hirschkind argues that the discourses and communities that make up the movement constitute what he calls a “counterpublic,” which is drawn from Michael Warner’s critical discussion of the “public” of the nation-state, many features of which Hirschkind locates within contemporary Egypt (i.e., there exists both a public in its Habermasian sense and a counterpublic).¹³⁸ In exploring the notion of a public in the modern nation-state, Michael Warner highlights several aspects that, while appearing to enable autonomy and agency through rational-critical discourse, actually

¹³⁷ Saba Mahmood, for instance, uses the notion of grammar to describe the global regime of political and legal secularism. She writes, “I track not only the ideational life of a concept but its practical and material unfolding in a society that is historically distinct but shares a global grammar of legal and political governance” (Saba Mahmood, *Religious Difference in a Secular Age: A Minority Report*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 23). More fundamentally, I draw here on Wittgenstein’s notion of ‘*lebensform*’ (form of life) to think through the ways in which possibilities for public discourse and performance are constrained (and made possible) by the rules/grammar established by religious and political authorities. In other words, in approaching piety as a ‘form of life’ (*lebensform*), it is necessary to consider not only the ways it is practiced and lived, but also the rules that condition that lived and practiced piety.

¹³⁸ “The form of public I explore in this chapter contrasts with this model in some of its basic features. For this reason, I will refer to it as a “counterpublic”” (Charles Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 106). The basic features by which the *da’wa* counterpublic and the nation-state public differ are in the areas of affect, hierarchies of senses and modes of transmission, temporalities, and self-other relations. However, it is crucial to recognize that ‘counterpublic’ here is not used in the sense used by Nancy Fraser who writes characterizes counter-public as “parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs” (Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy,” *Social Text* 25, no. 26 (1990): 67). Rather than seeing the two as oppositional, as Fraser does, Hirschkind highlights how these publics overlap, intersect, and inflect one another.

fail to account for the varieties of publics that can be formed through the gradations of affective, emotional, temporal, and embodied elements of the performance of discourse. For Warner, a public, as conceived by the modern social imaginary, is “a space of discourse organized by nothing other than discourse itself.”¹³⁹ In this way, by being self-organizing, the public can remain independent of the state and other external authoritative frameworks, such as religious authorities. Through this independence, the public can have a claim to be free from institutional power. This model of the public critiqued by Warner therefore carries with it the underlying assumption that social agency necessitates autonomy in deliberation and action. However, as Hirschkind’s work on the *da’wa* movement illustrates, public argumentation and debate that lead to social, as well as political, change are present in the *da’wa* community, even though the notions of morality and responsibility are not grounded in ideals of freedom and autonomy. Furthermore, this example illustrates that any public, even the public of the secular state, cannot be properly understood without attention being paid to the formation of the modern secular subjects which participate in the public sphere, on top of the institutional arrangements that facilitate its emergence. In other words, any public is going to be dependent upon the processes of subject formation that construct the embodied capacities that enable the forms of reasoning, discourse, and interaction authorized within that public.

The privileging of autonomy in the modern model of the public also entails a corresponding ethical relationship between members of the community. According to Warner, the model of a public in secular states is seen as pure stranger-relationality where individuals are connected as abstract entities.¹⁴⁰ What Warner means here is that while the

¹³⁹ Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone, 2002), 67.

¹⁴⁰ Warner, *Publics*, 75.

set of citizens composing a nation can be identified at a particular moment in time, a public is not an aggregate of a certain set of people. In this sense, a public is a “virtual entity,”¹⁴¹ indicating that rather than being an empirical reality, it should be seen instead as a “distinctively modern mode of power.”¹⁴² Publics then are able to “make stranger relationality normative, reshaping the most intimate dimensions of subjectivity around co-membership with indefinite persons in a context of routine action. The development of forms that mediate the intimate theater of stranger relationality must surely be one of the most significant dimensions of modern history.”¹⁴³ For Hirschkind, the kind of ethical work done by the practice of cassette-sermon listening functions to restructure this interpersonal relationality, giving rise to alternative forms of social interaction and experience that make possible the modes of moral reasoning and argument present within the community. Social relationships themselves become a type of practice, that is, a way of honing one’s aptitudes and abilities in the tradition. In his case, these abilities are tied to proper modes of argumentation and discourse, ways of interacting that are tied to a specific conception of piety. My point here is not that the groups with which I worked applied the same sense of piety and accompanying practices; instead, I highlight the theoretical point that this type of public (i.e., a moral community consisting of porous, pious subjects) become sites for performing and honing piety, even in Sufi contexts. One of my goals is to demonstrate the types of interaction deployed by Sufi communities, and that within these Sufi communities the relationships implicitly critique stranger relationality and provide alternative sources of social solidarity.

¹⁴¹ Warner, *Publics*, 88. One could also, in this way, conceive of the public as an imagined community (Anderson).

¹⁴² Warner, *Publics*, 108.

¹⁴³ Warner, *Publics*, 76.

The stranger-relationality of the modern public, which severely limits ways of relating to others, also implies for Warner that one must be able to address one's self as a stranger. For instance, he writes, "Our subjectivity is understood as having resonance with others, and immediately so. But this is only true to the extent that the trace of strangerhood remains present in our understanding of ourselves as the addressee."¹⁴⁴ Because a public is constituted through attention or participation, there is a sense in which public discourse is addressed to possible people rather than actual people. Thus, when listening to public speech, one must be able to see one's self as that possible person, i.e., as a stranger. The idea of a stranger, however, ultimately reduces the subject, who experiences, perceives, and reasons differently, to a disembodied entity defined by its rational capacities. Such a view of the self reinforces the idea of the public individual as an autonomous agent and is modeled on the hierarchy of senses associated with the private reader open to rational-critical debate, as opposed to the ethical listener in the case of the *da'wa* movement.¹⁴⁵

For Warner, the hierarchy of senses privileged by the social imaginary of the public has led to a particular conception of the human in which the private reader with its rational-critical faculties and primarily visual modes of perception are elevated to the status of the ideal person.¹⁴⁶ Here, Warner is arguing that the notion of a public as rational-critical discussion reinforces and is reinforced by a framework that highlights the rational dimension of language at the expense of its performative and expressive dimensions. Warner argues, "Discourse is said to be propositionally summarizable; the poetic or textual qualities of an

¹⁴⁴ Warner, *Publics*, 77.

¹⁴⁵ Hirschkind writes on the difference between the private reader and the ethical listener, "As opposed to the private reader whose stillness and solitude became privileged icons of a distinct kind of critical reasoning within the imaginary of the bourgeois public, it is the figure of the ethical listener – with all of its dense sensory involvements – that founds and inhabits the counterpublic I describe here" (Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape*, 107).

¹⁴⁶ Warner, *Publics*, 116.

utterance are disregarded in favor of sense.”¹⁴⁷ Moreover, the conception of language as rational-critical discussion that focuses on narrowly construed propositional meaning is a crucial feature of the modern social imaginary of the public insofar as it enables a vision of discourse as free from influences of power. In this approach, it is only when the free exercise of reason through deliberation is achieved that participants in the modern public sphere extricate themselves from the authority of, for example, religious traditions. Abstracting public discourse from performance and power in this way limits the analysis of ways of speaking publicly (i.e., the possible forms of public life) and its focus on deliberation tends to exclude the disciplinary dimensions of those forms of public speech (and life).

Critical to Hirschkind’s elaboration of the counterpublic is the relationship between discipline and deliberation. It is assumed in the concept of the public that there is an inverse relationship between the deliberative capacities of a public on the one hand, and its disciplinary function on the other.¹⁴⁸ Drawing on Warner, Hirschkind argues that modern senses of the public often overlook the institutional and disciplinary mechanisms that construct individuals and facilitate the circulation and consumption of discourse.¹⁴⁹ This is one of the key distinctions between a public and counterpublic, where the former is thought to be free of disciplinary power, the latter brings together discipline and deliberation such

¹⁴⁷ Warner, *Publics*, 115.

¹⁴⁸ Hirschkind writes on the two forms of public assumed in scholarship, “In short, the public arena constituted by media practices of religious actors tends to be identified either as a deliberative space of argument and contestation between individuals or as a normative space for education in community-oriented virtue. The assumption is that the more truly deliberative a public, the weaker its disciplinary function, and vice versa” (Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape*, 105-6). Therefore, the institutional and disciplinary processes that enable certain forms of reasoning to occur are left out in analyses of modern publics, and forms of reasoning and deliberation are left out of analyses of religious communities. The former produce changes free from the bounds of power, while the latter produce no change in thought due to the over-determining modes of social discipline. This inverse relationship between deliberation and discipline forecloses an analysis of how disciplinary, educational, social practices operate on bodies to make possible the forms of reasoning taken as constitutive of publics.

¹⁴⁹ Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape*, 106.

that publicly deliberating is also a means for disciplining oneself and potentially others. Moreover, the performance of piety in the form of public deliberation does not simply benefit the individuals involved but also helps to ensure the moral uprightness of the community. Thus, the piety performed in the counterpublic is not only the expression of a personal piety, but also a way to help others through advice, encouragement, and even reprimand in a way that benefits the community as a whole.

Hirschkind's discussion of the *da'wa* movement as a counterpublic highlights that changes in affects, gestures, and other embodied faculties are the means by which changes in modes of thought, relationality, and interaction occur, and therefore when analyzing the agency of a movement such as the Islamic Revival, i.e., what changes in social and political landscapes it is able to produce, it is necessary to attend to these embodied changes before evaluating the political and social changes. The *da'wa* movement constitutes a counterpublic first and foremost by replacing the idea of a private reader with an ethical listener as the inhabitant of the public. Such a move calls forward a rethinking of the hierarchy of faculties, where "the faculties of the ethical listener – an appreciation for and attunement to the affective and expressive dimensions of divine speech – now come to define the proper attributes of a public subject."¹⁵⁰ Thinking of the aural subject in this way illustrates how discourse can have crucial aesthetic and ethical dimensions that are more present in the performance of language than in the reading of a text. In doing so, sound, as well as other senses such as smell, gain prominence in the role of regulating and enabling social interaction.¹⁵¹ As a result, alternative forms of interaction, i.e. social agency, become

¹⁵⁰ Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape*, 121.

¹⁵¹ "Smell, in other words, is a salient perceptual feature of the moral landscape for those who practice *da'wa*" (Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape*, 130).

possible because the ways of relating to and understanding other people go beyond the an abstract stranger-relationality in which the other is a receiver and processor of propositional meanings (i.e., a private reader).¹⁵² In short, he proposes an idea of the aural subject as a porous and embodied subject always enmeshed in a moral community that allows for alternative modes of social interaction not readily captured by the reading subject sitting alone reading and thinking to oneself.

In discussing *da'wa* as a counterpublic, Hirschkind illustrates the variety of ways in which practitioners' conceptions of subjectivity and agency differ from the conceptions associated with the "public" critiqued by Warner. In particular, engaging in public discourse cannot be seen as a straightforward expression of fully-formed internal (i.e., intentional) states since speaking publicly on ethical issues allows one to simultaneously hone and enact ethical character.¹⁵³ The enactment of discourses demonstrates that the discussion of ethical or religious practices and the proper performance of those practices are both dimensions of the interdependent processes of cultivating ethical sensibilities and creating an environment that allows for the proper enactment of those sensibilities. However, the conditions that

¹⁵² In addition to the normative subject constitutive of the public, the *da'wa* movement also constitutes a counterpublic through its temporality, which stands apart from what Warner refers to as "secular time." Secular time here refers to the temporality of publics idealized as conversation and decision making, which relies on a more punctual notion of temporality, i.e. the unfolding of sequential events through homogenous time. For Warner, this kind of punctual time is characteristic of modern politics and is important because "a public can only act in the temporality of the circulation that gives it existence" (Warner, *Publics*, 107). Therefore, in order to act politically, it is necessary for a public to operate within the highly punctual "temporality of the headline." Hirschkind demonstrates how the *da'wa* counterpublic is constituted by a temporality that is distinct from any form of secular time and, I would assert, could be characterized as a "messianic time," in the sense used by Walter Benjamin. For instance, Hirschkind writes, "The temporality of these tapes ... does not index the nation, the daily unfolding of events, or "news," through which the newspaper reader or television viewer participates as a national citizen" (Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape*, 205). In this way, it contrasts with the political time, but it also differs in its relation to the past where past sermons are not seen as fixed, and instead can be used in the present moment to help reason about contemporary issues. Furthermore, this present moment is "structured by the notion of *sahwa*, or revival, the period of moral renewal that repeatedly succeeds eras of decline and corruption" (Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape*, 63). Therefore, the temporality of this counterpublic could be seen as messianic in terms of the redemptive feature of the moment and its relationship to the past and the future.

¹⁵³ Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape*, 112.

enable the proper performance, in this case the moral agency, are not located solely in an individual's beliefs or doctrinal knowledge; instead, those conditions include the embodied and deliberative capacities of individuals, and also extend into the environment through technologies like cassette sermons. The key point here is that the engagement in social discourse and reform made possible in the *da'wa* counterpublic, i.e. the construction of a moral community, is dependent on the ethical work accomplished through the disciplinary practices that restructure relationships with self and other by modulating and altering processes of perception, affect, memory, and gesture within and between subjects that can serve as the ground upon which forms of thought and reason can take place.¹⁵⁴

Despite this theoretical discussion, my point here is that the approach to the public adopted here derives not from Habermas's notion of the 'public sphere,' but critiques of that concept which have used the term 'counterpublic.' Adopting this perspective places emphasis on the institutional conditions that enable forms of public discourse and performance, as well as the formation of subjects whose sensibilities underpin modes of public reasoning and sociability. Public piety, in this sense, is the ensemble of sensibilities and attitudes that constitute the attributes of a pious public subject that can be executed in an array of contexts.¹⁵⁵ As I argue, in the Moroccan context, due to the confluence of a number of historical trajectories and political circumstances, this public piety has been defined in

¹⁵⁴ "Indeed, one of the central arguments of this book is that the affects and sensibilities honed through popular media practices such as listening to cassette sermons are as infrastructural to politics and public reason as are markets, associations, formal institutions, and information networks. My analysis, in this sense, follows upon a growing recognition by scholars that the forms of thinking and reasoning that constitute our political discourses are profoundly indebted to evaluative dispositions outside the purview of consciousness, to what political theorist William Connolly refers to as "visceral modes of appraisal" (Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape*, 9). In this sense, processes of political and social deliberation and action cannot be logically separated from the

¹⁵⁵ Hirschkind writes, "The faculties of the ethical listener – an appreciation for and attunement to the affective and expressive dimensions of divine speech – now comes to define the proper attitudes of a public subject" (Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape*, 121).

relation to Sufism generally and *iḥsān* specifically. However, this is not necessarily the case in every context, and therefore the need to attend to the specific ways in which Islam as a global tradition is actualized through various social and politically processes historically.

In Deeb's case, the public piety endorsed by the authentication process is predicated upon various values and virtues, the primary one being 'commitment' (*iltizām*). As a value that summons individuals to fulfill moral obligations for the spiritual development of the individual, the growth of the community, and the progress of society, *iltizām* constitutes a centralizing virtue that is performed through a variety of embodied practices. As Deeb writes, "These personal practices of piety take public forms and carry public meaning in two senses. They are read by other devout Shi'is, often as markers of a person's morality, signaling membership in the community of the pious modern. They are also read by others ... usually as demonstrations of the new national and international political presence of the Lebanese Shi'a."¹⁵⁶ In addition to being read as critical markers of piety, as embodied practices the manifestations of *iltizām* are also means through which that piety is honed. The ability to perform *iltizām* correctly, is therefore dependent upon proper social relations (i.e., a community made up of pious individuals) and proper instruction, as well as the individual initiative to learn correct practice.¹⁵⁷ In addition to being read by others in everyday life, i.e., being visible modes of religiosity, pious practices are also connected to the public good. Deeb captures this dual sense of public piety by writing, "... public piety [is] a phrase which brings together the notion of piety meant to be seen with that of piety that is inextricably

¹⁵⁶ Deeb, *An Enchanted Modern*, 102.

¹⁵⁷ Deeb writes, "Religious practices done as part of one's heritage did not 'count' as truly pious acts; instead piety was to stem from an understanding of the 'correct' interpretation of Islam" (Deeb, *An Enchanted Modern*, 102).

linked to the public good.”¹⁵⁸ Thus, public performances of authenticated piety are not solely for the spiritual well-being of the individual, but also means for the spiritual and social progress of the community. In short, the proper performance of piety is predicated upon a moral community and therefore the kind of publicness entailed in the notion of ‘public piety’ reflects the porousness of the pious subject, i.e., its connection with other individuals.¹⁵⁹

For Deeb, public piety therefore refers to the attributes and qualities that make up a pious subject as defined through a process of authentication, as well as to a form of piety in which the embodied performance of that piety contributes to the ‘public good.’ While Deeb’s analysis centers on *iltizām*, I argue that in Morocco, *iḥsān* serves as a centralizing value for a type of public piety derived from Sufi traditions and authorized by state discourses. The enactment of this mode of piety involves certain types of embodied practices and performances, and therefore practices of charity, teaching, hospitality, and advice (among others) act as critical markers of and means for the cultivation of *iḥsān*. These performances, however, are also aimed at the improvement of the community and the lives of other individuals within the community, thereby connecting it to issues of the public good and social reform. In the context of Morocco, performance of this public piety through Sufi festivals, for example, inculcates and demonstrates a mode of religiosity that is framed as a corrective to the radical religiosity posing a threat to the moral and social order of the nation. In addition to being a remedy for extremism and as such a force for the public good, this authorized public piety is framed as a remedy for the moral corruption and spiritual degeneration of the youth (and contemporary society more generally). In comparing

¹⁵⁸ Deeb, *An Enchanted Modern*, 34.

¹⁵⁹ Asad contrasts what he calls the ‘porous self’ with Charles Taylor’s ‘buffered self’, emphasizing how alternative articulations of the self make possible different forms of public action (Asad, *Thinking*, 3).

manifestations of *iḥsān* as a mode of public piety, the goal of this project is to demonstrate the types of public engagement through which Sufi communities enact their own pious ideals and encounter competing and dominant discourses.

iii. Performing Piety

In the previous section I discussed the concept of ‘public piety’ with particular attention to the ways in which the public intersects with issues of subject formation and conditions of power on the one hand, and concerns for the common good on the other hand, in order to dissociate the notion of public used here from the ‘public sphere’ as commonly understood. My argument is that *iḥsān* constitutes a core component of public piety and that as a form of public piety, *iḥsān* is cultivated and expressed through various performances and public activities. While performance here may refer to staged productions of Sufi music, for example, the notion of performance adopted in this work draws on a number of theorists who have illustrated the performative character of everyday life.¹⁶⁰ This section will begin by unpacking this idea of performance and proceed to review secondary literature on the performance of piety in the Islamic tradition, with particular attention to the significance of Sufi performances in contemporary Morocco.

Theoretical elaborations on ‘performance’ have taken place in a variety of fields, many of them focusing in one way or another on language in use.¹⁶¹ One prominent strand of performance theory emerged through the confluence of anthropology and folklore studies in

¹⁶⁰ Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1956); Victor Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance* (New York: PAJ Press, 1986); Richard Schechner, *Performance Theory* (London: Routledge 1988(2003)); Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York: Routledge 1993); Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*; Jonathan Shannon, *Among the Jasmine Trees: Music and Modernity in Contemporary Syria* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2006).

¹⁶¹ For example, John Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969) and J.L. Austin, *How to do Things with Words* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

the study of verbal arts. In this regard, Richard Bauman defined performance as follows, “Fundamentally, performance as a mode of spoken verbal communication consists in the assumption of responsibility *to an audience* for the display of communicative *competence* ... Performance thus calls forth special *attention* to and heightened awareness of the *act of expression* and gives license to the audience to regard the act of expression and the performer with special intensity.”¹⁶² In addition to being situated and contextual, for Bauman performance also involves a reflexive recognition of the ‘act of performance’ that is accompanied by an enrichment of some form, i.e., it is marked off from ordinary experience.¹⁶³ Certain contextual cues or frames may provide the sufficient conditions for setting apart a particular event as a performance, but performances also pervade everyday life in ways that do not necessarily bring forth an enhancement of experience in the same way.¹⁶⁴

As Richard Schechner writes in his introduction to essays on performance theory, “Performance is an inclusive term. Theater is only one node on a continuum that reaches from ritualizations of animals (including humans) through performances in everyday life – greetings, displays of emotion, family scenes, professional roles, and so on – through to play, sports, theater, dance, ceremonies, rites, and performances of great magnitude.”¹⁶⁵ There are multiple modalities of performance, some of which may take the form of an explicit ritual (e.g., daily prayer, *dhikr*), others which may occur in a staged setting (e.g., music performance) or festival setting (*mawlid*), and some which may be enacted in the course of

¹⁶² Richard Bauman, *Verbal Art as Performance* (Long Grove: Waveland Press, 1984), 11.

¹⁶³ “It is part of the essence of performance that it offers to the participants a special enhancement of experience, bringing with it a heightened intensity of communicative interaction” (Richard Bauman, “Verbal Art as Performance,” *American Anthropologist* 77, no. 2 (1975): 305).

¹⁶⁴ To make a tentative distinction for the present purposes, while performances of piety may be distinguished as specific acts, occasions, or events, performing piety refers to an ongoing process of expressing and creating that piety that is enacted throughout one’s daily life.

¹⁶⁵ Schechner, *Performance Theory*, xvii.

everyday life (e.g., greeting by kissing hands, not shaking hands, wearing certain clothing). The performance of public piety is therefore intended to capture this range of activities that includes both formal events (e.g., festivals) and informal interactions. Importantly, however, these genres of performance do not simply express piety, they are integral means for constituting that piety, i.e., one is not pious unless one is able to perform in these ways (the piety is constituted ontologically in its enactment).¹⁶⁶ In short, piety is not analytically separable from its apt performance in diverse contexts.

Erving Goffman's *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1956) also takes up the question of performance as a broad category of actions. He writes, "We have been using the term 'performance' to refer to all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers."¹⁶⁷ For Goffman, social action can be understood as a performance insofar as individuals adopt a role, thereby putting up a 'front' to strategically regulate the presentation of a particular version of the self to others in order to gain an advantage.¹⁶⁸ In the 'front stage,' individuals play out roles on a social stage roles with

¹⁶⁶ In this regard, I follow Mahmood in her critique of Butler's concept of performativity. Contrasting her approach with Butler's she writes, "... I would like to expand Butler's insight that norms are not simply a social imposition on the subject but constitute the very substance of her intimate, valorized interiority ... this in turn requires that we explore the relationship between the immanent form a normative act takes, the model of subjectivity it presupposes (specific articulations of volition, emotion, reason and bodily expression), and the kinds of authority upon which such an act relies" (Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*, 23). Rather than the external imposition of norms on a given internal subject, Mahmood suggests an analysis that looks at the ways in which the embodiment of those norms through disciplined practice over time allows for alternative forms of action, and thus the norms are not merely imposed but enacted. In this context, piety does not simply refer to normative codes of action that prescribe and proscribe certain behaviors, but to the process whereby norms enable new forms/grammars of life.

¹⁶⁷ Goffman, *The Presentation of Self*, 13.

¹⁶⁸ In describing the front, he writes, "It will be convenient to label as 'front' that part of the individual's performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance. Front, then, is the expressive equipment of a standard kind intentionally or unwittingly employed by the individual during his performance" (Goffman, *The Presentation of Self*, 13). As for the manipulation of the front so as to gain advantage he writes, "I have suggested that a performer tends to conceal or underplay those activities, facts, and motives which are incompatible with an idealized version of himself and his product" (Goffman, *The Presentation of Self*, 30).

varying degrees of sincerity, that is, conviction in their identity as defined by that social role.¹⁶⁹ Individuals may also inhabit the ‘back stage,’ in which the norms embedded in social roles are not fully operative and performance of a role is no longer necessary. The basic idea here is that social individuals inhabit and play a number of public roles, each with their proper modes of conduct and demeanor, while also living a private life as one’s ‘true’ self. As critics have pointed out, this idea of the autonomous and authentic self has been integral to the project of modernity and the constitution of the modern ‘public sphere.’¹⁷⁰ It also entails a certain relationship between interiority and exteriority that maps onto a private and public self. As other scholars have pointed out, the application of this distinction in Islamic contexts does not necessarily hold, a point that I try to make by stressing *ādāb* as proper conduct and comportment, i.e., it is not merely ‘formal’ etiquette or politeness. Rather, in its fullest sense in the Sufi context, *ādāb* constitutes a correlation and harmonization of inner and outer such that the latter cannot be detached from the former, for if it could, one would not be acting with sincerity (*ṣidq* or *ikhhlās*) and therefore not enacting piety at all.

Talal Asad, for instance, cites Goffman’s analysis not as a general theoretical model, but as an instantiation of the tendency to separate a public and private self. He writes, “... it is the systematic separation of the self from its publicly observable behavior that enables these attitudes [of morality].”¹⁷¹ The attitude referred to here is the ‘dismissal of sincerity’

¹⁶⁹ “At one extreme, we find that the performer can be fully taken in by his own act; he can be sincerely convinced that the impression of reality which he stages is the real reality ... At the other extreme, we find that the performer may not be taken in at all by his routine ... When the individual has no belief in his own act and no ultimate concern with the beliefs of his audience, we may call him cynical, reserving the term sincere for individuals who believe in the impression fostered by their own performance” (Goffman, *The Presentation of Self*, 10).

¹⁷⁰ Asad writes, “My point is simply that the separation of the ‘true’ self from its action, behavior, way of living, was in great measure a consequence of religious reforms in early modernity” (Talal Asad, *Secular Translations: Nation-State, Modern Self, and Calculative Reason* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 111).

¹⁷¹ Asad, *Secular Translations*, 106.

entailed by Goffman's theory, which effectively posits that all public behavior is in some sense insincere insofar as it is the enactment of an externally constructed role.¹⁷² Although Asad is interested in the implications of this notion of the self and its 'publicness' for national politics, my interest in his argument is that the notion of the self that is operative in Goffman's work is reflective of the context of his work. Thus, while I take Goffman's insight that much of everyday life is performative, I do not necessarily follow his distinction between public and private insofar as other scholars have illustrated the ways in which Islamic public selves are articulated in a different fashion, thereby making "Making an a priori separation between individual feelings and socially prescribed behaviors unfeasible."¹⁷³

For Asad, this modern European articulation of the 'self' has been pivotal in academic approaches to the study of ritual as well, privileging a symbolic reading of religious practice over the work done by practices in constituting moral subjects. In fact, he links the transformation in the understanding of ritual, from disciplinary to symbolic, to the reading of social action as the enactment of a script or a role played by an autonomous self.¹⁷⁴ Ritual, in this sense, becomes conventionalized behavior organized into set patterns

¹⁷² "Gouldner's warning against the dismissal of sincerity seems to me persuasive, as does his protest against the substitution of 'gamesmanship' for morality – although I would say ... that what we have here is not an absence of morality but a different conception of (attitude toward) morality" (Asad, *Secular Translations*, 106).

¹⁷³ Saba Mahmood, "Rehearsed Spontaneity and the Conventionality of Ritual: Disciplines of ṣalāt," *American Ethnologist* 28, no. 4 (2001): 844. Saba Mahmood writes elsewhere, "It might be tempting to explain such a reorientation of emotions as simply a performance of social obligations in the delimited context of acts of worship and, in keeping with anthropological theories of ritual, as an enactment of a socially authorized discourse that has little to do with what one 'genuinely or 'truly' feels (as, for example, when one cries out of distress) ... However tempting such a reading may be, I would argue that it would be a mistake to reduce the practice of weeping in prayer to a cross-cultural example of conventionalized behaviors that are assume to achieve the same goal in all contexts ... Such a view does not give adequate attention to those performances of conventional behavior that are aimed at the development and formation of the self's spontaneous and effortless expressions ..." (Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*, 130-1).

¹⁷⁴ Asad asks rhetorically, "is it possible that the transformation of rites from discipline to symbol, from practicing distinctive virtues (passions) to representing by means of practices, has been one of the preconditions

by authorities, the proper execution of which is detachable from the internal feelings, motivations, or intentions of the individual. This approach is reflected in Adam Seligman's work on ritual and sincerity in which he and his colleagues contrast the two as 'ideal types' of actions.¹⁷⁵ Whereas sincerity involves approaching the world 'as is', ritual creates a subjunctive world ('as if') that facilitates the ordering and maintenance of a social world.¹⁷⁶ They write, "We argue that what constitutes society – what makes social a sui generis entity, irreducible to any other – is precisely a shared 'could be,' a mutual illusion of the sort that all rituals create."¹⁷⁷ As an example, they cite 'rituals of politeness' that effectively enact the illusion of a shared sentiment of solidarity, which provides the basis for civil interaction.¹⁷⁸ I will discuss this point later in relation to the concept of 'civility' and *ādāb*, but for now I want to point out how the formalization of behavior and its detachment from internal states accompanied the formation of social bonds. Although their insight into the significance of ritual for social life is helpful for thinking about the ways in which religious practices may facilitate forms of sociability, Asad's argument is that the perception of the self in this model presupposes a separation of internal and external that often makes internal feeling extraneous

for the larger conceptual transformation of heterogeneous life (acting and being acted upon) into readable text?" (Asad, *Genealogies*, 79).

¹⁷⁵ "We thus analyze ritual and sincerity as two 'ideal typical' forms of framing experience, action, and understanding that exist in all societies, in tension with one another" (Adam Seligman et. al., *Ritual and its Consequences: An Essay on the Limits of Sincerity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 7).

¹⁷⁶ "... ritual creates a subjunctive, an 'as if' or 'could be,' universe. Creating a shared subjunctive, we will argue, recognizes the inherent ambiguity built into social life and its relationships – including our relations with the natural world. The formality, reiteration, and constraint of ritual are, we argue, all necessary aspects of this shared creation" (Seligman, *Ritual*, 7).

¹⁷⁷ Seligman, *Ritual*, 23.

¹⁷⁸ "This suggests that the rituals of politeness posit a possible, even plausible, mode of activity between interlocutors by building an illusion that pulls them out of a more Hobbesian world of the war of all against all ... By saying please and thank you, we are both symbolizing a fundamentally civil recognition of one another and actually acting out and instantiating such behavior in the world" (Seligman, *Ritual*, 22-3).

to the analysis of ritualized behavior.¹⁷⁹ Such a critique of approaches to ritual is echoed by Saba Mahmood who concludes:

Thus, ritual worship for the women I worked with, was both enacted through, and productive of, intentionality, volitional behavior, and sentiment – precisely those elements that a number of anthropologists assume to be dissociated from the performance of ritual ... Ritual is not regarded as the theater in which a performed self enacts a script of social action; rather, the space of ritual is one among a number of sites where the self comes to acquire and give expression to its proper form.¹⁸⁰

The goal here is not to provide an extended critique of ritual as an adequate theoretical concept, but to point out that the approach to performance taken in this study emerges out of this criticism of ritual. Consequently, it moves away from a notion of performance that, like ritual, tends to separate the interior self from public behavior and toward an approach to performance that also accounts for its disciplinary operations.¹⁸¹ Furthermore, drawing insight from the theorists who have recognized the performative character of social life, I take performance to cover a much wider range of practices, from highly formalized practices like prayers (*ṣalāt*) through everyday forms of interactions guided by rules of comportment (*ādāb*) to annual festivals (*mawlid*) or pilgrimages. Therefore, in approaching certain Sufi practices as performances of public piety, I do not assume that they are merely portrayals of piety; rather, they are the embodied means through which the pious self is cultivated and enacted. In using the term public piety, I indicate the inseparability of apt performance from being pious and living piety as a form of life.

¹⁷⁹ This reading of Seligman's work is reflected in Seligman's argument: "In any ritual, as with saying please, performing the act marks the acceptance of the convention. It does not matter how you may feel about the convention, if you identify with it or not. In doing a ritual the whole issue of our internal states is often irrelevant" (Seligman, *Ritual*, 24).

¹⁸⁰ Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*, 131.

¹⁸¹ Mahmood writes, "As such, outward bodily gestures and acts (such as salat or wearing the veil) are indispensable aspects of the pious self in two senses: first in the sense that the self can acquire its particular form only through the performance of the precise bodily enactments; and second in the sense that the prescribed bodily forms are necessary attributes of the self" (Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*, 133).

In the remainder of this section, I provide a short review of literature on the performance of piety in Islam (and Sufism) in order to illustrate the kinds of practices that have been analyzed in this regard. The multiple modalities of performing public piety identified by scholars in anthropology and ethnomusicology open up spaces for thinking about the public manifestations of Sufism in contemporary Morocco. While this review will focus primarily on studies of performance in relation to Sufism, genres of performative practices subject to research have included: prayer, dress, music, festivals, sermons, pilgrimage, charity, food, comedy, film, healing, storytelling, media/television, theater, and visual arts.¹⁸² With regard to Sufism in particular, studies of *dhikr*, *ḥaḍra*, *samāʿ*, and *inshād*

¹⁸² Saba Mahmood, “Rehearsed Spontaneity and the Conventionality of Ritual: Disciplines of ṣalāt,” *American Ethnologist* 28, no. 4 (2001): 827-853; Deeb, *An Enchanted Modern*; Carla Jones, “Fashion and Faith in Urban Indonesia,” *Fashion Theory* 11, no. 2/3 (2007): 211-232; Shannon, *Among the Jasmine Trees*; Deborah Kapchan, “The Promise of Sonic Translation: Performing the Festive Sacred in Morocco,” *American Anthropologist* 110, no. 4 (2008): 467-483; Ann Rasmussen, *Women, the Recited Qurʾan and Islamic Music in Indonesia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Joseph Alagha, “Jihad through Music: The Taliban and Hezbollah,” *Performing Islam* 1, no. 2 (2012): 50-80; Jonathan Shannon, *Performing Al-Andalus: Music and Nostalgia Across the Mediterranean* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015); Samuli Schielke, *Perils of Joy: Contesting Mulid Festivals in Contemporary Egypt* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2012); Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape*; Anna Bigelow, *Sharing the Sacred: Practicing Pluralism in Muslim North India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Afsar Mohammad, *The Festival of Pirs: Popular Islam and Shared Devotion in South India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Amira Mittermaier, *Giving to God: Islamic Charity in Revolutionary Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019); Samuli Schielke, *Snacks and Saints: Mawlid Festivals and the Politics of Festivity, Piety and Modernity in Contemporary Egypt*, PhD Dissertation, University of Amsterdam (2005); J. Irvine, “(Re-)presenting Islam: A Comparative Study of Groups of Comedians in the United States and France,” *Performing Islam* 2, no. 1 (2013): 89-104; Karen van Nieuwkerk, *Performing Piety: Singers and Actors in Egypt’s Islamic Revival* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014); Vincent Crapanzano, *The Hamadcha: A Study in Moroccan Ethnopsychiatry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973); J.B. Flueckiger, *In Amma’s Healing Room: Gender and Vernacular Islam in South India* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006); Earl Waugh, “Baraka, Performative Healing, and the Moroccan Sufi Chant,” *Performing Islam* 1, no. 2 (2012): 247-261; Emilio Spadola, *The Calls of Islam: Sufis, Islamists, and Mass Mediation in Urban Morocco* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013); J. Schaefer, “Observations on Gnawa healing in Morocco: Music, Bodies, and the Circuit of Capital,” *Performing Islam* 4, no. 2 (2015): 173-182; Zargar, *Polished Mirror*; Armando Salvatore, “Staging Virtue: The Disembodiment of Self-Correctness and the Making of Islam as Public Norm,” *Yearbook of the Sociology of Islam* (vol. 1 on Islam. Motor or Challenge of Modernity, ed. Georg Stauth) (1998): 87-120; F. Afzal-Khan et al, “Expansions of the Dramaturgy of Political Violence: Snapshots of Three American Playwrights,” *Performing Islam* 5, no. 1 (2016): 49-63; N. Althaqeel, “The Beginning of Theatre in Saudi Arabia,” *Performing Islam* 7, no. 1 (2017): 23-40; and Karen van Nieuwkerk (ed.), *Muslim Rap, Halal Soaps, and Revolutionary Theater: Artistic Developments in the Muslim World* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012).

have been pivotal in deepening understandings of performance in the Islamic tradition.¹⁸³ In the Moroccan Sufi context, specific attention has been paid to the importance of Sufi music festivals in performing and constructing national and transnational identities.¹⁸⁴ This expansive field of studies has provided substantial insight into the embodied and material dimensions of the Islamic tradition, but for the present purposes I will focus on the studies that pertain specifically to Sufism.

In his analysis of Sufi liturgical practices, ethnomusicologist Michael Frishkopf proposes the term ‘language performance’ as an alternative to ‘music’ in the study of Islamic ritual practices like *dhikr*, *samāʿ*, and other language-based genres.¹⁸⁵ Defining language performance he writes, “...I mean the sonic realization of language in a social setting, such that the ‘actness’ of performing is recognized, i.e., in which language it is being performed, and participants are particularly aware that they are doing something performative, aware that what they are doing is an act, and conscious of parameters potentially available for manipulation.”¹⁸⁶ Specifically, there are four aspects (each with their own sub-aspects) available for manipulation in language performance: sonic, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic. In addition to differing along these dimensions, language performances may

¹⁸³ Michael Frishkopf, “Tarab in Mystic Sufi Chant in Egypt,” in *Colors of Enchantment: Theater, Dance, Music, and the Visual Arts in the Middle East*, ed. Sherifa Zuhur (Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 2001); Michael Frishkopf, “Against Ethnomusicology: Language Performance and the Social Impact of Ritual Performance in Islam,” *Performing Islam* 2, no. 1 (2013): 11-43.

¹⁸⁴ Kapchan, “The Promise of Sonic Translation”; N. Ter Lan, “Performing Dhikr Above a Nightclub: The Interplay of Commerce and Spirituality at the Fez Festival of Sufi Culture,” *Performing Islam* 1, no. 2 (2012): 161-170.

¹⁸⁵ “What I hope to have shown in this extended disquisition is that from an analytical ... standpoint, music is not a helpful term for analyzing ritual performance in Islam ... By turning attention away from music and towards language performance as the central phenomenon underlying such practices, while broadening the scope of language performance to include syntactic, semantic, sonic, and pragmatic aspects, and by carefully analyzing the multiple dimensions of those many aspects, and differentiating language’s multiple modes, the analyst may attain a more holistic perspective, truer to the underlying totality of the phenomenon that is primary in nearly all Islamic ritual...” (Frishkopf, “Against,” 39).

¹⁸⁶ Frishkopf, “Against,” 21.

differ in the ‘mode of language’ they deploy. Frishkopf defines these as the communicative, affective, and ritual mode.¹⁸⁷ Within the context of his work in Egypt, he argues that strategic control of *ḥaḍra* through the manipulation of these aspects and modes has been a mechanism of adaptive survival for Sufi orders in modern society insofar as it operates to deflect criticism and maintain group identity.¹⁸⁸ One strategy in the control of *ḥaḍra* has been the practice of public and private ritual forms, with the public performances conforming to prescribed rules and avoiding excessive ‘ecstatic’ emotional expressions. This limits potential condemnation from internal religious critics who see Sufi practices as unwarranted innovations (*bid‘a*), as well as external secular critics who see ritual as the reflection of uncritical and unflinching adherence to tradition and authority. Through his survey of the practices of multiple orders in modern Egypt, he highlights the strategic value of performance as a potential resource for social and spiritual engagement and adaptation. While his scrupulous ethnographic and quantitative descriptions of *dhikr* and *ḥaḍra* provide ample support for his argument, the point I want to make with regard to Frishkopf’s argument is that the public character of Sufi practices requires consideration of how they emerge in relation to and in conjunction with particular audiences, that is, public performances are speaking to and therefore also adapted to distinct audiences.

¹⁸⁷ “However, in attempting to understand the mechanisms and effects of LP, and the strategies that guide it, my primary concern is not with the spiritual effects of language performance (the ritual mode) but rather with the communicative and affective modes, because it is these two modes that together produce objective social effects most directly and observably so, particularly when LP takes place in a group setting open to the researcher’s participant observation. Ritual LP, by contrast, exerts a more indirect effect upon social reality, since its primary significance is to produce objective effects in the spiritual world, according to believers, as certified by a subscribed-to system of belief” (Frishkopf, “Against,” 31).

¹⁸⁸ “The new orders use LP effectively and completely, leaving very little to chance or individual whim. Features of LP have been determined, which act upon existing members, attract new ones and construct a well-honed image for outsiders. In this case, LP can be largely understood as a direct or indirect response to the challenges posed by modernity” (Frishkopf, “Against,” 35).

In identifying and organizing aspects and sub-aspects of language performance that are available for conscious (or non-conscious) modulation, Frishkopf's theory identifies key parts of performances available for empirical analysis. One of these features of performance is that performers are 'aware' that the act is being performed, that is, the performer adopts a position of acting or speaking to an audience. Performances are therefore aimed toward an audience, i.e., some public or imagined community, and to analyze Sufi practices and discourses as performances is to consider them in light of intended audiences being addressed. Insofar as they are addressed to an audience, the performance is therefore also open to evaluation by audience. In a similar manner, various publics may deploy different criteria of evaluation when considering other religious performances. Therefore, the form a particular practice takes, and the justifications provided for that practice need to be considered in relation to the public being targeted. Thus, a public festival with an international audience will take a much different form than a festival targeting members of a specific Sufi order. Alternatively, a pilgrimage performed in Morocco by a Moroccan Sufi order may be evaluated on very different terms when it is performed by the same group of people in Algeria or France. Therefore, as a performance, a single practice may acquire significance and therefore the form and defense of that practice may have to consider multiple, coexisting public audiences.

In conjunction with this feature, Frishkopf highlights the interactive and emergent quality of performance, specifically in his discussion of the affective facets of vocal performances at public Sufi events. Describing the famous Egyptian signer Shaykh Yassine al-Tuhami, he writes, "Moving himself and his listeners with the poetry he selects, and selecting poetry according to his *ḥāl* and feedback from listeners, he carefully tunes the

performance, seeking that elusive frequency of emotional resonance among poet, *munshid*, and listener, that melting point at which individual boundaries dissolve away, leaving the emotional unity which is *tarab*.¹⁸⁹ The performance emerges through an interaction of performer and audience, producing not merely individualized feelings but a shared ‘emotional resonance’ that can have substantial social and spiritual effects. One point I want to make is that performance as a framework for thinking about religious practice does not assume a specific architecture of the self or way of mapping interiority onto exteriority (and vice versa). The notion of *tarab* here relies on a porousness and intersubjectivity of performer and audience and reflects an emergent quality of the self. Performance can therefore entail multiple, and at times perhaps even contradictory, perceptions of the self that make possible alternative modes of being in the world, i.e., ways of enacting and living tradition in public life.

Finally, performances are framed by certain spatial, symbolic, or linguistic cues meaning that, for example, the *ḥaḍra* performed in one context, e.g., public festival, will differ from the *ḥaḍra* as performed within the confines of Sufi lodge.¹⁹⁰ While the impact of contextual features may seem obvious in cases of large cultural performances, for example, staging a Sufi ritual at a music festival, the ways in which the intricacies of daily life influence performances of piety can be much more difficult to pinpoint. However, it is precisely these features of performance, that is, its interactive, emergent, and contextual

¹⁸⁹ Frishkopf, “Tarab,” 268.

¹⁹⁰ I take the idea of framing or keying here from Bauman who writes, “All framing ... is accomplished through the employment of culturally conventionalized metacommunication” (Bauman, *Verbal Art*, 11). These refer to a structured set of distinctive communicative devices/means: special codes (archaic language), figurative language (creativity in terms of originality or in terms of novel deployment of previous characters), parallelism (repetition of phonic, grammatical, semantic, or prosodic structures), special paralinguistic features, special formulae, appeal to tradition, and disclaimers of performance. There are linguistic tools such as these available for keying performances, but there are also contextual factors, such as the setting, that can serve the same purpose.

characteristics, that generate diversity in practice such that it is not mere repetition. As such, approaching religious practices as performances leaves room for improvisation and creativity, or one might say skill or quality, not only in the execution of a defined ‘script,’ but also in the improvisational adaptation (conscious or non-conscious) of that ‘script’ to a specific context.¹⁹¹ In other words, the performance of piety is not merely adherence to a code, but the embodiment of certain virtues such that models of pious behavior can be readily enacted in a variety of novel situations and improved over time.¹⁹² The performer, through this enactment, becomes practiced and experienced in tradition, developing emotional, perceptual, and bodily capabilities that make possible certain forms of experience and knowledge. My point here is that the focus on the contextual features of performance provides insight into the pedagogical dimension of performance in that constantly changing situations require alterations of practices and that the enactment of ethical qualities must be attuned to the specific concrete situation. The ability to discern the relevant contextual factors and to respond accordingly so as to resolve any performative tensions is one that is honed over time and through practice and repetition and as a result, performance suggests

¹⁹¹ One might object to the use of improvisation here, particularly in the context of tradition where practice is judged relative to its adherence to a past model. My point is not about improvisation in the practice itself, i.e., the procedures of conduct, but the recognition of features of the environment that need to be accounted for in the proper performance of the practice.

¹⁹² I use situation here in reference to Dewey’s notion of the indeterminate situation in order to suggest that religious traditions provide important tools for resolving situations. Moreover, I follow his suggestion that, “Habits enter into the constitution of the situation; they are in and of it, not, so far as it is concerned, something outside of it” (Jo Ann Boydston (ed.), *The Collected Works of John Dewey: The Middle Works 1899-1924* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1976), 120). The point here is that the internal ‘habits’ have inherent social dimensions, and thus change in oneself also requires attendant changes in environment, i.e., changing habits is not merely changing one’s self. Habits here function in many ways like affordances in J.J. Gibson’s ecological psychology (1966).

difference within the repetition of the same practice that relates it to the process of discipline.¹⁹³

The disciplinary function of performances is also reflected in Jonathan Shannon's study of *dhikr* in modern Syria. As he writes, "The performance of *dhikr* aims to condition the moral self of participants ... It is via the aesthetic practices of performing *dhikr* – the acts of the sensate, sensual body in time and space, conditioned by specific aural, kinesthetic, olfactory, and tactile experiences – that effect this moral-musical conditioning."¹⁹⁴ As a performance, *dhikr* consists of bodily and aesthetic features that are tied to the work of *dhikr* as a disciplinary practice that produces a moral subject. In other words, for Shannon, *dhikr* operates as a performance and discipline of the self, bringing together aesthetic ideals and moral values in the making of a pious subject. Shannon writes in this regard, "The disciplining of the self is accomplished through the repertoire of aesthetic practices that constitute the experiential heart of the *dhikr*: music and rhythm, dance and motion, olfaction and tactility. The spiritual elements of the *dhikr* cannot be understood as separated from the aesthetics of *dhikr* performance and performativity."¹⁹⁵ In addition to stressing performance and discipline, Shannon's analysis of *dhikr* also connects issues of aesthetics to the social world of ethics, thereby bring performance into the domain of everyday life. Thinking about performance in this broader sense he writes, "Beyond the particular acts and events of performance, I address performance as a mode of being and as a strategy for framing and differentiating diverse modes of practice and being ... Therefore performance, when

¹⁹³ In this sense, performance can be linked to progression along a spiritual path, as well as notions of 'trial/test'. In the Sufi context for example, progression along the path may be framed as part of a trial/test (*ibtilā'*), and therefore performance may also refer to ability to 'pass' the trial/test.

¹⁹⁴ Shannon, *Among the Jasmine Trees*, 120.

¹⁹⁵ Shannon, *Among the Jasmine Trees*, 121.

understood as a particular strategy of acting, can include a much wider range of behaviors and contexts than what we normally understand to be ‘performance.’”¹⁹⁶ Performance, as a theoretical concept applied here, therefore helps to bring into focus these aesthetic aspects of religious practices that are not mere embellishments (i.e., epiphenomena) but necessary components of the proper enactment of those practices. Moreover, Shannon’s approach to performance brings it into everyday life, transforming it from a singular event into a way of being in the world. As such, the ‘performance of piety’ can be read as a way of being pious, acting piously, and evaluating that which is a pious lifestyle. Insofar as performing piety is partly a strategy, we can also see how the justifications and defenses deployed by Sufi communities operate as ‘strategies for framing and differentiating’ their practices in a competitive and contentious religious marketplace.

Anthropologist Samuli Schielke has also studied Sufi *dhikr* within the context of festivals in modern Egypt, arguing that such festivals operate to create a temporarily better world that is marked off from daily life in some fashion.¹⁹⁷ In its polyphonic yet utopian structure, the festival relies on a shared bodily habitus that provides a repertoire of attitudes, aesthetic styles, and behaviors that facilitate the emergence of a sense of *communitas*. Although his analysis does not deal with performance as such, the point I want to make is that the festival serves as a particular kind of context in which there are multiple ways of framing practices and experiencing the festival as an event.¹⁹⁸ As a prominent public

¹⁹⁶ Shannon, *Among the Jasmine Trees*, 17.

¹⁹⁷ “... I argue that what unites all mulid celebrations – and most other festivities anywhere – is the creation of a temporary better world that in some significant way stands out from everyday life ... The mulid as a festivity is characterized less by a specific idea of better world, however, than by its ability to unite very different ideas under the umbrella of a joyful contrast to the everyday life...” (Schielke, *Perils of Joy*, 54)

¹⁹⁸ “Festivity is the practice, the experience, the act of entering an extraordinary, temporary set of social relations and roles. Festival is the event, the physical shape, that is constituted by numerous festivities coming together” (Schielke, *Perils of Joy*, 55).

performance, the festival elicits the enactment of distinct conceptions of the pious selves and moral communities.¹⁹⁹ Festivity, in contrast the festival as event, is constituted by a certain ambivalence and internal diversity that is temporarily held in check by the conditions of the festival. In other words, the festival affords the space in which multiple festivities can be lived, including competing modes of piety. Insofar as these festivals have also been subject to ongoing debate in Islamic legal discourses, they can be seen as discursive and embodied grounds for the public performance and contestation of Islamic norms.

Several scholars working on Sufism in Morocco have also identified festivals as crucial contexts for the performance of Sufi piety, though for many their object of study has been the world sacred music festivals hosted throughout Morocco, such as the Fes Festival of World Sacred Music. Deborah Kapchan, for instance, argues that the Fes Festival (along with other international ‘sacred’ festivals) produce what she calls the ‘festive sacred,’ that is, the shared promise of ‘sonic translation.’²⁰⁰ The idea behind this is that festivals aim at the (re)construction of the sacred such that it can be experienced via music and listening (i.e., an aesthetic definition of the sacred) across linguistic and cultural differences.²⁰¹ The festival therefore ‘promises,’ though does not necessarily fulfill, the ‘translation’ of the sacred through music and listening (sound) and in that promising, enacts an affective exchange and mutual trust that makes possible ‘*communitas*’. Kapchan adds, “The festive sacred not only

¹⁹⁹ Thus, for example, the ‘Sufi mulid’ is distinguished from the ‘fun mulid’ and the ‘community mulid’ as alternative ways of experiencing and performing festivity.

²⁰⁰ “Yet it is clear that the festive sacred is sedimenting new aesthetic practices in a community whose beliefs are diverse but who are united by a promise: not the secularist promise of peace through the (disenchanting) human capacity for universal rationality ... but, rather, the promise of reenchantment through belief in the universality (translatability) of sonic devotion.” (Kapchan, “The Promise of Sonic Translation,” 221).

²⁰¹ “... I argue that the phenomenon of the sacred music festival draws on the religious sentiment evoked by sacred music to create a transnational (thus mobile) notion of ‘the sacred’ that is in many ways a counterpoint to the specificity and ideology of more orthodox forms of religious practice. It does so by enacting a promise – what I refer to as the promise of sonic translation – premised on the belief that music can translate affect across cultural and linguistic divides” (Kapchan, “The Promise of Sonic Translation,” 218).

produces a Turnerian *communitas* but also creates new transnational imaginaries that mediate religious sentiment and reenchant the world.”²⁰² Therefore, one key insight of her work is the need to consider, especially in the Moroccan Sufi context, the impact of and communication with these international audiences, particularly the ones that seek a ‘universal spirituality’ that can be translated via music and dance. What I take from Kapchan is that these Moroccan festivals serve as productive nodes in a transnational network of Sufi groups that are all variously inflected by local and global ‘grammars’ of social and ethical life.

In addition to the creation of a notion of the sacred that mobilizes a transnational sense of spirituality, the festival also operates to produce subjectivities through disciplines of listening and to display a model of interfaith devotion and dialogue that reflects the values of tolerance and solidarity (said to be constitutive of Moroccan national identity). Noting the disciplinary dimension of these festivals Kapchan writes, “Deep listening is a pedagogy at the festival, and auditors become apprentices of this method. Insofar as they learn an auditory discipline, they become symbolic disciples of sacred sound, sharing in the communion that such colearning constitutes ... It is the goal of the Fes Festival to create a new perception.”²⁰³ In producing a new mode of perception and accompanying aesthetic sensibilities, the festival effectively constitutes its audience, forming them as subjects in potential transnational publics. Festivals therefore teach people to listen properly and as such are not merely cultural performances but can actually be part of a program of ethical education, i.e., of performing and disciplining piety.

²⁰² Kapchan, “The Promise of Sonic Translation,” 229.

²⁰³ Kapchan, “The Promise of Sonic Translation,” 225. Note here that ‘deep listening’ is a term taken from Becker (2004) and applied to the Islamic practice of *sama*’ through the work of Hirschkind (2006).

The festival is also an important component of the government's multifaceted approach to the regulation of the religious field. For example, it enables the government to sponsor and provide a public platform to Sufi orders, such as the Būdshīshiyya, which has direct ties to the Fes Festival through its original founder Fawzi Skali. Furthermore, the selection and framing of certain religious groups in the festival encourages the articulation of form of religiosity that can compete with what Kapchan calls 'orthodox' Islamic trends.²⁰⁴ Festivals have become an integral part of Morocco's economy, providing a boost to tourism and encouraging certain neoliberal values.²⁰⁵ Finally, by bringing together multiple faiths, cultures, and nationalities to experience and participate in religious performance and dialogue, festivals model an ideal heterogeneous public, or what Skali referred to as a 'model for inter-cultural civil society.'²⁰⁶ Kapchan elaborates on the way in which festivals perform identity by writing, "As sacred festivals take on lives of their own, they become a testing ground for free speech, free-market capitalism, and civil liberties – the hopes, it may be said, of a modernizing nation ... Religious and cultural identities are also constructed and contested in these forums."²⁰⁷ Festivals display and foster, through their ambivalence and heterogeneity, a limited acceptance of difference, making them performances of public piety insofar as they enact and cultivate the values of tolerance and pluralism. While I do not take music festivals as objects of study in this work, in my fieldwork I encountered 'religious

²⁰⁴ "Sufism does important political work both nationally and internationally, challenging the conflation of Islam with orthodoxy and conservatism" (Kapchan, "The Promise of Sonic Translation," 229).

²⁰⁵ "The Moroccan monarchy has many stakes in the spate of yearly festivals. They construct a public discourse of neoliberalism and engage the producers (usually artists and academicians nominated to political positions in the Ministry of Culture) in the active creation of Moroccan culture as a product for national and international consumption (the tourist industry being one of the most lucrative sources of income for the Moroccan state). In short, the nation has much to hope for in festival production, both materially and otherwise" (Kapchan, "The Promise of Sonic Translation," 221).

²⁰⁶ Kapchan, "The Promise of Sonic Translation," 224

²⁰⁷ Kapchan, "The Promise of Sonic Translation," 221.

conferences' along these lines, arguing that much like the festivals, conferences perform a form of public piety through the staging of dialogue and 'reasoned' debate on religious issues, thereby providing spaces for the disciplining of subjects as well as displaying a 'moderate' Moroccan religiosity that is open to intellectual engagement. In short, festivals and conferences provide public venues for performances that help to 'retune' national and transnational subjectivities such that they resonate with (i.e., they recognize) models of piety and ethical citizenship authorized by state discourses.²⁰⁸

One of my arguments in this section is that approaching Sufi practice through the lens of performance brings into relief the connections between piety and aesthetic sensibilities, that is, its relation to modes of perception and to conceptions of beauty. These aesthetic sensibilities in turn make possible certain forms of social interaction, underpinning bonds of social solidarity and forming the foundation of a community. In other words, the public piety that undergirds a pious community based in the values of an authorized 'Moroccan Islam' entails a combination of ethical and aesthetic (as well as social and spiritual) qualities. The manifold character of this public piety is reflected in the idea of *iḥsān* itself, a term that captures both what is good and what is beautiful, as well as how to behave towards the other and towards God. However, though it is tied to Morocco through an authorizing discourse, the community constituted by this shared public piety is not bound to the borders of the nation-state. As such, this public piety rests on an immanent tension between national and transnational forces of social solidarity. This tension, however, is not a dichotomy insofar as there are multiple ways of constructing the transnational community through religious and historical imaginaries. For example, while Sufism as a universal spirituality may provide a

²⁰⁸ On the role of Sufi performances in 'retuning the nation' see Murphy.

religious imaginary that facilitates the conceptualization of an interfaith community, the historical imaginary of Andalusia may encourage a form of regional identification and solidarity. My point here is that there are parallel and overlapping imagined communities afforded by constructions of ‘Moroccan Islam’ and that as a result, it speaks simultaneously to national, regional, and global audiences. In order to capture this feature of Moroccan Islam as a form of public piety, I consider it in light of discussions of civility and vernacular cosmopolitanism as developed in sociological literature in the next section.

iv. Sufism, Civility, and Citizenship

In the previous section, my goal was to develop an approach to Sufi practice as performance that is complementary to the disciplinary approach and provides tools for thinking about the public aspect of embodied disciplines. In addition, I used literature on the performance of Sufi practices to illustrate the ways in which the aesthetic and ethical work together to produce forms of piety, highlighting how the performance of festivals in Morocco contributes to the construction of a public piety that creates national and transnational bonds of community. In short, though tied to the authorizing discourse of the nation, this public piety is framed by shared sensibilities of tolerance, pluralism or cosmopolitanism (*‘ālamīyya*). As a result, Sufism lends an important transnational dimension to ‘Moroccan Islam’ allowing this public piety to exceed the bounds of the nation-state in its ethical orientation. This section considers the social role of Sufism through the lenses of civility and ‘vernacular cosmopolitanism’ such that it can be seen as an integral Islamic tradition that has historically provided a mechanism for the establishment and maintenance of local and non-local forms of solidarity and sociability.

Armando Salvatore's *Sociology of Islam* (2016) takes up the historical role of Sufism in circulating a global civility, which for Salvatore is a 'weak socially cohesive force' that is integral to the social fabric.²⁰⁹ More explicitly, he approaches civility as a social bond grounded in a shared habitus that regulates interactions in order to facilitate cooperation such that the potential 'meta-institutional' components of the Islamic tradition can be actualized in a given context. In this sense Salvatore writes, "Civility in many ways arbitrates whether a given meta-institutional potential of religion (e.g., one demanding from the individual a strong commitment to the welfare of the other) can be successfully institutionalized and in which forms."²¹⁰ In other words, an abstract ideal of social welfare is given concrete form through social actors who have been empowered, i.e., have the appropriate forms of knowledge and sociability, to instantiate that ideal (or the means to achieving that ideal) collectively through, for example, a charitable endowment (*waqf*).²¹¹ Salvatore identifies three 'meta-institutions' in the Islamic tradition: the normative practice of the Prophet (*hadith* and *sunna*), the charitable endowment (*waqf*), and Sufism (*taṣawwuf*).²¹² While his goal is to

²⁰⁹ He writes, "Civility might appear as a weak socially cohesive force if compared, for example, with much more organic forms of solidarity. Yet civility is as essential to the fabric of society (traditional or modern) as gravitation (considered the weakest among the interaction of forces in physics) is to the physical world. The type and quality of the social bond can be best recognized in the mostly unspectacular modulations of civility within everyday life, rather than in the full-fledged institutionalized forms of social organization and governance" (Armando Salvatore, *The Sociology of Islam: Knowledge, Power, and Civility* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 25).

²¹⁰ Salvatore, *Sociology of Islam*, 26. Note here that Salvatore clarifies his approach to religion through the concept of 'meta-institutions.' He writes, "The key to reappraising religion as a compound of knowledge and power through the prism of civility (be it the source of social cohesion or mobilization) is to distinguish between a rather institutional notion of religion, which ultimately coincides with its authorities, creeds, and practices, and its rather creative, and in this sense eminently rational (following Weber's sense of value rationality), meta-institutional impetus ... This richer notion of religion cannot simply consist of emphasizing the plurality and often syncretic dimension of religion ... found among the non-Western other but should rather focus on religion as a potentially universalizable, meta-institutional, and knowledge-based type of power" (Salvatore, *Sociology of Islam*, 7).

²¹¹ "Often wrapped in a web of formal rules of tact and manners, civility thus conceived reflects the realization that there is a more profound communicative substratum that facilitates cooperative social action and sociability, which is often as ethical as it responds to the canons of beauty" (Salvatore, *Sociology of Islam*, 63).

²¹² "In the sociology of Islam the meta-institutional dimension is far more relevant as it emanates from the religious ideas of exemplary prophecy. These ideas were first enshrined in the *hadith* corpus, then mildly

develop sociological approach called ‘civilizational analysis’ that he argues helps to de-center Western biases in sociology more generally, for the present purposes I want to highlight his discussions of Sufism and *ādāb* as they relate to civility and thus to the social dimensions of Sufism.²¹³

With regard to Sufism, Salvatore identifies the ‘brotherhood’ (*tariqa*) as “... an important traditional matrix of the associational bond that facilitates cooperation and a channel for its implementation via the acquisition of knowledge, spiritual elevation, and cohesive social networking.”²¹⁴ The Sufi order, as a ‘meta-institutional matrix,’ has been pervasive throughout much of Islamic history, being actualized in and adapting to myriad socio-political contexts, but what it both requires and reinforces are patterns of social cohesion based in a vision of pious communal life.²¹⁵ Critical to this cultivation of social cohesion within Sufi communities were embodied practices that helped to create a shared pious habitus capable of supporting an alternative principle of social solidarity.²¹⁶ In the contemporary world, it continues to provide an alternative to solidarity based on citizenship or participation in civil society of the public sphere, i.e., it provides another mode of mutual

institutionalized through the incentives to do good to others via the waqf, and finally crowned by the spiritual cultivation of ultimate truth through tasawwuf. All these three dimensions of Islamic traditions are also, and quite inevitably, intensely social, no less than they are religious” (Salvatore, *Sociology of Islam*, 283).

²¹³ “Freed from such strictly sociological straightjackets, civilizational analysis facilitates a vivid insight into the cultural (including, if not mainly, religious) traditions which provide a meta-institutional capacity to impact frames of social action and to shape matrices and codes innervating a variety of institutions” (Salvatore, *Sociology of Islam*, 17).

²¹⁴ Salvatore, *Sociology of Islam*, 62.

²¹⁵ “This model of piety-based community life contributed to form the early visions of the Islamic umma and facilitated successive adaptations of the socio-political coordinates of the Islamic ecumene” (Salvatore, *Sociology of Islam*, 78).

²¹⁶ “There is nothing inherently primordial in the nexus of brotherhood, if we understand it – as we do sociologically – as an increasingly successful form of organization of the social bond and of related forms of civility, as they took a solid shape and peaked in the crucial phase of Islamic history that we have identified as the Middle Periods ... Within this pattern, the brotherhood is a key intermediate mold facilitating the passage from the primordial (kin-based) to the civil (kin-independent) level of social organization” (Salvatore, *Sociology of Islam*, 89).

identification that is not tied to the nation-state or the normative structures of civil society and public sphere associated with the nation-state.²¹⁷ As highly international organizations, contemporary Sufi orders are composed of disciples with certain nation, ethnic, and social differences; consequently, Sufism has been a traditional mechanism for mediating forms of difference within the global Islamic community. Through the organizational matrix of brotherhood, Sufism is, "... a crucial locus of sociability and civility that can, under given circumstances, contribute to a state-building process and, in contemporary settings, feed into waves of transnational mobility and migration."²¹⁸ His approach is therefore helpful in thinking about the ways in which the inclusion of Sufism into Morocco's authorized religiosity operates to mediate the tensions between local, national, regional, and global attachments.²¹⁹

In addition to its contribution to civility as a model for pious communities and solidarity, Sufism has also been integral to character development and the cultivation of *ādāb*, which in turn form vectors in the matrix of civility. For Salvatore, "The most general definition of *adab* would embrace the ensemble of ethical and practical norms of virtuous and beautiful life ideally cultivated by a class of literati [which] stood out as an elite-oriented, yet flexible, matrix of rules of good life, courteous exchange and civic cohesion based on bundling together cultured life forms considered to be adequate to responds to Islam's core message."²²⁰ *Adab* in this sense was a complement to the normativity of Islamic legal

²¹⁷ "Such considerations should help immunize us against seeing the agent as by necessity alternately enveloped in a compulsory membership within the state (via citizenship) or voluntarily choosing membership of an association or a plurality thereof (via civil society). A non-voluntary, yet rational notion of the social agent, like the one we find in *fiqh* and in the prevailing patterns of civility within the Islam-Islamdom of the Middle Periods more in general, can dispense of both" (Salvatore, *Sociology of Islam*, 147).

²¹⁸ Salvatore, *Sociology of Islam*, 256.

²¹⁹ This does not mean that these tensions are resolved. Rather, it adds to possible 'imagined communities' with which one can identify, enabling individuals to operate in parallel and overlapping publics.

²²⁰ Salvatore, *Sociology of Islam*, 123-4.

reasoning whose authority rested with the religious scholars, and was derived from moral norms and ethical practices of Persian court etiquette that were refashioned in an Islamic idiom.²²¹ Over time, *adab* became a mechanism for adapting and supplementing Islamic norms in various geographic, historical, and political contexts, crystallizing into distinct configurations accordingly. In the modern period, *adab* was reformulated as a form of civility that could underpin participation in a modern public sphere. In this regard Salvatore writes:

Opening up to ideas of participation in a modern and increasingly open public sphere, *adab* became the foundation stone for the articulation of a modern yet original conceptualization of social intercourse ... while initially reflecting a classic notion envisioning models of cultivation of the self, in the course of the reform process the concept gave rise to a moral sense similar to the one augured and theorized by the Scottish theorists of civil society.²²²

Adab, in other words, undergoes a series of transformations as it is elaborated in different historical contexts, but in general comes to define a supplementary realm of morality distinct from Islamic law with myriad manifestations.²²³

The historical argument aside, I want to highlight Salvatore's treatment of *adab* as a kind of 'social savior-faire' facilitating social interaction that includes not only adherence to rules of conduct (i.e., manners and etiquette), but also what he calls a 'mastery of the self.'²²⁴ However, while he does recognize this interior dimension of *adab*, Salvatore is clear in his emphasis on *adab* as an external face of civility rather than discipline. He writes, "It is

²²¹ "Adab should be considered as a parallel knowledge tradition that the Islamicate civilization inherited from the Persianate court culture" (Salvatore, *Sociology of Islam*, 123).

²²² Salvatore, *Sociology of Islam*, 223.

²²³ "... by designating traditionally conceived models of self-cultivation to be emulated, the concept of *adab* evolved into defining a unity, homogenous – though internally differentiated – and largely autonomous field of morality" (Salvatore, *Sociology of Islam*, 222).

²²⁴ "Adab was now ever more clearly understood as an ensemble of moral dispositions entailing not only appropriate manners of conduct but also a mastery of the self, to be further manifested via a sensibility toward shifting social circumstances in differentiated urban contexts: a kind of complex, highly social *savoir-faire*" (Salvatore, *Sociology of Islam*, 222).

therefore important not to reduce civility so defined to the moral work of building virtuous dispositions. While ideas of discernment and recognition of the goods and attendant practices are an important engine of civility, civility is relevant sociologically also, if not especially, for its habitualized, outer dimension reflected in self-composure, modulated exposure, porousness to communication and understanding, and, as a cumulative result, its capacity to build connectedness.”²²⁵ Although Salvatore’s sociological account privileges external conduct and the capacity for *adab* to effectively smooth out social interactions where rigid adherence to one’s internal feelings may break down those interactions, my point about his argument is that civility and *adab* work together to give shape to a sociability that supports public life. However, Salvatore’s use of *adab* is somewhat limiting in that it stops at the formal and external. In my approach, I suggest that through the disciplining of shared norms of conduct, grammars of communication, and expectations, *adab* connects individuals to one another and the divine, thereby forming communities bound by shared conceptions of piety and its proper performance. Furthermore, given that, as I have argued previously, Sufism involves the cultivation of *adab* as part of a program of spiritual development, its social significance is not merely as a brotherhood, i.e., an organizational matrix, but also as a concrete means for the formation of pious subjects and communities.²²⁶ Thus, my second response to Salvatore is that his use of *tariqa* is also limiting in that it fails to account for the notion of *tariqa* as a method and path of spiritual instruction. However, in general by connecting Sufism through *adab* to civility, my goal is to provide angles for thinking about

²²⁵ Salvatore, *Sociology of Islam*, 64.

²²⁶ My suggestion is therefore that *adab* as operative within Sufi imaginaries is productive of an alternative mode of being public (i.e., of the foundation of society) from the *adab* that is being described in the work for which Salvatore is drawing (see Ellen McLarney, “The Islamic Public Sphere and the Discipline of *Adab*,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43, no. 3 (2011): 429-449).

the kinds of publics that Sufism makes possible, and how those publics may stand in contrast to notions of public sphere or civil society tied to the nation-state on the one hand, and the ‘counterpublics’ of the Islamic Awakening that have been extensively studied over the past two decades.²²⁷ In other words, while I agree with Salvatore’s insight that Sufism has this important social function, I disagree that it is primarily its role as a social institution or network that it achieves this social function. Rather, in the context of Moroccan Sufism, it is its role as an embodied ethical tradition that enables it to create social bonds across forms of difference.

Closely related to civility is the idea of civil society, so I want to discuss potential relationships between Sufism and civil society. I bring this up because state support of Sufism through the establishment of organizations, as well as the sponsorship of Sufi conferences that promote ‘civil dialogue,’ could be read as an attempt to assimilate Sufi groups into the hegemonic apparatuses of the state. Although ‘civil society’ has been defined and operationalized as a theoretical concept in different ways, it is certainly the case that the civil society emerged in the context of the nation-state and is therefore tied to the evolution of the nation-state out of its European history, much like the idea of the public sphere. Intended as a general sociological category applicable across societies, civil society came to acquire a normative function as a result of its history and application to post-colonial contexts. Thus, studies of civil society in the Middle East tended to see civil society as a necessary correlate of democracy and a marker of modernization. For example, as August Richard Norton suggested in his volume on *Civil Society in the Middle East*, “If democracy –

²²⁷ I am not, however, suggesting a single model of adab in Sufism. In fact, my point is that adab can be formulated in different ways but reflects a concern for both internal and external, for knowledge and action, and as a result is a prism through which architectures of the self and ways of being social are refracted.

as it is known in the West – has a home, it is in civil society, where a mélange of associations, clubs, guilds, syndicates, federations, unions, parties and groups come together to provide a buffer between state and citizen.”²²⁸ Civil society is in this sense the collection of formal (and to a certain degree informal) associative networks that mediate between the individual citizen and the state, providing a zone of rational and voluntary debate and conduct that while delimited by the state through law, is largely free of vertical power relations.

However, civil society has also referred to a manner of conducting social interaction in a ‘civil’ fashion and as a result, civility has functioned theoretically within formulations of civil society to provide the source of solidarity necessary for social formations. The prominent sociologist Edward Shils writes in this regard, “A civil society is a society of civility in the conduct of the members of society towards each other. Civility enters into conduct between individuals and between individuals and the state; it regulates the conduct of individuals toward society.”²²⁹ The point here is that the notion of civility has been linked directly to civil society and operates as a mechanism to facilitate social interaction and cohesion. Civility in this use is an elaboration of earlier moral sentiment (Locke) and moral sense (Ferguson, Smith) theories that relied on a vague ‘innate mutuality’ that produced social bonds through feelings of affection and sympathy.²³⁰ One of Salvatore’s first tasks is

²²⁸ A.R. Norton (ed.), *Civil Society in the Middle East* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 7.

²²⁹ Edward Shils, “The Virtue of Civil Society,” *Government and Opposition* 26, no. 1 (1991): 4. Put otherwise and perhaps more directly he writes, “[Civility] is approximately the same as what Montesquieu called virtue [that is] ‘love of one’s country’” (Shils, “Virtue of Civil Society,” 11). August Richard Norton, in his analysis of civil society in the Middle East, states, “Civility implies tolerance, the willingness of individuals to accept disparate political views and social attitudes, to accept the profoundly important idea that there is no right answer” (Norton, *Civil Society*, 11-12).

²³⁰ Adam Seligman writes, “Natural affections, which bound societies together ... emerged from a happy confluence of Reason and benevolence, which allowed us to put the good of the whole above the good of the parts and so the public of social good above our individual interests” (Adam Seligman, *The Idea of Civil Society* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), 34).

therefore to detach civility from the nebulous and normative concept of civil society in order to explain the emergence of social solidarity in Islamic contexts without imposing a Western model that tends to bifurcate societies into modern and non-modern based on their adherence to this normative model.

Embedded in this normative model of civil society is therefore not only a political structure but also a moral imaginary, that is, a notion of the citizen that separates the private realm of morality from the public realm of duty and social obligation. Citing the influence of Kant in the formulation of the public-private distinction as a juridical-ethical division, the sociologist Adam Seligman writes, “The distinction within the individual of particular-private and what was invariably seen as interest-motivated sources of action and universal, social, and by implication altruistic sources of action has become seminal to modern consciousness.”²³¹ In other words, civil society entails a subjectivity in which one relates to oneself and others as ‘abstract’ legal citizens, and in that sense the ‘same’ and deserving of respect, as well as to oneself as a free and autonomous individual. This tension between freedom and law, liberty and constraint, has been a considerable topic in political philosophy and my goal is not to open up these issues, but simply to point to the ways in which civil society presupposes particular forms of moral agency and subjectivity that are bound up in the nation-state.²³² As I discussed previously, the notion of public underpinning the approach in this work is at odds with assumptions about agency and subjectivity that are operative with modern and liberal notions of the public sphere. Thus, an important point of distinction between Sufism and these versions of civil society is that the former encompasses

²³¹ Seligman, *Idea of Civil Society*, 119.

²³² As Seligman posits, “The public/private divide ... brings us to the heart of the image of civil society as a moral vision” (Seligman, *Idea of Civil Society*, 31).

a ‘cosmopolitan moral vision’, in which the ‘equality’ of individuals is based on a shared humanity and not stipulated by law. Thus, ‘Moroccan Islam’ integrates, or at least holds in tension, two types of social solidarity, one grounded in the nation-state and the other grounded in the cosmopolitanism of Sufism. As a result, I suggest that it is useful to consider it in terms of what Pnina Werbner calls ‘vernacular cosmopolitanism.’

Cosmopolitanism is of course a nebulous term, having multiple genealogies and uses since its meaning as ‘world citizen’ was developed in Greek thought. However, the basic principle is that humanity in its diversity constitutes a single community and consequently, those forms of difference must be tolerated to some degree and there are some sufficient shared grounds for sociality. From a moral standpoint, cosmopolitanism refers to a sense of tolerance, open-mindedness, and a general openness to ‘strangers,’ and is therefore bound up with ideas of civility in the sense of being civilized. Certain critics of cosmopolitanism have suggested that the exercise of tolerance, i.e., the act of tolerating someone, is in fact dependent upon dynamics of power such that tolerance (and civility) operates as a mechanism of domination. For example, Wendy Brown writes, “[tolerance] as a political practice is always conferred by the dominant, it is always a certain expression of domination as it offers protection or incorporation to the less powerful.”²³³ In other words, it is those in positions of power that choose to tolerate certain groups as opposed to others, and it is those in power who, through the act of labeling certain groups as tolerant or intolerant, discursively construct and reinscribe relations of domination.²³⁴ However, Werbner asks, if

²³³ Cited in Pnina Werbner, “Vernacular Cosmopolitanism as an Ethical Disposition: Sufi Networks, Hospitality, and Translocal Inclusivity,” in *Islamic Studies in the 21st Century: Transformations and Continuities*, ed. Leon Baskins (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016), 223).

²³⁴ “Those who are perceived to be intolerant are defined by tolerant Westerners as barbarians ... and as such a legitimate target of aggression. The result is that tolerance, in marking what is ‘civilised,’ confers superiority on the West” (Werbner, “Vernacular,” 223).

cosmopolitanism is tied to power and politics in this way, then is it possible for those who study, for instance, Muslim communities to engage with interlocutors as cosmopolitan, given that they are not in a position of power?²³⁵

In response, she proposes the idea of ‘vernacular cosmopolitanism’ as a way to suggest that there are local idioms and semantic fields that shape the contours of a cosmopolitan worldview, as evidenced by her fieldwork with Sufi saints in contemporary Pakistan.²³⁶ While part of her project is to lay out the ‘semantic field’ of terms that reflect an ethical concern for the human community (e.g., *insāniyya*), the other part illustrates the role of Sufism in embodying this cosmopolitan orientation.²³⁷ She writes, “... I propose that a Sufi ideology of peace and tolerance is related to the kind of networks across boundaries that Sufi saints foster.”²³⁸ Thus, the cosmopolitan outlook of Sufism is not a mere ideological gloss, but is based in a long history, tradition, and experience of operating across forms of regional, cultural, linguistic, and at times religious difference such that Sufis have developed (organically as it were) principles and practices of cosmopolitanism. Werbner identifies hospitality as one of those practices of that performs a vernacular cosmopolitanism, writing, “The similarity between hospitality and vernacular cosmopolitanism lies in the fact that in hospitality as in cosmopolitanism there is no intention of a guest or interlocutor being

²³⁵ She writes, “If cosmopolitanism is defined at least in part by an ethics of tolerance or ‘openness,’ a willingness to reach out to a cultural ‘other’ or stranger, may we conclude, with Brown, that cosmopolitanism is necessarily Western, secular-liberal, and elitist – a discursive strategy that disguises and depoliticizes relations of dominance? And, if so, what room is there for ethnographers of Muslim societies to attempt to describe their research subjects as ‘cosmopolitan,’ or to theorize a non-elitist, demotic, vernacular cosmopolitanism that is nevertheless tolerant, moral, and ethical?” (Werbner, “Vernacular,” 223).

²³⁶ “It is possible to map out, I suggest, a semantic field of Urdu notions that between them speak to different aspects of cosmopolitanism” (Werbner, “Vernacular,” 224).

²³⁷ “I have argued in this essay for a need to recognize the ethical dimensions of vernacular forms of cosmopolitanism as exemplified by Sufi saints and others in the Muslim world, and with it the need to analyse not simply cosmopolitan practice and performance but the way that ethical ideas and concepts are formulated in local, vernacular terms” (Werbner, “Vernacular,” 239).

²³⁸ Werbner, “Vernacular,” 224.

assimilated or fully incorporated into the house. S/he is accepted as a stranger and outsider and yet welcomed and enveloped in the generosity as an insider.”²³⁹ Likewise, Werbner notes that festivals also operate in South Asia as a performance of cosmopolitanism insofar as they embody an ‘ethos of joyful inclusiveness.’²⁴⁰ Through the localization of these types of practices as well as the ‘translation’ (or ‘vernacularization’) of universal Islamic ethical concepts into local idioms, Sufism has been a powerful vehicle for the appearance of multiple Islams that nevertheless contributes to the cultivation of a shared moral sentiment that maintains the universality of the human community.²⁴¹

In contemporary Morocco, Sufism is seen from a sociological and political perspective as a tradition that fosters these moral sentiments, that is, tolerance (*al-tasāmuḥ*) and solidarity (*al-taḍāmun*). Moreover, religious education in public schools has incorporated some of these principles of Sufism, changing the curriculum from teaching texts to a more general civic education in which values of open-mindedness and dialogue are placed in high regard. In this sense, there are clear resonances between civil society (even civil religion) and Sufism and consequently, it would be possible to read this discourse as a kind of ‘modernization,’ that is, as an adaptation of to a Western model of civil society. This would be reinforced by the observation that many Sufi orders have taken to forming ‘civil organizations,’ as exemplified by the *tariqa* ‘*Alāwiyya*’ discussed in a later chapter, thereby making Sufi orders an institutional part of civil society. Leaving aside the empirical question of the existence of civil society in Morocco, at the theoretical level this is insufficient for two

²³⁹ Werbner, “Vernacular,” 231.

²⁴⁰ “The intercultural atmosphere of tolerance evident at Sufi annual festivals in South Asia can be found elsewhere in the Muslim world, too ... Such festivals are marked, [Schielke] tells us, by an ethos of joyful inclusiveness” (Werbner, “Vernacular,” 235-6).

²⁴¹ On localization see Mohammad, Festival of Pirs. On vernacularization see Green, Sufism.

reasons.²⁴² Firstly, the concept of civil society posits a form of moral agency and subjectivity that not only has a separate history, but is also at odds with their practice within the Sufi communities with which I worked in Morocco. Secondly, it constricts the operations of these associations to the nation-state. However, the aim of these associations is, in fact, to overcome these differentiating modes of affinity. With the *‘Alāwiyya*, for example, the performance of pilgrimages that link Europe to Morocco reflects this tendency to create bonds of solidarity, i.e., civility, that are not tied directly to the nation-state, i.e., reflect a cosmopolitan outlook. Vernacular cosmopolitanism, much like civility, provides a more robust model for thinking about the transnational components of contemporary Sufism insofar as they focus on the moral and social formations that make possible the bonds of mutual identification upon which communities depend. The two differ most significantly from civil society (or public sphere) in providing a source of solidarity that is not bound to the nation-state and has a history of enactment through Sufi networks.

An alternate approach to civil society is developed in the work of the Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci for whom civil society is a hegemonic power that operates in conjunction with direct forms of state coercion.²⁴³ Hegemony, in this framework, consists in a mediated exercise of power in which the dominant class exerts moral, intellectual, and political influence over the subaltern classes. However, through this encounter the subaltern classes can respond to those values being imposed upon them, opening up potentials for consent on

²⁴² See James Sater, *Civil Society and Political Change in Morocco* (London: Routledge, 2007) for a discussion of civil society and public sphere in Morocco.

²⁴³ “A distinction must be made between civil society as understood by Hegel, and as often used in these notes (i.e., in the sense of political and cultural hegemony of a social group over the entire society, as the ethical content of the State), and on the other hand civil society in the sense in which it is understood by Catholics, for whom civil society is instead political society of the State, in contrast with the society of the family and that of the Church” (Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (New York: International Publishers 1971), 447).

the one hand and transformation on the other hand. Civil society, as hegemony, is therefore a space of negotiation between dominant and subaltern classes, but as an arm of the state apparatus it is not an autonomous sphere and therefore may operate as a mechanism of authoritarianism.

Applying this to the context of Sufism in Morocco, it is tempting to consider the institutionalization of Sufism through the promotion of Sufi orders, the sponsoring of festivals, and the creation of specific religious institutions (i.e., the creation of multiple cultural and civil institutions for the promotion of Sufism as the moral foundation of Moroccan Islam) as an instance of hegemony. These various channels allow elites (religious and political authorities) to provide a kind of ethical and political leadership while leaving spaces for negotiation with the non-elites through their, albeit limited, participation in these practices. The reading of the promotion of Sufism as an exercise in hegemonic power, as an alternative to coercive power, in the religious field can be further corroborated by the claim that certain forms of Sufism, particularly those embodied in the Būdshīshī order, are also widely popular among Moroccan bourgeoisie. As Haenni and Voix argue, “It appears that the new presence of a ‘modern’ and ‘universal’ Sufi discourse that was not embodied in traditional Sufi personalities but in culturally contemporary intermediaries allowed many members of the Moroccan bourgeoisie to ‘reconcile themselves’ with Islam.”²⁴⁴ Thus, through its integration with state institutions, in the form of the Ministry of Religious Affairs headed by Būdshīshī member Ahmed Tawfiq, the permeation of Sufi-related organizations

²⁴⁴ P. Haenni and R. Voix, “God by All Means ... Eclectic Faith and Sufi Resurgence Among the Moroccan Bourgeoisie,” in *Sufism and the Modern in Islam*, ed. M.V. Bruinessen and J.D. Howell (London: IB Tauris, 2013), 249. Elsewhere in this article they write, “Recently Moroccans have found other more discreet ways of embracing Islamization, ways where hybridity and cultural extraversion are accepted. Among these is the re-composition of religious belief in New Age terms. Since the 1990s, this cultural move has become a popular mode of Islamization among the Muslim bourgeoisie” (Haenni and Voix, “God by All Means,” 241).

throughout civil society, and the participation of Moroccan bourgeoisie, a certain form of Sufism appears to be operative as a form of hegemony in Morocco.

However, I resist this reading on both theoretical and empirical grounds. As for the empirical observation, based on my time in Morocco, the dominant class or the bourgeoisie is not clearly Sufi. While certain influential members of this class, who have both economic and social ties to centers of power through what is known as the *makhzen*, are sympathetic to Sufism, it is not necessarily a widespread feature of the class as a whole. This point is reflected in a 2016 survey by the Tabah Foundation, a non-profit research think-tank, which stated that in response to the question, “When you think about who you are, what is the fundamental source of your identity?” only fifteen percent identified themselves as religious.²⁴⁵ In contrast fifty-nine percent responded ‘Moroccan’ and twenty-one percent responded ‘Arab.’ Thus, combined with my research experience, these empirical results lead to my hesitation in claiming that Sufism constitutes a dominant ideology among the Moroccan bourgeoisie.²⁴⁶

The application of hegemony is problematic at the theoretical level as well for two reasons. Firstly, it relies on specific structures of class formulated within the Marxist framework and, as such, is only applicable in circumstances in which those class structures have obtained. The Moroccan economy, however, is not the capitalist society described by Marx because on the one hand the Moroccan king is heavily invested in a number of

²⁴⁵ Aḥmad Al-Hilālī, *Al-ḥāla al-dīniyya fī al-maghrib: 2016-2017* (Rabat: Moroccan Center for Contemporary Studies and Research, 2018), 15.

²⁴⁶ It is important to note here, however, that the kind of ‘Sufism’ mentioned by Haenni and Voix is not a ‘traditional’ Sufism and, in that sense, may be merely an ethical component of national identity, rather than an explicitly religious identity. Thus, the fact that people would identify as Moroccan does not preclude the possibility that they also practice some form of Sufism that is detached from its traditional foundations in the *tariqa* structure. In other words, if Sufism is seen as a privatized mode of religiosity providing an ethical orientation, then it would not show up in a question about identity in this format.

economic ventures and personally owns a significant portion of the natural resources (e.g., land) and means of product, and on the other hand neo-liberal policies facilitated through the World Bank and IMF have allowed foreign interests to enter the market.²⁴⁷ In addition to these economic factors that complicate the class structure, the hegemonic model of civil society is also tied to the nation-state. As mentioned previously, the operation of Sufism across national boundaries forces a reconsideration of the application of civil society to the role of Sufism in contemporary Morocco. In contrast, the flexibility of civility as developed by Salvatore enables Sufism to manifest, at the same time, as an ingredient of Moroccan national identity and as a more global Islamic identity that traverses Europe, Morocco, and West Africa in particular.

In summary, civility and vernacular cosmopolitanism provide ways for thinking about Sufism as a source of social solidarity as it is taking place in contemporary Morocco. They also situate Sufism within a historical trajectory in which its role as a source of social solidarity, and more specifically moral foundation, does not represent a radical rupture, that is, it does not posit an unprecedented transformation of Sufism.²⁴⁸ Finally, they illustrate how Sufism may serve as a source of national and international (what Salvatore would call ecumenical) identity. In short, these terms provide a platform for thinking about how Sufism has provided a continued source of moral education and social solidarity that can take particular, but not pre-determined, forms in concrete situation. This approach is buttressed, I suggest, by the analysis of Sufism as an ethical tradition that enables us to better understand

²⁴⁷ In conjunction with this, the remnants of French colonialism still require certain types of taxes to be paid to France for lands and/or resources that have been developed by France. For example, even though France may not

²⁴⁸ "... Sufism provided a permanent infrastructure of ties of trust, moral leadership, and a flexible discourse of justice reflecting a religious orientation to the ultimate truth" (Salvatore, *Sociology of Islam*, 138).

the mechanisms, beyond the institution of the brotherhood (*tariqa*), through which Sufism has been able to provide this moral education and social solidarity. The point here is not to endorse any particular theory in this regard; rather, it is to think through the implications of a situation in which a public piety that is framed as the basis of a national identity also operates as centripetal social force for transnational communities. For example, if a Sufi order requires allegiance to the Moroccan king but a disciple is Algerian, then how might an individual navigate those competing loyalties or identities? How might the actions of that same order in foreign countries be perceived not as the actions of religious community, but as a gratuitous extension of the Moroccan state? This last question brings us to the final section of this chapter, which addresses issues of Sufism and the state.

v. Sufism and the State

In the previous section I discussed the social implications of Sufism from a sociological perspective, arguing that as ‘civility’ or ‘vernacular cosmopolitanism,’ Sufism has the capacity to articulate ethical frameworks and establish social bonds that make possible a variety of communities and public life. This is not to say that in its historical manifestations Sufism has always fulfilled the ideals of cosmopolitanism, but that is precisely the place of ethnography, that is, to study how ethical ideas are formulated in specific contexts as well as how they are put into practice and performed. Nevertheless, in recent years a picture of Sufism as a peaceful and tolerant form of Islam has emerged, highlighting on the one hand universal love and on the other hand political quietism and social detachment. This image, however, stands in stark contrast to the image of Sufi revolutionaries circulating during the colonial period, for example, which portrayed Sufi

figures as militant leaders of an anti-colonial holy war (*jihad*). Likewise, in the post-colonial period, as nation-states gained their independence and began to take shape, Sufi orders developed myriad relationships with the nascent nations, at times inserting themselves into political structures and other times being banned entirely (e.g., Turkey). In the pre-colonial period, it was common for Sufis to serve as advisors to rulers and during the Ottoman period Sufis were thoroughly entrenched in governmental and military bureaucracy. Sufism, therefore, has engaged politics (temporal power) in a variety of ways, suggesting that Sufism does not have a specific political ideology but has had shifting relations to centers of power throughout history, sometimes being exploited and other times exploiting those relations for gain.

In the introduction to an edited volume on Sufism and politics, Paul Heck writes, “This adaptability to diverse political forms has been viewed as evidence of a chameleon-like nature, a willingness to go along with reality, static or changing, solely out of a concern to preserve its own interests, turning Sufism into a spiritual cronyism of sorts, where the institutional becomes the purpose.”²⁴⁹ Heck’s argument is that scholars have treated Sufism’s pragmatism and expediency vis-à-vis political structures as evidence of a self-interested survival strategy that abandons ethical principles for the sake of temporal power.²⁵⁰ However, as he notes, “What may seem to be dissemblance or cooption may reflect a strategy of withdrawal, not physical withdrawal from society, although that is one option, but rather spiritual withdrawal into the mystical dimension of Sufi religiosity, at least

²⁴⁹ Paul Heck, *Sufism and Politics: The Power of Spirituality* (Princeton: Markus Winer Press, 2007), 3.

²⁵⁰ “In the case of Sufism ... apparent evidence of a survival strategy – sacrifice of religio-moral principle and collusion with political power – may be viewed quite differently from an insider’s perspective” (Heck, *Sufism and Politics*, 3).

temporarily.”²⁵¹ While Heck recognizes two alternative strategies, i.e., two kinds of withdrawal, my point is that historically and in the contemporary world, Sufi communities deploy a variety of strategies in their attempts to navigate political structures. It is therefore not possible to say that Sufism necessarily produces an ‘apolitical quietism’ and general disengagement from society and politics, but rather provides resources for developing strategies of political engagement. The modalities of political engagement, however, are often not direct political discourse or participation in electoral politics; rather, it is as moral and social force that Sufism asserts its impact. In short, Sufis have historically operated as moral, social, and political critics within Islamic societies, and while that authority and the means for performing it have depended on the exigencies of historical conditions, Sufis have remained engaged as moral critics and exemplars.²⁵² Therefore, the political significance of Sufism is based on its social and public roles, as discussed previously, which are in turn connected to the processes of ethical formation.

Approaching the politics of Sufism in this manner, Paulo Pinto states in his analysis of the effects of Sufism on the public sphere in pre-Arab Spring Syria, “This transformation of the public sphere through the continuous production of shared normative understandings and practical standards within the religious framework of Sufism aims to change society not through an ideological confrontation in the political realm, but gradually by redressing its moral order in the cumulative effects of the enactment of embodied correctness in the everyday practices of the individual.”²⁵³ Insofar as the public is framed in terms of Sufi-

²⁵¹ Heck, *Sufism and Politics*, 3.

²⁵² For a historical perspective on Sufism and politics, see A.H. Akhtar, *Philosophers, Sufis, and Caliphs: Politics and Authority from Cordoba to Cairo and Baghdad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

²⁵³ Paulo Pinto, “Sufism and the Political Economy of Morality in Syria,” in *Sufism and Politics*, ed. Paul Heck (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2007), 130.

inspired notions of piety and its proper performance, Pinto argues, the exercise and contestations of power and authority, i.e., the politics, are in part dependent upon the proper enactment of that piety. Echoing considerations by Salvatore, Pinto suggests that this public piety is rooted in *adab*, the acquisition of which entails the moral education of the entire individual, not merely adherence to rules of conduct.²⁵⁴ He writes, “The enactment of *adab* as moral performance creates a framework of public morality through which are built social evaluations and expectations.”²⁵⁵ Sufism therefore operates as a kind of cultural capital because, as a Sufi one is able to perform *adab* which in turn is thought to foster public morality in general. This public morality in turn helps to facilitate relations of mutual trust and social solidarity, enabling the emergence of a public in which claims to authority and debates about the common good are grounded in and guided by Sufi ethical thought and practice.²⁵⁶

In Morocco, claims to authority and political power have been framed in Sufi terms since at least the early modern period, and Sufi orders have historically provided important mechanisms for political mobilization as well.²⁵⁷ Within this context however, some scholars argued, the Sufi conceptual paradigm inscribed patterns of authoritarianism and patrimonialism into the social fabric (and cultural psyche) of the nation. As such, the framing of Sufism as a vehicle of civility and cosmopolitanism, as the contemporary

²⁵⁴ “The acquisition of *adab* (rules of behavior) is a central element in the process of constituting the ‘perfect self’ (*al-nafs al-kāmil*), which is a major goal of the Sufi path. However, *adab* does not imply simple compliance with rules of civility or social behavior, but is rather the expression of inner qualities of the self. It must be embodied as guiding disposition of all concrete actions and choices of the *murid* (disciple)...” (Pinto, “Sufism,” 125).

²⁵⁵ Pinto, “Sufism,” 126.

²⁵⁶ “The relations of trust and solidarity produced in these arenas allow for social circulation of Sufi doctrines and conceptions of authority, providing its participants with a shared language for the understanding and evaluation of the common good” (Pinto, “Sufism,” 129-30).

²⁵⁷ Geertz, *Islam Observed*; Hammoudi, *Master and Disciple*; Cornell, *Realm of the Saint*; Zeghal, *Islamism*.

authorizing discourse attempts to do, in fact stands in contrast to previous ways of thinking about Sufism. While previously antithetical to the sensibilities of the modern world due to its reliance of traditional authority and adherence to ritual, Sufism has now become, at least according to this discourse, the embodiment of a cosmopolitan religiosity tailored to the contemporary world. One of the goals of the authoritative discourse, I suggest, has been to construct a definition of Sufism that is sufficiently substantive to provide points of intellectual engagement yet flexible enough to afford space for diversity. Sufism as a tradition is singular and plural, taking diverse concrete forms, geographically and temporally, and these political considerations are implicated in the specific manifestation of Sufism in contemporary Morocco. In this work, I will attempt to demonstrate how this authorized Sufism emerged and how contemporary Sufi communities are strategically engaging with and aligning to that form of public piety.

vi. Summary

In this chapter, I discussed three interrelated concepts of piety, publics, and performance in order to provide a framework for discussing Sufism in contemporary Morocco through the lens of performing public piety. Regarding piety, I suggest that it is an orientation toward and concern for proper religious practice in daily life. As for public piety, drawing on Lara Deeb, I suggested that it was a form of religiosity in which the spiritual and ethical progress of the individual was tied to the common good of the community. In the Moroccan context, I argue that *iḥsān* encapsulates this idea of public piety. As for publics, I argued that the practice of public piety in Morocco is related to multiple publics, including a domestic public sphere as well as the counterpublic of the Islamic Awakening, for example.

These multiple publics in turn influence the styles and justifications of public performances of piety. With regard to performance, I reviewed some of the literature highlighting varieties of performance genres, while also arguing that those performance are not merely displaying piety, but critical means through which one hones and enacts the social and spiritual virtues upon which that piety is based. These social and spiritual virtues are embedded in the idea of *iḥsān*, which despite its different formulations, reflects the position of Sufism as the ethical and spiritual foundation of modern Moroccan citizenship. Thus, the performance of Sufism in Morocco can be approached as the performance of a public piety in which the virtues of the Sufi are framed as the ethical foundation of normative (i.e., good) Muslims, as well as the qualities of civility that are conducive to and constitutive of a normative (i.e., good) Moroccan and cosmopolitan citizen. While couched in its local terms as ‘Moroccan Islam,’ the public piety performed by the groups discussed in this dissertation is reflective of an authority and normativity that cuts across the boundaries of nation-states.

CHAPTER FOUR: SUFISM, POLITICS, AND MODERNITY: CONSTRUCTING THE RELIGIOUS FIELD

i. Introduction

In the next two chapters I will be discussing the relationship between Sufism and politics in Morocco over the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. While playing a prominent role in contemporary politics, Sufism has also played a central role in Moroccan politics since at least the fourteenth century, as Vincent Cornell has clearly laid out in his seminal work *Realm of the Saint: Power and Authority in Moroccan Sufism* (1998). Intended in part as a historical corrective to a few anthropological studies of Moroccan Islam, Cornell's work frames the historical precedents that led to the entrenchment of Sufism as a defining feature of Moroccan political authority. As the scope of this work is limited, I will be focusing in this chapter on the twentieth century and the shifting fortunes of Sufism in relation to various of social, political, and religious changes. My goal in this regard is to present some of the historical context leading up to the emergence of Morocco's policy of religious reform in 2003 in order to better understand how Sufism was positioned relative to various strategies and techniques for exercising religious and political power. Specifically, I will use debates about religious education as a focal point for discussing the shifting makeup of Morocco's religious field and the government's resulting religious policies aimed at regulating the competing debates about Moroccan identity and religiosity. My argument in this regard is that the more recent tying of Sufism to religious education is part of an ongoing battle for religious authority and the ability to define the proper relations between religion, politics, and public life. However, insofar as several studies are dedicated to the essential

place of Sufism in Moroccan political structures, this chapter is also intended as a brief literature review of these studies.

In this chapter, I will begin by discussing the some of the basic structures of Moroccan political and religious authority with a focus on the king as a nexus of these two modes of authority. I will then step back briefly to consider accounts of Sufism in the colonial period in order to situate Sufi orders within the political and religious landscape at the beginning of Moroccan independence in 1956. Finally, I discuss the emergence and shifting fortunes of various religious and political actors within Morocco's religious field. The goal of this discussion is to demonstrate how, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the pieces were in place for the Moroccan regime to undertake an explicit program of religious reform of the religious field, which actors were participating in this religious field, and how they were situated with respect to one another. The details of this policy of reform will be discussed explicitly in the next chapter.

ii. Sufism and Modernity

According to most early scholarship on Sufism in the modern period, and in line with theories of modernization in general, it was suggested that Sufism, being associated with outdated superstitions of popular religion, would eventually disappear. By the second half of the twentieth century it was clear that, regarding Sufism, this disenchantment thesis was untenable, so scholars posited a radical break between medieval and modern Sufism. This Sufism of modernity was termed 'neo-Sufism' by Fazlur Rahman and was described as a militant and activist brand of Sufism that sharply contrasted with the previous mystical brand of Sufism.²⁵⁸ Neo-Sufism was critiqued by scholars who rejected the radical rupture and

²⁵⁸ Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (New York: UniveAnchor, 1968).

argued that even these ‘militant’ Sufis who led anti-colonial resistance movements in the 19th and early 20th centuries continued to uphold many of the doctrines of medieval Sufism, and that neo-Sufism is more broadly characterized by a general reform of Sufism from within the tradition.²⁵⁹ While this criticism of neo-Sufism emphasizes doctrinal or spiritual continuity, I suggest that this militancy is a manifestation of the social and political roles of Sufism in Islamic history. More recently, the issue has been addressed by John Voll who argues that neo-Sufism is still a valid term insofar as it refers to a significant change in the organizational structure of Sufi orders, which were able to use modern means of publication and transportation to recruit members and transmit ideas.²⁶⁰ A final characterization of neo-Sufism argues that it refers to “this-worldly ethical and devotional practice free of the Sufi orders.”²⁶¹ In this regard, neo-Sufism is associated with a bourgeois, almost 'protestant ethic' lifestyle that also enables individuals to eclectically choose which aspects of Sufism are conducive to their modern lives.²⁶² These various approaches to Sufism in modernity all posit some degree of separation from the previous Sufi tradition and consider the transformation of Sufism apart from broader trends in Islam. My suggestion is that all of these points of transformation rely not on the invention of tradition or the incorporation of external elements, but on the redeployment of traditional practices and discourses and therefore the process of ‘modernization’ of Sufism is part of the ongoing unfolding of a discursive and embodied tradition that is integral to Muslim societies.

²⁵⁹ R.S. O’Fahey and Bernd Radtke, “Neo-Sufism Reconsidered,” *Der Islam* 70 (1993): 52-87.

²⁶⁰ John Voll, “Neo-Sufism Reconsidered Again,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 42, no. 2 (2008): 314-330.

²⁶¹ Van Bruinessen, *Sufism and the Modern*, 11.

²⁶² P. Haenni and R. Voix, “God by All Means ... Eclectic Faith and Sufi Resurgence Among the Moroccan Bourgeoisie,” in *Sufism and the Modern in Islam*, ed. Martin van Bruinessen and Julia Day Howell (London: IB Tauris, 2013).

While ‘neo-Sufism’ provides one way to approach the transformation of Sufism in the modern period, it is also important to note some of the broader processes of change that have deeply impacted Muslim societies and that must be kept in mind when looking at the transformations undergone by Sufi orders. The changes in the social landscape brought about by modernization have cut across nearly all domains of life in Muslim societies including Sufi orders, practices, and institutions. Colonialism itself brought about a significant shift in the overall balance of power and partly generated an increased self-consciousness of the need to ‘catch up’ with the West. Sufi responses to colonialism generally took the form of cooperation or resistance. In the case of Morocco, the entrenchment of Sufis in existing political structures led to an overall perception that many Sufis cooperated with the French Protectorate, which in turn generated a cynical attitude towards Sufism following independence in 1956. This attitude was also helped by epistemological changes associated with developments in European science that operated to displace many traditional and religious forms of knowledge. In addition, the emphasis on critical, rational thought, over traditional knowledge and rote memorization, meant that in many cases religious figures lost their place as educators in society and Sufis were certainly not exempt from this process. Furthermore, scientific knowledge also generated skepticism of ‘magic’ and ‘superstition,’ categories into which Sufi behaviors and beliefs were largely classified under the heading of ‘popular religion.’ Changes in conceptions of morality had a significant impact on the kinds of subjects that were expected to exist in modern societies. Rational, autonomous, and ‘free’ subjects who were able to reason and calculate actions to come to their own conclusions about what they ought to do characterized this modern European morality (whether in its utilitarian or deontological forms). Sufi subjects, on the

other hand, were juxtaposed to this modern subject, and seen as adhering blindly to their shaykh and therefore restricted in their ability to exercise personal choice in the realm of moral decisions. Furthermore, the ‘emotionalism’ characteristic of Sufism, that is, the overt and public expression of emotion, was seen as antithetical to the ‘disciplined’ modern subject who was ruled by reason and not passion.²⁶³ There were significant changes in political structures, associated not only with the colonial era, but also the post-colonial nation-states. Secularism, socialism, and nationalism all operated to generate ideologies that often contrasted themselves with the past (i.e., Sufis), and also allowed for the development of civil society that brought new forms of organization that were geared to active engagement with the world in an effort to ensure political ‘liberation.’ From these perspectives, Sufism led to a kind of social apathy and political quietism that did not generate goal-oriented, socially effective activity, i.e., it was seen as an outlet from social and political realities. Moreover, significant social changes functioned to displace Sufi organizations as primary format of social intercourse. In this regard, the development of civil society was accompanied by new forms of social organization, with groups like the Muslim Brotherhood providing alternatives to Sufi orders. In addition, the development of middle-class professionals, and more generally distinct social classes, in conjunction with increased urbanization that brought many rural people to the cities, led to Sufism often being associated with lower social classes. These class differences, while not always mapping directly onto differences between orders, do influence how certain orders are able to engage the state. Transformations in financial structures and the impact of political economy led, in many cases, to the confiscation of many Sufi assets that for a long time had provided the necessary material

²⁶³ It is interesting to note the contradiction here in modern thinking, for the subject must be ‘free’ yet ‘disciplined.’

capital to support their activities. In the eyes of many states, these assets were not being utilized efficiently and not contributing enough to the economy of the state, so they were confiscated and put to new use. Changes in administrative structures had substantial impact on Sufi orders as they were progressively brought under government regulation and shaykhs were appointed and dismissed according to government agendas. Legal reforms also had ramifications for Sufi orders. In one sense, this was part of a more general displacement of religious authorities through the reorganization of legal systems along European lines. In another sense, and one often less explored, insofar as Sufis in many cases were part of the *ulama* before 1800, they also operated as jurists and arbitrated many local disputes, particularly outside of urban centers. They therefore had a great deal of authority through their ability to mediate local disputes and the changes in legal structure directly impacted their ability to do this. A final point in relation to law is that the changes in legal structure enabled the state to circumvent Islamic laws regarding *awqāf* (charitable endowments), which would have protected many of their assets. Technological developments in printing and the Internet have provided new vehicles for transmitting knowledge, recruiting members, and establishing transnational networks. The ability to effectively use technology is an important element of modern Sufi orders, and the use of technology has also had effects on traditional practices. Finally, globalization has involved not only the spread of Sufi ideas to the West, but also the feedback of Western characterizations of Sufism onto its local forms. Therefore, various global discourses inflect Sufism as it is practiced in contemporary Morocco, and a consideration of transformations in practices should consider how these global forms get localized in certain contexts. Put otherwise, the incorporation of Sufism into ‘perennial’ philosophies, universal spiritualities, or ‘traditionalist’ schools of thought,

particularly in the European context, has had a significant impact on contemporary understandings and presentations of Sufism in Morocco.²⁶⁴

The point here is that while all of these developments displaced Sufism from some of its traditional roles in society over the course of the twentieth century, they resulted not in the disappearance of Sufism but the active adaptation of Sufi communities and practice. This process of adaptation paved the way for the emergence of myriad manifestations of Sufism, some of which have become vital members of Morocco's contemporary religious field. In this sense, I take this process of 'modernization' as to a certain extent given, rather than being the object of study. Thus, for example, the transformation of the traditional Sufi order into a civil society organization might be a question worth exploring, but my question focuses more on how this new organizational format makes possible alternative modes of practice and authority. Moreover, rather than seeing such an organizational transformation as a 'deviation' or degradation from an ideal model of the Sufi order, it can be framed as one among several necessary strategies for operating in the contemporary world. For instance, the ability to perform charity or provide educational services may require licenses or authorization from governmental bodies, which in turn requires registration as a certain type of organization. Thus, in order to continue to perform its traditional role of providing religious and ethical education, a Sufi order may have to establish itself as a non-governmental organization that is authorized to offer educational services. The need for such adaptations to social and political contexts is not, however, novel for Sufi orders, which have always had to navigate constraints imposed by the exigencies of their contexts. For me then, the question is not only how that adaptation is constrained in specific ways, but how groups

²⁶⁴ See for example Rene Guenon, Frithjof Schuon, and Jean-Louis Michon.

nevertheless work within those constraints to provide creative and competitive forms of religious practice, identity, and community.

In addition to its responses to Western modernity, Sufism has also been faced with challenges posed by modern Islamic thought and movements. Specifically, Salafi and Wahhabi trends have explicitly and forcefully critiqued Sufism. This critique has focused primarily on the issue of *bid'a* (innovation) and the degree to which certain forms of Sufi practice and ritual activity exceed the bounds of legitimate Islamic practice. Such a critique, however, is not new to the modern period insofar as these debates over what constitutes legitimate religious practice have been integral to Islam as a discursive and embodied tradition. Furthermore, while it is common to posit an absolute distinction between Salafis and Sufis, that is, to suggest that Salafis are necessarily anti-Sufi, some scholarship has demonstrated the ways in which Salafism emerged as an internal reform movement from within a variety of Sufi communities.²⁶⁵ Some have also suggested that many 'sharia-minded' Sufi reformers can be described as 'Salafi Sufis,' including the Moroccan Shaykh 'Abd al-Salam Yassine.²⁶⁶ There are several angles to this Sufi-Salafi divide, and I do not propose an exhaustive analysis here. Rather, my aim is point out some of the ways in which

²⁶⁵ As historian Nile Green puts it succinctly, "As the nineteenth century progressed, what had begun as an early modern pattern of legally-minded Sufi reformism gradually divorced itself from its Sufi origins under the pressures of colonialism to become a movement of vehemently anti-Sufi reform presenting Sufis as the principal obstacle rather than the means to a renewal of faith" (Green, *Sufism*, 189).

²⁶⁶ Summarizing this point in relation to the early Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, scholar of religion Sam Houston writes, "As John Voll (1992; 1994), Itzhak Weismann (2001; 2007), and Henri Lauzière (2005; 2010) have shown, fixating on this nomo-centric Salafism elides those traditions of Islamism which have been thoroughly shaped by *ṣūfism*. For such traditions, attention to ethico-spiritual formation (*tarbiya*) was crucial for building successful reform and renewal movements aimed at confronting the staggering changes taking place in the wake of modernity and colonialism. As such, they appropriated discursive and embodied practices provided by *ṣūfism* in order to cultivate the character and virtues they believed were essential for an effective organization. Moreover, they took their salafi and *ṣūfi* commitments to be complimentary rather than contradictory and considered themselves as belonging to a reformist middle way that sought to address the interior and exterior dimensions of Muslim life while avoiding the extremes of legalism and mysticism" (Sam Houston, "Monks by Night and Knights by Day: Hasan al-Bannā', *Tarbiya*, and the Embodied Ethics of the Early Muslim Brotherhood," *Religion Compass* 12, no. 5/6 (2018): 2).

Sufism has been impacted not only by Western modernity, as discussed above, but also by Islamic modernities

Taking the issue of *bid'a* first, the basic critique is that a host of Sufi practices constitute 'unwarranted innovations,' that is, practices that were explicitly rebuked by the Prophet and his companions, or at least were not practiced by the early Islamic community. As a result, these practices reflect the intrusion of 'external' elements into Islam and these elements have led to an overall 'degradation' or 'deviation' of Islam as a whole. For these Salafi critics, Sufism as a whole facilitated the deviation of the Muslim community from the example of the Prophet and his community and therefore these deviant practices must be eliminated in order to ensure the revival and reform of the Islamic community. Examples of the types of practice critiqued are the visitation of shrines, seeking intercession from saints, celebrating saint's festivals, and the inclusion of musical instruments in ritual practices. At their best, such practices were seen as illegitimate innovations and at their worst examples of idolatry (*shirk*). For instance, by visiting the shrine of a saint and asking for assistance, the individual was in effect worshipping the saint, a form of worship that ran counter to the absolute unity of God. In response to these criticisms, one of the goal of 'reformist' Sufi orders has been to adapt public and private ritual performances such that they adhere more strictly to Islamic law by, for example, eliminating the use of musical instruments.²⁶⁷ These ritual reforms reflected a broader trend toward a 'legally-minded Sufism' that has been contrasted with earlier forms of Sufism, and this reformist trend was labeled 'neo-Sufism' by many scholars. Such a position assumes that these critiques of Sufi practice were new to the modern period, that a concern for the law was effectively absent from the 'mystical Islam' of

²⁶⁷ For a detailed account of ritual reform in the modern period, see Frishkopf, *Sufism, Ritual*.

medieval Sufism, and that such concerns for ritual reform were imposed from the outside. However, as a variety of scholarship has shown over the past two decades, these criticisms and their responses were part of an ongoing debate, the separation of Sufis and jurists is not tenable historically, and Sufis themselves initiated trends in thought that led to the rise of Salafism as an internal critique of Sufi communities.²⁶⁸

With regard to the historical analysis of anti-Sufi polemics, an edited collection entitled *Islamic Mysticism Contested: Thirteen Centuries of Controversies and Polemics* (1999) provides an extensive historical and regional comparison of the debates about the validity, authority, and teachings of Sufism. In doing so, it offers insight into the emergence of Islamic reform movements at various points in history that took the position of Sufis as a critical point of departure. Taken as a whole the most common points of criticism that ‘anti-Sufis’ emphasized were related to *bid‘a* and a disregard for Islamic law. However, these well-known critiques emerge out of specific social and political conditions of the moment, and as such these critiques of Sufism are not comprehensive rejections of Sufism writ large. Instead, they are often aimed at specific individuals or groups within contexts of power struggles with respect to government positions, funding, and support, as well as attempts to assert authority of certain groups of religious scholars over others. What was at stake then were issues of power, as John van Ess notes, “Vernacular language, visionary experience, rigid obedience, connections with the government, this is where popular influence and immediate power came in.”²⁶⁹ In many ways, the Sufis became an important mechanism for

²⁶⁸ Elizabeth Sirreyeh, *Sufis and Anti-Sufis: The Defense, Rethinking, and Rejection of Sufism in the Modern World* (Richmond: Curzon, 1999); Frederick de Jong and Bernd Radtke (eds.), *Islamic Mysticism Contested: Thirteen Centuries of Controversies and Polemics* (Leiden: Brill, 1999); Itzhak Weismann, *Taste of Modernity: Sufism, Salafiyya, and Arabism in Late Ottoman Damascus* (Leiden: Brill, 2001); Green, *Sufism*; and, Lloyd Ridgeon (ed.), *Sufis and Salafis in the Contemporary Age* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2016).

²⁶⁹ In de Jong, *Islamic Mysticism Contested*, 37.

mediating between the government and the masses, and thus governments supported the Sufis in a whole host of ways, continuing up to the 19th century. What was at stake for many opponents of Sufism was therefore a degree of religious authority as it penetrated both centers of political power and the daily lives of Muslims. In sum, there does not appear to be any historically stable category of ‘anti-Sufis,’ even if one looks at the Hanbalis, though many of the same issues seem to reappear at different times.²⁷⁰

Even in the modern period, the extension of Hanbalism to Wahhabi criticism of Sufism did not amount to an outright rejection and requires a more nuanced reading. As Esther Peskes notes, “The need for a more careful assessment of Wahhabi-Sufi relations is evidenced by the fact that the Wahhabiyya apparently tolerated the Sufi shaykh Ahmad b. Idris and his followers in Mecca at the beginning of the 19th century.”²⁷¹ Similarly, Mark Sedgwick has noted the existence of Sufi orders in Mecca until 1940, suggesting at least a tacit acceptance of ‘reformist’ Sufi orders within the Saudi-Wahhabi context.²⁷² My point is that Sufism has been undergoing a gradual process of reform and transformation throughout its history, responding in different ways to its critics. However, for much of that history the critique of Sufism was not tantamount to a wholesale dismissal, especially given that many of the critics were in fact trained in Sufi thought and practice. The focus was instead on specific practices or doctrines that were scrutinized in concrete social and political contexts

²⁷⁰ In his article from this volume, John van Ess writes, “The Hanbalites are reputed to have remained the arch-enemies of Sufism. In reality, however, this is not more than a stereotype derived from the fact that, in our times, Hanbalism tends to present itself under the form of Wahhabism ... Yet, in the Middle Ages the attitude was much more differentiated” (de Jong, *Islamic Mysticism Contested*, 29).

²⁷¹ De Jong, *Islamic Mysticism Contested*, 146-7. The author adds, “...the sources do not mention anything which points to a direct confrontation between ... al-Wahhab and contemporary Sufis, nor do they provide evidence that [he] especially directed his teachings against Sufis or Sufi structures ...” (de Jong, *Islamic Mysticism Contested*, 150-1).

²⁷² M. Sedgwick, “Saudi Sufis: Compromise in the Hijaz 1925-40,” *Die Welt des Islams* 37, no. 3 (1997): 349-368.

as ways of contesting both religious and political authority. As such, attempts to deal with the conditions of modernity should be understood with respect to the varieties of tools Sufis have developed over time for handling the challenges posed by religious and political critics of all sorts, rather than as novel inventions imposed by the unique conditions of the modern world.

While the historical perspective helps to destabilize any coherent category of ‘anti-Sufis’ by, for example, showing that Hanbali scholars like Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) were in reality well-versed in Sufism, the modern manifestations of anti-Sufism also point to a clear disparity in types of anti-Sufi criticism. Such a disparity can be seen in the anti-Sufism of the Muslim modernists like Hassan al-Bannā’ (d. 1949) as opposed to that of Wahhabi reformers. On the one hand, figures like al-Bannā’, for example, tended to criticize Sufism for standing in the way of modernizing Islam while nevertheless drawing upon Sufism in significant ways.²⁷³ On the other hand, the Wahhabi criticism centered on questions of *bid‘a* with particular attention to idolatry (*shirk*) rather than on rationality. Thus, these two strands of anti-Sufism are quite distinct in their reproaches and make up two visions of modern Islamic piety with which Sufi groups have had to contend and compete. What they do share, however, is their disdain for the authority of Sufism. For the leaders of modern Islamic movements like al-Bannā’, this is closely related to the organizational format of the Sufi order that needed to be updated for the modern period, as exemplified in the Muslim

²⁷³ “... al-Bannā’ appropriated ṣūfī vocabulary and practices, not only in his efforts to create a program of *tarbiya*, but also in fashioning the Brotherhood’s organizational structures and institutions of authority, all of which he presided over as the ‘general guide,’ expecting complete obedience just as the shaykh of a ṣūfī order” (Houston, “Monks by Night,” 15). Also see Albert Hourani, “Rashid Rida and the Sufi Orders,” *Bulletin d’études orientales* (1977): 231-241. for a discussion of Rashid Rida and Sufi orders. The issues of Muslim modernists, Wahhabis, and Sufis are also played out in the South Asian context with figures like Ahmad Sirhindi (d. 1624), Shah Wali Allah (d. 1762), Sayyed Ahmad Khan (d. 1898), and Ahmed Barelvi (d. 1921) and their associated movements and schools (e.g., Naqshabandi, Deobandi, Tablighi Jam‘at, Barelvi, Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College).

Brotherhood's self-conception as kind of total social institution that encompasses religious, ethical, political, social, and athletic dimensions of life. For the Wahhabis, the critique of authority dealt with how Sufism had become entrenched in the Ottoman government, at times making participation in certain Sufi orders one of the qualifications for governmental appointments. As in its historical precedents, the modern manifestations of anti-Sufism were therefore not strictly religious but tied to broader social and political criticisms.

Thus, in addition to rethinking the framework of Sufi reform movements in the modern period, it is important to note in this context that going into the seventeenth century, Sufism was itself part of the establishment, both in the sense that Sufism was a part of traditional Islamic education and that it was embedded in governmental structures and bureaucracy. Moreover, as Nile Green points out, this governmental Sufism was characterized by many of the 'popular' practices described as *bid'a* above: "Such was the permeation by the early modern period of Sufi ideas and institutions through all levels of society across most of the Islamic world that it is often difficult to decide who was and was not a Sufi. Whether by paying homage to a shrine, reciting a popular song ... ordinary Muslims were exposed to a Sufism that had largely become indistinguishable from Islam in general."²⁷⁴ Thus, the critique of Sufism by various thinkers in the modern period was not merely a legal argument, but more significantly it was a criticism of existing structures of religious and political authority.²⁷⁵

²⁷⁴ Green, Sufism, 154.

²⁷⁵ For example, Itzhak Weismann writes, "Furthermore, contrary to the emphasis of the proponents of Modernism on the outer Western challenge to the world of Islam, the Salafis were more concerned with its inner degeneration, relating it to the conduct of those 'ulama and Sufi shaykhs who were willing to harness orthodoxy in the service of Abd al-Hamid's autocracy" (Weismann, *Taste of Modernity*, 26).

As Itzhak Weismann argues in his analysis of the emergence of Salafism in late Ottoman Damascus, much of the criticism at that point lay in the alliance between the state and popular Islam, supported by state-authorized shaykhs who enforced orthodoxy in the service of the government and not the tradition. In other words, the critique of Sufism that led to Salafism began as a critique of some Sufi shaykhs by others who took issue with the Ottoman government's control over religious knowledge and practice. By shifting the point of analysis to Damascus, Weismann offers a different picture of the emergence of the modern reform movements, especially as they relate to the policies of Sultan Abd al-Hamid II regarding modernization and the institutionalization of Sufis groups. In a way, state-sponsored Sufi groups, with their emphasis on Ibn Arabi, became 'orthodox' in this period, and thus the critique of Sufism was simultaneously a critique of the ruler who, while positing himself as caliph and demanding absolute obedience, also displayed significant immorality. As Weismann argues, the turn to Ibn Taymiyya as a source emerged as a response to the consolidation of a Sufi orthodoxy at the hands of Hamid II and the perceived inadequacy of Ibn Arabi's work to help modernize Islam. "Thus, seen from the Damascene angle, the origins of the Salafiyya lay in the shift of its reformist-minded '*ulama* from the theosophy of Ibn Arabi, and from the latter-day Sufi reformism in general, to the teaching of Ibn Taymiyya, reinforced by the rationalist approach of Islamic Modernism."²⁷⁶ The key insight is that the emergence of Islamic modernism needs to be seen as a part of a process of internal critique that has continued throughout Islamic history, and that even the 'Muslim modernists' like Afghani and Abduh may in fact owe a debt of gratitude to Sufi reformers for their efforts to create a modern, rational Islam.

²⁷⁶ Itzhak Weismann, "Between Sufi Reformism and Modernist Rationalism: A Reappraisal of the Origins of the Salafiyya from the Damascene Angle," *Die Welt des Islams* 41, no. 2 (2001): 206-237.

In an effort to critique the religiosity of their time, these reformist Sufis sought out alternative sources as the basis for the critique and in the process turned to Ibn Taymiyya, a move that would turn out to provide a precedent for future Salafi thinkers. As Weismann notes, “Hence came the reformist *ulama*’s adoption of the teachings of Ibn Taymiyya, whose call to return to the ideal of the forefather, *al-salaf al-salih*, gave them the leverage to amend the late orthodox tradition, both legal and mystic, that had become so distorted in their eyes, and to reestablish the supremacy of religion over the state in Islam.”²⁷⁷ Put otherwise, part of what was at stake in the emergence of Salafism was the authority of religious scholars to define the boundaries of proper practice and knowledge, and insofar as certain styles of Sufism were embedded in political structures of the Ottoman governmental apparatus, Salafism emerged as a critique of those styles of Sufism associated with Ottoman governmentality.²⁷⁸

The juxtaposition of Sufis and Salafis is often mapped onto a distinction between mystics and jurists, with Salafis claiming a strict adherence to legal authority in contrast to the Sufis who, Salafis claimed, ignored legal authority. This dichotomy of Sufis and Salafis has played out in scholarship through a variety of dichotomies: popular-orthodox, mystical-scripturalist, or mystical-legal. However, as Nile Green argues, “For what we are mostly looking at is a picture of Sufis using the law to either criticize one another or else criticize the common people.”²⁷⁹ What Green is addressing here is the idea that legally-minded anti-Sufism so often associated with modern Salafi critiques in many cases emerged out of Sufi circles themselves and were the product of Islamic scholars trained in Sufism as well as

²⁷⁷ Weismann, “Between Sufi Reformism,” 227.

²⁷⁸ An added component of this criticism of the Ottomans is that these proto-Salafi circles of Sufi jurists also reflected a nascent nationalism.

²⁷⁹ Green, *Sufism*, 157.

Islamic law. As such, the deconstruction of the Sufi-Salafi dichotomy also disassembles a number of dichotomies that have been crucial to the academic study of Islam, such as Geertz's opposition of mystical and scripturalist Islam. My interest, however, is not in the deconstruction of dichotomies, but in showing how the transformation of Sufism (in terms of thought, practice, and organization) is part of an ongoing process of internal contestation and criticism, where those internal critics do not fit easily into categories of Sufis or Salafis. These processes are therefore related to contestations of authority, that is, the capacity to define legitimate practice and knowledge, and the efforts to delegitimize Sufism were part of an effort to displace them from their positions of authority.²⁸⁰ In short, the Sufi-Salafi divide as it is often portrayed is not the product of an innate or essential difference between two distinct types of piety; rather, it is the product of a particular historical circumstance that gave rise to competing claims to authority.

My goal in this discussion of Sufism and modernity is to acknowledge that the shifting fortunes of Sufism over the course of the twentieth century are the result of multiple trajectories of modernity. For instance, while Western ideas about ritual and superstition generated skepticism and an attitude of contempt toward some Sufi practices, modern Salafi thinkers critiqued those same rituals on the grounds that they were deviations from the prophetic example. Therefore, the emergence of 'reformed Sufism' was a response to both these criticisms and Sufism in the modern period has been marked by confrontation with both

²⁸⁰ I am indebted in this line of thinking to Nile Green who writes, "Rather than looking for innate tensions between abstract moralistic and mystical pieties representing legal and mystical authority, in historical terms it is more fruitful to conceive this shift towards legalism and the crisis of conscience behind it as involving particular groups reacting to particular circumstances. By seeing mystical knowledge and legal book-learning as forms of authority which might alternatively be united in a single person or separately championed by rivals, this contextual approach helps us reckon with the inconsistencies of the older static picture of 'mystics versus lawyers'" (Green, *Sufism*, 157).

internal and external criticisms.²⁸¹ Moreover, by exploring the confrontation between Sufism and Salafism with regard to authority, one point I want to bring into relief is that the close ties between Sufism and political authority are not new or distinctive to the Moroccan context, and that such ties to a bureaucratic orthodoxy, or what I call an authorized Moroccan Islam, may in fact open Sufi communities in Morocco to the same criticisms experienced by Sufis in the Ottoman context. Thus, if one were to draw a parallel between the Ottoman bureaucratization of religion and Morocco's efforts, then it is possible that subsuming Sufism under state authority may not only render its potentials for social reform ineffective, but also add substance to existing critiques of Sufism in the contemporary Islamic world.

iii. Religion and Politics in Morocco: A Review of Literature

Over the past twenty years of Mohammed VI's reign, Morocco has engaged in an explicit program to regulate and reform the Moroccan religious field. In doing so, it has come to construct 'Moroccan Islam' according to four pillars: Sunni, Ashari creed, Maliki law, and Junaydi Sufism. These pillars are derived, in the state's formulation, from the didactic poem of Abd al-Wahid ibn Ashir (d. 1631), *'The Helpful Guide to What is Necessary in Religious Sciences.'*²⁸² In its introduction the poem reads, "Help is from Allah the Glorious / in its composition the illiterate benefit / in the creed of al-Ashari and the *fiqh* of Malik / and in the path of Junayd."²⁸³ Through its construction of Moroccan Islam, a construction which is in turn grounded in the traditional discourse of an early modern jurist,

²⁸¹ For the present purposes I limited this discussion to a Middle Eastern, i.e., Ottoman context, though studies of a similar nature from the South Asian context have been influential in shaping this rethinking of Sufism and Salafism in the modern period, particularly Bareilvi, Deobandi, and Aligarh movements inspired by Shah Wali Allah (d. 1762).

²⁸² Al-murshid al-mu'īn 'alā al-ḍarūrī min 'alūm al-dīn.

²⁸³ It was common for individuals studied in Islamic sciences to recite the introduction of this poem from memory when I ask them about Moroccan Islam, and many had memorized it in its entirety.

the Moroccan state has sought to curb the influence of domestic rivals in the religious field, as well as the influence of foreign Islams.²⁸⁴ In other words, its manufacture has been a way to acquire and maintain a monopoly over religious discourse, practice, and symbolism domestically, while also seeking to export its national religion as a rival to other forms of Islam which have been tied to the international problems of extremism and terrorism. Sufism has been a key component in the regime's formulation of Moroccan Islam insofar as it has been identified as a source of modern Moroccan religious and national identity that inculcates values of moderation, tolerance, and solidarity. As such, the Sufi dimension of Moroccan Islam not only sets it apart from its international rivals, but also lends tremendous political significance to Sufism in contemporary contexts, a significance that is based in its role as an ethical tradition.

The ability for the monarchy to construct and export this brand of Moroccan Islam gains its legitimacy from three aspects of the monarchy's ideology of legitimation: *sharīfān* lineage, allegiance (*bay'a*), and 'commander of the faithful' (*amīr al-muminīn*). These mechanisms of legitimation have been at work in varying forms in Moroccan history, with the latter emerging more recently. In the constitution of 1962, Islam is declared "The religion of the state" and the king "the Commander of the Faithful."²⁸⁵ It also goes on to state that the king is "sacred and inviolable," leading to the now omnipresent slogan, "God, Nation, King" (*Allah, al-Waṭan, al-Malik*), that adorns banners, buildings, and mountainsides throughout the country. While the Moroccan constitution has undergone a series of

²⁸⁴ These foreign forms of Islam are variously attributed to the influence of Iran and Shi'a Islam, along with Saudi Arabia and the Muslim Brotherhood. Wainscott, for instance, writes, "...this theology has been repackaged and politicized to support the state's objectives of discouraging citizens' adherence to Shi'ism and Salafism while encouraging apolitical religious practice" (Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing*, 70).

²⁸⁵ Moroccan Constitution 1962, Articles 6 and 19.

reformulations (1970, 1972, 1992, 1996), its most recent version from 2011, which was proposed in response to the February 20 Movements in 2011 (part of the so-called Arab Spring), still refers to the king as the Commander of the Faithful. It also states, “The King Head of State, His Supreme Representative, Symbol of the unity of the Nation, Guarantor of the permanence and of the continuity of the State and Supreme Arbiter between the institutions.”²⁸⁶ The key phrase here, to which I will return shortly, is ‘Supreme Arbiter.’ In short, the framing of the king as supreme arbiter ensures his neutrality and sets him above the vagaries of politics and rivalries, a role I suggest is based on the segmentary theory of Moroccan society in which the ‘saint’ (*walī*) functioned as a mediator between tribes, stabilizing an anarchical and segmented social structure.

As for the sharifan dimension of legitimation, it is commonly claimed by political scientists that it is a source of legitimate leadership dating back to the founding of the Idrissid dynasty in the late eighth century. The ‘founder’ of Morocco, as the narrative goes, known as Idriss I (d. 791) who traced his lineage to Ali and Fatima and after fleeing the Arabian Peninsula, settled in the former Roman settlement of Volubilis. Today, Idriss I is buried on a small, hill-top village called Zerhoun and is a continued site of pilgrimage. His son, Idriss II (d. 828), settled in Fes and undertook a campaign to unify Morocco under the Idrissid dynasty. Idriss II is buried in Fes with his tomb at the center of the old medina also being a site of pilgrimage to this day. As such, these two figures, both descendants from the Prophet, are viewed as the original founders of modern-day Morocco and serve as the origins of the claim that Moroccan leadership is necessarily legitimized by sharifan lineage. Leaving aside the connection of the Idrissids to Shi’ism, which would certainly put a wrench in

²⁸⁶ Jefri Ruchti, “Morocco’s Constitution of 2011,” Constitute Project, accessed February 5, 2019, https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Morocco_2011.pdf.

constructions of contemporary Moroccan Islam,²⁸⁷ Vincent Cornell argues in his meticulous account of authority in Morocco, “That the rise of sharifism, which begin in earnest after the fifteenth century, was not inherent to Moroccan Islam, but was due to a combination of social and political factors.”²⁸⁸ One of the significant factors in this development was the rise of the Jazuli Sufi order through which an ideology of the imitation of the Prophet embodied by the sainthood (*walāya*) authorized the exercise of political power (*wilāya*). This fusion of *wilāya* and *walāya* functioned to provide the foundation for the emergence of the sharifan state in the sixteenth century. Thus, even the claim that the sharifan dimension of Moroccan legitimacy has been an ever-present feature in the Moroccan religious and political landscape is itself dubitable. Furthermore, Cornell’s work illustrates how Sufi conceptions of sainthood played an integral role in the creation of that political landscape.

In addition to being commander of the faithful and a descendant of the Prophet, the king is also said to gain legitimacy through the practice of *bay‘a*. The *bay‘a* was a process in which local leaders (religious and political) who represented what has been called the *blad al-ṣiba* (land of disorder) declared allegiance to a single authority and in doing so, granted legitimacy to that ruler. The ability to bring together the discordant tribes also required allegiance from the urban centers, or what has been called the *blad al-makhzen*, which was most often accomplished through networks of patronage with urban elites. In this way, the

²⁸⁷ Cornell writes, “The significance of this exercise in philology is that it links the political ideology of the Sa’dian dynasty to the religiopolitical ideology of the Jazuliyya Sufi order. Insofar as it reflected popular aspirations for a new order of faith and justice, the Sa’dian state might also be seen as a *civitas dei*, a city of God ... The fact that the Sa’dians were descendants of the Prophet Muhammad made their claim to be the leaders of such a polity all the more logical. We have seen how closely the Jazulite doctrine of *at-tariqa al-Muhammadiyya* approximated the Shi’ite models of authority and how al-Ghazwani’s concept of the Sovereignty of Saintly Authority (*siyadat al-imama*) was as close to political Shi’ism as one could come in the context of Sunni Islam. If Sufi shaykhs could enjoy the fruits of Prophetic Inheritance, how much more worthy of this honor were the Sa’dian sharifs, who had the advantage of being holy by birth as well as by attribution?” (Cornell, *Realm*, 260).

²⁸⁸ Cornell, *Realm*, 114.

legitimacy of the ruler consistently depended on the ability to rise above segmented society and act as an arbiter between the competing factions. Such an understanding of legitimacy, however, is dependent upon a conceptualization of Moroccan society in which conflict between rural tribes, as well as between rural and urban society, was inevitable and inherent. This structure of Moroccan society was developed in part during the colonial period and brought out more explicitly by Ernest Gellner in his analysis of Moroccan saints.

In his *Saints of the Atlas* (1969), anthropologist Ernst Gellner argues that a segmented tribal social order was mediated by saints who acted as intermediaries within and between tribes.²⁸⁹ The relative neutrality of the saints, he argues, is determined by their link to a Prophetic heritage and to a common Islam shared across the tribes. They therefore served to regulate and legitimize local leaders and provided stability to an otherwise anarchical tribal landscape. In short, a kinship structure modeled on the ‘segmentation theory’ interacted with a religious lineage structure among the saints (the *igurramen*) to maintain society without a centralized government. Such a conception of authority as arbitration and mediation was taken up by John Waterbury in his work *The Commander of the Faithful* (1970). In his analysis of the king’s authority he writes, “It has already been postulated that Moroccan society consisted, and to a lesser degree still consists, of numerous segments related to one another by tension and conflict. Because this was a constant factor of Moroccan politics, one of the most consistently rewarding political roles in Morocco was that of arbiter among conflicting groups, and to the extent that Moroccan politics remain segmented and imbued with tension that role continues to be important.”²⁹⁰ Returning to the terminology deployed

²⁸⁹ E. Gellner, *The Saints of the Atlas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969).

²⁹⁰ John Waterbury, *The Commander of the Faithful: The Moroccan Political Elite – A Study in Segmented Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 145.

in the constitution, we can note the continued use of ‘supreme arbiter’ as a source of authority for the king, a role that is based not only in the supposed nature of Moroccan society, but also the role of the saint in that society. As such, the claim to ‘supreme arbiter’ is simultaneously a claim to a feature of sainthood embodied by the king. Abdellah Hammoudi, author of *Master and Disciple: The Cultural Foundations of Moroccan Authoritarianism* (1997), suggests this connection between arbitration and sainthood when he writes, “In fact, Mohammed V’s first nonordinary action in the view of the majority was to create a consensus around himself.”²⁹¹ Thus, in the post-independence creation of the modern Moroccan state, one of the ‘nonordinary actions’ (i.e., saintly) of the king was to manage to establish a degree of agreement between disparate parties. As such, I argue that this power of mediation as a mechanism of legitimation for modern Moroccan kings is modeled on the image of saint as mediator among segments of society.

Hammoudi’s argument, however, was not about the role of the king as mediator, but about his role as a political center (*dār al-mulk*) that distributed gifts, established networks of patronage, and facilitated closeness that created a relationship of dependence and obedience modeled on the master-disciple relationship of Sufism.²⁹² As the center, the leader maintains a position of power by fostering competition and distrust through the selective giving of gifts.²⁹³ Regarding the role of gifts he writes, “A gift reaffirms a mutual obligation of service and obedience, on the one hand, and protection through perpetuation of royal favors, on the

²⁹¹ Abdellah Hammoudi, *Master and Disciple: The Cultural Foundations of Moroccan Authoritarianism* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1997), 19.

²⁹² Hammoudi writes, “closeness, service, and gift exchange constitute the vehicles which motivate the interactions within and around the dar al-mulk” (Hammoudi, *Master and Disciple*, 81).

²⁹³ He writes, “The ascendance of the political center is maintained through a constantly renewed competition between elites eager to obtain maximal closeness to the prince through service and gift exchange” (Hammoudi, *Master and Disciple*, 82).

other. Loyalty is thus symbolized by the exchange of things visible.”²⁹⁴ In other words, the mechanisms of gifts in the form of patronage and closeness in the form of service to the ruler serve to cement a relationship of obedience that is already embedded in society in the form of the schema of the master-disciple relationship found in Sufism. Hammoudi writes in this regard:

If the royal institution and its legitimacy function in and through the hegemony of sainthood, as has been noted (Geertz), it seems logical to consider the master-disciple relationship in Sufi initiation as the decisive schema for the construction of power relations. Indeed, candidates for sainthood prepare themselves under the direction of a guide, who imposed rule and hierarchical superiority they respect, to achieve in turn a position of authority. The rules thus sanctioned are primarily observed and enforced by men and women who scorn convention in their quest for the absolute. But they also operate in any interaction which involves precedence and apprenticeship. Therefore, the use of cultural history – especially through an analysis of the hagiographic narrative – to account for these rules does not limit their scope; to the contrary, it demonstrates that they delineate everyone’s horizon of discussive and nondiscussive practices.²⁹⁵

While Geertz’s analysis relies on a conception of *baraka* in the construction of authority (discussed below), Hammoudi argues that a constellation of concepts and practices connected to the practice of sainthood and discipleship constitute a ‘cultural horizon’ for thought and action. Just as Sufi masters rely on the categories of service, obedience and closeness for their authority, so too do these categories constitute the authority of the ruler (*dār al-mulk*).²⁹⁶ These categories, for Hammoudi, have been formalized and homogenized in the etiquette (*adab*) of the Sufi orders, which enables him to claim that the analysis of a single figure is

²⁹⁴ Hammoudi, *Master and Disciple*, 51.

²⁹⁵ Hammoudi, *Master and Disciple*, 85.

²⁹⁶ He writes, “the same categories of service, obedience, and closeness which govern the master-disciple relationship also inform the attitudes of servants in the *dār al-mulk* and so it appears the expectations of a chief regarding his men. From this point of view the religious elite and the political bureaucratic elite recognize identical norms. Finally, both murids and government officials derive from their practice, and from the particular ethos they assimilate, a belief that individual effort is not enough; one must apply oneself within a framework of allegiance and obedience to a master” (Hammoudi, *Master and Disciple*, 94).

sufficient to represent these features of Moroccan Sufism.²⁹⁷ He goes on to argue that this etiquette is composed of two key components. The first is service (*khidma*) and the second is *ṣuḥba*, which he translates as patronage. With regard to the former he writes, “This service is called *khidma*; a disciple owes it to his educator and it must be accomplished according to the impeccable rules (*adab*) which govern contact with the master.”²⁹⁸ Service, for Hammoudi, is seen simply as an obligation owed to the master and done simply for the sake of the master, rather than as a set of practices done to cultivate a set of virtues, such as humility, that lead one not to a blind submission but to a willing obedience that can be grafted onto a willing obedience to divine will. Thus, I suggest that Hammoudi reduces the complex relationship between master and disciple and the role of service in that relationship, and I try to illustrate the multi-dimensionality of the master-disciple relationship, *adab*, and service in the Chapter Six through an analysis of hagiographical narratives in the Karkariyya. As for *ṣuḥba*, Hammoudi writes, “[It] implies that he might give support to the powerless in exchange for their loyalty and attachment - that is, patronage... If the relationship between a lord and his subjects takes on the features of the relationship between the shaykh and his fuqara, we can expect all of these features to be accentuated in the paradigm of sainthood.”²⁹⁹ Reiterating the analogy between master and disciple on the one hand and lord and subject on the other, he suggests that the concept of *ṣuḥba* embodied in Sufi traditions constitutes a form of patronage, that is, the establishment of a relationship of loyalty and ultimately submission. This reductive reading of *suḥba* is intended to provide an ‘inherent’ cultural foundation for

²⁹⁷ “Relations between masters and their disciples seem to have achieved a high degree of homogeneity, at least regarding the most influential figures of sainthood. I will therefore deal with one case only: that of a well-known saint of the late nineteenth and early 20th centuries. This biography will serve as a focal point for other information ... The life and work of Sidi al-Haj Ali, founder of the zawiya Ilgh The Sufi way they represent was widely diffused, in Morocco and elsewhere” (Hammoudi, *Master and Disciple*, 85).

²⁹⁸ Hammoudi, *Master and Disciple*, 92.

²⁹⁹ Hammoudi, *Master and Disciple*, 97.

Moroccan authoritarianism, but I suggest that this is an incomplete rendering of the Sufi conception of *suhba*. While I will attempt to demonstrate this insufficiency in later chapters, for the present purposes I cite Brian Silverstein's analysis of the concept in contemporary Turkey as it provides a source of inspiration for my own approach. He writes:

Sohbet is the harnessing of a metaphysic of influence in order to form proper, morally structured dispositions to do what God commanded as the good ... the specific kind of discipline here is akin to those monastic disciplines Asad studied that involve the constitution of a will to obey and in which obedience is a virtue ... *Sohbet* harnesses and institutionalizes this conception of love into a discipline of companionship as a technique for the formation of moral dispositions.³⁰⁰

It is important to note that Silverstein's account refers its operation within the Naqshbandiyya in contemporary Turkey, so it cannot necessarily be assumed that this conception can be translated into the Moroccan context directly. However, my point here is to demonstrate the polysemy of the terms, and more importantly to frame it as a practice of companionship that entails the cultivation of relationships not only with the master but also with fellow disciples. It is therefore dependent upon affective dispositions that give shape to relationships throughout a disciple's life and not reducible to a simple patron-client dichotomy.

The point here is that Hammoudi relies on Sufism to provide a deep-seated cultural schema that underpins the perceived legitimacy of Moroccan authoritarianism. As such, his argument articulates a second role for Sufism in Moroccan politics. Just as Waterbury relies on the Sufi saint as arbiter for his articulation of Moroccan legitimacy, Hammoudi relies on a reading of Sufism as encouraging submission and obedience to explain Moroccan claims to legitimate leadership. I engage Hammoudi in detail in this section because his analysis of practices such as the gift, service (*khidma*), proper conduct and comportment (*ādāb*), and

³⁰⁰ Brian Silverstein, *Islam and Modernity*, 144-5.

companionship (*ṣuḥba*) provides a point of departure for my analysis of Sufi communities in the remaining chapters. Finally, in discussing the ways in which conceptions of Sufism are transposed onto Moroccan politics, I turn to perhaps the most well-known presentation of the fusion of Sufism and politics in the work of Clifford Geertz.

In his *Islam Observed* (1971), Geertz claims that the Moroccan king does in fact operate as a kind of saintly figure, or at least that there is an analogy between his power and that of the saint. However, the cultural configuration through which Geertz filters this analogy is not that of the ruler as saintly arbiter or as saintly master. Instead, he writes, “Traditionally the Moroccan king has in fact been an *homme fetiche* [saint, cult figure, marabout], a man alive with charisma ... Once chosen he became not just a ruler, but the center of a royal cult.”³⁰¹ This notion of the marabout was developed in detail by Alfred Bel in his 1938 work, but as Cornell notes:

[Bel’s] paradigm of maraboutism was heavily influenced by his political agenda ... the concept of maraboutism was well-suited for creating an artificial dichotomy between the supposedly natural religious syncretism of the Berbers and an Arab Islamic orthodoxy. Until the end of the colonial period, the official French policy toward religion in the Maghrib was to distinguish the supposedly sober, authoritarian, and culturally alien ethos of classical Islam from the affective, syncretistic, and Mediterranean ethos of the Berber ‘state of nature.’³⁰²

This colonial policy that relied on a differentiation between urban, ‘orthodox’ Islam on the one hand and rural, ‘popular’ Islam on the other hand, is most clearly reflected in Berber decrees issued by the French (1914, 1930, 1934). The Berber Decree sought to ‘preserve’ Berber customary law by distinguishing it from Islamic law (*sharia*), establishing customary courts that operated in rural areas and outside the jurisdiction of Islamic law practiced in

³⁰¹ Geertz, *Islam Observed*, 53.

³⁰² Cornell, *Realm*, xxvi.

urban areas.³⁰³ This historical note aside, the point here is that the concept of the marabout denotes an individual endowed with a particular kind of charismatic authority called *baraka*. In this regard, Geertz goes on to say, “Baraka clung to the sultan ... as it clung to certain descendants of saints.”³⁰⁴ After an interruption of colonialism, Geertz claimed, maraboutic kingship returned to Morocco and the king became “the chief marabout of the country.”³⁰⁵ In other words, a particular conception of Sufism that existed before colonialism returned with Mohammed V in the post-independence era, and this mode of charismatic authority traditionally found in the saint provided a basis for his legitimacy. The assumption underlying this claim is that sainthood and kingship were both based on the same claim to religious authority, that is, Prophetic lineage, which in turn endowed the individual with a form of spiritual power that elicited veneration. He writes, “Popular saint worship, sufist doctrine ... and the sherifan principle all flowed together ... into a precut spiritual channel: maraboutism.”³⁰⁶ The convergence between sainthood and kingship as a mode of authority provided the key mechanism in Geertz's explanation of the legitimization of the monarchy in the postcolonial era, and for the present purposes demonstrates a third way in which an aspect of Sufism as a cultural concept operates as a legitimizing principle for Moroccan leadership.

In summary, contemporary Moroccan religious and political legitimacy is based on three positions: sharifism, ‘commander of the faithful,’ and *bay‘a*. One of the most common ways to explain the emergence of these types of legitimacy is to demonstrate how they are

³⁰³ Katherine Hoffman, “Berber Law by French Means: Customary Courts in the Moroccan Hinterlands, 1930-1956,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 4 (2010): 851-880.

³⁰⁴ Geertz, *Islam Observed*, 51.

³⁰⁵ Geertz, *Islam Observed*, 74, 77.

³⁰⁶ Geertz, *Islam Observed*, 54.

grounded, in one way or another, in entrenched cultural and social structures of practice and thought. In other words, the religious identity of the state corresponds to a historical religiosity engrained in Moroccan society, a religiosity closely associated with some form of Sufism. For Waterbury, this was a segmented society in which the rural saint operated as an arbiter. For Hammoudi, it was a type of relationship between master and disciple that demanded obedience through the distribution of patronage. For Geertz, it was a charismatic authority that inhered in saintly individuals. However, as the historian Edmund Burke III points out in his analysis of the ‘invention of Moroccan Islam’ through French colonial ethnography, “Although the appeal of the monarchy cannot be doubted, Moroccan Islam is not a primordial essence encoded in the DNA of Moroccan, just waiting to be tapped. Rather, it was the consequence of complex historical processes over the course of the modern history of Morocco. The invention of Moroccan Islam and its successive transformation led to the forging of a powerful political discourse that still has currency.”³⁰⁷ Thus, the religious identity and policy of the monarchy should not be seen as fixed according to some historical ‘Morocco that was,’ but as part of pragmatic political strategies that shifted in the post-colonial period in relation to emergence and dissolution of various social, political, and religious opponents.

Political scientist Malika Zeghal demonstrates this feature of Moroccan religious policy by arguing that the processes that led to authoritarianism in Morocco were not a simple transposition of preexisting structures, but a complex negotiation of national identity that drew from a variety of intellectual sources, as well as deployments modern modes of

³⁰⁷ Edmund Burke III, *The Ethnographic State: France and the Invention of Moroccan Islam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 200.

state power.³⁰⁸ The policies of religious regulation, therefore, were not derived from the development or deployment of a particular religious ideology; rather, they were part of a political strategy aimed at consolidating hegemonic power. Furthermore, as the political scientist Driss Maghraoui notes:

Reforms in the religious field in Morocco can better be viewed as part of a process of restructuring than as part of a significant theological breakthrough ... the restructuring of the religious field involved a set of measures which involved but are not limited to religious councils, religious education, the use of modern telecommunications and the introduction of the *mourchidat* (female religious guides), the creation of the Council for Moroccans Abroad, the reactivation of Sufism, and the calibration of religious discourse to developmental issues.³⁰⁹

While this process of institutionalization has been integral to the regime's capacity for religious reform and regulation, analyzing it solely in terms of political expediency, as political scientists tend to do, overlooks two things. Firstly, in positing a lack of 'theological breakthrough,' it precludes developments in religious discourse and practice, making the analysis of the content of this discourse ultimately superfluous. In conjunction with this, the assumed lack of autonomy among the religious elite implies a degree of insincerity insofar as religious discourse will be used simply as a mechanism of legitimizing state policy. Secondly, by supposing a thoroughgoing hegemony of the religious field, groups that align with state positions, such as Sufi orders or NGOs, are seen as pawns in a political game dictated by the state. In discussing the three Sufi communities in the following chapters, I hope to move past this binary of resistance versus passive acceptance (hegemonic domination) in order to bring into relief some of the spaces, however slight, in which individuals and communities are able to exert some degree of agency. These spaces, I suggest, include areas of ethical education and the development of curricula of ethical

³⁰⁸ Zeghal, *Islamism in Morocco*.

³⁰⁹ Maghraoui, "The Strengths."

education (*manāhij al-tarbiya*) forms one of the points of diversity in Moroccan Sufism today. As such, in the subsequent chapters, I take the curriculum of *tarbiya* as an object of comparison in order to highlight different articulations of Sufism, potential spaces for agency within Sufi communities, and the political significance of Sufism as a program of moral education.

In the remainder of this chapter and the next chapter, I present a brief outline of the transformations in Moroccan religious policy in the post-independence period. These transformations will be analyzed in their domestic and international orientations. As for the domestic orientation, I highlight three stages in which the state responded to religious nationalists and leftists (1956-1980), Islamists and anti-monarchy resistance (1980-2003), and international terrorist and extremist organizations (2003-present). In laying out the contours of this history, I highlight the transformations in policies of religious education not only as representative of religious policy shifts, but also to illustrate the emergence of religious education as a form of civic education, culminating in the creation of a set of religious state institutions that allow for the insertion of Sufism as the basis for the religious and moral foundation of civic education. As for the international orientation, I begin with Hassan II's recognition of foreign religious influences in the country related to the Iranian revolution, Saudi funded schools and mosques, and groups like the Muslim Brotherhood (1980-2003). This period is followed by an international context defined in relation to the war on terror and international extremism in which concerns of religious education are linked to national security. Part of the goal is to demonstrate how religious education gets reformulated as moral education and, in the process, how that moral education becomes a mechanism for combatting international Islamic radicalism. While the political significance

of Sufism has waxed and waned over the past century, my aim in the present discussion is to highlight the shifting alignments of religion and politics in Morocco out of which the religious reform policy of the past twenty years emerged.

iv. 1956-1980: Nationalists and Socialists

In 1912, the Moroccan Sultan ‘Abd al-Hafiz (d. 1937) signed the Treaty of Fes officially making Morocco a protectorate of France, a dynamic that would last until Morocco’s independence in 1956. The treaty also granted spheres of influence to the Spanish, namely, the Rif in the north and the ‘Western Sahara’ in the south. ‘Abd al-Hafiz had only recently ascended to the throne (r. 1908-1912), after leading a movement against his younger brother, ‘Abd al-Aziz, who was the Sultan at the time. Beginning in Marrakech, the movement spread to Fes and in January 1908, the religious elites of Fes declared their loyalty (*bay‘a*) to ‘Abd al-Hafiz. The main source of critique in what has been called the Hafiziyya movement was ‘Abd al-Aziz’s close ties and capitulations to European powers, and therefore the supporters of ‘Abd al-Hafiz have been associated with proto-independence movements.³¹⁰ Over the following years, however, ‘Abd al-Hafiz gradually gave in to the increasing pressure of foreign nations, leading to his signing the treaty in 1912, which was in turn followed by a series of riots and his abdication in 1912 to his brother Yusef.³¹¹ The *bay‘a* issued by the religious elites of Fes to ‘Abd al-Hafiz was not unconditional; rather, it stipulated fourteen conditions incumbent upon the new sultan.³¹² These conditions came to

³¹⁰ The Algeciras Act of 1906, which was not signed by Moroccan delegates but ratified only by royal decree, granted Morocco a degree of autonomy on its surface, but ultimately placed Morocco under European economic supervision.

³¹¹ Edmund Burke III, *Prelude to Protectorate in Morocco: Pre-Colonial Protest and Resistance, 1860-1912* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

³¹² “These included [his] rejection of the terms of the Algeciras act, his rescinding of taxes that were not stipulated in the Quran, the return of territories seized by France, the termination of consultation with European advisers and experts, the ending of concessions to the European states and their protégés, and the requirement of

be known as the ‘Kattani conditions’ (*al-shur‘u al-Kattaniyya*), named after the Sufi jurist Muhammad al-Kattani (d. 1927), and the new sultan’s failure to uphold these conditions was used by the elites as justification for rebelling against him. However, the resistance of al-Kattani and his followers to ‘Abd al-Hafiz was framed by their rivals as support for the French and therefore anti-nationalist. Therefore, this process provided a nascent impetus for what would later develop into the politically forceful *Istiqlal* (Independence) Party with an anti-Sufi outlook that was framed by both political rivalries and intellectual (i.e., Salafi) trends in Islam.³¹³

I pause briefly to highlight this relationship between the Hafiziyya movement and Muhammad al-Kattani because the Kattaniyya are often cited as ‘anti-independence’ or alternatively ‘pro-French,’ particularly because Muhammad al-Kattani began to speak out against Abd al-Hafiz for his failure to uphold to the conditions of the *bay‘a*. Take, for example, Abdellah Hammoudi’s characterization:

This undermining of the brotherhoods continued under the protectorate. The Kettaniyya, like other important *zawiyas*, supported French rule and led a relentless struggle against the governing dynasty. This drew the ire of nationalists. Thus the monarchy and the nationalist party, which, during the interwar period, acted under the aegis of the royal house, coordinated their efforts to curtail the brotherhoods’ influence. The whole brotherhood system was now suspected of betraying the national cause. The campaign against religious orders, their ritual practices, morals, and yearly festivals, culminated in 1940 sultanian decree prohibiting the creation of any new foundation without prior permission of the Palace.³¹⁴

consultation with Moroccan advisers regarding political matters, and finally, the protection of the rights of the shurafa” (S. Bazzaz, *Forgotten Saints: History, Power, and Politics in the Making of Modern Morocco* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 130).

³¹³ As the historian Sahar Bazzaz writes in her study of this period, “Although the Fez bay‘a was a significant victory for Abd al-Hafiz because it legitimized his claim to the throne, it also marked a success for social groups previously politically marginalized, by articulating political demands that reflected their interests ... Therefore, the bay‘a ... opened the way for their participation in politics.”³¹³

³¹⁴ Hammoudi, *Master and Disciple*, 18.

In Hammoudi's account, through their critique of and resistance to Abd al-Hafiz's rule, and afterwards the rule of Youssef bin Mohammed (later Mohammed V), many prominent Sufi orders effectively supported French occupation. However, as Bazzaz's account shows, Abd al-Hafiz's critique of Sufism generally, and al-Kattani specifically, emerged as a strategy to discredit al-Kattani who posed a political threat as a descendant of the prophet (*sharīf*), a prominent religious elite, and the leader of a popular resistance movement. The feud between the two led to the closure of the Kattaniyya *zawiyas*, and eventually the capture and execution of al-Kattani. Describing the return of al-Kattani after his capture Bazzaz writes:

After their arrival, the travelers, including the family women and children and an entourage of disciples, were subjected to unprecedented public humiliations, which sent shock waves throughout the city and elicited reactions of utter dismay. The Kattani men entered the city and were paraded through the streets on mules, their hands fettered, their beards shaved, and their head coverings removed. The family women and children rode solemnly behind. The group was eventually brought to the palace, where they were imprisoned, including the women. The incarceration of women ... had previously been unknown. As an example to others who attempted to challenge the *makzhan's* authority, Abd al-Hafiz subject the disciples who accompanied the kattani clan to severe and gruesome punishment; first, they were beaten, and then their hands were cut off, the bleeding wounds then rubbed with salt. Muhammad al-Kattani, his father, and his brother Abd al-Hayy, were each subjected to lashing while their wives and servants looked on. Muhammad al-Kattani died shortly after the beating. His was then placed in an unmarked grave, its whereabouts unknown to the family or to disciples of the brotherhood.³¹⁵

In other words, a highly respected religious scholar and leader of Sufi brotherhood from one of the oldest families of Fes descended from Idrisi *shurafā'*, who had helped Sultan Abd al-Hafiz rise to power by facilitating the *bay'a* of the Fassi elite, was, only a year later, subjected to a humiliating and unprecedented punishment at the hands of the ruler he had helped to bring to power. It should come as little surprise, then, that later members of the family and Sufi order would be critical of the Abd al-Hafiz's heirs. Moreover, the fact that

³¹⁵ Bazzaz, *Forgotten Saints*, 140-1.

the ruling dynasty would seek to thoroughly discredit the Kattaniyya in later years by framing them as anti-nationalist served several purposes. In addition to justifying their actions, it also recruited nationalists with a Salafi and anti-Sufi agenda, to the cause of the monarchy, and created a general skepticism of Sufism in the population.

My point in this brief foray into colonial history is threefold. Firstly, I want to demonstrate that the constellation of factors that guided actions of Sufi orders was far more complex than a binary in which opposing the monarchy entailed an endorsement of French occupation. As the case of al-Kattani illustrates, the power dynamics went beyond this straightforward dichotomy and included, for example, struggles of power between families with equally valid religious credentials in the form of being trained religious scholars and members of *shurafā*.³¹⁶ Secondly, the critique of Sufism was connected to these power dynamics and while it certainly has connections to the rise of Salafism in the Islamic world at this time, criticisms of Sufi practice were not new to this period. Furthermore, the criticism of Sufi practice in this period was not only dependent on Salafi reform projects; it was also related to Western critiques of ‘ritual’ and superstition, as evidenced in the reform projects of Sufism in colonial Egypt.³¹⁷ As discussed previously in the chapter, the Sufi-Salafi polemic was commonly tied to specific political circumstances and contestations over authority, and the critique of Sufis in the case of Sufism are no different in that regard. In line with that contextual reading, the third and most important point was to illustrate how an anti-Sufi stance operated to unite the nationalists, later the *Istiqlal* party, with the monarchy and

³¹⁶ Bazzaz notes, “Abd al-Hafiz had studied with prominent shaykh and was well-suited to spar intellectually with al-Kattani” (Bazzaz, *Forgotten Saints*, 139).

³¹⁷ Sirriyeh, Sufis and Anti-Sufis and de Jong, *Islamic Mysticism Contested*, 1999.

effectively displace and discredit Sufi orders as Morocco entered the post-independence period.

Political scientist Sarah Feuer explains the resulting relations in the following way, “For the sultanate, fostering an alliance with the men of the [nationalist scripturalist] elite like al-Fassi put it at odds with the other main locus of religious authority in the country, the Sufi brotherhoods. This was driven by ideological differences between the two religious camps. *Salafism had always been hostile toward Sufism and other popular forms of Islam.*”³¹⁸ Through this pragmatic alliance of the monarchy and nationalists, the Sufi orders entered the post-independence era in a state of disrepair and largely displaced from centers of power. However, the claim that ‘Salafism had always been hostile toward Sufism’ essentializes and simplifies a difference that requires a more nuanced reading of history in which the *Istiqlal*’s ‘Salafi’ critique of Sufism was more directly related to claims to political power than to any necessary or outright rejection of Sufism as such.

Nevertheless, relations between the *Istiqlal* and the monarchy formed the basis of anti-colonial resistance that eventually led to independence. In 1953, the sultan, Mohammed bin Yusef, was exiled from Morocco and in the process, he became a symbol of national unity, bestowing upon him substantial symbolic capital as a potential leader of independent Morocco. He returned from exile in 1955 as sultan and the following year he successfully negotiated a declaration granting Morocco its independence from France. Shortly afterward, he changed his title from Sultan Mohammed bin Yusef to King Mohammed V and reigned as king until his unexpected death in 1961 when he was succeeded by his son, Hassan II. The

³¹⁸ Sarah Feuer, “Religious Establishment and Regime Survival: The Politics of Religious Education in Morocco and Tunisia 1956-2010” (PhD Diss., Brandeis University, 2014), 47.

following year the first constitution was drafted adding the title of ‘commander of the faithful’ (*al-amīr al-muminīn*) to that of king.

The coalition between the nationalists and the monarchy that emerged in the colonial period and helped fuel the independence movement did not last long after independence, however, because the *Istiqlal* party posed a threat to the monarchy’s legitimacy. It did so on two grounds. Firstly, many members of the *Istiqlal* were from the religious elite, so they posed a challenge to the religious legitimacy of the regime. This can be seen, for example, in Allal al-Fassi’s work *In Defense of Sharia*, in which he wrote, “Kings and heads of state do not have power or rights that come to them from heaven... This power and these rights belong to the people who – by virtue of the status of its individual members, vice-regents of God on earth – is the source of sovereignty (*siyada*), the source of power.”³¹⁹ Secondly, nearly ninety-percent of the population belonged to the party by 1956.³²⁰ Founded in 1944 by its leader Allal al-Fasi (d. 1974), the *Istiqlal* was a nationalist party inspired by Salafi discourses, including issues of social justice, education, and integration of politics and religion. As for education, the party supported the ‘Free Schools’ established during the protectorate that sought to counter the increasing rise of Francophone education. Consequently, an important component of their project was the Arabization and Islamization of education, which was intended as an extension of the anti-French sentiment and reinforcement of the Islamic identity of Morocco.

In her analysis of the regime’s education policies during this period, Sarah Feuer illustrates the political pragmatism of the Moroccan monarchy. Aligned with a party that

³¹⁹ Cited in Zeghal, *Islamism in Morocco*, 72.

³²⁰ M. el-Mansour, “Salafis and Modernists in the Moroccan Nationalist Movement,” in *Islamism and Secularism in North Africa*, ed. John Ruedy (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994).

sought to enhance the role of Islamic education, coupled with the regime's religious claims to legitimacy, it would be expected that in the wake of independence the regime would seek an active integration of Islamic education into the curriculum, i.e., to placate them by agreeing. However, as Feuer notes, this did not take place.³²¹ She explains this by suggesting that the regime sought to curb the influence of the *Istiqlal* party by supporting rivals, a process that involved cooperation with rural leaders and Francophone bourgeoisie. Moreover, the government lacked sufficient resources to substantially expand and oversee curriculum, resources such as properly trained teachers. Thus, rather than being a policy based in state religious ideology, the educational policy adopted by the regime was determined by political expediency on the one hand and insufficient institutional endowment on the other hand. As she writes:

Indeed, despite a consensus among the nationalist leaders that Moroccan schools should reserve a prominent place for religious instruction, the Alouites' encouragement of a pluralistic political realm created spaces for divergent preferences to emerge among those who had fought to remove the French and were now in a position to staff the nascent bureaucracies of the state. The government's 1960-1964 Five Year Development Plan called for the unification of the various educational tracks to 'give to all Moroccans a proper Islamic education that would immerse them once again in Muslim civilization,' but translating this goal into policy was more complicated, since proponents of the Free School model now had to contend with fellow nationalists who had graduated from the French system and were congregating around rival political parties. The regime's encouragement of a pluralistic political realm – an encouragement fueled by the monarchy's institutional weakness – brought to the fore divisions that precluded major policy shifts.³²²

Therefore, while presenting itself as ostensibly in favor of educational reform involving an increase in Islamic education in the public-school curriculum, in practice the regime did not

³²¹ She writes, "Furthermore, given the heavy reliance on religious symbolism in the Alaouites' legitimating ideology, it stood to reason that the independent regime would heed the nationalists' demands and expand on the Free School model to reinforce its religious bona fides. Yet, this did not happen. Instead, the independent regime retained the bilingual curricula of the vast majority of the French Protectorate public schools that paid relatively marginal attention to religious instruction" (Feuer, "Religious Establishment," 106).

³²² Feuer, "Religious Establishment," 107-8.

follow through and in the process fostered a political landscape constituted by conflict and contention. In other words, religious policy, specifically pertaining to religious education, served as part of a pragmatic strategy to divide potential rivals and prevent a consolidation of opponents that could challenge the religious or political legitimacy of the monarchy.

The cultivation of competition in the political realm turned out to be successful insofar as it eventually led to the fracturing of the *Istiqlal* and the formation of the National Union of Popular Forces (UNFP), founded by Mehdi ben Baraka in 1959. While it was nationalist in orientation, it took a strongly leftist, i.e., socialist, stance that called for a more radical transformation of social structures. While originally heading the government after its creation, it soon joined the opposition, after Mohammed V dissolved the government in 1960, and served as a staunch critic of Hassan II throughout the 1960s. This opposition to the government led to numerous protests and clashes with the government, often drawing the brunt of Hassan II's and his infamous minister of interior General Mohammad Oufkir's oppressive tactics. These tactics included brutal repression of protests, imprisonments, and death sentences, as well as the 'forced disappearance' of its leader Mehdi ben Barka in France in 1965. Later, the party would change to the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP) in the 1970s. The perceived threat of the left, however, lasted even to 1981 when the 'bread riots' in Casablanca, which resulted in the deaths of several hundred citizens, were blamed on members of the USFP.³²³

The threat posed by the secular leftist ideology of the UNFP/USFP resulted in a shift in the religious education policy of the regime as it realized that it needed to provide a more

³²³ John K. Cooley, "A Black Saturday Shadows the Future of Hassan's Morocco," Washington Post Online, accessed February 5, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1981/08/25/a-black-saturday-shadows-the-future-of-hassans-morocco/8a5cb6ce-39b4-42b9-bb48-f3a196706961/?utm_term=.a8aadcc80340.

explicit religious bulwark against the left. While this included an increase in amount of time spent on religious instruction in public schools, more significantly it involved a substantial shift in the content and framing of religious education. As Feuer argues, “Emphasis shifted from lessons on religious rituals and dogma to teachings on Islamic ethics and morals ... likening the teacher’s role to that of a father responsible for inculcating his children with religious morals.”³²⁴ During the 1970s the religious education transformed from instruction in traditional Islamic sciences to the teaching of morals and ethics, that is, to a form of civic education. Such a shift, however, was not the result of a change in the religious stance of the regime; rather, it was a response to the rise of the left and the nationalists associated with the *Istiqlal*. In other words, reforming religious education became a means to combat socialist ideology and to placate the religious contingent in the *Istiqlal* that had criticized the government for not adequately reforming education. Moreover, in the aftermath of the attempted coups in 1971 and 1972 led by military officers, it was necessary for the king to reinforce his political legitimacy and religious educational reform provided a pragmatic means for doing so.

In summary, while the discussion above illustrates the shifting contours of the political landscape in the first two decades after independence, along with the regime’s pragmatic approach to dealing with a variety of opponents, the goal was also to show how religious education emerges as a site of political contestation to illustrate more broadly the intersections of religion and politics in Morocco.³²⁵ In the process, the way in which

³²⁴ Feuer, “Religious Establishment,” 112.

³²⁵ A good deal of literature has illustrated the role of education in the project of nation-building, so it should not come as a surprise that in post-independence Morocco, the construction of national identity was linked to education (e.g., Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, Gellner *Muslim Society*, Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, Starrett, *Putting Islam to Work*). However, a critical component here is the link between religious identity and religious education, which in turn imparts an ethical dimension to Moroccan citizenship.

religious education was discussed transformed it into a site of civic and moral education, and though Sufism was not yet inserted into that curriculum, the focus on values like tolerance and pluralism opened a space that would later come to be filled by Sufism. During this period, the ethical orientation of the rhetoric on education remained consistent with traditional Islamic ethics, but it opened a space in which other discourses of ethics could enter. For example, in the 1990s, as the Moroccan regime came under criticism for its ‘human rights abuses,’ shifting the ethical content towards issues of human rights, equality, and tolerance to mitigate those criticisms was made possible by these earlier reforms to the rhetoric of religious education. More recently, that ethical aspect of religious education has been colored, in part, by a rendering of Sufism as a moral foundation for modern Moroccan citizenship. In other words, the space created by changing religious education to civic education involved the insertion of various ‘secular’ or ‘liberal’ values that would later be translated back into an Islam context, i.e., (re)grounded in the Islamic tradition, through the deployment of a (re)formulated Sufi ethical terminology.

v. 1980-2003: Islamists

The first decades of independence saw the regime battling with nationalists and leftists, eventually turning to religious contingents and organizations to ward off the influence of leftists. In addition to creating departments of Islamic Studies at universities to mitigate leftist power on college campuses, the regime also encouraged some Islamic activist groups. One of these groups was the ‘Islamic Youth’ (*Shabība Islamiyya*), founded by Abdelkarim Moutii in the 1969.³²⁶ The following decades saw the emergence of multiple

³²⁶ Marvin Howe writes in his analysis of the Islamist awakening in Morocco, “The Islamic Youth Association was active among high school and university teachers and students and tolerated by the palace as long as it opposed the foreign ideologies of Marxism and Maoism. The group’s overt aims included the moralization of

groups that can be loosely glossed as ‘Islamist.’ The two primary players in this regard are the *Hizb al-‘adl wa al-tanmiyya* (PJD), along with its associated religious wing *Harikat al-Tawhīd wa al-Iṣlāḥ* (Movement of Unity and Reform) that developed out of the ‘Islamic Youth’ movement, and the *Jama‘at al-‘adl wa al-iḥsān* (AWI). The opposing trajectories of these two organizations provide insight into the ongoing state strategy of pitting competitors against one another so as to maintain control, the effects of that competition on the development of religious thought and practice, and their lasting impact on the religious field.³²⁷ Specifically, I suggest that the Sufi-inspired thought of the AWI led the state to adopt a strategy of Sufi revival that sponsored alternative Sufi organizations as a means to reduce the influence of the AWI. In this way, AWI’s thought gave shape to contemporary discourses on Sufism, especially insofar as its leader, Shaykh Abd al-Salam Yassine, articulated a socially active vision that relied on notions of Sufi *tarbiya* and *iḥsān*. Thus, the state-sponsored Sufism that has come to exist today in the form of the *tariqa* Būdshīshiyya in particular, and the revival of Sufism more generally, emerges from an environment of competition in a religious marketplace in which a popular movement compelled actions from the government that we are still seeing the effects of today.

Before discussing the historical development of the AWI, two theoretical notes are in order to clarify the complexity of the relationship between these three groups (AWI, PJD,

society, including the banning of alcohol and other forms of ‘depravity’ like prostitution, the Arabization of education, and the implementation of Islamic law. The unstated, long-term goals, however, were to undermine the Left, destabilize those national institutions considered ‘un-Islamic,’ and come to power” (M. Howe, *Morocco: The Islamist Awakening and Other Challenges* (New York: Oxford University Press (2005), 127).

³²⁷ The political scientist working on AWI and PJD Avi Spiegel writes, “To stamp out socialism and Marxism on campuses, for example, [Hassan II] forced universities in the early seventies to require Arabic courses and to form Islamic studies departments, which often displaced faculties in philosophy and the humanities. Such action, not surprisingly, paved the way for the Islamicization of the country’s main student union, a trend that continues today” (Avi Spiegel, *Young Islam: The New Politics of Religion in Morocco and the Arab World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 38).

and Būdshīshiyya). Commonly classified as an ‘Islamist’ group for its call for the integration of religion and the state (*al-dīn wa al-dawla*), the AWI is also deeply inspired by Sufi discourse and practice. Likewise, the PJD is classified as an ‘Islamist’ political party for its stances on the relationship between religion and politics. As such, from the perspective of scholars analyzing Moroccan politics, the difference between the two lies not in their ideology, i.e., they are both Islamist, but in their political positions vis-à-vis the monarchy. Specifically, what differentiates the two is that one takes an oppositional stance to the monarchy (AWI), while the other adopts a participatory approach (PJD).³²⁸ Therefore, for those who study the political field in Morocco, the two groups represent two distinct ways in which the government has attempted to deal with the category of Islamism - exclusion and inclusion. In doing so, the content of their discourse and their use of traditional practices in their texts, meetings, and organizations is largely overlooked or seen as politically insignificant, usually based on the assumption that political Islamic movements manipulate, ‘invent,’ or insincerely exploit Islam in order to achieve political goals.³²⁹ While there are important political implications of the AWI that scholarship has helped to reveal, the lasting

³²⁸ For example, Malika Zeghal writes, “I analyze this new Islamist party [PJD] through its relations with the monarchy and the operations of the political system in order to understand the transformation of Moroccan authoritarianism and the tensions now pervading the foundations of the sacred character of the monarchy. The PJD is a political movement that contrasts sharply with Yassine’s, and it defines a new type of relationship between Moroccan Islamism and the monarchy” (Zeghal, *Islamism in Morocco*, 145).

³²⁹ See for example Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, Mohammed Ayoob, *The Many Faces of Political Islam*, Dale Eickelman, *Muslim Politics*. I take as my starting point in this critique Charles Hirschkind’s analysis of ‘Islamist’ groups in Egypt in which he writes, “[their] political impact lies not so much in its participation in electoral politics but in the changes it effects in the social and moral landscape of society” (Hirschkind, *Ethical Soundscape*, 256). Consequently, I suggest, it is this effect on the ‘moral landscape’ that opened spaces for Sufism to emerge as an alternative ethical force. In other words, the framing of Sufism through ‘tarbiya’ develops in relation to these Islamist groups that attempt not merely to capture the state, but to reshape the moral community. Hirschkind work further illustrates that what makes this moral project of the ‘Islamist’ political is the insinuation of the nation-state into all matters of daily life such that any project aimed at the reformation of the moral or ethical forms of sociality upon which that nation-state is based is, necessarily, a political project, even when its goals are not explicitly political in the sense of engaging in electoral politics, regime change, or revolutionary rhetoric. It is this sense of the political that I am analyzing not only the AWI, but also Sufism more generally in contemporary Morocco.

impact of the group and Shaykh Yassine's thought on the religious landscape of Morocco remains under studied.³³⁰ In addition to the reductive classification of the AWI that situates it as primarily a political movement with its religious dimension being a byproduct of political goals, this classification also tends to equate it with Salafism, which is often assumed to be anti-Sufi. From a theoretical perspective, the AWI challenges the Salafi-Sufi divide to the point that, as one scholar of the AWI argued, "Yassine too argued that the Salafi and Sufi elements of his thought functioned harmoniously by addressing the interior and exterior dimensions of Muslim life, all the while avoiding the extremes of exoteric legalism and esoteric mysticism."³³¹ In this way, Houston goes on to compare Shaykh Yassine with Sufi reformers such as Ahmad Sirhindi or Ahmad ibn Idris. Situating him within this lineage of internal Sufi critics, perhaps even as a "conservative rebel" to borrow a phrase from Scott Kugle's description of Ahmad Zarruq, opens up possible connections between Shaykh Yassine's thought and contemporary Sufi discourse in Morocco. Specifically, I suggest, his emphasis on *tarbiya* as spiritual and ethical education, his elaborate articulation of *iḥsān* in his book of the same title, and a strategy of recruitment aimed at youth that involved campus canvassing and camping expeditions (*khaymāt*) have been incorporated into state discourses and local practices of Sufism.

³³⁰ Furthermore, in relation to conversations of 'post-Islamism' (A. Bayat, *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), Shaykh Yassine challenges the shift from rhetoric of 'obligation' to 'rights' that is said to characterize post-Islamist movements that emerge in the wake of the experience of the failure of political Islam. Although Bayat's later work does downplay the historical and temporal aspect of the shift from Islamism to post-Islamism, the point is that both theoretical frameworks analyze the movement in terms of its political ends, i.e., what is conceived to be politically expedient. In framing studies this way, the religious dimension is assumed to be merely a tool for achieving political ends and the religious discourse changes to better fit the political exigencies at a given time.

³³¹ Sam Houston, "Sufism and Islamist Activism in Morocco: An Examination of the Tradition of Commanding the Right and Forbidding the Wrong in the Thought of Abd al-Salam Yassine," *Middle Eastern Studies* 53, no. 2 (2017): 154.

Situating Shaykh Yassine as an instigator of the revival of Sufism in Morocco stems not only from secondary scholarship and some of his primary sources, but also from discussions with multiple members of the AWI. During my fieldwork in Morocco, I became acquainted with several members of the organization and although the nature of my work and my positionality prevented extensive access to the internal workings of the organization, many were comfortable discussing the impact of Shaykh Yassine's thought on the revitalization of Sufism. One summer afternoon in Rabat, for example, a former member of the AWI and I met in the area of Mamouniyya, home of the ministry of justice, just outside the old city. After graduating from university, he went to graduate school to Islamic and International law. Previously, he had been highly active in the AWI, working as a recruiter on campuses. We walked together on the hot summer day in August, through the market streets of the medina, until we reached the grave of Shaykh Yassine in the cemetery on the north side of the medina, a stone's throw from the great lighthouse. There was nothing to mark the grave as significant and there was no structure built over it as is the case with many saints in Morocco. Rather, it was just a plain grave – one among many. My friend said a brief *du'ā'* to himself and we continued our walking discussion, meandering over to Udaya (the old Kasbah overlooking the oceans) and then returning through the medina back to a bookstore on Mohammed V Avenue where we spent another hour perusing and discussing books. During our walk, we touched on many topics including comparative law, ethics, politics, and the revival of Sufism, which came up as we passed the *zawiya* of the Būdshīshiyya in the medina.

I mentioned that many scholars have talked about their role in revitalizing Sufism in Morocco and I asked him, "What caused the blossoming (*izdahār*) of the Budshishiya, in your opinion?"

He replied, “In my opinion, it was Shaykh Abd al-Salam Yassine joining the group, at least that was part of it. Many of his friends and followers joined along with him. But, when he left they did not leave with him. With the growth of the order, there was a renewal of Sufism, it was dead and dying before that...”

“What do you mean by dead?” I asked.

He answered, “There was not much happening (*kān walū*). There was no living sheikh (*shaykh ḥayy*) or people of knowledge. There were few activities and it was mostly ancestors [descendants] maintaining *zawiya*. Almost everyone was *murid* without sheikh or *murshid*. There was no knowledge or thinking.”

“So Yassine is responsible, in part, for the renewal of Sufism in the contemporary period?” I inquired.

He answered quickly, “Yes, he is a renewer (*mujaddid*).”

“What about the state? Did it or does it play an important part in the growth of Sufism?” I asked.

He paused a moment to think and responded, “No, not really. They give some support and help to organize it, but it is individual persons that develop the thinking for Sufism.”

In order to clarify I asked, “So the blossoming of Sufism recently is the result of individuals - bottom-up not top-down?”

He nodded in agreement and I went on to ask, “Why is the Budshishi popular?”

“Well their influence is that they were able to organize many youth-oriented (*shabābī*) events – summer camps (*khaymāt*), trips (*riḥlāt*), studies and such. Later, other groups came to follow, but they took that from Shaykh Yassine and so their following grew.”

I then asked him why he was no longer with the AWI. He replied, “Because in Sufism, you need a sheikh that is alive. We are all in desperate need of (*fī amas al-ḥājja ila*) a guide to connect social interactions (*mu‘amalāt*) to the highest form of seeing (*mushāhada*) that is *iḥsān*. It is like mastering (*itqān*) karate, and it is from this that the need for the shaykh arises.”

While the historical details of this narrative may be a reconstruction, what I want to highlight in this conversation is that the growth of the Būdshīshiyya, and the revival of Sufism more broadly, is tied to Shaykh Yassine’s critical project, more than to the efforts of the state. Furthermore, in tying it to an individual in this way, the emphasis is put on the role that individual thinkers have played in the development of Sufi thought in the wake of Shaykh Yassine. While the state provides organizational and material support, Sufism is always in need of living shaykhs who can help people reach the level of *iḥsān* through a program of *tarbiya*. His point was not that Shaykh Yassine ‘invented’ this framework, but that as a

living shaykh and a renewer he was able to breathe life back into this program intellectually and practically, and in doing so, sparked a renaissance of Sufism. Therefore, in addition to providing a historical sketch of the AWI and its position within the political field in Morocco, I will highlight three features that continue to play out in contemporary Sufism, that is, *tarbiya*, *iḥsān*, and a youth-oriented social activism.

vi. Shaykh Yassine and *Jamāʿat al-ʿAdl wa al-Iḥsān*

Born in 1928 in Marrakesh to a family of sharifan descent, he excelled in school until moving to Rabat in 1947 to pursue training as a teacher. After graduating a year later, he worked as an Arabic teacher in Eljadida before returning to receive a graduate degree at the Institute of Higher Islamic Studies in Rabat. In 1955, he was appointed as Arabic School Inspector in Marrakesh and therefore when Morocco achieved independence the following year, he was among the few highly qualified teachers that could fill positions in the Ministry of Education. During his time at the ministry from 1956 to 1968, he worked as an inspector, the director of teacher training schools in Marrakesh, and the director of the school inspector training center in Rabat. He also wrote and edited several textbooks and actively attended pedagogical training sessions abroad. In short, in addition to receiving education in Arabic and classical Islamic sciences, he was also highly trained as a teacher, and as a teacher of teachers.

Despite achieving a degree of success in his life and work, he experienced a period of existential dread and began to search for a spiritual guide that could help him in his quest for knowledge and meaning. This search took him to the books of the Sufis first, before attempting to find a living shaykh, which he did in the form of al-Haj al-Abbas, the shaykh of the Būdshīshiyya. Yassine became his disciple and studied under him for nearly six years

until his death in 1972. Although a disciple and therefore obliged to a degree of deference and obedience, Yassine it seems tended to criticize some of the practices of the group, particularly as it began to grow in the 1970s. As the scholar of Islam Abdelouahad Motaouakal suggests in his biographical sketch of Yassine, “[He] seemed to have lived his Sufi experience in a rather different way. He never lost critical thinking or refrained from speaking against what he considered not allowed by Islam ... to the extent that he was dubbed ‘Mr. Yassine Sharia’ by members of the brotherhood.”³³² In other words, during his time as a disciple and member of the Būdshīshiyya, he was a vocal critic of the practices and changes in the physical and demographic makeup of the *zawiya*, such as the introduction of furniture and the overflowing of gifts, but still saw the value in the Sufi project.

After the passing of his shaykh, Yassine left the order. Some have argued that he left due to a conflict over succession and his desire to be leader, while others suggest that it was merely a difference in vision for how to move forward, that is, what sort of changes and reforms the order ought to undertake.³³³ Specifically, as Houston writes, “Part of his disillusionment also stemmed from his growing belief that the Sufi way demanded, not isolation from the world, but engagement with it.”³³⁴ Regardless of the motivation for leaving, it is the case that he began an activist career and quickly wrote two books after leaving, ‘Islam between the Call and the State’ (*Al-islām bayn al-da‘wa wa al-dawla*) and ‘Islam Tomorrow’ (*Al-islām ghadan*). These books, totaling some 1500 pages, demonstrate the early stages of his reformist agenda in which he attempts to articulate a path for social

³³² Abdelouahad Motouakel, “Al-Adl wal-Ihsan: An Explanation of its Rise and its Strategy for Social and Political Reform in Morocco,” (PhD diss., University of Exeter, 2014), 48.

³³³ The difference in these readings is largely one of intention, with those seeking to explain his political movement emphasizing his personal ambition, and those seeking to explain his religious thinking emphasizing his sincerity in the path of Sufism.

³³⁴ Houston, “Sufism and Islamist Activist,” 156.

reform through education. These books were followed in 1974 by his infamous epistle entitled 'Islam or the Deluge' (*Al-islām aw al-tawafān*).

Modeled after the tradition of advice (*naṣīḥa*) literature, an Islamic genre of the 'mirror for princes,' the letter takes aim at King Hassan II as well as the religious scholarly community. Regarding the latter, he criticizes them for failing to uphold their historical role of advising and speaking out against injustice, as Muhammad al-Kattani had done earlier in the century. In this way he effectively adopted traditional role for the socially active Sufi saint. As Malika Zeghal put it, "Becoming *wali* and *nāṣiḥ*, on the one hand, he is able to eliminate any mediation between himself and God, hence becoming a saint and mystic, and, on the other, between himself and the king, hence becoming a political critic ... To criticize the regime of the monarchy he directly confronts its center, the monarch, while being protected and legitimized by his own closeness to God."³³⁵ In his criticism of the king, Shaykh Yassine highlighted the ritualization of the *bay'a* ritual, arguing that formalizing and televising it were humiliating to those forced to prostrate before him.³³⁶ He also goes on to criticize the king's exploitation of the country's resources for his own personal gain and his

³³⁵ Malika Zeghal, "Politics of Sainthood: Resistance and Mimicry in Postcolonial Morocco," *Critical Inquiry* 35, no. 3 (2009): 590.

³³⁶ "Has it ever occurred to you that every man has his dignity, and he whom you obliged to prostrate himself before you, in front of everyone and on television curses you in his heart because of your contempt for human dignity? You must be mad if you think that those who are at your service adore you, and prostrate themselves out of respect for your person and the kingdom." (cited in Motouakel, "Al-Adl," 52). It is also important to note that criticism of the *bay'a* is a partially veiled way of challenging the legitimacy of the monarchy itself, for this 'reinvention' of the *bay'a* was indeed part of a colonial strategy to legitimize the Alawite monarchy (Burke 2014). Burke begins his book, "In an iconic moment, Hubert Lyautey, first resident-general of the French protectorate in Morocco (1912-25), holds the stirrup for Moulay Youssef as he mounts his horse on the occasion of his accession to the throne in 192 as the first sultan of the French protectorate. The ceremonial ritual is alleged to have originated in the precolonial period when the sharif of Wazzan, a major regionally powerful religio-political figure held the stirrup. According to the new custom, the new sultan would then ride from the palace to the principal mosque and lead the Friday prayer ... The ritual underscored the status of the sharif of Wazzan as the premier grandee of the realm, as well as his public abasement in the presence of the sultan. With the inauguration of the French protectorate in 1912 this ceremonial gesture was repeated. Or so we are told ... The throne accession ceremonial encapsulated the political strategy that underlay the French protectorate. By it, the French colonial state affirmed its historical continuity and legitimacy through its deep understanding and respect for the historical specificity of Moroccan Islam" (Burke III, *Ethnographic State*, 1).

general inattentiveness to the well-being of the Moroccan people. In response to this letter, which was widely distributed, the king sentenced Yassine to three-and-a-half years in a mental hospital without trial.

After his release from detention, his activities were rather limited due to close monitoring and some events in the landscape of Islamic movements that took place during his detention.³³⁷ In 1979 he published a journal called ‘The Group’ (*al-Jama‘a*) and in the early 1980s he formed an association that would later become *Jama‘at al-adl wa al-iḥsān* in 1987.³³⁸ Officially changing its name to the AWI stressed the dual approach of justice (*al-adl*) and virtuous piety (*al-iḥsān*), representing the social and spiritual respectively. As Euben and Zaman suggest in their analysis of the AWI, “[Yassine insists] that a successful Islamist movement must address both the corporeal and inner aspects of human existence.”³³⁹ They go on to suggest that this group therefore embodies a ‘this-worldly’ mysticism in which salvation is dependent upon good works (*iḥsān*) in this world, or as Weber put it, “within the institutions of this world, but in opposition to them.”³⁴⁰ In short, Shaykh Yassine was in fact embodying the socially active form of Sufism that has characterized Moroccan Sufism through his emphasis on the dual dimensions of justice and virtue that he would eventually lay out as a *minhaj*.

³³⁷ Specifically, in 1975 Omar Benjelloun, a leader in the USFP, was killed and the regime blamed the leader of the Islamic Youth Association (*al-Shababa al-Islamiyya*), Abd al-Karim Muti’. This led to heightened tensions regarding Islamic movements at the time.

³³⁸ The name is variously translated as ‘Justice and Charity,’ ‘Justice and Benevolence,’ and ‘Justice and Spirituality,’ the third seemingly preferred in French sources. I choose not to translate it and refer to it as AWI, given that the polysemy of *iḥsān* is an underlying point of this work.

³³⁹ R. Euben and M.Q. Zaman (eds.), *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought: Texts and Contexts from al-Banna to Bin Laden* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 303.

³⁴⁰ Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion* (London: Beacon, 1963), 166. See Euben and Zaman, *Princeton Readings*, 304.

This program was laid out clearly in his 1981 work ‘The Prophetic Curriculum: Spiritual Instruction, Organization, and Movement’ (*al-Minhaj al-nabawī: tarbiya, tanzīm, wa zahf*). In the next few years, the group went on to publish a newspaper entitled ‘The Dawn’ (*al-ṣubḥ*) and ‘The Discourse’ (*al-khiṭāb*). During this time, the group attempted to establish itself through legal means multiple times and under multiple names: ‘Family of the group’ (*Usrat al-jama‘a*), ‘The Group’ (*al-Jama‘a*), and ‘Association of the Charitable Group’ (*Jama‘iyyat al-jama‘a al-khayriyya*).³⁴¹ Although the formation of such groups was technically legal, the subjugation of the civil sphere to both central and localized authorities prevented many associations from forming, and for those that were able to form, they were most commonly associated with political parties and therefore had little autonomy. In any case, the group attempted to organize activities, including camping expeditions. The first of these was held in 1982 outside of Casablanca and the second shortly after the following summer. Both were forcefully broken up by authorities and that policy has continued to this day. In fact, in my discussions with members who participated with the group at this time, they recall vividly the violence visited upon them by police breaking up these summer camps.³⁴² In the late 1990s, these summer camps would be tolerated and were perhaps one of the most successful innovations of the group. Motouakal writes:

...summer camping was the sole type of external activity which had somehow more or less been tolerated and to which [AWI] had brought a number of distinctive features. For instance in August 1998 and in July and August 1999, [AWI] organized six big summer camps in different places in Morocco. The success of these camps hardly needs to be proved. Suffice it to say that the number of campers reached in some cases over 70,000 and that especially in the summer of 1999 they made headlines ... With the ascension of the new king to the throne, the Moroccan

³⁴¹ Motouakel, “Al-Adl,” 67-8.

³⁴² The story of the police intervening in a camp in the northern region of al-Hoceima under Muhammad VI was first narrated to me by a young woman who said her mother had been there, so one night over dinner at their home she described in detail the police officers raiding the camp, arresting and beating members of the group, and setting the camp on fire.

authorities, as if they had been unaware of a serious loophole in their two decade-long blockade of the movement, responded firmly: no camping for the member of [AWI]. Then they went on to take some precautionary measures to show, or so it seemed, that they would get their orders implemented and not tolerate any defiance: one camp in the region of Nador city was simply set to fire; another was ransacked and all the camping equipment was confiscated whereas the organizers of other camps would never have even the chance of setting foot on the sites they had used in the previous summer.

The attempt to curb the influence of Shaykh Yassine continued with his imprisonment in 1983 on the pretext of an article he wrote in the newspaper. He was later released in 1985 and the efforts to curtail his influence on the part of the regime ultimately proved unsuccessful, perhaps even having the opposite effect. They continued this policy through many different strategies, including placing Shaykh Yassine under house arrest from 1989 to 2000 and officially banning the group in 1990. Over the course of the next decade, the organization operated as an underground, illegal association whose members were subject to imprisonment and harassment, but the group still managed to organize demonstrations and recruit a wide base of support. While the summer camps were one of the effective means for recruitment and the sharing of ideas, Moroccan universities also provided fertile grounds for the growth of the AWI. In the process, it developed an organizational infrastructure that included various councils, including a '*shūra*' assembly and a political wing.

After the passing of Hassan II, Shaykh Yassine wrote another letter to King Mohammed VI, questioning the optimism of his promised reforms, though with a softer tone than his previous letter. However, this letter was not taken well by the regime and it resulted in a variety of reactions aimed at the AWI. For example, the interior minister issued a fatwa forbidding prayers on beaches, presumably aimed at preventing these summer camps.³⁴³ In addition, due to the influence of student unions in recruiting for the AWI, authorities

³⁴³ "The war of the beaches" as it was called (Motouakel, "Al-Adl," 83).

executed a sweeping campaign of arrests in these groups, arresting and expelling students from university. The authorities also targeted Shaykh Yassine's publications, banning them and preventing their display or sale. The first piece of literature given to me by a member of the group was a book of Sheikh Yassine's poetry (*waṣīṭī*) and I was instructed to keep it hidden. Finally, the authorities attempted to target the private meetings, called *naṣīḥāt*, held at people's homes or in residences owned by members of the group. These meetings consisted of religious lessons, recitation of Quran, *dhikr*, night prayers, and other supererogatory acts of prayer. In this sense, they are in many ways modeled after Sufi gatherings and when I asked members about this comparison they agreed, though they stressed that they only practice *dhikr* and some *madh* (poetry praising the prophet) and not *ḥaḍra* or *khalwa*. Thus, communal spiritual practices were and remain integral to the movement.

Despite these measures and its continued status as an illegal organization, it has continued to attract followers and "to pioneer a Sufi inflected re-Islamization through *dawa*, education, and social welfare projects for the poor, sick, widowed, and unemployed."³⁴⁴ Thus, practices of charity and the provision of social welfare, in addition to education and *da'wa* formed the underlying mechanisms that facilitated the growth of this grassroots movement. In its contemporary form the group is much more tolerated, being able to host public conferences for example, but remains illegal and explicitly rejects the legitimacy of the monarchy. In rejecting the monarchy, it boycotts elections and constitutional referendums, arguing that the government's 'democratic' visage is merely an illusion used by the regime to maintain power in the hands of a few. Thus, the government is illegitimate

³⁴⁴ Euben and Zaman, *Princeton Readings*, 303.

from a ‘liberal’ perspective. However, according to Yassine’s ideology, an Islamic state is also in its nature democratic, a connection he makes through the concept of *shūra*, so the Moroccan government is also illegitimate from an Islamic perspective. The relationship between the AWI and the Moroccan state is therefore one of mutual exclusion, which contrasts with the inclusive relationship between Morocco’s other Islamist organization, the PJD, and the state. However, before moving to the PJD, I want to pause briefly to discuss some aspects of Shaykh Yassine’s thought that have influenced the Moroccan religious field of discourse, opening spaces that a variety of Sufi communities will attempt to fill, specifically, spaces of *tarbiya* and socially engaged spirituality.

Discussing the significance of *tarbiya* in Shaykh Yassine’s work *Al-minhaj al-nabawī*, scholar of religion Sam Houston writes, “Key to the [*minhaj*] is Yassine’s conception of spiritual education (*tarbiya*) which leads one through a series of stations to the acquisition of spiritual beneficence (*iḥsān*), without which no Islamic movement can be successful.”³⁴⁵ This *tarbiya* is a process of ethical refinement that cultivates individuals capable of performing the integral function of ‘commanding the right and forbidding the wrong’ that is necessary for constitution of a moral community. The vanguard (*ṭalī‘a*) must be able to perform this function in the proper manner, avoiding violence and harshness, which can have negative results.³⁴⁶ Performing it in the proper manner so as to avoid these negative effects required the cultivation of virtues, specifically civility (*rifq*), humility (*tawād‘u*), and sincerity (*ṣidq*), which was done through an education modeled after the Sufi

³⁴⁵ Houston, “Sufism and Islamist,” 157.

³⁴⁶ “Displaying the concern with Muslim unity so often found among Islamists, Yassine lamented the excesses which too typify the manner in which some individuals and groups carry out the duty ... Moreover, overzealous use of force to ‘command the right and forbid the wrong’ often produces negative and counterproductive results ... For Yassine, these dangers stem primarily from carrying out the duty without the proper ethical formation” (Houston, Sufism and Islamist,” 158).

path. The incorporation of Sufism into his work was therefore accomplished through the deployment of the *minhaj al-tarbiya* as an educational technique for training individuals to perform *da'wa* in an effort to rectify the moral corruption of society.³⁴⁷ Consequently, the articulation of Sufism in state discourses as a source of spiritual instruction (*al-tarbiya al-rūhiyya*), and more explicitly their call to develop a *minhaj* of ethical instruction based on Sufi teachings should be seen an attempt to counter the influence of the AWI in this domain. As such, state approaches to Sufism are indeed framed in relation to Shaykh Yassine's incorporation of Sufism into his own 'Islamist' ideology, and thus the 'revival' of Sufism undertaken by the Moroccan state acquires its specificity due to Yassine's influence on the religious field.

In addition to *tarbiya*, Shaykh Yassine's influence can be seen through his elaboration of the concept of *ihsān*. The centrality of the concept is signified not only by the name of the organization, but also by the fact that he devoted two volumes to elaborating the concept. As discussed in the first chapter, *ihsān* is a complex term with meanings that has been variously translated as charity, beneficence, and spirituality in the context of the AWI. In the opening pages of his work titled *Ihsān*, Shaykh Yassine highlights three meanings of *ihsān*.³⁴⁸ The first refers to the meaning given in the *hadith* of Gabriel in which it is defined

³⁴⁷ I witnessed members of the organization practicing *dawa* on many occasions in Fes, often late at night. One night, as I sat with a group of friends on the *ṭala' saghīra*, the secondary artery through the heart of the Fes medina, I watched a young college-aged member of AWI give a short lesson to a group of five high-school-aged young men sitting on one of the stoops smoking. The streets were empty except for the *shabāb* (young men). The AWI member wore a clean, off-white *jalaba*, in contrast to the ripped jeans and hoodies of the *shabāb*, and he spoke to them in this case about family and responsibility. I sat some distance away, pretending to engage in conversation with my Moroccan friends and trying not to make it look like I was listening, so I did not hear the specifics. Nevertheless, the AWI member spoke to them calmly, not admonishing them for their deeds at the moment, but trying to force them to think about the implications of their deeds. For me, this came to represent the *da'wa* encouraged by the AWI. Another form of *da'wa* described to me by a young female member of the AWI was that she would keep small pieces of paper with verses from the Quran written on them. She would sometimes distribute them, on buses for example, as a gentle reminder to people to be mindful of Allah during their day.

³⁴⁸ 'Abd al-Salām Yassine, *Ihsān: Volume I* (Casablanca: Al-Afaq Press, 1998).

as, “To worship Allah as if you see him, for if you are not one that sees him, then he sees you.”³⁴⁹ The second meaning corresponds to interactions with people, such as parents, relatives, poor, Muslims and all other creatures. It is therefore something done for the sake of other people, giving it a sense of charity and good deeds. The third meaning reflects a sense of mastery in work, whether it be worship or social interaction (*mu‘amalāt*). In this sense, he writes that it is, “improvement of work (*iḥsān al-‘aml*), its mastery (*itqānahu*) and its betterment (*iṣlāḥhu*), whether that work is worship, mundane (*‘adī*), or transactional (*mu‘amalatī*).”³⁵⁰ As such, *iḥsān* is an act and a quality of being, that is, a way of behaving with and relating to oneself, one’s community, and the divine. Moreover, this quality and the sets of actions that follow from its cultivation in the individual through a program of *tarbiya* come to define, for Yassine, the virtuous and socially responsible citizen. Motouakal writes in his work detailing Shaykh Yassine’s thought that, “The various meanings of *iḥsān* coalesce to provide us with the basic characteristics in order for the Muslim to be a good, responsible citizen, able to make significant contribution to his and her society and promote the conditions for a better life in this world and a good preparation for the life to come in the hereafter.”³⁵¹ According to this reading, *iḥsān* is not simply quality of worship, but in fact brings together all aspects of one’s life to create a complete individual and pious Muslim.

Drawing on the *hadith* of Gabriel in his explanation of the process of developing *iḥsān*, Shaykh Yassine writes, “Islam is an ascent, it is not a stationary state. The first rung is that of the practicing Muslim, attentive to fulfilling the obligations the law prescribes for every Muslim. The second rung is that of *imān*, a higher degree, where worship and moral

³⁴⁹ Yassine, *Iḥsān*, 17.

³⁵⁰ Yassine, *Iḥsān*, 17.

³⁵¹ Motouakel, “Al-Adl,” 120.

rectitude are on par. The third degree, *iḥsān*, is the springboard for the great spiritual journey and its infinite space.”³⁵² Thus, Shaykh Yassine’s exposition of *iḥsān* and its place within Islamic traditions mirrors (or is subsequently mirrored by) state discourses of Sufism, which define Sufism as the achievement of the level of *iḥsān* and support socially active Sufi orders like the Būdshīshiyya. My point here is that, in many ways, Shaykh Yassine emerges as an internal Sufi reformer and when framed in this way, one can begin to see his impact on subsequent discourses of Sufism and Islam more generally in Morocco. In other words, the success of his organization and the depth of his rhetoric have forced those who want to participate in the religious field to engage his work even if only implicitly, and I suggest that the state’s approach to Sufism has been framed in response to Yassine’s conception of *iḥsān* in order to provide a competitive alternative. As such, *iḥsān* becomes central in discourses of contemporary Sufi communities in Morocco, though they tend to engage with different aspects of this multivalent term. This does not mean, however, that such a framing has been invented, either by the state or by Shaykh Yassine. In fact, this is a framework that draws on existing traditions, but gets redeployed in contemporary contexts in a highly competitive religious marketplace over which the Moroccan state attempts to exert substantial control.

vii. Party of Justice and Development

Over the course of the 1980s and 1990s, the AWI continued to grow in popularity despite state efforts at repression. This period also saw the development of an alternative Islamist organization that would eventually enter Morocco’s political system as the Party of Justice and Development (*ḥizb al-‘adl wa al-tanmiyya*) in 1996, the party to heads the

³⁵² ‘Abd al-Salām Yassine, *Winning the Modern World for Islam*, trans. from French by Martin Jenni (Iowa City: Justice and Spirituality Publishing, 2000), 111.

Moroccan government today. After this period, the two would develop in competition with one another, or as Avi Spiegel puts it in his analysis of the two group, they would ‘coevolve.’ He writes that the behavior of these movements, “is best understood as a strategic calculation to survive in dynamic interaction not just with those setting the rules of the game (the authoritarian state), but with their movement opponents as well. They don’t just evolve in relation to the state; they coevolve in relation to each other.”³⁵³ Thus, while their relationship to the state’s political system reflects complementary political strategies of inclusion and exclusion, their historical trajectories also reveal effects of competition in the religious field between religious groups. In other words, relationship to the state is one among several interactions that condition possibilities for public engagement for religious movements. That being said, in this section I want to provide a brief sketch of the historical development of the PJD in order to contextualize the contours of the religious field as it existed prior to 2003, a year that would become a turning point in state strategy in the religious field.

As previously stated, in 1969 the ‘Islamic Youth’ movement (*Shabāba al-Islāmiyya*) was created by Abd al-Karim Muti‘ as a revolutionary organization modeled after the Muslim Brotherhood and inspired by figures such as Sayyed Qutb. Insofar as it served to curtail the influence of leftists in Morocco who were opposed to the monarchy, it was generally supported over the course of the 1970s. However, as its influence and revolutionary rhetoric expanded, it became an increasing threat to the government and the organization was officially banned in 1976. The pretext for the banning of the group was the assassination of Omar Benjelloun, leader of the USFP party, which was blamed on Muti‘ and members of the organization. In the wake of these events, many members of the

³⁵³ Spiegel, *Young Islam*, 35.

organization left and began to form other organizations, some joining AWI and others founding local groups.³⁵⁴ Two of these local groups would merge in 1994 to form the ‘Rally for the Islamic Future.’

In addition to this trajectory, another group of members who wanted to distance themselves from Muti’ founded a new organization called ‘The Islamic Group’ (*al-jam‘a al-islāmiyya*). These members included figures such as Mohamed Yatim, Abdallah Baha, and Abdelilah Benkirane, the latter eventually serving as Prime Minister from 2011-2017. While never gaining official or legal recognition, it remained tolerated to a large degree during this time, partly due to its explicit opposition to more radical groups. Furthermore, in 1990, the group officially recognized the legitimacy of the monarchy, putting it in opposition to the AWI. As such, it provided an alternative Islamist organization, taking a position that was more conducive to the rules of the political game while also appealing to Islamic constituencies in the country. In 1992 the group transformed once again, dropping any direct reference to Islam in its name, and relabeling itself the ‘Movement of Unity and Reform’ (*Harakat al-tawhīd wa al-iṣlāḥ*). The new group signaled a more pragmatic approach, opting to engage with the political system rather than opposing it.³⁵⁵ Such a shift entailed a degree of ideological flexibility on their part, working within the system to accomplish a social reform program.

In 1992, the burgeoning ‘Movement of Unity and Reform’ made a deal with a political party the ‘Popular Constitutional Democratic Movement’ (MPCD) headed by Dr. Abd al-Karim el-Khatib. Although it was not formalized until 1996, the agreement laid the

³⁵⁴ These included the Jama’iyyat al-Dawa based in Fes and al-Jama’iyya al-Islamiyya in Ksar al-Kabir.

³⁵⁵ “By varying their name – by dropping Islam – these Islamists were changing their public course. They were slowly signaling that they were ready to cede any formal religious claim to the state” (Spiegel, *Young Islam*, 49).

foundation for the entrance of the members of the Islamist organization into electoral politics. Eventually, in 1998 the party officially changed its name to the ‘Party of Justice and Development.’ However, the two groups maintained a degree of autonomy, though that relationship has continued to shift since its establishment. According to the political scientist Eva Wegner, in principle, “The PJD was defined as a political organization dealing with all political issues of the country and defending Islamic causes in state institutions, whereas the MUR was defined solely as an organization for vocation/mission (*dawa*) and education. The two organizations were supposedly independent, though linked by ‘consultation, cooperation, and coordination and their joint objectives and principles.’”³⁵⁶ Over the next few years, they continued to gain momentum as a political party, but in 2003 Islamist movements in Morocco in general came under increased scrutiny. As a result of this ensuing atmosphere, the distance between the PJD and MUR grew from both directions. While the PJD wanted to distance itself from the Islamist rhetoric, the MUR also wanted to distance itself from the ‘corruption’ of politics and the concessions involved in participating in Morocco’s political game. Despite some setbacks between 2002 and 2007, the PJD achieved and held the majority position in parliament in 2011 and 2016 and remains the most dominant party, with its main opposition being the relatively new Party of Authenticity and Modernity (PAM).

In summary, the period from 1980-2003 (loosely defined) was marked by a rise in Islamist groups with two standing out in particular: the AWI and the PJD. Their success was dependent in part on a policy of the regime in the 1970s of supporting Islamic associations to combat the Leftist opposition, as evidenced by the support of the *Shabāba Islamiyya* on university campuses and in student unions. The following decades, however, saw the rise of

³⁵⁶ Eva Wegner, *Islamist Opposition in Authoritarian Regimes: The Party of Justice and Development* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2011), 57-8.

these Islamist associations as legitimate threats to the regime, thereby prompting a change in strategy. For the PJD, the regime encouraged a degree of inclusion through the political system and in doing so sought to moderate and control their operations. For the AWI, the regime adopted a policy of exclusion, officially banning the party and repressing its operations for several decades. However, these two organizations evolved not only in relation to the regime, but also in relation to one another, and therefore the story of their emergence and development should not be read in terms of the political pragmatics of Moroccan politics alone. Rather, their rhetoric, organizational structure, and ideology was constructed through competition with one another, forcing each to develop alternative strategies of engagement with political and public life. Nevertheless, as the ‘Islamist’ block emerged as a legitimate oppositional threat, the regime was forced to adopt a new strategy, a strategy that was propelled by the ascension of Mohammed VI, the US-sponsored war on terror, and the 2003 Casablanca bombings in Casablanca.

viii. Summary

While framed as a literature review, this chapter had three specific goals on top of review key literature related to Sufism and politics in Morocco. Firstly, I discussed issues of Sufism and modernity in order to illustrate the array of effects and possible trajectories of research. Rather than focusing simply on the impact of Western modernity, however, I also discussed the Sufi-Salafi distinction. My aim in that regard was to suggest that anti-Sufi critiques often stem from contestations for authority in specific political contexts and that although certain themes may run through these criticisms, anti-Sufism (and therefore Salafism in the modern context) is best approached not as an ahistorical category of anti-Sufi sentiment but as a specific critique that emerges under concrete political conditions. Thus, in

the context of Morocco for example, the nationalist critique of al-Kattani (and many Sufi orders) was not only a criticism of specific Sufi practices, but more fundamentally a critique of their authority as part of an effort to displace and assume religious and political authority.

Secondly, I reviewed literature discussing the relationship between religion and politics in Morocco. The goal was in part to show how religion has informed questions of political legitimacy in previous literature as well as how Sufism in particular has been used as a defining feature of Moroccan political authority. While providing important points of analysis, many of these anthropological studies reify Moroccan religiosity, failing to acknowledge their discursive and historical construction, thereby imposing an essential ‘Moroccan Islam.’ My aim in discussing these various constructions of Moroccan Islam is not simply to criticize them; instead, I highlight them as a point of contrast to my approach to Moroccan Islam. By Moroccan Islam, as I use it in this work, I do not refer to this sort of timeless essence or inherent religiosity of an incredibly diverse set of peoples. Rather, by Moroccan Islam I refer to a specific crystallization of components that have been brought together through discursive and institutional means by political authorities with the mission of constructing a national religious identity.

Thirdly, I presented a historical outline of the period between independence (1956) and the onset of Morocco’s religious reform policy (2003). My goal was to discuss the trends in the government’s attitudes towards religion, as well as the emergence of several key actors in the religious field that play an important role today. In doing so, I outlined the trajectories of anti-Sufi sentiment as they emerged in relation to nationalist sentiments and Islamist movements, giving rise to a fractured and competitive religious field. The competition between these various religious and political actors helped shaped the religious

field out of which the Moroccan regime's current policy emerged, and it is to that policy of reform that I turn in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: REFORMING AND REGULATING: MOROCCAN RELIGIOUS POLICY AFTER

2003

i. Introduction

In 2003, a group of suicide bombers belonging to the Salafiyya *Jihadiyya* (a branch of al-Qaeda) conducted coordinated attacks in Casablanca, killing forty-five people.³⁵⁷

While Morocco had previously prided itself on being a stable and safe Muslim country and an example of moderate Islam in the wake of the September 11 attacks in the United States, the attackers jeopardized Morocco's sense of exceptionalism amidst the rise of Islamic radicalism and threatened to tarnish its reputation as a moderate Muslim nation.

Furthermore, the participation of Moroccan nationals in European attacks, such as the 2004 train bombings in Madrid, further threatened this image of Moroccan Islam as a model of religious moderation and a practical alternative to extremist forms of Islam. In the wake of these events, King Mohammed VI, who had taken over from his father in 1999 at the age of thirty-five, and the Moroccan government imposed a series of security measures, including the passage of an anti-terrorism law that enabled the jailing of multiple figures held responsible for the bombings. In response to these attacks and the threat they posed to national security, the government undertook a program of reforming the religious field that was meant to ensure national security and the stability of Moroccan society. In other words, religious reform was required for maintenance of national security, and in his role as Commander of the Faithful (*amīr al-mu'minīn*), the king was authorized to regulate that process of reform by any means necessary. Moreover, the country's main Islamist political party, the PJD, was held to be 'morally responsible' for the attack and was heavily criticized by the state and leftist parties alike. By framing the PJD in this way, the state was able to adopt the moral high ground, so to speak, and seize the discourses of morality that

³⁵⁷ K. Bekkaoui & R.R. Laremont, "Moroccan Youth Go Sufi," *Journal of the Middle East and Africa*, no. 2 (2011): 32.

underpinned Islamist rhetoric to bolster its own religious credentials. In the process, regulation of the religious field was achieved through a multifaceted strategy that relied on direct means of repression (e.g., jailings)³⁵⁸, as well as more hegemonic practices of institution building, bureaucratic restructuring, and government takeover of arenas of religious discourse and practice (e.g., mosque sermons). Most significantly, it has involved an institutional restructuring that has included the creation and reformation of multiple governmental and quasi-governmental organizations that facilitate the strict monitoring and severe restriction of religious activities and discourses in the public sphere. This institutionalization has been authorized and legitimized by the global trends in national security and the war on terror.

Although this multifaceted strategy has been successful in its prevention of terrorism and limitation of the spread of radicalism through its insidious regulation of the religious field, it has also sparked controversy with respect to the means used to enforce domination in this field. The oppressive techniques have been criticized, for example, by human rights groups who highlight the forced disappearances and imprisonment of various actors, the harsh treatment of prisoners, and the lack of transparency and judicial procedure in the sentencing of those prisoners. In addition, human rights advocacy groups criticize the Moroccan state in the domains of religious freedom, freedom of expression and assembly, and police conduct. Regarding religious freedom, the state not only actively seeks to curtail Shi'i groups, evidenced for example by its breaking of diplomatic relations with Iran in 2009, but also forbids conversion to Christianity and Judaism along with any form of proselytization. Despite Pope Francis's recent visit to Morocco as a symbol of Morocco's

³⁵⁸ "Police investigations led to the arrest of at least 2,000 Salafiya suspects" (Bekkaoui & Laremont, "Moroccan," 32).

openness to religious pluralism, attitudes of tolerance toward the open practice of Christianity remain unclear, while certain laws restrict the possibilities of pluralism. As for freedom of assembly, the recent Rif Movement (*ḥirāk al-rīf*) has shown the unwillingness of the state to tolerate mobilization of social groups. Other movements, such as teachers' protests in April 2019 have also been repressed. Taken in light of the events of the 'Arab Spring,' such hesitation on the part of the regime to accept public demonstrations is not surprising, but nevertheless illustrates an authoritarian repression of the public, including religious, arena that results in the restriction of rights and civil liberties for Moroccan citizens. In short, while there has been success in deterring forms of extremism and terrorism, the strategies for doing so have come at the cost of increasingly authoritarian mechanisms that have restricted various freedoms for the Moroccan population, in spite of the fact that Mohammed VI had hoped to differentiate his mode of authority from that of his father, Hassan II, who often resorted to military and police force to maintain his rule.

The strategy of the Moroccan state has been diverse and has developed over time, moving, for example, from straightforward repression to accommodation and cooptation of various actors in the religious field. One of the critical components in this strategy has been Sufism, which is presented as the moral foundation of modern Moroccan citizenship and a definitive element in 'Moroccan Islam.' In this section I look at three strategies that have been deployed over the last fifteen years: support of Sufism, institutionalization of religious bureaucracy and reform of religious education, and cooptation of Salafi figures.

ii. Sponsorship of Sufism

As discussed in the previous chapter, the post-independence period in Morocco was marked by a trajectory of decline of Sufi orders. This was due, in part, to power politics

insofar as Sufi orders provided a potential threat to the regime. It was also due, in part, to criticisms focused on the one hand on the compliance of Sufi orders with French authorities, and on the other hand on ‘popular’ practices and innovations. The fact that the sources of these criticisms came from pro-independence parties, such as the *Istiqlal*, that were inspired by Salafi thinkers, such as Allal al-Fassi, meant that the Sufi orders faced reproach from multiple angles. However, after the first decades of independence, as the regime sought to curb the influence of groups like the *Istiqlal* and later the leftists, it began to encourage Islamic groups to bolster its legitimacy. This policy of combatting political rivals through religious reforms was accompanied by a rise in Islamist movements, particularly over the course of the 1980s and 1990s in line with the broader Islamic Awakening (*al-ṣaḥwa*). Consequently, during this period, the regime’s perceived threat switched from the leftists to the Islamists. As the Islamists began to question the religious legitimacy of the Moroccan monarchy, the monarchy in turn sought an alternative source of support to counter the influence of these organizations. The result has been the explicit support of specific Sufi orders and more generally the formulation of a Moroccan Islam that is constituted in large part by Sufism.

The integration of Sufism into state discourses as a response to Islamist influence can be seen in a 1986 speech given by Hassan II in which he stated:

Islamic Sufism, by its purity and reference to the prophetic lamp, sponsors, if one travels the sound path as the Sufis do, a great participation in the reform of the conditions of Muslims through the establishment of faith in their hearts, the deepening of feelings of unity, and the strengthening of brotherhood and affection among them. It urges them to cooperate in benevolence, piety, and synergy with [Allah] ... restoring the Islamic community to its former glory ... performing its role in the reform of the conditions of the world and happiness of humanity.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁹ Letter from Hassan II to participants in a conference on Sufi orders, “The Role of the Tariqa Tijaniyya” (1986).

This statement reflects an early formulation of the incorporation of Sufism into state discourses on religion that emphasizes its role in the reformation of society. While still in its early stages at this point, it signals a transition in state policy that will take shape under Mohammed VI.

The policy of state support of Sufism emerges most clearly after the 2003 Casablanca bombings. In response to these attacks, King Mohammed VI said in a 2004 speech:

What we are working on is not simply providing a harmonious and integrated strategy which is susceptible to helping our country face the challenges of the religious field under the impulsion of the commander of the faithful ... but also contributing in a rational and focused way to correct the image of Islam that has been deliberately tarnished by unbalanced villains and the hideous acts of senseless aggressors involved in terrorism, a scourge which can in no way be ascribed to any country or religion.³⁶⁰

What he signals in this speech is the need to ‘correct the image of Islam,’ that is, to provide an alternative ‘Islam’ that counters the extremist trends of the time. In framing it this way, terrorism and extremism are presented as a religious problem insofar as they are the product of misleading others and a deliberate manipulation and exploitation of Islam. Rather than being social or economic problems requiring socio-economic solutions, for example, extremism and terrorism are religious problems that require a religious solution. Political scientist Ann Marie Wainscott supports this claim in her analysis of the adoption of religious regulation as a counterterrorism strategy by writing, “The move to bureaucratize religion indicates that the Moroccan state views violence in the name of Islam as a religious problem that can be solved through greater state control of religion. Morocco’s policy of bureaucratizing Islam is more than just political opportunism: it is an effort to reshape Islam.”³⁶¹ Insofar as religious reform constitutes a counterterrorism strategy, the regulation

³⁶⁰ Cited in Maghraoui, “Strengths and Limits,” 201.

³⁶¹ Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 237-8.

of the religious field is linked to issues of national security. As such, for the Moroccan state, the existence of violent extremist trends requires an intervention in the religious field, specifically the domain of religious education, that teaches or provides a ‘reformed’ vision of ‘moderate Islam.’³⁶² This ‘moderate Islam’ is in turn equated with Moroccan Islam, which is distinguished by being Sunni, Ash‘arī, Maliki, and Junaydi Sufi.

Sunni in this context is intended to distinguish Moroccan Islam from Shi‘i Islam often associated with modern Iran. In a literal sense, *sunni* refers to ‘people of the *sunna*,’ that is, the people who follow the example of the Prophet exclusively. More specifically, it entails a view of legitimate leadership that contrasts with Shi‘i views of leadership. While the latter depends primarily on genealogy that tends to fuse religious and political leadership in the figure of the Imam, the former bases legitimate leadership on consensus that establishes the caliph as a political leader with certain religious obligations. Given the nature of leadership in Morocco, i.e., that is based on genealogy and the concept of the ‘commander of the faithful,’ it brings religious and political leadership together with genealogy in a way that has been critiqued for its claim to represent a Sunni position. In fact, for many critics of the

³⁶² The use of field in this discussion is in fact used by the Moroccan regime (al-ḥaql al-dīnī) and is in many respects an incorporation of Pierre Bourdieu’s theoretical apparatus into state governmental discourses (see Bourdieu 1993). Paulo Pinto deploys this notion of field analytically in his study of Sufism in Syria writing, “The production of an ‘official Islam’ by the Ba‘thist regime comes about less through control of the content of the discourse or imposition of a consensus than through the establishment of the limits of debate in which different actors can resent competing visions. It is in that sense that this ‘official Islam’ is less a coherent corpus of doctrines and opinions than what Pierre Bourdieu has defined as a ‘field’ or ‘universe of possible discourses.’ It disciplines public discourse by establishing the issues to be debated and the terms of debate, which itself is produced through the participation of key figures in the religious debate by giving them easy access to media ... or, simply, by tolerating their public activities” (Pinto, “Sufism and Political,” 113-4). The Moroccan context differs from this in two important ways. Firstly, while the notion of field is used by Pinto to describe a state of affairs (i.e., analytically imposed), in the Moroccan case the field is itself a discursive construct deployed in state rhetoric and policy. Secondly, while Pinto suggests that there is not a positive content to this ‘official Islam’ in the Syrian context, in the Moroccan case there is an explicit positive content (‘coherent corpus of doctrines and opinions’) that does not merely set the limits of discourse but determines degrees of conformity. Thus, rather than an ‘official Islam’ as a field of potential debates and discourses, I see the Moroccan context as an ‘authorized Islam’ that, in addition to setting limits, also defines proper practice.

monarchy such as Shaykh Yassine, it is precisely this reliance on hereditary inheritance rather than consensus established through consultation (*shūra*) that makes the Moroccan monarchy illegitimate from both a Sunni perspective and a democratic perspective.

Ashari (*Ash'ārī*) is a reference to a specific theological school of thought that emerged as a relative compromise between opposing schools of thought, namely, the Mu'atazilī and the Hanbalī (*athārī*).³⁶³ Broadly contrasted as rationalists and traditionalists, the debate between the two centered on a number of theological problems. These included, for instance, the eternity of the Quran, the nature of free will and its implications for moral accountability, and the relationship between faith and works. From a theological perspective, the primary debate was about the role of reason in interpreting and determining divine injunctions. It was defined by a number of theological positions including notions of *kasb* and *bilā kayfa*.³⁶⁴ The Ashari position emerged as an intermediary position that was adopted over time as the majority position, establishing itself as a kind of orthodox position through the work of scholars like al-Ghazali. However, the Hanbali (*athārī*) theological positions reemerged in modern Saudi Arabia, while the Mu'atazilī approaches maintained a degree of importance within Shi'a theology. In short, the claims to be *sunni* and Ashari are not especially unique, i.e., they are predominant positions in much of the Islamic world, but they do function to explicitly differentiate Moroccan Islam from its two main rivals.

³⁶³ For the sake of simplicity, I am not including the Maturidi position which was adopted in Ottoman lands. Some may argue that Maturidi is more of a compromise position in that it holds a greater place for reason than the Ashari.

³⁶⁴ *Kasb*, literally acquisition, refers to the acquisition of actions on the part of individuals that are caused by Allah. It was a mechanism for understanding how, if all actions originate with Allah, individuals can be held morally responsible. *Bila kayfa*, literally 'without (asking) how,' was used to describe certain attributes or actions of Allah, such as his speech and its relationship to the Quran. It effectively attempted to put an end to 'speculative theology' (*kalām*), deferring certain discussions that were beyond human understanding.

Maliki (Mālikī) refers to one of four Sunni schools of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), the others being Hanafī, Shafī‘ī, and Hanbalī. The Maliki school, named after Mālik bin Anas (d. 795), has had a long history in the western Islamic world dating back at least into the 10th century.³⁶⁵ In a general sense, the Maliki school is distinguished by an emphasis on the practice of the inhabitants of the city of Medina during and shortly after the time of the prophet. With its practical emphasis, it has also been considered more accommodating of custom (*‘urf*) in its determination of legal rulings. As Mohammed Tozy, a prominent Moroccan political scientist, argues, “The state’s reading of Malikism is opporTūnistic. It is not the Malikism of medina’s inhabitants. It is the spirit of a pragmatic Malikism that is closest to the concerns of Moroccan mountain berbers.”³⁶⁶ In other words, the reliance on Maliki doctrine is, for Tozy, a political expediency used to justify the legitimacy of customary religious practices that do not have explicit injunction from sacred texts.³⁶⁷ As such, the Maliki orientation of the Moroccan state provides an accommodating mechanism in which different customary practices may be seen as acceptable. This pragmatism is given greater flexibility through the concept of public benefit (*maṣlaḥa*), especially as articulated by the jurist al-Shāṭibī (d. 1388). Wainscott, drawing on Tozy, argues, “Moroccan religious policy has embraced the broad nature of [*maṣlaḥa*] in order to legitimate the country’s laws and to protect it from the accusation that it needs to more fully incorporate Islamic law.”³⁶⁸ Such a position extends the scope of *maṣlaḥa* and enables both state law and customary practice to be legitimized since they contribute to the maintenance of social order, insofar as

³⁶⁵ Cornell *Realm*.

³⁶⁶ Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 74.

³⁶⁷ “By basing Moroccan religious policy on the claim that the practice of the Muslim community can be a source of law, the state effectively calls for the legitimation of existing religious practices as long as they do not conflict with sacred texts” (Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 75).

³⁶⁸ Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 76.

social order is of ultimate public interest. In short, any laws deemed necessary for the stability and safety of the nation are legitimized through the legal mechanism of *maṣlaḥa*.³⁶⁹ This move, for many political scientists, is seen as a political expediency, that is, the cooptation of a religious concept for pragmatic political purposes. While this may be the case, one aspect of the Maliki school for some Moroccan religious scholars is that it does place a greater emphasis on the practical dimensions of life over the theoretical, and in doing so, colors Moroccan Islam with a shade of practicality that distinguishes it from other legal cultures.

The fourth component of Moroccan Islam is Sufism, specifically what they call Junaydi Sufism. As discussed, incorporating Sufism began under Hassan II, but became much more obvious under his successor. For example, King Mohammed VI issued a letter read by a spokesperson at the Sidi Chiker National Gatherings of Sufi Partisans in 2009 that read, “This gathering is being held under my patronage to show how deeply I care for Sunni Sufism in my capacity as *amir al-muminin* [Commander of the Faithful] and Guardian of the Faith. Sufism is indeed one of the characteristic spiritual and ethical components of the Moroccan identity; it is fully consistent with the blessed *Sunnah* and the pristine Islamic Sharia.”³⁷⁰ In this case, the king emphasizes the idea of ‘*sunni* Sufism,’ that is, a form of Sufism that is consistent with the *sunna* and *sharia*. This clarification and qualification is intended to shield the Sufism sponsored by the Moroccan state from Salafi criticisms, as well as to normalize diverse sets of Sufi practices that exist through Morocco under the heading of

³⁶⁹ It also means that changing laws or criticizing practices as un-Islamic becomes much more difficult because custom acquires more weight.

³⁷⁰ Muedini, *Sponsoring Sufism*, 81.

Junaydi Sufism.³⁷¹ In addition to this normalizing function, the king connects Sufism to Moroccan identity, claiming that the former constitutes one of the ‘ethical components’ of the latter.³⁷² If Sufism is a component of Moroccan civic morality, and if religious education is intended to teach that morality, then Sufism must be a part of that religious education. Put otherwise, Sufism comes to serve as a basis for Moroccan ‘religious’ education that, as discussed in the previous chapter, had evolved into a civic education dealing with issues of human rights, pluralism, and tolerance. Furthermore, as I will demonstrate below, Moroccan religious education undergoes a transformation during the 2000s, shifting more poignantly to a form of civic education. Thus, Sufism becomes a source not only for religious training, but also for civic training, that is, the development of citizens with particular moral outlooks. It is in this sense, Sufism constitutes an “aspect of civil religion (*al-dīn al-madani*)” in state strategies to regulate the religious field.³⁷³ The relationship between Sufism and Moroccan identity is presented in a review of reports from the Ministry of Islamic Affairs:

Throughout Moroccan history, Sufi *zawāya* and *turuq* have been present in the religious scene (*al-mashhad al-dīnī*) through their religious, social, and political roles and their continued performance of the function of spiritual instruction (*al-tarbiya al-rūhiyya*) ... As such they formed an aspect of Moroccan identity (*al-huwiyya al-maghribiyya*) while also being considered one of the most important pillars of the project of regulation of the religious field (*aham arkān mashru‘a dabt al-ḥaql al-dīnī*) that was announced in 2004 (the year after the May 16, 2003 Casablanca attacks), and part of the public religious policies (*al-siyasāt al-‘amumiyya al-dīniyya*) that target the reaction of an example for ‘moderate’ individual religiosity and a competitor to

³⁷¹ “Junayd is not just an exemplary figure for Sufis; he is also a state-sanctioned symbol of devotionally focused, depoliticized spirituality” (Waincott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 79).

³⁷² “The addition of Sunni Sufism as a defining element of what is officially called ‘Moroccan Islam’ is certainly the most important innovation in this policy. In official Moroccan discourse, Sufism emerges as an Islamic tradition that emphasizes tolerance and ensures social unity, cultural cohesion, and political stability” (Bekkaoui & Laremont, “Moroccan,” 33).

³⁷³ “It is clear that the *zawaya* and *turuq* of Morocco seek through their activities to participate in the framing of society spiritually, socially, and intellectually, contributing to social regulation, and form the face of civil religion for the state strategy in avoiding what is called extremism and terrorism, laying the foundation for ‘social stability and peace,’ considering it a political actor cased in Sufi religion” (Al-Hilali, “Al-ḥāla,” 81).

the other opposing Islamic power.³⁷⁴

Thus, there is no secret to the use of Sufism as a counter to other forms of Islamic religiosity, as a pillar of Moroccan identity, as a means to regulate the domestic religious field, and as a source of education (*tarbiya*).

The use of Sufism has included a host of mechanisms including the promotion of certain Sufi orders, the sponsorship of Sufi music festivals, the hosting of conferences, and the establishment of research centers. In naming orders, the report cites the Būdshīshiyya, as well as the Tijaniyya, the Darqawiyya al-Karkariyya, the ‘Alāwiyya, and the Risaniyya.³⁷⁵ In subsequent chapters I will investigate the Karkariyya and the ‘Alāwiyya specifically based on my fieldwork with these communities. In the present chapter, I will begin with the *tariqa* Būdshīshiyya as an example of the promotion of a particular Sufi order and its incorporation into the state bureaucracy based on secondary literature and my own limited fieldwork with the community.³⁷⁶ My goal in this analysis is not merely to demonstrate that Sufism has been situated as a component of ‘Moroccan Islam,’ but also to illustrate how it has been deployed in the production of contemporary Moroccan citizenship as well as in state counterterrorism strategies. These two dimensions, that is, the moral education and the prevention of violent radicalism, are interconnected in that the moral order of society, which prevents extremism, is necessary to ensure national security, which is threatened by the presence of extremism.³⁷⁷ Discussing this connection, for instance, Driss Maghraoui argues, “Security is perceived here as part of a ‘moral security’ to guarantee a particular kind of

³⁷⁴ Al-Hilali, “Al-ḥāla,” 80.

³⁷⁵ Al-Hilali, “Al-ḥāla,” 81.

³⁷⁶ While I did not spend extensive time with the order, I was able to attend the annual mawlid festival in Madagh and discuss the order and its activities with ten different members. Given the extensive work that has been done on the order, I chose not to make it the focus of my dissertation.

³⁷⁷ Waincott argues, “According to Moroccan policy makers, state control of public religion is a national security imperative – a form of ‘spiritual security’” (Waincott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 1).

‘Moroccan moral order.’ The other connotation of security has to do with state security, its image abroad, and the attempt to counter *Wahabism*, *shia*, and radical Islamist groups.”³⁷⁸ However, while security has been used as a pretext for increased regulation, and overall an expansion of authoritarianism in Morocco, it is important to keep in mind that, just as in the previous periods, the support of religious groups is part of a pragmatic political approach aimed at reinforcing the religious legitimacy of the state and curbing the influence of its domestic opponents.³⁷⁹ The point is that the state sponsorship of Sufism serves multiple purposes simultaneously and therefore fits nicely into the state’s multifaceted strategy for consolidating political power, reinforcing religious legitimacy, and fostering foreign relationships.

The clearest example of the Moroccan state’s approach to Sufism is the *tariqa* Būdshīshiyya. As mentioned in the section on AWI, Shaykh Yassine was formerly a member of the Būdshīshiyya and therefore state support of the order directly counters the influence of the AWI, demonstrating how Sufism is used to curb the impact of an Islamist group. In addition, the order has placed a great deal of emphasis on the spiritual education of youth (*tarbiya*), just like the AWI, while also establishing a school for *sam‘ā* (Sufi music), organizing summer camps and other events aimed at attracting youth. As for reinforcing religious legitimacy, the state has sought to incorporate members of the order into the governmental bureaucracy. This is seen, for example, in the appointment of Ahmed Tawfiq as minister of the Islamic Affairs and Religious Endowments in 2002.³⁸⁰ Through its close

³⁷⁸ Maghraoui, “Strengths and Limits,” 197.

³⁷⁹ Waincott writes, “The state seeks control not just to neutralize Islamist political parties, a favorite subject of study for political scientists of the Middle East, but also to meet more amorphous threats it perceives from the religious sphere as a whole” (Waincott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 2).

³⁸⁰ “In sum, Toufiq’s appointment suggests the elevation of a new kind of religious actor in Morocco: the bureaucrat” (Waincott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 127).

relationship with the state in conjunction with its socially active agenda, the Būdshīshiyya has become by far the most prominent Sufi order in Morocco and therefore warrants further description. In this section, what I want to highlight, in addition to an exposition of its history, is the shift in emphasis on *tarbiya* as the ethical and spiritual education of youth, a shift that is part of larger calibrations of Sufism to the state's strategy.

iii. *Tariqa* Qādiriyya Būdshīshiyya

As its name suggests, the Būdshīshiyya trace their lineage through the *tariqa* Qādiriyya, which derives its name from ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī (d. 1166). According to anthropologist Abdelilah Bouasria's account of the history, members of the Qādiri lineage settled in northeast Morocco and established a *zawiya* near present-day Madagh. As part of this lineage, these members of the Bani Iznassen tribe were descendants of the prophets (*shurafā*). As for the emergence of the name Būdshīshī, “Legend has it that during the famine in 1870, [Sidi Ali al-Qadiri] started distributing a wheat-based soup known as [dshisha] (*Dchicha*) to poor people, hence his name *Boudchich* (the father of *Dchicha/Tchicha*).”³⁸¹ The order gained some popularity in the twentieth century under Shaykh Mukhtar (d. 1914) who led a resistance movement against the French who occupied eastern Morocco (Oujda) in 1907. French reports described him at the time as ‘an influential marabout,’ ‘the head of a revolt,’ and after his capture, “one of the most fanatic elements and real leader of the anti-French movement.”³⁸² While in captivity, it was said by his followers

³⁸¹ Bouasria, *Sufism and Politics*, 69. An alternative story narrates that the name comes from an event in which Sidi Ali was invited to a meeting with a local ruler and was fed this soup as an appetizer. However, rather than saving room for the main course, Sidi Ali was satisfied with the soup and the governor exclaimed, “The secret went to Boutchich” (Bouasria, *Sufism and Politics*, 69). This implied that the spiritual secret or baraka had been transmitted to him.

³⁸² Bouasria, *Sufism and Politics*, 69.

that Shaykh Mukhtar was able to exit his cell for prayer while voluntarily returning to his cell. Such tales reflect a common trope in which the spiritual powers provided a source of anti-colonial resistance.³⁸³ After the passing of Shaykh Mukhtar in 1914, he was succeeded by his cousin Sidi Boumediene (d. 1955). What is most significant about Sidi Boumediene is that he claimed spiritual lineage through two additional teachers: Sidi Ahmed Lahlou of the Shādhiliyya and Sidi Mahdi Bel Ariane of the Tijaniyya.³⁸⁴ Thus, the figure of Sidi Boumediene reflects a convergence of three prominent Sufi orders in a single figure, who in turn serves as a spiritual master in a single chain of transmission to the present Shaykh of the Būdshīshiyya, Shaykh Jamal al-Qadiri al-Budshishi. In addition to bringing together three different orders, the Būdshīshiyya fused together its Sufi lineage with a sharifian lineage.³⁸⁵

Sidi Boumediene appointed Sidi Hajj Abbas as his successor before his death in 1955, though the latter refused to take over leadership until 1960. The intervening five years, as historians of the order suggest, were marked by a degree of dissent and competition between prospective claims to succession. This was eventually decided in favor of Sidi Hajj Abbas through a challenge to find a deviant man and guide them to the straight path. “The story ends with Sidi Hamza purifying an alcoholic and drug addict only a few days after he took the Boutchichi dhikr, turning him from an addict to a pious Muslim.”³⁸⁶ According to Bouasria, the story of the ‘coming-out’ of Hajj Abbas reflects a broader transformation in the

³⁸³ “The trope of using mystical powers in anti-colonial resistance reflects the typical dogmatic tension in the Sufi theology between power over creation (*tasarruf*), and respecting God’s exoteric law and will (*adab*)” (Bouasria, *Sufism and Politics*, 70). The point here is that even if an individual has particular powers, one must use those powers in an appropriate manner. Thus, *adab* is integral to the exercise of spiritual power (*baraka*).

³⁸⁴ Bouasria, *Sufism and Politics*, 70.

³⁸⁵ Rachida Chih writes, “Thus, the Qadiriyya Budshishiyya was born of the fusion ... of Sharifism and Sufism, in a region that was marked by tribalism and which had long enjoyed a certain independence because of its distance from central political authorities” (Rachid Chih, “Sufism, Education and Politics in Contemporary Morocco,” *Journal for Islamic Studies* 32, no. 1 (2012): 37).

³⁸⁶ Bouasria, *Sufism and Politics*, 71.

visibility of the order and its entrance into the public domain after a period of absence.³⁸⁷

Such a shift in visibility is used to frame the history of the order over the post-independence period. During the first three decades of this period, the Būdshīshiyya order was politically repressed and it was not until the 2000s that the order finally became visible in the public realm. Furthermore, Sidi Hajj Abbas described himself not as a preacher, scholar or distributor of blessings, but as a spiritual educator, signifying the emphasis on *tarbiya* that would become essential to the order moving forward.³⁸⁸ Before his passing in 1972, he appointed his son, Sidi Hamza (d. 2017), as successor.

Under Sidi Hamza the Būdshīshiyya underwent significant reforms in practice and as a result experienced a tremendous growth domestically and internationally. These reforms included a relaxation in the rigid observance of Islamic law as well as removal of some of the ascetic practices associated with *malāmatī* Sufi traditions, such as not wearing shoes.³⁸⁹ This reform project thereby facilitated an opening-up of the order to all social classes. In addition, the reformation involved a transformation in the program of education (*minhaj al-tarbiya*) that constituted the path of the disciple. One significant shift was the removal of arduous tests aimed at eliminating the disciple's ego (*nafs*) because it was deemed that the proper upbringing (*tarbiya*) and orientation (*tawajjuh*) were sufficient.³⁹⁰ A second development under Sidi Hamza that had to do with a move away from asceticism is captured in the rhetorical shift from renunciation (*takhallī*) to adornment (*tahallī*). "Sufism used to promote

³⁸⁷ "The story of Haj Abbas becomes in fact a *sabiqa* for the order in terms of political participation" (Bouasria, *Sufism and Politics*, 72).

³⁸⁸ Bouasria, *Sufism and Politics*, 72.

³⁸⁹ "Sidi Hamza removed the rigid observance of the traditional Islamic legal framework from the rituals of the order as a requirement to accept members, since in the time of Sidi Boumediene a man without a beard could not have access. He started opening up the order to all sectors of society: youth, drug addicts, foreigners, and other outcasts" (Bouasria, *Sufism and Politics*, 74).

³⁹⁰ Bouasria, *Sufism and Politics*, 74.

self-deprivation as the only way towards spiritual achievement; today self-fulfillment is the path to religious enlightenment.”³⁹¹ In this respect, the Būdshīshiyya reflect a convergence of spirituality and capitalism, that is, a sort of protestant ethic in which a ‘this-worldly asceticism’ ties together spiritual and economic development.³⁹² However, according to members of the Būdshīshiyya I spoke with, the notion of *tahallī* was also related to the ‘adornment’ of virtues rather than exclusively the ‘adornment’ of material wealth or success in business. Another change was the relationship between the master and disciple, insofar as it became the master’s responsibility to seek out the disciple rather than the disciple’s responsibility to find a shaykh.³⁹³ What follows from this is the necessity of an intensive recruitment program and socially active network of members who seek out new members. As part of this shift in recruitment strategy, requirements for entering the order, such as age, were removed. In short, “the need to market the religion made it pluralistic in practice and philosophy.”³⁹⁴ Under Sidi Hamza, this marketing strategy was largely successful, expanding the number of disciples to fifteen thousand, and by 2000 approximately twenty-five thousand.³⁹⁵ However, it was not until after the 2003 attacks that order became visible in the public sphere, reflecting on the one hand a change in state policy and on the other hand the reentrance of Sufism into the religious marketplace. This shift, according to Bouasria, is exemplified in the changes to the Būdshīshī *dhikr*: “The *dhikr* of *laṭīf* ... changed from a silent group ritual to a meditation read aloud forcefully in groups. This change signals the

³⁹¹ Bouasria, *Sufism and Politics*, 74.

³⁹² Daromir Rudnyckij, *Spiritual Economies: Islam, Globalization and the Afterlife of Development* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010).

³⁹³ Bouasria, *Sufism and Politics*, 74.

³⁹⁴ Bouasria, *Sufism and Politics*, 74.

³⁹⁵ Bouasria, *Sufism and Politics*, 75. Bekkaoui & Laremont, “Moroccan Youth,” 35.

order's transformation from a silent to a publicly visible brotherhood ... These rule changes mark another shift from private and silent to more visible 'market politics.'"³⁹⁶

This entrance into the public realm has been accompanied by a number of strategies including the deployment of a program of *tarbiya* that includes practices of *da'wa* and social activism, the recruitment of youth through social outreach programs, and the hosting of festivals and other public events that have a financial, political and spiritual benefit. With regard to festivals and public events, three prominent examples are the Fez Festival of Sacred Music, the Fez Festival of Sufi Culture, and the annual *mawlid al-nabī* (Prophet's birthday celebration) held in Madagh.³⁹⁷ The Fez Festival of World Sacred Music was developed under the leadership of Fawzi Skalia, a member of the Būdshīshiyya, and held its twenty-fifth annual festival in 2019. It consists of an assortment of musical and artistic performances from throughout the world that are held over the course of a week at various locations in the city of Fez. The festival has served as an important platform for various Sufi orders to perform their musical traditions, as well as a means to cultivate a particular aesthetic sentiment regarding Sufism. As Philip Murphy discusses in his research on Sufi musicians in Morocco, these festivals function in part to 'retune the nation' and engage in ethical subject formation. A second, more recent festival, also organized by Fawzi Skalia, is the Fez Festival of Sufi Culture. In contrast to the music festival, the Sufi Culture Festival has a conference component during the day in addition to a performative component at night. In 2017, I attended the tenth annual festival held during the day in madrasa Bounaniya with performances at night in the Jnan Sbil Park, including one by the Būdshīshiyya. The week-

³⁹⁶ Bouasria, *Sufism and Politics*, 75.

³⁹⁷ I highlight these three specifically because I was able to attend them during my fieldwork in Morocco. Other festivals take place in Marrakech, Tangier, and Essouira.

long festival was entitled, “Sufism Meets the Wisdom of the World: The Road of Sufism from Morocco to India.” The conference portion included ‘roundtable’ discussions related to Sufi poetry and art, Quranic interpretation, Sufi history in Andalusia and its relation to global history, comparisons of Sufism in Morocco with Sufism in India and Sufism as a mechanism for inter-religious dialogue. Although a few presentations were given in Arabic, English, Turkish, and Persian, most of the conference was held in French. Furthermore, while the audience at the concerts was more diverse, the daytime audience was predominantly middle-aged Francophone Moroccans from the upper middle-class elite. In fact, as I lived in the old city of Fez, I spent the entire week asking young people in my neighborhood about the festival and very few had even heard of it. Therefore, the claim that the festival provides an effective outreach to youth seems largely unsubstantiated based on my fieldwork.³⁹⁸

Nonetheless, the goal of these festivals is clear for their organizers. “[Fawzi Skalia] explains that the aim of the festival is to go beyond the stereotyped ideas about Sufism by projecting it as a progressive movement [capable] of coping positively with contemporary social and intellectual issues ... Sufism is a form of spirituality that harmoniously combines cultural authenticity with the requirements of modernity.”³⁹⁹ By providing a modern platform (e.g., the conference forum or the musical stage) for the performance of Sufism as a feature of cultural heritage, these festivals and conferences form a contemporary civil ritual in which a supposedly shared spirituality is performed and constructed at the same time. The contemporary pious subject that constitutes modern Moroccan religiosity is performed in the sense that it is made visible and audible to the public, but that performance does not present

³⁹⁸ “To combat stereotypes associated with Sufism as being archaic and anachronistic, the Moroccan authorities have organized Sufi festivals that would attract youth to a modernizing Sufi culture” (Bekkaoui & Laremont, “Moroccan Youth,” 37).

³⁹⁹ Bekkaoui & Laremont, “Moroccan Youth,” 37.

an already-existing identity. Rather, through the spatial, rhetorical, and aesthetic dimensions that frame these performances, that identity is given certain parameters that are conditioned in the context of the festivals and conferences. As public festivals, however, these events are usually held not by the Sufi orders themselves, but by civil society associations that have the connections, means, and legal abilities to host these events. Therefore, by referring to them as civic rituals, I do not mean that they are symbolic expression of civil religion; instead, I point to them as civil rituals insofar as they are hosted and sponsored by elements of civil society and are structured performances of public piety. For example, these two festivals are not sponsored directly by the Būdshīshiyya. They are held by the *Jamaʿat Fes-Saiss*, an NGO based in Fez under the direction of Fawzi Skalia. As I will discuss later in relation to the *tariqa* ʿAlāwiyya, the formation of civil society organizations is in many ways a necessary component for the entrance of Sufi orders into the public realm, a requirement that functions to bring the activities of Sufi orders under governmental supervision while maintaining a visage of autonomy of Sufi orders.

In addition to these festivals, the other prominent public performance of the Būdshīshiyya is the *mawlid al-nabī*, the celebration of the Prophet’s birthday, held at the order’s main *zawiya* and home of the tombs of its spiritual leaders in Madagh. According to some estimates, the number of disciples attending the festival increased from fifteen thousand in 2002 to over one-hundred thousand in 2009, an increase that reflects its massive expansion over the 2000s.⁴⁰⁰ In addition to holding religious observances and meals in the large *zawiya*, they also host a conference and provide medical services to disciples, such as eye exams and physical checkups. In 2017, I attended the celebration in Madagh, which was

⁴⁰⁰ Bekkaoui & Larement, “Moroccan Youth,” 35.

the first one with the new leader Sidi Jamal. Upon entering the *zawiya*, I noticed a large line wrapped around the outside of the room with hundreds of people waiting to meet the Shaykh and receive blessings from them. I walked around the inside of the line with a group of friends (not disciples of the *tariqa*) and we asked people what they were doing and how they received the blessing. They all said that they were giving money to receive the blessing from the Shaykh, with the minimum amount quoted being four-hundred dirham (approximately forty dollars). The values went far higher, some reaching several hundred dollars. When the shaykh came out, he sat behind a partition and people proceeded one-by-one to offer their money in exchange for blessings, receiving in addition a picture of the shaykh. Bekkaoui and Laremont claim that the one of the important reforms undertaken by the Būdshīshiyya was a move away from practices of seeking blessings: “[Shaykh Hamza’s] main contribution, however, has been shifting the order’s focus from *tabarruk* (seeking spiritual blessings or *baraka* from a Shaykh) to *tarbiya* (spiritual education).”⁴⁰¹ However, as my trip to the annual mawlid celebration demonstrated, seeking blessings is still widely practiced among disciples from all over the world and still serves as an important source of income for the *tariqa*. This economic value comes in addition to the commercial shops that are set up in the area of the *zawiya*, the income generated through conference registration, and the tourism generated as a result of the festival. In his discussion of the Būdshīshi *mawlid*, Bouasria argues, “These rituals and festivals can be seen as political and economic rallies that create the bond between the state and society ... Politically, these gatherings serve as a show for the public and its rulers of the number and the variety of disciples to demonstrate the Shaykh’s legitimacy to his disciples and to government officials ... [they] stress the order’s

⁴⁰¹ Bekkaoui & Laremont, “Moroccan Youth,” 35.

significance to the political regime.”⁴⁰² The political dimension of the festival is clearly manifest in the picture below of the entrance to the *zawiya*, through which all disciples must pass, which is adorned with a large poster of King Mohammed VI and the phrase ‘[Long] Live the King’ (*‘ash al-malik*). Thus, the festival is simultaneously a celebration of the shaykh and the king, and the legitimacy of each is linked through this annual public performance.⁴⁰³



Figure 1. Front of *zawiya* displaying portrait of King Mohammed VI and phrase 'God, Country, King' (photo by author).

Moreover, in 2017 the festival was accompanied by the twelfth annual ‘International Sufi Conference’ under the title “Sufism and Spiritual Diplomacy: Cultural, Developmental, and Civilizational Dimension” (*al-taṣawwuf wa al-diblumasiyya al-ruḥiyya*). According to the director of the conference, Munir al-Qadiri al-Budshishi:

spiritual diplomacy works to spread spiritual and humanist radiance between countries in order to build a modern civilization [that is] secure, cooperative, and peaceful. [It is] a bridge of communication between civilizations [and] we should draw from the Islamic values that are based on a feeling of mercy, tolerance, and consolidation of the spirit of living together in order to weave an authentic Islamic discourse that gives an enlightened image of Islam and Muslims and strengthens their links with other cultural components.⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰² Bouasria, *Sufism and Politics*, 77-8.

⁴⁰³ On Sufi rituals as rallies see Villalon 1994. He writes, “An examination of these rituals thus offers an opportunity for a dynamic presentation of both the articulation of social structures and their interaction with the state” (L. Villalon, “Sufi Rituals as Rallies: Religious Ceremonies in the Politics of Senegalese State-Society Relations,” *Comparative Politics* 26, no. 4 (1994): 416).

⁴⁰⁴ Abdellah Shibl, “Tafāṣī layla al-jadhaba fī ḥaḍra al-shaykh al-ṣāmit b-l-*zawiya* būdshīsh,” Hespess Online, accessed Feb. 15, 2019, www.hespess.com/orbites/373404.html.

Spiritual diplomacy, in other words, works to bridge differences between civilizations, foster communication, and correct negative images or stereotypes of Islam, while also basing itself on ‘authentic’ Islamic discourses and values. The source of these authentic discourses and values, though not mentioned explicitly in this statement, is assumed to be Sufism, in conjunction with the other components of ‘Moroccan Islam.’ Thus, the claim is that the practice of spiritual diplomacy is dependent upon the articulation of an authentic Islam, and insofar as the Moroccan state attempts to authorize that vision of authentic Islam through its regulation of the religious field, the practice of spiritual diplomacy is dependent upon the Moroccan state’s definition of an authentic Moroccan Islam. Therefore, these festivals and conferences serve to consolidate the state’s legitimacy regarding control over the religious field by equipping it with concepts justifying its intervention and demonstrating popular support for the state’s project of ‘reform.’

As for other forms of social outreach, the Būdshīshiyya provide a number of youth services. These include camping expeditions and other recreational trips. In 2014, for example, they organized a recreational trip to the ocean for orphans in the city of Settat, south of Casablanca. The trip represents one of the multiple activities encouraged by Shaykh Hamza’s curriculum of education (*minhaj al-tarbiya*) and began with the singing of the national anthem in front of the *zawiya* after which the participants proceeded through the streets of city wearing uniforms of blue shirts and red baseball caps. In 2017, the *tariqa* organized a trip to ‘Magic Park’ in Sale for a group of young people. That same year, they held a youth retreat (*i’ tikāf*) at the *zawiya* in Madagh that included a training program focusing on safe use of social media, internet, and other electronics. In addition to these youth outreach programs, the order also provides a variety of social and charitable services

including the distribution of food during Ramadan, along with the collection and donation of blood at the annual mawlid celebration. Finally, music has been a mechanism of outreach, in the formation of the Shaykh Hamza Academy for Sama and through individual artists such as Abd al-Malik. A French rapper born in the Congo, Abd al-Malik joined the Būdshīshiyya in 1999 and has been open about how Sufism helped to steer him away from extremism on the one hand and the pitfalls of life in the French ghettos (e.g., drugs and crime) on the other hand.⁴⁰⁵ According to Bekkaoui and Laremont, “Malike is indeed a concrete epitome of the success of Sufism in attracting marginalized youth and embittered and disenchanted immigrants and turning them into citizens who render service to their community and cherish their country.”⁴⁰⁶ In addition to an autobiographical book entitled “Sufi Rapper: The Spiritual Journey of Abd al-Malik” (2009), he has a book (2004) and film (2014) entitled “May Allah Bless France” (*Qu’Allah benisse la France*). The Būdshīshiyya are therefore not lacking in youth outreach activities, which has made them successful in recruiting a large following, while also garnering support from the state as a key component of its strategy to combat the influence of Islamist organizations such as the AWI. In addition, the Būdshīshiyya, along with the ‘Alāwiyya and the Karkariyya which I will discuss in this work, have a strategic importance to the state geographically, not just as counters to Islamism. All three groups are based primarily in the Rif region of Morocco, a region that has been known for its independence and resistance to both colonial and centralized Moroccan rule. Therefore, by sponsoring Sufi orders that have strong ties to the monarchy

⁴⁰⁵ “In an interview ... Malik confesses that had he not met Shaykh Hamza, he would have embraced extremist jihadist ideology and ended up in Guantanamo prison. He explains that Sufism taught him tolerance toward his host country and a sense of brotherhood with other Muslims beyond national and ethnic affiliation ... and saved him from corruption, drug addiction, and crime” (Bekkaoui & Laremont, “Moroccan Youth,” 38).

⁴⁰⁶ Bekkaoui & Laremont, “Moroccan Youth,” 38.

and explicitly endorse the monarchy, these orders in the Rif have the potential as a mechanism of soft power to encourage loyalty and discourage resistance in the region. It is not clear that such a policy is indeed working, but it is worth noting that their geographic location holds strategic importance for the state as well.

In summary, the *tariqa* Qādiriyya Būdshīshiyya provides a variety of benefits to the state as a model Moroccan Sufi order in that it offers a wide domestic and international membership, it recruits from multiple social classes and locations (i.e., both rural and urban), it emphasizes an adherence to *sharia* and *sunna* while not placing emphasis on ‘archaic’ rules related to gender norms, it successfully attracts youth to its membership, and integrates discourses of modernization into its rhetoric of reform. Furthermore, with its focus on spiritual development through engagement in social life, it encourages an economic outlook that links financial success to spiritual progress, or at least does not require abstention from worldly gains to progress on the spiritual path. Finally, its emphasis on *tarbiya* aimed at the cultivation of certain values, such as tolerance and moderation that are linked to a progressive and modern Islam, makes it a powerful tool for the formation of modern Moroccan citizens and therefore integral to the multifaceted state strategy for regulating the religious field.

The final component of the Būdshīshiyya is its shift from *tabarruk* to *tarbiya* as part of its program of renewal (*tajdīd*). In her article on the educational dimensions of the Būdshīshiyya, Rachida Chih writes, “Thus, the Būdshīshiyya today adopts a discourse legitimizing a religious authority that is founded on the medieval tradition of religious renewal (*tajdid al-din*), but based on the proselytism of nineteenth century Reformism by

abandoning the search for *baraka* in favour of a greater focus on education.”⁴⁰⁷ The proselytism here refers to the concept of *da‘wa* and emerges as part of the order due to a shift in the master-disciple relationship in which the contemporary master must go out in search of disciples and “draw [the disciple] progressively and gently towards [the disciple’s] own spiritual transformation.”⁴⁰⁸ This shift provides a doctrinal backing for the various social and youth outreach programs of the *tariqa* that are aimed at recruiting a broader membership. These various programs are given further purpose in the curriculum of education (*minhaj al-tarbiya*), a curriculum that draws upon traditional sources but reflects a renewal and reform that is necessary in contemporary contexts.⁴⁰⁹ What is needed, in other words, is a new set of practices that are adapted to the exigencies of contemporary life. There is, however, no single vision of how to accomplish this reform and renewal, and therefore a comparison of curricula of *tarbiya* across multiple Sufi orders provides insight into the ways in which they situate themselves with respect to one another, i.e., how they market themselves in a competitive religious marketplace. As I suggested in the section on AWI, this focus on *tarbiya* does not emerge on its own out of the Sufi orders; rather, it is a response to the success of groups like the AWI (and other Islamist associations) that stressed the necessity of religious education (*tarbiya*).

As for the program of the Būdshīshiyya, it consists of seven principles: respecting the sharia, learning exoteric science (*‘ilm*), practicing Sufi rituals earnestly, acquiring Muhammadan virtues through companionship (*ṣuḥba*), proper conduct and comportment (*adab*), visiting and helping others with compassion, giving and cultivating generosity, and

⁴⁰⁷ Chih, “Sufism, Education,” 39.

⁴⁰⁸ Chih, “Sufism, Education,” 39.

⁴⁰⁹ For example, “The master no longer has recourse to physical discipline, and puts the dhikr and the sama at the heart of his practice once again” (Chih, “Sufism, Education,” 39).

bringing people to God through one's own comportment and preaching.⁴¹⁰ With regard to the approach to the *sharia*, while a minimal 'respect' for the *sharia* is necessary, the order condones a flexible approach by acknowledging that the scrupulous adherence to all components of the *sharia* may be difficult in the present world.⁴¹¹ One result of this degree of flexibility is that it has allowed more women to join the order and participate in forms of Sufi life that were not previously accessible. In addition to trying to follow the *sharia* to the best of one's ability, disciples are advised to engage in the daily practices of *dhikr* assigned by the shaykh while also balancing those requirements with one's daily life. For example, in response to a question about the obligations of family, work, and worship, Shaykh Hamza replied, "It is important to work, as the *sharia* demands that we meet the needs of our family. It is important to busy ourselves with the family, your spouse and children. It is important to work seriously for the *tariqa*. You have to reconcile these three things and meet their demands."⁴¹² As for the obligations of the *tariqa*, what is expected is the performance of *wird* (daily recitation) and *dhikr* (weekly gathering), along with a continual orientation (*tawajjuh*) toward the shaykh. The role of orientation is to tie the disciple directly to the living shaykh, for it is only the living shaykh who is able to provide sufficient and appropriate guidance and *tarbiya*.⁴¹³ Shaykh Hamza says, for example, "He who tries to find his way solely from the writing of Ibn Arabi or of other Sufi masters of the past is only

⁴¹⁰ Chih 2012, 40. Her description of the 'rules of education' are based on her analysis of two texts: 'Elements of the tariqa Qādiriyya Būdshīshiyya' and 'Lamp of the Disciple in the path of Unity' by Ahmad Qustas.

⁴¹¹ "It is this flexible approach that has permitted women from bourgeois backgrounds who do not wear the veil, and are often well-educated, to join the order" (Chih, "Sufism, Education," 40).

⁴¹² Ian Draper, *Toward a Postmodern Sufism: Eclecticism, Appropriation and Adaptation in a Naqshbandiyya and Qadiriyya Tariqa in the UK* (Birmingham: Birmingham University Press, 2002), 238.

⁴¹³ Shaykh Hamza says, "Two things are necessary and complement one another in practice: invocation and orientation. When we possess a mirror that is dirty and rusted and we desire that it should perfectly reflect the sun, we must do two things: polish the mirror (and this polishing takes the form of invocation) and orient it towards the sun. We can spend hours in invocation but if we are not oriented towards the master, it is all time wasted" (Chih, "Sufism, Education," 41).

following their *djellabas*. He will remain on the surface of things. Methods differ as a function of the conditions prevailing in the period in which we live.”⁴¹⁴ A living master is necessary, for it is only the living shaykh who is able to adapt the curriculum of *tarbiya* to the capacities of the individual and the contingencies of the time. In clarifying the nature of this orientation, Shaykh Hamza likens the relationship to that between a father and a child, an analogy that is important when considering the master-disciple relationship as the cultural schema for Moroccan authoritarianism (as Hammoudi does).

In addition to these duties, it is also incumbent upon the disciples to engage in preaching in order to spread awareness of the *tariqa* and recruit more disciples. The performance of this responsibility, however, requires substantial knowledge on the one hand and proper attitudes to engage the public effectively. Citing a text on preaching, Chih writes that preaching can take one of three forms:

Preaching which consists of bringing the Muslims in general back to religious practice; then comes preaching which consists of elevating the faith of the believer towards the degrees of fear of God (*taqwa*) and of perfection (*ihsān*): this form then brings us to the third *da‘wa*, which is that of the Sufis. It consists of the purification of souls, which permits one to accede to a state of superior consciousness of God – a state in which the believer sees the face of God everywhere he turns ... If, for the first two forms of *da‘wa*, it is a matter of being persuasive through rightly-worded sermons, through soft and beautiful words and acts of kindness, the *da‘wa* of the Sufis can only be accomplished via the *suhba*, companionship.⁴¹⁵

Performing *da‘wa* therefore entails discursive (rightly-worded sermons) and embodied (acts of kindness) dimensions. It is also dependent upon the cultivation of specific social ethical virtues, i.e., kindness and companionship. The ‘call’ to Sufism articulated here is one embodied in social activities and dependent upon communal relationships.⁴¹⁶ Thus, *da‘wa*

⁴¹⁴ Chih, “Sufism, Education,” 41.

⁴¹⁵ Chih, “Sufism, Education,” 43.

⁴¹⁶ Spadola, *Calls*.

here is achieved not only through ‘preaching,’ but also by performing varieties of social services and charity that simultaneously cultivate the virtues of kindness, compassion, and generosity that are part of the *tarbiya* and reach out to society, thereby spreading awareness and recruiting new members. In other words, the performance of social work fulfills the function of training disciples who perform the social work and the responsibility of disciples to execute *da‘wa* as part of socially engaged spiritual training.

Social work, generosity, charity, and service are therefore key components of the curriculum of *tarbiya*. The role of social work in the *tariqa* is explained in an article posted on the order’s website by a disciple Khālīd Rihan.⁴¹⁷ After discussing the development of ‘social work’ in its connection to the emergence of civil society after the industrial revolution, Khālīd goes on to differentiate the concept of social work in the order from social work in civil society.⁴¹⁸ Specifically, he writes, “Social work in the understanding of the *tariqa* Qadiriyya Būdshīshiyya is work in society, with society, for society.”⁴¹⁹ Therefore, there is a specific meaning of social work in the Būdshīshiyya since it proceeds from values embedded in personality (*khaṣuṣiyya qayyamiyya*). “The strength of the idea in it is the strength of its value and its orientation towards purification and instruction (*mawajjuhha tazkawī wa tarbawī*), proceeding from the words of Allah: ‘Take from their wealth a charity [for] you to purify them and cause them increase (Q 9:103).’ Work in society is work of the heart with educational aims oriented towards those with particular needs.”⁴²⁰ In this explanation, although social work is connected to purification, it is also framed in terms of

⁴¹⁷ Khālīd Rihan, “Maḥūm al-‘aml fī al-mujtma‘ ‘and al-tariqa,” accessed April 25, 2019, www.boutchichiya.com/مفهوم-العمل-في-المجتمع-عند-الطريقة/.

⁴¹⁸ “It is close to the concept of social work that we saw in what came before [in the 19th century], but it is not [the same], insofar as there is and is not a type of symmetry between them, but there is a difference between them in form and content” (ibid).

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*

tarbiya. As such, “Work in society and with society is defined by a duality of values, which are purification (*al-tazkiyya*) and education (*al-tarbiya*). It is considered one of the great aims and purposes of the *tariqa* ... aiming at the consolidation of ethics of the sincere and righteous citizen (*tarsīkh akhlāq al-muwaṭṭana al-ṣaliḥa wa al-mukhlīṣa*) and refutes allegations of isolation.”⁴²¹ Helping to form righteous citizens is therefore an explicit aim of the order, and though the article denies political goals for this activity, the formation of citizens is of primary concern. The social work of the order is also different from that of civil society organizations (*jamaʿiyyāt al-mujtamʿa al-madani*) in that the goal of the Būdshīshiyya is spiritual education (*tarbiya ruḥiyya*).⁴²² In addition to being integral to the order, the practice of social work is vital to the Islamic tradition as a whole, as evidenced by Quran, *sunna*, and *sharia*. With regard to the *sharia* the author writes, “The Islamic *sharia* came to reform the individual (*l-iṣlāḥ al-fard*), and if it reforms the individual then it reforms society as a whole, and it only reforms the individual if that individual is adorned in ethics (*taḥallī bil-akhlāq*) and generous virtues (*al-fadāʿil al-karima*) including solidarity (*taḍāmin wa takāful*), synergy, compassion, and love in order to achieve the greatest goal, which is none other than purification (*tazkiyya*) and education (*tarbiya*).”⁴²³ Examples of this type of social work include circumcisions, distributing glasses to children, distributing food during Ramadan, participating in blood collection campaigns, educational programs aimed at children, and medical programs related to diabetes. My point here was not to provide a comprehensive account of the social activities of the Būdshīshiyya, but to illustrate its centrality in the curriculum of education. On the one hand, the significance of social work is

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*

⁴²² “This orientation is distinguished from the work of civil society associations, cooperatives, non-profit associations, or from other networks that work in the field of social services” (*ibid*).

⁴²³ *Ibid.*

related to the influence of groups such as the AWI that have gained a following through the provision of social care.⁴²⁴ This is not to say that the performance of social services is new to Sufi orders. Rather, the suggestion is that insofar as many Islamist groups (such as the Muslim Brotherhood) throughout the Islamic world recruited support through the provision of social welfare that many Middle Eastern states failed to provide, the revival of Sufism represented by the rise of groups like the Būdshīshiyya was achieved in part through the redeployment of traditional functions of the *zawiya* as a center of social care.⁴²⁵ Furthermore, the reactivation of this function, in addition to revitalizing the orders themselves, also worked to the benefit of the state to counter a source of influence for Islamist organizations. As I will demonstrate later, the *tariqa* ‘Alāwiyya also places social work at the center of its curriculum of *tarbiya*. For now, a goal in highlighting this aspect of the Būdshīshiyya is to illustrate how the provision of social care integrates the spiritual and social through the concept of *ihsān* serves as a point of competition between Sufi orders.

The educational program of the Būdshīshiyya includes not only the cultivation of virtues, the practice of social work and the transmission of spiritual knowledge, but also training in Islamic sciences. The recognition of the need to provide education in the Islamic sciences is itself a form of criticism, insofar as “it is intended to make up for the relatively poor university education that disciples have received.”⁴²⁶ In other words, the focus on education is meant as a supplement to the religious education that is perceived to be inadequate. As I will discuss in a section below, this weakness in religious education, in

⁴²⁴ “These charitable activities have gained the [AWI] wide support among the marginalized and the destitute” (Bekkaoui & Laremont, “Moroccan Youth,” 44).

⁴²⁵ Jonathan Benthall, “Charitable Activities of the Muslim Brotherhood,” *Journal of Muslim Philanthropy & Civil Society* 2, no. 2 (2018).

⁴²⁶ Chih, “Sufism, Education,” 44.

terms of providing training in traditional Islamic sciences, is due to a significant program of educational reform in which religious education was transformed into civic education.

However, despite this point of criticism, the education offered by the Būdshīshiyya operates successfully to produce a class of individuals who can fill positions for the state. Drawing on Tozy, Chih writes, “These young people are henceforth equipped to fulfill a number of functions requiring an intellectual education, functions that answer a social need that the State *ulama* are not in a position to fill.”⁴²⁷ In other words, the Būdshīshi educational program operates to create ‘religious bureaucrats’ that have a balanced education including training in ‘modern’ social sciences and humanities along with ‘traditional’ Islamic sciences. These religious bureaucrats have the skillsets necessary to serve as state functionaries and therefore are better qualified for a variety of positions than their counterparts that are trained at religious institutions.

In summary, the Būdshīshiyya are integral to the state’s strategy of sponsoring Sufism in several ways. Firstly, through their focus on *tarbiya* and social work, they reach out to the youth and disenfranchised communities, teaching them values that are constitutive of modern Moroccan citizenship. Secondly, through their festivals and conferences, they demonstrate popular support for the monarchy and work to generate intellectual tools that can be deployed by the state to justify their interventions in the religious field. Thirdly, through its discourses and practices of *da‘wa*, the Būdshīshiyya provides a successful alternative to Islamist organizations, thereby helping to curtail the influence of the monarchy’s opponents such as the AWI. Fourthly, with its flexible application of *sharia* and reformed regulations that link spiritual and economic progress, it presents a model of modern

⁴²⁷ Chih, “Sufism, Education,” 44.

Moroccan religiosity that improves the face of Morocco. Finally, through its educational programs, the Būdshīshiyya produces the staff for a religious bureaucracy that continues to enhance the state's capacity to control religious discourse and practice. These benefits come at little cost to the state, but they also provide the order with a degree of autonomy and notoriety that has helped it to become the most prominent Sufi order over the past twenty years. In the process, and in competition with the AWI, the Būdshīshiyya have helped to reshape the religious field through its discourses and practices such that other Sufi orders have had to adapt to their influence and develop strategies to compete. The turn to *tarbiya* and social service are two of the ways in which the Sufi communities I worked with attempted to compete in this religious marketplace. However, before turning to these groups, I look at some of the other ways in which the religious field has been restructured over the past twenty years.

iv. Institution Building and Educational Reform

Some scholars have claimed that this articulation of 'Moroccan Islam' is banal, vacuous, and lacking any significant theological innovation, so most of the studies of this strategy have been focused on the institutional restructuring of the religious field.⁴²⁸ In other words, since the religious and/or doctrinal components are not new (or do not contain any substantial theoretical elaboration), there is not really a need to study those religious discourses. Rather, what is important for many political scientists is the way religion is 'used' by the state, an analysis that often focuses on institution building. While the restructuring of the field has facilitated greater oversight and regulation that have resulted in

⁴²⁸ Wainscott argues, "The Moroccan case suggests that the War on Terror is reducing the diversity of religious doctrines available to practicing Muslims, as states employ overwhelming resources to support or oppose particular doctrines" (Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 3).

an increased normalization and homogenization of the religious field, the claim that there is little diversity or intellectual activity in the articulation of ‘Moroccan Islam’ is largely overstated.⁴²⁹ The analysis of three separate Sufi communities and their diverging approaches to teaching ethics as part of a program of *tarbiya* is intended to illustrate spaces of difference in order to call into question this narrative of monarchical monopoly.

The groups and individuals with which I worked during my time in Morocco all argued against a singular vision of Sufism, claiming instead that the various groups worked to fashion and articulate multiple forms of Sufism that often stood in contrast with each other and state discourses. However, it is possible to read this as a sense of false consciousness that is produced through the subtle insinuation of hegemonic state discourses in the thought and action of individuals such that these individuals effectively perpetuate positions authorized by those state discourses. In this reading, individuals merely propagate state interests because the state uses a contrived diversity to bolster its own claims to legitimacy, i.e., by permitting a degree of religious freedom, and to counter opponents that are seen as less open to religious pluralism, i.e., PJD.⁴³⁰ Such a reading, however, fails to account for the forms of difference between Sufi communities and my argument is that the spaces of relative creativity exist within the program of practices that cultivate ethical virtues. Even if those virtues or morals align with state discourses, the way in which they are cultivated, honed, and acquired may differ and it is in that space of the *manāḥij al-tarbiya* that potentials for originality can be located. This originality, however, is not framed as ‘innovation’ but as

⁴²⁹ Put otherwise, this claim is dependent upon a reading that seeks to assert or demonstrate the extent of Moroccan authoritarianism such that even daily religious life and belief are determined by structures of power. As such, there is little concern for the ability of individuals to act creatively and adaptively in circumstances that are not entirely of their own making.

⁴³⁰ Bouasria writes, “The Moroccan state ... did not produce diversity because diversity is a cultural value, but because the discursive frame within which Islamist parties such as PJD ... or some salafi groups operate shuns diversity as heretical and un-Islamic otherness” (Bouasria, *Sufism and Politics*, 82).

‘renewal,’ that is, a redeployment of traditional practices that need to be updated slightly for contemporary contexts. The political significance of these emerges not necessarily because they are forms of resistance, but because religious and moral education (*tarbiya*) has been the object of continued political debate in post-independence Morocco. My goal in this section is to illustrate how the institutional restructuring that has facilitated the construction of ‘Moroccan Islam’ and in particular the deployments of Sufism within that construction.

There are political contingencies that have shaped the various educational and structural reforms, such as the need to reinforce religious legitimacy, the changes in perceived threats and opponents, and the infrastructural endowments at the state’s disposal.⁴³¹ While the recognition that approaches to religious education are not based solely on a regime’s ideology is important, it carries with it the assumption that the monarchy is not guided by a genuine religious orientation but rather feigns sincerity to pragmatically consolidate and maintain political power. In a sense, this mode of analysis mirrors approaches to political Islam in which religion is treated as a tool that is manipulated as part of a political strategy. In this light, one shortcoming of Feuer’s analysis is that it does not connect the emergence of certain discourses within the state to their articulation by its opponents. In other words, the state coopts concepts and rhetoric deployed by those groups, and without an analysis of the religious discourse and practice of the group, it is difficult to explain precisely why the educational reforms took the shape that they did. For example, in the late 1990s, the Moroccan state began a program of the reform of religious education, largely in response to the political threats of the AWI and PJD. This included a shift from religious education in public schools as ‘traditional education’ (*ta’līm ‘aṭīq*) to ‘civic

⁴³¹ This is Sarah Feuer’s argument, i.e., that these three variables determine through their interaction a given state’s policy toward religious education.

education' framed as a form of *tarbiya*, i.e., as the cultivation of certain values. This shift, however, corresponds to the rhetoric being deployed within the AWI, as discussed earlier. Thus, the shift to *tarbiya* needs to be understood not only in relation to the presence of the AWI, but also in the context of AWI's discourse and practice. A second example, which is one of the underlying assertions of this work, is that a similar process happened with the concept of *ihsān*. Through its institutional and education reforms, the state adopted a definition of Sufism as the spiritual level of *ihsān* that it has perpetuated through its various educational and institutional resources. In short, it attempted to coopt and redeploy two of the central components of Shaykh Yassine's curriculum: *tarbiya* and *ihsān*, and it has been able to do so successfully because of the reforms it made to education and infrastructure. This historical restructuring and its relation to Moroccan state security strategies has been referred to by Ann Marie Wainscott as the "bureaucratization of Islam."⁴³² It is to this process that I now turn.

While the first couple decades after independence saw limited reforms to religious institutions, such as the Qarawiyyin University that dates back to 859 CE, in the 1970s, as part of an overall strategy of deflecting the influence of leftists and Islamists on college campuses, a number of institutional innovations took place. The first of these was the establishment of the Dar al-*Hadith* al-Hassaniyya in 1968.⁴³³ The foundation was a graduate institute created under Hassan II aimed at the training of religious scholars (*ulama*) and researchers. The curriculum was reformed in 2005 to align it with American universities in

⁴³² Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*.

⁴³³ While secondary sources claim that it was founded in 1975, the foundation's website states that it was founded by royal decree in 1968. "Nabdha 'an al-mu'asasa," Mu'asasa Dār al-Hadīth al-Hasaniyya, accessed April 13, 2019, <https://www.edhh.org/index.php/etablissement/intro>.

particular by transitioning it to a four-year bachelor's degree institute.⁴³⁴ The second was the creation of Islamic Studies departments at secular universities.⁴³⁵ For Wainscott, "These departments were founded both to shape Islamic political activism *and* to weaken leftism with the goal of creating a divided political opposition."⁴³⁶ This dual orientation proved relatively successful in its ability to attract students to Islamic Studies departments, with the number of enrolled master's students increasing from one in the 1970s to 478 in the 1990s, and doctorate students increasing from 21 in the 1980s to 147 in the 1990s.⁴³⁷ In addition to the goal of diminishing the influence of political opponents, the other goal of these departments was the creation of religious bureaucrats that reflected a more modern and progressive religious elite, that is, one trained in languages, social sciences and humanities, as well as Islamic sciences. Wainscott argues, "The departments were designed to develop approachable but apolitical religious elites, strong enough to oppose competing interpretations of the religion, but not strong enough to question official Islam."⁴³⁸ In other words, the creation of Islamic Studies departments at secular universities was an attempt to create institutional mechanisms for producing an alternative class of religious scholars that could be integrated into the state system. This approach was accompanied by a general unwillingness to reform the curriculum at Qarawiyyin, which in turn reinforced a segregation

⁴³⁴ Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 127.

⁴³⁵ According to Wainscott, "While the founding of Dar al-Hadith weakened Qarawiyyin as a site for the reproduction and resistance of religious scholars, the founding of Islamic Studies departments sought to shape the beliefs of those attracted to Islamic political activism located at Morocco's secular universities" (Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 197).

⁴³⁶ Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 198.

⁴³⁷ Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 199.

⁴³⁸ Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 201. Similarly, she writes, "... the idea that state-sponsored programs were intended to develop critical religious scholars is better understood as an attempt to market their program as modern, rather than as a reflection of the curriculum" (Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 200). The argument, in general, was the Islamic Studies departments were necessary due to the low quality of religious education in the country. This low quality, attributed to the weakness of Qarawiyyin in particular, was actually the result of a series of confrontations between the state and the ulama at the university that limited any attempts at reforming the Qarawiyyin curriculum.

between ‘traditional’ religious scholars and ‘progressive’ religious bureaucrats – a process that in many ways mirrors the ‘preservation’ of old medinas in Morocco that effectively isolated certain classes of people from social and economic developments of the elite classes. Even when such reforms did eventually take place, the reforms were modeled on the curriculum developed under the French Protectorate, meaning that subjects of modern education were left out.⁴³⁹ Therefore, Qarawiyyin was unable to produce the kind of religious scholar that could work within the emerging religious bureaucracy that was necessary to the state’s regulation of the religious field. As such, the Islamic Studies departments provided the primary way to staff a religious bureaucracy that would come to play an extremely important role after 2000 in the state’s strategy to regulate the religious field. The success of these programs for this purpose is reflected in the fact that, for example, the number of employees in the Ministry of Islamic Affairs rose 774 percent from 2003 to 2014, from 451 to 4,081 total employees.⁴⁴⁰ In short, during this period, the state created educational programs whose curriculum was dictated by the state itself that were aimed at the generation of religious bureaucrats who would staff the state ministries responsible for perpetuating the ‘Moroccan Islam’ taught by those departments.

In addition to these efforts, the king established the High Council of Religious Scholars in 1981 that consisted of a single high council, appointed by the king, along with numerous regional and local councils. These local councils oversaw the appointment of Imams and preachers in their respective regions. In 2004, King Mohammed VI reformed this

⁴³⁹ “The curriculum offered to graduate students closely mirrored the curriculum that had been standardized under the French protectorate in the 1930s. It thus continued to reflect the colonial aim of isolating students from any modernist thinking ... the colonial curriculum and its postcolonial successor rely almost exclusively on medieval Maliki texts within the Ashari creed. This training seeks to encourage the development of a depoliticized and narrowly trained religious elite, rather than producing broadly trained ulama capable of discussing diverse issues in an Islamic framework” (Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 189).

⁴⁴⁰ Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 105.

institution creating the Supreme Council of *Ulama*. The goal of this council was “to oversee all religious matters in the country and to keep an eye on all forms of religious expressions and teachings that detract from the orientation of official Islam.”⁴⁴¹ This council is the only body legally authorized to issue *fatwas* in the country and through its local councils monitors any forms of deviation from the state’s ‘Moroccan Islam.’ As Maghraoui writes, “The practical purpose of the council is to orient the religious direction of individuals and shape their spirituality in a way that is officially deemed to be healthy, balanced, enlightened and respectful of Moroccan Islam.”⁴⁴² It therefore provides a degree of intellectual and religious guidance, as well as oversight for mosques and daily religious life.

As for mosques, in 1984 the king decreed that all mosques would come under the authority of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, imams had to be approved by local governors and the ministry, sermons would be subject so oversight from both, and they were opened only during prayer times⁴⁴³ This decree enabled the closure of ‘illegal’ mosques and those with suspected ties to foreign sources. In 2007, further restrictions were placed on mosques, with parliament passing a law in which any places of worship required approval from local authorities for their construction. In addition, building a mosque or *zawiya* requires the formation of an association (*jama`iyya*) that would be answerable to the local authorities and Ministry, and that would be responsible for the upkeep and activities the place of worship.⁴⁴⁴ In other words, the performance of any religiously-affiliated activity requires the formation of a civil society organization known as a *jama`iyya*. Through this law, religious activities

⁴⁴¹ Maghraoui, “Strengths and Limits,” 202.

⁴⁴² Maghraoui, “Strengths and Limits,” 203.

⁴⁴³ Feuer, “Religious Establishment,” 64-5.

⁴⁴⁴ “For stricter control of the financial basis of the mosques, the new law would follow more closely the sources of the money and how it would be used by establishing special bank accounts under the name of the associations” (Maghraoui, “Strengths and Limits,” 203).

are brought under the supervision of local and central authorities, providing the state with an important mechanism for monitoring the field and limiting possibilities for public engagement. As I will discuss in relation to the ‘Alāwiyya, this means that the social service component of the curriculum requires the establishment of a civil society organization called the Shaykh al-Alawi Association for the Revival of Sufi Heritage. It is within the context of this law regulating mosques and *zawāya* that the ability for religious organizations to engage in the provision of social welfare is managed. The economists Jane Harrigan and Hamed El-Said for instance note that Morocco, “Has shown a degree of state monopoly over the provision of social welfare and tight control over civil society which has reduced the extent to which faith-based welfare provision could grow.”⁴⁴⁵ Thus, the combination of royal decrees and parliamentary laws regulating the administration of mosques and other religious spaces has been another mechanism through which the state has been able to exert control over the religious field.

Beginning around 2000, a series of parallel reforms took place for education and the Ministry of Islamic Affairs. In late 2003 and early 2004, royal decrees reformed the ministry giving it a new organizational structure and rearticulating its goals. It is worth noting here that the Ministry of Islamic Affairs is one of the ‘Ministries of Sovereignty,’ along with the Ministry of Interior for example, meaning that its minister is appointed by the king and not the government. As such, the minister reports directly to the king and the areas overseen by the ministry are de facto under the supervision of the king.⁴⁴⁶ A 2003 decree outlining the duties of the ministry states that it aims to: improve understanding of authentic Islamic

⁴⁴⁵ Jane Harrigan and Hamed El-Said, *Economic Liberalisation, Social Capital and Islamic Welfare Provision* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 189.

⁴⁴⁶ “By bureaucratizing religious institutions so that they report to the minister, the process gives the king greater control over the religious field” (Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 101).

concepts, ensure spreading of Islam's tolerant values, oversee endowments, preserve Islamic values including the Maliki rite, supervise mosques, revive the heritage of Islamic culture, oversee mosque construction and maintenance, plan and execute state policy on religious education, facilitate cooperation among multiple bodies, and develop plans for training religious elite.⁴⁴⁷ These ten goals outline a vision for the role of the ministry that would be critical to the state's strategy over the next fifteen years, a role which includes the reform of religious education. In addition, in 2004 the king reorganized the ministry by creating four departments: endowments, Islamic affairs, mosques, and 'traditional' education (*al-ta'lim al-'aṭīq*). This latter department was "charged with granting official permits to the schools and overseeing all matters related to traditional religious schooling in consultation with regional councils of state-appointed *ulama* responsible for inspecting schools and carrying out policies at the local level."⁴⁴⁸ These reforms were also accompanied by the appointment of Ahmed Tawfiq in 2002, a member of the Būdshīshiyya, reflecting an additional goal of promoting Sufism through state institutions.

At around the same time a concerted effort to reform religious education was underway, as exemplified in the National Charter on Education and Training (*al-mithāq al-waṭanī li-l-tarbiya wa al-takwīn*) in 1999. Given that the development of the charter took place under Hassan II and its implementation under Mohammed VI took place before the 2003 Casablanca attacks, it demonstrates that the political significance of religious education reform in response to Islamist opponents such as the AWI was recognized in the 1990s. Central to this educational reform project was a shift in the content from 'traditional' Islamic

⁴⁴⁷ Royal Decree 1-03-193. Cited by Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 100.

⁴⁴⁸ Feuer, "Religious Establishment," 65.

subjects to a generalized civic education.⁴⁴⁹ As Feuer writes, “What changed were the ethics being stressed, as curricula began promoting Islamic principles compatible with concepts like democracy, human rights, and tolerance.”⁴⁵⁰ The reformed curriculum was therefore aimed at the formation of modern Moroccan citizens who embody the values of a ‘moderate and progressive Moroccan Islam.’ The charter states that religious education, “Aims to form virtuous citizens who are a model of uprightness, moderation and tolerance, open to science and knowledge and with the spirit of initiative, creativity, and enterprise.”⁴⁵¹ In the following years, changes were made to textbooks and lessons that reflected changes in the ‘*mudawanna*,’⁴⁵² social rights discourses, compliances with international treaties (e.g., human rights), and more general values of open-mindedness and coexistence.

However, after the bombings of 2003 in Casablanca and 2004 in Madrid, the debate about extremism and its relation to religious education took center stage in Morocco. In the ensuing debate, Islamic education was simultaneously blamed as a cause of extremism, if it is done ‘improperly,’ and framed as a solution or ‘safety valve’ (*simām al-aman*) that can be used to ward off extremism.⁴⁵³ Several teachers’ associations engaged in public debate about the issue, urging the king not to abandon or secularize religious education entirely, but to reform the curriculum and produce more highly qualified teachers. Thus, while the

⁴⁴⁹ “Thus, although the students are studying Islamic education for the same number of hours as before, they are taking in a curriculum increasingly reflective of citizenship values rather than one focused on classical Islamic education methods or goals such as the memorization of texts” (Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 174).

⁴⁵⁰ Feuer, “Religious Establishment,” 122. Feuer argues that the incorporation of these values was part of an attempt to secure allies within the emerging civil society sector to counter Islamist groups. “With the controlled political liberalization of the 1990s, non-governmental organizations found a space to operate in civil society, and the regime reached out to them in an effort to secure new allies” (Feuer, “Religious Establishment,” 123).

⁴⁵¹ Cited in Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 160.

⁴⁵² Literally *mudawwanat al-aḥwāl al-shakhsiyya*, or Personal Status Code, this ‘family law’ was reformed in 2004 in attempt to respond to issues of women’s rights, such as male guardianship and age of marriage.

⁴⁵³ “Although the king’s speeches implicated Islamic education in the growth of extremism, those who wrote opinion pieces ... defend the program’s role in ‘vaccinating’ students against it. They also referred to Islamic education as a safety valve (*simām al-aman*) responsible for lifting Morocco out of its ‘intellectual, doctrinal and behavioral missteps’” (Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 166).

immediate aftermath of the bombings caused the monarchy to criticize Islamic education, as many sponsors of the ‘war on terrorism’ did and as the term ‘*madrasa*’ acquired negative connotations in western imaginations, members of Moroccan society pushed back against this idea to suggest that ‘Islamic education’ was not the problem in itself, but rather an unsupervised education offered by unqualified teachers was the main problem. As such, the question became how to rework a ‘civic education’ that stressed ‘secular values’ as a ‘religious education’ that reflected ‘Islamic values.’ Sufism, insofar as it was said to foster the values of openness, tolerance, and moderation, provided a religious resource for achieving this integration. This process also required more innovative curriculum reform that was guided by “Islamic values, values of modern identity, nationalist values, and human rights values.”⁴⁵⁴ The result of this debate about education was therefore the production of a liberal or progressive Islam that would be called ‘Moroccan Islam.’

The retranslation of secular and/or civic values into an Islamic idiom can be seen, for example, in lessons offered in one of the main texts used for religious education entitled *Fī Rihāb: Al-Tarbiya al-Islāmiyya*. In one of the secondary school lessons on tolerance, the book focuses on four qualities: tolerance, acceptance of the other, meekness, and acting justly. Acting justly, for instance, “is the ability to recognize a mistake and possess the courage to concur with the other if it becomes clear that the other is right ... when people possess this quality they can proclaim the truth and establish justice and their differences become a factor for progress and growth.”⁴⁵⁵ Tolerance “is one of the branches of faith which lifts the behavior of different people from the level of bigotry to the level of

⁴⁵⁴ Waincott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 173.

⁴⁵⁵ Cited in Waincott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 174.

compromise.”⁴⁵⁶ Meekness, or humility, “is one of the branches of faith and a quality that prevents the Muslim from being misled by his own opinion and protects him from feelings of superiority.”⁴⁵⁷ Therefore, while the lesson presents three principles (justice, tolerance, and humility) as being grounded in the Islamic tradition, the definitions given do not, in fact, make any direct references to the uses of those terms within Islamic sources. In addition to these conceptual transformations, the style of teaching has shifted from traditional pedagogical techniques aimed at memorization to the facilitation of discussions and student-centered learning strategies.⁴⁵⁸ In her interviews with religious education teachers, Wainscott suggests that these reforms have been welcomed by teachers, despite the fact that they seem to hollow out traditional concepts. However, while these curricular reforms may provide greater flexibility to teachers within the system, the lack of Islamic sources in the education system has been recognized by people outside the system as a major weakness. This recognition is reflected in the fact that many religious communities, such as the Būdshīshiyya discussed above or the ‘Alāwiyya who will be discussed later, have developed educational programs aimed for youth to supplement the religious education offered in schools. In other words, while religious education in the public schools may have broader applicability due to the reforms, it is no longer sufficient to produce individuals have substantial knowledge of traditional Islamic sources of knowledge. As such, many religious communities have taken it upon themselves to provide supplemental educational programs.

⁴⁵⁶ Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 174.

⁴⁵⁷ Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 174.

⁴⁵⁸ “They also reflect the change in didactic approach; in interviews, Islamic education teachers noted the reforms encouraged them to lead discussions rather than give lectures in class” (Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 174).

In addition to these educational reforms and the associated restructuring of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, the monarchy has established a set of quasi-governmental institutions grouped under the umbrella of the Mohammed VI Foundation. Proceeding in relatively chronological order, these institutes include the Foundation for Publishing the Holy Quran (2010), the Institute for Quranic Readings and Studies (2013), Foundation for the Promotion of Social Welfare of Religious Employees (2013), Foundation of African *Ulama* (2013), and in the Institute for Training of Imams, Murshidin and Murshidat (2014). These foundations reflect different aspects of the management of the religious field, such as the regulation of sacred texts, the support of religious bureaucracy, the connection to foreign countries, and the training of religious scholars. The Foundation for Publishing the Holy Qur'an "effectively gives the state control over the content, printing, and distribution of the Quran."⁴⁵⁹ This regulation includes oversight of publishing houses, typeface that is used, and any additional information included in them, and is capable of printing one million texts a year. "It is also responsible for regulating audio copies of the Quran, assuring that they conform to the Warsh style of recitation."⁴⁶⁰ *Warsh* is a style of recitation that differs from, for example, *hafs* style that results in slight differences in pronunciation and meaning at times. For example, in the *warsh* style, the opening verse of the Quran (the *fatiḥa*) is read as 'owner' (*malik*), as opposed to the *hafs* style that reads it as 'king' (*mālik*). Regulation of the printing and public recitation of the Quran is therefore an additional mechanism for defining 'Moroccan Islam' and differentiating it from other forms of Islam. The Foundation for the Social Welfare of Religious Employees helps to provide various services for imams, such as paying for tuition for their children. In 2016, the number of beneficiaries increased from

⁴⁵⁹ Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 113.

⁴⁶⁰ Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 113.

77,676 to 82,136.⁴⁶¹ It provided 31 million dirhams of support to over fifty-thousand beneficiaries during *ʿīd al-aḍḥā*, while also providing scholarships to children of employees.⁴⁶² Since it relates more to foreign policy, the Foundation of African *Ulama* will be discussed later. Finally, the Institute for Training Imams, Murshidin and Murshidat aims at the production of preachers and religious guides (male and female) who provide not only religious counseling, but also literacy and general life-skill lessons to local communities. During his trip in 2019, Pope Francis visited this center specifically as it is taken to be a model for Islamic religious education. While the female religious guides (*murshidāt*) are trained to provide religious lessons alongside lessons in language for example, they are not allowed to lead prayers.⁴⁶³ It is composed of over 1200 students and graduates approximately one hundred female guides and one hundred and fifty male guides twice a year. It also includes students from Morocco along with a variety of other African nations (particularly West Africa). In the first chapter of this work, I began with a snapshot of a lesson spontaneously offered by one of the female religious guides trained at this institute who was also educated through an Islamic Studies department and member of the Būdshīshiyya. As such, her discourse integrates three different components of the reforms that have taken place over this period, that is, the development of Islamic departments at universities, the sponsorship of the Būdshīshiyya, and the training of female religious guides.

⁴⁶¹ Al-Hilali, “Al-ḥāla,” 63.

⁴⁶² Al-Hilali, “Al-ḥāla,” 63.

⁴⁶³ “...this is one of the doctrinal precepts of the maliki school of thought which has clearly prohibited women from leading prayers. To this regard, the High Council of the ulama reiterated this position by issuing a fatwa in order to keep the potential for any controversies, at least in Morocco, under control. The fatwa basically stated that ‘Islamic law did not allow women to lead men in prayer ... and that there is no precedent in Moroccan history whereby a woman leads prayers in a mosque for either women or men’” (Maghraoui, “Strengths and Limits,” 204).

As part of its institutional restructuring of the religious field, the state has also created various media outlets. These include a radio station, the Mohammed VI Radio of the Holy Quran, and a television station called ‘*al-sādissa*.’⁴⁶⁴ Programming on the religious television station often includes Sufi musical performances (*samāʿ*), lessons on religious topics provided by scholars, educational programming, and historical programs involving visitations to and discussions of various saints or Sufi orders. According to Wainscott, “The alternative religious programming provided by the state is an effort to redirect such behavior toward state-sanctioned religious content and away from other voices, including those of (real and perceived) extremists.”⁴⁶⁵ One of the features of the television channel is that it features local figures in addition to national figures, thereby providing a sense of localized representation for different parts of Morocco. For example, Dr. Aziz Kobaiti, who will be discussed in one of the following chapters on the IACSAS, has appeared several times on programs for the television channel. Programs on the channel also include a mix of voices, bringing together individuals from religious, academic, and civil spheres to discuss various topics. Likewise, the radio station contributes to the construction of a national soundscape that helps to ‘tune the nation’s’ auditory dispositions as part of a broader project of forming ethical citizens.⁴⁶⁶

Finally, there are a set of independent state-run religious institutions grouped under the Muhammadan League of Scholars (*al-rābiṭa al-muḥammadiyya li-l-ʿulamāʾ*) headed by Ahmad Abbadi. The general secretary is appointed by the king, making it an institute that operates in parallel with the Ministry of Islamic Affairs and the other state-run programs.

⁴⁶⁴ Literally meaning the sixth channel, it is one of the national television stations, with others including news, sports, culture, and Amazigh.

⁴⁶⁵ Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 124.

⁴⁶⁶ See Philip Murphy forthcoming.

Therefore, much like the Mohammed VI foundations, it exists in a gray-area between an independent organization and a state-run ministry. Nonetheless, the goal of the league is in general to serve as a research think-tank for the monarchy. Established in 2006 by royal decree, the league has the explicit goals of “defining the rulings of Islamic law (*ihkām al-sharaʿ al-islāmī*) and its supreme purposes (*maqāṣidahu al-sāmiya*), and working to spread the values of Islam,” “contributing to the revitalization of scholarly and cultural life in the field of Islamic studies,” and “strengthening bonds of cooperation and communication between scholars, thinkers, and associations (national and foreign).”⁴⁶⁷ It has worked to achieve this goal through the hosting lectures and conferences, as well as through the creation of multiple research centers, each addressing specific topics. These include, for example, the Center for Research and Studies in Women’s Islamic Issues, the Ibn Abi al-Rabi’a Center for Studies in Language and Literature, and the Ibn al-Banna al-Marrakeshi Center for Research and Studies in the History of Sciences in Islamic Civilization. In addition, the league includes the Ibn al-Hassan al-Ashari Center for Studies in Creed (Islamic Theology), the Center for Research and Studies in Maliki fiqh (Islamic Law), and the Imam Junayd Center for Research and Studies in Sufism. These final three research centers reflect three pillars of Moroccan Islam, each contributing to the development of thought through publications and conferences. The Imam Junayd Center, for example, publishes a journal entitled *Qūt al-Qulūb* (Sustenance of the Hearts) and helps to host the annual International Sufi Conference with the *tariqa* Būdshīshiyya. An analysis of the journal gives a sense of its contribution to intellectual life and the contours of the issues regarding Sufism.

⁴⁶⁷ “Takhwīl al-rābiʿa al-muḥammadiyya,” Ministry of Islamic Affairs, accessed April 13 2019, www.habous.gov.ma/html.الرابطة-المحمدية-للعلماء/14-820-فبراير-2006-تحويل-الرابطة-المحمدية-صفة-مؤسسة-ذات-نفع-عام.

The first issue of *Qūt al-Qulūb* was published in 2012 with the title “Scholarly Judgement in the Sufi of Morocco” (*al-ijtihād al-‘ilmī l-ṣūfiyya al-maghrib*). This issue has been followed by four publications, each reflecting aspects of intellectual engagement with Sufism on the part of professors, researchers, and graduate students from Morocco and abroad. One implicit goal of the magazine is to reformulate particular concepts within a Sufi framework in order to provide an alternative Islamic discourse sufficiently grounded in Islamic traditions. This is reflected in the titles of the subsequent issues: “Ethics between Theory and Practice” (2013) (*al-akhlāq bayn al-naẓr wa al-‘aml*), “Integration of Law and Sufism” (2014) (*al-takāmul bayn al-fiqh wa al-taṣawwuf*), “Building Conscience and Freedom of the Nation: Reading in the National History of Sufism in the Kingdom of Morocco” (2015) (*binā’ al-wajdān wa tahrīr al-awṭān .. qirā’ fī al-tarīkh al-waṭanī li-l-ṣūfiyya bi-l-mamlaka al-maghrabiyya*), and “Sufism and Law of Freedom” (2017) (*al-taṣawwuf wa fiqh al-taharrur*). A brief look at the titles reflects three predominant themes. The first is the relationship between Sufism and Islamic legal thinking (*fiqh*); the second is the role of Sufism in Moroccan history and its relationship to national identity, especially in the colonial period; and, the third is developing an applied curriculum of ethical instruction.

Each journal is framed around a specific theme, with Ahmad Abbadi providing introductory remarks followed by a ‘keynote’ piece with a prominent scholar that may take the form of an interview or an article. These are followed by commentary and research articles related to the topic, reviews of publications from the center, and other information related to the activities of the center, such as the planning of the International Sufi Conference. For the present purposes, I will look at the introductory remarks made by Ahmad Abbadi and Dr. Ismail Radi because, as the general secretary of the Muhammadan

League and the president of the center, they are ultimately responsible for representing the official position of the league and the center on various issues. Therefore, engaging his statements can illustrate how the work of the center filters into and interacts with state discourses on Sufism. My goal in this discussion is to illustrate the kind of intellectual activity being done to deepen the state's discourses on Sufism and the conceptual tools available in that discourse in order to challenge the claims made by political scientists that there is little to no ingenuity in contemporary discourses of Sufism.⁴⁶⁸ My argument is that the creativity can be found in the appropriation and rearticulation of concepts used by Salafi discourses within a Sufi framework through the selective reading of history and choice of sources.

For example, in the first issue dealing with the concept of *ijtihād*, Ahmad Abbadi wrote an article entitled “On the achievement of the foundation of conscience.” After providing a general definition of the term as the effort exerted in seeking knowledge for the sake of correct practice, he writes, “This meaning manifests... the marriage between *ijtihād* in order for spiritual and ethical qualification (*al-ta’ḥīl al-rūḥī wa al-akhlāqī*) ... and the behavior (*saluki*) that disciplines learning, the procurement of studies, and emulation of example ... it integrates them for the function of instruction (*tarbiya*), orientation (*tawajjuh*), and education (*ta’līm*).”⁴⁶⁹ Therefore, as he goes on to explain, *ijtihād* is not limited to legal scholars alone and Sufis play a critical role in developing the ability to perform *ijtihād*, for it provides the necessary ethical and spiritual foundations for guiding others. In order to do

⁴⁶⁸ Waincott writes, “[Morocco] has flood the Moroccan religious sphere with a relatively banal interpretation of Islam...” (Waincott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 240). Maghraoui writes, “Reforms in the religious field in Morocco can better be viewed as part of a process of restructuring rather than as part of a significant theological breakthrough ...” (Maghraoui, “Strengths and Limits,” 202). In short, their position is that there is little need to look at the content of the religious discourse itself as a meaningful reform.

⁴⁶⁹ Ahmad Abbadi, “Fī taḥqīq mināṭ al-wajdan,” *Qūt al-Qulūb* 1, Rabat: Al-Rabita al-Muhammadiyya (2012): 6.

this, he cites Imam Abu Ishāq al-Shāṭibī (d. 1388) who suggests that, “The person with this special discernment is one upon whom is bestowed a light through which he knows selves and their goals.”⁴⁷⁰ In other words, there is a form of judgement practiced within Islamic law that is dependent upon this underlying foundation and gives rise to two forms of *ijtihād*. Abbadi defines these as *ijtihād rūḥī* and *ijtihād shar‘ī*. For Abbadi, due to the fact that the discernment and application of rulings must take into account the conditions of the individual, in the same way that any teacher must take into account the abilities of a disciple in order to teach, it is necessary to “Compare the legal *ijtihād* (*al-ijtihād al-shar‘ī*) with another *ijtihād* ... and this is spiritual *ijtihād* (*al-ijtihād al-rūḥī*), which empowers the *mujtahid* who includes it within the legal *ijtihād* to achieve the perfection of foundations and apply them to the individuals. This connection between the two *ijtihāds* (legal and spiritual) was most prominent among the Sufi scholars.”⁴⁷¹ The two forms of *ijtihād* in this sense are not just complements but rather two capacities that must be integrated in order to complete one another. It is in this sense of the integration between the two that members of Sufi communities in Morocco with which I worked repeated the phrase of Imam Malik: “Whosoever practices legal discernment and not Sufism will stray from the right path; whosoever practices Sufism and not legal discernment will commit heresy; and, whosoever unites the two will achieve certainty” (*man tafaqah wa lam yataṣawwaf f-qad tafassaq, man taṣawwuf wa lam yatafaqah f-qad tazanddaq, man jama‘ baynhumā f-qad taḥaqqaq*).⁴⁷² In other words, in this formulation, Islamic legal reasoning is not completed until is

⁴⁷⁰ In this regard he writes, “[Shatibi] clarifies in these texts that the judgement of foundations upon which rulings are grounded is not separated from the selves and the wills of individuals in relation to the legality of these rulings and their application” (*ibid*, 7).

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid*, 7.

⁴⁷² This phrase was repeated to me on several occasions by members of almost all Sufi groups with which I worked. It also appears explicitly in two articles by the Imam Junayd Center’s President Dr. Ismail Radi. (*ibid*, 9).

accompanied by a thorough spiritual and ethical education, an education that is grounded in the Sufi curriculum of *tarbiya* (*minhaj al-tarbiya*) and produces embodied abilities and attitudes that enable the jurist to discern rulings based not just on past texts, but also on the specifics of the context and the people involved.

The discussion of Sufism providing an ethical grounding for the proper implementation of Islamic legal reasoning and practice leads into the development of an applied ethical framework that can be derived from Sufi sources, which is the topic of the second journal published by the center. In the introductory article entitled, “Ethics and the Moral Exemplar” (*al-akhlāq wa al-ta’sī*), Abbadi argues that in light of the various forms of relativity that plague contemporary society, what is needed is a standardization of measurement (*waḥdat al-qiyāsiyya*) that can produce a state of equity (*ḥalat al-sawā*).⁴⁷³ This standard of ethical judgement should be completed through an instructional program along with different types of scholarly and practical endeavors.⁴⁷⁴ As such what is needed is a program that is based on the Prophet and “The curricular determination (*taḥdīd minhajiyya*) of the return to the state of equity that is embodied in the standard of judgement [i.e., the prophetic example], since humanity today lives in confusion because of the illusion of the lack of availability of a living example free of imperfections.”⁴⁷⁵ However, as Dr. Radi argues, “The aim of Sufism has remained, first and foremost in Morocco, the adornment of Muhammadan virtues (*al-taḥallī bi-l-akhlāq al-muḥamadiyya*) [to the point that it can be said]: ‘Sufism is character (*al-taṣawwuf huwa al-khuluq*), so whosoever increases in character also increases in Sufism (*man zād ‘alayk fī al-khuluq f-qad zād fī al-taṣawwuf*).’”⁴⁷⁶ Relying

⁴⁷³ Ahmad Abbadi, “Al-akhlāq wa-l-ta’sī,” *Qūt al-Qulūb*, no. 2 (2013): 6.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 6.

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 7.

⁴⁷⁶ Ismail Radi, “Al-khaṣā’il al-taṣawwuf al-maghrabī,” *Qūt al-Qulūb*, no. 1 (2012): 9.

on this ethical approach to Sufism, he goes on to connect ethical development and *tarbiya* to the attainment of the level of *iḥsān*. He writes, “Sufism is a school of faith and ethics, defined by spiritual instruction. It works toward progress in religious practice from form and appearance to the level of taste and presence, [and] on the path that is walked by the individual through the levels of religion until one achieves the highest levels of proximity and *iḥsān*.”⁴⁷⁷ Thus, Sufism provides the ethical model for acquiring the virtues of Muhammad, who in turn serves as the ‘normative example’ of moral action culminating in *iḥsān*.

The engagement with Sufism reflected in these texts illustrates an attempt to rearticulate legal concepts such as *fiqh* and *ijtihād*, as well as ethical concepts (*akhlāq*, *ta’sī*), by relating them to definitions and discourses of Sufism. The third concept that is addressed in this manner through the journal is *jihad*, which is taken up in the context of the role of Sufi communities in nationalist and anti-colonial resistance movements. It is widely noted that during the colonial period many Sufi groups led resistance movements against colonial occupiers, and moreover that leaders of these groups often framed their resistance within the concept of *jihad*. Consequently, in order to present Sufism today as inherently apolitical, quietist, tolerant, and non-violent, what has been required is a selective rereading (rewriting) of history in which the violent *jihad* of Moroccan Sufis is reframed as part of a ‘greater *jihad*’ aimed at the moral defense of the nation. In framing Sufi *jihad* this way, Radi differentiates between the greater and lesser *jihads* (*jihad al-akbār* and *jihad al-asghār*). This common division claims that the former is the work done on the self that is incumbent upon all Muslims, while the latter is a collective duty that involves fighting against

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid, 8.

hypocrites or unbelievers. However, while the greater *jihad* is related to work done on the self, it is also connected to the building of society. Radi writes, “[*Jihad al-nafs*] is not limited to the individual and instruction of the self and the elevation of its conscience, but enters into the core of the building of society and human civilization (*samīm al-binā’ al-ijtima’ī wa al-‘imrān al-bashrī*).”⁴⁷⁸ Therefore, the greater *jihad* that is identified with Sufism is given social and national significance insofar as it is framed as one of the building blocks of society. With this in mind, he goes on to say that “The presence of this lesser *jihad* among the Sufis flows from the faith and behavior of their greater *jihad*.”⁴⁷⁹ Thus, the use of violence in defense of the nation is situated as part of a ‘greater *jihad*’ that is aimed at the moral preservation of society. This reading reinforces the image, perpetuated by state discourses, that Sufi groups have and continue to form the moral foundation and compass for Moroccan society, while simultaneously deflecting attention from the political and militant aspects of their movements. In addition to the moral aspect, it is worth noting that positioning them as nationalist movements stands in stark contrast to the narrative of Sufism seen in the colonial and early post-independence period where they were criticized for their collusion with colonial forces.⁴⁸⁰

Summarizing this engagement, *Qūt al-Qulūb* is a journal produced by the Imam Junayd Center that is a subsidiary of the Muhammadan League, which is in turn a parallel, non-governmental think-tank under the authority of the king. As such, the journal reflects some of the high-level discourse revolving around Sufism and illustrates the points of intervention into religious discourse. These points of intervention included the relationship

⁴⁷⁸ Ismail Radi, “Al-sulūk al-jihādā al-mu‘aṣr,” *Qūt al-Qulūb*, no. 5-6 (2015): 8.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 13.

⁴⁸⁰ In fact, several of the articles in this issue go on to cite Allal al-Fassi as someone who highlighted the role of Sufi orders in resisting colonialism.

between Sufism and law, Sufism and ethics, and Sufism and *jihad* (colonial history). What is significant about these topics is that they are also vital to Salafi and *jihadi* discourses that rely on concepts of *sharia*, moral correctness, and *jihad* to justify their positions. By tackling these concepts directly, and more importantly underpinning each of them with Sufi discourses, the center, as a manifestation of state intervention in religious discourse, is actively reforming the religious field at the intellectual level and more importantly providing intellectual resources from which the state can draw in its reform efforts. As such, the claim by political scientists that the reforms should be seen as political measures aimed at the restructuring of the religious field in order to facilitate authoritarian mechanisms of control and oversight is incomplete and fails to account for the actual work being done by religious scholars. My contention is that such an approach also overlooks the intellectual contribution of less prominent religious communities to religious discourse and practice in Morocco, and the goal of the following chapters is to bring into relief that contribution through a comparison of three Sufi communities.

In summary, the state has deployed a whole set of structural and education reforms that have helped expand its ability to monitor and intervene in the religious sphere. The restructuring occurred through the creation of various institutions, along with the reorganization of ministries. The educational reforms began as a response to growing Islamist trends in the late twentieth century but emerged out of a debate between critics and defenders of Islamic education in the wake of the ‘war on terrorism.’ The compromise in this educational reform project was to situate Islamic values within a broader program of citizen formation, a program that required a degree of curricular innovation. In the process, however, many elements of traditional Islamic education were removed from the curriculum,

producing a form of religious education that for some religious communities is insufficient and must be supplemented by other forms of education. Specifically, this involved the translation of secular and civic values, which had been inserted into a reformed curriculum in the 1990s as a response to global discourses of human rights and multiculturalism, into an Islamic framework that relied on Sufi terminology for its content. Nonetheless, the reforms to the management of the religious field require these religious communities to formally register, which gives the state (and local authorities) control over these associations of supplemental education. As such, not all religious communities are granted the autonomy to establish educational centers that offer additional religious education. One set of religious communities that can do this, at least within a limited range of possibilities, is Sufi groups. This was demonstrated in the context of the *tariqa* Būdshīshiyya, and in the following chapters I will look at how the IACSAS and *tariqa* ‘Alāwiyya have attempted to navigate this field.

v. Cooptation of Salafis

Another strategy employed more recently, that is, since the 2011 movements, has been the cooptation of Salafi leadership. The aftermath of the attacks of 2003 led to a serious crackdown on Salafis, including the arrest of several prominent Salafi leaders such as Muhammad Fizazi. These individuals, along with hundreds of their followers, were sentenced to long prison terms even though their direct relationship to the bombings was never fully established. Over the course of the next decade, these prisoners were engaged in a process of de-radicalization through a program of incentives. What was distinct about this in the Moroccan context is that it was largely a self-led program, with the state indirectly

providing incentives to facilitate a de-radicalization among these contingents.⁴⁸¹ This process led to an attempt after 2011 to reintegrate Salafi figures into the social and political landscape, beginning with the pardoning of several Salafi leaders in 2011.⁴⁸² For example, Muhammad Fizazi who had been sentenced to thirty years in prison was given a royal pardon and in 2014 he led a prayer in Tangier that was attended by the king. He has since come out in support of the majority of the regime's religious policies, including its 2017 ban on the *niqab*.⁴⁸³ Then in 2015, the king pardoned a group of thirty-seven prisoners who had been charged with terrorism after they declared their loyalty to the regime.⁴⁸⁴ After their release, these individuals were allowed a degree of involvement in party politics, even though they were not permitted to establish their own political parties. Instead, many of them joined existing parties such as the *Istiqlal*, the Party of Renaissance and Virtue (PRV) and the Democratic and Social Movement (MSD). One effect of this policy has been the relative fragmentation of Salafi leaders, another instance of the regime's strategy of supposedly encourage political participation while actually fostering division. Another effect has been the loss of credibility for many of the Salafi leaders, whose clear alignment with the regime has put them out of touch with the younger generation. Finally, the rise of ISIS led to a reinvigoration of Salafi *jihadist* trends among youth, leading over 1,500 Moroccans to join the organization between 2012 and 2016. The question of what to do with these returning *jihadists*, and how to reintegrate them in society, has been a question of public debate over

⁴⁸¹ Masbah writes, "Moroccan Salafi Jihadi inmates self-deradicalized, thanks to an internal process of dialogue between the Shaykhs and other Jihadis in prison. Moroccan authorities' role was indirect: through a blend of carrots and sticks, the regime rewarded deradicalized Jihadis – and hence encouraged the process – by granting them incentives, such as enhancing their living conditions in prison" (Mohammed Masbah, "Morocco's Salafi Ex-Jihadis: Co-optation, Engagement, and the Limits of Inclusion," *Middle East Brief* 108 (2017): 3).

⁴⁸² Salim Hmimnat, "Recalibrating Morocco's Approach to Salafism," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, accessed April 30, 2019, <https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/62463>.

⁴⁸³ Masbah, "Morocco's," 4.

⁴⁸⁴ Hmimnat, "Recalibrating."

the past few years, even before the apparent collapse of the caliphate in 2019. In short, the strategy of coopting specific leaders and integrating them into the political system as a means to appease the Salafi contingent of society has been relatively unsuccessful, due in part to the practical issues and in part to the emergence of ISIS.

Another aspect of this strategy has been an attempt to discursively redefine ‘Salafism’ to make it more compatible with ‘Moroccan Islam.’ One poignant example of this effort was a conference convened by the High Council of *Ulama* in 2015 entitled, “Salafism: Investigating the Concept and Clarifying the Meaning” (*al-salafiyya: taḥqīq al-maḥmū wa bayyan al-maḥmūn*). Much like the attempts seen in the journal *Qūt al-Qulūb* to rearticulate concepts within the framework of ‘Moroccan Islam,’ this conference was held with the goal of making Salafism part of Moroccan religiosity by redefining the term. In the opening address, Ahmad Tawfiq intimated as much when he said, “This symposium aims to remind and to establish that every Moroccan, today as yesterday, is a Salafi on the basis of their livelihood in emulation (*al-iqtidāʾ*) and commitment (*al-iltizām*).”⁴⁸⁵ He argues that ‘every Moroccan is a Salafi,’ situating the term under the umbrella of Moroccan Islam. However, such a move requires a rearticulation of the concept of Salafism, which he points toward when he says:

The induction (*istiqrāʾ*) of the curriculum (*minhaj*) of the prophet (peace and prayers upon him) from the action of his *sunna* does not leave a space for the restriction (*taḍayyiq*) of the term ‘salafi.’ It is either comprehensive and therefore not in need of use for specification, or a group takes hold of it and specifies it is dragged into characterizing, explicitly or implicitly, other groups as different from al-salaf or outside of them (*mukhalif al-salaf aw al-khuruj ʿanhum*). Its use in this restricted [form] is a dangerous innovation (*bidʿa khaṭīra*) because in it is the accusation that

⁴⁸⁵ “Kalimat al-sayyid Ahmed Tawfiq fi nadwa al-salafiyya ... taḥqīq al-maḥmū wa bayan al-maḥmūn,” Ministry of Islamic Affairs, accessed April 28, 2019, www.habous.gov.ma/-/الوزير/6369-كلمة-السيد-أحمد-التوفيق-في-ندوة-السلفية-تحقيق-المفهوم-وبيان-المضمون.html.

the majority is outside (*kharij*) [the tradition], but the exit (*al-khurūj*) [from tradition] does not issue from the majority.⁴⁸⁶

As Tawfiq suggests here, the term has been appropriated by certain groups who confine its meaning and in turn use it to accuse many Muslims of transgressing the tradition.

Understood in its broad sense, however, it is a unifying term that brings together the communities and unites them through practices based in the *minhaj* of the prophet. In elaborating on this *minhaj*, Tawfiq goes on to say:

The practical way (*al-sabīl al-‘amlī*) to what is called an intelligent reading is a humble awakening to the conditions of Muslims and the world in light of the orientation of religion that only comprehends its path in light of the years of history. This reading would empower the *ulama* with the ability that is required to inaugurate unprecedented applied thought that is an example for removing confusion and clearing up confusion in terminology, meanings, and perceptions. The thought no doubt is based on two pillars: guidance of the discernment of coexistence (*tarshīd fiqh al-tasakun*) and spreading the values of purification in the community (*nashr qiyam al-tazkiyya fī al-umma*). The call to the fundamental key is clear to the generations and is none other than the key of accountability (*al-muḥāsiba*), an education for self-accountability (*al-tarbiya ‘ala muḥāsibat al-naḥs*) as the righteous ancestors focused on. This accountability is the benefit of following the salaf, self-accountability, and it is a concept that is not translated into modern language as to the concept of responsibility (*mas’uliyya*), but in its civil and practical dimensions and its lordly and spiritual underpinnings. This clarification is one of the primary requirements for the nation (*al-muwaṭan*) in following the salaf.⁴⁸⁷

The point here is that Tawfiq is calling for a reading of the practical methodology of the ‘salaf’ that entails the cultivation of certain virtue, that is, the virtue of self-accountability (*muḥāsibat al-naḥs*). While it is like the concept of responsibility in some of its civic dimensions, it is not directly translatable and therefore requires some scholarly work. The goal of the conference is to begin that scholarly endeavor. Thus, he is offering a reading of the term Salafi, or encouraging *ulama* to pursue a reading, in which the term Salafi and its associated practices reinforces the relationship between Moroccan religious and national

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

identity through the concept of Moroccan Islam, an Islam that is no longer grounded solely in the four pillars but also in the curriculum of the ‘salaf,’ which he has now been rendered in new terms that make it amenable to civic values through its connection to Sufism. As such, he is calling not only for the cooptation of Salafi figures, but more significantly the cooptation of the term Salafi itself. Moreover, coopting Salafism requires a replacement source for this curriculum of the ‘salaf,’ and Sufism provides this alternative source. This approach reflects the scholar of religion Paul Heck’s assertion that one way Sufism has responded to Salafi critiques is by “Declaring itself to be the true Salafism, i.e., the Islam most in conformity with the beliefs and practices of the first Muslims (*al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*) and the revealed texts of Quran and *sunna*.”⁴⁸⁸ While such an approach to articulate a ‘Sufi Salafism’ on the part of the Moroccan regime challenges the authority of some Salafi movements, from an academic perspective these efforts undercut the clear analytic distinctions between Sufism and Salafism that have pervaded a great deal of scholarship on Islam in the modern world.

vi. International Orientations

In addition to these various efforts to reform and regulate the domestic religious field, the Moroccan state has also worked to export its ‘Moroccan Islam’ as a form of international relations, particularly with Europe and West Africa. It has also relied on its state-defined religious identity to counteract the influence of foreign religious groups in the country, ultimately aiming at the presentation of an alternative global ‘Moroccan Islam’ that serves as an alternative to Iranian-based Shi’ism and Sunni groups like the Muslim Brotherhood. This international orientation began in the early 1980s, with the rise of a number of Islamic

⁴⁸⁸ Heck, *Sufism and Politics*, 16.

organizations that challenged the religious authority of the king. During this time, Hassan II began to recognize the influence of foreign agents in the Moroccan religious field. As Feuer writes, “In a harshly worded speech, Hassan II for the first time attributed the social strife to leftist and foreign agitators sympathetic to Khomeini’s Revolution in Iran and the Muslim Brotherhood (among others).”⁴⁸⁹ Although the influence of foreign groups in the domestic sphere emerged during this time, the use and exportation of religious identity as part of an international strategy of spiritual diplomacy emerged primarily under King Mohammed VI, facilitated by the institutional reforms discussed above.

The shift to an international policy took place in 2013 with Mohammed VI offering to train Malian preachers in Moroccan institutions.⁴⁹⁰ Explaining this invitation, the king said, “Any coordinated international action which does not attach the necessary importance to cultural and religious aspects will be doomed to failure ... The partnership that the kingdom intends to offer in the physical and spiritual reconstruction of Mali is firmly rooted in that philosophy.”⁴⁹¹ In the ensuing years, fourteen additional countries have participated in this imam-training partnership, reflecting a significant openness to this religious cooperation from both European and West African nations. For Wainscott, this willingness to allow Moroccan intervention in religious society is dependent upon three factors: historical legitimacy, preexisting institutional foundations (e.g., Qarawiyyin), and economic cooperation. While this policy may be effective in the context of West Africa, where the

⁴⁸⁹ Feuer, “Religious Establishment,” 53.

⁴⁹⁰ Wainscott writes, “The year 2013 marked a turning point for the Moroccan religious bureaucracy; it is the year that the state extended its project of regulating Islam beyond its borders to the religious spheres of foreign countries, relying on the institutions it had built to regulate its domestic religious market. That year, King Mohammed VI offered to train Malian imams in Moroccan state-run religious institutions. The previous year, Mali had suffered a coup d’etat and a civil war in the north, losing significant territory to jihadists affiliated with al-Qaeda” (Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 207).

⁴⁹¹ Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam*, 207.

power dynamics situate Morocco as a potential leader, and in the context of Europe, where the power dynamics make Morocco a useful ally in the war on terror but not necessarily an economic threat, other nations are much more skeptical and suspicious of Morocco's motives.⁴⁹² In the case of Algeria, for example, Morocco's efforts to use religion to foster ties with West Africa is part of an effort to secure its claim to the Western Sahara, which holds tremendous symbolic and economic value for the Moroccan state. As I will demonstrate with my discussion of the Karkariyya, an order closely associated with the Moroccan monarchy, their practice in Algeria and recruitment of Algerians is seen as an attack on the religious identity of the Algerian nation. Similarly, the 'Alāwiyya, an order of Algerian origin, faced a few challenges in its attempts to take control of and rehabilitate material resources (e.g., *zawāya*) of the order. Thus, while a focus on West Africa and Europe may demonstrate the successes of this international policy, an analysis of its effects on the practice of Sufism across the Morocco-Algeria border reveals some of the obstacles and difficulties that arise from this policy. Lastly, in addition to West African and European orientations that are reflected in specific institutional developments, Morocco has also started to take aim at the religious fields in other countries like Saudi Arabia.

For example, in 2017, King Mohammed VI issued a statement to pilgrims setting out on their journey for the hajj, read by the minister of Islamic Affairs and Religious Endowments Ahmad Tawfiq at the Rabat-Sale airport that stated:

The values of Islam, namely equality, brotherhood, cooperation and solidarity ... Those are the values to which the Moroccan people have been committed throughout the ages, within the framework of the Commandership of the Faithful. Through the

⁴⁹² Discussing an important aspect of the modern world system, Talal Asad writes, "The difficulty with secularism as a doctrine of war and peace in the world is not that it is European ... but that it is closely connected with the rise of a system of capitalist nation-states – mutually suspicious and grossly unequal in power and prosperity, each possessing a collective personality that is differently mediated and therefore differently guaranteed and threatened" (Asad, *Formations*, 7).

bond of the baya, the Moroccan people express their commitment to that Commandership and to the clear, straight path it implies. They are thus committed to the Sunni, Maliki rite, to the Ashari doctrine, and to the moderation, temperance and openness characterizing them.⁴⁹³

In this statement, the king articulates a vision of ‘Moroccan Islam’ that consists in not only a set of values, namely, moderation, openness, equality, but also a theory of legitimate leadership, ‘Commandership of the Faithful,’ and particular legal and theological positions (Maliki and Ashari). The message continues:

Having drawn your attention to your duties with regard to the performance of this great pillar of Islam, I must now remind you of your individual and collective obligations to your beloved country ... Chief among these is your commitment to the immutable, sacred values of the Moroccan State – a nation which is based on moderate Islam and the Sunni doctrine, as represented by the Maliki rite and Ashari doctrine. This is the cornerstone of the Commandership of the Faithful on which the constitutional, democratic and social monarchy is based. I therefore want you to be ambassadors for your country during that great gather and reflect the characteristic, longstanding traditions of Moroccans, namely those of brotherhood, solidarity, moderation and openness.⁴⁹⁴

In addition to repeating the central components of ‘Moroccan Islam,’ the king’s statement attaches tremendous political significance to the performance of the hajj, beseeching the pilgrims to fulfil their obligations to the Moroccan nation and to act as ambassadors for the country’s religious and cultural heritage. This call to the pilgrims, it is important to note, comes immediately after the Mohammed VI’s recognition of the Saudi king, Salman ibn Abd al-Aziz. In structuring the statement this way, ‘Moroccan Islam,’ with its legal, theological, and political perspectives, is juxtaposed to a Saudi Islam with contrasting perspectives. As such, the hajj undertaken by Moroccan citizens becomes not just a religious act, but a political performance of Moroccan identity, grounded in a particular vision of Moroccan

⁴⁹³ “Letter to Moroccan Pilgrims,” Royal Morocco Website, accessed April 13, 2019, <https://www.maroc.ma/en/royal-activities/hm-king-commander-faithful-sends-message-moroccan-pilgrims-heading-islam-holy-0>.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

Islam, that contrasts sharply, or is at least clearly distinguished by, its moderation and openness. Thus, the Moroccan state's construction of Moroccan Islam is both a domestic and international policy, aimed not only at regulation of the domestic religious field, but also at influence over global articulations of Islam. In this way, Morocco's religious policy intentionally presents itself as a 'third pole' to what it presents as Saudi and Iranian Islam. Moreover, this policy is directed toward influencing Islam in Europe, through the establishment of centers for the training of imams in Europe and educating Moroccans abroad, as well as cultivating international relationships with Africa (particularly sub-Saharan West Africa) through a process of spiritual diplomacy. This transnational religious policy, which has taken shape over Mohammed VI's reign, has been the outgrowth of a domestic policy that has sought to combat forms of religious opposition since Morocco's independence. By developing mechanisms for hegemonic control over the domestic religious field, Morocco has also created an institutionalized infrastructure that has, in the eyes of many political analysts, effectively curtailed the influence of extremism and terrorism in the country. In doing so, it has constructed itself as a model for combatting these trends globally. One of the key elements in this overall strategy, domestically and internationally, has been the sponsorship of Sufism as an ethical alternative to other visions of Islam, as well as a shared cultural heritage. This process has also involved the consolidation of religious authority and the production of religion knowledge that has allowed the Moroccan regime to construct an 'authorized' Moroccan Islam capable of being exported.

Writing on the role of Sufism in Morocco's transnational policy and its aim at a 'spiritual security-based integration' between North and West Africa, Salim Hmimnat writes, "Sufi orders should be seen in this process as a mere dependent player, among others, that

emblematised partially Morocco-Africa long-held relations. Their concrete influence remains relative and ultimately controlled, to a great extent, by the regime.”⁴⁹⁵ One of the most prominent Sufi orders that has operated in this manner and represents this shared heritage is the Tijaniyya. Founded in North Africa in the 1780s by Ahmad al-Tijani (d. 1815 CE) whose tomb is located in Fes, Morocco, the Tijaniyya has become the most prominent order in West Africa.⁴⁹⁶ Its spread through West Africa took place over the course of the nineteenth century through multiple mechanisms, but al-Hajj Uman Taal (d. 1864) extended its influence from Mauritania through Senegal, the Gambia, Guinea, Mali, and northern Nigeria. Subsequent developments further extended the reach of the Tijaniyya into Ghana and southern Nigeria, providing an alternative to the Qadiriyya affiliated with the Sokoto Caliphate.

The spread of the Tijaniyya took place against the backdrop of the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate by Usman dan Fodio (d. 1817). While Ahmad al-Tijani based his claims to authority on waking visions of the Prophet, Usman claimed to have a vision of Abd al-Qadir Jilānī that amounted to his initiation into the order. Both leaders framed themselves as renewers (*mujaddid*), but as the founder of a state based on his conceptions of *jihad* and justice, Usman was proclaimed ‘Commander of the Faithful,’ the same title held today by the Moroccan king.⁴⁹⁷ While the Qādiriyya are a highly dispersed order, in contrast to the centralized authority of the Tijaniyya, its historical presence in West Africa facilitates claims to a shared Sufi heritage with Morocco through the contemporary Sufi order – the Qādiriyya

⁴⁹⁵ Hmimnat, “Recalibrating.”

⁴⁹⁶ Patrick Ryan, “The Mystical Theology of Tijani Sufism and its Social Significance in West Africa,” *Journal of Religion in Africa* 30, no. 2 (2000).

⁴⁹⁷ Ibraheem Sulaiman, *A Revolution in History: The Jihad of Usman dan Fodio* (London: Mansell Publishing, 1986).

Būdshīshiyya. As discussed previously, the Būdshīshiyya have played an integral role in the domestic religious policy of the Moroccan state, but its basis in the Qādiriyya also provides it with a spiritual lineage that opens up possibilities for enhancing claims to a shared Sufi heritage that can be politically expedient in the African context.

In addition to Sufi orders, several institutional innovations in Morocco serve as a means to facilitate transnational religious connections with West Africa. Founded in 2013, the African Imams Training Program initially enrolled nearly 500 Imams from Mali, followed by more than ten African countries.⁴⁹⁸ The curriculum of study for these imams was created by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs and was composed of standard Islamic sciences, including Maliki *fiqh*, Sufism, and Ashari theology. It also included lessons in the history and languages of Mali, along with training in issues of human rights, mental health, information sciences, and communication. It was therefore an interdisciplinary curriculum aimed not only at the formation of Islamic scholars, but more importantly at the development of applied skills in order to create individuals who can effectively communicate religious and moral concepts to a popular audience in multiple languages. In this regard, political scientist Salim Hmimnat writes, “... New imams should be aware that their roles are not limited in religious matters, in the narrow sense, but they will be required to connect with people and listen to their grievances and issues, and even go down in the hotbeds of corruption and subversion and see ways to cooperate with the state authorities to tackle these issues.”⁴⁹⁹ Therefore, this religious training project is, in fact, part of a more holistic program that has significant social and political implications.

⁴⁹⁸ Hmimnat, Salim “Recalibrating.” According to his sources, 95% of the first group of imams from Mali were Sufis, with about 70% being Tijani and the rest Qadiri.

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 26.

This project was later taken up under the auspices of the Mohammed VI Foundation of African Ulama founded in 2015 by royal decree. The goals of the foundation were to, “Unify and coordinate the efforts of Muslim *ulama*, in Morocco and other African States, to make known the values of a tolerant Islam, to disseminate them and to reinforce them,” as well as to “Consolidate historical relations between Morocco and the other African States, and foster their development.”⁵⁰⁰ Based in Fes, the foundation hosts conferences and other events that bring together scholars from Africa and Morocco. In December 2017, Ahmad al-Tawfiq gave an opening address to the meeting of the high council of the foundation in which he said:

We also discover that the acceptance of Sufi thought involves the pursuit of perfection, uniting the external of the religion as well as its essence in the spiritual life manifested in moral behavior and love of creation [that is] built on the relationship of love with the creator. Therefore, it is understood that the integration between the work of the *ulama* and the work of the Sufis is for desired perfection, especially in this time in which the curriculum of Sufism is exposed to accusations from those who see it as innovation, even though its origins are in the [Quran] and *Sunna* making it an exemplary treasure that the *ulama* should maintain and protect. Therefore, the Muhammad VI foundation for African Ulama ... is not just an association or expediency, but is the carrier of the moral religious African project springing from the authentic choices of the people of these countries, with implications for material funds that can be invested in existential, global, human, and charitable dimensions, for the service of people of Africa and [as a] statement of the virtues of religiosity in a lifestyle based on the wisdom of Allah in creation. So, the African *ulama* with help from their Moroccan brothers are able to build a sound example of compassion for people.⁵⁰¹

While Ahmed Tawfiq clearly highlights Ash‘ari doctrine and Maliki law as unifying elements of Moroccan and African identity, Sufism is also presented in this context as a moral foundation of a shared religiosity that brings together the external (*ẓāhir*) and internal

⁵⁰⁰ “Dhahir no. 1-11-75 Establishing Foundation of African Scholars,” Ministry of Islamic Affairs, accessed April 13, 2019, www.habous.gov.ma/الظهير-1155-الافارقة-للعلماء-السادس-مؤسسة-محمد-السادس-eng/6739-dahir-establishing-mohammed-vi-foundation-of-african-oulema.html.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid.

(*jawhar*). Furthermore, the support of Sufism is framed as more than a political expediency; it is also, in effect, an expression of popular will insofar as this moral-religious project “springs from the authentic choices of the people of [African] countries.” In other words, the support of Sufism is not a top-down imposition but emerges from the choices and shared cultural heritage of African societies, and in creating institutions and policies that maintain this shared heritage, the Moroccan state is framing itself as merely a servant of the interests of the African people.

One final note regarding Morocco’s African orientation is that this continental religious policy is also closely connected to an economic policy. In this regard, while Morocco had been absent from the African Union since 1984 for its failure to recognize the Western Sahara’s independence, in line with the international community, it recently re-joined the body in 2017. Its admission to the union was dependent upon a recognition of the autonomy of the Western Sahara as an active member of the African Union, but it also enables Morocco to exert a greater influence over one of the organizations that has consistently called for the right to self-determination of the people of the Western Sahara, also known as the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic.⁵⁰² My point here is that Morocco’s transnational religious policy has been a means for cultivating relationships with African countries that have enabled its reentry into the African Union, which in turn bolsters its ability to lay claim to the Western Sahara. Furthermore, since the Western Sahara is a primary source of phosphates for Morocco, a major source of revenue and natural resource

⁵⁰² Morocco’s claim to the Western Sahara, formerly Spanish Sahara, emerged in the wake of Spain’s withdraw from the area and took shape after the 1975 Green March. These events led to a war between the ‘Polisario’ and Morocco between 1975 and 1991, ending in a cease-fire negotiated by the UN. To this day, over 100,000 refugees still live in refugee camps in the region.

for the kingdom, the implications of Morocco's religious policy have clear and direct economic implications.

In addition to its religious interventions in Africa, Morocco has also actively sought to engage with Islam in Europe as well. It did this through the establishment of the Council of Ulama for the Moroccan Community in Europe in 2008. Consisting of eighteen religious scholars, the council is part of an effort to provide religious and spiritual guidance to Moroccans living abroad. This is important not only for fostering ties with Europe through countering extremist trends, something which it also does through its intelligence services, but also for maintaining ties with Moroccans living abroad, many of whom provide significant economic benefit to Morocco. They do this through tourism on the one hand and forms of trade on the other hand, in addition to some more illicit economic activities.⁵⁰³ While the council provides an official means of facilitating these connections, Sufi orders are also an integral part of this strategy. For example, the Būdshīshiyya has an extensive network of disciples throughout Europe, many of whom visit Morocco for the annual mawlid festival. In addition, the 'Alāwiyya have a substantial European following, including European nationals and Moroccan expats, particularly in France. These orders therefore provide another means for spreading Moroccan Islam in Europe and in this way, constitute a key component of the state's strategy.

In summary, through the training of religious leaders in Moroccan institutions, the sponsoring of specific Sufi orders, and the promotion of Moroccan Islam through pilgrimages, the Moroccan state seeks to foster relationships with foreign states. As such, the

⁵⁰³ "It is estimated that there are about 3 million Moroccan expatriates. Each year many of them return for family visits. Their contribution to the Moroccan economy is more important than that of Morocco's large deposits of phosphates and they are a major source of foreign currency" (Maghraoui, "Strengths and Limits," 205).

extension of Morocco's religious policy to international relations constitutes a form of 'spiritual diplomacy.' The stated goal of this policy is to help combat extremism and terrorism, but it also entails certain economic and political benefits. The case of the Western Sahara exemplifies these added political and economic benefits, insofar as using religious ties to bolster friendly relationships with the other nations that have a claim to that territory has resulted in the reacceptance of Moroccan to the African Union (a political benefit) and deflected other claims to that territory, which holds substantial economic value. The fact that their religious policy carries these other benefits is not lost on other nations, such as Algeria, resulting at times in the exacerbation of tensions between the two nations. For the two orders based in the Rif region of Morocco with which I worked, the Karkariyya and 'Alāwiyya, this international policy has at times made it difficult to operate between the two nations despite the fact that they have shared historical and religious ties that have spanned the Morocco-Algeria border.

vii. Summary

The contemporary religious field in Morocco is highly regulated by state institutions, but it still consists of numerous actors. At the top and at the center of this field is the Moroccan king whose religious authority is based on his genealogical status as *sharif* and constitutional status as *amīr al-muminīn*. Connected to the king are three parallel sets of institutions: the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, the Mohammed VI foundations, and the Muhammadan League of Scholars. The Ministry of Islamic Affairs, while being a part of the state governmental structure, is a 'ministry of sovereignty,' meaning that its minister reports directly to the king. As such, it is in many respects dependent for its activities on the king. The Mohammed VI foundations sit outside the governmental structure, but are related to it in

different ways, making them a quasi-governmental set of institutions. These foundations include those aimed at fostering foreign relations, managing sacred texts, and training religious scholars. The Muhammad League of Scholars is also outside the governmental structure, but its general secretary also reports to the king. In addition to the main council, this association is composed of numerous research centers, such as the Imam Junayd Center for Sufi Studies. These research institutes serve as relatively independent think-tanks that help in the articulation of Moroccan Islam. Another part of the religious field is the High Council of Religious Scholars which serves as the main religious authority for issuing legal rulings. Also appointed by the king, its members operate outside the state itself, though its independence from state interests is not always clear. In the field of religious education, the main centers of higher learning include the Qarawiyyin University, Dar al-Hadith al-Hassaniyya, and Islamic Studies departments situated at various universities. These are all subject to curricular oversight from the state but reflect different approaches to producing Islamic scholars.

Moving out of the governmental realm, two of the most prominent actors in the religious field are the *jama'at al-'adl wa al-ihsān* (AWI), as well as the Party of Justice and Development (PJD) and its associated religious wing, the *ḥarikat al-tawhīd wa al-iṣlāḥ* (Movement of Unity and Reform). The AWI is a widely popular illegal organization that rejects the legitimacy of the monarchy and refuses to partake in the political process. The PJD is the ruling 'Islamist' party in Morocco's parliament and reflects a less ideological and more pragmatic approach to political Islam. The Movement of Unity and Reform emerged in conjunction with the PJD, representing its religious ideology and working to implement a vision of social reform based on Islamic values. In addition to these politically oriented

Islamic groups, the ‘Salafi contingent’ (*al-ṭayyar al-salafī*) consists of a variety of scholars who draw on international ‘*jihadi*’ and ‘salafi’ discourses to criticize the Moroccan state and society. The past decade has seen a concerted effort to coopt many of these leaders through processes of deradicalization in the prison system, such as Muhammad Fizazi, but other voices have remained critical. These include, for example, Shaykh Hamad al-Qabah who penned an open letter to the king in 2016, Muhammad Abd al-Wahab Rafiqi, and Hisham al-Temsmani. These figures have joined different political parties but have been unable to form a united front that could legitimately challenge political opponents.

Finally, Sufi orders constitute a considerable contingent in the Moroccan religious field. The most prominent of them is the *tariqa* Qādiriyya Būdshīshiyya, a twentieth-century order based in northern Morocco. In addition to its extensive network of disciples at home and abroad, it has been successful in recruiting younger generations, women, and a variety of social classes. With its relatively flexible reformist approach, it provides an appealing alternative religiosity for many people. Along with the Būdshīshiyya, the Tijaniyya are a substantial order throughout Morocco and West Africa, making it vital to Morocco’s international strategy. Considerable research has been done on these two orders and their roles in Moroccan domestic and foreign policy, so my research focused on two alternative Sufi orders, the Karkariyya and ‘Alāwiyya. Finally, in addition to Sufi orders, a few Sufi-related non-governmental organizations are emerging in Morocco. These include, for example, the International Academic Center for Sufi and Aesthetic Studies, as well as the Imam Shadhili Association for the Renaissance of Sufi Heritage and the Shaykh al-Alawi Association for the Revival of Sufi Heritage.

One of the primary goals of this chapter has been to lay out the various actors that constitute the contemporary religious field in Morocco and how those actors and the field have been constituted historically. In this regard, the aim was to provide a context that situates the Sufi groups discussed in the following chapters relative to state policies and institutions. A second goal of this chapter was to demonstrate the emergence of particular concepts and debates that led to the emphasis on issues of ethical education (*tarbiya*) as a component of Moroccan religious and national identity. The point was to show how the institutional restructuring of the religious field involved not only the explicit sponsorship of Sufism and the building of religious centers of knowledge, but also the use of Sufism to translate civic values into an Islamic idiom that pinned Sufism as an ethical tradition to the moral foundation of modern Moroccan citizenship. However, as I will illustrate later, despite attempts to homogenize or normalize this ethical connection, Sufi groups have continued to display a limited degree of agency in the articulation of their curricula of ethical education (*manāḥij al-tarbiya*).

CHAPTER SIX: WANDERING THROUGH REPENTANCE: SHAYKH MUḤAMMAD FAWZĪ AL-
KARKARĪ AS *WALĪ ALLAH*

i. Introduction

In the next four chapters, I will be presenting aspects of the *tariqa* Karkariyya-Fawziyya, a contemporary branch of the vast *tariqa* Shādhiliyya. Through an analysis of their practices and discourses, I aim to demonstrate how they interpret, cultivate and perform *iḥsān* as a form of public Sufi piety. Specifically, I will outline Shaykh Muhammad Fawzi al-Karkari's 'curriculum of ethical education' (*minhaj al-tarbiya*) in order to show how it brings together two processes, enlightenment (*tanwīr*) and ethical instruction (*tarbiya*). Insofar as these two processes combine to culminate in the attainment of the level of virtuous piety (*iḥsān*), their simultaneous deployment in the disciplining and development of disciples illustrates how *iḥsān* entails the cultivation of social and spiritual virtues. The curriculum of the Karkariyya-Fawziyya therefore demonstrates how, even in a highly 'mystical' Sufi order, the embodiment and performance of *iḥsān* can serve as the 'ethical and spiritual foundation for Moroccan citizenship and identity,' as King Mohammed VI put it earlier (see Chapter One).

In this chapter, I present a brief biographical sketch of Shaykh Fawzi's life, with attention to the ethical principles and practices that shape significant portions of his instructional methods. In doing this, I intend to show how his biography fits into hagiographical narratives characteristic of Moroccan Sufism and draws upon key conceptual elements constitutive of Moroccan sainthood. I then discuss Shaykh Fawzi's spiritual lineage within the Shādhiliyya, tracing it through several generations in order to bring into relief the continuities of his methodology, as well as the ways in which he 'renews' that

spiritual lineage through the adaptation of practices such as the patched cloak (*muraqq'a*) and pilgrimage (*siyāḥa*).⁵⁰⁴ Thus, he is not merely the inheritor of a spiritual lineage that traces itself back to the Prophet Muhammad, but also the renewer (*mujaddid*) of a spiritual and ethical methodology that is applicable in the contemporary world. Moreover, as a spiritual master uniquely ordained to renew the tradition, he is also framed as an axial saint of the age (*quṭb al-zamān*) that is, the contemporary manifestation of the complete human (*al-insān al-kāmil*) and the divine light (*al-nūr*).⁵⁰⁵

Before turning to his biography and the key figures in his Shādhilī lineage, however, I will begin the chapter with a discussion of sainthood in the Islamic tradition generally and in Morocco specifically. My goal in this regard is to review some of the common terms and tropes deployed in the characterization of Islamic saints, as well as to position my work with respect to previous work on the subject. For instance, while some scholars take a psychoanalytic approach in an attempt to determine the ways in which saints conceive of themselves in multiple, ambiguous, and inconsistent ways, sainthood and saints are not my primary object of study.⁵⁰⁶ My questions are different, that is, what types of practices and discourses are deployed in the disciplining of disciples? How do those practices and discourses draw on resources afforded by Sufi and Islamic traditions, while also reformulating them for contemporary conditions? Finally, how is the selective use of tradition and its performance in contemporary Morocco conditioned by the social and

⁵⁰⁴ For the present purposes I translate *siyāḥa* as pilgrimage – see Chapter Nine for more detail. For more information on the *siyāḥa* in traditional Sufi contexts, see Arin Salamah-Qudsi, “Crossing the Desert: *Siyāḥa* and *Safar* as Key Concepts in Early Sufi Literature,” *Journal of Sufi Studies*, no. 2 (2013): 129-47.

⁵⁰⁵ See below for more on the *quṭb al-zamān* and its relation to sainthood in Islam. For more on the ‘complete human,’ otherwise translated as perfect being or universal man, see ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī, *Universal Man [Extracts]*, trans. Titus Burkhardt, Engl., trans. Angela Culme Seymour, Fr (Sherborne: Beshara Publications, 1983[1953]).

⁵⁰⁶ For instance, see Katherine Ewing, *Arguing Sainthood: Modernity, Psychoanalysis and Islam* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

political exigencies of the regime's domestic and international rhetoric and policy? In short, my object of study is not the lifeworld of individual subjects, whether they be saints or disciples, but the 'curriculum of ethical education' (*minhaj al-tarbiya*) that consists of embodied disciplines, collective practices, and public performances that operate to cultivate *ihsān*, interpreted in the Karkariyya as visionary experience obtained through *tanwīr* and a refinement of character acquired through *tarbiya*.

The object of study also has implications for sources and methods in this chapter. For instance, if the goal was to provide an account of Shaykh Fawzi's understanding and formulation of himself as a saint or Sufi master, then it would require personal interviews with him and detailed analysis of his narrative responses. While I did speak with Shaykh Fawzi on several occasions and he generously hosted me in the *zawiya* for long periods of time, I elected not to pursue this path because I was concerned with how he was recognized as a pious exemplar. As I will discuss in the next section, sainthood is a social phenomenon that requires recognition by the other for it to be constituted, and as such my concern was for the ways in which disciples narrated or described Shaykh Fawzi as a model of emulation and piety. As I will try to show, the two common features of his model of piety were his ethical character and his possession of divine light that he shared with others. In this sense, it is not merely his possession of the divine light, but more importantly his willingness to share that divine light, a willingness that emerges from his character, which makes him a complete Sufi master.

The material for this chapter is based on three types of sources. The first is a book written by 'Abd al-Hāfiẓ al-Ribāṭī entitled *The Precious Gem of the Karkariyya in the Spiritual Lineage of the Shādhiliyya (Al-tuḥfa al-karkariyya fī al-tarājim al-shādhiliyya)*.

This book is an edited compilation of a ‘biographical notices’ of prominent members in the spiritual lineage of the Shādhiliyya. One of the main sources for ‘Abd al-Hāfīz’s book is a twentieth-century book written by a former leader of the ‘Alāwiyya, Shaykh ‘Adda bin Tūnis (d. 1952 CE) entitled, *The Splendid Garden: On the Traces of the ‘Alāwiyya (al-rawḍa al-saniyya fī al-ma’āthīr al-‘alāwiyya)*. In order to get a better sense of how disciples saw these previous figures, that is, what stood out to them in these hagiographical narratives, I read the book together with different disciples. I even worked with an Egyptian disciple named Khālīd, a heart surgeon living in Canada, to translate some of them into English for distribution on Facebook. Through these collaborative efforts, I was able to see what was important for them in these texts, rather than relying on what was important to me. I also spoke to ‘Abd al-Hāfīz about his selection of stories, since he included only portions of longer narratives. In doing so, his choices also reflect his perception of what is important in these stories for the *tariqa*, i.e., the themes that emerge out of his selections bring into relief themes that are foundational to the Karkariyya-Fawziyya.

The second source for this chapter is a Belgian disciple of Tūnisian descent, Jamil, who was one of my primary interlocutors throughout my time with the Karkariyya. At the time (in 2018), he was in the process of writing the biography of Shaykh Fawzi, which is now published in an English translation under the title, *At the Service of Destiny: A Biography of the Living Moroccan Sufi Master Shaykh Mohamed Faouzi al-Karkari* (2019). As he had received direct permission from the Shaykh to write the biography, he was an extremely important source of information. Moreover, some of the anecdotes that appear in this chapter are also part of Jamil’s published work, but as this chapter was written before the publication of his book, some of these are accredited to Jamil’s narrations and dialogue with

me personally, rather than citations from his book.⁵⁰⁷ In other words, what I present here is not an ‘official’ biography or an attempt to provide a complete biography of a saint. Rather, I want to provide enough context to aid in understanding the Karkariyya-Fawziyya and Shaykh Fawzi in particular, and most importantly, to show how his life and lineage provide resources for his method of instructing disciples (*minhaj al-tarbiya*).

The third source is informal conversations with numerous disciples from all over the world (e.g., Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, France, Belgium, Yemen, Oman, Ghana, Senegal) who came to the *zawiya* in northeastern Morocco. I would ask them how they heard about the shaykh and the *tariqa*, what appealed to them about it, and if they knew anything about Shaykh Fawzi’s life. Some would be able to narrate a full version of his biography, while others knew only parts or a few anecdotes. Consequently, the repeated narration of the Shaykh’s life, as well as the lives of his predecessors, revealed a set of spiritual practices, character qualities, and powers that, for the disciples, proved Shaykh Fawzi’s saintly status. As I will discuss below, these practices and qualities align with the features of sainthood characteristic of Moroccan Sufism that a variety of scholars have identified.⁵⁰⁸

ii. Sainthood in Islam

Before I discuss the specific features of sainthood in Morocco, I want to discuss sainthood in the Islamic tradition more generally. The term most often translated as ‘saint’ is *walī Allah*, which can alternatively be translated as holy person, friend, protégé, or ally of God.⁵⁰⁹ Many people have debated the issue of translating *walī* (pl. *awliyā*), especially

⁵⁰⁷ For anyone interested in learning more about Shaykh Fawzi, I recommend reading Jamil’s book, which is currently available in French and English.

⁵⁰⁸ See for example, Cornell, *Realm*; Geertz, *Islam Observed*; Kugle, *Rebel*; Eickelman, *Moroccan Islam*.

⁵⁰⁹ Kugle, *Rebel*, 32.

whether or not the Christian bias associated with the idea of a ‘saint’ renders it ineffective or misleading in non-Christian contexts. One example of this difference is that while Catholic saints are only identified as saints after their deaths, Muslim *awliyā*’ may be recognized as saints while still alive, i.e., you can have a living saint. However, as Vincent Cornell notes rhetorically, “If a *walī Allah* looks like a saint, acts like a saint, and speaks like a saint, why not call him a saint?”⁵¹⁰ Therefore, for the purposes of this chapter, I will be using saint to translate *walī Allah* when I do translate it. Sainthood, on the other hand, is a bit more complicated, particularly insofar as it consists of two components: *wilāya* and *walāya*.

Walāya in the context of Sufism refers to a degree of intimacy or closeness to the divine, while *wilāya* refers to a kind of temporal or worldly authority.⁵¹¹ For the *walī Allah*, the former is related to one’s relationship with the divine, while the latter deals with one’s relationship to the social world. What this pair of qualities is generally taken to mean is that saints were seen to possess certain qualities that set them apart from ordinary people, but that those qualities had to be recognized by others. Ahmet Karamustafa puts it succinctly when he writes, “The friends of God ... needed to have public recognition in order to fulfil their salvific function.”⁵¹² The *walī Allah* is therefore both a spiritual and a social construct that, through its close relationship to Allah and worldly authority, is able to mediate between the two realms of life. Karamustafa frames it in this way:

[They] are the instruments through whom God guides humanity to Himself and the springs with which He showers His mercy on His creatures. In a curious turn, the friends of God thus emerge as the friends of His creation. This is because the spiritual elect are the hinges that connect God to his creation; in al-Junayd’s cryptic

⁵¹⁰ Cornell, *Realm*, xxix.

⁵¹¹ John Renard, *Friends of God: Islamic Images of Piety, Commitment, and Servanthood* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

⁵¹² Ahmet Karamustafa, “Walāya According to al-Junayd (d. 298/910),” in *Reason and Inspiration in Islam: Essays in Honour of Hermann Landolt*, ed. Todd Lawson (London: IB Tauris, 2005).

words, ‘in God’s manifesting them they are the hidden witnesses of God’s concealment (*kānū fī ibdā’ihī shawāhid maknūn ikhfā’ihī*).⁵¹³

As a socially embedded phenomenon, sainthood in Islam will also vary depending on the cultural and historical contexts. It is even possible that there are multiple paradigms of sainthood operative in the same context, as Scott Kugle demonstrates in his study of Ahmad Zarruq in early modern Morocco.⁵¹⁴ My first point, however, is that there is a consensus among those who have studied sainthood in Islam that it is highly social, interactive, and performative. Before discussing what some of these social roles were and how they performed sainthood, i.e., what were the characteristics and behaviors that allowed others to recognize one as a saint, I will briefly discuss some of its theoretical features as they connect to Sufi doctrines.

Sainthood is central to practices and principles of Sufism. The relationship between sainthood and Sufism is often traced through Ibn al-‘Arabi (d. 1240 CE) to al-Tirmidhī (d. 910 CE) with the concept of ‘seal of the saints’ (*khatm al-awliyā’*).⁵¹⁵ A primary goal of his theoretical elaboration of sainthood was to articulate the difference between prophethood (*nubuwwa*) and sainthood (*walāya*). In his sweeping analysis of Islamic sainthood, John Renard describes al-Tirmidhī’s distinction in this way: “Prophets receive revelation (*waḥy*) in the presence of a spirit (*rūḥ*) whose task is to signal the terminus of the communication of God’s word (*kalam*) and secure the recipient’s assent. Saints receive an inspiration (*ilhām*) of supernatural speech accompanied by an intense experience of a confirming divine

⁵¹³ Karamustafa, “Walāya,” 70.

⁵¹⁴ “Rather than focusing upon one paradigm of sainthood that developed over a long period in a discrete region, this study will focus on the competition between multiple paradigms of sainthood within a more condensed period of time across linked North African regions” (Kugle, *Rebel*, 33).

⁵¹⁵ Bernard Radtke and John O’Kane, *The Concept of Sainthood in Early Islamic Mysticism* (Surrey: Curzon, 1996).

presence (*sakīna*).”⁵¹⁶ Al-Tirmidhī claims that the nature of the relationship and communication with the divine was different for the saint, developing the beginnings of a cosmological hierarchy in which different types of friends had more or less access to spiritual truths and realities. While Muhammad represented the ‘seal of the prophets,’ other prophets and lesser saints shared in the ability to communicate with the divine to some degree. They therefore create a cosmic hierarchy that connects everything to the divine and sustains existence in its entirety.”⁵¹⁷ These saints are created by God, endowed with certain qualities and a relationship of proximity, in order to make God accessible and present in the world of believers. As such, they serve as points of contact, intermediaries, or ‘hinges’ between the spiritual and the social worlds. Therefore, while distinct from prophets, “All saints share with the prophets the qualities of inspiration, clairvoyance (*firāsa*), and authenticity.”⁵¹⁸

As it developed over time, the theoretical exposition of sainthood acquired precision through the designation of specific numbers and types of saints, especially in the work of Ibn ‘Arabi. Specifically, he theorized the existence of four ‘pillars’ (*awtād*) who were in effect extensions of the Prophet Muhammad in this world, each participating in a share of his role as seal of the prophets. However, since no single one of them inherited this in its entirety, they were at a level below prophecy. These are supplemented by seven ‘substitutes’ (*abdāl*), who were a rank below the *awtād* and were related to the seven heavens. In Ibn ‘Arabi’s formulation, the number of saints at any given time equaled the number of total prophets, with the saints effectively operating as heirs to specific prophets.⁵¹⁹

⁵¹⁶ Renard, *Friends of God*, 261.

⁵¹⁷ Renard writes, “The cosmic hierarchy effectively institutionalizes the notion of intercession, for the Friends are so organized primarily to serve their fellow human beings” (Renard, *Friends of God*, 261).

⁵¹⁸ Renard, *Friends of God*, 261.

⁵¹⁹ Renard writes in this regard, “Ibn ‘Arabi regarded himself, for example, as a disciple of Jesus from early on in his own life” (Renard, *Friends of God*, 261).

Other formulations of this cosmic hierarchy took place after al-Tirmidhī's death. For example, "Hujwiri breaks down the cosmic 'administrative' hierarchy of the Friends into its various already-traditional subcategories: three hundred *akhyar*, forty *abdāl*, seven *abrar*, four *awtād*, three *nuqabā'*, and one at the top of the hierarchy known as the *qutb* or *ghawth*."⁵²⁰ The *qutb al-zamān* (lit. axis) is an 'axial saint' of a given time around which these other saints rotate in their propagation of the cosmos. As we will see in the context of Morocco, these saints operated not only in this metaphysical sense, but also came to be thought of as upholding the Moroccan state. Cornell writes, "It is fully proper to consider the saints and Sufi shaykhs who sustain Morocco with their baraka as the *aqṭāb ad-dawla*, 'axes of the state' ... The greatest source of this spiritual sustenance is the *qutb az-zamān* – the Axis of the Age or paradigmatic saint – who derives his powers alchemically from the light of the Prophet Muhammad."⁵²¹ As an inheritor of the prophetic light and embodiment of the character of the Prophet Muhammad, the axial saint was also considered a manifestation of the perfect person (*al-insān al-kāmil*). This perfect person was in a sense an ideal prototype that was actualized in the Prophet Muhammad, whose perfect character distinguished him from the rest of creation. As an actualization of a perfect ideal, Muhammad became a model of emulation to be embodied by saints.

To be clear, these are all contentious ideas and even in Sufism there is no universal agreement about the theological and theoretical underpinnings of sainthood. Furthermore, given that my work here is aimed at demonstrating aspects of practical Sufism, I do not want to dwell on these speculative and mystical discourses. For the present purposes, I simply wanted to point out some of the theoretical issues that have been at play in defining the *walī*

⁵²⁰ Renard, *Friends of God*, 265.

⁵²¹ Cornell, *Realm*, 271.

Allah. One issue I highlighted was the relationship between sainthood and prophecy and how to differentiate between the two. A second issue was the pairing of *walāya*, understood as relationship to Allah, with *wilāya*, understood as relationship to society. In a straightforward sense, I take a pragmatic approach to sainthood, following a number of the scholars cited above, in which what saints do (or what they are claimed by others to have done) provides the best insight into understanding what sainthood is. As such, I turn now to some of the characteristics and behaviors attributed to saints to demonstrate their role in promoting Sufism as a practical ethical tradition.

Taking this practical approach, John Renard demonstrates how saints functioned as moral examples and models of public virtue through their ethical character and service to the community. In this regard he writes:

A strong sense of social solidarity and service to the community of believers emerges as a fundamental value, and as the context for discerning and evaluating other virtues. Altruism rooted in the basic conviction of God's sovereignty over all humankind nurtures a range of other values ... Even the dourest ascetics are in general keenly aware of the social implications of faith: God alone is truly self-sufficient; all human beings are inherently needy. The ultimate in human generosity, therefore, is sharing one's spiritual and earthly possessions in the conviction that God will supply all of one's own needs and that the Bounteous One intends the divine largesse to be shared with the neediest people.⁵²²

Renard highlights the virtues of altruism (*īthār*), generosity (*karama*), and reliance on God (*tawakkul*) in his description above, recognizing that the saint is devoted to the solidarity and service of the community. The saint, as a moral exemplar and guide, teaches others proper modes of conduct and comportment that facilitate not only spiritual relationships developed through acts of worship, but also social relationships. Renard writes, "Friends of God are generally depicted as models of proper demeanor (*adab*) in their relationships with God and

⁵²² Renard, *Friends of God*, 144.

their fellow human beings... derived their moral authority from their perceived spiritual commitment.”⁵²³ In other words, the saint is contributing to the good of the community through the saint’s own spiritual commitment. As such, the saint embodies public piety while working to elevate both the spiritual and social level of the community in daily life. This public piety includes a number of values and virtues that are characteristic of saints, as Renard notes in his citation of a passage from Qushayri:

According to Qushayri, essential characteristics of saints in their ordinary mode of living include sincerity in devotion and religious duties, affinity to all of creation, patience and acceptance of other people along with prayer on their behalf, a desire to guide people away from vengefulness, simple respect for others and their belongings, and the grace to hold others in high regard and speak only good of them.⁵²⁴

As people engaged in day-to-day life, the piety of saints was characterized in this early formulation by patience, acceptance of others, a desire to guide others, respect for others, and thinking well of others. Being a saint entailed living with these attitudes toward others and performing them for others through social actions. Moreover, insofar as saints are to a large extent considered to be models for the Sufi path, these attitudes toward and interaction with others is a necessary component of their spiritual progress.

On top of their role as ethical exemplar and guide, saints have been characterized by certain types of action and knowledge. Perhaps the most widely discussed in this context are the miraculous deeds (*karāmāt*) performed by the *awliyā*. These may include different sorts of supernatural feats, such as healing, traveling immense distances in short times, producing food without a source, or commanding spirits (*jinn*). They may also take the form of clairvoyance (*firāsa*) or spiritual insight (*baṣira*). In general, these different deeds are taken to exhibit the power (*baraka*) of the saint that has been bestowed by the divine. It is

⁵²³ Renard, *Friends of God*, 145.

⁵²⁴ Renard, *Friends of God*, 266.

important to note two things about these *karamāt*. Firstly, they are clearly distinguished from the miracles of the prophets, which are called *mu'jizāt*. Secondly, they are usually not considered to be performed by the saint, but occur at the dispensation of God, that is, they are a way of generously giving to His creation. This gift, according to Renard, has the function of reinforcing "... people's faith in the veracity of their prophet. In other words, because Friends' marvels are meant to underscore God's revelation through Muhammad, they in no way trespass on prophetic turf."⁵²⁵ In this sense, they are not meant to lead individuals away from revelation toward idolatry (*shirk*), but are signs that reinforce the authority of the saint, who as a saint is able to lead individuals and the community back to that revelation and the message that accompanied it.

Another characteristic common occurrence in the life of a saint is the dream (*manām*) or vision (*ru'ya*). As Renard notes, "As early as the *hadith*, Islamic tradition has acknowledged dreams as a mode of access to higher realities, even regarding them as 'a share in prophecy.' Dreams thus function in the lives of countless ordinary people as a kind of extension of revelation, albeit on a minor scale, beyond the cessation of prophecy."⁵²⁶ Dreams therefore acquired significant status and feature prominently in the hagiographies of saints. They are also common subjects of interpretation and evaluation, with signs for determining the source of dreams and accompanying meanings. Visionary experiences have also played an important role in Sufism, with many saints claiming visionary access to 'unseen realms' (*‘ālam al-ghayb*), the Prophet Muhammad, dead saints, distant people, and perhaps divine realities (e.g., *nūr Allah*, *ṣifāt Allah*).⁵²⁷ The vision of God, or contemplative

⁵²⁵ Renard, *Friends of God*, 272.

⁵²⁶ Renard, *Friends of God*, 277.

⁵²⁷ Nile Green, "The Religious and Cultural Role of Dreams and Visions in Islam," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, no. 13 (2003).

vision, was referred to as *mushāhada* and will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Eight. My goal here is not to provide a full account of visions and dreams in Islam, but merely to point to their presence in hagiographic literature as one among characteristic of saintly behaviors. This is not to say they are restricted to saints, but that the content of their visions often indicate access to forms of spiritual knowledge and awareness that is taken to reflect their status as *walī Allah* as well as affirmations or confirmations of that status.

Finally, the capacity for intercession (*shafāʿ*) on behalf of others features prominently in the description of saints. As intermediaries between God and common people, that is, with a hand in both worlds, saints can effectively ask for things from God on behalf of other people. Again, this is controversial in the tradition because it is argued that it may lead some people to elevate the saint too highly. The power for saints to intercede, even after their death, has also led to the development of practices of visiting tombs and performing rituals in the presence of the shrines. For some, this may be conceived in terms of a physical power, i.e., one that can be transmitted via touch, while for others the saint serves as a kind of satellite facilitating communication with the divine. In any case, as the number of saints grew throughout history, so too did the number of shrines, giving rise to a sacred geography that was connected by networks of pilgrimage (and trade) routes. This enabled the local groups at some of these sites to immerse themselves in global networks, bringing international flows of goods, knowledge, and practice into contact with local practice, producing localized forms of Sufism.

The goal of this section was to provide a brief overview of the concept of the saint (*walī Allah*) and sainthood in Islamic traditions. As I showed, sainthood consists of a spiritual component reflected in the concept of *walāya* (i.e., intimacy with Allah) and a social

component reflected in the concept of *wilāya* (i.e., worldly authority). While this relationship is the subject of much theological and philosophical debate, my aim was to demonstrate the practical aspects of sainthood. In this regard, I highlighted the role of the saint as an ethical exemplar and as a moral guide who works to bring the community together. As guides and teachers, these saints developed distinctive methods for spiritual practice that were passed down by followers. Together, this method and community came to be associated with a particular saint, who would then become the eponymous founder of a ‘Sufi order’ (*tariqa*). In other words, while saints may operate in the lives of non-Sufis in different ways, their relationship to Sufism as a practical tradition is that they developed and taught methods of spiritual instruction and contributed to the formation of distinct communities defined by participation in that method. While many scholars recognize this dual meaning of the term *tariqa*, it is often taken to mean the social institution or the specific community of followers, that is, something akin to a guild. However, in my approach I focus primarily on the *tariqa* as a practical method of instruction, and in order to underscore this pedagogical feature, I use the alternative term *minhaj* (which I translate as curriculum). This distinction emerged out of my fieldwork and readings in contemporary Sufism in Morocco, reflecting an understanding of Moroccan Sufism as a practical ethical tradition.

iii. Sainthood in Moroccan Sufism

In discussing the relationship between sainthood and Sufism, it is necessary to point out that the two are not coextensive. That is, not all Muslim saints are Sufis, nor are all Sufis saints. Nevertheless, saints play different roles in Sufi traditions, thereby making them a separate yet indispensable topic of conversation in Sufism. One context in which this

integral relationship is manifest is in Moroccan Sufism. Thus, for instance, one of the preeminent scholars of sainthood and Sufism in Morocco, Vincent Cornell, argues that sainthood and Sufism have historically constituted Moroccan Islam as a relatively distinct brand of Islam that, although residing on the periphery of the classical and medieval Muslim societies, has nonetheless had a tremendous influence on the development of traditions and thought throughout the Muslim societies. It is for this reason that Cornell titled his book, and many of the Moroccans I worked with, referred to Morocco as the ‘realm of the saints’ (*dār al-awlīyā*), in contrast to the Eastern Muslim societies referred to as the ‘realm of the prophets’ (*dār al-anbīyā*).⁵²⁸

Elaborating on this relationship, Scott Kugle begins from the premise that sainthood is a social phenomenon, i.e., it is vis-à-vis the recognition of others that one is constituted as a saint.⁵²⁹ As such, Kugle says that Sufis perceive individuals as set apart in some way, thereby constructing sainthood through an interactive and social exchange. In this sense, the relationship between saints and Sufis is performative, that is, sainthood emerges through the interactive display of a competency (or set of competencies) for an audience. While I would not necessarily say that all saints are necessarily defined by the perception of self-avowed ‘Sufis,’ given that versions of sainthood may intersect differently with Shi’i traditions or that saints may be evaluated according to norms set by jurists, the point I want to make here is that, in his study of a Moroccan Sufi, Kugle highlights this performative and socially interactive relationship between sainthood and Sufism.⁵³⁰

⁵²⁸ Cornell, *Realm*.

⁵²⁹ Kugle, *Rebel*, 34.

⁵³⁰ As Cornell himself notes, “But the image of sainthood that is found in Moroccan hagiographies reflects more than just the Sufi perspective. For juridically minded ulama, who sometimes rejected the doctrines of Sufism, the saint’s example had to conform to different, more widely accepted traditions” (Cornell, *Realm*, 275).

As a performative and dynamic social construct, sainthood can take on a variety of forms and can be constituted through the display of multiple competencies. While the popular anthropological studies have tended to reduce sainthood in Morocco to a singular cultural concept (e.g., *baraka* in Geertz or *qarāba* in Eickelman), Cornell writes:

But a *walī Allāh* is more than a spiritual trope, just as he or she is more than a figment of the narrative imagination. The *walī Allāh* is also a human being who acts, like other human beings, in several dimensions at once. At one moment the *walī* is a teacher, at another a philosopher, at other times a pure charismatic, at others a politician. There must be a way to express the many-sided reality of Moroccan sainthood without reducing the *walī Allāh* to any single essence.⁵³¹

Thus, one of the primary aims of Cornell's work is to draw on hagiographical resources of Moroccan Sufism to illustrate the multiple dimensions of sainthood. That is, what are the concepts, practices, and characteristics that people use to distinguish saints as set apart from others? Moreover, how do these tropes and types of sainthood relate to different kinds of authority?

As mentioned briefly in the previous section, two qualities of sainthood in Islam that are manifest in Moroccan Sufism are *wilāya* and *walāya*. While the former corresponded to the outward exercise of authority, the latter expressed the inner quality of sainthood. As Cornell writes, "As a lived phenomenon, what most premodern Moroccans saw as sainthood was *wilāya*, not *walāya* ... In Morocco, *walāya* connoted the internal visage (Ar. *bāṭin*) of sainthood [It] thus referred to the metaphysical essence of sainthood as seen from the perspective of Islamic mysticism – an ideological complex whose main function was to articulate and validate the premises of Sufism."⁵³² This internal metaphysical quality of closeness or intimacy with the divine had an outward component that took the form of

⁵³¹ Cornell, *Realm*, xliii.

⁵³² Cornet, *Realm*, 273.

wilāya. As a feature of sainthood apparent to the public and visible in action, it was primarily conceived in terms of power to act.⁵³³ However, while this empowerment allowed for the performance of miraculous deeds (*karamāt*) or other extraordinary feats, the Moroccan saints were set apart by others in terms of their knowledge. Cornell differentiates between what he calls ‘ilm-based (knowledge) and ‘amal-based (action) miracles, with the former involving reading thoughts, fortune telling, or unveiling secrets and the latter involving healing, subduing spirits or taming beasts.⁵³⁴ Both of these types of acts - action and epistemological – performed *wilāya* as a type of worldly power for the public, from which *walāya* as a spiritual quality of the individual was inferred.⁵³⁵

For Cornell, since *walāya* could be inferred through a variety of actions, it is possible to use hagiographic materials to distill ‘types’ or ‘tropes’ of saints in premodern Morocco. In this regard, he posits eight distinct types of exemplary sainthood. My goal here is not to review all of these types, but to highlight some aspects of his analysis that have been influential in framing my own approach to Sufism as an ethical tradition. Specifically, I want to point out the role of the saint as an ethical exemplar (*ṣāliḥ*), the prevalence of social practices in their spiritual programs (e.g., *ṣadaqa*), their possession of unique forms of knowledge and insight (*firāsa* or *baṣīra*), and the ethical qualities that characterize a saintly figure (e.g., *tawāḍū*). As I will demonstrate, these features run through the accounts of

⁵³³ Cornell, *Realm*, 273.

⁵³⁴ Cornell, *Realm*, 275.

⁵³⁵ From a sociological perspective, this discussion also brings together issues of knowledge, power, and authority in premodern Morocco, for as brokers of certain types of knowledge and mediators between multiple domains of life, saints acquired power and the ability to exercise authority. As they theorized this power and authority over successive generations of thinkers, it gradually solidified into a model of saintly authority that framed the saint as the embodiment of the Muhammadan ideal and the descendant of a sharifan lineage. As such, Cornell writes, “The roots of this model of authority are traced to the ‘imitatio Muhammadi’ paradigm of Islamic pietism and Idrisid sharifism, which conceived of the Muhammadan paradigm in genealogical terms ... in Morocco at least, the Muhammadan Way constituted a model of authority in which sainthood and religious leadership were predicated on the assimilation of the Prophetic archetype” (Cornell, *Realm*, xxxviii).

Shaykh Fawzi and his predecessors, thereby demonstrating how Shaykh Fawzi can be situated in continuity with these premodern Moroccan traditions and ideas of sainthood.⁵³⁶

More specifically, my argument is that the type of authority and the way in which Shaykh Fawzi is situated in relation to traditions of Sufism and sainthood in Morocco provide certain possibilities for his pedagogical techniques. For example, his possession of divine light allows the practice of *bayʿa* to be framed as a gift of divine light, which on the one hand displays his generosity and feeds back to reinforce his exceptional status, and on the other hand imposes certain obligations on the disciple. As another example, the fact that his status is not derived from his educational credentials (e.g., graduating from Qarawiyyin) means that certain disciplinary techniques such as a *fatwa* or other scholastic endeavors are not part of his curriculum. In fact, some of the elite disciples who have trained at institutions of higher learning supplement the shaykh in this regard, providing lessons on topics that more closely fit into traditional Islamic sciences. Therefore, by discussing Shaykh Fawzi's biography and his place in a lineage of Moroccan Sufism, my aim is not to reflect on the nature of his sanctity, but to show how certain components of his curriculum are afforded by tradition as well as how he is recognized as a renewer (*mujaddid*) in relation to that tradition.

One type of sainthood identified by Cornell is the *ṣāliḥ* who exercised ethical authority as a moral exemplar.⁵³⁷ Cornell writes, "As an ideal type, the *ṣāliḥ* stood above all

⁵³⁶ By contrast, for example, given the popularity of Geertz's study of Sufism in Morocco, one would find the lack of an emphasis on baraka surprising. As such, if one were to take Geertz's emphasis on baraka as constitutive of Moroccan sainthood, then the current traditions would be discontinuous. My point is simply that a closer reading of that history reveals multiple characteristics that provide an array of resources that can be selectively redeployed in the present in a way that is both continuous and discontinuous.

⁵³⁷ "This chapter has introduced the *ṣāliḥ*, a Qur'anic topos that is used in hagiographical literature to designate the Muslim saint of premodern Morocco. Whether a walī Allah was best known as a martyr, holy warrior, mystic, a miracle worker, or an urban scholar, he or she was seen to personify *ṣalāḥ*, a multifaceted concept that represented the social, or active, dimension of the Islamic ideal. In contrast to most models of Muslim sainthood discussed in the Introduction, which have highlighted the metaphysical or structural aspects of the phenomenon, the *ṣāliḥ/ṣalāḥ* paradigm brings into focus the ethical and praxis-oriented understanding of

for social virtue (*ṣalāḥ*) ... As the prototypical walī Allāh, the ṣāliḥ exemplified Moroccan sainthood in its most basic form. Every Moroccan saint was a ṣāliḥ in some way.”⁵³⁸ Thus, perhaps the most fundamental feature of Moroccan sainthood was not an other-worldly persona, but a socially embedded ethical commitment to embody the example of the prophets, specifically the Prophet Muhammad, in all aspects of life. As Cornell notes, the ṣāliḥ was characterized by a state of scrupulousness and purity (*wara*'), the virtue of altruism (*īthār*), and the performance of advice (*naṣīḥa*) and ‘commanding the good and forbidding the evil’ (*ḥisba*).⁵³⁹ Moreover, in his quantitative analysis, Cornell shows that charity (*ṣadaqa*) and humility (*tawādū*') are practices from which sainthood is inferred in fourteen and twenty-five percent, respectively. In the cases of the ‘great saints,’ charity in fact rises to the third most frequent spiritual practice cited in demonstrating saintliness. As for criteria used to evaluate saints, ethical guidance (*ḥisba*) and charity (*ṣadaqa*) both appear prominently in hagiographical accounts (eighteen and fourteen percent, respectively).⁵⁴⁰ Sainthood therefore manifests through various ethical qualities and practices, in addition to the oft-cited miraculous deeds.

holiness in the Islamic West ... a person’s knowledge of mystical doctrine mattered little if his or her behavior did not correspond to the ideal of the ‘abd ṣāliḥ, the socially conscious slave of God” (Cornell, *Realm*, 30).

⁵³⁸ Cornell, *Realm*, 277-8.

⁵³⁹ “Consequently, the ṣāliḥ was frequently associated with the Sufi traditions of futuwwa and the ṭarīq al-malāma, the path of blame. The relationship between the doctrines of futuwwa [i.e., *ādāb*] can be seen in the attention given by the Moroccan saint to the concept of ethical purity (*wara*'). It can also be seen in the saint’s view of merit as based on altruism (*īthār*) and in the saint’s mediation on behalf of the unempowered. The ṣāliḥ’s relationship with the malāmatiyya tradition can be seen in the saint’s tendency to act as a critic (*nāṣiḥ*) and in his or her advocacy of the Qur’anic injunction to ‘command the good and forbid the evil’” (Cornell, *Realm*, 277-8).

⁵⁴⁰ A brief observation is necessary here. Charity (*ṣadaqa*) is listed as both a ‘spiritual practice’ and ‘criteria of special status,’ and the fact that the percentage is the same in both cases tells me that it is in fact referencing the same passages in the hagiography. This is actually crucial to my understanding of *ṣadaqa* not only as the practice of charity, but also as a virtue or aspect of one’s character. Thus, the act of giving charity can be used to infer the ethical character of an individual, a character in which charity as a virtue plays an important role. In other words, charity is not an external act separated from an internal state, but a holistic way of being that involves the correlation of inner and outer states.

The types of miraculous deeds (*karāmāt*) cited in the literature included a wide range of actions from mind reading and spiritual insight to visionary experiences and commanding spirits (*jinn*). Cornell suggests in this regard that the miracles can be divided into two categories: epistemological and ‘power-miracles,’ with the former including modalities of spiritual perception such as foretelling the future (*firāsa*) and uncovering hidden secrets (*baṣīra*).⁵⁴¹ In other words, the miraculous deeds of saints in the period prior to the mid-fifteenth century related primarily to forms of spiritual perception, awareness, and knowledge. Finally, in all of these early hagiographical texts there is one element that is surprisingly lacking, *sharifism*. Sharifan lineage, i.e., descent from the Prophet Muhammad’s family, was largely irrelevant in the evaluation of Moroccan sainthood prior to the fifteenth century. As Cornell writes in critique of earlier anthropological models of Moroccan sainthood:

How can a paradigm of sainthood (such as that used by Gellner and Geertz) which is dependent upon sharifian status have much heuristic value when descent from the Prophet is statistically insignificant in the very period in which the paradigms of Moroccan sainthood were formulated? It will be shown ... that the rise of sharifism, which began in earnest after the fifteenth century, was not inherent to Moroccan Islam, but was due to a combination of social and political factors. These included the increased Arabization of rural society following the Banū Hilāl and Banū Ma‘qil migrations at the end of the Almohad period, the pro-sharifian propaganda of the Idrisids, and an attempt by the Marinid dynasty to co-opt the sharifs of Morocco into their own circle.⁵⁴²

In other words, descent from the Prophet Muhammad emerged after the fifteenth century with the rise of the Jazuli Sufi movement that disseminated *sharifism* as a political ideology that came to give Morocco a distinctively Islamic identity.⁵⁴³ Moroccan Islam is a

⁵⁴¹ Cornél, *Realm*, 115.

⁵⁴² Cornél, *Realm*, 114.

⁵⁴³ He writes that the Jazuli, “promoted the political ideology of sharifism and helped to define Morocco as a country with a unique Islamic identity” (Cornél, *Realm*, xxxviii).

historically constituted and contingent concept that has been and continues to be subject to change based on social and political circumstances. As such, it continues to be reformulated by contemporary political and religious authorities in Morocco in ways that adapt it to the exigencies of domestic and global publics.

My point in discussing Cornell's ideal type of the *ṣālih* as an ethical authority and his quantitative analysis of spiritual practices, qualities, and deeds is to demonstrate the pairing of social and spiritual virtues in the paradigmatic Moroccan saint. While the saint possesses the spiritual qualities of awareness and insight, the saint also performs a number of social practices (e.g., *ṣadaqa*, *ḥisba*, *naṣīḥa*) that tie the saint to the community and display ethical qualities such as altruism (*īthār*), humility (*tawādū*), and commitment to social justice. Therefore, rather than being an isolated mystic confined to realms of abstract speculative theology and philosophy, the Moroccan saint was a social embedded moral exemplar that embodied and taught the virtues and character idealized in the Prophet Muhammad. This teaching was called *tarbiya*, and thus the saint was also a *shaykh al-tarbiya*. According to Cornell in his description of the famous and paradigmatic medieval Moroccan saint Abu Madyan, "[He] saw his primary role to be that of teaching master, or *shaykh at-tarbiya*. This meant that he concentrated his efforts on the 'spiritual tutelage' (*tarbiya*) of his disciples, supervising their personal development (*ifāda*), imparting religious education, stimulating the practice of piety, and attending to God both inwardly and outwardly."⁵⁴⁴ As such, the type of sainthood reflected in Cornell's analysis of hagiographical material produced by Sufis in this period shows a concern for Sufism as a practical ethical tradition that is performed through an array of social practices.

⁵⁴⁴ Vincent Cornell, *The Way of Abū Madyan* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1996): 13-14.

While teaching the character of the Prophet Muhammad was practiced prior to the rise of the Jazuliyya in the fifteen and sixteenth centuries, it was in this period that this practice acquired a theoretical basis in the idea of the Muhammadan Way (*ṭarīq al-Muḥammadi*). As a practice of embodying the character of the Prophet Muhammad as a ‘beautiful example’ (*uswa ḥasana*), the Muhammadan Way was a means of spiritual development that entailed following the Prophetic example in all aspects of life.⁵⁴⁵ The spiritual method developed and deployed by the Sufis was considered to be based on this Prophetic archetype and therefore progression along the Sufi path was linked to the cultivation of the Prophetic character.⁵⁴⁶ Although the practice of imitating the Prophet Muhammad does get linked to metaphysical discourses about ‘Muhammadan Reality,’ ‘Muhammadan Image,’ ‘Muhammadan Light,’ and ‘Annihilation in the Messenger,’ my point here is to illustrate this ethical core to Sufi practice. In this regard, the Sufi path is a practical embodiment of the character and morals (*akhlāq*) and proper modes of conduct and comportment (*ādāb*) that are exemplified in the Prophet Muhammad. Moreover, as either inheritors or imitations of that prophetic *akhlāq* and *ādāb*, saints in Moroccan Sufism reflect a concern for Sufism as a practical and applied tradition of ethical development.

In the Moroccan context, the Muhammadan archetype developed an elective affinity with descent from the Prophet Muhammad through the Idrisid dynasty, with descent being linked to the inheritance of his charismatic persona.⁵⁴⁷ Over time, these relationships

⁵⁴⁵ Cornell also refers to this using his term imitation Muhammadi. Differentiating imitatio Muhammadi from imitatio Christi in Christianity, Cornell writes, “So conceived, the imitatio Muhammadi was different from the imitatio Christi of Christianity, in that all aspects of the Prophet’s perfected yet still human personality were included in the paradigm instead of the more limited attributes of forbearance, suffering, and forgiveness that provided the model for Christian piety” (Cornell, *Realm*, 199).

⁵⁴⁶ Cornell, *Realm*, 199.

⁵⁴⁷ “In the twelfth century C.E., the Sufi version of the imitatio Muhammadi became identified with a regional cult of the Prophet’s family in northern Morocco ... This practice did not arise by itself but was the result of a

between sainthood, the Muhammadan Way, prophetic lineage, and religious-political authority were given a theoretical grounding, particularly in the writings of the Jazuli's followers, such as al-Ghazwānī. Cornell writes, "In Morocco at least, the Muhammadan Way constituted a model of authority in which sainthood and religious leadership were predicated on the assimilation of the Prophetic archetype."⁵⁴⁸ However, while this particular set of relationships was certainly localized to Morocco, it was not a radical departure but rather a localization of a global Islamic norm that considered the Prophetic example as an ideal path for spiritual and social development of the individual and the community as a whole.⁵⁴⁹ In this regard, the Prophetic example can be seen as a form of public piety, and insofar as the Sufi path attempts to embody that Prophetic example, the goal of the Sufi path is the inculcation of pious habits and virtues through which the individual's spiritual progress is tied to the common good of the community.

Given this focus on the Prophetic way of life as exemplified in the *sunna*, it is also necessary to comment briefly on the relationship between Sufism in Morocco and Islamic *sharia*. As a practical tradition concerned with conduct in everyday life, Moroccan Sufism placed significant emphasis on adherence to the norms of Islamic (Maliki) legal discourses. For instance, the *malāmatī* traditions in the Eastern Islamic lands tended to involve intentional acts of violating social norms in order to elicit rebuke, experience blame and shame, and ultimately to rid oneself of attachment to worldly goods and one's ego. However, in Western Islamic lands, this tradition was largely reformulated as a type of

promotional campaign conducted by the Idrisids, the descendants of the first ruler of a united Moroccan state, 'Mūlāy' Idrīs ibn 'Abdallāh" (Cornell, *Realm*, 200).

⁵⁴⁸ Cornet, *Realm*, xxxix.

⁵⁴⁹ Cornell argues, "Far from introducing an unorthodox model of Islamic leadership as Bel surmised, the image of al-Jazūlī as a walī Allah was modeled on the paradigm of the Prophet Muḥammad. Thus, the collective recollection of his sainthood reflected not just local norms but a more universal 'tropics of prophethood' that pertained to Islam as a whole" (Cornell, *Realm*, xxxvi).

political criticism and acting as moral censure in society.⁵⁵⁰ Adherence to the norms of Islamic legal rulings was therefore characteristic of most manifestations of Moroccan Sufism, a feature that is seen, for example, in Scott Kugle's analysis of the early modern Sufi Ahmad Zarruq.

In his study of this influential yet controversial figure, Kugle refers to Zarruq as a 'juridical Sufi' that integrates *sharia* and Sufism to provide vision of social reform for society through a critique of religious and political leaders.⁵⁵¹ In this sense, Zarruq was a kind of 'conservative rebel,' in Kugle's phrase, who drew upon previous traditions to critique the state of sainthood and Sufism in his time, a period in which Sufi groups like the Jazuliyya emerged as prominent political movements. Describing the figure of the 'conservative rebel,' Kugle writes, "They rebel against the social and political forces that are seemingly dominant in their community. Yet they rebel by turning to the past, to restore ideals from their community's tradition, ideas that will address their society's current crisis."⁵⁵² For Zarruq, the authority of sainthood should be based in juridical training (*fiqh*) as it is the trained jurist who has the capacity to effectively and properly criticize the practices of the community, i.e., to operate as a social and political critic.

My point in mentioning Kugle's treatment of Zarruq is not to suggest that Shaykh Fawzi constitutes a 'juridical Sufi.' Rather, I wanted to emphasize two points. Firstly, a consideration for Islamic jurisprudence and an attempt to articulate practice in relation to the norms of Islamic law have been characteristic of Moroccan Sufism. This close relationship between Sufism and jurisprudence was reflected in the phrase by Imam Malik cited

⁵⁵⁰ "An attitude of political dissent was more characteristic of the Moroccan *malāmatiyya* than was antinomianism, a rejection of the law" (Cornell, *Realm*, 278).

⁵⁵¹ Kugle, *Rebel*, 36.

⁵⁵² Kugle, *Rebel*, 26.

numerous times by my interlocutors in Morocco: ‘Whosoever becomes a Sufi without studying jurisprudence will be a heretic; whosoever studies jurisprudence without Sufism will be corrupt; and, whosoever integrates the two will achieve [awareness of] spiritual reality (*man taṣawwafa wa lam yatafaqaha f-qad tazandaq; wa man tafaqaha wa lam yataṣawwaf f-qad tafasaq; wa man yajma ‘a baynhuma f-qad tahaqqaq.*) Therefore, the appearance of defenses and justifications should not necessarily be read solely as a product of modern Islamic influences. The choice of sources in defense of certain practices reveals that Shaykh Fawzi situates himself in conversation with certain modern Salafi discourses.

Secondly, I want to highlight again the role of the Moroccan saint as a social critic, understood in the sense of one who rebukes others while also encouraging proper norms through example and education. While not necessarily a political critic, Shaykh Fawzi is critical of the educational system in Morocco, particularly its failure to provide ethical and religious guidance for society. Thus, the applied curriculum of ethical education (*minhaj al-tarbiya*) that he has formulated and implemented, which in many ways contrasts with the ‘bureaucratic model’ discussed in the previous chapters, is itself a manifestation of his role as social critic. Therefore, while not necessarily a juridical Sufi in the sense of Zarruq, as a renewer (*mujaddid*) of a spiritual methodology that critiques current methods of education in the country, Shaykh Fawzi is a conservative rebel that diagnoses the causes of social crises and offers advice for overcoming those crises. In his diagnosis, the lack of proper religious education and role models has produced a moral vacuum in society, and in order to remedy this problem plaguing society individuals must be given proper instruction (*tarbiya*), which is derived by ‘turning to the past.’ As such, the ethical and spiritual development of the

individual is related back to the common good, and in that regard the *minhaj al-tarbiya* of Shaykh Fawzi aims at the cultivation of a public piety.

In this section, I presented features of Moroccan sainthood that have been influential in my own approach to Sufism as an ethical tradition and as a performance of public piety. My goal was to highlight how sainthood was constructed through the recognition of a variety of social and spiritual practices and qualities. Insofar as the saint (*walī Allah*) served as an ethical exemplar whose authority was constituted through the embodiment of prophetic character and tied to the ethical education of the community, these figures have been integral to Morocco's religious, moral, and political life throughout its history. Thus, in addition to being 'extraordinary' figures known for their miraculous deeds for example, saints were also 'ordinary' figures invested in the moral well-being of their communities.

iv. Repentance and Return: Biographical Sketch of Shaykh Fawzi

Muḥammad Fawzī al-Karkarī al-Hasanī al-Idrisī (henceforth referred to as Shaykh Fawzi) was born in 1973 to a religious family with prophetic descent in the city of Temsmān in the Rif region of northern Morocco. In describing his early years, his biography states, "Already in his youth he was characterized by seriousness in all his affairs. Neither idleness nor laziness approached or swirled around him."⁵⁵³ He studied at primary school in al-Hoceima, then went to Taza for secondary school. At the age of nineteen, he finished his studies and returned to his family before spending ten years on an isolated journey. The biography continues, "Allah willed that he stop his studies and opened for him the school of the Great Universe (*al-kawn al-kūbrā*), until he was qualified to carry the burdens of

⁵⁵³ "Shaykh al-tariqa: tarjamat al-shaykh," Karkariya Website, accessed October 23, 2019, ar.karkariya.com/شيخ-الطريقة/.

walāya.”⁵⁵⁴ Leaving his family and friends, he wandered the lands of Morocco on foot, visiting numerous cities. When he finished his period of divestment of the self (*tajrīd*), he returned to his family as someone wholly transformed by the hand of God.

Jamil, one of my key interlocutors in the *tariqa*, shared with me the following version of the events leading up to this ten-year journey.⁵⁵⁵ As a teenager, Shaykh Fawzi began working in a fish factory and selling in the markets to help his family, but during that he ‘felt the world close in around him’ and began think regularly about his own death. Jamil said he heard the Shaykh say:

Before becoming a Shaykh, I committed a sin more serious than all your sins together. In our family prayer and dhikr were common ... but there came a period when the world was too constricted for me. That day, I sent my brother Abdullah to buy me a juice and a hundred capsules of poison ... only one of those capsules could kill three dogs. That day, I took the hundred capsules ... when I took [them] I knew that by dying my place would be in Hell. I knew that. As the *hadith* said, I would be condemned to repeat my gesture perpetually in Hell. I knew it. I still remember that when I took the poison, the call for ‘aṣr prayer sounded. I then went to the mosque, the poison in the belly, and I prayed ... I swear, until today, I have not prayed an equal prayer. Every prostration was as if I was not going to stand up again and when I did, I saw in front of me the name Allah. I was waiting for death and Hell. I was only asking Allah not to disturb prayer with my death and indeed, I had time to pray. When I came out of the mosque, I fell.

After collapsing, Shaykh Fawzi spent three days unconscious during which time he received the following vision from God: “I saw myself in some kind of court. In front of me there were several men, they appeared to be judges. I saw them discuss my case until one of them turned in my direction gripping his gavel, striking it with strength, saying “Muḥammad Fawzī al-Karkarī is sentenced to ten years in prison.” He woke up from his coma with the Friday call to prayer and he went to pray. No trace of the poison remained, as if he had never

⁵⁵⁴ “Shaykh al-tariqa.”

⁵⁵⁵ Jamil has since completed a book on the biography of the Shaykh (see introduction to chapter).

taken the pills. After a few days, his spiritual state became so intense that he retreated from his family and traveled across Morocco again.

Shaykh Fawzi went to Nador with a disciple where he bought a ticket to take him as far as possible with the money he had, which was to Taza. From there he continued alone to Fes on foot where he stayed for a while. After Fes, he walked east to Oujda where he spent three months staying in the neighborhood where the *zawiya* in that city is currently located. After that he went north to al-Hoceima, then on to Oued Laou, walking the whole time, sleeping under trees and eating plants, herbs, and even garbage when necessary.⁵⁵⁶ Shaykh Fawzi continued on to Tetouan, Tangier, Fes, then Marrakech where he spent a couple days. He traveled throughout that region, eventually reaching Mahbes, a small military encampment in the Western Sahara on the Algerian border, eventually returning north through Rabat and other towns and villages in the area. This was how he spent the first year on his journey of repentance.

During the second year, he visited forty-four shrines throughout Morocco, sleeping in the mausoleums and graveyards. One in which he spent the longest time was Sidi Mūlāy ‘Abdallah Amghār.⁵⁵⁷ Others included Shaykh al-Kamel (Meknes), Sīdī Ali bin Hamdoush, Sīdī Idrīs Zerhoun, and Mūlāy Idrīs al-Akbar (Fes). He visited them more than once, some of them even thirty times, and stayed for varying lengths in all of them. This is why the Shaykh says, according to Jamil, “When a disciple tells us that he comes from such-and-such a city, I know who he is, because I have known the characteristics of the inhabitants of these cities during my *siyāḥa* ... [that is] if the inhabitants are stingy or generous, sweet or violent.”

⁵⁵⁶ In many cases, Shaykh Fawzi speaks in the first-person plural (we) rather than first-person singular. For purposes of clarity, I use the first-person singular.

⁵⁵⁷ He was the founder of the Sanhajiyya in the 11th century CE near present-day El-Jadida.

During this time, he wandered from shrine to shrine, staying wherever he could find a spot while relying completely on God for sustenance and safety.⁵⁵⁸ In describing his wandering during that time, Shaykh Fawzi said to Jamil, “I was serving destiny without knowing [it]. If I called then Allah answered my call, if I requested [something] then I received [it]. Creation encircled me everywhere I settled.” In addition, along his journey he encountered numerous trials. For example, he had a job and was accused of theft by one of the other employees. The police came to interrogate him and just before being arrested, a man recognized him and testified in his favor saying, “Of all men on earth, he is the only one who cannot steal, leave him be.” It was revealed later that the one who accused him was in fact the one guilty of theft and he was later imprisoned for that.

According to Jamil that was how he wandered during that time: “He traveled without knowing the design of Allah. Allah wanted him to accompany all His creatures, whether they were pious or sinners, [in order to] share in their states and their lives so that he may become the teacher of states and *shaykh murabbī* [one who performs *tarbiya*].” As such, he accompanied vagrants, alcoholics, and addicts, but despite keeping this company he was not touched by their sins and was steadfast in prayer. Paraphrasing the shaykh’s own words, Jamil said, “How can I guide the sinner if I have never known his problems? How can I guide the criminal and the addict, if I have never been exposed to them, if our entire life has been seized in [academic] sciences (‘*alūm*)? In this way, Allah has perfected my education (*tarbiya*).”

Therefore, Shaykh Fawzi’s hagiographic journey is framed in retrospect in the context of *tarbiya*, that is, ethical cultivation and instruction. The experience of living with

⁵⁵⁸ “Shaykh al-tariqa.”

others, regardless of their state as sinner or pious Muslim, and living with creation and nature, is what according to both him and his disciples, bestowed upon him the ability to ‘teach the states’ and become a *shaykh murabbī*. His authority is certainly grounded in his visions, knowledge, and possession of the divine light, but in the way this story is narrated, his sainthood is constructed through the establishment of him as a shaykh who has been ethically instructed by God through direct and painstaking experiences with the world. So, while these ten years frame a period of ‘isolation’ from his family and loved ones, it is not lived in isolation from the world. In fact, he contrasts his own ‘isolation’ with the isolation of being absorbed in books and sciences, saying that the latter is detached from the lives of the people of the world, thereby reversing the relationship between a scholar whose knowledge is based on books and the saint whose knowledge is based on experience with the world. My point is that even in a hagiographical narrative that is framed by conceptions of divestment of the self through abandonment of attachments (*tajrīd*) and isolation (‘*uzla*), there still exists an underlying theme of ethical engagement with the world, and it is this ethical engagement with the multiplicity of God’s creation that forms a basis for Shaykh Fawzi’s vision of an ethical community.

Returning to the narrative, on *‘īd al-fiṭr* when Shaykh Fawzi returned from his journey to visit his uncle Mūlāy al-Hasan, the leader of the *tariqa* at that time. Shaykh Fawzi said about this night:

They were discussing that night the attributes of Allah and the Beautiful Names, and I was listening with passion to the dialogue between him and those in attendance. [His words] influenced me tremendously and after the group dispersed, I asked him: ‘My uncle I want to repent, will Allah accept my repentance?’ The Shaykh was taken by the tenderness of my state and tried to calm the awe in me, seeing the veracity of my intention and the sincerity of my purpose and request. He asked me to return to al-Aroui and wait for his arrival so he could teach me the *wird*.

But Shaykh Fawzi was unable to extinguish the fire of repentance that burned inside him. He looked over his things but there was nothing that would help him on his path to the divine, so he donated his clothes, burned the rest of his things, and shaved his head and beard, beginning his second journey once again in a state of complete divestment (*tajrīd*).

He headed toward Temsmān, walking barefoot, weeping, and witnessing the light of the beloved, though at the time he did not know its meaning. When he arrived at his uncle's *zawiya*, Shaykh Fawzi said to him: "Permit me to take the *wird* and enter *khalwa*."⁵⁵⁹ His uncle responded, "Get away from me. Who told you I guide (*usallik*) enraptured persons (*majānīn*)?" Shaykh Fawzi repeated the request while expressing his sincerity, and as Shaykh Fawzi rose to leave his uncle asked him if he was going home. He replied, "No, because I left seeking closeness to Allah, so I will wander in the world (*al-mulk*) because Allah is among the rocks and trees. Allah is in every place."⁵⁶⁰ With that, his uncle ordered his daughter to prepare the *khalwa* for him. According to the biography, Shaykh Fawzi said in relation to this day, "Repentance was my intention, but it was Allah who completed His goal and blessed me with His grace. I saw the most wondrous of wonders in my blessed *khalwa* [retreat] on Thursday, November 18, 2004. It was the greatest revelation (*al-faṭḥ al-akbār*) ... lasting until Friday when He gifted and taught me His great name, the Most Powerful."⁵⁶¹ As the biography goes on to say, all of this was due to the sincerity of his intention, for he had requested repentance from God and whosoever requests repentance also requests contentment (*riḍā*) and whosoever requests contentment finds it, and whosoever finds it achieves the greatest degree of love. The shaykh remained in the company (*ṣuḥba*) of

⁵⁵⁹ "Shaykh al-tariqa."

⁵⁶⁰ "Shaykh al-tariqa."

⁵⁶¹ "Shaykh al-tariqa."

his uncle for about two years, being educated through proper conduct and comportment (*ādāb*), reasoning (*ijtihād*), *dhikr*, and lessons (*mudhākara*) until the passing of Mūlāy al-Hassan.

The results of these two periods of *tarbiya*, that is, his *siyāḥa* and his *ṣuḥba* with the shaykh, are captured in the biographical presentations of the ethical qualities of the shaykh. In describing his ethical qualities, ‘Abd al-Hāfiẓ includes the virtues of modesty, service, generosity, mercy, love, patience, loyalty, and honesty. To capture these virtues, he notes a number of accounts from his own memory as well as those narrated by other disciples. As is common with descriptions of the ethical character of shaykhs, the actions described take the form of everyday actions, rather than solely extraordinary events. To illustrate his modesty, ‘Abd al-Hāfiẓ recalls a story from one of the disciples:

One day he went out with our Shaykh who took from the ground a piece of bread dumped on the street. When they got in the car, he saw the Shaykh eat it without disliking it. Like that, we knew that he was blessed ... it is from his modesty that you find him working with people [of all sorts] and talking with young boys as he talks with older men. He consults with anyone, regardless of whether or not they are beneath him in knowledge and wisdom. All of this is a gift from [Allah] who saves with His knowledge and overflowing His mercy, for as spiritual knowledge and awareness (*maʿrifa*) of Allah increases, so too does modesty increase.⁵⁶²

Here, the narrator addresses the connection between spiritual knowledge (*maʿrifa*) and the ethical virtue of modesty (*tawāḍūʿ*). The two processes of spiritual and ethical cultivation are intimately connected in this passage.

‘Abd al-Hāfiẓ moves on to discuss the generosity of the shaykh. Scott Kugle, in his work on Ahmad Zarruq, suggests that generosity serves as a defining characteristic of Moroccan sainthood through his analysis of the ways in which Zarruq challenged

⁵⁶² ‘Abd al-Hāfiẓ al-Rabāʿī, *Al-tuḥfa al-karkariyya fī al-tarājim al-shādhiliyya* (Casablanca: Matbaʿa al-ṣinaʿa al-kitāb, 2016): 196.

predominant conceptions of the relationship between sainthood and generosity in early modern Morocco. He writes, “Generosity was the contested moral value in Morocco, around which real virtue or its hypocritical counterpart revolved ... The authority of sainthood was intimately connected to the virtue of generosity and the accusation of its opposite. The importance of generosity highlights an aspect of *baraka* that is underdeveloped by anthropologists, who treat it as the power of command.”⁵⁶³ To summarize the issue, in Ahmad Zarruq’s reformist vision, ‘generosity’ was used by saints in his time to develop a social following and thereby gain power and consequently represented an insincere practice and the ethical corruption of sainthood. The other saints, that is, those being critiqued by Zarruq, in turn critiqued him for his lack of generosity and in doing so challenged his position as saint. What I want to point to is that in addition to generosity being a central virtue of Moroccan sainthood, there are multiple manifestations of this virtue. ‘Abd al-Hāfīz writes, “There is no Shaykh except whosoever practices largesse (*jawad*) with his secret and there is no shaykh except whosoever generously shares his light. This is true generosity, since anyone who shares the light gives that which will remain, while anyone who gives from the pleasures of this world gives only that which will fade.”⁵⁶⁴ Therefore, this generosity may take the form of something akin to charity (*ṣadaqa*), as we will see in the next account, but it also takes the form of sharing knowledge or divine light.⁵⁶⁵ In this context, *baraka*, that notorious cultural concept that is supposed to underpin authoritarianism in Morocco, functions less along an axis of command and more along an axis of the gift. As a gift in this

⁵⁶³ Kugle, *Rebel*, 195-6.

⁵⁶⁴ Al-Rabāfī, *Al-tuḥfa*, 196.

⁵⁶⁵ I will discuss this in more detail in Chapter Fourteen through the notion of ‘ethical giving.’ In this case I want to note the emphasis on sharing (rather than strictly giving) and the immateriality of ‘the gift’ as permanent (i.e., not exchanged).

sense and drawing on Mauss's exploration of practices of gift giving, *baraka* entails relationships of reciprocal responsibility and obligation, making the master and disciple relationship not one of command and obedience, but one of intimate companionship, that is, a style of friendship. Framing it as such does not mean that the shaykh does not give orders and instructions to his disciples, but that the way those orders are followed is not so much straightforward submission. This relationship demonstrates that the generosity of the shaykh is connected to the development of willing obedience in the disciple, a willing obedience that emerges out of love for the shaykh, a love which is dependent on an intimate relationship of companionship.

Generosity, however, can also take a form more directly akin to charity, as narrated in the following account from a disciple: "I was with him on a visit to one of the *zawāya* and when he saw their state of extreme poverty, he wept and took everything he had in his pocket and gifted it to them, even though he was traveling far from [his home] at the main *zawiya*. He returned from there without a dirham in his pocket."⁵⁶⁶ The practice of charity (*ṣadaqa*) will be touched upon at various points throughout this work, but for now I simply want to note this distinction between material and immaterial generosity to highlight the diversity of forms of charity as practiced in Sufi contexts. In other words, Shaykh Fawzi's generosity is manifest in the act of sharing the divine light as well as his donation of money, both of which are used as indications of his virtuous and pious character.

The third and final virtue I will discuss is patience (*ṣabr*) as exemplified in the following story. 'Abd al-Hāfiẓ writes, "One day he left the mosque and ran into a bad person who spit on his face. However, no motive for revenge or response stirred in our shaykh; he

⁵⁶⁶ Al-Rabā'ī, *Al-tuḥfa*, 196.

simply wiped his face and continued on his way. He did not tell any one of his followers the name of the person. We asked, how can you not seek revenge on him? He said, “We donate our body and present them to the people.”⁵⁶⁷ Put in other words the shaykh said, “We give people light and they give us fire.”⁵⁶⁸ Patience operates as a vital virtue in the context of the *tariqa* because they often draw ridicule or contempt from the public, as exemplified in the story above, usually for their multi-colored patched robes. In this sense, drawing on the *malāmatī* tradition within Sufism, the disciples wear these robes as part of a process of disciplining and stripping down the self (*tajrīd*) and as a result, they face mockery from the public wherever they go, whether it be in Morocco, Algeria, or Europe. As such, patience serves as a necessary component of their development, for without patience they would be inclined to react and thereby indulge their base desires, which in turn would feed the ego-self (*nafs*).

As with any hagiographical account, it is possible to see the stories and ethical qualities as idealized portrayals of a more nuanced reality. In the case of Shaykh Fawzi’s ten-year *siyāḥa*, it was only after the fact that he was able to construe it as a process of *tarbiya*. How he felt and experienced it at the time is another matter entirely, and that is not something I can speak to directly. Instead, what is important when considering him as a living saint is the way in which he and his disciples have constructed his life as a model for his disciples and how some of the key practices of the order derive from that model. In this regard, he relies on two common tropes in Moroccan Sufism: the transformative journey

⁵⁶⁷ Al-Rabāt, *Al-tuḥfa*, 197.

⁵⁶⁸ Al-Rabāt, *Al-tuḥfa*, 197.

(*riḥla*) and the ethical exemplar (*ṣālih*).⁵⁶⁹ In this construction, these two processes are deeply connected, that is, his journey is a form of *tarbiya* that provided the foundation for his visions. It was upon his return from this journey of ethical training that his visionary experiences of divine light came, so the journey was an embodied discipline that made possible the forms of spiritual knowledge and perception that would constitute Shaykh Fawzi as a *walī Allah*. In other words, the process of *tarbiya* embedded in his *riḥla* and *ṣuḥba* with his shaykh accompanied his ability to perceive and share the divine light (*al-nūr*), a process characterized as enlightenment (*tanwīr*). Together, these facilitate progression to the level of *iḥsān*, with its characteristic social and spiritual virtues.

In this case, I highlighted the virtues of charity (*ṣadaqa*), humility (*tawadūʿ*), and patience (*ṣabr*). I also showed the ways in which these were cultivated and performed through different types of ascetic practices (*tajrīd*) and trying experiences (*balāʾ*). In this regard, I focused on the construction of Shaykh Fawzi as a *shaykh murabbī* (or *shaykh al-tarbiya*) who works as a spiritual instructor through companionship (*ṣuḥba*) to discipline the proper conduct and comportment (*ādāb*) and character (*akhlāq*) of disciples. Through this process of *tarbiya*, which Shaykh Fawzi received via his journey and at the hand of his shaykh, disciples gradually open themselves up to the perception of the divine light and accompanying states of consciousness (*aḥwāl*) and spiritual knowledge and awareness (*maʿrifa*).

⁵⁶⁹ In describing the exile of Ahmad Zarruq, Scott Kugle uses the concept of liminality to discuss the construction of sanctity. He writes, “The liminality of pilgrimage allowed Zarruq to feel set apart or sacred” (Kugle, *Rebel*, 105).

v. Spiritual Heritage

While his personal experiences have shaped aspects of Shaykh Fawzi's curriculum of *tarbiya* and enabled him to claim the types of knowledge characteristic of Moroccan saints, his curriculum is also shaped by the practices and exemplary figures of his spiritual lineage (*silsila*). For example, one of the central practices and concepts in this heritage is related to the name Allah. I will discuss this in more detail in Chapter Eight on the spiritual retreat but mastering the proper recitation of the name Allah as a form of *dhikr* (*talqīn ism Allah*), as well as learning the hidden meanings and secrets of the Name, is an essential element of this lineage. My goal in this section is to highlight some of these types of continuities through biographical accounts of his spiritual predecessors with particular attention to key figures in the Shādhilī lineage that not only inform Shaykh Fawzi's contemporary practices, but also have received little scholarly attention. By looking at the ways in which Shaykh Fawzi embodies these traditions, it becomes possible later to identify how he 'renews' these practices, i.e., adapts traditional practice and concepts to contemporary contexts, rather than seeing them as innovations (*bid'a*).

Shaykh Fawzi traces his genealogy, on both his maternal and paternal sides, through a sharifan lineage, that is, as a descendent of the Prophet. On his father's side, this is traced back through Mūlāy Idrīs to 'Alī and Fāṭima and finally to the Prophet Muhammad. Furthermore, the twelve generations preceding him all have tombs built in the vicinity of al-Aroui, two of which, Sidi 'Alī and Sidi Moussa, are present in the cemetery in al-Aroui and still visited to this day. As such, his family has been a constant presence in the region for many generations and has been responsible for the education and spreading of Islam in the region. Therefore, his authority, in terms of his genealogy, is both localized, in the sense that

he traces it through family members with specific historical and spatial ties to the region, and global, in the sense that it is a sharifan lineage tracing back to the Prophet Muhammad. Of course, disentangling the two is difficult in the context of Morocco, where prophetic descent has been localized through ties to the ‘founder’ of Morocco, Mūlāy Idrīs, but specifically I wanted to point out the ways in which he ties himself directly to the town of al-Aroui and its surrounding areas through his genealogical heritage.

His spiritual lineage is traced through his grandfather to Ahmad al-‘Alawi al-Mostaghanem. From there it runs through a number of figures back to well-known Shādhilī figures like Muḥammad al-‘Arabī al-Darqāwī (d. 1823), ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Majdhūb (d. 1568), Aḥmad Zarrūq (d. 1493), Ibn ‘Atā’ Allah al-Iskāndirī (d. 1310), Abū al-Hasan al-Shādhilī (d. 1258) and ultimately ‘Abd al-Salām bin Mashīsh (d. 1227).⁵⁷⁰ According to accounts, he received his authorization (*idhn*) directly from his uncle, Hasan al-Karkarī, to whom Shaykh Fawzi returned after his journey. After presenting the account of his authorization from Shaykh Hasan, I will present excerpts from the biographies of several of the shaykhs included in this lineage. My goal in presenting these is not to provide a comprehensive account of their lives or teachings, but to highlight a few key aspects that are prominent for disciples. I can discuss what the disciples consider to be significant by conducting readings and discussions in the biographies of these saints with disciples at the *zawiya* during my fieldwork. These salient aspects focus on the ethical qualities of the shaykhs and their approaches to teaching (*tarbiya*).

Regarding his authorization, it is said that seeing the excellence of his behavior and his mastery of the path, Mūlāy Hasan authorized Shaykh Fawzi to transmit the different

⁵⁷⁰ The lineage would therefore be Karkariyya-‘Alawiyya-Darqawiyya-Shādhiliyya. There is also a distinct Karkariyya group, so this order can be further specified as Fawziyya-Karkariyya.

invocations of the name Allah and initiate seekers into the path. However, Shaykh Fawzi refused because his shaykh was still a living shaykh who could give the *wird*. One day, he went to visit the shaykh at his house in Temsmān and it was there that he was granted authorization. According to Jamil, the Shaykh said, “That night, I saw the whole of creation pledge allegiance. I did not tell the vision to the shaykh, but since that night, he has not stopped elevating me.” Abdel Nasser al-Karkarī, the Shaykh’s brother, added to this:

I heard Mūlāy al-Hasan raise [Shaykh Fawzi] four times. The first was on the phone with Sīdī ibn Siniy when he said, “He is *muqaddam*, he can transmit the *wird*.” The second time I saw Mūlāy Hassan in front of me, ‘He is one of the *awliyā*!’ The third time I heard him say, “Be careful not to upset him, he is *quṭb*.” The fourth time he said, “All that is here [pointing to his heart] is there [pointing to the heart of Shaykh Fawzi].”

Ibn Siniy, one of the senior disciples, also said that, “We were in the car with Shaykh Fawzi, and Mūlāy Hasan when Mūlāy Hasan told Sīdī Muhammad Fawzi ‘you will become *quṭb*.’” Shortly afterward, Shaykh Fawzi saw a waking vision indicating the death of Mūlāy Hasan. Out of modesty, he refused to reveal his vision but upon visiting him, Mūlāy Hasan questioned him. When he told him the vision, he replied, “If Allah wants it, it will be so.” When Mūlāy Hasan became sick, family and friends, including Shaykh Fawzi, gathered around him, but one woman in the family refused to take him to the doctor, saying that she knew the time had come. As he repeated the unique name Allah (*ism al-mufrid Allah*), Shaykh Fawzi said, “I stood at his feet and seized his right hand with my left hand to help him do the *shahāda* ... I was alone with him hand in hand ... At the moment his soul left him, there was something, a secret, that will remain between him and me.”

After the passing of Mūlāy Hasan, Shaykh Fawzi inherited his station on the path, but continued to progress to the higher stations, making him a ‘saintly axis’ (*quṭb*) around whom humans and *jinn* alike gravitate and to which they turn for spiritual truths. Jamil narrated that

Shaykh Fawzi said, “I obtained a closeness to and knowledge of Allah after his death that he had not reached himself during his life.” He continued to progress to the station of *al-khatimiyya*, that is, the legacy of the divine names and *al-khalīfa al-muḥammadiyya*, i.e., the Prophet Muhammad’s designated representative in this world. Jamil recalls that the shaykh said, “The authorization of a shaykh is first made by the shaykh, then by the Prophet in person [or waking vision], and finally by Allah.” Shaykh Fawzi added, “I never sought to become shaykh. It fell upon me as a gift of Allah.” Thus, he not only received authorization to lead but progressed beyond the status of his immediate predecessor, occupying the role of *quṭb al-zamān* discussed previously.

The reason for this extensive account of his authorization and the emphasis laid on it by the disciples is that there is no formal certificate of authorization given and there is dispute with the *tariqa* ‘Alāwiyya as to the legitimacy of the Karkariyya in relation to the ‘Alāwiyya. Furthermore, there exists internal conflict within the Karkari family and *tariqa* regarding the issue of Shaykh Fawzi’s permission to lead the *tariqa*. During my time in al-Aroui, I interviewed two people from the extended family who took issue with the way in which Shaykh Fawzi took control of the *tariqa*, suggesting that on the one hand he did not have sufficient authorization, and on the other hand that he was exploiting the name for his own benefit. Moreover, I met with members of a different branch of the Karkariyya in Fes who expressed the same sentiment by claiming that their branch was the only authentic one. Unfortunately, efforts to work with this branch of the *tariqa* were stalled because the *muqaddam* in Fes refused to meet with me when he learned I was non-Muslim. My purpose in mentioning this is merely to point to the fact that the issue of authorization remains a key point of contention within the *tariqa* and there exist competing claims to leadership of the

Karkariyya, so stories of the shaykh's authorization play an important role in the construction of his authority.

According to members of the *tariqa*, the Karkariyya, as a distinct *tariqa*, dates back to Muḥammad bin Qadūr al-Wakīlī al-Karkarī (d. 1884 CE). He was the teacher of Muhammad bin al-Ḥabīb al-Buzīdī (d. 1910 CE), who was in turn the teacher of the well-known Ahmad al-‘Alawi (d. 1931 CE), founder of the *tariqa* ‘*Alāwiyya*.⁵⁷¹ From al-‘Alawi, the lineage passes through al-Ṭahir al-Karkarī (d. 1976 CE) and Hasan al-Karkarī (d. 2006 CE) to Shaykh Fawzi. In what follows, I present brief profiles of their lives, focusing on the ethical dimensions emphasized by disciples and their modes of transmitting knowledge. The goal is to provide a historical context to better demonstrate the ways in which the *tariqa* today draws upon these earlier traditions, as well as how they situate their project of renewal in relation to these traditions.

After his childhood, al-Wakīlī studied under Muhammad bin ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘al-Bāsha’ (d. 1847 CE) in present-day Algeria. However, as he progressed along the path, he developed a close relationship with his master and as a result, some of the relatives of the shaykh became increasingly envious. His shaykh saw this and ordered him to leave the *zawiya*. From there he went to a nearby mountain in order to remain close. However, this separation was hard for him because he had to stay hidden during the day and go to the *zawiya* to eat at night. When he was absolutely starving, he ate snails and anything he could find. He lived like this for some time until the shaykh saw him one night and decided that he had taught him all that he could offer. He then ordered al-Wakīlī to return to his land,

⁵⁷¹ See Martin Lings, *A Sufi Saint of the Twentieth Century: Shaikh Ahmad al-Alawi* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society) among others who have researched this group. I discuss in more detail in chapters twelve, thirteen, and fourteen.

saying, “Go to your land as you have authorization, but be generous and be cautious of your brothers.”⁵⁷²

Upon returning to his home near Mount Karkari in the Rif region of northern Morocco, al-Wakīlī began teaching the youth in the village but the local nobles (*shurafāʾ*) quickly became jealous and plotted to kill him. As it is narrated in the work of his disciple, Muḥammad bin Mukhtār al-Qaḍāwī (entitled *Qalāda al-jawāhir fī ʿanāq al-fuḥūl wa-l-akābir*):

One day while he was returning from the village in which he taught the Quran, there was a man hidden behind a tree. When [al-Wakīlī] saw him, he stopped and said to him, ‘You all are envious of me because of the *dhikr* of Allah.’ [The assassin] could not move from his place and his body parts convulsed from the prestige of al-Wakīlī ... When [al-Wakīlī] returned he told him who had sent him. [al-Wakīlī] said, ‘You are not suitable for this task because you have tremendous fear.’ So, the notables sent other people to kill [al-Wakīlī], but [Allah] saved him from them and they killed his servant instead. This was a sign from [Allah] for [al-Wakīlī] to leave the mountain, so he emigrated to another place for his safety. He settled in the mountain of ʿAin al-Zahra where there were two caves. He took one of them as a residence and the second he used for educating children in the Quran and gathering for *dhikr*.⁵⁷³

During his time in the cave, he and his disciples lived in a state of asceticism, eating herbs and other things with little nutritional value. Over time, however, he became more famous. One day a group of villagers came to him and took him to Mount Karkari where he decided to establish a permanent residence. He built his *zawiya* around 1844 CE on the mountain and his tomb remains there today. For members of the *tariqa*, it is still a site for visitation and pilgrimage, a bit over a day’s walk from their *zawiya*.

⁵⁷² Al-Rabāʿī, *Al-tuḥfa*, 147.

⁵⁷³ Al-Rabāʿī, *Al-tuḥfa*, 148.

In discussing his personality, disciples highlight both his captivated state of being (*jadhb*) and his ethical quality.⁵⁷⁴ Regarding the captivated aspect of his personality, ‘Abd al-Hāfiẓ cites a story in which al-Wakīlī said:

One day I read the Sūrat al-Ṭaha until I came to the verse [Oh, what made you hasten from your people Mūsā] [Q 20:83]. [This verse] made my spirit fly from my body as if it was shot from an arrow and it only settled above the throne. I remained there as if I was a body without spirit for a period of forty days. While I was thrown on my back, I looked at the stars and I read the words of Allah [oh Lord, you did not create this without purpose] [Q 3:191]. I told the story of what happened to me to my shaykh and he said, ‘I am delighted. This came to you without cause or service, and this does not come to others even after years of practice. This, my son, is a type of revelation (*fath*).’⁵⁷⁵

In this story, his captivation, which as I will discuss below is one of the two dimensions of the *tariqa* cited by Shaykh Fawzi (*jadhb wa sulūk*), is achieved not through extraordinary or supererogatory practices, but simply through the reading of the Quran. Disciples highlight this aspect in their discussions of this story because they want to point out how their path is based in the basic elements of *sunna* and *sharia*. In other words, there is nothing outside the normative example of the Prophet and the norms of jurists that is required to progress along the path. As ‘Abd al-Hāfiẓ said of al-Wakīlī, “He is the convergence between the *sharia* and *ḥaqīqa*.” He also cited one of al-Wakīlī’s sayings: “The disciple seeking the presence of [Allah] should fear Allah in the manner of his conduct internally and externally.”⁵⁷⁶ In other words, the path of training is one that involves the coordination of internal and external ways of being and behaving. Therefore, the Sufi path for the disciples is not confined to the internal realm but is an all-encompassing project. The external dimension, here represented

⁵⁷⁴ One who is captivated is called a *majdhūb* where the notion of captivation is also connected to ideas of holiness. For more on the notion of *jadhb* see Arin Salamah-Qudsi, “The Concept of *jadhb* and the Image of *majdhūb* in Sufi teachings and Life in the Period between the Fourth/Tenth and the Tenth/Sixteenth Centuries,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, no.28 (2017).

⁵⁷⁵ Al-Rabāʿī, *Al-tuḥfa*, 146-7.

⁵⁷⁶ Al-Rabāʿī, *Al-tuḥfa*, 151.

by the term *sharia*, is given more explicit content in specific Sufi paths through *ādāb* (proper conduct and comportment), which in the case of the Karkariyya is best captured in a text by Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Buzīdī called “The Fulfilling Etiquette.”⁵⁷⁷

One story regarding al-Wakīlī’s external ethical comportment involves his service to others during his life. This is reflected in his establishment of an educational center in the cave in northern Morocco. It is also expressed through a simple story that dates back to his days as a disciple. ‘Abd al-Hāfiẓ writes:

He had a great deal of etiquette (*ādāb*) and service (*khidma*), and it is narrated that he heard the servant of [his master] say, ‘Oh master, I did not find the dish that we usually use to bake bread.’ When [al-Wakīlī] heard this he went to one of the markets in a village and bought a dish that was made of wood and fairly heavy. He carried it on his back ... walking across a long distance, and placed it in front of his Shaykh who asked him, ‘Where did you bring this from?’ He replied, “From [such-and-such] village. The shaykh was pleased with this patient young man who made the shaykh content.”⁵⁷⁸

This story illustrates the way in which simple acts of service, in addition to mystical experience or spiritual captivity, are valued and taken as expressions of and means to developing the disciple and disciplining the self. These ‘this-worldly orientations’ that are said to constitute a defining feature of contemporary Sufi and Islamic movements influenced by a neoliberal protestant ethic in the twentieth century are not, as I am trying to demonstrate through these examples, invented traditions. Instead, they have a deep history in Sufi traditions and as I suggest, it has been the orientalist framing of Sufism as mystical and internal, as distinct from external, that has imposed these types of discontinuity.⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁷ See Muḥammad al-Būzīdī, *Al-ādāb al-mardiyya l-sālik tariqa al-sufiyya* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub, 2006). Note that Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Buzīdī (d. 1814) is not Muhammad bin al-Ḥabīb al-Buzīdī (d. 1910). The former was the teacher of Ibn ‘Ajība (d. 1809) while the latter was the teacher of Ahmad al-‘Alawī (d. 1932).

⁵⁷⁸ Al-Rabāṭī, *Al-tuḥfa*, 146.

⁵⁷⁹ For a further discussion of this argument, see Chapter Four. In short, it is not that a this-worldly orientation was invented in the wake of modernization, but that it was simply ‘discovered’ by western researchers who began to have more direct access to Sufi communities, i.e., they began to employ anthropological methods. However, how those traditions are drawn upon to articulate and inform present practices varies between groups.

An additional reason I include a detailed analysis of al-Wakīlī here is that he has remained a largely unexamined figure, primarily because he did not leave behind any texts. On the role of texts, it is said that al-Wakīlī said to one of his students who attempted to write a book about him during his lifetime, “I did not come to author books – I came to author hearts ... what I leave you all is individuals and shaykhs.” What I want to highlight here is that in addition to the role of hagiographies and saints as moral exemplars in thinking about the ways in which tradition is drawn upon in the present, relationships to past texts reveal sensibilities of renewal linked to the continued formation of pious subjects. In other words, how do individuals today use and relate to books of the past, that is, aspects of the discursive tradition, in a way that reflects the ethical concerns of practical Sufism. In the Karkariyya, transmission through texts and the knowledge contained within texts is given little primacy relative to the knowledge transmitted through visions in which lessons are taken directly from the shaykh. Shaykh Fawzi clearly expressed this sentiment during a lesson by stating, “I became shaykh by having read only two or three books.” By emphasizing ‘teaching hearts’ over ‘writing books,’ al-Wakīlī’s quote conveys a concern for the applied aspects of Sufism that mold the embodied conditions for forms of knowledge, experience, and piety. It is also a means to assert an alternative epistemic-ethical authority that challenges strictly textual renderings of Islamic knowledge.

The next in the lineage is Muhammad bin al-Ḥabīb al-Būzīdī (d. 1910), who was the teacher of Aḥmad al-‘Alawī. In describing al-Būzīdī’s method of instruction, his disciple said:

For example, the concept of service as employed in the Gulen movement is different from that employed in the Budshishiyya, which is in turn different from the Karkariyya, and it is precisely this difference that I suggest enables comparative work on Sufi movements to be conducted.

As for the most common course [of action] that the shaykh adopted and which we adopted after him also, [was that] he charged the seeker with *dhikr* of the unique name by giving form to its letters until they are inscribed in one's imagination. Then he ordered the stretching out and magnifying of the letters until they filled what is within the pulsations [i.e., the heart]. This required being in a constant state of *dhikr* in that manner until their attributes turn over into the semblance of light. Then he indicates to him (in an inexpressible manner) to exit from that appearance and the spirit of the seeker quickly reaches the outside of the universe, if he is prepared. If not, he needs to purify and to practice with that sign. The distinguishing between the absolute and the limited takes place for the seeker, and this existence appears to him like a ball or a lamp suspended in a vacuum without beginning or end. Then it becomes smaller in his vision with the commitment to *dhikr* and the accompaniment of thought, until it becomes a trace after an eye, then it becomes not a trace and not an eye. *The seeker stays in this state until the seeker is absorbed in the world of ethics* and his certainty is empowered in that bare light. In all that, the shaykh engaged the disciple, asked the disciple about states and gave strength in *dhikr*, depending on the level [of the disciple], until the disciple reached the goal felt by the seeker from oneself. The shaykh was only satisfied with the disciple if that occurred.⁵⁸⁰

In this way, al-Būzīdī transmitted the method of *dhikr* of the name Allah that is still used in the *tariqa* today, though I cannot speak to the precise articulations of the name Allah given to disciples. However, in this form of meditation, during which visions are commonly experienced, the result, according to al-ʿAlawī, is that the disciple is “absorbed in the world of ethics.” Thus, even at this point, the meditative practice of *dhikr* that facilitates the process of enlightenment (*tanwīr*) is also connected to one's ethical development (*tarbiya*).

In describing al-Būzīdī's methodology, Ahmad al-ʿAlawī describes his first encounter with him in the following way:

Sīdī al-Būzīdī said to me [Ahmad al-ʿAlawī] one day while he was visiting our shop, “I was told that you charm vipers and do not fear their bite.” I replied that I did, and he said, “Now do you think it is possible for you to bring one and charm it in our presence?” “Easily,” I replied. I searched for half a day and the only thing I found was a viper half an arm's length. I brought it back, placed it in front of me, and did as was my custom. Upon seeing this, Sīdī al-Būzīdī said to me, “Can you charm a viper bigger and more powerful than this one?”

⁵⁸⁰ Al-Rabāʿī, *Al-tuḥfa*, 168.

I said that this was the only one I had. He said, “Here, I will show you one. If you can touch it and tame it, then you are a true sage (*al-ḥakīm*).”

I asked him, “So where is it?”

He replied, “Your self (*nafs*) that is within you. Its venom is deadlier than the venom of vipers. If you touch it and tame it, then you are truly wise.” He added, “Go and do with that snake what is your custom and do not return to anything like what you have been doing.”

So, I left him, wondering about this self and how its bite is deadlier than that of a viper.⁵⁸¹

This story illustrates the way in which al-Būzīdī guided al-‘Alawī away from some of the supernatural practices associated, in this case, with the ‘Aissāwa order and toward the path of taming the self. Continuing in the account of al-Būzīdī’s method of *tarbiya*, al-‘Alawī says that he was instructed to continue in *dhikr* in the manner prescribed and recite the *wird*. However, there was no adequate space for retreat (*khalwa*). He asked al-Būzīdī about it, who replied, “There is no better space for isolation than the graveyard.”⁵⁸² However, this turned out to be extremely difficult for al-‘Alawī because spending each night in the graveyard was terrifying, so after some time al-Buzīdī told him to restrict his *dhikr* to the final third of the night. At this time, al-‘Alawī returned to his lessons during the day, studying texts and theology with others. One day al-Buzīdī asked him, “To what art is this lesson related that I see you memorizing?” Al-‘Alawī replied that it was the art of unity (*fann al-tawḥīd*), specifically dealing with proofs. Al-Buzīdī then said, “It was sīdī so-and-so who called it the art of getting stuck in the mud (*fann al-tawḥīl*),” adding, “You know the meaning of unity, but as for [speculative theology] the only benefit is increase in doubts and accumulation of illusions.”⁵⁸³ As a result, al-Būzīdī instructed him to avoid lessons and concentrate on *dhikr* until he was purified and filled with the divine light, which was not an easy task for al-‘Alawī

⁵⁸¹ Al-Rabāṭī, *Al-tuḥfa*, 168.

⁵⁸² Al-Rabāṭī, *Al-tuḥfa*, 169.

⁵⁸³ Al-Rabāṭī, *Al-tuḥfa*, 169.

as he enjoyed attending lessons. After a while, he was instructed to return to lessons and upon returning, al-‘Alawī said, “After the fruit of *dhikr* (which is the knowledge of Allah through the path of witnessing) ripened, my own shortcomings in the art of unity (*fann al-tawḥīd*) became apparent and I tasted at that time what the teacher had indicated [to me previously].”⁵⁸⁴ After returning to lessons once again, al-‘Alawī found himself understanding them with far more ease, grasping deep meanings before the shaykh completed his explanations. He also derived implicit knowledge from the explicit aspects of the lessons without needing additional instruction. Reflecting on this he said, “In total, I found my understanding not matching what I had before. As such, my circle of understanding began to widen until [I reached the point that], were the reciter to read something from the book of Allah, my feelings would spontaneously precede the explanation of its meaning in the strangest of ways during the recitation.”⁵⁸⁵

In presenting this story of al-Buzīdī’s instruction of al-‘Alawī, my goal was to present the historical precedence for the model of *tarbiya* employed by the Shaykh Fawzi with his disciples. In other words, what stands out in the depictions of these two figures in the eyes of the Karkari disciples today, in addition to the specific method of *dhikr*, is the form of instruction (*tarbiya*) and the necessity of that *tarbiya* for accessing knowledge. Consequently, it provides a model and justification for the authority of Shaykh Fawzi today, who does not have any formal training in the religious sciences, but nonetheless, for the disciples, provides deep insight into the Quran and *hadith*. The ethical character of this *tarbiya* is given more detail in the remaining accounts of the order’s leaders.

⁵⁸⁴ Al-Rabāṭī, *Al-tuḥfa*, 170.

⁵⁸⁵ Al-Rabāṭī, *Al-tuḥfa*, 170.

Al-Ṭahir al-Karkarī (d. 1976 CE) was the grandfather of Shaykh Fawzi and as a result, the ethical character of al-Ṭahir is framed as an inherited quality of the family. For example, in demonstrating the virtuous character of al-Ṭahir, ‘Abd al-Hāfiẓ cites a story about al-Ṭahir’s father, Muhammad al-Fardī, in order to illustrate the righteousness of the family lineage. According to this story, al-Fardī was raised in a righteous family with sincerity and was sent to Fes by his father for education during the French colonial period. On the way, there was an inspection group that was taking money from all those who passed, so everyone who was asked lied about the amount of money they had. When al-Fardī arrived, they asked him if he had money and he replied honestly. The group started laughing at him and mocked him because he had so much. However, they ended up letting him pass. According to the narrative, “Sincerity was the reason for his escape.” ‘Abd al-Hāfiẓ goes on to say, “This is the ethical character of the father who raised [al-Ṭahir] and he drank from this resource.”⁵⁸⁶ In this case, sincerity is the valued virtue, but the way in which it is framed in this story situates it as an innate quality of the family, that is, something that is and has been valued, passed along, and cultivated across generations.

Shaykh Fawzi’s immediate predecessor was his uncle, al-Hasan al-Karkarī (d. 2006). Regarding his character, ‘Abd al-Hāfiẓ narrates the following story: “One day he entered the market and donated (*yataṣadaq*) all that he had without looking at how much he gave until he had nothing left. He left the market as he had entered it, and it was due to his generosity that his house was never empty of guests or in need of people, as he did good deeds (*al-khiyr*) with everyone.”⁵⁸⁷ Once again, generosity as exemplified in acts of charity (*ṣadaqa*) appears as an important aspect of ethical character in the reconstruction of the lives of shaykhs and

⁵⁸⁶ Al-Rabāṭī, *Al-tuḥfa*, 176.

⁵⁸⁷ Al-Rabāṭī, *Al-tuḥfa*, 185.

stories like these help provide context for thinking about conceptions and practices of charity within Sufi communities. In conclusion, these hagiographic accounts provide insight into the centrality of the cultivation of ethical virtues in the curriculum (*minhaj*) of the Karkariyya, as well as the methods of teaching that accompany the development of these virtues.

vi. Curriculum of Ethical and Spiritual Education (*minhaj al-tarbiya*)

As noted in the previous section through the stories of al-Buzīdī and al-Alawī, the form of *tarbiya* consisted of a period of focus on *dhikr*, performed in a prescribed manner, aimed at the purification of the self that is analogous to the taming of a viper. *Dhikr* in this sense was therefore one among many disciplinary techniques aimed at the ethical refinement of the disciple. This was followed by a period of study, leading up to a strong visionary experience (*mushāhada*), which was often related to divine light (*al-nūr*) and the name Allah. This experience of divine light as something cultivated is described as a form of enlightenment (*tanwīr*), and this enlightenment is accompanied by the ethical cultivation of *tarbiya*. In this section, I expand on that hagiographic model of *tarbiya* to provide a brief overview of the components of Shaykh Fawzi's *minhaj al-tarbiya*. I will discuss these components in detail over the next three chapters, but here I would like to outline the key principles and practices.

ʿAbd al-Hāfiẓ's biography of Shaykh Fawzi includes a section on his spiritual method and curriculum of *tarbiya*. To begin with, he clarifies that the method is not fixed but flexible and is based on the shaykh and his understanding of his disciple. His ability to adapt the method to the disciple based on insight into the intention of the disciple, as well as the development of the curriculum over time, proves to him that the shaykh is a renewer

(*mujaddid*) and not an imitator (*muqallid*). ‘Abd al-Hāfīz writes, “His *tarbiya* for disciples changed from the beginning to the present time. I have noted how he worked with each disciple in a way that was appropriate to the given disciple. [Therefore,] we know that he is a *mujaddid*, not a *muqallid*, for if he were a *muqallid*, then nothing would change in his curriculum.”⁵⁸⁸ To note this at the start means that change, development, that is, difference from the past is taken as evidence of his authority, presented here as his position as renewer. Thus, in relation to the past and the textual tradition presented in the hagiography, we should expect to see differences. This view of the past is a crucial dimension of the relationship to the textual tradition, for as several disciples noted, the universe itself is continuing to grow and change, so the past sciences are no longer valid, that is, they need to be renewed to correspond to the current state of affairs. However, while the knowledge in past texts needs to be updated, the practices and models provided by the figures remain applicable today. In fact, for the members of the order, the world is in dire need of these traditional practices, from Muslims in Europe who face discrimination, to Moroccans and Algerians who face the allure of ‘Salafi’ teachings.⁵⁸⁹ The temporality of the *tariqa* is embedded in the concept of renewal is therefore simultaneously one of change and development of tradition on the one hand and return to and rooting in tradition on the other hand.

‘Abd al-Hāfīz attempts to present a general framework for the curriculum. He begins by writing, “[Shaykh Fawzi's] path combines behavior (*sulūk*) and captivation (*jadhb*).

Captivation here means a captivation of the heart by the light of the beloved in the presence

⁵⁸⁸ Al-Rabāʿī, *Al-tuhfa*, 200.

⁵⁸⁹ The framing of the order as a response to Salafism was a repeated trope among several of the Algerian disciples. Anas, in particular, describes how the environment in Algeria, in addition to his research on the internet, began to lead him towards Salafism and that it was not until he found the Karkariyya that he was able to be guided away from that path. This language is often coded through the filters of ‘extremism’ (taṭarruf and mutashaddid), but Anas in particular spoke openly about the need to use the *tariqa* to target youth who are being drawn toward Salafism.

of the lovable. It is a captivation the disciple does not feel, because captivation is light (*khafīf*) when accompanied by gentle care.”⁵⁹⁰ In addition to the path combining both external behavior and internal states, ‘Abd al-Hāfīz stresses that this training is done under the care of the shaykh. He continues, “His path combines beauty and majesty, the internal with lordliness (*al-rabubiyya*), and the external with the proper conduct and comportment (*ādāb*) of worship. Therefore, you find the disciple absorbed in the presence of the secret [along with] the disciple’s performance of the functions of worship.”⁵⁹¹ Once again emphasizing the mix of internal and external, he elaborates that the internal consists of absorption in the presence of the secret, while the external consists of proper conduct and comportment, as well as the performance of worship. The *tarbiya* here is therefore multidimensional, emphasizing both the inner and outer simultaneously.

‘Abd al-Hāfīz continues by saying that he heard Shaykh al-Fawzi say, “[My] path is the path of the universal great name [Allah].” By this, the shaykh is referring to the meditative practices of reciting and visualizing the name Allah. Perhaps the most important feature of the curriculum however is this, “You find the Shaykh [sending] the disciple to the level of *mushāhada* with their first step on the path, without effort or work of the disciple because it is from his pure largesse (*jawād*). It is for this reason that he differentiates between his companions and their opposites [by saying] ‘Our path is a path of visions. People who do not see are not my disciples, and I am not their guide.’”⁵⁹² As a result of his generosity – an ethical quality emphasized in the hagiographical accounts and critical to conceptions of sainthood in Morocco according to Kugle – disciples are propelled directly to

⁵⁹⁰ Al-Rabāʿī, *Al-tuḥfa* 200.

⁵⁹¹ Al-Rabāʿī, *Al-tuḥfa*, 200.

⁵⁹² Al-Rabāʿī, *Al-tuḥfa*, 200.

the level of witnessing.⁵⁹³ ‘Abd al-Hāfiẓ adds, “[He] plants the seed in the heart of the disciple in the beginning. It is only incumbent upon the disciple to preserve it with *dhikr* and love.”⁵⁹⁴ Therefore, while it might seem at first that disciples gain access to visions of the divine light without any effort, that generosity of the shaykh, i.e., that gift given by the shaykh, is accompanied by certain obligations and attitudes. Furthermore, the shaykh does not offer this gift to anyone, for he contains within himself insight into the character of individuals before they even pledge allegiance to him.

For example, on one occasion a man came but quickly left because he wanted to take *bay‘a* solely to gain access to heaven. Rather than obtaining knowledge and character, the man simply wanted salvation and demanded to know how taking the *bay‘a* would grant him that salvation. Hearing the shaykh’s response during the group meeting one afternoon, the man was dissatisfied and abruptly left. On another occasion, Jamil recounts the shaykh’s statements about his ability to see the character of individuals ahead of time:

[I] have seen all of my disciples pledge allegiance to the spiritual worlds. I know all of them. Their beginning, their end. If they are happy or unhappy. The station they will reach and even today, I remember each of them.” Indeed, a man in Belgium wanted to meet our Shaykh when he visited Europe. When the Shaykh saw him, he said, “He will not take the path because when a disciple comes to me, I can recognize him, and my heart starts shaking (mimicking heart tremor in his hand).” And sure enough, when the man came to visit the *zawiya* in al-Aroui, he left after a week without asking to join.

In other words, the gift is not unqualified, which in practice amounts to some individuals being required to undergo preparation before they can take the *bay‘a*, while others take it much quicker. The main criterion, according to ‘Abd al-Hāfiẓ, is that the disciple has a sincere intention for knowledge of Allah, and it is the shaykh’s job to discern that sincerity.

⁵⁹³ Describing the start of the path in other terms, ‘Abd al-Hāfiẓ writes, “Its beginning is companionship with the light of Muhammad (pbuh).…” (Al-Rabā’ī, *Al-tuḥfa*, 200).

⁵⁹⁴ Al-Rabā’ī, *Al-tuḥfa*, 200.

After taking the *bay'a*, the shaykh instructs the disciple to seek the presence of the divine name '*al-Nūr*' until it is "characterized by the unity of attributes."⁵⁹⁵ This is done by placing the disciple in *khalwa* (spiritual retreat) where, "[The disciple] gets the collective secret (*sirr*) [so] one can be a knower of the meaning of the saints and the afterlife, the internal realm and the external realm."⁵⁹⁶ The one who gains access to this collective secret, which is the result of cultivating the seed of the divine light through the practice of *dhikr*, opens up possibilities for gaining new insights into saints or even accessing them directly, as well as for understanding the external world through sciences like astrology, alchemy, or numerology. Upon achieving this secret, "[The disciple] gets the elixir of happiness ... and enters the house of the beloved."⁵⁹⁷

This collective secret is only another beginning as the disciple will move from secret to secret progressively. 'Abd al-Hāfiẓ discusses the features of these secrets by writing, "In every secret, the disciple remains in it with two functions: one directed toward [Allah] and the other directed toward creation. [The first] is witnessing (*shahūd*) of the greatness (*al-ʿazīma*) in all things. [The second] is to cultivate the graces of ethics with everything."⁵⁹⁸ Each step along the path consists of the development of two relationships simultaneously, one with the divine and the other with the world. The goal is therefore to recognize the existence of greatness, that is, divinity, in all things (or in other words to maintain a constant relationship with the divine), and to embody ethical virtues in this world. These ethical

⁵⁹⁵ Al-Rabāʿī, *Al-tuhfa*, 201.

⁵⁹⁶ Al-Rabāʿī, *Al-tuhfa*, 201.

⁵⁹⁷ "The Shaykh takes on his shoulders to put each disciple whose intention is to knowledge of Allah in the presence of the name 'Al Nur until it is characterized by the unity of attributes. After *khalwa*, he gets the collective secret, he can be a knower of the meaning of the saints and the afterlife, the internal realm (*al-bāṭiniyya*) and the external realm (*al-zāhiriyya*). He gets at that moment the 'elixir of happiness' and the title of success and enters the diwan of the beloved" (Al-Rabāʿī, *Al-tuhfa*, 201).

⁵⁹⁸ Al-Rabāʿī, *Al-tuhfa*, 201.

virtues consist of the prophetic virtues exemplified in the Quran, *sunna*, the life of the prophets, the saintly virtues manifest in the lives of the saints, and the virtues embedded in the *ādāb* of the Karkariyya.

To summarize the curriculum, the disciple begins by taking the *bayʿa* at the discretion of the shaykh. In practice, the *bayʿa* can be preceded by varying amounts of preparation time. After this, the disciple is placed in *khalwa*, usually for a length of three days during which time they sit in an isolated room and perform *dhikr* of the Great Name (*al-ism al-ʿaẓīm*). During the *khalwa*, the disciple will experience visions (*mushāhadāt*) of varying sorts and ideally, by the end of the *khalwa*, the disciple will gain access to the collective secret (*sirr*) that is the starting point for accessing esoteric sciences (*ʿalūm*). The disciple will then share these *mushāhadāt* with the shaykh who interprets them in order to extract knowledge or interpret the spiritual state of the disciple. At this point, the curriculum is again highly individualized and dependent upon both the shaykh and the disciple, but no matter what, the shaykh instructs the disciple to continue in the performance of *dhikr*. Some disciples are given additional responsibilities, such as wearing the *muraqqaʿa*, according to what the shaykh feels they need to progress along the path. In this way, he leads each disciple along the path of secrets through interpretation, advice, instruction, and companionship, and as each individual progresses, so too does the community progress. This communal progression is exemplified in the ‘readings of the name Allah,’ in which each letter of the Name reveals certain secrets and completing one ‘reading’ of the full name reveals further secrets in a hermeneutical cycle of re-reading the name Allah. All the while, however, the disciples are required to maintain a strict adherence to obligatory and supererogatory prayer, and to uphold an ethical standard exemplified in Shaykh Fawzi.

Shaykh Fawzi lays out this curriculum in his *Al-kawākib al-darriyya fī bayyan al-uṣūl al-nūraniyya* (henceforth referred to as *The Enlightened Principles*). The book is laid out according to seven principles: *al-‘ahd* (the commitment), *al-ḥaḍra wa al-raqs* (the *ḥaḍra* and dance), *al-muraqqa‘a* (the patched cloak), *al-ism* (the name Allah), *al-siyāḥa* (the pilgrimage), *al-khalwa* (the spiritual retreat), and *al-sirr* (the secret). Summarizing his teachings in the introduction to the book, Shaykh Fawzi writes, “The path is clear ... it is gathered entirely in the sentence ‘To worship Him as if you see Him.’”⁵⁹⁹ The sentence here references the well-known *ḥadith* of Gabriel that discusses *islām*, *imān*, and *iḥsān*, in which *iḥsān* is defined using the sentence given above. For the Karkariyya, this ‘seeing Him’ is not meant to be metaphorical but literal and is achieved by witnessing the divine light. This divine light is gifted to disciples by the shaykh who then work, through prescribed practices, to enhance the view of this divine light. In short, the entire method of Shaykh Fawzi aims at the attainment of *iḥsān*.

Elaborating on the specifics of the program of cultivation, Shaykh Fawzi writes, “Our curriculum ... is very clear, simple not complex, an easy series of seven principles: the commitment with the prayer beads, pilgrimage, *ḥaḍra*, the cloak, *dhikr* of the unique name, spiritual retreat, and the secret.”⁶⁰⁰ In each chapter, he begins by defining the principle linguistically, then how it is used in the vocabulary of the Karkariyya. After that, he provides justifications based in *ḥadith* and Quran in order to demonstrate the foundation of the principles in the primary textual sources of the tradition. Finally, Shaykh Fawzi moves on to discuss various topics related to each principle, drawing both on his own experience as well

⁵⁹⁹ Muḥammad Fawzī al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib al-darriyya fī bayyan al-uṣūl al-nūraniyya* (Casablanca: Matba‘a al-ṣina‘a al-kitāb, 2016): 3.

⁶⁰⁰ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 6.

as the teachings of previous Sufis. Additionally, Shaykh Fawzi presents an eighth principle, *al-nūr* (the divine light), in his work ‘The White Path.’⁶⁰¹ While it is not included in the ‘Enlightened Principles,’ it nonetheless serves as a central concept in the *tariqa*, which is the reason why an entire book is devoted to the light.

During my time at the *zawiya* in al-Aroui, I observed how disciples engaged with these texts and discussed them with multiple disciples. As they framed it, ‘The Enlightened Principles’ is intended as an introductory text for new disciples and is recommended reading for all. ‘The White Path,’ on the other hand, is an advanced text that includes in-depth interpretations of Quranic verses and highly theoretical discussions. Not all of the disciples had read this book, or even necessarily had the linguistic skills to read it, so it was intended for the elite disciples. However, the light is at the center of the initiation process, being at once the starting point and the final goal of the path. Thus, the process of cultivating the light (*tanwīr*) and the process of cultivating moral character (*tarbiya*) operate in conjunction with each other in the attainment of the quality of virtuous piety - *iḥsān*.

vii. Summary

In this chapter, I began by discussing the idea of sainthood in Islam in relation to the *walī Allah* (friend of Allah). Embedded in this idea is the quality of *walāya*, understood in its most general sense as an intimacy with Allah that affords certain possibilities for thought, action, and perception. I then discussed some of the features of sainthood as it emerged in the Moroccan (*maghribī*) context using secondary literature on hagiographies from medieval and early modern periods. My goal was to highlight the construction of the saint as an

⁶⁰¹ Muḥammad Fawzī al-Karkarī, *Al-maḥajja al-bayḍāʾ* (Casablanca: Matbaʿa al-ṣinaʿa al-kitāb, 2016).

ethical exemplar embodied in the idea of the *ṣāliḥ*, along with the ethical and spiritual practices and virtues that constitute that model of sainthood. These practices included charity (*ṣadaqa*), advice (*naṣīḥa*), companionship (*ṣuḥba*), and ‘ethical guidance’ (*ḥisba*). The accompanying qualities included, among others, pious purity (*warāʿ*), generosity (*ṣadaqa*), and altruism (*īthār*). My point in this regard was that the characteristic of Moroccan Sufism as a practical ethical tradition is exemplified in the approach to the Moroccan saint as a model of piety and morality (i.e., as *ṣāliḥ*).

Furthermore, I showed how the construction of Shaykh Fawzi in hagiographic materials of the Karkariyya drew upon many of the tropes used in Moroccan Sufism. In order to do this, I presented an outline of Shaykh Fawzi’s biography and spiritual lineage. In doing so, my goal was not only to illustrate the deployment of these tropes, but also to demonstrate the continuities between Shaykh Fawzi’s spiritual method and the methods of his predecessors. These continuities occurred in ethical qualities and moral character, as well as specific practices such as the recitation and visualization of Allah in *dhikr*. In highlighting these continuities, however, my goal was to point to his role as a renewer (*mujaddid*) who adapts traditional practices and principles to the present. While he does reformulate practices, he maintains a multidimensional curriculum that entails the cultivation of both spiritual and social virtues. These virtues are honed through the dual processes of ethical education (*tarbiya*) and enlightenment (*tanwīr*), the combination of which produces a pious subject that manifests the quality of *iḥsān* throughout one’s daily life.

CHAPTER SEVEN: ETHICS IN A VISIONARY ORDER: THE *MINHAJ AL-TARBIYA* OF THE KARKARIYYA-FAWZIYYA

i. Introduction

In the previous chapter I used written and oral accounts from disciples to describe the construction of Shaykh Fawzi as a living saint and to illustrate the roots of his curriculum of ethical education (*minhaj al-tarbiya*) in his spiritual lineage. My argument was that a concern for ethics was apparent both in the recognition of the authority of Shaykh Fawzi and in the spiritual instruction of the disciples, exemplifying one articulation of Sufism as an ethical tradition. While drawing on that tradition for his own program, Shaykh Fawzi positions himself as a renewer (*mujaddid*) of the spiritual path of the *tariqa* and as a result, adapts traditional practices to the context of contemporary Morocco, with all its social and political topographies.

This chapter examines Shaykh Fawzi's reformed curriculum as it is presented in his texts along with its practical application as observed during my fieldwork. My argument in this chapter is that the curriculum aims at the cultivation of a constellation of virtues that not only contribute to the formation of good character and companionship, but also make possible the forms of knowledge and experience discussed in the next chapter that are the spiritual aims of the disciples. Moreover, insofar as virtues such as altruism (*īthār*), tolerance (*tasāmuḥ*), sincerity (*ṣiḍq*), and patience (*ṣabr*) embedded in the curriculum of the Karkariyya-Fawziyya embody *iḥsān* as a form of public piety, they also reflect the broader conception of cosmopolitan ethics authorized by the Moroccan state's discourse on Sufi piety. This chapter explores the specific practices through which disciples cultivate this piety

within the community, while the two subsequent chapters will discuss its public performance through the analysis of online testimonials of visionary experiences (Chapter Eight) and pilgrimages (Chapter Nine).

ii. Curriculum of Ethical Education (*minhaj al-tarbiya*)

To summarize the curriculum, the disciple begins by taking the *bay'a* (pledge of allegiance) at the discretion of the shaykh. In the *bay'a*, the shaykh shares the divine light (*nūr*) with the disciple as a gift, and it is the responsibility of the disciple to work with the shaykh to magnify the light within oneself, a process called enlightenment (*tanwīr*). After a period of preparation, the disciple is placed in *khalwa* (retreat) for at least three days, during which time the disciple sits in an isolated room and performs *dhikr* (repetition of the name Allah). During the *khalwa*, the disciple will often experience visions (*mushāhadāt*) and ideally by the end of the retreat, the disciple gains access to the collective secret (*sirr*) that is the starting point for the esoteric sciences (*'alūm*). The disciple shares these visions with the shaykh who interprets them in order to extract knowledge or discern the spiritual state of the disciple. Disciples are instructed to perform *dhikr* at designated times, accompanied by an ensemble of formal exercises including: *ḥaḍra*, wearing the *muraqqa'a* (cloak), and *sīyāḥa* (pilgrimage), as well as informal practices of advice (*naṣīḥa*) and lessons (*mudhākara*). This set of practices also operates as a program of ethical education and discipline (*tarbiya*) aimed at the refinement of character, attunement of emotional states, and habituation of proper conduct and comportment (*ādāb*). In short, entering into the spiritual path of the Karkariyya entails a thorough commitment (*'ahd*) in which ethical cultivation (*tarbiya*) and enlightenment (*tanwīr*) are performed alongside one another.

iii. The Commitment (*al-‘ahd*)

In his book *The Enlightened Principles*, Shaykh Fawzi defines the commitment as, “The comprehensive unity expressed by the covenant taken by the first children of Adam in the primordial world, where it was barren of vision and knowledge of the self, when we heard without ears His saying, “Am I not your Lord?” and we answered without tongue, “Yes.””⁶⁰² It is from this Quranic context of the primordial covenant (*mīthāq*) that Shaykh Fawzi and his disciples derive their understanding of the *bay‘a*, that is, the initiation or pledge of allegiance to the shaykh.⁶⁰³ This consists of two separate acts. The first is the initial *bay‘a* and the second is the renewal, performed each year at the *‘īd al-nabawī* (Prophet’s Birthday Celebration) held at the main *zawiya* in the northern Moroccan town of al-Aroui. However, the commitment involves not only the allegiance to the shaykh, but also a promise to oneself, the fellow disciples, and ultimately the divine to fulfill a set of responsibilities and to perform a certain set of responsibilities and tasks. As Shaykh Fawzi expressed during an afternoon lesson (*mudhākara*):

When the disciple comes to me and asks me to give him *bay‘a*, I do not consider him asking for the *bay‘a* but rather, it is as if he said, “show me the light please.” Only the one who has spent a long time in my company and who applies, to the letter, what is required in the *Sunna* ... may be considered as having taken the *bay‘a* ... The *bay‘a* is for those who give full effort, who exhaust themselves and who suffer along the path... The reality of the *bay‘a* is that you stay firm in the path and this in the very heart of hell, not that you follow a path leading to hell, but that you hold to that path, even if [Hell] was the price to pay.

⁶⁰² Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 8.

⁶⁰³ Ahmet Karamustafa writes, “According to Junayd, this primordial covenant recorded in the Quran marked the true and perfect type of human existence as selfless existence in God, presumably as non-individualized spiritual entities in God’s mind” (Ahmet Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 17).

In the first part of this lesson, Shaykh Fawzi reinforces the point that the original *bay'a*, taken at the hand of the shaykh, entails a sharing of the light. He adds in this lesson, “At first, when the disciple comes ... [I] give him the light as a gift. This is a gift. Do not forget that.” In general, this initial sharing of the light is done in person, although stories have been told of disciples receiving the initial *bay'a* over the telephone.⁶⁰⁴ Based on my observations at the *zawiya*, new disciples would come and spend a period of time living at the *zawiya* before taking the *bay'a*. To take the *bay'a*, the disciple is invited to visit the shaykh, who often spends his days seated outside the *zawiya* building in the company of his three dogs and the other animals.

On one occasion, I spent a week with a new disciple from Yemen who passed his time reading all the books of the shaykh before taking the *bay'a*. According to him, he was convinced of the shaykh's status even before arriving, based on the testimonials of disciples posted online, but he wanted to be certain, so he came to visit the *zawiya*. It was as if he were studying for a test and on the day of the exam, the elite disciples came into the main room and invited him to meet the shaykh. We were sitting next to each other and he handed me the book we had been discussing and nervously stood up and left the room. The elite disciples reassured him as they walked away, emitting an aura of excitement and anxiety. I waited about thirty minutes for his return. He entered slowly, hunched over with hands covering his eyes. It looked as if he was weeping, but he was not. His eyes were red and he was squinting, unable to keep them open as if the light of the world was too bright for him. The elite disciples escorted him and sat him down next to me, telling him to recite the *wird*. I asked if he had taken the *bay'a* and he said that he had. I asked what he saw and he said the

⁶⁰⁴ Disciples said that this was usually only reserved for cases in which initiates were unable to travel (e.g., they could not obtain visas).

light. I asked if he could describe it. He said it started as a single point, like a single star in a dark night sky. The star grew larger, seeming to approach until the light filled the entire field of vision. He said that at that point he opened his eyes, but the light did not go away. I asked if that was why he could not keep his eyes open now and he replied yes. I asked what the shaykh did during the process. He replied that Shaykh Fawzi recited the *sūrat al-fath* as he took his hand, then whispered a specific *wird* (like a mantra) in his ear that he was meant to recite and which he was not to share with others.⁶⁰⁵ At that point, I left him to himself, he took out his prayer beads, and began silently reciting the *wird* to himself as he sat there.

This example is typical among the initiations that took place while I was there, and although I was not permitted to directly witness the giving of the *bay‘a*, all new disciples returned in a similar state. However, as Shaykh Fawzi emphasizes in the lesson above, the *bay‘a* is not simply taking the hand and sharing the light; rather, it is the steadfast effort to uphold one’s promise. Put simply at the end of the same lesson he said, “The difficulty is not to take the *bay‘a*, but to keep the commitment.” In this regard, he differentiates between the initial *bay‘a* and the true *bay‘a*, where the latter (the true *bay‘a*) is the commitment (*al-‘ahd*) that must be diligently enacted in action and intention.

The *bay‘a* is also performed annually at the *‘īd al-nabawī* celebration hosted at the *zawiya* as a renewal of this commitment. My first visit to the *zawiya* was on the occasion of this celebration. I made the four-hour drive from Fes for the first time, arriving after sunset. I attempted to use Google Maps to navigate to the *zawiya*, only to discover that there was no actual road leading there. Instead, there were expanses of dirt fields crossed with beaten

⁶⁰⁵ He recited verse Q 48:10 specifically: “Verily, those who swear allegiance to you surely swear allegiance only to Allah. The hand of Allah is above their hands, so whosoever breaches [the oath] surely breaches against himself.; and, whosoever fulfills what one committed (‘ahd) to Allah, then that one will soon bring oneself a great reward.”

paths and spotted with clusters of buildings, but because it was totally dark, I could not make out a way. In the middle of a dirt field I saw a man walking and I stopped to ask him for directions. He laughed and pointed in a direction, asking if I saw an illuminated sign on top of one of the buildings in the distance. As I would later learn, this sign is the word Allah traced out in lights and hovers over the *zawiya*. I said that I saw it but was not sure how to get there. He started to explain, then I simply said he could get in and show me, and I would give him a ride wherever he was headed. He got in the car and we exchanged some pleasantries before arriving at the ‘main’ dirt road leading to the *zawiya*.



Figure 2. Zawiya pictured from the back with tent on the right morning after ‘īd al-Nabawī (Photo by Author)



Figure 3. Approaching zawiya on foot (Photo by Author)

The *zawiya* was packed with people and it took some time to find a spot to park, but after that I found Frederic who helped get me oriented to the way things were set up.⁶⁰⁶ Inside the *zawiya* on the bottom floor, the women were performing *dhikr*, generating a powerful resonant sound that seemed to echo from the walls as I passed. Outside the *zawiya* they had erected a tent with enough room for at least three hundred people, adorned with numerous

⁶⁰⁶ Frederic is a French disciple in his mid-40s who joined the Karkariyya shortly after its original foundation in 2007. He is one of the advanced disciples and often gives lessons to the group on topics related to intersections of science and religion, as well as reflections on his own spiritual transformation and journey. He lives in France with his family, but visits Morocco a few times a year, especially for the renewal of the bay‘a.

colored banners. Front and center, behind Shaykh Fawzi, stood a prominent picture of Mohammed VI, King of Morocco. The crowd included disciples as well as people from the town who came to watch and enjoy the atmosphere, or simply for the food served at the end.

The event began simply with some collective singing (*samā`*) led by a small group sitting in the corner, accompanied regularly by the audience. After about forty-five minutes, the disciples rose to their feet and began to form a circle. They took each other's hands and slowly began to bounce to the rhythm of the singing. The movement consisted of a bending of the knees with a sitting-back motion, as if sitting in a chair, followed by a straightening of the knees and rocking the upper body forward, shifting the weight from the toes to the heels as they project forward. The movement began slowly, accompanied by a low, breathy '*hayy*' ('the Ever-Living one').⁶⁰⁷

The pace began to quicken as their voices grew louder and deeper, transforming from a breathy sound to something akin to a growl or a grunt. This cycle lasted approximately twenty-five minutes before the pace slowed for a few minutes. During the second cycle, as the pace grew, the shaykh began to walk around the circle and invite individual disciples into the center, creating a second circle in the middle. The shaykh continued to walk in the space between the two circles during this phase. Again, the pace decreased, and the participants returned to one circle. Finally, the third cycle began, following the same format as the first two. However, in this cycle, two individuals were invited into the center of the inner circle and they moved around the interior of the circle opposite one another. The volume and pace remained high at this stage with individuals showing signs of exhaustion and just as it

⁶⁰⁷ Al-*Hayy* is one of the ninety-nine divine names. The notion of 'living' permeates the Karkariyya, particularly with the emphasis on a 'living shaykh' in contrast to seeking guidance from 'dead saints.'

seemed as if it might be too much for some, the singing that had been going on throughout dropped out and the *ḥaḍra* came to a stop.

The disciples took a seat in their places, still in the shape of concentric circles with the shaykh at the center, and the shaykh's father came to the center. In a cracking and emotional voice, he gave an impassioned supplication (*du'ā'*) bringing many in the audience to tears. After the twenty-minute *du'ā'*, people returned to their seating in rows of cushions on the ground. At this time, individuals who had composed poetry presented it to the shaykh, reading aloud in front of the audience, and the delegation from Paris performed an abbreviated rendition of Attar's *Conference of the Birds* in French, accompanied by flute music composed by Florient.⁶⁰⁸ The shaykh then gave a brief sermon, mostly thanking those who performed and those in attendance, and explicitly thanking the king. Disciples brought out food and those in attendance formed circles around the large chicken tajine dishes that had been placed on the ground.

After all the food was finished and the place cleaned, many of the people from the town left and mostly disciples remained. At this point they were seated in their various delegations from Belgium, Paris, Yemen, as well as multiple Algerian and Moroccan groups. These were not the only places, but they were each called up in turn and renewed their *bay'a* collectively. After each group had performed the *bay'a*, individuals who did not belong to any specific place or did not have a full delegation were called forward. Finally, the shaykh opened himself to non-disciples, allowing them to come forward and seek the blessing of the

⁶⁰⁸ Florient is a French disciple of Albanian descent in his mid-twenties. He is a university student studying homeopathic medicine and while he lives at the zawiya most of the time, he occasionally returns to France for studies. His Albanian descent is reflected as well in the fact that he uses the kaval as his flute, as opposed to either a European (silver) flute or an Arab flute (nay). The modest performance included segments of readings in French from Attar's epic poem (a mix of direct quotation and paraphrase) followed by a musical segment that led back into the reading. It was not theatrical in any sense, but as Florient later told me, it was largely educational for newer disciples.

shaykh. A crowd formed in front of him as individuals placed money on the ground and the shaykh said a few words over them. They would usually exchange words but sometimes they did not. The amount of money was relatively small, usually no more than fifty dirhams. This stood out in contrast to the Būdshīshiyya, whose celebration I attended the following night in a nearby city, where individuals would offer at least four hundred dirhams to the shaykh, i.e., that was the minimum. The events also contrasted in terms of attendance, where those in line at the Būdshīshī festival numbered in the hundreds, hours before the shaykh even appeared. At this point in the evening, some disciples who were exhausted went to gather blankets and set up places to rest along the inner edge of the tent, intending to sleep for a few hours before waking up for the morning *dhikr*. I talked with the disciples about their experiences during the *ḥaḍra* that evening and at around two in the morning I walked with Jamil, who was to become one of my main interlocutors in the *tariqa*, through the muddy dirt fields to a house owned by one of the disciples that had been set up as a hostel for the traveling disciples. This is how the renewal of the *bay'a* was performed as part of the overall commitment of the disciples.



Figure 4. Disciples during ḥaḍra at al-ʿīd al-nabawī (Photo by Author)



Figure 5. Disciples and visitors offering money in return for prayers from Shaykh Fawzi (Photo by Author)

iv. *Dhikr* and *Mudhākara*

In addition to these acts of initiation and renewal, the practice and embodiment of *dhikr* is crucial to the curriculum (*minhaj*) of the Karkariyya. As a practice, *dhikr* is the individual or collective repetition (verbally or silently) of certain words or phrases often used in the Quran and Prophetic supplications. As an embodied attitude, *dhikr* is a perpetual orientation towards God that fulfills the Quranic injunction to constantly remember God.⁶⁰⁹ In this latter sense, I follow the ethnomusicologist Jonathan Shannon’s account of *dhikr* as an embodied practice that conditions ethical and aesthetic sensibilities, making possible forms of spiritual knowledge while also constituting moral subjects.⁶¹⁰ It comprises one of the core disciplinary techniques of Sufism as an ethical and spiritual tradition, and this is reflected in the Karkariyya.

⁶⁰⁹ “Oh, you who have believed, remember Allah with much remembrance” (Q 33:41).

⁶¹⁰ Shannon writes, “It is via the aesthetic practices of performing *dhikr* – the acts of sensate, sensual body in time and space, conditioned by specific aural, kinesthetic, olfactory, and tactile experiences – that affect this moral-musical conditioning, and move participants toward a state (ephemeral, always in need of re-enactment) of remembering their higher Self and the divine truths of existence” (Jonathan Shannon, *Among the Jasmine Trees: Music and Modernity in Contemporary Syria* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2006): 120).

Shaykh Fawzi places *dhikr* at the center of the commitment, writing in his book *The Enlightened Principles*, “*Dhikr* is the pole around which actions rotate. It is the talisman that unites all the meanings of religion and its stages. It is the great spirit circulating in all the members of the body of the *sharia*.”⁶¹¹ The disciples perform group *dhikr* at least twice a day. Once in the morning before the dawn prayer and the second in the afternoon between the sunset and night prayer. The *dhikr* is coupled with recitations of a series of Quranic *suwur*, several of which are topics of repeated interpretation and discussion during the shaykh’s afternoon lessons (*mudhākara*).⁶¹² However, given the focus of previous scholarship on *dhikr*, in this section I discuss the *mudhākara* as an important pedagogical technique in Shaykh Fawzi’s curriculum. I will return to discuss *dhikr* in more detail in the section on *ḥaḍra* below.

Each (or at least most) afternoons the shaykh holds a group session lasting between two and four hours, during which various topics are discussed. The sessions include brief lessons on a given topic from the shaykh, descriptions of visionary experiences from disciples followed by interpretation and guidance from the shaykh, and a general question and answer session. The disciples may ask the shaykh questions or the shaykh may ask disciples, and disciples may even phone in questions. The lessons are presented by the shaykh in a mix of Arabic and local dialect, partly depending on the topic, and one of the disciples usually translates into French.

In addition to the *dhikr*, the *mudhākara* serves as a central practice for the *tariqa* and its disciples, though it is not included as a principle in Shaykh Fawzi’s text. The *mudhākara* therefore reflects an integral component of the curriculum of ethical education that is absent

⁶¹¹ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 11.

⁶¹² Specifically, the 'light verse' (Q 24:35) is repeated on every occasion.

from the text yet practiced daily in the Karkariyya. It fosters a sense of intimacy with the shaykh through direct contact and communication, while also facilitating a sense of community and companionship (*ṣuḥba*) among the disciples. While it does provide a platform for the shaykh to give lessons on religious topics, it also allows him to address more mundane issues facing the *zawiya* and the lives of the disciples. The religious lessons are sometimes focused on one of the principles of the *tariqa*, and at other times begin with a *hadith* or verse from the Quran and use that as a point of departure for discussion. When I asked elite disciples about how the shaykh prepared his lessons, they said that usually he only writes down two or three lines and then expands from there. Over time, these lessons have been collected and published in various formats. Specifically, the shaykh currently has three published books that present his lectures and attempt to organize them under a common topic.⁶¹³

The point here is that both the *dhikr* and the *mudhākara* are two central communal practices that form the foundation of the commitment to the *tariqa*. Furthermore, as a practice intended to facilitate a sense of community, the topics covered in the *mudhākara* tend to extend beyond spiritual and mystical matters, and into the domains of mundane, everyday life. Reflected in the discussion of these matters of daily life during the *mudhākara* is the shaykh's deep concern and care for the ethical cultivation (*tarbiya*) of his disciples. The *mudhākara* is therefore one of the key techniques through which the shaykh provides *tarbiya*. However, while other techniques of disciplining and cultivating the ethical self are readily available for analysis (e.g., the patched cloak which will be discussed later as a

⁶¹³ See also Muḥammad Fawzī al-Karkarī, *Al-tarātīl al-hā'iyya fī al-āya al-harūniyya al-mūsāwiyya* (Casablanca: Matba' al-ṣina' al-kitāb, 2016) Muḥammad Fawzī al-Karkarī, *Afanīn al-sujūd l-l-alif al-khalūd* (Casablanca: Matba' al-ṣina' al-kitāb, 2017).

technique of ethical cultivation), the *mudhākara* is a subtler practice, but one that I argue is integral to the cultivation *ṣuḥba* (companionship).⁶¹⁴ Here I will illustrate these dimensions of the *mudhākara* through a constructed example, piecing together sections from different sessions in order to create an example representative of a typical *mudhākara* that also illustrates its ethical role.

Shaykh Fawzi sat on the floor in the corner of the room next to the entrance, legs crossed as he adjusted the cushions underneath and the table in front of him. He wore a green scarf and brown *jalaba*.⁶¹⁵ Sohayl motioned for one of the disciples to bring water and he poured the shaykh a cup, asking if he needed anything else.⁶¹⁶ The shaykh looked around the room as the disciples were seated on cushions in a semi-circle facing him, perhaps twenty in total. The room was silent for a few moments before the shaykh began by asking if anyone had questions. One disciple, a relatively new member wearing a white *jalaba*, asked about the cloak worn by disciples called the *muraqqaʿa*. “Is there a difference between me and those disciples who wear the *muraqqaʿa*?” he asked. “No, there is no difference, you are alike (*b-ḥāl b-ḥāl*),” the shaykh answered directly. From here the shaykh proceeded to discuss both the symbolism and the function of the *muraqqaʿa*, much of which will be discussed in a subsequent section. Summarizing the shaykh’s response, he maintained that

⁶¹⁴ Brian Silverstein analyzes the Naqshabandi along these lines, that is, tying the weekly lessons of the shaykh to the cultivation of companionship among disciples. His focus, however, is on how technology mediates this experience of companionship and the effects of the radio on that process. As I mentioned, the publication of parts of lessons (in print, internet, or Facebook) provides a degree of mediation that enables the extended network of disciples to benefit from the content of these lessons. However, as I have observed, many of the more mundane aspects of the shaykh’s lessons during the *mudhākara* are not published in this format; instead, the publications focus on the more esoteric or theoretical teachings. Therefore, in the mediation through textual reproduction a degree of the function of the *mudhākara* is diminished, and it is precisely the social or communal function of the *mudhākara* that I am trying to emphasize here.

⁶¹⁵ The *jalaba* (*djellaba* in the French transliteration) is the traditional Moroccan robe worn by men.

⁶¹⁶ Sohayl is a Spanish disciple in his late-twenties and is one of the adept disciples. As will be discussed later, he is known in the *tariqa* for his intimate knowledge of the science of letter (*ʿilm al-ḥarūf*).

the colors all represent attributes or names of Allah and justified the wearing of multiple colors by arguing that the Prophet wore multiple colors and therefore it is permissible to do the same. He then discussed the appropriateness of colors to specific times and days, saying that things were created at specific days and times and thus it is better to wear certain colors in accordance with those correspondences. The colors, in this sense, have an astrological and cosmological significance, but perhaps more importantly for the shaykh, they can have a practical application. In other words, wearing specific colors can help one to embody a certain attribute. For example, wearing blue (at the right time) can help one to cultivate the attribute of mercy (*rahma*) reflected in the divine name *al-Rahmān* (the Merciful). Returning to the Prophet, he pointed out that although he wore different colors, white was his preferred color and references the fact that the disciple is currently wearing white. “Why is white the preferred color?” he asked rhetorically. “Because white contains all the colors and therefore all the attributes.” At this point he recites quickly the ‘light verse,’ a common verse discussed by the shaykh and interpreted in Sufi circles.⁶¹⁷ He described white light as the light of Allah, so just as the white light of the lantern (in the verse) takes the color of the glass surrounding it, so too does the white light of Allah take the color of the spirit (i.e., the person) surrounding it. As suggested by the previous example of the relationship between blue and mercy, wearing blue effectively filters this divine attribute and enables the individual to embody it, over time ideally etching it in the character of the individual, and wearing multiple colors would enable one to filter and embody multiple attributes

⁶¹⁷ The ‘Light Verse’ (Q 24:35) reads: “Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is like a niche within which is a lamp, the lamp is within glass, the glass as if it were a pearly [white] star lit from [the oil of] a blessed olive tree, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow even if untouched by fire. Light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom He wills. And Allah presents examples for the people, and Allah is Knowing of all things.”

simultaneously. However, the shaykh added that the spirituality of the body makes each individual into one's own *muraqqa'a*. Therefore, physically wearing a specific color (or set of colors) is not necessary for everyone because some have the ability, or have achieved the spiritual state, where they are able to 'filter' the white light spiritually. In this case, the disciple's preference for white was taken as an indication, for the shaykh, of a degree of spiritual enhancement; or put otherwise, the shaykh permitting the disciple to wear white was a recognition by the shaykh of the disciple's spiritual state. In closing, the shaykh returned to his initial point, emphasizing that all the disciples are alike regardless of whether they wear the *muraqqa'a* or not, and that the authorization to wear the *muraqqa'a* is dependent on the individual's spiritual state, as well as what is required according to their individualized path. As such, he actively adjusts the curriculum to individual disciples, suggesting a program not only of abstract rules but also of situational factors.

Several important points are illustrated in this example. Firstly, the shaykh begins the *mudhākara* with an invitation to questions, rather than with a sermon. As many disciples expressed, the shaykh encourages questions and in this sense, encourages a dialogical and interactive relationship. In the *mudhākara*, he is not the master commanding them, but the guide helping and communicating with them. Secondly, as is quite common, the shaykh uses questions to present a religious lesson at the beginning of the session. In this case, he elaborates on the concept of the *muraqqa'a* as practiced in the *tariqa*, while also providing an interpretation of a Quranic verse and references to the Prophetic example. Thirdly, he ties this theoretical discussion to the practical ethical matter of embodying specific virtues, presented as attributes of the divine. Finally, the example illustrates the individualization of his applied curriculum of ethical development. While he has a general set of practices, each

of them may not necessarily be appropriate for every disciple and the shaykh reserves the right to differentiate the program accordingly.

As Shaykh Fawzi finished his response to the first question, Sohayl approached and handed him a Smartphone with a disciple on the video line. The shaykh placed the phone on the table in front of him, propping it up on a small stack of books, and began to speak with the disciple who asked about the *sūrat al-kahf*, specifically two verses.⁶¹⁸ The shaykh contemplated for a few moments, opened the Quran to read the verses, silently to himself at first and then aloud to the group. He then offered a short interpretation of the verses, finishing with the statement, “Everything attained by people is present within the Quran.” At this point he paused and allowed those words to linger in the air as the disciples sat deep in thought. The shaykh looked to Sohayl who took the phone, spoke to the disciple and finished the video call.

With this account, I want to highlight two things. Firstly, the use of the Smartphone and technology as a way of connecting a vast network of international disciples is brought into relief through this interaction. That mediation changes the dynamic of the *mudhākara* insofar as the disciple cannot be heard easily by all the disciples, thereby turning a collective endeavor into a personal exchange. However, by making the disciple present in the session, it actively engages an international community, allowing them to participate as members of the group despite their physical absence. Secondly, while the first question led to an

⁶¹⁸ While *sūrat al-kahf* is often cited for its rendition of the ‘People of the Cave’ or the story of ‘Moses and al-Khiḍr,’ the question here pertained to the example of the two men who were given grape vineyards. Since I could not hear the questions directly and had to rely on the shaykh’s responses I do not want to dwell on the interaction itself. However, one of the verses read aloud by the shaykh was Q 18:39-40: “And when you entered your garden why did you not say, ‘What Allah willed [has occurred]; there is no power except in Allah’? Although you see me less than you in wealth and children / It may be that my Lord will give me [something] better than your garden and will send upon it a calamity from the sky, and it will become a smooth, dusty ground.”

explanation of the ‘light verse,’ this question involved the *ṣūrat al-kahf*, another topic of continued conversation. These points of Quranic tradition act as attractors in the various discussions, providing axes around which many different discussions revolve and return.

Following the video call, one disciple (Sohayl) asked to share his visionary experience from the *ḥaḍra* the previous night. In narrating his experience, he said he saw something inside the circle of the *ḥaḍra*, but it was not fully clear. As he focused on it, it became a sea of light. He dove into the light and as he emerged from the other side, it became water and he felt like he was sinking. As he sank, he saw a dark forest grove encircle him. From the darkness, he saw something with red eyes and big horns approach him. The beast was accompanied by twelve dogs who hunted him as he attempted to evade them. As he tried to escape, the number of dogs multiplied, and he saw that the beast was a great wolf. He then saw a child (infant) illuminated with a light and he asked the child to help him escape. The child led him to a door in the grove and he escaped with the child of light, emerging from the center of the *ḥaḍra* and returning to it. The shaykh listened carefully to Sohayl’s account of the vision as he is one of the elites of the group and then offered an interpretation. He said that what he saw in the center of the circle was the ‘*khātim*.’⁶¹⁹ The dogs are the gates that seal the *khātim* and the infant was the love of the knowledge of the Prophet. The people of knowledge are people of purity, and this is why the infant was illuminated in a light of innocence. However, the beast represented a fear of the other and the shaykh advised him that he needed to, “work through this until you see the origin of the other as your own origin.” The escape with the infant was a reference to the end

⁶¹⁹ The sense of *khātim* used here is the attainment of the highest level through the unveiling of all the secrets. It also refers to the notion of ‘*khātim al-nabīyin*,’ or the seal of the prophets, used to designate Muhammad status as the penultimate prophet leading back to Abraham.

of days.⁶²⁰ After interpreting the vision in detail, the shaykh began to speak more generally about visions, addressing the group as a whole by saying, “The world you go to depends on the composition of the self.”

In this case, the transition from individual interpretation to collective lesson at the end illustrates how the shaykh uses Sohayl’s vision as a means for instruction. Not only does the vision provide a model for others to follow, but by connecting the form of the vision to the ‘composition of the self,’ the shaykh is encouraging disciples to adopt Sohayl as an ethical model as well. Sohayl’s access to these realms and the clarity of his visions is a product of the effort he has made in disciplining himself, and thus his engagement with Sufism as an ethical tradition aimed at the attainment of *iḥsān*. The practice of narrating his visionary experience to others is a demonstration of that *iḥsān* (i.e., piety) that operates as a form of teaching and community building, and as such can be seen as a performance that enacts and constructs the individual and communal ideals of religiosity in the Karkariyya.

Furthermore, in discussing the vision with Sohayl after the meeting, one feature that he emphasized to me, but not in the group recounting, was the embodied quality of the experience. For example, when he found himself in the sea, he could feel himself drowning, like he could not breath. When he was in the forest grove, the darkness was terrifying and bitterly cold, and he felt himself shivering in the face of a cold wind. As he was being chased, he could hear the growls of the dogs and the howling of the wind. For him, the power of this vision was therefore not so much the various symbols and visual representations, but the embodied feelings that made it feel as if he was present in the vision.

⁶²⁰ The conversation hovered around issues of the ‘end of days’ for a few minutes

Up to this point in the *mudhākara*, the shaykh had covered a principle of the *tariqa* (i.e., the cloak), an interpretation of a Quranic verse, and the narration of a visionary experience. Asking again for questions, the shaykh received one regarding how to balance life in the *zawiya* with life outside in the world. He started by saying that it is possible to do both, that is, to engage in one's daily life and have a profession, and at other times stay in the *zawiya*. However, fulfilling the purpose of being in the *zawiya* requires constant focus on the part of the disciple and it is not useful without a desire to learn. "The door is open to those who wish to befriend the Prophet and the saints (*awliyā*')," he continued, meaning that it is not necessarily a closed group. The shaykh added that the program at the *zawiya* is taken step by step, "like in a sea – swimming from wave to wave until it becomes easy." The first principle of the *zawiya*, the shaykh declared, is "he not I" (*huwwa laysa ānā*), that is, "how to love the other and live with people ... this is not in the head but in the heart." It is a program that requires tremendous patience and "those who are impatient with things, frankly, they should just sit in their house." The goal is to learn the attributes of God through interaction with the other disciples, who all come from different backgrounds and have different customs, but by living with them one is able to experience these attributes and come to embody them over time. Here, the shaykh emphasizes the need for *ṣuḥba* (companionship) in learning these attributes.

The shaykh then pivoted the discussion to the concept of the *walī* (saint), saying that the *walī* is one who calls the other from darkness into the light. Tying this back to the topic he says, "If you take one person and lead them from the dark to light, then this is glad tidings (*bushrā*) in this world and the next." The program embodied by the *walī* as one who brings another from darkness to light, for Shaykh Fawzi, is the path of love. "This is the way of the

zawiya... the way of love reflected in ‘Īsa [Jesus] ... To close the door and say I am important ... this is not the message of ‘Īsa.” Rather, it is necessary that one work for the community, to give charity (*ṣadaqa*) to one’s neighbor in order to develop a relationship that would last after death, as he said. “Do not worry about yourself,” he stated in conclusion, “but love another as you would yourself, because focusing on the self ... is not represented in this call to lead the other from darkness into light.” As he concluded, Sa‘īd (the cook) entered the room with a tray of Moroccan green tea and distributed them to each of the disciples.

In this case, the shaykh discussed several important ethical points that I want to highlight. To begin with, the shaykh recognizes that for many a certain balance between living one’s life and living at the *zawiya* is necessary, that is, it is not necessary for each disciple to fully abandon one’s life to spend all of one’s time at the *zawiya*. However, for those who do live in both, it is crucial that one spend one’s time outside the *zawiya* in service of the other, rather than in service of one’s self. This can be done in many ways, from simply helping a neighbor in need to a grander act of leading another from darkness to light. As I argue later, within this Sufi context it is best to understand charity not as individuated acts based on concepts of reward, but as a virtue honed and performed through repeated acts of kindness and care that are situated within a program of ethical cultivation. The key point I want to emphasize is that the program is not a withdrawal into the self, even for those who do choose to live in the *zawiya*. Rather, for these disciples, they must maintain a degree of social and communal responsibility as exemplified in the shaykh’s emphasis on *ṣuḥba* (companionship). The properly balanced life, in other words, is dependent upon the replacement of self-concern with a concern for the other, a concept expressed in the phrase

‘he not I.’ This virtuous disposition is often characterized as *īthār* (altruism), and the transformation entailed in the cultivation of this virtue is a target of the curriculum of ethical education. In short, the goal is the development of virtuous qualities that make possible certain types of relationships to the shaykh, fellow disciples, and the community more generally. Moreover, the discussion of ‘Īsa [Jesus] reflects the tendency of contemporary Sufism in Morocco to emphasize interfaith dialogue as a bridge to religious difference. Some of the disciples are converts from Christianity, so focusing on Jesus in this way also provides an important point of connection for them, thereby helping to translate their own understandings of Jesus into the Islamic context and providing topics for discussion among the disciples in order to encourage companionship.⁶²¹

Elaborating on the importance of companionship and interpersonal relationships during his *mudhākara*, the shaykh discussed a minor problem among the disciples. He did not mention any specific names or issues but addressed the problem of being angry with other disciples. “We speak different languages ... but we all have the language of love in our hearts ... Love is the way to understand what I have put in your hearts.” He mentioned a few daily problems that might cause tension in the group, for example, not cleaning the bathroom properly, eating too much or not sharing food, and not taking care of one’s place after sleeping or not offering a sleeping cushion or blanket when you have extra. “Proper conduct and comportment (*ādāb*),” he said emphatically, repeating it several times. “*Dhikr* and *ādāb* are the two foundations for Sufism.”⁶²² Proper conduct and comportment is essential for

⁶²¹ Discussions of Jesus in Islam are not uncommon by any means, but I want to point here to one of the ways in which Sufism in practice operates to bridge divides.

⁶²² In the Introduction I discuss the multiple meanings of *adab* (in the singular) and *ādāb* (in the plural) as they relate to ethics, behavior, literature, and courtly behavior. I also argue that within an ethical tradition of practical Sufism, *ādāb* and *akhlāq* (moral character) are closely related so that the cultivation of moral character involves the refinement of proper conduct and comportment (*ādāb*).

developing the relationship of companionship that is the foundation for embodying the attributes of God. “The messengers were always with other people who help them on the way,” he added, referencing the story of Mūsā and the Khidr, “so we too are in need of someone to help us realize the truth ... we must help to share this truth.”⁶²³ Developing the proper forms conduct and comportment allows one to interact with the Prophet, with Allah, with the shaykh, and with each other in the daily acts “eating, walking, talking, listening ... allowing you to behave as if you are monitoring (*murāqaba*) the light.” He added that monitoring the light here is a reference to *ihsān* as the state of being aware that God sees one at all times.⁶²⁴ Insofar as *ādāb* facilitates this monitoring of the divine in daily life, it is also integral to the cultivation of *ihsān*, and therefore a foundation of piety. “That is why,” he said in conclusion, “I advise all disciples to read the book of *ādāb* of Shaykh al-Būzīdī, to know to behave with the shaykh and thus know how to behave with the Prophet.”⁶²⁵ At this point, Saīd walked in the room towards the window to begin the call to prayer. It is not electronically amplified but is simply his voice calling from the second story window of the *zawiya* building. With the closing of the call to prayer, the shaykh stood up, all the disciples rose, and he adjourned to his apartment one floor above, finishing the day’s *mudhākara*.

In this case, the shaykh discussed the mundane interactions of the disciples and how they must have patience (*ṣabr*) with each other. It is here that the ethical project of the *zawiya* as a collective endeavor comes into clear focus, for it provides a space in which people of difference are required to live together in close proximity with very few amenities,

⁶²³ The story of Mūsā and al-Khidr appears in (Q 16:65-82).

⁶²⁴ *Ihsān* is defined as ‘worshipping Allah as if you see Him, and even if you do not see Him, know that He is seeing you.’ One interpretation defines the first half (‘as if you see Him’) as witnessing (*mushāhada*), and the second half (‘know that He sees you’) as monitoring (*murāqaba*). This is discussed in Chapter One.

⁶²⁵ See al-Būzīdī, *Al-ādāb al-mardiyya*.

living conditions that might put a strain on relationships. In this context and under these conditions, however, the specific qualities of patience (*ṣabr*), tolerance (*tasāmuḥ*), and altruism (*īthār*), as well as proper conduct and comportment (*ādāb*) that makeup the ideal form of piety (*iḥsān*) are cultivated and allowed to flourish. By bringing Moroccans, Algerians, sub-Saharan Africans, and Europeans together in the *zawiya*, for the shaykh, they can live with the differences and to a certain extent overcome those imposed by nationality or ethnicity. As I discuss in Chapter Nine, altering the relationships between peoples of these countries is part of the social vision of the *zawiya*, and here we can see how that social vision entails the cultivation of these virtues, and moreover that their cultivation is encouraged by mode of life in the *zawiya* itself. In other words, the *zawiya* is a microcosm for the social imaginary, both of which are dependent on proper conduct and companionship, which in turn require an applied program of ethical cultivation. In short, when speaking about the applied curriculum of the Karkariyya, it is necessary to see the *zawiya*, as a place of living and community, as a crucial component of that curriculum. That curriculum, however, is not meant to be limited to the *zawiya*; instead, the hope expressed by the shaykh is that this program and its ethical principles will spread internationally so that relations between countries, or at least individuals of different nationalities, may be reformed. Consequently, although localized in the *zawiya*, the ethical vision embodied and enacted in the Karkariyya has broader implications as a form of ‘vernacular cosmopolitanism’ insofar as specific articulations of ethical concepts are used to create bonds of community across national and ethnic differences.⁶²⁶

⁶²⁶ Pnina Werbner, “Vernacular Cosmopolitanism as an Ethical Disposition: Sufi Networks, Hospitality, and Translocal Inclusivity,” in *Islamic Studies in the 21st Century*, ed. Leon Baskins (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016).

The case above also clearly demonstrates the shaykh's emphasis on companionship, which he articulates in more detail in his book *The Enlightened Principles*, and proper conduct, specifically a book on *ādāb* authored by al-Būzīdī. Before turning to these texts, however, I will discuss takeaway points from this example *mudhākara*. Firstly, it illustrates the teaching style and the variety of content in the gatherings. Often, it is a question-and-answer format, but the shaykh may decide to interject specific topics without prompting from disciples. As for content, it included discussions of principles of the *tariqa*, theoretical discussions and interpretation of Quran, sharing of visionary experiences, and advice or instruction in daily matters. Secondly, the *mudhākara* was used as a technique of instruction (*tarbiya*) that involved both 'religious' and 'daily' teachings. Furthermore, while certain topics may be separated, the shaykh often finds a way to weave religious lessons (e.g., Quranic stories or *hadith*) into a commentary on daily life. For example, in discussing companionship at the *zawiya*, Shaykh Fawzi invokes the story of Mūsā and Khidr, using it as a model for the kind of desired relationship at the *zawiya*. Finally, it identifies some of the central features of the commitment (*al-ʿahd*), that is, the set of practices performed by the disciple. These practices included wearing the cloak, *dhikr*, performing *ḥaḍra*, experiencing and sharing visions, along with communal practices of proper conduct (*ādāb*), companionship, and service to others. The commitment is therefore not merely an initiation, nor is it performing specific acts. Rather, it is a way of developing one's self, with the help of others, over time so as to acquire certain aptitudes and propensities that make possible forms of behavior, for example, living patiently with people of difference (and forms of religious experience). Consequently, the *mudhākara* demonstrates the various dimensions of

this commitment and as a result, the multidimensionality of the shaykh's curriculum of ethical development.

As part of Sufism as an ethical tradition, this discipline is not a practice done in isolation; instead, it is done under the guidance and in conversation with a guide, as well as in relation to the others in the *tariqa*. So, while the individual commits oneself to the path, fulfilling that commitment requires the community as support and as a place of trial.⁶²⁷ In this sense, there is a recognition that commitment to the *tariqa* is a process, not a singular act. Commitment here reflects Sufism as an embodied tradition in that it improves and increases over time in a process similar to the acquisition of expertise, while always being susceptible to regression, and this process of development must be conducted under the supervision of a guide.⁶²⁸ For example, in one lesson Shaykh Fawzi discusses errors made by the disciples asking rhetorically, “Is a mistake made by a disciple [the disciple's] fault?” The question was not posed in a philosophical sense (that is, a question regarding the causality of action or in relation to determinism) but as a call to the disciples to be attentive to one another, help one another, and “monitor one another in order to direct [each other] to Allah.” Again, the commitment is not a singular act like an initiation. Instead, it is an ethical reorientation of the relationship to oneself, to the fellow disciples and community, to the shaykh, and to the

⁶²⁷ Trial here is related to the concept of *balā'* that is developed in the work of Junayd. Michael Sells writes in this regard, “Trial is the continual struggle against this spiraling circle of ego-self, which ends with the real ‘overpowering’ the human, working through and upon the human, subjecting ... and making the human subject to the workings of the real within the human” (Michael Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism: Sufi, Qur'an, Mi'raj, Poetic and Theological Writings* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1996): 258).

⁶²⁸ One way to frame the approach to tradition adopted here (and its accompanying notions of ethics and embodiment) is to draw an analogy between a ‘good’ Sufi and a ‘good’ craftsperson. Good here connotes a sense of doing things well, i.e., with skill and quality, rather than a sense of moral goodness. In this vein, I take the notion of learning in the context of traditions to refer to the development of practical expertise that can be deployed in novel situations, rather than the acquisition of propositionally summarizable beliefs or actions.

divine that is part of an ongoing and unfolding process of acquiring embodied expertise and proper attitudes that eventually lead to forms of knowledge and experience.

v. *Ṣuḥba*

Shaykh Fawzi elaborates on the concept of companionship (*ṣuḥba*) in his book *The Enlightened Principles*, identifying five types that are dependent upon the spiritual nature of the disciple. These five types are companionship of love, instruction and striving, reflection, recitation (*wird*), and blessing. However, only the first two are discussed as components of the curriculum of instruction, while the final three are left out of the discussion in his book. The key distinction made, according to Jamil, is between the forms of companionship that are intended or destined for spiritual education and those that are not. He added, “When we talk about spiritual education, there are two kinds of ways: the harder is the companionship between Mūsā and Khidr and the easier is the companionship between the dog and the People of the Cave.”⁶²⁹ According to Shaykh Fawzi, “companionship is the key which opens the door of the good, for the companions only reached their rank by the companionship of the beloved [Prophet].”⁶³⁰ This ideal companion must “be like a mirror [in order to] show [the disciple] gradually the reality of [the disciple’s] ego.”⁶³¹ Finally, the disciple “needs a companion who has totally reduced his human characteristics and remains only by the Lord.”⁶³² It is important to note here that while the emphasis in the text appears to be on companionship with a perfected master modeled after the Prophet, in practice this companionship is extended throughout the community of the *zawiya*.

⁶²⁹ This is a reference to the story of the ‘seven sleepers.’

⁶³⁰ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 20.

⁶³¹ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 20.

⁶³² Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 20.

For example, on one occasion I was sitting with Abdelsalam, an experienced disciple in his fifties who stays continuously at the *zawiya*, when one young disciple came to sit with us. Abdelsalam and I were discussing some differences between Sufism and philosophy when the young disciple asked about visionary experiences (*mushāhadāt*). “I am concerned,” he began, “because I have not yet had one. What should I do?” There was a visible concern in the face and voice of the disciple, a concern that was beginning to express itself in doubt. He continued, “I am not sure...,” but paused, unable to express exactly what he wanted, or unsure of what he wanted to say. Abdelsalam interjected, asking him if he has seen anything during the *dhikr* or *ḥaḍra*. “Nothing clear,” the disciple replied, “but I see a light sometimes.” Abdelsalam assured him that this was a good sign but added that he is still young. “The vision is in the heart and you must continue to prepare your heart so you will be ready ... you are not yet ready for a full-pictured vision. Continue with your *dhikr* and read the Quran. Do not spend the time on your phone or computer but ‘keep your tongue moist with *dhikr*.’” In this case, an elite disciple is responsible for offering advice to the young disciple and, as his role as disciple-guide, provides advice that is specific to the disciple and general in that it repeats a common *hadith* circulated in the *zawiya*.⁶³³ The elite disciple acts in this context as the mirror that helps the young disciple gradually to see himself as others might see him and therefore to see his own ego (*nafs*). In this case, the criticism was that Abdelsalam had observed the young disciple spending significant amounts of time on things like Facebook and therefore not devoting enough of his free time to proper conduct. Rather than sharply criticizing or rebuking those actions however, he subtly tried to correct the

⁶³³ According to Tirmīdhī’s authenticated version, a man said to the prophet, “O Messenger of Allah, the laws of Islam are too many for me, so tell me something I can hold on to.” The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, “Keep your tongue moist with the remembrance of Allah (*dhikr Allah*)” (Jami‘at Tirmīdhī)

behavior while also encouraging proper conduct. The form of advice offered here also constitutes a performance of the Islamic duty of ‘commanding the good and forbidding the wrong’ manifest in an informal exchange.⁶³⁴ These daily forms of interaction display the subtle acts of advice (*naṣīḥa*) practiced within Sufi communities and their connection to the spiritual progress of disciples on the one hand, and bonds of companionship (*ṣuḥba*) on the other hand.

Another way in which companionship is cultivated is through weekly gatherings held at the home of Idriss, one of the older Moroccan disciples originally from northern Morocco, outside the *zawiya* in the town of al-Aroui. The disciples enjoy this tremendously because they do not leave the *zawiya* often. Leaving the *zawiya* requires the permission of the shaykh and for most of the disciples, their only chances to leave are the Wednesday gatherings at Idriss’s home and the Friday prayer. It is about an hour walk from the *zawiya* to Idriss’s home and the disciples stop at the local *hanut* (shop) along the way to purchase some soda and snacks, treats to which they are not often privileged. On one occasion, we arrived from the *zawiya* in the evening and the disciples started chanting Allah as we entered the house and made our way up the stairs in a single-file line. Idriss waited at the top of the stairs to greet the visitors and we were led into a small sitting room. We were served *harira* (soup), doughnuts (fried bread beignets), fresh juice, and coffee. After eating, we moved to a room furnished with cushions where they prayed and began the *dhikr* in the same fashion as the *zawiya*. This was followed by the usual reading of chapters of the Quran, then the evening

⁶³⁴ Relating this to the more general Islamic duty of ‘commanding the good and forbidding the wrong’, my point here is that the focus is on reforming not rebuking the individual. As Talal Asad writes with regard to Michael Cook’s work on this topic, “Cook reduces this tradition to the imperative of ‘forbidding wrong,’ a move that, among other things, distracts attention from the complex process of encouraging right ... cultivating right behavior is not exhausted by prohibitions...” (Asad, “Thinking,” 3).

prayer. Before and after the prayer some of the disciples performed *samāʿ*. The *samāʿ* of the Karkariyya consists primarily of poetry from Shaykh al-Alawi, though they occasionally use some of Shaykh Fawzi's poetry, in addition to the common sources like *al-Burda* and *Dala'il al-khayrāt*.⁶³⁵ After the prayer, we all stood, joined hands and began the *ḥaḍra*. It lasted about thirty minutes because it was only one cycle as opposed to the three that usually take place on Friday (see more in the following section on the *ḥaḍra*). The *ḥaḍra* was followed by more *samāʿ* and then Abdel Hafez gave a short lesson discussing the *mi'rāj*.⁶³⁶ As usual, the event was sealed with a meal, provided entirely at the expense of Idriss whose family helped to prepare it. After relaxing and digesting, we filed out of the home in the same manner that we entered and began the hour-long walk home through the dirt fields. The Wednesday gatherings, which happen almost weekly, provide an important social function and help to facilitate relationships outside the direct supervision of the shaykh as he is not always in attendance. It is also, for Idriss, an important personal practice done out of care for the fellow disciples and embodying the spirit of generosity and hospitality that he says are constitutive of both the shaykh (and the *tariqa*) and Moroccan Sufism more generally. As such, hosting guests in this manner is fulfilling not only a social purpose within the *zawiya*, but also a personal goal within his program of ethical cultivation as he seeks to embody what he perceives to be the virtues of the pious Karkariyya disciple and contemporary Sufi practitioner.

⁶³⁵ *Al-Burda* is a poem (qaṣīda) composed by al-Busiri (d. 1294). *Dala'il al-Khayrat* is a collection of prayers compiled by al-Jazuli (d. 1465). Both are poems recited in praise of Muhammad. Together, they form part of the language performance genre of madh.

⁶³⁶ *Mi'rāj* refers to the story from the Prophet's Biography of his journey through the seven heavens.



Figure 6. Disciples seated in group for study session
(Photo by Author)



Figure 7. Disciples returning from Wednesday gathering (Photo by Author)

Returning to Shaykh Fawzi's text, he distinguishes two modes of companionship. The first is companionship of love (*ṣuḥbat al-maḥabba*). "It is a companionship dominated by beauty. Its companion is loved and interacts with gentleness and affection, like the companionship of the dog with the People of the Cave."⁶³⁷ Citing the *ṣūrat al-kahf*, Shaykh Fawzi suggests that the dog should be seen as an example of loyalty and companionship, offering the following interpretation:

The dog is loving, annihilated in service of its master. It has no worry except the contentment of his master and it has no demand except service ... Its 'I' is annihilated in the 'he' of its master, so the word I is no longer found in its vocabulary... All his language is the *ha* and *waw* (of *huwwa*). The *ha* [corresponds] to the five pillars of Islam and the *waw* [corresponds] to the six pillars of faith, adding up to the *kaf* of 'as if' (*ka'inaka*) ... [This] is its hidden secret...⁶³⁸

In other words, taking the model of three tiers of tradition (*islām, imān, iḥsān*), Shaykh Fawzi formulates an equation that reads *islām* plus *imān* equals *iḥsān*. Here, Shaykh Fawzi is articulating the sentiment addressed earlier that the basis of the *tariqa* is "he not I"

⁶³⁷ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 21.

⁶³⁸ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 21.

(discussed in the *mudhākara*), and relating this basis back to his initial point that the entire path is embedded in the phrase ‘Worship Him as if you see Him.’ Using Arabic numerology, he provides an interpretation of a Quranic verse which maps the companionship embodied in the relationship between the dog and the people of the cave onto the *hadith* of Gabriel, thereby connecting the idea of ‘he not I’ with ‘as if you see Him,’ bringing together companionship (*ṣuḥba*) and proper conduct (*ādāb*), embodied in virtues of altruism (*īthār*) and charity (*ṣaḍaqa*), with the ultimate aim of virtuous piety (*iḥsān*).

The alternative mode of companionship is that of instruction, which Shaykh Fawzi writes, “[Is] like the companionship of Mūsā and al-Khiḍr. It is a companionship the external [aspect] of which is majestic and whose internal aspect is beauty. It is permeated by tests and demands from its companion for abundance in proper conduct (*ādāb*) and sacrifice of that which is valuable and precious.”⁶³⁹ After recounting the interpretation of the story offered by Ibn Kathīr (d. 1373), Shaykh Fawzi writes, “Look at the conduct (*ādāb*) and how he underwent difficulties and exhaustion of travel [in order to] find whosoever surpasses him in knowledge.”⁶⁴⁰ Furthermore, if Mūsā is willing to undergo these hardships and has the humility to seek knowledge from a servant, then every individual must be willing to do this, that is, to seek out knowledge of Allah from anyone that may have it, even a servant. “For al-Khiḍr is the servant that, if you visited him, then you would find Allah with him.”⁶⁴¹ Moreover, there are examples of proper conduct and humility in the way in which Mūsā approached and asked permission for companionship. For instance, “[Mūsā] requested

⁶³⁹ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 23.

⁶⁴⁰ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 24.

⁶⁴¹ Reference to *hadith*: “Allah will say on the Day of Judgement: “Son of Adam, I was sick but you did not visit me.” “My Lord, how could I visit you when you are the lord of the worlds?” “Did you not know that one of my servants was sick and you did not visit him? If you had visited him you would have found me there” (cited in Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 25).

permission for companionship in great manners by saying ... ‘May I follow you on the condition that you teach me from what you have learned of sound judgement?’ Look to the sweetness of demeanor and the good taste [that is] an example to every disciple.”⁶⁴² Thus, the story is used not only to demonstrate the obligation to seek knowledge, but also the necessity of proper forms of conduct, comportment, and attitude, which are displayed in the use of language and humility of Mūsā.

Expanding on this ethical point, he proceeds to give the first test to the disciple in the form of an ‘eternal rule’ based on the model in which al-Khiḍr said to Mūsā, ‘Indeed you will never have patience with me.’ When the disciple commits to the shaykh, the disciple responds in the proper manner by saying what Mūsā said, which is, “You will find me, if Allah wills, patient and I will not disobey you in an order.” Shaykh Fawzi continues, “Then [Mūsā] compounded this *ādāb* by saying I will not disobey any order. Indeed, even if the shaykh were a *ghawth* [spiritual master], he would not enrich the disciple if the disciple does not follow his order and avoid what he forbids, just as a clever doctor would not benefit [a patient] if the [patient] does not take the medicine.”⁶⁴³ What stands out in this story, or what Shaykh Fawzi emphasizes in his interpretation, is not so much the issue of knowledge in itself; instead, it is the manners, that is, the types of comportment that facilitate a mode of instructional companionship, that make possible the acquisition of knowledge which he emphasizes in this story. Therefore, access to knowledge is dependent upon personal transformation in which one develops a relationship of willing obedience to the shaykh embodied in the commitment (‘*ahd*’), which in turn is connected to social relationships in the *zawīya* and an attitude of humility that facilitates a willingness to learn and be taught from

⁶⁴² Q 18: 66 cited in Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawāḳib*, 25

⁶⁴³ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawāḳib*, 25.

anyone (not just prescribed authorities). The issue of authority is of course an important theme and obedience is certainly embedded in the proper forms of conduct of master-disciple relations, but my point is about the ways in which forms of knowledge and experience are made possible not only through the cultivation of internal ethical dispositions, but also through the establishment of communal bonds, thereby linking the spiritual aims of the Sufi path to the communal possibilities afforded by that path.

Shaykh Fawzi goes on to cite Ibn ‘Ajība’s (d. 1809) interpretation in which two forms of knowledge are illustrated by the story of Mūsā and al-Khiḍr, that is, external knowledge (*sharia*) and internal knowledge (*ḥaqīqa*).⁶⁴⁴ However, even in Ibn ‘Ajība’s interpretation, the moral of the story, as it were, is not the attainment of knowledge as such, but the experience of humility entailed in seeking knowledge. Entering this relationship also requires specific forms of conduct and modes of interaction and in this way, Shaykh Fawzi connects etiquette (*ādāb*) with knowledge (*‘ilm*). Therefore, he emphasizes the manners and conduct of Mūsā in his explanation of the story and recommends to each of his disciples that they read the Muḥammad bin Aḥmad al-Būzīdī’s text on *adab*. My argument is that embodied virtues, such as humility (*tawāḍu‘a*), make possible access to forms of knowledge acquired through a master or guide, and therefore the cultivation of virtues such as this are

⁶⁴⁴ Ibn ‘Ajība writes, “The story of Mūsā and al-Khiḍr showed the difference between the people of external knowledge and the people of internal knowledge. The external settle the problems in the external world while the people of internal knowledge are filled with what is hidden. The former draw on the ocean of the sharia while the latter draw on the ocean of Truth. This is the meaning of the ‘convergence of two rivers.’ Because Mūsā who is the ocean of sharia met al-khiḍr who is the ocean of truth. We are not saying that Mūsā did not have a part of the ocean of truth because he combined both, but the Truth wanted to send him the sublime accomplishment of seeking knowledge through humility. This is how Mūsā was educated after he claimed he was the most erudite man of his time...” (Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 25).

considered to be part of the transformation of the self necessary for attaining spiritual states and knowledge, or as Foucault put it, “the price to be paid for access to the truth.”⁶⁴⁵

In summary, what is meant by the commitment is a whole ensemble of practices and relationships that are aimed at enlightenment (*tanwīr*) as the attainment of knowledge, and ethical instruction (*tarbiya*) as the refinement of character. As Khālīd presented it, these processes are ultimately the same:

Enlightenment (*tanwīr*) is the adorning of oneself in light (*taḥalla b-l-nūr*) that affords access to secret knowledge. This adornment is in itself instruction (*tarbiya*), which is the cultivation of ethics (*akhlāq*)... The purpose of the *bay‘a* is to open the field of vision of the internal eye through light. It starts as a point, then becomes a star, then a moon, then the sun. For me, the sky is like one-quarter full of stars ... so I must continue to work to maintain and magnify this light.

As I have tried to illustrate, the work referred to by Khālīd consists of the formal practices of *bay‘a*, *dhikr*, and *mudhākara*, as well as informal interactions of companionship (*ṣuḥba*) and advice (*naṣīḥa*). In the remainder of the chapter, I examine two additional practices that makeup the curriculum (*minhaj*) of the Karkariyya: the *ḥaḍra* and wearing the patched cloak (*muraqqa‘a*).

vi. Ḥaḍra

The *ḥaḍra* (literally meaning presence) is a collective ritual performed weekly by Sufi groups. While its specific form varies between Sufi communities throughout Muslim societies, it tends to contain several common features. In a general sense, it aims to elicit a direct experience of the divine (i.e., to make the divine ‘present’) through repetitive rhythmic

⁶⁴⁵ The full quote from Foucault’s 1981-82 lectures on the Hermeneutics of the Subject reads, “We will call spirituality then the set of these researches, practices, and experiences, which may be purifications, ascetic exercises, renunciations, conversions of looking, modifications of existence, etc., which are, not for knowledge but for the subject, for the subject’s very being, the price to be paid for access to the truth” (Foucault, *Hermeneutics*, 15).

vocal, breathing, and movement exercises. Some groups may include the use of musical instruments and drums, while others rely only on clapping or vocal performances. These vocal performances take a variety of genres, such as the recitation of poetry (*samāʿ*), praise of the Prophet (*madh*), and recitation of Quran (*tilāwa*). As such, the term *ḥaḍra* refers to one among several other components of a collective ritual, as well as to the collective ritual itself.

I described the *ḥaḍra* of the Karkariyya in a previous section the commitment as it took place during the renewal of the allegiance at the Prophet's birthday celebration. In this section, I approach the *ḥaḍra* in two ways. Firstly, I aim to show how this collective ritual is situated within the overall curriculum of the Karkariyya by focusing on its deployment as a socializing practice integrated into a daily routine. Secondly, I discuss Shaykh Fawzi's justification of the practice of *ḥaḍra* in order to demonstrate how the use of certain sources in defense of the *ḥaḍra* is a performance for specific audiences, so by analyzing his defenses of the practice I also show who he is speaking to, as well as how he uses these defenses to train disciples in their public lives. In other words, the types of sources relied upon reflect the targeted audiences as they serve to provide counter interpretations of these seminal Salafi figures. For example, using Ibn Taymiyya, who is often cited by 'Salafi' groups for his criticism of the practice, in defense of the Karkariyya's practices enables Shaykh Fawzi to speak to 'Salafi' audiences on their own terms and to demonstrate a competency in the sources they take as authoritative. In short, I will be focusing on Shaykh Fawzi's discourses defending the *ḥaḍra* as a legitimate practice in addition to its place within the curriculum and daily life of disciples.

The Karkariyya hold their *ḥaḍra* on Friday evenings after a rigorous day of religious observances. The day begins before dawn with *dhikr* in the final third of the night, a practice referred to as *qiyām al-layl*. For the disciples, it is derived from multiple sources, including Prophetic sayings such as: “When it is the last third of the night, our Lord, the Blessed, the Superior, descends every night to the heaven of the world and says ‘Is there anyone who invokes Me (demand anything from me), that I may respond to his invocation; Is there anyone who asks Me for something that I may give it to him; Is there anyone who asks My forgiveness that I may forgive him?’”⁶⁴⁶ This night prayer consists of a variety of individual supplications and is performed along with *dhikr* before the dawn prayer, all of which are considered obligatory for the disciples.

After finishing the dawn prayer, many disciples return to sleep for a few hours, but others (usually the elite students) stay awake to discuss or write the visions seen during *dhikr*. Jamil, for example, carries a notebook with him during *dhikr* and records his experiences in real time. Others will meet in small groups and discuss their visions, or lack thereof, and some will go directly to the shaykh, if he is available. These conversations often continue over the breakfast table, which usually consists of olive oil, bread, jam, and occasionally hard-boiled eggs dusted with cumin. During breakfast and leading up to Friday prayer, disciples take turns washing and preparing in a pair of small shower-toilet stalls on the bottom floor.

Disciples make their way in groups over to the local community mosque, about a ten-minute walk from the *zawiya* to join the Friday prayer. Sermons given in mosques are controlled and monitored by central state authorities through various means, but several

⁶⁴⁶ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhari*.

themes emerged during my attendance at these sermons. On one occasion, the sermon focused on the concept of *iṣlāḥ* and repairing society through the bonds of the brotherhood of Islam, adding that Moroccan society, and society at large, is in desperate need of a role model for social citizens today. In particular, the imam focused on *ṣadaqa* to develop these bonds within the community. On another occasion, the imam encouraged local involvement by organizing a ‘community clean-up’ sponsored by the mosque intended to help clean up the local community. Unfortunately, it appeared that the call fell on deaf ears, as no more than five people showed up on the day of the clean-up. On a third occasion, the imam gave a disjointed sermon, touching on various topics but providing no clear centralizing theme. I discussed this with the disciples after the sermon, asking what they thought about it. “It was chaotic (‘*ashawī*),” one said, and “it did not make sense ... I could not follow it,” or, “I am not sure what he was trying to say.”

As part of their overall program, the Friday mosque visit also serves an important social and communal function for the *zawiya* as it enables disciples to get out and engage with members of the community. Most of the time this is done through small charity given to children who play around the *zawiya*. These acts may include a small amount of money, candy, or foodstuffs. For example, Khālid had some spare change, so he gave it to one of the older boys. However, he insisted that the boy share with the six or seven other boys and girls with him and stayed until the boy distributed it. He had to tell him repeatedly to give it, but eventually the boy did. For Khālid, giving the money is not sufficient, but it should, where possible, also accompany a lesson of some sort. That is, one should give not simply to fill a need, but also to provide an example from which others may learn and benefit. By giving in this manner, Khālid was also assuming a responsibility for what happens afterward, and he

took that opportunity to teach the boy accountability by making him organize and take leadership over the equal distribution of the money.

Khālīd's adoption of the responsibility of teaching in this case is best seen by way of contrast with a different example. This example took place in Batha circle, a busy roundabout just on the outside of the old Fes medina. I was sitting in my usual café drinking a cup of coffee writing notes from a conference that I had just attended the previous day. One of the visiting shaykhs who presented at the conference walked by, followed by some of his disciples. The previous day he had given a keynote address about his program of ethical training. One component of it was service and he emphasized charity, or small acts of giving, within this context. In line with his teachings, it seemed, he took out several packages of tissues, which in a sense operate as a type of currency since people can sell them on the street, usually about four or five dirhams for a small package. The shaykh handed one package containing ten small packs (totaling about forty dirham) to one of the children and he was then quickly surrounded by fifteen or so young children asking for one. The shaykh had maybe five or six in his backpack and randomly distributed them to a few children before hopping into a taxi. What the shaykh did not see, however, was the ensuing battle that raged between the children. The children grabbed at the packages, pushing each other and throwing punches to get their hands on a couple of the small packages. One escaped the melee and came sprinting down the sidewalk just in front of me, chased by four other children. They caught up to him just outside the café and tried to snatch the package away from the smaller, younger boy. At this point, one of the waiters stepped in and, with the help of another man sitting at a table next to me, subdued the quarreling children and managed the situation, eventually through the equal distribution of tissue packages.

The difference is that in the first case there was an effort to teach something in and through the act of giving, while in the second case the giving stopped with the exchange of goods. In other words, for Khālid, the act of giving had multiple functions. It helped the children, it taught them an important lesson about sharing and equality, and it was part of his effort and training to embody the virtues of generosity and care manifest in Shaykh Fawzi. Notably, he did not say that it was done for ‘reward’ or ‘repentance,’ that is, to ‘purify sins.’ This logic was demonstrably absent from his explanations and discussions, despite efforts on my part to frame it in this way. Instead, Khālid insisted that this form of *ṣadaqa* was a means to reaching the spiritual level of *ihsān*. “*Dhikr* and *ṣadaqa* are both means to realize *ihsān* ... *dhikr* is a tool for cleaning the heart ... while *ṣadaqa* is a tool for the limbs (external) ... together coordinate the inner and the outer to realize the spiritual level of *ihsān*.” Here, Khālid formulates *ihsān* as having an internal and an external component, which he clarifies further. “What is the intention in giving,” he asked rhetorically, “and how can I be certain of this intention? ... I must have a pure heart to be sincere in my intention, that is the *dhikr*, and I must have etiquette (*ādāb*) in my action when I give ... we take this etiquette from our shaykh.” Both why one gives and how one gives are necessary considerations for the act of charity for Khālid, and the point in contrasting the two examples was to illustrate multiple modalities of giving.⁶⁴⁷

Returning to the Friday schedule at the *zawiya*, the time between Friday prayer and the afternoon prayer is free time filled by the usual activities. For some, that is internet and Facebook, for others it is reading Quran, and for others it is fulfilling certain duties, such as helping to prepare dinner. The afternoon prayer is performed in the downstairs room and is

⁶⁴⁷ This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Fourteen.

followed by readings from the Quran, after which a selection of poems from Shaykh Fawzi's collection are recited aloud. This lasts until the sunset prayer and between sunset and evening prayer the disciples perform *dhikr*, usually led by one of the adepts, though sometimes Shaykh Fawzi. While *dhikr* is performed separately from the *ḥaḍra* twice a day every day, on Fridays it is performed as a segment of the *ḥaḍra* so that disciples perform *dhikr* three times on Fridays.⁶⁴⁸

The *dhikr* includes seven repetitions of the *fātiḥa*, ninety-nine *istighfār* Allah (seeking forgiveness), ninety-nine blessings and greetings to Prophet and his companions, ninety-nine 'there is no god but God alone and he has no partner, He has the creation and the praise and is [all] powerful over everything,'⁶⁴⁹ and ninety-nine praises and thanks to Allah, with specific verses connecting each part. It is performed at a quick, steady tempo with little oscillation, and at a consistent, drone-like volume. On the one occasion that I witnessed Shaykh Fawzi lead the *dhikr*, which was during Ramadan, it had more dynamics and he regulated and modulated both the pace and the pitch. The lights in the room are turned off and the shades are drawn so that it is done in the dark (or near-dark setting).

While the *dhikr* is to a certain extent a solitary practice, in the sense that it is a mechanism for preparing and purifying the individual, it is also an important communal practice. One disciple, Frederic, uses the concept of resonance to explain the significance of performing *dhikr* in a group, rather than individually, and in unison, i.e., in phase.⁶⁵⁰ In this online lesson, Frederic explains how soundwaves interact with one another to produce the amplification effect of resonance. Using this scientific basis, he suggests that each individual

⁶⁴⁸ The *ḥaḍra* therefore refers to the whole event and its phases (e.g., recitation, *dhikr*, *samā'*), as well as the specific 'dancing' phase.

⁶⁴⁹ 'La ilāha illa Allāh waḥdahū la sharīk l-hu; l-hu al-mulk wa l-hu al-ḥamd wa huwa 'ala kul shī' qadīr.'

⁶⁵⁰ Frederic "Resonance."

is able to elevate the overall effect of the sound by performing at the same time. According to Frederic, the simultaneous and coordinated articulation of *dhikr* produces both sonic and spiritual resonance. For example, if the letter ‘*alif*’ is pronounced by three people at the same time, it will have an amplified sound while also producing greater spiritual effects on each individual, whereas if it is not pronounced in unison there will be interference and both the sound and spiritual effect will be dampened. When the shaykh joins, he magnifies the spiritual effect exponentially. Therefore, for Frederic, it is necessary that the disciples learn to perform the *dhikr* accurately and collectively in order to obtain the maximum benefit.

Dhikr lasts until around evening prayer time, depending on the season, and there is usually some free time just before prayer. After evening prayer, the *samā* ‘ begins with a small group of singers in the corner. At this point, disciples who live in the area begin to enter and take their places along the outside of the room on cushions. Over the course of the hour the singers recite poetry from the shaykh’s *diwan* as well as the *diwan* of Shaykh al-Alawi. During this time, Muhammad, the photographer and videographer for the *tariqa*, arrives to set up the cameras and begins his live stream of the *ḥaḍra*. According to Abdel Majid, one of the *munshidīn* (reciters), they take turns selecting the poetry individually during this time, but he uses the poetry of Shaykh al-Alawi most regularly. At the signal of the sheikh, the disciples all rise and form a circle, joining hands and arranging themselves to fit in the room. There are usually a few members of the community who come solely for the food, so we sit along the outside to observe.

In the section on the commitment, I provided a description of the *ḥaḍra* as performed at the celebration of the Prophet’s birthday celebration, and while the size of the group differed, the format, length, and overall performance of the *ḥaḍra* is largely the same. It

consists of three cycles, each cycle adding an additional concentric circle. In other words, for the first cycle there is one circle, the second there are two, and the third there are three. The shaykh selects individuals, usually many of the same ones, to enter the second and third circles by taking them by the hand or tapping them on the shoulder. He walks around the circle, sometimes its interior and sometimes its exterior, with his walking stick, helping to keep the rhythm and organization of the group. Each cycle crescendos up to a climax and then rapidly descends to a stillness and silence filled only by a single *munshid* singing. After the third cycle, everyone sits, and the shaykh's father performs the supplication. As many of the disciples share, the supplication (*du'ā'*) is most notable for its emotional content conveyed through the quality of the voice shaykh's father. It is a strained, desperate voice on the verge of weeping as it cracks and changes pitch in a manner that evokes, for many, a sense of longing. In total, the *ḥaḍra* with the *du'ā'* lasts a little over an hour and at the end, the disciples are sweating and exhausted, looking for a drink to quench their thirst from repeating '*ḥayy*' (meaning the ever-living one and one of the ninety-nine names of Allah).

After the *ḥaḍra* and *du'ā'*, the shaykh or an appointed disciple offer a lesson to the group. When a disciple gives a lesson, he usually presents it using the whiteboard in the room, whereas the shaykh will present from his seat. As with the *mudhākara* discussed earlier, the lessons vary in topic and any single lesson can cover multiple topics, intertwining esoteric Quranic interpretation with everyday advice for disciples. One major difference between the lesson during *ḥaḍra* (called a *dars*) and the *mudhākara* is that the former is not done in a dialogical or question-and-answer format. Therefore, when discussing the *mudhākara* previously, I emphasized that as a part of the applied curriculum of the *tariqa*. Its function was not merely teaching but also developing relationships between the shaykh

and disciples, as well as between the disciples themselves. In other words, the lessons did not merely teach ethics or offer advice; it was itself an ethical practice that operated to construct relationships and develop modes of comportment, complementing the *ḥaḍra* as a disciplinary practice.

During the Friday lesson, Moroccan sweet tea is served to the disciples and those in attendance, along with sweet bread. The sweet bread is donated by a local bakery in town who keep leftover breads to give to the *zawiya*. At times, the sweets may also be donated by disciples as well. It is common for additional people from the community to enter around this time, as they come primarily for the food. After the lesson, there is a small break as the room is prepared for dinner. Small tables are brought in and groups of six or seven people take a seat around them. A large, family-size tajine, usually of beef or chicken, is brought and placed on the table with bread. The bread is broken and distributed among the people at the table who begin eating for the first time since the morning.

By about midnight, all the food is finished, and the room is cleared of the tables. Some of the disciples will move upstairs to begin preparations for sleep, since they will only get about three hours before waking up for the night prayer and dhikr during the final third of the night. Others, especially those who live outside the *zawiya* in town, will remain to socialize, discussing topics of all sorts including politics, football, recounting experiences in the *ḥaḍra*, and religious topics. Disciples also enjoy singing during this time, and on one occasion I was treated to a private session by Abdel Majid, Sa'īd, and Karim.

In summary at this point, my goal in presenting the *ḥaḍra* as part of a Friday schedule was to illustrate how the *ḥaḍra* serves an important social and communal function. On the one hand, it enables the disciples to engage the surrounding community through attendance at

the Friday prayer and through small acts of charity with locals. On the other hand, it facilitates social interaction between disciples themselves, bringing them together for a structured, shared practice while also providing space for socialization. The point, therefore, is that before entering a discussion of the justification and symbolic interpretation of the *ḥaḍra*, it is important to realize the practical import of the activity and its location within a holistic program of training. One disciple, Khālīd, compared this program to that of military training, adding that it aims at disciplining the self. In this sense, it constitutes what he called a ‘technology of divestment [of the ego] (*taqniyya al-tajrīd*).’

This divestment, however, is not simply a loss of the self. Instead, as mentioned before, it is a gradual stripping down of the ego such that the self is lost in the other (as portrayed in the principle ‘he not I’ discussed above). In other words, it is an ethical reorientation of the relations with oneself, with others, and with Allah. All the parts of the Friday program, in its communal nature, lead up to the culminating experience of losing the self in the circle of the *ḥaḍra*, a circle that represents the *hā’*.⁶⁵¹ Thus, losing oneself in the *ḥaḍra* is simultaneously a losing of oneself in the *hā’* of *huwa* (he), which, as discussed previously, is an ethical principle of the *tariqa*. Furthermore, the *hā’* is also the *hā’* of Allah, so through the *ḥaḍra* one can ‘dive into the name’ in order to obtain forms of knowledge. The relationship between the name and knowledge will be discussed in the next chapter, but for now the point I want to make is that the *ḥaḍra* has both this ethical and epistemological function. That is, it is a means for training the self in relation to oneself and others, and it is a means for attaining certain forms of knowledge.

⁶⁵¹ The shape of the letter ‘hā’ in Arabic script is a circle in its final form, i.e., the form it takes in the word Allah.

The *ḥaḍra*, as with any ritual, also carries certain symbolic meanings, though there is no single reading of the *ḥaḍra*. For example, as mentioned, the outer circle of the *ḥaḍra* was said to stand for the *hā'* of He (meaning the other) as well as the *hā'* in the name of Allah. At other times, the circle was seen to represent creation or the universe in its entirety, within which certain planets moved. The individuals moving in the center represent the orbits of planets, as well as certain elements (e.g., fire or water). According to Jamil, the shaykh is responsible for directing the *ḥaḍra* like the conductor of a symphony. “He knows how to combine the elements and movements in the center ... he recognizes the features in disciples that are signs.” Thus, for Jamil, there is no way of knowing ahead of time what anything might represent on a given occasion. Two individuals dancing in the center circle might represent two elements, but they may also represent two planets or two colors. Even within a given *ḥaḍra* that representation may change from moment to moment, since elements, planets, and colors are themselves all correlated. Therefore, any attempt to read the symbolic meaning of the ritual by fixing relationships between the representation (the form in the *ḥaḍra*) and that which is represented will necessarily fail because it will cement relationships that are, in practice, constantly changing. This is why I begin the section on *ḥaḍra* not with the question, what does it mean or what does it represent; instead, I ask how it is situated within a program of activity in which Friday, the day of the *ḥaḍra*, is a day marked by community activity, in comparison to other days, and culminating in a group experience, or more precisely, individual experiences that emerge in the context of a community that has worked to cultivate bonds of companionship.

Moving now to how it is discussed in the text, in his book *The Enlightened Principles*, Shaykh Fawzi presents the *ḥaḍra* as the second principle of the *tariqa*, taking

great care to justify its practice through the Quran, *hadith*, and previous scholars. As with all of the principles in the book, he begins with a linguistic definition of the *ḥaḍra*, followed by a terminological definition as stipulated in the *tariqa*. The *ḥaḍra* and dance (*raqs*) are defined in the *tariqa* as, “The symbol of the dispersed heart combining the phenomena of the universe and human truths at the foot of witnessing; [it is] the proximity and the unveiling of the garment of protection [through] the manifestation of eternal lights.”⁶⁵² He moves on to cite five verses demonstrating the foundation of the *ḥaḍra* in the Quran. These verses are used later in his chapter to illustrate what is known as *ḥāl*, a spiritual state of divine presence often characterized by being overcome by emotion. Of the verses mentioned, one from *ṣūrat al-zumar* (Q 39) illustrates the connection between *ḥaḍra* and *ḥāl*: “Allah has sent down the best statement: a consistent Book wherein is reiteration. *The skins shiver therefrom of those who fear their Lord; then their skins and their hearts relax at the remembrance of Allah. That is the guidance of Allah by which He guides whom He wills.* And one whom Allah leaves astray - for him there is no guide.”⁶⁵³ This verse is taken to mean that the recitation of the Quran has the power to evoke emotional responses and thus the kind of emotional ecstasy characteristic of *ḥāl* is not in itself prohibited, for the Quran acknowledges that possibility. Therefore, the experience of *ḥāl* elicited by the *ḥaḍra* is permissible.

In citing *hadith*, Shaykh Fawzi begins with a narration by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 855) that demonstrates the permissibility of dancing based on the fact that people danced in front of the Prophet and he remained silent about it.⁶⁵⁴ It is important to note here Shaykh Fawzi’s

⁶⁵² Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawāki*, 58.

⁶⁵³ Q 39:23

⁶⁵⁴ His narration reads, “As for dancing, Imam Ahmad relates from Anas (Allah be well pleased with him), with a chain of transmission all of whose narrators are those of Bukhari except Hammad ibn Salama, who is one of the narrators of Muslim, that the Ethiopians danced in front of the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace); dancing and saying [in their language], “Muhammad is a righteous servant.” The Prophet (Allah

use of a *hadith* from Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's collection, since he was known to be critical of early proto-Sufis and gathering for recollection (*dhikr*).⁶⁵⁵ Later Hanbalis, such as Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328), have been interpreted by modern and contemporary Islamic movements to justify attacks on Sufi practices, so the choice of sources in this context is equally as important as the content of the *hadith*. The selection of *hadith* here, and in general the extensive effort to justify and ground the *ḥaḍra* in Islamic legal reasoning, should be taken as an indication of the intended audience. Many Sufi practices come under attack at the hand of Salafi organizations, and insofar as the Karkariyya situate themselves as an alternative and a competitor to those interpretations of Islam and their associated movements, they need to defend against criticisms on their terms. Moreover, insofar as they are trying to recruit from many of the same populations, the inclusion of these defenses equips disciples with tools that enable them to coopt Salafi rhetoric and criticize them using their own terms and sources of tradition.

The appeal to Salafi sources is further exemplified in the first legal justification of the *ḥaḍra*. Here, Shaykh Fawzi cites a *fatwa* by Ibn Taymiyya. The quote from Ibn Taymiyya comes, according to Shaykh Fawzi, in response to an interpretation of a story at Mount Uhud. Shaykh Fawzi writes, "It thus seems clear that the cause of the agitation of the mountain was love and nothing else. Therefore, the trepidation and swaying are physical manifestations of faith."⁶⁵⁶ He goes on to ask rhetorically, "So, if the Quran was revealed and descended on a mountain and, despite all the rigidity, strength, and inflexibility of it, the mountain was affected to the point of reverence and fracturing, then how should the state of hearts of Sufis

bless him and give him peace) said, "What are they saying?" And they said, "'Muhammad is a righteous servant.'"

⁶⁵⁵ See Christopher Melchert, "The Hanabila and the Early Sufis," *Studia Arabica* 48, no. 3 (2001): 352-367.

⁶⁵⁶ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 62.

[not be affected]?”⁶⁵⁷ The point he makes here is that if containment of love or reverence, of feelings toward God and the Prophet, is not possible for a mountain, then how could it be possible for a human heart. On the containment of feelings in the presence of the reading of the Quran Ibn Taymiyya writes, as quoted in Shaykh Fawzi’s book, “When Imam Ahmad was questioned about it he replied, ‘We read the Quran in the presence of Yahya ibn Said al-Qattan and he fainted. Yet if anyone would have been able to repel this state, [he] would have done it: I have never seen anyone more sensible than him.’”⁶⁵⁸ In this case, Shaykh Fawzi uses a *fatwa* by Ibn Taymiyya to defend being irresistibly overcome by a feeling generated through listening to the Quran.

He then moves on to cite Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 1350), Ibn Taymiyya’s student and another scholar taken by some to be a staunch critic of Sufism, on the topic of *ḥāl* and specifically on its evocation through movement. “There is divergence about [eliciting ecstasy through movement] (*tawajjud*): is it permissible or not? [There are] two groups. One group said: it is not permissible when in it there is affectation or feigning of what one does not have. [The other group] the Sufis said: it is permissible for the sincere individual for whom true, spiritual ecstasy is provided.”⁶⁵⁹ The issue therefore hinges on both the sincerity and the intention of the individual. Ibn Qayyim continues, “As the prophet said, ‘Weep, and if you do not weep, make yourself weep, meaning that if one sways affecting [and in] passion and his self, then that is not permissible. If one affects in order to bring about a state or a spiritual level with Allah, then it is permissible. This is known by the state of the person swaying, [that is,] the evidence of his sincerity (*ṣiḍq wa ikhlāṣ*).”⁶⁶⁰ Apart from the legal

⁶⁵⁷ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 63.

⁶⁵⁸ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 63.

⁶⁵⁹ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 63.

⁶⁶⁰ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 64.

argument here in which the permissibility of an action is tied to the internal character of an individual, these examples show Shaykh Fawzi's use of 'traditionally Salafī' jurists in the justification of Sufi practice, thereby repelling criticisms from within these camps on their own terms.

Having established the permissibility of experiences of *ḥāl*, Shaykh Fawzi moves onto the *samā'* polemic in which the permissibility of the practice of *samā'*, reciting or signing poetry, is debated. In this case, Shaykh Fawzi draws on more explicitly Sufi sources, including al-Ghazali (d. 1111), Abu Madyan (d. 1198), and Ibn 'Ajība (d. 1809). Shaykh Fawzi uses Ibn 'Ajība to clarify the position:

In the *samā'* there are arts, rhythms and swayings, [spiritual] states, and fragrances (*waradāt*) for the knowing shaykhs. Therefore, they made it a pillar in which they take shelter, [but] they do not rely on it because it is licensed for the weak among them. As for the strong, they are not in need of it. As Junayd was asked about the *samā'*, 'Is it permissible?' He said, 'All that unites the worshiper with his Lord is permissible.' ... [Thus] there is a group [for whom] it is permitted, a group [for whom] it is recommended, and a group [for whom] it is forbidden.⁶⁶¹

In his framework, those for whom it is permissible are the ascetics who have successfully extinguished their egos and so cannot cause any harm. Although permissible, it is not generally recommended because these ascetics have not attained a sufficient spiritual level. Those for whom it is recommended are the knowing shaykhs, "Because it arouses in them ecstasy (*al-wajd*) and [spiritual] flow until it spreads in the bodily worlds and expands in the sphere of the *ḥaḍra*. There is a benefit for the audience from it, because whosoever achieves the state, then those in attendance will be penetrated by it."⁶⁶² Therefore, it is recommended for those who have achieved a certain spiritual state not only because they personally benefit

⁶⁶¹ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 69.

⁶⁶² Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 69.

from it, but also because it has the potential to benefit others in attendance. Finally, those for whom it is forbidden are the masses because it has the potential to lead them to sin and corruption.

In closing the section on the justification of the *ḥaḍra*, Shaykh Fawzi cites the following poem from Abu Madyan:

*Say to whosoever prohibits his people from swaying
If you have not tasted the meaning of love [then] let us be
If the spirits tremble out of longing for the encounter
Then the ghosts dance, oh you who are ignorant of [spiritual] meanings
When you look at the caged bird, oh young one,
If [the bird] remembers the homeland then it feels nostalgia for the singer
It is released by the chirping [of] what is in its heart
Its limbs move from [physical] feeling and [spiritual] meaning
It dances in the cage out of longing for the encounter
The mindful rationalities tremble if it sings
Likewise the spirits of the lovers, oh young one,
The longing for the sublime world stirs them
Can we require from [them] patience while [they are] longing?
Can one be patient who has witnessed the [spiritual] meaning?⁶⁶³*

The poem reiterates the idea that singing and dancing, insofar as they are expressions of love or longing for the divine, should be considered permissible. Furthermore, those who have not had this experience should refrain from passing judgment in the matter.

My purpose in citing these sources, however, is not to provide a definitive argument for or against the permissibility of *ḥaḍra* (as dance) or *samāʿ* (as singing). The *samāʿ* polemic is a vast debate that requires detailed analysis of Quranic terminology, chains of transmission of *hadith*, legal reasoning, and accounts of direct experience often expressed in poetry.⁶⁶⁴ It also poses certain definitional problems, from a Western perspective, regarding what precisely constitutes music, dance, and singing. For example, does the melodic

⁶⁶³ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 70.

⁶⁶⁴ See for example, Arthur Gribetz, “The *samāʿ* Controversy: Sufi vs. Legalist,” *Studia Islamica*, no. 74 (1991): 43-62; Kristina Nelson, *The Art of Reciting the Qurʾan* (Cairo: AUC Press, 2010).

rendition of the call to prayer make it a form of music? Again, the nature of this debate is not my focus here. Instead, my concern is to identify the sources selected and presented by Shaykh Fawzi in his defense of the permissibility of the practice of the *ḥaḍra*, the *samāʿ*, and the experience of *ḥāl*. My argument in this regard is that Shaykh Fawzi begins the defense with selections from two prominent and authoritative critics, Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim, both of whom permit, at least in principle, some forms of experience and expression of that experience. He then moves on to Ibn ʿAjība in order to provide a Quranic foundation for the practices based on a figure that many Sufi practitioners I spoke with considered authoritative. Finally, he finishes with a poem from Abu Madyan as a final source of validation for the practices. As such, Shaykh Fawzi uses a *fatwa*, a Quranic interpretation, and a poem as a framework for his defense, thereby fortifying his defense from multiple fronts. This also demonstrates that he is speaking to multiple audiences simultaneously, and the choice of sources reflects the target audiences. In short, Shaykh Fawzi's textual justifications are themselves a performance, that is, the rehearsal of a set of competencies for an audience that is conditioned by the exigencies of contemporary social and religious landscapes.

For example, criticism of the *ḥaḍra* comes not only from outside the Sufi community at the hands of Salafis, but also from inside the Sufi community as various Sufi groups criticize each other's practices. This internal Sufi debate regarding the permissibility and appropriateness of specific practices has been a continual point of contention and did not emerge only with the rise of modern Salafism (or secularism for that matter). Therefore, in order to defend the practice, Shaykh Fawzi must also speak to the Sufi community, which he does by citing Ibn ʿAjība and Abu Madyan as sources for the permissibility of their practice, as well as to the 'Salafi' community, which he does by citing Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-

Qayyim. In other words, the defense he offers cannot be labeled either Sufi or Salafi but moves back and forth between the two in an attempt to perform mystical, legal, and traditional (*hadith*-based) competencies.

In order to complete the defense, Shaykh Fawzi specifies the details of the practices with a section on the proper conduct and comportment (*ādāb*) of *samāʿ*. He writes: “Know that tears are a translation of the eye – meaning by the eye the eye of the heart, the original eye. As for the eye of the head, it is only an example of the eye of the heart in the realm of [physical] feeling and the limbs. The eye of the heart is on fire with passion and love, so it overflows from the tears of life and love.”⁶⁶⁵ Here, Shaykh Fawzi makes a connection between the ‘eye of the head,’ that is, the eye in the realm of the perceptible, and the ‘eye of the heart,’ that is, the eye in the realm of the hidden. He goes on, “For the [sensory world] there is a direct relationship with the [spiritual world] ... the [sensory world] is only an expression and translation for the [spiritual world], so if the heart reveres then the limbs revere, so [the body] is authorized as a pen that writes what is lined in the heart.”⁶⁶⁶ There is therefore a coordination between the inner and outer identified here. This coordination occurs through the teaching of *ādāb* such that the alignment of internal feelings with external behavior takes place. Consequently, this passage helps to illustrate my argument that Sufism should not be restricted to the ‘science of the internal’ alone, and engagement with *ādāb* helps reveal this external dimension, or more precisely, the multidimensionality of Sufism as an ethical tradition.

As for the specifics of *ādāb* in this case, Shaykh Fawzi concentrates primarily on silence and seriousness while listening to *samāʿ*, drawing on the well-known etiquette work

⁶⁶⁵ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 71.

⁶⁶⁶ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 71.

of al-Sulami (d. 1021).⁶⁶⁷ Shaykh Fawzi writes, “Calmness and listening [intently] [are] among the etiquette of the listeners.”⁶⁶⁸ In addition to encouraging the practice listening intently (*al-inṣāṭ*), he also discourages distracting (*al-tilāhī*) others during the *samāʿ*. “Watching and distracting [others] done by glancing at another with the heart or by gesture, [is to be] preoccupied with other than the *samāʿ*.”⁶⁶⁹ Finally, he mentions smiling during the *samāʿ*: “As for smiling during it, it is an offense of etiquette. If one is overcome by it then he exits. If one does not exit then that one should be rebuked.”⁶⁷⁰ The *ādāb* is therefore designed to keep a relatively restrained atmosphere and attitude, which is often reflected in their practice that does not include ecstatic outburst or behaviors. By emphasizing a reserved style of *ḥaḍra*, free of musical instruments, drums, emotional outbursts, and ecstatic behaviors, Shaykh Fawzi uses the discussion of *ādāb* as a further justification for the permissibility of their practices, clearly articulating his sense of a ‘reformed’ *ḥaḍra* devoid of unwarranted innovations (*bidʿa*).

This section on *ḥaḍra* demonstrated the following points. Firstly, by situating the *ḥaḍra* as part of a program of activity, it not only produces or provides access to individual experiences, but also cultivates a sense of loss of self through engagement with the community. It is thus a social practice with an ethical dimension, in addition to a spiritual practice with a mystical dimension. Secondly, in defense of the *ḥaḍra*, Shaykh Fawzi draws on legal sources, specifically those used by Salafi critics of Sufism, in order to construct his defense of the *ḥaḍra* and its associated experiences and practices. Furthermore, the section

⁶⁶⁷ Al-Sulamī *A Collection of Sufi Rules of Conduct*.

⁶⁶⁸ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 72.

⁶⁶⁹ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 72.

⁶⁷⁰ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 72.

provides insight into the ways in which legal reasoning is deployed within a particular Sufi community to ground specific practices. Finally, through an analysis of the *ādāb* of the *samāʿ*, I demonstrate that both the external conduct and inner comportment of individuals are critical points of intervention for the shaykh. Because of the correlation asserted between these inner and outer dimensions, the shaykh must take both as his object of training. Therefore, the shaykh's curriculum of ethical development is not limited to the internal realm. In the Karkariyya, one of the most valuable mechanisms for training this outward comportment is the patched cloak (*muraqaʿa*), which is discussed in the following section.



Figure 8. Disciples seated after first cycle of ḥaḍra (Photo by Author)



Figure 9. Painting of ḥaḍra in zawiya (Photo by Author)



Figure 10. Tea and Sweet Bread after ḥaḍra (Photo by Author)



Figure 11. Disciples performing ḥaḍra (Photo by Author)

vii. Muraqqa'a

In a general sense, the *muraqqa'a* is a patched cloak stitched together from pieces of cloth, wool, or other material, often worn by Sufis as an ascetic practice of poverty. Shaykh Fawzi defines the cloak within the *tariqa* as, “The external appearance covered by the essential beauty inside the difference of the names, manifested by colors present in the rainbow. It announces the allegiance of the self to the spirit to enter and elevate in its

levels.”⁶⁷¹ As with each of the principles, Shaykh Fawzi begins with stipulated definitions then proceeds to discuss its foundation in the textual traditions. From a Quranic perspective, the *muraqqa‘a* is framed as ‘*libās al-taqwa*,’ or clothing of piety, as mentioned in the verse “Oh children of Adam, We have bestowed upon you clothing to conceal your private parts and as adornment. But the clothing of piety – that is best. That is from the signs of Allah that perhaps they will remember.”⁶⁷² It is also identified as a sign from God to remember and as such, the *muraqqa‘a* is in a sense a form of *dhikr*. As Jamil said, “[The cloak] and its colors provide a constant reminder of the names of Allah and His attributes.” In short, the basic purpose of the *muraqqa‘a* is *dhikr*, that is, remembrance, which takes place by sedimenting relationships between colors, attributes, and names of Allah. It also carries an important ethical component in this regard, for in remembering certain attributes through their associated colors, disciples seek to embody those attributes, gradually acquiring them in order to become the complete person (*al-insān al-kāmil*).

In discussing the symbolism of colors in the Quran, Shaykh Fawzi begins with the following verse, “So when Moses prayed for water for his people, We said ‘strike the stone with your staff.’ And there gushed forth from it twelve springs, and every people knew its watering place.”⁶⁷³ He goes on to interpret this verse in the following way:

The cane of Moses indicates the *alif* of unity, the *alif* of the majestic name... the *alif*, among the people of realization, is not a letter but all the letters [which are] none other than appearances and manifestations of the *alif*. It circulates in the letters as the ‘one’ circulates in the many ... So, Moses struck the heart of the *alif* of unity on the stone of the *ha* and the twelve letters of the phrase of unity – ‘*la ilaha ila Allah*’ – erupted from it ... twelve springs with twelve colors ... this is the secret of the diversity of the phenomena of the universe in the *ha* of the Name.⁶⁷⁴

⁶⁷¹ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 76.

⁶⁷² Q 7:26.

⁶⁷³ Q 2:60.

⁶⁷⁴ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 88.

In this interpretation, the twelve springs that erupt from the stone struck by Moses correspond to twelve colors. The twelve springs also correspond to the twelve letters of the phrase of unity – ‘there is no god but Allah.’ These colors and their associated springs then represent, or more accurately serve as sources for, certain attributes. Shaykh Fawzi writes, “The colors have a symbolism of external imagery in the Quran, for color in the Quran indicates divine power (*qudra*), mercy, and beauty. [The colors] symbolize life or death; unbelief or faith; guidance or misguidance.”⁶⁷⁵ However, rather than adopting a single color, the Karkariyya embrace a diversity of colors in their *muraqqa‘a*, because this diversity itself represents, and more importantly helps to bring about in the individual, a sense of beauty and harmony. Shaykh Fawzi writes, “As for the difference of colors and their mixing, it forms beauty [in which] the eye takes delight and [in which] the heart is enchanted (*yaṭrab*), and the spirits become intoxicated [because] Allah connected the different colors to memory and thought.”⁶⁷⁶ In this way, the colors do not merely represent abstract concepts, but are intended to evoke certain affective qualities in the individual. Furthermore, the wearing of the *muraqqa‘a* is seen as a way not only of evoking certain affective states, but also of enfolding attributes and relationships to the world within oneself. In other words, it is an external tool for the cultivation of internal characteristics. Shaykh Fawzi writes, “So wearing the colored cloak is the adornment externally of the universes inside ... it is a message of love to all the creations of Allah, [because] in our *zawiya* our curriculum is love (*ḥubb*) and our school is love (*gharam*).”⁶⁷⁷

⁶⁷⁵ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 90.

⁶⁷⁶ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 90.

⁶⁷⁷ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 92.

This discussion reflects two key components of the curriculum of ethical education (*minhaj al-tarbiya*): the embrace of diversity and the emphasis on love in spite of diversity. These features of the curriculum connect the Karkariyya to broader global trends in which Sufism emerges as a type of cosmopolitanism that transcends differences and entails an inclusive morality. However, as I will discuss in Chapter Nine, while this *tarbiya* has this cosmopolitan flavor, it is also tied by the Karkariyya directly to a distinctive Moroccan religiosity and identity. In other words, the *minhaj al-tarbiya* of the Karkariyya is simultaneously ‘universal’ (cosmopolitan) and ‘local’ (Moroccan), a tension that has the potential to generate problems as this ‘Moroccan cosmopolitanism’ is exported across borders.

Returning to the discussion of the *muraqqa’a*, the colors have multiple correspondences in Shaykh Fawzi’s interpretation. They correspond to the creations of the universe, to the attributes of God, and to the letters composing the ‘phrase of unity.’ The colors also have an aesthetic and an ethical dimension. Regarding aesthetics, the coordination of colors can help to produce affective states that lead one to recognize or to feel beauty and harmony in the world. As for the ethical dimension, which will be discussed in more detail below, it is a tool for coordinating the external and the internal dimensions of the disciple such that the multiplicity of the universe is embodied by the disciple, enabling the disciple to develop relationships of love with creation. The *muraqqa’a* is only one part of the ethical curriculum, but it is certainly one of the most apparent components and as a result, wearing it must also be considered a public performance of piety. As a public performance, it comes under consistent criticism from the general public.

In justifying or defending the practice, Sheikh Fawzi frames the *muraqqa‘a* as a form of ‘clothing of piety,’ a term present in the Quranic verse above, and using Ibn ‘Ajība, he grounds the *muraqqa‘a* in the clothing used by Adam.⁶⁷⁸ He adds that each group of people has a characteristic type of clothing, but this clothing has an internal and an external component. He writes, “For everyone among those groups there is an external and an internal [adornment]. The internal adornment is for the sight of Allah and the external adornment is for the position of the *sharia* ... every clothing has in it the fortune of the worshiper and there is not, in the clothing of piety, a fortune of the self.”⁶⁷⁹ While a difference is drawn here between the external and the internal and that is articulated along the lines of a distinction between the domain of the *sharia* (external) and the sight of God (internal), what is important is that both dimensions and their coordination are taken into account. In addition, this clothing of piety has an external component that is sanctioned by the *sharia*, more specifically the *sunna* of the Prophet. Shaykh Fawzi writes, “The prophet wore all colors, so collect the *sunna* of the Prophet in you.”⁶⁸⁰ On top of grounding the *muraqqa‘a* in the clothing of Adam, Shaykh Fawzi also grounds the colors of the *muraqqa‘a* in the behavior of the prophet. Therefore, the external aspect of the *muraqqa‘a*, for Shaykh Fawzi, is fully consistent with the *sharia* as it must be in order to be clothing of piety. He writes, “How can He respond to you while your clothes are forbidden. The evil of your actions begins externally ... how can the light of the Truth circulate in you while your body is clothed in the forbidden? Remove all clothing and wear the clothing of piety.”⁶⁸¹

⁶⁷⁸ “The *muraqqa‘a* is the heritage of our father Adam. It is the origin of all clothing. It is the first of what our father Adam wore” (Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 94).

⁶⁷⁹ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 93.

⁶⁸⁰ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 94.

⁶⁸¹ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 81.

Therefore, for Sheikh Fawzi and the disciples, the *muraqqaʿa* is seen as fully consistent with *sharia* and *sunna*, and consistency with the *sharia* in clothing is evaluated based on these criteria. Furthermore, it illustrates an important aspect of Sufi approaches to *sharia*, in which the external is not done for its own sake, but because it serves an important internal function. This clothing is authorized by the *sharia* not only because it is worn by Adam or has precedent in the *sunna*, but also because it is a means for acquiring certain inward attitudes and propensities. In other words, *sharia* here is best understood as legitimized behavior that is not simply legal in the strict sense of the term, and in approaching *sharia* this way Shaykh Fawzi and the Karkariyya embody Sufism as an ethical tradition.

As such, one does not wear the clothing of piety, in this case the *muraqqaʿa*, simply to follow the *sharia* as an imposed set of obligations. Instead, the wearing of the *muraqqaʿa* performs certain operations on the internal aspects of the disciple. In a general sense Shaykh Fawzi writes, “So cover your attributes with his attributes, cover your ignorance with his knowledge and your shame with his pride and your negation with his existence. Cover your darkness with the lights of his attributes descended in the colors of the presences manifested in the colored *muraqqaʿa*.”⁶⁸² Specifically, the *muraqqaʿa* has numerous benefits that are explicated in a poem attributed by Shaykh Fawzi to al-Saraqustī (d. 1130) and an explanation of that poem by Ibn ʿAjība.⁶⁸³

*The people do not choose the muraqqaʿa
Except for attributes that will come
The first is banishment of arrogance
And its prevention of cold, then heat
And the lightening of commissioning (responsibility) then in it*

⁶⁸² Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 95.

⁶⁸³ While I was not able to get a definitive answer, the reference here is likely to Abū al-Hussayn Razīn ibn Muʿawiya al-ʿAbardī al-Saraqustī al-Andalusī al-Malikī, author of *Tajrīd b-l-ṣiḥāḥ was al-sunna*. Alternatively, it is possibly a reference to Abū al-Ṭāhir Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Tamīmī al-Saraqustī ibn al-Astarkūwī (d. 1143), author of *Al-maqāmāt al-luzūmiyya*.

*Lessening greed of those who are greedy in it
And shaming the self and lengthening age
And patience then the embracing of age
For you do not see its cloth as the reverent one
So it is authorized for approaching humility.*⁶⁸⁴

Ibn ‘Ajiba summarizes this poem by identifying ten benefits of the *muraqqa‘a*. I will not include a discussion of all these, but I do want to point out at the start that the benefits are both spiritual and practical, that is, the *muraqqa‘a* has benefits pertaining to the internal life of the disciple as well as the external life. For example, the *muraqqa‘a* has the benefit of repelling heat, when it is hot, and repelling cold, when it is cold. As for its disciplinary function, it is intended to diminish arrogance and generate humility, as well as to reduce greed and ambition. It is a defense against evils insofar as, “The *muraqqa‘a* distances its owner from the ambushes of pests [that lead to] discontentment of the Lord. It is like a protection in treatment, preventing the frequenting of places of amusement, ignorance.”⁶⁸⁵ It also operates to shame the self, for “the dropping of status and rank is a condition for the realization of the spiritual level of sincerity (*ikhhlās*).”⁶⁸⁶ In other words, by wearing the cloak, one attracts criticism and contempt from others, which in turn diminishes the feelings of pride in the self. Furthermore, as the *muraqqa‘a* is a clothing of poverty that is associated by the general public with beggars, thereby inviting public scorn and, in this way, cultivating a sense of patience and diminishing the ego. Finally, it is a means to create mindfulness of creation, to strip oneself of carelessness in interactions with the world, and to adopt attitudes of compassion and love. The *muraqqa‘a* therefore operates as a kind of trial (*ibtilā‘*) in which the ridicule from the outside world produces the virtues of patience, humility, and

⁶⁸⁴ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 82.

⁶⁸⁵ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 94.

⁶⁸⁶ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 83.

concern for that which is other than the self. As such, the *muraqqa'a* is an ethical practice used as a technology for disciplining the self in which the external comportment of the individual disciple is a means for developing certain attitudes, propensities, and virtues. This ethical practice is based in traditions of Sufism and Islam more generally, but its form as a multi-colored, patched robe is new. As such, the *muraqqa'a* here rearticulates a traditional ethical discipline in the contemporary world. However, as clothing it is also a public performance of piety, and my argument is that part of the ethical function of the *muraqqa'a* is dependent upon its public performance.

As a performance, the *muraqqa'a* carries broader public significance as well. For example, Khālīd explained that while the *muraqqa'a* is a form of *tajrīd*, that is, a technique for evoking blame and discomfort in order strip away the trappings of the ego, “It is also a uniform of the moment giving us clear distinction from Salafi forms of dress.” The point he was making here is that the *muraqqa'a* serves as a marker of piety distinguishing them from Salafis, in addition to a means for cultivating that piety. Therefore, the *muraqqa'a* is not only an ethical discipline but also a public performance of Sufi piety that targets a specific audience and aims to counter Salafi appeals to that same audience.

The significance here is that, with the exception of the *muraqqa'a*, the Karkariyya, are actually quite close to the ‘Salafi’ groups in their overall appearance. This is exemplified by a story from Jamil when he was in Belgium:

One day I was feeling like a change after I completed my final exams, so instead of wearing the *muraqqa'a*, I wore jeans and a polo shirt with nothing on my head. While on the train, a young Muslim woman in a hijab started staring at me wearily. I noticed this and so I opened my bag to show that I only had books in it ... I pretended to look for something in the bag. I tried to ignore her, but as soon as the metro doors opened, she ran ... literally ran away. So, I decided to put the *muraqqa'a* back on and people’s attitudes changed [fellow disciple interjects that this is the *baraka* of the sheikh] ... When we wear the *muraqqa'a*, people just think we are crazy, but they

leave us alone. Without it, I am like *daesh* [according to them] with a beard and long hair.

The *muraqqa'a* in this account has the simultaneous function of distinguishing the disciple from other groups of Muslims, thereby providing a kind of social protection, while also evoking the ridicule, or at least bewilderment, of the public. “People stop and stare of course,” he adds, “but this is good for taming the self.” I then asked if he got the same response wearing it in Morocco as opposed to Europe, and he replied that people found it just as strange in Morocco as in Europe. This is a crucial point, because it is connected to seeing the *muraqqa'a* as a contemporary articulation of a traditional disciplinary practice.

The Karkariyya is a largely international *tariqa* with members all over the world. Therefore, if part of the curriculum is to wear something that evokes ridicule from the masses while also being standardized throughout the order, then the ‘uniform’ must be something that would be seen as equally strange in France as it would in Morocco as it would in Egypt. Therefore, while wearing, for example, the Moroccan *jilaba* may cause some form of social alienation in France or Canada, it would be considered completely normal in Morocco. Thus, due to its international composition and the diverse norms of dress across those countries, it was necessary to create a ‘uniform’ that would serve the same function regardless of the location of the disciple. The multi-colored, patched robe is something that can do this insofar as it is equally strange in relation to norms almost everywhere. As such, I argue that the multi-colored, patched cloak, in the specific form that it exists within the Karkariyya, is a contemporary manifestation of a traditional ethical technology that takes its form from traditions as well as from the contemporary context and composition of the community.

The *muraqqa`a* is a multi-dimensional practice that is central to the Karkariyya's applied curriculum. It has a representational or symbolic dimension, insofar as colors and attributes are related to one another and serve as triggers for remembering God. It has an aesthetic dimension, insofar as the use and combination of colors evokes certain feelings of beauty, diversity of creation, and harmony. It has an ethical dimension, insofar as it operates on the external body of the individual to produce internal virtuous dispositions. Finally, it has a social (and political) dimension, insofar as it serves as a 'uniform' bringing the diverse members of the group together while also distinguishing them from other Islamic groups.

When I asked him what the *muraqqa`a* did, Hamid summarized it as follows:

[The *muraqqa`a*] is spiritual instruction (*tarbiya*). The act of sewing requires one to stitch together the names of Allah. The act of wearing it is a way of disciplining the self (*tahdhīb al-nafs*). The symbolism of the colors and the names give a constant reminder, so it is *dhikr*. Progress along the path is reflected in clothing. For example, first you wear the *muraqqa`a*, then you go barefoot. All of these are done at the authorization of Sidi Shaykh.⁶⁸⁷

Therefore, the *muraqqa`a* is one of the mechanisms of *tarbiya* serving multiple functions including the disciplining of the self and the remembrance of God. It also operates as a public performance that makes the Karkariyya visible in public spaces, distinguishes the group from other Islamic communities, and helps to foster a sense of community and social bonds between the disciples. Most significantly, however, is that its role within the curriculum as a technology of *tarbiya* is constituted by its function as a public performance of piety.

⁶⁸⁷ Hamid was from Casablanca and was in his mid-thirties. He spent extended periods of time at the zawiya, but had not yet been permitted to wear the *muraqqa`a*. He had a somewhat troublesome background and as he told me, the shaykh required that he go through a process of repentance and purification before being permitted to wear the cloak.

viii. Summary

In this chapter, I discussed several components of the curriculum of ethical education (*minhaj al-tarbiya*) of the Karkariyya: the allegiance (*bayʿa*), the commitment (*al-ʿahd*), the *dhikr*, the *mudhākara*, companionship (*ṣuḥba*), advice (*naṣīḥa*), the *ḥaḍra*, and the *muraqqaʿa*. My goal was to demonstrate the ways in which these formal and informal practices operate to cultivate a set of virtues, to refine modes of conduct and comportment, and ultimately to elevate the individual to a level of piety characterized as *iḥsān*. While the Karkariyya articulate *iḥsān* as witnessing the divine light (*tanwīr*), my argument was that attaining the level *iḥsān* also involved a program of ethical development (*tarbiya*) that reoriented disciples to themselves, to other disciples, to the social world, and ultimately to God. As a program of reorientation of intention and cultivation of virtue, the Sufism of the Karkariyya can be seen as an embodied ethical tradition whose disciplinary techniques include public performances of piety.

CHAPTER EIGHT: RETREATING INTO THE NAME: *MUSHĀHADĀT* IN THE KARKARIYYA-
FAWZIYYA

“Our tariqa is the tariqa of visions (mushāhadāt). People who do not see are not my disciples and I am not their shaykh”
- Muḥammad Fawzī al-Karkarī

i. Introduction

In the previous chapter I outlined a program of practices that shape the *minhaj al-tarbiya* of the Karkariyya. This program included formal exercises such as the *bay‘a*, *dhikr*, *mudhākara*, *ḥaḍra*, and wearing the *muraqqa‘a*, as well as informal practices of companionship (*ṣuḥba*), advice (*naṣīha*), and charity (*ṣaḍaqa*). As I argued, these practices are aimed at the ethical formation of subjects in which certain virtues (altruism, patience, and generosity) are cultivated in order to progress to the highest level of piety defined as *iḥsān*. While I focused primarily on its ethical components, the process of *tarbiya* also facilitated and accompanied certain forms of perception and experience, often taking the form of visionary experience (*mushāhada*). This aesthetic dimension was characterized as enlightenment (*tanwīr*), encompassing a sense of seeing properly and attaining knowledge via perception of the divine light. Up to this point, I have focused on the various practices employed by the group as part of its applied curriculum of ethical development. The goal has been to show, on the one hand, that the training process is ultimately one of ethical development and that this sits at the center or at the heart of the Karkariyya, thereby illustrating the centrality of ethical practices to Sufism. On the other hand, I have been attempting to show, as discussed in Chapter Two, the practices that enable certain forms of mystical experience. In short, my goal was to provide an account of the embodied practices that form the preconditions for certain forms of experience. In what follows, I explore the

spaces opened by these practices, and therefore, what one might call the mystical or esoteric sciences (‘*alūm*).⁶⁸⁸

Specifically, I will explore the connections between practices and experience with particular attention to the practice of spiritual retreat (*khalwa*). I begin by discussing how the name Allah operates as a conceptual tool that is materialized and embodied through daily practice and that provides a framework for progress in the spiritual path and acquisition of spiritual knowledge. I then discuss features of this spiritual knowledge as they relate to visionary experience (*mushāhada*) and divine light (*nūr*) in order to illustrate that progress along the path involves the transformation of perceptual abilities from *baṣr* to *baṣīra*. Finally, I use narratives of visionary experiences posted online by disciples after their spiritual retreats to explain the *khalwa* as an embodied practice that, in conjunction with the other exercises, disciplines the pious self by allowing one to attain the state of *iḥsān*, part of which includes the vision of Allah and/or His light. As such, I use the discussion of the *khalwa* to bring into relief an alternative dimension of *iḥsān* that is central to the Karkariyya, as Shaykh Fawzi makes clear in his statement above that, “Our *tariqa* is the *tariqa* of visions (*mushāhadāt*). People who do not see are not my disciples and I am not their shaykh.”

⁶⁸⁸ Asad writes, “Thus, the possibility is opened up of inquiring into the ways in which embodied practices (including language in use) form a precondition for varieties of religious experience. The inability to enter into communion with God becomes a function of untaught bodies” (Asad, *Genealogies*, 76).

ii. The Name (*al-Ism*) and Secret (*Sirr*)



Figure 12. Zawiya at night with ‘Allah’ illuminated on roof (Photo by Author).



Figure 13. Diagram of the name from Shaykh Fawzi’s Lectures.

The name Allah in its general sense refers to the single God of the Abrahamic religious traditions. While it is possible to translate it in this way, among the Karkariyya the Name as it is written in its Arabic form carries additional spiritual and esoteric meaning. In other words, the material forms that the word takes, whether written or spoken, is of great importance in the Karkariyya insofar as it carries secrets (sing. *sirr* pl. *asrār*) of divine knowledge. Consequently, in this chapter I will use the word Allah rather than translating it into God as I have done elsewhere in this work, and I will capitalize ‘Name’ when referring to the name Allah. The word Allah is technically composed of seven linguistic elements, but for present purposes I only want to highlight the four written letters as they appear in the diagram above.⁶⁸⁹ Reading from left to right, the Name includes the *hā’* (written as a circle), a *lām* followed by a second *lām* (written as attached vertical lines), and an *alif* (written as a detached vertical line).⁶⁹⁰ As I discussed in Shaykh Fawzi’s biography (see Chapter Six), the

⁶⁸⁹ Other parts are the hamzat *al-waṣl*, the *shadda*, and the dagger *alif*.

⁶⁹⁰ Note that Arabic is read from right to left but as will be discussed later, the ‘esoteric reading’ of the name proceeds from left to right.

Name has traditionally been used for meditation and visualization techniques in the Karkariyya and in this regard he continues that tradition. However, he adds to these traditional uses a new function, that is, it operates as a conceptual schema that frames the progressive unveiling of divine secrets. In this sense, the Name is a continual point of orientation for individuals as they advance and, as I will discuss later, for the group as it moves toward the collective realization of an ideal communal life.

On my first visit to the *zawiya*, the Name, or more specifically the illuminated sign sitting atop to the *zawiya* building (pictured above), served as a navigational landmark for finding my way through the dark dirt fields.⁶⁹¹ In a similar manner, for the disciples it provides a conceptual apparatus, or a scaffolding, for the process of progressing along a spiritual path. It is not merely a metaphor that symbolizes that progress, but a conceptual tool that is materialized and embodied daily through writing, reading, recitation, audition, and visualization. While it is used as a form of *dhikr*, especially during the *khalwa*, it is also used as a framework for spiritual stages, for the progressive lessons of the shaykh, and for visualization techniques.⁶⁹² In short, the repeated material and embodied enactments of the Name embed it as a schema for progress that includes a transformation of spiritual awareness and understanding (*maʿrifa*), perceptual aptitudes (*baṣīra*), and modes of conduct and comportment (*ādāb*). As such, the name Allah is a conceptual apparatus that frames a host of embodied practices, which in turn deepen the disciples' knowledge of spiritual truths and thus their understandings of the Name. In other words, as part of Shaykh Fawzi's curriculum of *tarbiya*, it provides a way of orienting disciples in their practice and conceptually outlining

⁶⁹¹ Discussed in previous chapter on the *bayʿa*.

⁶⁹² The visualization technique most often includes imagining diving through the *ha* into an ocean and locating and amplifying the light.

the graduated process of unveiling secrets that is akin to peeling back layers of the ‘unique name’ (*al-ism al-mufrid*) through iterated readings performed in multiple perceptual modalities.

Figure 2 above provides an overview of the components of the Name as laid out by Shaykh Fawzi in his book, *The Enlightened Principles*, and as elaborated in his lectures. In his book, he begins by describing the practice of reciting the unique name, i.e., Allah. After providing justification and support from the *sunna* and Quran for the practice and value of recitation and concentration on the unique name, he goes on to discuss the significance of the specific parts of the name. Reading it from left to right, the trajectory of progression through the name begins with the ‘*hā*’ *al-huwiyya*,’ ‘*lām al-‘ishq or al-qabd*,’ ‘*lām al-ma‘rifa*,’ ‘‘*ama*,’ ‘*alif al-fardāni or alif al-tawhīd*,’ and ‘*naqṭa al-kanziyya*.’⁶⁹³ In the most basic sense, the disciple begins with the *hā*’ and moves through each of the components of the Name in order to reach the point. However, upon completing this, one returns to read the name again, but from the perspective of the *lām*, rather than the *hā*’. Furthermore, the group progresses through the readings together insofar as lessons are given from alternative starting points in the Name.

The sequential reading of the name is exemplified in a collection of lectures published in 2016 under the title, “The slow articulations of the *hā*’ in the verse of Harūn and Mūsā” (*Al-tarātīl al-hā’iyya fī al-āya al-hārūniyya al-mūsāwiyya*). In the introductory note Shaykh Fawzi writes, “This book is a tasted vision of the life of Mūsā and Hārūn ... during the first reading of the *hā*’ ... [It] unveils some of the hidden secrets of the absent *huwiyya*

⁶⁹³ While Arabic of course reads right to left, the ‘reading’ of the name in this scheme is done from left to right as one returns to the alif of unity that represents a return to the divine. This is considered to be one of the secrets of the Name and thus the ‘reading’ in this sense moves through the *hā*’ of otherness, the *lām* of longing, the *lām* of gnosis, the gap, the alif of unity, and the point of treasure.

(otherness) in the presence (*ḥaḍra*) of Mūsā and Hārūn.”⁶⁹⁴ In other words, the lectures in this collection deal with interpretations of the lives of Moses and Aaron relative to the *hā’*.

Elaborating more generally on the iterated readings he writes:

Regarding the unique name, the disciple should return from the *hā’* to the *alif*, looking to their graduated difference. Entrance to the individual *alif* is possible by the attribute of *walī* not of believer and attachment to the company of the *alif* makes the knower taste the reality of worship. Wayfaring toward entrance into the *alif*, relative to the *ḥaḍra Hārūniyya*, is of two types: vision of the bright ball [as if] it is the Message and vision of the bright ball [as if] it is the Prophethood. This is the site of the *alif* and you, in your wayfaring, are wandering around the *alif*. This *alif* is not the *alif* of the unique name ... however, it is equivalent to the descent to the original *alif* in the two *lāms* until one is empowered from its reading relative to the *hā’*. The *lām* is equivalent to the slanted [italicized] *alif*, as the *alif* in the name that has descended in every name from the beautiful ninety-nine names it appears in the names relative to the tacit *alif* until there is for each name an orientation toward the essence and an orientation toward the attributes. So be as a *lām* relative to love and annihilation in mediation until your trunk wraps around its trunk and its light, secrets, and knowledge circulate in you.⁶⁹⁵

This extended quote highlights a number of theoretical points, but what I want to emphasize is the progressive reading of the Name in which one moves from the *hā’* to the *alif*, working through a series of implicit *alifs*, each of which represent an attribute of Allah (i.e., one of the ninety-nine names). The gradual accumulation of these attributes through discipline under the guidance of a *walī*, in this case Shaykh Fawzi, leads one toward the unified *alif* (*alif al-tawḥīd*), which is the embodiment of Allah’s attributes as reflected, for example, in the Prophet. Summarizing this he writes in a separate lesson, “The [disciple] in the path progresses until arriving to the touch of the *alif* relative to the reading of the *hā’* ... As for

⁶⁹⁴ Al-Karkarī, *Al-tarātīl*, 4. While Moses and Aaron are the point of focus for the set of lectures contained in this book, each stage in the reading can correspond to a different prophetic personality. Ultimately, the meanings behind each prophet’s selection are considered to be part of Shaykh Fawzi’s esoteric knowledge, but in a basic sense each reflects a different vantage point from which different interpretations of verses are unveiled.

⁶⁹⁵ Al-Karkarī, *Al-tarātīl*, 7.

arriving to the original *alif*, it will be after reading every letter from the letters of the name with ten readings.”⁶⁹⁶

The main idea expressed in these passages is the progressive reading of the name from the perspective of a particular letter, as shown in references to ‘*qirā’at al-hā’iyya*’ (reading from the *hā’*) and ‘reading each letter from the letters of the name.’ However, even at this abstract level, progress through the name is not merely the attainment of knowledge and secrets, though of course that is important. Rather, advancement entails the embodiment of divine attributes leading toward a perfection in worship that can be characterized as the state of *ihsān*. Thus, the *alif* of unity that unites all the implicit *alifs*, that is, all the names and attributes, signifies both the attainment of spiritual knowledge and the embodiment of ethical attributes. This *alif* is composed of three points: *risāla*, *nubuwwa*, and *walāya*.

Relating the *alif* to these three points, Shaykh Fawzi writes in his lesson, “... The *alif* is composed of three levels: the level of *risāla* on top, the level of *walāya* in the middle, and the level of *nubuwwa* on the bottom ... [Scholars] say every messenger is a prophet but every prophet is not a messenger, and every prophet and messenger is a *walī* of Allah. Therefore, every messenger unites the reality of the *alif* in terms of its three levels, but for the prophet only two levels appear in him from the levels of the *alif*: *walāya* and *nubuwwa*.”⁶⁹⁷

Connecting the *alif* to the idea of the straight path Shaykh Fawzi adds:

The straight *alif* line is the line of the course in progress and ascent ‘there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah.’ With the bending of the heart’s direction and orientation until it gets its realization. Therefore, take notice of the knowledge of the bending of your hearts, i.e., from where, to where, what it wants? The way to know that is very easy, with nothing to do but sit in a room with yourself in the final third of the night. Put a mirror in front of you and speak with all sincerity about your works, wishes, and goals. Do you want Allah, or do you want what is

⁶⁹⁶ Al-Karkarī, *Al-tarātīl*, 85.

⁶⁹⁷ Al-Karkarī, *Al-tarātīl*, 21-2.

other than Him? This is the meaning of the referendum of the heart that is narrated in the *hadith*, “reckon your heart.”⁶⁹⁸

In this quote, Sheikh Fawzi brings together the ideas that the *alif*, as the source of letters, is also the source and representation of the straight path (*al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*). In this formulation, that straight path consists of three points of orientation: *risāla*, *walāya*, and *nubuwwa*. The various readings of the name, consequently, bring the disciple back to the basic ‘straight path’ reflected in the simple statement of unity and laid out by the messengers, prophets, and *awlīyā*’ (saints). In short, despite the theoretical meanings attributed to aspects of the Name, what it does is to help disciples ‘return to the *alif* of unity,’ that is, continually turning one’s attention and intention toward Allah in worship and in daily life.

Just as the illuminated sign atop the *zawiya* in al-Aroui helped me navigate the dark paths of the Rif countryside, so too does the Name serve as a conceptual beacon for the disciples, continually orienting them as they try to navigate the ‘dark’ world while adhering to the straight path. Through the repeated uses of the name, each letter is gradually given more depth, in the same way that letters are inscribed by an engraver. As such, the name is engraved in the disciples through repeated practice, making it not only an abstract blueprint but also a material and embodied feature of Shaykh Fawzi’s *tarbiya*.

In addition to its use as a form of *dhikr*, as a framework for the progression along the path, and as a means for orienting disciples toward perfection in worship, the Name schema is also used as a visual technique. This is particularly the case with the *hā*’, which represents both the beginning of the reading of the Name and often the entrance to the realms of spiritual realization. One example of this dual function of the name is seen in Asif’s account:

On Saturday with the blessing and grace of Allah, I entered the *khalwa* which was a chance to gain more of a connection. As I sat in seclusion I was told to read name of

⁶⁹⁸ Al-Karkarī, *Al-tarātīl*, 23.

Allah and the light I had seen was stronger and I completed a few exercises until I gained a vision of the light which was all around me. It was in my vision as I looked right and left. As I dove into the name, I found myself submerged in the ocean of light and I realized that there was a secret to this and afterwards Sidi Shaykh blessed me with the understanding of this secret which is connected with the name of Allah.⁶⁹⁹

By diving into the name, Asif means the verbal repetition of the Name (like a mantra) as well as the experience of going through the circle of the *hā'* and being submerged in an ocean of light. This visual metaphor of passing through a circle is seen in other examples as well, such as an account below that discusses passing through sequential rings of light. In addition, Asif's testimonial reiterates the connection between the secret knowledge and the Name. In short, the name operates as an embodied technique (in its repetition) designed to facilitate visual experiences framed by material manifestations of the Name. These experiences then provide access to deeper knowledge of the Name itself leading to the discernment of secrets that can then be reapplied to practices involving the Name to advance along the path. This advancement, however, is not only epistemological but also ethical insofar as it entails the embodiment of divine attributes implicitly embedded in the Name.

My goal in this discussion is not to provide all the theoretical nuances of the Name as it is articulated by Shaykh Fawzi. Rather, what I want to emphasize are the ways in which Shaykh Fawzi has expanded upon the traditional practice of meditating on or invoking the name Allah as a form of *dhikr*. As a renewer (*mujaddid*) of his *tariqa*, he does not simply copy the curriculum of his predecessors; instead, he updates those inherited practices and principles according to his own spiritual awareness and the exigencies of the times. Moreover, given that the Name is a traditional meditation technique, it is shared by contemporary Sufi groups that incorporate it into their curricula in distinct ways, i.e., they

⁶⁹⁹ Video Asif November 9, 2016.

update it differently. For instance, in Chapter Ten I will discuss how the Name is redeployed in meditation techniques used in the reformed curriculum of the IACSAS. In their guided meditation practices, the Name is a focal source of light during certain phases, but it is not used in the same systematic fashion as in the Karkariyya. In contrast, the curriculum of the IACSAS uses geographical and imaginational locations to orient disciples in their visionary prayers. In this regard, the two groups illustrate distinct possibilities for renewing a traditional practice as part of reformed curricula of *tarbiya*.

iii. Visionary Experiences: *Mushāhadāt* and *Nūr*⁷⁰⁰

In its basic sense, *mushāhada* comes from the Arabic root *sh-h-d*, which appears in a variety of forms related to witnessing and testifying. For example, the statement of faith begins with *ashhadu*, which is translated as I testify or I bear witness.⁷⁰¹ Within Sufi contexts, it has been elaborated to mean a direct vision of Allah experienced with certainty (*yaqīn*) that unveils (*kashf*) spiritual realities.⁷⁰² While there are debates about the object of this vision (i.e, Allah’s attributes or essence), the possibility of *mushāhada* is grounded in the Prophet’s definition of *iḥsān* in the *Hadith* of Gabriel: ‘It is to worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you do not see Him, know that He sees you.’ As I discussed in Chapter One, this

⁷⁰⁰ In his book ‘The White Destination,’ Shaykh Fawzi defines the light by writing: “It is that which unveils all that is covered, the appearance of all that is hidden, that which is transcendent above quantity, how, direction, color, and where. The Great Spirit and the annihilator of the shade and the appearance of things to the eyes. It is the external in itself the appearance to its other. It is the simple pearl, the self-evident that is true, the vehicle of knowledge of Lord of the Worlds. It is the nature of the spirit and the shadow of the secret, being of meaning and source of certainty, attribute of the eternal and everlasting Truth in its essence. It is the external in the world of possibility on the principle of existence and the comprehension manifested in the picture of that which is possible. Among the people of realization, it is the first creation free from material. It is the ink of the pen and the intermediary bridge between the new and the old. It is the drink of arrival, the supporter of expressions and perceptions of truths of the secret of the obligatory. Among the people of the path it is the everlasting attribute of the essence – without source and without other” (Al-Karkarī, *Al-maḥajja*, 49).

⁷⁰¹ “I testify that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His messenger.”

⁷⁰² L. Gardet, “Kashf,” in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd Edition, ed. P. Bearman et. al. (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

definition can be divided into two components: *murāqaba* and *mushāhada*. The first of these relates to the second half of the definition, that is, continually taking into consideration or attentively regarding Allah's observation in one's daily life. The second relates to worshipping Allah as if one sees Him directly, that is, bearing witness directly to the presence of Allah through a form of seeing. As I discussed in that context, while the definition refers to worship, within the Sufi context worship refers not to confined to acts of prayer but rather to a thorough transformation entailing the cultivation of willing obedience in all of one's actions and intentions. In other words, the cultivation of a pious lifestyle in which one's daily life is infused with the attitude of acting as if one sees Allah and of knowing that He sees one's thoughts and actions (i.e., *iḥsān*).

My point here is that although *mushāhada* (pl. *mushāhadāt*) does refer to visionary experiences, it is also closely connected to the attainment of the level of *iḥsān*. Therefore, just as the cultivation of certain character traits are embodiments of *iḥsān* as a form of piety, so too are the experiences of *mushāhadāt* manifestations of *iḥsān*. Moreover, insofar as those experiences are narrated and posted on websites to be shared with audiences, *mushāhadāt* in the Karkariyya are also public performances of piety. As such, *mushāhadāt* are critical components of Shaykh Fawzi's curriculum of ethical education (*minhaj al-tarbiya*), i.e., a means for cultivating piety, as well as a marker and expression of that piety.

Much like the invocation of the Name as a form of *dhikr*, visionary experiences and their interpretation are common in Islamic traditions.⁷⁰³ In a general sense, these experiences often took the form of dreams (*manām*) and visions (*rū'yā*). Dreams became the subject of interpretation (*ta'bīr*), resulting in the production of a variety of dream interpretation

⁷⁰³ For a discussion of their use in literary context, see Dwight Reynolds and Kristen Brustad, *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 89-93.

manuals that are still in circulation today. Amira Mittermaier's 2011 work, *Dreams that Matter: Egyptian Landscapes of the Imagination*, explores contemporary practices of dream interpretation in Sufi communities. One insight that I take from her work is that these visions of the (in)visible, through their narration and interpretation, actively orient individuals in their daily lives and are not detached from the lived realities of the individuals with which she worked. In this sense she writes, "By this I mean not simply an ethics arising for dialogical, face-to-face encounters but also an attitude of openness to the (in)visible, the *barzakh*, the imaginary, the emergent."⁷⁰⁴ For Mittermaier, the space opened up by imagination and dream interpretation has important implications for possible ways of being in the world for some Egyptians, bringing spiritual realities to bear on the material exigencies of daily life. However, while the connection between visions and ethics provides valuable insight, there are significant differences between dreams and the visions in *mushāhada*. Most importantly for the present purposes, the *mushāhada* in the Karkariyya is the outcome of specific program of disciplinary practices, an outcome that is initially made possible by the sharing of divine light (*nūr*) through the pledge of allegiance (*bay'ā*). In addition, the Karkariyya consider the *mushāhada* a direct form of perception that, while open to interpretation, is nonetheless an encounter with refractions of the divine light and therefore an experience of deeper levels of spiritual reality. As such, the epistemological status of these experiences, for the disciples, is one of certainty (*yaqīn*), so the development of the qualities and modes of perception through *tarbiyya* creates the embodied conditions for claims to knowledge.

⁷⁰⁴ Amira Mittermaier, *Dreams that Matter: Egyptian Landscapes of the Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 56.

The image of Allah as light (*al-nūr*) is pervasive in Islamic traditions, often deriving from the famous ‘Light Verse’ that begins: “Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth.”⁷⁰⁵ The analogy between Allah and light has a variety of interpretations, some of which emphasize its metaphorical sense and others that take a more literal interpretation. Al-Ghazali, for instance, presents three possible interpretations or meanings of light. The first is its natural sense as that which makes things visible. The second is in its role as a sense organ or the ‘eye of the intellect’ that makes perception itself possible. The third is as a primordial light (*al-nūr al-awwal*) that is not derived from any sources, but which is the True/Real Light (*al-nūr al-ḥaqq*) sustaining and circulating throughout existence.⁷⁰⁶ My goal here is not to delve into the nuances of the concept of light in Islamic interpretive traditions, but simply to provide a basis for its elaboration in Sufism.

In Sufi contexts, two prominent scholars, Ibn Arabī (d. 1240) and Suhrawardī (d. 1191), expanded on light as an underlying reality that gives rise to, or illuminates, the diverse modes of existence. This primordial divine light is a composite of all of Allah’s attributes, and insofar as the Prophet’s character was seen as an embodiment and perfection of those attributes (i.e., as *al-insān al-kāmil*), one interpretation of the light was as the ‘Muhammadan Light’ (*al-nūr al-muḥammadiyya*). This Muhammadan Light was passed, via the Prophet’s family, to inheritors (i.e., *awliyā’*) that could in turn become like the Prophet, embodying divine attributes and guiding others along the path to Allah.⁷⁰⁷ As a manifestation of the ‘Prophetic archetype’ and inheritor of Muhammadan Light, the ‘axial saint of the age’ (*qutb*)

⁷⁰⁵ Q 24:35

⁷⁰⁶ Kristin Sands, *Sufi Commentaries on the Quran in Classical Islam* (London: Routledge, 2006), 112.

⁷⁰⁷ Vincent Cornell writes, “Here the axial saint is seen as a lamp lit by the oil of gnosis, which is set in the niche of Muhammad’s eternal light. As a way of highlighting Jazūlite dependence on the Prophetic archetype, al-Anadusī remarks that this light would not have been passed down to succeeding generations if it had not been for the family of the Prophet” (Cornell, *Realm*, 218).

was not only a guide and exemplary complete person (*al-insān al-kāmil*) to be imitated, but also a metaphysical pole that anchors existence. This axial saint was reformulated in the early modern Moroccan context as the ‘bell saint’ (*al-jaras*), which “peals out (*ajrasa*) the Muhammadan Reality to the world.”⁷⁰⁸ Cornell explains its significance in Moroccan Sufism as follows:

The Bell saint of the Jazūliyya-Ghazwāniyya was the most potent manifestation of sainthood in Moroccan Sufism. Combining the Idrisid concept of the imamate with the *imitation Muhammadi* as expressed through Ibn al-‘Arabī’s theory of the Muḥammadan Reality and al-Jīlī’s corollary of the Muḥammadan Image, this supreme shaykh and paradigmatic saint was tailor-made to assume the role of both political leader and savior ... By actualizing a portion of the Muḥammadan Inheritance that was latent in every human being, each saint could be compared by analogy with the Prophet Muḥammad.⁷⁰⁹

Thus, the light has been an integral component of Moroccan and Andalusian Sufism for several centuries at least, and it continues to play an authorizing role, as can be seen in the case of Shaykh Fawzi whose authority as ‘axial saint’ (*qutb*) is tied to his ability to help others enhance the kernel of Prophetic light that exists within each person.

Before expanding on its place in the Karkariyya, I want to highlight three points about the light (*al-nūr*) in this discussion. Firstly, the inheritance and sharing of the light has been a common yet contested feature of Moroccan Sufism for a long time and as such constitutes a traditional doctrine and practice. Secondly, the light is closely connected to the imitation of the Prophetic example, that is, the embodiment of Prophetic character. In this sense, it is not simply an object of perception but the adornment of Prophetic traits. Thirdly, this ethical development is accompanied by transformations in modes of perception, opening up possibilities for seeing the divine light directly in the form of *mushāhada*. My goal here

⁷⁰⁸ Cornell, *Realm*, 221.

⁷⁰⁹ Cornell, *Realm*, 228-9.

was not to provide a systematic account of the light and its interpretations; rather, I wanted to situate its place in the Karkariyya with respect to issues of ethics and perception.

As part of the curriculum of the Karkariyya, the light ties together the practices and principles insofar as it is both the starting point and final goal. It is the starting point in that the process of *tarbiya* begins with the *bay‘a* in which Shaykh Fawzi transmits the light to the disciple. In receiving the gift of light, the disciple takes on a set of responsibilities that seek to expand the perception of this light. Certain practices serve as focal points through which that light can be filtered, such as the *dhikr* and *khalwa*. However, the goal is to see this light in all of the world, not only in isolated cases, just as the goal of *ihsān* is to create an awareness of the constant presence of Allah. These practices not only expand one’s visual capabilities to perceive the light, but also effectively cultivate specific ethical dispositions. As one disciple put it succinctly in the previous chapter, “Enlightenment (*tanwīr*) is the adorning of oneself in light (*tahalla bi-l-nūr*) ... This adornment is in itself instruction (*tarbiya*), which is the cultivation of ethics (*akhlāq*).” Thus, the aesthetic process of refining a particular mode of perception is tied to an ethical process of developing particular character traits, both of which are framed within an overall spiritual process of coming to know Allah. This aesthetic dimension will be analyzed through descriptions of visionary experiences (*mushāhadāt*), and the associated development of modes of perception (*baṣīra*), as well as the visual art inspired by these experiences. In this sense, aesthetics is taken in both its meaning as perception and artistic endeavor, both of which involve the divine light (*nūr*).

iv. Spiritual Retreat: *Khalwa*

In addition to the practices discussed so far in the curriculum of ethical education (*minhaj al-tarbiya*) of the Karkariyya, the spiritual retreat (*khalwa*) is an embodied discipline connected to the evocation of visionary experiences (*mushāhadāt*). As its Arabic roots (*kh-l-ā*) reflect, the term *khalwa* refers generally to ideas of seclusion, isolation, and retreat. In its Sufi contexts, it referred to ascetic practices of isolation, sometimes performed as a lifestyle and other times as a periodic retreat. The nature of this isolation was also debated in that a distinction was made between ‘spiritual’ and ‘material’ seclusion from society. This debate was closely connected to injunctions against monasticism (*rahbaniyya*) that appear in narrations of *hadith* and in the Quran.⁷¹⁰ While seclusion and retreat from society as an all-encompassing ascetic lifestyle was to a certain extent an open question, the practice of periodic retreats consisting of spiritual exercises aimed at a divine encounter became a common practice among Sufi communities. These retreats usually lasted forty days, modeling themselves after the Prophet’s practice of isolation in the cave on Mount Ḥīrā’.⁷¹¹ In this section, I will discuss some of these foundations of the *khalwa* as an Islamic practice, its role in inducing spiritual experiences and knowledge, and the characteristics of those experiences as they are laid out in Shaykh Fawzi’s texts and exemplified in the narrations of disciples.⁷¹² The goal is not to provide a phenomenological analysis of these experiences

⁷¹⁰ On *rahbaniyya* in the Quran see Q 57:27.

⁷¹¹ This was known as *tahannuth* and was practiced in pre-Islamic Arabia. As I will discuss below, the revelation of the Quran occurred during one of these periods of isolation.

⁷¹² A note on sources here is that, while I heard various accounts in person, the narrations used in this section are posted on the Karkariyya website. My goal in selecting these sources is to demonstrate how these experiences are narrated and performed for a public audience. As public material, they are not aimed at me (the researcher) and in that sense are not dependent upon me to be brought into existence. However, that is not to say that they are not in some sense ‘staged’ as performances, for there are cases of disciples reading and there are ‘scripted’ components.

based on structures of consciousness (e.g., temporality, space, event, causality).⁷¹³ Instead, I aim to illustrate how the concepts discussed in Shaykh Fawzi's text manifest in the individual narratives, or in other words, how the theoretical discourses within Sufi traditions connect to embodied practices and associated experiences.

Shaykh Fawzi defines the *khalwa* theoretically as, "The necessity of the tomb of life to be free from feeling and to travel to the world of meaning with the increase of the Name [Allah] with total concentration to enter into the heart and sit with the Lord until the covering is unveiled and perception is defined from the intrinsic nature of the eternal."⁷¹⁴ Practically, the *khalwa* is an embodied discipline performed by disciples through seclusion in a dark room, usually for a period of three days, with the explicit intention of witnessing Allah. Disciples are authorized by the shaykh to perform the *khalwa* after a period of preparation and after they have demonstrated commitment and intention. During the *khalwa*, disciples sit in the small, darkened *khalwa* room, located just off the stairs between the ground and first floor of the *zawiya*, and concentrate on the Name, repeating it with intense focus. They are allowed to leave the *khalwa* for a meal during the day and to sleep, though the requirements in a given case vary for the disciple. The goal is to experience visions and with the help of Shaykh Fawzi, to interpret those visions in order to obtain spiritual secrets or sciences. In addition to knowledge of Allah, after the *khalwa* the disciples also produce art, poetry, talisman, and journals. Finally, the Karkariyya record videos of disciples narrating these experiences and post them on their website (and share on Facebook), providing a vast archive

⁷¹³ While I think the material in this section could be fruitfully analyzed in that fashion, for the present purposes I am focused on situating the visionary experiences within Shaykh Fawzi's curriculum. Thus, the approach here is merely a point of emphasis and not an argument against a phenomenological analysis.

⁷¹⁴ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 148. In other words, it is like entering a tomb that frees one to travel through the Name Allah into the spiritual realms and unveil secrets by altering one's perceptual abilities.

of *mushāhadāt* testimonials. These visions are the result of not only the *khalwa*, but also *ḥaḍra*, *dhikr*, and *bay‘a* (discussed in Chapter Seven), but the *khalwa* is really the first step, that is, the first opening to the secrets of the name for the Karkariyya. After going into the *khalwa* and gaining access to the first secret, potentials for visions in *ḥaḍra* and *dhikr* increase as the disciple becomes more adept at concentrating on the vision and remembering it in detail.

Within the Karkariyya, the *mushāhadāt* are the attainment of the level of *iḥsān*, which is to worship Allah as if you see Him. The interpretation of this phrase can vary depending on how one wants to read the ‘as if’ (*kā’* of *ka-innaka*). As I have demonstrated throughout this work, there is a common thread weaving together definitions of Sufism in Morocco and that common thread is that Sufism is seen as the spiritual level of *iḥsān*. However, precisely how *iḥsān* is interpreted and performed varies from group to group. In the Karkariyya, *iḥsān* is taken in a literal sense as the vision of the light of Allah (or the Muhammadan light), which is why Sheikh Fawzi claims that “Our *tariqa* is the *tariqa* of visions (*mushāhadāt*). People who do not see are not my disciples and I am not their shaykh.” Thus, to achieve the spiritual level of *iḥsān* is to directly witness the attributes of Allah in the light, and the *khalwa* is a primary means for opening the door to this vision of the attributes and the light.

Witnessing the attributes and the light grants the disciple access to other worlds, such as the *malakūt* or imaginal realm, which sits between the material realm (*al-mulk*) and the higher spiritual realm (*al-jabarūt*). Upon reaching these alternate realms, disciples acquire different forms of spiritual knowledge and awareness (*ma‘rifa*) or esoteric sciences (*‘alūm*). These multiple kinds of knowledge refer to the unveiling of secrets represented by the progressive readings of the name Allah. While these include insights into the depths of

spiritual realities accessible by only a few, they also include applied sciences like astrology, music, language, and the science of letters (*‘ilm al-ḥarūf*). Before discussing how disciples take these forms of knowledge through their visionary experiences, I will begin with Shaykh Fawzi’s justification and grounding of the *khalwa* in the Quran and *sunna*. The goal is to demonstrate how the traditional practice of the *khalwa* is formulated and practiced within the renewed curriculum of *tarbiya* of Shaykh Fawzi and the Karkariyya.

Beginning with the Quran, Shaykh Fawzi cites two verses from the *sūrat al-a‘rāf*, highlighting a pair of concepts: moment of time (*mīqāt*) and falling unconscious (*sa‘iq*).⁷¹⁵ With regard to the first, the verse suggests that there is a time appointed by Allah for each of His worshippers for eliminating impurities of negligence. This time (*al-mīqāt*), “Is the source of the real internal name called Time (*al-dahr*) and it is an attribute-name ... so it was the ‘traditional way’ of the *mīqāt* that you imagine [all creation as] a point first and discern a secret after that. As for [Allah], He is too great for time and place, without beginning or end, without first or last.”⁷¹⁶ As for the *sa‘iq*, it is “To annihilate yourself from yourself, with yourself, for yourself, so your sight does not deviate from your secret, and does not transgress the reality of your essence.”⁷¹⁷ In addition to the sense of being annihilated in the moment, the experience also entails a specific form of perception (*baṣr*). I will discuss the relationship between *baṣr* and *baṣīra* in a later section. The point here is that the *khalwa* is

⁷¹⁵ Q 7:142-3: “And We made an appointment with Moses for thirty nights and perfected them by [the addition of] ten; so the term (*miyqāt*) of his Lord was completed as forty nights. And Moses said to his brother Aaron, “Take my place among my people, do right [by them], and do not follow the way of the corrupters. And when Moses arrived at Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he said, “My Lord, show me [Yourself] that I may look at You.” [Allah] said, “You will not see Me, but look at the mountain; if it should remain in place, then you will see Me.” But when his Lord appeared to the mountain, He rendered it level, and Moses fell unconscious. And when he awoke, he said, “Exalted are You! I have repented to You, and I am the first of the believers.”

⁷¹⁶ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 151.

⁷¹⁷ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 164.

related to this appointment (*mīqāt*) or chosen moment as described above, and the experience of it is framed in the context of Moses falling unconscious. Finally, the temporality of the chosen moment is defined against Time (*al-dahr*), to the effect that the moment stands out of time as it is a ‘moment’ of meeting with that which is beyond time.

Concerning the foundations of the *khalwa* in the *hadith* literature, Shaykh Fawzi cites the story of the Prophet’s first revelation narrated by Aisha. As narrated in the beginning of this *hadith*, revelation came to Muhammad in a sound vision in sleep while in seclusion in the cave of Mount Ḥirā’ in the form of an exhortation to recite. In its most basic sense, therefore, the *hadith* grounds the *khalwa* in the customary practice of the Prophet. While it is not done in a cave currently by the Karkariyya and there is a dedicated room in the *zawiya* building, the previous *zawiya*, part of which still stands in Temsmān, was built over a cave which was used for lessons and *khalwa*. This was discussed in the narrative history of the Karkariyya (see Chapter Six) and was also used as a sanctuary during the Rif war in the 1920s (see Chapter Nine).

Moving on from the justifications of the practice, Shaykh Fawzi presents four conceptual dimensions of the *khalwa*: separation-connection (*faṣl-waṣl*), union (*jama*’), enfolding (*tayy*), and beauty (*jamāl*). As for separation-connection (*faṣl-waṣl*), it is the recognition of the inherent duality of humanity, a duality that can be discussed as darkness and light, black and white, or low and high. This duality can also be framed as a battle between the heart and the self (*naḥs*), as reflected in the quotation of Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allah (d. 1259), “The light is a soldier of the heart (*qalb*) as the darkness is a soldier of the self (*naḥs*). If Allah wanted to help his worshipper, then He would support him with lights and stop the

expansion of darkness and the other [than Allah].”⁷¹⁸ This light, which is connected here to the heart, “is the secret of connection and the apparent form of sainthood with which [Allah] took guardianship of his worshipper.”⁷¹⁹ The darkness, on the other hand, “it is at the level of idolatrous separation (*al-faṣl al-taghūtī*).”⁷²⁰ The inherent encounter between light and dark in the human reflects the struggle between the heart and the self (*nafs*), a struggle which is explained through an interpretation of the confrontation between David and Goliath.

In summarizing this interpretation, Shaykh Fawzi writes that when it says in the Quran, “...*So they defeated them by the permission of Allah...*,” it means that, “David (the Intellect) killed the passionate senses of Goliath (the Self). [The intellect] then took possession of its bodily land with the secret of the spiritual heavens, and the heart took reign of the soldiers (the senses), so that he knew the reality of His essence by His essence itself.”⁷²¹ The point here, for Shaykh Fawzi, is that the battle is ultimately within the individual and one needs to concentrate on that struggle. As such, he writes:

I put before you a rule [which] if you apply to yourself and inscribe in yourself in earnest, will bear for you the fruits of: 1) understanding in the book of Allah, 2) diving into its esoteric meanings, and 3) inhaling the intricacies of its secrets. The rule is this: “Do not get out of your grave.” [In this case] the grave means your body, so the whole universe and its esoteric meanings (incorporeal dimensions) are enfolded in [your body], and all the names and their secrets are inscribed in it. You are the appearance of opposites, the isthmus (*barzakh*) of two seas, and sovereign of the two houses, so do not consider yourself insignificant, because [enfolded] in you is the largest of worlds [Macrocosm].⁷²²

Because the human is endowed with this fundamental duality, the human is also endowed with possibilities for bridging these dualities. Shaykh Fawzi writes, “The secret of

⁷¹⁸ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 153.

⁷¹⁹ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 153.

⁷²⁰ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 153.

⁷²¹ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 155.

⁷²² Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 154.

understanding is a bridge (*barzakh*) between something and its shadow.”⁷²³ In short, the human being is a bridge due to its dual nature and understanding is a bridge, therefore the human being contains within it the secret of understanding. The *khalwa* is a technique used to expose this interplay of opposites through experiences of light and darkness that draw out this underlying nature of the human as a vehicle for deeper spiritual understandings.

The contrast of light and dark in the *khalwa* and its role in facilitating an experience of separation can be seen in Ahmed’s testimonial. He says that after seeing the light he thought to himself, “I’d like to penetrate that light to see what is beyond and when I penetrated it, I could see *al-‘adm*, the nothingness, the darkness, complete black and I felt *wahsha*, which is loneliness and feeling very strange.”⁷²⁴ This reflects his arrival at the separation, experienced as complete darkness and accompanied by affective registers of forlornness, alienation, and estrangement. As Ahmed goes on to explain, he relayed his various visions to the shaykh who then gave him, in accordance with Ahmed’s attainment of a certain spiritual level, the first secret of the Name. What I want to emphasize here is how the separation-connection concept representing the duality of humanity is experienced through the *khalwa* as the presence and absence of light, as well as how the *khalwa* serves as a gateway practice for higher forms of knowledge.

The second conceptual dimension of the *khalwa* is the union (*jama`*). In a basic sense, the union is the recognition of the connectedness of all things despite their distinctness. For Shaykh Fawzi, “Union is including some in the whole and attaching the branch to the root until it realizes a vision [of Allah] with the truth. The beautiful manifestations of His attributes and name are seen circulating in the branches of differences,

⁷²³ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 153.

⁷²⁴ Video Ahmed (June 29, 2017). Original in English.

so you see the one circulating in the many, and the *alif* circulating in the letters.”⁷²⁵ As such, the spiritual level of union is among the foundational principles of *tarbiya* because, “Whosoever does not unite does not witness, and whosoever does not witness does not have knowledge.”⁷²⁶ Therefore, part of what it is to see or to witness is to recognize that, “Multiplicity does not have an existence in its essence, [and that it is nothing other than] fleeting shadows.”⁷²⁷ In other words, just as the duality of humanity is experienced through particular patterns of light and dark, the unity or underlying connectedness of the different manifestations of creation are experienced through the schema of attaching branches to a root. This is often presented through the visual metaphor of a tree seen during visionary experiences, as depicted in the following excerpt from Abdel Khabir: “I saw myself during the *dhikr* ... at the foot of a gigantic tree in an illuminated place. Here there was my Shaykh. I sat facing him, he handed me his hands in which there was a sun, a ball of light, which he placed in my heart.”⁷²⁸ Similarly, Naim expressed the idea of union through one of his drawings entitled, ‘The Union’ (pictured below). In describing the picture, he emphasizes the tree as that which brings together disparate elements: sun and moon, animals and plants, and the interconnectedness of their roots. Likewise, after meeting Shaykh Fawzi in his vision, Mustafa narrated: “I saw myself in a forest with big trees, one of them was made of light – its root was of light (*aṣl diyalu nūr*) and it went from the ground up into the sky and as I looked at it I said, ‘*al-khayr*’ (the Good).”⁷²⁹ He went on to explain how Shaykh Fawzi clarified that the tree of light was the *alif* of unity, which is the unified source of existence.

⁷²⁵ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 156.

⁷²⁶ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 157.

⁷²⁷ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 157.

⁷²⁸ Video Abdel Khabir (July 11, 2017). Original Arabic.

⁷²⁹ Video Mustafa (June 6, 2015). Original Arabic.

In these various ways, the tree is used as a way to describe the encounter with unity (*tawḥīd*) and the tree is grounded discursively through reference to the light verse in which the light in the lamp is lit from oil from the blessed olive tree. Thus, through repeated discussion and visualization of this verse, the connection between the light, the olive tree, and unity is reinforced and given expression in the visions. As one of the female disciples described in her testimonial, “The search for knowledge and love of Allah is like the search for the blessed olive tree inside us all.”⁷³⁰



Figure 14. Disciple Naim's drawing 'The Union'



Figure 15. Entrance to khalwa room in zawiya (Photo by Author)

The third conceptual dimension of the *khalwa* is the enfolding (*ṭayy*). It is the idea that in the *khalwa*, one folds up all the domains of creation, drawing oneself closer to Allah and the hereafter. The concept of folding is derived from the verse, “The Day when We will fold the heaven like the folding of a [written] sheet for the records. As We began the first creation, We will repeat it. [That is] a promise binding upon Us. Indeed, We will do it.”⁷³¹ Shaykh Fawzi provides Ibn ‘Ajība’s interpretation of the verse, which consists of three alternate readings. Specifically, the ‘folding’ is interpreted in multiple senses, from the

⁷³⁰ Video Soham (February 24, 2016). Original Arabic.

⁷³¹ Q 21:104.

literal folding of a paper to protect what is written on it, to the folding of the heavens and its forms onto the earth, to the enfolding of multiple levels of meaning.⁷³² Its place within the Karkariyya as a component of the *khalwa* is elaborated through a poem from Shaykh al-‘Alawi: “Remember the Supreme Name and fold up the universe, you will get the reward / Dive into the pre-eternal ocean, it is the divine ocean / Dive into the ocean of light, of meaning, the ocean of secrets / Annihilate this illusory home and your heart will reach the one it desires.”⁷³³ The schema of folding, as a way to draw nearer, is deployed as a visual technique in the *khalwa* to frame the movement through the worlds. Citing Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allah al-Iskāndirī (d. 1310), Shaykh Fawzi writes, “The real folding up is when the dimensions of the world are rolled around you so that you see the Hereafter closer to you than yourself.”⁷³⁴ Thus, in addition to folding in the normal sense of the term, it also refers to a ‘rolling up’ that allows that which is distant to become closer. For example, imagine rolling a piece of paper – the two ends are now adjacent so that what were once opposites are now coincident. He adds, “This is the requisite folding, that you fold around yourself its wishes, feelings, and demands [until] you are an ascetic in the world. Then you fold the world around yourself with its ornateness, adornment, imagination, and status, and see the Hereafter closer to you than yourself.”⁷³⁵ What Shaykh Fawzi indicates here is an iterative process of folding layers (internal and external worlds) onto one another so as to reduce the distance (and time)

⁷³² Shaykh Fawzi notes different meanings in this context. (1) One reading suggests that the phrase “For the record (l-l-kitāb)” means ‘for writing,’ because the writer folds the sheet in two parts to write. The lām in ‘l-l-kitāb’ can indicate the assertion or can be understood as ‘on,’ like the folding of a sheet to protect what is written on it. (2) Others read “Yawma tutwa” as ‘the day the heaven will be folded.’ (3) It may also refer to the suppression of the forms and the images of the heaven (as a kind of folding out of view) and/or (4) the folding of the stars, the moon and the sun. (5) Others read the phrase as “l-l-kutub” using plural form, so it may refer to the folding up of the several esoteric meanings that are written on it. Lane’s Lexicon provides a variety of meanings including to fold and to roll up.

⁷³³ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 159.

⁷³⁴ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 160.

⁷³⁵ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 160.

between the individual and the highest world. In other words, the self is folded, then the lower world, then each of the seven heavens, then the throne, etc. until that which started far away has become close and that which started close has become distant and concealed or forgotten.⁷³⁶ In narratives, the conceptual tool of folding is often expressed in two ways, one of which is in astrological terms. For example, Karim describes his vision in the following way:

I saw myself outside the planets and the planet entered my body. It felt as if everything outside was inside. After entering, I saw a star or a planet with light in it, like the opposite of a black hole. It was reaching out and attracting all the planets. This light then brought me all over the universe to see all the different forms of existence and the planets – big and small. It was a clearer picture than anything I have seen before, but it was not physical, I felt as if I was in the *malakūt* [spiritual realm]. At the same time, I felt my body, my head was rotating with the planets and galaxy. Then, inside one of the huge planets I saw mountains and a lot of fog making it difficult to see. I descended upon the planet ... The light I mentioned, it took me far, far away without finding an end. As I traveled, the light became bigger until I saw a pit seed at the center of it. I entered the seed of the light and it felt like I was in an ocean – it was very cold. The light saw me and said to me, ‘Come with me, I will show you all of the universe.’ I followed it – it was very fast. The light touched the water and made a wake ... it took me into a cave that it illuminated ... Everything in existence combined and entered into the light. I then thought to myself, if everything is so big, then what is Allah in relation to it – He will have to be that much greater than all that I saw. From this, I understand what is meant by ‘Allahu Akbar.’⁷³⁷

In this case, as it is framed at the beginning, the light that takes him across the universe is enfolded in him, meaning that the journey to the far reaches of the universe is simultaneously a journey into himself. These cosmic journeys are therefore one of the means for expressing the concept of enfolding (*tayy*) insofar as they provide the modes of expression for

⁷³⁶ Framing this iterative process otherwise Shaykh Fawzi writes, “If the disciple folds up the Attribute in the Name, and then the Name in the Named, he will contemplate the Oneness of the Truth and the star of Existence will manifest for him. Then the pillars of his inner Self will be erected and the earth of this existence will begin to shake, allowing the deep Knowledge’s to appear, and this earth will evoke part of its secrets. At this moment, the books of his ego will be gathered in the record of the spirit and the disciple will come back to his real origin. His hidden part will appear and his Secrets will manifest to Him and then He will understand the meaning of “Allah was when nothing was” (Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 160).

⁷³⁷ Video Karim (February 20, 2017). Original Arabic.

explaining how that which is distant becomes near and the universe gets incorporated into the self, or as Karim expressed, ‘it felt as if everything outside was inside.’

Another way the process of folding is articulated is in journeys through the heavens, a voyage modeled after the Prophet’s heavenly ascent (*mi’rāj*). Yahya shares this experience in his testimonial:

After he put me in the *khalwa*, I saw the seven heavens, the *kursī* [seat], and the ‘*arsh* [throne]. I returned to the time of the Big Bang and traveled to the past then to the future. I went to Adam and found him in the first heaven, handsome and in white clothes. Then on this path of light, I went to Ibrahim who was with Ismail and I saw them building the house – the *ka’ba*. Then I went to Moses who I saw in the desert ... he went with the tribe of Israel a long way to the sea and submerged in it. Then I went on this path of light to the time of Joseph and I saw his brothers and the palace in which they lived ... Then I traveled to the time of Muhammad where I saw the battle of Badr. I saw Muslims wearing white and the unbelievers in black clothes. Then I watched the battle from a place in which there were trees ... Then I went to the time of Jesus and saw him thin and tall, bearded in clean clothes, and I said, ‘Oh prophet of Allah, can you heal me of this pain,’ for I was suffering from sickness of the world (*al-mulk*). I met the treatment for this sickness in the time of Jesus.⁷³⁸

In Yahya’s description, rather than distance it is time that is enfolded. In other words, he travels to different times to meet the various prophets, but this all ultimately leads him back to himself insofar as he brings the treatment from the past to the present, thereby making the past present in the moment. In this sense, he blends the ascent through the heavens in which Muhammad meets the prophets with a journey through time in which the past and the future (i.e., the temporally distant) are folded into the present moment. As a moment out of time, or an encounter with that which is not temporal, these multiple temporalities may exist simultaneously, and the idea of enfolding (*ṭayy*) provides a way for speaking about these multiple temporalities.

⁷³⁸ Video Yahya (December 28, 2016). Original Arabic.

A third example of this enfolding is from Ahmed, who articulates the way in which the seven heavens, seat (*kursī*), and throne (‘*arsh*) are encompassed by the heart of the believer:

After ten days, about three days ago, the shaykh decided to put me in *khalwa* for three days ... he gave me *talqīn* [how to recite] the great name – to say Allah clearly [and properly]. I started to recite the great name and started to see things while doing the *dhikr* Allah. The room was completely dark and it was a small room ... I started to see the *hadith* of the prophet - the first heaven to the second is like a small ring in an open desert and the second to the third like this ... even the seventh heaven to the seat is like this and the seat to the throne is like a ring in an empty desert. I started to combine that in my heart until I have seen my heart itself is a throne which is a big cloud like snow and the seat was like a small ring in this cloud. I was not sure of the vision but I told it to the shaykh and he said that this is correct, ‘The throne is your heart.’

Ahmed describes the grandness of the heavens through the metaphor of a small ring in a desert, suggesting vast differences at each level of reality. However, this expansive universe composed of the heavens is itself merely a ring in comparison to the throne. Nonetheless, this is all ultimately enfolded in the heart, making even the most distant heavens present in the believer and displacing the self (*nafs*).

The fourth conceptual dimension of the *khalwa* is beauty (*jamāl*). Much as the union is a manner of seeing the connectedness of creations, so too is beauty a way of looking at the world that manifests the underlying unity of existence. Shaykh Fawzi writes, “The entire world is an expression of the beauty of absolute excellence with the attributes. In reality, the ugly is beautiful [as is] the beautiful, so all is beautiful because it is a manifestation of divine beauty.”⁷³⁹ Absolute beauty is therefore the beauty of Allah that makes possible the various degrees of beauty (from the ugly to the beautiful) that are the product of judgment, a judgment that is dependent upon the conditions of the individual. He writes, “As for internal

⁷³⁹ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 162.

absolute beauty, it is fixed without change but its appearance is strengthened with the purification of the mirror of the hearts, so that it reflects the divine beauty in it, and, with the vision of the true beauty, [the disciple] experiences a real adoration in the True Beauty.”⁷⁴⁰ Seeing beauty in the world requires the capacity to reflect it in the ‘mirror of the heart.’ Therefore, the mode of perception here is made possible only by a process of cleaning the mirror of the heart, which refers to an ethical and spiritual disciplinary regime, i.e., *minhaj al-tarbiya* (see discussion in Chapter Two). One outcome of the curriculum of *tarbiya* is the cultivation of this form of seeing in which a unifying beauty of existence is recognized in the diversity of creations. This is also reflected in Shaykh Fawzi’s statement that, “What veils you from the vision of his beauty is none other than your preoccupation, so [even when] He is absent from you, you find Him closer to you than yourself, manifested externally by His lights.”⁷⁴¹ As such, the inability to see the beauty of Allah is a product of the ‘untaught body,’ that is, one that has not properly polished the mirror of the heart. For those who are properly disciplined, the divine light and its refractions are the means for recognizing that divine beauty. Abdel Majid discusses the change in perception associated with this experience of the beauty of unity in the following way:

I saw (*shahadtu*) ‘*la ilaha illa Allah wa Muhammad rasul Allah*’ [there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His messenger]. I saw with my eyes [*shahadtu b-‘aīnayn diyālī*]. I saw as if it was with my eyes. I see that there is no god but Allah [*ashhadu anna la ilaha illa Allah*] and I see that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. I used to say this before with my tongue. I say [*kanqūl*] there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His messenger. Now I see [pointing at his eye], and I say it with tongue and see it with certainty [*kanqūl bil-lisān wa ashhadu bil-yaqīn*]. With the eye of certainty [‘*aīn al-yaqīn*’] I see that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His messenger ... [In the Quran] there is a verse ‘For what have the jinn and people [*al-jinn wa al-ins*] except for worshipping me.’ By worshipping me it means knowing me [that is] knowing Allah and the hidden treasure [*al-kanz al-makhfī*]. As

⁷⁴⁰ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 162.

⁷⁴¹ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 163.

Allah said in a *hadith* qudsi, ‘I was a hidden treasure so I loved to be known, so I created creation in order to know me.’

In this example, Abdel Majid stresses the difference between simply saying the *shahada* and seeing it with certainty. What I want to highlight is the transition between two modes of knowing and the explicit emphasis placed on seeing the underlying unity embedded in this phrase through a particular mode of perception, which he describes as ‘the eye of certainty.’

To summarize in relation to the overall argument, the visionary experience of the *mushāhada* requires the ability to see the divine light. The ability to see the divine light requires the cultivation of a mode of perception (*baṣīra*). The cultivation of this perception is dependent upon the ‘polishing of the heart,’ that is, the practical science of character development and spiritual purification through embodied disciplinary practices. These ensembles of exercises constitute the ‘curriculum of *tarbiya*.’ Therefore, enlightenment (*tanwīr*) and ethical education (*tarbiya*) operate in tandem to cultivate a state of *iḥsān* as pious virtue and direct encounter with the divine light. These four conceptual dimensions of the *khalwa* provide frameworks for speaking about different aspects of the *khalwa* experience, but in a general sense they all focus on the attainment of a level of perception in which unity is perceived despite diversity. Cultivating this mode of perception entails a transition from sight (*al-baṣr*) to insight (*al-baṣīra*). Through the development of this form of perception, the disciple can obtain certain forms of knowledge and this process is seen as a form of enlightenment (*tanwīr*) based on the concept of divine light.

Regarding the modes of perception, Shaykh Fawzi, drawing on al-Ghazali, differentiates between sight (*al-baṣr*) and insight (*al-baṣīra*). The former refers to the flawed sight that sees the tangible world of humanity with the physical eye, while the latter refers to a perception of the internal states of things through the eye of the heart. Sight is limited and

flawed, as al-Ghazali writes, along seven dimensions, while insight is absolute and certain.

As Shaykh Fawzi writes:

With the eye of insight you see your nothingness and His existence ... the radiance of insight is the light of knowledge of certainty and the source of insight is the light of the source of certainty ... the radiance of insight is for people of [this world] and the source/eye of insight is for the people of the *malakūt*, and the truth of insight is for the people of *jabarūt*. [Put otherwise], the radiance of insight is for people of annihilation in work, the source of insight is for people of annihilation in the essence, and the truth of insight is for people annihilated in annihilation.⁷⁴²

Insight, therefore, is a mode of perception that, once cultivated, enables one to see deeply into the reality of things in order to discern their underlying unity and thus their truth. Put otherwise, Shaykh Fawzi writes (citing Ibn ‘Ajība), “The radiance of insight is the light of faith for the people of monitoring (*murāqaba*), the source of insight is the light of *ihsān* for the people of *mushāhada*, and the truth of insight is the light of durability and empowerment for the people of discourse.”⁷⁴³ In this framework, there are three aspects of insight: radiance, source, and truth.⁷⁴⁴ Therefore, insight itself has its own levels corresponding to the individual, worlds, and different stages along the spiritual path. This last point is reflected in Ibn ‘Ajība’s statement that the radiance of insight corresponds to the level of *murāqaba*, its source corresponds to the level of *mushāhada*, and its truth corresponds to the level of *mukālīma*. The radiance, source, and truth of insight are all forms of light with which the internal eye of the heart can see. Specifically, however, I want to point out the second level in which *mushāhada* is derived from the ‘light of *ihsān*, and as such the people of *mushāhada* are those who are able to perceive and reflect the ‘light of *ihsān*.’

⁷⁴² Al-Karkarī, *Al-mahajja*, 58-9.

⁷⁴³ Al-Karkarī, *Al-mahajja*, 59.

⁷⁴⁴ As he writes, “Know that there are for insight levels of science, source, and truth. The first is science which is the radiance of fortune and with the sheet of guidance witness greatness of the proximity of Allah and his surrounding, so know that he is closer than your jugular vein ... the middle is the source of insight with which you see your nothingness and His existence ... [then] the truth of certainty witnessing His existence without your nothingness or existence ...” (Al-Karkarī, *Al-mahajja*, 58).

Shaykh Fawzi, again drawing on al-Ghazali, differentiates between two types of eyes: external and internal.⁷⁴⁵ The two eyes parallel the distinction made between sight and insight insofar as the internal eye is the eye of insight, that is, “The eye of the heart enlightened with the eternal light from the stores of the absent world.”⁷⁴⁶ Insight is therefore a mode of spiritual perception that connects this world and the spiritual world (*malakūt*), and enables the perceiver to take knowledge from that other realm. The *khalwa* is a specific technique for opening up this mode of perception, but it must be accompanied by a progressive program of *tarbiya*. The point I want to make here is that, as we have seen, this program of *tarbiya* is aimed at the ethical cultivation of the individual as well as at the refinement of a manner of perceiving the world (i.e., a way of relating to the world). These two dimensions of the *tarbiya*, that is, its ethical and aesthetic dimensions, give shape to the trajectories that open possibilities for acquiring forms of knowledge through (visionary) experiences in the *khalwa*, *dhikr*, and *hadra*.

In the Karkariyya, the knowledge acquired through these means is quite diverse. Individual disciples, depending on their stage in the path and personal intentions, acquire different types of knowledge such as the science of letters (*‘ilm al-ḥarūf*), astronomy/astrology (cosmic sciences), science of the language of the angels, and sciences regarding the embodiment of attributes of Allah. Furthermore, while each disciple takes the knowledge individually, the overall project is collective insofar as the individuals help to

⁷⁴⁵ “The eye is two eyes: external and internal. The external is from the tangible and visible world, [while] the internal is from another world, that is, the *malakūt*. For every eye among these two is a sun and light with which complete sight is reached. One of them is external and the other is internal. The external is from the visible world and it is a tangible sun. The internal is from the *malakūt* and it is the Quran, the esteemed Allah wrote, intending to unveil for you this complete unveiling, opened the first door for you from the doors of *malakūt*, and in this world the wondrous things are demeaned by the addition of the visible world” (Al-Karkarī, *Al-maḥajja*, 68).

⁷⁴⁶ Al-Karkarī, *Al-maḥajja*, 55.

unveil secrets that enable the group to progress through more readings of the Name. In this sense, the adept disciples explore various branches of science through their practice, record them, and share them with the shaykh in order to interpret their meaning. This is the process of what they call taking sciences, and Jamil describes it in the following manner: “I sit and say Allah [in the *khalwa*] and the light comes rushing at me until I see a moon. Then, I think of a question in my heart ... it has to be sincere ... and you see things in the *malakūt* that you cannot explain but you have to be just like a printer, you do not use your intellect when you record the information.” I asked if he had difficulties remembering or being able to describe them to the shaykh. He said, “If I forget, it is because something better will come. For example, this morning [in *dhikr*] I heard a poem and thought to myself that it was beautiful, but by the time I got my pencil I forgot it.” Consequently, Jamil keeps a notebook with him during the *dhikr* to occasionally stop and write down specifics from the visions. He then takes those notes and, in cooperation with the shaykh, interprets their meaning. Jamil has hundreds of pages with these visions and interpretations pertaining to the astrological sciences, studies which complement his university studies in physics and mathematics. Regarding the relationship between the two he said, “Each disciple studies a different form of science and all sciences are to be found here. For example, chemistry was the product of spiritual vision, as was astronomy, mathematics, language, music, etc... We can study all of those here through the *mushāhadāt*.”

Jamil’s studies focus on astrological and cosmological relationships, that is, correspondences between stars, dates, elements, and colors. By studying these correlations, he says that they can determine, for example, when it is best to do *dhikr* with a particular name, or the best moment to study, or the best time to have sexual relations. “If you study

the constellations, you can find someone's love by constellations," he added. However, he insisted that, "We do not use this ... I do not take it to use it, only to look to the greatness of Allah ... These sciences are not what is important, but it is the essence of the name Allah that is important. Some of them may appear to you as coincidence, but they are a sign of a deep connection and an underlying reality." Jamil's insistence that these sciences are not taken to be used is extremely important because it reflects how these esoteric sciences are differentiated from the lowly (*sufli*) sciences, i.e., sorcery (*sihr*). As Shaykh Fawzi discussed in one of his lessons, what differentiates science from sorcery is intention in learning it and using it, and for Jamil, the ethical training and self-monitoring (*murāqaba*) is necessary for maintaining the good intention and avoiding the lowly intention.

Sohayl, another adept disciple whose vision I presented previously (see Chapter Seven on *mudhākara*), focuses on the sciences of letters, leading some disciples to refer to him as a new 'Al-Buni.'⁷⁴⁷ Reflected in this framing, which some of the other disciples used to describe his domain of knowledge, is the issue of renewal as it pertains to sciences, as well as a relationship to books.⁷⁴⁸ Sohayl also produces a journal, but specifically he draws pictures of his visions containing various letters, colors, and shapes. These drawings, when interpreted with the shaykh, can function as talismans with properties hidden in the meanings of the images. Sohayl described this in the following way, "The letters are in fact spirits that can be embodied in different forms ... we embody the spirit of the letters in the talisman ...

⁷⁴⁷ Reference to Ahmad al-Buni (d. 1225) who is famous for his work *Shams al-marif al-kubra*.

⁷⁴⁸ The disciples explained to me that since the universes are constantly changing and expanding, a claim which they ground in modern science, so too are the correlations between aspects of the world and the *malakūt*. As a result, the sciences contained in these previous books, while accurate at that time, is in need of updating because those relationships have changed. Therefore, part of the collective project is the updating of these previous esoteric sciences in order to collectively progress through the secrets and approach Allah. Furthermore, "some writers have put 'codes' in their books. For example, al-Buni changed the moon and sun letters, making it difficult to fully use," according to Jamil.

[In addition,] there are multiple ways of embodying this spirit ... for example, writing using candles can embody the spirit of fire and ink the spirit of water.” The point here is that through the right combination of letters, colors, element, and number (to include some of the correlations), it is possible to produce talismans that allow for communication with jinn or angels, as well as certain effects in the material world. Furthermore, each name of Allah is said to have a corresponding letter, though the numbers do not match, and I was unable to get a straight answer regarding this. The possibilities for the effects of these talisman increase over time as the disciples progress through the various readings of the name and unveil the secrets hidden within it. Jamil says in this sense, “We will be reaching the reading of the point soon and the shaykh said this will be our greatest test yet because we will learn to transform material reality.” In response, I asked how they used the talisman. He replied that they can be used for predicting future events, interpreting certain verses in the Quran, and with alchemy we can literally transform the material world, when used at the right time. Other examples included talisman that could be hung in buildings to provide security, as the shaykh explained to me during one of his lessons where he showed me the journals of some of the adept disciples. Sohayl’s journal was full of these drawings that are first recorded by him from visions (*mushādāt*) and then interpreted with the help of the shaykh. However, as they are all quick to point out when discussing these sciences, the intention is not to apply them but to use them as means through which, or vehicles by which, the disciples draw closer to Allah.

Another example is Abdel Qadir, a young disciple studying the language of the angels. While he was not able to speak to me about the details of his studies since he did not have the permission of the shaykh to share, he nonetheless explained the process as being

like what has been described above. He takes his knowledge by meeting with the sheikh in the *malakūt* who gives him lessons, which he then brings back with him and records in his journal like the others. Florient is also an adept disciple who studies the embodiment of the names and attributes of Allah, that is, how those attributes are in the human body. He combines this with studies at university in physiology and sciences of the human body, providing him with the foundations for combining modern science with the sciences studied at the *zawiya*. This compatibility between the two is an oft-repeated theme within the *tariqa*, with disciples consistently claiming that all contemporary sciences are derived, or at least embedded, within the Quran.⁷⁴⁹ In Florient's case, however, he not only produces these embodied maps of Allah's attributes. There is also an aesthetic dimension to these practices insofar as he learns and creates music through his visions. Specifically, he plays the kaval and draws inspiration from his experiences to compose and play music.

Naim is an Algerian disciple who also uses his visionary experiences as inspiration for his visual artwork. Below is an example of one of his drawings made with ballpoint pen that was shown to me from his journal. In describing his art, he talks about the clarity of the point, relating it back to the ball of light that forms the basis of the *tariqa*. Furthermore, through his art, he attempts to express the relationship between interior and exterior, relying on contrast (opposition) and complementarity to reveal internal meanings. Therefore, the style which uses simple contrast of light and dark (a point or no point) brings into relief the basic dimensions of the *khalwa* (separation-connection, union, folding, and beauty). For Naim, the drawings aim to express not only the visual content of the visions (external), but also their underlying meanings (internal).

⁷⁴⁹ Examples here include the creation and expansion of the universe, biology, chemistry, and even evolution.



Figure 16. Picture by Naim based on vision



Figure 17. Picture by Sohayl based on vision

As Shaykh Fawzi explained to me in the interpretation of Naim’s drawing, the disparate parts of the geometric shape represent the different sciences and their unification takes place in the perfect person (*insān kāmil*). In describing it this way, he drew an analogy between the perfect person as an individual containing all these sciences and the *tariqa* as a ‘body’ containing them. Thus, the project of becoming the perfect person as an individual is linked to the collective project of learning and sharing the sciences within the group, illustrating that even the individual pursuit of knowledge or science is not an isolated project but is intimately connected to conceptions of community. In short, one takes the sciences in order to share them, one shares them in order to help others progress through the readings of the name and unveil secrets, and the group progresses through the readings in order to draw nearer to Allah as a community. The sciences enable deeper understandings that allow people to live, individually and as a community, the verses of the Quran. As Shaykh Fawzi said in one of his *mudhākara* lessons, “Man has to be the soul of the Quran and the Quran is like the body ... you must bring the Quran to life by embodying it (*tajsīd*) ... you must

become like an *aya* from the Quran.” Thus, for Shaykh Fawzi, learning the Quran is a process of embodying it, which in turn is the basis for deeper layers of meaning and knowledge.

Speaking about the forms of knowledge accessible through this embodiment of the Quran, Shaykh Fawzi writes at the end of his section on science in his theoretical book, *The White Destination*, “Science, then, is not that you memorize then reiterate what you memorized for what are you [at that point] but a printer. But science is that you learn a verse then work with it then harvest the fruit of labor [that is] a light with which you discern the purpose of Allah. With that you give to all their due in terms of etiquette, state, and taste.”⁷⁵⁰ The point here is that all of these sciences, despite their theoretical and esoteric dimensions, are tied back to the practical question of how to live life in this world and interact with others in an appropriate manner. It is here that one moves back from the theoretical sciences and into the practical sciences of conduct and comportment (*ādāb*), as well as the cultivation of affective dispositions that shape the contours of those interactions. The Sufism of the Karkariyya can be seen here as a practical tradition, even in some of its most esoteric formulations. For example, in his chapter on science Shaykh Fawzi writes that scholars are of two types: those who study only the wisdom of Allah and those who study Allah. The former group studies the wisdom of Allah because they dread anger and punishment, while the latter group studies Allah because they dread separation from the divine.⁷⁵¹ Moreover, “[The latter] take their science from Allah [while the former] take their knowledge from the

⁷⁵⁰ Al-Karkarī, *Al-mahajja*, 66.

⁷⁵¹ “Scientists (scholars) are of two types: scholars of the wisdom of Allah and scholars of Allah. [The former] dread His anger and punishment and [the latter] dread His distance and veiling. [The former] are careful of the citizens of the land and [the latter] are careful only etiquette in the presence of [Allah]. The dread of [the latter] is elevated and strong” (Al-Karkarī, *Al-mahajja*, 63).

dead. [As a famous Sufi Abu Yazid al-Bisṭāmī (d. 848) said,] ‘The poor take their knowledge from the dead. We take our knowledge from the living that do not die. The difference between fear, awe, and dread is that fear is from punishment, awe is from reproach, and dread is from distance.’”⁷⁵² Put otherwise he writes, “Dread necessitates science. As Shaykh ‘Abbad said, ‘Know that the useful science ... is science that led [the Prophet’s] companions to fear and dread, to the necessity of humility and shame, and to the development of faithful ethics ... it necessitates proper conduct and comportment (*ādāb*) in the hands of Allah, as well as the [acquisition of divine] attributes.’”⁷⁵³ In these quotes, Shaykh Fawzi is emphasizing an affective dimension of science (*‘ilm*) by connecting it to fear and dread, as well as an ethical dimension in which science requires the cultivation of character based on virtues and *ādāb*.

Specifically, he notes the importance of three affective states of fear (*khawf*), dread (*khashi‘a*), and awe (*rihba*). As the first quote clarifies, these are three different states, each characterized by a different intentional object. For example, dread has as its intentional object the individual’s distance from Allah, while for fear it is punishment from Allah. Consequently, *khashi‘a* (dread) is framed as the most advanced of the three because it only arises from a felt separation from Allah, instead of from anxiety over punishment. This distinction, between fear and dread, is also quite crucial in constructing a moral framework insofar as fear of punishment in the afterlife is often used in sermons and discourses as a motivating force for right action.⁷⁵⁴ These quotes suggest, however, that fear of punishment in the afterlife is an incomplete or insufficient emotional state and that the highest form of

⁷⁵² Al-Karkarī, *Al-maḥajja*, 63-4.

⁷⁵³ Al-Karkarī, *Al-maḥajja*, 62.

⁷⁵⁴ See Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape* - section on fear in cassette sermons.

fear is not from punishment but from separation. In this case, while the emotion generally glossed as fear operates within both the ‘political Islamic movement of Egypt’ (discussed by Charles Hirschkind) and the Karkariyya, the way in which this fear is glossed, how it is related to other emotions, and the means for evoking it are quite distinct. In other words, Shaykh Fawzi’s discussion reflects the multiple modalities of fear operative within the Islamic tradition, along with the affective and ethical dimensions of knowledge.

Furthermore, this formulation of fear as *khashi‘a* moves the disciple past an evaluation of acts in terms reward and punishment because fear of punishment in the afterlife is no longer the motivating force, thereby allowing the disciple to approach a state of sincerity. The point here is that these nuanced renderings of the general emotion of fear entail distinct relationships with Allah, relationships that can be brought to bear on action in a variety of ways. In short, the development of *ihsān* as a form of piety that allows one to take sciences involves the cultivation of specific affective dispositions, like *khashi‘a*.

Moreover, *khashi‘a* is connected to another affective state called *shawq* (longing). With the felt separation comes a desire directed toward reunion and making Allah’s presence felt in the present. It is for this reason that the *khalwa*, as a technique for producing visions that lead to or generate knowledge, must also be seen as an affective technique, that is, a practice designed to cultivate certain affective dispositions by evoking experiences of separation and reunion. I do not mean that the *khalwa* produces affective states only through experiences of separation and reunion, but this constellation of separation, longing, and dread makes visionary experience an affective experience that, through repetition, can sediment certain affective dispositions that underpin the character of a pious Muslim. The goal, therefore, is not merely to take knowledge and esoteric sciences through the *khalwa*, but to

foster constellations of affective dispositions that permeate the life of the disciple and are not confined to the *khalwa* room or the *zawiya*. In short, it is a means to cultivate the affective experiences that accompany the ‘as if you see Him’ of the spiritual level of *ihsān*, enabling disciples to worship and live ‘as if they see Him’ in their lives. *Ihsān*, therefore, is not only a way of seeing but also a way of feeling, or put otherwise, *ihsān* is an affective-perceptual aptitude honed through an applied curriculum of ethical development.

Regarding the affective dimensions of the visionary experiences, Naim captures them in his explanation:

On the first day of the *khalwa*, my eyes were closed and I saw a light approaching me until it encompassed my [field of] vision. I concentrated on the light and in the light, I felt warmth. At that time, I opened my eyes and saw myself sitting on a wall in front of myself. There was a bit of light in the room so in from of me I saw a window with a little light. *I felt panic and fear*. This bothered me greatly because it was real. When I opened my eyes I saw planets and galaxies, jinn and angels.

With Naim’s account there are two affective attributes. Firstly, with the light came a feeling of warmth felt in his body. This kind of bodily affect was also present in Karim’s account of the coldness of the ocean, as well as by Sohayl in his description of his vision during *hadra*. Secondly, Naim notes a feeling of fear and panic that accompanied the beginning of the vision. For him, the vision of himself sitting on a wall evoked this feeling.

In another case, Ahmed describes bodily feelings associated with the light:

I could see an empty disc with a ring a light, the more dhikr I do the more light I see until it became completely light which is white with a little blue and the more dhikr I do that disc approaches me until I put my head inside. The previous state I had, the more dhikr, I feel heat and am sweating, but in that one I could see the coolness, that was a cool light. The cool light I could feel the coolness in my face when I’m doing that. I wanted to get inside whole disc and when I tried to get in I felt all my body is shivering and I am shaking badly. When I get out, I felt exhausted with coolness and I am shivering out of coolness ... I could see darkness and I felt *wahsha*, which is loneliness.⁷⁵⁵

⁷⁵⁵ Video Ahmed (June 29, 2017).

In addition to feelings of warmth and coolness, he emphasizes his bodily reactions to the visions, as well as an affective state of loneliness that accompanied his vision of the emptiness. My point here is twofold. Firstly, there are bodily affects, such as warmth, and bodily movements that are experienced consistently during the *khalwa*. In this sense, there is always a grounding of these experiences in the bodies of the individuals. Secondly, there are emotional affects that are evoked in the *khalwa*, many of which are related in some fashion to fear. The valences of this fear vary, but it was explained most commonly as the kind of dread that might accompany a feeling of vertigo. In this sense, the fear of evoked by the *khalwa* is closely associated with an (existential) dread (*khashi'a*) of (infinite) distance, rather than a fear of punishment or reproach.

v. Summary

In this section I tried to highlight in the practice of the *khalwa* the ways in which it is grounded and justified in tradition through Sheikh Fawzi's discussion of Quran and *hadith*. The goal was to demonstrate how tradition is drawn upon to frame and orient a practice in the present. I also discussed the role of the *khalwa*, as well as the *dhikr*, in eliciting experiences called *mushāhadāt* (visions) that produce, or allow disciples to take, certain forms of knowledge. These forms of knowledge, or sciences, include the science of letters, astrology/astronomy, and science of the names, to point out a few in particular. These sciences, while studied individually, are also shared among the disciples and consequently serve as pieces of the collective puzzle of deciphering the secrets of the name of Allah. In the final portion of the section, however, I tried to bring into relief the affective character of these experiences and thus the role of the *khalwa* in the applied curriculum of ethical

development insofar as it evokes affective states that, over time and with additional training from the shaykh, become engrained as dispositions in the disciple as characteristics of the pious subject. The *khalwa* is therefore not only a means to evoke transient mystical state, but also an embodied ethical technology of the self.

Specifically, I argued that the spiritual retreat (*khalwa*) operates as one among a number of disciplinary techniques for cultivating and performing *iḥsān*. On the one hand, the *khalwa* facilitates visionary experiences (*mushāhadāt*) that involve a direct encounter with the divine light (*nūr*). This direct encounter a manifestation of the level of *iḥsān* defined as ‘worshipping Allah as if you see Him.’ As such, the *mushāhada* is one embodiment of *iḥsān*, and the narratives posted online are performances of that piety. On the other hand, the *khalwa* is a disciplinary technique aimed at the development of certain perceptual and affective dispositions, that is, ways of seeing and relating to oneself, others, and Allah. As such, the *khalwa* and the *mushāhada* are not only expressions of *iḥsān* as a form of piety, but also the means to refining that piety and enabling one to effectively perform it in daily life. Thus, while the *khalwa* is an act of seclusion, it produces changes in the disciple that are not confined to the *khalwa* room and are embedded in the daily life of disciples over time through the repeated enactment of the embodied practices of the *minhaj al-tarbiya* of the Karkariyya.

CHAPTER NINE: PILGRIMAGE, POLITICS, AND PIETY: PERFORMING THE *SIYĀḤA* IN THE KARKARIYYA

i. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the *khalwa* as a spiritual exercise aimed at the direct vision (*mushāhada*) of the divine light (*nūr*) and other realms (e.g., *malakūt*). These visions facilitated the acquisition of forms of spiritual knowledge and awareness (*maʿrifā*), applied sciences (*ʿalūm*), and divine secrets (*asrār*). Furthermore, progression through these stages of understanding was framed as iterated readings of the Name (*ism Allah*), which also served important material and embodied functions in the curriculum of *tarbiya*. However, in addition to granting access to esoteric (mystical) knowledge and realities, the *khalwa* also operated as a disciplinary practice that cultivated a mode of perception characterized as insight (*baṣīra*) and an affective attitude of dread (*khashiʿa*) toward God. The development of these affective and perceptual dispositions transforms relationships with oneself, with others, and with God, thereby contributing to the ethical advancement of the disciple. As such, the *khalwa* operates as both a spiritual technology and disciplinary technique in which the ability to see the divine light (*tanwīr*) is entwined with the refinement of character (*tarbiya*). Together, these two processes lead to the attainment of the level of *iḥsān*, a form of virtuous piety that permeates one's interactions and underpins the pious subject.

Narratives of the visionary experiences of disciples from the *khalwa* were also recorded and posted online for public consumption in an international audience. In these testimonials disciples attest to the veracity of Shaykh Fawzi's claims that he shares the divine light with disciples through the *bayʿa*. While I did not necessarily analyze them as such,

these videos constitute a public performance of piety insofar as they express and are a means to cultivating *ihsān*. In sharing their visions, disciples display their piety while also calling on others to come to the *zawiya* and experience it for themselves. As an invitation to others, the disciples perform a call (*da'wa*) that is itself part of their training as disciples.⁷⁵⁶ My point in this regard is that although the *khalwa* and *mushāhada* are a secluded practice and an isolated experience, by narrating testimonials online the group opens them up to various publics. In the process, the version of piety performed necessarily competes with alternative articulations circulating in public spaces and at times comes under criticism by supporters of those competing religiosities. While the public circulation of online testimonials gives rise to this competition and criticism, the practice of the pilgrimage (*siyāḥa*) most clearly brings into relief the political significance of debates about public piety.

In this chapter, I will discuss the *siyāḥa* as a component of Shaykh Fawzi's curriculum of ethical education (*minhaj al-tarbiya*) modeled after his own journey discussed in Chapter Six. Additionally, I will investigate the political significance of the *siyāḥa* and how it gives rise to conflict as it is performed across borders. As I will argue, due to the structure of the religious field in Morocco, the pilgrimage of the Karkariyya acquires political significance as a performance of an authorized public piety. At the domestic level, public performances like festivals and pilgrimages that display religious diversity exhibit the regime's support of diverse religiosities, and therefore its supposed tolerance of religious pluralism. In demonstrating the regime's commitment to religion, these public performances help to legitimize the religious and political authority of the Moroccan government.

Likewise, by framing their public performances as products of the regime's religious policy

⁷⁵⁶ In the previous chapter, I discussed how the progression to the alif entailed the embodiment of *walāya*, understood as calling, or bringing forth, others from darkness into the light.

and reinforcing its authority, religious communities demonstrate their loyalty to the regime and elicit support from the government. For example, the Karkariyya performed their annual *siyāḥa* between the tombs of two previous Moroccan kings, using it to publicly announce their support of the regime. However, insofar as the *siyāḥa* of the Karkariyya is performed in multiple nation-states, its political significance in the domestic field has important implications at the international level. Thus, for example, if the performance of the *siyāḥa* in Morocco demonstrates mutual support between the Karkariyya and the Moroccan regime, then does its performance in Algeria also demonstrate their support of the Moroccan regime? Furthermore, if it is performed by Algerian citizens, either in Algeria or Morocco, does this in some sense express loyalty to Morocco at the expense of Algeria? My goal is not necessarily to answer these questions directly, but to use the *siyāḥa* of the Karkariyya as it is performed in different contexts to reflect on some of the practical political ramifications of Morocco's recent religious policies.

My point is that Morocco's religious policy imposes a political significance on Sufi orders, and although some nation-states may welcome this form of spiritual diplomacy, other nation-states may see the practices of 'Moroccan Sufi orders' in their borders as an infringement on their sovereignty. Therefore, while Morocco's policy of supporting Sufism to combatting religious extremism domestically and internationally may facilitate cooperation among nation-states, it also carries the potential to exacerbate tensions and cause conflict between mutually suspicious nation-states vying for regional influence. While scholars and policymakers have identified potentials for Sufism to facilitate international

relations and intercultural dialogue, I want to highlight what Vish Sakthivel insightfully calls the ‘flawed hope’ of Sufism in North Africa.⁷⁵⁷

ii. Journeys and Visitation: *Rihla* and *Ziyāra* in Sufism

The *hajj* is the primary pilgrimage in Islam recognized and performed by all Muslims who are able at least once in their lives as one of the pillars of the tradition. The *hajj* is formally done during a designated time of the year with a series of rituals executed at appointed times and locations. The pilgrimage can also be performed outside the annually appointed time, a practice called the ‘*umra*. In addition to these normative practices, several other groups have adopted other pilgrimages related to historical events, prominent religious figures, or diverse local customs associated with sacred times and spaces. For instance, Shi’a Muslims travel to the tomb of Hussein in Karbala, Iraq, during Ashura in commemoration of his martyrdom. In South Asia, shrines of certain religious figures may bring together Hindu, Muslim, and/or Sikh traditions, producing ‘multiconfessional sites’ of shared ritual and pilgrimage.⁷⁵⁸ In Egypt, annual pilgrimages may take the form of the *mawlid* festival in which devout practitioners come to commemorate saints (*awliyā*’) alongside others who come for the joy and fun of festivities.⁷⁵⁹ In Morocco, a similar pilgrimage festival called the *mawsim* is commonly practiced and involves a journey to the grave of a figure, such as Abū Ya‘zzā ‘Yalanūr’ (d. 1177) in the Middle Atlas region.

In addition to these forms of pilgrimage, Sufi practitioners have often incorporated two related practices: *rihla* and *ziyāra*. The former is a general term that refers to any type of

⁷⁵⁷ Vish Sakthivel, “The Flawed Hope of Sufi Promotion in North Africa,” Foreign Policy Institute, accessed October 16, 2019, www.fpri.org/article/2016/12/flawed-hope-sufi-promotion-north-africa/.

⁷⁵⁸ Mohammad, *Festival*; Bigelow, *Sharing the Sacred*.

⁷⁵⁹ Schielke, *Perils*.

journey, though it has often been connected to travel undertaken in search of knowledge. In Sufi contexts, the journey to seek knowledge is often modeled after the pious journey of Moses who sought out someone with even more knowledge, a person that appeared in the form of the enigmatic ‘*khiḍr*.’⁷⁶⁰ I discussed this story in some detail in Chapter Seven, so I simply want to identify this Quranic story as a model of the pious and transformative *riḥla*, which constitutes one of the bases of the *siyāḥa* of the Karkariyya.

In his historical presentation of the well-known early modern Sufi figure Ahmad al-Zarruq, Scott Kugle elaborates on the role of the transformative journey and pilgrimage in Moroccan Sufism.⁷⁶¹ According to Kugle, while originating in his forced exile from the city of Fes, Zarruq reformulated his forty-day trip to the tomb of Abū Madyan in Algeria as a transformative pilgrimage. Kugle writes, “His passage to maturity would be a geographic journey as well as a spiritual one, one that would threaten his physical well-being and tax his intellectual and imaginative resources.”⁷⁶² His transformative journey proceeded through stages of liminality, alienation, death of self-will, and ultimately a reintegration into Fes in which his former social identity was displaced.⁷⁶³ Consequently, for Kugle, Zarruq’s journey constituted an initiation ritual or rite of passage that allowed him to adopt the role of reformer, *walī* (saint), and ‘juridical Sufi,’ thereby changing his relationships to others. Central to the transformative process in this journey was a ‘death of self-will,’ an idea closely connected to the annihilation of the ego (*nafs*) that permeates Sufi thought and practice. Citing the anthropologist Stefania Pandolfo, Kugle writes, “His journey would be a

⁷⁶⁰ Q 18:65-82.

⁷⁶¹ Kugle, *Rebel*. Also see Stefania Pandolfo, *Impasse of the Angels: Scenes from a Moroccan Space of Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997) on the *riḥla*.

⁷⁶² Kugle, *Rebel*, 99.

⁷⁶³ Kugle writes, “It is as if Zarruq experienced a form of death in leaving Fes ... In the passage to Tilimsān and back, he encountered a rebirth, through exile, liminality, and pilgrimage” (Kugle, *Rebel*, 102).

‘departure from one’s place and oneself,’ in the phrase Pandolfo uses to describe the theme of Moroccan journey (*riḥla*).”⁷⁶⁴ Thus, the *riḥla* also altered the relationships one had with oneself by eliminating self-interested desire. Finally, the goal of the *riḥla* was to experience hardship, struggle, and trial (*balāʾ*) that required complete reliance on God (*tawakkul ʿalā Allah*). By depriving oneself of luxuries and basic needs of life, one comes to put one’s trust in Allah alone, thereby reorienting one’s intention and cultivating sincerity. Together, these transformations in ethical relationships to oneself, to others, and Allah produced a state of sincerity constitutive of the *walī Allah* (saintly friend of God). This sincerity is a kind of ethical authority that is, “Internal to the personality, displayed in virtues, struggles, and personal sacrifices; through these means, sincerity can generate a certain kind of authority that is always interpersonal and not invested in rank, status, or material symbols.”⁷⁶⁵ In other words, the *riḥla* exemplified in Kugle’s analysis of Zarruq is a disciplinary practice aimed at the cultivation of ethical qualities that, as they become embedded in the character of the pilgrim, constitute a form of religious authority performed not through miraculous or supernatural events, but through daily acts and social relationships.

Furthermore, Kugle goes on to suggest that the transformative journey aimed at the death of the ego is a type of *jihad*. In this regard, he says that for Zarruq the willingness of the Prophet’s companions to sacrifice their lives in the form of military action, “... was merely the surface expression of their spiritual cultivation: to struggle to limit their self-concern and selfish will and to transcend it completely. This was ‘the greater *jihad*’ that the Prophet Muhammad advocated, in contrast to ‘the lesser *jihad*’ of military action or political

⁷⁶⁴ Kugle, *Rebel*, 102.

⁷⁶⁵ Kugle, *Rebel*, 101.

activism.”⁷⁶⁶ In other words, the pilgrimage becomes a technique of performing *jihad*, understood in the sense of ‘struggling against oneself.’⁷⁶⁷ As I will discuss later in this chapter, the notion of the *siyāḥa* in the Karkariyya is formulated as a type of ‘greater *jihad* in this sense, so I simply want to highlight the connection between these concepts. In short, the *riḥla* is both a physical and spiritual journey that results in a transformation of the self in relation to the self, to others, and to God. As such, it has traditionally been a component of Moroccan Sufism as an ethical tradition aimed at the cultivation of pious and ethical subjects.

The *ziyāra* is another Sufi practice closely related to the pilgrimage. It involves the visitation of sacred spaces, often shrines or tombs of pious figures or saints (*awliyāʾ*). These sites can be highly localized, or they can be destinations for pilgrims throughout the Islamic world. For the latter, it is common for yearly festivals to be organized by Sufi orders, governmental organizations, or caretakers of the shrines. In many cases, these festivals will include performances of Sufi music (*samāʾ*), religious singing (*inshād* or *madh*), and collective rituals (*ḥaḍra* or *dhikr*). While the specifics vary greatly, the general idea is a yearly commemoration of a saintly figure that involves a journey to the shrine and the performance of certain practices at the shrine. For the local shrines that are not destinations for large annual festivals, it is common for people to visit them as part of their everyday lives, offering prayers and gifts in exchange for mediation (*wasāṭa*) or intercession (*shafāʾ* or *tawaṣṣul*) from the saints or the Prophet via the saint.⁷⁶⁸ Individuals may visit shrines to seek healing and protection, or in order to perform supererogatory devotional acts in exchange for

⁷⁶⁶ Kugle, *Rebel*, 114.

⁷⁶⁷ To be clear, I make no claims about the strength or authenticity of the narrations upon which this idea is based. Whether or not such a distinction is accurate is not my concern here since the distinction was common among the groups with which I worked.

⁷⁶⁸ Insofar as many international shrines are also local shrines for people, these international shrines will also be places for these types of practices.

spiritual reward. The structure of these shrines also varies, from simple grave sites to elaborate mausoleums, though in Morocco the two most common structures are a dome (*qubba*) and open-air garden (*rawḍa*). These sacred sites dot the urban and rural landscapes of Morocco, earning it the nickname ‘Land of the Saints,’ (*dār al-awliyā*), in contrast to the Middle East, which they refer to as ‘Land of the Prophets’ (*dār al-anbiyā*). Thus, there is an overabundance of potential pilgrimage sites in Morocco and as we will see with the Karkariyya, this abundance allows them to change the destination of the *siyāḥa* each time it is performed.

Whether in the form of collective annual festivals or individual weekly rituals, the visitation of shrines has remained a controversial practice in Islam. Although for practitioners they are piously motivated pilgrimages, for critics they are a manifestation of unwarranted innovation (*bid‘a*) that reflects idolatry (*shirk*) and goes against the foundational teaching of divine unity (*tawḥīd*). As such, many critics of Sufism highlight this practice as proof of Sufi deviation (*inhirāf*) and unwarranted innovation and condone the demolition of these shrines. Most recently, this kind of attack on sacred Sufi sites was seen under the Islamic State, but it had historical precedent not only in Wahhabi attacks on Sufi and Shi‘i shrines in Saudi Arabia and Iraq in the late eighteenth century, but also in medieval debates about the permissibility of certain kinds of practices.⁷⁶⁹ While it is common for present-day

⁷⁶⁹ For scholarship on anti-Sufi debates and the reform of Sufism in the modern period see Sirriyeh, *Sufis and Anti-Sufis* and de Jong *Islamic Mysticism*. In this latter volume, John Van Ess writes, “The Hanbalites are reputed to have remained the arch-enemies of Sufism. In reality, however, this is not more than a stereotype derived from the fact that, in our times, Hanbalism tends to present itself under the form of Wahhabism ... Yet, in the Middle Ages the attitude was much more differentiated” (de Jong, *Islamic Mysticism*, 29). Examples given of the overlap between Sufis and Hanbalis are al-Isfahānī, ‘Abd Allāhī al-Ansarī, ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jīlānī and Ibn Taymiyya. With these figures we see that while they criticized certain aspects of Sufism, they were trained and quite familiar with the Sufi practices and doctrines of the time and were specific about the aspects of practice with which they took exception. In a sense then, they constituted an internal critique of Sufism, not external opposition. Examples of external criticism in the early stages generally concerned the status of

Wahhabi and/or Salafi groups to draw on medieval thinkers such as Ibn Taymiyya and modernist thinkers such as Rashid Rida in support of their ‘anti-Sufi’ sentiments, it is important to recognize that both were trained in aspects of Sufism and participated in Sufi orders (at least in their youth).⁷⁷⁰ As such, it is perhaps best to think of these earlier ‘anti-Sufis’ not as external critics but as internal reformers.⁷⁷¹ These historical points aside, what I want to suggest here is that the use of *siyāḥa* in contrast to the more widely used term *ziyāra* is in part a reformulation of the Sufi pilgrimage so as to circumvent standard critiques of the practice offered by anti-Sufi groups of different affiliations. While the *siyāḥa* of the Karkariyya does involve visiting shrines and performing devotional acts in those sacred spaces, by emphasizing its role as a transformative practice centered on the journey not the destination, and changing the term itself from *ziyāra* to *siyāḥa*, Shaykh Fawzi deflects some criticisms and helps to buttress the normativity of the practice. My goal in discussing these different forms of pilgrimage is to provide a framework for understanding the *siyāḥa* as a reformulation of these traditional practices, bringing together elements of each in order to articulate a renewed practice that is, at least in theory, secured from certain types of criticism. However, as I will demonstrate, the political significance of the *siyāḥa* opens it up to alternative criticisms as it moves across borders.

miracles and came for Mu’tazili theological positions. This was exemplified primarily in the trial and execution of al-Hallāj.

⁷⁷⁰ See Hourani, “Rashid Rida” and Houston, “Monks by Night” for examples.

⁷⁷¹ On this point, see Weismann, *Taste of Modernity*.

iii. Pilgrimage in the Karkariyya: *Siyāḥa*

While the term *siyāḥa* in contemporary contexts is commonly translated as tourism, it also carries a sense of journeying, wandering, and peregrination.⁷⁷² It is in this latter sense that I translate *siyāḥa* as pilgrimage, though being sure to distinguish it from the *ḥajj* or *ʿumra* as formally authorized pilgrimages in Islam. Further, while based on traditions of the *riḥla* and *ziyāra* discussed previously, the use of *siyāḥa* in the Karkariyya reflects a reformulation of these traditional practices. Finally, although religious tourism has become a feature of the tourist industry with foreign members of Sufi orders traveling to Morocco to participate in annual events, the *siyāḥa* in this context does not refer to this type of religious tourism. In short, it is a kind of pilgrimage in which the journey itself takes priority, rather than the destination, which in the case of the Karkariyya changes each year.⁷⁷³

In his book, *The Enlightened Principles*, Shaykh Fawzi defines the *siyāḥa* theoretically as, “The setting forth without a place and wayfaring without time on the principle of divestment (*tajrīd*) to expel the ‘other’ and obstacles in order to shatter the god of the I.”⁷⁷⁴ In practice, it is an annual journey undertaken by disciples, and in the past by Shaykh Fawzi, in which they walk on foot between two chosen sacred sites. The explicit purpose of the *siyāḥa* is cultivating patience in the face of hardship and is modeled on the journey of the shaykh covered in his biography. In short, Shaykh Fawzi spent many years in isolation, wandering the Moroccan countryside before returning and being authorized as shaykh. Along the way he had numerous experiences and visions, but as framed in the

⁷⁷² The Oxford English Dictionary gives a series of definitions for the term peregrination: “The course of a person’s life viewed originally as a temporary sojourn on earth and hence as a spiritual journey;” “A pilgrimage;” “The action or an act of travelling or going from place to place ... a journey, esp. on foot.”

⁷⁷³ For more on the *siyāḥa* in Sufi contexts see Arin Salamah-Qudsi, “Crossing the Desert: *Siyāḥa* and *Safar* as Key Concepts in Early Sufi Literature and Life,” *Journal of Sufi Studies* 2, no. 2 (2013): 129–47.

⁷⁷⁴ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 131.

narrative, the *siyāḥa* operated as a form of *tarbiya*, teaching him not only patience but also how to interact and live with people different from himself.⁷⁷⁵ As such, the *siyāḥa* is situated as one of the primary practices within the *tariqa*'s applied curriculum of ethical development, carrying with it significance for the individual disciple, the group of travelers, and the Karkariyya's engagement with the public.

Since its foundation in 2007, the disciples of Sheikh Fawzi have been authorized at specific times, in groups or individually, to perform the *siyāḥa* between two designated locations. While the locations and timing may change at the discretion of the shaykh, in general the *siyāḥa* is walking between two sites of Sufi heritage with the explicit goals of visiting the shrines of predecessors and training or testing the patience of the individual through physical and spiritual exertion. At times, the shaykh may also give specific instructions or pose a particular question to the disciples beforehand, as is seen, for example, in the *siyāḥa* performed on the occasion of the eclipse in July 2018. However, in addition to these goals, the *siyāḥa* also assumes political significance insofar as it is seen as a form of *da'wa* (most apparent in the European *siyāḥa*) and cuts across national borders, potentially bringing religious loyalties into conflict with national territories. In addition to these political dimensions, one of the textual bases for the *siyāḥa* frames it as a form of *jihad*. As such, in the context of the contemporary world, the *siyāḥa* must also be seen as a response to Islamic groups that offer interpretations and performances of *jihad* and in that regard the *siyāḥa* of the Karkariyya is also political, in the sense that it is a response to those who attempt to use Islamic traditions to justify forms of political violence. In short, the *siyāḥa* has an ethical dimension, in that it helps cultivate virtues, it has a 'mystical' dimension, in that it facilitates

⁷⁷⁵ The role of the transformative journey and its roots in Moroccan Sufism is seen clearly in Kugle's account of Zarruq in early modern Morocco.

the acquisition of forms of knowledge, and it has a political dimension, in that it publicly performs a piety that is tied to the Moroccan state's authorized religiosity.

A note on sources here. While in the previous sections I relied primarily on texts, interviews, and observation, in this section I will be using primarily internet sources from the website and texts. Beginning in 2014, the *tariqa* started publishing synopses of the *siyāḥa* on the website, including a brief, written account as well as collections of pictures and videos depicting the journey. In discussing the examples, these will be used as the main sources.

According to their accounts, in 2014 a group of twelve disciples set out at the beginning of August from the town of 'Ain Bani Mathar, located south of Oujda near the Algerian border, and walked the two-hundred kilometers to the town of al-Aroui where the main *zawiya* is located, embodying the journey undertaken by Shaykh Fawzi before he entered the *tariqa* and when he visited his shaykh barefoot to request entrance into the *khalwa*.⁷⁷⁶ They left in the beginning of August (4th of Shawwal), on Friday after the afternoon prayer, after they performed *dhikr* and *du'ā'* for traveling. They passed many villages and cities along the way and arrived in al-Aroui a week later. On the way, "[We] tasted ... a lot of instruction from lessons and benefits and we tasted the meaning of divestment [of the self] (*tajrīd*)."⁷⁷⁷ In this description, the function of the *siyāḥa* is first and foremost an experience, described as tasting but implying a particular mode of direct experiential knowing, of *tajrīd*, that is, the divestment of the trappings, illusions, and desires of the ego-self (*nafs*). The article then adds, "We carried patience in the cold and in sleeping on the ground until one feels the blessing of everything. The blessing of blankets, the

⁷⁷⁶ "Siyāḥa ṣūfiyya min 'ayn banī maṭṭhar," Karkariya Website, accessed April 20, 2019, <http://karkariya.org/site/play.php?catsmktba=15385>.

⁷⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

blessing of the home, the blessing of food and drink.”⁷⁷⁸ As such, in addition to developing patience, the *siyāḥa* also serves to cultivate feelings of gratefulness even for the simple needs of life with the recognition that it is all provided by God. Furthermore, “In this *siyāḥa* one acquires a refinement in the heart in which is gathered for him vision of the *malakūt* [spiritual realm] with remembrance and thought.”⁷⁷⁹ The *siyāḥa*, combined with other practices such as *dhikr* and lessons along the way, also opens up possibilities for visions and experiences. “One recognizes one’s self ... things that are absent from the self are unveiled [which can] only be discovered in travel... One comes to know his fellow disciples from proximity and comprehension of their value and their love, taste [experience] (*dhawq*), and understanding (*ma’rifā*) circulate [among them].”⁷⁸⁰ The *siyāḥa* not only develops an understanding of the self and its flaws, that is, what is absent from the self, but also encourages fellowship and companionship among the disciples. “We also saw, in this travel, the generosity of the people, their love of Sufism, and their honor [bestowed upon] [the Sufis].”⁷⁸¹ On top of engaging the self and the fellow disciples, this quote demonstrates, at least in principle, that the *siyāḥa* is also a mode of engagement with the public. Finally, the article concludes, “We thank all who helped us in the completion of this Sufi journey from the powers and the cities ... so we ask Allah to preserve this land and make it a land of assured security ... and we [ask] Allah ... to make victorious his Majesty the King Muhammad VI.”⁷⁸² In this conclusion to the summary, explicit thanks are given to the local authorities that helped the *siyāḥa* and a direct link was made to the country of Morocco and its leadership. This clear

⁷⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸² *Ibid.*

recognition of the role of the Moroccan authorities in authorizing and providing the environment in which the *siyāḥa* can take place transforms the *siyāḥa* from solely a practice of *tarbiya* into a public practice with political significance.

In a sense, the ability to perform the *siyāḥa* operates as a demonstration of the stability of Morocco and its support of Sufism as a peaceful alternative, and the Karkariyya operate within that framework. However, when the pilgrimage moves to Algeria, for example, the ‘*tarbiya*’ dimension and the ‘political’ dimension can be confused, because the *siyāḥa* not only represents an ethical practice of the self, but also a collective practice expressing loyalty to a nation and king that authorize the performance of the *siyāḥa* and the form of piety it displays. Regardless of the ‘intention’ of these expressions of gratitude – on the one hand they may merely be ‘playing the game’ and operating within the rules set by the religious field in Morocco, or on the other hand they may indeed be sending a political message – nevertheless, the group ties the performance of the *siyāḥa* to the Moroccan state and as a result, when performed elsewhere, the *siyāḥa* can be read as a political statement, as Algerian authorities will (discussed later).

Thinking about the *siyāḥa* in its international context, in 2014, two small groups of European disciples performed the *siyāḥa* in France. The first left from Paris and walked down to the Spanish border while the second began their journey in Lille, walking down to the Pyrenees mountains. Frederic, a French disciple introduced in a previous chapter, explains in a video that the purpose of the *siyāḥa* is to test and stretch the limits of oneself physically, mentally, and spiritually, and to venerate Shaykh Fawzi. Commenting on his understanding of Sufism more generally he says, “Sufism is practical ... it does not reside in

books ... but it is practical.”⁷⁸³ He adds, “As the shaykh explained to us ... the *siyāḥa* is not idolatry (*shirk*), it is simply a confirmation of the symbolic elements of Sufism.”⁷⁸⁴ In this case, in addition to discussions of the ethical dimensions of the *siyāḥa*, Frederic also points to a common criticism of Sufism, that is, the veneration of saints being a form of idolatry (*shirk*). Insofar as the *siyāḥa* of the French was directed toward Shaykh Fawzi in Morocco, it is also a veneration oriented toward the shaykh, and Frederic draws an analogy between the direction in the *siyāḥa* being toward the shaykh and the direction in prayer toward the *qibla*. While not explicit, the analogy is that just as the *qibla* operates to orient individuals in prayer, so too does the shaykh orient disciples in their physical and spiritual journeys.

What is more relevant, however, is that the article on the website frames the *siyāḥa* as a form of *da‘wa*. For instance, describing the *siyāḥa* the article states, “Disciples of the Karkariyya undertook a Sufi *siyāḥa* on foot from the capital of Paris, from which they cut across France to the borders of [Spain] in order to spread education of tolerant Islam that urges the call (*da‘wa*) with mildness and good advice.”⁷⁸⁵ Thus, the *siyāḥa* is being performed with the intent of teaching and spreading Islam, giving it not only an individual purpose but also a substantive social dimension. Another article says that the *siyāḥa* was done, “Under the banner of the call (*da‘wa*) to the tolerance and moderation (*‘itidāl*) that is urged by [Moroccan Islam].”⁷⁸⁶ Here, they add that it is not Islam in general, but specifically Moroccan Islam, which consists of these characteristics, that is being spread through the pilgrimage.

⁷⁸³ “Siyāḥa ṣūfiyya fī barīs,” Karkariya Website, accessed April 20, 2019, <http://karkariya.org/site/play.php?catsmktba=15381>.

⁷⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

As both articles illustrate, the *siyāḥa* as performed in France was situated as a form of *da‘wa*, that is, a call to and an informing of the people France. That form of Islam is specifically a Moroccan Islam grounded in Sufism, which is in turn characterized as tolerant and moderate (as opposed to extreme). Consequently, and insofar as the teachings of the Karkariyya align with the state-authorized public piety, the *siyāḥa* as a form of *da‘wa* performed in Europe can also be seen as an extension of the state control over the religious field in Morocco into the religious field in France (Europe). Framed in this Gramscian light, it is possible to see how the pilgrimage operates as an extension of state hegemony of the religious field, thereby enabling the Moroccan state to influence constructions and conceptions of Islam in foreign countries.⁷⁸⁷ The deployment of Sufism as a tool in international politics is not a concealed strategy for Morocco because it has actively sought, through the establishment of various institutes, to use religion, and specifically Sufism, to foster ties in African and Europe. As we saw in Chapter Five, institutions such as the Mohammed VI Institute for Imams in Europe and the Mohammed VI Institute for African Scholars illustrate state attempts to affect the religious field abroad, on the grounds that the religious education in foreign countries is tied to global and national security. In other words, the government has been actively involved not only in the consolidation of an authorized Moroccan Islam domestically, but also in the exportation of that religious identity in Europe, West and North Africa. Moreover, insofar as the Karkariyya operate within this highly regulated religious field, its public practices and discourses are constrained to a certain extent by the bounds of normative Islam, one of which is the expression of loyalty to the king. To participate in this field openly then requires a degree of alignment with state

⁷⁸⁷ See my discussion of the interpretation of Sufism as a hegemonic tool of the state in Chapter Three.

discourses and policies, though as I have been trying to demonstrate this alignment should not be read as homogeneity. Therefore, given the state's policy of exporting Moroccan Islam and the Karkariyya's position within that authorized Moroccan Islam, it might appear to some foreign powers that the Karkariyya could be a tool of state strategy, that is, an attempt to use Morocco's religious authority to exert hegemonic influence over other nation's publics. To be clear, my point is not to make the argument that the Karkariyya are an apparatus of the state sent to influence or to sow seeds of discord.⁷⁸⁸ Rather, my point is to articulate the rationale behind this argument as it is presented in this case by Algerian authorities in order to show that despite the values of tolerance and moderation embedded in their discourses, the deployment Sufism as part of a political strategy inflects Sufi orders with a political significance that has the potential to exacerbate tensions between nation-states.

Considering the more direct connections between the *siyāḥa* and Moroccan politics, in 2015 two *siyāḥas* were performed, one from Mawlay Idriss in Zerhuon, north of Meknes, to Mawlay Idriss in Fes, and the other from Rabat to Casablanca. With regard to the first, these two figures are credited with the founding of Idrisid dynasty in Morocco beginning in the eighth century AD, and this pilgrimage is done by many Sufi groups in Morocco in some form. While today many of the Sufi groups will use modern modes of transportation to

⁷⁸⁸ This rationale would read something like: The monarchy and state have significant influence over the public religious field, represented in their clear definition of Moroccan Islam. As part of that field, the Karkariyya have a number of options for responding. They respond by aligning themselves with the Moroccan state model of Sufism, with a few small points of difference that make them distinct, as represented in their repeated allegiances to the King. When the Karkariyya go beyond Morocco's border, they are effectively, by the transitive property, the medium for the transmission of that state model into another country's public. So, two questions that emerge are: (1) To what extent do the Karkariyya actually adhere to the model of the Moroccan (and local) state? And (2) Are they being 'used' by the Moroccan state directly?

travel between the cities, the Karkariyya elected to perform the pilgrimage on foot. The article describing this *siyāḥa* states:

The revival of one of the pillars of Sufism that was first approached in their *tarbiya* of disciples [was] going out on *siyāḥa* of the land of Allah until they learned many lessons that one cannot learn from books or hearing in lessons. There is no doubt that whosoever puts oneself in [that] state of experience until one knows to where one arrives in the elevation of the gradations of ethics. In order to do that, a group of disciples from the Karkariyya went out in Sufi *siyāḥa* walking on foot ... until [they] experienced how the good ones are exhausted in seeking knowledge and how they can be patient with hunger, thirst, and sleeping on the ground... when the disciple does this then the disciple learns patience and indifference to creation's view of him, until he does not care what he wears or where he sleeps.⁷⁸⁹

The article finishes by saying that the goal of this particular *siyāḥa*, “is to untangle the secret of the *muraqaa'a* manifested in the twelve colors”⁷⁹⁰ The *siyāḥa* therefore has a specific goal in terms of acquiring knowledge, in addition to its role in training the disciple. As for the second *siyāḥa*, the article reads:

Walking in the footsteps of our shaykh ... and the footsteps of the ancestors from the people of Sufism and asceticism, a group of disciples performed, beginning on the 4th of Shawwal, a Sufi *siyāḥa* traveling by foot in pursuit of connecting the present to the past and believing in the importance of the allegiance [to] the Commander of the Faithful. The group divided into two groups, each containing nine disciples. The first group left from the capital Rabat, specifically the tomb of [the departed] Mohammed V, in the direction of the Hassan II mosque [in Casablanca] ... The second group left from the Hassan II mosque towards the tomb. [They left] after reading the *fātiḥa* ... and performing *du 'ā'* that Allah preserves this nation and blesses ‘the shepherd and the flock.’ The *siyāḥa* covered about one hundred kilometers ... passing along the national highway through [cities] ... where [the disciples] met the people [who] accepted and welcomed them, asked for *du 'ā'* as is done in the atmosphere of the *siyāḥa*, an atmosphere of reverence, remembrance, and prayer. The primary and best purpose of this *siyāḥa* is *tarbiya* of the self through carrying discomfort and hardening oneself, representing the *hadith* ... “harden yourself, for blessing is not permanent.”⁷⁹¹

⁷⁸⁹ “Siyāḥa šūfiyya zerhūn,” Karkariya Website, accessed April 18, 2019, <http://karkariya.org/site/play.php?catsmktba=16284>.

⁷⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹¹ “Siyāḥa šūfiyya ilā min rabāt,” Karkariya Website, accessed April 18, 2019, <http://karkariya.org/site/play.php?catsmktba=16178>.

The article finishes by expressing gratitude to the authorities for providing the opportunity and ensuring the stability of the nation.

In both cases, similar themes are repeated about the purpose of the *siyāḥa* and its relation to the ethical training of the disciple. However, the selection of location for both, but especially in the second case, carries significant weight. This is explicitly stated when they say, “believing in the importance of allegiance to the Commander of the Faithful.” By performing the *siyāḥa* between the tomb of Mohammed V and the grand mosque of Hassan II, and then adding that this is done in recognition of allegiance to the current king Mohammed VI, they tie the *siyāḥa* directly to politics. In a sense, the *siyāḥa* becomes a performance and recognition of allegiance to the king, insofar as the king is what ensures the stability necessary to perform the *siyāḥa* itself and the performance illustrates the allegiance.

In 2016, disciples along with the shaykh performed the *siyāḥa* between the towns of al-Aroui and Temsmān, about eighty kilometers to the west near al-Hoceima. Temsmen is home to Shaykh Fawzi, as well as his uncle and grandfather, the previous shaykhs of the order. Their tombs are in the town, so twelve disciples walked from the *zawiya* in al-Aroui to the tombs in Temsmen. The disciples included individuals from the UAE, France, Belgium, Morocco, and Algeria. On this occasion, Shaykh Fawzi traveled ahead of them, greeting them upon their arrival. Along the way, several of the disciples recorded brief testimonials (in Arabic and French) that were later posted on the website discussing the *siyāḥa*. One is by Salih from the Emirates, in which he thanks the shaykh for authorization in performing the *siyāḥa* and says, “This *siyāḥa* is related to *tarbiya al-naḥs* ... [that is] the diminishing of the self with hunger, sleep ... this *siyāḥa* benefits us greatly, including patience and mutual recognition (‘*itirāf*) among the disciples.” The website also includes a

timeline of photos from the journey with the group stopping to take pictures at various signs representing their progress along the path, as well as videos of the various activities performed, including *dhikr*, *samāʿ* and lessons.

One video is a lesson given by ʿAbd al-Hāfiẓ. In the video, he is seated on a rock in the rugged, rocky landscape of the Rif mountains, surrounded by a group of disciples. ʿAbd al-Hāfiẓ begins the lesson with a *duʿāʾ* before discussing the, “Importance of enlightenment of the heart (*tanwīr al-qalb*) for arriving at [Allah] and elevating in the levels of spiritual knowledge and awareness of [Allah] (*maʿrifā*).”⁷⁹² He reads a *hadith*, followed by its source, then explains: “This *hadith* makes clear signs of the ranks of love of Allah ... there is only love (*maḥabba*) if you arrive at [the light which] is compiled between the participating hearts [which are] oriented to Allah... this will no doubt be one of the most elevated forms of love of Allah ... As you know, the heart is the king of this [gestures to chest] kingdom, the essence of the human.”⁷⁹³ He cites another *hadith* discussing how to correct the corruption of the body, explaining: “The person, if it wants to reform itself and orient itself to Allah, then it needs to begin with the heart ... with the reform of the heart. This heart, all that is in it in darkness is far from Allah. All that is enlightened is close to Allah.”⁷⁹⁴ He cites another *hadith* discussing Allah creating light in the heart and *duʿāʾ* for creating light in heart. He interprets this to say that, “It is incumbent upon us for our hearts to become like this ... like that light in order to get rid of all this darkness so that only the light of Allah remains in it

⁷⁹² “Siyāḥa ṣūfiyya ilā temsmān,” Karkariya Website, accessed April 10, 2019, <http://karkariya.org/site/play.php?catsmktba=17223>.

⁷⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

and the heart is reformed for knowledge of Allah and of His Secrets.”⁷⁹⁵ He then cites another *hadith* about the types of hearts:

There are four types of heart. One is polished like a lamp. One is a sealed heart with a knot tied around it. One that is inverted and one that is shielded. As for the polished heart, it is the heart of the believer and the lamp is the light of faith. The sealed heart is the heart of the disbeliever. The heart that is inverted is the heart of the hypocrite, because he had knowledge but denied it. As for the shielded heart, it is a heart that contains both belief and hypocrisy. The example of faith in this heart is the example of the herb that is sustained by pure water. The example of hypocrisy is the example of an ulcer that thrives on puss and blood. Whichever of the two substances has the upper hand, it will have the upper hand on that heart.⁷⁹⁶

For ‘Abd al-Hāfiẓ this *hadith* demonstrates clearly that the light is not merely a spiritual or metaphorical light. Rather, “It is a real light seen with the eyes of insight (‘*ayn al-baṣīra*) and seen as well by one who strengthens insight.”⁷⁹⁷ In the previous chapter I discussed the how this insight was developed, linking it directly to the cultivation of *iḥsān*. Again, the ability to see the light (*tanwīr*) is connected to the ‘polishing of the heart’ embedded in the ethical program of *tarbiya*.

Furthermore, in interpreting the second half of the *hadith*, that is, the descriptions of the other three types of hearts, he says:

Faith starts in our hearts as a white darkness and all that increases faith also increases the white heart until it becomes light entirely. Hypocrisy starts in the heart as a dark point, so all that increases hypocrisy also increases the blackness of the heart. Therefore, we are taught in this *tariqa* ... that the stars of Muhammad participate in the disciple so he teaches us that this is the faith and this is the Muhammadan light that begins as a point so it is incumbent upon the worshipper to see it with the *dhikr* of Allah and to be straight in obedience to Him ... and become like a bright sun, circulating these lights from the heart to the limbs (body) so the disciple can realize the spiritual level of being loved (*mahbubiyya*) that came in the *hadith al-quḍsi*, “And when I love him, I am his hearing with which he hears, his sight with which he sees, his hand with which he seizes, and his foot with which he walks...”⁷⁹⁸

⁷⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

The process of enlightenment (*tanwīr*) and its accompanying *tarbiya* ultimately enable the individual to reach the spiritual level of being loveable. As he describes it, this transformation begins with the recognition of a single point of light in the heart (i.e., the ray of Muhammadan Light that underpins existence as discussed in Chapter Eight), which can be cultivated until ‘the heart becomes light entirely.’ For ‘Abd al-Hāfīz, “This is the level which, if we arrive to it, we arrive to Allah.” ‘Abd al-Hāfīz then finishes with a prayer for Shaykh Fawzi.

In this video, ‘Abd al-Hāfīz presents an organized argument, citing multiple *hadith*, demonstrating the relationship of the enlightenment of the heart with the attainment of the spiritual level of being that which is loved. These sorts of lessons take place daily at the *zawiya*, sometimes led by the shaykh and other times by disciples, so it is an extension of that activity. However, insofar as it is posted online, it also serves as an engagement with multiple publics in which they present themselves as grounding the *tariqa* in the *sunna*, using these *hadith*. By highlighting this video, I wanted to point to two things. Firstly, it gives a glimpse of an important aspect of the *siyāḥa* and its connection to the overall program of training. Secondly, it starts to illustrate some of the ways that videos, and certain selection of videos, are used online to engage with the public and present the *tariqa* within a certain framework. In its public presentation, adherence to and justification in *sunna* is of primary concern, and this has a two-fold political significance. On the one hand, as a public performance, the type of religiosity must conform to the norms of the religious field as structured by the Moroccan state. This does not mean that all groups are homogenous; instead, it is more like a defining of the rules of the game that require groups to creatively formulate and adapt their teachings. On the other hand, the public presentation of the *tariqa*

commonly frames it as an alternative to Salafism by emphasizing light and love (in addition to the values of Moroccan Islam), so direct engagement with sources that elaborate on those concepts is necessary. In this regard, by engaging with target audiences of Salafi online discourses, that is, not directly but by actively recruiting within a similar population, the Karkariyya must present themselves in part through the normative standards of those groups. Furthermore, by engaging the public in Morocco, they must present Sufism according to the norms defined by the Moroccan state. Thus, as a performance of piety, the content and contours of that performance are constrained by the expectations and criteria of evaluation of target audiences, i.e., the multiple publics in which they perform their pious practices and discourses. This does not mean that these conditions are determinative of the content and practice of the Karkariyya; rather, the Karkariyya must draw on the resources of tradition that can be creatively redeployed in order to renew Islamic traditions, that is, to bring them to life by living and embodying them.

On the Karkariyya Arabic website, information for the *siyāḥa* in 2017 is left out and the articles resume for two *siyāḥas* performed in 2018. The absence of 2017 is quite notable, because it was the year that the controversy surrounding the Karkariyya emerged in response to the *siyāḥa* in Algeria. The section on politics will address this event directly, so for the present I will move to the 2018 *siyāḥa*. In 2018, there were two *siyāḥas* performed by the *tariqa*. The first was from Mawlay Idriss in Fes to Sidi Azuz in Taza, about one-hundred-and-twenty kilometers, and coincided with the eclipse at the end of July. The second took place two months later and went from Taza back to the *zawiya* in al-Aroui, about two-hundred kilometers. The website includes timelines with photos and videos for both trips.

As for the one from Fes to Taza, there are no testimonials posted from disciples during the *siyāḥa*, but ‘Abd al-Hāfiẓ provides an account of the purpose of the *siyāḥa* in a lesson after his return to the *zawiya* in al-Aroui. In the video, he begins with blessings and then goes on to say:

Pilgrimage on the land has shaped many of the previous scholars ... They searched for knowledge of Allah [in it] ... So it is a principle of the principles of Sufism (*al-taṣawwuf*) and *sunna* from the *sunna* of the people of Allah. It trains (*turabba*) the disciple in durability and patience in hardship ... Last week we organized a pilgrimage from Mawlay Idriss to the tomb of Sidi Azuz in Taza. This *siyāḥa* differed from previous ones in terms of its support and spirituality ... It was a pilgrimage for solving the mystery that our shaykh had placed before us [which was] how to apply (*inzāl*) the spiritual realm (*malakūt*) in the physical realm, or, the mechanisms of achieving intention (*niyya*) in the perceptible realm (*maḥsiyāt*).⁷⁹⁹

In this case, in addition to the goal of training the self, the *siyāḥa* also had an explicit ‘spiritual’ purpose in which the disciples were tasked with uncovering ways of acquiring intention in this world. He goes on to discuss the things the disciples could take along with them in support of their journey, which were the cane, the prayer beads, and four rings given to them on the day of the journey. For example, “We also had two-hundred-and-ninety dirham that the shaykh had gathered but not counted until he gave it to us.” Furthermore, “The night we gathered was the night of the eclipse and there were sixteen of us. We were supposed to be twenty-four but [it turned out] to be sixteen instead. Our shaykh indicated to us that he had undertaken this [round trip] journey four times barefoot. His *siyāḥa* was [very difficult] as it was a *siyāḥa* of hunger and pain, without [direction or destination], as if it were a *siyāḥa* in the majesty of the Essence.”⁸⁰⁰ However, ‘Abd al-Hāfiẓ added, “Our *siyāḥa* was not like that, but it was performed under the oversight and help of the state (*wilāya*) so

⁷⁹⁹ “Siyāḥa šūfiyya min ɗarīḥ sīdī ‘azūz tāza ilā al-zawiya al-karkariyya al-‘arwī,” Karkariya Website, accessed April 20, 2019, <https://ar.karkariya.com/> إلى-تازة-عزوز-سيدي-سريح-سويحية-من-ضريح-سيدي-عزوز-تازة-إلى-.

⁸⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

thank you to them.”⁸⁰¹ He then proceeded to describe the conditions and series of events that led up to their departure with particular attention to the various signs that indicated the hidden meanings of the time of the journey.

In providing interpretations for some of the material dimensions of the *siyāḥa* he said, “As for our number, we were sixteen, and the name of the shaykh is fifteen letters, so anyone who carried the sheikh’s cane, prayer beads, or rings, completed his humanity and embodied the level of spirituality of the sheikh ... the other disciples remained embodiments of the other letters of the name of the shaykh.”⁸⁰² The number of disciples was therefore given significance by relating it to the name of Shaykh Fawzi, as well as his material belongings.

‘Abd al-Hāfiẓ finished by saying:

In conclusion, this *siyāḥa* was for the knowledge of these blessed days which are the reality of the breath of the Perfect Person emerging from the paradise of the essence. Or by another expression, it was a *siyāḥa* in the footsteps of the *alif* where the intention is the stabilized on prophecy (*nubuwa*), and the message (*risāla*) grants the realization of this intention, and the course to realize it is the breath of sainthood (*walāya*) circulating between the two [*al-nabuwa* and *al-risāla*] ... so whosoever can know how this can be [that is] how to apply the spiritual realm while in the physical realm, then Allah reiterates to us our weakness, the smallness of our knowledge, and our ignorance and its many forms.⁸⁰³

This video demonstrates that alongside the ethical dimension of the *siyāḥa* there exists a dimension of knowledge, of symbolic interpretation. It also illustrates how the shaykh uses the *siyāḥa* as a means of *tarbiya*, that is, as a technology for cultivating virtues and imparting knowledge to the disciples. ‘Abd al-Hāfiẓ claims that the shaykh assigned them a task that involved uncovering the hidden meaning of the days of the eclipse, bestowing upon the disciples material objects of symbolic meaning including the shaykh’s cane, prayer beads,

⁸⁰¹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰² *Ibid.*

⁸⁰³ *Ibid.*

four rings, and two-hundred-and-ninety dirham. In addition to the signs explained by the shaykh that dictated the date for the *siyāḥa*, ‘Abd al-Hāfiẓ noted a few other signs on the day they left. Specifically, he noted that the sun was behind him to the right while his shadow was in front of him to the left, citing the *hadith* from the Prophet’s biography. Furthermore, the last verse they heard before departing was the verse of *al-‘aṣr*, which reads, “By time/Indeed mankind is in loss/Except for those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience” (Q 103: 1-3). The person described here is, as ‘Abd al-Hāfiẓ says, the perfect person (*al-insān al-kāmil*), and the *siyāḥa* was to be performed as a means to embody this perfect person. On the journey, holding the shaykh’s items became a symbol of the embodiment of the spiritual level of the sheikh. Put another way, the one holding the cane is the *alif* that is the source of all letters, and the remaining fifteen disciples embody the fifteen letters of the shaykh’s name. Within the sciences of the Karkariyya, the *alif* of the name Allah is constituted by the poles of *risāla* (message) and *nubuwwa* (prophecy) between which circulates *walāya* (sainthood). It is on this basis that he says in conclusion, “... Or by another expression, it was a *siyāḥa* in the footsteps of the *alif* where intention is stabilized on prophecy (*al-nubuwa*) and the message (*al-risāla*) grants the realization of this intention, and the breath of sainthood (*al-walāya*) circulating between them is the course to actualizing [this perfection].”⁸⁰⁴ This explanation illustrates how the name (and its letters) provides a structure or a framework, i.e., a schema, through which particular activities and events are made meaningful for disciples.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the name Allah provides a framework for the individual visionary experiences while also providing a configuration for the collective

⁸⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

advancements of sciences acquired through those visions. In the former, the *hā'* (the circle at the end of the name) is used as a starting point and disciples are advised to 'dive into' the *hā'*. In the latter, the unveiling of secret forms of knowledge of Allah and the worlds is seen as a reading of the name of Allah. This reading is repeated, each time revealing new layers, ultimately unveiling the seventy veils. The point for now is that part of the teaching (*tarbiya*), as reflected in 'Abd al-Hāfiz's comments about the instructions of the shaykh, is to develop this schema within the disciples using material objects and practices, and the *siyāḥa* serves as an embodied means for embedding this schema not only individually but also collectively. The name Allah operates as a conceptual, schematic, and material practice within the *tariqa*, giving location in, progress along, and direction in that path.

The most recent pilgrimage took place in September 2018, beginning in Taza and ending at the main *zawiya* in al-Aroui. As with the previous trips, the website includes a timeline of events as well as testimonial videos from disciples. In one video, a disciple named Mustafa reflects on his experience with the *siyāḥa* and the *tariqa* generally, highlighting specifically the proper conduct and comportment (*ādāb*) of the disciples as its most distinguishing feature. He says based on his experience with and knowledge of the other Sufi orders in Morocco:

The Karkariyya are different from the others. There is a unity of etiquette, with the sheikh and amongst the disciples, the etiquette of eating and even the etiquette of sleeping is all as is said in the *sunna*. You can tell me a *hadith* about the etiquette of sleeping, but how do you apply it? Here, we know the *sunna* for reform (*iṣlāḥ*), for purification. But without the light it is nothing and the *sunna* unites the etiquette of eating, sleeping or washing.⁸⁰⁵

In this case, while some of the more intellectual dimensions are discussed, Mustafa clearly emphasizes the centrality of *adab* as a distinguishing feature of the *tariqa*, an etiquette that

⁸⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

embodies and applies the *sunna* that many people only speak about. His experiences at the *mawlid*, visiting the *zawiya* and with the disciples on the *siyāḥa* are distinguished for him by the etiquette practiced among them and the relation of that *adab* to sources in the *sunna*.

I have discussed *adab* as a dimension of each of the practices of the *tariqa* and just as with the *hadra* and the *muraqqaʿa*, there is also an *adab* with the *siyāḥa*. Shaykh Fawzi covers this proper conduct and comportment during the *siyāḥa* explicitly in his *Enlightened Principles*. In this section, he begins by writing, “Know that all the things in this chapter on the *siyāḥa* form good character.”⁸⁰⁶ He then cites a series of *hadith* pertaining to good manners (*ḥusn al-khuluq*), including: “The most perfect believer in terms of faith is one who has good character, and the best of you all are those who are the best to their wives.” This leads him to the conclusion that:

Proper conduct and comportment (*ādāb*) is an aspect of good character. [It] is the spirit of Sufism, to the point that it is said that whosoever vanishes in *ādāb* vanishes in Sufism. It is also said, ‘Make your worship beautiful and your *ādāb* refined.’ What is this saying other than what is seen in people of Allah in terms of the grace and blessing of the *ādāb*. They had [a face] with [Allah], a face with the mediator [Shaykh], a face with the [fellow disciples], and a face with the masses.⁸⁰⁷

The first point is the direct connection made between *ādāb* and Sufism in the phrase ‘whosoever vanishes in *ādāb* vanishes in Sufism.’ In other words, his presentation of the pilgrimage reflects my broader argument about Sufism as a practical tradition tied to *akhlāq* and *ādāb*, i.e., as a applied craft of the refinement of character. The second point is that Shaykh Fawzi identifies four aspects (faces) of proper conduct and comportment.

The first aspect is proper conduct and comportment with God. He writes, “As for *adab* with [Allah] in the *siyāḥa*, it is to trust in Allah (*al-tawakkul*), placing oneself in His

⁸⁰⁶ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 144.

⁸⁰⁷ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 145.

hands until one is like the feather blown away in the winds of its destiny, [along] with considered asceticism minimizing enjoyment of the world.”⁸⁰⁸ The second aspect is the conduct and comportment with the shaykh, presented in the text as the mediator (*al-waṣīṭ*). Shaykh Fawzi writes, “As for [conduct] with the mediator, be constant in monitoring the mediator’s reality until you strip yourself of your existence ... you [should] only see your shaykh in yourself in every action considered legitimate and true.”⁸⁰⁹ The third aspect is comportment with companions. Here he writes, “As for [conduct] with [companions], [it includes] patience and avoiding seeing the flaws [in others], as well as the inclusion of what is commendable in them [because] what are they but the attributes of [divine] manifestation, so see them as great. Council with them, for there is blessing in council. [Allah] urged the Prophet to take council with his companions.”⁸¹⁰ Finally, the fourth aspect is conduct with the masses during *siyāḥa*. He writes, “As for [conduct and comportment] with the masses, prayers for tranquility and good fortune in contentment of Allah ... and looking at them with the eye of realization. One of the [Sufis] said, ‘legislate yourself and correct others.’ The eye of realization is an eye of beauty with which you see everything in the mercy of [Allah], [as well as] mercy, friendliness, and gentleness with them.”⁸¹¹

These four aspects reflect the multiple modes of interaction present in the *siyāḥa* (God, shaykh, companions, masses) and the corresponding attitudes and behaviors. The

⁸⁰⁸ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 145.

⁸⁰⁹ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 145-6.

⁸¹⁰ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 146. He goes on to cite Sūrat al-‘Imrān in relation to this reference. “So, by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you. So, pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in the matter. And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely [upon Him]” (Q 3:159).

⁸¹¹ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 146. From here, it is possible to frame the *siyāḥa* as, in a sense, an extension of the sheikh, extending his generosity and charity into society. Through his disciples, he is bringing his blessing to the people.

public dimension of the *siyāḥa* is recognized in the discussion of *ādāb* with the masses. Disciples are advised to perform prayers for the public and approach them with ‘the eye of realization,’ with the attitude of ‘legislating the self and recognizing the truth in the other,’ and with qualities of friendliness and gentleness. My point is that Shaykh Fawzi’s discussion of the public etiquette of the performance of the *siyāḥa* illustrates two things. Firstly, it shows the recognition that the *siyāḥa* is intended to engage the public directly, that is, it is not meant to thoroughly isolate the individual from the world. Secondly, the *siyāḥa* functions simultaneously as a practice for acquiring knowledge through direct experience and as a practice for cultivating virtues through different types of social relationships and interactions.

The focus on *ādāb* and building character through the *siyāḥa* is therefore a consistent theme that runs through both the responses of the disciples and the shaykh’s text itself. The *siyāḥa* was a tool of *tarbiya* used by the shaykh and performed by the disciples, in order to gain knowledge, emulate and embody the shaykh, develop patience and companionship through hardship, and engage the public through prayer and kind words. In other words, it is part of an applied curriculum of practical Sufism that is imbued with certain esoteric dimensions. An analysis of Shaykh Fawzi’s text on *adab* of the *siyāḥa* also demonstrates what is reflected in the articles and videos posted on the Arabic website, that is, that the *siyāḥa* establishes a relationship between the disciple and God as well as the disciple and the community simultaneously. One of the points of defense for the Karkariyya is their mode of interacting with the people in the areas and the acceptance of those people. While I cannot attest to the on-the-ground reception of them on their *siyāḥa* in Algeria, I can speak to perceptions of the group in Fes and locally in al-Aroui and Nador. The *muraqqa’a* was the

consistent point of contention and ‘repulsion’ for almost everyone. I point this out because it is important to note how the *siyāḥa* combined with the *muraqa‘a* forms a powerful, or at least notable, public presence. While the number may be relatively small, they are highly noticeable wherever they go and, in that respect, perform a visually salient public practice in the *siyāḥa*.

The final point of analysis for the *siyāḥa* that situates the forthcoming debate Shaykh Fawzi’s interpretation of the *hadith*: “A man sought permission from the Prophet to do *siyāḥa*. [The Prophet] said to him, ‘*Siyāḥa* for my community is *jihad* in the cause of Allah.’” This is important because this *hadith* provides an entrance for engaging in discussions of *jihad* in which the *siyāḥa*, as performed by the Karkariyya, presents an alternative, ‘peaceful’ *jihad*. Specifically, he reformulates the terminology in order to provide a defense of the practice as well as an implicit criticism of those who think of *jihad* in primarily militant terms. In doing so, he also equips his followers with rhetorical devices for countering arguments that may be presented to them. He writes, “The word *jihad* [whose] meaning is limited to the concept of killing leads to the slipping of the youth of the community, who take the position of spite and that enmity is the ... zenith of faith.”⁸¹² However, he writes, “*jihad* has multiple types, some of which are collective obligations and [others] individual obligations, like the *jihad* of the self [which is] the highest rank of *jihad* and is called *al-jihad al-akbār*.”⁸¹³ For Shaykh Fawzi, “The meaning of the *hadith* [for one at the] spiritual level of *al-iḥsān* is that the true *siyāḥa* is the *jihad* of the disciple in the cause of Allah, that is, the cause of realizing the ranks of the majestic name. It is this *siyāḥa* from the levels of the *hā’* of *huwīyya* to the *lām* of *qabḍ* to the *lām* of *ma‘rifa* to the gap of the Lord to

⁸¹² Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 140.

⁸¹³ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 140.

the *alif* of unity.”⁸¹⁴ In other words, the progression through the name is itself the true *siyāḥa*, which in turn is itself a form of *jihad*. Therefore, Shaykh Fawzi offers an alternative interpretation of *jihad* framed in the schema of progressive readings of the name, and its performance through the *siyāḥa* is a means for disciplining disciples and publicly performing piety for multiple audiences.

To summarize this section, the *siyāḥa* is a principle practice of the Karkariyya with multiple aspects. It functions as a technology of *tarbiya* for the disciples, specifically designed to teach patience and cultivate companionship with fellow disciples and the public. It is a form of emulation of the shaykh, embodying his presence by following in his footsteps or carrying his items. It also has public significance insofar as it occurs across international borders, is often performed in honor of the king, and is presented as an alternative practice of *jihad*. It is worth noting that the grounding of the *siyāḥa* in tradition did not discuss authorization of visits to shrines. In other words, the *siyāḥa* was not justified as being a traditional Sufi practice, based in the traditions of *ziyāra*, but was justified as a traditional practice in accordance with the *sunna* based in a *hadith* that is interpreted for alternative ends by other Muslim groups. As with the *ḥaḍra*, the selections and framing of sources used for justification is an important indicator of the intended audience, or at least the presumed competitors. In this regard, the textual defenses of the practices should also be seen as performances, that is, as creative articulations of traditions that are constrained by the exigencies of domestic and international publics.

⁸¹⁴ Al-Karkarī, *Al-kawākib*, 140-1.



Figure 18. Disciples on siyaha



Figure 19. Disciples at crossroads signs pointing toward Taza and Oujda



Figure 20. Disciples resting during siyaha



Figure 21. Disciples arriving in Al-Aroui⁸¹⁵

iv. Pilgrimage and Politics in Karkariyya Discourses

In the previous section, I discussed how Shaykh Fawzi situates the *siyāḥa* as part of his curriculum of *tarbiya* by drawing upon a variety of sources. As an ethical practice, it aims at the cultivation of character qualities such as patience (*ṣabr*), reliance on Allah (*tawakkul*), and companionship between disciples. It does this through trial (*balāʾ*) and hardship that diminishes the self (*nafs*), divesting (*tajrīd*) oneself of egoist self-interest in the process. Like the *khalwa*, the *siyāḥa* is also an embodied practice that makes possible certain types of knowledge and awareness (*maʿrifa*), grounding theoretical concepts in the bodily experiences of the pilgrimage. Shaykh Fawzi and disciples frame this process of attaining deeper levels of spiritual knowledge and awareness as enlightenment (*tanwīr*), understood in

⁸¹⁵ “Siyāḥa ṣūfiyya min ẓarīḥ.”

the sense of enhancing one's ability to perceive the divine light (*nūr*). The ability to perceive the light not only in specific contexts but during one's daily life constitutes for the Karkariyya the actualization (*taḥqīq*) of the level of *iḥsān*. Therefore, as with the other practices discussed in the Karkariyya, the *siyāḥa* brings together *tarbiya* and *tanwīr*, demonstrating how *iḥsān* is constituted by a constellation of social and spiritual virtues, attitudes, and perceptual capacities. Moreover, insofar as the *siyāḥa* is both a means to and an expression of that idea, it is a performance of *iḥsān* as envisioned in the Karkariyya.

However, although its place within Shaykh Fawzi's curriculum as an embodied discipline of ethical *tarbiya* and spiritual *tanwīr* is clear, as a public performance it acquires certain political significance. This political significance is due in large part to the conditions of the Moroccan religious field, which is heavily regulated by a Moroccan regime that has worked to consolidate religious authority and authorize an orthodox Moroccan Islam. In short, the use of Sufism as a means of combatting alternative visions of Islam domestically and internationally has resulted in the governmental sponsorship of specific Sufi orders. For some, the neopatrimonial ties between these Sufi orders and the government allows them to be interpreted as tools or pawns of the government, that is, extensions of the state's hegemonic power. In this section, I will analyze a specific instance of the *siyāḥa* performed by the Karkariyya in Algeria to demonstrate how the actions of Sufi orders across borders can be interpreted as extensions of Moroccan state power, thereby giving rise to conflict rather than cooperation. To be clear, my goal is not to argue that the Karkariyya are (or are not) invested in the political project of the Moroccan regime. Rather, my aim is to demonstrate the logic behind the argument made by some Algerian critics of the Karkariyya

in order to bring into relief some of the tensions that can arise out of a policy that weds Sufism to national political strategies and policies.

In highlighting potentials for conflict through a specific case study, I also seek to comment more generally on the relationship between Sufism and politics. In thinking about this relationship, I take inspiration from Charles Hirschkind who writes, “The political impact [of the *da‘wa* movement] lies not so much in its participation in electoral politics but in the changes it effects in the social and moral landscape of Egyptian society.”⁸¹⁶ Similarly, the political significance of Sufi communities in Morocco is not merely their support of the king or ability to provide grassroots electoral support; rather, it is as a practical tradition of ethical education that Sufism acquires political significance. It is precisely its power to shape subjectivities as an ethical tradition that is highlighted when King Mohammed VI refers to Sufism as the ‘ethical foundation of Moroccan Islam and identity,’ and which is recognized in the responses by Algerian authorities who perceive potential political threats from ‘Moroccan’ Sufi orders. Thus, despite the moral rhetoric of ‘Moroccan Islam’ that espouses a cosmopolitan attitude of tolerance, the tying of Islam (as a universal) to the nation-state of Morocco (as a particular) necessarily gives rise to contradictions.⁸¹⁷ These contradictions, however, are not particular to religious movements, but are the product of the structure of the nation-state model itself. My point is that it is not the ‘moral content’ of a religious movement alone that makes it conducive to contemporary sensibilities regarding pluralism or freedom of religion. In other words, even if Sufism is taken to reflect a thoroughly

⁸¹⁶ Hirschkind, *Ethical Soundscape*, 209.

⁸¹⁷ In this critique I take inspiration from Mayanthi Fernando’s insightful analysis of Islam under French Republicanism: “Nonetheless, republicans have enforced a notion of citizenship as abstract, of the public sphere as neutral, and of the general will – thought to represent the national community of citizens – as universal. What this means is that the supposed inability to be a Muslim and a citizen is not generated by Muslims but by republicans; the alleged contradiction of being Muslim and being a citizen is immanent to French republicanism” (Mayanthi Fernando, *The Republic Unsettled* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 86).

universalist and cosmopolitan ethic, the policies of the Moroccan state that entrench Sufism within the governmental and national structures of power, while facilitating its spread via institutional networks, nevertheless imperil its potential for success by particularizing Sufism's universalist message. Making it 'Moroccan' inserts Sufism into a game of mutually suspicious nation-states vying for power and sovereignty and the potential transnational message of Sufism is lost to the exigencies of political expediency.

Sufi orders in Morocco do assert varying degrees of political or governmental affiliation. The minister of religious affairs in Morocco, for example, is a member of the Būdshīshiyya and despite its international composition, the order aligns itself strongly with governmental policies regarding Sufism. Thus, while the policies of the Moroccan state result in an acquired political significance, there are different ways in which the rhetoric and practice of Sufi groups can distance themselves from or reinforce their image as tools of the state. In this section, I begin by looking at two public documents from the Karkariyya that tie participation in the order directly to allegiance to the king (*bay'a*) and preservation of Moroccan national identity. I will then discuss the performance of the *siyāḥa* in Algeria and the subsequent debate that unfolded in Moroccan and Algerian media about the politics of the Karkariyya.

On the home page of their Arabic-language website, in a fixed box in the top menu bar with a picture of King Mohammed VI, there is a link-box entitled 'Obligation of allegiance to the Muslim Ruler (*al-ḥākim al-muslim*).' The box links to a letter written by one of the disciples, added to the site on March 31, 2014. The letter reads:

In our age, there are many who are ignorant of the creeds of Islam and reject those who follow them, comply with their commands, and avoid their prohibitions. They know that there is no change in the rulings of religion and no Muslim may criticize what Allah and His messenger have commanded. Among the creeds criticized by the

innovators of the people of tradition and consensus (*sunna wa ijm'a*) are the four schools [of law], the 'Ashāri, and Sufis, and they deny Karkariyya in their obedience to and love of the ruler, as well as their support for him. The reason for this denial is that they are ignorant of the spirit of Islam and the truth of the rulings that called for the obligation of allegiance to the ruler and entrance under his care and veneration, as he follows the guidance of Allah in His command with obedience to the ruler. If he chose this violence, corruption, and prostitution while the messenger said ... "Discord is sleeping, Allah's curse awakens us. We choose order and preservation of the blood of Muslims and the stability of their countries over the appearance of corruption in them and the shedding of blood on the earth." In this, we only follow what Allah and His messenger said, therefore the *tariqa* Karkariyya pledges allegiance to the King Mohammed VI and we disavow ourselves from those that say with their tongues and mouths what they do not know. Whosoever has criticism of the ruler, then the prophet indicated [that one should] approach him, not to arm the people for war and killing Muslims but for dialogue and advice for reform. In a *hadith* [for example], 'The best *jihad* is a word of justice to an unjust ruler.' The prophet [therefore] advised dialogue, but how with a ruler like the king of Morocco who cares for service of his nation, and preserves its religion? We need to talk about the danger of slander in Islam, for the religion came to preserve humanity. Islam does not accept the pronouncement of insults of anyone, especially if they are slanderers.⁸¹⁸

The letter goes on to cite several *hadith* pertaining to the issues of slander and obedience to ruler.⁸¹⁹ While there are important insights in the argument and justification present in the letter itself, the first thing I want to highlight is its prominence on the website itself. It is a fixed link, so it does not change over time like a news feed, which is how many of the disciples' articles appear. It is present on every page, meaning that it is built into the architecture of the site. Finally, it places a picture of the king in a prominent position at the top center of the webpage. I highlight this prominence because, although it is written by a single disciple and in that sense, does not reflect the *tariqa*, nonetheless its place in the website turns it into something approaching an official statement.

⁸¹⁸ "Wujūb bay'a al-hākim al-muslim," Karkariya Website, accessed April 20, 2019, <https://ar.karkariya.com/وجوب-بيعة-الحاكم-المسلم>.

⁸¹⁹ The *hadith* cited focus on these two issues. As for slander, one way in which it is used here is to say that the King should not be criticized due to his sherifan genealogy, and that, as a member of ahl al-bayt, he is privy to the same respect accorded in the *hadith* regarding insults of the prophet's family. As for the issue of obedience, there are several cited which speak simply to the need, even in the face of injustice, to maintain obedience to a ruler.

In addition to the prominence accorded the letter on the website, a number of conclusions can be drawn from it. Firstly, it is framed as a reply or a rebuttal to those who deny that the Karkariyya are ‘Moroccan.’ Its aim is therefore to affirm and solidify the Moroccan character of the Karkariyya by publicly declaring allegiance to the king of Morocco. Secondly, it takes up the issue of criticism of the king in the form of advice for reform. Here, the author is arguing that even in the case of an unjust ruler one ought to advise through words of justice rather than ‘slander,’ so in the case of a just ruler, like the Moroccan king, one should be even less inclined toward ‘slander,’ though one may still offer words of advice. A key point that emerges from this position is that the allegiance to the king is not a blind obedience, insofar as it is possible to take a critical stance toward power with the appropriate *ādāb*, i.e., with the proper conduct and comportment. While debates may take place as to what specifically defines appropriate etiquette in terms of format of advice offered (for example, see discussion of Shaykh Abdelsalam Yassine in Chapter Four), the point I want to make is that criticism here entails a certain *adab*, and *tarbiya* aims to hone this form of life of criticism through individual and group exercises and relationships.⁸²⁰ Thus, allegiance and criticism share a need for an underlying and unifying ethical sensibility or civility that provides a source of communal solidarity as part of Moroccan citizenship.

So, how does Sufi *tarbiya* contribute to the making of modern Moroccan citizenship? We can answer that one role of Sufi *tarbiya* is that it teaches a certain *ādāb* which, while not necessarily blind obedience, entails a degree of deference and refrainment from public accusation. However, it does not follow from this that Sufi *tarbiya* therefore produces

⁸²⁰ If Moroccan citizenship is linked to Sufi *tarbiya*, and if this form of *tarbiya* requires an allegiance and a critical attitude (understood in the moral sense), and that allegiance/critical attitude is embedded in the relationships cultivated through *tarbiya*, then we can see how *tarbiya* forms a basis for the construction of contemporary Moroccan citizens.

passive subjects. Rather, entailed in this *ādāb* is also an attitude of reflective criticism understood as an ethical ‘taking account’ of oneself and others (*ḥisba*). Specifically, this refers to practices of enjoining the good and prohibiting the evil (*amr bi-l-ma‘rūf wa al-nahī ‘an al-munkar*). While it has been common in scholarship to approach this idea with regard to the second half, i.e., the policing of action, what I have been trying to do is to demonstrate the ways in which ‘the good’ is encouraged through pedagogical techniques of *tarbiya* in Sufism. As Talal Asad notes in his commentary on Michael Cook’s book on the subject, “Cook reduces this tradition to the imperative of ‘forbidding wrong,’ a move that, among other things, distracts attention from the complex process of encouraging right ... *cultivating* right behavior is not exhausted by prohibitions.”⁸²¹ One role of Sufis in the political sphere is to serve as critics of ethical and moral landscape, and perhaps the most effective way to do that is not to publicly denounce, but to find alternative ways of offering education, advice, and training. Its political significance is therefore embedded in its moral-ethical project, which is not a project contained to the individual in isolation. It is also in their role as educators of good character qualities, i.e., the formation of pious and virtuous subjects, that Sufis have functioned to ensure the moral order of society, thereby linking the cultivation of piety to the public good.

One way in which Shaykh Fawzi operates as a critic, in the sense of social reformer, is in his stance toward ‘bureaucratic religious authority.’ As discussed in Chapter Three, the Būdshīshiyya reflect a tendency in state-sponsored Sufism to produce religious bureaucrats, a tendency that, for Shaykh Fawzi, produces merely ‘superficial’ knowledge of the tradition and generates excessive pride in the self. Thus, Shaykh Fawzi is often critical of the

⁸²¹ Asad, “Thinking,” 3.

educational system, in Morocco in particular, and is wary of student's relying too heavily on texts. Skepticism of traditional models of education is common among Sufis historically, but it is significant in the context of Morocco because of the way in which Sufism has been incorporated into the educational curriculum. Thus, by offering an alternative curriculum of *tarbiya*, Shaykh Fawzi is simultaneously offering criticism of the existing model while providing a 'reformed' curriculum for instruction that will generate loyal Moroccan citizens. Both the IACSAS and the Shaykh al-Alawi Association offer alternative curricula of *tarbiya* as implicit criticisms of the ways in which religion is being deployed by the state in its administration of education. Through the three examples, we can see diversity in how traditional practices and materials are drawn upon to diagnose contemporary social problems (criticism), provide techniques for solving those problems (discipline), and articulate a vision for the community (reform).

The Karkariyya explicitly link their model of *tarbiya* to Moroccan citizenship in a document published at the end of 'Abd al-Hāfiẓ's book on the lineage of the Karkariyya, *The Karkari Gem in the Shadhili Lineage (al-tuḥfa al-karkariyya fī-l-tarājim al-shādhiliyya)*.

This document reads:

The *tariqa Karkariyya* has played an important role in spiritual instruction (*al-tarbiya al-ruḥiyya*) since the Eminent Shaykh Muḥammad bin Qadūr al-Wakīlī al-Karkarī (may Allah be pleased with him) established it. It was a beacon (*qibla*) for students of religious learning (*'ilm*) and spiritual knowledge and awareness (*ma'rifa*). Shaykh bin Qadūr (may Allah be pleased with him) had a substantial impact on the preservation of religious principles in the honorable Moroccan Kingdom. [These principles included] Mālikī jurisprudence (*fiqh*), Ash'arī creed, and Junaydī Sufism. [He also contributed to] the defense of national unity and was loyal to the glorious 'Alawī throne. Sīdī Muḥammad bin Qadūr (may Allah bless him) trained his disciples and taught people these principles, as is evident in [his] students. One of them is Shaykh Muḥammad al-Hibrī (may Allah bless him), who founded the *zawiya Hibriyya* and was among the most prominent of Sīdī Muḥammad bin Qadūr's disciples (may Allah bless them both). Dr. Khanshalāwī, an expert in Sufism, confirms that the *Hibriyya* became famous in history for its fierce struggle against

colonialism and that the French Administration considered it one of the foremost Sufi orders. [It was] “the greatest danger [to France] and the strongest enemy of [France] for its resistance, its consolidation of the spiritual kinship of Moroccan peoples, its help in serving the *mujāhidīn*, and their support in thwarting the colonial project. [As such,] they were considered shelters for revolutionaries and *mujāhidīn*.”

Shaykh Muḥammad al-‘Abdalāwī was also under the instruction Sīdī Muḥammad bin Qadūr (may Allah bless him). His *tariqa* was known far and wide before the attack of Būḥamāra [and his forces] that had resisted joining them.

Shaykh Mawlay al-Ṭayyib (1330 AH/1912 CE), the son of Sīdī Muḥammad bin Qadūr (may Allah bless him), was the last exposed to assault from Būḥamāra [and his forces] when they forcefully demanded that [Shaykh Mawlay al-Ṭayyib] give them supplies and good tents. Būḥamāra seized the best tents and cattle he had, so Shaykh Mawlay al-Ṭayyib cursed them. Allah responded to his curse by burning their tents. The reason for opposing their inclusion in the group of Būḥamāra was this *tarbiya* that he learned from al-Wakīlī, [which entailed] the preservation of Moroccan [religious principles] and identity.

In the era of Mawlay al-Ṭayyib, the *zawiya Karkariyya* became an outpost for the observation of the Spanish Army’s movements in 1954. It included a role for students and leaders, and the framework of the *zawiya* and mosque allowed for teaching Quran, *fiqh*, and Sufism. Researchers mention in the region’s history that the *zawiya Karkariyya* fought a significant battle against the Spanish colonial forces, defeating them and capturing many prisoners. This came after the demand of a Spanish administrator, known as ‘Aqra’ī Azḥāf,’ to expand the army and ordinances in order to seize the region in twenty-four hours. They asked him, “How can we do that?” He replied, “If we manage to dominate the Karkariyya, then all the villages will succumb to you.” This news arrived at the *zawiya*, so they sent a letter to the *mujāhidīn* all over who came and filled Mt. Karkar with *mujāhidīn*, and Allah ordained victory for them. In the *zawiya*’s cemetery there are still the graves of eighteen *mujāhidīn* who fell as martyrs in that battle.

In the [following] era, the Eminent Shaykh Mawlay al-Ṭahir al-Karkarī (may Allah bless him) was the leader of the Karkariyya. He took dispensation for leadership [of the Karkariyya] from the Eminent Shaykh Sīdī Aḥmad al-‘Alawī (may Allah bless him), who is buried in Mostaghanem and is the founder of the *tariqa ‘Alāwiyya*, one of the branches of the *tariqa Karkariyya*. [With regard to this spiritual lineage, it is said that] Shaykh Muḥammad bin Qadūr al-Karkarī (may Allah bless him) said in Moroccan dialect that Aḥmad al-‘Alawī’s shaykh, Muḥammad al-Buzīdī (may Allah bless them both), “Performed pious deeds in the lodge (*adā al-kurba bi-l-ribāṭ*).” This meant that Sīdī Muḥammad al-Buzīdī undertook pious deed (*quruba*) in the lodge, which indicates that he took the spiritual secret (*sirr*) in its entirety [i.e., he was the inheritor of the spiritual lineage].

Mawlay al-Ṭahir (may Allah be pleased with him) resurrected the spirit of the *tariqa Karkariyya*. He gathered a large circle [of disciples] around him who took from him external and internal sciences (‘*ilm al-zāhir wa al-bāṭin*). His *zawiya* was a center of religious radiance and a shelter for students and *mujāhidīn* who commenced *jihād* in defense of national unity in the region of the *zawiya* in Temsmān.

In the era of his son and inheritor of his secret, Sīdī al-Hasan al-Karkarī (may Allah be please with him), the role of the *zawiya* was confined to spiritual instruction and guidance to Allah, which is the greatest *jihād* as [the Prophet] (pbuh) said. [This was the case] until the Eminent Shaykh and Knower of Allah, Shaykh Muḥammad Fawzī al-Karkarī (may Allah be pleased with him) appeared. He returned the *tariqa Karkariyya* to its historical place in spiritual instruction (*tarbiya*) and guidance (*irshād*). It became a beacon for students of spiritual reality (*ḥaqīqa*) from all over the world whose character (*khuluq*) benefited from him greatly, removing from their hearts the veil of ignorance with the light of knowledge of Allah.

Now the *tariqa*, besides spreading its principles of Islam and its three ranks [i.e., *islām*, *imān*, *iḥsān*], [also] participates in propagating bonds of love and extending bridges of intercultural dialogue and peace between European and Moroccan peoples. It has made its responsibility the preservation of Moroccan [religious principles] under the care of his Majesty Mohammed VI (may Allah support him).

Therefore, Shaykh Muḥammad Fawzī al-Karkarī (may Allah be pleased with him) made allegiance (*bay‘a*) to his Majesty the King (may Allah support him) one of the conditions for entering the *tariqa*. That act [is based on] the [*ḥadith*] of the Prophet (pbuh) who said: “One who withdraws his hand from obedience [to the Amīr] will find no argument [in his defense] when he stands before Allah on the Day of Resurrection; and one who dies without having sown allegiance will die the death of one belonging to the Days of Ignorance” (*Sahih Muslim*).⁸²²

The document begins by clearly and unequivocally connecting the *tarbiya* of the Karkariyya to the ‘religious principles (*al-thawābit al-dīniyya*) of the Moroccan Kingdom,’ with specific reference to the Maliki *fiqh*, Ashari theology, and Junaydi Sufism. The lineage and impact of the Karkariyya is then traced through the disciples of al-Wakīlī and their associated orders, the *Hibriyya* and the ‘*Alāwiyya*.’⁸²³ The deep connection between the *tariqa* and the nation is evidenced, for the author, by its participation in colonial resistance and providing religious

⁸²² Al-Rabāṭī, *Al-tuḥfa*, 207-9.

⁸²³ Note that, in the formulation of the Karkariyya Fawziyya, the Alawiyya is a branch of the Karkariyya. By focusing on al-Wakili as a beginning point, the root is the Karkariyya while the Alawiyya become a branch.

education in the region. Regarding colonial resistance, the author narrates a story about the Karkariyya's involvement in resistance to the Spanish in the Rif region. In this story, the Spanish saw the Karkariyya as the key to rapidly taking over the region, suggesting that if they fell, then the people of the region would fall. In response, the *zawiya* located in Temsmān wrote a letter to the resistance soldiers who gathered at the *zawiya*, ultimately winning a battle against the Spanish. As for the relationship between *tarbiya* and Moroccan identity, the author narrates that Mawlay al-Ṭayyib (son of al-Wakīlī) refused allegiance to Būḥamāra (d. 1909), who was attempting to impersonate the sultan.⁸²⁴ In the story, Būḥamāra seized tents and materials from Mawlay al-Ṭayyib, but the tents went up in flame in response to Mawlay al-Ṭayyib's curse. However, the key element in the narrative is given by the author who writes, "The reason for opposing their inclusion in the group of Būḥamāra was this *tarbiya* that he learned from al-Wakīlī [which entailed] the preservation of Moroccan [religious principles] and identity."⁸²⁵ In other words, the curriculum of *tarbiya* offered by al-Wakīlī, which in turn provides a primary source for Shaykh Fawzi's curriculum, necessarily entails a connection to Moroccan identity and the religious principles that underpin it.

These two threads tying the Karkariyya and its *tarbiya* to Moroccan identity are demonstrated simultaneously when the author writes, "Mawlay al-Ṭahir (may Allah be pleased with him) resurrected the spirit of the *tariqa Karkariyya*. He gathered a large circle [of disciples] around him who took from him external and internal sciences (*‘ilm al-zāhir wa al-bāṭin*). His *zawiya* was a center of religious radiance and a shelter for students and

⁸²⁴ See Ross Dunn, "The Bu Hmara Rebellion in Northeast Morocco: Phase 1," *Middle Eastern Studies* 17, no. 1 (1981): 31-48, on Bū Himāra (Bou Hmara).

⁸²⁵ Al-Rabāṭī, *Al-tuḥfa*, 208.

mujāhidīn who commenced *jihad* in defense of national unity in the region of the *zawiya* in Temsmān.”⁸²⁶ Thus, in the first three quarters of the twentieth century, the Karkariyya played an important national role by resisting colonial occupation and teaching the religious foundations of citizenship.⁸²⁷

While this combined role diminished over the end of the twentieth century, constrained by possibilities afforded under Hassan II in particular, as a renewer (*mujaddid*) Shaykh Fawzi has returned the spiritual method of the Karkariyya to its place as a point of instructional orientation for individuals across the world. In addition to its instructional role, however, Shaykh Fawzi continues with the thread that ties the order to the Moroccan nation. The author writes, “Now the *tariqa*, besides spreading its principles of Islam and its three ranks [i.e., *islām*, *imān*, *iḥsān*], [also] participates in propagating bonds of love and extending bridges of intercultural dialogue and peace between European and Moroccan peoples. It has made its responsibility the preservation of Moroccan [religious principles] under the care of his Majesty Mohammed VI (may Allah support him).”⁸²⁸ Here, in addition to religious education, the Karkariyya assume both an international and domestic responsibility, being on the one hand a means of communication between Morocco and Europe (*al-tawāṣṣul al-ḥaḍārī*), and on the other hand a mechanism for preserving Morocco under Mohammed VI. Thus, to bring the two threads of religious education and national service back together, Shaykh Fawzi made allegiance to the King a requisite for the *tariqa*. The author writes,

⁸²⁶ Al-Rabāṭī, *Al-tuḥfa*, 208.

⁸²⁷ Framing resistance to Spanish authority in the Rif region during the first half of the twentieth century as a form of Moroccan Nationalism, however, is not entirely accurate. The resistance movements in the region often asserted a regional ‘national’ identity, as evidenced in the Rif Republic of Muhammad ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Khaṭṭābī (1921-1926). Al-Khaṭṭābī is still a heroic figure in the Rif region. As such, while participation in resistance during this time can certainly be framed as pro-independence, this independence was not necessarily directed at the Moroccan state/kingdom as it exists today, or at that time. That is, it did not agree with the legitimacy of the Alawi dynasty.

⁸²⁸ Al-Rabāṭī, *Al-tuḥfa*, 209.

“Therefore, Shaykh Fawzi made allegiance to the King one of conditions for entering the *tariqa*.”⁸²⁹ Such an explicit political requirement for entrance represents, at least, an alignment with state objectives in promoting Sufism as a domestic and international policy, that is, the Karkariyya could be read as an extension or instantiation of the Moroccan state’s multifaceted policy of promoting Sufism. To be clear, I am not making this argument. Rather, I am attempting to provide a reading of some of their materials that might help us understand the logic of the argument of those who attribute political motivations to the Karkariyya.

It is important to note that, as framed in the writings of Shaykh Fawzi, the *bay‘a* to the ruler is required because allegiance to a Muslim ruler is embedded in the tradition of the Prophet, so to completely embody that tradition, one must pledge allegiance to a Muslim ruler. This is why the document above finishes with a *hadith*, “One who withdraws his hand from obedience (to the Amir) will find no argument (in his defense) when he stands before Allah on the Day of Resurrection; and one who dies without having sworn allegiance will die the death of one belonging to the Days of Ignorance.”⁸³⁰ Taken as a public performance, the requirement of allegiance is an extension of Moroccan state power insofar as it demonstrates a commitment to the nation. Taken as a ‘religious’ act, the requirement of allegiance is an attempt to embody the tradition of the Prophet, insofar as the Moroccan king stands as the legitimate Muslim leader in the present moment. My point here is not to separate ‘political’ and ‘religious,’ but to show how it operates as both simultaneously. As we will see, the requirement of *bay‘a* to the Moroccan king, in addition to Shaykh Fawzi, is a point of

⁸²⁹ Al-Rabāṭī, *Al-tuḥfa*, 209.

⁸³⁰ Al-Rabāṭī, *Al-tuḥfa*, 209.

contention for foreign countries, but the Karkariyya also link themselves to other public issues of national concern.

For example, in the summer of 2018, about twenty members of the Karkariyya participated in a demonstration in front of parliament in Rabat in support of Moroccan leadership of the Western Sahara.



Figure 22. Members of Karkariyya in front of Parliament in Rabat. The sign reads, “The Zawiya Karkariyya supports the initiative of autonomous governance of the Western Sahara under the leadership of Muhammad VI.”

On September 9, 2018, the official Arabic Karkariyya website added an article entitled, “The love of nation [patriotism], faith, and adherence to the Moroccan Sahara is right and virtuous.”⁸³¹ The article begins, “Praise be to Allah and his blessings and grace upon His creation ... We testify that there is no god but Allah alone without partner. He planted in individuals love of the homeland [patriotism] so comfort and serenity are found in its quarter.” At the start, the author makes a clear statement that patriotism, as love of the homeland, is a natural attribute bestowed by Allah. The article continues, “Love of homelands and belonging to the *umma* and countries is an instinctive issue and a nature imprinted by Allah on individual selves.” Love of the homeland is constructed here as a natural instinct inscribed in individuals by God. The homeland, it is important to note, is not

⁸³¹ “Hubb al-waṭan fiṭra wa īmān wa al-tashabbuth b-maghribiyya al-ṣaḥrā’ ḥaqq wa iḥsān.” Karkariya Website, accessed April 20, 2019, <https://ar.karkariya.com/> /حب-الوطن-فطرة-و-إيمان-و-التشبث-بمغربية-الصحرى-حقوق-و-إحسان.

construed strictly as the nation-state, but as the environment in which one was raised. The article writes, “When the person is born in a land and raised in it, the person drinks its water, breathes its air, and lives among its people, so his human nature (*fiṭra*) binds him to [that land].” Thus, for the author, it is in the nature of humans to bind themselves to their homelands in this way, and the absence of that connection to a homeland causes distress for individuals. It states, “Indicating that a person has does not have a homeland is sufficient [enough] to injure that human being.” This connection and belonging to a homeland also comes with certain responsibilities. The author writes:

Among the requirements of belonging to a homeland: loving it, taking pride in it, maintaining and defending it, advising it, attending to its peace, respecting its individuals, appreciating its scholars, and obeying the governor [according to the verse]: “O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is the best [way] and best in result” (Q 4:66).⁸³²

What is being articulated here is a conception of citizenship and a relationship to the nation. This relationship has affective dimensions (e.g., love, pride, appreciation), practical dimensions (e.g., defending), political dimensions (e.g., obedience, advice), and ethical dimensions (e.g., respecting). This is continued as the article moves from the requirements of belonging to a homeland/nation to the requirements of the nation and the citizen. “Among the requirements of the nation: performing all the obligations and responsibilities in their place with security and sincerity. Among the requirements of the citizen: respecting the order and culture of the nation, and preserving its facilities and economic resources, and attending to shares and factors in its building and prosperity, and being cautious of what

⁸³² *Ibid.*

leads to its decline.”⁸³³ The nation and the citizen have certain responsibilities toward one another. The author provides another articulation of citizenship in the following passage:

[There is a lot of clear evidence] in this regard that the power of the peaceful instinct in love of homelands. Then, the true citizenship is values, principles, sensibility, advice, enjoining the good and forbidding the bad, dignity, sacrifice and altruism, and moral commitment to individuals and the *umma*. It is to feel longing for the nation even if an individual was living in its quarters. As Shawqi said, “My homeland were I to work eternally on it / my self removes me from it eternally.”

At the center of this conception of citizen is the moral citizen, with responsibilities towards other citizens and the community. In other words, the ethical principles underpinning citizenship are those of the pious Sufi. This moral citizen is precisely the kind of individual produced by the Karkariyya. The author writes, “The *tariqa* Karkariyya, throughout its historical spread, was and remains an example to be followed in love of the homeland and adhering to its territorial integrity.” In summary, for the author, the Karkariyya, through its method of ethical education, has and continues to produce moral citizens with the proper affective and ethical qualities of citizens that ensure stability and moral social order. While this article brings into relief the specific characteristics of this citizenship as presented by a Sufi community, it also allows us to see how the curriculum is tied to a larger project of shaping moral citizenship, and therefore how the Karkariyya participate in the production of an authorized public piety.

After constructing citizenship in this way, that is, as based in a love of and connection to the homeland that develops through being brought up in a certain way, the article goes on to argue that for this reason the Western Sahara ought to be considered part of Morocco. The author states, “We say with absolute conviction that the Sahara is nothing but a Moroccan province due to the history that confirms that it is no less Moroccan than other Moroccan

⁸³³ *Ibid.*

cities. This characteristic is made clear from the viewpoint of geography, language, culture, religion, and ethnicity. It is confirmed also by [modern European writers and travelers] who traveled the region in the beginning of the previous century and did not place a border between the Sahrawi [and the Moroccans].” The author argues that it is this common heritage that makes the Western Sahara part of Morocco, along with a shared political history. The article continues, “The legitimacy and legality of Morocco in the Sahara is based upon numerous historical, legal, and political arguments. The countries that followed the rule of Morocco from the 11th to the 20th century have Saharawi origins and emerged from the Sahara. The best evidence of that is the era in which the Murabitun, Marinid, Sa‘adi, and Alawi dynasties lived.” Therefore, there is a historical narrative deployed as a mechanism of justification of the inclusion of the Western Sahara under the banner of Moroccan identity, and how these geographic issues intersect with questions of regional identity.

The reason I highlight the Western Sahara issue is that it is a highly controversial topic in Morocco, and the international community in general, but it is a position in which support for unification clearly allies a group with the monarchy. In addition to the Western Sahara ‘secessionist’ issue, the Rif, where the Karkariyya are based, is also a volatile area when it comes to domestic politics and relationships with Algeria and Spain. The Rif has historically been a difficult region to regulate for authorities based in Fes, Meknes, Rabat, or Marrakech, as exemplified in the short-lived Rif Republic from 1921-1926.⁸³⁴ Under Hassan II, the Rif was a constant source of disruption for the government and the king (in conjunction with the minister of interior) often resorted brutal measures to put down any

⁸³⁴ See D. Woolman, *Rebels in the Rif: Abd el-Krim and the Rif Rebellion* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968).

dissent. More recently, a Rif movement headed by de facto leader Nasser Zefzafi has emerged after the death of Muhsin Fikri, a fish vendor in al-Hoceima. Zefzafi was then arrested for speaking out against the king during a Friday prayer. The incident and his subsequent arrest sparked a number of protests in the northern region resulting in the *Hirāk al-Rīf* (Rif Movement), a movement that was focused primarily on demands for better infrastructure, hospitals, schools, and universities to service the region. The general claim was the region was being ignored by the centers of power in and around Rabat, and that the government needed to invest in the region more directly. The point I want to make in briefly discussing this political situation is that the Karkariyya participating in and writing a letter in support of the Western Sahara issue should also be seen within the context of the Rif movement. As a *zawiya* located in the middle of these protests and movements, it is possible that the Karkariyya would feel compelled to affirm alignment with the monarchy on an issue that does not necessarily affect them locally, while remaining silent on a controversial issue that does affect them locally.

The article can therefore be read in different ways. Firstly, formal support of the Western Sahara issue can be seen as a strategy for gaining recognition (and therefore also support) from the monarchy and state, that is, as a political strategy. Secondly, the statement and show of support can be an attempt to assuage any fear or skepticism from the government toward the order, and therefore simply a formal necessity rather than a meaningful statement. Thirdly, the call for unification of the Western Sahara under Moroccan rule can be seen as a proxy argument for the Rif region, meaning that the Karkariyya would discourage Rif-based independence movements. Finally, it could be seen as a sentiment emerging from the *tarbiya* of the *tariqa*, in which support of the inclusion of

the Western Sahara (or unity of territory in general) is an ethical disposition of the citizen. In any case, what I want to point to is the clear connection drawn between the moral citizen and the curriculum of tarbiya applied within the Karkariyya. Thus, the political significance is not merely the stance on the Western Sahara issue, but also the claim that its method of instruction cultivates citizens with the requisite ethical dispositions. As such, their curriculum constitutes the cultivation and performance of public piety, that is, a piety that is linked to the public good where this public is both Moroccan and global at the same time.

By tying piety and citizenship together in this way, the Karkariyya also illustrate an important connection to what the sociologist Armando Salvatore calls ‘civility.’⁸³⁵ For Salvatore, civility constitutes a ‘weak socially cohesive force’ that operates on the one hand to facilitate cooperation and sociability, and on the other hand to actualize religious ‘meta-institutions.’ One of these meta-institutions, in his framework, is the ‘brotherhood’ (*tariqa*), which is understood largely as a social network that allows alternative forms of identification. However, as I have tried to approach the *tariqa*, it is not merely a social formation but also a pedagogical method for developing senses of self-other-divine relations and proper modes of conduct and comportment (*ādāb*) that underpin shared ethical orientations and moral values. Thus, while I agree with his assessment about the capacity for the Sufi *tariqa* to foster social relationships and solidarity (i.e., civility), I disagree slightly with his approach to the *tariqa* as primarily a social network. In other words, what creates ‘solidarity’ in the *tariqa* is not the label ‘Karkari,’ ‘Alawi,’ or ‘Naqshabandi,’ but the embodied practices that create common character traits (e.g., patience and generosity), as

⁸³⁵ For a more detailed discussion of civility, see Chapter Three and Salvatore, *Sociology of Islam*.

well as shared experiences of companionship (*ṣuḥba*) and mutual recognition (*‘itirāf*), for example.

v. Pilgrimage across Borders: An Algerian Case Study

While the linking of the *tariqa* Karkariyya to Moroccan religious and national identity has the potential to facilitate social bonds (i.e., civility) in Morocco, it also has the potential to cause conflict across borders. Such issues were demonstrated in the various responses to the *siyāḥa* performed in Algeria in the summer of 2017, along with testimonial videos posted on the Karkariyya website for a few Algerian disciples. Below are examples of headlines in Algeria that emerged during the controversy.



Figure 23. Algerian newspaper, 'The Karkariyya Sect ... why now?' (France 24 News)



Figure 24. Algerian newspaper "Wide Denunciation of the dawa activities of the Karkariyya in Algeria" (France 24 News)

The controversy began around August 18 when disciples of the *tariqa* Karkariyya were filmed visiting the tomb of a saint outside Mostaghanem (Algeria) and walking on the street as part of their annual *siyāḥa*. The disciples included Algerian, Moroccan, and French citizens, with the Moroccans flying from Nador airport (in al-Aroui) to Oran, Algeria. Within a few days, the Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars, with a branch based in Mostaghanem, issued a statement warning against the Karkariyya, suggesting that it is a

foreign order sent to sow the seeds of discord (*fitna*) and invade Algeria's religious field. The association also called upon the Ministry of Interior to intervene in the situation by prohibiting any activities of the Karkariyya and defending Algerian religious foundations by drawing comparisons between the Karkariyya and the Ahmadiyya.⁸³⁶ Specifically, the Karkariyya were criticized for practicing magic, spreading Shi'i ideas, taking drugs, and performing divergent or innovative practices. Furthermore, they were framed as a foreign Sufi order linked to Moroccan intelligence services, sent as part of Morocco's strategy to infiltrate and influence the religious field in Algeria (along with other countries). In addition to the direct criticism, the *siyāḥa* and subsequent social media controversy gave rise to substantial ridicule of the order on social media, with the creation and publication of videos mocking their practices and clothing in particular.

As a result of this circulated social media controversy, several articles were published and news programs in Algeria and Morocco held discussions about the Karkariyya. The articles, which were published in Arabic, French, and English from various news outlets, included titles such as, "Concerns over suspicious cult in Algeria,"⁸³⁷ "Karkariyya, a Sufi 'wave' with Moroccan origins in Algeria,"⁸³⁸ "The Association of Algerian Muslim *ulama* demands the stop of Karkari activities,"⁸³⁹ "The Karkariyya ... a new religious group sowing discord among the people,"⁸⁴⁰ "10 Algerians pledge allegiance to the Karkariyya and began

⁸³⁶ The Ahmadiyya became a controversial topic earlier in the year, February 2017.

⁸³⁷ "Concerns over Suspicious Cult in Algeria," Middle East Monitor, accessed October 16, 2019, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170822-concerns-over-suspicious-cult-in-algeria/>.

⁸³⁸ "La tarika karkarya, un courant soufi d'origine Marocaine fait des vagues en Algérie," Maghreb Émergent, accessed October 16, 2019, <https://www.maghrebemergent.info/la-tarika-karkarya-un-courant-soufi-d-origine-marocaine-fait-des-vagues-en-algerie/>.

⁸³⁹ "Jam'iyya al-Ulamā' al-Muslimīn al-Jizā' rīn Tuṭālīb bi-waqf nashāt al-Karkariyya." Mosaiquefm, accessed October 16, 2019, www.mosaiquefm.net/ar/الجزائريين-تطالب-بوقف-نشاط-الكركرية.

⁸⁴⁰ Majrāb, Zahīra, "Al-Karkariyya ... ṭā'ifa dīniyya jadīda tafatan al-nās!" Al-Shurūq Online, accessed October 16, 2019, www.echoroukonline.com/الكركرية-طائفة-دينية-جديدة-تفتن-الناس.

to spread the *tariqa*,”⁸⁴¹ and “The Karkariyya in Algeria: Religious Group or ‘foreign conspiracy.’”⁸⁴² In what follows, I will present the contours of the debate as it unfolded in multiple domains in order to illustrate more generally how the context of Moroccan state policy towards Sufism imbues an instance of transnational religious (Sufi) activity with political significance. In short, I ask how the emergence of this debate brings into relief possible tensions between nations that arise out of a policy that explicitly links Sufi groups with national structures of political power.

The headlines listed above help to map the contours of the debates insofar as they include the key elements of criticism that reflect the ways in which the Karkariyya are framed. Firstly, there is the issue of origins, i.e., framing the Karkariyya as a Moroccan Sufi order. Directly linked with this is the suggestion, at times explicit and other times implicit, that the Karkariyya is somehow connected to the Moroccan intelligence services and therefore ‘sent’ by the Moroccan government. This leads to the second issue, which is that the Karkariyya are being used as a tool by the state to create discord (*fitna*) in Algeria by attacking the religious principles of Algerian Islam. As a result, various religious and state officials in Algeria felt the need to speak out against the Karkariyya insofar as it was framed as an external threat to the internal stability of and control over the religious sphere in Algeria. The challenge to state authority can be seen in the headline that emphasizes the pledge of allegiance (*bay‘a*) of ten Algerians, which for the critics represents not only an allegiance to the shaykh but also potentially an allegiance to Morocco, insofar as the

⁸⁴¹ Al-‘Arabī bin Zaydān, “10 Jizā’rīn bāy‘uā al-Karkari wa shar‘uā fī nashr al-tariqa bi-l-walāyat.” Al-Shurūq Online, accessed October 16, 2019, www.echoroukonline.com/10-جزائريين-بايعوا-الكركري-ونشرعوا-في-نشر-الطريقة-بالولاية.

⁸⁴² Sonia Farid, “The Karkaria in Algeria: Religious Group or ‘Foreign Conspiracy.’” Al-‘Arabiyya, accessed October 16, 2019, <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/features/2017/09/14/The-Karakaria-in-Algeria-Religious-group-or-foreign-conspiracy-.html>.

Karkariyya pledge their allegiance in turn to the Moroccan king, as discussed previously. What was troublesome for some was that these pledges of allegiance were posted online, including narrations of visions, and inviting or calling upon others to join the group. Several other practices – the *muraqqaʿa*, the *ḥaḍra*, and the *siyāḥa* – are also highlighted in the reproaches of critics that seek to frame the Karkariyya as a strange, foreign threat to the religious stability of the Algerian nation.

As a starting point, I begin with a testimonial video of one of the Algerian disciples discussing his *bayʿa* posted on August 2, 2017. I start with this video because it is cited in one of the earliest articles pertaining to the controversy, an article that opens, “Over the past few days, a young man descending from the village of Hujaj, east of Mostaghanem, converted to the ideas of the Karkariyya group, announcing it through social media and causing a big stir in this coastal region. [He] was questioned about this school (*madhhab*) that does not belong to the ‘National Religious References’ represented in the Maliki school. This young man was trying to convince others to join the Karkariyya group.”⁸⁴³ I will return to this article later, but for the present purposes I cite it to show how the debate unfolds with the online testimonial as a starting point.

The video is approximately four minutes and is filmed in the ground floor of the *zawiya* with a green *mihrab* displaying the word Allah as a background. After brief blessings, Musa introduces himself as an Algerian disciple from the area of Mostaghanem. Continuing he says, “My lord blessed me with entrance into the *tariqa* Karkariyya when I came to the *zawiya* in al-Aroui last year and I pledged allegiance to Sidi Shaykh Muhammad Fawzi al-Karkari ... [and] I saw the light of Allah. Then, I returned a second time for the

⁸⁴³ Majrāb, “Al-Karkariyya.”

Mawlid Nabawī ... in order to renew the *bayʿa* with the Prophet. Then, I returned a third time, in these blessed days, where my shaykh blessed me with entrance into the blessed *khalwa*.”⁸⁴⁴ At this point, Musa begins to describe the *khalwa* from a theoretical perspective, pulling out a piece of paper and reading off it. He said in the video:

The *khalwa* is an expression for a small room, isolated from the outside world. But, glory to Allah, with the mediation of the light of Mustafa, there appeared in it time and space, the *malakūt* and numerous *mulk* (creations), the absent and the visible. It gathered the seven heavens, as they were gathered for Mustafa ... [appearing] as a ring in a desert and as the light, if it appears it gives you an unveiling, as in the biography of the prophet. With the blessing of the light of Muhammad, I saw from my place a sea, the inside seen from my outside. [The sea] in the internal expression is a sea of truth that only shows the hidden, until I saw myself walking on it. I turned to the right where my sheikh gave me the word that unites of the secret of *al-ism* (name). As such, when I was reciting the great name in the blessed *khalwa*, a light came in the *khalwa*, manifesting to me in the color of orange that was protruding from the group of lights colored by the *mishkat* (lantern). Among the visions and unveilings that Allah blessed me with, I also saw a group of disciples, all of them wearing the *muraqqaʿa* and obscured by a light moving over their heads. All of this is from Sidi Shaykh Muhammad Fawzi al-Karkari. Here there are manifestations, there are unveilings that I cannot mention. Praise to Allah and Sidi Sheikh that I came to know Allah and get the first secret from the secrets.

To summarize, the disciple begins with an introduction of himself, followed by a brief story of his entrance into the *tariqa*, his experiences during the *khalwa*, and the uncovering of secrets through those experiences. In this sense, the video fits the model of numerous videos from other nationalities, some of which were analyzed earlier, and sticks to the main talking points of the *tariqa*. As such, there is nothing in this video that is significantly different from the previous four years (at least) of videos.

In addition to this testimonial, videos of disciples performing *hadra* at a tomb outside of Mostaghanem were circulated on social media and contributed to the controversy. The visit to the tomb of Sidi al-Khidr, about fifty kilometers east of Mostaghanem, was part of

⁸⁴⁴ Video Musa (August 2, 2017).

their *siyāḥa* in which they traversed the fifty kilometers on foot. As news agency ‘El Khabar’ explains in its article from August 22, 2017, “The beginning was with the appearance of a short video recording, circulated around social media widely and quickly in the state of Mostaghanem and its surrounding. In the video persons practicing a strange and exciting ritual appeared, performing it recently at the tomb of ... Sidi Al-Khiḍr bin Khalūf, east of [Mostaghanem] by fifty kilometers. It left a state of shock amongst visitors of the tomb, who posed numerous questions about what was taking place in front of them.”⁸⁴⁵ Therefore, in addition to the circulation of the testimonial video discussed above, the *siyāḥa*, performed with the *muraqqa’a* and the *hadra* at the tomb were the immediate causes of the controversy and subjects of criticism.

Criticism of the *tariqa* and its activities came from state and bureaucratic religious authorities, other religious (Sufi) groups, political commentators, and society in general. State authorities framed the Karkariyya as a threat to the ethical foundation of Algeria that is based in a version of Algerian Islam. Other Sufi groups, such as the Qadiriyya and ‘Alāwiyya, criticized their authenticity and their deviant curriculum. Political commentators argued that the Karkariyya used politics to gain a following and that they were part of Moroccan strategy to penetrate Algerian society. In analyzing this debate and these criticisms, my interest is not in the proper classification of the accusations, that is, deciding whether certain accusations are accurate or appropriate. Instead, my point is to bring into relief the contours of a debate that arises out of the practice of Sufism across national borders in order to demonstrate the effects of Moroccan state policy on possibilities for and attitudes towards Sufi groups.

⁸⁴⁵ “Al-Karkariyya ... ṭā’ifa jadīda taṣadam al-jizā’irīn!” Al-Khabr Online, accessed October 16, 2019. www.elkhabar.com/press/article/125314/الكركية-طائفة-جديدة-تصدم-الجزائريين/.

For example, in response to the controversy, Muhammad ʿĪsā, the minister of Religious Affairs and Religious Endowments in Algeria, said in a statement to the media, “[The Karkariyya issue] is a security and political issue par excellence [and] like the Ahmadiyya, it does not have a relationship with religion. The goal behind it is infringement upon the curriculum of moderation and balance that Algeria pursues.”⁸⁴⁶ In other words, in its perceived divergence from the ‘Algerian’ religious curriculum and values, the Karkariyya poses a threat to the political security of the nation. He goes on to comment, “The Sufi movement in Algeria is considered among the strongest movements and most of them represent social cohesion and defend Algerian identity and its unity. Any attempt to sabotage this [social] fabric domestically or internationally is considered unacceptable.” The minister clearly acknowledges the role of Sufi movements in defending Algerian society while framing difference in religious curriculum as primarily a political issue. In other words, deviation from the national religious principles is a threat to the social and political order of the nation, and the importation of the ‘foreign’ Moroccan orders represents this type of dangerous deviation.

This statement came after calls by religious scholars for the government to intervene and formally comment on the Karkariyya. Specifically, the Association of Algerian Muslim *Ulama*, with a branch in Mostaghanem, released a statement on August 22, 2017 calling for the intervention of state agencies to stop the activities of the Karkariyya. The association’s spokesperson, Tuhami Majouri, suggested that the targeting of Algeria had become evident, adding, “There is an ethical aspect intended to distort and destabilize society ... and the religious aspect is the strongest.”⁸⁴⁷ In addition to identifying the use of religious groups to

⁸⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴⁷ Majrāb, “Al-Karkariyya.”

destabilize the ethical foundations of Algeria, the spokesperson said that these events, “Require the Ministry of Religious Affairs to strengthen the formation of *ulama* and *imams*, especially since the current imams are very weak, that is, they are imams of the rank of ‘quasi-common.’ There must be well-formed religious leaders to address the sectarian threats to the country.”⁸⁴⁸ The penetration of group like the Karkariyya into Algerian society not only poses a danger to the stability of the nation, but also necessitates a response from the Algerian state that consists in strengthening control over the religious field through the training of religious leaders who, it would seem, can defend society from foreign religious sects. Thus, the perceived outside threat, posed by groups like the Karkariyya that are supported by the Moroccan state, in turn produces a felt need to tighten control over the religious field, thereby marginalizing diverse religious groups in favor of a national orthodoxy. This sentiment is echoed by a third critic and political commentator, Adda Filahi, who said, “It is true that this community is not new and is similar to the *tariqa* ‘Alāwiyya with some amendments. It is also true that I am for the freedom of belief; but, at the same time, I do not see a reason for the failure of official powers to open an investigation into the cause of the emergence of these sects and their spread in a manner that is harming the national religious reference (*al-marjʿiyya al-dīniyya al-waṭaniyya*).”⁸⁴⁹ The case of the Karkariyya therefore leads to the question of ‘freedom of religion/belief,’ as evidenced by Filahi’s insistence that he supports freedom of belief while simultaneously asserting that the diversity represented by the Karkariyya harms the nation. He holds, as he emphasizes again in a televised panel on El-Chourouk News, that while freedom of religion is embedded in the

⁸⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴⁹ Yūsif Al-Ḥāj, “‘Ada Filāḥī: Ghulām Allah yataṣarraf k-shaykh zawiya ... wa l-hadhā rafaḍat al-mushārika ma‘ al-Aḥmadiyya!” Al-Shurūq Online, accessed October 16, 2019, www.echoroukonline.com/-غلام-عدة-فلاحي.
 الله-يتصرف-كشيخ-زاوية-و.

constitution of Algeria, it nonetheless has its limits and threats to the security of the nation supersede this freedom. My point here, however, is not to engage in debate about religious freedom in Algeria; instead, my aim is to demonstrate how the problem was framed by state authorities in Algeria. For them, the Karkariyya pose a political problem, as evidenced by the statements of the minister of religious affairs, that is produced on the one hand by the foreign origins of the order and on the other hand by the order's conflict with Algerian Islam.

In referring to this Algerian Islam, critics often used the phrase, "*al-marj' iyya al-dīniyya*," or some variation of it. Specifically, they cite the Maliki school as the primary source of Islam in the country. What is recognized is that there is a need in the face of foreign pressure from Morocco, which is explicitly working to support and define Moroccan Islam, to assert an Algerian Islam that can fend off the encroachment of not only foreign religious groups but also foreign influence in society more generally. In short, Morocco's policy produces a situation in which Morocco's neighbors compete, not because they necessarily disagree with 'Moroccan Islam,' but because allowing Morocco to affect the religious field weakens the position of the state and potentially encourages alternative allegiances. Put otherwise, Morocco's policy necessarily politicizes Sufism insofar as foreign nations must treat Sufi groups as extensions of Moroccan state power, regardless of the intentions or positions of the Sufi groups themselves. That being said, the Karkariyya do engage, as discussed previously, in political issues by supporting the Western Sahara as part of Morocco (a position that directly contradicts to Algerian interests) or demanding

allegiance to the king, so the claim by Tuhami, for example, that the Karkariyya “use religion” is not entirely unsubstantiated.⁸⁵⁰

During a program on France 24 news, Tuhami and a disciple from the Karkariyya (Mehdi), engaged in a debate about the ‘dangers’ of the Karkariyya. The ‘political framing’ became evident toward the end of the discussion when Tuhami insisted on calling the *siyāḥa* (pilgrimage) a *masīra* (march). The latter term is commonly used when referring to protest marches or organized groups performing collective public political action. Mehdi, the spokesperson for the Karkariyya in this case, insisted that it was a *siyāḥa*, stating unequivocally, “We do not have time for politics.” It was in response to this claim that Tuhami said that they ‘use religion.’ He did not have the opportunity to expand on it, but what I want to highlight here is the use of terminology to (re)frame the issue, as well as the need to clarify terminology. While the texts and discourses on the *siyāḥa* within the Karkariyya detach it from any political significance, its use (i.e., the specific locations) has in fact connected it to politics. For example, the *siyāḥa* was performed between the Hassan II mosque and Muhammad V tomb. Moreover, other literature publicly distributed by the Karkariyya include references to the necessity of pledging allegiance to the Moroccan king, as discussed previously.

In addition to these political criticisms, participants in social media were quick to latch onto the photos and videos circulating in order to criticize and ridicule the Karkariyya. As one article put it, “The pages of Facebook were absorbed in a wave of sarcastic comments in response to the followers of the Karkari. They began and formed, in response, what can be

⁸⁵⁰ “Al-Jizā’ir: al-Karkariyya ... tariqa ṣūfīyya tathīr jadlan wāsi’a.” France 24, accessed Online October 16, 2019. www.france24.com/ar/20170823-وجهالوجه-كركرية-صوفية-الجزائر-موسى-بلغيث-جدل-20170823. صوفية-الجزائر-موسى-بلغيث-جدل.

described as a campaign for defending the national reference (*al-marj' aiyya al-waṭaniyya*) and putting an end to all penetrations and excesses imported from other countries.”⁸⁵¹

Similarly, according the news outlet Al-Khabar, visitors present at the tomb during the performance of *ḥaḍra* by the Karkariyya asked about the validity of the group and its practices. An article writes, “The visitors asked about the roots and references of these practices that overtook the tomb, some of them considering them a new innovation ... and encourage the spread of divergences and innovation among Algerians.”⁸⁵² The article goes on to say that, “Many users of social media expressed their resentment at the spread of these groups that are alien to Algerian society. Some have called them ‘misguided and misleading,’ stressing the importance of preserving the religious identity of Algeria, an identity that depends on the correct religion, fixed rulings, and the unity of Muslims [in terms of] creed, *fiqh*, and Sufism (*sulūk*).”⁸⁵³ Echoed in these summaries of social media responses to the Karkariyya is the reference to an Algerian Islamic identity and an implicit link between the stability of the nation and a cohesive religious identity.

The central point I want to make is that the political significance of the Karkariyya is not in its ‘electoral power’ (or total number), but in the recognized power of Sufism over the orientation of the social fabric, or in other words, the *tarbiya* of the nation. The political debate is therefore one about the proper curriculum of religious education and, more importantly, who can define that curriculum. The struggle for authority to define the curriculum, and therefore the forms of piety that manifest authorized values and identities,

⁸⁵¹ Zahīra Majrāb, “Al-Fāysbūkiyyūn yaskharūn min al-Karkariyya,” Al-Shurūq Online, accessed October 16, 2019, www.echoroukonline.com/الفايسبيوكيون-يسخرون-من-الكركرية/.

⁸⁵² “Al-Karkariyya ...ṭā'ifa”

⁸⁵³ *Ibid.*

takes place not only between the state and Sufi groups, but also among Sufi groups themselves.

For example, in a statement to news agency El-Chourouk, Hassan al-Hassani, the shaykh of the Qadiriyya, suggested, “These Sufi orders are aimed at penetrating societies through religion [and are] used by foreign intelligence services to spread division and chaos inside [other] societies. Knowing that the area of Mostaghanem is known for the activity of *zawāya* which transgresses national borders like the Sanusiyya ... in addition to the ‘Alāwiyya and Buzīdiyya. Their aim is to sow confusion and change the prevailing thinking.”⁸⁵⁴ He then calls upon officials to intervene, adding that the ability for groups to penetrate Algerian society is, “because Algerian law does not protect Sufis nor the Maliki school.”⁸⁵⁵ In this case, the leader of the Qadiriyya, a prominent and influential order in Algeria, is not only discrediting the religious validity of the Karkariyya by linking them to foreign intelligence services, but also critiquing the state’s policy toward religion and its inability to protect the religious welfare of the nation.

In addition, Hassan bin Tūnis, a spokesperson for the ‘Alāwiyya Sufi order, denied any affiliation with the Karkariyya and considered them “strange in belief and superstitious in curriculum.”⁸⁵⁶ As such, they stand in contrast to the ‘Alāwiyya that, “seeks to develop the curricula of *da‘wa* that spread the values of tolerance and peace throughout humankind through scholarly and religious activities. The ‘Alāwiyya have organized many international events, the most prominent of which are the ‘International Day of Living Together,’ the Emir Abd al-Qadir Al-Jazā’irī Prize for Peace, and membership of the *zawiya* at the UN.”⁸⁵⁷ In

⁸⁵⁴ Al-Hāj, “Ada.”

⁸⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵⁶ Zaydān, “10.”

⁸⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

this statement, the lineage claimed by the Karkariyya is denied and the spokesperson articulates that the two groups differ along the lines of their curricula. Specifically, he uses the term “divergent of curriculum (*ḥirāfiyya al-minhaj*)” to describe the Karkariyya, though without providing any additional detail in this manner. In contrast, he claims that the ‘Alāwiyya are continuing to develop curricula that cultivate and perpetuate peace and tolerance. The distinction here not only illustrates the use of the term in debates about religion, but also the necessity, in the current religious marketplace, of having a clear, explicit, and applied curriculum.

While drawing upon the same lineage, the ‘Alāwiyya and Karkariyya nonetheless compete with one another and what I want to point to in the previous discussion is that the issue of curriculum (i.e., sets of practices), as opposed to values (i.e., sets of ideas), is at the center of debate. Sufi groups differ and compete over the question of how to achieve a specific set of values that define modern Moroccan citizenship, without necessarily disagreeing with the abstract values that underpin that citizenship (e.g., tolerance, moderation, solidarity). The state may be successful in its discursive dominance of Moroccan Islam, but the embodied traditions remain a space of limited diversity and difference. In other words, there remains significant competition and difference within Sufi groups, even if these groups may be constrained by the broader contours of the religious field as shaped by state institutions. This is therefore why I have selected as one of my primary points of comparison and description the ‘applied curriculum of ethical instruction’ (*minhaj al-tarbiya*). Up to this point we have seen how this curriculum is applied in the Karkariyya. In the following chapters, I will unpack the curricula in the IACSAS and the ‘Alāwiyya in order to compare deployments of Sufism as an embodied ethical tradition.

The goal of discussing reactions to the Karkariyya in Algeria has been to bring into relief the contours of a debate, that is, the trajectories and themes along which the debate unfolded. One trajectory was the political question that linked the presence of divergent religious groups to the stability of the nation with the implication that state authorities were obliged to regulate ‘orthodoxy’ (*al-marja ‘iyya al-dīniyya*) for the benefit of the nation. Another trajectory was the social reaction in which individuals saw the Karkariyya as an affront to Algerian Islamic identity and which produced, as a result, a contraction to claims about the singularity of Islam in Algeria. In other words, in the first line of thinking religious difference can be a danger to the political structure, and in the second line of thinking it can pose an obstacle to social cohesion. My argument is that part of what fuels these reactions, in addition to the Ahmadiyya issue, is suspicion of Moroccan state support of Sufism. Positing a Moroccan Islam linked to Sufism causes other states to harden their own position, in the interest of national security. The potential for religious infiltration, that is, foreign intervention in the domestic religious field, generates the perceived need to strengthen control over the religious field by defining a national, in this case Algerian, brand of Islam that is accompanied by all the bureaucratic ensembles and is distinguishable from others. The increased intervention in the domestic religious field along with an attempt to define a unified Algerian Islam, however, has the potential to limit religious freedom as religious deviation becomes linked to national instability. If this is the case, then foreign attempts to ‘diversify’ the religious field are, therefore, also seen as attempts to destabilize. For Morocco, Sufi groups provide one of the remaining traditional mechanisms (that is, one not already dominated or adopted by another state) that can be deployed as part of an international strategy to enhance foreign influence. The reactions of Algerians in this

episode illustrate an awareness of this strategy, as well as the sentiment that this strategy poses a threat to Algeria. To be clear, I do not want to generalize to say that Moroccan policy necessarily leads to this perception and tension, particularly as it has been successful in West Africa. Instead, I simply point to the potential for Moroccan state policy to generate a feeling of skepticism from other nations, which in turn can give rise to this type of conflict and ultimately the “Flawed Hope of Sufi Promotion in North Africa.”⁸⁵⁸ By this potentially flawed hope I mean that Sufism’s capacity as a mechanism of spiritual diplomacy can be complicated by its potential to produce division when practiced across borders.

vi. Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the *siyāḥa* of the Karkariyya in three respects. Firstly, I demonstrated how the *siyāḥa* as a transformative journey draws upon Islamic traditions of pilgrimage, such as the *riḥla* and the *ziyāra*. Secondly, I analyzed Shaykh Fawzi’s texts and online publications regarding the performance of the *siyāḥa* to show how it is situated with the Karkariyya’s embodied practices. In this regard, I argued that it illustrates the dual processes of *tarbiya* and *tanwīr* involved in the cultivation of pious virtuosity (*iḥsān*). Finally, I discussed a specific performance of the *siyāḥa* in Algeria and the ensuing debate in order to reflect on the potential conflicts that can arise out of Morocco’s explicit policy of supporting and exploiting Sufism as a political strategy. In this sense, while the principles of the Karkariyya point toward a cosmopolitan ethic of tolerance, peace, and moderation, its claims to represent a ‘Moroccan Sufism’ generate a vernacular cosmopolitanism that is not always readily received in other nations who may view these activities as an extension of

⁸⁵⁸ Sakthivel, “Flawed Hope.”

state power. To be clear, my goal was not to argue for or against the thesis that Sufi orders like the Karkariyya are tools of state hegemonic power; rather, my goal was simply to demonstrate how some people may interpret it that way and how that may cause conflict or exacerbate existing tensions in order to reflect on the unintended implications of Morocco's use of Sufism as a mechanism of spiritual diplomacy.

CHAPTER TEN: JOURNEY TO *IḤSĀN*: SPIRITUALITY AND ETHICS IN THE IACSAS

i. Introduction

In the next two chapters I will be presenting two alterantive cases in comparison with the Karkariyya. This discussion has three goals. Firstly, as I have argued throughout this work, *iḥsān* as public piety consists of sets of relationships with oneself, with society, and with the divine. While all three of these are evident in the Karkariyya, there is a clear emphasis placed on the relationship with the divine insofar as *iḥsān* is understood primarily as witnessing the divine in the form of *mushāhada*. In these next two cases, I will be presenting two groups that place an emphasis on *iḥsān* as relationship with oneself (Chapter Ten) and as relationship with others (Chapter Eleven). Secondly, in presenting these distinct refractions of *iḥsān*, my goal is also to reflect on the diversity of Sufi thought and practice in contemporary Morocco despite the enhanced regulations of the past twenty years. Finally, by presenting these three refractions of *iḥsān*, I want to demonstrate more broadly the intersection of spiritual and social virtues that form the basis of a Moroccan religious and national identity that also has significant implications for the political role of Morocco regionally and globally.

To begin with, I will discuss the International Academic Center of Sufi and Aesthetic Studies as a second example of how *iḥsān* is interpreted, cultivated, and performed as a form of public piety. Specifically, the IACSAS and its founder, Dr. Aziz al-Kobaiti, interpret *iḥsān* as a mastery of the self. As a second refraction of *iḥsān* as public piety, this mastery of the self is not focused on the individual for its own sake; rather, the pious subject formed here is an ethical citizen that is the basis of a broader vision of social reform. In this understanding, individuals are in need of an applied curriculum of ethical education (*minhaj*

al-tarbiya), which for Dr. Kobaiti will consist of a three-part program that includes academic, ethical, and spiritual components. As a result, this chapter will concentrate primarily on the cultivation of *ihsān*, while the next chapter will address its public performance in the context of religious conferences.

In addition to providing a second refraction of *ihsān*, by looking at the means for cultivating and expressing that piety, one of my goals in this chapter is to compare the *minhaj al-tarbiya* of two groups. Therefore, my point of comparison is not the organizational structure, or the group taken as a whole (i.e., a ‘traditional/informal’ *tariqa* versus a ‘modern/formal’ civil society association). Instead, the comparison refers to the curriculum of ethical education, which consists of the ethical substance (i.e., what is being worked on), the mode of subjectivation (i.e., mode of authority operative), the ethical disciplines (i.e., the ensemble of exercises), and the telos (i.e., the outcome). While I do not present my analysis in such a formulaic manner, these are the various categories of comparison operative in this work, as discussed in Chapter Two. Thus, for example, this chapter will compare visionary techniques from the Karkariyya and the IACSAS with specific attention to the role of the name Allah in those exercises. Likewise, I will set up this discussion so as to open up spaces of comparison with regard to the third case, the ‘Alāwiyya. These spaces of comparison include the incorporation of social and educational activities into the curriculum of ethical education such that the disciplining of disciples is reformulated for a public audience as a kind of civic education. All of these groups draw upon traditional techniques to articulate and implement a vision of Islam that is embodied in specific sets of practices and principles, while also adapting those techniques to contemporary contexts. Consequently, they reflect alternative ways of cultivating and performing public piety.

Specifically, I will be discussing the spiritual and ethical components of the curriculum of ethical education of the IACSAS. As for the spiritual, the IACSAS perform collective and individual guided meditations which will be outlined first. The ethical aspect will be addressed second by looking at a formalized program of practice and self-observation. For the sake of the present work, I will be forgoing a discussion of the academic dimension, but in short my observation is that the holding of academic conferences operates as a way of performing pious dialogue that simultaneously performs contemporary religious sensibilities such as open-mindedness and tolerance on the one hand and disciplines those sensibilities on the other hand. As such, while the public dimension of the public piety discussed in this chapter is not necessarily at the forefront of the discussion, it will be analyzed in more depth in a future work that explores the transnational dimensions of this project in more detail. My argument regarding the overall work is that the cultivation of *iḥsān* in the IACSAS is part of a project of building ethical citizens that in turn make possible social reform. Even though the focus here is primarily on the reform of individuals, that reform is clearly linked to a broader social vision in which virtuous piety is an essential component of an ethical and cosmopolitan citizen. Given that the reform of society is dependent upon the reform of the individual, my goal in this chapter is to illustrate how traditional Sufi practices and principles are assembled into an applied curriculum of ethical and spiritual education.

Opening in 2014, the International Academic Center for Sufi and Aesthetic Studies (IACSAS) is a privately funded non-governmental organization based in a working-class suburb of the Ville Nouvelle of Fes. It is run by Dr. Aziz al-Kobaiti Idrissi who earned his PhD from the University of Sidi Muhammad bin Abdullah in Fes, conducting research on

Islamic Sufism in America and Europe and writing a dissertation entitled, “Islamic Sufism in the West.” After working as a professor of Arabic Language and Sufi Literature at the Moroccan Ministry of National Education and participating in the *tariqa* Būdshīshiyya, Dr. Kobaiti decided to open the center in response to what he saw as the insufficiencies of the formal education system as well as the direction of the mission in the Būdshīshiyya. While not explicitly critical of either, Dr. Kobaiti perceived the need for a new vision of Sufism in the contemporary world that was more attentive to the issues of society, particularly with respect to education and the ethical development of individuals. In other words, the center was created to fill in gaps in the educational system on the one hand and some Sufi orders on the other hand. Along with its domestic orientation, the center is also directed toward an international audience, hosting students from Indonesia, Europe, and occasionally North America.

While not explicit, one criticism of the educational system was that it did not train individuals sufficiently in traditional Islamic sources and that even students graduating from universities with degrees in Islamic Law were not adequately trained. As for other Sufi orders, they allow for an undisciplined and privatized spirituality that does not require sufficient commitment to practice in daily life. For Kobaiti, this spirituality needed a more rigorous piety that was also public insofar as it is oriented individuals toward issues of social concern. One attitude that links this individual piety to public concern is accountability, understood on the one hand as accountability in acts of worship and practice, and on the other hand as accountability of oneself to others. As such, while the Karkariyya interpret *ihsān* as literally seeing God, the IACSAS focus on practices of self-monitoring (*murāqaba*) that develop a sense of accountability and responsibility to oneself, to others, and to the

divine. This taking account of oneself in all aspects of one's life (*murāqabat al-nafs*) has historically been an aspect Sufi *tarbiya*, but as I will show in this chapter, it undergoes a process of formalization through the IACSAS that allows it to be extended to a wider population, i.e., it becomes a more general program of educating ethical citizens. While this ethical component does extend the cultivation of piety into public areas, the curriculum also includes several spiritual practices that form the foundation of the IACSAS.

ii. Spiritual Orientation

Once a week, the IACSAS hosts a group meeting (*majlis*) aimed at teaching and performing a curriculum of purification that includes a guided meditation, *dhikr*, and spiritual journey through prayer (*mi'rāj rūhī*). The *mi'rāj* here refers to the journey of the Prophet Muhammad as depicted in the Quran and *hadith*. In its basic format, this journey included the physical journey to the *al-masjid al-aqsā* (i.e., present-day Dome of the Rock) followed by a spiritual ascent (*mi'rāj*) through the seven heavens. In each heaven, Muhammad met with a different prophet, eventually meeting Allah. The Prophet's spiritual journey therefore serves as a traditional foundation for the practice in the IACSAS and while the end result may be inaccessible to people other than the Prophet, there are still potentials for spiritual journeys that enable individuals to communicate with and take insight from these journeys.

In this section I will describe this spiritual program as it unfolded in one meeting as it is representative of the program of spiritual development practiced within the group. Through this description I want to highlight the following points. Firstly, I want to tie this program of spiritual development to the curriculum of ethical development by showing how the experiences during these sessions serve as criteria for evaluation and diagnosis of

progression along the path of ethical purification, in much the same way that analyses of *mushāhadāt* in the Karkariyya serve as a criterion for evaluation of ethical conduct.

Secondly, I want to point out the style of teaching and the mode of authority created in and through that style of teaching, that is, how the pedagogical techniques themselves serve to establish a relationship. This relationship is distinct from that established through the disciplines deployed in the Karkariyya. As part of this discussion I will point to the concept of the *shaykh murabbi*, that is, the individual responsible for guiding individuals in ethical development, in order to open up a broader discussion of *ta'lim* and *tarbiya*. Thirdly, I will highlight the visual techniques used to frame the spiritual journey and how that schema is characterized in relation to the *mi'raj* of the Prophet as well as both local and global sacred geography. In contrast to the Karkariyya, who rely on a cosmic schema related to light and stars, the IACSAS schema is built around a stepwise visitation of different sites. Finally, I want to point out how the emphasis in these visionary experiences is not simply the experience as such, but the taking of advice in and through the meeting of spiritual guides on the spiritual journey. Along with this, individuals are asked to share their experiences in order to share that advice with each other such that the members can learn from one another.

The center is in the working-class neighborhood of Ain Chqaf in Fes on the second floor of an apartment building. The space is a simple three-bedroom apartment with a small reception desk at the entry, an office for Dr. Kobaiti, a sleeping room for the students that live there (usually two at a time), and a kitchen. The main room is split into two sections with a retractable curtain down the middle. During the sessions men and women are separated and the shaykh speaks through a microphone from the men's side when addressing the group. Each side has cushions placed around the outside to form horseshoe shape. On

one wall, there is a large banner for the center and a chart for how to recite Quran. There is a space reserved for Dr. Kobaiti consisting of a set of cushions and a specific carpet. Based on my experiences attending these sessions, I will provide an account of topics discussed, focusing on a specific session where the spiritual journey was discussed in detail.

The *majlis* session opened with an individual performance of *samā'* with collective refrains of '*la ilaha ila Allah*' for about thirty minutes. After this, Dr. Kobaiti began by saying that the session was going to be a theoretical and applied lesson about the '*mi'raj rūhī*,' or spiritual ascent, followed by a performance of the *mi'raj*. At this point, he turned on the projector that was used to display a powerpoint presentation on the far wall, requiring the curtain to be drawn back for the men's side to see. He also told the members that they needed to be sure to concentrate on the details of the presentation and insisted that everyone get a pen and a sheet of paper to take notes. One of the students on a scholarship from the center, who often serve as assistants to Dr. Kobaiti, distributed the pens and paper as the instructor encouraged everyone to focus on the presentation and take notes, instead of taking pictures of the slides with phones. He asked an open question about the method of spiritual ascension, specifically what steps one takes to prepare for it and protect oneself from Satan in the spiritual journey. Several individuals take turns providing answers such as *taḥṣīn* (protection) through a few acts, as well as the purification of spiritual centers in the body (*laṭā'if*) and through their associated colors. I will come back to this program more explicitly later, but at this point I want to point out the style of teaching, that is, as an instructor reviewing a concept with students in the sense that he opens the floor for them to speak, rather than simply telling them the program from the start. His goal in this part is to have the

students collectively reconstruct the method while also demonstrating to many of them that, since they cannot give a full answer, they need to pay attention during the lesson.

Beginning the lesson itself he states, “The spiritual journey is an applied curriculum for mechanism of action and is not just for theoretical knowledge.” In this curriculum (*minhaj*) there are three levels: memory (*dhihnī*), imaginative (*takhaylī*), and spiritual (*rūhī*). He then poses an open question, asking the students how they would answer someone who claims that there is no evidence or support for this sort of spiritual ascent. A few students take turns before Kobaiti clarifies:

The answer is quite simple. Muslims follow the *sunna* of the Prophet externally (*ẓāhirī*) and internally (*baṭinī*). Externally, that is what an individually is obliged to do with the limbs (*jawhariyya*). Internally, it is what we are obliged to do inside of ourselves and this inside is always in ascension ... So the *mi'rāj* (spiritual ascent) is the following of the Prophetic *sunna* internally ... This inner *sunna* was how his spirit was working inside himself, so we try to work with both this inner and outer form of the Prophet.

Thus, in clarifying this point explicitly, Dr. Kobaiti is equipping the students with a response to those who might criticize the practice itself and insist that there is no example in the *sunna*. Furthermore, Kobaiti is adamant that both the external and internal dimensions of the *sunna* are followed. As for external dimensions, he mentions things like how he dressed, ate, and slept, while the inner dimension refers to this constant process of inner spiritual work that the Prophet performed on himself. In short, his point is that *tarbiya* combines both the internal and external dimensions of one's life, indicating not a mystical but a practical Sufism aimed at the refinement of character, while also emphasizing emulation of the Prophet.

The first level of ascent, that of memory, is a kind of travel without visualization, that is, without picturing. As such, one might find oneself, or think of oneself, as being at the Ka'ba or the Prophet's mosque in Medina, but there is no visualization of the location. This

is the first form of the journey that one may undertake and is the beginning level. The second level is imagination, which is distinguished from the first one insofar as there is picturing. While the first level is mostly one of words or concepts without picture, the second one entails a picturing of the locations that will serve as landmarks on the spiritual journey. However, it is distinguished from the third level, the spiritual level, insofar as imagination still includes a sense of self-observation (*murāqaba*) and judgement (*taḥakkum*). One does not, in this sense, leave oneself as is the case at the spiritual level. However, through the visualization techniques of imagining oneself in, for instance, the mosque of the Prophet praying behind the Prophet, one is still able to invoke a heightened sense of presence as well as a deeper connection to the place. In the third level, as Kobaiti put it, “You find yourself travelling without thought.” In summary, all three are real forms of spiritual journey, but are also progressive steps in fulfilling the complete spiritual journey, which is accompanied by a broader program of purification and preparation. These procedures are clearly laid out in a handbook distributed by Kobaiti and are repeated during the meetings as a form of guided meditation.

In its practice, preparation for the spiritual journey began with the individual making Allah’s presence felt by thinking to oneself, “Allah is with me, Allah hears me, and Allah sees me.” This puts the individual, in its entirety (memory, reason, consciousness, heart), in a state that feels the presence of God prior to beginning the program. Once one puts oneself in this state, one begins with the necessary prayer, depending on the time of day, then does the following recitations: *sūrat al-fātiḥa*, *ayat al-kursī* and *al-ikhhlāṣ*. After reciting these, one breathes on his or her hands and distributes that breath over the body. As he finished explaining he asks the group, “Clear? Are you sure? Any questions?” One woman asked a

specific question about the necessity of ablutions as well as what dress was appropriate. Since the process begins with a prayer of two *raka'* (*salat al-haja*), one would expect to be in a state of purity, but in general there is security in purity so it is better. The third stage, after the presence of God and this protection (*taḥṣīn*), is to place oneself in the proper affective (ethical) state. This state consists of humility (*tawādu'*), gratitude (*shukr*), and reliance (*tawakkul*). Here, he defines humility as, “I am nothing and I do not know anything.” As for reliance, he says that we must feel, “We can only do this (the spiritual journey) by the leave of Allah.” In order to do this, one performs the following dhikr: *bismillah*, *istaghfur Allah*, prayers for the prophet, and there is no power but Allah (*la hawla wa la quwwa illa bi-llāh*). This last part is intended to prevent the intrusion of satan into the spiritual ascent, for if satan does enter, it is because one did not recite this. Again, he paused at this point to make sure everything is clear, this time receiving a question about the best prayer for the Prophet. He replied, “Any prayer, but the best is ‘*Allah yuṣalli ‘ala sayyidina Muhammad al-nabi al-ummi wa ‘ala alihi wa ṣaḥabi* [three times],” followed by greetings (*al-salām ‘alaykum*) on the Prophet. What I want to point to in this process of preparation is not so much the ritual or formulaic aspect of it, but the necessity of placing oneself intellectual and affective states. The first stage, seeking the presence of Allah, is described as placing oneself in a certain state of mind, while the third stage requires placing oneself in particular affective states that are not merely emotions, but states of relation. Humility is a relation to oneself, gratitude is described as a relation to the Prophet, and reliance as a relationship to Allah. They are therefore not merely affective states but also ethical states. It is in this sense that the ethical program is tied into this spiritual program, for the ethical program is designed to facilitate and foster these affective-ethical states through one’s daily life such that the spiritual ascent

becomes possible, or perhaps more accurately, so that one may progress through the levels of spiritual ascent. In short, by working to evoke these affective states, one is training in the embodiment of virtues that constitute piety, ultimately leading to the refinement of *iḥsān*.

After completing these preliminaries, Dr. Kobaiti continued, one begins the fourth stage, which is ‘purification of the subtle [spiritual centers]’ (*tazkiyyat al-laṭā’if*). In order to help individuals visualize this, he includes a diagram of the human body on the slide, locating both the location and color of each of the seven subtle spiritual centers. The spiritual centers and their corresponding locations and colors are: below the navel (red), navel (orange), stomach (yellow), breast (green), throat (light blue), forehead (dark blue) and above the head (white). Each of these is to be imagined as a tunnel running through the body. Dr. Kobaiti then instructs individuals to close their eyes and imagine the name Allah written in light above their head. To begin with, the light does not have any particular color and one breathes in through the nose, as Dr. Kobaiti guides them in the practice, and breathes out through the mouth, allowing the breath to travel through the spiritual centers. This continues for about ten minutes, as a general practice, and then he instructs them to imagine the name above the head in red. As they breath, they take in the air and filter it through the corresponding tunnel, breathing out the darkness, purifying the spiritual center, and filling it with light. This is repeated for each color such that all the spiritual centers are sequentially purified. Through each step he is guiding them, while performing it himself. Once all the colors have been completed, they are instructed to imagine the name as a rainbow and allow all the colors to be filtered through the tunnels, entering from the front and exiting the back. This operates to connect the spiritual centers and unify them such that, gradually, the body disappears and all that remains are the spiritual centers. Then, with every breath after the

body has disappeared, they are instructed to extinguish one center at a time until nothing remains but the conscious spirit. At this point, they take one deep breath and exhale in order to form the spiritual body, followed by a final breath to send the spiritual body on its transformative journey.

In this meeting, he explains the process during the lesson, but it is performed in this manner after the lesson is completed. Therefore, while portions of process were skipped (in execution) in the lesson, I included a description of the full process in order that I will not have to repeat it later. In short, this fourth stage is a guided visual and breathing meditation, done by the individual but overseen by Kobaiti, in which individuals purify themselves spiritually through a gradual process in which they circulate the light of the name of Allah through their bodies using the breath. Once this purification is complete, they work to create a spiritual body that can then perform the spiritual journey. The spiritual journey begins with searching for a spiritual guide or shaykh. He mentions several possible guides including al-Dabbagh (d. 1719), al-Shādhilī (d. 1258), Ibn Mashīsh (d. 1227), Jīlānī (d. 1166), Husayn ibn ‘Ali (d. 680), ‘Ali (d. 661), and the Prophet Muhammad. Once one finds the shaykh who will operate as the spiritual guide during the journey, they travel together to the tomb of Abd al-Aziz al-Dabbagh in the Bab Ftuh Cemetery of Fes. In this part of the lesson, Kobaiti includes images of the landmarks of the sacred geography to facilitate the process of picturing them, the second stage of types of spiritual journeys. After traveling to and praying at the tomb of al-Dabbagh, the individual should proceed with the spiritual guide to the mosque of the Prophet in Medina. Subsequently, the pair travels to the Ka’ba in Mecca, Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, and finally proceeds through the heavens, ideally, to the

barzakh, *kursi*, *‘arsh*, and beyond. Dr. Kobaiti adds, “Upon meeting the shaykh, be sure to greet them and travel with them but most importantly, take advice (*naṣiḥa*) from them.”

What I want to highlight here is the way in which both a local and global sacred geography operate to frame and orient the visionary experience. While the Karkariyya relied primarily on the name Allah, specifically the circle of the *hā’*, as a starting point that leads one into the ‘sea’ or abyss of cosmic light, the IACSAS participants use a local landmark as a key starting point. In addition, while both rely on the name Allah as a visual element in their experiences, the name operates differently in the two groups. In short, although both the Karkariyya and IACSAS seek to elicit visionary experiences associated with a spiritual journey that involves the attainment of knowledge, they differ in the schemas used to frame those journeys and therefore give shape to the experiences themselves, as well as in the form of knowledge sought. The Karkariyya, for example, emphasize specific sciences like astrology, and the IACSAS focus on the taking of advice from spiritual guides, advice that is intended to be shared across the group and benefit them in their worship and daily life. Finally, both Shaykh Fawzi and Dr. Kobaiti encourage individuals to share these experiences collectively and use them to diagnose the ethical state of individuals, but the Karkariyya use the internet to share these experiences not only with the group but also with the general public. The visionary practices, therefore, differ in how they are framed as well as how they are performed publicly.

After providing a short review of the steps in the process, the group broke for the *maghrib* prayer at about eight in the evening, during which Dr. Kobaiti encouraged individuals to attempt to perform the spiritual journey. This lasted approximately an hour as individuals performed prayer and then attempted the journey. Afterward, I stepped outside

during the performance of prayer so I did not directly observe them during this time, but the group reconvened and they were asked to share their experiences, specifically any difficulties they may have in the process or what advice they received.

In addition to this program of spiritual purification and ascent, the group also performs spiritual retreats at the tombs of saints throughout Morocco. During the *mawlid* at Ibn Mashīsh's tomb I attended with the 'Alāwiyya in August 2018, I met several members of the group who said they were there with Dr. Kobaiti. Similarly, they performed a group '*khalwa*' at the tomb of al-Dabbagh in Fes, during which time they had lessons and performed *samā*'. Finally, during Ramandan, the group went on 'spiritual trips' several times a week. In short, while the spiritual program does include an explicit set of spiritual practices, it also includes a number of worldly activities that operate to orient individuals to the sacred geography of Morocco, thereby cultivating an appreciation of that geography that will help individuals to navigate in their spiritual journeys. Thus, these spiritual retreats are an embodied practice that rely on a material tradition of sacred geography to facilitate imaginative processes that underpin the spiritual journey described above. Familiarity with this sacred geography facilitates visualization in the spiritual journeys by giving individuals a grounded and material orientation to the landmarks cited by Dr. Kobaiti. As such, these trips around Morocco serve to cultivate embodied memories that can be activated to assist the spiritual progress.

iii. Ethical Orientation

In addition to grounding the spiritual ascent in a sacred geography through visualization and visitation practices, the spiritual practices are also facilitated through a program of ethical development laid out by Dr. Kobaiti. This curriculum of ethical

cultivation lays the foundation for the spiritual practices insofar as progress in the spiritual journey, that is, attaining higher stages, is dependent upon a process of purification of body, heart, mind, and spirit. In this sense, difficulties encountered in the spiritual journey are tied to deficiencies in these domains (body, heart, and mind), deficiencies that can be remedied through the cultivation of specified relationships with the self, others, the Prophet, and God. As such, the spiritual portion of the program is thoroughly dependent upon a set of mental and embodied practices that permeate the daily life of individuals. Put otherwise, as Talal Asad suggests, “The inability to enter into communion with God becomes a function of untaught bodies.”⁸⁵⁹ In order to teach bodies, as Asad puts it, or to purify and enlighten bodies, as Kobaiti puts it, what is required is a detailed program of practice overseen by a mentor who is able to guide, correct, and diagnose progress along the path. My point in this regard is not merely that the spiritual dimension requires some sort of bodily preparation or training, but that this preparation, which is spoken of as purification, is accomplished through the performance of and abstention from conduct in everyday life, which in turn operates to cultivate affective, mental, and bodily habits that facilitate spiritual progress. I refer to this curriculum of conduct as ethical not because it involves a certain set of moral values that are held to be important or representative of an entire worldview. For example, while compassion or tolerance are portrayed as by-products of the program, I do not refer to it as ethical because it teaches these values. Instead, I call it an ethical program because it uses a set of bodily techniques and practices to give form to specific relationships between the self and others, relationships that include certain internal states as well as external behaviors.⁸⁶⁰

⁸⁵⁹ Asad, *Genealogies*, 77.

⁸⁶⁰ Foucault on ethics as a study of the practices of self-evaluation and self-monitoring, as well as the practices of acting upon oneself so as to transform oneself into the subject of ethical conduct. See Chapter Two on ethical tradition.

In short, it is an ethical program because it seeks to coordinate external behavior with internal dispositions through disciplinary techniques that establish certain specified relationships, as opposed to a moral program that defines rules of conduct.⁸⁶¹ One of the relationships to oneself honed in this context is a virtue of accountability linked to a mastery of one's self, which is defined as the virtue of *ihsān*.

Kobaiti specifies that there are four relationships that should be cultivated and that each of these relationships has four dimensions. Each individual must establish social and spiritual relationships through one's body, heart, mind, and spirit. For example, regarding one's relationship with the Prophet, one must establish a bodily relationship in which one "embodies the Prophet in one's behavior (*sulūk*).” However, a mere copying of the behavior is not sufficient, for one must also cultivate a relationship of love and longing for the Prophet, and thus the concern here is not simply what is done but how it is done, i.e., with what intentions and attitudes. This relationship is not limited to two dimensions though, i.e., it does not map directly on to an internal-external divide because the relationship also entails an intellectual (rational) dimension and a spiritual dimension. Furthermore, these relationships are presented not merely as they ought to be in their positive form, but also how they can exist in their negative form. For example, in discussing the relationship with God, Kobaiti contrasts a negative relationship which involves desire for sin and disobedience with a positive relationship of worship, willing obedience, and glorifying the command of God. Thus, even in the case of the relationship with the divine, external obedience is insufficient in itself insofar as it requires an internal disposition of willing obedience. It is in this sense that Kobaiti said during one of his lessons on this issue, “Religion (*dīn*) is not only worship, but a

⁸⁶¹ See discussion of ethics in Chapter Two for more detail.

complete system entailing ethics (*akhlāq*), excellence (*iḥsān*), and interactions (*mu‘amalāt*).”

The ethical curriculum that will be discussed below is Kobaiti’s attempt to formulate this organized system. My argument is not only that this formulation connects bodily practices (the external) to spiritual experiences (the internal) that have often been the focus of scholarship on Sufism as mysticism, but also the way in which it is formulated, taught, and practiced reflects an adaptation (codification) of Sufism as an ethical tradition to the contemporary contexts of Morocco.

Dr. Kobaiti presents this ethical program in a packet distributed to members of the association entitled, “The Precious Helping Guide for the Purification of Selves: Applied Curriculum in the Mechanisms of Purification of the Self and Attainment of Sincerity.” In the introduction to the packet, Kobaiti states that the goal of the program is to purify the heart because “Corruption of the heart is a reason for the destruction of the internal building for the entire body.”⁸⁶² In this way, Kobaiti connects the body to the heart directly, as evidenced in his citation of the following *hadith*: “There is a piece of flesh in the body if it becomes good (reformed) the whole body becomes good but if it gets spoilt the whole body gets spoilt and that is the heart.” This purification of the heart is accomplished through an ensemble of exercises that are outlined in the packet which includes the following components: *adhkār*, *murāqaba*, purification and enlightenment of seven body parts, performance of external and internal prayer, and finally the obtainment and practice of sincerity. In short, one performs daily practices of remembrance and prayer along with self-evaluation (*murāqaba*) while proceeding through the sequential purification of bodily parts until successfully purifying each part and obtaining sincerity (*ikhlas*). Each month the individual is instructed to review

⁸⁶² ‘Azīz Kobaiti, “Al-murshid al-mu‘aīn fī tazkiyat al-anfās,” 1.

progress, which is tracked through charts in the packet, with Dr. Kobaiti in order to “take the necessary advice to cement the curriculum of purification.”⁸⁶³

The program begins with four daily practices included under the heading of *adhkār*, which are a combination of recitations and meditative practices intended to orient the individual towards the divine and facilitate concentration on God throughout one’s daily life that are meant to be practiced over a forty-day period. As Kobaiti writes, “There is not a limited time for *dhikr* of Allah, but [one] should specify times according to [one’s own schedule]. It will become with the passing of time a part [of it] and not separated from [one’s] life until [one’s] time continues in remembrance of Allah.”⁸⁶⁴ The point here is that while it might be necessary to designate a specific time, set apart from the rest of the day, in which to practice *dhikr* at the beginning, the goal is to allow this remembrance to permeate one’s life at all times such that it is no longer necessary to specify a particular time. The performance of the *adhkār* begins with the performance of two *raka’* of *ṣalat al-tawba* and “Renewing one’s faith with the following thoughts such that they are inscribed on one’s heart and mind during the *dhikr*.”⁸⁶⁵ These thoughts that one is supposed to maintain during *dhikr*, and by extension during daily life, are “Allah is with me, Allah sees me, and Allah hears me.”⁸⁶⁶ These three foundational keys allow one to know and feel as if God monitors and sees oneself in every moment and hears one even in one’s own whispers to oneself, that is, the feeling and belief that God is always present. After concentrating on these three keys and making them the focal point of one’s thought, the individual should perform ‘*istaghfur Allah*’

⁸⁶³ *Ibid*, 1.

⁸⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 5.

⁸⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 3.

⁸⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 3

for fifteen minutes for each of the forty days of the program.⁸⁶⁷ During the performance of this dhikr, the practitioner is advised to concentrate on seven things.

To begin, “Imagine that you are groveling and begging in search of forgiveness ...for all that you committed in terms of faults, disobedience, and sins...”⁸⁶⁸ Second, “Supplicate in search of forgiveness from all righteous acts ... in which there was little thought of Allah ... [as well as] all righteous work performed in which you felt pride...”⁸⁶⁹ Third, “Grovel in search of forgiveness for every sin committed secretly or publicly, in words or in action, which you may have forgotten or not even be aware of, but which might be recorded against you...”⁸⁷⁰ Fourth, “[Have] repentance in integrity of conduct (*al-tawba rishād*) [and] orient your limbs to meet the *malakūt* of Allah. Imagine you are traveling to the *malakūt* without following the way of satan but the footsteps of Adam in his repentance and meditate as if you are on mount Arafat, then plead in search of forgiveness.”⁸⁷¹ Fifth, “While traveling along your path to your action or place of worship, imagine the darkness of disobedience as if it were like fat dripping slowly from you while you are on the path towards the light of the name of Allah.”⁸⁷² Sixth, “Meditate on the state of your body and purify it with the light of the name of Allah until it radiates with the light and illuminates everything around it.”⁸⁷³ Seventh, “There is no path to travel except the path of Allah and all the [others] have left you, but Allah will not desert you ever, therefore you do not leave Him. Establish in yourself

⁸⁶⁷ The full statement here is, “I seek forgiveness in Allah. There is no god but Him, the living eternal and I repent from Him.”

⁸⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 4.

⁸⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 4.

⁸⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 4.

⁸⁷¹ *Ibid*, 5.

⁸⁷² *Ibid*, 5.

⁸⁷³ *Ibid*, 5.

fear (*al-rahba*) of falling into small sins but do not despair from the mercy of Allah.”⁸⁷⁴ In this first stage therefore, one repeats the formulaic statement while progressing through a series of self-reflection and self-examination techniques.⁸⁷⁵ In doing so, one does not simply recount all the errors committed previously, nor seek forgiveness for those sins. The purpose, as reflected in the seventh component, is to develop a relationship with the self in which one continuously takes into account God’s perception by cultivating a sense of pious fear for errors, a fear that is not debilitating but which, in fact, allows one to better understand the God’s mercy. The point here is that the goal is not necessarily the elimination of sin in its entirety; instead, the goal is to acknowledge one’s sins such that, like Adam, one may establish a relationship of repentance with God. Therefore, repentance is a key component of piety and requires a constant awareness and readiness to take account of oneself, one’s actions, and one’s intentions. These relationships, both to the divine and oneself, consists of a constellation of affective dispositions, such as pious fear (*rahba*), which it is important to note is distinct from the kind of fear (*khawf*) of punishment often emphasized in other Islamic discourses.

Following the first two parts of the daily meditative practice, practitioners are required to perform a second *dhikr* ‘*la ilaha ila Allah*’ for fifteen minutes over the course of forty days. While reciting this *dhikr* one should “Imagine the amount of blackness and desire

⁸⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 5. Note here that I have translated *rahba* as fear, in contrast to Chapter Eight where I translated it as awe. This is due to discussions with Dr. Kobaiti that emphasized fear, but again *rahba* should be distinguished from *khawf*. That is, while the division of types of fear may differ, both the IACSAS and the Karkariyya emphasize a form of pious fear that is not *khawf*, which is commonly associated with ‘Salafi’ movements.

⁸⁷⁵ Foucault writes, “A history of the way in which individuals are urged to constitute themselves as subjects of moral conduct would be concerned with the models proposed for setting up and developing relationships with the self, for self-reflection, self-knowledge, self-examination, for the decipherment of the self by oneself, for the transformations that one seeks to accomplish with oneself as object. This last is what might be called a history of ‘ethics’ or ‘ascetics,’ understood as a history of the forms of moral subjectivation and the practices of self that are meant to ensure it” (Foucault, *Use of Pleasure*, 29).

in oneself [and then] purify the heart and the [sinful self] (*al-nafs al-ammāra*) by removing corrosion that covers them because of disobedience.”⁸⁷⁶ In addition to this imaginative practice that accompanies the recitation, one is advised to concentrate during this phase on the pronunciation and articulation of the letters. In this regard he writes, “The way to say this *dhikr* is to extend the *lām* in *lā* and extend the *lām* in the word of *ilha*, as well as insist on the absence of pronouncing the *alif* in Allah as if it was the letter *hā*’, while also pronouncing the *lām* in Allah with extension to the extent possible and filling the mouth with it.”⁸⁷⁷ Focusing on the form of pronunciation is also a technique for tying each word to particular kinds of thoughts, extending the self-evaluation from the previous phase. For example, when saying ‘*la*’ the individual must also rid oneself of any thought of other gods that may distract one from Allah while also working to purify one’s mind from any thoughts of disobedience or passion. The ‘*lā*’ in this sense, is a negation that seeks to rid oneself of these forms of thought. As for the ‘*ilha*,’ it means idol so the practitioner, “Should imagine the entire world in the mind as if you are saying to it, ‘the self, the permissible passions, and the impermissible passions, all of these people that cause negligence of Allah are not God, therefore I will not follow them or listen to them.’”⁸⁷⁸ In other words, with the word ‘*ilha*’ one is meant to imagine all the possible idols of the world, idols that may exist internally or externally, and try to purge them from one’s mind. In the process of purging all other idols from the mind, one replaces them with the thought of one God and “that you will not follow other than Allah and you will live your life according to His commands.”⁸⁷⁹ Finally, in the closing phrase of the statement, “it is necessary to think and imagine that Allah is the only

⁸⁷⁶ Kobait, “Al-murshid,” 6.

⁸⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 6.

⁸⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 6.

⁸⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 6.

thing worshipped in your heart and that your heart is enlightened by the articulation of Allah.”⁸⁸⁰ In summary, Kobaiti’s curriculum specifies both how one is to physically perform the *dhikr* as well as the modes of thought and feeling that are meant to accompany that performance. This degree of specification and, to a certain extent formalization, is distinct from the *dhikr* as performed in the Karkariyya in which the imaginative and affective dimensions are not specified in the same manner. In fact, disciples in the Karkariyya generally resist using terms for thinking or imagining during the *dhikr* because it implies that what is seen during *dhikr* is illusory and not real.

One way of analyzing this point of difference is to look at the distinct approaches to the concept of *ihsān* within each group. For the Karkariyya, *ihsān* entails a direct and real (not metaphorical) vision of God, insofar as God is understood as light. For Kobaiti, on the other hand, *ihsān* is best understood as excellence, that is, an all-encompassing mastery of the craft of worship where worship is understood as a form of life. Put otherwise, *ihsān* is seen as the skillful art of living a pious life. In this sense, a variety of techniques can be employed that help individuals to perform acts of worship, along with interactions with others in daily life, as if God sees them in their conduct. Kobaiti acknowledges that at the highest levels the spiritual journeys do actually take place and can result in visionary experiences related to what he calls ‘art of *tajrīd*’ (used here in the sense of abstraction rather than divestment of the self), but for most people they need mental techniques to help them make this ‘as if’ felt more directly.⁸⁸¹ In this sense, the work being done by these meditative practices is to facilitate the feeling that one is performing action ‘as if’ one sees God, actions that are not limited to the domain of worship alone but of daily life as well. Whereas in the

⁸⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 6.

⁸⁸¹ Seligman et al., *Ritual*.

Karkariyya there is a sense in which the *dhikr* directly opens access to hidden realities, in the IACSAS there is a clear recognition that the practice transforms the individual not through the acquisition of knowledge but in the cultivation or disciplining of a particular attitude. This attitude, in turn, refers to the concept of *ihsān* and therefore a difference in the two curricula can be discerned from how *ihsān* is practiced and embodied. While for the Karkariyya the practice of *ihsān* is a form of vision, for Kobaiti the practice of *ihsān* is an attitude and ability, a way of acting that encompasses not just an imaginative but also an affective orientation towards the world. I do not, however, mean this to be an absolute difference, for as I discussed with the Karkariyya, learning to see was accompanied by a set of ethical and affective techniques. Rather, I point out this comparison here merely as a point of emphasis, with each case refracting an aspect of *ihsān* because for both, *ihsān* entails a constellation of spiritual and social virtues that underpin a pious mode of life.

The fourth phase of the program, after seeking presence, seeking forgiveness, and *tahlīl*, is *murāqaba* and involves meditating on the majestic name. This phase begins with a series of invocations (*fātiḥa*, *istaghfār*, greetings on Prophet, and Allah’s providence) that are also employed in the preparations for the spiritual ascent covered previously. After these opening invocations, one closes the eyes and imagines the name Allah above oneself with light descending from it through one’s head and into the body until it settles in the heart. Kobaiti notes here, “It is not necessary to see the name above you since whether or not you see it, you will enjoy the blessings of this *murāqaba*.”⁸⁸² Thus, the important point is not necessarily the visionary experience itself, particularly for beginning practitioners. Then, the practitioner is instructed to “Use your heart to connect to the Lord while the tongue is silent

⁸⁸² Kobaiti, “Al-murshid,” 7.

until the heart becomes like a voice calling ‘Allah, Allah.’ Imagine that you are engraving the name inside your heart and limbs.”⁸⁸³ As opposed to the previous phases of *dhikr*, this phase is performed silently, focusing on an internal dialogue. The final stage is therefore to discuss one’s sins and disobediences while seeking forgiveness, to share problems and concerns in order to request stress relief, to remember His blessing and thank Him from the depths of one’s heart. Finally, after developing a feeling of reliance (*tawakkul*), he instructs, “Open your eyes slowly, feeling reassurance of the heart and comfort of the spirit.”⁸⁸⁴ In this concluding phase, one places one’s own affairs in the hands of God and in establishing this relationship one achieves the affective states of reassurance and comfort (*riḍā*). The practices have the effect of producing these states, but they operate specifically through a combination of techniques of self-analysis, imagination, and recitation. This interplay of corporeal and cognitive cultivates certain dispositions that allow one not only to relate to the divine and oneself in a particular manner, but also to cope with the concerns and cares of everyday life. It is in this sense that I consider it part of an ethical, as opposed to moral, curriculum, because it aims at the establishment of dispositions that connect ways of feeling to modes of conduct. In other words, as a curriculum it does not focus on teaching values like tolerance and compassion or strictly imposing modes of conduct; instead, it nurtures a relationship to oneself as a pious subject that makes possible the performance of those values in everyday contexts. As such, it draws upon Sufism as an embodied and ethical traditional to cultivate pious subjects who can perform that piety in everyday contexts.

While the meditative practices discussed above seek to engrain these affective-volitional dispositions, the curriculum also entails an extended process of purification and

⁸⁸³ *Ibid*, 7.

⁸⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 7.

enlightenment of the body through an explicit monitoring of forms of behavior associated with specific parts of the body. The body here operates as a medium for spiritual progress. For this portion of the program, individuals are given a collection of charts that are used to track conduct. In a sense, one can see in this program a moral code, that is, rules of action that are meant to be obeyed. However, the following of these rules is not the end in-itself, that is, individuals do not obey the rules of conduct because it is their duty to obey or out of fear of reprisal, but because enacting or abstaining from such activities is a means to reforming (or transforming) oneself (bodily, affectively, mentally, and spiritually) and cultivating sincerity (*ikhlāṣ*), defined as worshiping God for Him without ulterior goal or motive. My point here is that while listing a set of rules for conduct may appear as a type of moral code, the role of these charts in the curriculum of ethical development is not only to provide a list of rules, but also to facilitate a monitoring of one's own actions and a diagnosis of trends in thought or action that tend to lead an individual astray. By keeping track of actions in this way, Kobaiti and the individual work together to discern the habits of thought, action, and feeling towards which one is disposed, and in discerning those characteristics, make possible the transformation of the individual in order that he or she acquire new tendencies for thought and actions, tendencies embodied in the attainment of sincerity (*ikhlāṣ*).

The second half of the packet, after the section on *adkhār* and *murāqaba*, contains a total of seventeen charts. The first fourteen charts represent one of seven body parts, with one chart labeled 'purification' and including a list of actions one must avoid, and the other chart labeled 'enlightenment' and including a list of actions one should perform. This is followed by a chart for the levels of sincerity through which one may progress after

completing the previous processes of purification and enlightenment for each body part. Finally, the packet contains a pair of charts for the performance of prayer internally and externally. In what follows I will discuss how these charts are used as well as the forms of conduct they authorize, finishing with a discussion of the internal and external aspects of prayer presented in the program. My goal in doing so is to illustrate that although the creation of such a formalized curriculum of action reflects an adaptation to contemporary contexts, the way it is used maintains continuity with previous modes of ethical development. However, most importantly, I want to highlight how its construction as a curriculum allows it to be deployed in contexts outside the traditional *zawiya* setting and is therefore constructed as a potential program to be applied in public life more generally. Insofar as Kobaiti argues that society in general is in dire need of this type of ethical program due to the moral vacuum of youth, and insofar as the state sponsors Sufism as an ethical foundation of modern Moroccan citizenship, the curriculum of ethical development described here reflects an ‘elective affinity’ between Sufi and state institutions. In this case, what I mean is that the manner in which the Moroccan state has framed and supported Sufism has opened up the space of possibility for Sufi organizations to articulate versions of a curriculum aimed at the moral education and ethical development of individual citizens.⁸⁸⁵ The three groups that serve as the focus of the present study reflect different modes of operation within that space insofar as they each propose a model of teaching ethics that is based, albeit differently, on existing traditions while also being linked to contemporary publics. The values that underpin the morals of moderate Moroccan religiosity are laid out clearly in and through state

⁸⁸⁵ This critique of the content of religious and moral education in public schools was offered by members of all associations I worked with during my time in Morocco. While there have been efforts to reform this curriculum (see Feuer, “Religious Establishments”), for many members of Sufi communities it remains insufficient. Also see Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam* for further discussion.

عمود الأخطاء	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	تاريخ البدء

النظام التأديبي فيما يتعلق باللسان

1. الغيبة. 2. الخداع. 3. الكذب. 4. النميمة. 5. اللغو. 6. شهادة الزور. 7. الجدال والمراء.	15. الحلف كذبا متعمدا باسم من أسماء الله أو صفاته. 16. الحديث عن النفس وكهالها وصفاتها. 17. الحديث عن تفاصيل العقيدة دون سابق علم. 18. الاستهزاء بالآخرين والمسخرة منهم. 19. الكلام الجارح أو الشتمائم. 20. وصف الله أو رسله أو ملائكته أو الصحابة (رضوان الله عليهم) بما لا يليق بهم.
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Figure 26. Chart taken from Kobaiti's Manual labeled "Purification of Tongue: Step of Cleansing"

Upon successfully completing thirty days of purification for a specific body part, in this case the tongue, one moves on to the ‘enlightenment of the tongue,’ which includes a list of positive uses for the tongue. Thus, as a curriculum, it does not merely define actions negatively, i.e., what not to do, but also prescribes what one *ought* to do. In the same manner, one tracks one’s performance of these positive actions until one has completed thirty

days with these positive uses, while still refraining from the negatives. If one fails on a given day, that person records the date and the omitted action, then begins again. This process is followed for each of the remaining body parts, purifying then enlightening them sequentially. In prescribing a thirty-day period, Kobaiti draws explicitly on the model of Ramadan, arguing that this is the amount of time it takes to effectively cement certain habits of body and mind. In addition to the tongue, the body parts include eyes, ears, stomach, hands, feet, and genitals. As such, this program is based on an anatomy of spirituality in which control of parts of the body is linked to spiritual progress. The curriculum in sum constitutes a specific technology of purification and enlightenment through a prescribed code of conduct, some of which deals with matters pertaining to oneself, as well as those pertaining to relationship with God or the Prophet, and finally with other members of society. Thus, one must evaluate conduct as it unfolds along the four dimensions of relationships that constitute the desired ethical subject, and the charts constitute one of the disciplinary techniques through which individuals operate on themselves in conjunction with a mentor to facilitate transformation.⁸⁸⁶ While Kobaiti, as a *shaykh murabbī* in this case, stands in much the same relationship as a traditional shaykh, the methods employed by Kobaiti for teaching and engaging with his disciples differ significantly, particularly in the clarity and codification of the process. Such a ‘codification’ of the process is the result not simply of a ‘modernization,’ but more importantly of Kobaiti’s goal of developing a curriculum that can be applied outside the strict confines of the *zawiya*, for example, in public schools. The curriculum in this sense becomes detached from the specific context of the *zawiya* granting it mobility in

⁸⁸⁶ I want to reiterate that I do not refer to these techniques as Foucauldian ‘technologies of the self,’ for that description has often overlooked the role of guidance and mentorship through which those technologies operate. In these cases, the shaykh murabbī is essential to the process of ethical formation so while individuals are monitoring themselves, this is always related back to a guide.

modern society, whereas the curriculum employed by Shaykh Fawzi is fixed to the *zawiya* itself. While Shaykh Fawzi's curriculum does have implications for how individual disciples may live outside the *zawiya*, it is primarily concerned with proper conduct and comportment (*ādāb*) as performed within the *zawiya*. This difference in emphasis can be seen in the choice of a traditional *adab* text as a source of ethical teaching within the Karkariyya versus the creation of a curriculum adapted to contemporary contexts in the IACSAS. In their different selections of texts, and thus also the modes of conduct taken into account, we see alternative technologies of ethical cultivation and styles of teaching that, despite their differences, ultimately aim at achieving the state authorized Sufi values like tolerance, moderation, and solidarity that are taken to constitute the moral foundation of moderate Moroccan religiosity. They therefore work within an authorizing discourse of Sufism but enact their ethical agency through their interpretation and implementation of specific practices.

While the two groups largely align with the state on rhetoric concerning values, one point of emphasis in the IACSAS that is absent from the Karkariyya is individual responsibility. To begin with, it is important to note that the creation of this curriculum is recent and is in some ways still a work in progress. Also, the discussions of people's use of it and their success (or difficulties) along the path take place with Dr. Kobaiti behind closed doors during his office hours. As such, I did not inquire into the specifics of people's engagement with the charts; instead, I chose to ask them about the work done by completing the charts and practicing the meditation, that is, what effect they felt the practice had on them. While most people mentioned that it made them more mindful (*wa 'ī*) of God and that this mindfulness helped ease them in their daily lives, another common theme was

responsibility, that is, taking ownership of one's action. The issue of individual responsibility stands at the center of the vision of IACSAS insofar as it encourages individuals to take ownership of moral actions (i.e., to become the subject of moral action) by accounting for them daily, while also giving tools for coping with circumstances that might be out of the individual's control. Therefore, in its encouragement of reliance on or trust in God (*tawakkul*), it does not endorse or engender a fatalist position; rather, it focuses individuals on cultivating the affective dispositions that will enable them to navigate problems encountered in daily life, whether they be familial, work, or even political. As an example of this discourse of responsibility I want to highlight a conversation that took place between a student and one of the experienced members of the center while we were waiting during Kobaiti's office hours.

After finishing the lesson, it is common for the group to eat a meal together (men and women separately), and afterwards Dr. Kobaiti goes to his office as individuals wait to meet with him. During this time, the members sit and talk about a range of topics. In my time, I talked about everything from soccer to the reconciliation of the Quranic story of creation with big bang theory. On this occasion the discussion was political, at least tangentially, because we were discussing the ongoing boycott of several companies. Over the course of the summer of 2018, the Moroccan public boycotted several international businesses (e.g., Dannon, Ifriqiyya Gas, and Central). The boycott was, from my experience, fairly effective as one saw expired Dannon yogurts sitting on the shelves of local *hanuts* with no intention of being bought or replaced. No one ever took credit for starting the boycott so there was no clear purpose, but in general it started just before Ramadan to protest the excessive prices of basic goods like water and milk. Many Moroccan migrants in Europe took to social media to

post pictures of water being significantly cheaper in Europe than in Morocco, raising the question among Moroccans about the cause of the price hikes when the standard of living and wages are far lower across society and these large corporations seem to be making substantial profits. While we waited, a few of us discussed these issues and one student mentioned that he wanted to attend a protest the following day. One of the senior members of the group, an engineer and assistant to Dr. Kobaiti, asked him why he wanted to do that and what he had to gain from it. The student replied, “We have a lot of unemployment and these companies are taking the money. The government needs to help the people.” The assistant asked, “What should the government do? Are they supposed to give everyone jobs? Are they supposed to give everyone money? The people who go to protest expect that the government will hand them these things. They do not take responsibility for their education or their family.” The student said, “But they exploit us for their benefit and the government and corporations work together to do this.” “That may be true,” the assistant responded, “but what will the protest do? Go, if you want, but these protests do not provide solutions. We need real solutions and that starts with ourselves not the government.”

There are multiple ways to read this exchange. First, it reflects a common practice of advice (*naṣiḥa*) that occurs not only between shaykh and disciple, but also among disciples. In this case, the experienced disciple was offering a suggestion to the other about what to do (or not to do) while also getting him to think more deeply about the effectiveness and purpose of protests like this one, which in reality occur quite often in Morocco and, also in reality, produce little effect. Secondly, in suggesting that he not participate in the protest the government, it could be seen as an implicit support for the government, or a manifestation of the political quietism characteristic of state-sponsored Sufism. I resist this reading because

the assistant agreed that the government may be corrupt in its dealings with the business sector. The advice not to participate in the protest was therefore not a fatalist acceptance of the status quo, but a clear call to the student to focus on reforming himself and acting on what is in his own control, rather than laying responsibility at the feet of the government. It is precisely this tendency to delegate responsibility, to the state for example, that is part of the moral vacuum that exists within the society today, as Kobaiti suggests, and therefore a curriculum that is grounded in accounting for oneself and one's own actions is essential to the moral development of society. Consequently, the program as laid out in the packet takes as its primary point of concern accountability to and awareness of oneself, which in turn underpins possibilities for public action.

With this overall goal in mind, we can look at some of the specific rules of conduct during this stage. These rules of conduct pertain to multiple relationships and are certainly not confined to exclusively 'religious' domains, indicating that the curriculum does not in fact differentiate between religious and non-religious as it pertains to ethical conduct. Examples of errors of tongue include: lying, speaking black magic in order to perform supernatural acts, praising arrogant people, revealing secrets of others, speaking about one's own perfection and purity, speaking about details of creed without prior knowledge, insult and harmful words, and describing God or His messenger, angels, or companions by what does not fit them. Examples of positive behaviors of the tongue include using tongue for kindness, reciting Quran, giving advice or help to others, and performing *da'wa* (calling others to God). As for examples of errors of the hands, it includes touching the other gender with passion, theft, harming others, and writing slanderous words. Positive uses of the hands include: helping others, giving charity, thanking Allah for touch, imagining the hands

continually glorify God, using hands to write whatever pleases God, making every touch and feeling remind you of afterlife (for example, the heat of fire reminds one of the heat of hell, while the softness of the pillow reminds one of mercy and tranquility of heaven). In the case of the positive uses of hands, we see both specific acts, such as giving charity, as well as attitudes that underpin all actions with the hands. For example, using every touch as an opportunity to remember the afterlife is not an action in-itself, that is, it is an attitude or disposition that underpins everything done with one's hands. Thus, the program is not merely designed for individuals to simply follow a code of conduct; instead, it looks to form habits that connect action with forms of thought, thereby making in this case the remembrance of afterlife an unthinking disposition embedded in one's daily life. In other words, it is an attitude and ability embodied by the experienced (i.e., purified and enlightened) practitioner.

[illegible]

Figure 27. Chart taken from Kobaiti's Manual labeled "Strengthening Sincerity"

After completing the stages of purification and enlightenment, one proceeds to levels of sincerity (*ikhhlāṣ*) in which one monitors one's own intention in actions. In this case, because there are levels of sincerity through which one passes, the individual tries to complete the chart at each level before proceeding to the next. As shown in the figure above, there are seven levels to sincerity.

The first level requires that one renew the intention of sincerity before, during, and upon the completion of any righteous action (*'aml ṣālih*), such as prayer, *dhikr*, and reading Quran. In this stage, there is an intention to obtain contentment of God, along with reward in the afterlife and attainment of heaven. In other words, the first level approaches worship with the intention of obtaining remunerations in the form of contentment, heavenly rewards, and survival in the afterlife. The second stage is to worship God whole-heartedly, not with the desire to attain assurance or comfort, but because one is a servant of God rather than a servant of one's feelings and emotions. The third stage is that one should perform righteous action only to obtain the contentment of God and not for the attainment of heaven. While the first level allows one to take into account the potential rewards in the afterlife as motive for action, the second and third levels explicitly state that these ulterior motives, such as earning a place in heaven, must be overcome. The fourth stage is that one should perform righteous actions because one is the servant of God only, not because one has ambition or greed for anything. The fifth stage is that one's worship be sincere toward the essence of God because destiny, i.e., heaven or hell, has already obtained in God's knowledge. In other words, one worships with the recognition that one's fate is already written, or that God already knows one's fate, so one worships not to convince God of where one ought to be but simply out of sincerity. The sixth stage is that one worships Allah without any aim or motive at all. While

the earlier stages allow a degree of motivation, for example to obtain contentment (*riḍā*) from God. Finally, the seventh stage is that one worships Allah “without believing that one has become sincere.” In this final stage of sincerity, one effectively detaches oneself from all forms of ulterior motivation, even removing sincerity itself as a motivation. In other words, while the first six stages allow for the cultivation of sincerity to serve as a purpose or a goal for the actions, the final stage removes this as a goal, thereby making the goal of worship through daily life an end in-itself.

For Dr. Kobaiti, this final stage of sincerity is equated with *iḥsān* insofar as one develops a mastery over one’s feelings, thoughts, and actions that enables one to remain directed towards Allah not only in prayer, but throughout one’s life. Concentration, or the ability not to be distracted or diverted, is a skill that must be practiced and honed, and the goal of the curriculum is to help individuals gain a degree of mastery over their habits of thought and action through a process of continued self-evaluation (*murāqaba*). In cultivating this mastery, individuals learn to perfect their practice such that the attitudes and abilities that make possible perfect practice permeate the personality of the individual in its entirety. In short, the curriculum of ethical development is a program for the acquisition (or attainment) of *iḥsān*, where *iḥsān* is understood not as a direct seeing (as with the Karkariyya) but as a set of embodied capacities linked to sincerity, continued concentration, and excellent practice. In both cases, *iḥsān* is an embodied dimension of the tradition; however, for the former it is a perceptual aptitude and for the latter it is an orientation tied to intention that is aligned through prayer along with techniques of self-monitoring. As such, the form of the curriculum can be connected to conceptions and practices of *iḥsān*.

The final pages of the packet contain the specifics about how to perfect the performance of prayer externally and internally, with a chart for each to track progress. These charts function in the same way as the enlightenment pages in that one is meant to perform all of them and record errors. Moreover, as with the previous ones, the individual is supposed to focus on this for thirty days, not with the idea of stopping after thirty days, but on the principle that thirty days is sufficient to alter habits. I conclude this chapter with these not only because they are the final pages in the packet, but also because it highlights explicitly that this program of Sufi ethical development is concerned with both internal and outer aspects of worship as a form of life. While some of the prescribed behaviors in the purification and enlightenment sections were certainly internal states, i.e., concerned what an individual was thinking or what his/her intention was, other behaviors were entirely external and therefore this program represents a means to cultivating a more pervasive piety that shapes ways of being and interacting in the world. This was made explicit by Dr. Kobaiti when he defends the spiritual ascent by arguing that they practice the *sunna* of the Prophet externally and internally. This division in which Sufism is simultaneously linked to the internal and separated from the external aspects of the Islamic tradition, specifically the *sharia*, is certainly not a feature of these contemporary Sufi groups.

With regard to the performance of prayer, Kobaiti's chart for the aspects of external performance contains a basic list of elements. He says that each individual must be knowledgeable of the obligations for prayer and perform ablutions in the proper manner. Men should perform the prayer in a mosque and be sure to maintain purity in clothing. Furthermore, everyone should learn to pray as the Prophet prayed and worked to follow that in detail. Individuals should vary the supplications and invocations that they use according

to positions in the prayer, and they should also vary the chapters and verses used during prayer while making sure they understand their meaning. Finally, each person should go to perform prayer at the specified time while also performing additional prayers afterward.

As for the internal dimensions of prayer, Kobaiti lists nine components for perfecting prayer. When performing prayer, it is necessary to believe that the divine is present from the beginning to the end, and one must be thinking throughout the prayer, that is, be attentive and not neglect thought willfully. Furthermore, one must enter the prayer as if one were conversing with God and “Perform the prayer as you live the meaning of the Quran.” In addition, one should perform the prayer as if it is one’s last prayer and prevent the world from entering one’s mind or heart. He also states that one should, “Pray as if one is in the *barzakh* awaiting the questioning of angels, or waiting in the day of judgement.” During the prayer, one should be totally absorbed in the names and attributes of God, seeking to make their presence felt throughout the prayer. Finally, Kobaiti advises that everyone remain in the presence of Allah for at least an entire hour after completion of the prayer. Obviously not everyone can remain in the mosque after prayer and must return to their daily lives, but this advice shows how the proper performance of prayer is not meant simply for the period of prayer itself; instead, the internal states (and external states like purity) should carry over or bleed into daily life such that the presence obtained during prayer is felt outside of prayer. In maintaining this feeling of presence, one is working to cultivate a habitual attitude in which one not only acts ‘as if’ God is present (or as if he/she sees Him), but also knows that one is always under God’s supervision (know that He sees you). In short, prayer is a means for cultivating internal dispositions that constitute *ihsān*, which in this case is not a perceptual

capability but an orienting attitude that gives direction and intention to the individual in one's thought and action.

iv. Summary

In comparing the Karkariyya and IACSAS in terms of *ihsān*, my goal is not to argue that they have drastically different conceptions that can be read off their programs of ethical cultivation. Rather, my goal is to illustrate how slight differences in emphasis regarding *ihsān* give rise to differences in practice. Furthermore, by focusing on how the practices relate to *ihsān*, rather than solely how it is defined or conceptualized, I emphasize that *ihsān* is itself not an abstract concept, but a set of embodied capabilities cultivated through an ensemble of exercises and performed in everyday contexts. As such, an analysis of Islam, and Sufism, as an embodied tradition in contemporary Morocco requires us to attend to the technologies of transformation through which individuals, in conjunction with their community and guides, attain the level of *ihsān*.

In demonstrating a second refraction of *ihsān* as mastery of the self, my aim in this chapter was to bring into relief a second dimension of *ihsān* as a form of public piety, that is, the relationship to oneself. While appearing to follow the trend of Sufism to detach oneself from worldly affairs and focus on the individual, the type of piety cultivated through Dr. Kobaiti's spiritual and ethical programs in fact underpins forms of embodied sociability and civility that facilitate or enable modes of public engagement. In other words, the focus on accounting for oneself becomes the basis for a type of citizenship in which responsibility to oneself is rearticulated as responsibility to others and to society. Thus, the program of individual reform is the starting point for a broader vision of social reform in which society is

composed of accountable and open-minded members, and this accountability and tolerance is the product of cultivating *ihsān* as a form of public piety. One way in which this is demonstrated is through religious conferences that perform a reasoned piety grounded in attitudes of responsibility to oneself and tolerance of others.

On top of illustrating a second refraction of *ihsān* and opening up a space of comparison between the Karkariyya and the IACSAS, my point was to point toward the development of a curriculum of ethical education (*minhaj al-tarbiya*) that could be deployed outside of the *zawiya* itself. As such, Dr. Kobaiti's program, exemplified in his charts for purification and enlightenment, also connects with the efforts of the 'Alāwiyya to 'bring the *zawiya* into the world' by forming various non-governmental associations and schools. The recognition of a need for an applied curriculum of ethical education that can be deployed outside of the confines of the traditional *zawiya* reflects an effort on the part of both groups to revive and reform Sufism in the contemporary world through the reassertion of the role of Sufis as educators and moral leaders in society. It is to this effort of 'bringing the *zawiya* out into the world' and the third refraction of *ihsān* that I now turn.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: BRINGING THE ZAWIYA INTO THE WORLD: SHAYKH KHĀLID AND THE
TARIQA ‘ALĀWIYYA

“Care not about spirituality but about humanity!”⁸⁸⁷
- Shaykh Khālīd bin Tūnis

i. Introduction

In the previous chapters, I looked at two Sufi organizations in order to illustrate their curricula of ethical development, as well as how they orient themselves with respect to a religious field in which Sufism is supported by the state as a moral foundation of modern Moroccan citizenship. In doing so, my goal has been to show how there are multiple trajectories of alignment between state discourses and the specific practices of Sufi communities, in addition to how state approaches to Sufism simultaneously make possible and constrain possibilities for those communities. Thus, while state discussions of Sufism seem to normalize Sufism in the sense of endorsing policies that construct it as a unified set of ideas, and western scholarship among political scientists who look at this policy tend to reiterate this singular vision of Sufism, my work suggests a degree of variability, even within a relatively narrow range of Sufi groups. Regarding my overall argument, this chapter is intended to add to this conception of internal diversity by illustrating a third iteration of the relationship between Sufism and *iḥsān*.

In this chapter, I aim to illustrate how the curriculum of ethical education of the *tariqa* ‘Alāwiyya and its leader Shaykh Khālīd bin Tūnis represents a socially engaged spirituality that situates social practices, such as giving charity, as essential components of individual and social development. In doing so, the cultivation of virtuous piety (*iḥsān*) in

⁸⁸⁷ Khālīd bin Tūnis, *Sufism: The Heart of Islam*, trans. Khaled El-Abdi (Chino Valley: Hohm Press, 2015), 91.

individuals is linked to the welfare of global society. Through this active engagement in social welfare, the ‘Alāwiyya reflect a third dimension of *iḥsān*, that is, *iḥsān* as charitable action and service to the other. As such, the curriculum articulated and implemented by Shaykh Khālīd bin Tūnis situates *iḥsān* as a foundation of a cosmopolitan citizenship and/or civility that universalizes a certain set of values embedded in Sufism.

In this chapter, I will present an overview of Shaykh Khālīd’s vision of reform as well as the means for implementing that vision. With regard to the vision, I argue that he occupies a traditional space of Sufi as social critic (*nāṣiḥ*) who performs a moral accounting of social, political, and religious leaders through the practice of ‘commanding the right and forbidding the wrong’ (*ḥisba*). In order to clarify the sense in which I use critic, I will engage in a brief theoretical discussion of criticism as an ethical, as opposed to an epistemological, project. After outlining Shaykh Khālīd’s criticism and his vision for reform, I detail the array of activities and associations that aim at the implementation of that vision. In this regard, I argue that in order to ‘bring the *zawiya* into the world,’ that is, to construct a socially engaged spirituality, it has become necessary to establish a variety of civil society organizations that afford possibilities for collective social practices not available to the *zawiya* in its traditional form. My goal is to demonstrate how *iḥsān* remains a telos in Shaykh Khālīd’s *minhaj al-tarbiya* but is interpreted as ‘service to others’ and therefore requires formalized mechanisms to effectively cultivate and perform. This reflects the third refraction of *iḥsān* discussed in this work. In the following two chapters, I will look at different ways of performing this virtuous piety through a comparison of a saint’s festival in Morocco and a conference in Spain (Chapter Thirteen) and the activities of the Shaykh al-Alawi Association for the Revival of Sufi Heritage in Morocco (Chapter Fourteen).

ii. Criticism as Ethical Project

Before turning to the specifics of Shaykh Khālīd and his critique of society, I want to begin by clarifying the sense in which I use the terms criticism and critique when I refer to the Sufi as critic. This is necessary because the history of critique, especially as it goes back to its Kantian roots, has often been used to describe an epistemological project directed at establishing the limits of knowledge, as well as to the related project of challenging religious authority and its claims to knowledge. In other words, critique is often associated with a secular sensibility that is skeptical of religious authority and knowledge, so for many within the academy who understand critique in this way, referring to a religious figure as a critic may appear problematic. My goal in this discussion, however, is not to provide an thorough account but merely to situate my use of the practice of criticism within a line of thinkers that frame it not as an epistemological process but as an ethical project in which the intellectual endeavor must make possible new forms of action and forms of life, not merely new ways of knowing.⁸⁸⁸ Thus, in thinking about the reform projects undertaken by the groups discussed in this work, I find the idea of criticism as an ethical project to be much more fruitful in thinking through the ways in which Sufis perform their role as social critics within Muslim societies.

The question of the secularity of critique is taken up directly in an edited volume with the title *Is Critique Secular?* (2009). In the introduction, Wendy Brown writes:

⁸⁸⁸ Specifically, I draw on Michel Foucault who writes, “It is a matter of point out on what kinds of assumptions, what kinds of familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought the practices that we accept rest ... If at the base there has not been the work of thought upon itself and if, in fact, modes of thought, that is to say modes of action, have not been altered, whatever the project of reform, we know that it will be swamped, digested by modes of behavior and institutions that will always be the same” (Michel Foucault, “Practicing Criticism,” in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings 1977-1984*, trans. Alan Sheridan, ed. Lawrence Kritzman (New York, 1988).

The question, is critique secular? would seem to imitate critique's direct interrogative modality and secularism's putative transparency, conveying as well an *expectation of rational consideration conventionally associated with both critique and secularism* ... the Western academy is governed by the presumptive secularism of critique, and that it is with this governance that we must begin. Unseating governance of this sort is the very signature of political, social, and cultural critique; it targets what is presumptive, sure, commonsensical, or given in the current order of things.⁸⁸⁹

In other words, the question of the secularity of critique reflects an underlying assumption regarding rationality and a skepticism of religion due to its non-rational roots. In short, so this line of thinking goes, if critique is rational then it must be secular because religion is not grounded in the authority of reason, or at the very least poses nonrational limitations on the use of reason. There are of course nuances in this line of thinking, but my goal here is not to rehash debates about the secular versus the religious. Instead, my goal is to show how criticism can be approached as an ethical project, and therefore how different traditions may deploy alternative rationalities (i.e., types of arguments framed by discursively negotiated criteria) in their criticism of the constitution of contemporary subjectivity and society.

I turn now to the question, "Is critique secular?" posed as the title and centralizing theme of articles written by Talal Asad and Judith Butler, in order to highlight the different notions implied by the term critique and to more clearly articulate the tradition of criticism within which I situate this project. Whereas for Butler critique is primarily an epistemological project seeking to unearth false assumptions that function in the service of normative discourses and institutions; for Asad, on the other hand, the question of the secularity of critique requires a consideration of the historical constitution of the practice of critique as secular. The point is that an answer to this question has less to do with an essential classification of critique, because after all, as Asad shows in *Formations of the*

⁸⁸⁹ Talal Asad et al., *Is Critique Secular?: Blasphemy, Injury, and Free Speech* (Berkeley: Townsend Center for the Humanities, University of California, 2009), 8 (italics added).

Secular, the concept of the secular is not an essentially fixed category.⁸⁹⁰ Rather, critique may be secular or it may not be secular at all when critique is seen as an epistemological project. However, as investigated by Foucault, if critique is seen instead as an ethical project, as a practice of self-transformation, or an “art of not being governed,” then the project goes much deeper than the questioning and breaking-down of epistemological assumptions. Ultimately, the project of critique highlights the mechanisms by which we have been constituted as subjects in the present, not to reveal the aspects of that constitution that are guided by false assumptions, but to help us see the subtle and often not-so-subtle ways in which we are governed in the modern liberal state. By bringing into relief those process, it opens up space for change in that alternative techniques of self-constitution allow individuals to govern themselves more and be governed less. It is important to note here as well that governance, in this sense, refers not just to how governments suppress, coerce, and dominate subjects, but also to how they produce subjects at the same time through variable, and sometimes hidden, disciplinary techniques.⁸⁹¹ As I will demonstrate, Shaykh Khālīd’s criticism deals precisely with this issue, that is, how to change our relationships to ourselves, others, and the divine such that we can be governed less (or at least differently).

Foucault expresses a similar sentiment about his critical project, stating that it is “not a critical philosophy that seeks to determine the conditions and the limits of our possible knowledge of the subject, but a critical philosophy that seeks the conditions and the indefinite possibilities of transforming the subject, of transforming ourselves.”⁸⁹² Part of the capacity for self-reinvention, or for governing the self, also requires an understanding of the

⁸⁹⁰ Asad, *Formations*, 25.

⁸⁹¹ Michel Foucault, *Subjectivity and Truth: Lectures at the College de France 1980-81* (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2017), 152-3.

⁸⁹² Foucault, *Subjectivity*, 152.

processes by which that self is currently governed. As such, critique in this sense deals with a relationship to oneself, making it an ethical project, as well as with the historical constitution of the subject through the dynamic interaction of productive and dominating mechanisms of power.

Taking critique as an ethical project poses the problem to many scholars and activists, like Judith Butler, of what kind of principles can ground an ethical form of life and how to evaluate between those perspectives. For instance, Foucault writes, “Recent liberation movements suffer from the fact that they cannot find any principle on which to base the elaboration of a new ethics. They need an ethics, but they cannot find any other ethics than an ethics founded on so-called scientific knowledge of what the self is, what desire is, what the unconscious is, and so on.”⁸⁹³ What Foucault is questioning here is how it can be possible to establish a shared ethical framework that will make possible new forms of life, and for many contemporary scholars, that ethics is to be found in the form of human rights which in turn is grounded in an essentialized, scientific conception of what the human is, which of course Foucault himself critiqued in his study of the emergence of the human sciences in *The Order of Things*. Foucault turns to the ethics of the Greeks to find such an ethical framework for living artfully in a world that is not entirely of one’s own making, and critique as an ethical project pushes us to invent new techniques of the self that are not so bound up with certain structures of power so that we can explore alternative relationships with ourselves and others that do not necessarily carry with them the weight (and violence) of normative structures operative in the world today. For someone like Shaykh Khālid, rather than turning to the Greeks one can turn to Sufism to provide what I call a transnational

⁸⁹³ Foucault, “Genealogy of Ethics,” 256.

ethical grammar that shapes shared forms of life across the boundaries of the nation-state.⁸⁹⁴

So while Sufism may be used as a source of solidarity to foster a Moroccan religious and national identity, for Shaykh Khālīd it provides a shared ethical framework that underpins a cosmopolitan identity not confined to a specific nation-state.

My point is that in the formulation of criticism as an ethical project, there are possibilities for alternative modes of criticism not necessarily grounded in secular reason and its attendant ethical theories of deontology and utilitarianism that presume an essentialized, universal self. Put otherwise, by turning to Sufism as an ethical tradition and source of cosmopolitan solidarity, Shaykh Khālīd is not only critiquing existing ethical structures and their associated structures of power and normativity, but also attempting to provide new spaces of shared social action and forms of life that can bridge various types of difference. Moreover, insofar as my argument has been that Sufism can be approached as a practical ethical tradition, it is not an invention of tradition to use it as the grounds for a social critique that attempts to unravel the dominant structures of power that are behind modes of subjectification in the modern liberal world. To be clear, I am not offering here a prescriptive argument about the moral merit of these arguments, but merely to identify the possibility of a religiously grounded moral criticism of society that draws upon traditions of *naṣīḥa* and *ḥisba*.

Taking a step back for a moment to reiterate this argument, I turn to Talal Asad's discussion of religious criticism in Saudi Arabia. As he argues in his overview of Kant's approach to critique and its subsequent effects of notions of civil society and public debate,

⁸⁹⁴ This idea of a transnational ethical grammar is taken from Saba Mahmood's discussion of ethical thematization in Saba Mahmood, *Religious Difference in a Secular Age: A Minority Report* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).

the rationality of criticism was linked to a rejection of religious authority and the autonomy of the subject in public.⁸⁹⁵ Asad writes in summary, “Of course the concepts and practices of religion and state have not remained unchanged since Kant. But liberals continue to invoke his principle of the public use of reason as the arbiter of true knowledge ... and remain alert to the disruptive possibilities of religion as defined ... by the Enlightenment.”⁸⁹⁶ In this liberal formulation, Universal Reason is the only acceptable criterion for determining validity of claims made in the public, and any arguments grounded in religious authority, moral sentiment, or emotion (all of which fall broadly under the heading of mere belief or opinion) are unwarranted intrusions on the autonomy of subjects and therefore also detrimental to the functioning of civil society and the state. This secularized notion of critique, with its attendant conceptions of universal reason and the autonomous transcendental subject, are not the only ways to think about reasoned criticism.

Asad demonstrates this through his analysis of the ways in which *naṣṭḥa* (in this context criticism) has operated in modern Saudi Arabia. Despite the strict regulation of the religious and public fields, there are nevertheless institutional mechanisms and proper means for religious leaders to offer criticism of political authorities. These mechanisms are of course bound by certain criteria, but the existence of such limits of public criticism should not, in themselves, be taken as a sign of absolute distinction from the liberal public sphere, which also contains other constraints.⁸⁹⁷ Thus, the question of who speaks, when they are able to speak, and how they can speak are questions posed by Islamic and liberal traditions

⁸⁹⁵ “Kant’s idea of public, publicity, and critical reason have become part of a Habermasian story of the progressively liberating aspects of secular, bourgeois society” (Asad, *Genealogies*, 202).

⁸⁹⁶ Asad, *Genealogies*, 207.

⁸⁹⁷ Asad writes, “What the liberal tradition shares is precisely a continuing argument over the proper boundary between the authority of the law, on the one hand, and the freedom to speak and criticize publicly, on the other, as well as about who, among those qualified to engage in the criticism, deserves special attention” (Asad, *Genealogies*, 204).

alike.⁸⁹⁸ Highlighting these types of limitations, Asad writes, “[Critical debate] is limiting in that there are certain choices it will not allow; it is limited in that there are certain things it will not criticize. Nevertheless, I have aimed to provide an account that suggests the limitations are not due to a permanent incapacity to contemplate change, still less to an intrinsic contradiction between religion and reason. The limitations are part of the way a particular discursive tradition, and its associated disciplines, are articulated at a particular point in time.”⁸⁹⁹

In the Islamic tradition, these questions pertain to two closely related practices: *naṣīḥa* and *ḥisba*. However, they also draw on a different conceptualization of the community and the relationship between individuals in that community. Whereas the imagined community of the liberal nation-state relies on the idea of citizens who relate to one another via the law, that is, as abstract entities and strangers, the Islamic community (*umma*) is constituted by more permeable subjects whose relationship to one another not only allows for but also necessitates a degree of moral oversight.⁹⁰⁰ As I argued in Chapter Three, this conception of community requires a notion of the public that is imbued with discipline as well as debate, with power as well as reason. One of the means through which this community is maintained is *naṣīḥa*. However, in contrast to an image of moral oversight in public as merely a repressive technique, for Asad, “It reflects the principle that a well-regulated polity depends on its members being virtuous individuals who are partly responsible for one another’s moral condition – and therefore in part on continuous moral

⁸⁹⁸ “Even in a nonliberal (illiberal) state such as Saudi Arabia, then, there is a tradition of social criticism that is open and institutionalized” (Asad, *Genealogies*, 213).

⁸⁹⁹ Asad, *Genealogies*, 232.

⁹⁰⁰ “The *umma* is the concept of a religious-political space – divinely sanctioned and eternally valid – within which rational discussion, debate, and criticism can be conducted. It is also a space of power and of punishment” (Asad, *Genealogies*, 223).

criticism.”⁹⁰¹ In short, the moral character, rather than the legal status, of individuals is a primary concern for social criticism in Islamic traditions, and my point is that Sufis have often occupied this position of critic (*nāṣiḥ*) throughout history, offering forms of social, political, and religious critique that have contributed to the transformation of Islamic traditions.

My point in all of this is that there exists a tradition of social criticism embedded in Islam that is best understood by thinking about criticism as an ethical project. As I will discuss in the next section, Sufis have been prominent in this regard, occupying the role of social and political critic throughout Islamic history. Shaykh Khālīd draws upon these Islamic precedents to provide a critique of contemporary society that is not so much concerned with rival claims to truth as it is with transforming the moral character of individuals in order to reform social and political structures of power. This moral character, as I will show, is captured in the concept of virtuous piety (*iḥsān*), which imbues the individual with social and spiritual virtues that provide the basis for a shared sense of humanity and community, i.e., a transnational ethical grammar that underpins shared forms of life. Importantly, these virtues are not merely at the level of values or beliefs, but create the shared ethical sensibilities that make possible shared spaces of community action like charity that are not bound by religious or national difference. As such, *iḥsān* in this context forms the basis of a cosmopolitan ethic and universal spirituality that in its fulfillment benefits both Muslim and non-Muslim society on global levels.

⁹⁰¹ Asad goes on to contrast this with liberalism: “Modern liberalism rejects this principle. The well-regulated modern polity – so it argues – depends on the provision of optimum amounts of social welfare and individual liberty, not on moral criticism. The primary critical task, according to political liberalism, is not the moral disciplining of individuals but the rational administration and care of entire populations. Morality, together with religious belief, has become essentially a personal matter for the self-determining individual – or so the liberal likes to claim” (Asad, *Genealogies*, 233).

iii. Sufi as Critic

In some modern studies, Sufis are often framed as apolitical, quietist, and largely unconcerned with worldly affairs. This narrative has been enhanced in the context of the war on terror as Sufis are framed as the peaceful alternative to violent Muslim movements. It has also been informed by a history of research in which Sufism was framed as a mystical tradition that was corrupted over time as it became increasingly invested in issues of worldly concern. While this decline model has been refuted from several perspectives, a presumption remains that Sufi engagement in social life needs to be explained. As such, for instance, contemporary Sufi orders that concern themselves with social affairs or engage in social activities are uniquely modern, being in some way the product of modern capitalism and (neo)liberalism. In other words, the question for many people regarding Sufism and modernity is that, since they did not engage in these activities in the past, why are they doing it now?

However, many historians and anthropologists are beginning to recognize how deeply embedded Sufis and Sufi orders were in Islamic intellectual, social, political, and economic life. Sufi orders and their associated lodges formed integral nodes in vast intercontinental trade networks; Sufism was one among several Islamic sciences taught in Islamic schools and many Sufis were prominent jurists and theologians; Sufis often operated as mediators and judges in social contexts; and, Sufis commonly served as advisors to political figures. One could consider Sufism for much of Islamic history as a total social fact.⁹⁰² These various roles occupied by Sufis are captured in their dynamic role as *nāṣiḥ*, that is, someone who gives moral guidance for the benefit of the individual as well as society as a whole.

⁹⁰² On total social fact see Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Giving in Archaic Societies* (London: Cohen & West, 1966).

In the classical period, the role of political critic and advisor can be seen in the ‘mirror for princes’ literature. This genre is represented by, for example, al-Ghazali’s *Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk* (‘Counsel for Kings’). While the authorship of this work is debated, it appears that at least the first portion was in fact written by al-Ghazali.⁹⁰³ My point here is not to dive into the specifics of this text or its historical significance or context, but simply to highlight how al-Ghazali acts as a kind of spiritual advisor to the ruler through the work. In the introduction to his translation, Bagley summarizes the content of *Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk* in the following way: “[It] expresses a Sufi view of life and of politics which seems genuinely Ghazalian. What matters above all is the inward spiritual life; the ruler must therefore sincerely believe in the true faith and fulfill its prescriptions, sincerely intend to govern justly, and sincerely resist the temptation to love worldly power and wealth, and pleasure for their own sake.”⁹⁰⁴ Thus, one critical role of the Sufi is to be a spiritual advisor or teacher for those in power, to hold them accountable to their religious and spiritual lives, under the expectation that the proper character will lead to exercising power justly and righteously. In a sense, the Sufi as *nāṣiḥ* in this context is a *shaykh murabbi* for rulers.

Similarly, John Renard highlights in his book, *Friends of God*, how Sufis did not necessarily shy away from centers of power. He writes in this regard, “Access to the powerful is an important theme in the stories of individual Friends as well as in those of representatives of major Sufi orders ... As a result, stories often describe how a Friend of God wins or escapes a confrontation with a ruler, who subsequently asks forgiveness for his effrontery and may even become a disciple of the shaykh.”⁹⁰⁵ As Renard points out here, the

⁹⁰³ Patricia Crone, “Did Al-Ghazali Write a Mirror for Princes? On the Authorship of *naṣīḥat al-mulūk*,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 9 (1987): 167-191.

⁹⁰⁴ Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, *Counsel for Kings*, tran. F.R.C. Bagley (London: Oxford University Press, 1964).

⁹⁰⁵ Renard, *Friends*, 150.

relationship between the ruler and Sufi may be adversarial or amiable. In some cases, Sufis may speak out directly against the injustices of a ruler, acting as a kind of intermediary for the common people. However, such criticism is not without its risks, so the Sufi must carefully balance that criticism with the proper respect or run the risk of punishment, imprisonment, or execution. In this sense, as Talal Asad pointed out in the contemporary Saudi Arabian context, there is a proper mode of conduct and comportment (*ādāb*) for performing political counsel and criticism (*naṣīḥa*). I will briefly sketch a few relevant examples from the Moroccan context, some of which were discussed in Chapter Four in more detail. My point at present is simply to highlight the role of the Sufi as critic while also bringing into relief the implicit rules that govern that criticism. In doing so, my point is that although contemporary Sufi shaykhs, such as Khālīd bin Tūnis, do not explicitly or overtly criticize the Moroccan king, for example, aspects of their social critiques can be read as implicit criticisms of political authorities and structures of power specific to Morocco (e.g., pyramidal structure is reflective of the hierarchies of Moroccan society with the king at the peak followed by the *makhzen*).

In the historical context of Morocco, the ethical authority of the Sufi shaykh was linked to the performance of *ḥisba*, that is, ‘commanding the good and forbidding the evil.’ Vincent Cornell writes on this, “The ṣāliḥ’s relationship with the *malāmātiyya* tradition can be seen in the saint’s tendency to act as critic (*nāṣiḥ*) and in his or her advocacy of the Qur’anic injunction to ‘command the good and forbid evil’ ... an attitude of political dissent was more characteristic of the Moroccan *malāmātiyya* than was antinomianism, a rejection of the law.”⁹⁰⁶ What I want to highlight in this quote is that the role of critic entailed on the one

⁹⁰⁶ Cornell, *Realm*, 278.

hand a sense of social and moral criticism embedded in the idea of *hisba*, and on the other hand a sense of political criticism or dissent. While this tendency emerged more explicitly through a number of historical circumstances over the course of the early modern period, that political dissent was considered to be a part of Moroccan Sufism for much of the modern period. Thus, the argument of scholars like Hammoudi, for instance, that Sufism produces an ambivalent acquiescence to political authority and power is not necessarily corroborated by historical analysis.⁹⁰⁷

Perhaps the most well-known example of a Sufi critiquing a ruler in the Moroccan context is the story of Mūlāy Isma‘īl and al-Yūsī (Lyusi) that formed the basis of Geertz’s (in)famous analysis of politics and religion in Morocco. As it is narrated in his ethnographic account of an oral history, al-Yūsī was invited by Mūlāy Isma‘īl into the court and was well received as a holy person and spiritual advisor. However, when al-Yūsī learned of the sultan’s injustices, which included laborers dying while building a wall around the city of Meknes, al-Yūsī methodically destroyed all the dishes in the palace over a period of time. When the sultan questioned al-Yūsī about it, the latter replied something to the effect, “Which is better, the pottery of Allah or the pottery of clay?” The implication in this comment was that although al-Yūsī was breaking the dishes, Mūlāy Isma‘īl was breaking God’s creation, i.e., he was killing humans (who are made of clay). In response, the sultan banished him from the city, but he proceeded to set up camp just outside the walls of the city. The sultan then came to al-Yūsī to confront him about not leaving, and as the narration in Geertz’s account goes, when the sultan advanced on al-Yūsī for disobeying him, al-Yūsī drew a line in the ground and when the sultan crossed it, the legs of the horse he was riding

⁹⁰⁷ Hammoudi, *Master and Disciple*.

got stuck in the ground. This resulted in the sultan's explicit repentance and recognition of al-Yūsī as *sharīf* (descendant of the Prophet Muhammad).

My concern here is neither with the historical accuracy of this story, nor the displays of *baraka* that were taken to be demonstrative of Moroccan religion and politics. Rather, my point is simply that the concept of the Sufi as a political critic (*nāṣiḥ*) exists in Moroccan Sufism. The grounds upon which a Sufi may exercise this role as critic can vary. It may be dependent upon a Sufi's ability to perform miracles, as evidenced in this case, but it may equally be dependent upon an ethical authority derived from the Sufi's moral character as *ṣāliḥ*, or it may depend upon a religious authority tied to knowledge of legal matters as a *fāqih*. As Nile Green observes in this regard, "By seeing mystical knowledge and book-learning as forms of authority which might alternatively be united in a single person or separately championed by rivals, this contextual approach helps us reckon with the inconsistencies of the older static picture of 'mystics versus lawyers.'"⁹⁰⁸ Even in the Moroccan context, the Sufi as *nāṣiḥ* may derive authority, i.e., capacity to speak against powerful, from multiple sources.⁹⁰⁹

A second example is Muhammad al-Kattani, a well-known but controversial Sufi figure in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. I described his influence leading up to the signing of the Treaty of Fes in 1912, which established the French Protectorate, in Chapter Four. In the period leading up to 1912, he effectively mobilized support against the sultan Abd al-Aziz, eventually overthrowing him in favor of Abd al-Hafiz, who framed himself as an anti-colonial figure. In her analysis of al-Kattani, Sahar Bazzaz notes, "These

⁹⁰⁸ Green, *Sufism*, 157.

⁹⁰⁹ The role of the Sufi as a social critic that relies on legal authority is exemplified, for instance, in the case of Ahmad Zarruq analyzed by Scott Kugle, *Rebel*.

followers looked to al-Kattani for leadership and for political solutions to the problems plaguing Moroccan society, namely a sultan who compromised the sanctity of the *sharia* through his inability to thwart European colonial incursion ... al-Kattani's authority to challenge the sultan was based on his status as *sharif* ... and his in-depth mystical and juridical knowledge.”⁹¹⁰ While he would later be accused of ‘pro-French’ and therefore anti-nationalist sentiments for also resisting Abd al-Hafiz on the grounds that the sultan was excessively capitulating to the French, the point I want to make here is that his authority for criticism in the first case was based on both his ‘mystical and juridical knowledge.’ The historian Robert Munson writes in regard Muhammad al-Kattani, “Righteous scholars posed a real threat to sultans only when they were seen to be sacred as well as righteous, when they were believed to possess great baraka as well as knowledge.”⁹¹¹ Moreover, al-Kattani was a kind of populist leader, able to articulate shared feelings of the population against the powerful. His criticism was aimed largely at the hypocrisy of rulers and religious scholars, while his preaching targeted classes of tradespersons, artisans, and Berber villages. Specifically, Al-Kattani attacked the religious leaders who were failing in their duties as moral leaders, and in failing they were not merely allowing for the corruption of the Muslim community, but also opening it up to exploitation from foreign (Christian) powers.⁹¹² In short,. For al-Kattani, such a state of despair was reflected most poignantly in the figure of the sultan, Abd al-Aziz. When the successor, Abd al-Hafiz, also failed to live up to al-

⁹¹⁰ Bazzaz, *Forgotten Saints*, 68.

⁹¹¹ As Munson points out, “Al-Kattani argued that the Christians were in the process of subjugating Morocco because the ulama no longer taught mathematics or the basic rituals of Islam to the people ... The ulama were neglecting their role as exemplars to be emulated by ordinary believers” (Munson, *Religion and Power*, 62).

⁹¹² Munson, *Religion and Power*, 62.

Kattani's expectations, the latter attempted to start another revolt. However, he was captured and executed before it was able to get off the ground.

My goal here is not to provide a thorough historical account, but merely to point out some of these instances where Sufi leaders do insert themselves in the political realm as critics or advisors. In both cases, they are speaking against the injustices of rulers and the inability of rulers to maintain the moral integrity of the community. In addition, they each reflect in their own way different aspects of the ability for a Sufi figure to perform this function. For al-Yūsī, his ability to perform a miraculous deed that evidenced his spiritual prowess served as a turning point in his relationship to the sultan and granted him the requisite authority. For al-Kattani, his mystical and legal knowledge allowed him to effectively recruit popular support and translate popular grievances into a language that targeted ruling classes and religious elite. Both of these cases, however, indicate the consequences of exceeding the boundaries of appropriate criticism. A much more recent example of this is Shaykh Abdessalam Yassine (discussed in more detail in Chapter Five).

In his (in)famous open letter to King Hassan II, Abdessalam Yassine adopted the role of unsolicited spiritual advisor, 'inviting' the king to repent and turn away from his imitation of western customs and ideals. Summarizing this letter, the scholar of religion Sam Houston writes, "In writing this letter according to the classical literary genre of advice (*nasiha*) to rulers, Yassine was laying claim to Morocco's long tradition of activist Sufism. He did so by invoking the memory of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Kabir al-Kattani (d. 1909)."⁹¹³ As is now well-known, Hassan II responded by having him imprisoned without trial in a psychiatric hospital for over three years, eventually being released on house arrest. The movement that

⁹¹³ Houston, "Sufism and Islamist," 156.

Abdessalam Yassine created, known today as *al-‘Adl wa al-Iḥsān*, remains an extremely popular yet technically illegal organization. Thus, while all three cases illustrate the role of Sufi as critic, they also reflect the limits of that criticism and the consequences for transgressing those boundaries. As a result, it is important to keep this historical tradition in mind when considering how contemporary figures may operate as effective critics.

Some might say, however, that these examples demonstrate a kind of intolerance of criticism, especially in relation to criticism as it operates in liberal democratic nation-states. Many would be quick to jump to the conclusion that such limitations of ‘free speech’ are the product of nothing more than an oppressive religious tradition. It is worth noting, however, that in all of these cases, it is the use of force and violence that silences the criticism, and in that regard, the monopoly of violence exercised by the modern nation-state has a similar tendency to silence oppositional criticism. My point is that, as Talal Asad pointed out, there is nothing inherent in the religious tradition, as a discursive and embodied tradition, that precludes criticism. Rather, it is the specific structures of power, and most specifically the dynamics of violence and force, that enable or foreclose possibilities for criticism. As Foucault once quipped, “Concerning the expression ‘Islamic government,’ why cast immediate suspicion on the adjective ‘Islamic’? The word ‘government’ suffices, in itself, to awaken vigilance.”⁹¹⁴ My point is that while scholars of Moroccan politics have tended to chalk political deference up to religion (i.e., Sufism and Islam more generally), it is also the case that this deference is a product of imbalances of power and force. To be clear, I am also not saying that Islamic traditions necessarily allow for more space of criticism. Rather, I am simply saying that the idea that there are constraints on possibilities for criticism should not,

⁹¹⁴ Quoted in Janet Afary and Kevin B. Anderson, *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution: Gender and the Seductions of Islamism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 261.

in itself, be seen as something peculiar to religious traditions, for such constraints are imposed and practiced even in the liberal nation-state.

As I will demonstrate in this chapter, Shaykh Khālīd makes this argument by criticizing modern society on the grounds that it produces unthinking obedience. While constraints may not always appear as explicit violence and force like they tend to do in authoritarian situations (and which are suspiciously masked in liberal governance), the criteria of who is allowed to speak, how they are allowed to speak, and when they are able to speak are not applied equally to all people, even in the liberal nation-state, despite the supposed ‘equality before the law’ as ‘rational and autonomous’ agents and citizens. Even when the ability to limit speech comes back to law, that law is always already founded on a premise of violence. Or as Walter Benjamin noted in his critique of violence, “For if violence ... is the origin of law, then it may be readily supposed that where the highest violence, that of life and death, occurs in the legal system, the origins of law jut manifestly and fearsomely into existence ... all violence as a means, even in its most favorable case, is implicated in the problematic nature of law itself.”⁹¹⁵ Shaykh Khālīd, in his ability to transcend the localized legal framework of a specific nation-state as a leader of a transnational organization, operates as a critic not only of his own religious tradition, but also of liberal and authoritarian political traditions grounded in the model of the nation-state by basing his argument not on a legal but on a moral foundation.

⁹¹⁵ Walter Benjamin, “Critique of Violence,” in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings Volume 1 1913-26*, ed. Marcus Bullock, Michael Jennings (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 242-3.

iv. Shaykh Khālīd bin Tūnis and the *Tariqa* ‘Alāwiyya:

The ‘Alāwiyya order is a branch of the Darqawiyya-Shādhiliyya founded in the early twentieth century by Aḥmad ibn Mustāfa al-‘Aliywā (known as Shaykh al-‘Alawī) in the northern coastal city of Mostaghanem, Algeria. Martin Lings has provided a detailed account of the life and works of Shaykh al-Alawi in his book, *A Sufi Saint of the Twentieth Century* (1961), so I do not intend to review all this material.⁹¹⁶ Instead, I will simply provide a brief biographical sketch of Shaykh al-Alawi and his two successors, Shaykh ‘Adda bin Tūnis and Shaykh Mehdi bin Tūnis, in order to introduce the current leader of the order, Shaykh Khālīd bin Tūnis.

Shaykh al-‘Alawi was born in Mostaghanem in 1869 where he was raised and educated. He was a businessman who undertook studies at night until he met Shaykh al-Buzīdī (an encounter presented in Chapter Six) and studied with him until the latter’s passing in 1909. During the second decade of the 20th century he established the *tariqa* ‘Alāwiyya as an extension of the Darqawiyya-Shādhiliyya and in doing so, he was and is still considered a *mujaddid* (renewer) by his disciples. As a renewer, he was a spiritual instructor and developed a new curriculum for education (*tarbiya*) that had great influence not only in Algeria, but also in Morocco, Tūnisia, and Europe. He was also influential in fields such as poetry, theology, *fiqh*, astronomy, philosophy, and Quranic interpretation, while also establishing two journals and writing numerous articles. These articles were often about contemporary issues like schools, printing, press, and universities. The journals included ‘*Lisān al-dīn*’ established in 1923 and ‘*al-Balāgh al-Jiza’iri*’ in 1926. He spent his life, according to his disciples, as an independent thinker (*mujtahid*), particularly insofar as he

⁹¹⁶ Martin Lings, *A Sufi Saint of the Twentieth Century: Sheikh Ahmad Al-Alawi, His Spiritual Heritage and Legacy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961).

sought to reconcile Sufism, and Islam more generally, with modernity by calling for a dialogue of religions and advocating concepts like communication, tolerance, peace, and unity. He passed away in 1934 and was succeeded by Shaykh ‘Adda bin Tūnis.

Shaykh ‘Adda bin Tūnis was born in 1898 and was raised under the spiritual instruction of Shaykh al-Alawi. After traveling to Zaytuna for studies, he returned to stay with Shaykh al-Alawi and write books until the Shaykh’s death, at which point ‘Adda bin Tūnis began his leadership. He spread the *zawiya* according to the curriculum and values established by Shaykh al-Alawi, not diverting from that program of spiritual instruction but nonetheless establishing *zawiyas* outside Algeria as centers for *tarbiya*, *ta’līm*, and guidance (*irshād*). He continued to publish the journal ‘*Lisān al-Dīn*’ (Tongue of the Religion) and it ran from 1937-39, along with a bilingual (French and Arabic) journal between 1946 and 1952 in order to defend Islamic education and share its principles with non-Muslims. In addition, he created a foundation to teach youth professional skills in 1940 which included four components in the curriculum: mechanics, trade, printing, and baking. As we will see with Shaykh Khālīd bin Tūnis, this technique of using civic and social associations remains a key aspect of the activities of the order, and outreach to the youth through education is still considered necessary.⁹¹⁷ However, the association I worked with in Nador employs a different curriculum than the one briefly outlined here, suggesting that such engagements have evolved over time. Other associations created under Shaykh ‘Adda bin Tūnis include a foundation for young women and an association for ‘lovers of Islam’ in 1948. He wrote a number of books, including the hagiographical account of the spiritual genealogy of the

⁹¹⁷ Commenting on these types of activities, Shaykh Khālīd bin Tūnis writes, “Shaykh al-Buzidi ... used to go to brothels and teach prostitutes, whom he later married to his disciples. “There is more merit,” he used to say, “in getting people out of hell than in teaching good men.” Shaykh ‘Adda, too, created craft schools for delinquents” (Tūnis, *Sufism*, 15).

order, portions of which are used by the Karkariyya in their presentation of the lineage in Chapter Six. Shaykh ‘Adda bin Tūnis passed away in 1952 and was succeeded by Shaykh Mehdi bin Tūnis.

Shaykh Mehdi bin Tūnis was born in 1928 and was educated in the *zawiya* in Mostaghanem through multiple shaykhs, including his father ‘Adda bin Tūnis. He lived during turbulent times in Algeria and actively supported the anti-French resistance and the National Liberation Front. This support generated frictions with the French authorities and he was imprisoned for a period of time, but Shaykh Mehdi bin Tūnis is nonetheless credited with extending the geographic boundaries of the order drastically and bringing spiritual instruction of the order to westerners in Europe especially. He is viewed by the disciples in the order as a nationalist figure as a result of his support of the resistance. Shaykh Mehdi bin Tūnis passed away in 1975, at which point his son, Khālid bin Tūnis, was selected as successor.

Reflecting upon this moment, Khālid bin Tūnis writes in one of his early book, *Sufism: The Heart of Islam*:

I was twenty-six years old when I was designated by the assembly of scholars to succeed my father. I could not believe it, because the position was of such great importance ... Destiny had prepared me to live and integrate these two experiences, this bipolarity: the experience of the spiritual life that I had acquired through the traditional education, and that of the material life with its different facets ... I liquidated my business in France so that I could entirely dedicate myself to the *tariqa* ... Moreover, when our opponents noticed that the newly elected was a young man with long hair and living in Paris, they did not find me dangerous. Our heavy burden was then alleviated; that allowed us to breathe a little and, in secrecy, begin to reassemble the pieces in a slow fashion. Little by little, things went back to normal.⁹¹⁸

⁹¹⁸ Tūnis, *Sufism*, 12.

In his reflection on his selection as successor, Shaykh Khālīd recounts that the decision is left to a group of leaders who receive signs through dreams, visions, or intuitions about who to choose. He admits at first that he was hesitant to accept their decision, thinking perhaps it was only temporary. However, he writes, “I was feeling a deep transformation inside me which corresponded to the progressive emergence of another character ... This process lasted three months, and I must say that it was very intense and difficult to endure, both psychologically and physically.”⁹¹⁹ Here, Shaykh Khālīd is attempting to explain the radical experience that accompanied his selection as successor, and I cite it to highlight how he began to adopt his role as shaykh and what responsibilities that entailed. In taking up these responsibilities, Shaykh Khālīd notes that the material resources of the order were in disarray, as alluded to in his statement that they began to ‘reassemble the pieces.’ He added in this regard, “After my nomination, I discovered that the material structures of *tariqa* were profoundly weak, for when my father was imprisoned, every material asset (schools, land, prayer sites) was disintegrated and nationalized.”⁹²⁰ Therefore, he realized that although he did have a primarily spiritual role, he could not neglect the duties to rebuild and renovate the material resources of the tradition. This attention to the material dimensions of tradition, for Shaykh Khālīd, is one of the primary functions of the leader. He writes:

The Shaykh’s function is not only spiritual, it is also temporal. The community possesses goods over which he must watch. There exist, for example, dilapidated building that must be demolished, schools to rebuild, people to educate, an entire social and cultural infrastructure to manage; and the Shaykh must increase this patrimony, not diminish it. He is the guardian of the community and he cannot avoid this responsibility saying, ‘I deal only with the spiritual side, you are on your own.’ This attitude does not conform with the tradition.⁹²¹

⁹¹⁹ Tūnis, *Sufism*, 12.

⁹²⁰ Tūnis, *Sufism*, 16.

⁹²¹ Tūnis, *Sufism*, 47-8.

In short, the tradition inherited by the Shaykh is not merely the spiritual tradition, but also a material tradition consisting of the infrastructure, as well as an embodied tradition consisting of a curriculum of education. One point here is his recognition that the revitalization of the material infrastructure of the order is part of his reform program insofar as it is a necessary means to engaging the public more directly.⁹²² Finally, with respect to Shaykh Khālīd's comments about his succession, he draws attention to a 'bipolarity' that accompanied his education and life experience, along with the state of the order itself insofar as it had disciples in Europe and North Africa. Shaykh Khālīd saw it as his job, based on his dual modes of training, to integrate this duality of spirituality and materiality such that, as one of my interlocutors put it, "The *zawiya* is in the world [and] not restricted to the inside of a building [and for that] we need the spiritual path in order to act in the world with intention."⁹²³ Shaykh Khālīd's vision aims to generate this socially engaged spirituality, providing both the theoretical orientation and practical means to 'bring the *zawiya*' into the social world.

Spirituality, in this articulation, is not an end in itself but a way of orienting oneself in the world, of engaging with others, and developing attitudes that take into account not only oneself, but also oneself in relation to others and to the divine. As Shaykh Khālīd writes, "To the individuals, growing bigger and bigger in number, who are interested in spirituality, I would say: *Care not about spirituality but about humanity!* ... If spirituality assists therein, so much the better, but if it becomes a handicap, a hindrance, or an egotistic self-

⁹²² That being said, issues of material resources also give rise to conflict, for example, between the state and the *tariqa*, as well as within the order itself, particularly as it crosses international borders. Specifically, as Shaykh Khālīd began to assert control over material resources in Morocco, tensions arose with Moroccan representatives of the order, bringing into relief frictions generated by attempts by states to influence not only their domestic religious field but also foreign religious fields.

⁹²³ Notes Alaeddine, January 2019.

contentment, let us abandon it!”⁹²⁴ In this regard, the integration of the spirituality and worldly takes place through a concern for humanity, society, and the other.

Therefore, in this formulation, relationship to God, the other, and oneself are thoroughly interdependent and care for the other becomes a means for care of the self, which in turn entails the cultivation of a relationship with God. Insofar as spirituality provides both the values and practices to cultivate these relationships in the proper form, spirituality operates as a moral and ethical program of formation that begins with operations on the other. In saying this I do not mean that work is not being performed on the self or that one does not undergo a transformation; instead, my point is that this transformation of the self is a means to realizing effective social change, and that active social engagement is a necessary means for that self-transformation. He writes, “By transforming our inner world, we modify the environment that surrounds us ... If we act with mercy, tenderness, compassion, and joy, we spread around us an energy of well-being.”⁹²⁵ My point in this is therefore not to downplay the significance of spiritual practices in the order, but to bring into relief the framework articulated by Shaykh Khālīd that ties spirituality to forms of social care. In doing so, I hope to bring into focus the ways in which the various forms of social outreach are part of Shaykh Khālīd’s vision, as well as the curriculum of ethical development for individuals. Therefore, for example, in discussing practices of charity and community service, they are more than iterated acts of benevolence, that is, as embodied means for honing a set of attitudes and virtues. In short, working for social change is not only the expression of *iḥsān* as public piety, but also a technique for cultivating it as part of a pious citizenship.

⁹²⁴ Tūnis, *Sufism*, 151.

⁹²⁵ Tūnis, *Sufism*, 135.

v. Social Criticism and Reform in Shaykh Khālīd's *Tarbiya al-Yaqza*

In this section, I will outline Shaykh Khālīd's criticism and corresponding ideas about personal and social reform, while the next section will look at some of the applications. To summarize, my point is that Shaykh Khālīd proposes a socially engaged spirituality that frames *ihsān* not as the outcome of spiritual enlightenment, but as an attitude of care, concern, and service for others and humanity in general. In this sense, the notion of *ihsān* embodied and performed in this context differs from those previously discussed, and as a result, the disciplinary practices deployed, and styles of public performance also differ. Nevertheless, insofar as the cultivation of virtuous piety is tied to the well-being of society, the *minhaj al-tarbiya* of Shaykh Khālīd aims to produce *ihsān* as a form of public piety that underpins not a national citizenship, but a cosmopolitan humanism grounded in Sufism as an ethical tradition. Such efforts are also linked to a broader program of 'spiritual diplomacy.'

Shaykh Khālīd criticizes contemporary society for what he calls its pyramidal structure, which privileges competition, duality, and egoism. As he writes in his book, *Islam and the West*, "Our present world is built on a pyramidal order based on the confrontation between the peak, formed by the elite who distribute power and goods, and the base fated to be without wealth. This inevitably leads to disparity and conflict."⁹²⁶ Embedded in his critique of the pyramidal structure is a commentary on corrupt political and exploitative economic systems that privilege power and profit, leading to the moral bankruptcy of society. Continuing his critique, he turns the modernist critique of traditional authority on its head, arguing that in fact the 'modern' pyramidal structure produces blind obedience. In a talk given in December 2018, I heard Shaykh Khālīd say, "To find its place in the hierarchical

⁹²⁶ Khālīd bin Tūnis, *Al-islām wa al-gharb: al-da'wa l-l-aiysh ma'an* (Algiers: Dār al-Qaṣba l-l-Nashr, 2019), 152.

society that does not accept any questioning ... leads us to truncate our freedom of judgment and conscience, sometimes going so far as to compromise ... to accept the unacceptable in order to preserve the role, the place, and the advantages that one draws from the pyramidal system that distributes power and assets only to those in obedience.”⁹²⁷ In other words, the current state of affairs in political, social, and economic systems does not, in fact, provide liberation or freedom. Instead, it produces unthinking subjects who are unaware of their own subjugation and unwittingly participate in the perpetuation of their own exploitation. Not only does contemporary society reinforce egoism and exploitation, it also generates an unnoticed obedience and limits the freedom of individuals. He added, “We lock ourselves in a reality that values ourselves and kills the essence of being, leaving room for the illusion of success built against all the universal values of love, justice, altruism, sincerity, solidarity, and peace – the foundations of our humanity.” Thus, he grounds a humanity in a shared set of universal values that are effaced in contemporary society, leading to a degradation of humanity as a whole and an attitude of indifference toward others. In order to overcome this state of affairs, for Shaykh Khālīd, it is necessary to transform the preoccupation with the self into an attitude of service to others and humanity in general, that is, to reorient the ethical relationships between oneself and others in society. Through the cumulative reform of the moral character and ethical orientations of individuals, the social world can be re-formed as a circle in place of the pyramid.

In addition to his criticism of social and political structures, Shaykh Khālīd is also explicit in his reproach of some contemporary manifestations of the Islamic tradition. On the one hand, he calls to task the Sufis of the modern world for retreating into the *zawiyas* and

⁹²⁷ Notes, AISA Conference, December 2018.

failing to operate as moral and social leaders. While Sufi leaders and their institutions had been highly influential in society, provided various services to the community, and even served as somewhat of a check on political and religious authorities, the Sufis of today are failing in these roles. He is also, of course, highly critical of extremist manifestations of Islam that lead people toward violence and hatred. Speaking at the UN, Shaykh Khālid succinctly summarizes the social and religious dimensions of his criticism by saying:

[I hope to] contribute to sowing the seeds of hope that we all look forward to so impatiently, this reconciliation of the human family. AISA NGO has worked for a long time on this reconciliation in the field, especially with young people. Unfortunately, I see, in my opinion, that the place of young people in such an important discussion is not given the importance that it is due. Let us not forget that what we are seeking this is not peace only the absence of conflict, to arrive at this goal of peace that is inscribed as a state of being, at a level of consciousness, we must invest in educating for peace, education in the culture of peace. Also, I would like to emphasize that women's place and the importance of women must be a priority for us, because women are the first schools. It is the mother, who is the one who will give the firm imprints in our own lives. Today we are talking of religious leaders, but has the time not come to seriously ask ourselves the question. As religious leaders I am also representing one of the great Islamic Sufi fraternities, I would like to ask this question of the Religious leaders and Religious officials, has the time not come where they must look into their own scriptural writings for the germs of violence and how to translate and conceive them while bringing clarity so that the human family can reconcile itself and rebuild the future.⁹²⁸

While this short speech gives an overview of his project, what I want to emphasize here is the final portion that is directed at religious leaders. In this regard, he acknowledges the presence of 'germs of violence' within the scriptures of religious traditions. Rather than simply ignoring this, however, he argues that it is the responsibility of leaders to engage those germs directly and 'translate and conceptualize' them such that they can be explained in a way that brings people together. Underlying this is the recognition that some groups exploit these 'germs of violence,' so intellectual work must be done to develop alternative

⁹²⁸ "Kalimāt al-shaykh alātī itakhadhat fī al-umum al-mutaḥida." ASSO Alawi, accessed November 2, 2019. <http://www.assoalawimaroc.com/?p=3478>.

understandings of those germs that can effectively combat those who wish to exploit them. In failing to do this, religious leaders have shirked their responsibility, and this serves as a basis for Shaykh Khālīd's criticism. Such an effort to rethink and reformulate aspects of the tradition is reflective of the processes discussed in the journal *Qūt al-Qulūb* (see Chapter Five) where concepts such as *ijtihād* and *jihad* were reformulated.

As a substitute for the pyramid, Shaykh Khālīd proposes the 'circle of virtues and goodness' (*dā'irat al-faḍa'il wa al-jawd*). He writes, "As a replacement for the pyramidal order, the circle of virtues and goodness is based on the unity of humanity and exchanges corrosive competition for cohesive cooperation."⁹²⁹ This circle provides a schema for highlighting two principles that frame Shaykh Khālīd's program of moral reform. The first principle is equanimity. Just as all the points on the circle are equidistant from the center, so too are all people 'equal' with one another. If people can be encouraged to recognize this, that is, to become aware of it, then attitudes towards others and oneself will change. In this regard, Shaykh Khālīd writes:

The Quran reminds us that all living beings deserve both respect (*al-iḥtirām*) and dignity (*al-karāma*) because altruism (*al-ghayriyya*) is necessary to know ourselves. The other is a mirror so that we can know ourselves, our legitimacy (*sharī'atunā*), and our livelihood through the spiritual, religious, and cultural dimensions at once. From this [comes] the invitation to dialogue and exchange that permit us to receptivity, to enrich diversity, and develop our understanding of the complexities of human thought.⁹³⁰

In this formulation, Shaykh Khālīd grounds the recognition of a shared humanity in the Quran, while also arguing that it is only through interactions with others that one can develop

⁹²⁹ Tūnis, *Al-islām*, 152.

⁹³⁰ Tūnis, *Al-islām*, 123.

the proper relationship toward oneself. Through this recognition of others, attitudes and virtues towards other people emerge, such as altruism (*ghayriya*).⁹³¹

The second principle of the circle is that it has a single center, that is, a common point of orientation. After establishing a recognition of the universal value of others, it is necessary to teach people how to be mindful of those values throughout one's daily life. Therefore, what is necessary is to develop the proper intentions and the ability to monitor those intentions through one's actions. In this respect, Shaykh Khālid writes, "Insofar as Allah is present in ourselves, He commands us to justice and virtuous piety (*iḥsān*), helping us to realize the attribute of consciousness in every act, as opposed to being driven by instinct or habit. This relates to the act of reflection in every action, making the person generous, proximate, and compassionate toward all of creation ... the seeker of *iḥsān* is the servant of the other."⁹³² By being mindful of one's intentions in every act and working to make those intentions align with the universal value accorded to everyone, one hones a set of virtues that reorient social relationships and interactions. However, while the goal is to perform these types of actions automatically, one must learn these through a process in which these attitudes and sensibilities are sedimented as one's character. In other words, the recognition of the universal value of humanity and the intention to honor that value in others are not sufficient in themselves, for it is only through their practice and performance that personal and social change can occur. In other words, abstract values in themselves are inadequate for what are needed are the shared embodied virtues that will make mutually engaged forms of life possible.

⁹³¹ Both *īthār* and *ghayriyya* can be translated as altruism. The latter connotes a sense of concern for the other while the former has a sense of sacrifice and selflessness.

⁹³² Tūnis, *Al-islām*, 116.

The transformation from the pyramid to the circle requires a practical methodology, which Shaykh Khālīd calls *tarbiyat al-yaqza*, or education of awakening. The goal is to awaken one to the two principles discussed above: a shared humanity based on universal values and a continuous awareness of the place of the values in one's intentions and actions. As he explains, the seeker of *ihsān* mentioned in the quote above is none other than one traveling the Sufi path since Sufism is framed as the *maqām* of *ihsān*. The process of transformation through the circle that cultivates an intention directed toward universal values is the same process of transformation undertaken by the Sufi disciple. In this way, he draws upon Sufism as an ethical tradition to articulate the characteristics of the circle and develop an applied methodology of ethical education.

As for the characteristics of the circle, he writes, "This circle is based on three characteristics: sincerity, fellowship, and humility. The first ... permits us to express our feelings; the second is built on an air of trust between us; and, the third puts us at the service of the other. Together, these help [facilitate] communication, and the development of characteristics and possibilities for all of us."⁹³³ The key connection I want to draw here is between humility and virtuous piety, for both are framed here as service of the other. In other words, the disposition of humility is connected to cultivation of *ihsān*, which in turn enables the performance of a variety of acts of generosity, kindness, or charity. Likewise, the performance of those acts, even without the prerequisite intention, is nevertheless crucial to developing that disposition of humility. Sufism is drawn upon here as an ethical tradition that facilitates the cultivation of a sense of humility and taming the ego. For Shaykh Khālīd,

⁹³³ Tūnis, *Al-islām*, 153.

the transformation from the pyramid to a circle is also a shift from what he calls the I-me to the we-us.

This transformation, however, is not merely the classical ‘annihilation of the self’ that is often discussed in relation to Sufism. In other words, it is not an overcoming of the self that detaches oneself from the world; rather, it is a reformulation of the relationship to oneself such that the other takes priority over oneself. It is precisely this reorientation of relationship that makes it an ethical project. It is also not entirely a humanist project, for one is also realigning ‘vertical’ relationships with the divine. Put otherwise, Shaykh Khālīd writes, “I discover that to love others is to love God, and is also to love oneself.”⁹³⁴ In this sense, the *tarbiyat al-yaqza* of Shaykh Khālīd builds upon Sufism as an ethical tradition to formulate a ‘spiritual humanism’ that deploys Sufi principles and practices as means to a moral reform of individuals and society based on a universal sense of humanity and a transnational ethical grammar.⁹³⁵

vi. Implementing the Vision: *Minhaj al-Tarbiya al-Taṭbīqī*

One of the first ways in which Shaykh Khālīd sought to implement this vision of a socially conscious spirituality was through the creation of the Scouts Musulmans de France (Muslim Scouts of France) in 1991. The Scouting Movement, as it is referred to, provides opportunities for individuals aged seven to twenty-one to engage in community-based activities while also developing individual religious and social values. According to the charter published on their website, the organization aims to educate young men and women

⁹³⁴ Tūnis, *Sufism*, 92

⁹³⁵ “The Sufis ... have promoted spiritual humanism that is so lacking in our time; they were, and remain, those that pass between religions and cultures. They show by their teaching the humanity of Islam, and the wealth and benefits of diversity.” (AISA Conference Report, *Spiritual Islam and Contemporary Challenges*, 2015).

in order to cultivate a more tolerant society, helping them in the “Construction of a value system based on spiritual, social, and personal principles expressed in Law [Islam] and in the Scout promise.”⁹³⁶ This education is accomplished through ‘the Scout Method,’ in which “everyone is the main architect of his [or her] own physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual development.”⁹³⁷ One of the primary means for accomplishing this value-based, socially conscious education is through volunteering and organizing various self-funded trips and events. One of these events, for example, is the ‘Tent of Abraham,’ which is a national intercultural event started in 1996 and open to all denominations that includes dialogues on topics pertaining to youth in society. In describing the event the brochure reads, “This event in reference to Abraham calls us to believe in human fraternity and to build a world of peace, more just and more united. Open to all, no matter where we come from, the Tent of Abraham is a call to build this more fraternal world, an invitation to each of us to carry this tent in ourselves and accept difference as a wealth.”⁹³⁸ As such, it is framed as a form of education for citizenship that facilitates engagements between members of the scouts, the order, and the general public. Another activity of the Scouting Movement is an outreach program to aid physically handicapped persons planning to visit Mecca for *umra*. Older scouts (aged seventeen to twenty-one) assist in the preparation and accompany individuals with motor disabilities in order, on the one hand, to provide them with an opportunity that might otherwise not be possible, and on the other hand, to “experience generosity and self-giving on which each participant may draw for the rest of his [or her] life.”⁹³⁹ This is just

⁹³⁶ “Charte.” Scouts Muslamans de France, accessed October 31, 2019. <https://scoutsmusulmans.fr/charte/>.

⁹³⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹³⁸ “La Tente d’Abraham.” Scouts Muslamans de France, accessed October 31, 2019, <https://scoutsmusulmans.fr/la-tente-dabraham/>.

⁹³⁹ “Omra.” Scouts Muslamans de France, accessed October 31, 2019, <https://scoutsmusulmans.fr/la-omra/>.

one of a number of volunteer activities performed by participants of the Scouting Movement in France.

The Scouting Movement is premised upon values embedded in the Islamic tradition. The charter states, “We are nourished by the founding principles of Islam: the respect, dialogue, and openness enshrined in the Quran and *sunna*, as well as in its spiritual and universal tradition.”⁹⁴⁰ As for its educational program, they frame it around a progression through the three aspects of the tradition: *islām*, *imān*, and *iḥsān*. In this regard, the charter says, “We offer the possibility to progress individually in successive stages through *islām*, *imān*, *iḥsān*, the foundations of this religion.”⁹⁴¹ In addition to grounding itself in Islam in this manner, the Scouting Movement also includes reference to more general civic principles. For example, it includes a statement that, “We are committed to respecting Republican values and laws, democracy and human rights.”⁹⁴² Finally, it emphasizes a direct engagement with society, writing, “We are part of today’s society. We want to help girls and boys become full citizens: autonomous, supportive, responsible and committed, acting in the city, in France, in Europe, and in the world.”⁹⁴³ These demonstrate the direct link between the *tarbiya* that leads to *iḥsan*, the citizenship associated with democracy and law, and the cultivation of socially conscientious cosmopolitanism. The way these are brought together here reflects the deployment of the *tarbiya* of *iḥsān*, derived from Islam generally and Sufism specifically, as the basis of a broader program of education cosmopolitan citizens. In this formulation, *iḥsān* underpins a public piety in which the spiritual and moral character of individuals is critical to the collective good of humanity (not just a single nation-state).

⁹⁴⁰ “Charte.”

⁹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴² *Ibid.*

⁹⁴³ *Ibid.*

While presented separately, the Scouting Movement, as one of the first large-scale projects undertaken by Shaykh Khālid, links religious education in Islam, that is, the progression through the levels of the tradition and the inculcation of certain values, with a more general civic education, that is, the creation of responsible citizens capable of acting in a socially conscious manner. My point in discussing the Scouting Movement, even though it is based in France and in its inception precedes Moroccan state policy regarding Sufism under Muhammad VI, is to illustrate one of the early ways in which religious and civic education are entangled through a social outreach program, an entanglement that reflects the vision of Shaykh Khālid regarding the place of Sufism in the contemporary world. These efforts also clearly point to the transnational aspects of Sufism, which will be a topic of future research.

In addition to the Scouting Movement, Shaykh Khālid founded the Association International de Shaykh Alawi (AISA) as a non-governmental organization based in France, which now has branches in multiple European nations. The organization was officially registered in 2001 with a multi-dimensional mission aimed at the cultivation of a culture of peace that draws on the principles of Islam, specifically Sufism, to foster international cooperation and to construct conscious global citizens capable of engaging in a dialogue of cultures. In 2014, it was recognized as an official NGO as part of the United Nations' Department of Social and Economic Affairs with the specific foci of women's rights, poverty, social policy, and youth. It has approximately 1,600 members, sixty percent of which reside in Europe with the remainder coming from nations outside of Europe. As an NGO, one of its primary functions has been to host and sponsor events, such as conferences, workshops, festivals, and celebrations in Europe, Algeria, and Morocco. Some of the conferences and workshops have included, “Emir Abd al-Qadir: A Model of Reconciliation between East and

West,” “Andalusia – Land of Living Together: Between Myth and Reality,” “Social Processes and Teaching Principles: Mathematics and Living Together,” “Living Together: Reconciliation of the Human Family,” “Women and Culture of Peace Symposium,” “Spiritual Islam and Contemporary Challenges,” “Workshops of the Earth,” In addition, subsidiary organizations, such as the House of Peace (*Dār al-Salām*) organized a collaborative workshop entitled, “Why is Peace not yet realized by Humanity.” The association for Therapy of the Soul (Thérapie de l’Aïme) held an instructional workshop entitled, “Soul Therapy: The First Formation of the Circle of Awakening with Virtues and Qualities,” and the Djanatu al-Arif Mediterranean Foundation for Sustainable Development held a symposium called, “Renewing a new paradigm for health with the living.” These activities have been organized along with celebrations and festivals such as the 100th anniversary memorial of the foundation of the ‘Alāwiyya order and *mawlid* festivals to celebrate the Prophet's birth throughout Europe (specifically France, Belgium, and Switzerland). In short, AISA is actively engaged in several sectors of social and civic discourse and is therefore an implementation of Shaykh Khālid's approach to Sufism as a mechanism for a socially engaged spirituality consisting of an ethics of care for humanity and society. The goal of listing the various events here is simply to provide an overview of the programs and themes of the organization, many of which will be discussed subsequently. They reflect the engagement with particular themes, as well as the use of formal organizations to open up possibilities for social outreach that is an integral part of Shaykh Khālid's curriculum of ethical education.

One of AISA's most significant achievements at the international level has been its initiative for the “International Day of Living Together in Peace” on May 16, adopted

unanimously by the UN in 2017. The UN Resolution 72/130, which establishes this international day, “Underlines that the International Day of Living Together in Peace constitutes a means of regularly mobilizing the efforts of the international community to promote peace, tolerance, inclusion, understanding and solidarity, and to express its attachment to the desire to live and act together, united in differences and diversity, in order to build a sustainable world of peace, solidarity and harmony.”⁹⁴⁴ The resolution explicitly outlines a set of values that have become the cornerstone of Shaykh Khālid’s vision, who worked as president of AISA to lobby the UN to adopt the resolution and establish the day of peace. It was first celebrated in 2018 and while activities were modest in its first year, members of the organization are optimistic about the potentials for using the day to promote their pedagogies of peace. These efforts to lobby the UN on behalf of the Sufi order reflect not only an extension of Shaykh Khālid’s vision into existing institutional structures, but also a direct engagement with international politics.

As a brief side note here, this proposal was initially rejected by the head of the UN Alliance of Civilizations (UN-AC), Nasser al-Nasser, a representative from Qatar. According to a statement released on his behalf, “The UN-AC does not give support to Sufi movements.”⁹⁴⁵ In response, Shaykh Khālid said, “Our affiliation to the school of Sufi thought founded by Sheikh Ahmed Mustapha al-Alawi ... to which UNESCO has paid homage ... is far from being a handicap at a time when the Muslim world is living in grave moments and the image of Islam continues to deteriorate.”⁹⁴⁶ He added in a letter to the

⁹⁴⁴ “Resolution 72/130: International Day of Living Together in Peace.” United Nations Website. Accessed October 31, 2019. <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/72/130>.

⁹⁴⁵ “Haut représentant des Nations unies pour l’Alliance des civilisation refuse son soutien.” AISA, accessed October 31, 2019, <http://aisa-ong.org/haut-representant-des-nations-unies-pour-lalliance-des-civilisation-refuse-son-soutien/>.

⁹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

representative, “It is your responsibility and your duty as an international body to cooperate and help the ideals that contribute to giving this Islam of tolerance and fraternity a place to reconcile the human family in its diversity.”⁹⁴⁷ While Shaykh Khālīd was ultimately successful in having his initiative approved in 2017, the hesitation shown by al-Nasser in 2016 that was due to AISA’s affiliation with Sufism is indicative of one of the ways in which the political salience of Sufism emerges. For some members of the Islamic world, Sufism is still a controversial issue and therefore may raise concerns for some groups in the Islamic world. In other words, by entering into the United Nations in this manner, AISA (and Shaykh Khālīd) are perceived to be assuming the role of speaking for a particular vision of the Islamic tradition and in doing so infringe on the authority of other Islamic groups or nations to articulate their visions of Islamic traditions. In this regard, it should not be surprising that it was a representative from Qatar who initially refused to support Sheikh Khālīd’s initiative and who cited Sufism as a reason for that refusal. Such hesitations are reminiscent of the reservations generated in the case of the Karkariyya *siyāḥa* in Algeria (see Chapter Nine) insofar as they illustrate the ways in which Sufism’s role in spiritual diplomacy can backfire. In short, despite the calls for unity humanity through universal values embedded in Islam, using Sufism as a platform to engage domains of international politics runs the risk of exacerbating tensions between both national and religious authorities.

In addition to creating the International Day of Living Together in Peace, AISA has established what they call the ‘House of Peace’ (*dār al-salām*), primary schools aimed at children aged four to seven years old. These private schools have been formed through the Djanatu al-Arif Mediterranean Foundation of Sustainable Development, and government

⁹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

contracts in Algeria. While they are still in early stages of implementation, “The proposed activities allow the children to question, discover, taste, experiment, develop and live several aspects: the sacredness (unity) of life, intuition, ethics, the five senses, play, the debate using imagination.”⁹⁴⁸ Currently there are six schools serving approximately three hundred children. The responsibility of AISA in relation to these schools is to provide training for educators in 'pedagogies of peace' that, “Show ways to work, centered on universal values and for the benefit of children, youth, [and] the human being.”⁹⁴⁹ This is accomplished through what they refer to as 'the circle of qualities and virtues' (CEQV), a concept that will be discussed in more detail later. For the present purpose, the point is that these schools provide an impetus to develop curricula of values-based education aimed initially at the primary level but intended to be used at all levels of education. The pedagogical style and values embedded in that character education are derived from Sufism as an ethical tradition.

With regard to these pedagogies of peace, Aleaddine Touhami, a 23-year-old member of the organization living in Holland, has worked in conjunction with other members and Shaykh Khālid to develop and train instructors in Europe, Algeria, and Morocco in methods of teaching peace. The collaborative effort to develop these pedagogies was facilitated by a series of workshops aimed at providing effective pedagogical tools for teachers of children aged four to twelve to integrate this values-based education into various school subjects, and finally, to incorporate the CEQV model in the organization of institutional functioning. Aleaddine helped to organize and run these workshops, and I met him at the AISA annual conference in December 2018 to have a conversation about these initiatives and their results. In our conversations, he stressed the need to develop and integrate a values-based educational

⁹⁴⁸ AISA Newsletter, 2018.

⁹⁴⁹ AISA Newsletter, 2018.

model that would help to foster intentions to work for others, an awareness of those intentions in all of one's actions, and a sense of responsibility to perform actions associated with that intentionality and awareness. As such, the pedagogies of peace model is framed as a form of *tarbiya* derived from Sufi traditions, and my argument is that it is because Sufism is seen to constitute a program of ethical development it provides the resources for formulating and implementing contemporary curricula of ethical education.

In response to my question about what this *tarbiya* entailed and what its function was, Aleaddine responded, "Education of the inner self that is necessary to create a free society. When we talk about *adab* and *tarbiya*, this is the inner education."⁹⁵⁰ Furthermore, this inner education is centered on the orientation of intention, that is, training individuals to continually monitor their own intentions in every action, asking why at all times. "Intention gives meaning," he continued, "to our actions, to our lives. Our fundamental freedom resides in our intention." In describing this process, he uses the circle of quality and virtue in which, at every point, one should be directed (i.e., should intend), the center. This is accomplished, he added, through the encouragement of a constant process of *murāqaba* (self-monitoring and evaluation of actions and thoughts), and teachers, families, and spiritual guides need to continually encourage students to engage in this self-examination. With regard to who has the capacity to perform this type of *tarbiya*, he replied, "Everyone is a *murabbi*, even and especially a mother. It starts at the beginning with the family and the care of the mother, and therefore, as the first teachers, women must be educated as well." While his point here is about the need to educate women as the first performers of *tarbiya*, I simply want to point out

⁹⁵⁰ Notes Aleaddine, December 2018.

this extended practice that takes place through multiple interwoven social networks.⁹⁵¹ In other words, no matter how formalized *tarbiya* may be, it occurs through the cumulative weight of daily interactions and habits that engrain particular attitudes and attributes and constitute moral character.

I then asked him to clarify the role of the shaykh in the master-disciple relationship because he suggested that the education embodied in this relationship produced a form a freedom. For instance, entering a master-disciple relationship in Sufism requires obedience to the master, so how does that foster freedom. In response to my question about the specific role of the shaykh as master, he replied “This method of teaching is not in a pyramidal sense of the master relationship. The authority is not constructed in that way. You do not simply obey, that is how things are in the pyramid. With the circle, the shaykh is living in you ... In this way, not only the shaykh, but also the other, whether it be a friend, a relative, or a stranger, is also living in you.” His point here is that, in allowing the other to live in oneself in this fashion, one is constantly compelled to ask oneself about one's own actions in relation to that other, that is, to monitor one's actions and intentions. This self-monitoring, although it occurs within the individual, is therefore a social process that requires various modalities of guidance. Moreover, by integrating the will of the shaykh, one is realigning one's own intentionality, cultivating not mere compliance but a willing obedience. Thus, pedagogies of peace for Aleaddine, are not limited to formal contexts and therefore require not just the establishment of schools like *dār al-salām*, but also the ethical transformation of people in

⁹⁵¹ In Shaykh Khālid's words, “I would like to emphasize that women's place and the importance of women must be a priority for us, because women are the first schools. It is the mother, who is the one who will give the firm imprints in our own lives.” The point here is that women's education is important for their role as mothers. Thus, while this focus may initially read as empowering women, it remains embedded in a framework in which the woman plays a specific role. In short, educating women is not done ‘for the women’ but ‘for the children.’

general so as to create cultures of peace that can sustain this type of extended, social education and moral development.

For Aleaddine, these pedagogies of peace are derived from his view of the three pillars of the *tariqa*: sincerity (*ṣidq*), admiration (*ta'ẓīm*), and fraternity (*maḥabba*).⁹⁵² Sincerity is the dimension that deals with the development of intention, a process that requires constant self-evaluation, guidance, and advice. Admiration, on the other hand, is linked directly to knowledge of the world and education and is therefore an affective disposition underlying the desire to learn about the world. Quoting ibn Ata Allah, Aleaddine said, “When you look at things with the eyes of admiration, Allah looks at you with the eyes of admiration.” His point was that the search for knowledge and the desire to know the world ought to stem from a feeling of awe and perplexity regarding the greatness of all creation, and it is precisely this attitude that is lacking in contemporary education, or that contemporary education fails to create. In these comments, he links the search for knowledge, often seen as an individual obligation in Islam, to a feeling of awe not only toward creation, but also toward the creator. This is then connected to cultivating love for the world and for God. Therefore, education in this sense is not just a question of knowledge, but of embodying relations to the world and only by adopting awe, perplexity, and love as affective dispositions of the self can the full potential of education be fulfilled. Without these attitudes, modern education fails to create the relationships with oneself and with the world that make possible a more conscientious mode of being in the world.

⁹⁵² While admiration technically differs from the virtue of modesty that is one of the pillars of Shaykh Khālīd below, the two are closely related insofar as they establish a relationship with creation in which the value of the self is diminished relative to the world. Thus, awe or admiration entails an experience of humility and modesty, as Aleaddine explains it.

Furthermore, he adds, “The *zawiya* used to play this role. It was a center of education, in the sense of *ta’līm*, and in the sense of *tarbiya*. However, the *zawiya* has lost its function and now it is just a place of doing *dhikr*. This is why we must bring the *zawiya* out into the world in order to revive its educational role.” In this way, his critique is simultaneously a criticism of modern education and the current state of the *zawiya*, or Sufism more generally. He even added, “Look at the Arab Spring ... it shows that the Sufi leaders have failed to maintain society. They have failed to advise society, its leaders and its people, and that has led to the moral corruption that leads to oppression and injustice. The Sufis are responsible for this, but they retreat into their *zawiya* for *dhikr*.” Sufism, for Aleaddine in this context, is therefore not only a tradition for education, but also a tradition of criticism in which *murāqaba* and *ḥisba* are performed not just within the individual but also within society. Sufis are responsible, as one of the institutions of *tarbiya*, for the maintenance of the moral community by ‘taking account’ of the moral character of its members, and in this regard, he suggests, they have failed modern society. I would add that they have been displaced by processes that have reshaped patterns of social and religious authority as well.

Moreover, education should be linked to universal values, and the methods for teaching need to lead students to realize these values through their own efforts, but the focus should not merely be on abstract principles but on ethical agency and reasoning in action. In other words, students should not be told what justice is, for example, but given the opportunity to actively come to an understanding of it through collective action and shared experience in the classroom. Aleaddine explained this in the following way:

What does such a day look like at a school of peace? A child comes to school and today learns to count. Then we only take an abacus and that's how it helps to calculate so that it can add and subtract. But what is the purpose of arithmetic? Is the skill a goal in itself? Or has the skill of calculating arisen to be righteous in society?

For example, I have a basket with seven apples and we are with ten children. How are we going to know how to share with each other? We could simply do them by fractions, but some may want them and others may not. The arithmetic must be done in context so that they can all experience a just solution in which the counting helps but is not the goal. Then the child learns to count, but arithmetic is connected to one of the virtues. The virtue of sharing, of sharing righteously. And from a young age.

The moment such a skill is engraved in our memory, it is married with a sense of justice. And that math eventually becomes mathematics, but that mathematics can no longer be used to make atomic weapons or for economic models that exploit. The skill itself has been taught with one awareness. And that is what is lacking in education today. We separate the moral and the spiritual values from our cognitive skills. We go sit together and talk about justice ... then we go back to the order of the day. Now again, the real learning to count, or write an essay. [The teacher says,] 'Yes, that is good and you are doing better than the others.' This is the whole competition, for example. The competition in a class to be the best, or at least not the worst. This is the pyramid: everyone is pushed from an early age to be at the top of the pyramid. So, we create tunnel visions that sooner or later will collide with each other in society.⁹⁵³

In his explanation of pedagogies of peace, Aleaddine emphasizes that the teaching of skills must be connected to the inculcation of values or virtues, and when those skills become tied, through repetition and direct experience, to specific virtues like justice, it will be possible to shed the indifference plaguing students today who may possess skills but lack values that can orient those skills and make possible the performance and embodiment of justice in action. Furthermore, he insists, for those skills to be tied to virtues, it is necessary to teach them in a manner that creates a repeated and shared experience of how that skill is applied. In his example with the apples, he added in our conversation that the distribution will necessarily depend on the context. "Some people in the group may not want an apple, so if we are ten and two people do not want, then we do not have to worry about giving them apples." Furthermore, "If one does not get what they feel they deserve, they get to experience that and now they know how people feel in that context and can learn to develop empathy for others.

⁹⁵³ Interview Aleaddine, 23 June 2018.

Or they may not get what they want, and they must learn to live with less than everything. This experience is needed to creating fellowship in society.” He went on to provide other examples related to history and science, demonstrating how these teaching techniques might be incorporated into multiple subjects.

In response, however, I pushed back on the concept of a universal value like justice. “While we all may agree on the value of justice, which you define as everybody getting their due share,” I said, “we may not, in fact, agree on what that due share is. Take, for example, inheritance in the Islamic tradition. Are not the rules of inheritance in which, at least in a general framework, the daughter receives half that of the son considered to be just within the Islamic tradition? However, many people from with a humanist perspective on justice would fundamentally disagree, arguing that differentiation based on gender in these matters is necessarily unjust, for one is using an arbitrary measure to determine distribution. Or take another example. A capitalist and a socialist both agree, or support, the just distribution of wealth. However, the two would disagree about what that just distribution is insofar as they disagree on what constitutes ‘fair share.’” My point, I explained to him, was that in many cases, when we universalize concepts that have an articulation and meaning in specific traditions to a kind of 'least-common-denominator' value, do we not lose aspects of traditions and of difference that are themselves valuable. He acknowledged this as a valid point and asked for time to think about it. He did not have a direct response, but after some time he did reply, “I’ve not forgotten about you and your questions. I’ve been travelling and I’ve visited Morocco for the education for peace project. And during all of these times your question

about Justice accompanied me. As if your question wanted to find an answer to itself, and we were witnesses.”⁹⁵⁴ Finally, he did answer by saying:

One could say that it is a matter of sincerity towards yourself through your actions. Which means that one is sincere towards the agreements and is considerate towards the dignity of others. The education of peace does invite the educators and educated to discover this sincerity and dignity. It varies from country to country, from culture to culture, the way one perceives to be dignified. The essence though of the education of peace is to rediscover the self, which defines the human being. And that is in our eyes this potential of self-consciousness.”⁹⁵⁵

While emphasizing universal values, he also attempts to make space for localized articulations of those values. It is precisely in this sense that I consider their approach as a kind of ‘vernacular cosmopolitanism,’ defined by Pnina Werbner as: “Alternative, particularly non-Western, forms of cosmopolitan ethics, defined broadly as an openness to difference, whether to other ethnic groups, cultures, religions, or nations.”⁹⁵⁶ The pedagogies of peace articulate a sense of cosmopolitanism that attempts to integrate traditional concepts as they arise out of Sufism with a broader sense of humanism, giving shape to what they call a ‘spiritual humanism.’ In doing so, it also links together a process of self-transformation with negotiations of difference, meaning that the performance of tolerance is dependent first and foremost on the ethical education of citizens. My point here is that Aleaddine's work on developing pedagogies of peace provides an example of the application of a curriculum of *tarbiya* outside of the *zawiya* that is grounded in Shaykh Khālīd’s social criticism and vision of reform, which in turn is derived from his understanding of Sufi practices of ethical cultivation, and this curriculum is beginning to be implemented in the ‘houses of peace,’ or *dār al-salām* schools.

⁹⁵⁴ Personal Communication, February 2018.

⁹⁵⁵ Personal Communications, February 2018.

⁹⁵⁶ Werbner, “Vernacular.”

The Dār al-Salām schools, as previously mentioned, are a subsidiary of the Algerian organization known as Djantu al-Arif (or 'knowledgable paradise'). Established in 2004 by Shaykh Khālīd, this organization aims at the construction of humanity with dignity, beauty, and wisdom.⁹⁵⁷ Specific goals for the organization include development of means for autonomous and sustainable food production and promotion of a logic of cooperation rather than competition, as well as the maintenance of nature that respects the beauty of the divine and the cultivation of a cosmopolitan humanism that is based on responsibility and stewardship, rather than domination. To achieve these goals, the organization provides a variety of services through its infrastructure in Mostaghanem, an infrastructure that includes a 'pedagogical garden' along with spaces for hosting conferences and seminars. It has also worked to create the 'Adlania Library,' an archive of Algerian and other historical documents containing over six-thousand works and two-thousand manuscripts. Furthermore, it sponsors a variety of conferences and training seminars, and in 2015 organized the 'Caravan of the World Day of Living Together.' The caravan brought together youth members of the organization in a week-long trip from Mostaghanem to Timimoun in southern Algeria where they participated in a mawsim celebration. Finally, the organization sponsors the 'Emir Abd al-Qadir Award for the Promotion of Living Together.' Regarding the selection of the name, the description of the award says:

The choice of the name ... was obvious, for he was a heroic resistor and a determined patriot. The Emir was a recognized intellectual, brilliantly recapturing the effort of reconciliation between faith and reason, in the tradition of Averroes and other adherents of *falsafa* (philosophy) Arab-Muslim. Emir Abd el-Kader was a committed humanist who believed in a solidarity without shores between brothers in humanity, without any distinction. He saved with courage and firmness, during the riots of Damascus (1860), thousands of Christians threatened by the revenge of a manipulated crowd. This sage declared: 'To him who disdains the new and gives priority to the old, say: this old was new and this new will become old' and called for a continuous

⁹⁵⁷ "Mission," Djanatu al-Arif Website, accessed October 31, 2019, <http://djanatualarif.net/mission-2/>.

renewal of thought and behavior of each and every one. The message of openness, tolerance, fraternity and solidarity that he has bequeathed to us deserves to be continued and constantly renewed in the framework of a Prize bearing his name.’⁹⁵⁸

By taking Abd al-Qadir as a model of spiritual humanism and renewal of Sufi traditions, the prize reflects a particularized universalism in which the specifics of Sufism are transposed onto a cosmopolitan ethic. As a side note, in focusing on his actions in Damascus, they also omit his military activities in Algeria that preceded his exiles in France and Syria. The prize was officially established in 2015 through UNESCO, which had previously recognized the *tariqa* ‘Alāwiyya as a contributor to cultural heritage and tolerance in 2013. In this regard, UNESCO sponsored an exhibit on the life of Shaykh al-Alawi, writing:

The Sufi Order, founded by Shaykh al-Alawi, has made the promotion of interreligious dialogue its priority. The order shows how to better serve humanity; how to try to harmonize and embellish the world. He accepts and admits all that can bring to man the material comfort, but always in close relation with a permanent balance between the profane and the sacred. The order is placed on the loving brotherhood of humanity. It invites, in fact, not to reject rationality to the detriment of spirituality, not to lock oneself into a cautious religiosity.⁹⁵⁹

The Djanatu al-Arif institute therefore provides one of the additional mechanisms for implementing Shaykh Khālīd's vision, which in turn is based on predecessors like Shaykh al-Alawi and Emir Abd al-Qadir. In framing his vision through the lens of these Shaykhs, he is drawing upon their calls for renewal through an adaptation of Sufism to the times, as well as what he sees as their ethical messages of cross-cultural dialogue in a time of conflict.

In addition to the sustainable development association, Shaykh Khālīd also launched the Association of Therapy of the Soul in 2006. The association was created to help bring to life Shaykh Khālīd's vision of *tarbiyat al-yaqza* (education of awakening). For now, what I

⁹⁵⁸ “Prix Emir Abd el-Kader Pour la Promotion du Vivre Ensemble et de la Coexistence Pacifique en Méditerranée et dans le Monde,” Djanatu al-Arif, accessed October 31, 2019, <http://djanatualarif.net/evenements-3/prix-emir-abd-el-kader/>.

⁹⁵⁹ “Prix.”

want to highlight is how this association, with branches throughout France as well as Switzerland and Belgium, helps to organize training sessions, beginning in 2017, aimed at not only teaching individuals how to put the circle into practice through education, but also providing means for individual transformation and self-improvement through the circle of qualities and virtues. According a description of the training program on AISA's website, “This [education of] awakening with virtues and qualities [comes] from the Sufi tradition [and] allows the synergy of the skills of all participants in respect to each in order to bring out a common solution for the resolution of a problem, for example.”⁹⁶⁰ Although this idea of the circle of virtues is new, for Shaykh Khālīd and the association it is explicitly drawing on the Sufi tradition, particularly with respect to its program for cultivating the virtues of sincerity, humility, and fraternity, enabling one to transform the egoism fostered in contemporary society into altruism cultivated via the Sufi path.

One final set of activities was a set of 'journeys of peace' performed by an interfaith congregation of participants in southern Spain and northern Morocco in 2010 and 2011. My knowledge of this comes only through accounts given by participants, so I provide here an overview of their recollections about the activities and experience. This *masīrat al-salām* (march of peace) was organized by AISA in conjunction with the local Moroccan association and brought about one hundred people on each trip. According to Allal el-Filali, one of the Moroccan organizers, part of the goal was to connect Morocco to European pilgrimage routes, such as the Camino de Campostela and the Lourdes pilgrimage. As such, they assembled in southern Spain and crossed over to Tangier, taking two buses to Tetouan where they visited *zawāya*, churches, and synagogues. They then went back to Tangier, again

⁹⁶⁰ “Thérapie de l’âme,” AISA, accessed October 30, 2019, <http://aisa-ong.org/therapie-de-lame-cercle-deveil-aux-vertus-et-aux-qualites/>.

visiting Jewish, Christian, and Muslim holy spaces. Finally, the trip finished at the tomb of Mawlay ‘Abd al-Salām ibn Mashīsh with an eight-kilometer walk to the top of the mountain. According to one of the participants who I discussed the trip with, Nasser, the trip was organized by AISA, the association in Morocco, the Muslim Scouts, and the Compostela de Cordoba Association. “We took the boat across from Malaga to Tangier ... we visited churches, synagogues, listened to sama and Jewish music ... it lasted one week and there were about two hundred people.” When I asked him what the most memorable part was, he said, “The joy to find the freedom of friendship and a space of people with open hearts. I made lifelong friendships and that is what I remember most. People I still see today here at the conference [in Spain in 2018].” Nasser, a member of AISA who organizes events in Switzerland, added that he met his wife on this trip, and it was therefore, above all, a beautiful experience of getting to know like-minded people.

In the case of these ‘pilgrimages,’ to use the term loosely, one can see a redeployment of a traditional Sufi practice, that is, the visitation of Mawlay ibn Mashish. By linking this practice to Europe, i.e., connecting Moroccan pilgrimage routes to Christian pilgrimage routes in Spain and France, there is an attempt not only to speak about intercultural dialogue, but also to bring traditions together through the shared practice of the pilgrimage. My point, in this regard, is to highlight, on the one hand, how these practices fit into the vision articulated by Shaykh Khālīd of finding ways to bridge forms of cultural difference through providing opportunities for shared experiences, and on the other hand, how this involves a renovation of a historical practice. Much like the Karkariyya, who have refashioned the *ziyāra* into a *siyāḥa*, making it transportable across borders and useable in multiple locations, the ‘Alāwiyya in this context reshape the ‘Moroccan’ pilgrimage by linking it directly to

historical European routes. In doing so, both groups attempt to expand the sphere of influence by creating a shared space of action, while also enabling the pilgrimage to take on a variety of alternative meanings. For example, the *siyāḥa* performed by the Karkariyya between tombs of previous Moroccan kings gives the *siyāḥa* a particular meaning in contemporary contexts. While the political connotations of pilgrimages in Morocco are nothing new, the ability to detach the pilgrimage from a specific geography, or in the case of the ‘Alāwiyya to resituate a local geography in a translocal network, opens up spaces to attempt to integrate Muslim (Moroccan) identity into European life. In the case of the Karkariyya, the *siyāḥa* becomes a performance of the national stability provided by the king, and in the case of the ‘Alāwiyya, the march for peace is a statement of the shared heritage of Europe and Morocco that represents Shaykh Khālid’s vision of creating spaces of action that hone and enact a transnational ethical grammar that is in turn based on a sharp critique of contemporary social and political structures of power and the ethics they perpetuate. This is not intended to take away from the work that they do as part of a curriculum of ethical development, but simply to highlight possibilities created by the redeployment of pilgrimage practices.

vii. Summary

In this chapter, I highlighted Shaykh Khālid’s role as a social critic (*nāṣiḥ*) through an analysis of his writings and speeches. Through these materials, he expresses both a critique of contemporary society for its hierarchical and pyramidal structure, as well as a vision for reform that ties the ethical and spiritual development of the individual to the well-being of society. This vision of reform is based in the ‘circle of virtues and quality’ and the education

of awakening (*tarbiya al-yaqza*), both of which draw upon Sufism as an ethical tradition to ground an applied program aimed at the cultivation of cosmopolitan citizenship. What linked these two together, I argued, was *ihsān* as a form of piety conducive to the virtues and values that underpin this citizenship. These included the values of social justice, solidarity, tolerance, and service for others. My goal was to demonstrate how a tradition can be used to articulate shared human values while placing emphasis on the performance of those values by creating the necessary spaces and means for the enactment of forms of life grounded in a shared ethical grammar. After discussing Shaykh Khālid's criticism and reform, I presented some of the specific organizations and activities that have been established in order to implement this social reform. The performance of social service (e.g., charity, education) is not done solely for the betterment of society but also for the spiritual and ethical development of those who perform those actions. As a result, providing the organizational infrastructure that can allow individuals to engage in these activities frequently, that is, to serve others in many different ways, is central to his *minhaj al-tarbiya* that aims at the cultivation of *ihsān* as an attitude of living for the service of others.

Of course, one method of analysis for this material would be to look at the transformation of the traditional *zawiya* or *tariqa* into something akin to a civil society organization. This formalization, some might argue, reflects a degree of bureaucratization and legalization that demonstrates the 'modernization' of Sufism. This may then be compounded by the inclusion of references to ideas of democracy or human rights that clearly reflect the influence of western ideas. However, by not taking this path, my goal is to avoid the ever-present question of the 'impact of the West,' or the 'westernization of Islamic ideas,' or the other dichotomies that have been imposed on the study of Islam and modernity.

Shaykh Khālīd draws on multiple traditions simultaneously, but what interests me is how he redeploys principles and practices articulated within Sufi traditions to critique contemporary global society. In other words, his critique and reform are products of a multi-dimensional historical interaction and of trajectories of transformation that, while certainly impacted by events of ‘modernity,’ are not uniquely western or modern. In short, I am arguing that by situating Shaykh Khālīd’s vision as part of a longer history of interaction, encounter, and change, it is possible to see how he is performing a role played by many Sufis before him – the *nāṣiḥ*. Moreover, in his role as social critic and reformer who draws on traditions to engage the present, he is fulfilling the classic saying that a Sufi is a child of one’s time (*ṣūfī ibn waqtihi*). Finally, with these multiple streams of influence, he represents a thoroughly transnational outlook and approach to Sufism as the ethical foundation not only of a moderate Moroccan Islam and modern Moroccan identity, but also a cosmopolitan civility that entails common human values and forms of life that can be performed through a socially engaged spirituality.

CHAPTER TWELVE: CONCLUSION

“Can you tell me, Socrates, whether virtue is acquired by teaching or by practice; or if neither by teaching nor practice, then whether it comes to man by nature, or in what other way?”

- *Meno*⁹⁶¹

i. Overview

In this dissertation I have used Morocco as a case study to reflect on two overlapping themes. On the one hand, I engaged Sufism as a practical tradition integral to a global and transnational Islam. As a practical tradition, I focused on the various embodied practices that not only express but also cultivate the sensibilities and aptitudes of pious Muslims. To shift the focus onto these sets of practices, I have used a concept that emerged from my research and interviews – *minhaj al-tarbiya* – both as the object of analysis and as the lens for framing the dissertation itself. As such, each substantive chapter takes at least one practice as its starting point and, using the different groups, I presented the ensemble of exercises used by contemporary Sufi groups to teach ethics and perform piety. While the configurations for each group may vary, what they shared was an insistence on Sufism as a practical tradition aimed at the cultivation of virtuous piety - *iḥsān*. As the basis of pious subjectivity, *iḥsān* encompasses a set of virtues and values honed through their repeated enactment in distinct contexts, rather than being transmitted as abstract ideals. These virtues, moreover, are not merely spiritual (i.e., detached from worldly conditions), but require their enactment and training in social situations. As such, I use *iḥsān* to connote a form of public piety in which social and spiritual development are intimately connected, that is, as the basis of a pious subjectivity consisting in relationships to oneself, to others, and to the divine.

⁹⁶¹ Plato, *Plato's Meno*, trans. George Anastaplo and Laurence Berns (Newburyport: Focus Publications, 2004).

On the other hand, I have considered the Moroccan case through the lens of Islam and politics in order to shed light on alternative articulations of religious authority and political power in the modern Islamic world. While political Islam as an umbrella term has been used to describe the unwarranted intrusion of religious ideology on the proper domain of political and public life, this intrusion was only made possible by the insinuation of politics and government into every aspect of modern life. As Charles Hirschkind astutely commented:

Terms such as ‘political Islam’ are inadequate here as they frame our inquiries around a posited distortion or corruption of properly religious practice. In this way, the disruptive intrusions or outright destruction enacted upon society by the modernizing state never even figure in the analysis. In contrast, the various attempts of religious people to respond to that disruption are rendered suspect, with almost no attempt to distinguish those instances where such a critical stance is warranted from those where it is not.⁹⁶²

In addition, this binary paradigm has reinforced a sense of antagonism between religion and the modern state such that any attempt to limit or critique the role of the state in the daily life of communities is framed as a wholesale rejection of the modern nation-state or an overt attempt to ‘recapture the state.’⁹⁶³ Throughout this project, I have attempted to avoid positing such a binary in order to move beyond a model of resistance versus acquiescence. In other words, groups can simultaneously align with state policies while also critiquing them and, more importantly, can work to reformulate both ‘religious’ and ‘political’ values and practices as part of a process of transformation and adaptation. By considering Sufis through this lens, I show how even supposedly ‘apolitical’ Muslim groups acquire political significance by virtue not so much of their own rhetoric, but by virtue of state policies that require attempts to perform religiosity in public life to engage political power. My goal in

⁹⁶² Charles Hirschkind, “What is Political Islam?” *Middle East Report* 205 (1997): 14.

⁹⁶³ Hirschkind writes in this regard, “... those wishing to promote or maintain Islamic pedagogical practices necessarily have to engage political power. This does not mean that all forms of contemporary Islamic activism involve trying to ‘capture the state’” (Hirschkind, “Political Islam,” 13-4).

this work has been to unpack the strategies used by several Sufi organizations for presenting competing visions of Islam in the public arena that align with the state's attempts to regulate the religious field while also critiquing aspects of that policy.

The intersections between Sufism as an ethical tradition on the one hand and Sufism's relationship to religious authority and political power on the other hand emerge out of the case itself, i.e., the Moroccan state's attempt to use Sufism to define a Moroccan Islam as a moral foundation of citizenship and society. For example, if (as many scholars have done) Sufism is framed as essentially apolitical, quietist, and mystical (i.e., detached from worldly concerns), then its use as part of a political strategy can only be seen as a perversion of Sufism's essence and an insincere stratagem in the game of power politics. If, however, one recognizes the historical situatedness of Sufis in centers of power, then these developments in Morocco are not a radical break from historical precedent; rather, they are another manifestation of how religious authority and political power interact in the formation of normative forms of Islamic identity and practice. In short, the deployment of Sufism as a moral framework for society and citizenship is neither the radical departure from Sufism's integral place in the Islamic tradition nor the rigid adherence to previously authoritative practices and discourses. Rather, my focus has been on the process of authorization that involves criticism and contestation within concrete contexts structured by relationships of power between governmental and religious institutions. Possibilities for public piety are constrained and afforded by these contexts. While tied to Morocco explicitly, the public piety discussed here should not be read as a 'national' piety because the public is global and transnational and is closely related to a political strategy of exporting Moroccan Islam regionally in order to facilitate international relations with Europe and West Africa.

In summary, I have demonstrated in this dissertation that Morocco's policy of regulating the religious field over the course of the 21st century involved the construction of a 'Moroccan Islam' defined as Sunni, Maliki, Ashari, and Sufi. More specifically, I have elaborated on the place of Sufism in this formulation with attention to the state's rhetoric and policy as well as the effects of that rhetoric on local groups and their distinct responses in the form of support and/or critique. 'Moroccan Islam,' however, should not be seen merely as an invention or as a political expediency bereft of religious significance. In order to demonstrate the continuity, I focused on Sufism as a practical ethical tradition consisting of sets of disciplinary techniques aimed at the cultivation and enactment of virtues. By 'bringing the *zawiya* back into the world' through this analysis, I connected Sufism's integral role in shaping Muslim communities throughout history to its current role in the Moroccan context. Additionally, I showed that Sufism has consistently been situated at the intersection of religious and political authority (in Morocco and in the Islamic world historically) so the political 'use' of Sufism in this case is part of larger historical processes of authorization that emerge through contestation and internal criticism. In order to bring into relief these encounters between religious and political power, I demonstrated how the state has incorporated or coopted the discourses of different Islamic groups, as well as how some of those groups have adapted to the state's shifting regulations and rhetoric.

To put it in a slightly more schematic fashion, I have approached Sufism in several ways, attempting not to define or show what Sufism is, as if there can be an essential definition, but how Sufism has been constructed and deployed as part of ongoing contestations of religious and political authority in Morocco and globally.

ii. Sufism as an ethical tradition

In approaching Sufism as an ethical tradition, I draw explicitly on literature in the anthropology of Islam as well as in the anthropology of ethics and philosophy. At the center of these discussions has been the reemergence of virtue ethics as an ethical framework for addressing forms of moral conduct. One major outcome in evaluating traditions through the lens of virtue ethics has been an emphasis on the practices and disciplines through which subjects with certain attitudes, desires, and sensibilities are formed over time. In addition to its emphasis on the refinement of character, virtue ethics also draws attention to the situatedness of ethical action, suggesting that rather than merely adhering to codes or blueprints of action, individuals in religious traditions also need to adapt and improvise in distinct contexts. Taken from the perspective of virtue ethics, therefore, the reductive analysis of ethics in religious traditions based around notions of reward and punishment found in texts ought to be supplemented by detailed ethnographic accounts of ethical reasoning and action. While this work is admittedly insufficient in addressing these ethnographic nuances, I have tried to provide some insight by unpacking the different techniques for teaching and performing ethics across Sufi groups.

Furthermore, the shift to virtue ethics informs discussions in ritual theory in religious studies and anthropology. On the one hand, in line with scholars such as Catherine Bell, the move from ritual to practice compels us to ask about the work done as opposed to asking what ritual as a category of action means or represents (either for the observer or practitioner) in a given context.⁹⁶⁴ Likewise, as Talal Asad asked in his critique of Geertz and the concept

⁹⁶⁴ For instance, Catherine Bell writes, “Viewed as practice, ritualization involves the very drawing, in and through the activity itself, of a privileged distinction between ways of acting, specifically between those acts performed and those being contrasted, mimed, or implicated somehow. That is, intrinsic to ritualization are strategies for differentiating itself – to various degrees and in various ways – from other ways of acting within

of ritual, “Is it possible that the transformation of rites from discipline to symbol, *from practicing distinctive virtues (passions) to representing by means of practice*, has been one of the preconditions for the larger conceptual transformation of heterogeneous life (acting and being acted upon) into readable text?”⁹⁶⁵ In his effort to retrace the contours of this transformation Asad opens up a space for an alternative trajectory embedded in the Islamic tradition in which the category of ritual and the architectures of the self upon which that category is grounded do not obtain in the same fashion as in the modern West. Put otherwise, the use of virtue ethics as a frame of analysis for Sufism shines light on the practical aspects of holistic ethical education and character development, a process referred to within the tradition as *tarbiya*. This focus on learning how to do things aptly or perform them skillfully stands in contrast to an approach to religious education centered on the transmission of idea and representations.

Additionally, approaching Sufism as an ethical tradition takes the *minhaj al-tarbiya* as the primary object of analysis. That is, the ensemble of exercises used to train disciples to embody piety and through which that piety is performed. By concentrating on the process of *tarbiya* as ethical education and the *minhaj* as the techniques deployed in that education, I look at how teaching virtue takes place, as well as how those virtues are properly enacted and performed as part of one’s daily life. In doing so, I aim to counter approaches to Islamic education that emphasize indoctrination as a defining feature of modern that education, as well as academic studies in history and sociology that take the *tariqa* as the primary object of analysis. While *tariqa* is often acknowledged as being a path, it is common to see Sufi

any particular culture. At a basic level, ritualization is the production of this differentiation” (Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 90).

⁹⁶⁵ Asad, *Genealogies*, 79, italics added.

groups analyzed as a sociological unit which overlooks on the one hand the fact that historically many disciples were initiated in multiple Sufi orders throughout their lives, and on the other hand how Sufi groups adapt and redeploy distinct sets of practices aimed at the realization of a shared telos.

Finally, the goal of framing Sufism as an ethical tradition was to present it as an integral part of the Islamic tradition. In doing so, I tried to bring into relief connections between Sufism and Islamic legal thinking (*sharia*), as well as Sufism and Salafism. Since many Sufi practices have been the subject of intense legal scrutiny for centuries, developing the ability to argue and justify practices on strictly legal grounds, i.e., combatting accusations of *bid'a*, is a component of the curriculum. As for the relationship between Sufism and Salafism, recent scholarship in Islamic Studies has questioned the Sufi-Salafi divide by locating the Sufi contexts in which many of the modern reform movements (variously branded as Salafi) took shape. Emerging as an internal critique over proper practice and authority to define that practice, these movements displaced Sufism while nevertheless drawing upon Sufism's reservoir of pedagogical tools for cultivating piety.⁹⁶⁶ By highlighting these shared practices I hope to contribute to this existing body of literature that challenges categorical oppositions between Sufism and Salafism.

iii. Sufism as public piety

In approaching Sufism as a form of public piety, I draw on literature in anthropology and critical theory that addresses alternative manifestations of publics in the modern world

⁹⁶⁶ For example, the leader of the Muslim Brotherhood Hasan al-Banna is quoted: "We are a Salafiyya message, a Sunni way, a Sufi truth, a political organization, an athletic group, a cultural-educational union, an economic company, and a social idea" (Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 14).

and how those publics can be infused with pious aspirations while nevertheless remaining thoroughly modern. Specifically, I have relied on the notion of public piety to describe the link between social order and the moral quality of citizens grounded in a sense of piety as *ihsān*. By emphasizing the social implications of Sufism, I am not only portraying an ongoing reality in Morocco, but also moving away from formulations of Sufism as a quietist, individual mode of spirituality readily transposed onto the contours of secular liberal society. Further, through an analysis of Sufism as a socially engaged spirituality I wanted to explore diverse manifestations and modalities of Islamic activism in the contemporary world.

This lens was also intended as a modest intervention into discussions of asceticism and mysticism. While the terms participate in a long history of debate, Max Weber's formulation of the two in relation to the 'spirit of capitalism' has been quite influential in the academic study of religion. At its core, the distinction for Weber rested on action versus contemplation, with inner worldly asceticism standing in sharpest contrast to the other-worldly mysticism. Of course, Weber's typology is four-fold, and one understudied category has been the 'inner-worldly mystic.' This dissertation could in a sense be seen as an interrogation of inner-worldly mysticism, that is, a socially engaged or socially active mysticism. Writing on these 'missing inner-worldly mystics,' sociologists Summers-Efler and Kwak suggest, "[Inner-worldly mysticism] practices hold this power to reorder the prevailing hierarchy in the interaction order because they lead to direct solidarity-oriented action and change at the local face-to-face level."⁹⁶⁷ They are arguing that inner-worldly

⁹⁶⁷ As they state more comprehensively: "Exploring IWM reveals that ideas shape patterns of action not only within macro economics and political structures ... but also within the interaction order (Goffman 1964; Rawls 1987; Collins 2004). The interaction order is the realm of face-to-face interaction where social dynamics are made manifest. Students of the interaction order ... demonstrate how this level of social life [is] shaped by non-rational and emotional dynamics" (Erika Summer-Efler and Hyunjin Deborah Kwak, "Weber's missing mystics: inner-worldly mystical practices and the micropotential for social change," *Theory and Society* 44 (2015): 252).

mysticism can produce social change by reshaping the norms of everyday, face-to-face interaction. In drawing attention to the relationship between Sufism and *adab* as proper conduct and comportment, part of my goal was to illustrate how mysticism can inform social dynamics.

Interrogating the distinctions between asceticism and mysticism is not only significant theoretically but also helps untangle concepts of *zuhd* and *taṣawwuf*. In describing *zuhd*, often rendered as asceticism in the sense of self-denial, abstinence, and rigorous conduct, Leah Kinberg writes, “In this study, I propose to break the narrow boundaries in which *zuhd* is usually delimited by claiming that *zuhd* is the philosophy of life inherent in Islam according to which any Muslim who considers himself pious ... must behave.”⁹⁶⁸ Martin Lings reiterates this relationship writing, “It is obvious that if every mystic is subordinately or virtually an ascetic, by no means every ascetic is a mystic.”⁹⁶⁹ Mysticism and asceticism (as *taṣawwuf* and *zuhd* respectively) are not juxtaposed to one another in this formulation, as *zuhd* reflects an underlying aspect of an Islamic way of life. In this dissertation, I have tried to unpack that form of life through the shared social practices and attitudes taught by ascetic-mystics and performed in daily life by pious subjects.

iv. Sufism as political tool

Drawing on recent scholarship in political science and related disciplines, I also approached Sufism as part of a political strategy. This was in part guided by research on Sufism that pushes back against a model of Sufism as quietist and apolitical, as well as by a

⁹⁶⁸ Leah Kinberg, “What is meant by *zuhd*?” *Studia Islamica* 61 (1985): 29.

⁹⁶⁹ Martin Lings, “Mystical Poetry,” in *‘Abbasid Belles-Lettres* ed. Julia Ashtiany, T.M. Johnstone, J.D. Latham, R.B. Serjeant (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 238.

desire to question the realpolitik reading of Morocco's use of Sufism as merely a political expediency. In this latter formulation, Sufism is being exploited by the state and the regime to consolidate power against rivals domestically and internationally. From this perspective, these engagements with religion by political powers do not produce substantial religious change nor are they guided by sincerity. Moreover, those who work with the state or at the very least participate in the proliferation of Sufism are rendered as being manipulated by those political strategies, stripping them of their agency in the formulation of diverse visions of Sufism that are unfolding within the field of possibilities structured by the state. My aim has been to demonstrate the refractions of *ihsān* that illuminate how Sufi groups articulate and perform piety in ways that align with and critique state discourses.

From a broader perspective, discussing the relationship between Sufism and politics was a way to reflect on kingship as a mode of power within the secular liberal state. In other words, how does royal authority operate within the liberal state and in what ways does religious authority affect that relationship? Put otherwise, how might a form of 'sacred kingship' be operative within the secular liberal state when that state has defined itself via the separation of religion and state? This space, I would argue, is imminent in the secular state itself that unceasingly redefines the boundaries between the religious and the secular. As Charles Hirschkind noted, these redefinitions produce an internal instability and "This instability, ensured by the in principle impossibility of bordering off the secular from the religious, is not a limit on secular power but a condition of its exercise."⁹⁷⁰ In short, by reflecting on the relationship between Sufism and politics in Morocco, I am also asking if secularism as a mode of governance can be welded to or deployed alongside alternative

⁹⁷⁰ Charles Hirschkind, "Is there a secular body?" *Cultural Anthropology* 26, no. 4 (2011): 643.

modalities of power, and if secularism's attempts to quarantine religion to the private sphere allow it to coalesce with the type of royal authority present in Morocco.

As Saba Mahmood points out, "One of the greatest paradoxes of political secularism is that by making the state the arbiter of religious equality, it colonizes and often undercuts this socially embedded aspiration. Secularism, in other words, reduces religious equality to the politics of rights and recognition, strengthening the prerogative of the state to intervene in and reorder religious life."⁹⁷¹ The point I want to make is that reflecting on the role of kingship in the modern state, particularly a religious form of leadership in Morocco, we see many of the same processes taking place. In other words, they rely on a mix of modes of power and the liberal nation-state, as a mode of governance grounded in secularism as a form of power, operates within and alongside alternative mechanisms of power. In other words, even though the Moroccan King is the 'Commander of the Faithful,' it is the tools of secular liberal governance that afford him his control over Moroccan society. This is seen most poignantly in the process of 'bureaucratization of Islam' over the past two decades. Although this certainly has precedent in Ottoman reforms, the precise mechanisms for regulating religion in this case rely heavily on the legal and institutional frameworks invented in secular liberal contexts. It is in this sense that I would refer to Moroccan Islam as secular, not in that its deployment of Sufism individualizes and privatizes religion along 'secular' grounds, but in that it has been produced through secularism as a political project that seeks to subject the adjudication of religious difference and authority to the arbitration of the nation-state.

What I was after therefore was the nexus of several modes of power that crystallizes within the context of modern kingship. On the one hand, the king operates through

⁹⁷¹ Mahmood, *Religious Difference*, 212.

neopatrimonial forms of power (e.g., distribution of gifts and positions). On the other hand, the state operates through constitutional and secular modalities of power. The articulation of the two, however, leads to several ambiguous areas, such as the ‘ministries of sovereignty’ that are embedded within the structures of the constitutional state yet subject not to popular sovereignty but royal sovereignty. A third trajectory of power that further impacts this nexus is religious power. While efforts have clearly been made to subsume religious power under the auspices of the state, the two remain distinct in certain respects. Finally, religious authority may be a key component of neopatrimonialism, especially as religious resources (such as charitable endowments and schools) are subsumed as state resources. In thinking through aspects of modern kingship, I want to resist attempts to collapse a form of sacred kingship in the Muslim world to something like the divine right of kings in Europe.⁹⁷²

Rather than being a reversion to the latter, the form of kingship practiced in the modern Muslim world should be seen as part of a branching trajectory in which the boundaries between religion and politics (*din wa dawla*) were continually renegotiated and enacted, i.e., they make possible the writing of an alternative history of the formation of legitimate leadership in the modern Muslim world. This is not a single trajectory; instead, it has contributed to the manifestation of distinct performances of kingship in the modern Muslim world, with Morocco, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia (as a few examples) reflecting continuity

⁹⁷² Moin asks, “Why then, one may ask, has modern scholarship had difficulty seeing the coherency and durability of this pattern of sacred kingship in Islam? The answer in simplest terms is that Sufism and Muslim kingship have been studied mostly in a bifurcated fashion, the former in religious studies and the latter in political history. The differences in approach and method between the two disciplines have led to Sufis and kings being conceived and portrayed in opposing spheres of culture, the one sacred and the other profane ... This book challenges such conventional wisdom by emphasizing, instead, the performative aspect of Muslim kingship” (Afzar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship & Sainthood in Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 20).

with traditional aspects of legitimate leadership in Islam while nevertheless drawing on structures of the secular state for its articulation and performance.

v. Future Research: Sufism as transnational ethical grammar

While the present work has focused primarily on the role of Sufism in Morocco, I have intimated its transnational dimensions in two ways. Firstly, regarding Morocco's state policy I discussed how Sufism is used as a component of spiritual diplomacy aimed at bolstering ties in the region, especially with West African and European nation-states. In doing so, I suggested that Morocco is relying on Sufism to enhance both its religious and political authority, to rally allies that will support its territorial claims in the Western Sahara, and to spread its own brand of Moroccan Islam. Secondly, through a case study of the 'Alāwiyya in particular, I suggested that Sufi groups themselves seek to transcend the limitations imposed by this 'Moroccan Islam' by articulating what I have called a transnational ethical grammar that provides an ethical framework grounded in the particulars of Sufism while nevertheless appealing to universal human values, creating a kind of 'vernacular cosmopolitanism.' Given the artificial constraints of the dissertation I have not developed these ideas as thoroughly as I would like, but I intend to pursue this line of work in future research. For now, I will provide a brief theoretical sketch of that project.

In considering Sufism from a transnational perspective, my goal was to recognize that while the present case study deals with Morocco and discusses the construction of Moroccan Islam, as I noted throughout the dissertation this 'Moroccan Islam' also has a regional sense. In other words, although we consider Morocco to define a nation-state and therefore Moroccan Islam would be encompassed by the borders of that nation-state, the term *maghrib*

also denotes a regional identity that includes a region ranging from parts of West Africa into present-day Spain (formerly Andalusia). As such, Moroccan here relates to sub-national identities (e.g., Amazigh), national, regional (e.g., Maghrib as Western Islamic world), and historical (e.g., Andalusian). Although it is authorized and defined by structures of power within the Moroccan nation-state, the Muslims practicing (or the audience for) this Moroccan Islam exceeds those boundaries.

In order to attend to these global dimensions of Moroccan Islam, I have drawn on scholarship in sociology through the concepts of civility and vernacular cosmopolitanism. While not linked exclusively to Sufism, these terms point toward the role of Sufism in maintaining social solidarity within the global and plural Islamic ecumene, as Armando Salvatore refers to it. Providing not just a transnational organizational format for the movement and encounter of people and ideas, Sufism also entails the cultivation of a shared embodied sociability composed of practices, sentiments, and forms of life that have emerged as part of an ongoing process of encounter and contestation in pluralist settings. I have used the idea of *adab* as a gloss for this embodied sociability that provides a sense of cohesion while nevertheless adapting to distinct context. These shared forms of life are informed by and imbued with an ethical grammar out of which specific modes of moral agency and ethical action are enacted.⁹⁷³ My suggestion is that Sufism has been integral to formation of those forms of life and ethical grammars that have historically (and by necessity) taken shape in the context of religious (and ethnic) difference.

More generally, however, taking Sufism as a transnational ethical grammar is intended follow through on what Saba Mahmood refers to as the ‘ethical thematization’ of

⁹⁷³ Saba Mahmood writes, “... I insist that the meaning of agency must be explored within the grammar of concepts within which it resides” (Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*, 34).

religious difference.⁹⁷⁴ Unfortunately what this thematization would involve was not fully developed, but part of it would be to highlight alternative ways of living religious pluralism that are not dependent upon the state that flattens forms of difference and incommensurability using the mechanisms of law and history (i.e., secular modalities of power).⁹⁷⁵ Approaching my case study through the lens of ethical thematization was an attempt to sidestep the question of incommensurability by showing how an ethos of tolerance, conducive to ostensibly secular sensibilities yet grounded in Islamic tradition, can be formulated and enacted through alternative social practices (i.e., not only produced by legal discourses of rights). In other words, for the groups with which I worked, the desire and ability to participate in shared social practices despite differences did not have to be grounded in state law but was a feature of the Islamic tradition, and Sufism was historically and presently integral to the creation of that desire and ability to engage in social intercourse across many forms of ethnic, linguistic, geographic, and (today) national differences. Interrogate ways of resolving the incommensurability through the excavation of shared social practices that embody an ethos or form of life capable of envisioning religious equality without the agency of the state in its capacity as “arbiter of majority-minority relations.”⁹⁷⁶ In short, by taking the ‘necessary risk’ of ethical thematization I am trying to show possibilities for Sufism if it can be detached from a state project while also showing potential pitfalls should it remain part of a statist project of authorizing religion.

⁹⁷⁴ This is a phrase she uses in the final sentence of her book *Religious Difference in a Secular Age*: “Given this context, the ideal of interfaith equality might require not the bracketing of religious differences but their ethical thematization as a necessary risk when the conceptual and political resources of the state have proved inadequate to the challenge this ideal sets before us” (Saba Mahmood, *Religious Difference*, 213).

⁹⁷⁵ Mahmood writes, “One might say, at this point, that secularity flattens religious incommensurability, forcing religious traditions to confront one another in the uniform space of history, all equally vulnerable to the questioning power of the secular” (Mahmood, *Religious Difference*, 207). I would add that law, in addition to history, is another form of power that flattens difference in its interpellation of the universal citizen.

⁹⁷⁶ Mahmood, *Religious Difference*, 212-13.

Glossary of Terms

adab (pl. *ādāb*): proper conduct and comportment (also literature, courtly etiquette, and rules of conduct within a Sufi order).

‘ahd: commitment made by disciples to the path.

akhlāq: morals or character.

‘aql: rationality.

baraka: literally blessing (also divine gift or power).

barzakh: the barrier between the living and the dead (also translated as isthmus).

baṣīra: deep insight guided by purified heart.

baṣr: ordinary vision.

bāṭin: internal hidden reality or meaning (opposite of *zahir*)

bay‘a: literally the pledging of allegiance (to a ruler or a shaykh).

bid‘a: unwarranted innovation in practice

da‘wa: calling others (back) to the straight path.

dhawq: literally tasting (also Sufi term for direct experiential knowledge).

du‘ā: supplication (prayers).

dhāt: essence (opposed to *sifat* of Allah).

dhikr: literally remembering (also the ritual repetition of divine names or phrases).

fanā: annihilation of the self (*nafs*).

fātiḥa: opening verse of the Quran.

fatwa: legal ruling

firāsa: deep insight into the character of others.

ḥāl: literally state (also the ecstatic state experienced by Sufis)

ḥaḍra: literally presence (also a collective ritual).

ḥajj: annual pilgrimage to Mecca.

ḥisba: moral accounting of society (as in encouraging the good and forbidding the wrong).

iḥsān: to do right or to act well; to make beautiful; to give charity (translated as virtuous piety).

ikhlāṣ: sincerity.

iltizām: necessary commitment to one’s community or society.

insān kāmil: the complete person (embodying the ethical precepts of Prophet Muhammad)

iṣlāh: reform

īthār: selflessness

jabarūt: the highest real of reality (as distinct from *malakūt* and *mulk*)

jadhb: literally captivation (also referring to ecstatic condition of Sufi).

jama‘: union (referring to union with the divine).

karamāt: miraculous deeds performed by Sufi saints.

kashf: literally unveiling (as in the unveiling of illusory reality).

khalwa: spiritual retreat or isolation.

khāshi‘a: fear (translated as dread in contrast to *khawf* and *rahba*).

khawf: fear of Allah.

malakūt: imperceptible realm of existence (between *mulk* and *jabarut*).

maqām: literally a standing place (also a waypoint or station on the Sufi path).

maṣlaḥa: public interest (used in legal reasoning).
mawlid: birthday celebration for saint or Prophet Muhammad.
mawsim: annual celebration of saint.
minhaj al-tarbiya: curriculum of ethical education.
mīthāq: primordial covenant.
mīqāt: moment of meeting (with the divine).
mudhākara: review session
murāqaba: monitoring (of one's self and actions).
muraqqa'a: patched cloak worn by Sufis.
mu'jizāt: prophetic miracles (as distinct for *Karamat*).
mulk: the tangible realm of existence (as opposed to *malakut* and *jabarut*).
mushāhada: visionary experience.
nafs: ego (often translated as soul).
naṣīḥa: advice.
niyya: intention.
nūr: (divine) light.
qalb: heart (understood as the seat of moral action).
quṭb al-zamān: axis of the time (meaning the current saint maintain cosmic order).
riḍā: contentment (in Allah's will).
riḥla: voyage.
rūḥ: spirit (also translated as soul).
ṣabr: patience.
ṣaḍaqa: voluntary charity.
ṣalāt: daily prayers.
ṣāliḥ: righteous person.
samā': spiritual audition.
shukr: gratitude.
shūra: council (used for selecting leader).
ṣidq: sincerity.
ṣifāt: attributes (of Allah) (as opposed to *dhat*).
silsila: spiritual lineage.
sirr: (divine) secret.
siyāḥa: literally tourism (used here as a spiritual journey).
ṣuḥba: companionship.
tajdīd: renewal.
tajrīd: divestment of the self (*nafs*).
tanwīr: enlightenment (by the divine light).
taqwā: cognizance of Allah (often translated as pious fear).
ṭarīqa: literally path (also referring to Sufi organization).
tasāmuḥ: tolerance.
taṣawwuf: Sufism (often translated as Islamic mysticism).
tawhīd: declaration of the principle of unity of God.
wajd: ecstatic state of divine encounter.

walāya: authority derived from closeness and familiarity (as in friend of God).

walī Allah: saint (or friend of God).

wara': pious scrupulousness

wilāya: authority derived from position of power.

wird: codified set of phrases recited by disciples.

zāwiya: Sufi lodge (in Morocco and western Islamic world).

ziyāra: visiting (often saints' shrines).

zuhd: asceticism.

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