Changing Modalities in the Globalization of Islamic Saint Veneration and Mysticism: Sidi Ibrahim al-Dasuqi, Shaykh Muhammad 'Uthman al-Burhani, and their Sufi Orders

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Though globalization is often considered distinctively postmodern, pre-modern Islamic civilization enabled relatively free (if slow) diffusion of people and culture throughout its global span. Through trade, pilgrimage, political conquests, or education abroad, saints and their religious orders could diffuse far beyond their point of origination.

If globalization of Muslim saints is nothing new, its modern modalities changed radically. Division of the Islamic world into nation-states (including fortified borders, and oft-conflicting nationalisms) combined with religious reform and economic decline to impede free cultural circulation in the Islamic world. Meanwhile, emigration, "New Age" spirituality, and global communications promoted diffusion of Islamic saint veneration in the predominantly secular-Christian West.

Using historical and ethnographic data I examine these factors by tracing and interpreting patterns of veneration for the Egyptian saint Sidi Ibrahim al-Dasuqi (b. 1235). Formerly localized along the Nile Valley, veneration for Sidi Ibrahim dramatically expanded in the 20th c, ultimately diffusing into Europe, North America, and Australia through the agency of his spiritual successor, Shaykh Muhammad 'Uthman al-Burhani.

I. Introduction

Globalization as the flow of goods, information, culture, power, or people, across ever-widening distances is nothing new. While today's flows may be faster and more extensive than before,

this quantitative difference is - in my view - far less interesting than qualitative changes in the modes of globalization as process.

In this paper, I aim to indicate changing modalities in the globalization of Islamic saint veneration, through a detailed historical and ethnographic trace of the social and doctrinal aspects of veneration for a particular saint, Sidi Ibrahim al-Dasuqi of Egypt, mainly as manifested in the Sufi tradition centering on his mystical person and teachings. Modal change is continuous, representing not a break in Islamic tradition, but rather the adaptability of those traditions within a changing social world. Furthermore, in the Dasuqiyya tradition at least, what changes is primarily the social organization of saint veneration, along with a certain shift in doctrinal emphases, rather than the core doctrines themselves. The shifts in modes of globalization indicated by this trace suggest broader changes in the global configurations of Islamic saint veneration and mysticism.

II. Saint veneration in Islam

Saint veneration in Islam, comprising a broad constellation of beliefs and practices, has always exhibited processes of globalization. Saints (*awliya'*; singular *wali*, literally "close" to God) are selected by popular acclaim, among the holy men and women of Islam, living and dead. In person, at the tomb or shrine, or via dreams, the saint is sought for blessings, intercession, and guidance. Saintly status, confirmed by miracles (*karamat*), and the Divine gift of blessing (*baraka*), reflects the quantity and intensity of popular belief, as there is no official process of canonization (Goldziher 1968). The power of the saint is most concentrated at his or her shrine (*maqam*); shrines, beliefs, and practices of saint veneration are particularly abundant in Egypt (Hoffman 1995:89-122; Reeves 1990; Gilsenan 1973; de Jong 1976; Waugh 1989; Goldziher 1968).

Since the 12th century, saintly fame has spread largely through the agency of mystical Sufi orders (*tariqas*) to which saint veneration became firmly linked (Trimingham 1971:10-13ff, 26-

27). A *silsila* (chain) connects the contemporary shaykh to the founding saint, through an initiatic chain, each of whose links represents an oath (*'ahd*) between a disciple and his spiritual master. Members of each order regard certain persons, including founding figures and others along the *silsila*, as major saints. The veneration of these saints, in the form of faith, loving praise, devotion, and requests for assistance, is critical for the spiritual progress of members.

The order attaches mystical doctrines (of variable esotericism), ritual practices (of variable ecstaticism), and social structures (of variable organizational cohesion and centrality) to the veneration of saints, enabling saint veneration to spread systematically over a much wider region via expansion of the order. Naturally, the saint's aura extends beyond the formal *tariqa* (and constitutes an important source of new tariqa members), but it is inside the *tariqa* that veneration is most enshrined and most permanent. With trade, political conquests, pilgrimage, and education abroad, Sufi orders expanded widely throughout medieval Islamic empires, which enabled relatively free cultural and demographic flows, and were a key factor in the expansion of Islam at its periphery (Trimingham 1971 passim).

Yet the global span of saint veneration was typically localized in the medieval period, syncretized with local religious culture, affiliated with local social groups (such as trade guilds) and routed through lesser local saints (Trimingham 1971:233ff). As the *tariqa* expanded, carrying with it the reputation of central saints, it also established local roots. The medieval *tariqa* was a mystical way within Islam, not a unified or centralized social organization, and not self-conscious of its own globalization, much less guiding that process. The economic and communicative infrastructure – and perhaps the spiritual need – for global unification was lacking. In part for practical reasons, central shrines were rarely the site of global pilgrimage; global saints were commemorated at local shrines, or through local saints. The medieval orders thus had no opportunity to become socially

centralized or ritually uniform. The only feature necessarily shared by all the Qadiris around the world was veneration for Sidi 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (Trimingham 1971:233-234). "The tariqat served only to bring some uniformity into the teachings of the myriad of local Sufi masters and saints" (Lapidus 1988:171).

Local Sufism could be heterodox – esoteric and ecstatic – for there was a ready audience for such interpretations of Islam. Yet these movements, being firmly planted in local Islam, did not become sectarian; community bonds linking a Sufi to other local Muslims unaffiliated with his order were much stronger than links among members of a single tariqa globally. In the absence of strong centrifugal forces, schism commonly occurred, due to disputes over succession, or inadequate lines of communication. Thus decentralized, global saint veneration could adapt to a wide variety of cultural contexts.

This traditional decentralized globalization of saint veneration was overlaid with two new modes in the modern period, from the late 18th c. onwards, namely: (1) a pan-Islamic reform and revival mode within the Islamic world, instigated by the desire to strengthen the Islamic *Umma* (Community) through social and doctrinal unity; and in the 20th century (2) a form of Western globalization, taking advantage of the West's privileged social, economic, and communicative position, resulting in part from the repression of pan-Islamism by the new ideology of Islamic nation-states. Each new mode did not replace the previous, and all are currently active as overlays. In this paper, I hope to demonstrate how veneration for Sidi Ibrahim al-Dasuqi, and the spread of his Sufi order, exhibits a complicated overlay of all three.

III. The Dasuqiyya of Egypt

A. General Background

Since medieval times, Egyptian Sufis have venerated four principal saints (*aqtab*, or "poles"): Sidi Ahmad al-Rifa'i (d. 1182), Sidi 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (1077-1166), Sidi Ahmad al-

Badawi (d. 1276), and Sidi Ibrahim al-Dasuqi (d.c. 1296).[1] Most Egyptian Sufi orders trace their spiritual genealogy to one of these saints, or to another great medieval saint, Sidi Abu al-Hasan al-Shadhili (1196-1258). Although Sidi Ahmad al-Badawi and Sidi Abu al-Hasan al-Shadhili both lived in Egypt for a time, culturally they were "international" figures from north Africa and traveled widely; only Sidi Ibrahim was thoroughly local – an Egyptian by birth and culture.[2] He thus occupies a unique status as Egypt's greatest national saint (Hallenberg 1993:115, 184ff; Goldziher 1968:307).

Sidi Ibrahim al-Dasuqi, nicknamed "Burhan al-Din" (proof of religion) and more popularly known as 'Abu al-'Aynayn'[3], was born in the Egyptian Delta in 1255 (but the date is also given as 1235 or 1246), most probably in the village of Marqus; he lived in the town of Dasuq and died there by 1296 (Khalidi 1960; Hallenberg 1997).[4] His miraculous life was elaborated by succeeding generations and recorded by later shaykhs of the order, Ahmad al-Karaki (15th century) and Ahmad al-Sharnubi (16th century), as well as by Sufi biographers 'Abd al-Wahhab al-Sha'rani (16th century) and Yusuf al-Nabhani (18th century), and at least one contemporary Egyptian scholar (Sha`rani 1988; al-Nabhani 1984; al-Karaki 1969; Khalaf Allah 1992; Hallenberg 1997:8ff). The scant writings attributed to Sidi Ibrahim include two mystical prayers (*hizbs*) recited in Sufi ritual, blessings for the Prophet, a few poems, and Sufi guidance, much of which is gathered in his *Jawhara* (al-Dasuqi 19??). Sidi Ibrahim himself was initiated into the Suhrawardi, Rifa'i, Shadhili, and Badawi orders (Trimingham 1971:45). His connections to these saints, as outlined by the hagiographic literature, were familial as well as spiritual; his father was a Rifa'i or a Badawi (or both); his mother's father was Abu al-Fath al-Wasiti, the chief Rifa'i khalifa (deputy) in Egypt, while his maternal uncle was Abu al-Hasan al-Shadhili himself (Hallenberg 1997:61-61,84).

The Dasuqiyya tariqa appears to have been organized primarily after his death, mainly by his brother, Shaykh Sharaf al-

Din Abu 'Imran Musa (d.c. 1339).[5] Over time the *tariqa* further localized around subsequent nuclear saints in the Dasuqiyya tradition, via branching from the main *silsila*. The earliest branch is the Shahawiyya (founded by Sayyid Muhammad al-Shahawi, c. 1470-1542), centered at Mahalla al-Kubra; out of the Shahawiyya line came the Sharnubiyya (founded by Ahmad al-Sharnubi, c. 1525-1586), centered in Buhayra and Cairo. Other branches include the 'Ashuriyya, and the Taziyya. (Khalaf Allah 1992:287-292)

Veneration for Sidi Ibrahim exhibits three salient features critical to the present analysis: esotericism, ecstaticism, and Egyptian localism.[6]

B. Esotericism, ecstaticism, and Egyptianism

One of Sidi Ibrahim's miracles is the ability to speak multiple languages. Nabhani states that the great qutb Sidi Ibrahim spoke Suryani (literally, Syriac), 'Ibrani (Hebrew), 'Ajami ("foreign"), and languages of the birds and animals (al-Nabhani 1984:398). This miracle is in no way unique to Dasuqi; attributed to many saints, it appears to signal and promote global diffusion, true spiritual power knowing no linguistic boundaries. But for Sidi Ibrahim al-Dasuqi this quality is significant as an expression of more distinguishing properties: esotericism, and localism.[7]

Most great Muslim saints are associated with a mystical prayer called *hizb*, often ascribed spiritual or even magical powers; a deceased saint is known and venerated largely through dissemination and performance of his *hizb*. Most *hizbs* are composed out of excerpts from standard Islamic sources, mainly Qur'an, Hadith, and blessings for the Prophet; these elements are recombined to form a text which is thus simultaneously distinctive and familiar.

Sidi Ibrahim's great hizb (al-hizb al-kabir) is unusually esoteric, for (in accordance with his miraculous linguistic abilities) it is distinguished by large quantities of what many Egyptian Sufis dub Suryani. In Egyptian parlance, "Suryani" is not Syriac, but

rather a mystical language of angels and jinns, incomprehensible to human beings under ordinary conditions, but often produced as a glossolalic manifestation of Divine inspiration (much like "speaking in tongues" of the Pentecostal churches). The presence of Suryani in the great hizb indicates Sidi Ibrahim's elevated spiritual state. It also means that portions of the hizb are textually quite remote from the standard sacred sources. The recitation of his hizb is therefore associated with great mystical powers.

The following excerpt from Sidi Ibrahim's great hizb may serve to illustrate this point: "Allahumma aaminna min kulli khawfin wa hammin wa ghammin wa karbin kadin kadin kardadin kardadin kardahin kardahin dahin dahin dah dah" (al-Dasuqi 198?:121; al-Burhani 198?:19) This passage, which begins with a lucid supplication trailing off into esoteric-ecstatic Suryani, may be translated as follows: "Oh God, preserve us from every fear, worry, sorrow, and trouble kadin kadin kardadin kardadin...".

While various authors have attempted to explicate this and other similarly inscrutable passages through recourse to acronyms and tradition (Muharram 1936), its experiential meaning appears determined primarily by its mystical incomprehensibility and sonic effect, and secondarily by its implication of Sidi Ibrahim's exalted spiritual station. Recitation of the hizb is therefore commended for increasing faith in the saint and his path, and compared to the Islamic faith generated via the inscrutable letters preceding many Qur'anic suras (Muharram 1936:60).

The esoteric-musical aspect of the hizb is related to a more general ecstaticism in Dasuqiyya ritual practice, especially in the hadra (corporate ritual, usually performed once or more per week) through the agency of powerful dhikr (chanting the Names of God) and inshad (religious hymns). These hymns naturally draw heavily on Sidi Ibrahim's own poetic oeuvre, which demonstrates a markedly intoxicated mysticism, full of heterodox symbols of wine and desire, and ecstatic abstruse expressions of mystical union (shath), when compared to the output of most other Sufi saints.

Sidi Ibrahim's most well known poem is a lengthy ta'iyya, an ecstatic meditation on mystical union expressed as a qasida (classical ode) rhyming in the letter 't'.[8] Some typical lines:

tajalla li l-mahbub `an kulli wajhati; fa shaahadtuhu fi kulli ma'na wa surati...

The beloved appeared to me in every direction; I witnessed him in every meaning and shape

He addressed me from myself by revealing secrets, rising above others in subtlety and majesty

He said: do you know me? I said you, oh object of my desire, are me; so you are my reality

He said: just so, but if things are absent then you are as my simulacrum

So I joined my essence with his in my union, without incarnation, but rather through realization of my relation.

I became annihilated in subsistence, confirmed for an eternal essence

He gave me to drink, a cup from the beloved's hands, and in my ecstatic drunkenness, I withdrew from my existence.

(Cited in al-Najjar 1989:197-198; my translation)

Scholars have noted the tariqa's emphasis on the loud dhikr; although Sidi Ibrahim apparently criticized the sama' (musical assembly) his followers performed it anyway (al-Najjar 1989:163, 166). My experience attending many hadras of the Sufi orders in contemporary Egypt (from 1992 until 1998) suggests that, on average, the modern Dasuqiyya order features a more ecstatic corporate ritual (hadra) than most other Egyptian orders.

One Dasuqiyya hadra I frequented incorporated ecstatic singing of Sufi poetry, with duff (frame drum) accompaniment (and sometimes other musical instruments as well, though not inside the mosque), together with dhikr (remembering God by chanting His Names). The brethren begin the dhikr chant quietly with little movement. Gradually the tempo, volume, and melodic

line of dhikr and inshad build to an ecstatic pitch, and the force and amplitude of movement—bowing up and down or wheeling from side to side—increases. At the same time, the chant becomes noisier and less comprehensible, ultimately rendered unintelligibly as pure breath. Sufis consider this technique, known as dhikr al-qalb (dhikr of the heart), to be the most ecstatic technique of Divine remembrance. Whereas all of these ritual features are common enough in public hadras of the popular saint celebrations, they appear more common in the private liturgy of the Dasuqiyya than in that of other orders, many of which strive to avoid the impression of ecstasy. There is no reason to suppose that contemporary practice does not reflect a long tradition of such performances.

Being the last of the four aqtab, and having gathered together membership in most of their orders, Sidi Ibrahim is sometimes regarded as standing at their head in Egypt, much as Muhammad is the last of the Prophets (although in the timeless world of saints chronology is not always important). While all the saints claim (or are made to claim by their followers) high status, no claims exceed those imputed to Sidi Ibrahim who is supposed to have read the well-guarded tablet (lahw mahfuz) at age eight (Sha`rani 1988:183), who purportedly identified himself with God's essence ('ayn Allah) (surpassing in this even al-Hallaj, who said "I am the Truth") (al-Najjar 1989:156,158,167). His importance in Egyptian Sufism is also signaled by the fact that in Sha'rani's biographical dictionary of saints, *al-Tabaqat al-Kubra,* the entry on Sidi Ibrahim runs to 24 pages, longer than any other (Sha`rani 1988:165-183).

The Dasuqiyya of Egypt was localized culturally, as well as socially, its practices and beliefs rooted in the soil of the Nile Delta by Sidi Ibrahim's distinctive Egyptianness. Some Western scholars have even viewed such practices and beliefs as a reflection of pre-Islamic traditions that Islam was unable to wholly suppress (Goldziher 1968:296, 297). Besides a lifetime spent in Egypt (and furthermore in a town connected to the ancient Coptic/Pharaonic

city of Butu (Hallenberg 1997:184-185)), one of Sidi Ibrahim's oft-cited miracles points to this Egyptianness, as well as being related to his mysterious ability to communicate with animals. As Nabhani relates it:

> A crocodile abducted a child, whose terrified mother came to Sidi Ibrahim. He sent a disciple to call at the banks of the Nile: "Oh society of crocodiles, may he who swallowed a child come out with him!", whereupon a crocodile emerged from the river and walked to Sidi Ibrahim, who ordered that he regurgitate the child. The crocodile spat him out alive. Then Sidi Ibrahim commanded the crocodile to die, and he died. (al-Nabhani 1984:398; my translation)

Nile crocodiles (now extinct) had been feared and venerated in Egypt since Pharaonic times. Worshipped as the god Sobek, the crocodile symbolized the might of the Pharaohs (Brunner-Traut 2001; Doxey 2001).[9] The miraculous crocodile story points to Sidi Ibrahim's local provenance, suggesting his supremacy over the old crocodile cult. (See also Hallenberg 1997:164-168).

Veneration for Sidi Ibrahim is also Egyptianized by connection to solar cycles, and (most likely) to pre-Islamic agricultural festivals (Goldziher 1968). Significantly, the saint festivals (mawlids) of the two principal Egyptian saints, Sidi Ibrahim and Sidi Ahmad al-Badawi, are both determined by the solar year to occur in the spring and following the fall harvest, while most other saint festivals are determined by the Islamic lunar year (and thus cycle around the agricultural year, disconnected from it); solar festivals are thus simultaneously connected to pre-Islamic seasonal rituals, local agricultural conditions, and the land itself (Reeves 1990:126, 136; Hallenberg 1997:169-173).

The distinguishing color of the Egyptian Dasuqiyya tariqa is green. Used on their flags and banners, and often worn as a green 'imma (head-wrap) or taqiyya (skullcap), green provides a particularly potent symbol linking Egyptian and Islamic traditions. Green is polysemic for Egyptian Muslims: color of the Prophet's

tribe (Quraysh) and thus the symbolic color of Islam worldwide, green is more specifically connected to the Prophet's descendents (ashraf; singular sharif) who (to the present day) often distinguish themselves by wearing green; Sidi Ibrahim was himself sharif (Hallenberg 1997:65ff). The connection is reinforced by miracle stories, such as one related by al-Sharnubi: upon visiting the seventh heaven, God gave the Prophet Muhammad 3000 robes of honor, the first of which was made from green silk brocade. This robe the Prophet bestowed upon Sidi Ibrahim al-Dasuqi (Hallenberg 1997:158).

Green also evokes the distinctive verdure of the Delta, the Nile, and its crocodiles, distinguishing the Delta-born Sidi Ibrahim from the other great saint of Egypt, Sayyid Ahmad al-Badawi ("the Beduin"), who settled in the Delta after arriving from the desert, and whose color is red (O'Fahey and Radtke 1993; K. Vollers and E. Littmann 1960). Finally, green is associated with the mysterious immortal saint Khidr ("the green man"), spiritual guide of the Egyptian Prophet Moses in the Qur'an, and prototypical spiritual guide for Sufis in Egypt (Hoffman 1995:125-126; Hallenberg 1997:158-162).[10]

IV. Sufism in the Sudan, and the spread of Egyptian orders

Sufi orders developed in the Sudan differently from Egypt. Egypt was completely conquered by Muslim Arab armies by 643, only eleven years after the Prophet's death, and firmly incorporated into the earliest Islamic empires. Islam was not introduced through Sufi saints and orders, which developed six centuries later as a distinct social phenomenon. Even after widespread development of Egyptian Sufism, political authority was relatively centralized in Egypt, checking the independent social and political power of the orders.

By contrast, until the 19th century the Sudan was never fully controlled by large Islamic empires, and political organization was relatively decentralized. The northern Sudanese population converted not due to foreign conquest, but rather through the

mediation of Sufi shaykhs and saints, interoperating with a variety of small kingdoms. Conversion, beginning in the 13th century, was sporadic at first. Widespread Islamization came only in the 16th century via individual holy men. These faqihs, as they were called, taught Qur'an, Islamic law, and initiated followers into local branches of Sufi orders, primarily Qadiriyya and Shadhiliyya, passing their holiness onwards through the male line (Holt and Daly 2000:29).[11] Followers were transformed into more organized brotherhoods by the mid 17th century (Karrar 1992:13-20), which became "specifically Sudanese and were confined to the Sudan" (al-Shahi 1983:58). While Egyptian orders were checked by their subordinate relation to centralized political and religious authorities, local Sudanese orders enjoyed more independence. Representing large numbers of Sufi converts, Sudanese holy families emerged with significant religious and political power in this decentralized environment (Holt and Daly 2000:28-29; al-Shahi 1983:58). Sudanese Islam was thus thoroughly identified with Sufism of one form or another from the start. Unrestricted by any central political authority, the Sudan would have provided a particularly fertile environment in which a newly introduced order could localize and develop.

At first, most Sudanese orders came from the Hijaz and Baghdad, not Egypt (Trimingham 1965:195-196). Egyptian orders may have first entered the Sudan with southern migration of the Ja'fara and other tribes from towns north of Aswan (Trimingham 1965:241; Baddour 1960:32-40). By the 19th c, Egyptian Sufi orders were established in the Sudan, following Egyptian ruler Muhammad 'Ali's Sudanic conquests in 1821, which had served in part to eliminate the threat of Mamlukes who had fled to Dongola, but also to increase trade (Holt and Daly 2000:41). Egyptian orders, including the Dasuqiyya, received special recognition under Egyptian occupation forces (Trimingham 1965:200, 241). In this way, the Dasuqiyya must have entered the Sudan, and later localized there, although detailed information on which branches entered and how localization proceeded is not at present available.

Besides the Sudan, by the 19th century the Dasuqiyya had also spread (probably by similar means) to Aleppo, Antioch, Syria, Hadramawt, the Yemen, Mecca, and Madina (Hallenberg 1997:3; Trimingham 1971:46) All of this incipient global expansion of the Dasuqiyya took place in the traditional mode of gradual, decentralized diffusion, a natural consequence of migration and political conquests, followed by re-localization. The local groups thus established were never socially unified in a single order. One may only speculate that in a Sudanese environment highly conducive to Sufism the Dasuqiyya order must have thrived, especially given its distant connection to ruling Egypt. By 1920 three Dasuqiyya branches were represented in Khartoum by three different shaykhs (Shabana 1995:50).

But the local Sudanese branches of the 19th century were overshadowed and eventually disappeared due to the 20th century organization of a new Dasuqiyya branch in Khartoum under the authority of a charismatic new saint, Shaykh Muhammad 'Uthman 'Abduh al-Burhani, who claimed to be heir to the entire Dasuqiyya tradition. While maintaining this tradition in all its ecstatic and esoteric complexity, the new tariqa (called Burhaniyya) also exhibited new social characteristics of firm organization, centralization, and ambitious expansion, reflecting the current trends of Islamic reform and revival that swept the northern Sudan in the 19th century.

V. The rise of "neo-Sufi" movements

The late 18th and 19th c witnessed proliferation of Islamic reform movements, responding to a perception of internal weakness in Islamic societies (and later to European encroachments), attributed to an insufficient application of Islamic principles. Traditional Sufi orders were accused of fostering disunity and heterodoxy in the Umma, contradicting the unity of early Islam, and the unity of God. Medieval Sufism was also attacked for promoting social withdrawal (asceticism and spiritual madness), leading to social weakness.

The solution was reform and unity, via return to the pure Islam of the Prophet's own times, a turn to the past as a means of facing the future. While some movements (such as the Wahhabiyya) aimed to destroy saint veneration completely, parallel movements occurred among mystics that aimed to reform Sufism to support a purer, more unified and socially engaged Islam.

These movements, including the Tijaniyya, founded by Sidi Ahmad al-Tijani (Abun-Nasr 1965), and the Khatmiyya, founded by Sidi Muhammad 'Uthman al-Mirghani, have sometimes been labeled 'neo-Sufi' (Rahman 1979:206). This term must be used carefully, especially since numerous authors (including Rahman) have incorrectly equated the designation "neo-Sufism" with a radical shift in mystical doctrine, or a rejection of traditional rituals, yet recent scholarship has concluded that there is no historical evidence of such changes (O'Fahey and Radtke 1993; Hoffman 1999; Radtke 1996). The term is only useful, it seems to me, insofar as it correctly implies social changes in certain newer Sufi orders, to some degree paralleling social aspects of Islamic reform movements, without implying any sharp break in the spiritual tradition; O'Fahey and Radke appear to admit the utility of such a restricted definition along these lines (O'Fahey and Radtke 1993:87). Taking all the critiques into account, the claim then is that "neo-Sufi" orders thus exhibit most if not all of the following properties (while not claiming that these were always absent from Sufi orders in earlier times):

1) Charismatic founder of the modern age, who claims a privileged status as inheritor or gatherer of the spiritual power of older saints; veneration for the latter is largely subsumed within his own, thus providing him with the spiritual authority to revive, reform, and adapt the tariqa to contemporary times.
2) Founder's claim of direct spiritual dispensation from much older saints (often the Prophet or his immediate family), thereby validating formation of the order. Downplaying the

medieval silsila is the mystical equivalent to the reformists' return to the early Islamic community.

3) Spiritual and social unity. Complete submission to the central rather than local shaykh; veneration reserved almost exclusively for the founding saints, and the Prophet. Social unity is maintained through centralized social organization, and uniform codes of behavior, defining a sharp social boundary between members and non-members; intolerance of multiple or nominal affiliation.
4) Pan-Islamic, revivalist discourse used in active proselytizing, aimed particularly at the educated classes, and implicitly competing with other reform movements.
5) Modern social integration. Limitations of spiritual behaviors deemed anti-social, especially asceticism (zuhd), social withdrawal (khalwa), and spiritually madness (majdhub). Affirmation of the importance of education, and productive social roles for members in modern society.
6) Clear affirmation of the centrality of Islamic law (Shari'a) for the Sufi life, though sometimes rejecting traditional schools of law (madhahib) and sometimes affirming ijtihad (reasoning) (Radtke 1996:360; Radtke 1994:917-920).

Sufi orders possessing most or all of these attributes embodied some of the principles of Islamic reform, and were therefore less open to the critiques of reformers. They also approached more nearly the dimension (or potential dimension) of a pan-Islamic global social organization. Neo-Sufi orders, appearing more modern and respectable, and better organized, could win a more educated middle-upper class membership possessing greater financial and political clout. While firmly proclaiming their adherence to mainstream Islam, these socially unified brotherhoods rejected the extreme localization of traditional orders, and thus introduced sharper social disjunctures between members and non-members in community where they were active (O'Fahey 1990:1; Rahman 1979:205-209; O'Fahey in Karrar 1992:ix-x).

Such neo-Sufi reformist orders quickly entered the Sudan from Hijaz in the late 18th c, where they spread themselves widely, especially the Tijaniyya, the Idrisiyya, and the Khatmiyya (Holt and Daly 2000:36-37).[12] They transcended the traditional lineage-based social structure of older Sufi groups through supratribal and pan-Islamic links, and came to dominate many districts (e.g. Shayqiyya) in the 19th c (Karrar 1992:x, 42-23, 127-130).[13] In many cases, a kind of tribal theocracy developed in which Sufi organizations thoroughly penetrated tribal political structures (Holt and Daly 2000:30, 82).

Another social model for the Burhaniyya tariqa must have been the messianic Mahdiyya movement that produced dramatic social results: revolution and a short-lived theocratic Sudanese independence from the Turco-Egyptian regime and Britain (1881-1899). The movement's founder, Muhammad Ahmad of Dongola, was initiated into the Sammaniyya order (a branch of the Idrisiyya), although the Mahdiyya centered on his popular status not as saint in the traditional sense of wali, but rather as an Islamic reformer, in the triple guise of Imam of the Muslim community, successor of the Prophet, and al-mahdi al-muntazar (the awaited 'guided one' who will come to rule the world at the end of time, according to interpretations of the Prophet Muhammad's sayings) (Holt and Daly 2000:76ff). His version of pan-Islamism "aimed not only at restoring the primitive purity of Islamic organization and faith, but also at reforming the whole Dar al-islam and ultimately Islamizing the world as a Mahdi should...for a time the Sudanese Mahdi and his caliph appeared as a possible alternative to the Ottoman Sultan as leader of a world Isalmdom waiting to be united." (Hodgson 1974:3:247). Although the Mahdi officially abolished the orders, the Mahdiyya also displayed many of the signs of neo-Sufism, and allied itself with Sufi families such as the Majadhib; reemerging after the First World War, the Mahdiyya began to resemble a Sufi order (Holt and Daly 2000:82; O'Fahey 1999:276, 281)

The late 19th and early 20th century saw the decline of Sufi orders in Egypt. In the latter 19th century a strong Islamic reform

movement (the Salafiyya) developed in Egypt. While upholding Sufism as a purely spiritual concept, these reformists opposed the social manifestations of Sufism, especially saint veneration. Following the Salafiyya intelligentsia (most importantly Shaykh Muhammad 'Abdu, and Rashid Rida) came a more popular reform movement, the Muslim Brothers. Founded by Hasan al-Banna in 1928, the Brothers opposed the existing orders as a corruption of true Sufism, while providing a social alternative to them (Mitchell 1993:214). Expanding extremely rapidly, the Brothers attracted many youths who would formerly have joined Sufi orders. Combined with rapid urbanization, and Westernization of large cities, these factors led to the decline of most Sufi orders in Egypt during this period (Gilsenan 1973:14,17,195ff; Abu-Rabi' 1988:210-211; Trimingham 1971:251; Frishkopf 1999:70ff).

By contrast, in late 19th and early 20th century Sudan, multiple Sufi-related movements (including traditional Sufism, neo-Sufism (especially the Khatmiyya), and the Mahdiyya) centered on holy families, mystical beliefs and practices, and deeply enmeshed with political life, remained very strong. Despite training a Sudanese class of 'ulama' at al-Azhar, colonial Egypt failed to implant them as an Egyptian-style central mainstream Islamic authority in the Sudan (O'Fahey 1999:272). Anti-Sufi reformist groups like the Muslim Brothers played a major role in Sudanese history only after independence in 1956, and holy families such as the Mirghaniyya and the Mahdiyya have remained powerful to the present (Holt and Daly 2000:152, 182; al-Shahi 1983:62-70). In an environment hospitable to the development of powerful Sufi movements, the local Sudanese Dasuqiyya could flourish, even as it declined in Egypt. Following this incubation period, during which it developed some "neo-Sufi" attributes, the Sudanese Dasuqiyya was able to powerfully reemerge in Egypt during the 1970s, when social factors favored new manifestations of organized Islam. The career of Shaykh Muhammad 'Uthman al-Burhani should be understood in this historical context.

VI. Shaykh Muhammad 'Uthman and the Burhaniyya

It is difficult to find biographical information about Shaykh Muhammad 'Uthman except by relying on partial sources.[14] Keeping in mind the tendency of saintly figures to be "invented" (Hallenberg 1997; Homerin 1994), one is in a position to consider the following life story.

Shaykh Muhammad was born in northern Sudan (Halfa) around 1900 (Hoffman 1995:303), where he received a religious upbringing (Shabana 1995:50); at age 10 his uncle initiated him into the Dasuqiyya; among other jobs he appears to have worked on the railroad (Shabana 1995:52). Later he had a recurring vision of a one-car train coming from Dasuq. Entering the car, he found a coffin and corpse, whose feet resembled his own, and he was surrounded by saints. Sidi Ibrahim al-Dasuqi appeared, telling him "the dead man stands for my order, and you have been chosen to bring it back to life". At first he hesitated, but in a subsequent vision Sayyidna al-Husayn (grandson of the Prophet) appeared to urge him on, promising complete support. Shaykh Muhammad then agreed, subject to certain reformist conditions. A contract was signed including sixty such conditions, including guarantees that his followers should not become spiritually mad (majdhub) and need not withdraw from society (khalwa) (History & Tales 2001).

Shaykh Muhammad moved to Khartoum in 1930 where he gathered followers. In 1958 he founded a Dasuqiyya branch in Khartoum, which attracted a massive following (Shabana 1995:50). Subsequently he established an independent order (al-Qadi in Shabana 1995:52), the Burhaniyya Dasuqiyya Shadhiliyya, combining the charismatic forces of Sidi Ibrahim al-Dasuqi, his putative uncle Sidi Abu al-Hasan al-Shadhili (both characteristic of medieval Sudanese Sufism), and himself as reformist renewer.[15] In this "new" order the Dasuqi tradition, including esoteric writings such as the hizb cited earlier, formed the core (al-Burhani 198?). Shaykh Muhammad eventually became trustee of the Sufi Council in the Sudan (Hoffman 1995:301).

Under Shaykh Muhammad, the Burhaniyya effectively fused medieval Egyptian ecstaticism and esotericism, Sudanese Sufi individualism, and the centralized organization, revivalist spirit, and proselytization of neo-Sufism.[16] While upholding veneration for Sidi Ibrahim and Sidi Abu al-Hasan al-Shadhili, he also embodied such veneration in his contemporary saintly person, and offered a systematic, organized, and expanding mystical way. In this potent new form the Burhaniyya offered broad geographic and multi-class appeal. These features are metaphorically expressed in the mystical vision story through the themes of revival and reform, and elsewhere in the hagiographic literature.

VII. The Burhaniyya in Egypt and pan-Islamic globalization

By the mid 20th century Sufism had declined in Egypt. Most orders were weak, decentralized, and somewhat discredited, seen as the preserve of lower and rural classes. But the 150-year incubation period of the Dasuqiyya in the Sufi-hospitable matrix of Sudan strengthened the Sudanese Dasuqiyya, enabling the neo-Sufi Burhaniyya to appear as a powerful force for Islamic renewal in Egypt, precisely at a moment of spiritual crisis and Islamic resurgence there.

Although Shaykh Muhammad visited Egypt as early as the 1930s, the tariqa seems to have been established there in the 1950s (Hoffman 1995:301); according to tariqa members, Shaykh Muhammad traveled regularly between Sudan and Egypt from the 1950s onward (Sparkes 2001). Saint and order exerted a powerful effect on Egyptians, to the alarm of its religious establishment. Like other neo-Sufi movements, the well-organized Burhaniyya drew many members from upper and educated classes who would never have involved themselves in traditional Sufism (Hoffman 1995:300). In the 1970s, the Burhaniyya swept through Egypt like a wildfire.

When Shaykh Muhammad traveled from Khartoum to Egypt in 1974, he was heralded at every train stop by cheering crowds, and the sound of drums and oboes (al-Samman 1977:10;

Shabana 1995), treated "as a saint from the south" (al-Qadi in Shabana 1995:52). An administrative center was established in Cairo, with organized branches throughout Egypt. The tariqa grew most rapidly in the 1970s, reportedly reaching three million by the middle of that decade (History & Tales 2001; Sparkes and Shaykh Mustafa 2001).

Alongside Shaykh Muhammad's personal spiritual gifts and active proselytizing, this expansion was no doubt aided by contextual factors, including the spiritual vacuum in Egypt following the 1967 war, 1970s materialism and economic inequality resulting from the infitah (economic "opening" to the West), and Sadat's policy of promoting apolitical Sufism as a political bulwark against leftists and Islamic militants, whom he often repressed; according to Hoffman, Sadat specifically promoted the Burhaniyya in the 1970s (Hoffman 1995:301). For many, overtly political currents of Islam were unappealing, and they could be dangerous. The Burhaniyya offered a safer alternative for a resurgent Islamic revival.

But deeper archetypal factors may have been at work too. I suggest that Egyptians were drawn to the Burhaniyya due to its special combination of attributes: simultaneously Egyptian and Sudanese, familiar and exotic, esoteric-ecstatic and reformist, local and global. Shaykh Muhammad revived a distinctively Egyptian tradition, with powerfully esoteric and ecstatic characteristics, within the legitimizing framework of a modern "international" religious organization with pan-Islamic potential, as a revivalist model for a universal mystical Islam. To this potent mixture was added the exoticism of Sudanese Islam. In Egypt today, the Sudan is regarded as both the source of purer Islam, and of the spiritually miraculous.[17] Burhaniyya hadra was perfumed with both, aurally via unfamiliar Sudanese styles of dhikr and religious hymns, visually via the presence of Sudanese themselves.

A pan-Islamic perspective also appears to be deeply rooted in the Burhaniyya's discursive representation of their own sacred historical destiny. According to one present-day member, al-

Sharnubi foreshadowed this destiny in his *Tabaqat*, in which he outlined the theory of four "polar" saints (aqtab) (al-Sharnubi 1889). The modern Burhaniyya interpret Sharnubi's theory as a prescient division of history into four ages, each dominated by a "polar" saint, and corresponding to political control in the Middle East: (1) The age of Sidi Ahmad al-Rifa'i (during the Ottoman period); (2) the age of Sidi 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (during the period of French ascendancy); (3) the age of Sidi Ahmad al-Badawi (during the period of English dominance); (4) the age of Sidi Ibrahim al-Dasuqi (from the time of Shaykh Muhammad 'Uthman). (Sparkes 2001) This last period appears to correspond to the overthrow of colonial powers in the Islamic world, thus indicating the Burhaniyya as a post-colonial pan-Islamic movement. For tariqa members, it is this "batini" (esoteric") interpretation of their history, rather than any sociological explanation, which accounts for the tremendous growth of the Burhaniyya in the 20th century throughout the world.

While living in Cairo (1992-1998), I often encountered the Burhaniyya; several features stand out. One is their strong organization and tremendous scope. The Burhaniyya was by far the largest order I ever saw assembled. While some older orders (such as the Rifa'iyya) may be numerically larger, these are decentralized, and include many inactive, nominal members (affiliated by family tradition, or affiliated to more than one order), with membership primarily in villages. By contrast, the Burhaniyya in Egypt was centralized and organized, comprising dedicated, well-to-do, energetic members, many of them urbanites, for whom membership was clearly an active personal choice. Organization and scope became visible during impressive public processions for religious occasions such as Islamic New Year and the Prophet's Birthday; hundreds of Burhaniyya chapters participated, each carrying a banner. The line of members and banners, all well-arrayed behind the shaykh, appeared to stretch on forever.

Traditional orders tended to rely on family and community relationships to provide new members. A man would join the

order of his father, uncle, brother, cousin, or neighbor, almost as a matter of course. But since the early 20th century this means of replenishing a tariqa's ranks has become far less effective, since rapid social change means that the older generation's ways often seem irrelevant (or morally wrong) to the newer one, and many competing Islamic organizations are available. Like other reformist groups, such as the Muslim Brothers, neo-Sufi orders frequently expand through more active proselytizing. This kind of activity was clearly displayed by the Burhaniyya in Cairo. Though members were always extremely friendly, my approach was always sensed as a potential conversion opportunity, and pressure from the educated, well-to-do members could be intense.

While firmly rooted in mainstream Islamic tradition, and socially reformist, the Burhaniyya did not deny their esoteric and ecstatic spiritual inheritance, which comprised a regular part of the order's teachings and practices. In 1974 Shaykh Muhammad 'Uthman published a book, *Tabri'at al-Dhimma fi Nush al-Umma* (Discharging the duty of counselling the Islamic community), a collection of mystical Islamic interpretations by various esoteric Sufi writers (including Ibn 'Arabi, 'Abd al-Karim al-Jili, and Shaykh Muhammad, among many others), focusing on the emanationist doctrine of the Muhammadan Light, doctrines of sainthood, and the nature of the Sufi way (Hoffman 1995:308-315). They also published the traditional esoteric Dasuqiyya prayers, including the great hizb and other texts to be recited daily after dawn and afternoon prayers (al-Burhani 198?:148), as well as a collection of ecstatic poem-songs entitled *Sharab al-Wasl* (the drink of union). Shaykh Muhammad miraculously conveyed these poems to his disciples posthumously (al-Burhani 1993?).

Significantly, the lines of each poem are numbered, perhaps to facilitate easier group study or performance. The first poem (dated April 13th, shortly after the founder's death in 1983) is a long ta'iyya in the manner of Ibn al-Farid and Sidi Ibrahim al-Dasuqi; use of this rhyme letter in itself evokes the tradition of mystical esoteric poetry. But beside ecstatic and heterodox

messages, typical of those earlier Sufi masters, it introduces new ideas unknown to them: a self-consciousness about the Sufi order, its importance, legitimacy, and the necessity for its continuous expansion. The poem is extremely complex; one Burhani affirmed that it is the most important poem in the volume (Sparkes and Shaykh Mustafa 2001). Only a few representative lines can be considered here.

> (1) Ana fi ana inni wa inni fi ana, rahiiqi makhtumun bimiski l-haqiqati...
> (1) I am in me, indeed, I am in me; exquisite wine sealed with the musk of Divine Reality
> (4) I gave Ibrahim[18] wisdom long ago; he is my treasure and my gift {to you}
> (9) Some of my wine suffices for all to drown in love; my way is the Qur'an and my face is always turned towards God
> (27) Indeed I am truthful, the Divine Reality left in the depths of a well, Joseph-like in perspicaciousness
> (28) Abu 'Aynayn[19] arrived at its waters, and lowered a bucket, saying "this is by my sign"
> (29) It was brought to Egypt, where it was sold cheaply; how odd that some renounce such glad tidings.
> (al-Burhani 1993?:1-5)

The opening line (1) is an enigmatic statement typical of ecstatic Sufi poetry, and strongly reminiscent of Sidi Ibrahim's ta'iyya considered earlier. Line 4 reinforces the social centralization of the order by praising the founder and his son Ibrahim, but more importantly stating the relation between them (father transferred wisdom to son), and the fact that the son is a "gift" for the order. Such a line is clearly designed to emphasize that Ibrahim is his father's legitimate successor. Sufi orders often founder over leadership squabbles following the death of a

charismatic shaykh; line (4) seems designed to promote a smoother succession.

The two halves of line (9) express the dual nature of Shaykh Muhammad (and his tariqa) as simultaneously mystical and ecstatic (drowning, drunken, loving), and conventional and law-abiding (Qur'anic and God-fearing). Sufis often describe the ideal path (tariqa) as firmly rooted in Shari'a (Islamic law), but providing also a glimpse of Haqiqa (Divine Reality). The problem, they say, is in the balance: the "fundamentalist" focuses too much on Shari'a, while the majdhub (mystically mad) has lost his way by plunging too completely into the "shoreless sea" of Haqiqa. True Sufism comprises a balance between the two. A clear statement of this position is especially important in the modern Egyptian atmosphere, charged with reformist Islamic movements and concepts.

Lines 26-28 imply a complex network of relationships between Shaykh Muhammad, Sidi Ibrahim , and the biblical and Qur'anic prophet Joseph. The Qur'an presents the following story: for enjoying his father's favor, Joseph's jealous brothers resolved to do away with him, imprisoning him at the bottom of a well. A passing caravan in search of water discovered Joseph and brought him to Egypt, where they sold him – cheaply – as slave to a royal minister. The beautiful Joseph unintentionally tempted the man's wife, and was thrown into prison. There, he developed a reputation for successful dream-interpretation, and was eventually summoned to interpret a strange dream for the pharaoh. Inspired by God, Joseph's interpretation correctly advised the pharaoh on agricultural strategy, thereby enabling Egypt to survive a long drought. Joseph was therefore granted an elevated position in the royal court. From this position of respect and political power, he was better able to call Egyptians to God.

In the poem, this story is metaphorically interpreted and interwoven with the life and destiny of Sidi Ibrahim and Shaykh Muhammad 'Uthman, representing the intertwined destinies of traditional and modern Dasuqiyya movements. The beautiful

prophet Joseph in the well symbolizes the Divine Reality in the depths of a mystic's heart, necessary to quench spiritual thirst. Sidi Ibrahim drew on this well, introducing its truths to Egypt, just as Joseph's truth had come to Egypt more than two thousand years before him. Shaykh Muhammad, reviving the Dasuqi way, is now again attempting to bring Divine Reality to Egyptians, and the message is again cheap. Although some renounce him, he ought to be accepted and rise in importance, just like Joseph and Sidi Ibrahim before him.

Liberally suffused by a heady aura of Sufi symbols of intoxication, love, and union, the poem thus eminently expresses and supports the order's new neo-Sufi face, as simultaneously reformist and mystical, strongly rooted in Qur'an and prophets of yore, but also connected to traditional medieval Sufism, well-organized, and carrying an important message for Egyptian Muslims today which ought to be accepted by governing authorities. Through such intertextuality, Shaykh Muhammad represents his tariqa's mission as possessing profound spiritual as well as social importance.

This sort of poetry does not remain silent on the page, however, but rather is experienced sonically as a moving performance of ecstatic inshad (religious hymnody) within the Burhaniyya hadra.[20] It was probably these performances, more than anything, which allowed the tariqa to grow so rapidly in Egypt, for they were publicly performed each week in central mosques, they were extremely moving, and visitors were encouraged. At the same time, such a public, organized yet ecstatic performance style signals an intention to create a powerful, well-organized, pan-Islamic Sufi movement.

Poetry is experienced aurally in most Sufi hadras. But Burhaniyya inshad, based on five-tone (pentatonic) scales, is different from most inshad in Egypt, where nearly all singing (religious or secular) is based on the seven-tone scales called maqamat (Touma 1996:17-45). Burhaniyya inshad is also sung using a much fuller, more relaxed voice. For Egyptians, such

inshad carries a special affective charge for being "exotic", as well as for being recognizably Sudanese.

More generally, Burhaniyya hadra is ecstatic and esoteric, within a controlled and well-organized liturgical and social framework. Their dhikr chant (featuring dhikr al-qalb) is highly affective when compared to the thinner, sober performance of Egyptian orders (for instance, the eminent Hamidiyya Shadhiliyya (Gilsenan 1973), or the 'Ashira Muhammadiyya (Johansen 1996)) considered respectable by the Sufi and Islamic establishment. Burhaniyya performances I attended were always intoxicating. The space was packed with rows and rows of members all chanting and moving in unison; the lights were turned off to enable deeper concentration, as a multicolored hadra lamp of esoteric significance[21] was illuminated at the center of the hadra. Beautiful pentatonic melodies wafted forward and mixed with the deep and guttural chants of inarticulate dhikr al-qalb, soon becoming purely expressive breath. Often, one member used a microphone to chant interstitially, raising the emotional level even further by creating a call-response dhikr texture. Yet despite its high emotion, the hadra was well-organized, the product of a carefully structured social movement, unlike the freer ecstatic hadras of many loosely organized traditional orders, or the free-wheeling hadras of saint festivals. Again it appears to be precisely this balance of traditional and reform features that enabled the tariqa to grow so rapidly.

This exotic, ecstatic, and esoteric flavor of the Burhaniyya hadra performance was further intensified by the presence of many Sudanese members at the Cairo hadra, with their beautiful dark skin, speaking a distinctive Arabic dialect, and garbed in flowing Sudanese dress.

Distinctively Sudanic features of performance indexically (if inadvertently) evoked the Egyptian stereotype of a more mystical, but at the same time purer, Sudanese Islam. At the same time, the "otherness" of Sudanic features could also be interpreted as transnationalism, a positive sign of the movement's pan-Islamic, international character. In a specific sense, such a meaning arose

through association of Sudan with pan-Islamic movements, especially the Mahdiyya. More generally, in relatively ethnically homogeneous Egypt, non-Egyptians are highly conspicuous; their presence indicates the inter-ethnic and transnational character of an Islamic movement, transcending narrow cultural and political boundaries.

The Burhaniyya maintained an administrative center facing the mosque and shrine of Sayyidna al-Husayn, the Prophet's martyred grandson (and ancestor of Sidi Ibrahim), across the street from the ancient al-Azhar mosque and university, just down the street from Dar al-Ifta' (the office of Islamic legal judgements). Spatially, the al-Husayn mosque is the center of medieval Cairo, and the religious center of modern Cairo. All prayers are well-attended there, particularly on Fridays; religious tourists continuously flock to the shrine, especially on Thursday evenings. A large sign outside the Burhaniyya offices, bearing the names of the tariqa and Shaykh Muhammad 'Uthman, made their presence even more public. And every Thursday evening the Burhaniyya held a packed hadra in the room next to the shrine, which naturally attracted many onlookers. Those who were interested could receive more information (or be initiated) in the offices just upstairs.

The combined effect of Shaykh Muhammad's personal charisma; his esoteric teachings and poetry; unfamiliar Sudanese music, and people; a highly affective and yet carefully organized hadra performance, made the order visible and attractive. Its synthesis of apolitical ecstatic, socially structured, Islam with pan-Islamic reformism, in an Islamic movement at once visibly transethnic, and yet comfortably Egyptian, was captivating for many Egyptians. The tariqa therefore grew extremely rapidly from the 1970s onwards, particularly among the middle class and educated professionals. But this success also created problems, which resulted in several attempts – at first only partially successful – to ban the group. In the mid 1990s the tariqa was still

operating, but by the end of 1996 its Egyptian offices were closed, and the weekly hadra at Husayn's shrine had ceased.

VIII. Crises for the Burhaniyya in Egypt

Egyptian independence came in 1952; Sudanese in 1956. Yet Western colonialism left an indelible cultural legacy in the form of nationalism, and formation of nation-states within colonial borders. This legacy blocked the freer global flows characteristic of earlier Islamic empires by imposing armed boundaries and increasing the number of competitive power centers. In order to safeguard their largely undemocratic power, the new Arab state tended towards the total regulation of social organizations and group practices. In particular, the state attempted to control religious organizations and practices through regulatory medial organizations established or dominated by the state. In so doing, they naturally clashed with supranational pan-Islamic movements aiming to restore the broader unity and strength of the Islamic world.

Sometimes intertwined with nationalism, sometimes overtly opposed to it, an incipient pan-Islamic mode of globalization had flourished hopefully for over a century. The dream of restoring the Caliphate and reuniting the Islamic Umma was the major impetus of pan-Islamic movements, intellectually and socially; for such a dream, nationalism could be no more than a means. Pan-Islamist Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-1897) wrote of the "...aversion which Muslims have for manifestations of ethnic origin..."; they "...reject all clan loyalty with the exception of Islamic sentiment and religious solidarity" (Donohue and Esposito 1982:21). Rashid Rida (1865-1935) said that the Muslim's "...personal homeland is part of the homeland of his religious community. He must be intent on making progress of the part a means for the progress of the whole." (Donohue and Esposito 1982:59) Abu al-'Ala' Mawdudi (1903-1979) went farther: "...in their spirit and in their aims Islam and nationalism are diametrically opposed to each other." (Donohue and Esposito

1982:94) In 1954, Hasan Isma'il al-Hudaybi (second leader of the Muslim Brothers) remarked "We Muslim Brothers do not recognize geographical boundaries in Islam...", for which he was naturally castigated in the nationalist Egyptian press (Mitchell 1993:114). But from mid-century the rise of strong nation-states tended to block transnational Islam. This logical contradiction between third-world nationalism and pan-Islamism set the stage for clashes between Burhaniyya and Egyptian authorities.[22]

In post-revolutionary Egypt, Islam could be regulated through government control of religious institutions such as al-Azhar University, the Ministry of Religious Endowments, the Dar al-Ifta', and the Supreme Council for Sufi Orders. For over a thousand years, the principal religious authority of Egypt was al-Azhar university, whose scholars ('ulama') lived in a variably uneasy but ultimately symbiotic relation with political authorities. Muhammad 'Ali, seeking to create a virtually independent Egyptian state, weakened and subjugated the Azhari 'ulama', and gathered control of Sufi orders under the leadership of the al-Bakri family (de Jong 1978; Marsot 1972:152-153, 159-165). By 1905 Egyptian state control of the Sufi orders was reorganized and bureaucratized in the form of an administrative body, eventually called the Supreme Council for Sufi Orders (Majlis al-A'la li al-turuq al-Sufiyya), specifically charged with regulating Sufism in Egypt (de Jong 1978), overtly in accordance with proper Islamic principles, covertly in accord with the needs and demands of the state. To be legal, all orders had to be recognized by this body, which published regulations, organized events, and was indirectly accountable for the orders' activities.

After the Egyptian revolution of 1952, power at least nominally distributed among the royal family, the Parliament, and the British was now concentrated in the hands of President Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir, who soon realized he would have to use it forcefully if he wanted to maintain it. The new government did not seek to lessen the role of Islam in Egyptian society, but rather to seize control of religious education, activities, universities, and

organizations, via supervisory religious institutions (Vatikiotis 1969:441). Nasir repressed all potential opposition, including Islamic organizations such as the Muslim Brothers, which could pose a real counterrevolutionary threat (Vatikiotis 1969:106,386; Mitchell 1993).

The Supreme Council has been able to defend the existence of Sufi orders (including the Dasuqiyya) in Egypt before their detractors by emphasizing the mainstream features of Sufi devotions, and officially prohibiting ecstatic and esoteric aspects criticized as un-Islamic in a reformist climate (Hoffman 1995:9-10), even as these beliefs and activities might still recognized as essential to Sufism, and allowed to continue covertly.[23] The Burhaniyya threatened this control structure ideologically, and, perhaps more importantly, institutionally, as a large, public, international, ecstatic-esoteric Sufi organization that did not fit comfortably within the social instruments of state control.

On the ground, the crisis for the Burhaniyya in Egypt was triggered by the public nature of Burhaniyya esotericism, especially the 1974 publication of the esoteric *Tabri'at al-Dhimma*. Available to all members, this book easily became known outside the order. In Egypt, the Ministries of Religion and Interior, as well as the Supreme Sufi Council, all launched investigations, and in 1976 the Egyptian media "waged a relentless campaign against the Burhaniyya, depicting {Shaykh Muhammad 'Uthman} as a dangerous cult leader trying to pervert Islam from within" (Hoffman 1995:301). The book was also sharply criticized by at least one Saudi-inspired Muslim intellectual, reformist but anti-Sufi (al-Samman 1977; in his introduction, the author explicitly thanks two reformist shaykhs in Jedda), reflecting a new trend. By the late 1970s, the influence of Saudi "petro-Islam" had grown tremendously in Egypt, a result of the return of Egyptian migrant laborers, and Saudi's general surge in influence following the oil crisis of 1973.

Tabri'at al-Dhimma, *Sharab al-Wasl*, and the order's other books also attracted criticism of a more general sort. Critics tended

to impugn the order as dangerous because foreign, especially since political relations with Egypt's southern neighbor were often troubled. In conspiratorial tones, the Burhaniyya was linked to militant, anti-Egyptian, even anti-Islamic currents in the Sudan, especially in view of its highly organized hierarchical structure (Hoffman 1995:317). In a 1976 letter to Egyptian newspaper *al-Ahram*, the Egyptian consul in Khartoum, 'Asmat Abu al-Qasim al-Qadi, wrote that the tariqa is organized on a small number of "cells", whose activities are known only to members, stating "I believe their book – containing false ideas – is designed to mislead Muslims according to a precise plan. Defending Islam is the responsibility of Egypt and al-Azhar" (al-Qadi in Shabana 1995:52).

From a broader perspective, such printed criticism is a material manifestation of the larger structural contradiction. In order for the state to regulate a religious group, the latter must fall entirely within the state's jurisdiction. All transnational Islamic movements fundamentally contradict the nation-state ideology, and can at best serve any nation-state temporarily as a dangerous ally. The particular ideology of the pan-Islamic movement - whether mystical or political - is a secondary factor in this contradiction.

The Burhaniyya clearly highlighted the tensions between supranational pan-Islamic reformism (even the overtly apolitical Sufi variety) and more pliant national Islam, ensconced in state institutions and collaborating in state agendas. Transnational Sufism cannot be controlled by the Egyptian state, especially when the leader is not Egyptian, and the group espouses Islamic beliefs deemed extremist by powerful segments of the Islamic intelligentsia. The affective potency of socially organized mysticism makes it appear all the more threatening to the state, particularly when it grows rapidly among the educated classes. Though not overtly political, the mystical leader is unlike an ordinary leader, since he commands absolute authority and devotion of his followers, on a metaphysical – hence nearly unassailable – basis. Though he may claim no desire for political

influence, the potential is always present, at least from the state's perspective. Wallerstein has argued that all Islamist organizations are essentially anti-state, at least so long as they are out of power (Wallerstein 1997). For Sufi organizations with no real political designs, such a condition may appear permanent.[24]

But the more immediate threat of a proselytizing and expanding supranational religious movement is not to the highest levels of political authority, but rather to those secondary medial institutions established or controlled by the state to regulate religious life and ensure its conformity to state agendas, especially the Supreme Sufi Council, Ministry of Religious Endowments, and al-Azhar university. Such institutions are revealed as ineffectual by successful non-compliant supranational religious groups, even when the latter are not particularly dangerous to the higher echelons of state power.

Transnational groups headed by charismatic leaders are even more threatening to the government functionaries staffing such organizations, whose power is usually based on position, not personality. The authority of a great charismatic mystical leader such as Shaykh Muhammad 'Uthman is considerably greater than that which most Azhari professors, shaykhs, muftis, or ministers of religion (regarded by many as merely bureaucrats or, worse, political pawns) can possibly hope to wield. Being a foreigner and representing an incipient international movement, Shaykh Muhammad could not simply be absorbed into the Egyptian religious establishment.

A transnational neo-Sufi group led by a charismatic foreign shaykh would have been bad enough, but the Burhaniyya also featured overtly esoteric interpretations of Islam and ecstatic practices with a massive following, which served as a lightening rod for accusations against Sufism generally.[25] Criticism of the Burhaniyya would naturally be reflected also against the responsible regulatory agency, namely the Supreme Council. The Burhaniyya thus threatened to undermine the success of the

Council's mission. If the Egyptian Sufi establishment did not distance itself it too would be attacked.

From the 1970s on, the Supreme Sufi council of Egypt issued a number of decisions condemning the Burhaniyya for violating the Islamic shari'a and regulations for Sufi groups (Shabana 1995:51). The order and its books were banned in 1979, for transgressing Islamic law, violating regulation of Sufi orders, and corrupting the youth (Shabana 1995:51; Hoffman 1995:301ff; `Abd al-Fattah 1995:277). [26] Although these orders were not at once practically effective, appeals failed and a state administrative court reaffirmed the ban in 1994 (`Abd al-Fattah 1995:277).

Probably exacerbated by these crises, the tariqa developed internal problems. Shaykh Muhammad died in April 7, 1983, [27] and was buried in Khartoum (Hoffman 1995:327). He left a son, Shaykh Ibrahim, whom some followers deemed unfit to lead; his former disciple Shaykh Gamal al-Sanhuri continued to head the Egyptian branch until 1986, when he resigned, apparently at the insistence of Shaykh Ibrahim (Hoffman 1995:327). An Egyptian student of Shaykh Muhammad named Shaykh Mukhtar emerged to lead a large independent and competing faction, which I first observed in 1994. The tariqa therefore experienced a painful internal schism over succession (one which line four of the previously cited poem was evidently designed to avoid). The mainline Egyptian organization led by Shaykh Ibrahim was sharply curtailed in 1996, when its Cairo offices were closed, and its weekly hadra in the mosque of al-Imam al-Husayn ceased. The Supreme Council convinced Shaykh Mukhtar to affiliate as a bayt (branch) of the official Dasuqiyya order (represented on the Council), paying nominal respect to the offical head of the Dasuqiyya order in Egypt, Shaykh Muhammad 'Ali 'Ashur. Another shaykh, Hamid al-Guindi, reportedly leads another bayt of the Egyptian Dasuqiyya (Hoffman 1995:327). Shaykh Ibrahim continues to lead the global Burhaniyya organization. While many Burhanis in Egypt maintain their allegiance to Shaykh Ibrahim, their activities are more "underground" (Sparkes 2001). Evidently

these Egyptian Burhanis, even if numerous, no longer constitute a center for the global organization.

Thus, the underlying factors behind the clash between Burhaniyya and Egyptian state were nearly the same as those behind its popular success as an incipient pan-Islamic movement, namely Shaykh Muhammad 'Uthman's enticing and provocative synthesis of traditional esoteric and ecstatic mysticism, with a pan-Islamic neo-Sufi style of disciplined centralized organization, and active proselytization among the well-to-do and professional class.

IX. Transformation to Western globalization

However the tremendous popular success of the Burhaniyya in Egypt generated momentum for the transformation from a pan-Islamic to a Western mode of globalization. By this term I mean expansion through a global network of political, economic, and communications links, extending throughout the world, but densest in the West, where its power and control centers are primarily situated, and which is the primary beneficiary (in terms of wealth, power, or information) of its operations. Outside the West, benefits are skewed towards a narrow elite, links are less plentiful, and flows are frequently impeded by state control. Thus the Internet, often heralded as the information backbone of globalization, provides opportunities to citizens of the G-7 countries all out of proportion to their population.[28]

In the West, financial support, social connectivity, and communication for Sufi orders is rooted in the advanced technological infrastructure, economic power, and personal freedom available to Western members, which rests in turn upon the global domination of the developed nations of Europe and North America. A Western base for global operations provides a high degree of organizational and religious freedom, as well as ready access to globally dominant political and economic centers and a global communications network. Such a position is desirable not only for oppressed religious movements, but also for suppressed political movements worldwide.[29] All this has been to

the tremendous advantage of the Burhaniyya, expanding throughout Europe and North America around an organizational center in Germany. But since the Western-centered network is more limited in the Islamic world, Western globalization is a mode distinct from pan-Islamic globalization.

Structurally this new mode appears to emerge as an important option for neo-Sufi groups due to the incompatibility between pan-Islamism and third world nationalism. The irony for all Islamic groups is that political, economic, and communicative freedom is to be found in the midst of "Christendom". But for mystical movements especially, the Western environment also presents considerable new opportunities for expansion via conversion, due to extensive Western interest in eastern spirituality and Sufism in particular, especially since the 1970s (Heelas 1996:54-55; Sedgewick 1999). We turn now to a consideration of the tariqa's contemporary and global role.

(The conclusion of this article will appear in the next issue of RST-Editor)

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Notes

[1] The concept of four "poles" seems to have been introduced by the 16th century Sufi, Ahmad al-Sharnubi, who also founded an important Dasuqiyya branch (Hallenberg 1997:26-27).

[2] There is no record that he ever lived abroad, except briefly to fight the Crusaders (Hallenberg 1997:185).

[3] Possessor of two eyes or two essences, referring either to his clairvoyance, his "vision" in both religious law and mystical realities, or his mastery of these two "essences" of Islam (Hallenberg 1997:148).

[4] The scholar Helena Hallenberg has expressed doubt even as to the existence of Ibrahim al-Dasuqi, and focuses her dissertation upon the post-modern problem of the saint's invention through popular hagiography, rather than the traditional historian's excavation of an actual person (Hallenberg 1997). From my perspective, what is important is not the real person or the process of his invention, but the existence and globalization of the tradition of veneration for Ibrahim al-Dasuqi, which is very real.

[5] The tariqa is known as the Dasuqiyya, Burhamiyya , or Burhaniyya; the latter two names are derived from Sidi Ibrahim's first name and nickname (Burhan al-Din), respectively. In Egypt today the tariqa is generally known as the Burhamiyya. However I will use the term "Dasuqiyya" to refer to the original Egyptian tariqa, to avoid confusion with the modern Burhaniyya.

[6] By "Egyptianism" I do not in any way mean to imply national identity in the modern sense, but rather an identification with the locale of Egypt and Egyptian culture, specifically in the Delta region.

[7] I should not like to push the point that the Dasuqiyya is distinguished in having these properties as implying a kind of unique status. Their distinguishing the Dasuqiyya should rather be understood in quasi-statistical terms, as a penchant or tendency found among them to a greater degree, at least as compared with the other major tariqa lines in Egypt.

[8] The tradition, widespread among Arab Sufi poets, of composing ecstatic and esoteric verse rhyming in 'ti' was apparently established by 'Umar Ibn al-Farid, the most acclaimed among

them, whose monumental poem Nazm al-Suluk (Poem of the Way) runs to 760 couplets (Ibn al-Farid 1952).

[9] A cult of the theriomorphic crocodile god Suchos (Sobek) were centered at Fayoum and Kom Ombo, and that of Khenty-Khet existed at Athribis near modern Benha in the Delta; many mummified crocodiles have been found in these locations (Lurker 1980:26,43,117).

[10] Khidr (sometimes confused with the prophet Ilyas) also has agricultural associations. Khidr-Ilyas is associated with spring agricultural festivals in Turkey, and the Qur'anic Khidr with the green of the earth (Boratav 1960; Wensinck 1960). Khidr is the Muslim equivalent to St. George (one of the most beloved Christian saints in Egypt), who killed the dragon (portrayed as a crocodile in Egypt) (Hallenberg 1997:167). The semantic network linking Sidi Ibrahim to local Egyptian culture is thus extremely dense.

[11] It is perhaps significant that in Egypt "faqih" denoted a legal scholar, with non-Sufi connotations. Similarly in Sudan the word "khalwa" (Sufi retreat) came also to denote an Islamic school (kuttab); in Egypt it retained its Sufi meaning only (Holt and Daly 2000:119). This semantic analysis suggests how Sufism and mainstream Islam intermingled in the Sudan more than in Egypt.

[12] Following Sidi Ahmad al-Tijani (1737/8-1815), Sidi Ahmad ibn Idris (1749/50 – 1837), and the latter's pupil Muhammad 'Uthman al-Mirghani (1793/4-1852), respectively.

[13] The Sudanese Mahdi movement may also be regarded as a related movement, developing as it did out of Sufi roots, though it developed more revolutionary, eschatological, and ultimately Salafi character (Holt and Daly 2000:75ff)

[14] These include the tariqa's web site (http://www.tariqa-burhaniya.ch/default.htm), conversations with members, and numerous articles and one book written by their detractors in

Egypt. Hoffman has attempted to combine such sources into a balanced portrait (Hoffman 1995).

[15] Others say he formed this group with the blessing of the head of the Dasuqiyya in Egypt, though this is doubtful (Shabana 1995:50).

[16] In using the word "proselytise" (which often carries negative connotations) in this paper, I mean no more than to point to an attitude which is at the very least encouraging and open towards new members, an organizational structure designed (through publications and teachings) to accommodate them, and a sense of joy among members about tariqa growth, which is taken as an index of spiritual destiny; but even this much contrasts with most traditional orders, at least in Egypt.

[17] The Egyptian spirit-appeasement ceremony called zar, mainly performed for women, is commonly believed to have come from the Sudan.

[18] Son of Shaykh Muhammad 'Uthman; current tariqa leader.

[19] Sidi Ibrahim al-Dasuqi.

[20] While inshad is the general term for performed Islamic poetry in Egypt, the Burhaniyya themselves often refer to a religious hymn as "qasida", meaning "poem". The importance of inshad is no more for the Burhaniyya than for many other Sufi groups, but was well-stated by one Burhani member in 1981: "Once our shaikh said that you can repeat a qasida and study its words, but that doesn't mean the same thing as when it is sung in a hadra...; it's like a sakiah {waterwheel} that dips out new meanings with each turn." (Quoted in Waugh 1989:5-6)

[21] This lamp is further discussed below.

[22] A similar case is the history neo-Sufi movement of Sidi 'Abd al-Rahman, which became widespread in Algeria, before being halted by social and political controls imposed by colonial authorities (Clancy-Smith 1990).

[23] Thus in 1996 a Rifa'i *khalifa* (local leader) was chastised by tariqa leaders for using the *dabbus* in a public processions. The

dabbus is a traditional Rifa'i awl, which miraculously penetrates the body without causing bleeding. Following the procession, a photograph of the dabbus in action had appeared in a local newspaper. The leaders explained that while the dabbus is an honorable Rifa'i practice, the current atmosphere of "Sunni" (reformist) Islam precludes its public us, lest the order be discredited.

[24] Generally neo-Sufism spread with difficulty in Egypt, with its entrenched and centrally controlled Sufi orders, centralized government, and regulated, national Islamic environment. As recently as 1995 the Tijaniyya finally attained official recognition under an Egyptian shaykh, while recognition of the Idrisiyya was denied since it was already a Sudanese order (`Abd al-Fattah 1995).

[25] In a 1976 newspaper interview, Shaykh Muhammad al-Sutuhi, head of the Supreme Council, implied that *Tabri'at al-Dhimma*, contained views in line with the Sufi tradition, and should be condemned primarily for publicizing them (Hoffman 1995:315); in the 1990s I heard similar opinions expressed by other Sufis.

[26] The Supreme Council condemned the poetry books *Sharab al-Wasl* and *Bata'in al-Asrar* along with *Tabri'at al-Dhimma*, for supposedly giving the saints a position above the prophets, advocating the doctrine of the Mahdi, introducing heretical inventions, and violating the Qur'anic text (`Abd al-Fattah 1995). The notion of the Mahdi is indeed prominent in Burhaniyya poetry, and may be linked to the popularity of Sudanese Mahdiyya pan-Islamism.

[27] The Burhaniyya group in Montreal gives the date as April 4, 1983 (Sparkes and Shaykh Mustafa 2001).

[28] "About 81,5 % of worldwide Internet hosts are in the G7-countries, which make up only about ten per cent of world population. On the other hand the most populated countries of the Third World, China, India, Brazil and Nigeria all together make up

only 0,6 % of all hosts although they possess about a third of world population." (Afemann 2001)

[29] A short listing of other examples from the Middle East based in London alone might include: The Movement for Islamic Reform in Arabia (http://www.miraserve.com/); the Ni`matullahi Sufi order (whose Iranian leader is based in London; http://www.nimatullahi.org/); and the Iraqi Constitutional Monarchy Movement (http://www.iraqcmm.org/).

Conclusion of article from Vol.20 #1, 2001

Changing modalities in the globalization of Islamic saint veneration and mysticism: Sidi Ibrahim al-Dasuqi, Shaykh Muhammad 'Uthman al-Burhani, and their Sufi Orders

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Growth of Sufism in the West

Given its simultaneous success among Egyptians and conflict with the Egyptian state during the 1970s, it is not surprising that during this decade the Burhaniyya order began to spread abroad, establishing centers in Europe and North America (History & Tales 2001). Although in absolute numbers the Burhaniyya is strongest in the Islamic world (especially Sudan and Egypt), the global organization is now centered in, and dominated by, the West, taking advantage of the West's religious freedom, privileged economic position, and high degree of communicative connectivity. The spiritual center of the order at Khartoum (site of the founder's shrine) regularly sends support staff abroad to help with missionary work (Shabana 1995:51). However the practical center of operations, at least with respect to the growing Western membership, is now in Germany, at Haus Schnede (see below) (Sparkes 2001). Western centers gather Burhaniyya emigrants, other Muslims, and non-Muslim spiritual seekers (Sparkes 2001).
The spread of Sufism and Sufi orders to the West as a spiritual alternative available to Westerners did not start with the Burhaniyya, and each order's western expansion demonstrates a distinct trajectory. One of the earliest Sufi movements to move westwards was the south Asian Chishtiyya order, brought to the US by Hazrat Inayat Khan Chishti (1882-1927), who taught in San

Francisco in the early 20th century; a follower (Samuel Lewis, 1896-1971) established the San Francisco-based Islamia Ruhaniyat Society, and a son (Vilayat Khan, b. 1917) became leader of the Chishtiyya Sufi Order of the West (today called *Sufi Order International*), based in Geneva and Seattle (Sonneborn 1995). Because it does not require conversion to Islam, the Sufi Order International developed a large constituency overlapping with other religious faiths (*Sufi Order International 2001*). Many other Sufi orders followed. The Iranian Nimatullahi, which established a khaniqah in San Francisco in 1975, includes many Iranians displaced by the 1979 revolution; the tariqa's shaykh moved to London in 1983 (Nimatullahi, 2001); coming from Turkey, the Mevlevi Order of America (founded in 1980) (Mevlevi, 2001) includes a large non-Turkish membership. Judging by distribution of its centers, the Naqshbandiyya of Cypriot Shaykh Nazim al-Haqqani is far more widespread in the West than in the Islamic world, though it originated in Cyprus (*About Naqshbandi Sufi Way* 2001). As a the consequence of these social movements, as well as countless books, films, musical recordings, and television programs, a large segment of the Western public has become aware of Sufi spirituality and its connection to the great saints of Islam.

While a full analysis of this phenomenon is beyond the scope of this paper, the growth of Sufism in the West appears to have resulted from a growing spiritual openness and need, religious freedom, and culture contact through immigration to the West and tourism to the Islamic world. While spiritual links were often maintained to a point of origin in the Islamic world, organizationally these orders tend to be re-centered in the West. This re-centering is not without consequences for the nature and social organization of saint veneration.

The Burhaniyya's self-presentation on the web

The Burhaniyya's extensive website (like the websites of other Sufi orders) is a novel means of Sufi communication and

proselytization, one which takes advantage of the West's communicative resources, and thus tends to focus growth there. While members theoretically contribute to the website from all regions of the world where the tariqa is active, the International Center for Research and Strategic Studies at House Schnede coordinates (*Intranet design 2001*), and access to the Internet in practice is largely limited to the first world, not so much for technological as financial and linguistic reasons. The website provides important clues to the strategies of self-representation employed by the Burhaniyya in the West, revealing much about how they wish to be perceived by others, and how they perceive themselves. Texts are presented in German, English, and Arabic; German and English texts are substantially the same. Based on its content, in which the inner spiritual dimension of Sufism is highlighted over its traditional Islamic and legal (Shari'a) basis, the English and German portions of the web site are clearly directed to non-Muslims and Western members.

Significantly, the Arabic portions of the site are completely different, presenting (at the surface at least) the tariqa as Sufi groups present themselves in Islamic countries. I will not analyze this portion of the site, as it may be safely assumed (simply from the distribution of internet access, as well as by the geographical distribution of the tariqa's centers) that the vast majority of site browsers, living in Western Europe and G-7 countries, do not read Arabic.

The website is structured as follows:

Entry point. This page begins with the traditional Islamic preface ("In the Name of God, most Merciful and Compassionate"), followed by "Tariqa Burhaniya Dasuqiya Shadhuliya - Sufiorder in Islam". There is also a stunning photo of a hadra. (Burhaniyya entry point 2001) The color scheme here and throughout the site is white (for Sidi Ibrahim and the Shari'a), green (for the family of the Prophet), and yellow (for Sidi Abu al-Hasan al-Shadhili and the Sufi path) (History & Tales 2001).

Welcome. This page features a seven sided green and yellow figure, a stylized hadra lamp. Its central bulb represents the heart;

seven metal legs are the seven egos to overcome; the light is faith, without which the heart is blind (Sparkes 2001). As one moves the pointer around the figure, three different texts appear: (1) "The heritage of the inner knowledge is handed down vitally from person to person and not by reading. The Sheik is the teacher who guides our inner processes and leads us, step by step, to inner experiences that take place in our daily lives, which does not needs {sic} to change on the outside." (2) "The yearning for something unknown, for something nameless, often marked the beginning of the inner path for many of us. The soul's longing for a different kind of harmony, a different kind of nourishment emerged – but still without direction. Just a faint memory, a subtle fragrance passing by." (3) "The journey is exciting and full of blessing as well as challenges. The follower experiences his limits and learns to overcome them. He passes through heights and depths, old injuries and inner wounds are healed by the experience of encompassing love. New opportunities and new knowledge emerges and the heart comes to peace." At the center of the figure (the heart) a fourth text emerges: "The love is the essence of the Sufi-path. The beauty of true Islam and the light of the Prophet Muhammad (saws. [1]) lead the disciples to the awareness of their own self and thereby into the presence and the love of God." (Burhaniyya welcome 2001)

Tariqa Burhaniyya. The next page features a text introducing the order to non-members: "Tariqa Burhaniya is a Sufi-order for both women and men that has been spreading in the West for some years. While socializing, we have fun, we celebrate, and we meet regularly to do spiritual exercises together, to pray, to learn and to improve our knowledge. We do the Dhikr, the common practice of the Sufis which opens the hearts to God's love. Every Thursday night a Hadra takes place in all of the Zawiyas (Sufi centers) within the different cities - a good opportunity to get an impression of who we are and how we practice Sufism. You are most welcome to drop in and meet us personally. We are pleased to meet you and to answer your questions." (Tariqa Burhaniya 2001)

Public Internet. The public internet portion of the web site contains information about the order, contacts, photos of people, places, and rituals, and some audio recordings of their inshad (Tariqa Burhaniya Public Intranet 2001). It is divided into eight sections:

1. Welcome (including a specification the site's audience: "Burhani brothers and sisters as well as everyone interested")
2. Tales & History (including photos and a history of the founder and his tariqa)
3. Gallery (containing photos of shaykhs, rituals, social and outreach activities, such as a riverside picnic, and the annual Hauliya festival at Schnede)
4. Sounds & Video (with inshad recordings, and videos of hadra and procession)
5. Sufism Today (a presentation of Sufism in relation to Islam and Western culture, directed towards Westerners)
6. Shop (where one can order tariqa CDs and videos)
7. News (listing upcoming events)
8. World of Burhaniya (containing maps and contact information worldwide)

Overview of the globalized Burhaniyya today

Over the last two to three decades, the Burhaniyya have established many centers (zawiyas) throughout Europe and North America, as well as a handful in the Islamic world outside Sudan. The information presented below is summarized on their intranet (World of Burhaniyya 2001), except where another source is indicated.

While Khartoum, containing the saint's shrine and many followers, remains the spiritual center, the global administrative center is located on an estate near Hamburg called Haus Schnede, established by Shaykh Ibrahim in 1992 thanks to generous contributions made by followers. But Haus Schnede has also become a spiritual center for the West; Shaykh Ibrahim visits Haus Schnede regularly, and his son (designated to succeed him as Shaykh of the Burhaniyya) is currently studying in Germany

(Sparkes 2001). The house is used for international religious celebrations, including a yearly Hauliya (saint festival[2]) for the tariqa founder in early August, retreats, teaching, and regular rituals (World of Burhaniyya 2001). A photo of the mansion and its expansive grounds on the intranet indicates that it must have been quite an expensive purchase.

Germany contains more centers (10) than any other country, located in major cities including Hamburg, Stuttgart, Berlin, Munich, and Bonn. All centers are active with weekly hadra, dhikr, learning and singing the founder's mystical poems (qasidas), prayer, lectures, sharing food, and social activities. Festivals of Islam and Sufism are special occasions. Some centers maintain dedicated rooms (zawiyas) while others apparently meet in members' homes. Programs for children are offered, and courses in Arabic are given, in some of the centers. For each center, the intranet lists a telephone contact, usually fax and email, and often a street address as well. Sometimes the schedule of hadras is provided. Many of the listed contact names are women. Besides the German centers, there are nine others in various European countries (Denmark, England, France, Netherlands, Italy, Luxembourg, Russia, Sweden, and Switzerland), one in the US, and one in Canada. In the active Italian Burhaniyya center, tariqa membership is higher among converts than among those who are Muslim by birth (Stefano 1996:318-319).

The US center in New York was established in 1977. Weekly worship circles are held on Saturdays, and a lecture series on Islam, Sufism, Arabic, and poetry is held on Sundays. Many members are African-American and Puerto Rican Muslims, who belonged to various Islamic groups (including Nation of Islam) before joining the order. The tariqa has been active for about fifteen years in Montreal, where most of the Canadian Burhanis live. An Egyptian shaykh who joined the Burhaniyya while living in Egypt leads the Montreal center. While many members are Canadians of non-Muslim background, this branch also includes a number of Arab and African born Muslim, who became Burhanis while living in Canada. At their zawiya (meeting place) the group

performs Friday prayer, and a hadra every Saturday evening. (Sparkes 2001)

Outside the West and the Sudan, the web site indicates that centers exist in Pakistan, Syria, UAE, Egypt, and Morocco; an unlisted center also exists in Saudi Arabia (Sparkes 2001). However contact information for these centers is limited, or absent; no addresses or meeting schedules are given; combined with language barriers and government control of religion, one suspects that participants are not well-connected to the tariqa's burgeoning activities elsewhere, and that these centers cannot function as hubs for the global organization. While maintaining its spiritual axis in Khartoum, the tariqa appears to have turned (at least temporarily) from being a potential pan-Islamic global organization, towards a globalizing culture network centered in the West.

Selection for Western globalization

Operating in the mode of Western globalization, the successful Sufi organization tends towards particular characteristics, through processes of both selection, and adaptation. Selectively, the Burhaniyya was well equipped to succeed.

New religious movements in the West have been shown to share certain characteristics, including centrality of mystical experience; rejection of intellectual approaches; total surrender to a charismatic guru; and missionary work (Köse 1996:148). All of these characteristics are found in the Burhaniyya. Furthermore, "in Europe and America the spiritual nature and mystical vision of esoteric Sufism account for the success of Islam." (Köse 1996:142). Far from the centers of Islamic reform, Burhaniyya esotericism and ecstaticism is a more unequivocally attractive feature.

In the abstract theosophical and affective experiential domains boundaries between religious movements are weakest. By emphasizing these domains, the Burhaniyya (like other Sufi orders) enable Westerners to 'cross over' to Islam. Theosophical ideas of Ibn al-'Arabi and other authors of *Tabri'at al-Dhimma* more easily lend themselves to transformation into universal

spiritual principles, abstracted from the exoteric dictates of Islam proper. Similarly ecstatic experience, convincing through emotions that cannot be contradicted, provides a supply of new members for Sufi movements in the West.

Meanwhile the Burhaniyya's strong and independent organization and proselytizing are assets in the West, indicating a global sense of purpose. Strong organization and a foreign-born charismatic shaykh might arouse suspicion in Egypt, but these qualities are advantageous in the civil societies of the West, where religious freedom generally prevails, spirituality is often thought to come from the east, and strong organization and recruitment are the signs and causes of successful expansion.

Adaptation to Western globalization

But the Burhaniyya also appears to have changed in response to its new position in the West. While the essential spiritual core of the tariqa may not have changed, its realization as a social system of belief and practice seems to have been modified to better accommodate Western members and potential converts. However, when compared to other Western Sufi groups, the Burhaniyya appear to take a middle road between traditional and neo-Sufi values (on the one hand), and extreme Westernization that forsakes the Islamic heritage entirely (on the other).

1. Use of communications media based in the Western global system

The most obvious form of adaptation, shaped by and exploiting its new Western environment, is the use of modern communications media, for teaching, disseminating news, and generally fostering shared identity and social unity among members, as well as for reaching out to potential new members. In addition to its extensive website, including e-mail contacts, the group produces CDs and videotapes, which can be ordered on-line. Besides the immediate practical benefits of such adaptation, the use of technology as the "form" within which authentic Sufi content is delivered also portrays the group as decisively modern

(while nevertheless containing traditional wisdom and practices) and thus more appealing to Westerners, as well as adaptable to their technologically advanced lifestyles. The use of such technology helps support the vast geographical scope of the tariqa.

The website is not essential for the group's spiritual unity, but rather helps promote a practical social basis for such unity. Commenting on the tariqa website, Dr. Hasan Ralf Klischewski, Assistant Secretary General of Tariqa Burhaniya for Research, Strategic Studies and Scientific Affairs, wrote:

> From my point of view, the website is something nice to have, a means to help organizing ourselves and to provide some information and "corporate identity" - but it is nothing essential to our Tariqa. As for gathering new members, the website might have its role just like other "channels" and medias (personal contacts, events, seminars, books, music,...), but it is not designed for this purpose. The aim is to provide some "frame of information" anyone (mainly brothers and sisters) can draw on any place any time. Thus, there is a common informational point of reference, but it does not maintain the spiritual unity (at least not on purpose). (Ralf Klischewski 2001)

While physical distance may make it difficult for tariqa members to all meet together physically, application of communications media enables group unity and centralized organization among those with Internet access, and such organization is centered on Haus Schnede (Sparkes 2001). Similarly, non-members with access to the Internet may locate the website, read about the order, and send queries via email. However the modern media, mainly supported in the West, are primarily useful in unifying an organization expanding along the lines of Western globalization; conversely, use of such media tends to promote this globalization mode.

2.Balancing Islam and Sufism

Many Westerners are prejudiced against Islam, yet open to Sufism, often considered a special sect or even a distinct religion, an attitude reflecting and shaping development of Sufi orders in the West. On the other hand, Sufism in Islamic countries is always conceived as a spiritual way *within* Islam, and explicit connections to Shari'a are important to assure public legitimacy in a reformist atmosphere. Whereas some Western orders (such as the Sufi Order International) overtly state that Sufism is independent of Islam, the Burhaniyya maintains an essentially Islamic orientation. But even when an order is conceived as rooted in Shari'a, it is its more mystical discourses and practices that are more likely to draw Western spiritual seekers. Outside the Islamic world, Shari'a often need not be emphasized for legitimization, but may be important for maintaining an originally Islamic tradition. In its public self-presentation, each order must decide how to balance Islamic and Sufi aspects, and factors weigh in on both sides.

The English Burhaniyya website emphasizes those aspects of Sufi belief and practice which are most attractive to non-Muslims or recent converts living in a non-Muslim society. Westerners tend to be drawn by the "deeper" spiritual meanings promised by "eastern" religion, by mystical experience, esoteric knowledge, spiritual love, and guidance from inspired "gurus" (saints or shaykhs), as well the spiritual community induced by group spiritual practices, and so often missing from Western lives. It is precisely these attributes of "universal spirituality" which the website emphasizes. As one member told me, you can't "clobber" new members with all the obligations of Islamic Shari'a right away (Sparkes 2001).

Thus the Burhaniyya present themselves somewhat differently in the West than in Egypt. In this they are similar to many other Sufi orders operating in the West. The introduction for non-members (Tariqa Burhaniya 2001) emphasizes mystical exercises of dhikr and hadra; other mystical practices distinctive to the order, such as the yearly Hawliya, the symbolic hadra lamp, and the "saffa" parade, as well as the social-spiritual community of

the Burhaniyya, are effectively conveyed in the Gallery and Sounds & Video portions of the intranet. The order's real basis in mainstream Islam is relatively de-emphasized.

On the other hand, a careful reading of the website clearly indicates the strong underlying presence of mainstream Islam, which is confirmed by other data. Significantly, while texts on the Welcome page revealed by moving the pointer at the periphery of the lamp invoke trans-religious spirituality, the text revealed at the figure's "heart" blesses the Prophet, and speaks of the "beauty of true Islam". Several Burhaniyya centers offer Arabic lessons, conduct Friday prayers, and celebrate Islamic festivals (World of Burhaniyya 2001). The Sounds & Video section of the intranet mentions the importance of the Islamic shahada and the Divine Name "Allah" in the hadra.

White, one of the tariqa's primary colors, is symbolically linked to Shari'a (Sparkes 2001; History & Tales 2001). The Burhaniyya newsletter *al-Burhan*, published in Vienna, lists daily prayer prayer times and provides information on Islam; according to their former imam, Khalid Duran, the Burhanis at Haus Schnede "rigorously adhered to all aspects of Islamic law." (Hoffman 1995:322) In accord with Shari'a, men and women perform rituals separately (Sparkes 2001) although this fact is not noted on the website.

The "Sufism Today" section explicitly states the ideal relation, in which Sufism is firmly embedded in an Islamic matrix, although this ideal is not specifically attached to the tariqa, but rather Sufism in general. While the "followers of Sufism are preoccupied with the inner aspects of Islam and try to realize these principles within their own lives", it is also the case that "Sufism is the heart of the Islamic revelation. Islam and Sufism are undividably {sic} connected like the spokes and the hub of a wheel." (Sufism today 2001)

Compared to other Sufi groups that explicitly disavow Islam as a necessary or even significant component of belief, the Burhaniyya tariqa is clearly Islamic in a traditional Sufi sense. Yet these purely Islamic elements are downplayed in the public web

presentation, apparently as an adaptation to the Western environment, and new members attracted by mysticism may move gradually towards the beliefs and practices of mainstream Islam (Sparkes 2001).

This presentation represents a radical reversal of the relation between Sufism's exterior (zahir) and interior (batin) as presented in Islamic countries. There, one's shaykh initially presents the Sufi way as a supererogatory extension of one's exterior (zahir) Islamic duties, as prescribed by Shari'a. Only at the more advanced stages is Sufism understood in trans-religious (batini) terms, as spiritual love, a longing for Divine Reality (Haqiqa), or the fleeting experience of mystical union. This esoteric aspect of Sufism is hidden from novitiates and non-members, and ecstatic practices are often downplayed, at least to outsiders. Particularly in a reformist environment, few contemporary shaykhs dare emphasize Sufism's trans-Islamic potential, as expressed by Ibn 'Arabi:

> My heart has become a capable of every form: it is a pasture for gazelles and a convent for Christian monks
> And a temple for idols and the pilgrim's Ka'ba and the tables of the Tora and the book of the Qur'an
> I follow the religion of love: whatever way Love's camels take, that is my religion and my faith (Ibn al-`Arabi 1978:19,67)

But in the Burhaniyya presentation, the usual progression from exoteric to esoteric Islam is precisely reversed. The trans-religious Sufi message is most externalized. Only a "deeper reading" of the site reveals a commitment to Islam. This and other data lead to the inference that new Western members are drawn in by the "esoteric" message of Sufism, then move gradually to adopt mainstream Islamic beliefs and practices. Such a progression, shared with other Sufi groups, appears as an important adaptation to the Western mode of globalization, where the popularity of

esoteric Sufism renders emphasis of its public representation not only possible, but also adaptive.

3. Conversion

A related issue is whether conversion to Islam is necessary prior to joining a tariqa, or even afterwards. In Egypt, my experience suggests that conversion is a prerequisite, though rarely an issue, since in Islamic countries Sufi shaykhs can usually correctly assume that potential members are already Muslim. In a secular-Christian environment the issue is always present, and more sensitive as well, since many spiritual seekers seem drawn to that which is specifically Sufi, but less often to the strict rules of Islamic law and its stern eschatology.

Again, the tariqa is placed in a delicate situation in which strategic adaptation, taking account of all the factors, is necessary. To rigidly insist on conversion prior to membership might mean that potential members, who would ultimately convert and become good Muslims, will not join the order at all. Furthermore a rigid cleaving to "official" Islamic rules for pragmatic reasons of official acceptance and sanction is obviated by the religious freedom typical of most Western societies. However, to allow members to remain Christian or Jewish constitutes a drastic transformation of the Sufi tradition, which until very recently has always been firmly rooted in Islam (Sedgewick 1999).

Some Sufi groups explicitly state that they embrace all faiths. Such is the case for "New Age" Sufi movements that overtly advertise that no conversion to Islam is needed (e.g. Sufi Order International). Often such orders formulate the goal of Sufism in humanist psychological terms ("self-realization"), neglecting the Shari'a entirely. These orders require fewer changes in personal belief or practice, but they cannot possibly maintain strong links to the Islamic world, and thus become entirely Westernized. But even with Western globalization, the Burhaniyya also maintain considerable pan-Islamic vision; they affirm themselves as a Sunni Islamic tariqa, and point to a large membership in Islamic countries. (Sparkes 2001)

The Burhaniyya appear to have adopted a carefully balanced intermediate position on conversion, which marks a definite adaptive strategy for their global expansion in the West. Members affirm that the tariqa is Islamic. "In order to undertake an in-depth practice of {our} rituals it is essential to be a muslim." (Sparkes and Shaykh Mustafa 2001). Many of the European centers' contacts (who are presumably the more long-standing members) have adopted Arabic names, a sure and traditional sign of conversion. Based on activities on the website and conversations with members, it appears that most members probably do become practicing Muslims at some point, and that such conversion is probably expected if not required (Sparkes 2001).

Hoffman met some Western members whom she portrays as spiritual seekers fascinated with saintly powers, esoteric practices, and mystical illumination, but uninterested in such basic Islamic practices as prayer (Hoffman 1995:320ff). Her experience may be a poor representation of the tariqa as a whole. Still, conversion is not a strict precondition to participation, since "If a non-Muslim wishes to adore Allah, it is certainly an encouraging sign and we will not discourage him or her... In order to undertake an in-depth practice of {tariqa} rituals it is essential to be a Muslim...However, I would repeat emphatically that any well intentioned non-Muslim who wishes to spend time with us is most welcome and will not be turned away." (Sparkes and Shaykh Mustafa 2001).

4. Integration with Western society

Even if members do convert to Islam, to what extent should they adopt Islamic behaviors that may mark them publicly as Muslims? More generally: how should they frame their identities and interact within the wider society in which they live? This issue is a sensitive one not only for Muslim converts, but also for all Muslims living in the West. In most cases, some concessions are made to the Western, largely Christian, cultural milieux. Sufi orders, focused on the inner meaning of Islam, are specially

positioned to integrate themselves to Western society without compromising doctrine. Such integration perhaps should not be considered an adaptive change at all, since in Islamic countries integration (of some form) is often an imperative as well.

But social integration's ramifications and reasons are different in the West. In an Islamic environment, social integration does not preclude public Islamic dress and practice, or even distinctive signs of the Sufi order, but rather requires emphasis of exoteric Islam, socially productive roles, and maintenance of strong social relations with the larger Muslim community. This, in turn, enables the order to exist, and to gather new Muslim members.

In the West, integration means that Sufis should strive to blend into a secularist-Christian environment, and maintain strong social relations with non-Muslims. Here, integration requires emphasis of the trans-religious, aesthetic, and social aspects of the tariqa, and a privatization of exoteric Islam. Integration is not a reaction to fear of charges of either heresy or lethargy (as in Islamic societies) but rather reduces identity problems among members and assists in attracting and smoothly assimilating new members from a predominantly Christian society. This integration sounds similar to that required of the Sufi in Islamic countries, but is really quite different, for in the West integration entails an external social assimilation to Western secular-Christian society while maintaining Sufi-Islamic values, and enables the tariqa to operate within that society more effectively.

Conversion need not be conspicuous. The website is careful to stress Sufism as a process of internal transformation which does not require external change; thus "The Sheik is the teacher who guides our inner processes and leads us, step by step, to inner experiences that take place in our daily lives, which does not needs {sic} to change on the outside." (Burhaniyya welcome 2001). "In Sufism, daily life is a challange to develop the heart and the soul... Since most of the Sufi orders spreading out in the West strive for integration in society, their members are not noticable by special clothing or behaviour." (Sufism today 2001)

Integration can also be effected via social and aesthetic features of the tariqa which positively reflect Western secular-Christian values, including the beauty of poetry; the enjoyability singing together; the visual beauty of the hadra; and the sociability of communal events—not only religious celebrations but also traditional Western practices (such as a riverside picnic). Such features, strongly emphasized in the website, effectively call across the borders of religious belief and help to legitimize the tariqa in its Western milieu. An interfaith dialog with Catholics (portrayed in the Gallery section) represents a more explicit move towards integration.

But there are limits to integration within the Western context; Western Sufi orders appear sharply differentiated, and (for some) perhaps rather "cultish" in their devotion to saints, because saint veneration is uncommon in the West, and because the particular saints being venerated are culturally remote. Any tariqa (such as the Burhaniyya) that insists on a strictly Islamic basis further limits its ability to assimilate. At the same time, because of greater religious freedom, the Western Sufi order need not fear the charges of sectarianism and heresy that it faces in Islamic contexts. Whether the tariqa attempts to integrate, to maintain Islamic tradition, or both, Western Christians and non-tariqa Muslims alike typically regard it as a new and independent religious movement, and the tariqa tends to develop along these lines.

5. Relation to the Islamic community

Clearly, an order's social boundaries and relation to the "general" local Muslim community must be quite different in the West. Though the order is avowedly Islamic, within a predominantly secular-Christian Western environment it appears to outsiders as new religious movement. Despite common Islamic origins, there is little reason to develop connections with other Islamic groups, particularly when the latter are hostile to Sufism. For recent Western members, their participation in the order is often coterminous with their Islamic experience.

Relatively speaking, a Sufi group within a Muslim society is a barely differentiated subculture. Members share the basic religious convictions, identities, and social conventions of the broader society, even when the order's social solidarity is very high. The broader culture may not venerate their saints, but the notion of socially organized saint veneration is at least understood, and often accepted. But a Sufi group developing in the West, and drawing members from its Western context, need not, and probably will not, develop extensive connections to a local "Muslim community", which is usually a diverse immigrant rather than a convert community. In the West, even public mosque congregations (which do not usually form cohesive social groups) appear to differentiate themselves along ethnic lines, for linguistic and cultural reasons.[3]

Sufi groups are further differentiated by special rituals and devotions to particular saints; those seeking to expand along Western lines strive for integration within the broader Christian-secular context in ways which may not be acceptable to mainstream Islamic communities. Finally, the latter are more often reformist than in the Islamic world, since many emigrants (selected by Western governments for their education, professional skills, and wealth) come from precisely those social classes most impressed with reformist discourse, and since Saudi funding supports many mosques and Muslim groups in the West.

One member of the Montreal Burhani group told me that he didn't feel particularly comfortable in the local public mosque, where one preacher interviewed for a documentary depicted Sufi groups as marginal sects. He portrays relations between the Burhaniyya and the mainstream Muslim community as tolerant, but distant (Sparkes 2001). The West provides a tolerant religious environment enabling Sufi orders to develop freely according to their own beliefs and principles; especially when new members come from the non-Muslim community, there is little incentive to establish strong links with Islamic mainstreams. When a broader Muslim community is sought, the tendency is for the local Sufi group to emphasize links with other groups affiliated with the same

order, leading to the emergence of a quasi-independent transnational tariqa community centered in the West.

On the Burhaniyya internet, the concept of Umma (global Islamic community) is invoked, but then implicitly equated with the Sufi group itself:

> The community (umma) plays an important role in Islam and Sufism. It offers closeness and security, uphold and support in critical phases. Social learning within the group aids each individual in purifying the heart and improving his own character. E.g., a Sufi tries to correct a fault he/she remarks in another within him/herself - according to the traditional saying "the believer is a mirror for the believer".
> How do you become a part of the Sufi community?
> The outer process is to find an order and a Sheikh and to declare one's membership. The inner processes leading to this are as diverse as people themselves. Some search consciously and with a goal, others are led to the path in dreams and others are guided by strange coincidences and providence. Some experience this suddenly and dramatically, with others it is the result of a long development. (Sufism today 2001)

The Western environment provides new means for expansion and encourages development of transnational tariqa unity, while ironically detaching the order from the wider Islamic community.

6. Status of women

The status of women—in practice and in theory—within Sufi orders seeking to expand in the West is a critical variable. The reconciliation of Western integration and Islamic values is harder for women than for men, due to the relatively higher standards of modesty (particularly in dress) and more limited social interaction permitted according to Islamic norms prevalent in Islamic societies. In addition, many Western converts to Islam

are women,[4] and many of the spiritual seekers who join new religious movements (presumably potential tariqa members) are women.[5] Finally, many Westerners are prejudiced against Islam for supposedly being anti-feminist. Thus any Sufi group operating in the West must carefully weigh the consequences of policies regarding female members' role, dress, and behavior, and many appear to tackle the issue head-on by making such policy explicit.

Sufi orders in Egypt often treat women in a manner unacceptable to Western women. Officially, women are not allowed to join Sufi orders at all (Hoffman /ft 25). In practice, although many orders do admit women, their full participation is restricted, according to Islamic standards of modesty. Men perform rituals in a public portion of the mosque or zawiya, while women are typically secluded in a basement or upper gallery, or relegated to the sidelines.

Once again, Sufism's ideological focus on inner spirituality and non-literal readings of sacred texts provides the potential to adapt to Western standards of greater equality between men and women. Though only occasionally realized in traditional Islamic countries, this potential is often developed in the West. The radical trans-Islamic Sufi Order International takes a relatively extreme position. Founder Inayat Khan wrote: "The hour is coming when women will lead humanity to a higher evolution." The website adds: "Women have always functioned in all roles of spiritual leadership within the Order. Spiritual practices and service are fully integrated and initial attempts have been made to update the language of the teaching to include the feminine. Women teachers in the Order have made rich contributions, and have joined in developing practices that facilitate an awareness of, and a deeper identification with the feminine aspect of the Divine. (Inayat Khan on Women 2001)

While not so grandiose in privileging the feminine, the Burhaniyya website explicitly addresses women's issues, stating at the outset "Tariqa Burhaniyya is a Sufi-order for both women and men..." (Ralf Klischewski 2001), and emphasizing the female history of Sufism, the symbolic equation of the feminine and the

Divine, and the transformation of women's roles in orders of the West:

> There have been many female saints in the history of Sufism teaching male followers. The most famous one is Rabi'a of Basra (often compared with Saint Teresa of Avila)...In Sufi poetry man's love of woman is often used as a symbol for the love between humans and God ...
> Are there women in Sufi orders?
> Yes, especially in those orders spreading out in the Western world. In former times, female members of Sufi orders in Islamic countries did not appear in public. This has changed significantly. Tariqa Burhaniya has many female followers in Islamic countries. In Germany, e.g., about half of the members are women. (Sufism today 2001)

In 1981 a Sudanese magazine, *al-Muslimun*, reported on a visit of German Burhanis, most of whom were women (Hoffman 1995:319). In the Montreal Burhaniyya group, women are initiated into the tariqa, and perform most of the same prayers, though separately from the men (Sparkes 2001). The high percentage of women among the Burhaniyya appears both to underlie and to reflect their feminist transformation towards full equality for female members. It would be interesting to know the ramifications of these Western developments for branches of the order operating within the Islamic world.

7. The nature of saint veneration

All Sufi orders coalesce around a saint-founder, his spiritual practices and teachings. While saint veneration is never an end in itself, it is an important means of spiritual progress, for it is believed that the saint (and living shaykh) is a spiritual guide, and a relation of respectful love and devotion is essential to the guiding process. Veneration for the saint and shaykh is also that which is shared only by members of the order, and provides an important social basis for unity.

Traditional modes of saint veneration in Islamic societies center on the saint's shrine, or are marked by concrete acts of loving obedience to one's living shaykh (including those as mundane as cooking or cleaning). For this reason, the venerated figure tends to be local in traditional orders, which often branch when devotion to a local disciple exceeds that paid to the original but distant founder. But texts by or celebrating the saint (including the hizb, and praise poems) are a common way of extending the saint's geographical range.

Neo-Sufi orders, in order to maintain centralization, and for reasons of ideological reform, insist on a more abstract conception of saint veneration and blessing, one less tied to the saint's physical shrine, and more dependent on the saint's immaterial spiritual presence, especially as manifested via texts by or about him. Lacking a local saint-figure and focused on a distant one, the order may become more completely ritualized and text-centered, as I found for instance in one Tijaniyya group in Cairo.Transferred to the West, several further changes ensue, due not only to greater geographical distances, but also the cultural distances interposing between followers and saint, as well as the order's Western Christian-secular context.

The internet unequivocally establishes the importance of saints Sidi Ibrahim al-Dasuqi, Sidi Abu al-Hasan al-Shadhili, Shaykh Muhammad 'Uthman al-Burhani, and his son Shaykh Ibrahim, as well as the global scope of the tariqa (History & Tales 2001). Sidi Ibrahim is buried in Dasuq, Sidi Abu al-Hasan in Humaysara, on the Red Sea, while Shaykh Muhammad's shrine is in Khartoum. The roles of these saints have changed in the West, since they are not physically located there. Some Burhanis do visit Shaykh Muhammad for the annual Hawliyya in Khartoum; others may visit Sidi Ibrahim's shrine in Egypt. But the vast cultural and geographical distances introduce practical problems for such visits, rendering these places abstract spiritual locations for many members;[6] for those who do travel, visiting the shrine is a momentous event, resembling a pilgrimage, rather than a regular part of everyday life. Apparently as a practical response to the

inability of most members to travel, a parallel Hauliya celebration takes place at the European center, House Schnede (News 2001). But this detachment of saint festival from saint's tomb has theoretical consequences, for it reflects and reinforces a slightly more abstract and universal concept of saint. (In Egyptian Sufism non-shrine centered celebrations take place only for the Prophet himself.) Furthermore, in the Western context, the fact that saint veneration is not a widespread cultural practice, and the fact that other Muslim saints are relatively unknown, means that tariqa members are more completely focused on the saints of their particular order than they would be in an Islamic environment.

Modern travel, and the financial resources of Western spiritual communities, enable living shaykhs to visit their spiritual followers throughout the world. The Burhaniyya intranet indicates that Shaykh Ibrahim (based in Khartoum) visits the European centers in person (News 2001). Although this pattern of visiting would appear to reverse the traditional pattern of respect which requires followers to come to the shaykh, such a reversal is an economic necessity for a globalizing tariqa which desires to maintain organizational and spiritual unity. In addition, the culture contrast – the presence of a Sudanese shaykh in the West - may bestow upon him an additional layer of "eastern" spirituality which he does not enjoy at home.

Due to Hawliya celebrations, teachings, and visits by the Shaykh, Haus Schnede has become an important spiritual center, even without the physical presence of a saintly tomb. Combined with its administrative function, the centrality of Haus Schnede signals an important westward shift in the establishment of a secondary spiritual axis. Unlike some Western Sufi orders, important links with the Islamic world remain: Khartoum is still the principal spiritual center. But one member affirmed that the spiritual center is where the shaykh lives (Sparkes 2001); the implication is that if Shaykh Ibrahim's son, slated to inherit the order, were to remain in Germany, Haus Schnede could become the primary spiritual center.

In a Western environment in which it is unfamiliar, saint veneration must be somewhat rationalized. For many non-member Westerners, the idea of visiting a saint's shrine for blessing appears anachronistic, and blindly following a leader appears cultish and dangerous. More acceptable is the pragmatic role of saint as wise teacher and loving guide, a logical necessity whom one follows as an act of free will (a model which in any case conforms more closely to early Sufism than the later medieval fascination with saint who is expected to work miracles, and whom one leaves at one's peril[7]). The intranet elaborates the voluntary nature of discipleship, presenting the logical argument for the necessity of following a spiritual teacher in metaphorical terms. While obedience is important, it is also rationalized; the dangers of disobedience are limited and far from spiritual vindictiveness:

> Most important is that the follower must accept the Sheikh as his teacher by inner decision and outward declaration. All other obligations arise out of this initial one but must always root in the follower's free decision... Any follower of a mystical path needs a teacher who guides him through the ups and downs of inner experiences, who lovingly encourages him, and who arranges for the suitable experiences at the right time...Sufi exercises without the guidance and protection of a Sheikh is not recommended, it may even turn out to be harmful. The Sufi Path is like a high mountain range which cannot be crossed safely without a guide. What is the relationship between master and follower? The relationship of a follower to the Sheikh is like that of an apprentice to his master and should be characterized by obedience and devotion. An apprentice who wants to learn a handicraft must obey his master even though a given task might appear pointless at the time being and he must trust in the master as to it being useful for him in the long run. If the apprentice refuses, nothing will happen except for the fact that the he will learn nothing. (Sufism today 2001)

More significantly, perhaps, although Shaykh Muhammad and Sidi Ibrahim al-Dasuqi are often mentioned and eulogized, the website avoids explicitly designating them as saints, stressing instead the importance of the living spiritual teachers. Actual practice may conform more closely to the tradition sort of devoted veneration I observed in Egypt in the 1990s for members of Shaykh Muhammad's family; in the early 1980s Waugh documented the mass-adulation accorded to Shaykh Muhammad himself (Waugh 1989:188), and Hoffman described the strong emotions expressed by German Burhanis when visiting the shrine of Sidi Ibrahim (Hoffman 1995:321). But the tariqa's website self-presentation, an important indicator of attitudes and strategies if not practices, appears adapted to a kind of saint veneration more acceptable in the West.

Modes of globalization: an overlay

Western globalization has enabled the Burhaniyya to expand rapidly throughout the relatively open and richly interconnected Western domain (in which religious social organizations are rarely restricted by the state) while maintaining a centralized organization. By contrast, governments of developing nations, particularly in the Islamic world, impose formidable barriers to the free organized growth of such organizations, regulating them carefully for possible threats to state power, especially when they attempt to cross national boundaries. In addition, access to global communications and travel is more limited in the developing world, for purely economic reasons.

While the western expansion of the Burhaniyya may be the most salient feature of the Dasuqiyya's recent history, this mode overlays, rather than replaces, the older modes of traditional localized and pan-Islamic globalization. In Egypt (at least) several branches of the Dasuqiyya tradition (including the 'Ashuriyya, Shahawiyya, and Sharnubiyya, among others), each venerating a local saint, continue to thrive. And while the pan-Islamic mode may have been halted as a centralized process of globalization

within the Islamic world, the Burhaniyya maintains its pan-Islamic revivalist ambitions, as well as a large and expanding membership in many Islamic countries, including Egypt, Syria, Pakistan, North Africa, and the Gulf. However, even if Burhaniyya membership may be numerically far greater within the Islamic world than in the West, at the present time it appears inconceivable that demographic concentrations in Egypt or Syria, or even the Sudan, could become active organizational centers of world-wide coalescence. Rather, this process is occurring in the West, politically freer, and economically and communicatively richer, along established lines of Western globalization.

The fact that the Burhaniyya is the only Sudanese-Egyptian tariqa to have established a broad Western following indicates that its particular combination of esoteric, ecstatic, and organizational features is well suited to the Western mode of globalization. At the same time, the order has also changed, to further accommodate its new position outside the Islamic world and draw many Western converts. These changes have occurred primarily in its social organization, and in the public representation of its spiritual messages. Core beliefs and practices remain rooted in traditional and neo-Sufi movements of Sunni Islam. In contrast with some Western orders, such as the Sufi Order International, which have undergone more total doctrinal reorientations, Burhaniyya adaptations, though sociologically important, are relatively superficial.

Insofar as its organizational centers and expansion occur within and through networks of Western globalization, the order is less connected to the wider Islamic world, and thus has less direct influence upon it. But this Western positioning simultaneously provides the order many more opportunities to gain new members and converts, and enables it to become established within the dominant economic, political, and cultural centers of the present day, while using that position of dominance for centralized global growth. By deliberately maintaining strong links with traditional and neo-Sufism, the Burhaniyya retain the potential to become relevant to the Islamic world in the future.

It is possible that from a position of strength in the West, and with the political liberalization and economic development of the Islamic world at some future date, the Burhaniyya will be well positioned to expand through the Islamic Umma. A number of Burhani centers have been established in Islamic countries by immigrants who entered the tariqa in the West, and then returned to their home countries to found local zawiyas, indicating the important catalyzing role of Western religious freedom in the tariqa's world-wide expansion (Sparkes 2001). The process by which the West appears not only as the center of Western globalization but also as a critical intermediary point in broader patterns of global diffusion, has been insufficiently studied, and an analysis of this process for the Burhaniyya requires further research.[8]

What is certain is that the tariqa has begun to fulfill Shaykh Muhammad's global vision, as expressed in a poem on April 26, 1983:

> wajubtu bilaada allahi sharqan wamaghriban...
> I traveled to all lands of God, east and west, and I sowed seeds of my wheat in non-Arabic regions
> I took possession of hearts that had not acknowledged Allah as creator; by God's grace, these became among the ones who proclaim God's unity
> (al-Burhani 1993?:19)

Endnotes

[1]This is an abbreviation for "salla Allah 'alayhi wa sallim", "May God bless him and grant him peace", a supplication traditionally inserted after mentioning the Prophet Muhammad's name.

[2] "Hawliyya" according to this paper's system of transliteration. Literally "hawliyya" implies an annual event of power (Sparkes 2001); the word appears to be used in preference to "mawlid" in the Sudan (al-Shahi 1983:61).

[3] In Edmonton, where I live, the concept of "Muslim community" has limited social reality even for Sunni (as opposed to Shiite) Muslims. Thus most south Asians pray in one mosque, while most Arabs pray in another; the latter use Arabic extensively, while the former use Urdu. The two communities are amicable, and one feels welcome to pray in any mosque. But the two mosques are not merely two venues for a unified Islamic community of Edmonton; rather they represent different social phenomena.

[4] "Unprecedented numbers of British people, nearly all of them women, are converting to Islam...In the United States, women converts outnumber men by four to one." (Berrington 1993a; See also Berrington 1993b)

[5] While generalizations are tricky, on the whole scholarship seems to indicate that women are not a minority in new religious movements; some scholars suggest that they are over-represented (Dawson 1998:88).

[6] Jason Sparkes told me that while in Europe many Burhanis do travel to the Sudan, in Montreal only about a quarter of the tariqa members had done so (Sparkes 2001).

[7] A similar catalytic role of the West might be discerned in the trajectory of political opposition movements of the developing world, which frequently seek refuge in the West, where they grow (nurtured by political freedom, and economic advantage) abroad before returning home to effect political change.

[8] A similar catalytic role of the West might be discerned in the trajectory of political opposition movements of the developing world, which frequently seek refuge in the West, where they grow (nurtured by political freedom, and economic advantage) abroad before returning home to effect political change.

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