el-Sayed el-Aswad

SPIRITUAL GENEALOGY: SUFISM AND SAINTLY PLACES IN THE NILE DELTA

Although spiritual realities do not find a place in the explanatory scheme of modern science, they nevertheless play a significant role in the everyday life of people. This article discusses the interrelationship between blood and spiritual genealogies among Sufi orders in the Muslim world in general and in the Nile Delta of Egypt in particular. Contrary to theories of geographic reductionism that highlight the geographical features of the Delta,[1] this research sheds light on the impact of cultural and religious factors, such as regional Sufi orders and related saint cults, on the inhabitation and perpetuation of the local landscape.[2] Moreover, compared with the rich scholarship of the grand Sufi orders and saints,[3] studies that deal with local branches of dominant Sufi orders are sparse.[4] The relationship between Sufi beliefs and practices in local contexts and in broader national or global (Muslim) worldviews is also considered.

This essay provides an anthropological holistic insight incorporating objective description and subjective interpretation and as such constitutes a symbolic–hermeneutic account.[5] Based on ethnographic research conducted in the city of Tanta[6] and four of its adjacent villages,[7] this study focuses on the regional Sufi order (*ṭarīqa*) of al-Ahmadiyya al-Shinnawiyya[8] stemming from the Grand Sufi Order of al-Ahmadiyya, which was founded in Tanta by the Sufi leader al-Sayyid Ahmad al-Badawi in the 13th century.[9] The main concern here is to explicate how a genealogy in its biological sense transformed into spiritual genealogy as represented by the establishment of certain Sufi orders within a certain locality. By focusing on the life and writings of Shaykh Hasan al-Shinnawi,[10] the patron head of the Sufi order of al-Shinnawiyya and president of the Supreme Council of Sufi Orders in Egypt,[11] as well as by conducting in-depth interviews with members of the order,[12] the study examines the relationship between the worldviews of the order's adherents concerning the spiritual world and the world of kin and geography.

Sufism (*taṣawwuf*), embodying certain beliefs and practices held and enacted by distinct Sufi orders, is a mystical path of purification attained through contemplation, experiential–inner knowledge of God, and organized rituals and practices manifested in the relationship between the religious leader (shaykh) and the disciple (*murīd*).[13] Although it is institutionally practiced, Sufism embodies intellectual, emotional, and psychological dimensions such as *ḥāl* (spiritual state) and *maqām* (stage on the path).[14]

el-Sayed el-Aswad is Professor in the Department of Social Studies, College of Arts, University of Bahrain, Kingdom of Bahrain; e-mail: melaswad@hotmail.com.

The key objective of Sufism that brings Muslims to a deeper sense of faith is the awakening of the heart through full submission to God.

Because of their extensive knowledge and intensive experiences, Sufi shaykhs possess information that their followers may not fully understand. However, the major patterns that organize the concepts dealt with in this study can indeed be found in the discourse of ordinary Muslims, religious experts, and Sufis alike. This finding is not a matter of simple political or economic domination; it is a matter of collective representations refracted in individual beliefs and worldviews, which are spiritually, not politically, oriented. Within this framework, this work is a departure from the limited inquiry of the political features of Islam to focus on its spiritual and ethical aspects of Islam as represented in a particular Sufi order. Various Sufi orders contribute to Islam in different ways, incorporating local cultures, specific methods of inward experience, poetic expressions, particular cults, certain modes of music, as well as blood and spiritual bonds.

This study seeks to critique the distinction made by scholars such as Geertz[15] and Gellner[16] between two forms of Muslim experience: one scriptural (textual), intellectual, and urban; the other mystic, traditional, and rural. This distinction echoes Arberry's statement that "ignorant masses" are drawn to Sufi orders.[17] To the contrary, it has been argued that they form inseparable discourses.[18] Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (1058–1111) is a clear example of a Muslim who has integrated both discourses.[19] Abd al-Halim Mahmud (1910–78), the former Grand Imam or Shaykh al-Azhar, is another scholar (and Sufi) who contributed intellectually to Sufism.[20]

Religious meaning is an essential factor in accentuating the notion of sanctity especially when it is applied to mundane or nonreligious domains. Statements concerning ecological features as well as economic, political, and social activities may be sanctified by associating them with sacred rituals and religious propositions.[21] This is applicable to the spiritual genealogies enacted and maintained by people of the Nile Delta who bestow identity and sanctity on the places in which they live as well as to saintly places elsewhere in Egypt and the Muslim world. Likewise, ordinary persons may be certified as revered religious leaders embodying the sacred by establishing intimate, disciplinary, and spiritual bonds with prominent holy persons. The experiences of the sacred have been an important part of common worldviews, and they should be included in social scientific investigations.[22]

SUFISM AND BIOLOGICAL GENEALOGIES

Kinship is an important cultural concept for those interested in reconstructing the past. Insofar as similarities in kinship systems within culture areas reflect descent from common cultural ancestors, it becomes possible to reconstruct ancestral systems in greater detail.[23] To attribute holiness to saints in the Muslim context is to sanctify them by tracing their chain of ancestry (*silsila*) either directly to the Prophet's family or indirectly to a disciple of a Sufi or religious leader. Generally, although the Prophet Muhammad emphasized faith and piety as safeguards for all believers, his genealogy as represented in his family (ʾāl al-bayt) is highly revered by Muslims.[24] Because of the devotion to ʾāl al-bayt, it is not surprising to find that well-known shaykhs and saints sanctify their descent by tracing their roots or kin relationships, real or imaginative, to the line of the prophet. The grand shaykhs of Sufi orders such as ʿAbd al-Qadir al-Jilani

(d. 1167), Ahmad al-Rifaʿi (d. 1182), Abu al-Hasan al-Shadhili (d. 1258), Ahmad al-Badawi (d. 1276), and Ibrahim al-Dasuqi (d. 1277), to mention a few, conveyed that they were descendants of the Prophet Muhammad. Some of them specified a certain descent line. For instance, the genealogy of al-Badawi goes back to ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (d. 661), cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad.[25]

Sidi ʿUmar al-Ashʿath al-Shinnawi (1215–51), the founder of the mystical Shinnawiyya Order, and Sidi Muhammad al-Shinnawi (1430–1526), the fourth grandson of Sidi ʿUmar, are the most renowned and revered saints on whom the study will concentrate. Shaykh Muhammad is honored by an annual birthday (*mawlid*) that starts September 1 and lasts for eight days. The *mawlid* of Sidi Muhammad follows that of Sidi ʿUmar, which starts during the last week of August.[26]

Shaykh Hasan al-Shinnawi, the contemporary leader, belongs to the chain of saints descending from Sidi ʿUmar.[27] The social recognition of Shaykh Hasan as a man known for his religious piety and loyalty to al-Ahmadiyya has elevated him from a local shaykh to a leading member of the Muslim intellectual and Sufi establishment. To accentuate the concept of biological genealogy, Shaykh Hasan stated, "The son of the shaykh is a shaykh," emphasizing the hereditary nature of sainthood.[28] He pointed out that one of the significant blessings of his forefather, Sidi ʿUmar, is that there would follow a saint, consecutively, from his offspring until the Day of Judgment. Sidi ʿUmar was a descendant of al-ʿAbbas ibn ʿAbd al-Muttalib (the Prophet's uncle from the father's side).[29] His genealogy (fictive or otherwise), as recounted by Shaykh Hasan, also goes back to prominent Sufi figures such as Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardi[30] and Abu Yazid al-Bistami.[31]

The current center of the order of al-Shinnawiyya (*mashyakha*) is located in the city of Tanta, where it has two addresses: one of them located on "al-Shinnawi Street," an official acknowledgment and territorial mark of grace. As aforementioned, the Sufi order of al-Shinnawiyya is a reformed branch of the grand Ahmadiyya (*suṭuḥiyya*)[32] order established in Tanta by al-Sayyid Ahmad al-Badawi (1199–1276). Historically, one of the key reasons for the transformation of a peripheral village (Tanteda) to an influential city (Tanta) in the middle Delta was and has been the existence of the shrine or mosque of the grand Sufi leader al-Sayyid Ahmad al-Badawi.

SPIRITUAL GENEALOGY

Specifically, *spiritual genealogy* is taken to mean the affiliation and allegiance among members adhering to certain religious or sanctified principles, values, rituals, and practices expressed in hereditary, social, and transsocial or spiritual terms. Charismatic and exemplary leaders play a significant role in such genealogy.[33] Spiritual genealogy, moreover, goes beyond a specific Sufi order and is associated with overarching Muslim worldviews according to which the universe is constructed of visible and invisible worlds. The visible comprises material or natural, objective, historical, and geographical components, whereas the invisible encloses what is spiritual, unknowable, imperceptible, and existent withstanding its absence. Certain significant entities and forces such as angels, soul (*rūḥ,* as being eternal), holy persons (prophets and *walī*s, friends of God), holy places, and *baraka* (divine grace or blessing) intermediate between the two worlds. The categories of unseen entities and forces are dispersed

throughout both the cosmos and the person.[34] All worlds (visible and invisible, this life, and the afterlife) are expressions of the same divine mercy in the sense that they are created, maintained, and encompassed by Allah, the Ultimate One, the Merciful. One of the core goals of the Sufi is to connect himself with the spiritual domain of the world.

Hierarchically, highly revered and holy persons such as prophets and *walī*s have powerful souls or spirits.[35] The grand Sufi leader al-Badawi, the master of travelers (*sayyid al-sālikīn*) who never married or had any biological descendants, succeeded in establishing mystical links and spiritual genealogies located in different parts of Egypt. Born in Fez, he visited Mecca and Iraq and then resided and was buried in Tanta.[36] It is worth noting that the words "Tanta" and "al-Sayyid al-Badawi" are used synonymously in many different contexts in everyday life. I heard a person say that he would go to Tanta to fulfill some social duties; however, another person interjected saying, "You are going to Tanta; bring something for me from al-Badawi, for God's sake." Because of the charisma of al-Badawi, Tanta has become a seat of the Religious (Islamic) Institute (al-Maʿhad al-Dini).[37]

One of al-Badawi's spiritually certified descendants, born and raised in Fao village in Upper Egypt, was Sidi ʿUmar al-Ashʿath,[38] the patron saint and founder of the Sufi Order al-Shinnawiyya al-Ahmadiyya.[39] The story goes that, when Sidi ʿUmar heard that al-Sayyid al-Badawi had arrived in Egypt, he went to meet him in Tanteda, accompanied by his partner, Sidi Hasan al-Saʾigh, so as to make the pledge or covenant (*al-ʿahad*) directly and personally with him. Al-Sayyid al-Badawi advised Hasan al-Saʾigh to go to the village of Ikhnaway (where he is now buried) and establish himself there as a religious leader. Meanwhile, he advised ʿUmar to stay with him on the roof of the house of Ibn Shuhayt,[40] where he experienced the spiritual path and learned important religious and Sufi lessons. Sidi ʿUmar stayed with Sidi al-Badawi for three years and was then advised by al-Badawi to go to a village (subsequently referred to as the village of Shinnu)[41] to teach people mysticism.[42] Through the spiritual connection with his master, Sidi ʿUmar established a spiritual genealogy refracted in some of his male descendants, who maintained the biological genealogy and transformed it into spiritual genealogy.

The names of some spiritual successors are associated with the names of villages. If saint al-Badawi and Tanta represent a grand model in which sainthood and place overlap and identify with each other, the same pattern can be found, on a smaller scale, between local saints and small communities, such as between the Shinnawiyya and the village of Shinnu. For centuries, members of the Shinnawiyya Sufi order have grown in number and have spread among seven local Muslim communities located in proximity to the shrine of al-Badawi. This pattern, showing the connection between spirituality (represented in Sufi sainthood) and certain geographies, has been documented in other Muslim communities, such as those in India.[43] Persia,[44] Bangladesh, Pakistan,[45] South Asia,[46] and the Volga–Ural region in Russia.[47]

Locally, the concept of spiritual genealogy is deeply sustained by members of the Shinnawiyya Sufi order. When interviewed, members of the Shinnawiyya, as well as their patron Shaykh Hasan, reiterated the phrase, "The son of the shaykh is a shaykh." When I questioned them, referring to the fact that not all descendants of a saint are saints, they offered various responses that can be summed up as follows.

The emphasis is not just on the biological aspect per se, but, more importantly, on ethical and spiritual dimensions, as well as on charitable deeds aimed at serving the community. Although the biological genealogy of Sidi ʿUmar has been traced to prominent Sufi figures who are well known for their spirituality, the spiritual genealogy of Sidi ʿUmar is directly related to the grand Saint al-Badawi, the head of the spiritual family. Shaykh Hasan pointed out that his forefather, Sidi ʿUmar, like many disciples of al-Badawi (who had no biological offspring) had been a spiritual son (*ibn rūḥī* or *walad al-dīn*) as well as a man of *baraka*.

During our interview, Shaykh Hasan made an allegorical distinction between "the son of the mud" (*walad al-ṭīn*), signifying the kinship–blood bond, and "the son of religion" (*walad al-dīn*), conveying the spiritual bond. He went on to say that "*walad al-dīn* (the son of the religion) follows [you as] a religious leader, while *walad al-ṭīn* (the son of mud) may kill his parents." To support his view, he quoted the Qurʾan: "Among your wives and children (some are) enemies to yourselves: hence beware of them."[48] Within the circle of the Shinnawiyya Sufi order, the respect shown to the shaykh is more important than that shown to the biological father, because the shaykh guides the follower to the eternal life (or paradise) through mysticism, whereas the father begets the son in this transitory life (*al-dunyā*). The preferred case, however, is the one in which the shaykh's biological son follows the mystic path of his father. What is needed is purity of the heart and soul. This statement highlights the individual awareness of the spiritual and ethical dimension as the core element in the new orientation of the Sufi order that must be implemented not only by its members, but also by all Muslims.

An oath or pledge (*al-ʿahd*) is the first step in the Sufi path leading to spiritual genealogy. A new member of the Sufi order must make a pledge (locally known as "holding the hand," *al-qabḍa*) of the shaykh, committing himself to principles and practices of the *ṭarīqa*. Shaykh Hasan recounted that those who do not have the spiritual and moral support (*sanad*) of the shaykh are akin to being orphans.

Sufism, he recounted, cannot be achieved through schools or books as such[49] but requires three important elements. It requires spiritual guidance and divine knowledge that can be achieved through intimacy and closeness to the Sufi leader. It entails *mujāhada*, a multimeaning concept involving practice, experience, endurance, and patience in achieving divine and spiritual insights. It also necessitates natural or innate (*fiṭrī*) disposition, found in all people, without which all intellectual and practical efforts would be fruitless. *Spiritual genealogy is viewed here as if it were part of the biological nature of people that should be nourished by religious or Sufi experience*. Thus, the perfect successor of the shaykh of a Sufi order is one who has not only inherited the genes of the shaykh (genetic reproduction) but also has absorbed and experienced the ethos (spiritual reproduction or symbolic capital) of the order, an ideal juxtaposition of blood and spiritual ties. However, if the shaykh does not have a biological son, then the closest disciple or spiritual son can be his successor. Shaykh Hasan said, "I am a rational person who respects reason without overlooking spirituality which is part of human nature [*fiṭrī*]." He argued that the Qurʾan mentions in various verses the spirituality invested in the hereditary lines of prophets and pious persons, males, and females. Sufis, he maintained, are known for their humility and show great reverence and respect to the Prophet Muhammad and other religious leaders. Such statements resemble those expressed by another contemporary Egyptian Sufi, namely Muhammad Zaki Ibrahim, the founder of al-ʿAshira al-Muhammadiyya.[50]

To express the conformity of Sufism with the shariʿa, members of al-Shinnawiyya order argued that it is irrelevant to adopt legal or formal rules without content or spirit. They assured that their beliefs and practices can be viewed as *taṣawwuf sunnī* (Sufi-Sunni). Although there is consensus among interviewees that Sufi knowledge is based on the Qurʾan and Sunna[51] and is guided by Sufi leaders who show piety, righteousness, and humility toward Allah and obey Him for the benefit of His mercy and grace, spiritual genealogy necessitates a certain divine knowledge that goes beyond reason or intellectual gift. There are two interconnected religious ways of knowledge: one is *ʿilm kasbī* (acquired), as represented in the shariʿa, aimed at worshiping God; the other is spiritual or *bāṭin* (internal) reflected in the truth (*ḥaqīqa*) aimed at knowing Him. The *bāṭin* also refers to mystic, intuitive, or divine knowledge (*ʿilm wahbī* or *ʿilm ladunī*) imparted by Allah through illumination.

This explanation, however, does not constitute the whole picture. Shaykh Hasan recounted that, "the weakness of Muslim society today is caused by the lack of spirituality. We want to restore spirituality to the community."[52] There are three core components that must be considered: the self, God, and society. Three types of dialogue (dialogue with the self, dialogue with Allah, and dialogue with others) are required to facilitate spirituality. Self-awareness of unlimited spiritual energy is needed for achieving self-liberation and balance between the inner world and outer world. The serious effort a person makes toward knowing and controlling his/her inner dimension is viewed as a holy struggle, jihad. In this sense, jihad is not confined to politically and religiously motivated wars. "Allah looks at the hearts of people," relayed Shaykh Hasan, who continued saying that Islam is the "Religion of Peace," and to be with Allah is to remember and see Him in everything you do or observe, believing that if you do not see Him, He definitely sees you. Observance of oneself and remembrance (*dhikr*) of Allah form an inner spiritual and peaceful connection with God.

Sufism seeks both to suppress the idea of aggressive materialism confined to this transitory world and to elevate the spiritual quality inherent in people. This spiritual higher consciousness enables people to be aware of the uplifting dimensions of being as well as of the hidden secrets that can be transmitted through faith. Spiritual illumination is given by Allah to those who enact their faith in their daily life. In this context, the wonders (*karāma*) performed by saints are rendered intelligible. In terms of spiritual reciprocity, Shaykh Hasan explained these wonders by quoting a *ḥadīth qudsī*: "Insofar as the slave [ʿabd] continues to be near Me through supererogatory deeds of piety, I will love him. If I love him I will be the ear by which he hears, the eye by which he sees, the hand by which he strikes, and the foot by which he walks. If he asks Me for anything, I will give it to him, and if he seeks My protection, I will grant it."[53] It is the *divine will* that explains the shaykh's extraordinary actions.

The dialogue with others must be guided within the ethics of Muslim brothers.[54] Sufi brotherhood, Shaykh Hasan maintained, in its spiritual dimension, frees humans from *ʿaṣabiyya* or blood and tribal affiliation and satisfies spiritual–social needs in a spiritually barren world.[55] It constitutes a unique tie, transcending egoistic desires. The spirit of brotherhood entails using dialogue to convince others, Muslims or non-Muslims, of a point of view while showing tolerance toward the differing perspectives of other people.

In addition to the patron relationship of father/son where the leader of the order is considered both supporter (*sanad*) and guide of the disciple (*murīd*), brotherhood

signifies the equal relationship between members of the Order. Ideally, brotherhood works as a leveling mechanism that goes beyond the recognized ranks of the Sufi members to include all Muslims in one unified community.[56] "Let us talk the Ahmadiyya [al-Badawi] way" is a phrase I frequently heard from members of the order connoting an equal, friendly, and brotherly dialogue and relationship. In terms of cosmic views, Shaykh Hasan recounted, "We are brothers and sisters because we are descendants of one soul [*nafs wāhida*]." The notions of brotherhood and companionship underlie not only the concept of Sufism but also the collective meaning of *umma*.

SUFI SPIRITUAL HAGIOGRAPHIES AND EVERYDAY LIFE

Sufi hagiographical narratives enrich people's social imagination and serve as means not merely for legitimizing saints' spiritual positions but also for providing individuals with examples of the significance and legitimacy of spirituality. In addition to spiritual gain, social and economic benefits are derived from the brotherly relationship.[57] Whereas it is true that brotherhood "networks began as family networks,"[58] real brotherhood, from the Sufi point of view, is not mere "siblinghood" based on blood relationship but encompasses companionship.[59] Shaykh Hasan complained that real friendship is waning and that the Arabs are oriented nowadays toward egoistic and individualistic behavior, akin to that of Western individuals. Furthermore, saints are known as "friends of God" (*walī*s). The verse of the Qurʾan, "Behold! Verily on the friends of Allah there is no fear, nor shall they grieve," is frequently used by Muslim scholars, leaders of Sufi orders, and common Muslims to certify their belief in those who have achieved the merit of transsocial experience of being close to Allah.[60]

The following hagiographies show how Sufis drive the population toward brotherly relationships using diplomacy and dialogue as means of communication. Shaykh Muhammad al-Shinnawi (1430–1526), the revered spiritual Sufi leader and distinguished scholar, taught religious and Sufi courses to students who resided permanently in the rooms connected to his mosque. He helped al-Shaʿrani, another renowned Muslim scholar,[61] to become a Sufi and introduced him to al-Badawi. The following narration tells how Shaykh Muhammad established a brotherly and spiritual tie with Shaykh al-Shaʿrani who proclaimed, "my master, Shaykh Muhammad al-Shinnawi, taught me the Sufi path and was the shaykh who granted me permission to teach and train new Sufi disciples."[62]

One day while he was entering a mosque, al-Shaʿrani observed a humble man with unkempt clothes braiding palm leaves. He ordered the mosque keeper not to permit the disheveled and illiterate man in the mosque. When he found the same man on the following day, he questioned the guard who recounted that the man (named Sidi ʿAli al-Khawwas)[63] was a *walī* and a man of *baraka*. When al-Shaʿrani dismissed the idea that he was a *walī*, the man whispered some words that made al-Shaʿrani rethink the matter. The man's words indicated that he had knowledge of the private life of al-Shaʿrani as related to an incident that happened between al-Shaʿrani and his wife the previous night. The lesson implicit in this narrative is that people should not be judged based on appearance, and that mystic knowledge should be respected and never dismissed. It is also interesting to note that an unlettered man became a spiritual leader of such a renowned scholar as al-Shaʿrani. Thus, the aforementioned antithesis between scriptural

and mystical religious experiences, at least from the Sufis' point of view, is rendered impractical.[64]

Al-Shaʿrani asked al-Khawwas to teach him the "way" of mystic knowledge. Al-Khawwas advised him to meet with Sidi Muhammad al-Shinnawi in Mahalat Ruh, near Tanta. When al-Shaʿrani searched for Muhammad al-Shinnawi, the latter recognized him and told him about the incident of al-Khawwas. Impressed with their illumination, al-Shaʿrani asked al-Shinnawi to teach him the Sufi path. Al-Shinnawi recommended that they go together to the shrine of Sidi al-Badawi to make the pledge. When al-Shaʿrani was making the Sufi pledge, al-Badawi, dead in his tomb, extended his hand from the window of his shrine and shook the hand of al-Shaʿrani.[65] This *karāma*, enabling the spiritual bond to be physically witnessed, would not have occurred if Sidi Muhammad al-Shinnawi had not introduced al-Shaʿrani to Saint al-Badawi.[66] The Sufi saint is believed to have connections with the cosmos because he "participates in the essential forces of rational and spiritual power."[67]

A historical incident related to Saint Muhammad al-Shinnawi further highlights the great impact of Sufi saints' experiences on people's everyday life. During the Ottoman rule, officials were enslaving people and forcing them to uproot their barley crop. Saint Muhammad wanted to travel to Istanbul, to ask the sultan to issue a decree banning slavery and the mistreatment of people. He paid a visit to the shrine of al-Badawi, who informed him that he "would not have to travel." That night the sultan dreamt that he saw Shaykh Muhammad al-Shinnawi riding his donkey in the grand court of Istanbul entreating, "O Sultan, please, send a decree to stop enslaving people and uprooting the barley in Egypt." The sultan, influenced by the dream, ordered the decree. This example shows the Sufi's spiritual diplomacy of using dialogue and negotiation, even in dreams, to solve political and economic problems.

Shaykh Hasan referred to these exemplary episodes for establishing a diplomacy using kind words as ways through which religious leaders as well as common people can speak to those who are in power to reach suitable solutions for their community and defend marginalized and powerless people.

SAINTS GEOGRAPHY: VILLAGES AND SHRINES

Saints, as represented by their sanctuaries, are visible bonds that vertically link the heavens with the earth and horizontally connect north with south and east with west as embodied in the conviction of the four "poles" regulating the world.[68]

If the Nile geographically and physically connects Upper and Lower Egypt, the saints connect all of regions of Egypt. In the anniversary celebration of al-Badawi, for instance, members of various Sufi orders as well as ordinary people come from the north from cities such as Alexandria (where the sanctuary of Sidi al-Mursi Abu al-ʿAbbas is located) and Dasuq (where the sanctuary of Sidi Ibrahim al-Dasuqi can be found), from the south or from cities such as Qina (where that of Sidi Ahmad al-Qinawi is located) and Luxor (where that of Sidi Abu Hajjaj can be found), and from Cairo (where the mosques of al-Husain and Zainab among other honorable *walī*s have been built) to celebrate Sidi al-Badawi and recite the *fātiḥa*. Both men and women participate in these religious festivals.[69]

Al-Sayyid al-Badawi established the spiritual ties that keep his followers distinct from different Sufi orders. The spirituality and divine blessing (*baraka*) of Sidi al-Badawi have sacralized the space. The proximity of the shrine of al-Badawi to villages and towns bestows meaning and importance to those places.[70] Shrines set symbolic boundaries within the region. Put differently, Tanta encompasses a connected chain of saints and sanctuaries located within the sacred regional network of al-Badawi that extends beyond the city to include nearby towns and villages. All bear testimony to the question of belonging and localization as reflected expressions of spiritual territory.[71]

Similarly, the al-Shinnawiyya order, essentially one of eighteen Sufi orders[72] belonging to and having their roots in the Grand Ahmadiyya Sufi order of al-Badawi, has attracted both elites and ordinary people and created new sacralized spaces in Tanta as well as in adjacent villages. Interestingly, these Sufi orders are dispersed in different regions in Egypt.[73] The Sufi orders of al-Salamiyya and al-Maraziqa, although now independent, were originally related to the al-Shinnawiyya order.[74] The Shinnawiyya order has designed its own official and formal application for membership that must be signed by two witnesses.[75] The following will concentrate on the nomenclature, geographic distribution, and cult rituals related to the al-Shinnawiyya order.

Because their property and economic resources depend on their spiritual and symbolic capital, religious leaders strive to translate religious understandings and beliefs into social images, cultural symbols, and rituals to attract adherents and supporters. Initially, Sidi ʿUmar lacked the necessary resources to support his family, Sufi order, and teachings. The following story indicates how the piece of land that subsequently became the small village of Rizqa (literally translated as "livelihood") was originally allocated to Sidi ʿUmar as a gift from the governor of Egypt. According to local narratives, because of his *karāma*, the governor had given Shaykh ʿUmar a piece of land adjacent to the village assigned to him by al-Badawi. While visiting the shaykh, the governor asked him to express his wish. Sidi ʿUmar said that he wanted a piece of land whose allocation would be determined by his donkey. Surprised, the governor granted him his request. The donkey, after rolling on the soil, walked steadily through many arable *feddan*s,[76] which were then awarded to the shaykh as his property. This land (now the village of Rizqat al-Shinnawi) was used for sustaining his family and Sufi order. It also became known as the Basin of the Donkey.

As aforementioned, Sidi Ahmad al-Badawi assigned a village to Shaykh ʿUmar, who taught al-Ahmadiyya principles to the village inhabitants. The name of this new *ṭarīqa* is al-Shinnawiyya al-Ahmadiya. The surname "al-Shinnawi" was added to Sidi ʿUmar after his death for the following reason. According to the narration, when relatives and friends were washing the corpse of Sidi ʿUmar, they found a large burned spot that halted their cleansing process. They wanted to know the appropriate way to handle the damaged part of the body. While discussing whether they should wash it with water or clean it with a cloth, they heard a mystical call (*hātif*) saying "shinnu" (sprinkle it with water). Since then, Sidi ʿUmar has been named "*shinnawī*" or "the sprinkled," and the village in which he was buried was named "Shinnu." The title of al-Shinnawiyya as designating a new Sufi order has been bequeathed through the line of Sidi ʿUmar al-Shinnawi's descendants.[77] A grand mosque, in which Sidi ʿUmar is buried, was built in Shinnu.[78]

Saints are distinguished from ordinary people not only in this life as religious leaders but also after death when their shrines are raised and elevated in the cemetery, or set apart from it. Monumental funerary architectures such as mosques and shrines named after saints accentuate the spiritual and spatial position of the saints in their regions. There is an implicit and explicit hierarchy of the holy places. The more influential the saint, the more impressive and better preserved the monument.[79] A saint's shrine is built inside a mosque; together, they represent the interior and exterior domains of the sacred.

The reality of spiritual energy is affirmed and is believed to exist within and between all nodes in the cosmic web of interconnections.[80] One of the Muslim religious worldviews that explains the significance of graves, in general, and of saints' shrines, in particular, is that they are believed to be links between the everyday life and the *sacred* or trans-social reality. They inhabit the space and establish an intimate bond between the human body, earth, and celestial universe. Tombs and shrines constitute a liminal world, or *barzakh* (eschatology or isthmus), bridging this world with the next world. In everyday life, however, family members metaphorically use the phrase the "tomb's bones," *ʿaẓm al-turba,* to mean their ancestors' bones.[81]

Within this broader worldview, the focus of the people is on maintaining good relationships with their saints, kin, and friends, alive or dead. This view is reflected in the Arabic phrase "*ṣilat al-raḥim*," which simply means keeping in touch with relatives through local means of communication of which visitation or a face-to-face bond is the most significant. Visitors are careful to recite the *fātiḥa* and supplicate Allah for the sake of the soul of the dead or saint who can hear and recognize them. Within this socioreligious context, visitation (*ziyāra*) to the shrine of a saint is a way to establish spiritual networks or sanctified ties between the visitors and the saint, on the one hand, and between them and the other people who come to visit, on the other.[82] Shrines and mosques empower the social position of the shaykhs and their relatives.

The main objective for maintaining the Shinnawiyya order, as expressed by Shaykh Hasan and his followers, is to inhabit the universe. To participate in the universe is to participate in cosmic inhabitation through biological and spiritual reproduction that makes the house of Allah and the cosmos full. Inhabiting the universe is a divine intention that is to be fulfilled by God and His blessed creatures. Going beyond the social locality of their region, consistent with Muslim worldviews, al-Shinnawiyya adherents often refer to the "divinely inhabited house" (*al-bayt al-maʿmūr*), an invisible cosmic center located above the Kaʿba, toward which Muslims turn in prayer. In this sacred cosmic house, such unseen entities and forces as angels, spirits, and *baraka* exist.[83] Within this context of inhabitation, the Shinnawiyya have geographically expanded to encompass more than seven villages with saintly shrines directly related to the *silsila* of Sidi ʿUmar.[84]

The spirituality and ritual festivity connected to sacred centers form a common ground for regional cults that are spatially interpenetrating orders.[85] Apart from the biological lineage of a certain saint, the religious identity of brotherly disciples is derived from their connection with a chain of Sufi saints.[86] As outward and material expressions of inward and spiritual values, visitations to saints' shrines and related practices are clues to the significance of the geography of brotherly saints. The following example makes this point clear.

It has been a custom that, on the night of the last Wednesday of the seven-day celebration (*mawlid*) of al-Badawi,[87] members of al-Shinnawiyya order perform a distinctive form of ritual for honoring certain saints, some of whom are spiritually, not biologically, related to the Shinnawi family. The patron shaykh of the Shinnawiyya order or his deputy, accompanied by members of the order, spend the night in the shrine of Sidi Muhammad al-Shinnawi at the village of Mahalat Ruh (where the shrine of Sidi Muhammad al-Shinnawi is located). Then, on the morning of the next day (Thursday) he rides a donkey leading the *mawkab* (public procession) toward the Mosque of al-Badawi at Tanta. However, on the way to Tanta, the procession goes to the village of Shibshir al-Hissa, where the participants stay until noon at the mosque of Sidi al-ʿImari (who is not biologically related to the family of al-Shinnawi). After the noon prayer, the procession goes to al-Rajdiyya, where they rest for a while at the mosque of Sidi Marzuq (who is also not a Shinnawi descendant) and where they recite the *fātiḥa*. Then, the spiritual procession moves toward Ikhnaway (where the shrine of Sidi Hasan al-Saʾigh, a Sufi brother or friend of Sidi ʿUmar is located). In addition, Ikhnaway people from the al-Shinnawiyya branch, called Ghubbashiyya, receive the followers and join them heading to Tanta.[88]

While chanting the *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah) and the *madīḥ* (religious songs praising the Prophet and Muslim saints),[89] participants carry red banners (associated with the Grand Ahmadiyya of al-Badawi[90]) decorated with calligraphic phrases praising Allah and his prophet along with name of the al-Shinnawiyya al-Ahmadiyyah order. Both young men and the elderly partake in the procession.[91] Loudspeakers carried by young men spread the chants of the procession over the places they pass through. Tents for the followers of the Sufi order as well as for visitors are set up. Inside and outside the tents rugs, carpets, mats, and sheets are stretched on the ground for people to sit and relax. Inside the mosque of al-Badawi, as well as other mosques with shrines, visitors, using either one (their right) or both hands, touch the cloth that covers the shrine as well as the pillars and walls inside the shrine saying, "Support us, O people of grace" (*madad yā ahl al-baraka*). Tales of wonders and exceptional deeds of the saints are repeatedly narrated by followers and visitors. Food and sweets among other gifts (*nafaha*) are given to the needy and visitors as signs of blessing, unifying people together in this unique congregation.

What is curious here is that all participants walk from Ikhnaway to Tanta barefoot and bareheaded, a custom established by the founder of the *ṭarīqa* (Sidi ʿUmar) as a sign of humility and respect to the prominent pole (*quṭb*), al-Badawi. When they arrive at Tanta, the representative of the al-Badawi order receives them honorably and fraternally. Then, they visit the al-Badawi shrine, recite the *fātiḥa,* and pray the afternoon prayer. Finally, they rest in their assigned tents at Sijar (a traditional quarter in Tanta, west of al-Badawi mosque).[92] It is through this bodily ritual that they both sacralize the territory by walking on it and maintain the relationship between the Grand Sufi Order of al-Badawi and the fraternal order of al-Shinnawiyya. It is "the countless acts of diffuse inculcation through which the body and the world tend to be set in order, by means of a symbolic manipulation of the relation to the body and to the world aiming to impose what has to be called . . . a 'body geography,' a particular case of geography, or better cosmology."[93]

The reason for going barefoot and bareheaded, according to the local narrative, goes back to an incident that occurred to Sidi ʿUmar as he was walking from the village of Mahalat Ruh to visit al-Badawi in Tanta. On his way, he stopped at Ikhnaway to visit his friend, Sidi Hasan al-Saʾigh. However, when he arrived at Tanta and asked to meet his master, he was informed that the master, al-Badawi, was in his solitude (*khulwa*) and would not be able to see him. Disappointed, Sidi ʿUmar went back to his friend, Sidi Hasan al-Saʾigh, who suggested they go again together to meet the master. By the time al-Badawi finished his solitude, he was told that Sidi ʿUmar al-Shinnawi had come to visit but had been prevented from seeing him because of his solitude. Immediately, al-Badawi commanded that Sidi ʿUmar al-Shinnawi be brought from wherever he was. When Sidi ʿUmar received the message outside of Tanta, he said, "As far as my master wants me I will go, barefoot and bareheaded.[94] Since then, it has become a custom of the Shinnawiyya followers.

CONCLUSION

This study attempts to demonstrate the complex interplay between expressions of Sufi belief in the local setting (represented in the Shinnawiyya Sufi order certified by the charismatic persona of the Grand Shaykh al-Badawi) and the most common religious worldviews aiming at achieving deeper understanding of Islam as a whole. The ideological dichotomy between Islam (or orthodox Islam) and Sufism expresses views of certain scholars who fail to examine Sufism from the emic or inner perspective of its adherents. Sufism is quintessentially a way for adherents to vest their lives and the universe in which they live with meaning.

Spiritual genealogy manifests itself in the history and geography of the Nile Delta in which Sufi orders have been established and upon which saintly shrines have been built. Worldviews or ideas that exist in the minds and hearts of the Sufis and their adherents are manifested in their rituals, performances, bodily movements, and shrines establishing sanctified punctuations or landmarks in the communal and geographic region.

Spiritual genealogy is socially and economically relevant because it motivates people or, to be more specific, members of the Sufi order, to better serve their community. Sufis emphasize the use of diplomacy, negotiation, and tolerance in dealing with social problems. The welcoming response of the Delta's regional groups to Sufi orders bears witness to the social and spiritual roles these orders have played there. The Shinnawiyya order has succeeded in binding their members in allegiance to their leader through spiritual and emotional bonds, generating considerable social cohesion in their local or rural, tribal, and urban milieus.

Among members of the Sufi order in the traditional social environment, such as the Nile Delta, there is a transformation from relationships based on blood or tribal (kin) affiliation (vertical in nature) to that based on broader, spiritual and brotherly ties (horizontal in nature). The geographic evidence presented in this study shows that the expansion of saintly shrines in the Nile Delta (and elsewhere in Egypt) is not a random phenomenon but rather guided and conditioned by religious orientation that keeps the roof of the spiritual world open. However, the future of Sufism and saintly places is not a matter of purely local concern but is connected to the future of tradition and religion in Egypt as a whole.

NOTES

Author's note: I thank Shaykh Hasan al-Shinnawi, head of the Shinnawiyya Sufi order and president of the Supreme Council of Sufi Orders in Egypt, for his time, insightful information, and enduring patience during our extensive interviews. I also thank Dr. Abd al-Rahim Zalat who introduced me to Shaykh Hasan and also participated graciously in the interviews. I am grateful to members of al-Sinnawiyya order as well as to Mr. Saʿid al-Shinnawi, son of Shaykh Hasan and Deputy President of the order, for invaluable assistance during the ethnographic study. Special appreciation is extended to Sayyid Wabi and his son Samah (editors of the regional newspaper *al-Nas*, in al-Gharbiyya province) for their assistance in collecting local data. Appreciation also goes to the three anonymous reviewers of IJMES for their comments and suggestions.

[1] Jamal Hamdan, *Shakhsiyyat misr: Dirasah fi ʿabqriyyat al-makan,* vol. 1 (Cairo: Alam al-Kutub, 1980).

[2] Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen, "Holy Ancestors, Sufi Shaykhs and Founding Myths: Networks of Religious Geography in the Central Delta" in *Yearbook of the Sociology of Islam,* ed. Georg Stauth (Bielefeld: Universität Bielefeld, 2004), 24. This study concentrates on the central Nile Delta. "Holy men, brotherhood and pilgrimages have dictated the dominant characteristics of the religious landscape of the Central Delta from the end of the Mameluke period to the present day." Concerning recent studies that show the significance of Sufi orders in Upper Egypt, see Mark Sedgwick, "Upper Egypt's Regional Identity: The Role and Impact of Sufi Links," in *Upper Egypt: Identity and Change*, ed. Nicholas Hopkins and Reem Saad (Cairo: AUC Press, 2004), 97–118; Nicholas Hopkins, "Sufi Organization in Rural Asyut: the Rifaiyya in Musha," in Hopkins and Saad, *Upper Egypt,* 141–55.

[3] See, for example, Michael Gilsenan, *Saint and Sufi in Modern Egypt: An Essay in the Sociology of Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973); Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen, *Al-Sayyid al-Badawi: un grand saint de l'islam Egyptien* (Cairo: IFAQ, 1994); Valerie J. Hoffman, *Sufism, Mystics, and Saints in Modern Egypt* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1995); Edward B. Reeves, *The Hidden Government: Ritual, Clientelism, and Legitimation in Northern Egypt* (Salt Lake City, Utah: University of Utah Press, 1990).

[4] Mayeur-Jaouen, "Holy Ancestors, Sufi Shaykhs and Founding Myths," 24–35. As one scholar notes, the "phenomenon of holy family ancestors, to which Jacque Berque alluded too briefly in his book on Sirs al-Layyan, has never been studied."

[5] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973). "Symbolic-hermeneutics" is an interpretive approach in symbolic anthropology that focuses on peoples' points of view as means of reconstructing their reality.

[6] Tanta, the capital city of the al-Gharbiyya province located 95 kilometers north of Cairo and 125 kilometers southeast of Alexandria, is the largest and most active commercial center located in the Delta and comprises a mixed urban-rural population. Tanta is also known as a center for the composition and distribution of audiocassettes featuring religious songs.

[7] These four villages are Mahalat Ruh, Shibshir al-Hissa, al-Rajdiyya, and Sijin al-Kaum.

[8] Members of the al-Shinnayyia order have different occupations and social backgrounds that include university professors, students, merchants, military persons, police officers, lawyers, government employees, carpenters, peasants, doctors, and engineers.

[9] John Spence Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 45. The Ahmadiyya order "gave rise to a number of branches, not confined to Egypt, for it spread into Hijaz, Syria, Turkey, Tripolitania, and Tunisia."

[10] Shaykh Hasan al-Shinnawi has contributed extensively to the literature of mysticism through various books and articles.

[11] Shaykh Hasan became president of the Supreme Council of Sufi Orders in August 1997. The council officially belongs to the Ministry of Social Affairs and is responsible for Sufi affairs in Egypt.

[12] In addition to several short trips to Tanta and the villages, I conducted two extensive ethnographic studies from January to April 2003 and May to August 2004. I participated in the gatherings and ritual activities of the Shinnawiyya order in Tanta. I participated in the *mawlid*s and visitations to saints' shrines. I conducted in-depth interviews with Shaykh Hasan in both Tanta and Alexandria. With the consent of the shaykh, video- and audiocassette tapes were used during all interviews. I continued to correspond with him and his son, the deputy president of the order, by phone and letter as the need for clarification and further questions arose.

[13] Some scholars tend to focus on specific features of Sufism, defining it as an ascetic religious experience, a spiritual state, an internally oriented piety, a subjective experience using symbolism to unveil the hidden

meaning of apparent expressions, a technique of psychiatric treatment, a mechanism for social reform, a means for the spread of Islam, and a way of resisting invaders. For a detailed discussion concerning these diverse definitions of "Sufism," see, for example, Julian Johansen, *Sufism and Islamic Reform in Egypt: The Battle for Islamic Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica* (Oxford: 1949); Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*; Martin Lings, *What Is Sufism?* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1975); Vincent Crapanzano, *The Hamadsha: A Study in Moroccan Ethno-Psychiatry* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, Calif.: 1973); Reynold A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam* (Bloomington, Ind.: World Wisdom, 2002); Paulo Pinto, "Mystical Bodies: Ritual, Experience and the Embodiment of Sufism in Syria" (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 2002); ʿAbd al-Wahab al-Shaʿrani, *al-ʾAnwar al-qudsiyya fi qawaʿid al-sufiyya* (Beirut: Dar Sadi, 2004).

[14] Hasan al-Shinnawi, *Fi riyad al-tasawwuf: Ruʾya dhatiyya* (Tanta, Egypt: al-Shinnawiyya al-Ahmadiyya Order, 2003), 52–54. Some authorities convey that there are thirty-three different inner and spiritual states and stages.

[15] Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968).

[16] Ernest Gellner, *Muslim Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

[17] A. J. Arberry, *Sufism* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1950), 122.

[18] el-Sayed el-Aswad, "The Cosmological Belief System of Egyptian Peasants," *Anthropos* 89 (1994): 359–77; idem, *Religion and Folk Cosmology: Scenarios of the Visible and Invisible in Rural Egypt* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002); Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori, *Muslim Politics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996).

[19] See Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, *Ihiyaʾ ʿulum al-din* (Cairo: Dar al-Manar, 1979). Ibn Khaldun, *al-Muqaddimah* (Cairo: al-Matbaʿa al-Amiriyya, 1903); Miya Syrier, "Ibn Khaldun and Islamic Mysticism," *Islamic Culture* 21 (1947): 264–302. It is worthy to note that Ibn Khaldun, the erudite Arab thinker, scholar, politician, and historian of the 14th century, brought mysticism and theology together.

[20] Some contributions of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Halim Mahmud include *Qadiyat al-tasawwuf: al-Munqidh min al-dalal* (Cairo: Dar al-Maʿarif, 1981) and *Aqtab al-tasawwuf: al-Sayyid al-Badawi*, 4th ed. (Cairo: Dar al-Maʿarif, 1993).

[21] Roy A. Rappaport, *Ecology, Meaning, and Religion*; idem, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[22] Don Swenson, *Society, Spirituality, and the Sacred: A Social Scientific Introduction* (Peterborough, Ontario, Canada: Broadview Press, 1999), 20.

[23] Doug Jones, "Kinship and Deep History: Exploring Connections between Culture Areas, Genes, and Languages," *American Anthropologist* 105 (2003): 501–14.

[24] The Prophet Muhammad is considered by Sufis as an exemplary model for the true Sufi due to his meditation and contemplation on the Mount (*ghār*) of Hira.

[25] al-Shinnawi, *Fi riyad al-tasawwuf*, 224–26. See also, el-Sayed el-Aswad, "Sacred Networks: Sainthood in Regional Sanctified Cults in the Egypt Delta," in Stauth, *Yearbook of the Sociology of Islam*, 124–41.

[26] Birthday celebrations of saints are scheduled according to the Western calendar (August–October) for economic and regional reasons related to the harvesting of important crops, especially cotton.

[27] al-Shinnawi, *Fi riyad al-tasawwuf*, 224–30. Shaykh Hasan is the son of Muhammad Saʿid, ibn Muhammad Yousif ibn Yousif ibn Muhammad Bunduq ibn Muhammad al-Misry ibn ʿAbd al-Quddus al-Saghair ibn ʿAbd al-Quddus al-Kabir ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad Jamal al-Din ibn ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿAli ibn ʿUmar.

[28] Mark Sedgwick, *Saints and Sons: The Making and Remaking of the Rashidi Ahmadi Sufi Order, 1799–2000* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2005). The relationship between Sufi saints and their sons is discussed in a recent study focusing on the Sufi order of Rashidi Ahmadiyya that continued over two centuries in different countries. However, the study concludes that the Sufi order is more of a lineage than a religious order.

[29] al-Shinnawi, *Fi riyad al-tasawwuf*, 224–25. Sidi ʿUmar al-Ashʿath al-Shinnawi was a descendant of "Muhammad al-Sadiq ibn Dawood al-Hafiz ibn Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardi ibn ʿAta Allah ibn Ahmad al-Rafi ibn Dawood al-Taʾi ibn Tayfur ibn ʿIsa [known as Abu Yazid al-Bistami] ibn Abi al-Nahr ibn Khaythama al-Rabiʿ ibn Abi ʿUbayd ibn ʿUmar al-Awzaʿi ibn Bishr al-Sadiq ibn ʿAbd al-Rahman Abi al-Muhajirin ibn ʿAbd al-Rahman ibn ʿAbd-Allah ibn Sidi al-ʿAbbas ibn ʿAbd al-Mutallib." The genealogy goes on to reach Adam. The genealogy of the wife of Sidi ʿUmar is also consecrated by links to the Prophet's family, ibid., 225.

[30] Anna Bigelow, "The Sufi Practice of Friendship, the Suhrawardi *Ṭarīqa* and the Development of a Middle Road," *Jusur* 15 (1999): 14–49; Qmar-ul Hoda "The Remembrance of the Prophet in Suhrawardi's ʿAwarif Al-Maʿarif," *Islamic Studies* 12 (2004): 129–50. There is not a specific reference cited by Shaykh Hasan to support the kin relationship between Sidi ʿUmar and al-Bistami or al-Suhrawardi. The historical verification of the accuracy of the saints' genealogies given by Shaykh Hasan is beyond the scope of this study. However, although the exact identity of Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardi (1144–1234) is not clearly delineated, it seems that he is the person Shaykh Hasan refers to as the forefather of Sidi ʿUmar. Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardi is known for his Sufi views associated with the al-Suhrawardiyya Sufi order advocating the concept of *futūwa*, a multiple-meaning concept referring to bravery, generosity, and hospitality in both mundane and spiritual aspects.

[31] Peter J. Awn, "Sufism," *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mercea Eliad (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 104–23. Al-Bistami (d. 874) is known for his ecstatic utterances as well as for his theory of mystical annihilation (*fanāʾ*).

[32] "*Ṣuṭuḥiyya*" is derived from the Arabic word *saṭḥ*, which means the roof of the house on which the saint al-Badawi and his close disciples used to spend time together contemplating and praying.

[33] Regarding the notion of sanctity in Muslim culture, see el-Sayed el-Aswad "Sanctified Cosmology: Maintaining Muslim Identity with Globalism," *Journal of Social Affairs* 24 (2003): 65–94.

[34] el-Aswad, *Religion and Folk Cosmology,* 60–71.

[35] Jane Smith and Yvonne Haddad, *The Islamic Understanding of Death and Resurrection* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1981), 184. "Saints are recognized as having a hierarchical worth or value exceeding that of ordinary believers, based very simply on the understanding that they have achieved a special closeness to God."

[36] Saʿid Abd al-Fattah ʿAshur, *Al-Sayyid Ahmad al-Badawi: shaykh wa-tariqa* (Cairo: al-Hay al-Misriyya, 1998); ʿAbd al-Halim Mahmud, *Aqtab al-tasawwuf*.

[37] The Institute was known as al-Masjid al-Ahmadi. The late renowned scholar Shaykh Mutwalli al-Shaʿrawi, the former minister of Religious Endowments, was a graduate from that Institute.

[38] The Arabic word *ashʿath*, a person with shaggy and tangled hair, was used in the early stages of Sufism to describe an ascetic or a Sufi who had neglected his appearance.

[39] It is not the intention of this study to discuss all spiritual descendants of al-Badawi and their locations, but to highlight those who belong to al-Shinnawiyya al-Ahmadiyya.

[40] al-Shinnawi, *Fi riyad al-tasawwuf*, 204–5. Ibn Shuhayt was one of the locals who hosted al-Badawi, offering him his house to live in. Saint al-Badawi stayed there for twenty-six years. After al-Badawi's death, the house was replaced by the first mosque built in Tanta. Before living in that house, al-Badawi spent twelve years in the house of Shaykh Rukn al-Din, known as Rakin. The emphasis here is that al-Badawi showed no interest in owning properties but, rather, preferred to live as a poor person (*faqīr*), notwithstanding the blessings and wonders attributed to him while in the two homes.

[41] As will be discussed soon, the term *Shinnawiyya* is derived from the word *shinnu*, which means to sprinkle or spray water on something.

[42] al-Shinnawi, *Fi riyad al-tasawwuf*, 222.

[43] Christian Troll, ed., *Muslim Shrines in India: Their Character, History and Significance* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989).

[44] Carl W. Ernst "An Indo-Persian Guide to Sufi Shrine Pilgrimage," in *Manifestations of Sainthood in Islam,* ed. Grace Martin Smith and Carl W. Ernst (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1993), 43–67.

[45] Pnina Werbner and Helen Basu, ed., *Embodying Charisma: Modernity, Locality and the Performance of Emotion in Sufi Cults* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

[46] Nile Green, "Emerging Approaches to the Sufi Traditions of South Asia: Between Texts, Territories and the Transcendent," *South Asia Research* 24 (2004): 123–48; Green, *Indian Sufism Since the Seventeenth Century: Saints, Books, and Empires in the Muslim Deccan* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

[47] Allen J. Frank, "Islamic Shrine Catalogues and Communal Geography in the Volga–Ural Region: 1788–1917," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 7 (1996): 265–86.

[48] Qurʾan, 64:14.

[49] This statement does not mean to abandon schools, but what is meant is that modern education or "modernity" must not neglect spirituality. Hasan al-Shinnawi asserts that the pure and strong Sufi spirit "must become a component of the curricula in our institutes and schools, a guiding light in our newspapers, books and radio stations, and an inspired way of life in every aspect of our revival." See Hasan al-Shinnawi "Sufism:

A Call and an Education," paper presented at the *7th General Conference of the World Islamic Call Society* (Tripoli, 26–29 November 2004), http://islamonline.net/MercyForWorlds/English/Papers/03.shtml/

[50] Johansen, *Sufism and Islamic Reform in Egypt,* 4–5.

[51] Al-Shinnawi, "Sufism: A Call and an Education." Shaykh Hasan quotes Muhyi al-Din ibn ʿArabi: "The Sufis have reached consensus that there can be no prescription nor proscription after the Book of Allah and the Sharia." ʿAbd al-Wahhab al-Shaʿrani, *al-Tabaqat al-kubra al-musamma bi-lawaqih al-anwar fi tabaqat al-akhiyar* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1965). This view is compatible with al-Shaʿrani's definition of Sufism, as based on the Qurʾan and the Sunna.

[52] el-Sayed el-Aswad, "The Dynamics of Identity Reconstruction among Arab Communities in the US," *Anthropos* 101 (2006): 111–21. It deserves noting that there has been deep concern toward spirituality among Arab and Muslim communities in Western countries, especially the United States.

[53] Muhammad ibn Ismaʿil al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-bukhari, kitab al-riqaq* (Cairo: al-Majlis al-Aʿla li-l-Shuʿun al-Islamiyya, Lajnat Ihya Kutub al-Sunna, 1966), chap. 38, 6502.

[54] The reference to Muslim brothers is used here within a metaphorical context and is not related to the well-known politically oriented Muslim Brothers established by Hasan al-Banna in Egypt.

[55] On the liberation from ʿaṣabiyya, see el-Sayed el-Aswad, "Post-ʿAsabiyya: Ibn Khaldun and the Discourse of Reform," *Tabsir* 22 May 2006, http://www.tabsir.net/?cat=44/

[56] This statement does not mean that there is no competition between brotherly Sufi members or orders. The competition may involve negative accusations between different Sufi orders.

[57] The Shinnawiyya order offers charitable (voluntary), social, and community services to its members, aiming to help those in immediate need with medical care, educational concern, funeral or marriage expenses, and support for small development projects among others. Wealthy members contribute and offer financial aid guided by the head of the order.

[58] Mayeur-Jaouen, "Holy Ancestors, Sufi Shaykhs and Founding Myths," 29.

[59] Bigelow, "The Sufi Practice of Friendship," 20.

[60] el-Aswad, "Sacred Networks," 124–41.

[61] Leila Hudson, "Reading al-Shaʿrani: The Sufi Genealogy of Islamic Modernism in Late Ottoman Damascus," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 15 (2004): 39–68. According to Michael Winter, "al-Shaʿrani belonged most fully to the Ahmadiyya, a popular and moderate Egyptian *ṭarīqa*, which held the best model of relations between a Sufi shaykh and his followers to be a strict one of adherence to *Shariʿa*, obedience, benevolence, and structured testing."

[62] al-Shaʿrani, *al-Anwar al-qudsiya,* 54.

[63] Hudson, "Reading al-Shaʿrani," 51; Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam,* 228. Ali Khawwas, al-Shaʿrani's most influential master, was illiterate.

[64] To emphasize this idea, an interviewee stated that the Prophet himself was unlettered, *ummī.*

[65] el-Sayed el-Aswad, "Magic Bodily Members: Human Eye and Hand," *Archetypes and Motifs in Folklore: A Handbook,* ed. Jane Garry and Hasan El-Shamy (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 2005), 139–45. The folk belief in the extraordinary ability of al-Badawi to extend his hand from the window of his shrine to salute his followers constitutes a motif widely spread in the Arab culture.

[66] Pnina Werbner, *Pilgrims of Love: The Anthropology of a Global Sufi Cult* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2003), 67. Wonders are signs used for legitimizing the spiritual authority of saints. In Pakistan, the Muslim saint Baba Qasim was aging, and no longer accepting vows of allegiance. He was replaced by his biological son, Nazir. When Zindapir, who later became a renowned saint, entered Nazir's room with various supplicants to take the vow, he heard a voice in his right ear telling him he should give the vow to Baba Qasim. Later, Zindapir approached Baba Qasim who, recognizing his supreme spiritual qualities, passed him "the power of sainthood in a matter of seconds."

[67] Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 254.

[68] el-Aswad, "Sacred Networks," 130. Edward W. Lane, *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London: Everyman's Library, 1966), 249–50. Out of the four poles, Ahmad al-Badawi and Ibrahim al-Dasuqi established their Sufi orders, the Ahmadiyya and the Burhamiyya, in the Nile Delta. The other two poles are ʿAbd al-Qadir al-Jilani (d. 1166), the founder of the Qadiriya, and Ahmed Al-Rifaʿi of Iraq (d. 1178).

[69] el-Aswad, "Sacred Networks," 126–27.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Sayyid Wahbi, *al-Mawsua al-masiyya li-muhafzat al-delta,* 2 vols. (Cairo: al-Ahram Press, 2000). As a place of regional sanctuaries, Tanta comprises 40 saints.

[72] al-Shinnawi, *Fi riyad al-tasawwuf,* 54–55. These orders (and their present shaykhs) are (1) al-Shinnawiyya al-Ahmadiyya (Hasan al-Shinnawi), (2) al-Imbabiyya al-Ahmadiyya (Hani ʿAbd al-Salam), (3) al-Kannasiyya al-Ahmadiyya (Muhammad Nuyto), (4) al-Sutuhiyya al-Ahmadiyya (ʿAli Zayn al-Din al-Sutuhi), (5) al-Maraziqa al-Ahmadiyya (ʿIsam al-Din Shams al-Din), (6) al-Bayoumiyya al-Ahmadiyya (Ahmad Hamid Fadl), (7) al-Tasqayaniyya al-Ahmadiyya (Ibrahim Ahmad Ibrahim), (8) al-Shibiyya al-Ahmadiyya (Muhammad al-Shiʿibi), (9) al-Halabiyya al-Ahmadiyya (inactive), (10) al-Salamiyya al-Ahmadiyya (inactive), (11) al-Hamoudiyya al-Ahmadiyya (Ibrahim al-Maghribi), (12) al-Manaiyfa al-Ahmadiyya (ʿAli al-Din al-Munufi), (13) al-Zahidiyya al-Ahmadiyya (Hasan al-Zahid), (14) al-Farghaliyya al-Ahmadiyya (Ahmad al-Farghali), (15) al-Jaʿfariyya al-Ahmadiyya (ʿAbd al-Ghani al-Jaʿfari), (16) al-Jaririyya al-Ahmadiyya (ʿAbdallah Jarir), (17) al-Jawhariyya al-Ahmadiyya (al-Husain al-Juhari), (18) al-Kattaniyya al-Ahmadiyya (vacant).

[73] The discussion of the regional distribution of these Sufi orders is beyond the scope of this study.

[74] al-Shinnawi, *Fi riyad al-tasawwuf,* 241.

[75] The application includes data that must be submitted by the new member concerning his name, identity, job, and address in addition to a photo and a statement that he is not a member of another Sufi order.

[76] One *feddan* = 1.038 acres.

[77] al-Shinnawi, *Fi riyad al-tasawwuf,* 223.

[78] John Renard, *Seven Doors to Islam: Spirituality and the Religious Life of Muslims* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1996), 66. Similar examples are found in different Muslim places. For instance, in Ottoman Turkey, the "founder of the organization [*ṭarīqa*], and often the spiritual leader's successors as well, are buried within the structure, either in a separate room or in a space continuous with that used for communal prayer rites."

[79] Some Sufi leaders have been accused of encouraging their followers to deify them.

[80] David Griffin, "Introduction: Sacred Interconnections," *Sacred Interconnections: Postmodern Spirituality, Political Economy, and Art,* ed. David Griffin (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1990), 1–14.

[81] el-Sayed el-Aswad, "Death Rituals in Rural Egyptian Society: A Symbolic Study," *Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development* 16 (1987): 205–41.

[82] el-Aswad, "Sacred Networks," 125–26.

[83] el-Aswad, *Religion and Folk Cosmology*, 45–46.

[84] These villages are as follows: (1) Shinnu (located in the province of Kafr al-Shaykh, 35 kilometers northeast of Tanta) is the village where Sidi ʿUmar and his son ʿAli and his daughter Adiya are buried in a mosque named after him (ʿUmar). (2) Sijin al-Kaum (in the district of Qutur, located 19 kilometers northwest of Tanta) is where Shaykh Yousif al-Shinnawi is buried. (3) Mahalat Ruh (located 13 kilometers north of Tanta) is a village that enjoys a good reputation, exceeding that of Shinnu, because in it is located the shrine of the prominent Shaykh Muhammad al-Shinnawi, a respected scholar and Sufi. Additionally, the village is a place of four saints: Sidi ʿAbd al-Quddus al-Kabir, Sidi ʿAbd al-Quddus al-Saghair, Sidi Muhammad al-Misry, and Sidi Muhammad Bunduq. All of them are descendants of Sidi Muhammad al-Shinnawi and buried with him in his mosque. (4) Manyal al-Huyashat (located 11 kilometers northwest of Tanta) is where the shrine of Sidi ʿAbd al-Rahman is located. (5) Shibshir al-Hissa (located 8 kilometers north of Tanta) is where Sidi ʿAbdullah and Sidi Ahmad Jamal al-Din are buried. (6) al-Rajdiyya (located 6 kilometers northeast of Tanta) is the place of the shrines of Shaykhs Muhammad Yusuf and Muhammad Saʿid al-Shinnawi. (7) Abu al-Khaw (belonging to Kaum Hamada district, Buhayra providence, located 65 kilometers northwest of Tanta) is where a shrine of one of the Shinnawiyya saints has been erected.

[85] Richard Werbner, *Ritual Passage, Sacred Journey: The Process and Organization of Religious Movement* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), 275.

[86] Pnina Werbner, "Stamping the Earth with the Name of Allah: Zikr and the Sacralizing of Space among British Muslims," *Cultural Anthropology* 11 (1996): 309–38.

[87] el-Aswad, "Sacred Networks," 128. The annual birthday celebration of al-Badawi is held in October at the end of the cotton harvest and lasts seven days. Almost two million people from various parts of Egypt and the Muslim world come to celebrate the occasion. On Friday, the last day of the *mawlid,* the procession begins at the mosque. The successor, *khalīfa,* of al-Badawi, mounted on a horse, leads the procession of Sufi orders, government representatives, and ordinary people. The procession lasts until noon or the Friday prayer.

[88] See notes 43, 44, 45, 63 of this study. See also David Buchman, "The Underground Friends of God and Their Adversaries: A Case Study and Survey of Sufism in Contemporary Yemen," *Yemen Update* 39 (1997): 21–24. Religious festivals, visitations, and *mawlid*s are not exclusive to the Nile Delta but are a common phenomenon among Muslim communities in different countries.

[89]Some of these phrases include, for example, "blessings and peace be upon the Prophet, his Family, and his Companions."

[90]Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam,* 240. The color red, I was told, was chosen by Saint al-Badawi to represent the sacrifice, blood, and martyrdom adherents of the order are willing to pay to safeguard their religion. Al-Badawi was an active opponent to the Crusade of Louis IX.

[91]el-Sayed el-Aswad, "Religious Rituals and ʿAshura in Bahrain: Observations and Reflections on Shiʿa Bodily Symbolism," *Tabsir*, 27 March 2006, http://www.tabsir.net/?p=163#more-163/. Sufi processions are different from mourning processions or Husayniyya rituals, performed by the Shiʿa people of Bahrain and elsewhere.

[92]Local pilgrimages served economic purposes because they frequently occurred within the context of religious festivals accompanied by commercial activities.

[93]Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice,* trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 92–93.

[94]A brief account of this incident is mentioned by al-Shinnawi, *Fi riyad al-tasawwuf,* 232.