

The Shādhiliyya in Tunis: Prayer and Brotherhood

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## Abstract

This thesis is concerned with the Shādhiliyya Sufi Order as it is found in Tunis. The work discusses the development of the Order and the role of its central institution (the *zāwiya*) in a modern setting. The largest part deals with the ritual prayer of the Order - in particular the *ahzāb* (s. *hizb*). In dealing with both the ritual/experiential context, and the literary content and form of the prayers, the intention is to bring to light the significance of the *ahzāb*, and to begin to accord them their proper place in the study of Sufism.

Research is based on historical sources, manuals and prayer books of the Shadhiliyya, and the personal observations of the author. A translation of the Arabic "Hizb al-Kabir" is given in the appendix.

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Cette these a pour sujet la confrerie des Shādhilis à Tunis. On abordera le développement de la confrerie et le rôle de son institution principale (le *zāwiya*) dans le contexte moderne. La plus grande partie de l'oeuvre repose sur la prière rituelle - notamment les *ahzāb* (s. *hizb*). En traitant de l'expérience rituelle et de la forme littéraire des prières, l'intention est de mettre en lumière l'importance des *ahzāb* et de leur accorder une position juste dans l'étude du soufisme.

La recherche est basée sur les sources historiques, les manuels et les livres de prières de la confrerie Shādhilite, et les observations de l'auteur. Une traduction de "Hizb al-Kabir" est offerte dans l'appendice.

## Acknowledgements

Je voudrais remercier le Shaykh Sidi Hassen Belhassen de Tunis. Sans lui, cette étude n'aurait pas été possible. Il est un homme respecté par tous ceux qui le suivent et par ceux qui doivent se contenter de rendez-vous brefs. Mes remerciements vont aussi à Mustapha Zoubeidi pour son appui et sa connaissance de la confrérie qui ont été inestimables. Sans oublier les frères de Sidi Belhassen auxquels je suis reconnaissant.

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I must also recognize here the help of my thesis advisor Dr. E. Ormsby. His corrections and suggestions helped raise my work to a higher level. Thanks are also due to Dr. B. T. Lawson. Over the last five years he has encouraged and challenged me more than anyone else. His comments on the present work are much appreciated. I would also like to recognize the support of Dr. A. Rippin in helping me to focus my thesis topic, and Dr. H. Landolt for patiently listening to my thoughts on Sufi prayer.

Finally, I must thank S. Farahian and the staff at the Islamic Studies Library (McGill University). Also, the help of my friends B. Fudge, for passing along helpful references, and M. Ghassemi-Zavieh, for assisting me with difficult Arabic passages, is much appreciated.

This work is dedicated to Antoinette and Ginny.

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## Introduction

During a four month stay in Tunis at the end of 1991/1412<sup>1</sup>, I had the good fortune, while wandering through the great Jallāz cemetery of that city, to come across the *zāwiya* of Sidī Belhassen - the home of the Shādhiliyya Order in Tunisia. Outside the complex of buildings there was a boy selling sweets. He confirmed that this was the *zāwiya*, but my questions quickly exhausted his knowledge of the Order and the site, so he suggested one of his friends take me inside to get the whole story. After watching that night's prayer recitation I presented myself to the Shaykh and a group of his followers. After a discussion of my intentions I was officially welcomed to the *zāwiya*. Before I left Tunis a few months later, the Shaykh gave me a copy of the prayer-book of the Order as a parting gift. I was told that these prayers were written by the founder of the Order, Abū al-Hasan al-Shādhilī (died 1252/650) who had made spiritual retreats to the cave now beneath the *zāwiya*.<sup>2</sup> According to popular accounts these prayers have been recited at this location for the last seven-hundred and fifty years.

In the following work I propose to discuss the historical development of the Shādhiliyya *ṭarīqa*, the religious significance of the *zāwiya*, and the prayer-text itself. The first chapter will set the account of the life of al-Shādhilī in an historical context, and outline the development of Sufism and the various Orders. The second chapter will deal with the modern status of the *zāwiya* and its role in the religious life of the people of Tunis. In an attempt to understand the prayers and their recitation, the third chapter will deal with the various forms of prayer - special attention being paid to strictly Sufi forms. The following chapter will analyze the longest Shādhilī prayer, "Hizb al-Kabīr", in light of its intertextual

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<sup>1</sup> All dates are given according to the Christian (C.E.) and Hijrī calendars.

<sup>2</sup> This is probably the same cave to which Al-Khidr retreated after appearing to Ibn 'Arabī (d. 1240/638) in 1193/590. See Henry Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sūfism of Ibn 'Arabī* R. Manheim trans. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969) p. 64.

use of Qur'ānic material. The final section will discuss the prominent themes and terms used throughout the collection.

In a discussion of approaches to the study of prayer one scholar has isolated three basic areas of analysis: 1) the study of the prayer-texts themselves; 2) inquiry into the ritual and act of praying; and 3) analysis of statements which develop metaphysical or philosophical concepts.<sup>3</sup> Our primary goal in this work is to understand the prayers (*ahzāb*). Our discussions, covering more or less the three areas mentioned, are efforts at approaching the *ahzāb* from different angles in the hope of filling out the picture on all possible sides. The attempt at drawing intertextual links with the Qur'ān hopes to place the *ahzāb* in proper relation to what is the most important text in Islam. In employing this technique the intention is to discover exactly which Qur'ānic passages are incorporated and why. In particular, attention is paid to how the carrying over of material brings a secondary or implied significance - as established originally in the Qur'ān. This is intended to get at part of the dynamic which supplies the *ahzāb* with religious significance. Due to the size of the present work, themes, phrases and quotations could not be traced beyond the writings of the Shādhilī Order. As Schimmel's article on prayer makes clear, almost all major themes dealt with in Sufi prayer have been formulated, reformulated and commented upon in the earlier works of the great Sufi thinkers.<sup>4</sup> Tracing the themes and terms used in the *ahzāb* back to earlier formulators would be an undertaking beyond our present scope. The attempts at intertextual analysis are likewise limited. The Qur'ān is the only source used since it is the most important (being at the root of all subsequent religious thought) and because of its connections with the *ahzāb* in literary style and usage (i.e. recitation).

For a number of reasons I believe any account of the *ahzāb* must include consideration of its recitation.<sup>5</sup> It is made clear in chapter three that although we have a text,

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<sup>3</sup> T. Zahavy, 'A New Approach to Early Prayer' in B. Bosker History of Judaism, the Next Ten Years (Ann Arbor: McNaughton & Gunn, 1980) p. 45.

<sup>4</sup> A. Schimmel, 'Some Aspects of Mystical Prayer in Islam', Die Welt des Islams vol. 2, 1953.

<sup>5</sup> In his 'Islamic Textuality in Light of Poststructuralist Criticism' in A Way Prepared, Essays on Islamic Culture F. Kazemi and R. McChesny ed.'s (New York: N.Y. University Press, 1988) R. Martin notes that,

the prayer is only complete or effective if it is recited. As is the case in Qur'anic recitation, proper reciting is essential for the "raising" of the text to an effective spiritual phenomenon.

The position of my thesis is that the prayers of Al-Shādhili warrant recognition as a significant element in the study of the saint's *turuq*. Essentially, the following discussion will show how the prayers are important and successful on two levels: the liturgical and the textual. On the first level, the *ahzāb* will be seen to be a key element in the liturgy and spiritual practice of the Order. On the second, the *ahzāb*, in their context of Islamic mysticism, constitute a profound, significant and moving body of devotional literature.

Probably because they fall somewhere between the "greater" works of the Sufi literary tradition and studies in the history of Sufi Orders and institutions, the study of the *ahzāb* and their recitation has largely been neglected by scholarship. Studies of Sufi ritual have also failed to address the importance of prayer recital in large part due to their restriction to the theoretical accounts which dominate the sources.<sup>6</sup> Also, because of the importance of *dhikr* (to be discussed below) in both theory and practice, prayer recitation is usually ignored.<sup>7</sup> This problem is compounded by the fact that there is so little in the "greater" Sufi works and the "lesser" manuals, specific to the *turuq*, concerning theory of *ahzāb* recitation. In fact, these manuals - in the case of the Shādhiliyya - provide us with

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'textual and contextual analyses are often considered to be separate scholarly labors: texts for history and humanities and contexts for fieldwork in the social sciences' (p. 126). As an alternative to this 'division of labor', as he calls it, Martin states, 'The question of how texts are used to do things in the world is what the historian of religions wants to answer. The historical and linguistic spacing between source and contextual use holds the greater interest for human studies' (p. 124).

<sup>6</sup> See L. Gardet, 'Dhikr' (p. 225) in *El*.<sup>2</sup> Here Gardet's discussion relies heavily on Ibn 'Ata Allah (d. 1309/709) and his *Miftāh al-Falāh wa-Misbāh al-Arwāh* (Cairo: Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi, 1961). Further, some interpretations of Islamic ritual prayer do not recognize sources beyond the Qur'an. S. Goitein, in *Studies in Islamic History and Institutions* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968) pp. 87, 88.

<sup>7</sup> M. Gilsenan in his anthropological account of the Hamādiyya-Shādhiliyya and the Demerdashīyya Khalwatīyya of Egypt passes over prayer recitation to get to the more spectacular *dhikr* ceremony. His discussion of *dhikr* covers thirty pages while prayer recitation is disposed of in one sentence. In a more limited and immediate way (than *dhikr*), the recitation of certain litanies and sections of the Qur'an prescribed by the founder of the Order (the *ahzāb* or *wird*) fulfils the function of preparation for the *dhikr* proper and establishes the appropriate psychological 'frame' for its performances. M. Gilsenan, *Saint and Sufi in Modern Egypt: An Essay in the Sociology of Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973) p. 156. I make this point not to imply that Gilsenan's observations are inaccurate, rather my intention is show how a student, because of the accounts already written, might not look closely at recitation. For a similar treatment see L. Rinn, *Marabouts et Khouan* (Alger: Adolphe Jourdan, 1884) p. 99.



precious little as regards the actual dynamic of the individual's experience in relation to the text and to the group amongst whom the recitation takes place

This dynamic is discussed by E. Waugh in his work on the *Munshidīn* singers of Egypt. On the dynamic of the "individual" versus the "group" he distinguishes the tension between the group at once as the focus and ordered vehicle to spiritual reality, while at the same time giving way and providing room for personal religious expression.<sup>8</sup> Recognizing the same tension, Gilsenan writes, "the ritual unity of the group is always threatened. It is safeguarded by the Sheikh, the officials, and the norms of the Order which are in varying degrees internalized, but it is perpetually at risk."<sup>9</sup>

Another important context for the *ahzāb* texts is the rule of the Order itself. It is not the intention of this study to comment on how representative the practices of the *ṭarīqa* are of Sufism, or Islam in general, nor will a discussion of their "orthodoxy" be undertaken. I share F. Denny's position on this issue:

What does the scholar do when confronted with a duty unperformed by persons claiming to be devout; or with additional practices unprescribed in the Shari'a but diligently observed in local practice? It does not increase our understanding to scold the former and correct the latter, in either event a statement is being made about Islam as a perceivable reality.<sup>10</sup>

The *ṭarīqa* practices are not seen in this study, nor by most Muslims, as normative Islam. But within the Order itself we see that our discussion is not purely descriptive. All activity in this context is carried out in relation to the norms of the Order which are its *ādāb* (s *adab*). Through the *ādāb*, "even the most "emotional" of religious exercises is stylized according to controllable and explainable patterns of the group."<sup>11</sup> and, "Within the network (of the Order), one learns not only how to act, but how to respond to the realities

<sup>8</sup> E. Waugh, *The Munshidīn of Egypt* (Columbia: South Carolina Press, 1989) p. 6

<sup>9</sup> M. Gilsenan, *Saint and Sufi in Modern Egypt* p. 174

<sup>10</sup> F. Denny, 'Islamic Ritual: Perspectives and Theories' in *Islamic Studies Presented to C.J. Adams* W. Hallaq and D. Little eds (New York: E.J. Brill, 1991) p. 68

<sup>11</sup> E. Waugh, *The Munshidīn of Egypt* p. 5

that make up the Sufi life "12 In fact *ādāb* distinguish the adept's use of the prayers from any other use - popular or not. An adept is bound, according to his level of commitment, in both his discipline and his spiritual experience, to the framework of the *adab*. His discipline is structured by the rules of conduct which include things such as daily recitation, submitting oneself to the direction of a Shaykh, and his moral responsibilities as a brother of the Order. His spiritual experience is codified and contextualized by the *adab*. The manuals show us, through detailed discussion of *dhikr*, how spiritual experience is to be conceptualized. They provide the structure in which the individual may ground - and therefore make sense of - his experience. On this level,

Adab sharpens the perception of adepts and lets them see the truths they are pursuing. Adab controls their errant emotions and directs them into the serene direction of God. Adab mediates the power and introduces the paradigms. Adab shades from moral behaviour into ontological nature "13

Although this study will not address the vexing problem of distinguishing between the teachings of the various Sufi Orders, it would appear that one important element to be dealt with would be this concept of *adab*. In the introduction to our own prayer book we find preliminary evidence for this. "We can be assured of the place of the Shaykh (Al Shādhilī) with Allāh - by the drawing of Muslims to the preservation and memorization (*hifz*) of his prayers (*ahzāb*) and the adherence to his wisdom and *adab* "14

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12 *Ibid* p 9

13 *Ibid*

14 Nibrās al-Arḡiyā' wa Dalīl al-Anḡiyā' (The Lamp of the Pious and Guide of the Pure) (Tunis: Al-Mathaba al-Asriyya, 1964) p 4

## Chapter I: Al-Shādhilī and his *Tarīqa*

Before approaching the collection of Shādhilī prayers entitled: Nibrās al-Atqiyā' wa Dalīl al-Anqiyā' we propose to set the historical scene of North Africa at the time of 'Alī Abū al-Hasan al-Shādhilī's birth around 1187/584. A short chronological sketch of the period preceding and including the man will serve to highlight its most important and relevant features. From this point we shall turn to accounts of the *shaykh*'s life as recorded by the hagiographers. This will not only relate the facts of his life, but will allow us to appreciate the wider environment in which he lived and taught.

With this established we will take up the larger issue of the development of Sufism and the birth of Sufi *turūq* (meaning "Ways" or "Orders", sing. *tarīqa*). Here a schema will be developed which will allow us to see the relationship between the early Sufi tradition and the modern-day organization of the mystical brotherhoods. It is in this schema that the importance of the *ahzāb* in the Shādhiliyya Order begins to come to light. In our discussion of this fact it will also be seen how unique this Order is in some ways.

### The Historical Scene

North Africa, as a Muslim land, has had a complex and dynamic religious and political history<sup>15</sup>. Although today almost unknown<sup>16</sup>, the often fervent religious movement of the *Khawārij*<sup>17</sup> (Kharijites) was early on the dominant form which the Islamic religion took in this region. By 750/132 North Africa was solidly Kharijite due to the fact that this was the form in which Islamic doctrine had penetrated the area. Kharijism

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<sup>15</sup> The following historical survey is taken largely from R. LeTourneau, *North Africa to the Sixteenth Century* in *Cambridge History of Islam* P. Holt, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

<sup>16</sup> The small and rather insular Ibādiyya group living on the island of Jerba in modern Tunisia being one of these exceptions. For other groups see 'Ibādiyya' in *E.I.*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>17</sup> The Kharijite movement was probably the earliest schismatic development in Islam, dating to 657/36. It stressed a simple egalitarian ethic and the importance of action as a sign of faith. The distinction between believers and the unbelievers was also of primary importance.

also provided a sectarian element to the native Berber tribes' resistance to invasion by the Arab Sunnis from the East. But this doctrine did not remain prominent for very long and by 800/183 only one of the three major states (the Rustamids of Tāhart - central Maghreb) then established in the Maghreb was Kharīte

In Ifrīqiya the Arab dynasty of the Aghlabids ruled with the recognition of the ʿAbbāsīd caliphate. Their capital, Qayrawān (Kairouan), which had been established by ʿUqba bīn Nāfiʿ al-Fihri in 43/664 or 50/670<sup>18</sup> as the first permanent settlement of the Arab invaders, quickly grew to become an outstanding centre of Islamic culture. It was here by the end of the ninth century that the Mālikī system of jurisprudence, as it was to be found in the Maghreb, was developed. This system or *madhhab* has remained almost unchallenged in North Africa up to the present.<sup>19</sup>

In spite of these developments the turn of the tenth century saw a campaign which was to dramatically change the nature of rule in Ifrīqiya. In 909/296 a Fatimid<sup>20</sup> agent along with the Kutāma Berbers defeated the Aghlabid forces and took Kairouan. This victory, and the arrival of ʿUbayd Allāh al-Mahdī in 910/297, was the beginning of the Fatimid caliphate in Ifrīqiya. Here they had to resist various Berber rebellions and the Umayyad caliph in Spain who held Northern Morocco from 971/360 to 1010/400. In 973/362 the Fatimids left Kairouan for Egypt, leaving the Berber Zirids in control of their holdings. It is telling that this indigenous ruling family abandoned Ismāʿīlī doctrine some eighty years after their rise to power and proclaimed allegiance to the ʿAbbāsīd caliphate. Their reasoning in this is not fully known but doubtless the influence of the orthodox

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<sup>18</sup> The date given by P. Hitti in his *History of the Arabs* (London: MacMillan, 1970, 10th ed.) p. 361.

<sup>19</sup> For a preliminary attempt to relate the Mālikī system to the Shādhiliyya see V. Danner, 'The Shādhiliyya and North African Sufism' in *Islamic Spirituality: Manifestations* S. Nasr, ed. (New York: Crossroads, 1991) p. 34.

<sup>20</sup> The Fatimids were a sub-group of the Ismāʿīlī, who are themselves a Shīʿī sub-group. The Fatimids split from the main body of Ismāʿīlīs, most of which became known as the Qarāmita (Carmatians), over an eighth century succession dispute.

*ʿulamāʾ* of Kairouan and the Mālikī jurists in some way contributed to the repudiation of Shiʿism as the state religion.<sup>21</sup>

With the great influx of the Banū Hilāl and other bedouin from Egypt the Zīrid state disintegrated into a number of small principalities in 1052/444. Although the precise effects of this invasion/migration are debatable<sup>22</sup>, a temporary cultural and economic decline appears to have gripped the region. At about this same time a Berber movement in the western Sahara (inspired largely by calls for religious reform) was developing. This was the al-Murābitūn (Almoravids) who a century later would control all of Morocco and most of Muslim Spain. But both the surviving Zīrid principalities and the Almoravid lands would later fall to another Bedouin movement, the al-Muwahhidūn (Almohads).

Like the early Almoravids, the Almohads were characterized by a reforming religious spirit emphasizing a simple and puritan Islam. Their military successes including Morocco 1145/540, central Maghrib 1152/546, and Ifrīqiya in 1160/555, were in large part due to their reformist and spartan zeal. These successes gave rise to the largest of the Maghribi empires and to a period of great cultural activity<sup>23</sup>. The subsequent flowering of theological, juridic and poetic writing was accompanied by the rise of the popular preachers (*ṣulahāʾ*) throughout North Africa who were the precursors of the later rise of Sūfism in the 13th/7th and 14th/8th centuries. The success of the *ṣulahāʾ* and their emphasis on popular piety and the importance of holy men can also be interpreted as a response to the rigorous Mālikism of the *fuqahāʾ* (jurists) and the stern orthodoxy of the *ʿulamāʾ*.<sup>24</sup>

But the great Almohad state was not to endure beyond 1270/670. Having given way to the Hafṣids in Ifrīqiya in 1249/646, their capital, Marrakesh, was overrun in

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<sup>21</sup> For further details see LeTourneau, 'North Africa to the Sixteenth Century' p 220.

<sup>22</sup> Compare P. Hitti p 622 with LeTourneau p 221.

<sup>23</sup> LeTourneau writes 'Never, (in the Maghreb), had an autochthonous people succeeded in building up such a state by their own efforts, and in creating such a brilliant civilization' p 228.

<sup>24</sup> A. MacKeen, 'The Early History of Sufism in the Maghrib prior to Al-Shādhilī', *J.A.O.S.* vol. 91 1971 p 403, and LeTourneau, 'North Africa to the Sixteenth Century' p 229.

1269/667 by the Berber Marinids. The fall of the Almohad empire allowed yet another Berber tribe, the Banū ʿAbd al-Wād (later known as the Zayyanids) to establish their rule in Tilimsān. Thus by the end of the thirteenth century the Maghreb was divided into three states: the Marinids in the West (al-Maghrib al-Aqsā), the Hafsiids in the East (Ifriqiya) and the Zayyanids in modern-day Algeria (al-Maghrib al-Ausat)

### The Life of the Shaykh

The biography of the founder of the Shādhiliyya Order<sup>25</sup>, according to the hagiographical sources, concerns itself with two of these three areas - Maghrib al-Aqsa and Ifriqiya. Of these sources two can be isolated as the prototypes of all subsequent hagiographies of the Shaykh ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Jabbār<sup>26</sup>

The earlier account, written by the man usually considered as the second successor to al-Shādhilī himself, is probably the more accurate. The author, Ibn ʿAtāʾ Allāh al-Iskandarī, who died in 1309/709, can also be considered as the primary systematizer of the Order since, besides his hagiographic effort on al-Shādhilī, entitled Lataʾif al-Minan (The Book of the Divine Blessings)<sup>27</sup>, he penned such notable works as Miftah al-Falāh (The Key to Success)<sup>28</sup> and Al-Qasd al-Mujarrad (The Pure Goal)<sup>29</sup>. But Ibn ʿAtāʾ Allāh's recognition also goes far beyond the Order and is due to his famous Kutāb al-Hikam (The Book of Wisdom)<sup>30</sup>, which is known throughout the Muslim world.

The second account of the Shaykh's life was written around 1340/740 by a "comparatively inconspicuous devotee" of the Order, Abū al-Qasim al-Himyari more often

<sup>25</sup> In this work we shall use 'Order' as a synonym for *Tarīqa*. See below for a more substantial discussion of terminology

<sup>26</sup> Where he got the *nisba* (name of geographical association) 'Al-Shādhilī' will be discussed below

<sup>27</sup> Ibn ʿAtāʾ Allāh, Lataʾif al-Minan (Cairo: Maktaba al-Saʿidiyya, 1972)

<sup>28</sup> This work is one of the earliest and most comprehensive expositions on *dhikr*. Miftah al-Falāh wa Mubāh al-Arwāh (Cairo: Mustafā al-Bābī al-Halabī, 1961)

<sup>29</sup> Dealing with the divine names of Allāh. Al-Qasd al-Mujarrad (Cairo: Al-Matbaʿa al-Misriyya, 1930)

<sup>30</sup> A collection of mystical aphorisms. Al-Hikam (Egypt: Maktaba al-Jindī, 1977)

known as Ibn al-Sabbāgh<sup>31</sup> He undertook this project within a century of al-Shādhilī's death (1258/656) interviewing a number of his immediate family and authorities within the Order in Egypt Its full title is Durrat al-Asrār wa Tuhfa al-Abrār (The Pearl of Secrets and the Gift of the Pious).<sup>32</sup>

Although these two histories do follow the same general line with regards to the Shaykh's life, they often differ on details. Ibn al-Sabbāgh and Ibn 'Atā' Allāh both give their subject's birth place as the tribal region of Ghumārah in Morocco (south of Ceuta), but the first fixes the date at around 1187/583, while the second is silent on the subject<sup>33</sup> As mentioned above, the Berbers of this area had a dynamic religious history, and the Ghumārah were no different having had strong Khārijite affinities in the ninth century This history also included a great many religious pretenders, one of whom was responsible for the assassination of al-Shādhilī's most important teacher, Ibn Mashīsh (d. 1225/622)<sup>34</sup>

This teacher himself had been the student of the great Spanish mystic Abū Madyan (d. 1198/594) and had established himself in a *zāwiya*<sup>35</sup> on Jabal 'Alam. It is here al-Shādhilī made contact with him, but only after having gone through what one scholar describes as a spiritual crisis<sup>36</sup> which sent him on a search for the *qutb*<sup>37</sup> of the age. This search took him to 'Irāq where he was told by another prominent Sufi figure, al-Wāsitī (d. 1234/632), to return to the Maghreb where he would find who he was looking for. According to al-Shādhilī this was Ibn Mashīsh<sup>38</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> E. Douglas, 'Al-Shādhilī, A North African Sufi, According to Ibn Al-Sabbāgh', Muslim World vol.38, 1948 p.257

<sup>32</sup> Ibn al-Sabbāgh, Durrat al-Asrār (Leiden Ms. No. Or. 2629)

<sup>33</sup> See A. MacKeen, 'The Rise of Al-Shādhilī', J.A.O.S. vol.91, 1971 p.483 for the various dates of birth

<sup>34</sup> Ibid p.479

<sup>35</sup> *zāwiya* a usually small Sufi centre often including the tomb of a saint

<sup>36</sup> P. Nwyia, Ibn 'Atā' Allāh et la naissance de la confrérie shadhulite (Beyrouth, Dar el-Mashreq, 1990) p.19

<sup>37</sup> *qutb* the 'pole' or central figure amongst mystics or in a hierarchy of saints

<sup>38</sup> E. Douglas, 'Al-Shādhilī, a North African Sufi, according to Ibn Al-Sabbāgh', Muslim World vol.38, 1948 p.269

None of the sources specifies how long al-Shādhilī spent at the *zāwiya* of Ibn Mashīsh upon his return, but it was long enough for the master to recognize the maturity attained by the pupil. Ibn-Mashīsh then sent the student out on his own, and specifically to Ifrīqiya. Here al-Shādhilī took to performing miracles (*karāmāt*)<sup>39</sup> and living as an ascetic. Despite being at this period a *sā'ih* (vagabond ascetic)<sup>40</sup>, he became associated with the village of Shādhīla, some distance south of Tunis, because of his practice of retreating into the nearby cave on Jabal Zaghwān.

Having attracted a substantial following, the Shaykh moved to Tunis. According to Ibn al-Sabbāgh this was 1228/625, the same year Abū Zakariyā - a Hafsid still nominally under the Almohads - came to power<sup>41</sup>. During his rule he built the first *madrasa* in Tunis and established an important library, contributing substantially to the climate of religious study in the city.

As he had done on Jabal Zaghwān, al-Shādhilī continued his practice of retreating to a cave for meditation and religious discipline (*khalwa*)<sup>42</sup>, and in Tunis he chose the mountain and cave located in the Jallāz cemetery. It was on this site later that the Shādhiliyya *zāwiya* would be built.<sup>43</sup>

But al-Shādhilī's stay in Tunis would not be permanent. Ibn Sabbāgh tells us that the local *fuqahā'* (jurisprudents) were rallied against him and that he stood accused of being a Fatimid. In the face of this persecution he was forced to flee to Egypt around the year 1227/624.<sup>44</sup> From Ibn 'Atā' Allāh the date of this departure can be calculated as 1252/650,<sup>45</sup> while he is silent on the subject of the "persecution" of the Shaykh. One

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> J. Tringham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1971) p. 49.

<sup>41</sup> E. Douglas, "Al-Shādhilī" p. 259.

<sup>42</sup> Literally "solitude" or "retreat". For more on the concept of *khalwa* and its development among the Shādhiliyya see Bannerth, E. "Dhikr et Khalwa d'après Ibn 'Atā' Allah" *MIDEO* vol 12, 1974.

<sup>43</sup> This *zāwiya* will be discussed below.

<sup>44</sup> E. Douglas, "Al-Shādhilī" p. 260. (Note the incompatibility of this date with the date of 1228/625 given as his arrival in Tunis above.)

<sup>45</sup> A. MacKeen, "The Rise of Al-Shādhilī" p. 484.



modern scholar, upon investigation of this discrepancy, has produced evidence which casts serious doubt on the historical validity of any "persecution".<sup>46</sup>

Whatever the circumstances, al-Shādhilī was moving into a new stage of his career. In Egypt his home became Alexandria where he set up a *zāwiya*, attracted more followers, and laid the ground work for his new *ṭarīqa*. A MacKeen assesses this change.

The real birthplace of the Shādhiliyyah was certainly Egypt  
Here it grew into a self-conscious body with a definite step  
towards theoretical expansion.<sup>47</sup>

This theoretical expansion would be undertaken by the great minds of the Order such as al-Mursī (d 1287/686), the first successor (*khalīfa*) to al-Shādhilī, Ibn 'Atā' Allāh (d 1309/709) and others

The major events of the Shaykh's life are agreed upon not only by Ibn Sabbāgh and Ibn 'Atā' Allāh, but also by most subsequent hagiographers.<sup>48</sup> It is therefore interesting to note that in the short introduction to the *aḥzāb* and *wazā'ifa* collection used by the Shādhiliyya in Tunis today, entitled Nibrās al-Aṭiqiyā' wa Dalīl al-Anṣiyā' (Tunis: 1964), the dates and events of al-Shādhilī's life are somewhat different. In fact this account, through its strategic omissions and creative chronologies, has created a much more "Tunisian" Shaykh

Probably the most striking fact in the Nibrās is the claim that al-Shādhilī came to Tunisia at the age of ten. This scenario would almost rid the Shaykh of his Moroccan roots. Not only did he not grow to adulthood there, but any mention of his Moroccan spiritual master, Ibn Mashish, is also omitted. The Nibrās fills the attendant gaps with a Tunisian education and Tunisian masters. The following is taken from the first three pages.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid p 485.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid

<sup>48</sup> Ibn 'Iyād, Mafākhur al-ʿAḥyāyah (Cairo: 1937) and Sālim 'Ammār, Abū al-Hasan al-Shādhilī (Cairo: 1952). Sālim 'Ammār is a modern writer while Brockelmann's G.A.I. (sup II, pp 462,1000) fixes Ibn 'Iyād's death at either 1855/1273 or 1876/1293, and describes him as a little known writer on al-Suyūṭī.

Tunis boasts that it embraced the *imām* of the spiritual path, the *quṭb* of the earth, the companion of the Path and the Truth, Shaykh Abū al-Hasan ʿAlī al-Shādhilī while he was in his youth. It was responsible for the stages of his learning, and it was ordained by God that in its places of worship and institutions he would be granted both the penetration of the secret of Unity and the wearing of the mantle (*burda*) of Sufism (*tasawwūf*)

..in 1206/602 he arrived from Ghummāra Morocco, being ten years old (since he was born in 1196/593) He became the student of Tunisian shaykhs such as Abū Saʿīd al-Bāji and ʿAbd Allāh b. Harāzīm...

According to the Nibrās's chronology al-Shādhilī spent his first ten years in Morocco, thirty-eight in Tunisia (except for a voyage to the East), and his final fourteen in Egypt. No other hagiographical source contains such extensive dating or the same version of al-Shādhilī's youth. In light of the early hagiographies cited above and their general agreement that the Shaykh's time in Tunis was much shorter, we must suspect that the Nibrās reflects local efforts made to bring al-Shādhilī a little closer to the Tunisian reader.

#### Sufism and Sufi *Turuq*

The following discussion, due to the vast nature of the topic, will restrict itself to drawing an outline of the development of Sufi thought and its institutions. Detail will only be added when we are dealing with the Maghreb, and more specifically with the Shādhiliyya.

Sufism, the mystical tradition in Islam, can be approached in many different ways. For our purposes the methods of two modern scholars, J. Trimingham and P. Nwyia, will serve well. Although both these writers deal extensively in their work with Sufi *uruq*, Nwyia treats them primarily as vehicles for a mystical-literary tradition, while Trimingham tends to see them more as unique religious institutions responding to their historical

environments. Elaboration and comparison of these two approaches will give us a better account of the subject at hand.

For Paul Nwyia there are three separate stages in the history of the development of Sufism before the 13th/7th century, and they each relate in some way to language<sup>49</sup>. He writes, " (Les problèmes) renvoient tous, d'une manière ou d'une autre, à la question de la nature du langage religieux "<sup>50</sup>. Thus the first stage, beginning with Ḥasan al-Basrī (d.728/110), is characterized as a period of conflicting approaches to religious language. Nwyia maintains that what made the early masters great was the creative tension between themselves and the exponents of the literalist hermeneutic of the Qur'ān (*al-zāhirī*). The Sufis of this period practiced a symbolic interpretation of the Qur'an, the most outstanding figures being Kharrāz (d. 899/286), Nūrī (d.907/294), Junayd (d.910/297) and Ḥallāj (d.922/310).

The second period, beginning from the middle of the 10th/4th century, is called the period of Sufi manuals. Here two developments stand out as pivotal. The first is the great effort made by Sufi writers of the period to refute the accusations of heterodoxy leveled against the movement, and at the same time to head off the more disturbing expressions of mystical thought. The second development was the collection and re-transmission of the teachings of the masters of the first period. These efforts not only preserved the material but they also served to make it available to a much wider audience. Some of the most important of these manuals were: Qūt al-Qulūb (Makkī d. 995/385), Kitāb al-Luma' (Sarrāj d.988/387), Kashf al-Mahjūb (Hujwiri d. 1078/741) and Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn (Ghazālī d.1111/505).

It is with the death of al-Ghazālī that the third era begins. Here Nwyia describes two phenomena which have divided Sufism up to the present day. The first was the direction taken by the Sufi writers of the period. They did not feel the need to temper their

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<sup>49</sup> Nwyia's periodisation relies partly on Sulamī's Tabaqāt al-Sūfiyya. See P. Nwyia, Ibn 'Atā' Allāh et la naissance de la confrérie shadhulite (Beyrouth, Dar el-Mashreq, 1990) p. 5.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid

religious speculations to the degree that those before them had. Proving the orthodoxy of their doctrine was no longer an urgent concern. This new framework gave rise to what may be called the intellectualist or theosophical tradition in Sufism - some of its greatest contributors being Shihāb al-Dīn Yahyā Suhrawardī (d. 1191/587), Ruzbehān Shīrāzī (d. 1209/606) and Ibn ʿArabī (d. 1240/638). But the systems of mystical thought growing out of this tradition, with their specialized vocabularies and elaborate structures, were in effect inaccessible to the average man.

This alienation of all but the élite produced a second phenomenon, namely the birth of the *ṭarīqa*. The late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries produced the founders of the great Sufi Orders, men like ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d. 1166/561), Aḥmad al-Rifāʿī (d. 1183/638), Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Hafs al-Suhrawardī (d. 1234/631) and Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī (d. 1258/564).<sup>51</sup> The rise and success of the *ṭarīqa* is due in large part to its having adapted its teachings to respond to the religious needs of the average believer.

From a literary point of view Nwyia's periodization is particularly helpful, but the scheme proposed by Trimingham also has much to offer. It divides the development of Sufism and Sufi Orders into three stages as Nwyia has, but the delineations are not the same. Trimingham begins with what he calls the "*Khānaqāh*" stage. This was the "golden age" of Islamic mysticism and ran from the time of the Prophet to approximately 1100/494. At this time mystical teaching was usually passed on by a Master to his immediate circle of pupils. These teachers and their students were for the most part itinerant, their relationships being neither institutionalized nor systematized. A "*khānaqāh*"<sup>52</sup> was usually a religious hostel which would receive, house and feed the numerous wandering teachers and students. Trimingham has chosen this word in order to emphasize the dynamism and mobility characteristic of this age.

<sup>51</sup> Their respective Orders are the Qādiriyya, the Rifāʿiyya, the Suhrawardiyya and the Shādhiliyya. Of course this list does not include all the major *ṭuruq*.

<sup>52</sup> See D. Little, 'The Nature of *Khānaqāhs*, *Ribāts*, and *zāwīyas* under the Mamlūks' p. 93 in *Islamic Studies presented to Charles L. Adams* W. Hallaq and D. Little ed.'s (New York: E. J. Brill, 1991) for more detail on these institutions in medieval Egypt.

The second stage on Trimmingham's time-line is the *ṭarīqa* stage. Here the teachings become a transmitted doctrine, a fixed rule for living, and a method of spiritual advancement. This marks the birth of the *ṭarīqa*, "... a school designed to perpetuate (a teacher's) name, type of teaching, mystical exercises, and rule of life."<sup>53</sup>

Having once established themselves, the more successful Orders then made substantial efforts to conform to the legal standards of the day. It was also necessary for the transmitters of these various doctrines to demonstrate their authority and right to do so. They did this through the *silsila* (chain), a time honoured Muslim practice of creating a line of names extending from the individual in question back to an authoritative figure. For most of the Orders the *silsila* of spiritual authority remains to this day an important component of their religious legitimacy.

Trimingham describes Sufism in its "*khānaqāh*" stage as being an intellectually and emotionally aristocratic movement, but by the end of its "*ṭarīqa*" stage it had shifted to become primarily a movement of the city-dwelling "bourgeois".<sup>54</sup> Having established themselves in large population centres, the Orders began to be seen by the poor and uneducated masses as accessible sources of divine grace (*baraka*). Thus it was through association with Sufi institutions that the average believer, even if he was not admitted to the Order, felt he (or she) could benefit from the marvelous powers of the saints.<sup>55</sup>

This popularization of Sufism marked its entry into the "*ṭā'ifa*" stage at approximately 1400/803. Not only were the Orders changing outside, but they were also evolving internally. The director-disciple relationship, as opposed to the earlier teacher-student, became the norm, and the founder of the Order usually came to be deemed a "*walī*" (protégé) of God. This status of saint, in most people's eyes, included the power of intercession in worldly affairs or at least on the Day of Judgement.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> J. Trimmingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1971) p. 10.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid* p. 103.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid* p. 27.

<sup>56</sup> For the role of Saints as popular heroes with great magic powers, and their "holy" families see D. Provansal, 'Le phénomène Maraboutique au Maghreb' *Genève-Afrique* #14 (1975). P. Brown's *The Cult of*

In this third stage the idea of allegiance becomes important also. Participation in some Orders comes to require a statement of allegiance by the adept to the teachings of the founder and to the organization itself. With this new emphasis on clearly delineating sympathies come the *tawā'if* (sing. *tā'ifa*), literally "factions", which come to be distinguished as competing lines of allegiance within an Order<sup>57</sup>. In the Maghreb these *tawā'if* almost always include some form of the cult of the Saint.

The historical models described above approach the development of Sufism according to both its literary tradition and its organization. These general descriptions are helpful in the effort to conceive the history of the Shādhiliyya Order, with its dual tradition of continuity and dissention. In the following account these two models together will serve as a norm against which we shall compare the Shādhilī case.

For purposes of analysis we will approach the history of the *tariqa* through its *silsila*. The fact that there exists no single authoritative "chain" within the Order may complicate the picture, but it does not make it incomprehensible. The establishment of the Shādhiliyya can be divided into four stages. The first extends from the Prophet to include the immediate spiritual masters of al-Shādhilī. The connection between the individuals cited in this "chain" is believed to be that they have passed on to each other an esoteric message or secret. Along with this secret, or perhaps as a precondition to it, went a state of spiritual elevation (being *awālī* with the attendant *baraka*). For the Shādhiliyya these individuals passed on the essence of the mystical truth of the religion through their teachings.

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the Saints (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981) discusses many of the same phenomena, but in early medieval Europe. These two works would be very useful in any development of a typology of Saints.  
<sup>57</sup> For a discussion of the independence of these *tawā'if* on a practical level see A. Joly, 'Etude sur les Chadouliyas' Revue Africaine vol 51, 1907.

A Chain (Silsila) Showing the Primary Figures  
and Some Factions of the Shādhiliyya Order<sup>58</sup> (chart I)



<sup>58</sup> This *silsila* is a simplified distillation of a number of particular chains. For authentic *silsila* see: Ibn ʿIyād, *Mafākir al-ʿAlīyya* (Cairo: Mustafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1961) p. 12. For other examples and versions see: Lings (1951), Rinn (1884), and Druge (1951). Tringham (1971) has constructed many useful chains also.

The second stage is that of the mission of the founder, al-Shādhilī. Here a charismatic figure has secured a dedicated following and has established a sustainable rule as his *tariqa*. This has been possible due to the nature of his rule and the favourable historical circumstances in which he finds himself.

The question has been raised as to whether one man can take credit for the founding of a *tariqa* since its essential message has been passed down, refined and propagated by various masters for centuries before him.<sup>59</sup> But in practical terms it would appear that the original contribution of al-Shādhilī was his rule.<sup>60</sup> This includes the *dhikr*<sup>61</sup> ceremony, the writing of prayers (*ahzāb*) and the letters of advice sent to the community of followers he left behind in Tunis.

The third phase of development is the period in which capable figures sustain, develop and expand the Order after the death of the founder. For the Shādhiliyya this important role was assumed by al-Mursī and Ibn ʿAtāʾ Allāh.

This period corresponds with the third stage in the scheme advanced by Nwyia in so far as it produced intellectualized theosophy<sup>62</sup> (*Kitāb al-Hukam* of Ibn ʿAtāʾ Allāh). It is interesting to note that the Shādhiliyya does not get past the 1400/803 mark set by Trimmingham before *tawāʾif* begin to break off. In fact the immediate succession to the founder is not agreed upon by all who call themselves Shādhiliyya (see chart I). It is also of note that two of the manual writers from Nwyia's second phase, Nūrī and Ghazālī, can be found in Shādhilī *silsila*.<sup>63</sup>

Our fourth stage in the development of the Shādhiliyya is dominated by the figures responsible for the various *tawāʾif*. These are men who have added to or refined the rule of

<sup>59</sup> See A. MacKeen, 'The Rise of Al-Shādhilī' *J.A.O.S.* vol 91, 1971 p 481.

<sup>60</sup> Throughout the present work 'rule' means a code of discipline and ritual observed by a religious order. The most specific term in this context would be *ādāb*.

<sup>61</sup> To be discussed in more detail below.

<sup>62</sup> See above p 16.

<sup>63</sup> G. Drague, *Esquisse d'Histoire Religieuse du Maroc* (Paris: Peyronnet, 1951) tableau IV.



the *ṭarīqa*, and have attracted enough followers to perpetuate their new rules. The number of Shādhilī *ṭawā'if*, although most have only survived for short periods, must be over a hundred

A *tā'ifa* can either strongly associate itself with the Shādhiliyya tradition, or it can play down the connection stressing the individual importance of its founder. A good example of the latter is the <sup>c</sup>Isāwiyya in North Africa, who do not use a compound name. They are renowned for extreme religious practices with which the Shādhiliyya Order proper (in Tunis) does not agree <sup>64</sup> (Muhammad ibn <sup>c</sup>Isā was the grandson of Al-Jazūlī. See chart I.) One *tā'ifa* which is more positively disposed towards its roots is the <sup>c</sup>Alawiyya-Darqawiyya-Shādhiliyya established in Algeria by Shaykh Ahmed al-<sup>c</sup>Alawī (d 1934/1237) <sup>65</sup> A second is the Hamidiyya-Shādhiliyya of Cairo. <sup>66</sup>

Before moving any further in our discussion it must be made clear that the Shādhilī *ṭarīqa* (literally "way") is in essence a doctrine (in the widest sense of the word), and that this "way" is only manifested on the practical, organizational level through a *tā'ifa*. In other words the *ṭarīqa* generally takes the form of a *tā'ifa*. This statement is valid for a great number of Sufi organization in North Africa. Nevertheless, the Shādhilī *tā'ifa* which we shall be looking at for the duration of this study denies being a *tā'ifa* at all. This is because it feels it has not deviated from the rule laid down by al-Shādhilī himself when he lived in Tunis (ca 1250/647) <sup>67</sup> The fact that other Shādhilī *ṭawā'if* and other Orders in Tunis tacitly concede this claim makes it all the more credible. The subject of the following chapter - the Shādhiliyya as an institution - will help to elucidate this unusual situation.

<sup>64</sup> For accounts of self-mutilation and the eating of dangerous materials by the <sup>c</sup>Isāwiyya in Tunisia see P. Johnson, *Sufi Shrine in Modern Tunisia* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms Int'l, 1979) p.73 and G. Petrie, *Tunis, Karouan and Carthage* (London: Heinemann, 1908) pp 212-215 and R. Brunel, *Essai sur la Confrérie Religieuse des Aïssāwiya au Maroc* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste, 1926) p. 98

<sup>65</sup> See chart above for Darqāwiyya, and see M. Lings, *Moslem Saint of the Twentieth Century* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1961)

<sup>66</sup> M. Gulsenan, *Saint and Sufi in Modern Egypt* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973)

<sup>67</sup> This statement is a reflection of the beliefs of the contemporary members of the Order; but without further research we can not assume that the Order has always seen itself this way

## Chapter II: The Shādhiliyya in Tunis

The aim of this chapter is to present the reader with an account of the function and the organization of the Shādhiliyya *ṭarīqa* and its home *zāwiya*. Through our discussion of function we will deal with both the Order's relations with the political authorities and its position in popular religious life. It will be seen that in this position the *zāwiya* has an important role to play as a place of *baraka* (grace), and of spiritual intercession. Through the discussion of organization we hope to show how the religious needs of both the members of the Order and the unaffiliated visitors are met.

### The Institution

A distinction worth highlighting is that the Shādhiliyya in Tunis is a *ṭarīqa*, but that *ṭurūq* are not necessarily attached to any particular place - often using a number of separate locations simultaneously in larger cities. On the other hand, a *zāwiya* is a location. As mentioned above (fn 35), it is a place of worship usually including the shrine of a saint. The Shādhiliyya in Tunis is in a somewhat unusual situation in that it is an Order centered in a *zāwiya* which was built over a site made holy by the founder of the Order, but which does not include his grave. This site is the cave (*maghāra*) used by al-Shādhilī as a place of spiritual retreat during his time in Tunis. The *zāwiya*, located in the great Jallāz cemetery, is called simply Sidi Belhassen<sup>68</sup>

This *zāwiya* consists principally of a lower mosque built over the cave and an upper mosque, some 100 meters away, built on the location of one of al-Shādhilī's visions of Muhammad. In this vision the Prophet promised he would visit the *hadra*<sup>69</sup> at this site

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<sup>68</sup> Meaning Saint Abū al-Hasan al-Shādhilī

<sup>69</sup> Literally *hadra* means 'presence', and is the Sufi term for a group gathered for prayer recitation and *dhikr*. *Hadra* can also be an annual investiture meeting. See L. Rinn, *Marabouts et Khouan* (Alger: A. Jourdan, 1884) p. 84

one Thursday each summer in the second half of the night.<sup>70</sup> It is for this reason that the upper mosque was built on this location and is open for only the fourteen weeks of the summer during the entire year<sup>71</sup>

The *zāwiya* serves as a meeting place for the Order. It is here on Fridays after the evening prayer (*salāt al-maghrib*) that the Qur'ān is read and the prayers (*aḥzāb*) of al-Shādhilī are recited by the members collectively. Essentially the same thing happens on the summertime Thursdays, although a small *dhikr* ceremony (a few dozen men) is added which lasts for most of the rest of the night. A larger *dhikr* is also held on Saturday mornings, throughout the entire year, in the lower mosque (in 1991 I counted roughly 140 men and children, and 70 women).

The *zāwiya* is also a sacred site for many people who are in no way affiliated with the Order. The cave and the site of al-Shādhilī's vision are only accessible to the public at certain times, but most of the *zāwiya*, and in particular its two wells, are readily open to visitors when their presence does not interfere with the activities of the Order.

Although the term *zāwiya* (lit. "a corner") for the most part signifies a place, it can take on a somewhat different meaning. As an institution a *zāwiya* may be simply the manifestation of an extended family which has acquired some form of religious significance (usually described as having *baraka*). Amongst the Bedouin in north-west Africa E. Gellner distinguishes this type of institution and contrasts it with its form in more populated areas. In *Saints of the Atlas* he writes "the *zāwiya* in a tribe is a kin group, but in the city, although it may have a kin-defined nucleus, it is essentially a religious club, recruited

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<sup>70</sup> In the *hadith* of *Sahih al-Bukhārī* (19:14) we read "... (Muhammad said) Our Lord . . . descends every night to the nearest heaven when the latter one-third of the night remains, (and) says, Is there any one who calls upon Me so that I may accept of him, who asks of Me so that I may grant him, who seeks forgiveness of Me, so that I may forgive him?". Translation by M. M. Ali, *A Manual of Hadith* (New York: Olive Branch, 1988) p. 178. The Qur'ān also mentions night prayer (Q 73:6), and its division into thirds (Q 73:20).

<sup>71</sup> This account given to me by a member of the Order, Mustapha Zoubeidi (Aug. 13, 1992).

by enthusiasm or religious interest, and defined not by kinship but by specialized ritual practices."<sup>72</sup>

The urban *zāwiya* in North Africa has not remained unchanged throughout the religious history of the region. Trimmingham describes the rise of "popular worship" in the 14th/8th century which transformed the *zāwiya* through its new use of *dhikr*. Also, in the following century the development of the "*baraka* movement", which so profoundly affected the ordinary believer, added the element of tomb veneration to many *zawāyā* (sing. *zāwiya*)<sup>73\*</sup>

The institution underwent further change in the 18th/12th and 19th/13th centuries due to the renaissance movement (*al-nahda*), which among other things questioned the orthodoxy of the "*baraka* movement". A Green notes that the *nahda* in Tunis occurred at first largely within the moderate wing of Sufism itself, where the "neo-orthodox" mystical schools, and in particular the Shādhiliyya, began to criticize "maraboutism"<sup>74\*</sup>. But this renaissance had little positive effect on these conservative schools themselves, and in fact contributed to a decline in their function as teaching centres late in the 19th/13th century<sup>75</sup>

Sidi Belhassen in the modern era of the Republic of Tunisia (est 1956/1375) has been one of the very few Sufi institutions to receive government support. The *zawīya* itself is for the most part maintained by money from the national and city governments<sup>76</sup>. The reasons for this favour are probably two. The first is that the Shādhiliyya is the most conservative Order in Tunis thereby making it a safe institution to support for a government which is often popularly seen as being "un-Islamic". The second, and probably more

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<sup>72</sup> E. Gellner, *Saints of the Atlas* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1969) p. 8

<sup>73</sup> J. Trimmingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* pp. 83, 84

\* I do not fully ascribe to Trimmingham's periodizations of the history of Sufism. But despite being rather oversimplified they do remain useful for our limited historical discussion.

<sup>74</sup> A. Green, 'Sufi Orders in 19th Century Tunisia' *Revue D'histoire Maghrébine* no. 13, 1979 p. 61

\* "Maraboutism" is from the Arabic *murābit*. Originally a *murābit* was simply the resident of a *ribāt*, but later the term comes to refer to religious figures deriving spiritual authority through descent from the family of the Prophet or a saint. French colonials also applied the term generally to all Sufism and forms of popular devotion. See 'Marabout' in *S.E.I.*

<sup>75</sup> J. Trimmingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* p. 248

<sup>76</sup> P. Johnson, *Sufi Shrine in Modern Tunisia* p. 65

important reason, is the long history of affiliation of much of the religious élite of Tunis with the Order. A large part of the conservative attraction of the Shādhiliyya in Tunis is the perception, fully supported by the Order itself, that it is not the product of a sub-division (*tā'ifa*) of the original *ṭarīqa*, as described above (p.21). As will be seen below, a large part of its legitimacy is based on its claim to function in strict accordance with the rule laid down by the founder of the *ṭarīqa*. In fact the present shaykh of the *zāwiya* (simultaneously the head of the Order), Hassen Belhassen, made it clear to me that Sidi Belhassen is not a "marabout" since, "On n'a pas le culte des saints ici." In other words they feel they have managed to avoid the popular innovations introduced into *ṭarīqa*-based Sufism since its inception.

#### Organization and Sanctity

Although the *zāwiya* and the *ṭarīqa* are officially supported, they continue to maintain the functions which serve the religious needs of the population at large. The concepts of *baraka*, healing, saintly intercession etc. are current in varying degrees amongst both the brothers (*ikhwān*) of the Order and the unaffiliated visitors.

The importance of the saint in Sufi tradition is undeniable although opinions vary on its origins and orthodoxy. Goldziher sees the cult of the saint as a pre-Islamic survival against which the "enlightened" preach,<sup>77</sup> while D. Provansal claims Islamic saints simply took the place of earlier legendary heroes, Mediterranean gods, witches and gnomes.<sup>78</sup> But no matter what its origins the idea of the *walīy*, the holy man and protégé of God, is fully part of the Islamic religious world-view.<sup>79</sup> An important component of this subject is the role played by the descendants of the Prophet (*sayyid*, *sharīf*, *ahl al-bayt*). These people

<sup>77</sup> I. Goldziher, *Muslim Studies* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1967) vol. 2 p. 262.

<sup>78</sup> D. Provansal, 'Phénomène Maraboutique au Maghreb' *Genève-Afrique* no. 14, 1975 p. 62.

<sup>79</sup> It is as though the *zāwiya* itself wants to underline this fact by citing scriptural authority which not only legitimates the idea of the saint but even attests to his privileged status, since it displays on a large banner in the lower mosque the following quotation. "Behold! verily on the friends (*awliyā'*, sing. *walīy*) of Allah there is no fear, nor shall they grieve" (Qur'ān 10:62) (translation taken from Y. 'Alī, *The Holy Qur'an*, (Brentwood: Amana, 1989)).

were always revered in one way or another throughout the Islamic world, but in North Africa this descent became almost a prerequisite to being endowed with *baraka*.<sup>80</sup> In a recent article Hoffman-Ladd discusses the reverence for the *ahl al-bayt* in modern Egyptian Sufism.<sup>81</sup> Gellner also discusses the rise of *sharīf* families in his study of Bedouins of Morocco and Algeria. He describes this religious authority, once established, as charisma "routinized by kinship".<sup>82</sup>

The *baraka* attributed to the *zāwiya*, to the Order, and to the shaykh are crucial elements in the legitimacy and religious significance of the Shādhiliyya. The *zāwiya* is a holy site due primarily to its position over al-Shādhilī's cave. According to D. Provansal the sacred sites in popular North African Islam achieved their status long ago. He sees the sanctity of earlier animist sites (e.g. trees, streams, caves) as being incorporated into popular Islamic practice through association with a local saint.<sup>83</sup> Even restricting ourselves to the Islamic tradition, the image of the cave is well known and weighted with significance. The Qur'ān relates the story of the Companions of the Cave, and narrates the shelter found by Muhammad and Abū Bakr in the cave of Thawr (Q 18:9 & 9:40). But doubtless the most important cave in Islamic religious history is that of Hīrā', where according to *hadīth* Muhammad received his first revelation. The stories of the Prophet retreating from the busy world to a cave for spiritual reflection (*khalwa*) are in form echoed by the hagiographies of al-Shādhilī (above p. 13). It should not be surprising therefore to hear in popular Tunisian lore concerning the *maghara* of Sīdī Belhassen that the Prophet Moses had used this same cave for his *khalwa*.

The "*baraka*-status" of the Sīdī Belhassen *zāwiya* is reinforced by the activities of the brotherhood. During the *dhikr* and *ḥizb* recitations on Saturday mornings many

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<sup>80</sup> E. Gellner, *Saints of the Atlas* pp. 12, 70 and J. Tringham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* p. 89 both maintain that being a *sharīf* became a pre-requisite to both religious and political claims of authority. This analysis is challenged by V. Cornell 'Logic of Analogy and the Role of the Sufi Shaykh in Post-Marinid Morocco' *J.M.E.S.* #15, 1983 p. 77.

<sup>81</sup> V. Hoffman-Ladd, 'Devotion to the Prophet and his family in Egyptian Sufism' *J.M.E.S.* #4, 1992.

<sup>82</sup> E. Gellner, *Saints of the Atlas* p. 12.

<sup>83</sup> D. Provansal, 'Phénomène Maraboutique au Maghreb' p. 63.

women gather in the antechamber not to participate in the recitations but to benefit by their mere proximity to the *hadra*. Although the women cannot view the proceedings, they can easily hear the goings on. They often break out into a ululating chorus and on occasion one or more women will produce ecstatic trance-like calls <sup>84</sup>.

The Shādhiliyya Order has an unusual relationship with the *zāwiya* of Sidi Mehrez, located in the *medīna* of Tunis, which is not home to any *ṭarīqa* or *ṭā'ifa*. A group from the Shādhiliyya gathers at this tomb-shrine every Wednesday morning to recite *ahzāb* and to perform a short *dhikr*. The reason given for this is that al-Shādhilī, when he first entered Tunis, went to the grave of Sidi Mehrez to read and recite prayers. It is in honour of this that the *hadra* gathers there. It is interesting to note that Sidi Mehrez is the patron saint of Tunis and in fact was not a religious figure, but was known for his charity and defence of the Jewish minority of the city. The association of the Shādhiliyya with Sidi Mehrez serves to both raise the status of the tomb-shrine to that of an active *zāwiya*, and to reinforce the civic prestige of the Shādhiliyya Order.

The specific reasons individuals visit shrines and the *zāwiya* of Sidi Belhassen are many, but the common factor is the search for help - be it spiritual or practical. Those who are not initiated into the *ṭarīqa* but attend one or more parts of the *hadra* can be divided into two groups. The first is those who attend in an effort to secure some saintly intercession in a crisis situation in their lives <sup>85</sup>. The second is made up of those whose attendance is more regular and who are familiar with the *ahzāb* of the Order. These individuals would find their association with the Order spiritually beneficial in a wider sense than those of the first group who attend only in times of crisis.

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<sup>84</sup> For a good account of the women at an <sup>c</sup>Isāwiyya *zāwiya* see P. Johnson, *Sufi Shrine in Modern Tunisia* ch. 4.

<sup>\*</sup> Because the women's attendance is regular and they can be heard inside, the argument could be made that they are in fact participants in a secondary way.

<sup>85</sup> For specific examples of women's motives see P. Johnson, *Sufi Shrine in Modern Tunisia* p. 114.

Practical help is invoked by such activities as placing the sick in the same room as the *ḥaḍra*, praying for help in or near the *maghara*, and personal contact with the shaykh - to benefit from his *baraka* and his advice <sup>86</sup>

It is interesting to note that often the seekers of this help would not be considered "spiritually inclined" Hoffman-Ladd, commenting on the same situation in Cairo reports that, "... many Egyptians who are not Sufis visit the shrines in time of need in order to obtain . . . blessings and intercession . . ." <sup>87</sup> In her Tunisian study Johnson remarks on the apparently contradictory statements of individuals who on the one hand deride the shrines, accusing them of being less than orthodox, while on the other hand readily relating the instances in their own lives when they have sought the help of the saints at these same places.

The sanctity of the rule of the Order and the *baraka* of the shaykh are the two primary supports upon which the Shādhiliyya stands. The first, sanctity of rule, means in practice the preservation and perpetuation of the *ādāb*, the *ahzāb* recitation and the *dhikr* which provide the essential element of religious mystery to the Order. The importance of the preservation of the rule and teachings of the Order is clear in an *ijāza* (authorization) issued to a *muqaddam* (sectional leader of an Order) in Algeria at the turn of the century. In it the Shādhilī shaykh Sīdī Abū al-Qāsim bin Saʿīd warns that anyone who alters or distorts what he has been taught by the Order will be taken to task for it in the hereafter, " . . . *wa man baddala aw ghayyara fī qawli-nā al-miʿyāru amama-hu* " <sup>88</sup> Following the established techniques of these activities is considered essential for a successful *ḥaḍra*, i.e. a meaningful religious experience. For the members of the

<sup>86</sup> Offerings, mostly of money and candles, are made to Sīdī Mehrez. In other parts of the Maghreb the use of animal sacrifice as an additional strategy to secure blessing is not unknown, see L. Rinn, *Marabouts et Khouan* p. 16. The clothing of a sick person may be brought to a sacred site like the *zawiya* so that it may absorb some of the *baraka*. For striking Medieval European parallels see P. Brown, *The Cult of the Saints* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981) p. 88.

<sup>87</sup> V. Hoffman-Ladd, 'Devotion to the Prophet and his family in Egyptian Sufism' p. 626.

<sup>88</sup> O. Depont & X. Coppolani, *Les Confréries Religieuses Musulmanes* (Alger: A. Jourdan, 1897) p. 450. (He who has changed or altered our doctrine will face judgement.)



Shādhiliyya of Sīdī Belhassen the *murīd* / *murshīd* <sup>89</sup> relationship existing between them and their shaykh has not the same importance as it does in other Orders<sup>90</sup>, or as it did in the earliest Sufi organizations (above p 21). Rather than subject themselves to vigorous spiritual training, most individuals slowly improve themselves spiritually through regular attendance and participation in the Qur'ān and *ḥizb* recitations, the *dhikr* ceremonies, the *ḥadīth* readings, lectures and sermons, all of which make up the ritual and tradition of the Shādhilī rule

According to my inquiries and research this rule does not systematically consist of any specific mystical teachings, but rather its sanctity and mystical power are to be found through proper participation. Higher spiritual development - which usually includes study of the great Sufi thinkers such as Ibn 'Arabī - is dependent upon the aptitude and motivation of the individual. But few in fact aspire to this level. Although the higher works of Sufi spirituality play a minor role in the practical sanctity of the *ṭarīqa*, it must be remembered that they do form the intellectual "backbone", or the theory of Sufism's more practical and mundane manifestations such as the rule of the *ṭarīqa*. In sum, the sanctity of the Order accomodates a continuum of interests - from that of the simple *baraka* seeker to that of the advanced mystical adept

On the practical level also, participation is left up to the individual's degree of personal commitment. The taking of a *wazīfa* (a regimen of daily prayer recitations) is today amongst the Shādhiliyya of Tunis uncommon. An important member of the Order related to me,

Usually Shādhilites do not have any particular *wazīfa*; each chooses one or has one recommended to him by his shaykh, which he does in accordance with the degree of spirituality he has reached. Nevertheless, the true *mourides* of the

<sup>89</sup> *murīd* meaning aspirant, disciple or novice and *murshīd* meaning spiritual guide

<sup>90</sup> See M. Lings, *A Moslem Saint of the Twentieth Century, Shaikh Ahmad al-ʿAlawī* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1961) p.83

*ṭarīqa* (who are unfortunately few these days) adopt the following: After Ṣalāt al-Fajr they pray . After Ṣalāt al-Subh ... After Ṣalāt al-<sup>c</sup>Asr they recite:

- 11 times Sūra al-Ikhlās

- 1 time Sūra al-Nās

- 1 time Sūra al-Falaq

- 7 times al-Fāṭha

- 1 time "Hizb al-Bahr"

- one hizb of the Qur'ān

After Ṣalāt al-<sup>c</sup>Ishā' 91

This statement points to the fact that of the many "active" members only a few take up their spiritual discipline fully.

In discussing the *baraka* of the shaykh it must be noted that the theory was fully developed early in the history of the *ṭarīqa*. In the writings of Ibn 'Atā' Allāh (d. 1309/709), the second successor in the Order, it is claimed that al-Shādhilī is incarnated in each succeeding shaykh of the *ṭarīqa*.<sup>92</sup> Renard, in his study of Ibn 'Abbād of Ronda, claims that the prevalent Shādhilī theory (in the late 14th/8th century) was that the *qutb* was incarnated in each succeeding shaykh.<sup>93</sup> In Sufi theory the *qutb* is the head of the "spiritual fellowship" of saints. It is this *qutb* who is generally attributed the power of intercession.<sup>94</sup> The details of the theory of the *qutb* vary widely according to time, place and writer. In fact the current position amongst the *ikhwān* of Sīdī Belhassen is that although in popular practice al-Shādhilī is often prayed to for intercession, this is not within his ability. The power of intercession is only the right of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī (d. 1166/561) (above p.20)

The role of the shaykh is crucial in that he is, for both the *ikhwān* and the unaffiliated, a source of, or direct line to, divine blessing. Hoffman-Ladd describes the

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<sup>91</sup> My personal correspondence with Mustapha Zoubeidi (Mar 3, 1993). I have only listed the shortest section of the *wazīfa*.

<sup>92</sup> P. Nwyia, *Ibn 'Atā' Allāh et la Naissance de la Confrérie Shadhilite* (Beyrouth, Dar el-Mashreq, 1990) p 31

<sup>93</sup> *Ibn 'Abbād of Ronda, Letters on the Sufi Path* J. Renard trans. (N.Y. Paulist Press, 1986) p 37

<sup>94</sup> A. MacKeen, 'The Sufi-Qawm Movement' *Muslim World*, #53, 1963 p 223

central position of the shaykh " . one generally attaches oneself to a sheikh not to gain esoteric knowledge or subject oneself to rigid disciplines, but to be in contact with that divine light that has been passed down to the Prophet, to receive some of the overflow of the baraka that has been passed down through the chain of blessing, and to find acceptance with God "95

The present shaykh of Sidi Belhassen, Hassen Belhassen, although serving as this focus for divine grace, is not actually descended from al-Shādhilī. According to the accounts of the members of the Order, about two centuries ago a member of the al-Mu'addib family, who was the *imām* at a nearby mosque, came to be appointed to the position of shaykh of the *ṭarīqa* in Tunis. All the subsequent shaykhs have come from this family, which through such a long association with the *zāwiya* and the *ṭarīqa* eventually became known as Belhassen. 96 Depont and Copollani in 1897/1314 note that of the three Shādhiliyya *zawāyā* in Tunis at that time the most important was that run by "Ben Hassan", imam of the mosque of Djema'a-Bab-el-Djezira. 97 Although the choice of successor still rests ultimately with the government (now as it did under both French and Turkish rule), the appointment is made according to a consensus reached by the leading figures of the brotherhood.

The organization of the personnel under shaykh Belhassen is compared by the members of the Order to a military command. Those under the shaykh are appointed by him to their various positions of responsibility such as *shaykh al-ṣalāt*, *shaykh al-Qur'ān*, *shaykh al-dhikr* and *shaykh al-aḥzāb*. These individuals are responsible for leading their respective parts of the liturgy. 98 There also exists a number of less important positions, many of which have no liturgical significance.

95 V. Hoffman-Ladd, 'Devotion to the Prophet and his family in Egyptian Sufism' p 630.

96 According to A. Green, 'Sufi Orders in 19th Century Tunisia' an account of this family is to be found in Ahmad Diyāf *Ithaf Ahl al-Zaman* (Tunis 1963-66).

97 O. Depont & X. Copollani, *Les Confréries Religieuses Musulmanes* p 454.

98 For an account of these positions in the 'Isāwiyya of Sidi Hārī see P. Johnson, *Sufi Shrine in Modern Tunisia* p 75.

The hierarchy is reflected in the seating order during the recitation of the *ahzāb* and the ritual eating of common meals. Here the shaykh of the Order sits directly in front of the *mihrāb* facing outwards and his closest lieutenants sit to his left, right and across from him in the opposing line. A man retains his position in the hierarchy of the Order even if he is absent. It was related to the author by the shaykh that even if a man is not seen for many years he may return to assume his place, and that the others must make room for him. In contrast, this inalienable right does not exist in the Hamīdiyya-Shādhīyya of Egypt who see any long absence from the *ḥaḍra* as signaling a lapse in membership in the Order.<sup>99</sup> Shaykh Sidi Belhassen also stated that the Order, in his lifetime, has never had official international contact with any other Shādhīlī group.

It is also interesting to note that the rank and file members of Sidi Belhassen are not subject to the same detailed rule of conduct as those of the Hamīdiyya-Shādhīyya<sup>100</sup>, nor are they categorized in the elaborate fashion of other Egyptian Shādhīlī Orders.<sup>101</sup> Their only prescribed duties are the memorization - to the best of their ability - of the *ahzāb* and regular presence at the gatherings of the brotherhood.

At Sidi Belhassen the ceremony of initiation follows a pattern common among many *turūq*. The shaykh, surrounded by a number of followers, places his hands on the sitting or kneeling applicant, and together they recite the *Fātiha*.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>99</sup> M. Gilsenan, *Saint and Sufi in Modern Egypt* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973) p. 176.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.* p. 237.

<sup>101</sup> J. Trimmingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* p. 188.

<sup>102</sup> For an account of a number of different ceremonies see J. Trimmingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* p. 181. For an account of a four level system of affiliation see L. Rinn, *Marabouts et Khouan* p. 249.

### Chapter III: Prayer, Remembrance and Recitation

#### Prayer as a Text

In our approach to the prayers of Abū al-Hasan al-Shādhilī we must first take note of the fact that they are preserved as texts. Although somewhat underused as sources for the Orientalist's textual study of Islamic religion, the *aḥzāb* are nevertheless the site where the printed word gives way to active religious experience. That is to say, these fixed prayers become a vital catalyst around which is formed the adepts' experience of worship. Let us first make clear what we mean by "prayer", and then move to locate the *aḥzāb* within this definition. Our discussion will also point out that these *aḥzāb* require a specific ritual context if they are to be successful in practice.

Efforts have been made to formulate a basic typology of prayer using categories such as petition, confession and invocation.<sup>103</sup> For our purposes and in the most general terms, we may define prayer as an individual's intercourse with the Divine, the act of praying being characterized by the feeling that one's words are reflecting one's deepest condition in the direction of the Divine. In the context of this discussion two forms of prayer may be distinguished. The first will be called *formulaic* prayer, and may be identified by the fact that the individual involved is not the author of the prayer but simply the reciter. The second form we label as *spontaneous* prayer.<sup>104</sup> This form may be distinguished by the fact that the individual is both the reciter and the author of the prayer.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> See S. Gill 'Prayer' in E. Rieu and F. Heiler, Prayer: A Study in the History and Psychology of Religion (London: Oxford University Press, 1932).

<sup>104</sup> In a more general discussion Goitein distinguished between formal prayer and unaccompanied, 'abstract' prayer. Goitein, S. Studies in Islamic History and Institutions (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968) p. 74.

<sup>105</sup> Although I will not deal with it here, the point could be made that all prayer is essentially spontaneous, and that formulaic prayer is simply the record of a good spontaneous prayer. In some ways this is true, but in the context of the present discussion it is too reductionist.

Turning to a comparison of these two forms we first observe that *spontaneous* prayer has an advantage in that it allows one to choose the phrases and symbols which most accurately reflect one's feelings. A *formulaic* prayer, on the other hand, must provide surrogate symbols or statements for the reciter. That is, the fixed word must be capable of reflecting the sentiments of the reciter. The text must consist of moving yet commonly accessible themes in order to allow the reader to use them to symbolize his own condition. If the text accomplishes this the reader will feel that he has expressed himself to the Divine (The most successful prayers are the ones that can reflect different people's feelings at different times - the parallel may be made to a good poem which though fixed in its textual form, can say something different to its reader time after time.)

Turning from theory to practice we may locate the *ahzāb* in the category of *formulaic* prayer. Significantly, observation reveals a great emphasis on recitation (see below p 46). Recitation is here, in light of our definition above, the dynamic of the individual appropriating the text of the prayer. Recitation is his using a fixed text to express himself (i.e. his own condition). It is the process through which the fixed word comes to engender the active religious experience. This experience, on the level of ritual, is also supported by other elements. The sanctity of the Order and the saint, the dynamics of the *hadra* along with proper recitation all contribute to the individual's experience. Thus, *formulaic* prayer plays a central role in the *Tariqa's* efforts at fostering the spiritual lives of its members.<sup>106</sup>

F. Heiler, in his seminal work on prayer, sets the two forms of prayer somewhat further apart. In fact, what we have labeled as *formulaic* above he does not fully recognize as prayer. He writes, "the words fixed in writing do not perfectly correspond to those uttered in prayer. The very act of writing brings with it the transformation of the *authentic*

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<sup>106</sup> Of course the *Tariqa* can only make the environment conducive to the experience - it can not bestow it - in the end the responsibility lies with the individual to take the last step and to participate in, or 'open up' to the potential here created.

words of prayer into literary form . "107 This position subordinating the literary form of prayer does not go far in explaining the religious significance or effectiveness of written prayer In discussing Heiler's prioritizing the *spontaneous* over the *formulaic* (to use our terminology) S Gill claims that,

when the understanding of prayer as a free and spontaneous "living communion of man with God" is conjoined with the general restriction of prayer to the text form, incongruency, confusion and dilemma arise. Prayer texts, almost without exception and to a degree as part of their nature, are formulaic, repetitive, and static in character, much in contrast with the expected free and spontaneous character of prayer 108

In other words, almost all recorded prayer has taken on what may be called its literary form This form, when compared to the ecstatic spontaneous speech of a mystic may on the surface appear spiritually barren and of little appeal, but upon further inspection this is not necessarily the case. Our discussion above argues that both forms may be - to use Heiler's term - authentic.

In an attempt to reconcile the "confusion and dilemma" that Gill has pointed to we propose that the recitation of a formal prayer has the potential to evoke a powerful religious experience, and thus is able to maintain a vitality which makes it spiritually useful for its readers It would seem that Heiler begins to recognize this as a fact when he concedes,

The element of spontaneity does not wholly exclude fixity of expression. A man in need frequently catches hold of a prayer formula quite unconsciously and unintentionally, or, to put it better, the formula suggests itself to him, and in it he pours forth his emotion. Even the hard impersonal formula is filled with personal life 109

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107 F Heiler, *Prayer* p xix (my italics)

108 "Prayer" in *E.R.* p 489 Here we must note that Gill approaches the subject partially with the intention of including the prayer of 'exclusively oral religions' K Morrison review of *Native American Religious Action* (Columbia Univ of South Carolina Press, 1987) by S. Gill, in *J.A.A.R.* no 1, 1993 p 144

109 F Heiler, *Prayer* p 10 An interesting study would be to look at Heiler's views on prayer in the light of his personal relationship to Catholicism and Evangelical Protestantism As E Ormsby points out in his

From another angle, W. Graham, in his study of scripture, recognizes the connection between text, recitation and religious significance. He writes,

I would say of intense oral repetition of texts such as that found in Muslim practice that this may be the most characteristically "religious" medium for the scriptural word because in it ... form and content merge in a manner peculiarly congenial to conveying what W. James called the experience of "the reality of the unseen" (and R. Otto's *mysterium tremendum*)<sup>110</sup>

It is with this connection made between text, recitation and religious experience that we approach the *aḥzāb* of al-Shādhilī.

### Forms of Prayer

In the following section our intention is to discuss the various types of prayer used in the Shādhilī Order. Although many of the terms and titles to be discussed have a number of meanings, our emphasis here will be on the terms as far as they represent different types of written prayer.

Of paramount importance to Islamic prayer in general is the *ṣalāt* (pl. *ṣalawāt*). This is the central prayer rite and is one of the five pillars of Islam. Each of the five daily occasions of this rite is to be preceded by a ritual ablution (*wuḍūʿ*) and may take place anywhere - except at tombs and "unclean" places.<sup>111</sup>

The prayers specific to the Orders revolve around the daily *ṣalāt* times for a number of reasons, the most important of which is probably to share in the ritual cleanness of the *wuḍūʿ*.<sup>112</sup> Many of the prayers are even assigned to follow a particular *ṣalāt* prayer. For example, al-Shādhilī is recorded as saying that the best time to recite "Ḥizb al-Birr" is

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review of Friedrich von Hügel - Nathan Soderholm - Friedrich Heiler, *Briefwechsel, 1909-1931* by P. Misner, in *The Catholic Historical Review* no 4, 1984 pp 630, 631, Heiler was divided between his appreciation of the highly developed sacramental of Roman Catholicism, and the sense of free expression, intellectually and otherwise, offered by the Evangelical Church.

<sup>110</sup> W. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987) p 113

<sup>111</sup> "Ṣalāt" in *E.I.* p 493

<sup>112</sup> C. Padwick, *Muslim Devotions* p 8.



after *ṣalāt al-Ṣubḥ* (morning prayer).<sup>113</sup> As for the prohibition of prayer at tombs, the *zāwiya* of Sidi Belhassen in Tunis, despite the presence of graves within and around its two main buildings, maintains its sanctity and status as a place of *ṣalāt*. In fact, the buildings are distinguished (at least in conversation) as the upper and lower "mosques". The graves are located in rooms separate from that which is used for the five daily prayers.

The word *ṣalāt* and its plural *salawāt* are to be found as titles of prayers in the collection *Manbaʿ al-Saʿādāt* (used, according to a vendor in Tunis in 1992/1413, by the Shādhiliyya in Syria).<sup>114</sup> Two examples are "Salawāt Sidī Ahmed al-Badawī" (d 1276/675) and "Al-Salāt al-ʿAzīmiyya". These prayers, not unlike others in the collection, are primarily concerned with invocations of blessing and requests for divine help.

Another term, *duʿāʾ*, is also important in this context. Its root verbal meaning is to call, and with the preposition *lī* it takes on the connotation of invoking blessing upon someone or something. When used with *ʿalā* it becomes to curse - literally to call God against someone.

*Duʿāʾ* (pl. *adʿiyya*) may be translated as call, supplication, prayer and request, but in usage a general distinction may be made between *duʿāʾ* as a more personalized petition by an individual with his or her God, and *ṣalāt* as the legal duty of profession of faith of an individual as a member of the Islamic community.<sup>115</sup>

The topic of *duʿāʾ* holds an important place in the Shādhilī manuals. The modern *ṭarīqa* writer ʿAbd al-Halīm Mahmūd highlights its importance with the *aḥādīth*: "There is nothing more perfect towards God than the *duʿāʾ*" and "For him to whom the door of

<sup>113</sup> ʿAbd al-Halīm Mahmūd, *Al-Madrasa al-Shādhiliyya* (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Hadītha, 1967) p 191. See also p 180 f n 1.

<sup>114</sup> There is no indication in the collection itself as to its origin or location of use beyond the fact that it is printed in Bayrut. It is probably used by a number of groups since it contains Khalwatī, Badawī, Rifāʿī, and Shādhilī material, but on the other hand perhaps it is simply intended for popular use.

<sup>115</sup> This distinction only applies to the terms in their widest sense.

*du<sup>c</sup>ā'* is open, the doors of (God's) compassion are also open " <sup>116</sup> Discussion is further made concerning strategies for maximizing the efficacy of one's *du<sup>c</sup>ā'* Mahmūd writes, "The *du<sup>c</sup>ā'* is proper at all times (but the best) time for *du<sup>c</sup>ā'* is in the last third of the night .. " <sup>117</sup> He also relates the *ḥadīth* that, "The slave is closest to his Lord when praying (*sājid*) - so increase (your) *du<sup>c</sup>ā'*!" to which he adds, "The places best suited for the answering of ones *du<sup>c</sup>ā'* are the pure and blessed places, the most noble of which are Mekka and Medina. " <sup>118</sup> And Shādhilī himself says, "If you want Him to answer you in less than the blink of an eye you must do five things. 1 Obey the (divine) command, 2 Avoid that which is forbidden 3. Purify the heart 4 Show determination and 5 Perform that which is required (of you). <sup>119</sup>

Also, the importance of *du<sup>c</sup>ā'* in this context reflects its position in Islam We are told that, "Because of this great importance of *dhikr* and *du<sup>c</sup>ā'* in Islam, Abū al-Hasan (al-Shādhilī) was exhaustive in (his performance of) *dhikr* and *du<sup>c</sup>ā'* " <sup>120</sup>

The term *du<sup>c</sup>ā'* is also a prayer title. In Manba<sup>c</sup> al-Sa<sup>c</sup>ādāt one finds a pair of short prayers - Du<sup>c</sup>ā' al-Basmala li'l-Jilānī and Du<sup>c</sup>ā' al-Jalāla la-hu attributed to <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī (d 1166/561) In the same collection are found a number of shorter *ad<sup>c</sup>īya* intended for use at special times such as the first day of the year and the day of *'āshūra'*.

Turning from *du<sup>c</sup>ā'* to *dhikr* (literally, mention or remembrance) we approach a more complex term. The larger spiritual significance of *dhikr Allāh* (remembrance of God), its techniques, and results will be dealt with later Here we shall restrict our discussion of *dhikr* to its use in our present context of prayer terminology

<sup>116</sup> <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Halīm Mahmūd, Al-Madrasa al-Shādhiliyya p 161 The first quotation is from Sahīh al-Tirmidhī (kitāb al-Da<sup>c</sup>wār, bāb. 1). I have not been able to locate the second, but we find 'Lord, open up to me the door of your compassion' in Sahīh al-Tirmidhī (kitāb al-Salāt, bāb 117)

<sup>117</sup> Ibid. p 162 This statement is based on Sahīh al-Bukhārī (19 14) cf above fn 70

<sup>118</sup> Ibid. p 163. The *ḥadīth* is taken from Sahīh Muslim (kitāb al-Salāt, no 215)

<sup>119</sup> Ibid. p 164 (We restate that Mahmūd has drawn his hagiographical material from Ibn 'Atā' Allah and Ibn al-Sabbāgh. See above p.11 )

<sup>120</sup> Ibid. p 163

*Dhikr* can be seen to have three distinct meanings. The first is a usage which is tied closely to the verbal root of the term. In *Al-Madrasa al-Shādhiliyya* (p. 140) we find the short statement, "No one reaches God except through perseverance (*dawām*) in *dhikr*."<sup>121</sup> Here the meaning may be taken simply as remembrance of God, or as referring to prayer in general. The verb used in its fifth form (*tadhakkara*) is used to convey the idea of a sinner acknowledging his own sin.<sup>122</sup>

The second usage of *dhikr* is as a short formula recited after one or more of the *salawāt* prayers.<sup>123</sup> Al-Shādhilī himself is alleged to have recommended the recitation of the following well known *dhikr* formulae (*siyagh*): "*al-hamdu li'llāh, wa astaghfiru Allāha, wa lā hawla wa lā qūwata illa bi'llāhi*."<sup>124</sup> Knowing the special *dhikr* phrases of one's shaykh is vital. Ibn 'Iyād writes, "... he who is affiliated with one of the shaykhs of the Order, (one of) the authorities of the truth, he must know the foundation of his shaykh's Order, and know the *adhkār* (sing *dhikr*) of his shaykh ..."<sup>125</sup> The *adhkār* are also often integral parts of the larger Shādhilī prayers known as *aḥzāb*.<sup>126</sup>

The third usage of *dhikr* refers to group recitation of the *aḥzāb* of the Order. Of "Ḥizb al-Bahr" and "Ḥizb al-Kabīr" Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh (d. 1309/709) says that he recommends their recital (*dhikrahumā*) in both the desert and the city.<sup>127</sup>

Another important prayer term is *wird* (pl. *awrād*). Its basic verbal meaning (from the root WRD) is to appear or arrive, but in our context as a noun it is usually defined as, "the time one devotes to supererogatory prayer ..."<sup>128</sup> But a survey of the term's use in the history of Sufi Orders leads to a wider definition. *Wird* may refer to the *ṭarīqa* or

<sup>121</sup> Statement attributed to al-Qushairī (d. 1072/464). I have not been able to locate this quotation in *Al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya*.

<sup>122</sup> Ibn 'Iyād, *Mafākhir al-'Alīyya* (Cairo: Mustafā al-Bābī al-Halabī, 1961) p. 192.

<sup>123</sup> J. Trimmingham, *Sufi Orders in Islam* p. 201. He calls this *dhikr al-awqāt*. See Padwick (p. 12) for a useful contrast between the *al'āl* and the *adhkār* of the prayer rite.

<sup>124</sup> 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Mahmūd, *Al-Madrasa al-Shādhiliyya* p. 139. (Praise be to Allāh, I seek Allāh's pardon, there is no power and no strength except in Allāh)

<sup>125</sup> Ibn 'Iyād, *Mafākhir al-'Alīyya* p. 3. (On Ibn 'Iyād himself see above fn. 48.)

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid* p. 191.

<sup>127</sup> 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Mahmūd, *Al-Madrasa al-Shādhiliyya* p. 180.

<sup>128</sup> 'Wird' in S.E.I. p. 634.

*ṭā'ifa* of a *shaykh* - in as far as his central message is to be found in the prayers he has written. Secondly, *wird* may refer to the times appointed for the recitation of a prayer, and subsequently come to mean the *adhkār*, or the *aḥzāb* which are used themselves. Finally, *wird* can refer to the ritual order and recitation of prayers as established by the founder of the Order. In this way also *wird* may come to refer to the entire *ṭarīqa* or *ṭā'ifa*.<sup>129</sup>

In Manbaʿ al-Saʿādāt we find two *awrād*, the "Wird al-Jalāla" attributed to ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jilānī, and "Wird al-Sahar" attributed to Mustafa al-Bakrī (d. 1709/1121) of the Khalwatiyya. It is interesting to note that the "Wird al-Jalāla" contains instructions for the reader to recite it 4356 times, and on each occasion to follow it with 66 repetitions of the *basmala*.<sup>130</sup> A wider study of *wird* as a prayer title would be necessary for us to know if this type of specific instruction is common.

In the "Wird al-Sahar" we find an allusion to the *wird* representing the essential message of the *ṭarīqa*. The prayer begins, "Praise be to God who has delivered those He has willed to the watering place (*mawrūd*). And He has favoured the people of the *awrād*, above the (other) worshippers, with gifts of generosity. He has granted them divine inspirations (*wāridāt*) which, through His sympathy for them, are occasions of good fortune."<sup>131</sup>

*Wird* in its plural form, *awrād* often takes on the meaning of religious duties. Al Shādhilī said, "The *awrād* of the faithful are twenty in number: *sawm* (fasting), *ṣalāt*, *dhikr*, *tilāwa* (recitation), censure of the self from craving, enjoining the good, forbidding the evil, *tawakkul* (trust in God), *waraʿ* (piety)."<sup>132</sup> Included in this discussion of the *awrād* of the *ṭarīqa* are the requirements that the adept take an active life in the community - which includes marriage and a family, while at the same time avoiding

<sup>129</sup> These three uses are discussed in J. Tringham, Sufi Orders in Islam p. 214.

<sup>130</sup> Manbaʿ al-Saʿādāt (Bayrut al-Malaba al-Thiqāfiyya) p. 9. I have not been able to find the significance of these numbers - perhaps they are some numerical equivalent to the prayer itself.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid. p. 82.

<sup>132</sup> Ibn ʿIyād, Maʾākhir al-ʿAlayya p. 82.

undue attachment to worldly pleasures. Further, the shaykh stresses personal ethic when he requires his followers to, " avoid causing offence, and bear the insult . " <sup>133</sup>

The term *wazīfa* (pl *wazā'ifa*), often translated as duty or daily office<sup>134</sup>, can frequently be found with *awrād* in our manuals. For instance the story related by al-Shādhilī that when a man asked his shaykh (Ibn Mashish) to prescribe for him *wazā'ifa* and *awrad*, the master angrily replied, "Am I a prophet? Do I impose obligations? The religious duties are (already) fixed, and the acts of sinning are known to all. So be faithful to the required duties and reject sin . " <sup>135</sup> In this example if we take *awrād* to mean religious duties in general, then *wazīfa* would refer to the prayers which make up part of those duties. *Wazīfa* is in fact elsewhere used as a prayer title.<sup>136</sup> In spite of the Shaykh's point here, the *wazīfa* does not mean only following the Sunna <sup>137</sup> We must recognize that *wazīfa* carries the further notion of personal spiritual direction managed by a guide - hence the adept's request. In this sense the prayers (*wazā'ifa*) which are assigned to an adept hold in part the lesson and secrets which he is to learn. Thus, just as *wird* was at first the prescribed time of prayer and later came to refer to the prayers themselves, so too has *wazīfa* expanded, from a duty to recite certain prayers it has come to imply their contents also.

As a title the term can be found in a special appended section of the *Nibrās*. I have not been able to find any independent treatment of the term as it is used here, but the members of the Order tell me that they are prayers written by the followers of al-Shādhilī, and were inspired by the *ahzāb* - hence their titles of "*Wazīfa Hizb al- ...* " In a short

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<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> From the root WZF the basic verbal meaning is to assign or impose. For its use as 'daily office' see C. Padwick, *Muslim Devotions* p. 22.

<sup>135</sup> Ibn 'Iyād, *Mafākhir al-ʿAlīyya* p. 82.

<sup>136</sup> Mustafā ibn Muhyī al-Dīn Najā, *Kashf al-Asrār li-Tanwīr al-Afkar* 4th. ed. (Bayrut?, 1978) p. 6.

<sup>137</sup> This anecdote is presented by Ibn 'Iyād to stress the orthodoxy of Mashish's thinking. It is not an utter condemnation of *wird* and *wazīfa*, rather the Shaykh would appear to be stressing the fundamentals of religion to an adept who has over-stepped the boundary of his spiritual station.

preface to the *wazīfa* collection the Nibrās states that they are part of the practice of the Cave (*maghāra*) of the saint

Finally, *wazīfa* in its widest sense can signify the essence of the teachings of the Order. In the introduction to his Kashf al-Asrār the modern *tariqa* writer Mustafa Najā states, "Know that this is the *wazīfa* of the Sunna, from the collection of the *awrād* of the *ṭā'ifa* of al-Shādhilī, . . . spread through him by (his master) Ibn Bashīsh"<sup>138</sup> In this statement Najā is stressing the orthodoxy of the message of the Order as it is found in its prayers, and the importance of Ibn Mashīsh in their formulation. Here the term *wazīfa* goes beyond "prayer" and becomes almost equivalent to the spiritual message of the Order

Another important prayer title is *ḥizb* (pl. *ahzāb*) which has the root meaning of group or band. The term refers not only to prayers but also means half of a *juz'*, or one sixtieth of the Qur'ān - partitions used primarily to facilitate recitation. *Hizb* is generally the title used of longer prayers and can mean much the same as *wird*.<sup>139</sup> Nevertheless, Michaux-Bellaire defines *ḥizb* as simply a "fraction of the *wird* of an Order" That is, the shaykh knows the *wird* and the followers are only given pieces (*ahzāb*) of it.<sup>140</sup> Here *wird* is taken to contain the complete esoteric message of the *tariqa*. But one of the Shādhilī manuals explains the relationship between the two terms rather differently. "Know that the truth (*ḥaqīqa*) of the *ḥizb* is the *wird* received and used in worship and its like. In usage it (*ḥizb*) is a collection of *adḥkār*, *ad'īya*, and requests, all arranged for recital and memorizing, and for seeking shelter from evil and asking for good . . ."<sup>141</sup> If we accept Michaux-Bellaire's claim that the *wird* holds the secret of the Order, then the statement of

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.* p. 6 (Bashīsh is an alternate spelling for Mashīsh)

<sup>139</sup> Faḥḥ Abderrahman Ez Zaoudi in E. Blochet, 'A Propos du *Hizb*' in Revue du Monde Musulman vol. 14, 1911, p. 112. According to D. MacDonald 'Hizb' in E.I.<sup>2</sup> p. 513, 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jilāni was the first to use the term in the sense of a supererogatory prayer

<sup>140</sup> Michaux-Bellaire as quoted in E. Blochet, 'A Propos du *Hizb*' p. 111

<sup>141</sup> Ibn 'Iyād, Mafāḥir al-'Alīyya p. 191 also see translation in C. Padwick, Muslim Devotions p. 23

this manual, paradoxically, obliges us to concede that this secret is also present, in some form, in the *ahzāb* <sup>142</sup>

Of the *hizb* it gives this further description,

Know that the *ahzāb* of the Shaykh, may God be pleased with him, are the union between (on the one hand) the benefits of knowledge, and (on the other hand) the way of oneness and the instruction of the Order and the sign of truth and the sublime remembrance of God, of His majesty and of His grandeur, and the remembrance of the wretchedness of the self and its vileness . <sup>143</sup>

thus emphasizing the central spiritual role of the *ahzāb* in the *tariqa* . The *ahzāb*, their use and contents, will be the subject of later discussion.

Another prayer title, though less common, is *dawr* . The word itself has a number of meanings (e g role, age, period), but in this context it is to be translated as "station". The one example we have of *dawr* is in Manbaʿ al-Saʿādāt (p.255) and is entitled "The *Hizb* of Protection for him who seeks power - by Muhyi al-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī which is also known as the Lofty *Dawr* " <sup>144</sup> In a recent study undertaken in Egypt, E. Waugh identified the *dawr* as a vocal piece derived from colloquial poetry accompanied by a choral refrain <sup>145</sup> But in "The *Hizb* of Protection .", although the meter is kept more strictly than it is in other prayers of the collection, and each line ends in "Allāh", <sup>146</sup> there is no chorus and the lines are rather long, which would make them difficult to sing - if in fact that is the intention . Further, use of *dāʾira* as "domain" or "field" on page 256 supports our reading of *dawr* here as "station" rather than as a musical composition (As mentioned earlier, there is no singing or playing of instruments at the Sidi Belhassen *zāwiya*.)

<sup>142</sup> In C Padwick, Muslim Devotions p 23 the author claims there is in effect no difference between the two terms

<sup>143</sup> Ibn ʿIyād, Mafākhir al-ʿAlayya p 191. It is interesting to note that this " union between ..." seems to reflect in form our earlier discussion of the tension between the individual and the group (See above Introduction)

<sup>144</sup> Muhyi al-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī (d 1240/638) I have not been able to confirm his authorship of this prayer

<sup>145</sup> E Waugh, The Munshidin of Egypt (Columbia University of South Carolina Press, 1989) p 59

<sup>146</sup> These are some of the basic characteristics of *saʿ*. D Stewart, ' *Saʿ* in the Qurʾān " Journal of Arabic Literature no 21, 1990 p 111

On the other hand the *qaṣā'id* (sing *qaṣida*) in Matbaʿ al-Saʿādāt are specifically intended for chanting. The following is from a *qaṣida* attributed to al-Bakrī.<sup>147</sup>

*Bi-kulli khalīlīn qad khalā ʿan shawā'ibīn*  
*Wa kullī jalīlīn qad jalā nūruhu al-ẓalmā'a*  
*Bi-ʿarshīn bi-farshīn bi-l-samawāti bi-l-ʿulyā'i*  
*Bi-mā qad ḥawā qalbu al-muḥaqqiqī min ruḥmā'īn*

By every friend (of God) who was faultless  
 And every sublime (one) whose light illumined the darkness  
 By throne, by (prayer) mat, by heavens, by heights  
 By what the heart of the enquirer has gathered by mercy

*Qasā'id* are popularly used on special occasions throughout the year, particularly at *mawlid*.<sup>148</sup> A *qaṣida*, such as that in the above quotation, can be used as one of the prayers in an Order's *ḥaḍra*.<sup>149</sup>

Another form popular prayers can take is that of the *ḥurẓ* or amulet. In its smaller forms a *ḥurẓ* usually contains no more than a few short extracts from the Qur'ān,<sup>150</sup> but larger collections do exist. One Shādhilī collection is entitled Ḥurẓ al-Jawshan (The Amulet of the Coat of Mail) which contains a piece from the "Dalā'il al-Khayrāt" of al-Jazūlī (above p.20) and three *aḥzāb* of the Order in shortened form.<sup>151</sup>

The purpose of an amulet is more practical than it is spiritual. Thus this pocket sized booklet claims to be particularly useful against the ills which afflict both men and women. It can protect the traveller day and night, and will defend its reader from the deceit of liars.

<sup>147</sup> Matbaʿ al-Saʿādāt p.109 (My translation). In Lisān al-ʿArab *qaṣida* is defined as an ancient Arabic form of poetry.

<sup>148</sup> E. Waugh, The Munshidin of Egypt p.104.

<sup>149</sup> E. Dermenghem, Le Cult des Saints p.305.

<sup>150</sup> C. Padwick, Muslim Devotions p.25.

<sup>151</sup> Ḥurẓ al-Jawshan (Tunis: Matbaʿa al-Manār) [containing Ḥizb al-Bahr, Ḥizb al-Burr and Ḥizb al-Nasr] The symbolism of a coat of mail is reinforced by the fact that one must carry the booklet in one's breast pocket whenever in public for it to be effective as an amulet.



Sorcery is thwarted, as are the evil intentions of thieves and *jinn*. It also helps a woman find a husband, and can ease her pains during childbirth.<sup>152</sup>

All of the above mentioned prayers exist (some more prominently than others) as texts. Nevertheless, we would do injustice to the subject if we did not push on to examine their animating principle - the recitation. By animation we mean not only the idea of "performing" of a prayer by reading it, but also the sense of an added spiritual dimension acquired by the prayer when it is recited.

### Dhikr and Ahzāb

Before turning to the reading of prayers we would do well to take note of the greatest recitation, the Qur'ān itself.<sup>153</sup> The first point to be made here is that the text of the Qur'ān is most "effective", or most fully realized when it is recited. In fact,

. . . the authoritativeness of the Qur'anic text is only realized in its fullness and perfection when it is correctly recited aloud. In other words, the book of holy writ (*kitāb*) in Islam is ultimately not a written or printed document, but a holy "reciting", or "recitation".<sup>154</sup>

The second point to make is that from the perspective of an individual worshipper, recitation maximizes one's spiritual interaction with the material at hand. W. Graham refers to this spiritual interaction when he writes, "Meaning is carried by the recitation over and above the particular meaning of the literal passage recited, however deeply felt and understood that meaning may be on an intellectual plane."<sup>155</sup> This "meaning" is available even to those who by virtue of illiteracy or language barrier do not understand the literal

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<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.* pp 2,3. See also Ibn 'Iyād, *Maḥākhir al-ʿAlayya* p 253 for a discussion of the power of a *ḥirz* and also its limitations in the face of Divine will.

<sup>153</sup> Qur'ān is from the verbal root *qara'a* - to recite, to read. Note also from the same root: *qirā'a* (pl *qirā'āt*) meaning recitation and often referring to the various traditions of Qur'ānic recitation. For further discussion see W. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word* p.99.

<sup>154</sup> W. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word* p.80

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.* p 114

meaning of the Arabic.<sup>156</sup> The issue of recitation will be picked up on later in the chapter in our discussion of the *aḥzāb*, but let us first turn to another important recitation, that of the names of God (*dhikr asmā' Allāh*).

In what is the earliest systematic work written on the theory and practice of *dhikr* (*Miftāh al-Falāh*) (cir. 1304/704) Ibn 'Atā' Allāh writes, "*Dhikr* is to free oneself from negligence of forgetfulness by the permanent presence in the heart of the True One."<sup>157</sup> In this work *dhikr* is divided into three categories: that of the tongue (verbal), that of the heart, and the Secret *dhikr*.<sup>158</sup> He writes, " . Le *dhikr* pratique avec les lettres sans la présence est *dhikr* de la langue. Celui de la présence dans le cœur est *dhikr* du cœur. Le *dhikr* de la disparition de la présence dans l'Invoqué (*al-madhkūr*) est *dhikr* du Secret tel est le *dhikr* caché (*khafī*). "<sup>159</sup>

The *dhikr* of the tongue, although only a first step, has practical benefits. For the novice it is the practice by which he may learn to control himself. Ibn 'Atā' Allāh suggests *dhikr* formulae such as: *Allāh ma'īya* (God is with me) and *Allāh nāẓirun ʿalayya* (God is looking at me).<sup>160</sup>

On the second level, the *dhikr* of the heart (*qalb*), the *dhikr* as a product of the heart disappears. It then becomes the heart itself. This role marks the "Divine Presence" within the individual, and is thus the first stage of annihilation (*fanā'*) of the individual's identity of being separate from the Divine.<sup>161</sup>

It is by "extinction of extinction" that one accedes to direct contemplation of the truth of all things. This is the Secret *dhikr* where differentiation between the individual and

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.* p 111.

<sup>157</sup> Ibn 'Atā' Allāh, *Miftāh al-Falāh wa Mushāh al-Arwāh* (Cairo: Mustafā al-Bābī al-Halabī, 1961) p 9. Introduction translated in Ibn 'Atā' Allāh, *Traité sur le nom Allāh* M. Gloton trans. (Paris: Deux Océans, 1981) p 217.

<sup>158</sup> L. Gardet's "Dhikr" in EI<sup>2</sup> uses Ibn 'Atā' Allāh's categorization as the basis for his discussion of all Sufi theory concerning *dhikr*. He also recognizes the important contribution of Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī to *dhikr* theory.

<sup>159</sup> Ibn 'Atā' Allāh, *Traité sur le nom Allāh* M. Gloton trans. p 217. *Miftāh al-Falāh* p 9.

<sup>160</sup> *Miftāh al-Falāh* p 5.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.* p. 7.

the object of remembrance is lost Ibn 'Atā' Allāh characterizes this level as one in which the lights (of revelation) do not disappear, in other words the Divine illumination becomes constant. He adds that you may abandon the first two *dhikr*s, but the third will never leave you.

L. Gardet makes the observation that there have been two distinct lines or forms of *dhikr*. In the first, and older form, it is simply one of the methods of prayer. In the second (beginning with Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī) *dhikr* comes to represent "procedures" by which one may attain spiritual states.<sup>162</sup> This observation is essentially accurate as long as it is remembered that *dhikr* in the first form did not disappear with the advent of *dhikr* in the second form. Our discussion of the various uses of the term *dhikr* - particularly in relation to prayer titles (above p 40) - sets out examples of the use of *dhikr* in this more primitive sense.

The *dhikr* of "procedures", which is an essential part of the ritual of an Order, consists essentially of the recitation of the names of God. Practice varies between Orders and even between Shaykhs. In the Shā'īdiyya Order in general the ritual event is called a *ḥadra*, and usually consists of *qasā'id*, Qur'ān and *ahzāb* recitations (in varying order and amounts) which are then followed by the *dhikr* Allāh.<sup>163</sup> But the *ḥadra* is somewhat different in the case of the Sidi Belhassen *zāwīya*. Here the primary *dhikr* takes place on Saturday morning prefaced by a short Qur'ānic recitation. The larger *ḥadra*, on Thursday night, is highlighted by the recitation of the *ahzāb* rather than the *dhikr*.<sup>164</sup>

Of the formulae to be used we know that Ibn 'Atā' Allāh recommended that only the words Allāh and *Huwa* (Him) be used.<sup>165</sup> He also preferred that *dhikr* be carried out in *khalwa* (retreat, solitude).<sup>166</sup> At Sidi Belhassen the *dhikr* - though always done in groups - is carried out either at night or in a dark, closed hall. Here the *dhikr* consists of "Allāh"

<sup>162</sup> L. Gardet, 'Dhikr' in *E.I.*<sup>2</sup> p. 226.

<sup>163</sup> J. Trimmingham, *Sufi Orders in Islam* p. 204.

<sup>164</sup> We will discuss the *ahzāb* in the *ḥadra* shortly.

<sup>165</sup> E. Bannerth, 'Dhikr et Khalwa d'après Ibn 'Atā' Allāh' *MIDEO* vol. 12, 1974, p. 87.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.* p. 68.

and "Huwa", with a few short Qur'ānic verses added from time to time by the shaykh of the *dhikr*. In contrast to the exclusive use of these two words, Ibn 'Iyād quotes 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha'arānī (d. 1565/972) saying that "*lā ilāha illā allāhu*" is the most efficacious *dhikr* formula.<sup>167</sup> On this topic 'Abd al-Halīm Mahmūd claims that al-Shādhilī recommended the following forms of *dhikr*: "*al-ḥamdu li'llāh, astaghfiru Allāha, lā hawla wa lā qūwata illa bi'llāhi*."<sup>168</sup>

It is interesting to note that both Ibn 'Atā' Allāh<sup>169</sup> and 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha'arānī<sup>170</sup> recommend to the adept engaged in *dhikr* to focus on the image of his shaykh during his recitation.

The *dhikr* of Sidi Belhassen is carried out by two lines of men standing facing each other.<sup>171</sup> At first "Allāh" is pronounced very slowly and in low tones (so slowly in fact that the name is difficult to say in one breath). The recitation speeds up and the two lines begin alternating in pronouncing the name. This is necessary because one cannot properly pronounce the word at the higher speeds. When the recitation reaches an unsustainable speed the Shaykh of the *dhikr* stops it and starts the entire process again with "Huwa". This can go on for up to an hour and a half.

There are in fact two Shaykhs of the *dhikr*. One participates in the recitation (he not only controls its speed but he must also call out to those who are bordering on hysteria to keep them in line).<sup>172</sup> while the other stays near the door of the hall and lets the active Shaykh know when he should end the *dhikr*. This second Shaykh controls access to the hall. If there are not many people, or the participants are not very experienced, the *dhikr* will be ended after approximately forty-five minutes.

<sup>167</sup> Ibn 'Iyād, *Mafākhir al-'Alīyya* p. 175

<sup>168</sup> 'Abd al-Halīm Mahmūd, *Al-Madrasa al-Shādhiliyya* p. 139

<sup>169</sup> Ibn 'Atā' Allāh, *Traité sur le nom Allāh* M. Gloton trans. p. 211

<sup>170</sup> Ibn 'Iyād, *Mafākhir al-'Alīyya* p. 175

<sup>171</sup> See M. Gilsenan, *Saint and Sufi in Modern Egypt* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973) pp. 161, 163 for examples of other *dhikr*s.

<sup>172</sup> cf. M. Gilsenan, *Saint and Sufi in Modern Egypt* p. 169

At this point the room is relighted and the Shaykh Belhassen enters and takes his place at the *mīhrab* of the hall. Remaining in two lines, the men sit and recite the *fātiha* a number of times. Shaykh Belhassen says short prayers between the recitations, and a common meal of bread, olives and water is served to all <sup>173</sup>

The *aḥzāb* of al-Shādhili are recited primarily at the communal *ḥaḍra*.<sup>174</sup> The summer season at Sidi Belhassen is the highpoint for these recitations, attracting hundreds of participants each night. The *aḥzāb* are read in a special cycle<sup>175</sup> over the 14 summer weeks.

- Week 1: "Ḥizb al-Kabīr" ("Ḥizb al-Āyāt")  
 " 2: "Ḥizb al-Kabīr" ("Ḥizb al-Birr")  
 " 3: "Ḥizb al-Hamd" and "Wazifa Ḥizb al-Hamd"  
 " 4: "Ḥizb al-Fath" and "Wazifa Ḥizb al-Fath"  
 " 5: "Ḥizb al-Tawassul" and "Wazifa Ḥizb al-Tawassul"  
 " 6: "Ḥizb al-Luṭf" and "Wazifa Ḥizb al-Luṭf"  
 " 7: "Ḥizb al-Kabīr" ("Ḥizb al-Āyāt")

- Week 8: "Ḥizb al-Kabīr" ("Ḥizb al-Birr")  
 " 9: "Ḥizb al-Hamd"  
 " 10: "Wazifa Ḥizb al-Hamd"  
 " 11: "Ḥizb al-Fath"  
 " 12: "Ḥizb al-Tawassul"  
 " 13: "Ḥizb al-Luṭf"  
 " 14: "Ḥizb al-Kabīr" ("Ḥizb al-Āyāt")

In addition, the Qur'ān is recited twice in its entirety over the 14 week cycle.

The *aḥzāb* are also recited on Friday evenings throughout the entire year according to a different cycle which, though less attended, includes a greater variety of *aḥzāb* and *wazā'ifa*. There are also six festival days (*mawāsim*) in the year in which the *aḥzāb* are

<sup>173</sup> Any remains from this meal are prized for the *baraka*.

<sup>174</sup> This is not to deny their other uses, either as individual recitations at times of crisis or as part of *wird* duties. For the second see 'Abd al-Halīm Mahmūd, *Al-Madrasa al-Shādhiliyya* p. 191 and Ibn 'Iyād, *Mafākhir al-ʿAlayya* p. 190.

<sup>175</sup> As with the 'Isāwīyya. See R. Brunel, *Essai sur la Confrérie Religieuse des 'Aïssāwīya au Maroc* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste, 1926) p. 93.

recited by the Shādhilī brotherhood joined by various groups from the other Orders of Tunis who are invited to celebrate the occasion with them. The Shādhiliyya is renowned for its *ahzāb* recitation. Let us now turn our attention to the significance of the *ahzāb* on a spiritual level.

Mention must be made of the important role of the *ahzāb*, first as the occasion for the intangible "religious experience" of the individual (attained by grasping the spiritual secret or essence of the Shādhilī Way), and secondly as the animating experiential element underlying the entire Order. In other words, recitation of the *ahzāb* is the practice which provides the individual members with the opportunity to experience the intense feelings that make up the spiritual state so often called "ecstatic" and described as a losing of oneself to the Divine presence.<sup>176</sup> (The recitation can send individuals into highly agitated states I observed men sweating profusely, others crying, and on occasion some with a wide-eyed blank expression who could barely stay seated and recited almost at the top of their voices. This last condition is certainly not pleasing to the Shaykh of the *ḥadra*, although as in the case of *dhikr*, it is tolerated - the feeling being that such a one is only going a little "overboard". But this overly enthusiastic reciter will be gently restrained by his fellows if he becomes too disruptive.) In this capacity the recitation engenders circumstances which are the *ṭarīqa*'s *raison d'être* - experience of the "truth" which is at the heart of the Shādhilī Order.<sup>177</sup> The experience available through these prayers is thus the animating principle of the entire Order since it provides the spiritual message which the *ṭarīqa* is set up to propagate. Put concisely, the "intangible" experience, which is reached through the *ahzāb*, invests the "tangible" organization with its deepest purpose - the spiritual reality of the Way.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> It is not my intention here to deny the importance of *dhikr*. But at Sidi Belhassen the power and significance of the *ahzāb* recitations overshadow *dhikr asmā' Allāh*. According to my preliminary researches this situation is unusual among the Sufi Orders.

<sup>177</sup> As further evidence of the importance of recitation, I was told by the Shaykh and another important individual that these summer recitations are the most important gatherings for the Order.

<sup>178</sup> The framework and terminology of this analysis relies heavily on E. Waugh, *The Munshidin of Egypt* pp. 7-9

The *aḥzāb* themselves are endowed with a status near to that of revelation. One reason is that al-Shādhilī was inspired in their composition by figures such as the Prophet and al-Khidr. In fact the saints' knowledge of God, which they have acquired by the "taste (*dhawq*) of actuality", has been Divinely imparted to them.<sup>179</sup> The recitation of the *aḥzāb* is thus an important act of spiritual significance, and "... no one hears one of them without being deeply affected, nor does one read them without a similar result."<sup>180</sup> In commenting on a statement made by al-Shādhilī concerning "Ḥizb al-Kabīr": "Whoever recites this litany possesses what I possess, and must do what I must do." Ibn ʿAbbād writes,

In other words, it is as though the shaykh were saying, "If an individual recites the litany ("Ḥizb al-Kabīr") with upright intention and sincere hope, and is a lover following our path as embodied in the litany ... he has reached the rank of sainthood reserved for me; he has entered into my litany, and thus my sponsorship."<sup>181</sup>

Thus the message of the *ṭarīqa*, being contained in the *aḥzāb*, is essentially of Divine inspiration (if not origin). And through the rule of the *ṭarīqa* the seeker may have access to the spiritual reality of the *aḥzāb*, and hence to a truth imparted by God Himself.

Another aspect of the recitation of the *aḥzāb* is that by doing so the individual becomes one of the small special group of Muslims who have, through their practice of the *ṭarīqa*, placed themselves further on the path to God. They are the followers of one of the *awliyā'* (friends) of God, and they reaffirm this following largely by reciting the unique prayers he has left for them. The power of the saint is available to all who will follow his *ṭarīqa*.<sup>182</sup> Al-Shādhilī himself speaks of the saints as the conduits for Divine light directed towards the world. He says, "Intercession is the pouring of light upon the essence

<sup>179</sup> Mustafā ibn Muhyī al-Dīn Najā, *Kashf al-Asrār li-Tanwīr al-Afāk* (Bayrut, 1978) p.126.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid* p.25.

<sup>181</sup> J. Renard, *Ibn ʿAbbād of Ronda* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986). p. 176.

<sup>182</sup> P. Brown, *The Cult of the Saints* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981) p.61. St. Augustine wrote, 'Let us take the benefits of God through him, our fellow servant.' (*Sermon* 319.8.7)

(*jawhar*) of prophethood, and it spreads from the essence of prophethood to the prophets and the saints, and the lights flow from the saints and the prophets to creation."<sup>183</sup>

At the same time the *ṭarīqa*, as a set of rituals and rules, fosters the discipline and tradition which make the *aḥzāb* recitation both possible and effective. In this way the rule of the Order - which is first "animated" by the *aḥzāb* - in turn provides the framework in which they are relevant and in which they are perpetuated.

Regular contact between the members of all ranks has a subtle yet strong influence on the spiritual evolution of an individual. As E. Waugh remarks, " .. within the network one learns not only how to act, but how to respond to the realities that make up Sufi life."<sup>184</sup> In the *Mafākhir al-ʿAlīyya* the importance of this communal interaction is made clear: "All this (pious activity and spiritual knowledge) is not accomplished by you except by keeping company with virtuous brethren or a proven shaykh."<sup>185</sup> It is from amongst the brothers of the *ṭarīqa* that an individual will find his role models. And it is these people who will have the greatest hand in his spiritual development.

In discussing *dhikr* Waugh describes the impact that a well performed *ḥaḍra* can have. He writes, "The *dhikr*, when it is said to be "good" by the participants, takes them out of their collective selves and makes them, in the moment of enthusiastic experience, into a cohesive and vibrant ensemble."<sup>186</sup> This first step towards the "intangible" is achieved through a corporate effort. Of communal prayer Rinn notes the importance of the group,

Or, tout Musulman est convaincu que les prières faites en commun ont plus d'efficacité que les autres, et que Dieu y a attaché des mérites particuliers. Cette solidarité étroite ... ne contribue pas peu à compléter l'effacement de la personnalité du Khouan, car non seulement il appartient à son cheikh,

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<sup>183</sup> Ibn ʿIyād, *Mafākhir al-ʿAlīyya* p.128. (See below p 75 for more on this statement and *sharḥ* )

<sup>184</sup> E. Waugh, *The Munshidin of Egypt* p. 9.

<sup>185</sup> Ibn ʿIyād, *Mafākhir al-ʿAlīyya* p 84. See also p 154. (The importance of a spiritual guide is asserted by many Sufi thinkers On this point see A Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* p 103 )

<sup>186</sup> E. Waugh, *The Munshidin of Egypt* p.8



mais il appartient encore a ses frères, dont il peut espérer tant de bienfaits s'il reste dans la voie tracée." <sup>187</sup>

Thus part of the essential message is to be achieved through both the group identity and dynamic of the Order.

At Sidi Belhassen the *aḥzāb* recitation is very difficult. Not only are the prayers themselves many and rather long - taking years to memorize - but the complex reading technique (much like Qur'ānic recitation) must also be mastered. Those more accomplished lead the younger and the less dedicated in the recitation, thus training them in proper technique. This technique is vital to keeping the *aḥzāb* recitation alive and meaningful for the brothers.

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<sup>187</sup> L. Rinn Marabouts et Khouan p 93.

## Chapter IV: Hizb al-Kabīr and Intertextuality

### Approaching the Material

Heiler, in his approach to the general subject of prayer, adopted a method based on the principles of early psychology of religion. As mentioned above (p 35), this method led him to prioritize the spoken (*spontaneous*) prayer over the written (*formulaic*) - concluding it to be more authentic. One alternative approach, aiming to account more fully for the significance of our so-called *formulaic* prayer, appears in the literary theory of "reader response". Although this will not be the focus of our present study, suffice it to say that the dynamic existing between the intention of the author and the responsibility of the reader merits further attention. The responsibility of the reader to make the proper assumptions, to follow the proper references and inferences of the author<sup>188</sup> may resolve Heiler's "dilemma" (above p.36) and give us a clue as to the living appeal and power of written prayer.

In moving away from this and using what is probably a more rewarding approach, namely that of textual/literary analysis, we hope to better appreciate the depth and creative achievement of written prayer. In the following analysis we will make use of such concepts as intertextuality and referential meaning; the aim being to make apparent the various levels of meaning that make up the *hizb*, and the strategies used by the author to construct such a discourse.

Turning to the text itself<sup>189</sup>, we are first struck by the large amount of Qur'ānic material used. In the first section of "Hizb al-Kabīr", entitled "Hizb al-Āyāt", Qur'ānic

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<sup>188</sup> J. Culler, The Pursuit of Signs (Ithaca N.Y. : Cornell University Press, 1981), Ch 6 and P. Ricoeur, Δ Ricoeur Reader (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991) M. Valdés ed. p 390. See also MacQueen, D. Speech Act Theory and the Roles of Religious Language (Ph.D. Thesis, McGill University, 1986).

<sup>189</sup> See Appendix. The use of the Psalter in Christian Daily Offices and the Breviary offer a number of parallels worthy of future study. See T. Talley, 'Worship and Cultic Life: Christian Worship' in E.R.E. and J. Bartlett, "Worship (Christian)" in E.R.E.

quotations make up almost the entire text. Their usage here is unlike usual Qur'ānic intertextual usage which normally presents quotations with the aim of corroborating a point or else to emphasize or restate a point. But in "Hizb al-Āyāt" this is not the case. Rather, the quotations are strung together to form almost the whole prayer.

Thus we are presented with a rather peculiar text, in the face of which we may ask why al-Shādhilī composed the prayer using intertextual material rather than formulating the message in his own words. We cannot answer this question categorically but we may advance some observations. The most obvious fact is that the Qur'ānic material is the revealed word of Allāh and is thus accorded a great level of authority and sanctity. The use of Qur'ānic material would thus endow the prayer with some of this authority. Another observation is that this is a form of composition in its own right and should be acknowledged as such. Its value can be appreciated when one bears in mind both the prevalence of Qur'ānic recitation in any Muslim society and the fact that the *aḥzāb* are written to be memorized and recited aloud. Thus a prayer composed of Qur'ānic material would carry a certain sanctity while also lending itself to practical use.

For our purposes a more important observation is the fact that this intertextual material brings with it - to some extent - its original meaning. This is in fact the basic idea of "intertextuality" which, " calls our attention to the importance of prior texts, insisting that the autonomy of texts is a misleading notion and that a work has the meaning it does only because certain things have previously been written."<sup>190</sup> That is to say the Qur'ānic quotation, when read, elicits information beyond its immediate literal meaning. This information is part of the larger message presented in its original context - the Qur'ān. This transported information we will call the referential meaning, as opposed to the apparent meaning which is the material's literal meaning as established in the prayer text.

To restate: the "Hizb al-Āyāt" is composed almost entirely of material taken from the Qur'ān. This material is selected and reorganized to form a new discourse - the prayer.

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<sup>190</sup> J. Culler, The Pursuit of Signs p. 103

This new discourse we call, on the one hand, the apparent meaning of the intertextual material. But this same material, in spite of its re-ordering and manipulation, does allude to or retain to some extent its original meaning. We will call this the referential meaning.

In this chapter we propose to discuss the strategies employed in the construction of the apparent meaning of the prayers. This will be done by isolating the process of organizing and redeploying the Qur'ānic material - in other words, the mechanics of how the prayer is "written" using intertextual material. Thus we shall see that the apparent meaning is constructed using 1) direct quotation (complete and incomplete), and 2) manipulated quotation.

As for the referential meaning we propose to elucidate it by first isolating its intertextual references. In so doing we will have indicated the Qur'ānic scenarios and themes invoked in the reader when he recites the *ahzāb*.<sup>191</sup> Secondly we will survey these references for thematic connections between them. The extent to which these connections are found will indicate the presence or absence of what we may call a parallel message.<sup>192</sup> And finally, we will discuss how the referential meaning completes or expands the apparent meaning.

Before continuing we would be well served by clarifying a few points. The prayer's two levels of meaning make it a rather unique form of discourse. Unlike most uses of intertextuality where the pre-text is variously evoked through quotation and formal or thematic allusion, here the *hizb* itself struggles to be recognized. It struggles in the sense that its intertextual material dominates it. The reader is almost reading scripture rather than a

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<sup>191</sup> We recognize that by simply tracing a quotation back to its Qur'ānic context does not necessarily tell us precisely what information is elicited in the mind of the reciter. Restricting ourselves to a textual study, we admit that we can not know what a quotation's full referential meaning is. Despite this uncertainty we have assumed that the prayer reciter would be familiar (consciously or subconsciously) with at least the immediate Qur'ānic context of most of the quotations. This familiarity would be dependant on two things: 1) the reciter's reflection on the referential meaning, and 2) the reciter's familiarity with and understanding of the Qur'ān itself. Here we have entered into speech-act theory. The idea here is "how a text gets things done in the world" - in this case how it evokes Qur'ānic themes etc. See R. Martin, 'Islamic Textuality in Light of Poststructural Criticism' p.124. For the difficulties inherent in reader theory see J. Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs* p. 125.

<sup>192</sup> N. Frye, *The Great Code* (Toronto: Penguin Books, 1990) p. 57.

devotional composition. Nevertheless, the prayer does have its own identity. This identity is witnessed first by the textual fact that the Qur'ānic material is organized and manipulated in a unique and creative manner by the author.<sup>193</sup> And as we shall see this creativity extends beyond the apparent meaning to include to some degree a referential composition. The second witness to the prayer's proper identity is the significance accorded it by its readers. In its phenomenological context the prayer is the inspired work of a saint. It contains the essence of his teaching which is unique and effective; and therefore has an identity beyond the Qur'ānic material it has appropriated. In other words, the prayer is recognized as being greater than the sum of its scriptural parts.

### The Hizb

Let us now undertake our discussion concerning the making of the apparent meaning of the intertextual material. Our first category is the most straightforward and consists of what we have called direct quotation. This is material which has been manipulated very little - or not at all - in transition from the Qur'ān to "Hizb al-Kabīr". By simply laying these particular quotations next to each other the author has composed the new text. They have been chosen largely because they complement each other thematically, or because they suggest a complete message by themselves.

An example of material strung together to bring out a theme begins at the top of page 16

(2:201) Our Lord! Give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and defend us from the torment of the Fire!  
 \*(3:147) Our Lord! Forgive us our sins and anything we may have done that transgressed our duty, establish our feet firmly, and help us against those that resist Faith. \*(2:286)  
 Our Lord! Condemn us not if we forget or fall into error;  
 Our Lord! Lay not on us a burden like which Thou didst lay on those before us; Our Lord! Lay not on us a burden greater

<sup>193</sup> See below (p 59) how even the most direct quotation may have been subject to manipulation.

than we have strength to bear. And grant us forgiveness.  
Have mercy on us. Thou art our Protector; Help us against  
those who stand against Faith

These passages have been cut out from their Qur'ānic text and strung together to develop  
the theme of the blessing of forgiveness leading to victory

This strategy also includes quoting a number of consecutive *āyāt* . For example  
(Q.40:7,8,9): [p 18 line 2]

(40:7) Our Lord! Thy Reach is over all things, in Mercy and  
Knowledge Forgive, then, those who turn in  
Repentance and follow Thy path; and preserve them from the  
Penalty of the Blazing Fire! +And grant, our Lord! that they  
enter the Gardens of Eternity, which Thou hast promised to  
them, and to the righteous among their fathers, their wives,  
and their posterity! For Thou art (He), the Exalted in Might,  
full of Wisdom +And preserve them from (all) ills, and  
anywhom Thou dost preserve from ills that Day, on them  
wilt Thou have bestowed Mercy indeed: and that will be  
truly (for them) the highest Achievement

Also (Q.3:15,16,17) [p 14 line 12]

(3:15) For in Allāh's sight are (all) [p 15. line 1] His  
servants +who say, Our Lord! we have indeed  
believed forgive us, then, our sins, and save us from the  
agony of the Fire +Those who show patience, firmness and  
self-control; who are true (in word and deed), who  
worship devoutly; who spend (in the way of Allāh), and who  
pray for forgiveness in the early hours of the morning

These verses are included together since they constitute an entire discussion of forgiveness  
and judgement.

We may also note that the author, in order to make these quotation groups run  
smoothly into the prayer text, has excluded the first parts of the initial *āyāt* quoted. This  
initial material would have tied the quotations to their Qur'ānic context, and would have  
included material not relevant (or even contradictory) to the theme at hand - something

which has to be avoided if the prayer text is to be successful in creating its own meaning (i.e. its apparent meaning).

The second strategy by which the text's apparent meaning is created is that of reworking and manipulating quotations.<sup>194</sup> The following are two examples of the manipulation employed. On the left is the phrase in its Qur'ānic context, and on the right it is in the prayer.

(Q.18:65) <i>wa ʿallamna-hu min</i>		[p.27 line 4] <i>wa ʿallim-nā min</i>
<i>laduni-nā ʿilman</i>		<i>laduni-ka ʿilman</i>
We . taught (him) knowledge from		and teach us knowledge from Your
our Own presence		Own presence.

(Q.39:63) <i>la-hu maqālīdu</i>		[p.32 line 4] <i>la-ka maqālīdu</i>
<i>al-samāwāti wa al-arḍi</i>		<i>al-samāwāti wa al-arḍi</i>
To Him belong the keys of the		To You belong the keys of the
heavens and the earth:		heavens and the earth

Other examples of manipulation - which are reworkings, and can be thought of almost as paraphrases - are:

(Q.48:2) <i>li-yaghfira la-ka Allāhu</i>		[p.33 line 8] <i>wa aghfir la-nā</i>
<i>mā taqaddama min dhanbī-ka</i>		<i>dhunūba-nā mā taqaddama</i>
<i>wa mā ta'akhkhara</i>		<i>min-hā wa mā ta'akhkhara</i>
That Allāh may forgive thee thy		Forgive us our sins of the
faults of the past and those		past and the future,
to follow;		

<sup>194</sup> We concede that the terms "reworking" and "manipulating" could be used even to describe the more complete quotations just discussed, but here we use them in reference to instances where the text has been either rearranged or some of its words have been changed.

And the following:

(Q.56:89) <i>fa-rauhun wa raihānun</i>		[p.35 line 1] <i>bi-al-rauhi wa</i>
<i>wa jannatu na<sup>c</sup>īmīn</i>		<i>al-raihāni ila al-jannati wa</i>
		<i>na<sup>c</sup>īmī-hā</i>
(For him is) rest and satisfaction,		(Lead us for) rest and satisfaction
and a Garden of Delights.		to the Garden (of Paradise)
		and its delights

As another example of manipulation of this sort we may cite:

(Q.113.1-2) <i>qul a<sup>c</sup>ūdhu bi-rabbī</i>		[p.29 line 7] <i>na<sup>c</sup>ūdhu bi-ka min</i>
<i>al-falaqī + min sharri mā</i>		<i>sharri mā khalaqta</i>
<i>khalaqa</i>		
Say: I seek refuge with the Lord of		We seek refuge in You from the evil
the Dawn, +from the mischief of		which is part of Your creation;
created things;		

In this instance it is also interesting to note that the author uses the phrase "*na<sup>c</sup>ūdhu bi-ka min ...*" over and over in the next few lines of the prayer. This usage not only brings a rhythmic quality to the prayer, but it is also a useful device which ties the author's requests to (or echoes) the opening of both sūra "Al-Falaq" and sūra "Al-Nās", which are very short suwar (Q.113,114), often used in *du<sup>c</sup>ā'*.<sup>195</sup>

A rather sophisticated manipulation is undertaken in the following example. In order to preserve the flow of the text and to facilitate a transition from one quotation to

<sup>195</sup> Many of the shorter suwar are included whole in prayers. See [p.19 line 4] for (Q.112,113 and 114).



another the author has exploited an intersecting phrase which is common to both quotations

From [p 16 line 12] we read:

(Q.3 53) *rabba-nā āmanna bī-mā anzalta wa attaba<sup>c</sup>na al-rasūla fa-uktub-nā ma<sup>c</sup>a al-shāhidīna*

O Lord! We believe in what Thou hast revealed, and we follow the Messenger, then write us down among those *who* bear witness.

What follows this quotation in the prayer is (Q.5:84,85) But (Q 5:83) ends in. *fa-uktub-nā ma<sup>c</sup>a al-shāhidīna* Thus (Q.3 53) and (Q 5 83) end in the same phrase. The author has used this common phrase as the pivot between one quotation and another.

For examples of common phrases not being used as pivots - rather their contexts serving almost to juxtapose them - see [p.12 lines 5-8] against [p.13 lines 9-12]; also, compare on page16 the lines 3 and 8.

The reason for one particular quotation to follow another is not always clear. At times the shift from one subject to another is rather abrupt. It is here that the referential meaning of the quotations can be of assistance. After isolating a number of disruptions in the narrative flow and checking the referential "pre-text", we find that on the referential level continuity has often been maintained.

One example of an apparent discontinuity in the prayer text is:

[p. 17 line 12].

(25.65) Our Lord! avert from us the Wrath of Hell, for its Wrath is indeed an affliction grievous. +Evil indeed is it as an abode, and as a place to rest in, \*(25 74) Our Lord! Grant unto us wives and offspring who will be the comfort of our eyes

In this instance the jump from the discussion in (Q.25:65,66) of Hell to (Q.25:74) and its discussion of wives and children is somewhat abrupt. But when seen in their Qur'ānic contexts, these verses have more in common. We can see that both quotations are part of a larger context which is listing the characteristics and actions of those who are the true

believers *Āya* (Q.25:63) sets the scene for the following five *āyāt* "And the servants of (Allāh) Most Gracious are those who " In this context (Q 25 65-66) and its discussion of Hell is part of what the true servants of Allāh believe (i.e. a confession) Likewise (Q.25:74) and its discussion of wives and offspring is part of a larger context We notice that the *āyāt* (Q.25:72-74) are in fact a listing of the things that must be done by believers And in (Q.25:75) it is concluded that:

Those (who prayed in this way) are the ones who will be rewarded with the highest place .

Thus it is on the plane of referential meaning that these two sections quoted in the prayer maintain a certain continuity.

A similar example may be found on page 19 There we find the following:

(60:5) Our Lord! Make us not a (test and) trial for the Unbelievers, but forgive us, our Lord! For Thou art (read art) the Exalted in Might, the Wise \*(66:8) Our Lord! Perfect our Light for us, and grant us Forgiveness .

The continuity of theme appears to break down between (Q 60:5) and (Q 66:8), but in their referential context these two verses share a common theme, that of a separation of the believers from the unbelievers.

The Qur'ānic pre-text for (Q 60:5) is the narrative of Abraham distancing himself from those of his people who would not accept Allāh alone *Āya* number five is in fact the prayer said by Abraham and his followers. The referential meaning of (Q 66:8) is to be found in the first part of that very *āya* The prayer for "completion of Light" is said by those recognized as true believers on the Day of Judgement The image used is a striking one: (Q 66:8) "Their Light will run forward before them and by their right hands" This Light will be what distinguishes between those destined for Paradise and those for Hell <sup>196</sup> Thus we may see a thematic continuity between Abraham separating himself and his

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<sup>196</sup> For a full understanding of this motif see also: (Q 57:12-15)

followers (the believers) from those who would not believe, and the lights on the Day of Judgement separating the faithful from the damned.

Occasionally this process is reversed, and the apparent meaning carries the continuity over the disruption in the referential meaning. That is, the "pre-textual" relation between two quotations may in some cases be sacrificed to allow for a situation in which the quotes work well together in their apparent meanings.

In the following lines [p 15 line 3] we find an instance of sound thematic congruity

(3 17) (In Allāh's Sight are those) who worship devoutly;  
who spend (in the way of Allāh), and who pray for  
forgiveness in the early hours of the morning \* (3 191)  
Those who celebrate the praises of Allāh, standing, sitting,  
and lying down on their sides, and contemplate the (wonders  
of) creation in the heavens and the earth

The transition from (Q 3 17) to (Q.3 191) works well largely because both verses are concerned with an individual's prayer and his reflection on the Divine. But this similarity in theme does not extend to the referential level. The Qur'ānic context for (Q 3 15-17) is largely established by (Q 3 14) which sets up the juxtaposition of man's futile craving for material wealth with the eternal rewards available to him if he pursues the Lord. In (Q 3 14) we read

Fair in the eyes of men is the love of things they covet  
women and sons, gold and silver . but in nearness to  
Allāh is the best of the goals (to return to).

The Qur'ānic context for (Q 3 191-194) is clearly different from this. These verses are tied to an explicit Divine reassurance to those of Muhammad's followers who have suffered persecution. Allāh states

Never will I suffer to be lost the work of any of you .. who  
have left (your) homes . and suffered harm in My Cause,

For further examples of the apparent text carrying continuity despite referential discontinuity, the reader is referred to [p. 17. line 9] and [p 16 line 8].

From a wider view of the referential material we observe two things. The first is that thematic connections may be made between the referential material. Although not every reference can be categorized in this way, much of it may be fitted into two categories. We may characterize the first as eschatological, while the second is concerned largely with Qur'ānic figures, and in particular the Prophets.

Although we cannot fully address the entire body of possible referential text we may offer the reader a general accounting of their thematic connections. Of the sixty three immediate Qur'ānic contexts from which the quotations of "Hizb al-Āyāt" are taken nineteen deal directly with eschatology, and five of these nineteen refer to the garden of heaven in one form or another. Of the second major thematic connection - that of Qur'ānic figures - we may enumerate fifteen instances. A number of different individuals are mentioned, but the majority of references are to Muhammad, Abraham and Moses.

In assessing the presence or absence of a parallel message it appears we must restrict ourselves to the thematic. To conclusively prove the existence of an intended parallel message<sup>197</sup> beyond the thematic lines we have discussed is beyond the scope of the present work - if it is possible at all. Nevertheless, we may consider referential meaning to be carried by the themes in the sense that they bring forward and repeat specific symbols and scenarios.

In spite of our having presented the apparent and referential meanings as distinct to this point, we must remember that the nature of intertextuality is more inclusive. In fact the basic dynamic of that concept revolves around a continuity and movement between the pre-text and the text.<sup>198</sup> And as we stated above (p 56), this movement is not only the moving of words but includes their meaning as established in the pre-text. That is, the material used to construct the new text arrives pregnant with meaning.

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<sup>197</sup> A message in which the referential instances develop each other and somehow constitute a separate narrative.

<sup>198</sup> In our terms between the referential and apparent.

In our process of tracing back to the referential pre-text not only have we been better able to appreciate the strategy employed in manipulating the Qur'ānic material, but we have better understood the full intended meaning of the prayer text. The referential meaning can often provide us with information which completes the meaning of the quoted material.

One example of the referential meaning active in the apparent meaning may be found on page 19, line 3

(Q 66 8) Our Lord! Perfect our Light for us, and grant us  
Forgiveness For Thou has power over all things

In the apparent text "Perfect our Light . . ." must be taken as a metaphor, and in the context one would probably read "Light" as either "soul" or "self". But the introduction of the referential meaning changes this situation by adding the eschatological background (see Q 57 12-15). The phrase is thus attached to an eschatological drama, which may conceivably be approached as symbolic or taken literally, but would not be read as metaphor.<sup>199</sup>

Another important instance of the referential active in the apparent is the rephrasing of (Q 18 65) on page 27, line 4: "teach us knowledge from Your Own Presence," In its apparent meaning this phrase seems to be saying something like: "teach us a divinely inspired knowledge", but the referential meaning specifies this kind of knowledge as that of the mystical figure of Khidr. A popular figure in Sufi thought, Khidr is often the great inspirer.<sup>200</sup> His knowledge "from the presence of Allāh", as narrated in the Qur'ān, makes him even Mūsa's superior (Q 18 60-82). Thus only by tracing back to the referential meaning may we fully grasp the meaning at hand.

On page 18, line 10 the prayer asks.

(Q 59 10) Our Lord! Forgive us, and our brethren who came  
before us into the Faith, and leave not, in our hearts, rancour  
(or sense of injury) against those who have believed.

<sup>199</sup> It is interesting to note how such easily identifiable intertextuality undermines any potentially metaphorical interpretation of passages in the prayer.

<sup>200</sup> Some of the Shādhilī *du'ā'* are attributed to his inspiration. See above p 52. In another prayer collection of the Shādhiliyya of Tunis (*Manbaḥ al-Asrār*) we find the *du'ā'* of Sidi Ahmad al-Khidr.

In its apparent context this petition makes little sense if the referential meaning is not included in one's understanding. In the Qur'ānic context these are the words of those who came later to Madina - and by implication to Islam. Thus, with this additional information, we may see this as a symbolic exhortation to the Sufi prayer reciter not to harbour resentment towards his co-religionists who may be spiritually superior to him.

Our exercise here of completing the text with the pre-text has dealt with only a few examples of the most obvious completions. The reader will have noticed that intertextuality remains an imprecise tool at best. Although it has allowed us to hew out some of the larger instances, it is not precise enough to yield results throughout the entire text. We know that all the Qur'ānic material quoted brings something with it, but our analysis is unable to account fully for even a large part of it. Here we are reminded of the fact that this text is, after all, like any good literary composition, neither mechanically produced nor open to any simple mechanical deconstruction.

## Chapter V: Words and Meanings

### Vocabulary

In her important work on a large collection of *aḥzāb* literature C. Padwick alludes to the unique position of the prayers as standing on the middle ground between accepted theological principles and the needs and interests of the greater mass of users of devotional literature.<sup>201</sup> This idea merits further development and is probably the most fruitful way to look at this type of writing. Let us start by noting that the "orthodoxy" of many Sufi practices has been an issue throughout much of Islamic history. In the case of the Shādhiliyya we find discussion of "orthodoxy" at both ends of its time-line. In the earliest period of its history, the third Shaykh of the Order, Ibn 'Atā' Allāh, was involved in the defence of devotional practices in Egypt against the attacks of Ibn Taymiyya (d 1328/728).<sup>202</sup> At the other end of the time-line, in the modern period, the *ṭarīqa* distances itself from the Orders it considers to be too excessive in their displays of popular devotion.<sup>203</sup>

From a certain point of view this history of at one time defending itself from the attacks of the conservative theologian and Hanbalī legal scholar Ibn Taymiyya, while later taking pride in its own restraint and "orthodoxy" - particularly in relation to other Orders - mirrors the unique position of its most representative literature, the *aḥzāb*. The prayers are composed by the Saint/Shaykh under various circumstances of inspiration,<sup>204</sup> but in order to be successful they must satisfy both the criteria of "orthodoxy" as established by the religious scholars, and the devotional aesthetic of the masses who will use them. All *aḥzāb* find themselves somewhere on the continuum between these two poles. And, although the

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<sup>201</sup> C. Padwick, *Muslim Devotions* (London, S.P.C.K., 1961) Introduction.

<sup>202</sup> V. Danner, 'The Shādhiliyya and North African Sufism' in *Islamic Spirituality: Manifestations* S. Nasr, ed. (New York: Crossroads, 1991) p. 36

<sup>203</sup> It would almost be safe to assume an ongoing tension between the mainstream of the Shādhiliyya *ṭarīqa* and its numerous and often more popular sub-Orders or *tawā'if*. See above fn. 64

<sup>204</sup> See above fn. 200

present study can not take up this comparative question fully, those of the Nibrās can be found closer to the pole of "orthodox", conservative, and more theologically defensible thinking. It is in the light of these two competing poles that we approach the present chapter.

As can be seen in the previous chapter on intertextuality, the vocabulary of the *ahzāb* is heavily dependent on the Qur'ān. Beyond that, many of the key terms have been expanded upon in what may be called the systematic writings of Sufi thinkers. Qur'anic terms such as "*dhikr*" (remembrance), "*al-asmā' al-ḥusna*" (the most beautiful Names) and "*nūr*" (light) are only a few examples.<sup>205</sup> In spite of the development of a large number of Qur'anic concepts within the Sufi tradition, our discussion of key terms will be rather more specific. Our aim is to explore the use and meaning of certain terms with reference primarily to the subsequent works of the Shādhilī Order.

### Tawakku<sup>206</sup>

From the root WKL, the basic meaning of this form of the verb is to assume a responsibility. In its Qur'anic context though, it has taken on the sense of relying on Allāh, or placing one's trust completely in Him

There are two Qur'anic uses of *tawakkul* in our *ahzāb*. The first is found on page 17 line 7. (Q 10:85) "In Allāh do we put our trust (*tawakkulnā*) O Lord! make us not a trial (*fitna*) for those who practice oppression." The idea of *fitna*, in the Qur'anic context, is that the people of Moses fear becoming targets of Pharaoh's persecution. Looking at the structure of this *āya*, we see that it is essentially a statement of juxtaposition; that is, a setting up *tawakkul* against the fears of the believers. The supplicant, in the face of adversity, is strengthened by his trust in the Divine. This idea of

<sup>205</sup> Ibn 'Atā' Allah has composed entire works on the first two concepts. His work on *dhikr* is Muṭṭāḥ al-Falāḥ wa Muṣṭabāḥ al-Arwāḥ (Cairo: Mustafā al-Bābī al-Halabī, 1961), and his work on the Names of Allah is Al-Qaṣd al-Mujarrad fī Ma'nā al-Mufrad Allāh (Cairo: Al-Matba'at al-Misriyya, 1930)

<sup>206</sup> For a wider view of this subject see B. Reinert Die Lehre vom *tawakkul* in der klassischen Sufik (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1968)



shelter from persecution is further echoed by the quotation chosen to follow in the prayer. It runs (Q 18:10) "O Lord! bestow on us from Thyself, and dispose of our affair for us in the right way!"<sup>207</sup>

The second use of *tawakkul* is quoted from *Sūra* 9:129, "Allāh sufficeth me: There is no god but He: On Him is my trust (*tawakkaltu*) - He is the Lord of the Throne (of Glory) Supreme!". This passage is found in three places in the *Nibrās*. In the first, on page 88 line 12, it retains its Qur'ānic context, that is, the material immediately before it in the Qur'ān is also quoted in the *ḥizb*. Specifically, the context is that of the message of the Prophet being ignored by unbelievers. In "*Ḥizb al-Ikhfā*" the same passage is presented as an article of faith along with a number of other short confessional statements such as, (Q 85:21) "Nay, this is a Glorious Qur'ān (inscribed) in a Tablet Preserved (*fī lawḥin mahfūzin*)" and, (Q.7:196) "My protector is Allāh, who revealed the book .."<sup>208</sup> In "*Ḥizb al-Bahr*" [p 103. line 4] the passage is found again, and in an almost identical context.

All together, these uses of *tawakkul* do not constitute an elaborate discussion of the subject. To fully appreciate the significance of this concept we must turn to the later writers of the Order. Here we find detailed discussions of *tawakkul* which can be, for the most part, placed into one of two categories. In the first, *tawakkul* has taken on an element of renunciation. In the second, it has become incorporated into the vocabulary of the stages along the spiritual Way.

A clear association of *tawakkul* with self-restraint is related by Ibn ʿIyād. In the *Mafākhir* (p 83) he quotes al-Shādhilī repeating what he had been told by his teacher<sup>209</sup>: "Confidence (*thiqa*) in Allāh's religion is the foundation of worship (*ʿibāda*) and of asceticism (*al-zuhd fī al-dunyā*); and the main part of these two things is trust in Allāh (*tawakkul*). This is the proper worship of the Believers." Another writer, Ibn al-Sabbāgh, relates al-Shādhilī's sayings on *tawakkul*: "*Tawakkul* is only authentic for the pious

<sup>207</sup> *Nibrās* p 17 line 9

<sup>208</sup> *Nibrās* p.108 line 14 and p.108 line 12

<sup>209</sup> Since *Ustādhī-hī* is not identified, it is most likely Ibn Mashīsh.

(*muttaqin*); and piety is only complete in him who trusts in Allāh (*li-mutawakkilin*) "<sup>210</sup>  
 Besides these associations with self-restraint and piety, *tawakkul* has also been used in a rather different context

In our second category the term *tawakkul* comes to be a stage in the spiritual development of an adept of the Order. The individual is taught that *tawakkul* is a crucial element in his relationship to the Divine. Al-Shādhilī himself has said that, "Tawakkul is the turning of the heart away from everything which is other than Allāh, that is to say, forgetfulness of all other than Him."<sup>211</sup> Further, along with *zuhd* and *ridā* (acceptance of Allāh's decree), *tawakkul* is the foundation of resistance to things prohibited <sup>212</sup> It is the tenth of the twenty *awrād* to be met by the "sincere ones" Another use of *tawakkul* as a bench-mark along the spiritual path is found in Ibn 'Atā' Allāh's work on *dhikr* Here it is presented as a *maqām* (station). "Dhikr of the Name "Al-Muhassan "<sup>213</sup> is useful if one wants to attain the *maqām* of *tawakkul* ."<sup>214</sup>, and "Dhikr of the Name "Al-Muqīt "<sup>215</sup> accords *tawakkul* ."<sup>216</sup> Thus *tawakkul* has assumed a place in the technical vocabulary of Shādhilī *dhikr*, and of spiritual discipline.

### Bātin and Zāhir

These two terms are usually translated as "esoteric" and "exoteric" Together they form probably the most popular set of opposites in the vocabulary of Sufism. Other well used pairs, but reserved as Names of Allāh, are *Al-Awwal* (The First) and *Al-Akhir* (The Last), and *Al-Muhyī* (The Giver of Life) and *Al-Mumīt* (The Giver of Death)

<sup>210</sup> Ibn al-Sabbāgh, *Durrat al-Asrār* p 58 as quoted in 'Abd al-Halīm Mahmūd, *Al-Madrasa al-Shādhiliyya* p.141.

<sup>211</sup> 'Abd al-Halīm Mahmūd, *Al-Madrasa al-Shādhiliyya* p 141

<sup>212</sup> Ibn 'Iyād, *Maḥākhir al-ʿAlīyya* p 83

<sup>213</sup> One of the Names of Allah, meaning "The Beautifier"

<sup>214</sup> Ibn 'Atā' Allāh, *Miftāh al-Falāh* p 35

<sup>215</sup> "The Nourisher"

<sup>216</sup> *Miftāh al-Falāh* p 36

The prayer "Wazifa Hizb al-Tawhid"<sup>217</sup> begins with a calling to Allāh in His form as two of these sets of opposites. It opens with, "Yā Awwalu! Yā Akhiru! Yā Zāhiru! Yā Bātinu!" Elsewhere, the writer displays a somewhat more creative use of these terms. He petitions,

(Lord) preserve us by Your Grace (*bi-Luṭfi-ka*) which is at once hidden (*al-khafīy*) and manifest (*al-zāhir*). O Hidden One! (*Yā Bātinu*), O Apparent One! (*Yā Zāhiru*), O Kind One! (*Yā Latīfu*).<sup>218</sup>

The use of the adjective *al-zāhir* in a less usual juxtaposition with *al-khafīy*, makes for a creative tension which is only resolved by its return in the next sentence to its usual place beside *bātin*. In another prayer this set of opposites begins to take on a sense which will be further developed by the later writers of the Order. We read, " (Lord) preserve me ... from without (*zāhir-ī*) and from within (*bātin-ī*) " <sup>219</sup> Here *bātin* and *zāhir* are not simply two competing characteristics, rather they have taken on the symbolic dimension of a whole. The petitioner has come to use them together to signify a sense of entirety.

Also used in the context of ritual and spiritual purity, the combination of *bātin* and *zāhir* begins to point to a state greater than the sum of the two parts. In one manual we are told that if purity in both parts is achieved, then the recitation of the *ḥizb* will be effective. The adept is told that in order to recite properly he must be both inwardly (*tāhir al-bātin*) and outwardly (*tāhir al-zāhir*) pure <sup>220</sup> Esoterically he may become pure by reading certain passages from the Qur'ān, <sup>221</sup> while exoteric purity is achieved through ritual prayer-rite ablution <sup>222</sup> Thus, if both outer and inner purity is achieved, the individual may rise to a higher level of spiritual interaction with the divine.

<sup>217</sup> *Nibrās* p. 35 (Wazifa section)

<sup>218</sup> *Nibrās* p. 83 line 8

<sup>219</sup> *Nibrās* p. 109 line 2

<sup>220</sup> *Mafākhur* p. 263

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>222</sup> *Mafākhur* p. 155

In other uses *bāṭin* and *zāhir* are set up against each other in a dichotomy. We read, "Know that Allāh has made for the worshipper occasions (*asbāb*) (through which) he may reach His Holy Presence . . . those occasions are sometimes esoteric and sometimes exoteric."<sup>223</sup> This kind of juxtaposition naturally creates a tension between the two elements of possible experience. Nevertheless, this tension is creative rather than exclusionary, since in the end the necessity of accounting for both elements is recognized. Shortly after the above advice to the seeker, we are told that although the esoteric leads to more direct contact, the exoteric must also be preserved.<sup>224</sup>

In much the same way, Ibn ʿAtāʾ Allāh sets up a tension between *bāṭin* and *zāhir* only to reintegrate them. In his discussion of the meanings of the letters A-L-L A-H he writes, "Heureux celui pour qui les voiles des ténèbres du sens extérieur (*maʿnā zahirihi* -ou exotérique) se sont levés sur les lumières du sens intérieur (*maʿnā bāṭinihi* -ou ésotérique)..."<sup>225</sup> He later reconciles this prioritizing of the *bāṭin* over the *zāhir* by drowning them both in the overwhelming concept of Allāh's universal Existence (*wujūd*).<sup>226</sup>

### Sirr

Meaning "secret", this term has a wide usage not only in Sufism, but also in many other religious traditions. Although not exclusive to mysticism, the word almost inevitably arises in any discussion of "mysteries" or of the "elect", which are important themes to any system of speculative spiritual thinking.

In the Shādhilī prayers the term *sirr* is often used. Upon observation we see that it is often doubled and subsequently juxtaposed to itself in its primary form. In other words, we sometimes read not only of the "secret" but also of the "secret of the secret". As one

<sup>223</sup> Mafākhir p. 153

<sup>224</sup> Ibid

<sup>225</sup> Al-Qaṣd al-Mujarrad fī Maʿrifa al-Mufrad Allāh as translated by M. Gloton in Ibn ʿAtāʾ Allāh, Traité sur le nom Allāh (Paris: Deux Océans, 1981) p. 80

<sup>226</sup> Ibid

would expect, the latter usage represents the higher, more essential truth of the matter under discussion

We may first note that *sirr*, even in its more straightforward forms, connotes a mystical or intuitive knowledge. The prayer reciter asks, "(Lord), cause us to see the secret of this (Your) protective Grace."<sup>227</sup> and elsewhere, "(Lord), grant us . . . a secret from among Your secrets "<sup>228</sup>

In another instance the use of *ṣirr*, it has been extended beyond "knowledge" to represent a mystical state. In "Hizb al-Tawhīd" one reads: "We have asked You, with *lā ilāha illa Allāhu*, the secret of unification (*sirru al-jamʿi*)<sup>229</sup> is *lā ilāha illa Allāhu* "<sup>230</sup>. It would seem that this is a petition asking not simply for an understanding of "union", but rather something more like an intuitive experience of it.<sup>231</sup>

This idea of experiencing a secret is well illustrated in the following lines: "We ask of You the secret of the secrets withheld with persistence until we are no longer in fault or sin"<sup>232</sup>. This association of the secret of secrets with the attainment of a higher spiritual level is further developed in a prayer on grace which ties access to the secret of *Luṭf* to ones having reached a certain level of perception- *maʿrifa* and *ʿiyān*. It then takes this one step further by presenting access to the secret of this secret as a guarantee of sanctity. We read,

You have hidden the diffusion of the secret of Your Grace  
(*luṭfī-ka*) in the worlds (*ʿakwān*), and no one sees it except  
for the people of gnosis and vision; and since they have seen

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<sup>227</sup> *Nibrās* p. 85 line 2

<sup>228</sup> *Nibrās* p. 61 line 1

<sup>229</sup> For a discussion of *sirru al-jamʿi* see A. Schummel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* p. 143.

<sup>230</sup> *Nibrās* p. 91 line 9

<sup>231</sup> This extension from knowledge to experience should not surprise us, since the idea of "Gnosis" or *Maʿrifa* (in the Islamic context) seems to maintain that we should not see mystical knowledge as something utterly distinct from mystical experience. Rather, they should be placed on a single continuum - the path to the Divine

<sup>232</sup> *Nibrās* p. 14 line 5

the secret of the secret of Your Grace in everything, then  
they are safe in it from the evil of all things.<sup>233</sup>

Thus the first proposition is to equate the secret with knowledge, and the second to equate the secret of that secret with existence, that is, a heightened level of spiritual being.

The association of *sirr* with a higher level of spiritual existence is echoed by Ibn ʿAtā Allāh. In his schema of the value of various forms of *dhikr*, he places "secret *dhikr*" at the top since it signifies the attainment of "presence" in the Divine. He writes,

*Dhikr* of the letters without the presence (*al-hudūr*) is  
"dhikr of the tongue"; *dhikr* of presence in the heart is  
"dhikr of the heart"; and the *dhikr* of concealment (*ghaiba*)  
in the presence of the mentioned (*madhkūr*) is the "dhikr of  
the secret", and is the hidden (*khafīy*) *dhikr*.<sup>234</sup>

Thus the adept may rise from a simple mechanical praise to penetrate the secret of "being" with Allāh, a secret which is above all found in silence, as Ibn ʿAtā Allāh remarks, "the nourishment of the secrets is in silence (*sukūn*)."<sup>235</sup>

### Shafāʿa

This term may be translated as mediation, advocacy or intercession. The following discussion will reflect the distinction existing between two different uses of the term. The first usage is primarily Qurʾānic, and has the sense of a superior advocating for the salvation of a lesser in front of Allāh. In these instances perhaps "advocacy" would best be chosen as an equivalent. In the second usage - which is the primary concern of the later commentators - the idea is rather of a "mediator". The superiors become a conduit through which Divine blessings may reach those of lesser stature. In this case it may be said they stand between the beneficent Allāh and humankind, rather than beside the judging Allāh on the final day.

<sup>233</sup> *Nibrās* p. 84 line 12.

<sup>234</sup> *Mufrāh al-Falāh* p. 9.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid*. In this line *sukūn* could well be translated as "peace" or "tranquility".

Padwick divides the Qur'ānic uses of *shafā'a* into three groups<sup>236</sup>, each of which is represented in our *ahzāb*. The first is a group which asserts *shafā'a* as being reserved as the prerogative of Allāh alone. That is, there are no intermediaries to be had from among the Prophets of the Saints. Al-Shādhilī writes, "As You have been our Guide to You, be also our Advocate (*shafī'a-nā*) to You "<sup>237</sup>, and, "O Lord, we ask for pure friendship (*khulla*), wide knowledge (*ma'rifa*) and steadfast intercession (*shafā'a qā'ima*)".<sup>238</sup>

The second group is made up of statements to the effect that the sinners will not find intercession for themselves on Judgement Day. We find in "Hizb al-Ikhfā'" the following Qur'ānic quotation: (Q 40 18) " . no intimate friend, nor intercessor (*shafī'*) will the wrongdoers have . "<sup>239</sup>

In the final group there is no absolute prohibition of mediation, but since everything is within Allāh's power, He may accord this right to whomever He wills. In "Hizb al-Lutf" we read, (Q 2 255)"Who is there can intercede in His presence except as He permitteth?"<sup>240</sup>

As to who will be accorded this right of intercession, the Qur'ān's most explicit statement is (Q.43 86)"And whom they invoke besides Allāh have no power of intercession (*shafā'a*) - only he who bears witness to the Truth, and they know (him) "<sup>241</sup> But this does not settle the question unequivocally. Classical exegesis tends to hold ʿIsā (Jesus) to be this figure,<sup>242</sup> but "in the hearts of the masses"<sup>243</sup> Muhammad is the intercessor on the Last Day.

In the *Nibrās* (p 70 line 12) we find individuals who are good potential intercessors. Muhammad, his family and companions have blessings called down upon

<sup>236</sup> C. Padwick, *Muslim Devotions* p.29.

<sup>237</sup> *Nibrās* p. 88 line 2

<sup>238</sup> *Nibrās* p. 35 line 1

<sup>239</sup> *Nibrās* p. 108 line 4

<sup>240</sup> *Nibrās* p. 88 line 6

<sup>241</sup> Note that Yūsuf ʿAlī's translation assumes that, ' he who bears witness to the Truth' is Muhammad.

<sup>242</sup> See *Tafsīr al-Jalālīn* (Bairut: Dār al-Maʿrifā, 1977) p. 255.

<sup>243</sup> A. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* p.217.

them. Also, Allāh is asked to approve of the Rightly Guided Caliphs (Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, ʿAlī), Hasan and Husain, their communities, and their companions. But nowhere in this collection is the next step taken to specifically request intercession from any of these figures.

Nevertheless, there is at least one instance, albeit from another prayer collection, in which the petitioners explicitly seek attainment to al-Shādhilī. It runs, "Then let him (the reciter) seek the presence of the spiritual personality of Sidī ash-shaikh Abū al-Hasan ash-Shādhilī."<sup>244</sup> But we may suspect that this is not from a Shādhilī work for three reasons. First, although we do not have access to the collection this statement is taken from, the fact that it is attributed to one Ismāʿīl ibn Muhammad al-Qādirī suggests that the writer is instead a member of the Qādirīyya. Second, we are told that this is a preamble to "Ḥizb al-Bahr", which is so widely used throughout the Muslim world that Order affiliation can not be inferred from its use. And third, I was told by members of the Shādhilīyya in Tunis specifically that al-Shādhilī does not have the power of intercession, and that only ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jilānī could be so petitioned.<sup>245</sup> In spite of these points we must not pursue the issue too far, since without further research we can not know even to what extent the statement above is a petition for intercession, or a symbolic reference to spiritual progress in the Shaykh's Way.

Arguably the calling down of blessings upon the Prophet is itself a form of intercession - but these uses are not accepted as such. On this very point Padwick cites al-Suyūṭī (d. 1505/910), "Our *ṣalāt* for the Prophet is not intercession (*shafaʿa*) from us on his behalf, for such as we do not intercede for such as he."<sup>246</sup> To be more precise, the calling down of blessings upon the Prophet is equated with remembrance of him through a remembrance of Allāh. Ibn ʿAtāʾ Allāh writes, "Thus the aspirant (*sālik*) begins with the

<sup>244</sup> C. Padwick, *Muslim Devotions* p. 243.

<sup>245</sup> For the petition to saints during *dhikr* ritual (*madad*) see M. Gilsenan, *Saint and Sufi in Modern Egypt* pp. 166, 168.

<sup>246</sup> Jalāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Rahmān al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Ḥizb al-Manīʿ* as quoted in C. Padwick, *Muslim Devotions* p. 38.



*salāt* upon the Prophet which is both remembrance of Allāh and remembrance of His Prophet (*dhikr rasūlī-hī*) "<sup>247</sup> He supports this equating of *dhikr Allāh* and *dhikr Rasūlī-hī* by quoting hadīth to the effect that, "He who loves Muhammad, loves Allāh, he who remembers Muhammad, remembers Allāh "<sup>248</sup> Thus we find evolving the idea of the Prophet as mediator between the simple worshiper and the Divine

This mediation is further developed by the later Shādhilī manual writers. Operating under the undisputed principle that Allāh is the ultimate source of all spiritual gifts, they describe the medial position of Prophets and Shaykhs in relation to the simple adept. Allāh's immutable position as fountain-head is concisely stated in an often repeated saying of al-Shādhilī He is asked, "What is polytheism?", to which his answer is, "the taking of Saints and intercessors other than God "<sup>249</sup> As for intercession itself, he describes it as light pouring forth from the Divine through the intermediaries

*Shafā'a* is the pouring of light upon the essence (*jawhar*) of Prophethood, and it extends from the essence of Prophethood to the Prophets and the Saints The lights run from the sincere ones (*ṣadiqīn*) and the Prophets to creation. (i.e. to the people beneath them) <sup>250</sup>

This downward movement from Allāh to the Prophets and Saints is complemented by a kind of upward movement from the perspective of the aspirant Mustafa Najā tells us that when an adept becomes the follower of a shaykh, the shaykh is the intermediary (*wāsita*) to the Prophet, for he is the intermediary between *al-Haqq* (the Truth, i.e. Allāh) and creation,<sup>251</sup> and he is the door to Allāh. Thus the adept comes to see that the support he receives from his shaykh is in essence from the Prophet.<sup>252</sup> Another specific example of this movement is found in Ibn ʿAbbād In his discussion of the boons of reciting "Hizb al-

<sup>247</sup> *Mufrāh al-Falāh* p. 46

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>249</sup> *Mafākhir* p. 17

<sup>250</sup> *Mafākhir* p. 128

<sup>251</sup> It would make for an interesting study - at a later time - to explore how much the idea of *Insān Kāmil* in his role as 'sustainer of creation' extends to the Saints

<sup>252</sup> Mustafa Najā, *Kashf al-Asrār li-Tanwīr al-Afākār* (Bayrūt. ?, 1978) p. 60

Kabir" he claims that the reciter somehow rises to share in al-Shādhilī's station. He comments ,

... it is as though the shaykh were saying, "If an individual recites the litany with upright intention and sincere hope, and is a lover following our path as embodied in the litany, and is careful to aspire to the qualities of the saints as mentioned in the litany, then that person has already reached the goal of hoping to attain his expectation. He has reached the rank of sainthood reserved for me; he has entered into my litany, and thus into my sponsorship. Hence, that person has what I have in the way of nearness to God and honor, and must do what I must do in the way of obedience and surrender."<sup>253</sup>

Thus the reciter may reach the level of sainthood, in some form, through the litany of al-Shādhilī.

The intermediary position of the Prophets is vital to those below them. They are the mediators of spiritual truths which would be overwhelming to all but them. Ibn 'Atā' Allāh makes this clear in his discussion of the intimate conversations (*munājāt*)

The legitimacy of the *ṣalāt* for the Prophets is that the spirit (*rūh*) of people is fragile and can not be exposed directly to the divine lights. And if the bond is strengthened between His Spirit and the spirit of the Prophets by the *salat*, then the abundant lights from the hidden world are reflected in the spirits of the Prophets upon the spirits of those who pray for their blessing.<sup>254</sup>

It is interesting to note that the common supplicants, by their prayers, help to support the Prophets' connection to the Divine Spirit - thus adding another dimension to their position as mediators.

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<sup>253</sup> Ibn 'Abbād of Ronda, *Letters on the Sūfī Path* J. Renard trans. (Toronto: Paulist Press, 1986) p. 176

<sup>254</sup> *Miftāh al-Falāh* p. 47 (Not only do the Prophets bring down revelation, but they continue on as active agents in the spiritual realm.)

## Paradoxes

One striking feature of the *ahzāb* are instances of what may be described as extreme recognition (or assertion) of the omnipotence and omnipresence of the Divine.<sup>255</sup> In short paradoxical statements the petitioner rolls his request and Allāh's response up into the single idea of His Will. Textually, this serves to undermine the logical juxtaposition existing between the creature and the Creator, the subject and the Sovereign. In the following instances forgiveness is requested while at once recognizing that in the end all occurs only by Allāh's Will - including sin and worship. We read,

(Lord), You are obeyed only by Your choosing and consent;  
(and) defied only by Your decision and decree. Without it  
I could not have obeyed You until You consented, and I have  
not defied You without Your having foreordained it.<sup>256</sup>

Another example uses the Qur'ānic symbol of the Pen to make the same point, "(Lord) forgive what was written by Your Pen."<sup>257</sup>

In her discussion of these types of statements Padwick describes them as paradoxes which reflect the true nature of reality. She proposes, "What if the 'insistent paradoxes of experience' are closer to Divine Reality than any conceptual scheme? Within the mystery of Divine Nature must be the reconciliation of incompatible attributes and perhaps it may be too tremendous in its reality to be expressed in syllogisms."<sup>258</sup>

In further statements this technique is used to highlight Allāh's immanence. In one example the aspirant hopes to attain a spiritual position which will stand between him and his own "self". He petitions Allāh,

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<sup>255</sup> In another form, this impulse to attribute all action fundamentally to the Divine is found in the Asharite (10th/4th century) concept of *Kasb* or acquisition.

<sup>256</sup> *Nibrās* pp 80,81

<sup>257</sup> *Nibrās* p 14 line 8 (Wazifa section). The Pen in Qur'ānic usage (Q 68:1) is a symbol of revelation and decree.

<sup>258</sup> C. Padwick, *Muslim Devotions* p 92

I ask You to conceal me by Your closeness (*bi-qurbī-ka*)  
from myself until I do not see or notice the closeness of  
anything, nor its distance from me . 259

This immanence is alluded to again in the statement.

The fulfillment of Your Wisdom in Your creation is Your  
Truth; and the mercy of Your Grace amongst creation  
softens the harsh examination of Your Truth in the two  
worlds (heaven and earth) 260

Not only does an individual take refuge from Allāh's judgement in His own Grace, but also  
his approach to the Divine is via Allāh Himself. The petitioner asks the guide to direct him  
to Himself:

Just as You have been Yourself our guide to You (*kunta  
dalīla-nā ʿalā-ka*), then be our advocate to You My merits  
are simply Your gift, and my misdeeds part of Your  
decree "261

Thus the paradoxes reflect the peculiar perception of the spiritual aspirant by collapsing the  
distance between him and the Divine They are also reflections of the paradox of the  
immanence of Allāh amongst His own creation.

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259 *Nibrās* p.41 line 9

260 *Nibrās* p.85 line 10

261 *Nibrās* p 80 line 2.

## Conclusion

As for our efforts to see how the *ahzāb* "get things done in the world" (above fn.5) we have tried to understand how the text carries religious significance or weight. Here the first point to be made is that these prayers are successful, that is, they are able to appeal to the entire spectrum of believers, and therefore to remain in current usage. To achieve this they must be both aesthetically pleasing and accomplished in substance. For the *Nibrās* its popular appeal and its use among other orders ("Hizb al-Bahr") signals a fair degree of success in at least its style and aesthetic.

A more important point is the substantive achievement. This study has dealt specifically with this issue, focusing primarily on the presence of Qur'ānic material. Analysis has produced the picture of a reuse or redeployment of scripture in order to create a new text and convey a new message. This is a unique literary process (above p.56). Unlike other uses it does not hesitate to edit scripture - pieces are cut and reassembled or paraphrased. The present study has labeled these efforts "reworkings" or "manipulations".

To more fully understand this use of scripture, the reformulation of Qur'ānic material must be seen on two levels: the literal and the referential (above p.56). In this light we can see that the prayer writer not only rearranges scripture to convey his message, but by doing so he simultaneously manipulates the referential field of meaning of that same scripture. This intertextual dynamic allows the prayer-text to evoke (either obviously or not) the wider Qur'ānic context of an issue or concept. In chapter four I have tried to show exactly how this dynamic is manipulated by the prayer writer.

On the subject of liturgy this study has attempted to place the recitation of the prayers in its proper light. The discussions of the *ḥaḍra*, *dhikr* and the *ḥizb* recitation points to a much more important role for the *ahzāb* than is commonly attributed to it.

Although the study has restricted itself to the Shādhiliyya in Tunis, some of its observations and conclusions about recitation may to some degree be relevant to other Orders

It is probably most difficult to assess the *ahzāb* on the level of the individual religious experience. This study has for the most part avoided the common temptation to equate ecstatic trances and extreme behaviour with spiritual significance. Particularly in the case of the *ahzāb* recitation we must remind ourselves that trance is, in effect, a failure since it is a breakdown of a subtle balance between the ecstatic intensity of the personal religious experience and the required form and discipline.<sup>262</sup> Making an analogy, we might say that as a great musician excels in both his interpretation and his execution of a score, likewise the accomplished prayer reciter refines his sensitivity to the inward ecstasy of participation in the divine, while mastering his outward technique of disciplined recitation. Both of these individuals not only balance the two elements, they can simultaneously excel in both. Thus for the Shādhiliyya of Tunis the *ahzāb* occupy a central position in the experience of worship.

I first approached this study with the following question: "What can these prayers tell us about the message of the Order?" The above work allows me to conclude that the *ahzāb* are not a systematic exposition of Sufi doctrine. (This is undertaken in the works of the great Sufi manual writers, from which all the *turūq* draw, and to some extent also in the later manuals specific to each Order.) In fact, this *ṭarīqa* does not have a "message" as such - in the sense of a unique set of beliefs or an alternative religious doctrine. Instead, the role of the *ṭarīqa* is to provide a structure and a catalyst for the spiritual development of its members. Simplifying matters to make a point, we may equate "structure" with the *adāb* (rule) of the Order and "catalyst" with the spiritual authority of the saint. The sanctity and position of the founder (and to some extent the subsequent shaykhs) were established by his achievements - both miraculous and intellectual. It is this position which allowed the

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<sup>262</sup> I share this position with M. Gilsenan, *Saint and Sufi in Modern Egypt*, and more particularly E. Waugh, *The Munshidin of Egypt*.

saint to establish a rule, and which continues to invest the Order with a sense of spiritual authority <sup>263</sup>

Recitation of the prayers of al-Shādhilī allows the individual to reassert his devotion to the saint - to reconnect with his spiritual guide. On one level the individual is part of the group structure, but on another, he remains the follower (*murīd*) of the great Shaykh. It is largely through the *aḥzāb* that this contact is re-established. In fact, they are the "message" in the sense that to fully experience them is to experience the "spiritual truth" of the saint and his Order.

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<sup>263</sup> Chapters I and II attempt to give an account of both the rise of the Order and its present day sanctity as an institution.

## Appendix

### Hizb al-Kabir (part 1: "Hizb al-Āyāt")

[p 11. line 1]<sup>264</sup> I seek shelter in God from Satan the accursed.<sup>265</sup> In the name of God the merciful, the compassionate. ((May God bless our lord

Muhammad, his family and companions, and grant them salvation ))\*(9 111)

Allāh hath

purchased of the Believers their persons and their goods; For theirs (in return)

Is the Garden (of Paradise). They fight in His Cause, and slay

and are slain: A promise binding on Him in Truth, through the Law, the Gospel and

the Qur'ān. And who is more faithful to his covenant than Allāh? Then rejoice

in the bargain which ye have concluded That is the achievement supreme +

Those that turn (to Allāh) in repentance, that serve Him, and praise Him;

that wander in devotion to

the Cause of Allāh, That bow down

[p.12. line 1] and prostrate themselves in prayer; that enjoin good and forbid

evil, and observe the limits set by Allāh- (These do rejoice) So proclaim

the glad tidings to the Believers

\*(23:1) The Believers must (eventually) win through +Those who humble

themselves in their prayers:

+Who avoid vain talk; +Who are active in deeds of

charity, +Who abstain from sex, except with

those joined to them in the marriage bond. Or (the captives) whom their right hands

possess- for (in their case) they are free from blame,

+But those whose desires exceed

Those limits are transgressors +Those who faithfully observe their trusts

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<sup>264</sup> All Qur'ānic translation taken from 'Abdullah Yūsuf 'Alī, The Holy Qur'ān (Brentwood MA: Amana Co., 1989). Square brackets refer to the text: Nibrās al-Anqiyā' wa Dalīl al-Anqiyā' (Tunis: Al-Matba'at al-

'Asriya, 1964). An asterisk \* marks the start of a new Qur'ānic quotation, and is followed by the *sura* number and the *āya* number in round brackets ( ). A plus sign + signifies that the quotation has extended into the following *āya*. Note that not all quotations are complete, some have been manipulated- see our analysis in Chapter IV. Double round brackets (( )) indicates material not found in the Qur'an.

<sup>265</sup> (Qur'ān 16.98) has. When thou does (read dost) read the Qur'ān, seek Allāh's protection from Satan the Rejected One (*al-rajīm*)



and covenants, +and who (strictly) guard their prayers, +These  
will be the heirs, +who will inherit Paradise: They will dwell therein (forever).

\*(33 35) For Muslim men and women, for believing men and women,  
For devout men and women, for true men and women,  
For men and women who are patient and constant, for men and women who  
humble themselves,

[p 13 line 1] For men and women who give in charity, for men and women who fast  
(and deny themselves), for men and women who guard their chastity, and men  
and women who engage much in

Allāh's praise - for them Allāh has prepared  
forgiveness and great reward. \*(70·19) Truly man was created very impatient,  
+Fretful when evil touches him, +and niggardly when good reaches him; +Not so  
those devoted to Prayer, +those who remain steadfast to their prayer; +and those in  
whose wealth is a recognized right +for the (needy) who asks and him who is  
prevented (for some reason from asking); + And

Those who hold to the truth of the day of judgement, +and those who fear the  
displeasure of  
their Lord, +for their Lord's displeasure is the opposite of Peace and Tranquility,  
+and those who

guard their chastity, +except with their wives and the (captives) whom their right hands  
possess - for (then) they are not to be blamed, +but those who trespass beyond this  
are transgressors, +and those who respect their trusts and covenants,

[p 14 line 1] \*and those who stand firm in their testimonies, +and those who guard  
(the sacredness) of their worship; +such will be the honoured ones in the Gardens  
(of Bliss) (( Allāhumma We ask of You companionship against fear, victory over  
desire, constancy of knowledge and perpetuity of meditation. We ask of You the  
secret of secrets withheld with persistence until  
sin and fault are no longer with us. Single us out and  
show us how to practice those words which You presented to us through  
the tongue of your prophet, and by which You tested Abraham - Your friend -  
and))\*(2 124) which he fulfilled· He (Allāh) said· I will make thee an Imām to the Nations.

He pleaded·

And also (Imāms) from my offspring! He answered: But My Promise is not within  
the reach of evildoers. (( So establish us  
amongst the charitable of his offspring, and of those of Adam

and Noah Place us on the path of the Imāms (leaders) of the pious ))\*(3:15) For in Allāh's  
sight are (all)

[p. 15. line 1] His servants +who say, Our Lord! we have indeed believed  
forgive us, then,

our sins, and save us from the agony of the Fire +Those who show patience, firmness  
and self-control; who are true (in word and deed), who worship devoutly, who spend (in  
the way of Allāh), and who pray for forgiveness in  
the early hours of the morning

\*(3:191) Those who celebrate the praises of Allāh, standing, sitting, and lying down  
on their sides,

and contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth, (With the thought).

"Our Lord! not for  
naught hast Thou created (all) this! Glory to Thee! Give us Salvation from the Penalty of  
the Fire +Our Lord! any

whom Thou dost admit to the Fire, truly Thou coverest with shame, and never will  
wrongdoers find any helpers! + "O Lord! we have heard the call of one calling (us) to  
Faith, "Believe ye in the Lord," and we have believed Our  
Lord! forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in  
the company of the righteous

+ "Our Lord! Grant us what Thou didst promise unto us through Thy Messengers, and  
save us from shame on the Day of Judgement, For Thou never breakest Thy promise "

[p. 16 line 1] \*(2:201) Our Lord! Give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter,  
and defend us from the torment of the Fire! \*(3 147) Our Lord! Forgive us our sins and  
anything we may have done that

transgressed our duty: establish our feet firmly, and help us against those that resist Faith

\*(2:286) Our Lord! Condemn us not if we forget or fall into error, our Lord! Lay not  
on us a burden like which Thou didst lay on those

before us; Our Lord! lay not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear

And grant us forgiveness. Have mercy on us Thou art our Protector,

Help us against those who stand against Faith \*(3 8) Our Lord! (they say) Let not  
our hearts deviate now after Thou hast guided us, but grant us mercy from Thine

own Presence,

for Thou art the Grantor of bounties without measure +Our Lord! Thou art He that will  
gather mankind together

against a Day about which there is no doubt, for Allāh never fails in His promise

\*(3:53) Our Lord! we believe in what Thou hast revealed, and we follow the Messenger,

[p.17 line 1] Then write us down among those who bear witness \*(5:84) What cause can  
we have not to believe  
in Allāh and the Truth which has come to us, seeing that we long for our Lord to admit  
us to  
the company of the righteous? +And for this their prayer hath Allāh rewarded them with  
Gardens, with rivers flowing  
underneath - their eternal home. Such is the recompense of those who do  
good \*(10 84) Moses said "O my People! If ye do (really) believe in Allāh, then in  
Him put your trust if ye submit (your will to His) +They said "In  
Allāh do we put our trust O Lord! make us not a trial for those who practice oppression;  
+and deliver us  
by Thy Mercy from those who reject (Thee). \*(18 10) O Lord! bestow on us from Thyself,  
and dispose of our affair for us in the right way! \*(23.109) Our Lord!  
we believe, then do Thou forgive, and have mercy upon us: for Thou art the Best of those  
who show mercy!  
\*(25 65) Our Lord! avert from us the Wrath of Hell, for its Wrath is indeed an  
affliction grievous +Evil indeed is it as an abode, and as a place to rest in;  
\*(25 74) Our Lord! Grant  
[p 18 line 1] unto us wives and offspring who will be the comfort of our eyes, and give us  
(the grace) to  
lead the righteous. \*(40 7) Our Lord! Thy Reach is over all things,  
in Mercy and Knowledge Forgive, then, those who turn in Repentance, and follow  
Thy path, and preserve them from the Penalty of the Blazing Fire! +And grant, our Lord!  
that they enter  
the Gardens of Eternity, which Thou hast promised to them, and to the righteous among  
their fathers,  
their wives, and their posterity! For Thou art (He), the Exalted in Might, full of Wisdom.  
+And preserve them  
from (all) ills, and any whom Thou dost preserve from ills that Day,  
on them wilt Thou have bestowed Mercy indeed and that will be truly (for them) the  
highest Achievement. \*(44.12) (They will say:) Our  
Lord! Remove the Penalty from us, for we do really believe! \*(59:10) Our Lord!  
Forgive us,  
and our brethren who came before us into the Faith, and leave not,  
in our hearts, rancour (or sense of injury) against those who have believed. Our Lord!  
Thou art indeed Full of Kindness,

Most Merciful. \*(60:4) Our Lord! In Thee do we trust, and to Thee do we turn in  
repentance:

[p.19 line 1] to Thee is (our) final Goal +Our Lord! Make us not a (test and) trial for the  
Unbelievers, but forgive us, our Lord! For Thou are the Exalted in Might, the Wise

\*(66 8) Our Lord!

Perfect our Light for us, and grant us Forgiveness For Thou has power over all things

\*(112:1) In the name of Allāh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful Say He is Allāh, the One  
and Only; +Allāh,

the Eternal, Absolute; +He begetteth not, nor is He begotten, +And there is none like  
unto Him. \*(113.1) In the name of Allāh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Say I seek refuge with the Lord of the Dawn, +from the mischief of Darkness as it  
overspreads, +from the mischief of those who practice Secret Arts, +and from the mischief  
of the envious one

as he practices envy \*(114:1) In the name of Allāh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful Say  
I seek refuge with the Lord and Cherisher of Mankind, +the King (or Judge) of Mankind -  
+from the mischief of the Whisperer (of Evil), who withdraws (after his whisper) + (The  
same) who whispers into

the hearts of Mankind - +Among Jinns and among Men.

[p 20. line 1] \*(1 1) In the name of Allāh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful +Praise be to  
Allāh the Cherisher and Sustainer of the

Worlds; +Most Gracious, Most Merciful, +Master of the Day of Judgement +Thee do we  
worship,

and Thine aid we seek +Show us the straight way,  
+the way of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace, Those  
whose (portion) is not wrath, and who go not astray

\*(6:1) In the name of Allāh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful Praise be to Allāh, who  
created the

heavens and the earth, and made the Darkness and the Light

Yet those who reject Faith hold (others) as equal with their Guardian-Lord +He it is who  
created you from clay, and then decreed a stated term (for you)

And there is in His Presence another determined term, yet ye doubt within yourselves! And  
He is Allāh

in the heavens and on earth He knoweth what ye hide, and what ye reveal, and He  
knoweth the (recompense)

which ye earn (by your deeds) \*(7 43) Praise be to Allāh who hath

[p 21 line 1] guided us to this (felicity): never could we have found guidance, had it not  
been for the guidance  
of Allāh. Indeed it was the truth that the Messengers of our Lord brought to us. (( Kindness  
is Allāh's  
alone.<sup>266</sup>)) \*(10 9) Those who believe, and work righteousness - their Lord  
will guide them because of their Faith beneath them will flow rivers in Gardens of  
Bliss + (This will be their cry therein: Glory to Thee, O Allāh! and Peace will be their  
greeting therein! And the close of their cry will be: Praise be to Allāh, the Cherisher  
and Sustainer of the Worlds! \*(17 11) Say Praise be to Allāh, who begets no son,  
and has no partner in (His) dominion, nor (needs) He any to protect Him from humiliation.  
Yea, magnify Him for His greatness and glory! \*(18 1) Praise be to Allāh, who hath sent  
to His Servant the Book,  
and hath allowed therein no Crookedness + (He hath made it) Straight (and Clear) in order  
that He may warn (the godless)  
of a terrible Punishment from Him, and that He may give Glad Tidings to the Believers  
who work righteous deeds,  
that they shall have a goodly Reward + Wherein they shall remain forever  
[p 22 line 1] \*(27 59) Say Praise be to Allāh, and Peace on His servants whom He has  
chosen (for His Message)  
(Who) is better? - Allāh or the false gods they associate (with Him)? \*(34 1) Praise be to  
Allāh, to Whom belong  
all things in the heavens and on earth To Him be Praise in the Hereafter and He is  
Full of Wisdom, Acquainted with all things. + He knows all that goes into the earth, and all  
that comes out  
thereof all that comes down from the sky and all that ascends thereto and He is the Most  
Merciful,  
the Oft-Forgiving \*(35 1) Praise be to Allāh, who created (out of nothing) the heavens and  
the earth,  
Who made the angels messengers with wings - two, three or  
four (pairs). He adds to Creation as He pleases, for Allāh has power  
over all things + What Allāh out of His Mercy doth bestow on mankind there is none  
can withhold what He doth withhold, there is none can grant, apart from Him:  
and He is the Exalted in Power, Full of Wisdom. \*(16.75) Allāh sets forth the Parable  
(of two men

<sup>266</sup> This phrase not found in the text of <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Halīm Mahmūd, Al-Madrasa al-Shādhiliyya p 189.

one) a slave under the domination of another; he has no power of any sort, and (the other) a  
man on whom We have bestowed goodly favours  
from Ourselves

[p.23 line 1] and he spends thereof (freely), privately and publicly Are the two  
equal? (By no means,) Praise be to Allāh But most of them understand not

\*(39:29) Allāh puts forth a Parable - a man belonging to many  
partners at variance with each other, and a man belonging entirely to one master are  
those two

equal in comparison? Praise be to Allāh! But most of them have no knowledge \*(39 74)

They will say Praise be to Allāh,

Who has truly fulfilled His promise to us, and has given us (this) land in heritage we can  
dwell in the Garden as we will how excellent a  
reward for those who work (righteousness)!

+and thou wilt see the angels surrounding the Throne (Divine) on all sides, singing  
Glory and

Praise to their Lord The Decision between them (at judgement) will be in (perfect) justice,  
and the cry (on all sides) will be, Praise be to Allah,  
the Lord of the Worlds!

\*(45:36) Then Praise be to Allāh, Lord of the heavens and Lord of the earth Lord and  
Cherisher of all the worlds! +To Him

be Glory throughout the heavens and the earth: and He is exalted in Power, Full of  
Wisdom!\*(30 17) So (give) glory to Allah,

when ye reach eventide and when ye rise in the morning, +Yea, to Him be praise, in the  
heavens and on

earth; and in the late afternoon and when the day begins to decline +It is He who brings out  
the living from the dead,

[p.24. line 1] and brings out the dead from the living, and Who gives life to the earth after  
it is dead. and thus shall ye be brought out  
(from the dead)

\*(37.180) Glory to thy Lord, the Lord of Honour and Power! (He is free) from what they  
ascribe (to Him)! +And Peace on the Messengers

+And Praise to Allāh, the Lord and Cherisher of the Worlds

Hizb al-Kabir (part 2: "Hizb al-Birr")

[p.24. line 6] I seek shelter in God from Satan the accursed. In the name of God the merciful, the compassionate. ((May God bless our lord Muḥammad, his family and companions, and grant them salvation.))\* (6:54)<sup>267</sup> When those come to thee who believe in Our Signs, Say: Peace be on you; your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule of) Mercy: verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended (his conduct), lo! He is Oft-

Forgiving,

Most Merciful. \* (6.101) To Him is due the primal origin of the heavens and the earth:

How can He

[p.25. line 1] have a son when He hath no consort? He created all things, and He hath full knowledge of all things. +That is Allāh, your Lord! There is no god but He, the Creator of all things; then worship ye Him; and He hath power to

dispose of all affairs. +No vision can grasp Him. But His grasp is over all vision: He is above all comprehension, yet is acquainted with all things.

*Alif Lām Rā'* <sup>268</sup>, *Hā' Mīm* <sup>269</sup>, *ʿAyn Sīn Qāf* <sup>270</sup>, *Kāf Hā' Yā'* *ʿAyn Sād* <sup>271</sup>

\* (21:112) O my Lord!

Judge Thou in truth! Our Lord Most Gracious is the One Whose assistance should be sought against the blasphemies ye utter!

\* (20:1) *Tā' Hā'* , +We have not sent down the Qur'ān to thee to be (an occasion) for thy distress, +but only as an admonition to those who fear (Allāh). +A revelation from Him Who created the earth and the heavens on high. + (Allāh) Most Gracious is firmly established on the throne (of authority). +To Him belongs what is in

the heavens and on earth, and all between them, and all beneath the soil.

+If thou pronounce the word aloud, (it is no matter): for verily he knoweth what is secret and what is yet more hidden.

[p.26. line 1] +Allāh! there is no god but He! To Him belong the Most Beautiful Names.

<sup>267</sup> According to ʿAbd al-Halīm Mahmūd, *Al-Madrasa al-Shādhiliyya* p.180 fn. 1, this āya was not part of the original composition, but was added by al-Shādhilī as an optional prologue.

<sup>268</sup> Abbreviated Letters (*al-Muqattaʿāt*) found at the start of *Sūwar* 10,11,12,14,15

<sup>269</sup> *Sūwar* 40,41,42,43,44,45,46. (In "Hizb al-Bahr" *Hā' Mīm* is repeated seven times)

<sup>270</sup> *Sūra* 42.

<sup>271</sup> *Sūra* 19.

(Line repeated twice more)

(( O Allāh!

You are Known<sup>272</sup> and All-Knowing.

You have, by Your Knowledge, grasped my (great) ignorance; So grasp it  
in Mercy, as You grasped it in Knowledge; and forgive me.

You have Power over everything - O Allāh! O King! O Bestower!

Grant us of Your blessings those which You have set out for us by Your Favour;

Clothe us in the Holy Mantle<sup>273</sup> which protects us from the trials of all

Your gifts, And with it sanctify us, (steering us) away from all attribution (*wasf*) which  
necessarily falls short of what only You can possess, in Your Knowledge - (and also steer  
us clear of) that which is other than You.

O Allāh! O Mighty One! O Lofty One! O Great One!

I ask of You poverty (*faqr*) in what is other than You; and for riches in what is truly You;  
so I may witness

[p.27 line 1] none but You. Bless us in both cases a blessing which is appropriate  
for one who is Your helper. Clothe us in Garments of Purity (*jalābīb al-ʿismat*) at  
every breath

and blink of the eye; and set us amongst Your worshipers at all times (*ḥālāt*);  
and teach us knowledge from Your Own Presence, so we may be complete in life  
and in death. O Allāh! You are the Praiseworthy, the Lord, the All-Glorious and  
Executor of Your Will; You know the "why", the "in what" and the "for what" of our joy.  
Likewise, You know our sadness. You impose existence - as You will it -  
onto us and among us. We do not seek the repudiation of Your will, rather we ask for  
support through the Spirit from Your presence, by Your will; the same (support) by which  
You confirmed Your Prophets, Your Messengers

and just men from among Your creation.))\* (3:26) Verily, over all things Thou  
hast power. \* (39:46) O Allāh! Creator of the heavens and the earth! Knower  
of all that is hidden and open! It is Thou that will Judge between Thy Servants (( and may it  
be good

[p 28 line 1] for him who knows You and who has accepted your justice and woe to him  
who knows you not; but  
woe upon woe to him who has conceded Your Unity (*waḥdāniya-ka*), but does not accept  
Your laws.

<sup>272</sup> c. Abd al-Halīm Mahmūd, *Al-Madrasa al-Shādhiliyya* p. 192 has the alternative: *Inna-ka taʿlamu anna-nī bi al-jahālātī ma ʿrūfun* .. (You know that I am famous for my ignorance...)

<sup>273</sup> *Kiswah*: the black covering of the Kaʿba.



O Allāh! for some You have ordained lowliness until they are respected,  
 for others You have ordained obscurity until they reach fame, but all standing (*ʿizz*) merely  
 restrains (us)  
 from You. Thus we ask instead for humility coupled with Your gentle kindness.  
 All the recognition we achieve only conceals You from us, so we ask for anonymity in its  
 stead coupled  
 with the lights of Your Love. Happiness has appeared for him You have loved,  
 and misfortune has appeared for him who has masters other than You.  
 So grant us the gifts of the blissful ones and divert us from the destination of the miserable  
 ones.

O Allāh! We are not even able to defend ourselves against the harm we are  
 well aware of; so how defenceless we are against that of which  
 we are not aware! You have enjoined for us and prohibited for us (certain  
 [p.29. line 1] things, including) the praise and censure You have imposed on us (*alẓamta-  
 nā*). Thus him You have improved, he becomes a  
 brother of piety;  
 while him You have led astray, he becomes a brother of depravity. The truly happy one  
 is him  
 You have freed from (the habit of) petitioning You, while the truly unhappy one is him You  
 have caused to sin (*ahramta-hu*)  
 by constant petitioning of You. So free us - by Your Grace - from petitioning You;  
 and do not - by Your Mercy - cause us to sin by constant petitioning of You. In  
 deed, You have Power over all things; O Great-in-Strength! O Omnipotent!  
 O Almighty! O Omniscient! We seek refuge in You from the evil (*sharr*) which is part of  
 Your creation;  
 And we seek refuge in You from the darkness You have made; and also from the  
 deceitfulness of (our) desires which You have predestined and willed We seek shelter  
 in You  
 from the enviers of what You have bestowed (*anʿamta*). We ask You for a high rank  
 (*ʿizz*) in this world  
 and in the next; as our lord and master Muḥammad - Your servant, Your Prophet, Your  
 Messenger (Peace and Blessing of Allāh be upon  
 him) - asked  
 for a high rank in in this world - but only in Faith (*īmān*) and  
 [p.30 line 1] intellection (*maʿrifa*); and in the next world he asked for a high rank in  
 Reunion (*liqā'*) and Witnessing (*mushāhada*)

(of Allāh).

You are the All-Hearing, the Near and Him Who Answers. O Allāh! I submit to You every breath, look and glance; (likewise) those of the people of both heaven and earth.

Everything does or has existed (only) in Your knowledge.

I submit to You then in everything.)) \*(2:255) Allāh! There is no god

but He - the Living, the Self-subsisting. Eternal. No slumber can seize Him nor sleep. His

are all things in the heavens and

on earth. Who is there can intercede in His presence except as He permitteh?

He knoweth what (appeareth to His creatures as) Before and After of Behind them. Nor

shall they compass aught

of His knowledge except as He willeth. His Throne doth extend over the heavens

and the earth, and He feeleth no fatigue in guarding and preserving them, for He is the

Most High, the Supreme (in glory).(( I entreat You

by Your outstretched Hand, the munificence of Your Face, the Light of Your Eyes,

and the perfection of Your Sources (a<sup>c</sup>yūn), that You bestow on us blessing

[p.31. line 1] through which You exercise Your Will, convey Your Omnipotence,

and assert Your knowledge; and protect us from the evil which is our adversary and

opposes this (blessing).

Complete our faith and persist in Your blessings.

Grant us the wisdom of all eloquent wisdom<sup>274</sup> coupled with a good life and an

honourable death. Arrange for the contraction<sup>275</sup> of our spirits in Your Hand and

stand (*hul*) between us and all that is other than You in the *Barzakh*<sup>276</sup> and in

what is before it and after it, by the light of Your Essence, the greatness of Your Power

and the beauty of Your Grace In deed, You have Power over all things; O Allāh!

O Lofty One!

O Great One! O Wise One! O Gentle One! O Perfect One! O All-hearing!

O Near One! O He Who Answers! O Loving One! Stand between us and the

temptations (*fitna*) of the world - women, carelessness, lust, wronging others and

all the evil in creation. Forgive us our sins, appoint us our

[p.32. line 1] responsibilities, expose evil (for what it is), save us from

grief and allow us an escape from it. In deed, You have Power over all

things. O Allāh! O Allāh! O Allāh! O Kind One! O Provider!

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<sup>274</sup> *hikmata al-hikam al-bālighat*

<sup>275</sup> *qabd arwāḥinā* For further discussion of *qabd* and *bast* (spiritual contraction and expansion) see: Ibn 'Iyād, *Al-Mafākhir al-'Alīyyah* p. 75.

<sup>276</sup> The intermediary position of souls between death and judgement. See: Qur'ān 23:100.

O Powerful One! O Mighty One! To You belong the keys of heaven and earth. You  
 extend sustenance (*rizq*) to him who You will; extend to us a  
 sustenance by which we can be united with Your Mercy; and (extend)  
 us Your Mercy which can stand between us and Your Rancour;  
 and (extend) to us a clemency which embraces us in Your Forgiveness Impress  
 upon us the happiness which You impressed upon Your apostles.  
 Make our days good, but make the best the Day of Reckoning;  
 and on earth remove us from the fire of lust, and cause us to enter  
 the fields of compassion. Clothe us by Your Light in gowns of  
 [p.33 line 1] purity. Make our intelligence a supporter (to us), Make our spirits  
 protectors; and set our minds in control of ourselves so that we may glorify You greatly,  
 and keep You foremost in our thoughts. Truly, over us You are All-seeing.  
 Grant us vision and the accompanying eloquence; and open  
 our ears and eyes. Remind us if we are heedless of you  
 through the best of what You evoke in us (*tadhkuru-nā*), when we mention You  
 (*dhakarna-ka*). Have mercy  
 on us when we disobey and be as kind to us as you are when we obey  
 Forgive us our sins of the past and the future;  
 Grace us with Your Kindness which shields us from what is other than You, but does  
 not veil us  
 from You. You the Knower of all things. O Allāh!  
 we ask of You a tongue moist in Your remembrance, and for a heart joyful  
 in thanks; (We ask) for a humble body (readily given) to obedience towards You, and with  
 [p34. line 1] all of this (we ask for) what no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and has not  
 occurred in the  
 heart of any man; as Your Prophet informed us in it (*akhbara-nā*), and as You  
 knew him through Your knowledge. So enrich us for no reason and make us  
 the occasion of wealth for your friends; and place us between them and Your enemies.  
 In deed, You have Power over all things. O Allāh! We ask of You faith for all time.  
 We ask for a humble heart, and for useful knowledge.  
 We ask for authentic certainty, and for the True religion.  
 We ask for well-being through every calamity, and for a complete well-being.  
 We ask for continuing health, and for the gratefulness for health.  
 We ask for wealth for all the people. O Allāh!  
 We ask for complete repentance, total forgiveness, all-inclusive love,  
 pure friendship, deep realization (*ma<sup>c</sup>rifa wāsi<sup>c</sup>a*), brilliant lights,

[p 35 line 1] steadfast intercession, extensive proof and  
a lofty station Undermine our resolve in disobedience, and our pawning off of  
(true) blessings for (worldly) gifts of favour. O Allāh! We ask for forgiveness  
in perpetuity. We take shelter in you from disobedience and its opportunities. Warn us -  
by fear

of You - before the attack of their dangers; and carry us  
to safety (away) from them and the consideration of their ways. Remove from our hearts  
the rewards which we have gathered from them, and replace them with an aversion to them  
and a taste for what is their opposite. Open up to us the sea of your Munificence (*karam*),  
Kindness, Generosity and Clemency until we leave the world for (a place)  
pure and free of evils. Place us at death amongst those  
uttering the *Shahāda*<sup>277</sup> and knowing it intimately. Show us the Mercy a lover  
shows to his beloved in peril; show it to us and relieve us of the afflictions of  
[p 36. line 1] the world and their sorrows. Lead us for rest and satisfaction to the Garden  
(of Paradise) and its delights.

O Allāh! We ask that first (the possibility of) penance be given to us by You, so that the  
penance may

subsequently proceed from us to You (as a petition).<sup>278</sup> Allow us to learn from You  
as You taught Adam (peace be upon him) the Words<sup>279</sup>; and thus he is an  
example to all men of penance and good works. Separate us from stubbornness,  
insistence and imitation of Iblīs the great seducer. Make our misdeeds those of one  
You have loved; and do not make our good deeds those  
of one You detest. Performing good deeds is of no value if  
You disapprove of us; likewise an offence is not harmful if You love us  
You have obscured this matter for us through our hoping and fearing; set our fear to rest  
and do not frustrate  
our hopes. Grant us our request; for You have given us faith even  
before we asked for it. You wrote<sup>280</sup>, You endeared<sup>281</sup>,  
[p.37 line 1] You adorned<sup>282</sup>, You made hateful<sup>283</sup>, and You loosened tongues concerning  
what was expounded

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<sup>277</sup> The profession of faith: *Lā ilāha ila Allāhu wa Muḥammadu rasūlu Allāhi* "There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is His prophet."

<sup>278</sup> In other words: "Lord, gift us with the ability to repent."

<sup>279</sup> See: (Qur'ān 2:37).

<sup>280</sup> The Qur'ān and the fate of all things.

<sup>281</sup> (Qur'ān 49:7), "Allah has endeared the Faith to you..."

<sup>282</sup> (Qur'ān 37:6), "We have indeed (adorned) the lower heaven with beauty (in) the stars"

<sup>283</sup> (Qur'ān 49:7), "He has made hateful to you Unbelief..."

in it (the Qur'ān?). Truly Lord You are wonderful; to You is the praise for what You have  
bestowed;

so forgive us and do not punish us by reclaiming what You have given us, nor by  
(allowing) us to be ungrateful for blessings, and (thus) exclusion from approval O Allāh!  
approve of us

in Your decree; and push us (*ṣabbir-nā*) towards compliance with You (Your Will), and  
away from disobedience

and fateful cravings which lead only to failings or distraction from You. Grant us the  
truth of Faith in You so that we do not fear other than You, nor do we love  
other than You, nor do we wish for other than You; and we submit to none other than You  
and allot to us the (proper) thanks for Your goodwill; and cover us with Your cloak of  
well-being and assist us with certainty and trust in You.

Unveil for us the Light of Your attributes. Smile upon us and give us, on  
the day of judgement, the good news that we are amongst Your friends; extend Your  
hand to

[pg.38 line 1] us, our folk, progeny and those with us - in Your compassion

Do not make charges to our souls (too) suddenly - at least.

How wonderful is He Who Answers! O He who is Him! - Him!

He is near in His sublimity. O Him of splendor and of honour.

O All-encompassing in night and day; I complain to You

about the anxiety of the parturition (*hijāb*), the injury of the reckoning, and of the  
intensity of

suffering. Truly this has severity if You do not show

compassion to me. There is no God but You; Glory to You! Truly, I have been in  
the shadows. There is no God but You; Glory to You! Truly,

I have been in the shadows. There is no God but You; Glory to You!

Truly, I have been in the shadows. Jacob complained to

You and You saved him from his sadness and You brought back that which had

[p.39 line 1] gone from his sight and united him with his children.

Noah called out to You formerly and You rescued him from his torment.

Jacob called out to You later and You removed his injury

Jonah called out to You and You rescued him from his anxiety.

Zechariah called out to You and You granted him progeny from his loins after the  
despair of his people and great age. You know what came down

for Abraham, Your friend, and You delivered him from the fire of his enemy.

You saved Lot and his family from the punishment visited on his people.

Truly, I am Your slave If You punish me with all possible  
punishments then I am deserving of it; and if You have mercy on me - as  
You did with them - despite my great crime, it is Your prerogative  
for You are Most Entitled, Most Generous. Your generosity is not confined to  
[p.40 line 1] him who obeys You, or has drawn near to You; rather it is granted to him  
in Your creation that You will, and even if he resists and turns away, Your  
generosity is still not obliged to sustain only him who has done right by You. You are the  
Most Excellent; but it  
is out of generosity that You sustain him who has insulted You; surely You are the  
Compassionate One. How is it You have ordered us to  
treat well him who has insulted us; this is easier for You than it is for us.)) \*(7:23)  
O Lord! We have wronged our own souls: if Thou forgive us not and bestow not upon us  
Thy Mercy,  
we shall certainly be lost. (( O Allāh! O Allāh! O Allāh! O Compassionate One!  
O Everlasting! O he who is Him - Him - Him, O Him! It is not that we have acquired  
Your Mercy (by our own means), rather it is Your Mercy that has taken possession of us.  
O his Lord!  
O his Master! O Helper to him who has resisted! (repeated twice more)  
Help us! help us! help us! O Lord!  
[p.41 line 1] O Munificent! Show mercy on us Lord, O Compassionate One! )) \*(2:255)  
O He whose throne encompasses  
the heavens and the earth; His upholding them does not weigh upon Him, for He is the  
Highest and the Greatest.  
(( I ask You for faith in compliance with You (Your Will); a faith in which my heart  
finds rest  
from the anxiety of fortune and the fears of the world; by Your  
Omnipotence draw me near, into a proximity by which You destroy for me every veil;  
(as) You destroyed for Abraham - Your friend - who did not need Your messenger Gabriel  
(as intermediary),  
nor did he need to petition You (*su'ālī-hi min ka*)<sup>284</sup> and for this You protected him from  
the fire of his enemy.<sup>285</sup>  
Indeed, how could he not be shielded from the harm of (his) enemies? - him who  
You concealed

<sup>284</sup> Earlier in the prayer (*Nibrās* p.14. line 8)(above p. 86) Allah speaks directly to Abraham and informs him that he has been made "an *Imām* to the nations".(Qur'ān 2:124).

<sup>285</sup> See: (Qur'ān 21:69).

because he was one of (Your) beloved ones (*aḥibbā'*). Truly, I ask You to conceal me, by Your closeness, from myself until I do not see or notice the closeness or distance of anything (else); ))

\*(3:26) Verily, over all things Thou hast power. \*(23:115) Did ye then think that We created you in jest, and that ye would not be brought back [p.42 line 1] to Us (for account)? +Therefore exalted be Allāh, the King, the Reality: there is no god but He,

the Lord of the Throne of Honour! +If anyone invokes, besides Allāh, any other god, he has no authority therefor;

and his reckoning will be only with his Lord! And verily the Unbelievers will fail to win through! +So say: O my Lord! Grant Thou forgiveness

and mercy! for Thou art the Best of those who show mercy! (( Our Lord, believe us, forgive us and have mercy on us,

for You are the Best of those who show mercy! He is the Living; there is no god but Him; so call to Him in

sincere devotion. Praise be to Allāh, Lord of the world.))\* (33:56) Allāh and His Angels send blessings on the Prophet:

O ye that believe! Send ye blessings on him, and salute him with all respect. (( O Allāh! May peace be upon our lord

Muḥammad and his family, just as You blessed Abraham and his people; and bless our lord Muḥammad and his family as

You blessed, preserved and had compassion for Abraham and his people

In both worlds; You are the Compassionate and the Exalted.

( From "O Allāh! ..." to "... the Exalted." repeated twice more.)

[p.43 line 8] O Allāh! be pleased with our masters the rightly-guided caliphs: Abu Bakr, <sup>c</sup>Ummar, <sup>c</sup>Uthmām and <sup>c</sup>Alī;

and with Hassan and Husain, their mother and all the

companions and followers; and also the followers of the followers

For them is beneficence on the Day of Judgement.

( From "O Allāh! be pleased ..." to "... Day of Judgement." repeated twice more.)

[p.44 line 8] and peace be upon the messengers.

Praise be to Allāh, Lord of the worlds!

[p.44 line 10] This is the end of "Ḥizb al-Kabīr".

The first section is "Ḥizb al-Āyāt", and the second is "Ḥizb al-Da<sup>c</sup>awāt", which is also called "Ḥizb al-Birr".

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