Spirituality, Islam, and the State: The Origins and Disavowal of Sufism in the Ikhwan al-Muslim n


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**DECLARATION**

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This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of the degree of MPhil in History of the School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London), on January 30th, 2012.  It contains 96,287 words.

The work and research that appears in this dissertation is my own.  This study was completed under the direction of Dr. Nelida Fuccaro.

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**ABSTRACT**

Hasan al-Banna (d. 1949), founder of the Ikhwān al-Muslimīn in 1933, is credited by historians as the creator of the modern Islamic organization. Since his boyhood, al-Banna studied with teachers from radically different Islamic persuasions, including the Sufī tradition. But from among his teachers al-Banna would continue to revere Shaykh Muhammad Hasanayn al-Hisāfī (d. 1910), his spiritual guide and founder of the Hasafiyya *tarīqa*, long after the founding of the Ikhwān. Al-Banna was drawn to Shaykh al-Hisāfī's spiritual depth but also to his tradition of political activism; a spiritual master who utilized the Islamic tradition of 'commanding the right and forbidding the wrong' to oppose the British occupation of Egypt. This dissertation examines in what ways al-Banna was influenced by Shaykh al-Hisāfī's teachings and how this influence shaped his fledgling organization. Further, this thesis investigates to what extent the nationalist debates of 1930s Egypt shifted al-Banna's teachings away from Sufism and towards a clearly defined Islamic nationalist rhetoric. This study also examines how the Ikhwān leadership dealt with Sufism after al-Banna's death. As the priorities of the Brotherhood shifted and the popularity of organized Sufism dwindled in the mid-twentieth century, the Muslim Brothers focused less on their leader's spiritual background and more on his legacy as a social and political activist. This transition, they believed, was necessary if the Muslim Brotherhood was to play a role in national politics post 1952. This rhetorical shift is apparent in Brotherhood literature and propaganda which is analysed in this dissertation in order to show how it was instrumental to drastically alter the character of the organization until today.

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# INTRODUCTION

*'The idea of the Muslim Brothers included in it all categories of reform; in specific, al-Banna defined the movement as "A Salafiyya message, a Sunni way, a Sufi truth, a political organization, an athletic group, a cultural-educational union, an economic company, and a social idea.'*[1]

In 2005, the Muslim Brotherhood, or *Ikhwān al-Muslimīn*, succeeded in winning twenty percent of seats in the Egyptian parliament. Their victory indicates that the Brotherhood enjoyed immense popularity with the Egyptian public, and suggests that voters identified themselves with a party that was at once Islamic and nationalist. It also suggests that, as Salwa Ismail has indicated, that Islam 'had grown in its appeal'[2], that more Egyptians were comfortable with an Islamic identification even in the realm of political representation, and had chosen the Brotherhood as their leaders.

The history of the Brotherhood's relationship with the Egyptian state is a history of conflict and conciliation. Since its early years, the government under King Farūq perceived the organization to be a threat because it appeared to be functioning as an alternative government, providing the people with much-needed social programs. After the Free Officers Coup of 1952, the Brothers were anxious to form an alliance with the new regime, but Jamāl `Abdul Nasser (d. 1970), one of the officers who led the coup, remained anxious of the Ikhwān's capability to rival his new government.

The elections of 2005 also conjure up questions for researchers about how the Brotherhood's founder, Hasan al-Banna (d. 1949), understood his organization and what he envisaged it would one day become. This study sets out to define the role of Sufism in the Ikhwān and how the Brothers' understanding of Sufism changed over time. My interest in this subject was sparked by a conversation with a colleague, who asked the simple question: 'Why did Hasan al-Banna call his *da`wa* a Sufī reality?' This question initiated years of research to understand to what extent Imām al-Banna was influenced by Sufism and in what ways.

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[1] Mitchell, Richard P. *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*. (New York, Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 14.
[2] Ismail, Salwa. *Rethinking Islamist Politics: Culture, the State, and Islamism*. (London, I.B. Tauris, 2006), p. xi.

Al-Banna wrote about Sufism in almost every edition of the Brotherhood's journal, *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn*, during the early 1930s. Besides his writings on Sufism he developed ties with Sufī shaykhs and incorporated them into his *da`wa* network. He actively defended Sufī beliefs whenever they were challenged by readers of his journal. Al-Banna defined his organization as a 'Salafī *da`wa*, a Sunnī way, a Sufī reality, a political organization, an athletic club, a workers union, an economic company, and a social idea.'[3] That Sufism was a part of that definition shows that the founder intended it to be a building block for each Brother's character because he believed the Sufīs 'understood that the basis of goodness was purification of the soul.'[4]

*Research Themes*

At the start of this study, we formulated several central research questions. We ask first what the history of the Suf orders in Egypt indicates about the changing nature of authority in Egyptian society in the late nineenth and early twentieth centuries. We then asked how al-Banna was influenced by his exposure to the Suf s and in what ways, and how he negotiated between the traditional and the 'modern' (for example, utilizing the press to disseminate ideas bout Sufism). Next, we ask how al-Banna's critique of the Suf s was linked to his ideas on political authority, Egyptian nationalism, and Islamic statehood. Further, we were interested to know why the Muslim Brothers showed revulsion to Sufism after al-Banna's death and whether or not this was linked to their political aspirations after 1952.

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[3] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Risalat al-Mutamar al-Khāmis' in *Majmuat Rasa`il al-Imām al-Shahīd Hasan al-Banna*. (Cairo, Dar al Mandlas, no year), p. 248.
[4] ibid.

Members of the Muslim Brotherhood wrote extensively on the themes of this dissertation even until the present day; their writings wrestle with the issues of Sufism and political authority, nationalism, and Egyptian nationalism and the Islamic state. The Brothers' methodologies in engaging with these issues are vital to our research. Because of the number of books they have penned, Brotherhood writings have defined the debate on these issues in the Arabic language until now.

Several Ikhwān authors emerged in the decades following Imām al-Banna's death to discuss the Islamic understanding of nationalism, statehood, and political authority. Shaykh Yusuf Qaradawī[5], a leading Ikhwān ideologue, established himself in the 1970s as an important political ideologue for the Brothers, a writer who could weave together a political agenda with the religious text. Thus, he devoted much of his writing to the nature of the Islamic state the Brothers were working to create. Qaradawī argued that the sharia could generate not only a constitution but a system of civil and common law that could be applied in Egypt. But it was his keen awareness of Egypt's social and economic realities that made his 'sharia-centric' arguments acceptable to readers. Who were his readers? They were primarily those individuals who, from the 1970s onwards, desired a legal system which derived from the sharia and who identified with one of Egypt's many Islamic associations, the so-called Islamists. Islamists hold that Islam is both a religion and a political system rooted in the sharia, the corpus of law derived from the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad. 'Since the late 1970s,' Ismail maintains, 'Egypt has experienced a widening of the scope of Islamic activism and a proliferation of forms of contestation that base themselves in Islamic tradition.'[6] These Egyptians, she continues, were no longer limited to the members of the radicalized Jama`at Islamiyya or the Ikhwān, but included professional

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[5] Al-Qaradawī, Yusuf. *Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin: 70 `Amman fil Dawa wal Tarbiya wal Jihad*. (Beirut, Mu`assassat al-Risala, 2001).
[6] Ismail, p. 58.

associations of lawyers and judges as well.[7]  From the late 1970s onwards, the widening circle of Islamists

allowed Brotherhood authors to reach a wider scope of readers with their ideas about sharia and Islamic

nationalism.

Other Ikhwn authors, encouraged by the rising popularity of Islamist rhetoric, wrote to position the

Bortherhood as champions of Egyptian Islamism.  Muhammad `Abbas, a member of the Brotherhood writing in

2008, writes to support the Brothers as an Islamic political party, arguing that 'the Nasserists do not glorify Allah

as much as they glorify Nasser, nor are they as impressed with the Prophet peace be upon him as much as they

are with Heykal!'[8]  `Abbas's aim in writing is to show organization's tangible contributions to Egyptian state and

society despite the political repression its members have faced through the decades.

Those writers outside Islamist circles feared the Brotherhood's vision for Egypt particularly as it pertained

to the rights of minorities.  Mukhtar Qsim, a notable Egyptian social commentator also writing in 2005, offers

criticism of the Brothers' socio-political vision for Egypt.  The problem, he argues, is that the system based on

Islamic sharia that the Brothers wish to apply would isolate minorities like the Copts.  'A Christian,' he maintains,

'would make light of the effect of this (Islamic) political system could have for him because he feels that it

isolates him from the start.'[9]  Qsim further criticizes the Brothers for their generic economic plan for Egypt, and

challenges the Brothers' slogan '*Al Islam howa al-Hal*' (Islam is the solution) arguing that an Islamic political

agenda for Egypt is one approach among many, and not necessarily the definitive solution.

Another trend which requires attention is the Brothers' treatment of al-Banna's attachment to Sufism.

Why is this trend so critical?   Because the Brothers' methodology in approaching al-Banna's Suf past

contributed to how their leader is perceived today both by those within the organization and the wider Egyptian

public.  After Hasan al-Banna's death in 1949, several Muslim Brothers wrote to challenge the notion that their

Imm had been a Suf.  One example is Tawfīq al-Wa`ī, a Muslim Brother who, in 2005, compiled a manuscript

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[7] Ismail, p. 58.

[8] `Abbas, Muhammad. *Al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn: Baqat al-Islām wa `Atr al-Imān*. (Cairo, no publisher, 2008), introduction.

[9] Qāsim, Mukhtār. *Al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn fil Haya wal Siyāsa*. (Cairo, no publisher, 2005), p. 149.

addressing various common 'rumors' about the Ikhwān, attributing misunderstanding of the Imām to 'intellectual superficiality' which has spread in Egypt. 'Even religiousity,' he argues, 'can be an illness if it is based on superficiality.'[10] Al-Wa` hopes to dispell assumptions about the martyred Imām, most importantly the rumor that he was a Sufi. 'The first allegation is the accusation that Imām al-Banna was a Sufī.'[11] We will see in Chapter One how the educated milieu of Egyptian society, who would be reading al-Wa`'s book, no longer accepted the orders as viable organizations for social mobilization. This explains why al-Wa` writes to contradict this perception of the martyred Imām. Not surprisingly, the subtitle of al-Wa`'s book is '*Shubuhāt wa Rudūd*', literally, 'Misconceptions and Rebuttals'.[12] The Brothers' objection to their Imām's portrayal as a Sufī in their biographies from the 1950s onwards will be discussed in detail in Chapter Seven. At the time of this research, Dr. Muhammad al-Shirbīnī, a PhD student at al-Azhar who was not a member of the Ikhwān, had just completed a comprehensive study of al-Banna's views on Sufism.[13] Dr. Al-Shirbīnī's approach was aimed at providing Islamic proofs for al-Banna's Sufī beliefs, fitting more under the rubric of Islamic studies than history. Dr. al-Shirbīnī observed the gap in the literature on this subject and suggested that this historiographic trend reflects a reluctance on the part of contemporary Brothers to give Sufism prominence in their narrative. This is the reason he chose to title his work *al-Shaykh Hasan al-Banna Mutasawifan* (Hasan al-Banna as Sufī).

Studies on the Ikhwān in the English language have only briefly touched on the subject of Sufism in Hasan al-Banna's life. Richard P. Mitchell's *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*[14], was written in the late 1960s but is still considered a vital source for any research on the Brotherhood. Mitchell alludes to the importance of Sufism in al-Banna's early life and also to the Brothers reluctance to carry on their leader's love of Sufī teachings. Roy Jackson mentions al-Banna's commitment to Sufism and makes the argument that al-Banna, unlike Muhammad

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[10] Al-Waī, Tawfīq. *Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimīn: Kubra al-Harakat al-Islamiya*. (Mansūra, Shurūq lil Nashr wal Tawzīa, 2005), p. 13.

[11] ibid, p. 17.

[12] ibid, title page.

[13] Saqr, Muhammad al-Shirbīnī. *Al-Shaykh Hasan al-Banna, Mutasawifān*. (Cairo, Al-Azhar, 2006).

[14] Mitchell, Richard P. *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*. (New York, Oxford University Press, 1969).

`Abduh and Rash d Rida, 'remained a Suf all his life.'[15] However, he does not substantiate his statement with sufficient evidence. Other studies which mention al-Banna's experience with Sufism include Brynjar Lia's *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt*[16] and Gudrun Kramer's recent study entitled *Hasan al-Banna*[17]. Kramer's study, the most recent on al-Banna's life, also addresses al-Banna's early attachment to Sufism, but does not delve into detail. Kramer's study relies on al-Banna's memoirs, as well as a collection of Letters penned by al-Banna's brother Jamal, to discuss the role of Sufism in al-Banna's early life but does not consult either primary sources on the Hasafiyya order or al-Banna's other writings which containing detailed references to Sufism.[18] Roxanne Euben and Muhammad Qasim Zaman published a reader on Islamist thought in 2009, in which al-Banna is termed the 'father of contemporary Islamism.'[19] Though the authors mention that al-Banna was a member of a Suf order in his youth and that his use of the title *murshid* is linked to his Suf origins, the authors do not explore this argument further in the course of their study.[20]

Because studies on the Brotherhood do not adequately address al-Banna's relationship with Sufism, it was necessary to consult other sources on organized Sufism during al-Banna's lifetime to provide context. Fred De Jong's study entitled *Turuq and Turuq-Linked Institutions in Twentieth Century Egypt: A Historical Study In the Organizational Dimension of Islamic Mysticism*[21] is an important resource for understanding the development of organized Sufism and how the orders negotiated spiritual and political authority with other shaykhs as well as with the government. Further, this study consulted Jamil Abun-Nasr's *Muslim Communities of Grace: The Sufi Brotherhoods in Muslim Religious Life*[22] for important background on the development of the orders vis a vis the

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[15] Jackson, Roy. *Fifty Key Figures in Islam*. (New York, Routledge, 2006), p. 197.
[16] Lia, Brynjar. *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt: The Rise of an Islamic Mass Movement 1928-1942*. (Reading, Ithaca Press, 1998).
[17] Kramer, Gudrun. *Hasan al-Banna*. (Richmond, One World, 2010).
[18] ibid, p. 10-16.
[19] Euben, Roxanne L. and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, ed. *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought: Texts and Contexts from al-Banna to Bin Laden*. (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2009), p. 49.
[20] ibid, p. 26.
[21] De Jong, F. *Turuq and Turuq-Linked Institutions in Twentieth Century Egypt: A Historical Study In the Organizational Dimension of Islamic Mysticism.* (Leiden, Brill, 1978).
[22] Abun-Nasr, Jamil. *Muslim Communities of Grace: The Sufi Brotherhoods in Muslim Religious Life* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2007).

British occupation of Egypt.  Mark Sedgwick's important article entitled ''In Search of a Counter-Reformation: Anti-Sufī Stereotypes and the Budshishiyya's Response' highlights the response of the Budshishiyya Sufī order to the rise of the modern education system in Morocco and the subsequent rise of Salafism and Arab socialism. The Budshishiyya responded to these movements first by addressing the anti-Suf  stereotypes that had become prevalent among Morocco's educated elites and then by 'emphasizing the charisma of the *shaykh* and concentrating on essentials rather than inessentials.'[23]  Sedgwick's model is critical to understanding Sufī revivalist movements which developed during the era of Salafī rationalism in the Muslim world.  Also important is Michael Gilsenan's work on the history of the *turuq* and their inner dynamics, both in *Saint and Sufi in Modern Egypt: An Essay in the Sociology of Religion*[24] and *Recognizing Islam: Religion and Society in the Modern Middle East*[25].  Gilsenan's research was critical to our understanding from both the historical and sociological perspectives.  Historically, his work explained in detail the decline of the *turuq* in the late nineteenth century, especially the economic forces which undermined their spiritual authority.   From a sociological point of view, Gilsenan's book *Saint and Sufī* aquaints the reader with the complex relationship between the Sufī shaykh and his students; understanding this dynamic was vital to our discussion of the orders, political authority, and activism in Chapter Three.

It was also important to consult sources on the synthesis of Egyptian Islamic nationalism as we engaged with the issues of the Suf  orders and authority.  Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski composed two studies entitled *Egypt, Islam, and the Arabs: the Search for Egyptian Nationhood*[26] and *Redefining the Egyptian Nation 1930-1952*[27] which highlight the development of Islamic nationalism and the Brotherhood's role in the

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[23] Sedgwick, Mark. 'In Search of a Counter-Reformation: Anti-Sufī Stereotypes and the Budshishiyya's Response' in Browers, Michaelle and Charles Kurzman. *An Islamic Reformation*? (Lanham, Lexington Books, 2004), p. 127.

[24] Gilsenan, Michael. *Saint and Sufī in Modern Egypt: An Essay in the Sociology of Religion*. (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1973).

[25] Gilsenan, Michael. *Recognizing Islam: Religion and Society in the Modern Middle East*. (London, I.B. Tauris, 2000).

[26] Gershoni, Israel and James Jankowski. *Egypt, Islam, and the Arabs: the Search for Egyptian Nationhood 1900-1930*. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995).

[27] Gershoni, Israel and James Jankowski. *Redefining the Egyptian Nation 1930-1952*. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995).

articulation of an indigenous, Islamic ethos. The two authors have recently published a third book entitled

*Confronting Fascism in Egypt: Dictatorship Versus Democracy in the 1930s* in which they draw a controversial

parallel between Nazism and the Muslim Brotherhood, arguing that

> 'features of the movement's (Ikhwān) organization and ideology resemble contemporary
> fascism: the society's hierarchical and autocratic structure; its revulsion over the flaws of
> partisanship…the cult of a venerated leader whose very title *murshid* (guide) echoed the total
> submission expected of a Sufī acolyte to his shaykh…and the adherence to a comprehensive
> doctrine providing guidance for all spheres of life.'[28]

The authors are quick to point out that they are in no way suggesting that the inspiration for the Ikhwān

originated with European fascism. However, they argue that al-Banna praised the Nazis for their organizational

abilities and their ability to create obedience to 'a charismatic leader.'[29] But we concur with the authors that his

interest in the Nazis was limited to these comments. We found overwhelming evidence through our research

that al-Banna derived both the idea of the charismatic *murshid* and the hierarchical structure from the Sufī

orders, and not from European fascism.

The corpus of books on the rise of political Islam, or Islamism as it is referred to by experts, also proved

vital to our understanding of the ideological tensions within the Brotherhood after the death of Imām al-Banna.

Barbara Zollner has made significant contribution to our understanding of the Brotherhood during the 1950s in

her book *The Muslim Brotherhood: Hasan al-Hudaybī and Ideology*, particularly the internal ideological tensions

of the 1950s and the effects of Nasser's crackdowns on the Ikhwān as an organization.[30] Zollner's work in her

article ''Prison Talk: The Muslim Brotherhood's Internal Struggle During Gamal Abdel Nasser's Persecution, 1954

to 1971' has also enhanced our understanding of the ideological schism which occurred within the Ikhwān after

al-Banna's death and the possible role of the state in curbing the rise of Qutbism.[31] Gilles Kepel's study entitled

*Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet and the Pharoah* also highlighted the life and legacy of Sayyid Qutb (d.

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[28] Gershoni, Israel and James Jankowski. *Confronting Fascism in Egypt: Dictatorship Versus Democracy in the 1930s.* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2010), p. 211.
[29] ibid, p. 211.
[30] Zollner, Barbara. *The Muslim Brotherhood: Hasan al-Hudaybi and Ideology*. (London, Routledge, 2009).
[31] Zollner, Barbara. 'Prison Talk: The Muslim Brotherhood's Internal Struggle During Gamal Abdel Nasser's Persecution, 1954 to 1971'. *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 30: 2007.

1965) and the ideological disputes that threatened to divide the organization in the 1960s.  The aforementioned *Rethinking Islamist Politics: Culture, the State, and Islamism* by Salwa Ismail provided valuable insight into the rising prominence of Egyptian Islamist rhetoric beginning in the late 1970s which created a coveted base for the Brothers to disseminate their 'sharia-centric' discourse.

*Contribution to the Field*

Based on this historiographic survey, it becomes clear that no study sufficiently clarifies the link between al-Banna's activism, Sufism, and his ideas on Islamic statehood and nationalism.  Our goal is to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of al-Banna's development and to argue that Sufism occupy a more prominent place in that narrative.  If this approach is applied, it is easier to understand the development of Egyptian Islamic nationalism as a religious and political phenomenon rooted in the Muslim Brothers dismissal of traditional Islamic mysticism and their desire to promote an Islam that would allow them to be as socially and politically relevant as secular political parties.  The evolution of the Ikhwn is a story of the larger transformation of the meaning of authority in Egyptian state and society which began in the late nineteenth century.   The move from a spiritual and hierarchical order to a rational Islam that rejected the constraints of religious authority would radically transform what it meant to mobilize people for a cause.  This dynamical transition resulted in a different understanding of politics as well, giving way to the rise of Islamic associations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries not necessarily organized around the spiritual pull of one shaykh. This study will argue that it is critical to understand the Muslim Brotherhood in the context of these changes.

*Primary Sources*

This dissertation will utilize many of Imām al-Banna's writings which appeared as articles in the *Jarīda* during his lifetime. After his death, articles which appeared in a series were gathered and published as books. These books include *Nahw al-Nūr, Risalat al-Ta`līm, Da`watuna, Ila Ayu Shay`in Nada`ū al Nās?, al-Jihād fi al-Islam*, and *Risalat al-Mutamar al-Khāmis*. This is also true of al-Banna's autobiography, *Mudhakkarāt al-Da`wa wal Da`iya*, which was published in the journal as short articles and then gathered into a book after his death.

This study will also make use of sources related to the Egyptian Sufīs in the late nineteenth and throughout the twentieth centuries. Much of what we know about Shaykh Muhammad Hasanayn al-Hisāfī comes from the manuscript *Al-Manhal Al Sāfī Fī Manāqib Al-Sayyid Hasanayn al-Husāfī*[32], penned by one of his students, `Alī al-Ja`farāwī in the 1930s. The book is written in the traditional style of *Manāqib* literature by a devotee to describe the qualities and miracles of the shaykh while providing a biographical sketch and gathering together some of the shaykh's writings and *khutbas*. In addition, we will make use of the shaykh's own book of *awrād* and writings, *Al-Sabīl al-Wādih Ma`a Risalat Nūr al-Basa`ir wal Absār wa Majmu`at Awrād al-Sāda al-Shādhiliya*. Other information was derived from interviews with current members of the Hasafiyya including Shaykh Muhammad Abul-Asrār al-Hisāfi, its current shaykh, and his deputies.

Other primary sources pertain to the Brotherhood from the time of its creation to the present day. Chapter Four will compare al-Banna's journal, *Jaridat al-Ikhw n al-Muslim n*, with other journals from 1930s Cairo. As Chapter Four will argue, journals like *al-Hil l* show the varied approach of Cairene intellectuals to religion and identity, religion and nationalism. Further, we compared al-Banna's work in the *Jar da* to other Islamic magazines from the 1930s, such as *al-Man r*, to show how al-Banna's approach to religion and politics was unlike his predecessors.

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[32] Ja`farāwī, `Ali. *Al-Manhal Al Sāfī Fī Manāqib Al-Sayyid Hasanayn al-Husāfī*. (Cairo, Al-Matba` Al-Jamāliya, 1912).

As far as Brotherhood sources, I discovered while conducting fieldwork the extensive publishing network the Brothers have created in Egypt since the 1950s, opening presses under various names to avoid detection by the authorities.  In 2003, one of the Brotherhood presses, Dar al-Tawz `a wal Nashr al-Islamiyya, published an important two volume collection of accounts by Brothers relating their experiences with al-Banna entitled *Qalū `an al-Imām Hasan al-Banna*.[33]  The manuscript provides an interesting survey of biographical material written both shortly after the Imām's death and also close to the book's publication in 2003.  Dar al-Tawzī`a was closed by the government for several months during my fieldwork in early 2007, but I was able to obtain a copy of this book from a Brothers' private collection.  Chapter Six and Seven utilized the writings of Ikhwān authors from as far back as the 1950s.  These authors include Muhammad `Abdullah al-Samman, Anwar al-Jindī, Shaykh Muhammad al-Ghazālī, and Sayyid Qutb.  Al-Samman and al-Jindī wrote memoirs of their experiences with Imām al-Banna and the organization.  Al-Ghazālī and Qutb, the ideologues of the organization, provided the theoretical basis for Ikhwān goals.  The important point about these sources is to approach them as a means of understanding these individuals and how they engaged with their historical setting.  These sources are not meant to be read as historical fact, rather they provide a way of understanding of the individuals who experienced the turbulent history of the Brotherhood.

The sources concerning the early history of al-Banna's life are problematic, as Mitchell has pointed out.  One of the important sources historians have relied upon for information about al-Banna's early life is his memoirs, *Mudhakkarāt al-Da`wa wa al-Da'iya*, which is actually a collection of short biographical articles penned by al-Banna in his adulthood that appeared in the weekly circular published by the Muslim Brotherhood years later.  The source is problematic for historians for three reasons; first, as Johansen points out, since the work is a compilation there is a chance of errors or omissions.[34]  Second, as is the case with all memoirs, there is the possibility that the author projects backwards his knowledge of people and events gained in adulthood onto

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[33] Hudaybī, Muhammad al-Ma`mūn. Introduction in `Abdul-Azīz, Goma`a Amīn. *Qalū `An al-Imām Al-Banna*. (Cairo, Dar al-Tawzi`a wal Nashr Al-Islamiyya, 2003).

[34] Johansen, Johannes. 'Hasan al-Banna's Earliest Pamphlet'. *Die Welt Des Islams* 32 (1992): p. 258.

his telling of events in his childhood.  In this case it is often better to use the biography as a testimony on the time the author is actually writing rather than the period the author says he or she is writing about.  In other words, the author's description of events is more a reflection of his or her point of view at the time of writing than twenty years earlier.  For example, if al-Banna describes Sufism in his youth in the village in Mahmudiyya, it may be useful to also use the source as a description of the debates taking place on Sufism in his adulthood in 1930s Egypt.  In this view, the author's telling of his story is full of purpose and we are left to ponder how al-Banna includes Sufism in his memoirs and what message he is trying to relate through the telling of his story as he does.  Mitchell, Johansen, and Lia utilized al-Banna's memoirs in their studies, but not without acknowledging its limitations as a source.

There is another potential problem when dealing with memoirs written by Muslim authors on religious topics or individuals--the respectful tone of the author could prevent the reader from understanding his relationships and tensions with others as Islamic teachings dictate that one not refer to others in a negative way.  Al-Banna's description of events and individuals reflect his hesitation to be critical in any sense of the word.  His style of writing is also reflective of a larger tradition of religious communication utilized by Muslim authors throughout the centuries.  Among members of this traditional Islamic meant to be understood but not overstated.  What is interesting, and will be explored in later chapters, is the idea that al-Banna's adherence to the genre of traditional religious communication can be contrasted with the marked shift in tone used by some of his followers in similar religious debates only a few decades later.

Both of these research hurdles had to be overcome.  Regarding the scarcity of sources on al-Banna's early life, I found it most effective to combine and cross-reference accounts from his memoirs, interviews, and what I learned from the Hasafiyya brothers about their group and from the Brothers about their organization.  Gathering accounts from different sources also helped me to gain an understanding of tensions and conflict, which are not transmitted when one uses only one account.  I made sure, for example, to document different perspectives on my subject.  So for example current members of the Brotherhood had starkly different

personifications of al-Banna than members of the Hasafiyya, who make sure to distance themselves from him since the government crackdown on the Ikhwān in the 1960s.  I dealt with the second problem, that al-Banna was not critical of his contemporaries, by defining the context of his bias and by treating his account as his perspective, rather than the only understanding.  I used this same approach when dealing with the sources on the Hasafiyya.  Since primary sources were limited, it was important to subject them to critical analysis and to define any biases clearly.

Much to our advantage, al-Banna's pamphlets and letters have been well preserved because they are still consulted by members of the Muslim Brotherhood today.  That said, the political situation in Egypt makes it a precarious task indeed to enter a bookstore and ask for his writings.  His writings on Sufism in particular are contained within a number of letters, including his *Risalat al-Ta`līm* and *al-Ma`thurāt*, his collection of litanies. Further, we have made use of his fatwas, published in *Jarīdat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* and other short volumes, for his opinions on topics related to Sufism.

Chapter Five, 'A Sufī Counter-Reformer? Hasan al-Banna and the Religious Setting in 1930s Cairo', utilizes several other primary sources taken from magazines such as al-Banna's *Jarīdat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn*, Jurjī Zaydān's *al-Hilāl*, and Rashīd Rida's *al-Manār*, all published in Cairo in the 1930s.  Journals and magazines such as these capture the essence of debates on religion, nationalism, and identity which occupied these thinkers.  Chapter Five will utilize these sources to highlight how each publisher viewed religion and spirituality, especially in the context of the rise of scientific inquiry and European advancement.

Our research would not have been complete without the many interviews with members of the Hasafiyya, the Sufī order al-Banna was attached to as a youth.  Muhammad Abul-Asrār al-Hisāfī, the current shaykh of the order, gave me unlimited access to the individuals and publications I had only read about. Further, his deputy, Ahmed Foad El-Gendy, served as a helpful guide on my visits to Damanhūr, the seat of the *tarīqa*.  Interviews with members of the Ikhwān, on the other hand, proved much more difficult.  At the time of my fieldwork, the Mubarak regime had launched a brutal crackdown on the Brothers and forced them

underground. Those who agreed to meet with me did so at their own risk, but provided me with vital information for my topic. Additionally, my interviews with Dr. Muhammad al-Gendy, then a Professor at Al-Azhar's *Kulliyat al-Da'wa* (College of Da'wa), helped me to understand the Brotherhood's transition away from Sufism and towards Islamic nationalism.

*Chapters' Contents*

Chapter One analyses the situation of the Sufī orders in Egypt in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This is to explain the religious environment into which Hasan al-Banna was born and how he developed a strong attachment to his shaykh, Muhammad Hasanayn al-Hisāfī (d. 1910). Then, having described the decline of the orders in the late nineteenth century, Chapter Two will describe the trend of religious reform that occupied Sufī shaykhs in Egypt during that period. Chapter Two will also introduce Hasan al-Banna's shaykh, Muhammad Hasanayn al-His f (d. 1910) and argue that he too should be seen as one of the reforming Sufī shaykhs of the nineteenth century. Chapter Three further develops this idea by arguing that Sufī shaykhs practiced activism during the British colonial period by striving to preserve their way of life. For Shaykh al-Hisāfī, resistence to foreign hegemony took the form of commanding the right and forbidding the wrong, a way of ensuring the continuation of an indigenous Islamic identity.

Chapter Four argues that al-Banna utiliized *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* to teach readers about Sufī doctrine and beliefs. This is evidenced by the number of articles on Sufism during the first few years of publication. However, in 1936 he was compelled by readers' interests to shift the journal's focus away from Sufism and towards Islamic nationalism. Cairene readers were attracted to publications which explained the process of national self-determination from an Islamic perspective and the nature of Islamic statehood. Further, they wanted to read articles which showed that Islam supported scientific inquiry and discovery.

Chapter Four compares the *Jarīda* to other journals from 1930s Cairo, specifically *al-Manār*, *Majallat al-Azhar*, *al-Hilāl*, and *al-Muqtataf*. The *Jarīda* diverged from *al-Manār* because it did not adopt the positions of

the Salafī school of thought.  Nor did it align itself with *Al-Hilāl* and *al-Muqtataf*, two popular scientific journals which promoted scientific inquiry and awareness of European innovation.

Chapter Five suggests that al-Banna be seen as a Sufī 'counter-reformer', based on the argument by Mark Sedgewick in his study on the Budshishiyya order and highlights al-Banna's efforts to ally with Suf shaykhs to re-establish the legitimacy of organized Sufism.  As a Sufī 'counter-reformer', al-Banna utilized the Ikhwān as a vehicle to ensure the survival of Sufī teachings.  Chapter Six argues that the Muslim Brothers tolerated Sufī teachings as long as their leader was alive.  After his death, the disdain they felt for organized Sufism came to the surface as they made every effort to separate themselves from the *turuq*.  Chapter Six will also discuss the Brothers' desire to imbibe members of their organization with a rational brand of Islam and a commitment to social activism.  Finally, Chapter Seven will detail how Imām al-Banna is remembered by his students by examining his biographies, and how his reverence for Sufism was excluded from his legacy.

**CHAPTER ONE**
**THE SUFĪ ORDERS IN EGYPT 1805-1952: THE END OF AN ERA**

This chapter sets out to paint a picture of religious life in nineteenth and early twentieth century Egypt focusing on themes related to the *turuq*, or Sufi orders, in order to provide a context for the life of Shaykh Muhammad Hasanayn al-Hisafī (d. 1910), founder of the *Tarīqa Hasafiyya*, and his successors. So influential were the orders during this period, that historians cite their influence in almost every sphere of Egyptian life.[35] However, between 1809 and 1882, a series of government reforms led to the economic and political decline of the Sufī shaykhs as viable power brokers for the people. The shaykhs' loss of tangible authority translated into a period of widespread disdain and criticism of the *turuq* by both scholars and intellectuals, beginning in the mid nineteenth century and extending well into post-revolutionary Egypt.

Al-Sayyid Marsot writes that 'it is no exaggeration to say that every man in Cairo, and probably in Egypt, was a member of at least one Sufī brotherhood, for the orders performed a vital social as well as a religious function.'[36] Throughout the eighteenth and into the nineteenth century, the *shaykhs* of the *turuq* functioned 'as a stabilizing element in a precarious unsettled constellation of conflicting interests and aspirations.'[37] They oversaw not only religious life in the mosques, but also influenced the realms of education, scholarship, politics, and land ownership.

Throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, education revolved around the mosque. Families would send their children to the local *kuttab* to study and memorize the Quran and other important Islamic texts. Gilsenan points out that the teachers at the *kuttab* or *madrasah* were often heads of orders

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[35] See for example, Gilsenan, *Saint and Sufi in Modern Egypt* and De Jong, Frederick. *Sufi Orders in Ottoman and Post-Ottoman Egypt and the Middle East: Collected Studies*. (Istanbul, The Isis Press, 2000).
[36] Marsot, Afaf Lutfī al-Sayyid. 'The Ulama of Cairo in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries' in Keddie, Nikki R. *Scholars, Saints, and Sufīs: Muslim Religious Institutions in the Middle East since 1500*. (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1972), p. 151.
[37] Moriah, Gabriel. *The Social Structure of the Sufī Associations in Egypt in the 18th Century*. (London, University of London, June 1963), p. 250.

themselves and that many of the texts on doctrine were texts penned by shaykhs of *tasawwuf*.[38]  It was

understood that children would complete their studies at the *kuttab* before going on to seek knowledge at the

center of Islamic learning in Egypt, al-Azhar.  As Donald Reid points out, in this traditional society, 'the network

of religious schools with al-Azhar at its head had long provided a means of social mobility for people of humble

origins.'[39]  Religious education also provided a viable means of earning a livelihood during this period, as

graduates would go on to fill positions in the government, courts, and schools.

      The shaykhs also played an important role in the realm of politics.  Though Egypt was nominally  under

Ottoman rule but effectively governed by the dynasty established by Muhammad 'Ali in the early 19th century, it

was the shaykhs of the *turuq* who wielded influence with the people.[40]  He could intercede for them with the

ruling class about various matters; for instance, he might pressure an *emir* to withdraw a ruling or a tax that his

people found burdensome.  Moriah writes that, 'these activities (ie seeing to the needs of the people) were

incumbent upon the shaykh or walī in his position as an exponent of the Divine power and were an important

part of his social function.'[41]  The shaykhs ensured their political status by virtue of their nearness to God, and

also by occupying positions of authority within this traditional framework.  For this reason, they 'founded family

Orders, became the Sheikhs of the legal schools, acquired large estates or control over *waqf* (land endowed for

religious purposes), and filled offices such as that held by the Bekri family of Sheikh al Masha'ikh.'[42]  The ruling

class could not refuse the request of a prominent shaykh, as they were well aware of the social and political

consequences of such an action.  This was particularly important in a world where, as Moriah points out, bribery

and force often led to arbitrary exercises of power.[43]

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[38] Gilsenan, *Saint and Sufī in Modern Egypt*, p. 189.
[39] Reid, Donald M. 'Educational and Career Choices of Egyptian Students.' *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, V. 8, No. 3, Jul.1977, p. 351.
[40] Gilsenan, *Saint and Sufī in Modern Egypt*, p. 190.
[41] Moriah, p. 195.
[42] Gilsenan, *Saint and Sufī in Modern Egypt*, p. 190.
[43] Moriah, p.202.

Much of what is known about the interactions of the shaykhs of *turuq* with the ruling elites during the seventeenth and eighteenth century comes from `Abdul Rahmān al-Djabartī's account, in which he describes the activities of prominent shaykhs of his age, including their peace-making between parties and their resolving the problems of others.  Al-Djabartī (d. 1825) was an Egyptian scholar who is most noted for his chronicle of Napoleon's invasion of Egypt and Muhammad `Alī's rise to power.  Al-Djabartī's account also highlights the lives of the shaykhs of nineteenth century Cairo, such as Shaykh Sayyid Badr bin Mūsā al-Nakīb.  He writes that he,

> 'conducted himself in a laudable manner…by showing esteem for (his) fellow-men, holding an open table, affording hospitality to his guests, paying frequent calls on the notables and the umārā', concerning himself assiduously with the needs of the people, exerting himself on behalf of the inhabitants of his quarter and his section of the town concerning their claims and the settlement of their quarrels, and making peace for them, and protecting them, and repelling (anyone) who attempted to oppress them, even if her were of the *umarā*' and governors.'[44]

The ability of the shaykhs to intercede for the people was vital during this period.  So important was the institution of intercession that the people came to expect it from the *shaykh* as a means of countering the injustice of their rulers.[45]  For example, Moriah relates Djabartī's account of Shaykh al-'Arūsī, a prominent Sufi *shaykh* and also an official at Mashyakhat al-Azhar, who was forced to deal with an angry mob because of his refusal to intervene against a ruling by Isma`īl Bey.  Loyalty to him, Moriah concludes, sometimes depended on his ability to alleviate their burdens.[46]

The political influence of the shaykhs was felt throughout Egypt during the `Urabī insurrection in the early 1880s and the struggle against British occupation that followed at the end of the nineteenth century.  As John Voll writes, 'the traditional brotherhoods provided the basis for much of the militant opposition to European imperial expansion in the nineteenth century and, through these efforts, created symbols for Islamic authenticity that have remained important throughout the twentieth century.[47]  Historians point to examples

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[44] Moriah, p. 196-197.
[45] ibid, p. 206.
[46] ibid.
[47] Voll, John Obert. 'Conservative and Traditional Brotherhoods.'  *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. Vol. 524, Political Islam, Nov. 1992, p. 66.

such as Shaykh Hasan al-'Idwī al-Hamzāwī, head of a Shādhiliyya order, who supported `Urabī and called for resistance to foreign domination in Egypt.[48]   One must keep in mind, however, that not all those who participated in the insurrection against the British did so to realize nationalist aspirations.  De Jong points out that peasants in the countryside who were members of the *turuq* may have supported 'Urabī's revolt not so much because they had nationalist ambitions, but because of their own dissatisfaction with the status quo.  He writes that, 'These rivulets of revolt seem to have merged with the broader stream of the `Urabī insurrection and continued to flow even after this stream had been checked, since they had sprung from different sources.'[49] Nevertheless, the *turuq* served as an important social grouping at that critical historical juncture—an avenue for the mobilization of large numbers of people seeking change.

Similarly, Shaykh Muhammad Madī `Abu`l-Aza`im, shaykh of the `Azmiyya order, urged his *murīds* to resist the British occupation of Egypt, by taking up arms if necessary.  The Shaykh himself was forced to leave his teaching post at Gordon College in Khartoum because of his anti-British stance.[50]  His writings reflect the desire to promote a balance between devotion and service to society, and to cultivate in his students a sense of self pride in light of foreign hegemony.  As Voll puts it, 'These brotherhoods were a major conservative force, preserving a sense of Islamic identity in times of rule by non-Muslims or secularizing and westernizing elites after independence.[51] Abu`l-Aza`im's desire was to work towards 'a revitalized Islam'[52] in a traditional world he felt was increasingly being threatened.  On the eve of the British occupation, many Sufi shaykhs felt great concern and uncertainty about the changing political situation.  De Jong points out that it was not until the establishment of the Turuq administration, and the subsequent issuance of the Regulations of the Sufī orders in

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[48] De Jong, *Sufī Orders*, p. 150.
[49] De Jong, *Turuq*, p. 122.
[50] De Jong, *Sufī Orders*, p. 163.
[51] Voll, 'Conservative and Traditional Brotherhoods', p. 66.
[52] De Jong, *Sufī Orders*, p. 163.

1872, that the *shaykhs* of the *turuq* began to feel more secure in their position vis-à-vis the British and eased their position on the occupation.[53]

In the realm of economics, we find that *shaykhs* of the orders in late eighteenth century Egypt enjoyed great financial status as large landowners and as such, were able to give assistance to others with the needs of daily life.  Al-Sayyid Marsot writes that,

> 'they (the ulemā') managed the wealth of minors and orphans, of schools, mosques, hospitals, and above all managed the funds of charitable endowments, the *awqaf* (pl. of *waqf*) which by the nineteenth century covered under one-fifth the rural cultivable land, around 600,000 faddans, and which included perhaps a higher proportion of real estate and other forms of urban property.'[54]

Furthermore, points out al-Sayyid Marsot, it came to be that the *qādī* was involved in every commercial transaction, as no sale or transfer of property could be carried out without his endorsement.  They were entrusted with the safekeeping of family funds and heirlooms, and stood in as protector of families when the head of the household was away.  The shaykhs and ulemā, then, should be seen as 'men of property'[55], a powerful economic social grouping in this period.

*The Decline of the Turuq in Egypt (1809-1882)*

This prestigious position of the orders soon changed.   Nineteenth century Egypt witnessed major transformations in the realms of agriculture and production, politics, and education that undermined the traditional framework of which the orders were an integral part.  Within a few decades, 'the distribution, allocation, and achievement of power and authority were now on grounds other than those of a century ago.'[56] This section will argue that the class of ulema, of which the Sufī shaykhs were a part, supported Muhammad Ali

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[53] De Jong, *Sufī Orders*, p. 158.
[54] Marsot, *The Ulama of Cairo*, p. 153.
[55] ibid, p. 154.
[56] Gilsenan, *Saint and Sufi in Modern Egypt*, p. 196.

initially hoping that he would guard their interests, only to be disadvantaged later on by the massive reforms he imposed.

Shortly before Muhammad Alī was appointed governor of Egypt in 1805, the ulema were involved in a desperate political conflict between the ruling Mamluk elite and Muhammad Alī, who had positioned himself as a viable alternative to the corruption of the ruling Mamluk governor. They chose to put their weight behind Muhammad Alī, who vowed to 'take no action without consulting the ulema, and were he to break his word, the ulema could depose him.'[57] The Porte, still influential in Egyptian politics, had no choice but to ratify the decision of the ulema. The Mamluk governor was relieved of his position and Muhammad Alī was declared governor of Egypt in June 1805.

Thus, Muhammad Alī entered his office with the full support of Egypt's ulema with the understanding that they would be consulted by him and that he would work to protect their interests. It is important to keep in mind that the ulema were not only scholars, but that most of them were wealthy landowners and businesspeople. Because the high ulema were 'men of wealth who feared and despised the masses'[58] they expected that Muhammad `Alī would protect their financial interests. His role, they believed, was to maintain order, as they themselves rarely became involved in politics or confrontation.[59]

It was precisely the ulema's reluctance to become involved in conflict that gave Muhammad Alī full confidence that they would not pose any threat to him after he assumed his office. 'This reluctance to become involved in confrontation,' writes al-Sayyid Marsot, 'may have given Muhammad Alī his clue as to how to handle the ulema later.'[60] Their reaction showed him that they did not seek power for themselves and that they would put their weight behind any candidate who secured their interests.

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[57] Marsot, Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid. *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad Ali*. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 47.
[58] ibid, p. 50.
[59] ibid, 51.
[60] Ibid.

The amicable relationship between Muhammad Alī and the ulema soon changed. At the beginning of his governorship Muhammad Alī, having no wealth of his own, recognized the need to secure funds as soon as possible. For this reason, in June 1809 he ordered that waqf lands would be taxed by the state as a means of generating revenue. This command angered the ulema greatly, as many of them were large landowners and their land had previously been exempt from taxation. They responded by refusing to go to al-Azhar, or teach any classes, effectively staying in their homes until the governor revoked his decision.[61] Of course, Muhammad Alī had no intention of changing his mind, and the ulema were warned that they might be harmed by him if they persisted in their position. Muhammad Alī, now turning against the elites who had supported him, 'knew the time had come to get rid of the native elite, who stood between him and his sources of income..'[62] Being an intelligent politician, Muhammad Alī co-opted two prominent shaykhs to his side promising them compensation for their support. He was further able to win over Shaykh al-Sharqawī, then shaykh al-Azhar, to his side. Shaykh al-Sharqawī already disliked the popular leader who had rallied the ulema, Umar Makram, and had concerns about his expansive influence.[63] Muhammad Alī responded by exiling Makram, thus depriving the ulema that opposed him of their leader. The ulema conceded defeat to the pasha, leaving them 'at the mercy of the wali.'[64]

By cutting off the ulema from their economic strength, Muhammad Alī had undermined not only their wealth but their viability as social leaders as well. Though the ulema were effectively disabled by these reforms it took some time for the people to understand their new state of weakness. 'For a long time to come the populace continued to believe the ulema were powerful and appealed to them to redress any wrongs but as Jabarti sadly remarked, they (the people) did not know that they (the ulema) had given in to the master who dominated them.'[65]

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[61] Marsot, *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad Ali*, p. 68.
[62] ibid.
[63] ibid.
[64] ibid, p. 69.
[65] ibid.

Having been deprived of their financial support, the shaykhs could no longer assist the people as they once did.[66] Al-Sayyid-Marsot writes that, 'Muhammad Ali, like Baibars before him, knew that he had to dominate the ulema if he was to rule absolutely, and he did that by sending their leaders into exile, by abolishing the iltizam system and confiscating the awqaf, and making the ulama completely dependent on the ruler for subsistence.'[67] Even bearing in mind Crecelius's suggestion that Muhammad `Ali sought not to tear down the old system but to create alongside it something new[68], the effects of his reforms on the financial status of the *shaykhs* can not be denied. The old frameworks of economic authority had been dismantled, soon to be replaced with new bureaucratic bodies and economic brokers. Gilsenan writes that, 'The endowments that made some of the *turuq* wealthy and provided a power base for the Sheikhs in their control of that vital resource, land, were lost in Muhammad Ali's reforms…The Sheikhs had to take employment like their followers.'[69] Whereas a century before , the shaykhs were able to resolve almost every need of their people, we see that in the early twentieth century that 'as their significance diminished there were new avenues, of which political parties were only one, through which men might seek these opportunities and in which power was increasingly located.'[70] Ultimately, the sphere of influence occupied by the shaykh diminished.

The economic situation was becoming increasingly complex as Egypt moved from a subsistence economy to a cash crop economy increasingly driven by international forces. The integration of Egypt into the world economy had drastic consequences for labor at home. The cottage industries were replaced with factories made for large-scale production as the center of economic profit moved from the villages to the cities. This led to migrations of large numbers of people from the countryside in search of work and new prosperity. As Gilsenan puts it, 'The old forms of labor organization swiftly disappeared, apparently chiefly as a result of the

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[66] Gilsenan, *Saint and Sufī in Modern Egypt*, p. 194.
[67] Marsot, *The Ulama of Cairo*, p. 163.
[68]Crecelius, Daniel. 'Nonideological Responses of the Egyptian Ulama to Modernization' in Keddie, Nikki R. *Scholars, Saints, and Sufīs: Muslim Religious Insitutions in the Middle East since 1500*. (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1972), p. 186.
[69] Gilsenan, *Saint and Sufī in Modern Egypt*, p. 200.
[70] ibid.

changes in the commercial system and in the habits of consumption, the modernization of occupations and the administrative reorganization.'[71] Shaykhs of *turuq* lost their economic standing in this new environment.

Just as the shaykhs lost their economic clout in this new world, they found no avenue of political involvement either. Previously, the shaykh was consulted by his followers on worldly and otherworldly matters and acted as mediator between Ottoman governor and governed. The early twentieth century witnessed the emergence of a new class of intellectuals who no longer looked to the shaykh for guidance or inspiration. Instead, Egyptian politics became more informed by what Gilsenan describes as Western Liberalism and pan-Islamic nationalism.[72] Parties such as the Wafd became the new political actors and it was through them that Egyptians from different walks of life hoped to realize their political aspirations. The formation of the parties in the first two decades of the 20th century,' argues Gilsenan, 'linked large numbers, in however tenuous a way, with the processes of government, the nationalist struggle, and the new sources of power.'[73] Even those Egyptians who did not align themselves with the political parties no longer saw the *turuq* as a significant or viable political actor and searched for new types of political associations that might help them realize their aspirations. These changes amounted to the economic and political weakening of the *turuq*, and ultimately their inability to survive in this new world.

Transformations in the realm of education which began under Muhammad `Alī were pursued most aggressively by his successor Khedive Ism`aīl (d. 1895), whose objective 'was nothing less than the complete Europeanization of Egypt in as little time as possible.'[74] As William Cleveland argues, Isma`īl's 'dualistic'[75] reform policy meant that while Isma` l did not do away with the traditional schooling system, students were offered incentives for attending the new government schools instead. In 1872, for example, he oversaw the establishment of Dar al-Ul m, a teachers college meant to re-train graduates of Islamic schools who would go on

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[71] Gilsenan, *Saint and Sufī in Modern Egypt*, p. 194.
[72] ibid, p. 195.
[73] ibid.
[74] Cleveland, William and Martin Bunton. *A History of the Modern Middle East, 4th ed.* (Boulder, Westview Press, 2009), p. 95.
[75] ibid, p. 101.

to teach in the new primary and secondary schools.  By 1886, the School of Languages had transformed into the Cairo College of Law, where students of law were taught French, not Islamic, models of governance.  Through his reforms, Isma` l envisaged the creation of a 'European educated Egyptian elite'; 'Egypt, he said, was no longer in Africa, it was in Europe.'[76]

Ism`a l's educational reforms served to further marginalize the Suf  shaykhs, who seemed no longer relevant in this new order.  Gilsenan writes that, 'what was once the preserve of the small, literate, religious elite, has become almost completely secularized.'[77]  By the start of the twentieth century, education was rapidly shifting away from the *kuttab* as more and more children entered state schools to receive their formal education.  In the span of a few decades, 'the *turuq* have ceased to be formal agencies of instruction.'[78]  In general, the government reforms enacted during the reign of Muhammad `Ali severely compromised the position of the *turuq*, and more generally the religious establishment, as a viable avenue for education.  Secular schools and courts set up during his reign rendered the Islamic schools and courts obsolete[79]; in the wake of increasing Western influence, there was a sense that al-Azhar was not, or perhaps could not, do enough to prepare its students for life in that new world.  The story of Ahmed Lutfi al-Sayyid adequately illustrates this point—though his father intended for him a religious education, a high-ranking government official advised him that this was no longer a viable career path for his son, and Ahmed pursued his education through the secular state schools during the last decade of the nineteenth century.[80]

The world of the Suf  shaykhs was further manipulated by the start of the British occupation in 1882.  Isma` l's ambitious agenda for Egypt led to his dismissal by Sultan Abdul Ham d in 1879, and the installation of his son Tawf q as his successor.  The British recognized the organizational importance of the orders and sought to co-opt Suf  shaykhs in order to control their followers.  They did this by lending their support to a centralized

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[76] Cleveland and Bunton, p. 95.
[77] Gilsenan, *Saint and Sufi in Modern Egypt*, p. 193.
[78] ibid, p. 194.
[79] Reid, *Educational and Career Choices*, p. 351.
[80] ibid.

Suf  authority, known as the *Mashyakha* (Suf  Council),  headed by Shaykh Muhammad Tawfīq al-Bakrī  (d.

1911), member of the al-Bakrī family appointed to be overseers of the orders by Muhammad `Alī.  Al-Bakr

became head of the *Mashyakha* in 1892, thereby becoming the representative of the 'official' Sufī establishment

in Egypt.[81]   Having inherited the position from his brother, Muhammad Tawfīq set out to reestablish the

authority of the *shaykh mashayikh al-turuq al sufiyya* and to establish official legislation that would regulate the

practices of the *turuq*.  Al-Bakrī belonged to one of the most influential families in the realm of the *turuq*,

important players in the realm of Egyptian Sufism since the fifteenth century.  Invested with semi-official

authority over the orders first by the Khedive and later by the British colonial administration, the al-Bakrī

shaykhs implemented a series of measures in the nineteenth century which included a comdemnation of the

practice of some orders of piercing their bodies at *mawlids* to show they felt no bodily pain, or a ban on singing

in the *hadra* or the *Dūsa*, the custom of some orders where the shaykh would ride his horse over the backs of his

*murīds*.[82]  These reforms resulted in the diminishing of Sufī visibility in public life as well as a widespread

dissatisfaction of the Sufī shaykhs with the shaykhs of the Bakriyya and the Turuq Administration.[83]

As a result of this legacy of proposed restrictions, Shaykh Muhammad Tawfīq inherited his position at a

particularly precarious time and 'found himself presiding over an uneasy membership.'[84]   He resolved to

strengthen his position vis-a-vis the *turuq* and create a centralized Sufī authority.  The most important of these

measures was the Regulations of 1895, which 'marked the beginning of a new and distinct era for

institutionalized Islamic mysticism in Egypt'[85], while lending legal legitimacy to al-Bakrī's authority.[86]   The

Regulations established the *Majlis al-Sufī*, a council of Sufī shaykhs with al-Bakrī as president which would settle

all matters pertaining to the *turuq* and enjoyed complete judicial authority.  These regulations were amended in

1903 to limit government interference in the election of the members of the *Majlis al-Sufī* and to give members

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[81] Johansen, *Sufism,* p. 21.
[82] ibid, p. 22-23.
[83] ibid,  p. 23.
[84] ibid.
[85] De Jong, *Turuq,* p. 132.
[86] ibid.

of turuq the opportunity to appeal to the *Majlis* decisions made by their shaykh.[87]  However, al-Bakrī's power remained limited and his efforts to gain greater bureaucratic autonomy were largely obstructed by the Prime Minister at the time, Mustafa Fahmī, who maintained that certain powers over the *turuq* should remain with the central government.  Centralized control over the *turuq* was greatly encouraged by the British administration-- anxious in this case to monitor the influence of Islamic institutions like the orders.[88]

*Colonialism and the Consequences of the British Occupation*

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, certain classes of the Egyptian population began to question the unchecked authority of the Khedive and to demand reform.  These sectors, including notables and government officials, gave their support to Ahmed `Urab  (d. 1911) an army general who 'referred to himself as a delegate of the people.'[89]  `Urab  attracted both the urban, reform-minded class of Egyptians as well as the rural population with his campaign to eliminate foreign control of Egypt's finances and the oppressive debt shouldered by Egypt's peasantry.  By 1882, Khedive Tawf q 'was forced to depend on foreign support to preserve his throne.'[90]

For the British, however, Ur b 's movement represented a serious geopolitical challenge.  British officials worried that a 'national' government would restrict their access to the Suez Canal or honor existing financial obligations.[91]  'They preferred,' Cleveland maintains, 'the rule of a pliable Khedive Tawfīq to the difficulties of dealing with an Urabist government that was responsive to the needs of Egyptians.'[92]  Under the pretense of reacting to anti-British riots in Alexandria, the British fleet laid siege to the city in June 1882.  In September of the same year, `Urābī confronted the British forces in the battle of Tel el-Kebīr, but was captured and his

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[87] De Jong, *Turuq,* p. 136-37.
[88] Johansen, *Sufism,* p. 25.
[89] *Cleveland and Bunton,* p.100.
[90] ibid.
[91] ibid.
[92] ibid.

comrades forced to surrender. In reacting to Urābī's movement, the British intended only to secure Khedive Tawfīq's power and had not foreseen a prolonged occupation. However, Lord Cromer, Britain's lead administrator in Egypt for the first twenty five years, fascilitated the country's growth to serve British interests while arguing that Egyptians were not 'ready' for independence.

The reality of occupation had quite a different effect than Cromer intended. Decades of occupation resulted in the formation of an anti-imperialist movement involving Egyptians of different socio-economic classes. Despite Cromer's efforts to quell political disturbances, Egyptian nationalist thinkers were able to mobilize public opinion to their cause through the press; as Cleveland points out, the Egyptian press 'flourished during the British occupation and assumed an increasingly important place in Egyptian political and cultural life.'[93] Chapter Four, which highlights the role of the periodical press in 1930s Egypt, will discuss the contribution of magazines like *al-Hilāl* and *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* to the spread and strengthening of the nationalist cause.

But it was the events of 1906 that galvanized rural and urban Egyptians under the anti-imperialist banner. In 1906, an unlikely incident in a village in the Nile Delta led to a wave of public outrage and calls for the immediate end of the British occupation. British officers stationed in the village of Dinshaway wounded the wife of the village im m while hunting pigeons. The villagers reaction led to a confrontation with the soldiers in which two soldiers were seriously wounded; one died later from his wounds. The British colonial administration, intent on making a 'lesson' out of the villagers, charged a number of them with murder and publicly hanged them. Others were flogged and imprisoned. The administration's over-reaction in Dinshaway 'created a certain common ground between which the *fellahin* and the urban nationalists and demonstrated to both that Britain was not a benevolent protector but an alien occupier.'[94] Most importantly, the reality of occupation created in Egyptians the feeling that there was an urgent need for new forms of organization which could mobilize the people to change their condition. The three main nationalist organizations, all founded in 1907, addressed the

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[93] Cleveland, p. 107.
[94] ibid, 108.

issue of Egyptian independence from different vantage points.  The Constitutional Reform Party, founded by

Shaykh `Al  Yusuf of al-Azhar (d. 1913) was established to reconcile between constitutional reform and the

sharia.  Shaykh Yusuf made use of his newspaper, *al-Muayyad*, to popularize the idea that the sharia could be

implemented once Egypt gained independence.  The second, the People's Party, was represented by Lutf  al-

Sayyid (d. 1963), who 'introduced a tone of secular liberalism into the debate on Egypt's future'[95];` al-Sayyid also

advocated his ideas through his newspaper *al-Jar da*.  The third, the National Party (*al-Hizb al-Watan* ), headed

by Mustafa K  mil (d. 1908), revered by many as 'the pioneer of the Egyptian national movement'[96], advocated

an immediate end to the British occupation of Egypt and the establishment of a constitutional system instead.

Like Shaykh Yusuf and al-Sayyid, K mil established a newspaper called *al-Liw*  to propagate his views on

nationalism.

　　　Thus, the Dinshaway incident served as a catalyst for nationalist activism in Egypt after 1906.  The three

parties which were formed in the aftermath of the incident reflect the different methodologies nationalists

employed to achieve their goals.  Most importantly for our purposes, the establishment of such parties reflects

the changing dynamics of social organization in early twentieth century Egypt up until the First World War.


*A Crisis of Legitimacy: Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Criticism of the Turuq*


　　　The rising influence and popularity of nationalist associations which addressed the crisis of occupation

leads one to ask why the nationalists did not make use of the *turuq* as outlets for mobilization for their cause.

This is because by the first decade of the twentieth century, the *turuq* were largely discredited in the eyes of

Egypt's literate class.  Reformers from a number of backgrounds, which will be discussed in this section, decried

the excessive rituals of the orders and the seeming lack of participation in the anti-colonial struggle against the

British.  Much of this critique was directed to the influential al-Bakrī family, who controlled the office of Shaykh

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[95] Cleveland, p. 109.
[96] Tibi, Bassam. *Arab nationalism: between Islam and the Nation State*. (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 1997), p. 179.

Mashāyikh al-Turuq al-Sufiyya from 1812.  It was in the sixteenth century that the al-Bakrī family developed into a mystical order in Egypt, adopting the name al-Bakriyya and obligating the recitation of a liturgy, Hizb al-Bakrī, on deciples.[97]   Over time, the family took on greater responsibilities and privileges within the framework of Egyptian Sufī life, such as the overseeing of certain shrines and celebrations, and the administration of *awqāf*. As De Jong correctly points out, these added responsibilities awarded the al-Bakrī family with pensions and stipends, and therefore greater economic clout and stability.[98]  The family's influence continued to increase until in 1812, as part of Muhammad `Alī's efforts to centralize government authority over the orders, Shaykh Muhammad Efendī al-Bakrī (d. 1855) was named head of all Sufī orders in Egypt, or *Shaykh Mashāyikh al-Turuq al-Sufiyya*.[99]  This position was passed down from one shaykh of the al-Bakrī family to the next, in effect creating a dynasty that spanned almost a century, until Shaykh Muhammd Tawf q al-Bakr 's death in 1932.  The *firmān*, or edict, which granted Shaykh al-Bakrī this authority gave him the ability to mediate between shaykhs of orders during disputes as well as to organize special celebrations such as the *mawlid al-nabī*, the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet.   But the *firmān* also had far reaching implications, including tensions with established shaykhs at al-Azhar who viewed this newly created position as a usurpation of their religious authority.[100]  Most importantly, the establishment of this position widened the gap between *tasawwuf* and other branches of knowledge; whereas before those who founded orders were typically scholars attached to al-Azhar, now only al-Bakrī's approval was needed to found an order.  Because of this, shaykhs of al-Azhar felt increasingly isolated from the world of mystical Islam.[101]  This dichotomy had great implications as Egypt entered the mid nineteenth century and Sufī shaykhs were accused by non-Sufīs of unorthodox practices; al-Azhar, increasingly seen as the bastion of orthodoxy, was not likely to come to their defense.

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[97] De Jong, *Turuq*, p. 10.
[98] ibid.
[99] De Jong, *Turuq*, p. 10.
[100] ibid, p. 23.
[101] ibid.

Thus, as heads of the Sufī orders in Egypt, shaykhs of the al-Bakrī family were obligated to address problems with the orders while in office. Shaykh Muhammad Efendī's authority was expanded even more in 1816 when Muhammad `Alī appointed him *Nāqib al-Ashrāf*, head of the *sharīfs* of Egypt. The expansion of al-Bakrī's jurisdiction only exacerbated tensions with al-Azhar and fed criticism of the orders by non-Sufī shaykhs. Shaykh Muhammad Efendī and his son and successor, Shaykh `Alī (d. 1880), would have been obligated at least to accknowledge organized Sufism's transgressions. Radtke writes that,

> '…there were complaints in the eighteenth century as well about the moral decline of Sufism. The two Bakrīs, father and son, fulminate against the perverted practices of Sufism in their day and age: the doctrines of *hūlūl* and *ijtihād* were widespread, the immoral practice of consorting with beardless youths (*murd*) and alien women (*ajānib*) was established, and magic practices were commonplace.'[102]

According to this, the Sufīs were accused of 'perverting' Islam, allowing practices the orthodox shaykhs of al-Azhar would have never allowed. Critiques of the orders continued well into the tenure of Shaykh Muhammad Tawfīq (d. 1932) as *Shaykh Mashayikh al-Turuq*, who recognized the need for reform as early as 1893.[103] However, being a pragmatic man, al-Bakrī recognized the need to establish his authority in his new position before working to fight innovation within the orders.[104] Egyptian journalist `Abdullah al-Jawīsh, also a reformist thinker, wrote in an open letter to Shaykh al-Bakrī in the first decade of the twentieth century that it was his duty to intervene and put an end to Sufī rituals and excesses.[105] By the beginning of the twentieth century, criticism of the orders became so intense that al-Bakrī had no choice but to respond.

At the start of the twentieth century, Muhammad Tawf q al-Bakr , aware that the orders were experiencing a crisis of legitimacy, made it his priority to reform the orders. But there were other Islamic groups in Egypt that were skeptical of al-Bakr 's ability to impose reforms. Specifically, historians have isolated several of these organizations which were vocal in their critique of the orders—the so-called Islamic reformists, the

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[102] Radtke, Bernd. 'Sufism in the Eighteenth Century: An Attempt at a Provisionary Appraisal.' *Die Welt Des Islams*, Vol. 36, Issue 3, Islamic Enlightenment in the Eighteenth Century?, (Nov. 1996), p. 341.
[103] De Jong, *Turuq*, p. 168.
[104] ibid.
[105] Johansen, p. 30-31.

salafiyya movement, and the Muslim Brotherhood.[106]  The reformist critics were active in the years until 1910;

the salafiyya reformers active between 1913 and the 1930s, and critics from the Muslim Brotherhood under the

leadership of Hasan al-Hudaybī in the 1950s.[107]

The reformist movement, led by the so-called Islamic modernists, owes much of its roots to the thinking

of Muhammad `Abduh (d. 1905).  `Abduh himself passed through many different phases in his life, and it was

only during his tenure as Muftī of Egypt that his ideas on reformism were most clearly articulated.  While a

youth growing up in the Nile delta, `Abduh had a very positive experience with Sufism and was especially drawn

to the writings of the Moroccan mystic Sayyid Muhammad al-Madanī (d. 1846).  `Abduh spent hours laboring

over his texts with his uncle Shaykh Darwīsh Khadir, who encouraged him to approach Sufism holistically with a

knowledge of other Islamic sciences.[108]  Between 1869 and 1877 `Abduh moved to Cairo to pursue his studies at

al-Azhar, where he became even more immersed in Sufism.[109]  By his own account, it was Shaykh Darwish who

encouraged him to be balanced and not to fall into extremes of Sufism while neglecting other sciences.

In 1882, `Abduh was exiled from Egypt by the British adminstration for supporting the `Urab revolt.

`Abduh's rulings on Sufism before his exile, Sirriyeh argues, are very different from his opinions when he

returned from exile.  His rulings before exile reflect the balanced teachings of his uncle, who taught him that

Islam was 'a progressive and reasonable religion compatible with modern science and technological

advances.'[110]  Sufī beliefs could exist within this framework, for the physical and the spiritual sciences would

complement one another. While in exile in Paris, `Abduh developed a brand of rational Islam, promoted by his

teacher Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (d. 1897) as well as a commitment to activism also transmitted to him by al-

Afghānī.  With these new ideas, Sufism, with its counter-rational beliefs, had no place.  `Abduh's complexity lies

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[106] De Jong, Fred.  'Turuq and Turuq-Opposition in 20th Century Egypt' in De Jong, Frederick. *Sufī Orders in Ottoman and Post-Ottoman Egypt and the Middle East: Collected Studies*. (Istanbul, Isis Press, 2000), p. 185-196.
[107] De Jong, 'Turuq and Turuq-Opposition', p. 185.
[108] Sirriyeh, Elizabeth. *Sufis and Anti-Sufis: The Defense, Rethinking, and Rejection of Sufism in the Modern World*. (London, Curzon Press, 1999), p. 88.  Sirriyeh points out that Shaykh Darwish had knowledge of Malikī fiqh as well as an extensive understanding of *tasawwuf*.
[109] ibid, p. 89.
[110] ibid, p. 90.

in reconciling his early sympathies to Sufism with his later opinions.  His desire to portray Islam as a religion of the intellect appears to fuel his attacks on Sufism.  When `Abduh was permitted by the British administration to return to Egypt in 1888, he was a man informed by his experience abroad.  In 1899 he was appointed Muftī of Egypt, and having reached the climax of his career, he argued that Islam was a religion of 'reason and tolerance'[111] and that it was the first generations of Muslims (*salaf*) who reflected these teachings.  Therefore, Muslims should look for inspiration from the *salaf* because Islam had not yet been 'corrupted'.  Behind `Abduh's rejection of Sufī beliefs was his belief that 'Islam champions the intellect, and rejects blind imitation (*taqlīd*). Islam has 'put an end to *taqlīd*,' `Abduh wrote, 'and shown that the human being is not meant to be lead around but instead guided through knowledge.'[112]

Clinging to the *salaf* also gave `Abduh a way to reject the 'innovations' of the Sufīs, who were at once innovative and anti-rational.  When asked about the Sufī practice of *tawassul*, or seeking intercession from saints, `Abduh answered that this was not a practice of the *salaf* so it should be avoided.[113]  Nor should a Muslim, he argues, believe that saints (*awliyā*) are given special abilities by God.  Further, 'it is the oligation of every Muslim to negate this belief.'  `Abduh saw more harm than good in Muslims fixation on Islam's esoteric teachings.  He writes, 'there is nothing in the principles of Islam that dictates that a Muslim should believe in *karamāt*.'[114]  Since belief in this concept was not an obligation, he urges the Muslims to seek unity and strength in other beliefs and leave off such distractions.

The reformist movement with its emphasis on reason appealed to individuals from the new class of urban, educated professionals that would become known to historians as the *effendiyya*.  Being both literate and urban, intellectuals from this class rejected the rigid traditional hierarchies of the orders, were more conscious of European impressions of their society, and believed in the need for total reform.  They identified

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[111] Sirreyeh, p. 95.
[112] Abduh, Muhammad. *Risalat al-Tawhīd*. (Cairo, Dar al-Hilāl, 1980), p. 11.
[113] Sirreyeh, p. 96.
[114] `Abduh, p. 177.

themselves as Muslims, but were less likely to accept traditional institutions if they felt that such structures were harmful to the advancement of the country as a whole and to national image.

`Abduh's critique of the orders was echoed by other reformist thinkers like Husayn al-Marsafī (d. 1890), who argued that Egyptian religious leaders were obligated to connect with the youth and speak the language of the day—the language of nationalism and fundamental human rights. He was considered 'among the most prominent of the established scholars and teachers of his time.'[115] Al-Marsafī was born in 1815 in the Egyptian province of Benha. After completing his primary studies in the village his father, also a shaykh, sent him to pursue an education at al-Azhar. During the course of his studies al-Marsafī became critical of al-Azhar's instructional methods as well as the 'poor quality of the books' he studied. The study of Arabic, he believed, should be made interesting to students by including a 'literary element'[116] that would tie the study of language to a wider cultural awareness.

Eventually al-Marsafī went on to become senior professor at Cairo's Dar al-Ulūm and is best remembered for his writings around the time of the `Urābī movement. His famous essay, entitled *Risalat al-Kalim al-Thamān*, inspired a wave of activism by urban readers attracted to his definitions of authority and freedom in Egypt.

Authority, al-Marsafī argued, should not be given to those who 'claim to know the future' or 'those who read the stars' or other practices associated with the shaykhs of Sufism. He stresses that authority is based on 'human'[117] traits such as bravery and intelligence rather than little-understood spiritual gifts. His recommendation is that leaders should be trained in the new Egyptian government schools, where students are taught values such as the liberty, justice, and patriotism.[118] Egypt was entering into a 'political crisis' and a response from learned men like himself was needed to remedy 'the weakening of local authority' which Marsafī

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[115] Mitchell, Timothy. *Colonising Egypt*. (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 131.
[116] Al-Shallaq, Ahmed Zakariyya. *Ru'ya Fi Tahdīth al-Fikr al-Masrī: al-Shaykh Husayn al-Marsafī wa Kitabuhu Risalat al-Kalim al-Thaman Ma`a al-Nass al-Kamil lil-Kitāb*. (Cairo, Al-Hay`a al-Masriyya al-`Amma lil Kitāb, 1984), p. 24.
[117] Al-Marsafī, Husayn. 'al-Kalim al-Thaman' in Al-Shallaq, Ahmed Zakariyya. *Ru'ya Fi Tahdīth al-Fikr al-Masrī: al-Shaykh Husayn al-Marsafī wa Kitabuhu Risalat al-Kalim al-Thaman Ma`a al-Nass al-Kamil lil-Kitāb*. (Cairo, Al-Hay`a al-Masriyya al-`Amma lil Kitāb, 1984), p. 143.
[118] ibid, p. 131-132.

believed was part of the natural cycle of power he had studied when reading Ibn Khaldūn.[119]  Marsafī's writings

are best understood as his attempt to 'extend and make secure political authority in Egypt by means of a revival

of learning.'[120]

Writers from outside the Islamic circles of Cairo also commented on the breakdown of the ulema and the

shaykhs of orders in particular.  Journalist `Abdullah al-Nadīm, for example, believed reform of the orders,

specifically the innovative practices that had become associated with the orders, was possible under al-Bakrī's

leadership.[121]  Al-Nadīm, an important figure in the Egyptian press during the British occupation of Egypt, argued

in 1909 that the orders were responsible to present themselves to the rest of the world as models of sobriety

and organization, bearing in mind that the non-Muslim world was watching.  Though al-Nadīm tried to pursue a

religious education, he quickly found himself unable to concentrate and decided instead to learn about Egyptian

society by observing the people on the streets and writing about them.[122]  Al-Nadīm utilized his journal, *al-

Ustadh*, to popularize the view that Islamic institutions should undergo reform while remaining true to the

essence of their culture and religion.  As Gershoni puts it, many Egyptian thinkers at this time divided the world

into an East-West paradigm in which the world was divided into two civilizational 'halves' that existed in a

perpetual state of conflict and competition.[123]  In an era of occupation and the reality of close contact with

European societies, it was very important to him that rituals such as dancing and drumming were not seen by

'foreigners'[124], who might use these practices as a way to look down on Egyptian society.

The view that Islam was a religion based on 'reason' and must satisfy the intellect as well as the heart

was a view upheld by Muhammad `Abduh and continued by members of the salafiyya movement.  The

movement, termed so because of the belief of its leaders that in order for modern society to be truly 'Islamic', it

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[119] Al-Marsafī, 'al-Kalim al-Thaman', p. 131-132.
[120] ibid.
[121] De Jong, 'Turuq and Turuq-Opposition', p. 185-196.
[122] Al-Nadīm, Shaqīqa `Abd al-Fatah. *Silfat al-Nadīm: Fī Muntakhabāt `Abdullah al-Nadīm*. (Cairo, no publisher, 2007), p. 2.
[123] Gershoni, Israel and James Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation 1930-1945.* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 37.
[124] Johansen, *Sufism,* p. 25.

must derive inspiration from the example of *al-salaf al-salīh*, finds its roots in Abduh's ideas as well as his disciple, Shaykh Muhammad Rashīd Rida. These reformers pointed to the prevalence of *bida`a*, or religious innovation, in the practices of the orders and called for such rituals to be eradicated if Islamic society was to be restored.

Though `Abduh and Rida wrote extensively on the faults of the orders, their ideas stayed within their circle of scholars and did not reach the masses. De Jong argues, the writings of `Abduh and Rida did not reach the merchant and artisan classes 'in which Sufism had its deepest roots'[125]; it was the movement initiated by Salaf reformer Mahm d Khattab Al-Subkī, that posed the most serious challenge to organized Sufism in the early twentieth century. Al-Subkī began his campaign against the *turuq* in 1903 when he founded the organization *Al-Jam`iyya al-Shar`iyya li-Ta`āwun al-āmilīn bil-Kitāb wa al-Sunna*. He gave speeches citing the writings of earlier reformers such as Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Qayyim to lend credibility to his attacks on both the beliefs and practices of the orders.[126] He was fought by several of the Sufī shaykhs, sometimes resulting in fierce confrontations between his followers and theirs[127] and highlighting the clash that was to continue for some time between the centuries-old system of *turuq* and reformers who argued that such institutions had no basis in orthodoxy.

Seen in this context, Hasan al-Banna, born in 1906, lived in an Egypt where criticism of the orders was already part of the discourse among Egypt's scholars, the *effendiyya*, and even the merchant class. His defense of the orders and their beliefs placed him in a minority and explains his desire to justify organized Sufism to a skeptical readership. His students did not speak aggressively against the Sufīs out of respect for their Imām, however, after his death in 1949, the Brotherhood adopted a more critical approach under the leadership of his successor Hasan al-Hudaybi (d. 1973). The same dislike of Sufism felt by the urban, educated *effendiyya* discussed earlier was shared by al-Banna's urban followers who saw Sufism as a reflection of the failure of

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[125] De Jong, 'Turuq and Turuq-Opposition', p. 189.
[126] ibid, p. 190.
[127] ibid, p. 189.

Islamic society to meet both the administrative and spiritual needs of the people.[128]  As Mitchell argues, 'even

the esteem accorded the leader (ie Hasan al-Banna) in this aspect of his personality did not minimize the

widespread revulsion and contempt felt by the articulate and the urban Brothers for Sufism.'[129]  After al-Banna's

death, some of the Brothers argued it was totally un-Islamic in the first place, having roots in Hellenism or

Hinduism, while others maintained that Sufism was a result of the failure of the Islamic caliphate to provide

adequate channels for the cultivation of the spiritual needs of the people.[130]  Most of the criticism, however,

stemmed from the Brothers' belief in the institutional shortcomings of Sufism, focusing on the quarreling

between shaykhs and the introduction of practices and rituals that had more to do with glorifying the shaykh

than any Islamic teaching.[131]

Most importantly, the early Muslim Brothers objected to the influence of what they saw as an archaic

institution that 'drugged the masses'[132], preventing them from progressing in any real way and encouraging

followers to engage in 'spiritual withdrawal from life'[133], without contributing to the advancement of their

society in any real way.  This 'activist' mentality, Mitchell argues, was mostly inspired by al-Banna, who himself

rejected the kind of Sufism that allowed for inaction and passivity on the part of its adherents.  But it can also be

attributed to the nature of the effendiyya class, from which the Brotherhood drew many of its members, and

their desire to define themselves in relation to the past and the future.


*Conclusion*


Prior to the nineteenth century, the *turuq* played a vital role in the fabric of Egyptian society.  Their

shaykhs were leaders in the economic and political spheres, serving as economic brokers and political allies for

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[128] Mitchell R., p. 215.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid.

the masses in their dealings with the elites.  They were the spiritual guides of the people and their source of economic and political aid in a precarious world.  The nineteenth century represented the beginning of the decline of the prestige and influence of the *turuq*—a series of reforms in the realms of education, government, and economics deprived the shaykhs of the sources of their political and fiscal authority.

The implications of these changes were far reaching.  As the shaykhs lost their economic and political authority so too did their religious and spiritual sway with the people wane.  Sufī shaykhs became associated with the traditional order and therefore increasingly seen as contributing to the mounting social and economic problems in Egypt.

The precarious position of the orders at the end of the nineteenth century led to a variety of responses from Egyptian shaykhs, both Sufī and otherwise.  Those shaykhs who were immersed in the Sufī way of life struggled to save the orders by arguing for their Islamic legitimacy while working from within to change those aspects that had become corrupted in their view.  Others, such as the modernist shaykhs, argued for the existence of an original Sufism far removed from what the orders had become.  All together, these reformers created a new discourse about the *turuq* and their future role in Egyptian religious life.

**CHAPTER TWO: REFORMING SHAYKHS IN NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURY CENTURY EGYPT**

Chapter One argued that the changing socio-economic circumstances of the *turuq* in the nineteenth century created a crisis of legitimacy for the Suf shaykhs, who struggled to maintain their popular and political authority. This chapter will argue that beginning in the mid- nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, reforming the *turuq* was the topic on everyone's mind, as Islamic thinkers from different persuasions argued that the orders must adjust or become obsolete. Suf shaykhs themselves, keenly aware of their precarious position, embarked on a mission to establish their legitimacy once more, and it is in this context that Shaykh al-Hisāfī's own discourse on Sufism should be understood. Shaykh Hasanayn's approach to reform involved a reassertion of the primacy of the law even in spiritual matters and a reinvigoration of the criteria for spiritual authority as a deterrent for abuse of spiritual power.

*Reforming Shaykhs*

At the social level, the Suf orders came under increasing scrutiny in the late nineteenth century from more than one sector of society. Secular and religious reformers alike argued that the orders were irrelevant in light of developments in Egyptian society or that they promoted quietism and an obsession with ritual.[134] In Chapter One, we discussed at length Gilsenan's argument concerning the inability of the *turuq* to adapt to the new setting. But it should be said that several leaders of the *turuq* put out significant efforts to halt or try to reverse this process by calling for reform of Sufī practices and even embarked on a campaign to combat the image of the orders as irrelevant or backwards.

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[134] Hoffman, Valerie J. *Sufism, Mystics, and Saints in Modern Egypt*. (Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1995), p. 7.

*Muhammad Tawfīq al-Bakrī (d. 1911)*


To begin, it is apparent that several of the shaykhs of the *turuq* were aware of the challenges the orders

faced at the end of the nineteenth century.  Al-Bakrī's organizational reforms reveal a desire to reinvigorate

official Sufism with himself as its leader, his opinions on doctrine also deserve further attention.  It becomes

apparent that al-Bakrī's writings on *turuq* reform were meant to argue for the relevancy and importance of Sufī

brotherhoods in Islamic society while defending Sufī ritual and re-establishing the purpose of the Brotherhoods

as *dawa*, the propagation of the faith.  In his *Kalām 'ala Nash`at al-Tasawwuf*, al-Bakrī cites examples of the

historical role of the *turuq* in the teaching and propagation of Islam as evidence for their importance in Islamic

societies.  He writes that,

> 'Many scholars[135] have said that the Islamic world has halted in its advancement for a time and
> European countries have superceded it.  These countries extended their influence into the
> Muslim lands and conquered much of it by both economic and rational powers.  But the ones
> who were able to counter the powerful were the Sufīs.'[136]


The portrayal of the Sufīs as the force of resistance in an era of European encroachment indicates al-

Bakrī's desire to point to an indigenous body of Muslims that effectively resisted foreign rule while at the same

time creating an atmosphere of legitimacy around the orders as the sole defenders of Muslim autonomy.  His

desire to legitimize the orders by verifying their historical importance is further shown when he credits them for

the spread of Islam in the Muslim hinterlands, as far as India and China.[137]  But al-Bakrī is not speaking solely of

history--he maintains that the orders remain until his day the only viable force of resistance to European

hegemony, a 'flourishing power among the people.'[138]

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[135] Al-Bakrī uses the term '`*ulemā al-ajānib*', perhaps meaning non-Arab scholars.
[136] Al-Bakrī, Muhammad Tawfīq. *Al-Kalām 'ala Nash`at al-Tasawwuf wal Sūfiyya wa `Amālihim*. (Cairo, Maktabat al-Adāb, 1992), p. 35.
[137] ibid, p. 35.
[138] ibid.

Al-Bakrī maintains his position as a staunch supporter of Sufī ritual despite accusations during his day that the orders were somehow backwards for encouraging members to engage in ecstatic rituals and the adoration of shaykhs. The shaykh, he argues, is a '*murshid*', a guide who is help his followers on the path of nearness to their Lord. The shaykh, he maintains, is a spiritual father and one who deserves as much respect as one would give a birth father, if not more.[139] His defensive position on Sufī ritual suggests that he is more concerned with redefining the role of the orders as callers to the faith rather than diminish their position by challenging their beliefs.

*Modernist Shaykhs of the early Twentieth Century: al-Afghānī, `Abduh, and Rida*

In addition to reform measures adopted by shaykhs of orders, it is important to include late nineteenth century modernist reformers such as Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (d. 1897), Muhammad `Abduh (d. 1905), and Muhammad Rashīd Rida (d. 1935) among those who spoke about the need to return to a 'true' Sufism and a rejection of the 'excesses' with which Sufism had become associated. Though as Johansen points out it is important to avoid the supposition that there were no nineteenth century Islamic reformers before al-Afghānī[140], we include him because of the wealth of writings he penned on the subject of *tasawwuf*.

Al-Afghānī's contribution to contemporary Sufism is his revival of esoteric and mystical concepts not favored by other reformers of his day. Historian Nikkie Keddie, who has written an authoritative work on his life and times, draws our attention to previously unexplored Persian texts and argues that although al-Afghānī's influence over contemporary Islamic movements is often exaggerated, his 'mode of interpreting the Islamic past in modern and nationalist terms displayed a temper of thought that was to become increasingly popular in the

[139] Al-Bakrī, *Al-Kalām*, p. 42.
[140] Johansen, *Sufism,* p. 12.

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Middle East.'[141]  Al-Afghānī's ideas on pan-Islamism and nationalism informed several important twentieth

century Islamic thinkers including Muhammad `Abduh, Muhammad Rashīd Rida, and Hasan al-Banna.  In

addition, al-Afghānī's background suggests an extensive knowledge of Sufī texts and tradition and that he read

and taught these works.[142]  The various documents Keddie draws from show 'an interest in various esoteric and

heterodox subjects, such as mystical alphabets, numerical combinations, and esoteric treatises.'[143]  A friend

wrote of him that 'he became somewhat tinged with something of Sufism.'[144]  In addition, al-Afghānī's

background in the Twelver Shi`i tradition may account for his messianic beliefs and his esoteric inclinations.

Al-Afghānī transmitted these Sufī inclinations to his students, including Muhammad `Abduh.  He evoked

such feelings of adoration in his student reminiscent of a *murīd* with his shaykh.  Muhammad `Abduh is cited to

have said that his relationship with his teacher was 'not merely that of a disciple to his master, or of a brother to

his brother, but was a relation of love which had overwhelmed his heart.'[145]  In another example, `Abduh writes

in a letter to al-Afghānī that, 'I have been endowed by you with a wisdom that enables me to change

inclinations, important rationality to reason, overcome great obstacles, and control the innermost thoughts of

men.'[146]  Commenting on this letter, Rashīd Rida states that this rhetoric was most unexpected from his teacher

and likens the adoration displayed by `Abduh to al-Afghānī to 'the language of those Sufī mystics who believed

that God's was the only real existence.'[147]  It also seems that `Abduh was inspired by al-Afghānī to write his first

treatise, *Risalat al-Waridat*, in which he explores the heterodox doctrine of *wahdat al-wujud*, which Rida labeled

as a 'widespread doctrine among the mystics, but which is rejected by the orthodox as tainted with heresy.'[148]

Though their writings on the subject could indicate a personal interest in *tasawwuf*, it may also be that al-

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[141] Keddie, Nikkie. *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamāl ad-Dīn al-Afghānī.* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1968), p. 3-4.
[142] ibid, p. 8.
[143] ibid.
[144] Kedourie, Elie. *Afghanī and `Abduh: An Essay on Religious Unbelief and Political Activism in Modern Islam*. (London, Frank Cass and Co., 1966), p. 16.
[145] ibid, p. 9.
[146] ibid, p. 10.
[147] ibid.
[148] ibid, p. 11.

Afghānī and `Abduh were motivated to dwell on Sufī beliefs for practical reasons. As Keddie argues, their interest in the esoteric realm served a dual function; it gave them a sense of pride that their religion was more than dogmatic while also uniting the elite and the masses to counter the influence of Western thought by offering different levels of understanding to different classes.[149]

Both `Abduh and Rida felt 'the revival of the 'true' Sufism to be a legitimate and important task for a reformer of Islam.'[150] The fact that `Abduh and Rida wrote extensively about Sufism is important and sometimes overlooked; they are typically referred to as Islamic 'modernists', those that wished to readapt Islam to conform with modern situations by rejecting *taqlīd*, or imitation of precedent and pointing to the stagnation of traditional Islamic institutions and their inability to deal with Westernization as the main causes of the decline of the *umma*. Both `Abduh and Rida, however, had experiences with Sufism in their youth which may have informed their views on the subject.[151] An important point here is that these two reformers did not call for a total rejection of the orders but rather only certain aspects, most notably for introducing rituals that have no basis in the Qurān or hadīth, esoteric interpretations of the holy texts, and placing too much emphasis on the doctrine of *karamāt*, the spiritual gifts of the righteous ones.[152] Hourani points to many examples of Rida's departure with Sufism; In one example he criticizes the authoring of a prayer by Shaykh Ahmed al-Tijānī, founder of the Tijaniyya brotherhood, who claimed that the Prophet himself taught him the prayer in a dream, as having no basis in the holy texts.[153] In another instance, he questions the centrality of *karamāt* in Sufī life and argues that shaykhs should be cautious of divulging miracles to their followers as this is likely to lead them astray.[154] On another level, Rida expressed his concern about what he saw as the tendency of the orders towards quietism, a dangerous inclination in such turbulent times. Even still, Hourani maintains that Rida remained committed to

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[149] Johansen, *Sufism,* p. 15-16.
[150] Hourani, Albert. *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East*. (London, The MacMillan Press, 1981), p. 91.
[151] On `Abduh, see Johansen, *Sufism* p.16-17 and on Rida, see Hourani, *Emergence of the Modern Middle East*, p. 97-98.
[152] ibid, p. 96-97.
[153] ibid, p. 96.
[154] ibid, p. 97.

the notion that there was a true Sufism that had been corrupted overtime.  In reality, Rida 'did not think of

himself as attacking Sufism as such, but only 'excess', which threatened the central core of essential belief and

the unity of its adherents.'[155]

For these reformers, concern with the practices of the orders was linked to the undermining of the unity

of the Muslim polity at that critical historical juncture.  It is important to keep in mind that these debates were

taking place at the same time as increased European encroachment in the region and the rise of nationalist

movements.  'The excesses of popular Sufism,' writes Hourani, 'are thought to have brought the Muslim world

into disrepute, and the quietism of Sufi teaching has weakened the will of the community and made it unfit to

survive in the modern world.'[156]  Upon closer examination, these examples of the engaging of reformers with

Sufism reflects their efforts to diagnose reasons for the apparent weakness of the Muslim world and the tension

within Islamic circles between the emphasis on the 'greater' good and the pressing needs of the day and the

inner serenity that Sufism offered.  It is possible to argue that any apparent rejection of Sufism and the inward

focus it implies may have in reality been inspired by concern and despair over the state of the *umma* at that

time and the overwhelming sense that action took precedence over spirituality in this case.

It appears that the language of defining 'true' Sufism from what was not authentic was something all of

these reformers shared.  'The differences,' Hourani writes, 'were not of total acceptance or rejection, but of

beliefs and practices within the system.'[157]  They recognized that many manifestations of Sufism existed and, in

varying degrees, were concerned with defining the 'Sufism' they felt was most correct.  When Rida, as Hourani

argues, condemned the actions of the attendees of a Mawlawī *hadra*, he was in fact rejecting their ritual dances

to the music of reed-pipes, and not the whole of Sufism.[158]

Most often, condemnation of Sufī practices was rooted in the argument that such rituals had no basis in

the Quran and *sunna*.  Rida's work is filled with references to what was real in Sufism and what was not,

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[155] Johansen, *Sufism*, p. 99.
[156] Hourani, *Emergence*, p. 101.
[157] ibid, p. 93.
[158] ibid, p. 91.

supported by the argument that such practices had no basis in the Quran and *sunna*.[159]  This reference to the

two canonical sources of Islam was to become standard in circles where Sufī reform was discussed, although the

extent to which reformers took it literally varied from person to person.

Their departure from popular Sufism had both a doctrinal as well as practical justifications.  As Johansen

points out, some intellectuals spoke out against Sufī practices being spurred by concerns over how Islam would

be perceived by outsiders.  Others such as `Abduh and Rida recognized the fundamental need of the individual

for a spiritual outlet while disparaging some Sufī interpretations that encouraged quietism--a dangerous

tendency in light of nationalist and social movements taking shape around them.

*Shaykh Muhammad Mādī Abul-`Azaim (d. 1937)*

The teachings of Shaykh Muhammad Mādī focus a great deal on Sufī reform and it is for this reason that

he should be included in the category of reform-minded Sufī shaykhs.  This section will argue that in light of

perceptions of Sufism during his lifetime, Shaykh Muhammad wished to transform his readers' conception of the

Sufī shaykh from miracle-worker to caller to the faith.

Shaykh Muhammad Mādī was born in 1869 during his parents' visit to the mosque of Sidī Zaghlūl in the

province of Rashīd.[160]  At age sixteen he began his studies at al-Azhar, stating that he benefited a great deal from

his time spent with Shaykh Hasanayn al-Hisāfī, whom he met while a student there.[161]  In general, Shaykh

Muhammad Mādī adopted the habit of keeping company with any scholar or *walī*, friend of Allah, that visited

Cairo, stating that 'if he spoke with wisdom or about anything concerning *tawhīd* (the oneness of Allah) or lofty

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[159] Hourani, *Emergence*, p. 97.
[160] Abul-`Azaim, Al-Sayyid Muhammad `Alā al-Dīn Mādī. *Buhūth wa Rasa'il `Ilmiyya `an al-Imām al-Mujaddid Al-Sayyid Muhammad Mādī Abul-`Azaim*. (Cairo, Dar al-Kitāb al-Sufī, 1996), p. 4.
[161] ibid, p. 12.

mannerisms I came to love him, and if I saw anything from him other than that, I bid him farewell and kept my distance. I never would have wished to appear to be against him, or blaming him, or argumentative.'[162]

Shaykh Muhammad Mādī was initiated into the Shadhiliyya tradition by Shaykh al-Hisāfī himself.[163] Shaykh Muhammad Mādī's order, which he called al-`Azmiyya, distinguished itself because of 'the stress it placed on inner-worldly asceticism in conjunction with active social commitment in conformance with the precepts of the law.'[164]  This was, De Jong continues, a divergence from 'the retraitist other-wordly asceticism and its underlying relative disregard of the life of this world, as found implicitly or explicitly in the teachings of many Shadhiliyya branches and other sufi orders.'[165]  Shaykh Muhammad Mādī did not see himself as only a head of an order, De Jong argues, but a revivalist of Sufism[166] who would fight for the relevance of the Sufīs while working to reform them.

Shaykh Muhammad Mādī worked to reinvigorate Sufism first by recognizing that Sufīs had gone astray. He writes, 'In the old days the people of *tasawwuf* used to enjoy a high level of respect with the people and even with the rulers.  However, now the name of the *tarīq* is not respected and the people of *tasawwuf* are despised.'[167]  He goes on to say that 'Sufism just like other sciences has been exposed to social and cultural trends coming from the West.  This accounts for the misguided opinions that have been introduced in Sufism and become popular among its devotees.'[168]  By distancing himself from negative popular conceptions of the orders, Shaykh Muhammad is able to build a different understanding of Sufism in the public mind.  He also worked to develop the role of the Sufī shaykh as one who gives *da'wa*, calls to Allah.  Once, Shaykh Muhammad

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[162] Abul-`Azaim, *Buhūth,* p. 12-13.
[163] De Jong, Fred. 'Aspects of the Political Involvment of Sufi Orders in Twentieth Century Egypt (1907-1970)-An Exploratory Stocktaking' in Warburg, Gabriel R. and Uri M. Kupferschmidt. *Islam, Nationalism, and Radicalism in Egypt and the Sudan*. (New York, Praeger, 1983), p. 185.
[164] ibid.
[165] ibid.
[166] ibid.
[167] Abul-`Azaim, *Buhūth*, p. 340.
[168] Al-Sherīf, Sirrī Muhammad. *Athar al Imām Abul-`Azaim al-Sha`riyya: Dirasa Faniyya* (Suhāg, Kuliyyat al-Adāb, 1992).  Excerpts from this thesis appeared in the collection *Buhūth wa Rasa'il `Ilmiyya `an al-Imām al-Mujaddid Al-Sayyid Muhammad Mādī Abul-`Azaim*. (Cairo, Dar al-Kitāb al-Sufī, 1996), p. 336.

Mādī was approached by a shaykh of another order, who came to meet him with snakes in his hands.  He said, 'I have the power to hold snakes as you see, what can you do?'  Shaykh Muhammad replied,

> 'How many men were you able to guide by holding these snakes?  As for me, I am able to remove the serpents of malice from the heart, and take out the snakes of envy from the heart, and cast out the snakes of desire from the souls.'[169]

Here, it is clear that Shaykh Muhammad wishes to move away from the role of the shaykh as 'miracle worker' and define his role as caller to the faith.  As his grandson writes, 'This story illustrates how strongly the shaykh believed in his role in *da'wa* to Allah *ta'ala*, and his true understanding of this role which was to guide people to the truth and removing from their hearts envy and malice until they become pure.'[170]

This story and others told about the shaykh also give some idea about his interaction with other Sufī shaykhs of his time and reveals his displeasure with some of his fellow shaykhs.  'Imām Abul-`Azaim,' writes his grandson Shaykh `Alā, 'was aware of shaykhs during his time who misled their followers and made them imagine false things.'[171] Therefore, it was not permissible in his view for shaykhs of orders to abuse their knowledge of the unseen to gain influence with their followers.  'Imām Abul-`Azaim noticed that some people that have no knowledge were convinced by the people of the *turuq* that it is a good thing that they submit to the shaykh unconditionally, and that the *sālik* will not reach Allah unless he surrenders completely to the shaykh.'[172] Anxious to publish as many works on Sufism as he could, the shaykh utilized a relatively modern medium, the press, to publicize his ideas.  In 1919, he established *al-Madina al-Munawarra* Press through which he published 'the majority of his books as well as the periodicals.'[173]

How, then, did the shaykh reconcile Sufī belief in the unseen with his desire to see Sufism enter the mainstream?  He argued that even if a Sufi is given certain spiritual gifts, he should not disclose them to others

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[169] Abul-`Azaim, *Buhūth,* p. 338.
[170] ibid.
[171] ibid, p. 337.
[172] ibid, p. 338.
[173] De Jong, *Aspects of the Political Involvement of Suf  Orders*, p. 185.

lest they create confusion.[174] 'If the Sufīs,' the shaykh wrote, 'experience a spiritual revelation that contradicts the sunna they should not reveal it out of respect for the Prophet of Allah peace and blessings be upon him.'[175] He argued that it was a priority for Sufīs to remain on the indisputable path of the sharia. He wrote that 'the sharia and the *haqīqa* are on the same path'[176] hoping to pursuade Sufīs to remain within the confines of the law in a world where the material law was given primacy and the unseen was no longer necessarily believed.

*Shaykh Muhammad Hasanayn al-Hisāfī (d. 1910) & Origins of al-Hasafiyya*

This section will describe how Shaykh al-Hisāfī came to establish his own Sufī order in 1872 and also how the shaykh negotiated the independence of his *tarīqa*, despite resistence from the *Shaykh Mashayikh al-Turuq al-Sufiyya* and the unofficial status of his Sufī order. Shaykh al-Hisāfī's biography is studied by his followers from al-Manhal al-Sāfī *al-Wāfī fi Manāqib al-Sayyid Hasanayn al-Hisāfī,* written by Alī al-Ja`farāw , a *mur d* of the shaykh. As a source on Shaykh al-His f 's life, al-Ja`far w 's book helps us to understand how Hasafiyya *mur ds* see their shaykh. Indeed, whenever his life is mentioned, his memory is kept alive through the transmission of stories from *al-Manhal*.

Shaykh al-Hisāfī was born in 1849 in the village of Kafr al-Husāfa in the province of al-Qalyubiya.[177] He was brought up by his father, Shaykh Hussein al-Tihāmī. As a boy, he studied the *dīn* and memorized the Qurān before going on to study at al-Azhar in 1860. He spent most of his time in the mosque at al-Azhar, studying with the shaykhs and learning the secrets of worship.[178] Every day, he read a quarter of the Qurān and offered prayers on the Prophet Muhammad a thousand times.[179] He soon came across the path of *tasawwuf*, and became interested in its methodology and meanings. Al-Ja`farāwī writes that, 'He continued to search for Allah,

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[174] Abul-`Azaim, *Buhūth,* p. 337.
[175] ibid.
[176] Al-Sherīf, *Athar,* p. 337.
[177] Al-Ja`farāwī, p. 27-28.
[178] ibid, p. 29.
[179] Al-Ja`farāwī, p. 29.

and uphold the way of his Prophet.[180]  His teachers on the spiritual path were two—Shaykh Hussein Hasan al-

Musaylhī and Shaykh Muhammad al-Fāsī.  At the time, Shaykh al-Hisafi was troubled that some of the students

of *tasawwuf* had begun to recite *dhikr*, or spiritual invocations, incorrectly.  Al-Ja`farāwī tells how Shaykh al-

Hisāfī met Shaykh al-Fāsī in Mecca during the *hajj*, and asked him should be done about this.  Shaykh al-Fāsī

stated that *dhikr* must be done properly if one is able to learn how, or else it is invalid.[181]  He finally took on the

way of the *tariqa al-Shadhiliya*, founded by Shaykh Abul Hasan al-Shadhili (d. 1258) in the thirteenth century and

the *tariqa Muhammadiya al-Tijaniyya* founded by Shaykh Ahmed al-Tijānī (d. 1815) in the eighteenth century

and began passing on the teachings of the *tariqa* to others.  According to al-Ja`farāwī, people came from as far

as Fes to study *tasawwuf* with him.[182]  It was Shaykh al-Fāsī who urged Shaykh al-Hisāfī to return to Egypt and to

establish the *tariqa* in al-Zaqzīq, which he did in 1872.  Shaykh al-Fāsī inspired him by telling him that, 'Allah with

guide people through you, and through you the *tariqa* will spread throughout the land'.[183]

Shaykh al-Hisāfi returned to Cairo as *khalīfa* of a branch of the al-Makiyya al-Fasiyya order but found it

necessary to prohibit some forms of *dhikr* taught by Shaykh al-Fāsī which resulted in a parting of ways.[184]  He felt

he was compelled to found his own order after a disagreement with the students of Shaykh al-Fāsī, whom he

met with in Mecca.  The students seemed to have been angered by Shaykh al-Hisāfī's exclusion of certain parts

of the dhikr their teacher had relayed to them, but he felt these forms of *dhikr*, which 'were characteristic of the

*tarīqa*'[185], to be contradictory to the sharia.  Al-Hisāfī established his own independent *tarīqa* soon after and

called it al-Hisafiyya al-Shadhiliya, because of the inspiration he derived from the teachings of Imām Abul-Hasan

al-Shadhilī (d. 1258).  Shaykh al-Hisāfī also incorporated some teachings and rituals from the Tijaniyya *tarīqa*,

founded by Shaykh Ahmed bin Muhammad al-Tijānī (d. 1815) in Fez in 1798.

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[180] ibid, p. 28-29.
[181] ibid, p. 32.
[182] ibid, p. 29.
[183] ibid, p. 32.
[184] De Jong, F. "Al-Hisāfī, Hasanayn". *Encyclopedia of Islam*. ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C E Bosworth, E Van
Donzel, and W.P. Heinrichs. (Leiden, Brill, 2008).
[185] ibid.

But the unofficial status of the Hisafiyya sometimes caused problems for the shaykh. Shaykh al-Hisāfī's interaction with Shaykh al-Bakrī and the Turuq Administration was sometimes very strained and reflects Shaykh Hasanayn's determination to establish the independence of his *tarīqa* in the Egyptian provinces. While giving *da`wa* in Zaqzīq, Shaykh al-Hisāfī was largely free to preach as he wished without interference from the administration; it was only when his *tarīqa* gained a wider following in the surrounding provinces that other shaykhs lodged a complained against his activities with the administration.[186] Shaykh al-Bakrī proceeded to ban the Hisafiyya's participation in any *mawlids* in Egypt as well as banning their own *hadra*, or gathering for *dhikr*.[187] Shaykh Hasanayn took immediate action by drafting a treatise on the impermissibility of prohibiting gatherings of *dhikr* in the mosques as well as a petition testifying to the orthodoxy of his beliefs which he had signed by notables from his province.[188] The petition was addressed to Khedive Tawfīq himself and was intended to draw the Khedive's attention to the assaults on the Hisafiyya by shaykhs of recognized orders.[189] The Khedive referred the matter to Shaykh Muhammad al-Mahdī al-Abbāsī, *Shaykh al-Azhar* at the time, who warned al-Bakrī that to escalate the matter may prompt other shaykhs of al-Azhar to side with Shaykh al-Hisāfī, who many widely respected.[190] After a meeting between Shaykhs al-Bakrī, Hisafī, and al-Abbāsī, it was decided that all restrictions placed upon the Hisafiyya would be lifted and henceforth that Shaykh al-Bakrī would have no authority over Shaykh al-Hisāfī and his activities.[191] In addition, Shaykh al-Hisāfī demanded that Shaykh al-Bakrī inform all governors and mosque-keepers that the ban had been lifted.[192]

These incidents reflect the precarious position of *turuq* which did not enjoy official recognition like the Hisafiyya in the late nineteenth century and reflects the extent to which the state, through the Turuq Administration, had become involved in the affairs of the orders. The reality was that only the orders that were

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[186] De Jong, *Turuq*, p. 102.
[187] Al-Ja`farāwī, p. 35.
[188] See al-Jaf`arāwī, p. 36-39, for the text of the petition.
[189] De Jong, *Turuq*, p. 102-103.
[190] Al-Jaf`arāwī, p. 40.
[191] De Jong, *Turuq*, p. 103.
[192] Al-Ja`farāwī, p. 40.

officially recognized by the state enjoyed great influence and involvement in Sufī public life. This new dynamic required shaykhs to comply with regulations set by the administration or face exclusion.

Further, Shaykh al-Hisāfī's response reveals to what extent the interplay between the orders and al-Azhar was important; it appears that Shaykh al-Hisāfī's affilation with al-Azhar and his ties to shaykhs there gave him the legitimacy needed to protest the suspension of his order. Also, as De Jong argues, the reorganization of the state apparatus after the start of the British occupation in 1882 resulted in a substantial weakening of the Turuq Administration[193], another reason why Shaykh al-Azhar may have felt confident in overruling Shaykh al-Bakrī's proclamation.

After Shaykh Hasanayn's death in 1910, leadership of the order went to his son, Shaykh Mohamed Abdul-Wahāb al-Hisāfi (d. 1949). Shaykh `Abdul-Wahāb was determined to carry on his father's message of '*tasawwuf al sunnī*' and it was during his tenure as shaykh of the order that the *da`wa* reached its peak.[194]

*Shaykh al-Hisāfī's Reformist Sufism*

Shaykh Hasanayn al-Hisāfī was a member of the class of 'reforming' Sufī shaykhs that includes Shaykhs Muhammad Tawfīq and Muhammad Mādī that became prominent in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Like these two shaykhs, he was part of the Sufī tradition in Egypt and so rather than arguing for the irrelevance of the orders, he worked to reform them. His quest was to establish a union between '*shar`ia* and *tarīqa*'[195] and a way to reconcile the doctrines Sufīs emphasized, such as *karamāt* and *wilāya,* with the sacred law. We will suggest three arguments here related to the shaykh's reforms. First, he called for the primacy of the law even when assessing Sufī beliefs. Second, he established the Prophet Muhammad and his sunna as the

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[193] De Jong, *Turuq*, p. 105.
[194] Interview, Shaykh Muhammad Abul-Asrār al-Hisāfī, June 20th, 2006.
[195] Hourani, *Emergence*, p. 95.

ultimate source of Sufī teachings.   Third, he reasserted the protocols for spiritual authority to counter the possibility of abuse.

*Attempted Institutionalization of Sufī Thought*

The ability of the Turuq Adminstration, and by extension the 'state', to impose restrictions on the *turuq* led Shaykh al-Hisāfī to codify the beliefs of his order in order to avoid any unnecessary interference in the future.  Previously, shaykhs of *turuq* were not accustomed to interference in their activities either by heads of state or by a supervisory institution.  The only response was to institutionalize his order, creating around it a culture of legitimacy, history, and a definition of Sufī authority.

Shaykh al-Hisāfī was aware that Sufism as a spiritual science could easily be manipulated if it was not governed by the law.  Further, he understood that grounding Sufism in the law gave it the insitutional viability to survive the critical perspectives that threatened it such as the voices of modernism and salafism.  The *sharia*, the body of law derived from the Qurān and the *sunna*, is actually the source of *tasawwuf*, he believed.[196]  While all of the *turuq* maintained that they followed the sharia, the Hasafiyya placed extra emphasis on this point and made it a cornerstone of their teachings.[197]  Shaykh al-Hisāfī writes that, 'And Allah taught (the believers) that the path to Him is by following the sharia and keeping away from what it prohibits both in what is apparent and what is concealed.'[198]  He continues that, 'and whoever tries to attain nearness to Allah with other than what the shari`a and His Prophet allows will be rejected…'[199] It is important to note that these lines appear within the first few lines of the text of the shaykh's *awrād*, as if providing a warning for those who wish to pursue the path of the Sufīs.

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[196] al-Hisāfī, Al Sayyid Hasanayn. *Al-Sabīl al-Wādih Ma`a Risalat Nūr al-Basa`ir wal Absār wa Majmu`at Awrād al-Sāda al-Shādhiliya*. (Benha, Matba`at al-Ikhlās, 1996), introduction.
[197] Interview, Shaykh Muhammad Abul-Asrār al-Hisafī, December 23rd, 2006, Giza, Cairo, Egypt.
[198] Al-Hisāfī, p. 49.
[199] ibid.

What aspects of Sufī ritual did Shaykh al-Hisāfī felt violated the sacred law?  'During his lifetime, certain practices had spread into the *dhikr* gatherings of the Sufīs,' says Ahmed Foad, a deputy of the current shaykh. 'The shaykh prohibited mixing between men and women, dancing in the *dhikr*, music, and fixed the *tajwīd* of certain *awrād* that were recited by the group.'[200]  These reforms were meant to strengthen the order, he argues, not diminish it.

The success of their movement, Ahmed Foad continues, should be measured by the response to the shaykh's *da'wa*.  As Ahmed Foad puts it, 'Shaykh al-Hisāfī had a strong personality.  He had an aura about him, and he was successful in spreading the *tarīqa* far and wide.'[201]  `Alī al-Jafarāwī described his shaykh as one 'who fought the people of *bid`a* to the best of his ability.'[202] His son and successor, Shaykh Abdul-Wahāb, continued to do so and attracted a large following as the *tarīqa* spread from al-Zaqzīq to other provinces.[203]  In light of the trend to reform the *turuq* at that time, it is no surprise that people were attracted to the shaykh's call for a Sufism dictated by the Quran and sunna.

Having established the sharia as a measure of the sanctity of ritual, Shaykh al-Hisāfī made use of his writings to define his position on controversial Sufī beliefs such as *wilāya* and *karamāt*.  *Wilāya*, a spiritual station granted by the master of the unseen world, was the reward granted to a servant by his creator, the fruit of his efforts to please his Lord.  For Shaykh al-Hisāfī, the station of *wilāya* is defined by how closely he or she follows the sharia.  Al-Ja`farāwī captures the shaykh's definition of *wilāya* when he writes,

'one who has attained certainty in his faith that is built on proofs and who does good deeds as prescribed by the *sharia*…the *walī* is one who tries to be closer to Allah by doing those deeds his Lord has made obligatory upon him.'[204]

This definition creates a legal context for a spiritual rank that might be misunderstood by the people.  The shaykh also writes, 'Whoever is reluctant to follow the sharia, he is misguided.  The *walī* can only be the one

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[200] Al-Hisāfī, p. 49.
[201] ibid.
[202] Al-Ja`farāwī, p. 15.
[203] Interview, Mr. Ahmed Foad El-Gindī, January 3rd, 2007, Damanhūr, Egypt.
[204] Al-Ja`farāwī, p. 4-5.

who acts according to what has been established.[205]  The shaykh also argues that his sharia-based definition of

*wilāyā* is rooted in Islamic tradition.  In the context of his discussion of *wilāya*, he quotes Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-

Dusūqi, a notable shaykh of *tasawwuf*, as having said,

> 'Our path (*tarīqatuna*) is according to the Quran and the *sunna*.  So whoever introduces something (to it) that is not from the Qurān and *sunna*, then he is not from us, he is not one of our brothers, and we are absolved from him in this life and the next, even if he associates himself with us.'[206]

To further remove the veil enshrouding matters such as *wilāya*, Shaykh al-Hisāfī taught that anyone could

become a *walī* if he or she followed a certain methodology.  Thus, in his view *wilāya* was not an enigmatic

concept that could not be understood by the greater public.  He writes that,

> 'He must be among those with knowledge of the principles of the religion and what is obligatory upon him towards other people and towards his creator.  He must be knowledgeable of the rulings of the *sharia* and he should behave in the best way as directed by his intellect and the *sharia*.  He should always be in fear of Allah.[207]

Here the rank of *walī* appears to be the likely result of years of worship and devotion and less a furtive

concept not easily understood.

Often, it was the ability of the Sufī shaykh to perform miracles that gave him legitimacy with the people,

as Hoffman-Ladd has indicated in her study on Egyptian Sufism.  Shaykh al-Hisāfī, however, argued that *karamāt*,

the spiritual gifts granted to the friends of Allah, were not a measure of the piety of a shaykh.  Instead, he

argued, *istiqāma*, or steadfastness, was the ultimate indicator of nearness to God.  Discussing *karamāt* serves

two other functions in the shaykh's writings.  *Karamāt*, when they came in the form of visions of the Prophet,

served to create an undisputable bond between the shaykh and his Prophet.  Finally, in the shaykh's own life,

*karamāt* served to give him certainty that he was on the right path in the wake of great opposition to his cause

and served to strengthen his followers in their support for him.

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[205] Al-Ja`farāwī, p. 9.
[206] ibid.
[207] ibid.

Our first argument concerns a theological question the shaykh grappled with that is addressed in the *Manhal*—to what extent do visions of the Prophet and the ability to carry out miraculous acts determine nearness to Allah?  This matter was the subject of ongoing debate among Muslim scholars of the late nineteenth century—inevitably, as the *turuq*, with their emphasis on the otherworldly and the unseen, came under increased scrutiny, so too did critiques of the importance of *karāmāt* as a litmus test for piety and *qurb* to the creator.  Could such a notion survive in an Islamic environment increasingly drawn to modernist interpretation and rational thought?  Shaykh al-Husāfī did not negate the concept of *karamāt*, but rather sought to put this valid Islamic doctrine into context.  *Istiqāma*, he believed, was a better indication of one's state with the Divine; al-Ja`farāwī echoes his shaykh's belief when he writes that, 'It has been said, be of the people who ask for *istiqāma*, it is your debased self that asks for the *karāma* when your Lord asks *istiqāma* of you.'[208]  In fact, the shaykh taught that the best *karāma* is steadfastness, and not the ability to walk on water or to cause food to multiply. These miraculous acts are actually tools the creator uses to increase the faith of the masses, but not necessarily a sign that the *sāhib al-karāma* is close to his Lord.

The shaykh argues that *karāmāt* could in fact turn to be more of a trial than a sign of nearness.  How else would God try a Sufī, who has deprived himself of the world and all it contains, if not by bestowing upon him spiritual gifts to test his sincerity?  Shaykh al-Hisāfī's desire to contextualize the doctrine of *karāmāt* should be seen in light of his constant effort to strive for a prophetic balance in the religion—a marriage between the spirit and the law.[209]

Secondly, the *karāmāt* that were given to Shaykh al-Hisāfī from his Lord served to create a bond of legitimacy and certainty between the shaykh and his Prophet.  We have mentioned how the shaykh's desire to reform the *dhikr* gatherings of the orders was met with some opposition by members of the other *turuq*.  In more than one instance, the shaykh was assured of the correctness of his position by a vision of the Prophet Muhammad.  He tells how in one instance,

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[208] Al-Ja`farāwī, p. 110.
[209] ibid, p. 111.

'During my reading of the *wadhīfa al-mamzūja*, I added a few verses such as *'āman al rasūl'* until the end of the *sura* because we have seen authentic hadīths regarding these verses (ie their benefit).  Also, some of the *ikhwān* requested this from me, that we read them (these verses) during (our reading of) the *wadhīfa* that I mentioned.  Then some of the envious ones went to the shaykh of the Wafa`iyya and told him, and when we met he said to me, "I was told that you added certain verses to the *wadhīfa al-mamzūja* and adding things is not permissible without the permission of the Prophet of Allah peace be upon him."  And so I was hesitant for a few days about whether I should read these verses or abandon their recitation.  But in my self, I was reluctant to abandon them.  And then, as I sat with the *ikhwān* after *maghrib* in the *maqām* of the mosque of al-Sultān al-Hanafī, I saw the Prophet of Allah.  He stood before me and placed his blessed hand on my chest and I felt its coolness throughout my body, and he gave me permission to add the verses.'[210]

These visions of the Prophet gave the shaykh the legitimacy he needed to make decisions about the activities of his order, but more importantly, they gave Shaykh al-Husāfī the spiritual authority he needed when presenting these reforms to other shaykhs who might challenge him.  In another situation, the shaykh had a vision of the Prophet in Mecca, who said to his companions 'Hasanayn is on the truth, and no one should challenge him' and the Prophet's companions replied, 'Yes, he is on the truth, oh Prophet of Allah.'[211]  This and other visions of the Prophet, as told to us by his students, solidified the spiritual bond between the Prophet and the shaykh.

Finally, the *karāmāt* served to give the shaykh and his followers the confidence needed to go forth in his mission to reform certain Sufī practices in his day.  On a visit to Mecca, the shaykh reports feelings troubled by the spread of corruption amongst the people.  He writes that,

'I went to al-*Maqām al-Hanafī* and sat there to think about the matter.  I was between sleep and wakefulness, when I saw the Prophet peace and blessings of Allah be upon him standing before the door of the *ka`ba*.  The four caliphs were beside him in rows, and I was with them, and the people were behind us.  The Prophet turned to his caliphs and asked them, in meaning, 'Is Hasanayn following my *sharia*?  They all replied, 'Yes, he is following your *sharia* oh Prophet of Allah.'  Then the Prophet said, 'And what has stopped him from continuing in this?'  When I heard the Prophet say this, my heart was filled with happiness and whatever I had of hesitation left me and my dedication to challenge all those who encourage sinfulness and harmful innovation increased.'[212]

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[210] Al-Ja`farāwī, p. 123-124.
[211] Ibid, p. 124-125.
[212] Al-Ja`farāwī, p. 125.

All Sufī shaykhs are connected to the Prophet—all of the *imāms* of *tasawwuf* must have a spiritual *sanad,* or chain of transmission, back to him.[213] The Prophet, therefore, is the fountain of Islamic spirituality, and his *sunna* is the source from which all shaykhs derive their spiritual authority.

Of course, Shaykh al-Hisāfī wished *murīds* to understand that Sufism itself was rooted in the sunna of the Prophet Muhammad. Attachment to the *sunna* is a recurring theme in *al-Sabīl al-Wādih*, Shaykh al-Hisāfī's collection of treatises and litanies, and serves two specific functions. First, references to the Prophet's *sunna* provide support for controversial rulings. Second, to argue that there can be no Sufism without emulation of the Prophet and that in fact the Prophet Muhammad is the ultimate source of all Islamic spirituality.

Shaykh al-Hisāfī relies on from the *sunna* to support some of the important arguments he makes in the Sabīl. For example, he finds support for the validity of gatherings of *dhikr* in several hadīths where the Prophet is reported to have spoken favorably about such meetings. He writes that,

> 'There are many hadiths regarding gathering for the purpose of *dhikr*. One of them is related by Abī Sa`īd al-Khudrī, may Allah be pleased with him, who said that Mu`awiya went to masjid and he chanced upon a gathering of companions and he asked 'what has made you sit together like this?' They replied that they had gathered to make *dhikr* of Allah. Then he asked, 'nothing else has gathered you together except this?' and they replied, 'By Allah, nothing has gathered us here except that.'[214]

Shaykh al-Hisāfī was undoubtedly aware of the controversy among Muslim scholars surrounding gatherings of *dhikr*; it is not accidental that he chooses to rely on hadiths to support his arguments, perhaps because these were authentic sources that few scholars would reject. In another instance, the shaykh was challenged by shuyukh of other *turuq* and he was prevented from holding his gathering of *dhikr* as he was accustomed. He writes that, 'How can they prohibit the dhikr that Allah and his Prophet have commanded us to

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[213] Al-Hisāfī, p. 60.
[214] Al-Hisāfī, p. 74-75.

do that is agreed upon by all of the scholars of Azhar and others?'[215]  The shaykh chose to compose a letter to

the Khedive to ask for his intervention.  What is interesting about this letter is that the shaykh includes a hadīth

in which the Prophet Muhammad likens gatherings of *dhikr* to the gardens of paradise.[216]  The hadīth is cited

immediately after the shaykh mentions his gathering of *dhikr*; it may serve the same purpose as the hadīth cited

above—the creation of an ethos of legitimacy and orthodoxy for the *turuq* and their activities.

It was very important for Shaykh al-Hisāfī to constantly establish the legitimacy of such gatherings in light

of the rising wave of criticism that challenged *turuq*-related rituals at the turn of the twentieth century.  One of

the most prominent criticisms of the *turuq* is the mixing of the sexes in the *dhikr* and the ecstatic state that may

overtake the attendees.  Shaykhs such as Muhammad `Abduh argued that these were were sufficient reasons to

disallow the *mawlid*.[217]  Others argued that the solution was to teach their followers how to behave in such

gatherings.  Shaykh al-Hisāfī took this position; rather than prohibiting the *dhikr* altogether, he establishes strict

*adāb*, or protocols of conduct, so that his students are not deprived of its benefits.  He writes that, 'Each of the

attendees should be careful not to raise his voice, especially if the gathering is in one of the houses of

Allah…they should lower their gaze and not look at anything that is *harām*…like women who are not kin.'[218]  For

this reason, attendance of the Hasafiyya *dhikr* is restricted only to men, even until today.[219]

There is another reason why Shaykh al-Hisāfī felt it was important for members of the orders to follow

the sunna, especially if their goal is to attain nearness to Allah.  In one of his treatises found in the *Sabīl*, the

shaykh argues that the path to Allah can only be attained through emulation of his Prophet.  He uses a Quranic

verse as his proof: 'Follow me, and Allah will love you.'[220]  For this reason, a *murīd* can not hope to attain a high

spiritual rank unless he follows the Prophet in all things.  The shaykh states that, 'The second pillar (of the *tarīqa*)

is following the *sunna* in speech, and in actions because following the *sunna* is the foundation of the *tarīqa* and

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[215] Al-Ja`farāwī, p. 64.
[216] Ibid, p. 63.
[217] Sirriyeh, p. 103.
[218] Al-Hisāfī, p. 87.
[219] Interview with Mr. Ahmad Foad Al-Gindy, Damanhour, January 3rd, 2007.
[220] Qurān 3: 31.

whoever does not follow the *sunna*, the spiritual path is not for him.'[221]  He was, in the words of his grandson, a

Sufī-Salafī—[222] a man who yearned for the spiritual as it could be attained within the confines of the Prophet's

tradition. The shaykh writes that,

> 'It is not allowed for the *murīd* (i.e. one on the spiritual path) to abandon anything the Prophet
> has said or done, both in his habits and in his acts of worship.  This is so that you may come to
> know him as the best example…just as his companions did.  And there are stories of the
> diligence with which the companions followed his example, both in words and in actions, in daily
> life and in worship.  And we are asked to do the same.[223]

This statement reveals the shaykh's desire that his students should be attached to the Prophet at all

times, but more importantly, it reveals the shaykh's belief that Sufism is rooted in, and derives its essence and

legitimacy from, the sunna.

This was a way of fighting back at the practices and *awrād* that had found their way into Sufī gatherings

which the shaykh did not accept.  Though most orders took it for granted that they followed the sunna, the

shaykh thought it important to mention it because he meant it to be a literal emulation—'in speech and in

actions…because he who does not follow the sunna there is no *tarīq* for him.'[224]  He continues to say that, 'It is

not allowed that the *murid* should leave off anything the Prophet said or even his ordinary actions and his acts

of worship and in this way the secret of his being will be revealed to you.'[225]  He reflects in his writings on how

strictly the companions of the Prophet followed his example, as a way of arguing that no emulation could be too

extreme.  He writes, 'The way of the companions is proof of how passionate they were about following the

Prophet peace be upon him, both in words and in actions both ordinary and in worship.  This is what we too are

commanded to do.'[226]  Re-establishing the Prophetic standard was Shaykh Hasanayn's method of fighting back

at the un-orthodox practices that had become commonplace in Sufī circles.

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[221] Al-Hisāfī, p. 52.
[222] Interview, Shaykh Muhammad Abul-Asrār al-Husafī, Cairo, June 2006.
[223] Al-Hisāfī, p. 52-53.
[224] Al-Hisāfī, p. 52.
[225] Ibid.
[226] Al-His f , p. 52.

To further convince his followers, the shaykh maintained that one who did not follow the sunna in the meticulous fashion he described would not achieve the spirtual station he sought. 'The one on the spiritual path should be warned against trying to take an easier path by forgoing anything from the Prophet's actions, words, both ordinary and in worship. He will be deprived of the blessing of following him peace and blessings be upon him so he should not be tempted to leave off (following him) or doing little (to follow him).'[227] Here Shaykh Hasanayn has established the Prophet as the key to spiritual advancement and consequently harmony between the law and the spiritual path. Al-Jafarāwī confirms the connection between spiritual rank and following the Prophet when he writes, 'One should know that sainthood is only bestowed upon the one who takes the path of following the Prophet.'[228] Al-Jafarāwī cites verses from the Quran, such as 'Say (oh Prophet!), if you Love Allah, then follow me, and Allah will love you'[229] to support his argument that the key to spiritual advancement lies with the Prophet. For al-Jafarāwī, even his own shaykh is blessed 'because of the blessing of following Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him.'[230]

*Establishing Criteria for Spiritual Authority*

Third, Shaykh al-Hisāfī reinvigorated the discussion on the guidelines for spiritual authority. Creating criteria for Sufī shaykhs served to further institutionalize their position and consolidate their authority in an environment increasingly regulated by the Turuq Administration.

We begin by discussing the internal dynamics of the orders, studied in detail by scholars such as J Spencer Trimingham, Valerie J Hoffman, and Michael Gilsenan.[231] At the heart of the order is the shaykh, the spiritual

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[227] ibid, p. 53.
[228] Al-Ja`farāwī, p. 15.
[229] Qurān 3:31.
[230] Al-Ja`farāwī, p. 30.
[231] See, for example, Trimingham, J. Spencer. *The Sufi Orders in Islam*. (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1971) and Hoffman, Valerie J. Sufism, Mystics, and Saints in Modern Egypt. (Columbia, University of South Carolina Press,

head of the *tarīqa*, who then appointed a deputy, the *khalīfa*, and various other members known as *muqaddams* to carry out the functional tasks of the order.[232]  A follower of the shaykh was known as a *murīd*; he or she is dependent on the shaykh for guidance on the spiritual path to Allah.  The *murīd* also relies on the shaykh to diagnose and help heal spiritual diseases, such as envy.  Thus, '*tasawwuf* began as the curing of hearts and the sheikh is the doctor of souls and of hearts.'[233]  The *murīd* pledged a spiritual oath, or *bay`a*, to the shaykh to observe his spiritual guidance and submit to his instructions.

The question arises as to the preconditions of the Sufī shaykh.  Shaykh al-Hisāfī taught that the shaykh must be a man of 'true spiritual state and clear knowledge.'[234]  He must also be spiritually connected through his Sufī teachers to the source of Islamic spirituality, the Prophet Muhammad.  Shaykh al-Hisāfī also clearly defines the one who should not be considered a Sufī shaykh, namely, he taught that 'the one who has one of five characteristics can not be a shaykh--one who is ignorant of the religion, one who interferes in matters that do not concern him, one who follows his passions in all things, and one who is ill-mannered.[235]  The shaykh must be a man of judgement for he bears the responsibility for the spiritual advancement of his *murīds,* as Hoffman puts it, 'he is their guardian, and he can control the spritual progress of his disciples, delaying or advancing their spiritual realizations according to his wisdom.'[236]

It is in Shaykh Hasanayn's 'five conditions' that we learn a great deal about those he considered to be encroaching on the realm of spiritual authority.  The implication of this discourse on the preconditions of the shaykh is that there were some who Shaykh al-Hisāfī considered to be ill-suited to be spiritual guides, though they may enjoy popularity with the people.  Further evidence of this is in his advice to readers that they scrutinize a shaykh before deciding to follow him.  'And so I warn you not to take one as your shaykh until you

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1995) and Gilsenan, Michael.  *Saint and Sufi in Modern Egypt: An Essay in the Sociology of Religion*. (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1973).
[232] Gilsenan, *Saint and Sufī* , p. 66.
[233] Ibid*,* p. 72.
[234] Al-Hisāfī, p. 60.
[235] Al-Hisāfī, p. 60.
[236] Hoffman, *Sufism,* p. 142.

have verified his knowledge and sincerity, his steadfastness in humility and *zuhd* and cautiousness not to commit sin...and his safeguarding against *bid`a* and innovation.'[237] In his discussion of the characteristics of the shaykh and the duties of the *murīd* that follows, one has the sense that it is more a relationship of mutual responsibility than one of unconditional devotion based solely on the claims of the shaykh. The creation of a standard for the shaykh would ensure that those who called others to a '*bid`a*' or other such messianic claims were not to be followed; in effect, he was reorienting organized Sufism around the men of knowledge.

Shaykh al-Hisāfī's discussion of the responsibilities of the *murīd* towards his shaykh must be understood in the context of his previous comments on the characteristics of the shaykh. In essence, he suggests that the *murīd* can offer total submission to the will of the shaykh only if he meets the conditions he has put forward. However, Shaykh al-Hisāfī does not put down these conditions to encourage questioning the shaykh's authority. He does not challenge that a *murīd* must 'submit to the will of his shaykh', thereby maintaining the fundamental dynamic of the relationship between shaykh and *murīd*. Thus he does not go so far as Rida who condemned what he saw as blind *taqlīd*, when a *mur d* enters a relationship with the shaykh where he suspends his own judgment.

Thus, Shaykh al-His f 's approach is to preserve the shaykh-*mur d* dynamic with the prerequisites he outlines in his book. He is deeply concerned wih preserving the *hayba*, or aura, which surrounds the shaykh and discourages any excessive familiarity between teacher and student. The *murīd* is not to 'pry into the shaykh's affairs, nor is he to wear his clothes or eat with him at his table unless he is given permission'[238] and more importantly, 'that the *murīd* should believe that (his shaykh) is the most complete individual of his time in guidance and discipline and that no one surpasses him and that he should not marry his wife after his death...the *murīd* should not look at his shaykh excessively and should pledge to his shaykh his very life.'[239]

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[237] Al-Hisāfī, p. 60.
[238] ibid, p. 61.
[239] al-Hisaf , p. 61.

It is possible to see here how some of the Sufīs were accused of according too much status to their shaykhs. However, while Sufis believe that the *murīd* must submit wholly to the shaykh if he hopes to improve, some Sufīs placed safeguards in place to ensure that there would be no abuse. Al-Jafarāwī writes for example that the murīd 'should not see his shaykh as protected from sin.'[240] Al-Jafarāwī uses the word '*ma`sūm*' which is the same word used to denote the infallibility of the Prophet Muhammad. Jafarāwī continues to say that the *murīd* should be like 'moldable clay'[241] in the hands of the shaykh and that 'he must not go to any other shaykh without his own shaykh's permission'[242], but the fact that he begins by stating that the shaykh is not infallible suggests that he did not wish fellow *murīds* to suspend their intellect while traversing the spiritual path.

Shaykh al-Hisāfī's teachings on the shaykh-*murīd* dynamic allude to his belief that the Sufī shaykh plays a vital role in the spiritual development of his followers. It is clear, then, that he did not share the view of contemporaries like Rida that any Muslim could read and interpret the texts and attain nearness to Allah simply by carrying out the obligatory deeds and then by adding supererogatory works. 'The *murīd*,' he writes, 'should not take on any acts of worship besides the obligatory and *sunna* ones unless instructed to do so by his shaykh.'[243] Such statements indicate Shaykh al-Hisāfī's maintaining of the role of the shaykh in the spiritual hierarchy and the creation of a spiritual bond between teacher and student so long as the *murīd* is under his guidance.

Thus unlike Rida, Shaykh al-Hisāfī's view on the shaykh-*murīd* dynamic is more supportive. Both shaykhs were concerned about those shaykhs who gathered students around them but lacked religious guidance, but differed in their approach on how to deal with the problem. Shaykh al-Hisāfī's critiques are subtle and phrased in terms of what Sufism should not be. It seems this is done to preserve the integrity of the institution while reasserting that though Sufism was a spiritual science, it remained governed by protocols. In Shaykh al-His f 's view, if a shaykh is knowledgeable and a man of piety he has earned the complete devotion of his followers.

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[240] Al-Ja`farāwī, p. 29.
[241] Ibid.
[242] Al-Ja`farāwī, p. 29.
[243] Al-Hisāfī, p. 61.

Though Rida and `Abduh were, as Hourani argues, 'spiritual' men, their removal from institutional Sufism may account for why they did not stress the Shaykh-*murīd* dynamic as essential.

*Conclusion*

This chapter highlighted efforts to reform the Suf  orders in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, focusing particularly on the efforts of Suf  shaykhs who sought to reform Sufism from within.  We suggested that Shaykh al-Hisāfī be considered one of the reforming Sufī shaykhs of this perio, such as Shaykh Muhammad al-Bakr  and Shaykh Muhammad M  d .  Shaykh Hasanayn believed that the salvation of the orders lay in a return to the *shar`ia* and abandoning Sufī rituals that were considered innovative.  He did this through emphasis on the primacy of the law even in spiritual matters and by re-establishing the criteria for spiritual authority as a means of deterring abuse of spiritual power.  His sunna-based approach was meant to establish the legitimacy of the orders in an increasingly critical environment.  In addition, his emphasis on the criteria for spiritual authority ensured that all Sufī leaders would be scrutinized and not be allowed to mislead the masses as Sufī critics feared.

Further, increasing interference by the state vis-a-vis the Turuq Adminstration led Shaykh al-Hisāfī to establish protocols for his order to guarantee that its practices were in line with Sunn  orthodoxy.  Shaykh al-Hisāfī's conception of the Sufī order as a clearly defined entity governed by legal criteria served to establish its legitimacy as a religious body.  More so, his Sufī model served to safeguard his own legitimacy as a religious leader while remaining outside the confines of state-run Sufism.

**CHAPTER THREE**
**COLONIALISM AND EGYPTIAN SUFIS: REVISITING THE MEANINGS OF ACTIVISM**

In July 1882, the supreme head of the Sufī orders in Egypt, Shaykh Abd al-Baqī al-Bakrī, declared his support for the British occupation and spoke out against dissenters like the `Urabists. The shaykh further made his position known by holding a banquet in honor of Sir Garnet Wolseley, commander of the British forces, the same evening British troops entered Cairo.[244] Thus, by accomodating British rule, Shaykh al-Bakrī ensured his position within the changing power structures in Egypt at the start of the colonial period.

For the Hasafiyya shaykhs, *tasawwuf* as an institution was distant from the realm of politics, not because their founder Shaykh Hasanayn did not have political views, but because they were wary of drawing attention to themselves in precarious political circumstances.[245] His successors argue that Shaykh Hasanayn was against British rule because he was against the idea of foreign occupation in principle.[246] Shaykh `Abdel Fattah (b. 1880), third in the line of Hasafiyya shaykhs, spoke against the occupation but only to his close companions.[247] This chapter will argue that rather than take on the impossible task of challenging foreign rule, Shaykh Hasanayn pursued a different form of activism, known as commanding the right and forbidding the wrong, aimed at promoting religiousity among the people and fighting against those who threatened the stability of the Muslim body politic.

One of the leading charges against the orders by religious and secular critics was that their shaykhs taught a kind of pacifism that made *murīds* resign to their fate[248], unwilling to participate in social or political events taking place around them. This charge may be based on the historical reality that Sufī shaykhs accepted

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[244]De Jong, Frederick. 'The Sufī Orders in Egypt During the `Urabī Insurrection and the British Occupation (1882-1914): Some Societal Factors Generating Aloofness, Support, and Opposition. In De Jong, Frederick. *Sufi Orders in Ottoman and Post-Ottoman Egypt and the Middle East*. (Istanbul, The Isis Press, 2000), p. 147.
[245] Interview, Shaykh Muhammad Abul-Asrār al-Hisāfī, December 23, 2006.
[246] ibid
[247] ibid.
[248] We will see this articulated in a later chapter on the critiques of Sufism by Ikhwān authors.

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and even accomodated the arrival of the European powers in Egypt for pragmatic reasons.[249]  The Sufī shaykhs,

like the majority of the religious establishment, did not seek to endanger their positions by challenging foreign

rule.  'They resented it,' writes Abun-Nasr, 'but sought to preserve their social influence by accomodating it.'[250]

In addition, heads of other orders under al-Bakrī's authority did not participate in any acts of resistance to the

occupation.[251]  The orders were more likely to fall in line with al-Bakri's political positions in order to gain official

recognition and necessary funding from the *awqāf*.[252]  Those that did resist the occupation tended to be shaykhs

who did not enjoy officially recognized status.  Because the Hasafiyya did not gain official recognition from the

state in the period of the British occupation of Egypt, Shaykh al-Hisāfī and his *murīds* were not subject to the

same pressures felt by the officially recognized orders.  Suf  shaykhs who were vocally pro-British were

rewarded for their support, while those who criticized the occupation were silenced.[253]  By not obtaining

recognition, Shaykh Hasanayn was able to speak out against foreign rule and to cultivate a culture of resistance

among his *murīds*.

There were, of course, a few orders in the Muslim lands that did support jihād with arms against the

colonial powers in their respective countries.  These were the exception Abun-Nasr argues and 'not likely to

belong to the socially influential Sufī shaykhs in their lands.'[254]  These shaykhs equated religious revival with

opposition to foreign control, but their unpopular position put them at odds with the indigenous ulema who

feared for their status.  Before long, colonial rule became a reality and the viability of opposition faded, the Sufī

shaykhs in general, including in some cases those belonging to families of the leaders of militant opposition to it,

showed remarkable power of accomodation.'[255]

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[249]For an example of the collaboration of Sufi shaykhs with the British see De Jong, Fred. 'Aspects of the Political
Involvment of Sufi Orders in Twentieth Century Egypt (1907-1970)-An Exploratory Stocktaking' in Warburg, Gabriel
R. and Uri M. Kupferschmidt. *Islam, Nationalism, and Radicalism in Egypt and the Sudan*. (New York, Praeger,
1983).
[250]Abun-Nasr, p. 200.
[251]ibid, p. 148.
[252]ibid.
[253]De Jong, *Aspects of the Political Involvement Of Sufī Orders*, p. 190-191.
[254]Abun-Nasr, p. 202.
[255]ibid.

Fred De Jong has authored several authoritative studies on the political role of the Sufis in Egypt during the British colonial period.  In his article 'Aspects of the Political Involvement of Sufi orders in Twentieth Century Egypt'[256], De Jong argues that there were examples of shaykhs who accomodated British rule as well as those who actively opposed it.  In some cases, the British came to see the orders as the source of 'active, religiously motivated opposition to colonial rule.'[257]  It is for this reason that 'they carefully monitored the religious activities of all of them (the orders), and collected detailed information on their family and social ties and their economic interests.'[258]  British concern for the activities of the Sufī shaykhs decreased after the First World War, indicating 'a declining importance attached to these personalities as viable religious and/or political leaders.'[259]

What was the nature of British involvement with the Sufi shaykhs?  'The colonial authorities,' writes Abun-Nasr, 'were aware of the influence of the Sufī brotherhoods' shaykhs in the life of Muslim societies under their rule, but their usual method of harnessing their influence to the colonial system of government was not the delegation of political power.  Instead they sought to promote in the lands under their rule the emergence of influential Sufī shaykhs who were willing to endorse the colonial system without being allowed a say in how it functioned.'[260]  For the British, this was a hassle-free technique that involved paying off shaykhs for their political quiescence and for their endorsement of the colonial adminstration.  If the shaykhs gave their allegience to the British, so too would the people.  'This policy,' Abun-Nasr continues, 'entailed rewarding the politically pliant among the Sufī shaykhs, by treating them as quasi-official religious representatives of their communities.'[261]  Shaykhs who cooperated with the British were allowed to build *zawiyas* and aquire properties without interference.  Sufī shaykhs who did not cooperate or who were considered anti-British were treated

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[256]De Jong, 'Aspects of the Political Involvement Of Sufī Orders.'
[257]Abun-Nasr, p. 200.
[258]ibid, p. 217.
[259]De Jong. 'Aspects of the Political Involvement Of Sufī Orders', p. 192.
[260] Abun-Nasr, p. 216-217.
[261] ibid, p. 217.

accordingly; the British restricted them from 'collecting donations, preaching in mosques and holding communal assemblies, and in extreme cases even imprisoning or exiling them.'[262]  The situation became such that if a Sufī shaykh wanted the activities of his order to continue, he was forced to comply or face serious restrictions.

In his study on the relationship between the Sufī shaykhs and the British administration, De Jong suggests that there were examples both of accomodation to British rule and active resistence. Shaykh Muhammad Sirr al-Khatm al-Mirghani, the head of the Mirghaniyya order, received regular payments from the British as as reward for his role in the Mahdī uprising in the Sudan.  These payments, De Jong continues, were reduced over time as the political contributions of the order decreased.[263]  Another shaykh, Mirghanī al-Idrisi (d. 1964), 'also received regular payments, in this case mainly in compensation for information about the movements of members of the Idrisi family which he passed on regularly to the British High Commission.'[264]  This information, De Jong continues, was considered extremely important because of the Idrīsī family's involvement 'in the affairs of the Idrīsī state in `Asir and their role as mediator in the negotiations between Muhammad Idrīs al-Sanusi and the Allied Mission (Britain and Italy) during the First World War.'  In addition, Sufī shaykhs sometimes received reward for their collaboration with the British in the form of official recognition.  This was the case of Shaykh Mirghani al-Idrisi, who 'was made head of the officially recognized Sufi order, al-Ahmadiyya al-Idrisiyya' in 1934.[265]

While some shaykhs benefited immensely from British rule, De Jong argues that two shaykhs were monitored by the British for their anti-colonial activities.  The first was Shaykh Muhammad Mādī, who we have introduced in this chapter, and the other was Shaykh Mahmūd Abu'l-Fayd al-Minufi (d. 1971).  Both shaykhs presented their anti-colonial activities 'not as just as mystical method but as Islam itself.'[266]

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[262] Abun-Nasr, p. 217.
[263] De Jong. 'Aspects of the Political Involvement Of Sufī Orders', p. 191.
[264] ibid.
[265] ibid.
[266] De Jong. 'Aspects of the Political Involvement Of Sufī Orders', p. 192.

For Shaykh Muhammad Mādī, a Muslim's identity was essentially political; it distinguished him from non-Muslims as clearly as any national border, and united him with his brethren in faith under a single banner. It was the obligation of every Muslim, in his view, to repel those who harmed his brothers in faith and threatened their homeland.

> 'It is among the signs of hypocrisy, or weak faith…that one cuts off the relationship between himself and his brothers in Islam, or that he should not feel pain when a misfortune strikes them, or and that he leaves them to their enemies.'[267]

His wish was that Muslims in Egypt share a sense of common identity with Muslims elsewhere, a sense of identity that transcended national borders. This is evidenced by his own involvement in political events in other Muslim countries. As his biographer Sirrī al-Sherīf puts it, 'Imām Abul-`Azaim was never far from the political happenings taking place around him. In fact, he participated in all of the insurrections in the Muslim lands such as Emīr `Abdel Karīm al-Khitābī in Marrakesh. He would help the revolt by publicizing it in his journal al-Madīna al-Munawarra.'[268] This was based on Muhammad Mādī's belief in the obligation of every Muslim not only to identify with Muslims of other lands but to defend them as well.[269]

Shaykh Muhammad Mādī first drew attention to himself by allowing an anti-British organization, *Jam`iyya al-Yad al-Suda*, to use his printing press.[270] De Jong explains that,

> 'The discovery of the link between Abu`l-Aza'im and the Jam`iyya led to his arrest as did the publication of anti-British pamphlets from his own hand late in 1919. On both occasions he was released a few days later without trial or any concrete charges being brought against him, probably as part of the effort by the authorities to diffuse the situation.'[271]

De Jong's research suggests that not only did Shaykh Muhammad Mādī aid in the publication of anti-British literature, but that he himself authored such pamphlets at the time of the 1919 Revolution. His writings

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[267] Abul-Aza`im, *Watan*, p. 10-11.
[268] Al-Sherīf, p. 183.
[269] Abul-Aza`im, *Watan*, p. 8.
[270] De Jong, 'Aspects of the Political Involvement Of Sufi Orders', p. 192.
[271] ibid.

inculcated *murīds* with the importance of Islamic nationalism and urged them to defend their brothers in faith if necessary. He wrote in one pamphlet that,

> 'We defend our homeland, with our lives and our wealth, and defend it with our tongues and our pens, because it is our beloved homeland, and our place of birth and the place we enjoyed the comforts of life, and our happiness in this life and the next.'[272]

Shaykh Muhammad al-Minufi went further than Shaykh Muhammad Mādī by heading his own anti-colonial organization, known as *Jam`iyyat al-Faydiyyin*. 'He expressed his views,' writes De Jong, 'in a series of pamphlets which appeared irregularly between 1919 and 1924…'[273] He continued to publish his anti-British views in a monthly periodical entitled *Liwa al-Islam* between 1924 and 1930. 'His published criticism of the British was met by confiscation, withdrawal of his publishing license, and imprisonment.'[274]

Despite their anti-British activities both al-`Azmiyya and al-Faydiyya were allowed to continue the activities of the orders without interference from the British administration.[275] British authorities also kept intelligence on other cases of disturbances by Sufī groups, but these incidencts were almost always resolved by the Egyptian government. In the Egyptian countryside for example a few incidents of anti-colonial protest lead by Sufis attracted the attention of colonial authorities. Most striking is the case of Shaykh Ahmad al-Tib, the *khalīfa* of a Shaykh Ibrahīm from the Indian subcontinent, from the district of Girga. In the 1850s he gained a large following based on his claims that he was a descendent of the Prophet and his 'Sufi charisma.'[276] Soon after Shaykh Ahmad began 'cursing the Egyptian government and all its works, accusing Viceroy Isma`il of having turned away from Islam.'[277] He declared that he was in fact the Mahdi awaited by the Muslims and launched a series of campaigns aimed at righting injustices against the believers. The government dispersed this group

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[272] Abul-Aza`im, *Watan*, p. 5.
[273] De Jong, 'Aspects of the Political Involvement Of Sufī Orders', p. 192.
[274] ibid.
[275] ibid.
[276] Cole, Juan. *Colonialism and Revolution in the Middle East: Social and Cultural Origins of Egypt's `Urabi Movement*. (Cairo, American University in Cairo Press, 1999), p. 196.
[277] ibid.

before long but we see here an example of a leader who, deriving his spiritual and worldly authority from his Sufīc origins, was able to mobilize the people for a cause.

To conclude, research has shown that the majority of Sufī shaykhs in Egypt accomodated British rule for pragmatic reasons.  For the Sufī shaykhs opposition meant severe restrictions as well as the loss of their position with the people.  Many Sufī shaykhs benefited from the presence of the British in Egypt, either by monetary compensation for their collaboration in political matters or by gaining official recognition with the *Turuq* Administration.  Efforts by the British to reward Sufī shaykhs for their compliance indicate their awareness of the importance of the orders as a political and social unit.  Others such as Shaykh Muhammad Mādī and Shaykh Muhammad al-Minufi took a position against the occupation and felt the effect of their resistence.  Though the British took no measures to limit the activities of these two orders, their response indicates their awareness of the importance of the Sufī orders for political mobilization during the interwar period.

*Sufis and Colonialism Elsewhere: A Comparison*

Several historians have composed studies on the relationship between the Sufīs and the colonial powers from Egypt to Algeria.[278]  Studies on the relationship between Sufīs and the colonizers elsewhere help shed light on indigenous responses to colonial rule and the importance of including local actors in the colonial narrative.  B. G. Martin has authored an authoritative work on the Sufi Brotherhoods in Africa in which he explores their role in colonial uprisings during the nineteenth century.[279]  Martin's exploration of 'political mysticism' illustrates

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[278]Consider, for example, the life of Emīr `Abdul Qādir of Algeria (d. 1883), a Sufī scholar who was instrumental in leading the resistence to French colonial rule in the mid nineteenth century.  Though he was defeated, he is remembered by the Algerians as a national hero.  His life has been covered in Clancy-Smith, Julia A. *Rebel and Saint: Muslim Notables, Populist Protest, Colonial Encounters: Algeria and Tunisia 1800-1904*. (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1994).  See also Abun-Nasr, Jamil. *A History of the Maghrib in the Islamic Period*. (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1987).

[279]Martin, B. G. *Muslim Brotherhoods in Nineteenth Century Africa*. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976).

how several Sufi shaykhs in Africa were able to be spiritual leaders and mystics while still pursuing 'practical'[280] causes. In addition, Anna Zelkina has explored the role of the Naqshabandiyya-Mujaddidiyya-Khalidiyya order in the resistence to the Russian incursion into the Caucasus.[281] Specifically, Zelkina attributes the success of the Naqshabandī *da'wa* in the region to the reality of Russian occupation.[282] Julia Clancy-Smith has increased our understanding of the North African orders and their role in anti-French and anti-British revolts in the nineteenth century. She writes in her book[283] that her purpose is to delve into 'all of the options available to religious notables, tribal elites, and ordinary people..as they strove to oppose and challenge, or merely cope with and come to terms with, the devastating reality of foreign conquest.'[284] More so, she points out, there were 'unstated agreements'[285] between Algerian notables and the French colonial officials that would prove crucial to the continuation of Algerian culture 'in a society literally and figuratively under seige.'[286] We also learn from Clancy-Smith's study about a Sufī shaykh who did oppose French colonial ambitions in Algeria, Emīr `Abdul Qādir al-Jaza`irī (d. 1883). He rose to the status of patron-saint of Algeria because of his opposition to the French from 1832-1847. Abun-Nasr maintains that the Emir's opposition is easily explained as he did not belong to one of the notable Sufi families of Algeria, who had more to lose if they had opposed the French.[287]

Other historians have explored the role of local actors in the history of colonialism. In her study on British India, Sarah Ansari explores the relationship between the *pirs* or Sufī saints and the British colonial administration. She points to a shift in the study of colonial encounters from studies of how European powers maintained their control to how local actors made this control possible.[288] She maintains that the purpose of

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[280] Martin, *Muslim Brotherhoods in Nineteenth Century Africa*.
[281] Zelkina, Anna. *In Quest For God and Freedom: The Sufī Response to the Russian Advance in the North Caucasus*. (New York, New York University Press, 2000).
[282] ibid, p. 5.
[283] Clancy-Smith, Julia A. *Rebel and Saint: Muslim Notables, Populist Protest, Colonial Encounters (Algeria and Tunisia 1800-1904)*. (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1994).
[284] ibid, p. 4.
[285] ibid.
[286] ibid.
[287] Abun-Nasr, p. 202.
[288] Ansari, Sarah. *Sufi Saints and State Power: The Pirs of Sind, 1843-1947*. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 1.

studying 'local' collaborators with British rule is not to diminish the responsibility of the colonizers or to deny that much of the empire was taken by force but to understand the role of local actors in the 'systems of control'[289] maintained by the British authorities. She also points out the need for a broader role for the Sufis; they were not only 'religious ascetics with few if any worldly cares'[290] but actively engaging with political and religious leaders all through the period of British rule.

It is a classic scenario, Ansari illustrates, that colonial powers should turn to local leadership to maintain their control over vast empires. With 'limited manpower'[291], they could only hope to pursue their colonial aspirations by utilizing local networks. She writes that, 'collaborating groups together with systems of local cooperation based on the 'bargains' made with their European rulers can be traced across the entire span of the British empire, from the supposed 'cradle' of indirect rule in northern Nigeria, to to Kenya and its neighbors on the opposite side of the African continent and further East in the massive example of modern colonialism at work in India.'[292] In the case of her research, she argues that British control over the Sind, a region in the Western Indian subcontinent, would have been impossible without the collaboration of the Sufī shaykhs there, who 'exerted such great religious influence over Sindhis, high and low, that the British could not afford to ignore their combined spiritual and temporal power.'[293] Ansari's study leads us to conclude that any understanding of colonial encounters without the consideration of local actors is incomplete.

Clancy-Smith also encourages a broader definition of 'activism' to include more than those who actually participated in the Algerian jihād; indeed she argues that those who engaged in 'moral pursuasion, propaganda, *hijra* (migration), evasion, withdrawal, and accomodation with the colonial regime'[294] should also be included. This wider definition of activism is critical for the understanding of the relationship between colonizer and colonized as responses which do not constitute jihād, though important, might be overlooked.

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[289] Ansari, Sarah. *Sufi Saints and State Power*, p. 1.
[290] ibid, p. 5.
[291] ibid.
[292] ibid, p. 2.
[293] ibid, p. 7.
[294] Clancy-Smith, p. 4.

To conclude, it appears from Ansari's research that the incidents of collaboration with colonial authorities by Sufī shaykhs were not isolated to Egypt. This relationship of accomodation was in fact the nature of the coloniser/colonized dynamic throughout the British Empire, and in fact the entire colonized world.[295] Further, Martin's comments on the multi-facted nature of Sufī shaykhs, able to perform jihād while leading the masses in spiritual matters, is mirrored in the Sufī shaykhs we witnessed in Egypt who were at once Sufī and political. Most of all, we can benefit from Clancy-Smith's analysis that those who did not engage in armed revolt against the colonisers should not be overlooked in the wider narrative. As she argues, those who did not participate on the battlefield were engaged in their own private way to negotiate and make sense of the realities of British rule.

*Commanding the Right and Forbidding the Wrong: Another Kind of Activism?*

This section will argue that Shaykh Hasanayn's activism in the religious sphere was aimed primarily at rectifying some of the mistakes he observed in his Sufi brothers, whether in his order or in others. He was most concerned with correcting the *wird* and with teaching his students the Sunna way of performing rituals such as *ziyārā*. His departure from the Fasiyya brothers is reflective of his departure from the popular Sufism practiced by other orders. Though his forthrightness in correcting these mistakes could have isolated him from other Sufīs, his students maintain that his message attracted a large following comprised of other Sufīs also unsettled by innovation.

Shaykh al-Hisāfī's non-involvement in national politics may have been the best course which insured the continuation of his *tarīqa*. There is no evidence that the shaykh received any payments or benefits from the British adminstration, so it seems that he falls into the category of shaykhs who did not poltically rebel but also

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[295] Ansari, *Sufi Saints and State Power*, p. 2.

did not involve themselves to heavily with the administration.  Shaykh Hasanayn would fall into the category of

shaykhs Abun-Nasr describes when he writes that

> 'The Sufī brotherhoods' shaykhs who achieved the greatest success in the colonial period where
> those who neither allowed themselves to become stooges of the colonial authorities, nor defied
> them politically.  They were inspiring, but socially and politically resourceful Sufī shaykhs, who
> could assure the colonial rulers of their lands of their political allegiance without undermining
> their credibility as authoritative spiritual guides for the Muslims.'[296]

Though Shaykh al-Hisāfī discouraged his followers from becoming involved in politics, he differentiated

between politics and the Islamic concept of *amr bil ma`arūf wal naī `an al-munkar*, or commanding the right and

forbidding the wrong.  Reminding others of their religious obligations, he believed, was a duty upon every

Muslim and hence every member of his order.  The practice of commanding and forbidding has been practiced

by Sufīs for centuries; Michael Cook credits the Sufī scholar al-Tustarī (d. 896) with developing 'a Sufistic

conception of a religious leader appointed by God; he describes this leader as, among other things, establishing

the forbidding of wrong.'  Over the centuries, the Sufīs debated the importance of commanding and forbidding

and the possible dangers it posed to the spiritual man, especially its effect on the ego as Sufīs were particularly

concerned with affairs of the heart.  So for example the eighteenth century Sufī `Abdul-Ghanī al-Nabulsī (d.

1731) used this as a justification 'to discourage forbidding wrong altogether.' Despite this, Cook believes that

Suf  shaykhs did not completely reject the practice of commanding and forbidding that would make him believe

that there is a distinctly 'Sufī' rejection of the practice.[297]   Further, he concludes that there is no

'characteristically Sufī'[298] position in the first place on the issue of commanding the right in Sufī writings.

And so historically there were certainly Sufīs who practiced commanding and forbidding despite the

spiritual dangers.  Shaykh al-Hisāfī too was a champion of commanding and forbidding and it is especially this

element of his teaching that is emphasized by his students.  Hasan al-Banna writes that a hallmark of Shaykh al-

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[296] Abun-Nasr, p. 233-234.
[297] Cook, Michael.  *Commanding the Right and Forbidding the Wrong in Islamic Thought*. (Cambridge, Cambridge
University Press, 2000, p. 467.
[298] ibid, p. 468.

Hisāfī's *da`wa* was '*al-amr bil ma`arūf wal nahī `an al-munkar*.'[299]   He recalls that this aspect of the shaykh's

legacy is what left the greatest mark on him.  He writes that, 'What most affected me was his (Shaykh Hasanayn)

insistence on commanding the right and forbidding the wrong and that he did not fear anyone in this respect.'[300]

His *murīds* saw their shaykh's struggle as a kind of 'jihād', for as al-Jafarāwī writes, the shaykh '*Jahad ahl al-bid`a*

*haqqa jihād*'[301], referring to the shaykh's efforts to correct the *awrād* and other rituals.  He writes about Shaykh

Hasanayn, 'Allah gave him the power to command the good and forbid the wrong.'[302]   Hasan al-Banna concurs

when he writes that, 'the shaykh advised people in every circumstance until he was able to change many things

he felt contradicted the Quran and sunna.'[303]


*Commanding and Forbidding in Religious Matters*


It can be argued that the Hasafiyya order itself is founded on a story involving Shaykh Hasanayn's

commanding and forbidding.  In 1871 Shaykh Hasanayn met his spiritual teacher Shaykh Muhammad al-Fāsi for

the first time and it was Shaykh al-Fāsī who urged Shaykh al-Hisāfī to return to Egypt and to establish the *tariqa*

in al-Zaqzīq, which he did in 1872. [304]  As discussed in Chapter Two, Shaykh al-Hisāfi returned to Cairo as *khalīfa*

of a branch of the al-Makiyya al-Fasiyya order but found it necessary to prohibit some forms of *dhikr* taught by

Shaykh al-Fāsī which resulted in a parting of ways.[305]  He felt he was compelled to found his own order after a

disagreement with the students of Shaykh al-Fāsī, whom he met with in Mecca.  The students seemed to have

been angered by Shaykh al-Hisāfī's exclusion of certain parts of the *dhikr* their teacher had relayed to them, but

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[299] Al-Banna, *Mudhakkarāt*, p. 16.
[300] ibid, p. 16-17.
[301] Al-Ja`farāwī, p. 29.
[302] ibid.
[303] Al-Banna, *Mudhakkarāt,* p. 16.
[304] Al-Ja`farāwī, p. 30.
[305] De Jong, "Al-Hisāfī".

he felt these forms of *dhikr*, which 'were characteristic of the *tarīqa*'[306], to be contradictory to the *shar`ia*. Al-Hisāfī established his own independent *tarīqa* soon after and called it al-Hisafiyya al-Shadhiliya, because of the inspiration he derived from the teachings of Imām Abul-Hasan al-Shadhilī (d. 1258). Despite the obvious spiritual bond between Shaykh Hasanayn and his mentor, his commanding the right in this case resulted in a fall out with his fellow *murīds* in Mecca and ultimately his taking a slightly different spiritual path.

This incident with the Fasiyya *murīds* is striking because typically *murīds* are taught *awrād* as it is transmitted to them by their shaykh. There is no room for ammendments or correction because students believe these *awrād* to be transmitted through a chain of shaykhs going back to the Prophet. However, Shaykh Hasanayn took the position that even his quest as a spiritual wayfarer would not cause him to suspend his religious judgement. For his objection, he could have paid a high price indeed as he took the risk of being excluded from spiritual circles. Despite his strong position in front of the murīds, his anxiety is revealed when he writes, 'I vowed never to enter the Hijāz again, fear having entered my heart.'[307]

Further, one of the main accomplishments of Shaykh Hasanayn as told by his *murīds* was correcting the *tajwid*, the rules of pronunciation, of the *wird*. His position on this issue put him at odds with other Sufī shaykhs who were accustomed to teaching the *wird* as it had been taught to them by their shaykhs. When the shaykh founded his order most of the other *turuq* were mispronouncing the litany, adding an extra *madd* where it did not belong. His students considered this further proof of his commanding and forbidding, as Jafarāwī writes,

'He met with his brothers from the Shadhiliyya to recite the *wadhīfa* and the *adthkār* mandated by the sharia. And so he observed them placing a *madd* on the *ha illa* of *la illaha ilallah*. He advised them against this prohibited *madd* but they told him that this is the way our shaykh taught it to us. And so he left them and recited his *adthkār* alone away from their distortions.'[308]

And so when establishing his own *tarīqa* the shaykh made it a principle that the *wird* be recited correctly without this additional *madd*. The Hasafiyya brothers were taught 'to preserve the *adthkār* and *awrād*.'[309] As

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[306] De Jong, "Al-Hisāfī".
[307] Al-Ja`farāwī, p. 33.
[308] ibid.
[309] ibid, p. 32.

Shaykh Hasanayn's *da'wa* spread from village to village, members of other orders came to hear about his message. He challenged the correctness of their own *awrād* and many were prompted to join his ranks.[310] Risking the obvious unpopularity that would come from challenging the other *turuq*, Shaykh Hasanayn was more concerned with establishing sound rituals in his own order.

Shaykh Hasanayn's reformist mentality also prevented him from engaging in Sufī rituals that almost all orders shared in Cairo. One such ritual was the visitation of the shrine of Imām Husayn. This sacred spot is visited by members of all orders especially during the season of the *mawlid*.[311] It is also common to see visitors seeking favors from the martyred Imām. We learn from al-Jafarāwī and al-Banna that when the shaykh took his *murīds* for *ziyāra* of Imām Husayn, Shaykh Hasanayn stood at the grave and supplicated with the 'prayer taught by the Prophet.'[312] His *murīd* asked him to ask Imām Husayn to be pleased with them. The shaykh became upset and replied, 'May Allah be pleased with us and with him!', implying that the Shaykh wanted his student to understand that he should not be distracted from Allah. Forbidding this wrong involved re-directing his *murīds* to base their worship, even rituals like *ziyāra*, on the hadīth.

This incident is substantial because as Hoffmann has put forth the sanctity of Imām Husayn is an intergral part of Egyptian Sufī life. She writes that the Imām's 'importance to Egyptians derives primarily from his closeness to the Prophet and the existence of his beautiful shrine-mosque in Cairo.' Outside the wall of the mosque is a plaque engraved with the Prophetic saying 'Husayn is from me, and I am from Husayn.'[313] Thus the Mohammadan light, many Egyptian Sufīs argue, is also in his grandson Husayn. Indeed, thousands visit his shrine seeking his acceptance and his favors. Hoffman writes, 'He is appealed to as *Bābā*, at whose gates both

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[310] Al-Ja`farāwī, p. 32.
[311] ibid.
[312] Al-Banna, *Mudhakkarāt,* p. 17.
[313] Ibid.

physical and spiritual healing is expected.'[314] Seen in this context, it was a radical position indeed for Shaykh

Hasanayn to advise his student as he did.

*Commanding and Forbidding in the Political Realm*

To Shaykh Hasanayn, even political risks were not a consideration when commanding and forbidding.

This is evidenced by stories of Shaykh Hasanayn's encounters with influential political figures and notables over

the course of his life.  Once, the shaykh was invited to the palace to visit Riad Pasha (d. 1911), then Prime

Minister.  During his visit another scholar entered and bowed to Riad Pasha 'as if he was almost making *ruk'u*

(the bowing position of prayer).  Shaykh Hasanayn struck the scholar on his face and said to him, 'Stand oh man

because *ruk'u* is only allowed before Allah, so do not disgrace the religion and knowledge, or Allah will disgrace

you!' Shaykh Hasanayn's critique left the scholar and the minister speechless.  He continues that at that moment

that another minister who was a friend of Riad Pasha entered the room wearing a gold ring and a cane with a

gold handle. Shaykh Hasanayn, clearly not influenced by the man's visible status, remarked, 'Oh you man,

wearing gold for decoration is prohibited on men and allowed for women, so give both of these things to one of

your women and do not contradict the command of the Prophet of Allah!'  The minister was about to object

when Riad Pasha intervened and introduced the men to each other.

In another incident, Shaykh Hasanayn was at the palace to meet with Khedive Tawfīq (d. 1892).  The

shaykh offered the Khedive the greeting '*asalaamu alaikum*' when he entered but the Khedive responded simply

by waving his hand.  Shaykh Hasanayn replied that 'the response to my greeting should be the same as my

greeting or better than it'[315] referring to the hadīth of the Prophet regarding salutations.  Hasan al-Banna

continues that the Khedive 'replied as the shaykh had told him to and praised him for his position and his

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[314] Hoffman-Ladd, Valerie.  'Devotion to the Prophet and His Family in Egyptian Sufism'. *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 24, p. 74.
[315] Al-Banna, Mudhakkarāt, p. 17.

commitment to his religion.'[316]  In another scenario, the shaykh visited some local notables and observed small statues on his host's desk.  Reminding his host that statues were forbidden in Islam, he proceeded to break the statue's neck.  At that moment, a British official entered the room and asked the shaykh about what happened. The shaykh 'answered him in a beautiful way and explained to him that Islam came to establish *tawhīd*..'[317]  The British official accepted his explanation and 'praised the shaykh'[318] just as the Khedive had done.

Shaykh al-Hisāfī's avoidance of political controversy may have helped him to achieve the support of the religious establishments and political elites.  In one instance, Shaykh Hasanayn's *da'wa* became so successful that other shaykhs began to feel threatened by the reach of his influence.[319]  At one point, several Sufī shaykhs mounted a campaign against Shaykh Hasanayn calling for the Turuq Adminstration to ban him from holding his gatherings of *dhikr*.  However, the shaykh responded by writing a letter to Khedive Tawfīq (d. 1892), citing the 'testimony of other scholars'[320], including scholars of al-Azhar with whom the shaykh had strong ties, to attest to his rank among the ulema.  De Jong elaborates that this was 'an unprecedented move' which lead the Khedive to refer the matter to Shaykh al-Azhar and the Mufti at the time, Shaykh Muhammad al-Mahdī al-Abassī.  The Mufti advised Shaykh al-Bakrī not to pursue the complaint against Shaykh al-Hisāfī, who had many allies at al-Azhar.[321]  Al-Bakrī agreed to meet with Shaykh Hasanayn, which resulted in his lifting all restrictions that had been placed on his activities, and more importantly as De Jong points out, 'the declaration by al-Bakrī that he had no authority over this group whatsoever, which was an implicit confirmation of al-Hisāfī as head of an independent *tarīqa*, later to become known as al-Hasafiyya al-Shadhiliyya.'[322]

Shaykh Hasanayn's middle course with the political elite was intended for the survival of his order in the precarious setting of colonial Egypt.  Though Shaykh Hasanayn was concerned with speaking the truth even to

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[316] Al-Banna, Mudhakkarāt, p. 17.
[317] ibid.
[318] ibid.
[319] Al-Ja`farāwī, p. 32.
[320] Ibid, p. 62.  The full text of the letter appears here as well.
[321] De Jong, *Turuq*, p. 103.
[322] ibid.

men of power, he also devoted part of his communication with cementing ties with notables for the purpose of ensuring the continuation of his order. In a letter to the administrator of the province of al-Qalyubiyya, the shaykh writes to invite him to the festivities of the *mawlid*. He begins first, however, with a prayer that 'Allah protect him (the administrator) from his enemies.'[323] Even in his letter to the Khedive Tawfīq concerning the complaint raised by the other shaykhs he begins by stating, 'Praise be to Allah who has made the leaders his shadow on earth for his servants and his lands.'[324] Shaykh al-His f 's willingness to engage with men of power could indicate his desire to create a network of support for his newly founded *tar qa*.

Despite these incidents of cordiality to rulers, the dominant theme in *al-Manhal*, al-Ja`farawī's biographical work on the shaykh, is Shaykh Hasanayn's ability to command and forbid at any cost. One may ask what motivated Shaykh Hasanayn to take these sometimes unpopular positions for the sake of commanding and forbidding. From the writings of his *murīds* it appears that he had the support of his students as well as his colleagues at al-Azhar. However, his motivation to command and forbid stemmed from a more other-worldly source. Throughout his career the shaykh writes that he enjoyed visions of the Prophet especially at times when he was unsure about the strictness of his position or the wiseness of his speaking out. After the incident with the Fasiyya *murīds*, the shaykh had vowed never to enter the Hijāz again. Soon after he dreamt of the Prophet who told him 'visit me, and do not be afraid.'[325] He writes that after this dream, 'my fear left me and my terror subsided and my attachment to the sunna increased for I had learned that I was to be victorious over all those who opposed me.'[326] This direct spiritual link with the Prophet strengthened his resolve and fueled his activism.

Hasafiyya *murīds* relate these stories while commenting on Shaykh Hasanayn's courage in expressing his opinion, even when in the company of men of influence and power. Even if some may doubt the authenticity of these stories, their message helps us to draw some important conclusions regarding the message the shaykh wished to transmit. In an era when Sufī shaykhs were more and more powerless, becoming 'willy-nilly guardians

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[323] Al-Ja`farāwī, p. 66.
[324] ibid.
[325] ibid, p. 33.
[326] ibid.

of their local communities' established traditions'[327], the figure of the Sufī shaykh as a defender of Islamic ideals was an important image. As the Sufī shaykhs were co-opted into the colonial establishment, there were few religious figures that exhibited an authentic Islamic spirit. More so, as Abun-Nasr argues, because of their compromises few of the Sufī shaykhs could come to represent religious revival with the people. This led, he proposes, to the rise of the Salafiyya[328] as the legitimate inheritors of the Islamic torch and the restorers of the Islamic spirit to its rightful place.

*Conclusion*

This chapter examined the relationship between organized Sufism and the colonial powers. We have suggested that most Sufī shaykhs accomodated British rule in Egypt with a few exceptions. Shaykhs such as Muhammad Mādī Abul-`Azaim felt it was a moral imperative to protest British colonial rule encouraging others to join their ranks. Others such as Shaykh al-Hisāfī believed that the political arena was not the place for the Sufī shaykh but rather that he should be occupied with preserving the authentic Islamic character of his community.

Recent work by Clancy-Smith encourages us to explore a broader definition to the word activism to include individuals who reacted to colonial rule in other ways besides jihād. Shaykh Hasanayn's story raises important questions too about how activism is defined. Though not involved in the nationalist struggle, his activism in his relative sphere can not be ignored.

In addition, Shaykh al-Hisāfī's insistence on commanding the right challenges notions of what it meant to be 'political'. Stories transmitted about him by his *murīds* cast him as a champion of truthful speech, unafraid of political authority when it came to the rulings of Allah. It seems plausible that one who can confront the Khedive is acting in a very 'political' manner. Surely the risks of his actions are comparable to the risks of one who fights on the battlefield in the highly stratified society of his day. Nonetheless, his commitment to truthful

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[327] Abun-Nasr, p. 234.
[328] ibid.

speech and to spreading the faith was infectuous and was transmitted to his students, including Hasan al-Banna,

who would go on to found the Muslim Brotherhood decades later.

**CHAPTER FOUR**
**ATTITUDES TOWARDS SUFISM IN THE EGYPTIAN PRESS: A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE JARIDAT AL-IKHWAN AL-MUSLIMIN AND OTHER JOURNALS, 1900-1935**

The previous chapter aimed to describe different ways activism can be understood and how it was practiced by Shaykh al-Hisāfī in the context of colonized Egypt. This chapter will argue that al-Banna's articles on Sufism which appeared in the 1934 editions of *al-Jarīda* reflect al-Banna's concern with introducing Sufism to readers through the medium of the press. However, like Shaykh al-His f , the reality of British colonialism in Egypt forced al-Banna to formulate an Islamic response. Thus, beginning in 1935, al-Banna's articles on Sufism and Islam became infused with a nationalist rhetoric. This was meant to strengthen an indigenous Islamic identity that was neither borrowed nor imported. Nationalism was the currency of the day in 1930s Cairo, and so a publisher who did not include articles on the subject was sure to be excluded from this important discourse. Thus, biographies of Sufīs who were nationalists and carried out jihād against the colonizers, such as Sidī Ahmed al-Sanūsī (d. 1933) feature strongly in al-Banna's narrative. [329] His inclusion of Sufism of this kind was meant to connect readers to this Sufī heritage that was also deeply nationalistic and anti-imperialist.

Eventually around 1935 articles on Sufism almost disappeared from *al-Jarīda* with a few exceptions. Instead, al-Banna utilized his journal more to define his own discourse on Islamic nationalism. This important move provided a precedent for the Ikhwān's transition from a spiritual brotherhood to a political organisation.

In the second part of the chapter al-Banna's articles will be compared with those of Muhammad Rashīd Rida of *al-Manār*, Jurji Zaydān of *al-Hilāl*, and Yacoub Sarrūf of *al-Muqtataf* between the years 1930 and 1940, focusing on the debates on religion and spirituality that are reflected in their respective publications.

With the widespread use of the printing press in early twentieth century Cairo, the printed word in the form of weekly journals took on added significance as intellectuals of different ideological backgrounds competed for readership. Uri Kupferschmidt points out that, 'Al-Banna was well aware of what we call today

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[329] Arsalān, Shakīb. 'Baqiyat al-Salaf al-Salih wa Khatimat al-Mujāhıdın' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 2 (August 2 1934): p. 362.

mass media'[330] and quotes al-Banna as having said, 'The preaching of yesterday consisted of a verbal message. Today it consists of publications, magazines, newspapers, articles…'[331] Further, al-Banna and the Brothers felt 'threatened by "the swelling wave of licensiousness to destroy religion", by which secular journals such as al-Hilal and al-Muqtataf were meant.'[332]

*Al-Banna's Early Life and political context*

Hasan al-Banna was born in 1906, the son of Shaykh Ahmed 'Abdul Rahmān al-Sa'atī (d. 1958), who was the local imam, *ma'dhun*, and religious teacher in the town of Mahmudiyya in the locality of Rashid. As a boy al-Sa'atī had left his village of Shimshira and studied at a prominent mosque school in Alexandria. After completing his education, he settled in Mahmudiyya, where he became 'widely respected for his religious learning and piety'[333], and divided his time between teaching at the mosque and his work as a *sa'ati*, a watchmaker, hence his name. The Shaykh wrote several books including a categorization of the hadiths in Imam Ahmad's *Musnad* collection by subject., his magnum opus.[334] When his eldest son Hasan was ready, the Shaykh sent him to the local mosque school where his friend Shaykh Muhammad Zahrān instructed the children.

The lessons learned at school were reinforced at home by Shaykh Ahmed, who wished his son to be a *hafiz* of the Quran and also introduced him to the books of traditional Islamic scholarship. Hasan and his friends also established a society for teaching others the faith, and called it 'Society for Warding off Wrongs'.[335] In one incident, the young al-Banna censured a sailor at the bank of the Nile who had attached a nude statue to the

[330] Kupferschmidt, Uri. 'Literacy, Illiteracy, and Censorship in the Tradition of the Muslim Brotherhood'. *Second International Symposium, History of Printing and Publishing in the Languages and Countries of the Middle East*, Paris, Novermber 2-4, 2005, p. 4.
[331] ibid.
[332] ibid.
[333] Mitchell R., p. 2.
[334] This work was entitled *Musnad al-Fath al-Rabbani*.
[335] Hāmid, Muhammad `Abd al-Halīm. *Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiya wa al-Imām al-Shahīd Hasan al-Banna*. (Cairo, Dar al-Tawzi`a wal Nashr al-Islāmia, 1989), p. 10.

mast of his boat; he brought his complaint to the police who demanded at once that the soldier remove it.[336]

Al-Banna's boyhood corresponded with a particularly turbulent time in Egyptian history--the British occupation and the 1919 revolution. The start of the 1919 revolution corresponded with his last year in primary school, and he remembers composing nationalist poetry around that time. Mitchell argues that the memory of these events never left him.[337] Though Goldberg has argued that it was more pragmatic concerns that caused Egyptian peasants to revolt in 1919[338], al-Banna's compositions suggests a political consciousness that one must take into consideration. It is possible that al-Banna is projecting later knowledge of the nationalist movement onto the events of 1919 but it also may be that he and his co-villagers utilized the moment as an avenue for the expression of their dissatisfaction with the status quo.

After 1919, Egypt enjoyed a decade of economic prosperity that was abruptly halted by the onset of the Great Depression. This was mainly due to the drop in the world price of cotton, which was Egypt's staple export, which resulted in a decline in the overall standard of living for most Egyptians.[339] On the political scene, the faith and hope that many Egyptians had after independence in 1922 was dashed with the establishment of the parliamentary monarchy in 1930 and the subsequent political repression during the tenure of Ismail Sidqī from 1930 to 1933.

The political and economic instability that characterized al-Banna's youth created in him a sense of urgency that reform was imperative. Along with this strong sense of social reform was the feeling that Islam was somehow under attack. He recalls seeing British troops active in his hometown and with that the feeling that his Egyptian and Islamic identity was being threatened.[340] As Philips argues, missionaries were looked upon

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[336] Shaikh, N. M. Memoirs of Hasan al-Banna Shaheed. (Karachi, International Islamic Publishers, 1981), p. 63.
[337] Mitchell R., p. 3.
[338] Goldberg, Ellis. 'Peasants in Revolt-Egypt 1919'. *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 24 (1992): p. 262.
[339] Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation*, p. 2.
[340] Al-Banna, *Mudhakkarat*, p. 27.

by Egyptians as 'part and parcel of Western imperialism' during this period.[341] In the same year of al-Banna's birth, protestant missionaries were active in establishing schools, churches, and periodicals aimed at the dissemination of ideas and the execution of their purpose.[342] For those concerned with the disappearance of Islamic symbols and traditions, the challenge was evident not only from outside influence but internally Egyptians could not escape the feeling that their society was somehow being 'undermined by British imperialism'[343] not only in the tangible reality of occupation but in the emotional and psychological battle that caused Egyptians to perceive the West as 'a great challenge.'[344]

A varied number of responses emerged as a result of these cultural and political battles. In the villages, the response often manifested itself as increased attachment to traditional meanings and symbols, an affirmation of collective identity in a changing world. Reformers of the day suggested radical changes or reforms aimed both at casting off the chains of foreign occupiers and the local notables who benefited from the status quo.[345] The interwar period was marked by the emergence of many such groups and a variety of nationalist expressions emerged, not all of them 'secular' as nationalisms are often portrayed. Historians have recently questioned the exclusion of religion from the definition of nationalism; for al-Banna and for many others, affirmation of identity meant, as Cole and Kandiyoti argue, that religion could have formed the foundation of their nationalism.[346] Somehow, religious identity was forged with Egyptian identity and defense of Egyptian soil became synonymous with defense of Islam and the result was the synthesis of an 'Islamic nation.'[347] Along with this assertion of Islamic identity came a call to action for Islamic revivalists like al-Banna to

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[341] Philipp, Thomas. 'Nation State and Religious Community in Modern Egypt: The Continuing Debate.' *Des Welt Des Islams* 28 (1988): p. 383-384.
[342] Moaddel, Mansoor. 'Conditions for Ideological Production: The Origins of Islamic Modernism in India, Egypt, and Iran. *Theory and Society* 30 (2001): p. 692-693.
[343] Abu-Rabi', Ibrahim. *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World*. (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 65.
[344] ibid.
[345] Gilsenan, Michael. *Recognizing Islam: An Anthropologist's Introduction*. (London, Croom Helm, 1982), p. 215.
[346] Cole, Juan and Deniz Kandiyoti. 'Nationalism and the Colonial Legacy in the Middle East and Central Asia: An Introduction. *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 34 (2002): p. 197.
[347] Abu-Rabi', p. 51.

develop 'an Islamic solution to alienation, education, economic organization, and social justice.'[348]  For these

visionaries the answer lay in the example of the Prophet Muhammad's life and their belief that this classical

portrait could be recreated as a solution to their problems.  As they took time to learn and live the faith, some

Egyptians began to despair that a 'political project'[349] of this magnitude may ever come to pass.


*Discovering the Hasafiyya*


The varied religious life in Mahmudiyya occupied al-Banna's time and allowed him to forge ties with

other like-minded youths his age.  This 'atmosphere of piety and respect for Islamic learning'[350] served as the

prism through which he viewed his surroundings and tackled predicaments.  This environment was

complimented by al-Banna's discovery of the Hasafiyya, a Sufī order active in his youth, and its shaykh at the

time, Abd al-Wahāb al-Hisafī.  From the start, al-Banna was drawn to the moral uprightness he saw in the

shaykh.  He writes about him that, 'His friends said they never saw anyone stronger in obeying Allah and in

carrying out obligatory deeds, even towards the end of his life.'[351]  Al-Banna was also attracted to the shaykh's

spiritual message.  He writes that one day, as he walked by the local mosque in Mahmudiyya, he heard a

gathering of people making remembrance of God in unison.  He was awe-struck, and inquired about who these

people were.  He found out that they were called the Hasafiyya and that they gathered at the mosque every

week to praise Allah in unison.  Hasan began attending their *hadra*, or *dhikr* gathering, every week and

befriended other boys who were members.  The children gathered with older members of the Hasafiyya and

studied books which introduced them to the spiritual realm of Islam.  He wrote that, 'The lectures and recitation

by the learned scholars, the discourse of the pious young men, their loving treatment of the children who

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[348] Abu-Rabi', p. 51.
[349] Gilsenan, *Recognizing Islam*, p. 216.
[350] Lia, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers,* p. 25.
[351] Al-Banna, *Mudhakkarāt*, p. 9-10.

rushed there and participated in the recitation attracted my soul very much.'[352]  As he understood it, Sufism was not a separate ideology, but an integral part of orthodoxy.  It was 'from the heart of Islam.'[353]  Among the shaykhs of the order, he mentions three that influenced him most directly—Shaykh Shalabī al-Rijāl, Shaykh Muhammad Abu Shūsha, and Shaykh Sayyid Usmān.[354]  His activities with the Hasafiyya became his whole life even after moving to Damanhūr—he describes his schedule on a visit back home as follows—

> 'On Thursday night, I would get off the train at Mahmudiyya and go straight to the shop.  I would finish my work until right before *maghrib* (evening) prayer, when I would go home to break my fast and then head to the small mosque for the lesson and the *hadra*.  After that, it was off to the home of Shaykh Sheblī or Ahmed Effendi for *madrasah* and *dhikr*, then to the mosque for dawn prayer, rest, and then the *juma'a* (Friday congregational prayer).  After that we would have lunch, and then back to the store until *maghrib* prayer, and then to the mosque again, and then home.'[355]

Hasan began reciting the litany taught to him by the shaykhs of the Hasafiyya.  He also became absorbed in reading the *Manhal*, the teachings and litanies of Shaykh Hasanayn, father of Shaykh `Abd al-Wah b.  To al-Banna the shaykh was a hero of the traditional world; a symbol and attestation of the ability of Islamic institutions and figures to maintain their strength at a time when the familiar seemed to be fading.

Al-Banna explains being strengthened by his dreams of Shaykh Hasanayn and stories about his courage.  Stories of the shaykh 'who did not fear for his safety'[356] give the reader an idea of how al-Banna was searching for a figure of strength in the tumultuous context we described earlier.  He once dreamt that he found himself in a race with *Iblīs*, the devil, and the shaykh picked him up and outran *Iblīs*, a metaphor that this man was to become his guide and rescuer.[357]

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[352] Shaikh, p. 67.
[353] Al-Banna, *Mudhakkarat*, p.15.
[354] Shaykh, p. 68.
[355] Al-Banna, *Mudhakkarāt*, p.23.
[356] Ibid, p. 11.
[357] Ibid, p. 12-13.

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*The Move to Cairo*

Al-Banna's background in *tasawwuf* and his attachment to shaykh al-Hisāfī made his move to Cairo a difficult transition for him. In 1923, al-Banna moved on to pursue his studies at Dar al-Ulūm, where he would have been exposed to a wider spectrum of individuals and opinions. The school was established in 1872 to bring together the study of the religious sciences as well as mathematics, science, and hygiene, and was meant to be 'a compromise between tradition and modernity.'[358] The teachers there were 'a mixture of turban and fez', and indication that al-Banna would have experienced diversity among his instructors as well.[359] As Mitchell puts it, 'he surveyed the scene with the eyes of a religious villager'[360] and began to find ways to reconcile his religious upbringing with the wave of new ideas and individuals he was now exposed to. Undoubtedly, Hasan's formal education and his desire to enter the workforce as a teacher in the government schools entered him in the class of new intellectuals which would become known as the *effendiyya*; the 'urban, educated class of native Egyptians.'[361] Historians concur that this social grouping would prove to be pivotal in all of the important religious and nationalist movements of the 1930s and 1940s. The so-called new effendīs, different from the previous generation of *effendiyya* of the 1920s, adopted a symbolic change of uniform that included the *tarbūsh* and Western-style shirts and trousers. This new generation, the 'trouble-makers' as Ryzova calls them[362], would go on to become the reformers and revolutionaries of the 1930s and 1940s. What makes this group different from their predecessors, she argues, is that they were raised under the new state and as such, were faced with the challenge of defining their identity in this new context.[363] The change of dress did not indicate a totalistic rejection of traditional society, but a positivist assertion of identity by a new generation.

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[358] Reid, Donald M. 'The Rise of Professions and Professional Organization in Modern Egypt. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 16 (1974): p. 31.

[359] Reid, 'The Rise of Professions', p. 31.

[360] Mitchell R., p. 4.

[361] Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation,* p. 11.

[362] Ryzova, Lucie. 'Egyptianizing Modernity Through the New Effendiya: Social and Cultural Constructions of the Middle Class in Egypt During the Monarchy' in *Re-Envisioning Egypt 1919-1952*. (Cairo, American University of Cairo Press, 2005), p. 150.

[363] ibid.

There were also larger trends taking place that affected al-Banna's experience in Cairo. His move to the city coincided with what Gershoni describes as the two overarching trends taking place in Egypt during the parliamentary monarchy--rapid urbanization and the expansion of education.[364] These trends had the effect of 'increasing the number of politically aware Egyptians'[365] because most Egyptians did not fully participate in political life until they moved to the cities. The expansion of the state education system and enrollment in higher education meant a sharp increase in the number of literate Egyptians; now fully able to participate in national debates as 'consumers of a modern, literate culture.'[366]

Al-Banna also relates that he was dismayed by the breakdown of traditional values and morals in Egyptian society as well as the political instability and the competition between political parties.[367] Reid writes in his article that,

> 'If political unrest were our topic, the 1930s would constitute a period of disturbances comparable to the pre-1914 years...the worldwide depression hit Egypt, the problem of independence remained unresolved, youth gangs fought each other in the streets, and the struggle in press and parliament continued unabated.'[368]

While a student at Dar al-Ulūm, al-Banna witnessed the debates taking place in the Egyptian press and in the universities surrounding the nature of government and the impact of Westernization. One such example is the symbolic debate in 1920s Cairo between the Ministry of Information (*Wizārāt al-Ma`arif*), Dar al-Ulūm, and the Wafdist publication *Kawkab al-Sharq*. Students at Dar al-Ulūm decided to abandon the traditional attire of the `imma and the *kuftān* and instead don the *tarbūsh* and shirts and trousers and demanded that the ministry accept this change.[369] According to the daily Cairo newspaper *al-Ahrām*, the ministry rejected their decision and

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[364] Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation*, p. 12.
[365] ibid.
[366] ibid.
[367] Mitchell R., p. 4.
[368] Reid, Donald M. 'Political Assassination in Egypt, 1910-1954. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 15 (1982): p. 631-632.
[369] A full account of this incident is provided in Sabāt, Khalīl. *Mawqif al-Sahafa al-Masriya min al-`Imāma wal Tarbūsh*. (Cairo, Maktabat al-Hilāl, 1961), p. 4.

placed guards at all entrances of the college to bar entrance to anyone dressed in the new attire.[370] *Kawkab al-Sharq* followed the incident and attacked the ministry, arguing that change is a part of life and demanding that the ministry reconsider its decision.

The incident at Dar al-Ulūm reveals efforts by a new class of Egyptians to define themselves as individuals and as a new class. In this case, the effendīs *tarbūsh* became a 'symbol of freedom of expression'[371] and a manifestation of the effendiyya's desire to set themselves apart. Because of their new formal education, they could no longer relate to the scores of others who were trained in trades or in the religious training of al-Azhar and other Islamic institutions like it. Most would go on to work in the bureaucracy or to teach in the government schools. Their status, above the Egyptian working class and below the political elites, placed them in the ideal situation to comment on Egypt's political and social ills.

The young al-Banna shared his concerns with several prominent shaykhs of al-Azhar, who offered him little recourse for action.[372] Though al-Banna does not mention names, he places the blame more than once on the ulema for their complacency in the wake of religious decline in Egypt and their inability to transmit to people the eternal relevancy of Islam to rectify all problems. It was the responsibility, he believed, of the men of religion to teach and maintain the religious standard. 'His revulsion,' Mitchell adds, 'at the sense of futility in the Azhar in the face of the currents battering away at Islam can be said to mark his disenchantment with it as a citadel of defense for the faith.'[373] In addition, he felt it was the responsibility of the scholars to make the religion appealing to the people and not reduce the faith to dry details that make people lose interest in immersing themselves in its study and practice. Those who studied at al-Azhar and were meant to be leaders were instead 'religious literates…not spiritual guides.'[374]

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[370] Sabāt, Khalīl, *Mawqif al-Sahafa al-Masriya min al-`Imāma wal Tarbūsh*, p. 4.
[371] ibid, p. 5.
[372] Al-Banna, *Mudhakkarāt*, p. 52 for his exchange with Shaykh al-Dajwī example.
[373] Mitchell R., p. 211.
[374] ibid, p. 213.

It was in fact the incapacitation of the shaykhs of al-Azhar in his day in confronting what he saw as increased Western encroachment and the general decrepitude of Islamic societies that spurred al-Banna to seek out avenues by which he might work for reform in Egypt. In 1927, he graduated from Dar al-Ulūm and accepted a teaching position in the town of al-Isma`iliya. He was probably distressed by the number of British troops stationed there as al-Isma'`iliya was an important town in the Canal Zone which would have further heightened his desire to seek change. Al-Sayyid-Marsot writes that, 'Having lived in Ismailiyya, al-Banna may have been more affected by the negative aspect of the European domination of Egypt than the rest of his compatriots, for Ismailiyya was a European enclave next to an Egyptian slum whose inhabitants catered to the creature comforts of the enclave.'[375] Resentment about the exploitative nature of occupation stirred within him and, anxious to realize his vision for reform, he established *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* in al-Isma`iliya the following year. Not unlike the reform-minded organization he had founded with his friends in his youth, the society aimed to educate Egyptians about their religion in hopes that they may adopt it as their way of life. The grassroots *da'wa* movement was simple at the start; members of the *Ikhwān* spoke at local mosques and coffeehouses about the beauty of faith and how the problems of Egypt might be solved if its people returned to Islam. He wrote profusely on what he saw as the symptoms of malaise in his society; political disputes and factionalism, religious disputes within Islam between the *madhhabs* for example, extravagance and the seeking of pleasure and opulence, neglect of the practical sciences, love of power and neglect of social development and advancement, and blind imitation of those individuals who imbibe society with negative influences.[376] He saw Egypt as the front-runner in the movement to reintroduce Islam because of her position as a center of Islamic thought and scholarship; her role in the revival is almost cast as a responsibility.[377] In this way, he concludes, Egypt may not

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[375] Marsot, Afaf Lutfi Al-Sayyid. 'Religion or Opposition? Urban Protest Movements in Egypt. *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 16 (1984): p. 546.
[376] Al-Banna, Hassan. *Bayna al-Ams wal Yawm*. (Beirut, Matab`a `Awīdāt, 1970), p. 9-10.
[377] Al-Banna, Hassan. *Da`watuna fi Tawr Jadīd.* (Khartoum, al-Dār al-Sudāniyya, no year), p. 25 and Mitchell, *Society,* p. 217.

only be restored to her original position as a leader in the Muslim world, but she might also come to be known as 'the greatest manifestation of true human life.'[378]

The decline of traditional religious authority, as reported by al-Banna, reflects the shift discussed earlier where soon shaykhs both of al-Azhar and Sufī orders would be replaced by new figures from the cities concerned about religion but not schooled in the classical methodologies of the scholars. It is worth mentioning that al-Banna was not himself an Azharite; the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood was an organization that was not led by the ulema or the shaykhs of the *turuq* is reflective of the new voices taking part in this Islamic organization. It is for this reason that Gershoni and Jankowski identify the Ikhwān as an 'effendī movement'[379] and shift our focus away from traditional Islamic figures and towards more serious study of this social phenomenon.

*Al-Banna and Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn*

Kupferschmidt argues that because of al-Banna's awareness of the importance of printed media in 1930s Cairo, it is 'not surprising that the Brotherhood turned journalism into a major agency with overriding Islamic goals.'[380] By the 1930s, weekly periodicals had 'made their transition from an attribute of the elite to a mass commodity'[381] which meant that al-Banna could expect to reach a much wider audience with his journal. This section will argue that in his work with the *Jarīda*, al-Banna's writing represents a major departure from other Islamic journals that preceded him. This departure lies first in his approach and his desire to move away from a strictly Salafī approach to religious understanding. This, along with a distinct anti-European and anti-colonial rhetoric, was meant to develop an Islamic identity that was at once inclusive and nationalist, and therefore very relevant in 1930s Cairo.

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[378] Al-Banna, *Da`watuna*, p. 28.
[379] Gershoni and Jankowskī, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation*, p. 16.
[380] ibid.
[381] ibid.

*Journalistic Beginnings: Al-Banna and the Salafī Press*

It is notable that al-Banna's work with the *Jarīda* was not his first journalistic assignment. Prior to beginning the Brotherhood journal al-Banna published his first articles in *Majallat al-Fath*, a Salafī publication founded in 1926 and edited by Muhib al-Dīn al-Khatīb, who would later become editor of the *Jarīda* in 1946. Also according to Mitchell, al-Banna was approached by the family of Rashīd Rida to resuscitate al-Manār after Rida's death; he was asked several times before he accepted and even then did not keep up its publication as its founder had done. Though Kupferschmidt argues that the reason al-Banna was reluctant to resume publication of al-Manār because he 'might have felt uncomfortable stepping in Rida's large shoes'[382], and Lia argues that he felt the journal was limited in its public appeal[383], it seems that it was chiefly a difference in ideology that prevented al-Banna from taking on this task. This is evidenced by Al-Banna's responses to Salafī Muslims who wrote to his journal, which will be covered in this chapter. For though al-Banna mirrored some of Rida's Salafī positions, his views on Sufism represent a major departure from the position of that school. In fact, in his work as a journalist, al-Banna represents the marriage of Salafism and Sufism as it had never appeared in Egyptian periodicals before, a blend that he hoped would draw interest and readers from both schools. For this reason Kupferschmidt is correct in saying that 'he wished to speak his own message, to his own audience, and in his own print channel.'[384]

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[382] Kupferschmidt, 'Literacy,' p. 7.
[383] Lia, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, p. 56.
[384] Kupferschmidt, 'Literacy,' p. 7.

Most of al-Banna's articles on Sufism appeared in the *Jarīda's* first year, 1933, and decreased in the years after.  Beginning in 1934 articles specifically on Sufism noticeably decreased though general religious articles still filled the pages of the journal.  This shift can be attributed to two possible explanations.  First, either that al-Banna utilized the first year of publication to orient readers on the teachings of Sufism and did not feel the necessity to repeat the material to readers after that.  Alternatively, al-Banna may have observed a shift in the religio-political dialogue in Egypt and changed his material to suit discussions of his day, which was shifting away from Sufism and towards social activism.

Nonetheless, in 1933 articles on Sufism filled the pages of *al-Jarīda*.  Al-Banna's first task was to aquaint Sufism with what Sufism was, and also what it was not.  He began writing about Sufism as soon as *al-Jarīda* began in 1933; his first article on Sufism, entitled 'What Sufism Means'[385] appeared in the June 22 edition of that year.  Articles on Sufism appeared in almost every month thereafter, his article 'Sufism and the Quran and Sunna'[386] and 'The *Sharia*, the *Tarīqa*, and the *Haqīqa*'[387] were published that July.  In August, al-Banna delved into more debatable Sufī concepts by writing on 'The Outer and Inner Sciences.'[388]  In September of 1933, he continued by discussing 'The Objectives of the Sufīs'[389] and in December, an article appeared on 'Sayings of Some Sufī Shaykhs on the Stages on the Spiritual Path'.  Two things are notable about these articles; first, they were published frequently in the first year and second that they appear to become more technical from month to month.  The frequency of articles on *tasawwuf* indicates al-Banna's desire to introduce readers to the subject,

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[385] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Ma`ana al-Tasawwuf.' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 2 (1933).  This selection, as well as those in footnotes 599-609, and excluding footnote 605, were acquired from the private collection of Ahmed Saif al-Islām al-Banna and therefore do not contain page numbers.

[386] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Al-Tasawwuf wal Kitāb wal Sunna.' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 5 (1933).

[387] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Al-Sharia wal Tarīqa wal Haqīqa.' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 6 (1933).

[388] Al-Banna, Hasan. '`Ilm al-Dhāhir wa `Ilm al-Bātin.' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 9 (1933).

[389] Al-Banna, Hasan. '`Ghayat al-Sufiyya wa Wasa`ilihim fī al Wusūl Ilay.' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 14 (1933).

while his gradual approach suggests that al-Banna meant for readers to follow his articles from the beginning to the end until they had grasped each Sufī concept.

Al-Banna's regular articles on Sufism were meant to ensure that Sufī teachings were never far from the public mind. Thus, his regular column entitled '*al-Ma`thurāt*' served to introduce to readers a small aspect of spiritual beliefs and ritual each week. For example, in a May 1934 edition the subject of *al-Ma`thurāt* is the importance of making regular *dhikr* of Allah.[390] In this case, only *hadīths* are provided and no commentary; an indication that al-Banna believed the sources sufficed to support this ritual. Other editions of *al-Ma`thurāt* taught different supplications for each occasion; *al-Ma`thurāt* as it appears in the July 12 1934 edition teaches readers which *dua* to recite each morning and evening.[391] Though the practice of making *dua* is something all Muslims do, the recitation of daily prayers (*awrād*) was the specialization of the Sufīs. Thus, the *Jarīda* served as a vehicle for the transmission of valuable Sufī practices to the general public.

Further, it is noteworthy that al-Banna's early articles such as 'Sufism and the Quran and *Sunna*' serve to create the textual basis that would be appreciated by Salafī readers. Here al-Banna quotes al-Junayd as having said, 'This knowledge of ours is based on the quran and *sunna*'[392] and Abul Qāsim al-Nasr Abadhī as having written that, 'the source of Sufism is adherence to the Quran and sunna and abandoning ones whims and *bid`a*.'[393] However, in articles such as 'The Inner and Outer Sciences' which appeared later that year, there are no references to the Quran and sunna as al-Banna relies chiefly on the sayings of Sufī shaykhs for support for his arguments. This shows that the basis of Sufī belief in these concepts is the experience of their shaykhs, and less so the texts of Islam.

But for al-Banna and other Sufī adherents, it would not be enough if one adhered to the sharia and did not attempt to attain loftier spiritual goals. The law, for them, was just the beginning. This leads to the core difference between al-Banna's approach and the understanding of Salafī publishers of the period—for al-Banna,

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[390] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Al-Ma`thurāt' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 2 (May 3 1934): p. 19.
[391] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Al-Ma`thurāt' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 2 (July 12 1934): p. 24.
[392] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Al-Tasawwuf wal Kitāb wal Sunna.'
[393] ibid.

the sharia as it was derived from the Quran and sunna is only the beginning of understanding the meaning of the

path.  In his article, '*Al-Sharia, wal Tariqa, wal Haqiqa*', he argues that 'whoever knows the sharia, and acts

according to the *tarīqa* will arrive at the *haqīqa*.'[394]  Al-Banna was clearly drawn to shaykhs who came from a

legal background such as Shaykhs `Abdul-Wahāb al-Sha`ranī (d. 1565) and Ahmed Zarrūq (d. 1493) perhaps

because he understood them as seeing the law as only a means to an end.  Al-Sha`ranī, he writes, objected to

the inner sciences being referred to as '*Ilm al-Bātin*', arguing that it should in fact be called '`Ilmullah'[395],

because it represented a special knowledge given to the servant by his Creator.  He quotes Ahmed Zarrūq as

having said,

> 'The laws of *fiqh* are general because its purpose is the establishment of the faith, and the
> raising up of its banner, and making clear its pronouncements.  But the rulings of *tasawwuf* are
> specific because they pertain to the relationship between the servant and his Lord with nothing
> else included.  And so it is not permissible for the *faqih* to reject the Sufī, or the Sufī to reject the
> *faqīh*, and in fact it is obligatory that Sufism is checked by *fiqh*, and Sufism can not exist without
> fiqh...'[396]

Shaykh Ahmed, himself a notable Sufī shaykh and legist, relates here the important relationship

between Sufism and fiqh and argues that one can not exist without the other.  The sayings of these *faqihs*

represented for al-Banna important proof that the sharia was only the first stage in man's quest for nearness to

Allah.

Al-*Jarīda* presented an ideal outlet for al-Banna to promote the idea of a balance between *tasawwuf*

and *fiqh*.  For example, an article in his July 12 1934 edition discusses the virtues of celebrating the birthday of

the Prophet Muhammad (*mawlid*) but urges readers to stay within the confines of the law.  The author, Mustafa

`Abd al-Fattah, writes that, 'It is obligatory (because of their love for him) for every Muslim to show happiness at

the coming of the Prophet's birthday and to celebrate it in a dignified way.'[397]  This article is clearly a response to

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[394] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Al-Sharia wal Tarīqa wal Haqīqa.' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 6 (1933).
[395] Al-Banna, Hasan. '`Ilm al-Dhāhir wa `Ilm al-Bātin.' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 9 (1933).
[396] ibid.
[397] `Abd al-Fattah, Mustafa. 'Al-Ihtifāl bidhikr Mawlid al-Nabī wal Gharad Minhu' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 2
(July 12 1934): p. 27.

the controversy that exists in Egypt until today regarding the celebration of the Prophet's birthday. The *turuq* in Egypt pride themselves on elaborate celebrations on that day, as well as the *mawlids* of their other shaykhs. Therefore, it makes sense that al-Banna would include this article, remaining supportive of this ritual while encouraging readers to remain within the confines of the law.

Al-Banna also searched for Sufi voices that were supportive of his argument that *fiqh* and *tasawwuf* must exist together. Al-Banna enlisted the help of a prominent Sufi shaykh, Shaykh Ibrahīm Khalīl al-Shadhilī, to write regular articles on Sufism for *al-Jarīda*. Al-Banna describes al-Shadhilī as, 'shaykh of the Shadhilı tarıqa, an activist scholar (`alim `amil) who strives with his murıds on the path of the truth, holding fast to the Quran and the sunna.'[398] Al-Shadhilī wrote an article which appeared in the August 1934 edition entitled 'Fusūl Mukhtāra bayn al-Fiqh wal Tasawwuf'[399], where he writes that, 'many of those who are associated with the *tarīq* bring to it things are rejected by the sharia, the intellect, manners and dignity.'[400] Thus, al-Shadhilī continues, Sufīs who commit acts such as 'charming snakes' or 'eating fire' in front of the people 'are responsible for misguiding the people.'[401] Further, he argues, these deeds are not the acts of 'a prophet or a *walī*.'[402] Also, that these acts commonly associated with the Sufīs 'are not found in any of the correct books of the religion, or even the incorrect books, and in fact these are not *karamāt*, but despicable acts that are prohibited.'[403]

Al-Banna believed that giving a voice to shaykhs such as al-Shadhilī would ensure the survival of Sufism in an increasingly skeptical environment. Al-Shadhilī's opinions on the common practices of the Sufīs would send a stronger message to readers about what Sufism was than anything al-Banna himself could have authored. The hard-line nature of al-Shadhilī's positions is a stark contradiction to the frivolous manner commonly associated with the Sufīs. For example, Shaykh al-Shadhilī writes that, 'Dancing in the *dhikr* and

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[398]Al-Shadhilī, Ibrahim Khalīl. 'Fusūl Mukhtāra bayn al-Fiqh wal Tasawwuf' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 2 (May 31 1934): p. 145.
[399] Al-Shadhilī, Ibrahim Khalīl. Fusūl Mukhtāra bayn al-Fiqh wal Tasawwuf' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 2 (August 9 1934): p. 422.
[400] Ibid.
[401] Al-Shadhilī, Fusūl Mukhtāra bayn al-Fiqh wal Tasawwuf', p. 422.
[402] ibid.
[403] ibid.

shaking right and left is prohibited (*harām*), because the Quran and the sunna have not indicated it and it was not from the actions of the companions, the first generation of the Muslims, or the imāms or the *awliyā*, or the *aqtāb* of the *tarīq*.'[404]  At this point, one can imagine a reader of the *Jarīda* feeling quite perplexed; here, a Sufī shaykh has made an argument against dancing in the *dhikr*, saying that it was not the actions of the *salaf*, a common argument used by the Salafīs.  Further, Shaykh Ibrahīm's statement that he himself, as a Sufī, checked his *tasawwuf* by the 'correct books of the religion', would assure readers that there were some Sufīs who had not departed from the law and who did not approve of what Sufism had become in Cairo.

Because of the association of organized Sufism with trickery in the public mind, Shaykh Ibrahīm's rulings on the miracles performed by Sufī shaykhs are expecially potent and emotive.  In his regular column on Sufism and *fiqh* he writes that,

> 'some of the people who falsely associate themselves with the *tarīq* bring into it things that contradict the sharia and the intellect and manners and dignity. And so they eat glass and cactus and snakes and swallow fire and puncture their bodies with pins and nails in front of the people. All of this is trickery, and lies and evil, and it would not be the action of a Prophet or a *walī* and it can not be found in the correct books of religion or even the incorrect ones.  These are not *karamāt*, but fake acts that are in fact prohibited, and cheating the people that is very low.'[405]

Al-Shadhilī's argument that those acts which are not acceptable to the intellect are rejected is significant because it shows that the Sufī shaykh to him was meant to be more of a spiritual guide than a miracle-worker. Al-Banna's inclusion of hard-line Sufī shaykhs was meant to change the public conception which was based on the rituals they saw, and acquaint them with a class of shaykhs concerned with a Sufism within the confines of the law.

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[404] Al-Shadhilī, Fusūl Mukhtāra bayn al-Fiqh wal Tasawwuf', p. 422.
[405] ibid.

*Fiqh and Fatwas: Sufī Controversies Debated*

Further, al-Banna took on the task of issuing fatwas through his journal, another avenue through which he could influence public opinion on spiritual matters. Readers would write to him with questions and ask for his ruling.

Generally, al-Banna's strategy in issuing fatwas is to provide a textual basis for his opinions (ie from the Quran and the had th). For example, in the May 10<sup>th</sup> 1934 edition, a reader asks al-Banna if the dead see those who visit them at the graves and whether they are aware of the affairs of those they leave behind.[406] Of course, this question has great implications for Sufīs, who believe that the *awliyā* they visit are aware of their presence and may even intervene in their affairs. Al-Banna favors the view that the dead do see and hear the living, and are aware of their predicaments. He provides *hadīths* to support his argument, such as the Prophet Muhammad's saying that a man does not pass the grave of a man he knew in life except that dead man would know him.[407] The use of *hadīth* and the sayings of reputable scholars such as Shaykh al-Sabūnī and the companion Ibn `Abbas ensured that his arguments could not easily be rejected by scholars. Through his fatwas, al-Banna is able to to validate certain Sufī beliefs which are supported by the sources.

*The Sufī and the Nationalist: Representations of Islamic Identity in Jarīdatul Ikhw n*

> 'It is my belief,'that the action which does not go beyond the limits of the self and fails to benefit others, is faulty and useless. The best action is that which proves beneficial to himself, his relatives, friends, and the whole nation in general.'[408]

From 1935 onward, the topic of nationalism eclipsed Sufism in the pages of *al-Jarīda*. Even stories that were typically not seen from the vantage point of nationalism were re-worked by al-Banna to support his belief

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[406] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Fatawī al-Jarīda' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 2 (May 10 1934): p. 43.
[407] ibid.
[408] Shaikh, p. 117.

that even the Sufī must work for the good of the Muslim collectivity.  More coverage of nationalism between 1935 and 1936 also coincided with a time of widespread disillusionment by the Egyptian youth with Wafdist politicians.  The drawing up of a constitution and the establishment of the parliament in …did not lead to a treaty with the British, and 'loss of hope became a characteristic of the thirties.'[409]  This void allowed al-Banna and the Brotherhood to be heard on the issue of nationalism and to contribute to the country-wide debate on the topic.

In light of these developments, al-Banna embarked on the project of tying nationalism to Islamic beliefs and history, validating a 'modern' notion and arguing that it was not in fact modern at all but an authentic Islamic construct that had roots in the Quran and in the Prophet Muhammad's own teachings.  His ongoing article *'Safha min al-Wataniyya fi Kitābillah'* was devoted to finding Quranic examples of nationalism for readers.  Most importantly, he makes use of the language of nationalist discourse even when analyzing the Quran.  For example, the Prophet Mūsa was the leader (*zaʿīm*) of the Jewish people.  As the years passed the children of Israel grew and their faith weakened and eventually their enemies were able to overtake them.  He writes that, 'the Children of Israel left the Torah and the sharia of the Torah and so they were fought by the Amalachites who colonized (*istamarū*) their homelands (*awtān*) and now one can see what was their recompense.'[410]

In another example, al-Banna tells the Quranic story of the King Talūt, who was sent to the Children of Israel to help them defeat the tyrant Jalūt.  Once again, the language of nationalism influences readers' perception of the story—he writes that Talūt and his army were the defenders of '*al watan al-maghsūb*. (stolen homeland).[411]  Both in this example and in the example of the story of Moses, Talūt and Moses are portrayed as nationalist-type leaders because of the use of the word *zaʿīm* leading their people in a struggle against a colonizing force.  They are defending their homeland, al-Banna uses the word *watan*, an emotive word for

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[409] Marsot, Afaf Lutfi Al-Sayyid. *A Short History of Modern Egypt*. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 88.
[410] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Safha min al-Wataniyya fi Kitābillah' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 4 (April 21 1936): p. 41.
[411] Ibid (May 5 1936): p. 66.

Egyptians in the 1930s who were deeply involved in determining their own national identity. These stories were meant to leave readers with the feeling that their sentiments for Egypt and their resentment towards foreign occupation have an Islamic basis, and that al-Banna and the Brotherhood understood and supported these emotions.

Al-Banna is also concerned to tie Sufī concepts into his discourse on nationalism. Sufī heroes are always depicted as 'brave' and in fact fighting for the sake of the Muslim *umma*, as in his discussion of the martyred Imām al-Husayn. The grandson of the Prophet, an important spiritual icon for the Sufīs, is mentioned in several articles, but always in the context of his bravery and sacrifice.[412] Imām `Alī, cousin of the Prophet Muhammad and another important figure in Sufism, is depicted in the same heroic fashion.[413] Al-Banna uses the *Jarīda* to instill these Sufī figures in the popular consciousness and to portray them as champions of the Muslim and nationalist cause. The bloodline of the Prophet Muhammad, passed down through his daughter Fatima and her husband Imam `Al , maintains an important spiritual He writes that, 'this was the way of all of the members of ahl al-Bayt may Allah be pleased with them all like pages in a book that a scholar can go through to learn their manners.'[414] Sufīs who also performed jihād against the colonizers also figure prominently into al-Banna's discourse on nationalism. For example, al-Banna includes an ongoing column on Sidı Ahmed Al-Sharıf al-Sanūsī, a Shadhilī shaykh who organized a resistance to French expansion in the Sudan with the support of the Ottomans. [415] In 1911, Shaykh al-Sanūsī, described by Ahmida as a 'militant pan-Islamist'[416], issued a proclamation of jihād against the Italians after their takeover of Ottoman Libya, and after several years of continued resistence his army was finally defeated in 1916 and he was forced to retreat. Though unsuccessful in pushing back the Italian army, he remained the spiritual head of his order, the Sanusiyya, until his death. In fact,

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[412] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Al-Imām al-Husayn Radı Allahu `Anhü' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 2 (August 2 1934): p. 396.

[413] Murād, Hasan. '`Alī ibn Abī Tālib Karam Allahu Wajhu' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 2 (May 31 1934): p. 135.

[414] Al-Banna, 'Al-Imām al-Husayn Radı Allahu `Anhū', p. 398.

[415] Arsalān, Shakīb. 'Baqiyat al-Salaf al-Sālih wa Khatimat al-Mujāhıdın' p. 362. This article continues in the next edition at Arsalān, Shakīb. 'Baqiyat al-Salaf al-Salih wa Khatimat al-Mujāhıdın' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 2 (August 2 1934): p. 399.

[416] Ahmida, Ali Abdullatif. The Making of Modern Libya: State Formation, Colonization, and Resistance. (Albany, State University of New York Press, 2009), p. 122.

Shaykh al-Sanūsī was able to keep contact with his followers even after his exile first in Istanbul and then in Arabia, where he continued to promote his anti-colonial ideology until his death.[417]  Thus, stories of Prophets and Sufī shaykhs are retold in the language of nationalism to rally Muslims around the banner of their faith.

As we mentioned earlier in the chapter, from 1935 onwards al-Banna included fewer articles on Sufism in the *Jarīda* as he shifted his focus away from the esoteric aspects of Sufism to the importance of political activism and anti-colonial struggle.  However, he does include an occasional article on Sufism as if to remind readers that it is still a part of Islam.  Shaykh al-Shadhilī's purpose again is to write as a shaykh of a *tarīqa* and to criticize the actions of the some members of the orders.  This article is very much like the criticisms of Shaykh al-Hisāfī, who said members of the orders do not pronounce the dhikr correctly.[418]  Besides this article, most of al-Banna's articles on Sufism after 1935 focus on the social activities of the Sufīs such as the *mawlid* of the Prophet, moving away from the solitary meditative life of the Sufī.

Celebrations of the *mawlid* were commonly organized by the Sufīs, so it is interesting that al-Banna incorporated it into the activities of the Ikhwān.  Fewer articles on Sufī *dhikr* and more on social gatherings such as the *mawlid* is a reflection of al-Banna's change in emphasis from the solitary to the social aspects of Sufī life.  In June of 1935 for example he describes the celebration of the *mawlid* by the Muslim Brothers in different Egyptian towns, being sure to emphasize the local notables, shaykhs, and politicians who participated in the festivities.[419]  Al-Banna continues to include *qasāid* as well, which are songs about the Prophet typically sung at the *mawlid*.[420]  Al-Banna believed these gatherings had purpose, namely, to gather the people and unite them in their Muslim identity.

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[417] Ahmida, p. 123.

[418] Al-Shadhilī, Ibrahīm Khalīl. 'Al-Dhikr al-Malhūn wal Muharaf'. *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 3 (June 18 1935), p. 402.

[419] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Ihtifāl Mawlid al-Nabī al-Kareem' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 3 (June 11 1935): p. 305.  Also see al-Zaynī, Hasan Khattab. 'Dhikr al-Mawlid al-Nabawī al-Karīm' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 3 (July 9 1935): p. 432.

[420] Al-Mudaris, `Abdullah Yusūf. 'Yawm Mawlid al Mustafa Sala Allahu alayhi Wasalam' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 3 (June 18 1935): p. 342.

Starting in 1935, the pages of *al-Jarīda* were filled with articles presenting nationalism as an Islamic construct. According to Al-Banna's reasoning, Egyptians' nationalist sentiment is rooted in the fact that Egypt is a champion of Islam. For him national identity and religion are inextricably linked, national pride is derived from Egypt's service to Islam more than an attachment to the land. His references to Islamic identity are also laced with references to nationalism. He quotes Shaykh al-Marāghī, shaykh of al-Azhar, as saying to students in a speech in 1935 that, 'You are in Egypt and Egypt is the nation (*balad*) of Islam and Islam is our homeland (*watan*), all of us.'[421] Al-Banna is supportive of this statement and writes in his own opinion that,

> 'Islam is our homeland, all of us, its belief system (*aqīda*) unites us and its teachings unite our souls and its verses unite our ranks and unites our hopes and our dreams, and its compass directs us. We would sacrifice our souls and our money and our families, our children and our business and our nation for it, what is with Allah is everlasting and what others have is fleeting.[422]

According to this definition, Islam is the overarching factor that validates nationalism and defines it. Incorporating an Islamic element into nationalism allowed the Brotherhood to have a voice in defining this important topic.

Ultimately, al-Banna's discourse on nationalism is meant to lend legitimacy and relevance to the Muslim Brotherhood. By serving Islam, he argues, his organization is ultimately working for the service of the nation. Al-Banna does not hesistate to criticize the territorial nationalists (should briefly explain who they are in the political intellectual climate of the 1930s), who in his view lost the help of Allah by distancing themselves from the Islamic component of their identity. He writes that,

> 'If the Muslims apply these manners their power will not weaken and their unity will not be disrupted and no enemy of theirs will gain an advantage, but they have forgotten Allah and so he has forgotten them. He says this is what happened to the nationalists (*al-qawmiyya al-*

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[421] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Kalima Adhīma: Al-Islām Watanana Jamī`an' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 3 (May 8 1935): p. 34.
[422] ibid.

*khassa*) who 'allowed their enemies to feel comfortable in their lands without them realizing it.'[423]

In light of the failure of other nationalist movements to unify the people and repel the colonizers, al-Banna attempts to portray the Brotherhood and Islamic activism generally as the solution. It was time, in his view, that members of the Brotherhood embraced their role as workers for the cause of the Muslim nation. He welcomes Shaykh al-Marāghī's statement and says that it is 'up to al-Azhar to prepare to carry out its aspirations and up to Egypt, the leader of Islam, to prepare herself for carrying the banner of leadership once again.'[424] What distinguished the Brotherhood from other organizations that claimed to serve the nation? The Brotherhood, Al-Banna argued, united the nation under the banner of Islam, which united people of different schools of thought, even those that are socially outsiders, as one body. According to al-Banna Islam is the strongest bond of identity, more than family or any other ideology. He cites examples from Islamic history when he writes, 'were there not those who killed their own fathers for the sake of Allah?' Islamic nationalism, he writes, and the desire to fight for the homeland are rooted in the sources of Islam--'was it anything but the teaching of the Quran that taught them this?'[425]

What is believed, he maintained, must be reflected through action. The 'brotherhood of faith' must have an outward, physical manifestation that is also practical, he says. This meant that the Brothers must be willing to sacrifice for others who were suffering in defending their homeland. He writes that a Muslim is required to protect his brother from 'the oppression of the oppressors' at any cost.

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[423] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Rabitat al-Islām' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 3 (May 14 1935), p. 170.
[424] Al-Banna, 'Kalima Adhīma: Al-Islām Watanana Jamī`an', p. 34.
[425] Al-Banna, 'Rabitat al-Islām', p. 169.

Having shown the failure of other nationalist groups to repel the forces of colonialism, al-Banna presents

the Islamic nationalist option as another force for unity and resistance.  He writes that,

> 'Oh Muslims!  This is the constitution (*dustūr*) of your religion and the words of your prophet and you were never oppressed or downtrodden as much as you are at this point in history.  Your unity has been crushed and your lands have been occupied and your resources have been confiscated…so be as your prophet peace be upon him said, like one building one part supporting the other.  If you wonder how you will do this my beloved ones, the matter is easier than you imagine, if the will is there, the path becomes clear.'[426]

He goes further by arguing that Islam can be utilized to organize the new state as well.  Al-Banna was

committed to persuading readers that an Islamic nationalist movement could produce as effective a state

apparatus as secular models.  For example, he writes that, 'When Islam provides a ruling on these matters it is

based on the strongest foundation with great detail.'  Further, he continues that,

> 'Islam is different than other religions in that it is a complete religion that covered all affairs of people…it is for worldly affairs and for the afterlife as well.  It is a legal system that can pass judgement on people regarding the practical matters of this life just like it is a guidance that organizes their spiritual life.'[427]

His emphasis on Islam's practical aspects is an interesting shift in focus after his early articles on Sufism

and the unseen realm.  In these articles he is concerned to reassure readers that Islam can provide a viable

political model that will bring about an end to corruption and occupation.  He writes that, 'this my brothers is

the best system for the raising up of nations (*ummam*) and the betterment of people (*shuʿūb*) that the

foundational law for the people protects the individual so that no ruler can manipulate it or overstep his limits

or fall short in his obligations.'[428]  Al-Banna is careful to manipulate the language in his writings to appeal to

readers with both Islamic (*ummam*) and nationalist (*shuʿūb*) concerns.  Al-Banna also includes other authors to

support his argument that Islam can produce a viable political system.  For example, Muhammad al-Hifnī writes

that a legal system derived from Islamic sources would be more thorough than any civil law code.  The legists of

Islam, he argues, did not hesistate to discuss every aspect of life, including the treatment of animals and the way

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[426] Al-Banna, 'Rabitat al-Islām', p. 171.
[427] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Hal Tahil Al-Sharia al-Islamiyya Mahal Al-Qawanīn al-Wadaʿiyya Fī Bilād al-Islamiyya?' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 3 (May 21 1935): p. 291.
[428] ibid, p. 292.

prisons should be organized.[429]  In one instance al-Banna comments on an article by a lawyer named Na`īma

Hānim al-Ayyubī who writes to laud the achievements of the secular courts.  He replies to her, 'you are excused

because you belong to a social group far from the knowledge of the sharia of Allah.  But I assure you, the

acheivements you have seen from the secular courts are nothing compared to what we would have seen had

the sharia of Allah been applied.'[430]

*From the Berbers to Palestine: Forging Nationalism Through a Common Enemy*

> *'Oh Muslims!  Do not blame France or Holland or Italy or England for any of this, our collective priority at this point is the elimination of colonialism.'[431]*

Al-Banna further develops his nationalist agenda by suggesting to readers that Islam was under attack

both at home and in other Muslim lands. Missionaries had come to Egypt to undermine the fabric of the faith.

*Al-Jarīda* contains more than one article on missionary work[432], enough to suggest that al-Banna intended to

create a feeling in readers that these men and women, usually Europeans or Americans, had entered Egypt to

threaten their way of life.  'Missionaries,' he writes, 'have entered Egypt to attack our religion.'   More so, he

tells readers that missionaries are protected because they work 'under the guise of humanitarian work'.  By this

he means that they 'open schools to spread learning, and open hospitals to heal the sick, and open orphanages

to help the weak…they only wish to spread the Christian religion in any way possible.' [433]  His development of a

narrative of persecution ensured that readers would rally to the cause of their faith and in doing so strengthen

their own identity as Egyptians and as Muslims.

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[429] Al-Hifnī, Muhammad Effendī al-Sayyid. 'Fī al-Sharia al-Islamiyya: Qanūn Ijtima`ī Tafadal Bihī Sāir Al-Sharā`a al-Ukhra' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 3 (June 18 1935): p. 391.

[430] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Hal Tahil Al-Sharia al-Islamiyya Mahal Al-Qawanīn al-Wada`iyya Fī Bilād al-Islamiyya?' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 3 (May 21 1935): p. 293.

[431] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Al-Jazā`ir Ba`ad Marakesh' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 2 (June 15 1934): p. 170.

[432] Articles on the role of missionaries in Egypt also appear in Al-Sa`atı, Abdul Rahmān. 'Jur`at al-Mubashirīn Amām Husūn al-Muslimın' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 2 (May 10 1934): p. 38.  Also Al-Jarısı, Mahmūd Hamdī. 'Hadıthī Ma`a Mubashir Amrīkī' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 2 (July 19 1934): p. 305.

[433] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Muqawamat al-Tabshır' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 2 (May 31 1934): p. 120-121.

He also utilized the *Jarīda* to nurture a wider Islamic nationalism meant to tie Egyptian Muslims to their brothers in other lands.  He is able to do this by suggesting that Islam is being attacked by its enemies there as well in an attempt to rally the Muslims in defense of their faith.  'And you the Muslims, 'he writes, 'remember well that the plan of the colonizers is the elimination of Islam.'[434]  Muslims outside of Egypt were also being fought by colonial regimes which threatened the fabric of the Muslim way of life.  The Berbers, for example, rose up against the French takeover of their land and the French policy to 'eliminate Islam among the Berber people who were honorable and strong in their faith.'  The French, he argued, did more than other colonizers in that they changed the educational system as well as the laws of Morocco.

> 'Sharia courts were closed down, the laws no longer originated with the sharia, the Arabic language was no longer taught, Quranic schools were closed down as were the *zawiyas* of the shaykhs, and the scholars of *fiqh* were no longer able to communicate with their brothers in Islam.'  [435]

The anniversary of the French takeover of Morocco should be a 'sad day in the soul of every Muslim.'  When the Berbers rose up to resist their control they were imprisoned or beaten or exiled.  Indeed the only salvation for the Muslims from colonial takeover is adherence to their faith, the one factor which unites them.  'Hold fast to your religion,' he writes, 'and be united in your ranks and be yourself, and know your enemy and Allah will make us victorious.'[436]

Perhaps al-Banna's most developed discourse on Islamic nationalism comes in his articles on Palestine which began to appear in 1936. Through these articles, al-Banna has the opportunity to present how he wishes readers to understand themselves and their relationship to other Arabs and Muslims.  For him the problem in Palestine is a nationalist cause as well as an Islamic, Arab and anti-colonialist calling.  Somehow al-Banna is able to develop all of these strands of identity in his writing without contradiction.  For al-Banna this is an Islamic issue because most of the Palestinians are Muslims and this entitles them to the help or at the very least the

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[434] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Dhikr al-Dhahīr Al-Barbarī Yawm 16 Mayo' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 2 (May 17 1934): p. 59.
[435] ibid, p. 57.
[436] ibid, p. 59.

sympathies of the Egyptian people. Al-Banna tells his Egyptian readers that the Palestinians are 'another Muslim

*umma* that is dear to you, they are your brothers, they were targeted by British politics in ways they could not

have expected.'[437] The Palestinians are part of the Muslim national body and therefore must be defended. Al-

Banna also presents the issue as an Arab dilemma, stating that 'the noble Arab people are the best people

among the people and will not accept this insult.'[438] The situation in Palestine is also an anti-colonial calling

because of the involvement of the British in Palestine. The Palestinians 'are fighting the repression of the Jews

and the oppression of the British, and fighting back against the control of colonialism, and in this they are doing

what is necessary instead of you, and taking the pain of jihad without you and you are all safe.'[439] Al-Banna goes

on to also frame the conflict as a nationalist one because the Palestinians are fighting to defend their homeland

against occupation. They were dying for 'al-sharaf al-qawmī'[440], literally for the honor of their nation. Whether

readers relate to the Palestinians as Arabs, or as Muslims, or because they are victims of colonization, al-Banna

develops each element of identity simultaneously and in asking readers to relate to the Palestinians he is

essentially asking them to define how they see themselves.


*Rashīd Rida and al-Manār*


Other Muslim reformers in early twentieth century Egypt, particularly those associated with the Egyptian

Salafī movement, supported, in theory, the need for a return to a sharia-compliant Sufism but unlike al-Banna,

felt that the orders were no longer useful for the revival of the *umma*. Rashid Rida (d. 1935), for example,

argued that the Sufī orders had been overtaken by innovation and had strayed too far from the original

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[437] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Filistīn Ma`a Marakesh' Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Safha min al-Wataniyya fi Kitābillah' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 4 (May 26 1936): p. 136.
[438] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Filistīn al-Mutahida al-Mujahada' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 4 (April 21 1936): p. 55.
[439] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Min Ajal Filistīn al-Mujahada al-Bāsila' Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Safha min al-Wataniyya fi Kitābillah' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 4 (May 19 1936): p. 129.
[440] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Nahdat al-Umma al-Arabiyya' Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Safha min al-Wataniyya fi Kitābillah' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 4 (June 16 1936): p. 222.

mysticism practiced by the early Muslims to be of any use. In this section, we will argue that Rida's journal *Al-Manār*, was pervaded by the teachings of Salafism, a dislike for Sufī groups and practices, and an anti-Western rhetoric as Rida struggled to cope with the realities of colonialism and define Muslim identity. Unlike al-Banna, he viewed organized Sufism with an eye of suspicion, as reflected in his numerous fatwas on various subjects related to *tasawwuf*. However, this suspicion must be seen in the broader context of Rida's mission to return to the pristine Islam of the righteous predecessors, the *salaf*, while struggling to define what that meant in an age of immense change.

Historians have characterized the views of Rida as 'Salafī' in his approach, a Salafī being one who is committed to adhering only to the teachings of the Quran and the sunna and the first generations of Muslims. A hallmark characteristic of Salafism is a rejection of Sufī teachings and practices, as Salafīs see the development of Islamic mysticism over the centuries to be divergent from the sunna. Rida's Salafī approach permeates each fatwa he offers his readers. In one example, he is asked by a reader to give a fatwa on the permissibility of visiting the graves of parents. He answers that it is allowed as long as the son or daughter visits the grave for the sole purpose of remembering death or for praying for the soul of the deceased as the Prophet Muhammad stipulated, and not with the intention of gaining any benefit from the deceased. He writes that, 'visitation of the grave of the righteous man is permissible if for the purpose of remembering his righteousness and the hope of gaining inspiration from his memory, and not in order to ask for some benefit (from him) or asking him to remove some harm, and not having anything to do with *bid`a* or anything related to it, and so such an oath is allowed for a visit that is done in this lawful (*mashru`a*) way.'[441]

Further investigation of Rida's own background reveals an experience with Sufism that left the young Rida disillusioned and unsettled. His exposure to the activity of the Sufi orders in his youth left him with the feeling that these groups had gone astray from the original teachings of Islam and that their activities were therefore *bid`a*, innovative. Having been influenced by the writings of Imām al-Ghazalī and his `Ihyā and

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[441] Rida, Muhammad Rashīd. "Fatwa `an al-Wa`ad bi Ziyarat Qabr al-Wālid al-Sālih" *al-Manar* 31 (1930): 124.

wanting to lead a life of extreme asceticism, he joined the Mawlawī order as a youth but was stunned by their 'whirling' rituals which he believed to have no place in a religious ceremony.[442] He even interrupted their dance and warned them that this was disliked by God, and then left, having gained a few listeners who left with him.

Although Rida began his life with a deep interest in Sufism, his experiences with the Mawlawis left him distressed and convinced that he must fight their influence among the Muslims. It becomes clear that one of Rida's objectives in establishing al-Manār in 1898 was the dissemination of anti-Sufī teachings and the promotion of the Salafī school of thought. While Muhammad `Abduh argued for a rethinking of Sufism, argues Elizabeth Sirriyeh, Rida actually contributed to a wider rejection of Sufīs through his writings.[443] She suggests that after Rida's move to Cairo in 1897 and his establishment of al-Manār the following year, he used al-Manār as a vehicle for the dissemination of anti-Sufi rhetoric, and 'through the pages of al-Manār, salafī critiques of contemporary Sufism reached a wide public and generated an extensive correspondence around the umma.'[444] Through al-Manār, Rida directly confronted shaykhs of orders that lived during his time, such as Shaykh Ahmed al-Tijānī, and declared them through the pages of his journal to be responsible for misleading their followers and using their so-called spirtual gifts to advance their interests in the world.[445]

Unlike al-Banna, no where in Rida's work does he suggest that the orders might be a useful part of a greater Islamic revival. Rather, his vision for reform consists of casting off the shackles of such groups, which had become decrepid from innovation and blind imitation, *taqlīd*, and return to the original, pristine Islam of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions. As Elizabeth Sirriyeh puts it, 'While he (Rida) might come theoretically to acknowledge, with `Abduh, the continuing existence of a 'true' Sufism, for him it would gradually cease to command his personal commitment.'[446] As is the case with several Salafī thinkers, the classical period of Islam, the age when Sufism flourished, is larger ignored and is considered to be a period when innovative

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[442] Hourani, Albert. *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 225.
[443] Sirriyeh, p. 99. Also Hourani, *Arabic Thought,* p. 225.
[444] Sirriyeh, p. 101.
[445] ibid, p. 101-102.
[446] ibid, p. 100.

practices were introduced in the Muslim *umma*. Because of this belief, Rida focuses a great deal of his writings and his fatwas on discrediting Sufi practices and arguing against their validity according to the Quran and the sunna of the Prophet. For example, Rida authored an obituary upon the death of the Shaykh Mashayikh al Sufiyya in Egypt, Shaykh Muhammad Tawfīq al-Bakri, and though he comments on the shaykh's knowledge and strength of heart, he does not mention any of the shaykh's activities with the *turuq* or his bureacratic or spirtual station among his colleagues.[447]

The question of defining *bid`a* is one that has challenged Muslim scholars throughout the history of Islamic scholarship. The Prophet Muhammad's hadith stating that 'every *bid`a* is a misguidance, and every misguidance is in the hellfire'[448], along with other hadiths on the subject, prompted scholars to define what would be considered *bid`a* and what would not be—and more specifically, whether some *bid`a* would be allowed or even considered useful. This was of course very important in the early twentieth century, when a number of technological innovations were introduced in the Muslim world and scholars struggled to define Islam's position regarding these various inventions. In addition, Muslims came into contact with a number of new ideologies and religions, socialism and Baha`ism, for example, that forced Muslim scholars to define their position as well. Rida felt that the Sufī orders were responsible for introducing a number of reprehensible deeds into the religious life of Muslims and felt that these deeds should be declared *bid`a* and abandoned. Even deeds that might be considered *halal*, he argued, could become unlawful if not carried out with the right intention.

Rida's fatwas related to Sufī rituals indicates his opinion that these groups were harmful to Muslim society and must be fought. In another fatwa, the shaykh discusses the practice of *tawassul*, seeking intercession from the dead, and argues that '*al-tawassul al-mashru`a*' does not involve that which distracts the heart of any person and it is in fact the drawing near to Allah through what he has decreed lawful of knowledge and actions.'[449] Just as in the previous fatwa, we see his emphasis on conforming to what is *mashru`a*, what is

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[447] Rida, Muhammad Rashīd. "Waf t `Alam: Shaykh Muhammad Tawfīq al-Bakrī Al-Sidīqī". al-Manār 32 (1930): 717.
[448] Narrated by Jābir in al-Nisa`ī for example.
[449] Rida, Muhammad Rashīd. "Fatwa `an al Tawassul ili Sh ghil al-Muslim n" al-Manar 31 (1930): 129.

legally substantiated in the Quran or in the sunna of the Prophet, and purifying the Muslims from spiritual teachings that were introduced throughout the centuries.

The dominant theme in Rida's treatment of Sufism is that they are individuals who teach passivity and do not contribute in any substantitive way to the advancement of the Muslims.  Rida utilizes a phrase to title his fatwa on *tawassul* that requires further attention—'the *tawassul* that is pre-occupying the Muslims'.  The use of the word '*shāghil*' in this instance indicates that Rida feels this practice is distraction from those things that really bring benefit.  He states clearly that it only makes sense to ask favor from Allah, who created all things and has power over them.  Not only this, he alludes to the fact that the insistence on Sufī rituals may be distracting the Muslims from other things—namely advancements in science and medicine.  He writes of the permissibility of 'science and experimentation' and 'treating illnesses with various medicines.'[450]  These are known as '*asbāb*', and it is required for the Muslim to believe that these actions that have no power in themselves, but are only effective because 'Allah is behind all *asbāb*'[451].  This conclusion is supported by Hourani, who writes that,

> 'There is also a practical criticism of the mystics common to Rida and his friends. The Sufis are a weakness to society as well as a danger to religion.  They neglect their duties in the world, studying things which are of no value, and they corrupt the umma by teaching that Islam is a religion of passive submission not strength and activity; their festivals can be an occasion for drunkenness, drug-taking, and other kinds of immorality.'[452]

This fatwa also sheds further light on Rida's Salafī approach to Islam which is important for our understanding of his critique of Sufīs.  He, along with other Salafī thinkers from this period, argue that the period of time comprising of the life of the Prophet and the first two generations after him was followed by a time of *bid`a* and decay.  He describes how the prophets and good people of the past taught the Muslims *tawhīd* but that the Muslims strayed from this teaching over time and began to call on others besides God to resolve their problems—a pattern described by God in the Quran.[453]  The period of decay corresponds with the development

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[450] Rida, Muhammad Rashīd. "Fatwa `an al Tawassul ili Sh  ghil al-Muslim n", p. 129.
[451] ibid.
[452] Hourani. *Arabic Thought,* p. 232.
[453] Rida, Muhammad Rashīd. "Fatwa `an al Tawassul ili Sh  ghil al-Muslim n"*,* p. 129.

of Sufi culture and institutions.  Though Muslims of his day may not realize it, he argues that they themselves have fallen into this pattern.  Their task, then, was to return to the original, pristine faith, as dictated by the Quran and sunna.[454]

*Rida and Wahabism*

Early Egyptian Salafism as it appears in Rida's writings appears to have grown as a response to a number of things, but existing research does not suggest that Rida was inspired in his anti-Sufī rhetoric by the teachings of the Wahābīs, the movement founded by Muhammad ibn `Abdel-Wahāb in Najd, central Arabia in the eighteenth century.  This section will argue that although Rida was not inspired to take a position against the Sufīs by the Wahābī movement, he became increasingly sympathetic to this movement in the later part of his life.  This sympathy appears to be rooted in Rida's desire to see a stern, strong Muslim force that could represent the Muslims in the face of growing European influence in the region.

By the time of Rida's writing, the Wahābīs had become infamous throughout the Muslim world for their villification of Sufīs and their destruction of important shrines and holy sites.  Rida described them as an 'innovative sect'[455] early on in his writings and could have only heard negative talk about them as a youth in Syria from scholars of his day.  It was only later on that Rida's tone towards the Wahābīs changed—he became much more sympathetic to their cause as reflected *al-Man r*.  Rida's defense of Wahābism seems to have more to do with a desire within him to witness a strong force in light of Muslim weakness than a sincere belief in their *aqīda*.  In his old age he would defend their orthodoxy when very few scholars would, arguing in a fatwa that the Wahābīs are in fact followers of the teachings of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, founder of one of the four sunnī legal schools, and also of Ibn Taymiyya, the fourteenth century scholar.  Rida's desire to be linient on this group,

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[454] Rida, Muhammad Rashīd. "Fatwa `an al Tawassul ili Sh ghil al-Muslim n", p. 129.
[455] Hourani, *Arabic Thought,* p. 231.

despite the opinions of other scholars, reveals his desire to promote their legitimacy with his readers. He continues by arguing that,

> 'and if any of them (Wahābīs) rules on something in contradiction with the way of Imām Ahmad and the majority of the *salaf* then this is because he has no knowledge of the issue that he has contradicted and it should not be understood that this is really his position or the position of his people.'[456]

Rida's defense of the Wahābīs is especially prominent in his later fatwas. A man wrote to Rida enquiring about the soundness of the Wahābī ideology and whether it was in line with 'Ahl-al-Sunnah wal Jam`a', the term widely used at this point to indicate Sunnī Muslims, and Rida replied that, 'As for the *aqīda* of the Wahābīs, it is the *aqīda* of the Ahl al-Sunna wal jam`a that the *salaf* of the umma followed and the second generation of Muslims as well. Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal may Allah bless him and his followers were the greatest defenders of the sunna when the *bid`a* (ie of the Mu`tazilites) appeared and the Abbasid Caliphate supported it.[457] Here Rida argues for a link between Imam Ahmad and the current Wahābī movement. In a response to a contributors article on Ibn Taymiyya, Rida is concerned that Muslims seem upset at the practice of takfīr by the Wahābīs— that is, labeling a Muslim who commit a wrong *kāfir*, unbeliever. He argues that no where in his writings does Ibn Taymiyya allow *takfīr*—but most interestingly, he can not say that the Wahābīs of his day themselves do not practice it. He seems to treat the Wahābī movement and the writings of Ibn Taymiyya as if they are the same— he describes how most Muslims will accept when a scholar says a certain act (ie not paying *zakat*) takes a person out of Islam, but if the Wahābīs say one is *kāfir* because of visiting graves, Muslims reject their judgement.[458]

Our findings about Rida's sympathies to Wahābīsm are echoed by Albert Hourani and Elizabeth Sirriyeh. Hourani argues that Rida did not favor the Wahābīs while a youth and that his anti-Sufī sentiments should be attributed more to his negative experiences with the orders and to Ibn Taymiyya's writings than to any reading of Wahābī texts. In fact, his perception of the Wahābīs could have only been negative while a youth in Syria, as they were widely criticized by the Sunnī Muslim establishment and grave stories were told about them in

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[456] Rida, Muhammad Rashīd. "Fatwa `an Aqīdat al-Wahābīyya". *Al-Manār* 31 (1930) 735.
[457] ibid.
[458] Rida, Muhammad Rashīd. "Thalath Kalimat `an al-Mas`ala." Al-Manār 32 (1930) 552.

popular circles.[459]  It was only later in his life, around the time when we see fatwas like the one above in al-Manār, that Rida begins to see the Wahābīs in a favorable light and defends their legitimacy and their orthodoxy.

Sirriyeh's study of Rida's connection to the Wahābīs further contributes to our understanding of Rida's anti-Sufī discourse.  She points out that Rida's Wahābī opinions began while the Wahābī state of Ibn Saud was still in its infancy but that Muslim scholars at the time were likely to associate any anti-Sufī rhetoric with Wahābism.[460]  This argument is supported by an incident which took place during Rida's visit to Damascus in 1908.  Rida gave a public speech at the Umayyad Mosque which drew a large crowd where he condemned the practice of asking for intercession of saints but was interrupted and barred from continuing by a Sufī shaykh who was listening.  Even more so, another shaykh excited the crowd by shouting anti-Wahābī statements and claiming that Rida was one of them, thereby forcing him to make a quick exit from the mosque. Although many Salafī reformers argued against intercession, this critique of the orders 'was most familiarly associated in the public mind with Wahābism.'[461]  Later, mobs in the streets demanded Rida, and other salafīs of Damascus be killed, for having Wahābī opinions.[462]  The Sufī shaykhs of Damascus, she concludes, were in favor of Sufī reform of the type promoted by `Abduh and later al-Banna, and saw Rida's rejection of the 'rationale of Sufism'[463] as excessive, and as such, rooted in the ideology of the Wahābīs.

Later, Rida's relationship with the Saudī king Abdul `Azīz bin Saud increased speculation that he promoted Wahābī teachings through his publication for his own self gain.  Hourani points out that Rida's detractors accused Rida of being 'bought out' by King Abdul `Aziz bin Saud, and give this as the reason why Rida aggressively defends Wahābī doctrine.  The house of Saud had forged an alliance with the Abdul-Wahāb and the Wahābī scholars dating to the mid-eighteenth century.  Rida denies that his defense of Wahābī beliefs is rooted

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[459] Hourani, *Arabic Thought,* p. 226.
[460] Sirriyeh, p. 103.
[461] ibid.
[462] ibid.
[463] ibid, p. 104.

in self-gain[464]; he felt it necessary to forge a bond with Ibn Sa`ud because he was the only Arab leader capable at the time of forming a cohesive Muslim state to counter Western imperialism.

In conclusion, Rida's defense of Wahābism is rooted in complex causes having to do with the socio-political situation in the Muslim world at that time.  But it is most important to understand why a scholar such as Rida, against the consensus of the Muslims, would defend this stringent ideology.  Concerns about increasing Western encroachment in Muslim lands perhaps made this sect from the east attractive to Rida.  Growing Western influence and involvement in the Muslim world seemed to have created in him a need to establish a strong identity rooted in a distant past.  Rida often invokes the memory of the strength of the first generations of Muslims and often juxtaposes it with their current weakness.  In his open letter to Muslim leaders and scholars on a new measure allowing the French government to overhaul the religious affairs of the Berbers in the Maghrib, Rida appeals to Muslim leaders, both political and religious, to intervene and to stop the closing of Quranic schools and the flood of missionaries that are entering the country.[465]  According to Rida, as of May 12, 1930, the French initiated an overhaul of the court and educational system in the region of Morocco inhabited by the Berber tribes.  This led to a wave of immigration by French missionaries and teachers to the Maghrib.  Their influence, Rida argues, has 'forced the men of the government of the Maghrib to leave their religion by abandoning their right to impose the laws of sharia both in the Berber tribes and in their own people.'[466]

With the fall of the Ottoman Empire, and the subsequent ensuing of the colonial period, Muslim intellectuals and scholars were left scrambling for reasons to explain the apparent weakness of their once great empire.  Letters such as these, addressed to the Muslims from Bombay to Morocco, reveal the desire on the part of some Islamic thinkers like Rida to cultivate a pan-Islamic identity able to withstand the strength of colonial occupation.  The feeling was that if Muslims from east to west could bond together based on their common faith they could overcome what appeared at the time to be the extinction of their faith.  This letter

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[464] Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, p. 231.
[465] Rida, Muhammad Rashīd. "Nidā ila Mulūk al-Islām wa lil Nās `Ammatan". *Al-Manār* 31 (1930) p. 205.
[466] ibid, p. 206.

relays that fear, as Rida makes every effort to portray the French overhaul as an attack on Islam, a war of ideologies and not a bureacratic measure. 'France should know,' he writes, 'that Islam will not die, and that the Muslims are waking up from a sleep, and some of them are becoming aware of what is happening to others in other (Muslim) lands with regards to their religious and worldly affairs, and that the building of a mosque in Paris which cost millions of Francs from the *awqāf* of the Haramain (in Saudia Arabia).'[467] Rida is aware of the ideological significance of the replacement of Islamic courts with secular ones, and the closing of Quranic schools to make way for the opening of French schools. In his view, there can be no amicability between the Islamic world and France because of what France has done—because of her own actions, he writes, 'the nation of France has chosen a path with our Muslim brothers in the Maghrib that can be neither gentle nor advisory.'[468] It is the obligation, he concludes, of every Muslim in every part of the world to work to change this measure in any way he can.[469]

*Rida and Muslim Identity*

Questions of identity can be found throughout the pages of *al-Manār* and reveal the debates on identity taking place in Egypt in 1930s Egypt. As we mentioned in the case of the French takeover of the Moroccan legal and educational infrastructures, Rida calls on the religious and political leaders of countries as far as Indonesia and India to intervene, referring to them as his brothers in faith. Questions of identity also led to questions of responsibility, especially when Rida argued that Muslims intervene in a problem affecting their brothers thousands of miles away. In his lecture to the organization al-Shubbān al-Muslimīn, established in 1927 and sometimes referred to as the Young Mens' Muslim Association, he calls on the '*umma al arabiya*' and the

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[467] Rida, Muhammad Rashīd. "Nidā ila Mulūk al-Islam wa Jamahīr al-Muslimīn". *Al-Manār* 31 (1930), p. 207.
[468] ibid.
[469] ibid.

'*shu'ub al islamiyya*' to intervene in the conflict in Palestine and to put an end to Zionist enterprise there.[470]

There is a great deal of criss-crossing in the terms of identity he utilizes here. Keeping in mind that at the time of his speech the Ottoman Empire had ceased to exist less than ten years ago, there are many who still identified themselves chiefly as Muslims, though no longer subjects of a great empire. Others, because of an awakening of Arab consciousness taking place during this period, were more likely to relate to someone who identified them by their 'Arabness'. Rida is clearly aware of the multiple identities in his audience and wishes to include all readers by calling on them with different designations in different articles. To conclude, in the shadow of the fall of the Ottoman Empire, debates about identity were very strong and certainly resonate in the pages of al-Manār.

As we will see in other journals, some authors wrote during this period with the belief that it was important for readers to know about the world and to be informed. Rida, however, did not write just to provide information. Throughout his journal, he is motivated by his belief in the importance of defining the position of the Muslims on various matters. His view of pan-Islamism, anti-colonialism, and anti-*turuq* resonate throughout the pages of the journal and even topics such as the status of women, at the time hotly debated, find their way into the journal.[471] His desire to define what Muslims believe about these matters explains his opinionated style of writing.

Sufism, though still an important part of Egyptian religious life, was disliked by Rida who made use of his journal to argue against Sufī beliefs and practices. Unlike al-Banna, Rida felt the orders were no longer a useful vehicle in the movement to end the malais that plagued the Muslim world and actually contributed to its degeneration. Throughout his writings, Rida suggests that the remedy for what plagued the Muslims lay in a return to their true religion, practiced in a time when the Muslims were strong, and through competing with the West in industrialization and education. His promotion of Salafī teachings were an important development in

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[470] Rida, Muhammad Rashīd. "Khitābī ila Mu'assassat al-Shubban al-Muslimīn". Al-Manār 34 (1933) 207.
[471] See for example, Rida, Muhammad Rashīd. "Risala ila al-Alam al-Islm : al-Mawlid al-Nabawī". *Al-Manār* 32 (1930) p. 280.

the transition from Ottoman Empire to nation states as well as the development of Islamic identity vis-à-vis the West.

*Comparison with Majallat al-Azhar*

Another Islamic publication that deserves further attention is the *Majallat al-Azhar*, edited by Muhammad Farīd Wajdī during the late 1930s into 1940.  The journal reflects a slightly different tone than al-Manar particularly because it does not seem influenced by a Salafī ideology nor does it contain pronounced anti-Sufī rhetoric.  Like *al-Manār*, the *Majalla* contains fatwas on important contemporary issues as well as biographic sketches of the Prophet's companions.  Politically, the journal appears to be more closely tied to the Egyptian government, which explains, for example, why the Shaykh of al-Azhar issued a statement through the Majalla in which he defended his decision to participate in a birthday celebration for the king.[472]

It appears that the most important difference between *al-Manār* and the *Majalla* is al-Azhar's decision not to promote a particular strand of Islamic ideology or school of thought.  Where Rida promoted a Salafī approach in that he supported a return to the teachings of the original Muslims and a rejection of classical Sufism, the publishers at al-Azhar seem to set a more inclusive tone in the journal, so that a reader may encounter articles on Sufism, as well as *fiqh* and stories of the *salaf*.  Rida himself is disturbed by the 'liberal' rulings that are issued by the Dar al-Ifta of Azhar and published in the journal.  He describes a fatwa he gave in which he prohibited adding to the end of the *adthān*, the call to prayer, a practice that had become common, citing it as *bid`a*.  In his view, things must remain just as they were during the time of the Prophet, with nothing added or taken away.  He criticizes Shaykh al-Marāghī of al-Azhar for ruling that it is *bid`a*, but *hasana*, meaning that it is a good innovation.  In Rida's view, there is no such thing based on the Prophet's saying that 'every bid`a

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[472] "Kalima min al-Ustādh al-Akbar: Ihtif l al-Azhar bi al-Mawlid al-Malik ". *Majallat al-Azhar* 11 (March 1940), p. 74.

is in the hellfire' whereas the shaykh of al-Azhar, who did not adopt a Salafī approach in his rulings, permitted it.[473]

Another example is an article that appeared in a 1940 edition and serves as evidence of the tolerant tone of the Majalla towards different approaches to Islam, including Sufism. It describes "Tasawwuf al-Sharq" and describes the teachings of Buddha, stating that he was "the best example of learning to control the soul and fighting desires".[474] The article goes on to describe Buddha and some of his teachings in an informative fashion. Most interestingly, his teachings on abstaining from the enjoyments of this world and controlling the nafs, the soul, are likened to the teachings of Sufism, Buddha teaches self-denial and his followers are called "murids"[475] just like the students of a Sufī shaykh. The author concludes that study of other religions is important so that readers can be convinced that Islam is the one, true faith[476], but he does not venture to tell readers what kind of Muslims they should be.

*Jurji Zaydān and al-Hilāl*

We have presented *al-Jarīda*, *al-Manār*, and *Majallat al-Azhar* as examples of three Islamic journals of 1930s Cairo. But there were other voices competing for a role in the articulation of identity, namely, non-religious journals published by writers influenced by the pull of science and Western development. One such publisher, the Syrian Christian Jurgi Zaydān (d. 1914), opted to avoid writing on topics that would cause controversy among both Muslims and Christians and instead to highlight topics of common interest for the cultural enrichment of his audiences. As Hourani puts it, his writings 'tended to avoid anything bearing directly

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[473] Rida, Muhammad Rashīd. "Khiyanat al-Azhar Nahwina". *Al-Manār* 32 (1931), p. 638.

[474] Al-Hindī, Muhammad Muhī al-Din. "Nadhra ila al-Tasawwuf al-Sharq". *Majallat al-Azhar* 11 (August 1940), p. 435.

[475] ibid, p. 438.

[476] ibid.

on local politics or religion, and which might stir up hostility.'[477]  Further reading into Zaydān's journal, which is still in publication to this day, reveals articles on history, travel, archeology, and architecture.  Zaydān himself was a figure of great importance during this period.  Born in 1861 to a Greek-Orthodox family in Beirut, Zaydān joined the Syrian Protestant College in 1881 where he studied medicine for a time.  Soon after his admission, he became involved in student demonstrations and was expelled from the school.  He left for Cairo and begain his career as a journalist and publisher.  In this section, we will argue that the tone of Zaydān's journal was intended to be optimistic and reflects Zaydān's desire to shape his readers rather than lament their state of affairs.  As Hourani argues, behind his articles 'lay certain positive ideas about what truth was', and were meant to define 'what the Arabic reading public should know.'[478]  His journal reflects three main characteristics, namely, a tactiful approach to religion, the importance of scientific study and invention, and the desire to expose readers to unfamiliar peoples and places.  Zaydān and his contributors develop these themes with an optimistic tone, perhaps to make the point that positive thinking might be a way out of the current stagnation of the Muslim world.

Articles on Islam and religious topics are very much present in the journal, but rather than debating contemporary issues or publishing fatwas that may cause controversy, Zaydān opts to publish a piece like 'The Oldest Islamic Artifact'[479] or "Al-Azhar wa Dar al-Hikma"[480] which describes the establishment of al-Azhar and its history, or 'The Minaret in islam' which highlighted the minarets of different mosques throughout the Islamic world[481].  The tone of these articles is informative and meant to immerse readers in information and facts about Islamic places or people of common interest.  In the article on al-Azhar, the author, Muhammad `Abdullah `Anān, attracts the reader by beginning with leading questions on the history of al-Azhar and states that this 'interesting historical article' aims to answer the questions.  The authors do not, however, delve into subjects of

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[477] Hourani, *Arabic Thought,* p. 246.
[478] ibid.
[479] Al-Huwārī, Hasan Muhammad. "Aqdam Athar Islam ". *Al-Hilāl* (Aug 1930): p. 1179.
[480] `Anān, Muhammad `Abdullah. "al-Azhar wa Dar al-Hikma". *Al-Hilāl* (Feb 1935): p. 420.
[481] No author, "al-Adthān wal Ma`dthūn fil Islam". *Al-Hilāl* 39 (Jan 1931): p. 394.

Islamic law or debatable issues, nor do they entertain questions that would require an Islamic scholar to answer based on his *ijtihād*, his conclusion on an issue based on his knowledge of Islamic sources and current affairs which could spark a debate. While articles by religious scholars do appear in *al-Hilāl*, it is interesting to note that al-Anān is a lawyer by profession, but has clearly researched the history of the Fatimids and their establishment of al-Azhar. His article represents the ways in which al-Hilāl gaves voices to Egyptians from different professions and perspectives, furthering their exposure to diverse points of view.

When discussing Sufism, Zaydān takes a much more accepting position than Rida treating the Sufīs more like a spiritual brotherhood than a heretical sect. He had no personal interest in reforming the orders like al-Banna and seems more concerned with educating readers about the Sufīs without passing judgement. In March of 1935, the journal published an article by Abdul Rahmān Sidqī called "*al-Shawq `and al-Sufiyya*" in which he explains to readers the meaning of Sufism and what the Sufīs ultimately strive for. 'Sufīs across history,' he writes, 'were overwhelmed by spirtual growth.'[482] There are several points to note concerning this piece. First, the article appears underneath a section of the journal entitled "For the Growth of the Spirit" which is a positive statement and implies that the subject to follow is presented for the spiritual enrichment of readers. Second, the style of writing is more of a report than an assessment, as Sidqī attempts to familiarize readers with the idea of Sufī love for the divine and their never-ending struggle to attain oneness with God. Finally, Sidqī quotes poetry written by Muhīyyudīn Ibn `Arabī (d.1240), who was a prominent Sufī shaykh but not one who is associated with the Sufī reform movement which began much later in the eighteenth century. Sidqī goes on to quote other important Sufīs such as Rab`ia al-Adawiyya and Imam Abu Hāmid al-Ghazālī and their poetry, to provide readers with a deeper understanding of Sufī love. The author concludes that the realm of the Sufīs is beyond the tactile world and requires concentration on what is felt more than what is seen.[483] This presentation of Sufī belief and practice differs greatly from what we observed in al-Manār, where Sufī beliefs were criticized for straying from true Islam and Sufī shaykhs were not introduced to readers or their teachings quoted.

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[482] Sidqī, Abdul Rahmān. "Al-Shawq `and al-Sufiyya". Al-Hilāl (March 1935): p. 661.
[483] ibid, p. 664.

In matters of religion, contributors to al-Hilāl reflect an attitude of objectivity in their writing that is characteristic of non-emotive Western scholarly literature.  It is for this reason that writers to religious journals like al-Manār appear emotional about their subjects, while writers for al-Hilāl appear objective and unbiased.  Until the late nineteenth century, Muslim writers were not aware of the style of writing that asked authors to leave their personal opinions out of their work and to write in a strictly informative fashion.  The introduction of this style of writing allowed readers to engage with the subject without having to personally commit to a belief or cause and can be read without adopting the assumptions of the author.

Technological advancement and the importance of scientific study are strong themes that permeate the articles in al-Hilāl.  Zaydān believed strongly that scientific advancement, as promoted by European societies, could be studied and understood by his Arabic-speaking audience.  It was not wisdom, he reasoned, for Arabs to reject these discoveries simply because they were coming from the West.  The optimism that characterizes the articles in al-Hilāl is certainly exhibited in his articles on science; Zaydān urges readers to imagine future discoveries much like "Jules Verne" once did, and to believe that anything was possible.[484]  For example, an article on the "Cordless Telephones in the Future" begins by stating the history of the development of the cordless telephone and discussing the latest developments and research being conducted.  Also in the journal is a translated interview between Albert Einstein and an American author, George Firk, about the reality of life after death and other such questions.[485]  Einstein explains his theory of relativity and also answers other questions on man's mortality and the possibility of life after death.  The publication of this interview is meant to expose the Arabs to the latest thinking in the scientific community believing that ignorance was harmful and ultimately a source of backwardness.

Zaydān and his contributors wrote on science while maintaining their awareness of the religious views of their audience.  One article which appeared in 1936 discusses the aspects of modern psychology, focusing on perception and intuition, describing the sensory perception studied by scholars like Imām al-Ghazālī leading to

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[484] No author, "Al-Telefon al-La Silk  wal Mustaqbal". *Al-Hilāl* 39 (Jan 1931): p. 398.
[485] No author, "Ra'  Einstein fil Hayat ba'ad al Ma'm  t". *Al-Hilāl* 38 (April 1930): p. 722.

contemporary scientific thought on the subject.[486]   Ahmad `Ayyad Tawfīq, the author, brings examples from

Europe, as well as examples from the Islamic sources, such as the stories of the Caliph `Umar's extrasensory

perception, to set the stage for his discussion of the research that was being conducted at the time in this field.

He goes on to describe the terms defined by science that describe these phenomenon, such as sensation,

perception, and conception.[487]   Finally, he describes other kinds of perception that do not fall into these

categories, that he describes as having been accepted and studied by Muslim scholars but that has not been

acknowledged by modern psychologists.  He finds this other kind of perception in the writings of Imām al-

Ghazālī, who describes the same modes of perception taught by modern psychologists but adds to it the 'inner

eye' that, if Allah wills, beholds the unseen and the future.  This is the eye, he argues, 'by which the prophets

behold truths and understand life.'[488]

   This section of Tawfīq's article leads to an important argument.  Tawfīq understands that it would be

impossible for many of his Muslim readers to divorce their religious beliefs from their understanding of

psychology.  Though this article is scientific in its themes and discussion of psychology, there are nonetheless

religious themes that appear and no doubt reflect the personal views of the author and also serve to relate to

readers who would view all of science through the lense of Islam.  Another article asks if there is another

universe besides our own, but still attributes to Allah the creation.[489]  Even Firk's interview with Einstein is very

much centered on religious questions, with Einstein being asked if he believed in God at all, and his response

that he was not an atheist.[490]   This approach was sure to stimulate scientific enquiry in an audience still very

much rooted in Islamic tradition and worldview.

   Another noticeable theme in the articles of al-Hilāl is the belief that Arabic-speaking audiences needed

exposure to unfamiliar people and places—for example, Abbās al-Aqqad, a notable writer from this period,

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[486] `Ayyad, Ahmad Tawfīq. "Hal Lana al-Qudra `ala Ru'yat al-Ghayb?  Bayna al-Ghazal  wa Ulema al-Nafs al-Judud".
*Al-Hilāl* 44 (Feb 1936): p. 445.
[487] ibid, p. 446.
[488] ibid, p. 447.
[489] No author, "Hal fi Kawn Siwa Kawnillah?" *al-Hilāl* 38 (Jan 1930): p. 309.
[490] No author, "Ra'  Einstein fil Hayat ba'ad al Ma'm  t", p. 722.

writes about Bah`ai leader `Abdul Bahā and discusses the particulars of this newer religion that had become the topic of discussion in both religious and social circles in Egypt during this period.[491]  As we saw in Hasan al-Banna's writings, shaykhs during this period viewed Baha'is with an eye of suspicion and some, as we saw in al-Banna's own memoirs, traveled around Egypt to warn the people about the spread of their teachings.  In this case, the view of *al-Hilāl* seems to be that it is better for readers to know and then decide, rather than draw conclusions without knowledge.

Travel is also a prominent theme in *al-Hilāl*; authors who have traveled to countries throughout the world were asked to describe their experiences and even to provide photographs of places they had visited.  There are several articles of trips to countries in Africa, and even the United States.  In February of 1930, *al-Hilāl* published an interview with the former ambassador to the United States, Mahmūd Samī Basha, about his visit to the country.[492]  He describes going to the states at the start of the British occupation of Egypt in 1883 and being very impressed with the modernity he saw there in every aspect of life.[493]  He focuses particularly on several aspects of their society—namely, education, agriculture, trade and commerce, and the overall quality of life there.[494] Regarding education, he tells his audience that the Americans understand the importance of education and it is for this reason that they extended themselves to develop the school system and colleges.  He stresses that, unlike in other countries, American children are not taught facts alone, but encouraged to immerse themselves in real experiences that will help them to understand what those facts mean.  He is also impressed that American children are taught to rely on themselves, a quality that will engender in them leadership and self-discipline.  Mahmūd Samī is also impressed by advances in American agriculture, stating that fruit growers in the country bring it "money and fortune" because they are able to export these crops throughout the world.[495]  He goes on to comment on trade in the country, commenting on the rise of companies and corporations that drive

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[491] Al-Aqqād, Abbās Mahmūd. "Sa`a ma'a Abdul Bahā". *al-Hilāl*  38 (Jan 1930): p. 272.
[492] Sami, Mahmūd. "Ma Ra'aytuhu fil Wilayat al-Mutahada". *al-Hilāl* 38 (Feb 1930): p. 407.
[493] ibid.
[494] ibid, p. 407-410.
[495] ibid, p. 407.

the economy and encourage growth. Fiinally, he concludes by stating that, 'the standard of living in America is higher than any country in the world…and we would not be exaggerating if we said that every American family even had a car.'[496]   These statements by Samī are significant when one considers what life was like in Egypt at the time of his writing; the beginning of occupation, several years of economic decline resulting from the integration of Egypt into the world economy, and growing political unrest.  It was also articles like these, describing to an Arab audience what life was like in the West, that led to the so-called 'complex' of inferiority, the feeling that Western society had superceded the East and would continue to do so, considering its rate of growth and development.  Samī's article no doubt stirred intense debate among Egyptian readers, some perhaps eager to apply these models to their native land and still others resentful and hopeful that they could compete some day.

To conclude, journalists like Zaydān and other writers for al-Hilāl were probably aware of Islamic publications such as *al-Manār* and the debates that took place in its pages.  However, these writers sought a different approach to dealing with the apparent weakness of the Arab peoples, namely, to emphasize the importance of optimism and objectivity when approaching all subjects.  They felt that coverage of Islamic topics should be informative and enriching, and not meant to promote a particular group.  Most importantly, their slogan seemed to have been the importance of exposure, that Muslims had the right to know what was happening in the rest of the world, and that neglecting this was ignorance, not a statement.


*Ya`qūb Sarrūf and al-Muqtataf*


There were other journals as well that took an interest in exposing Arabic-speaking readers to the latest not only in travel, but in scientific discovery.  The monthly journal al-Muqtataf, founded in 1876 by Ya`qūb Sarrūf and Faris Nimr, both teachers at the Syrian Protestant College, aimed to provide scientific articles on various

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[496] Sami, Mahmūd. "Ma Ra'aytuhu fil Wilayat al-Mutahada". *al-Hilāl* 38 (Feb 1930): p. 410.

subjects and even exposed readers to Darwinism. Sarrūf and Nimr moved to Cairo in 1885 to continue their careers as publishers, having been attracted by "the growth of the reading public, the comparative freedom of expression, and the patronage of such men as Riaz Pasha."[497] Just like *al-Hilāl*, Sarrūf's journal avoided any discussion of controversial religious matters or even politics. The journal was intended to be a scientific one, featuring articles on medicine, agriculture, and other sciences such as astronomy. The journal was not received well by all sectors of Arab society; Hourani cites how when the journal arrived in Baghdad in 1876, religious scholars both from the Sunnī and Shi`ite schools objected to its contents, arguing that it "preached new and dangerous doctrines."[498] Specifically, it was Sarrūf's discussion of the theories of Darwinism, and the suggestion throughout the journal that readers see creation through the lense of science rather than religion that put many Muslim scholars on guard—this approach was seen as a direct challenge to the creationism and God-centrism taught by Islam.

This section will argue first that *al-Muqtataf* did not delve into controversial religious topics, believing that there was no need since the aim was to shift the focus away from the particulars of Islam. This should not be understood as a rejection of faith, as the writers of the paper fully acknowledge God and the Prophet Muhammad.[499] Second, we will suggest that the authors sought a marriage between religious beliefs and Western scholarly study as much as possible. Our final argument is that *al-Muqtataf* was a journal devoted to science and it is for this reason that its writers aimed to introduce readers to the latest in scientific research taking place throughout the world, and went further than *al-Hilāl* in approaching controversial scientific topics like Darwinism.

Our first argument is that the writers of *al-Muqtataf* published articles on religion but shied away from discussing controversial or *fiqh*-related topics. Like *al-Hilāl*, the writers of *al-Muqtataf* addressed religious

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[497] Hourani, *Arabic Thought,* p. 246.
[498] ibid, p. 247.
[499] Rajab, al-Sayyid Muhammad, transl. "Minbar al-Ras l wa Tatawir al-Man bir". *Al-Muqtataf* 86 (Feb 1935): p. 166. Here is a piece for example translated and presented by Egyptian Minister al-Sayyid Muhammad which describes the Prophet Muhammad's pulpit and each time the Prophet's name is mentioned, the author writes, upon him be peace, which is the customary practice of Muslims.

matters but only those topics relating to studies such as history, for example, or art.  An article describing the

pulpit of the Prophet Muhammad, for example, describes its physical appearance and how its appearance

changed over time.[500]  The author then goes on to describe the evolution of the pulpit throughout the centuries

of Islam.  The article is written in an informative style and even describes the linguistic origins of the word

"*minbar*", pulpit, citing the research of Semitic language scholar Theodor Noldeke (d. 1930), who says the world

originated with the Ethiopians[501] and also Henri Lammens (d. 1937), a Belgian orientalist who published an

important Arabic dictionary and also his research on the Umayyad dynasty.  In another article, author Najīb al-

Armanazī, a lawyer from Damascus, describes the debate on having a state law in Islam.  The author attempts to

make the case for civil relations between Muslim nations and non-Muslim nations, arguing that in Islamic legal

writings there exists the *dar al-Islām*, or the lands of the Muslims, *dar al-harb*, the lands of the non-Muslims that

Muslims were allowed to conquer, but also the oft forgotten *dar al-`ahd*, the lands of non-Muslims with which

Muslims have some sort of peace treaty.  Al-Armanazī utilizes this concept to make his case that not only should

non-Muslims be allowed to live safely in Muslim lands, but that Muslim nations should maintain civil

relationships with the West and therefore benefit from their ties with them.[502]  He gives Muslims a sense of

pride by arguing that the Spanish legal system, as well as military system, owes much to the Muslim Empire that

existed there for several centuries.  Though this article is political in nature, its purpose is to find Islamic proof

for reconciliation between the West and Islam.  Interestingly, there is no reference to any plan on the part of the

West to undermine Islamic culture or society or even the colonial reality that so many Muslims felt at the time.

Instead, the author tries to seek commonality between the two, concluding his article by stating that the two

best civilizations in matters of law were the Romans and the Arabs.[503]  By setting this tone, al-Armanazī leaves

his audience with the feeling that their civilization has something to contribute and a legacy to be proud of, but

also with a reminder of their heritage of conciliation.

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[500] Rajab, al-Sayyid Muhammad, transl, "Minbar al-Ras l wa Tatawir al-Man bir", p. 166.
[501] ibid, p. 168.
[502] Al-Armanāzī, Najīb. "al-Hukm al-Dawl fil Islam". *Al-Muqtataf* 77 (Oct 1930): p. 304.
[503] ibid.

Al-Armanazī's article suggests that writers for *al-Muqtataf* did not wish to contribute to anti-Western sentiments in their readership.  As we saw in *al-Manār*, the realities of imperialism caused many Muslim writers to promote anti-European rhetoric in their articles.  In *al-Muqtataf*, however, authors attempted to put forward Islamic teachings that would support conciliation with the West despite the realities of occupation.

Our second argument is that contributing journalists saw fit to cite the contributions of Western orientalist thinkers even when discussing religious topics, which is supported by articles like "al-Minbar fil Islam".  The author draws equally from the hadīth literature, citing collections such as Sahīh al-Bukhārī and the Musnad of Imām Ahmad, as well as the writings of several prominent Orientalist scholars who have studied the Arabic language as well as Islamic history.  The use of these sources together is an important indicator of the type of journalistic writing of this period—we see here an example of a writer that is equally comfortable citing both types of sources and believes both to be important for the strength of the article.  Similarly, al-Armanazī, author of the article on Islam and nation-states, makes use of French sources such as Histoire de l'Espagne and the Journal Asiatique but is equally comfortable utilizing the important Islamic thinker al-Mawardī as a source.[504] The coming together of Eastern and Western sources in these articles reflects an important change that was taking place in the identity of Arab writers and reflects their feeling that it was not intelligent to remain ignorant of Western intellectualy development or thought.

Our final argument concerning *al-Muqtataf* is that its writers were not afraid to cover controversial scientific topics, which might clash with religious beliefs, in the name of scientific enquiry.  For example, an article appears entitled "Science and Bringing Back the Dead: Will Scientists Be Successful in Doing So?" which was copied from another journal entitled "Al-`Ilm Al-`Am" by Awad Jindī.  The article describes various experiments that have been done to try to bring back, in one example, a dead dog.  First, it is important to make note of why such a topic would be controversial to Muslim readership.  Muslims believe that death is the ultimate end to life, and there can be no escape from it.  After death, there is a period of time which passes in

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[504] Al-Armanāzī, Najīb. "al-Hukm al-Dawl  fil Islam", p. 304.

the grave and then the soul of the person is brought before God for judgement. The author of this article describes the scientist in California who is conducting these experiments "to cheat death".[505]

The most controversial argument published by *al-Muqtataf* was the theory of Darwinism and the evolution of man. An important source for our discussion is Hina Khabāz's selection of writings from *al-Muqtataf*, published in 1930. She divides her book thematically, to describe the position of the publication towards research in several areas. The section entitled "al-Ins n", highlights the work of several important European scientists who have studied the origins of man. William Boyd Dawkins, the British archeologist and geologist (d. 1929), wrote extensively on the topic. In his book entitled *Early Man in Britain and His Place in the Tertiary Period*[506], he describes the phases of history and gives them names, and then attempts to account for the appearance of man. These phases are all quoted in Khabāz's *Mukhtarāt*. Of course, Dawkins is not discussing the creation of the earth by God, but rather the evolutionary development of species according to the teachings of Darwin. He argues, for example, that man belongs to the order of primates, and tries to account for when man first appeared. The discussion of these theories in *al-Muqtataf* would have been highly problematic and controversial, because Muslims believe that the first man was Adam, not descended from apes but created by God in the Garden of Eden. Indeed, the summary in *al-Muqtataf* reads, "Science indicates that the human being has an animal origin…that from this origin came the human and the ape."[507] The article goes on to describe the discoveries of various primitive human beings that prove that the human being evolved from an ape-like form to the human being that exists today. The author also cites an article by scientist Bernard Owen which describes the relationship between man and apes, and argues that man should be proud that he evolved

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[505] Jindī, Awad, copied by. "al-`Ilm wa Ihy  al-amw t: Hal Yastat a al-Ulem  Fa'al Dh lik?". *Al-Muqtataf* 86 (April 1935): p. 461. Originally from "Al-`Ilm Al-`Am.

[506] Dawkins, William Boyd. *Early Man in Britain and His Place in the Tertiary Period*. (London, MacMillan Press, 1880), p. 36.

[507] Khabāz, Hina, ed. *Mukhtarāt al-Muqtataf*. (Cairo, Matba`at al-Muqtataf, 1930), p. 190.

to be superior to his relatives the apes, and that in reality he is quite similar to those animals lower than him, such as the chimpanzee and the gorilla.[508]

There are two important points to note here. As mentioned earlier, *al-Muqtataf* adopted the position of the plausability of Darwinism and it is for this reason that articles such as these appeared in the journal. This position allowed the journal to publish the work of influential Western archeologists and scientists who also adopted Darwin's theories as the framework for their scientific inquiry. Second, articles such as these introduced the idea that science is the most important indicator of truth—more important than religion itself. As Hourani puts it, the publishers of this journal believed that

> "science was the basis of civilization, and the European sciences were of universal value, that they could and must be accepted by the Arab mind through the medium of the Arabic language; that from thed discoveries of science there could be inferred a system of social morality which was the secret of social strength."[509]

According to this approach, what is found in the form of scientific and archeological evidence determines what is believed, science was religion. As Hourani points out, conservatives in several corners of the Muslim world opposed the publication and dissemination of such ideas as appeared in *al-Muqtataf*[510], but it was inevitable that they would spread, and provide insight into an important debate, the role of science in understanding the world, taking place at the time.

Darwinism and its implications was understandably seen as another attempt by the West to undermind the Islamic world—to infiltrate and subvert Islamic order through ideas, a sort of intellectual imperialism. However, some of the youth "welcomed" these theories[511], and the debates that took place as a result of these publications made early twentieth century Cairo a diverse and interesting place.

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[508] Khabāz, Hina, ed. *Mukhtarāt al-Muqtataf*, p. 195.
[509] Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, p. 247.
[510] ibid.
[511] ibid.

*Conclusion*

We argued in this chapter that between 1933 and 1935 al-Banna devoted a large percentage of his publication, *Jarīdat al-Ikhw  n al-Muslim n*, to writing about Sufism.  However, beginning in 1935, al-Banna shifted the focus of his writing away from Sufī doctrine as he began to articulate the meaning of Islamic nationalism and identity.  Though his journal continued to publish articles on Sufī social gatherings, those aspects of Sufism which focused on the 'self' rather than the collectivitiy no longer had a place in the *Jarīda*.

Did Sufism have any place for al-Banna in this new narrative?  Yes, in so far as the Sufīs he included were also nationalists who stood against colonial hegemony.  Because to al-Banna the Sufīs represented an authentic Islamic identity, their stories were meant to strengthen readers and to enhance pride in their history.  His historical depiction of them as *mujāhidīn* and callers to the faith shows how he wished them to be remembered by readers.

Al-Banna's views on Sufism make more sense when seen in the context of other journals from the period.  His accomodating approach to the Sufīs is a major departure from Salafī writers like Rida who devoted a great deal of their journalistic energies to fighting off these 'innovative' groups.  Zaydān, on the other hand, treated Sufism much like any socio-religious phenomenon, a group that should be studied for sake of gaining knowledge of the world.  In the eyes of Sarrūf and writers at *al-Muqtataf*, Sufism was problematic not because they were religiously heretical but because everything supernatural should be explained by science.

To al-Banna, the time was at hand to articulate how nationalism should be understood in the minds of Muslims.  Al-Banna portrayed nationalism as an essentially Islamic construct, again to refute any notion that the West had the ideological 'upper-hand' on the Muslims.  Through his knowledge of the Quran and other sacred texts, al-Banna published article after article in his journal providing an Islamic justification for the struggle first against colonialism and then for national self-determination.  The Sufīs could be part of that too, but only to the extent that they worked for the collective good and not only their own personal spiritual goals.

**CHAPTER FIVE**
**'A SUFI 'COUNTER-REFORMER'? HASAN AL-BANNA, RATIONALISM, SPIRITUALITY, AND THE IKHWAN**

The previous chapter aimed to analyze Hasan al-Banna's ideas on Sufism and to contextualize them within the other dominant ideological trends in early twentieth century Cairo. This chapter will set out to contend that al-Banna sought to justify Sufism in light of the mood of rationalism that dominated Cairo in the 1930s. We will propose three main arguments. First, that al-Banna, should be viewed as a Sufi 'counter-reformer'[512], one of several Muslim reformers who sought to restore Sufism after the 'reformation' of the Muslim world at the end of the nineteenth century. The concept of a Sufī 'counter-reformation' was developed by Mark Sedgwick in his study on the Budshishiyya order in Morocco. Sedgwick argues that in the nineteenth century, the Muslim world went through a reformation similar to the Protestant Reformation in Europe.[513] The Budshishiyya, he suggests, responded to the reformation by initiating a significant, though limited, challenge to anti-Sufī rhetoric that had spread among Morocco's educated strata. Sedgwick defines a 'counter-reformation' as 'an attempt by the formerly dominant religious authorities to respond to the new circumstances created by a reformation, to re-establish in modified form something of that which was lost during a period of reformation.'[514] Sedgwick confirms our argument that a similar phenomenon occurred in Egypt, where the rise of a modern education system promoted the spread of a rationalistic worldview that challenged the basis of many Sufī beliefs.[515] Al-Banna challenged this anti-Sufī mood and committed himself to working with the Suf shaykhs to address and reform aspects of organized Sufism he believed to be problematic.

Second, this chapter will argue that al-Banna accepted most Sufī teachings and re-introduced the concept of spiritual authority to his readership. Third, that al-Banna sought to ensure the survival of certain Sufī teachings through the establishment of the Ikhwān and his use of the new organization as a vehicle for spiritual enlightenment.

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[512] Sedgwick, title.
[513] ibid, p. 125.
[514] ibid.
[515] ibid, p. 128.

The first argument is that regarding the rise to prominence of the Egyptian Salafī movement in the early twentieth century, al-Banna sought to counter their critique of Sufism by legitimizing his Sufī inclinations in light of the Quran and sunna. From the end of the nineenth century, Salafī schools gained an advantage because of their willingness to combine the teaching of Islam with other subjects such as mathematics and science. Abun-Nasr describes the symbiosis of Salafism with the rise of modern education when he writes,

> 'They (the Salafiyya) sought to bridge the gulf between Islam and modern civilization by the foundation of Islamic schools in whose cirricula instruction in Islam and in the Arabic language was combined with the teaching of the subjects taught in the schools founded by the colonial authorities.'[516]

Elizabeth Sirriyeh also comments on the failure of Sufism to thrive after the rise to prominence of European rationalism—she writes that,

> 'modern European exaltation of rationalism conflicted with faith in mystical insight leading to a deeper apprehension of the Truth (al-Haqq), the Ultimate Reality of the Divine unknowable through the exercise of human reason alone unaided by Qur'ānic revelation and gnosis.'[517]

As a result of this change in religious mood, Sufism was increasingly seen as backwards and superstitious. The Salafī movement in Egypt thrived during this period of crisis in religious identity; Salafī shaykhs like Muhammad `Abduh (d. 1905) embraced rationalism rather than rejecting it and argued that Islam was in actuality a rational religion far detached from the superstition of the orders. But the challenge of Salafism to Sufism was more than just claiming that the Sufīs were superstitious—as Mark Sedgwick puts it, 'The significance of Salafism for anti-Sufism was not just that instead of combatting rationalism it accepted and even encouraged it, but that it was also actively anti-Sufi.'[518] Though `Abduh was much drawn to Sufism while a boy, he and others of the Salafī movement came to speak out not only against the rituals of the orders, but the

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[516] Abun-Nasr, p. 239.
[517] Sirriyeh, p. 54.
[518] Sedgwick, p. 129.

institution of Sufism itself.  This phenomenon manifested itself across the Arab world.  For example, Shaykh `Abdul Rahmān al-Qarashī, a Salafi shaykh in Morocco, launched a campaign against the Tijaniyya brotherhood in the 1930s; the shaykh called for the execution of author and member of the Tijanīyya Muhammad al-Nafīzī for the ideas in his book.[519]  In Egypt as well, Abun-Nasr cites how with the growth of prominence of the Salafiyya at the beginning of the twentieth century, Salafī shaykhs became increasingly critical of the office of the Mashyakha in Cairo, set up to oversee the Sufī orders of Egypt and headed for several generations by the al-Bakrī family.[520]  Critiques of the office of the *mashyakha* of Cairo led to its proposed abolition by shaykh al-Azhar Muhammad al-Marāghī in 1935, but eventually after intense pressure from the Sufī shaykhs this plan was abandoned and an office for combatting *bid`a* in Egypt was instituted instead.[521] This rejection of 'Sufism as a phenomenon'[522] may account for why al-Banna could not continue his professional relationship with the Cairene Salafīs like Rashīd Rida, who was a disciple of `Abduh, after working with him for a time at the office of al-Manār. By the 1930s, 'associations' that 'endorsed the central tenets of the Salafiyya movement'[523] had spread across the Muslim lands.

The conflict between Salafī reformers and Sufī shaykhs was essentially 'a conflict over religious authority.'[524] As Sirriyeh points out, Sufī groups would have faded away given this turn of events was it not for certain Sufī reformers who preserved these teachings and slowly engineered their revival.[525]  Abun-Nasr proposes three 'factors' that ensured the survival of the Sufī shaykhs.  First, he suggests that by the nineteenth century, 'Sufi beliefs and religious practices had become integral elements of the Islamic traditions of most Muslim countries.'[526]  Sufī rituals, festivals, and veneration of shaykhs had become so interwoven into local cultures that it seemed impossible that any of these could be reversed.  Second, in many areas, shaykhs were

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[520] Abun-Nasr, p. 240.
[521] ibid, 240-241.
[522] Sedgwick, p. 128.
[523] Abun-Nasr, p. 239.
[524] ibid, p. 241.
[525] Sirriyeh, p.
[526] Abun-Nasr, p. 241.

well-protected by an 'extended network of social ties.'[527]  This networking meant that shaykhs were important

social and economic players in most Islamic societies—too important to be challenged or removed.  Third, Salafī

shaykhs did not have political sway with the colonial powers, who viewed them with an eye of suspicion and

caution because of their pan-Islamic ideology.  Instead, colonial powers sought to appease Salafī thinkers by

appointing them to positions but still 'gave them no say in the formulation of their development plans.'[528]

The Sufī shaykhs too played a role in protecting their authority.  Itzchak Weismann's study on the

relationship between Sufīs and Salafīs deals particularly with the deterioration of Sufī authority at the start of

the twentieth century and the subsequent move by Sufī shaykhs to reform or adapt their orders to

accommodate changing times.[529]  As Sedgwick argues in his study on the revival of the Budshishiyya in Morocco,

Sufī leaders had to first combat the stereotypes about them that had become widespread in order to re-

establish their legitimacy with the people.[530]  Al-Banna, too, recognized this need to re-establish the legitimacy

that had been lost after the Salafī onslaught on the orders.  The conflict between al-Marāghī, the shaykhs of the

Salafiyya, and the Sufī shaykhs culminated 1936 with the opening of the office for combatting *bid`a*.  This

corresponds with the peak of al-Banna's activities with the Ikhwān in Cairo.  After the formation of the Ikhwān

he continued his relationship with Sufī shaykhs as he attempted 'to persuade them of the need for reform so

that all might unite and work together for the salvation of Islam.'[531]  In his article 'My Opinion on Sufism', he

argues that reform of the orders is a necessity and writes that 'it is an obligation on anyone interested in (Sufī)

reform that they spend long hours meditating on how to reform these fringe groups of the Sufīs.'[532]  Al-Banna is

arguing here for the imperative task of saving the orders.  Just like the Budshishiyya revival in Morocco, al-Banna

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[527] Abun-Nasr, p. 242.
[528] ibid, p. 243.
[529] Weismann, Itzchak. 'The Politics of Popular Religion: Sufis, Salafis, and Muslim Brothers in Twentieth Century Hamah.' *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 37: p. 39-58.
[530] Sedgwick, p.
[531] Mitchell R., p. 215.
[532] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Ra'yī fil Tasawwuf'. Private copy, provided by Ahmed Saif al-Islām al-Banna, Family Archives, 2007.

believed in the importance of the orders in the social fabric of Egypt and it is for this reason he devotes himself to their reform—he writes,

> 'their (Sufīs) reform is an easy task, and they have all of the desire and ability to reform themselves, and they may in fact even be the closest to what is right if they only had someone to guide them.  This does not require much more than one good and activist scholar to free his time for this task, and the sincere warners to study these groups...and someone to lead them afterwards in a good way.'[533]

Al-Banna's plan for re-instating the status of the orders consisted of two strategies.  He would first defend the foundation of Sufism to his readers in terms Muslims from all groups could accept—with compelling support from the Quran and sunna.  Second, throughout his rulings he maintained an air of conservatism which would designate his place as a scholar and not a Sufī-sympathizer.

Several of al-Banna's articles set out to provide textual support for the validity of Sufism.  He wanted his readers to know that despite Salafī critiques, Sufism was a tradition rooted in the Quran and the sunna, the ultimate sources of religious legitimacy among Muslims.  In his article entitled 'Sufism and the Quran and Sunna'[534], he writes 'Sufism in its true meaning has its roots in the Book of Allah and the sunna of the Prophet of His Prophet peace and blessings of Allah be upon him just like any other Islamic science.'[535]  For support, he quotes numerous Sufī shaykhs from Islam's history that suggest that they would only accept spiritual teaching that was rooted in the two sources, and all other ideas would be rejected.  For example, he cites the ninth century Sufī scholar al-Junayd as saying that 'this knowledge of ours is supported by the Quran and sunna.'[536]  Also, he quotes Abū Uthmān al-Hīrī as having said, 'whoever commands himself to follow the sunna has spoken

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[533] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Ra'yī fil Tasawwuf'. Private copy, provided by Ahmed Saif al-Islām al-Banna, Family Archives, 2007.

[534] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Al-Tasawwuf wal Kitāb wal Sunna'. In *Nadtharāt fil Tarbiya wal Sulūk*. (Cairo, Dar al-Tawzi`a wal Nashr al-Islāmīyya, 2005), p. 35.  The collection of articles from the *Jarīda* we are using, entitled *Nadharāt fil Tarbiya wal Sulūk*, contains ten articles on various subjects related to Sufism.  The editor, Esām Talmiya, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, thought it would be useful to organize the book thematically.  Seeing these articles together certainly gives us an idea of how much attention al-Banna gave Sufī concepts in the *Jarīda* and how eager he was to define its concepts to readers.

[535] ibid.

[536] ibid.

with wisdom, and whoever is a follower of his whims and passions has spoken with *bid`a*.'[537]   Of course, the

reference to *bid`a* in al-Banna's writings is important; it was important that he show readers that he did not

accept all Sufī beliefs and practices without question, such a view would have been rejected by contemporaries.

It was only by distinguishing 'true Sufism' from the despised amalgamation of rituals it had become, that he

could hope it would survive.   He writes, 'And you have seen from what has preceded this: that Sufism has

nothing to do with these things, is rooted in Allah's book and the sunna of His Prophet peace be upon him, and

that a Sufī is not a Sufī unless he is attached to both of them, and the saint is not a saint unless he is guided by

both of them.'[538]

   In light of al-Banna's desire to legitimize Sufism with support from the Quran and sunna, it was very

important that he argue against those practices he did not associated with it.   He was aware that there were

individuals who identified themselves as Sufīs during his time who were actually contributing to the stereotypes

Sedgwick discusses in his article.   In the article 'Sufism and the Quran and Sunna', al-Banna includes a sub-

heading called 'Incorrect Understandings About Sufism' where he challenges his audience to consider that not

everyone who calls himself a Sufī is really a Sufī at all.   He writes, 'People use the word Sufī so easily nowadays,

or ibn tarīq, or saint, or dervish, which is a Persian word meaning *murīd*, for anyone who shows signs of

asceticism.'[539]   He tries in this piece to suggest that *tasawwuf* is not defined by the outer garb but by the inner

struggles; he admonishes the Sufīs who feel they have reached such a state that they neglect prayers and asks

his readers not to pass judgement on Sufism as a whole because of the actions of these few.   In another article,

he appeals to 'Sufī reformers' to work to reform the orders and to reach out to Sufīs who are not practicing

*tasawwuf* correctly.[540]   Al-Banna was also following the work other Sufī reformers and mentions their work in his

writings.   He cites the work of Sayyid Tawfīq al-Bakī, who we discussed earlier, and Shaykh Abdullah Afifī and

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[537] Al-Banna, 'Al-Tasawwuf wal Kitāb wal Sunna', p. 35.
[538] ibid.
[539] ibid, p. 36.
[540] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Al Tasawwuf al-Islamī: Nasha'tahu, wa Tarikhahu wa Atharu'. In *Nadtharāt fil Tarbiya wal Sulūk*. (Cairo, Dar al-Tawzi`a wal Nashr al-Islāmīyya, 2005), p. 29.

commends their efforts to fight innovations in the orders.[541] Fully aware that no one party could handle such a task alone, he called for an alliance between the 'power of knowledge from al-Azhar, with the power of the spirit from the *turuq*, with the power of activism from the Islamic organizations'[542] as the key to *turuq* reform.

Al-Banna did not deny that some of what was said about Sufīs was true. He was particularly critical of the large religious festivals of Cairo that drew sizeable crowds and also a great deal of criticism from several circles. The Imām was well aware of what often took place at these gatherings—the mingling of men and women, the use of musical instruments, and even drug use.[543] The Imām was particularly concerned with objecting to rituals that were public, and therefore contributing to the negative image of the Sufis prevalent in his time. In this fatwa, he does not accept the celebration of *mawlids* at the tombs of saints, citing the important hadīth in the Musnad of Ahmed in which the Prophet states that Muslims should not have celebrations at his grave.[544] Likewise, he argues, these celebrations should not take place at the graves of other *awliyā* because the same wisdom behind the Prophet's prohibiting it should be applied in this case as well. However, he continues, Muslims should gather for remembrance of the righteous people of the past provided that nothing occurs in these gatherings that angers Allah and his Prophet. Al-Banna's main qualms with Sufī rituals are those practices that are public displays—suggesting that he is concerned not only about what Sufis do, but how they are perceived. This explains why al-Banna is critical of the *mawlids* in several essays[545] which were generally very public events that attracted large crowds and involved singing, dancing, and loud music.[546] If al-Banna is to reform the image of the Sufīs, he must first speak out against those rituals that contributed to their negative image.

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[541] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Al-Tasawwuf al-Islāmī: Ma`ana'. In *Nadtharāt fil Tarbiya wal Sulūk*. (Cairo, Dar al-Tawzi`a wal Nashr al-Islāmīyya, 2005), p. 30.

[542] Al-Banna, 'Al-Tasawwuf al-Islāmī: Ma`ana', p. 30.

[543] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Al-Dhikr, wa Ahkamahu wal Shar`au wal Bid'a Minhu'. In *Nadharāt fil Tarbiya wal Sulūk*. (Cairo, Dar al-Tawzi`a wal Nashr al-Islamiyya, 2005), p. 81.

[544] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Huqūq al-Awliyā, Ridwān Allahi Alayhim'. *Jaridāt al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 4 (5 May 1936).

[545] Al-Banna, Hasan. *Mawlid al-Imām al-Husayn*. Private Collection, Provided by Ahmed Saif al-Islām al-Banna, Family Archives, 2007.

[546] ibid.

Second, al-Banna promoted an atmosphere of conservatism that disallowed his detractors from claiming that he was accepting of either Sufī transgressions or Western intellectual trends. Maintaining an air of austerity and strictness in his religious rulings made it difficult for Sufī critics to accuse the Imām of being liberal in his views. Also, his knowledge and study of *fiqh* enriched his religious knowledge and raised his station among his readers. It is clear from his references that he is well versed in books of hadīth such as the collections of al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Ahmad and Nisa'ī.[547] He even cites commentaries on hadīth collections, such as *Fath al-Bārī*, to provide further support for his arguments.[548] He was also knowledgeable about the books of Sufism, referring to the *Ihyā* of Imām al-Ghazālī and also the sayings of al-Junayd and Ibn `Arabī in his article explaining the outer and inner sciences.[549] Similarly, he is able to cite the works of classical Muslim scholars such as Imām Yahya ibn Sharaf al-Nawawī (d. 1278) and Imām Jalaluddīn al-Suyūtī (d. 1505) to support his arguments.[550] His fatwas also reflect his research into the books of *fiqh*. For example, in his fatwa on *tawassul,* the Sufī practice of seeking intercession, he is able to refer to the opinions of all four Sunnī schools on the subject.[551]

He was also very conservative about ideas coming to Egypt from the West. As Gershoni and Jankowski put it, al-Banna displayed in his early writings a 'cultural sense of Easternism', meaning that he sought an 'independent and non-Western course of revival and progress for the East.'[552] Al-Banna wrote that, 'the leaders of the East had best divest themselves of this false doctrine, the doctrine of imitating Europe, and guide their

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[547] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Huqūq al-Awliyā', p. 73-80. The Imām cites multiple references to several hadīth collections in this article that suggests his knowledge of the books of hadīth.

[548] There is a reference to Fath al-Bārī, a commentary on Sahih Bukhārī, in Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Huqūq al-Awliyā Ridwān Allahi `Alayhim.' In *Nadtharāt fil Tarbiya wal Sulūk*. (Cairo, Dar al-Tawzi`a wal Nashr al-Islāmīyya, 2005), p. 77.

[549] See for example his summary of Imām al-Ghazālī's opinion on the outer and inner sciences in Al-Banna, Hasan. '`Ilm al-Dhāhir wa `Ilm al-Bātin.' In *Nadtharāt fil Tarbiya wal Sulūk*. (Cairo, Dar al-Tawzi`a wal Nashr al-Islāmīyya, 2005), p. 43. For an example of his references to the sayings of al-Junayd, see Al-Banna, 'Al-Tasawwuf wal Kitāb wal Sunna', p. 35. In this instance he quotes his statement that the source of Sufism is the Quran and sunna. Also for example his references to the works of al-Sha'arāni, al-Buzīdī, and even Ibn `Arabī in the same article.

[550] Al-Banna, 'al-Dhikr wa Ahkamahū.', p. 82. In this case the Imām cites al-Suyūtī to support his argument for circles of *dhikr*.

[551] Al-Shirbīnī, Muhammad. *Hasan al-Banna Mutasawifan*. (Cairo, Dissertation To Be Submitted for Consideration to al-Azhar Kulliyat al-Da`wa, 2007), p. 279.

[552] Gershoni, Israel and James Jankowski. *Egypt, Islam, and the Arabs: the Search for Egyptian Nationhood 1900-1930*. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 258.

nations on an original Eastern road…to greatness and revival.'[553]  What al-Banna was looking for was indigenous

development, a move to develop by the Muslims themselves, or as Gershoni puts it, 'a genuine

modernization.'[554]

While writers for *al-Hilāl*, such as the Syrian writer Jurgī Zaydān discussed in the previous chapter, clearly

applauded Western science and argued that Arabs should keep up with their findings, al-Banna did not believe

that Muslims should emulate the West in any aspect of life, even science.[555]  He felt that 'the civilization of the

West, proudly strong in its science, and for a period able to subjugate the world, is now in bankruptcy and in

decline…its social order decaying.'[556] He detested the idea of intellectual imperialism[557], as he saw it, 'the

corruption of the faith was serious enough, worse still, it resulted not only in the abuse and disregard of its

teachings, but in their headlong replacement by foreign values brought by the invader…'[558]  He dreamed of an

Islamic community that as he put it, 'would lead and not be led, would influence and not be influenced.'[559]  He

believed that Islam contained the answer to all questions and more so it contained all the tools needed for

advancement and enginuity.[560]

He had the same conservative approach when discussing outside influences on Sufism, particularly the

influence of Greek philosophy on Islamic mysticism during the classical period.  He argues that it was only the

translation of Greek books into Arabic that made these ideas available to Muslims centuries ago, and that these

ideas 'lead only to taking a Muslim outside the fold of Islam, even though he imagines he is one of their best.'[561]

Not only are such ideas, when adopted from outside and applied to Sufism, dangerous and blasphemous, he

argues that they provide an avenue for those who are insincere to defile the ranks of the Muslims by introducing

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[553] Gershoni and Jankowski, *Egypt, Islam, and the Arabs,* p. 259.
[554] ibid, p. 258.
[555] Mitchell R., p. 226.
[556] ibid.
[557] Gershoni, Israel and James Jankowski. *Egypt, Islam, and the Arabs,* p. 258.  They describe how al-Banna censured Eastern rulers for the 'ideological and psychological conquest' of the Muslim lands by Western countries.
[558] Mitchell R., p. 233.
[559] Al-Banna, 'Al-Tasawwuf al-Islāmī: Ma`ana', p. 30.
[560] Mitchell R., p. 242.
[561] Al-Banna, 'Al-Tasawwuf al-Islamī: Ma`ana', p. 34.

ideas that appear Islamic but are not.[562] These individuals are able to do this by plunging Muslims into talk of *shubuhāt*, doubtful or unknown areas of religious belief that al-Banna believes are best left untouched. What is interesting in his reference to the influence of Greek philosophers on Sufism is that he does not make specific mention of which Greek writings he is referring to[563], either because he did not read into it himself or because he may be trying to tell readers that he did not want to give these books too much attention.

The Imām's perspective, that some things are better left untouched and unknown, and are reserved only for the knowledge of God and those he permits, seems antagonistic to the mood of his day that we observed in *al-Hilāl*, where writers encouraged inquiry into all things, having been inspired by Western scientific advancement. Al-Banna's arguments indicate that he did not support scientific advancement for the sake of knowing, and he did not envy the West for their scientific prowess. In his view, science without attention to matters of the spirit was emptiness, and discovery without attribution to God was meaningless.

His view was also at odds with `Abduh and his students who argued that Islam was a religion of the intellect and that those beliefs that could not stand to rational scrutiny were not from Islam. As we saw with `Abduh's fatwa on *karamāt*, the muftī did not believe it was obligatory for a Muslim to believe in this important Sufī concept. While al-Banna echoed `Abduh's appreciation for the importance of intellectual scrutiny, he argued that there were some elements of Islam that must be believed with the heart, not with the mind. He remains in line with `Abduh in emphasizing the importance of following the *salaf*, though his definition of who they were was certainly broader (including scholars beyond the first three generations). Adopting this strategy allowed al-Banna to win over those who wished to understand religion through the lense of rational scrutiny. This was particularly important at a time when, as we have previously mentioned, the rational approach to religion was particularly dominant. Individuals who accepted religious explanations without question were few, and so leaving the door open for questions and exploration was critical to the success of the organization. This

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[562] ibid.
[563] Al-Banna, 'Al-Tasawwuf al-Islamī: Ma`ana', p. 33.

is why he argued that 'there is no harm in searching for the truth'[564] so that both rational thinkers and spiritual seekers would be attracted to the Ikhwān.

Though al-Banna maintains that religious inquiry is allowable and even encouraged in some matters, he does not go so far as to subjecting religious beliefs to the test of reason. Though Muslim scholars have been divided for centuries on this matter, al-Banna writes in a pamphlet on *aqīda* that,

> 'I will not resort to the devices employed by the scholars of *kalām*, and I will not enter into a discussion about philosophical perspectives or logical terminologies that the scholars of *kalām* utilized when resolving matters such as these. Instead I will turn to the noble Quran and the pure sunna and what we know of the first generation of believers in this religion, for there is no doubt they are the purest people, softest of hearts and the deepest in their understanding...'[565]

Al-Banna's approach combines both his deep regard for the position of the *salaf* with a rejection of the logical approach to religious debate employed by many Muslims since the inauguration of `ilm al-kalām* centuries ago. He goes on to argue that there are two types of Muslims, those that are like the first generations of Muslims who inculcated within themselves the *aqīda* of Islam based on its 'beauty and feeling' and those who are the Muslims of late who understood *aqīda* to be based on a 'complicated philosophy'[566] and 'hard, dead, technical words.'[567] In light of the sometimes conflicting ideological trends which existed at that time, al-Banna advises readers by writing,

> 'I believe it is our duty to return with haste to the way of our pious predecessors (*salaf)* and that we should absorb our understanding of *aqīda* from this pure source, which is not tainted by anything and contains the trustworthiness of the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him...'[568]

Al-Banna's main objection to the reason-based approach to religion is that explanations that are based on the intellect do not nurture the soul. He writes that such explanations 'exhaust the intellect and tighten the

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[564] Al-Banna, *Risalat al-Ta`līm*, p. 7.
[565] Al-Banna, Hasan. *Allah fi al-Aqīda al-Islamiyya*. (Cairo, Manshurāt al-`Asr al-Hadīth, 1971), p. 8.
[566] ibid.
[567] ibid.
[568] ibid, p. 9.

soul.'[569]  Further, he maintains, intellectual inquiry, when applied to religious matters, will never end, thereby

leading to mental exhaustion without conclusion.[570]  Therefore, religion must be believed and not proven[571],

even if contemporary intellectual trends dictate otherwise.  Al-Banna, like the Salafī shaykhs of his era, shows his

appreciation for the way of the pious predecessors while maintaining the need for intellectual and spiritual

inquiry and discovery.

In summary, the beginning of the colonial period in the Islamic world ushered in the rise of a 'rational'

view of Islam, allowing for the growth and spread of the Salafiyya movement and the subsequent attack on

Sufism as backwards and 'anti-reason'.  We have argued here that Hasan al-Banna is best understood as a Sufi

'counter-reformer'[572], one of the many shaykhs across the Muslim world that initiated a reform and revival of

the orders following the Salafī assault on their legitimacy beginning in the nineteenth century.  Unlike shaykhs of

the Salafiyya like Muhammad `Abduh and Rashīd Rida, al-Banna, aknowledging that there were aspects of the

orders that required reform, argued for the importance of the orders and that they were indeed worth saving.

In doing so, he was certainly at odds with both Salafī and rationalist thought on religion, choosing instead to

argue, as we will see in the following section, for the reexamination of esoteric teachings and the reinstitution of

the concept of spiritual authority.


*Al-Banna and Sufi Esoterism*


If there was any subject that put al-Banna at odds with Salafī thinkers of his day, it was his writings on the

esoteric elements of Sufism.  Our second argument is that unlike some Sufi-Salafīs, as Sirreyeh has termed

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[569] Al-Banna, Hasan. *Allah fi al-Aqīda al-Islamiyya*, p. 9.
[570] ibid, p. 8.
[571] ibid.
[572] Sedgwick's term.

them[573], the Imām accepted most of theoretical Sufi thought regarding the unseen. As Mitchell puts it, 'Banna was steeped in both the theological and Sufī traditions, and from both he absorbed, and in his teachings demonstrated, the non-rationalist, even non-intellectualist qualiy which has been observed to be an aspect of Muslim thought.'[574] In this subject he did not seem to hesitate to write on his Sufī beliefs; first, he believed like many Sufīs that there was an inner and outer meaning to all things.[575] This position allowed him to argue for the importance of the orders because there were spiritual secrets shown only to those who perservered on the path. Second, that the Imām approached the study of Sufism as if it was a science among the Islamic sciences and as such, utilized his magazine to de-mystify Sufism to his audience. Third and finally, that al-Banna supported the spiritual station of the *awliyā*, saints, and their veneration, and also their ability to perform miracles or *karamāt*, as a means of restoring the concept of spiritual authority.

The Sufī belief that things were not always what they appeared and that the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet had an outer and inner meaning ran counter to the rationalist discourse of the Salafīs that had gained prominence during al-Banna's lifetime. However, the spirtual teachings of the Sufīs was in actuality an argument for their importance—Sufīs maintained that life had hidden meanings only a person striving on the path could comprehend. In his article entitled, 'The Outer and Inner Sciences', al-Banna argues that the *shari`a*, or Islamic law, is the most basic level of meanings that Muslims must follow in their daily life to gain Allah's pleasure.[576] Those that have perfected this level can then hope to attain the next level of understanding, the *tarīqa*, which is reserved for those who apply the *shari`a* without any laziness and who understand the wisdom behind the rulings. Finally, one who follows the laws of the *shar`ia*, while loving to because it pleases God, can

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[573] Sirriyeh, p. 98. The Sufī-Salafīs were those shaykhs who admired the teachings of Sufism but rejected any practices which did not originate with the *salaf* (the early generations of Muslims).
[574] Mitchell R., p. 326.
[575] Al-Banna, 'Al-Shari`a, wal Tarīqa, wal Haqīqa, aw `Ilm al-Dhāhir wa `Ilm al-Bātin'.
[576] ibid, p. 39.

hope to be shown the *haqīqa*, the unseen truths that Allah reserves only for those close to him.  Imām Malik,

writes al-Banna, taught that 'one who has married between the law and Sufism will find the *haqīqa*.'[577]

According to this schema, though following the *shar`ia* was not the ultimate goal, it was a necessary step

in the process of spiritual advancement.  The *shar`ia* was, according to Shaykh al-Dasūqī, the tree, and the

*haqīqa*, its fruit.[578]  In his article on outer and inner truths al-Banna argues that the reality of life was like the

fava bean—the outer, hard shell representing the shar`ia, the inner soft shell being the *tarīqa,* and the

being the *haqīqa*.  The logic being, that one can not reach the heart unless he breaks the two outer shells.[579]

With these statements Al-Banna aims, despite the atmosphere of rationalism and the prominence of Salafism in

Cairo at the time of his writing, to stress that following the law is only the beginning and that those who stop

there are depriving themselves of the spiritual gifts given to those who perservere on the path.

The belief that a fundamentally legalistic perspective was limiting informs al-Banna's treatment of most

Sufī concepts.  He urges readers to stay within the confines of the law while exploring the unseen realm.  The

Imām made it clear that any practice of the Sufīs that did not have a *marj`a* to the Quran and the sunna would

be rejected by the Brothers.  As Mitchell puts it, 'he urged, therefore, a serious reform effort designed to save

the 'pure' Sufism from its later 'accretions' but at the same time chose not to establish an order of his own as a

vehicle for his reform program.[580]  Because of this, the Imām utilizes the *Risalat al-Ta`līm* to define what beliefs

of the Sufīs would be accepted, and which others rejected.  He writes,

> 'learning to read signs and shells and the sand and witchery, and fortune telling, and claiming to
> have knowledge of the unseen, and all that is related to this is a serious wrong which should be
> fought, except what is supported by the Quran, or a recitation that is supported by the
> sources.'[581]

With this statement the Imām has established that those customs sometimes associated with the Sufīs,

such as claiming to have knowledge of the unseen, would not be incorporated into the beliefs of the

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[577] ibid,, p. 40.
[578] Al-Banna, 'Al-Shari`a, wal Tarīqa, wal Haqīqa, aw `Ilm al-Dhāhir wa `Ilm al-Bātin', p. 40.
[579] ibid.
[580] Mitchell R., p. 214.
[581] Al-Banna, *Risalat al-Ta`līm*, p. 5.

Brotherhood. This distinction was critical because critics of the Sufīs pointed to these very practices as evidence that Sufism was the reason for the backwardness of the Muslims.

Thought critical of some Sufī understandings of the unseen, al-Banna maintained a safe distance from the view of the Salafī school on fighting *bid`a*, innovation. In his discussion of the meaning of *bid`a*, the Imām argues that all innovative beliefs and practices should be fought but with certain conditions. He writes, 'Every *bid`a* in Allah's religion that has no basis, that the people developed based on their whims, either by increasing or decreasing, is a misguidance that must be fought and eliminated.'[582] However, having seen the discord that can result, both in the case of the Salafī critique of the Sufīs and in the case of the Wahābī onslaught on the *turuq*, al-Banna stipulated that *bid`a* can only be fought when it 'does not lead to a harm greater than the *bid`a* itself.'[583] By this al-Banna is referring to the harm of divisions between the Muslims, which he believed was a calamity greater than innovation. Al-Banna is also reluctant to make an open-ended prohibition on *bid`a*, for fear of stifling religious inquiry. He writes that, 'there is no harm in searching for the truth by looking for proofs and signs.'[584] In sum, his position on *bid`a* served to quell members with a Salafī or rational mindset while allowing Sufī oriented members to seek out spiritual realities.

Following the rejection of these specific practices, al-Banna proceeds to outline the Brotherhood's position on other Sufī beliefs. Specifically, he urges the Brothers to have love for the *awliyā*, a belief commonly associated with the Sufīs, to believe in *karamāt*, and to make visits to the graves (*kubūr*), all with stipulations. Regarding the *awliyā* he writes that,

> 'Love for the righteous people and having respect for them, and praising them for the good deeds they have done brings one closer to Allah exalted is He. The *awliyā* are those who are mentioned in the Quran when Allah ta'ala says 'Those who believed and fear Allah'.[585]

Similarly, al-Banna argues that *karamāt* are a reality based on the belief that the *walī* has 'not the power to help or to harm'[586] and that his spiritual gifts are given to him by God. Further, he argues, the *awliyā* have no

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[582] Al-Banna, *Risalat al-Ta`līm*, p. 7.
[583] ibid.
[584] ibid.
[585] ibid.

power to help or harm after their death[587], thereby challenging the common practice among Sufīs of seeking favors from dead saints.  Related to this is his argument that the Brothers should make it a practice to visit the graves of the righteous but only in the way that was taught by the Prophet Muhammad, without asking the *walī* for favors or blessings.  He writes that,

> 'Visitation of graves is a *sunna mashru`a* if it is done in the way validated by the sources.  But asking for help from the dead whoever they are…and wiping over the grave and swearing by other than Allah and whatever is like this from innovations are all from the major sins that should be fought.'[588]

In placing limitations, al-Banna is able to negotiate the validity of these rituals and to establish them as Brotherhood practices as well.

Related to grave visitation is the controversy of *tawassul*, intercession, which al-Banna also addresses. Unlike the Salafī shaykhs, he argues that this is a matter 'where there is a difference of opinion'[589] and that the issue is not actually a matter of *aqīda* at all.  Al-Banna distinguishes himself from the Salafīs by arguing that this is a debatable subject, and not necessarily a deed that the shaykhs believe was *shirk*, associating others with Allah, the only unpardonable sin.

Second, al-Banna portrayed Sufism to his audience as a legitimate Islamic science much like jurisprudence or hadīth.  Al-Banna's approach to Sufism as a science would appeal to both readers who approached Islam from a rational, scientific point of view, or those who were influenced by the Salafī school and were not convinced of the validity of Sufism at all.  This approach would also satisfy those who read journals like al-Hilāl or al-Muqtataf and believed that a personal should gain knowledge and question all aspects of life.  Different aspects of life, argues the Imām, are organized into sciences to 'organize man's comings and goings.'[590]  Sufism was no exception—as in any science, if man has a stated objective, which in this case was seeking paradise, it was the

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[586] Al-Banna, *Risalat al-Ta`līm*, p. 7.
[587] ibid.
[588] Al-Banna, Risalat al-Ta`līm, p. 7-8.
[589] ibid, p. 8.
[590] Al-Banna, 'Al-Tasawwuf: Nash'ahu, wa Tarikhahu wa Atharahu, p. 28.

responsibility of the shaykh to outline which actions would help him arrive at that objective.[591]  Sufism, he

continues, is a science that is 'at the heart of Islam.'[592]  It is a science like medical science, used to treat the

diseases of the souls and hearts, meant for 'treatment of the soul and its medicine, just like medicine of the

body.'[593]  This depiction of Sufism establishes its weight with an audience that, as Sedgewick pointed out, was

largely disillusioned with Sufism at this point and most likely did not see its importance. Sufism was, he

continues, developed by shaykhs of Islam with the specific and important purpose of developing the soul to a

higher state.  The shaykh, much like a doctor, he argues, perscribes treatments for his *murīds*, who are like his

patients, to help them overcome diseases.  Though these maladies do not afflict the body, they are equally or

more serious, and it is for this reason that shaykhs of the past developed this science.

Al-Banna's detailed discussion of the unseen realm served to de-mystify Sufism to his audience.  He did

this by discussing Sufī concepts such as the inner and counter meaning of life openly with readers and in great

detail.  Within the orders, shaykh typically shared the understanding of these concepts only with *murīds* who

they deemed ready for a deeper understanding.  The Imām was no stranger to this concept; he

> 'records that one of the principles emphasized by the shaykh of the Hasafī *tarīqah* at the time
> was not to discuss controversial theological and philosophical matters before commoners who
> were not in the position to appreciate the theological and intellectual articulation of Islam.'[594]

What were these 'controversial theological and philosophical matters' that Abu-Rabi' is referring to here?

Shaykh al-Husāfī meant by this the importance of concealing the reality of *mukashafa*, spiritual revelations, from

people who would not be able to contextualize these gifts in this world.  Sufīs also deliberated beliefs on man's

relationship to God that might confuse the people, hence Shaykh al-Hisāfī's desire to protect them.

But Shaykh al-Husāfī had allowed al-Banna into his inner circle and shared these spiritual teachings with

him.  Al-Banna himself recalls attending special 'spiritual sessions'[595] with his shaykh meant for advanced

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[591] Al-Banna, 'Al-Tasawwuf: Nash'ahu, wa Tarikhahu wa Atharahu, 28.
[592] ibid.
[593] ibid.
[594] Abu-Rabi', p. 68.
[595] ibid.

students who were ready for this type of understanding.  However, he did not adhere to this principle in his own writing.  It seems that by discussing these concepts openly in his magazine, al-Banna hoped to remove the veil that covered Sufism and perhaps in doing so, remove some of the criticism that came from the ignorance of his readers on the subject.  In one article entitled ''Ilm al-Dhāhir wa `Ilm al-Bātin', he begins by writing, 'Our discussion in this study will revolve around the following questions…what do we mean by 'Ilm al-Bātin?  Also, is there proof for its existence?'[596]  Unlike the articles we read in the scientific journals of the 1930s, there are no references to tangible scientific evidence or research to support his argument.  Al-Banna relies fully on the sayings of scholars such as Imām Abu Hāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), Shaykh Abdul Wahāb al-Sha'arānī (d. 1565), and Shaykh Ahmed Zarrūq (d. 1493) for support concerning the existence of the unseen world.

Thirdly and finally, al-Banna's attention to the veneration of saints served to reestablish the authority of the *awliyā*, or saints, with readers who no longer recognized the validity of spiritual authority.  As discussed in the previous chapter, those who read and wrote to journals belonged to the educated class of Cairo, so in a way even al-Banna's establishment of a journal indicates which social group he was trying to reach.  At this point, the educated strata in Egypt were less concerned with the power of saints as they were with advancements of science and invention.  During al-Banna's life and even earlier, authority had shifted in Egypt from the spiritual masters like the Sufīs, who once were held in high esteem with rulers and with the masses, to men of 'science', scholars from both Egypt and abroad who spoke the language of scientific inquiry. These men, Hourani continues, were a part of

> 'that great movement of the late nineteenth century for which science was more than a method of discovering regularities in the behaviour of objects: it was the key to the secrets of the universe, even a mode of worship.'[597]

With the fall of the Ottoman Empire, Muslims searched for answers for the decline of their societies and some concluded that science was the key to revival.  For example, a Lebanese writer addressed the Ottoman sultan in 1896 stating that there were three fundamental things lacking in the Empire--'science, justice, and

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[596] Al-Banna, ''Ilm al-Dhāhir wa `Ilm al-Bātin, p. 42.
[597] Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, p. 248.

liberty'.[598]   Of the three, Hourani continues, science was the most important, both to him and to other writers

such as Jurji Zaydān.[599]

It was al-Banna's wish to regain the allegiance of this educated class through his writings, arguing that the

spiritual gifts of the saints should be believed and these were in fact the men and women that Egyptians should

hold in high esteem.[600]   This would perhaps be his greatest challenge.   As we saw from journals from this period,

even the world of the unseen was being studied from a scientific point of view; most writers put forth tangible

evidence as proof of their arguments and not scripture.   Even those who included religious proofs did so

alongside physical evidence from the findings of Western scientists, an indication that religious arguments alone

did not suffice their readers anymore.[601]   It would be impossible for al-Banna to prove scientifically that the

miracles of saints were a reality, nor does he attempt to do so.   He does not at any point provide references to

research being conducted by scientists on his topics.   He writes that the miracles of saints are a reality because,

> 'our proof based on the intellect is that it is not the *walī* that is performing the miracle, it is
> Allah, and Allah is present in all states…and our proof based on the sources is the hadith in
> Bukhārī when `Asim bin Thābit was taken captive by the enemy in the Battle of Raj'ia and the
> enemy wished to mutilate his body.   Allah sent a swarm of flies to attack them and protect him.
> There is no doubt that this is a sign of Allah's gifts on him….Also there is the example of what Ibn
> Sa'ad has narrated in the Tabaqāt…that Abī Sa'īd al-Khudrī reported that whenever he passed
> the grave of Sa'ad ibn Mu'adth, he would smell the scent of musk coming from the grave.   There
> is no doubt that this too is evidence of Allah's blessing on Sa'ad, even after his death.'[602]

Readers with different backgrounds would be able to appreciate al-Banna's rationale—some would

prefer his rational argument for the reality of *karamāt* and others would be convinced by the sources.   This

argument for the *awliyā* in the *Jarīda* would at the very least keep the topic in the consciousness of readers in a

time when these beliefs seemed to be fading.

Al-Banna recognized that by the first decades of the twentieth century widespread disillusionment with

the religious establishment created a sort of vacuum of authority when it came to religious matters.   The idea of

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[598] Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, p. 248.
[599] ibid.
[600] Al-Banna, 'Huqūq al-Awliyā, Ridwān Allahi `Alayhim', p. 76.
[601] `Ayyad, "Hal Lana al-Qudra `ala Ru'yat al-Ghayb?  Bayna al-Ghazalī wa Ulema al-Nafs al-Judud", p. 445.
[602] Al-Banna, 'Huqūq al-Awliyā, Ridwān Allahi `Alayhim', p. 76-77.

'taking' a shaykh to serve as a personal guide in religious matters was becoming less popular.  More and more, individuals were encouraged to approach religious texts themselves and interpret them in the way they saw fit.  Contrary to this view, al-Banna encouraged the Brothers to acknowledge the importance of religious authority and to have a personal imam who should be consulted in religious matters.  Like his discussion of grave visitation and the veneration of *awliyā*, al-Banna defines limits to the shaykh-student dynamic by arguing that the shaykh should only be followed if he has a proof for his ruling.  He writes that,

> 'Every Muslim who has not reached a high level of understanding in the proofs and rulings should follow an imām from the imāms of the dīn, and he should do his best to follow him, trying his best to understand his proofs, and accept every guidance that is based on a proof…'[603]

Though after al-Banna's death the first generation of Brothers would argue that 'every Muslim was a man of religion'[604], al-Banna's statement indicates a recognition of the importance of religious authority and a desire to preserve the revered position of the shaykhs as interpreters of the faith.

While the topic of saints was not addressed in scientific or cultural journals during this period, it was still widely debated within Muslim circles and in Islamic publications.  As we saw in al-Manār, one of the dominant critiques of the veneration of saints by Salafī shaykhs was that it caused people to forget about Allah, turning instead to shaykhs for help.  As Sedgewick points out, Muhammad `Abduh cited the story of a man who prayed to God and got no response, and then prayed to a saint and was helped.[605]  Several scholars have composed studies on the veneration of saints in Egypt; Valerie Hoffman and Christopher Shurman Taylor have both made significant contributions to this area of research.[606]  As Abun-Nasr writes, the *awliyā* are viewed as 'divinely inspired guides of the believers' who are seen as 'the recipients of God's special guardianship'.[607]  Simultaneously, they 'became venerated as His deputies in the guardianship of the believers.'  The

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[603] Al-Banna, *Risalat al-Ta`līm*, p. 6.
[604] Al-Sammān, Muhammad `Abdullah. *Al-Islām al-Musafa.* (Cairo, Mu'asasat al-Hananjī, 1958), p. 68.
[605] Sedgwick, p. 128.
[606] See Hoffman, Valerie J. *Sufis, Mystics, and Saints in Modern Egypt*. (Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1995) and Taylor, Christopher Shurman. *In the Vicinity of the Righteous: Ziyāra and the Veneration of Saints in Late Medieval Egypt*. (Leiden, Brill, 1999).
[607] Abun-Nasr, p. 52-53.

pervasiveness of the rituals of veneration can be observed while one is visiting Cairo, from the mosque of al-Husayn to the shrines of Sayyida Nafīsa and Sayyida Zaynab. All three shrines are devoted to the veneration of these three members of the Prophet's family and attract large crowds daily. Many people come just to pray, but most come to touch the shrine, hoping to absorb some of the *baraka*, blessings of the saint, or to ask the deceased for favors.

Over the centuries, scholars have debated the acceptability of these practices based on the sources. Al-Banna, too, was asked about these matters and sought to define the position of the Brotherhood through his journal. In 1936, a reader asks the *murshid* whether a *walī*, or saint, has any powers after his death, and whether it was allowed for Muslims to hold *mawlid* celebrations to commemorate births or deaths of saints. Al-Banna begins his answer with three suppositions that seem specifically aimed to pre-qualify his fatwa in light of the non-compromising position of the Salafiyya; first, that differences of opinion between Muslims is a normal and beneficial thing. Second, that Muslims should hate to fall into disputation and argument. Third, that these issues have been debated for centuries and are not new problems that must be resolved.[608] By beginning with these premises, al-Banna has positively critiqued one of the dominant features of the Salafī school—that there is only one sunna and that all opinions inconsistent with it must be fought.

Al-Banna's fatwa reflects his belief in the strength and resilience of the spiritual power of the saints. He argues that the *karamāt*, or miracles, of the *awliyā* continue after their death, and gives the two stories of the righteous men we mentioned earlier who retained their *karamāt* after death as support for his argument.[609] He adopts a controversial Sufī position by permitting the asking of intercession from dead saints, providing hadīths from the important collections of an-Nisa`ī and Tirmidhī to support this.[610] Again, in arguing for the acceptibility of these two beliefs he aims to re-establish his readers' connection to the blessing and spiritual world of the pious dead. In his own memoirs he cites how in his dreams he is helped in a race against the devil by Shaykh

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[608] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Huqūq al-Awliyā, Ridwān Allahi Alayhim'.
[609] ibid
[610] ibid.

`Abdul Wahāb, shaykh of the Hasafiyya.[611]  The shaykh picked him up and carried him and together they outran

shaytān.  Al-Banna is very concerned to re-establish this spiritual connection with his readership despite social

and religious trends that favored other interpretations.

Regarding Sufī esoterism, al-Banna was not critical of even the most controversial Sufi teachings on the

relationship of an individual with the unseen, particularly the issue of saints and their position after death.  His

emphasis on the status of the Sufīs of the past served to re-orient readers with the spiritual realm and to restore

the status of the *awliyā* as the guardians of Islam with his readership.

*Al-Banna and the Salafī Critique of Sufism*

Equally important as al-Banna's treatment of the educated, urban classes was his treatment of his

Salafiyya readership.  With them, the object was to establish Sufism as having roots in the Quran and sunna,

arguing that Sufīs too, like Salafīs, were inheritors of the Prophet's tradition.[612]  In Chapter Four we discussed the

position of Salafī thinkers like Muhammad Rashīd Rida towards Sufīs and their beliefs.  Al-Banna was very aware

of Salafi critiques of Sufī rituals because of his work with Rashīd Rida at *al-Manār*.  There he would have exposed

to many of their opinions and rationales as well.  Al-Banna also read *al-Manār* as a youth and was influenced by

some of its ideas.[613] Fully aware that shaykhs of the Salafiyya disagreed with Sufism even as a 'phenomenon'[614],

al-Banna makes two arguments when dealing with his Salafī audience.  First, he argues that a scholar must take

into consideration the time and place he lives in, '*al-makān wal zamān*', before making a ruling.[615]  Second, he

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[611] Al-Banna, Hasan. *Mudhakkarāt al-Dawa wal Da'iya*.
[612] For example, Al-Banna, 'Al-Tasawwuf al-Islamī: Ma`ana'.  The Imām defines Sufism as the following of the Prophet in his actions, words, and his states.
[613] Mitchell R., p. 322.
[614] Sedgwick, p. 128.
[615] Al-Banna, 'Al-Dhikr wa Ahkāmuhū. p. 93.

argues that a deed is not prohibited simply because it was not instituted in the time of the Prophet Muhammad and argues for the concept of '*bid'a hasana*'[616], beneficial innovation.

First, al-Banna takes the opportunity to address the Salafī argument that Sufī rituals, such as group *dhikr*, were not practiced at the time of the Prophet and therefore should not be practiced at all. Al-Banna does not agree with this rationale in religious rulings, stating that there are deeds that can be permissible even if the Prophet himself did not institute them if they are beneficial for the religious life of the people.[617] Such deeds are known as *bid'a hasana*, beneficial innovations.[618] Al-Banna is fully aware that the Prophet did not institute circles of *dhikr*, and that the companions used to make remembrance of Allah alone.[619] Even if the Prophet did not hold such gatherings, al-Banna argues that there are many proofs in the Quran of the blessings of making *dhikr*. He writes, 'Dhikr is nearness to Allah Exalted is He, and the proof of this is the numerous Quranic verses and hadīths known by all.'[620] He cites the verses, 'Oh you who believe! Make much remembrance of your Lord' and 'Thank Him by night and by day' and the verse 'If you finish your prayer, then make remembrance of Allah standing and sitting and on your sides'.[621] If the issue is that people have gathered together to make *dhikr*, this is meant only so that they encourage one another, and not to establish a harmful innovation.[622]

In 1936, a reader of the *Jarīda* wrote objecting to his fatwa permitting Muslims to gather for *dhikr*. The reader, Sayyid Ahmad Fahmī, states that all circles of *dhikr* were in fact *bid'a* and that such gatherings should not be allowed, even in mosques or homes.[623] He writes that,

> 'As far as calling this act (e.g. group *dhikr*) *bid'a*, there is no doubt in that, because it was not done during the time of the Prophet, or in the time of the four rightly guided caliphs, or our pious predecessors. And anything that was instituted after that in acts of worship or its branches is a reprehensible *bi'da* that the shar'ia has warned against.'[624]

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[616] Al-Banna, 'Al-Dhikr wa Ahkāmuhū. p. 97.
[617] ibid, p. 82.
[618] ibid, p. 81.
[619] ibid.
[620] ibid.
[621] ibid. These verses are Qurān 33: 41-42 and Qurān 4:103.
[622] ibid, p. 81.
[623] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Hawl Fatwa al-Dhikr wa Ahkamahu'. In *Nadharāt fil Tarbiya wal Sulūk*. (Cairo, Dar al-Tawzi`a wal Nashr al-Islamiyya, 2005), p. 83.
[624] ibid.

Though we cannot say for sure, it is possible to deduce from the content of the man's argument that he is approaching the subject from a Salafī point of view, utilizing hadīths to support his view that circles of *dhikr* did not exist at the time of the Prophet. As for al-Banna's belief that some innovations can be beneficial, Fahmī writes that,

> 'We did not know that any of the scholars of the sunna made such a distinction (e.g. *bid'a hasana*), actually they are all united on the belief that the sources prohibit any *bid'a*, and any new innovation in the religion is a bid'a, and every bid'a is a misguidance..'[625]

Fahmī's letter reflects the non-compromising attitude of the Salafī position on Sufism and its practices, which explains why Muhib al-Dīn al-Khatīb, head of the religious section at the *Jarīda*, replies by telling him that differences of opinion were natural and supported by Islam.[626] Al-Khatīb was born in Damascus in 1886, the son of a mosque teacher. After completing his primary education, he moved to Cairo to pursue a career as a journalist. After working for a time at *Majallat al-Azhar*, he started his own journal, *al-Fath*, which became an important outlet for the Salafī press in Cairo.[627] He also served as proprietor of the Salafī bookstore in Cairo, which al-Banna often visited.[628] Al-Khatīb published several of al-Banna's writings in *al-Fath* on the methodology of *da'wa* in the 1930s. Al-Banna left a significant impression on al-Khatīb, who helped al-Banna to start the Brotherhood's first weekly publication, *Majallat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn*, in May 1933. He writes that, 'Hasan al-Banna was one *umma*, a strength that my soul searched for and didn't find until I met him in the small room at the Salafī press in 1346 H (1927). It was then I discovered a need inside me for this strong *da'ī*, this patient man, who gave *da'wa* from his very essence..'[629]

In light of his background as a Salafī publisher who was now sympathetic to the Sufīs, al-Khatīb was the ideal person to respond to critiques of Sufism. In his response, al-Khatīb appears to be to avoid an argument

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[625] Al-Banna, 'Al-Dhikr wa Ahkāmuhū'. p. 92.
[626] Al-Banna, 'Hawl Fatwa al-Dhikr wa Ahkamahu'. p. 91.
[627] Al-Khatīb, Muhib al-Dīn. 'Hadīth `an al-Banna' in Abdul-Azīz, Goma`a Amīn. *Qalū `An al-Imām Al-Banna*. (Cairo, Dar al-Tawzi`a wal Nashr Al-Islamiyya, 2003), p. 334.
[628] Mitchell R., p. 5.
[629] Al-Khatīb, p. 334.

between one Muslim with pro-Sufī views and another who leans towards the Salafī school of thought; at the end

he tells Fahmī that he is right about the *dhikr*[630], but that Muslims, in their present state of spiritual weakness,

have tried to revive their hearts in many ways.

Just as al-Banna was critical of what he saw as the narrow approach of the Salafiyya, he was also critical

of their literal approach to the sources.  He points out that the Salafiyya are in error if they believe that Muslims

can derive everything they know about how to worship from literally reading the Quran and sunna.[631]  He

challenges Fahmī's assertion by stating, 'In that hadīth concerning how the companions worshipped, 'do you

really know how they worshipped?  Alone or together?  What wording did they use to glorify Allah or pray upon

His Prophet, and ask Him regarding their afterlife and their life on earth?  The two hadīths did not specify all of

these things, instead they left it open.'[632]  We observed earlier that al-Banna read sources in all subjects of the

Islamic sciences and from all periods of history.  It seems that he is concerned about the Salafī tendency to read

hadīth and apply it without taking into consideration the various interpretations put forward by scholars.  Al-

Banna is calling here for a less literal approach and one that allows for multiple interpretations, which, he has

argued, is a 'mercy for the Muslims.'[633]

Second, al-Banna argues that a scholar must assess the religious state of the people before making a

ruling.[634]  As we mentioned earlier, al-Banna understood that the elaborate rituals of the Sufis, including circles

of *dhikr*, were so much a part of the social fabric that to abolish them would do harm to the religious life of the

people.  The validity of these circles as well as other Sufī rituals was hotly debated in the 1930s as Salafī shaykhs

sought to portray the rituals of the Sufīs as 'incompatible with true Islam and a hindrance to the development of

Muslim societies.'[635]  Unlike Salafī thinkers, al-Banna seems willing to take into consideration the circumstances

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[630] Al-Banna, 'Hawl Fatwa al-Dhikr wa Ahkamahu'. p. 91.
[631] ibid, p. 98.
[632] ibid.
[633] Al-Banna, 'Huqūq al-Awliyā, Ridwān Allahi Alayhim'.
[634] Al-Banna, 'Al-Dhikr wa Ahkāmuhū. p. 82.
[635] Abun-Nasr, p. 241.

of the people when making a ruling.  In his discussion of circles of *dhikr* in the *Jarida*, we see this willingness and

also his reluctance to prohibit a good deed done imperfectly.  He writes that,

> 'Yes, this way of doing *dhikr* was not the way it was done during the time of the Prophet, instead each person would make *dhikr* of Allah alone…however, when the desire (for Islam) decreased, and the drive to worship decreased, and groups became needed for many of the acts of worship, and many hadīths were brought out pointing to its (*dhikr*) benefits, and in it is a great many blessings, when things became this way the shaykhs allowed gathering for *dhikr*, and it is a good recommendation…and a good deed if Allah wills, so long as it is devoid of those prohibited deeds, and those involved adhere to the proper *adāb*, and Allah knows best.'[636]

In conclusion, the fundamental difference between al-Banna and Salafīs like Fahmī appears to be al-

Banna's desire to encourage a non-literalist, non-essentialist Islamic ethos that allows for differences of opinion

and mutual respect at the same time.  Al-Banna's approach may explain why his membership in the Ikhwān

came from so many different social and religious groups—from the educated lawyer to the villager.[637]  Another

difference seems to be al-Banna's willingness to factor in the religious state of the people in his rulings.  Fahmī's

opinions do not consider time or place, and resemble the absolute tone we saw reflected in the rulings of Rashid

Rida.  In adopting this temperate approach, he would appeal to the reform-minded segment of readers

uncomfortable with the way Sufism had evolved, without losing the benefit of these gatherings all together.  He

might also appeal to the segment of readers who, disillusioned with Sufism as it manifested itself in the

neighborhoods of Cairo, might be convinced to revisit the sources and decide for themselves if what they saw

around them was the only way to practice Sufism.


*The Muslim Brotherhood: Sufi Order or New Organization?*


> 'Al-Banna applied all that he acquired from his early Sufī training—in terms of self-discipline, obedience to the leader or shaykh, and fulfillment of the ethical rules and standards of Islam—to the Ikhwān movement.'[638]

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[636] Al-Banna, 'Al-Dhikr wa Ahkāmuhū', p. 82.
[637] Gilsenan, *Recognizing Islam,* p. 221.
[638] Abu-Rabi', p. 68.

In a February 2007 interview, Ahmed Saif al-Islām al-Banna, son of Hasan al-Banna, indicated to me that his father saw Sufism not only as a personal quest, but as a socio-political mission.[639]  Indeed, this is how Ahmed understood Sufism from his father and this is how his father sought to cultivate Sufism in the Ikhwān.[640] Scholars such as Ibrahim Abu-Rabi' have studied the effect of the Sufī orders on al-Banna's social and political mission.  Abu-Rabi' contends that al-Banna's involvement with the Hasafiyya 'was the single most important factor in al-Banna's establishing and sustaining an active religious and social organization with a clear social and political mission.'[641]  Abu-Rabi' is critical of any interpretation of the Ikhwān that does not take into consideration its founder's spiritual background when discussing its foundations.[642]  This perspective has profound implications for our perception of the Muslim Brotherhood and suggests that the Brotherhood should be understood as an historical extension or development of the orders.  It was Imām al-Banna, after all, who taught that *al-ruhaniyya al-ijtimi`iyya*, social spirituality, was the best course of action.  This meant that,

> 'For men, beside the mystical aspect of the ritual and the spiritual discipline gained thereby, the obligation was to enter the world and exert effort (jihād) towards the solution of social problems.'[643]

Abu-Rabī argues that al-Banna's Sufī beliefs did not leave him even after his establishment of the Ikhwān.[644]  Three Sufī rituals come to mind that were included in al-Banna's teachings to the Muslim Brothers. First, the institution of *dhikr*, both alone and in groups.  Second, the institution of the *bay'a*, the Sufī oath of allegiance, which all members of the Ikhwān were obligated to give.  Third and finally, the re-establishment of spiritual authority between the *murshid*, the supreme guide, and members.

The first important ritual was the institution of the practice of reciting invocations, *dhikr*, by all members. Al-Banna compiled a collection of invocations called *al-Ma`thurāt* in the mid 1930s, and according to Lia, 'there

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[639] Interview with Ahmad Saif al-Islām al-Banna, February 5, 2007, Cairo.
[640] ibid.
[641] Abu-Rabi', p. 67.
[642] ibid, p. 70.
[643] Mitchell R., p. 216.
[644] Abu-Rabi', p. 70.

were several examples of the practising of dhikr among the Muslim Brothers in the 1930s.'[645]  This *wird* was meant to be recited daily in the morning and evening by members of the Brotherhood.  Al-Banna writes that the obligation of all Brothers to Allah was to 'make *dhikr* of him in all states' and 'be diligent in reciting the *awrād al-ikhwaniyya* except in extraordinary circumstances (that prevent you from doing so).'[646]  In his conclusion to Risalat al-Ta`līm he advises Brothers to 'read the Quran or listen to it be recited, or make *dhikr* of Allah, and do not allow your time to pass without benefit.'[647]  The text of *al-Ma`thurāt* was printed and distributed in small pamphlets and members were encouraged to establish a ritual of recitation from the book.  This practice of reciting daily *adhkār* is not different from the practice of the Sufīs of reciting *awrād* taught to them by their shaykh.

Before approaching the controversial subject of *dhikr* in groups, al-Banna worked first to establish the legitimacy of *dhikr* even for the individual, a practice which had become associated with the Sufīs and was therefore frowned upon.  Al-Banna utilizes the introduction to his *Ma`thurāt* to argue that *dhikr* of Allah is a deed of great importance and value, and one that is substantiated by the sources.  He describes the Prophet Muhammad as 'the best of those who makes remembrance (*afdal al-dhākirīn*)'[648], which indicates al-Banna's effort to link the Prophet to the practice of *dhikr*.  He continues that the very purpose of Islam is to 'cure the hearts of men and to enrich them'[649] and it is for this reason that nurturing that spiritual bond with the creator through dhikr is so essential.

Further, al-Banna establishes that the practice of *dhikr* is a means to following the sunna of the Prophet and attaining nearness to Allah.  He writes that, 'If we ask the Ikhwān al-Muslimīn to adhere to the sunna of their Prophet then they would preserve these *adhkār* and through it they would become closer to Allah (*al-Azīz*

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[645] Lia, p. 115.
[646] Al-Banna, *Risalat al-Ta`līm*, p. 37.
[647] ibid, p. 39.
[648] Al-Banna, *Al-Ma`thurāt*. (Kuwait, Maktabat al-Manār, no year), p. 5.
[649] ibid, p. 6.

*al-Ghaffār*).'[650] He reminds his audience that since the Prophet himself taught these invocations to the Muslims, to recite it is to follow his way and to abandon it is to neglect what the Prophet has taught. The Quran, too, al-Banna argues, supports his argument that *dhikr* is an essential practice for every Muslim. For example, in a verse where Allah describes the believers of different types, the *dhākirūn* are mentioned last, evidence he argues that they are in fact the highest level of believers.[651]

While many Muslims recited *dhikr* alone, the Sufīs are credited for instituting gatherings of *dhikr*, a practice that al-Banna continued with the Ikhwān. He argues that, although this practice did not exist in the time of the Prophet, it was important because Muslim had become weak in their resolve to worship God and doing so in groups would strengthen their commitment.'[652] He provides examples from the hadīth which support the recitation of *dhikr* in groups to convince those who claim that it is an innovation—for example, the Prophet is reported to have said, 'A group does not sit to make *dhikr* of Allah except that the angels envelope them with their wings…'[653] Even in general, al-Banna argues, gathering to perform deeds that are pleasing to Allah is greatly encouraged.[654] There are several examples of al-Banna establishing these groups with the early members, the most notable being with his "Battalions for the Supporters of God", established in 1937 and comprised of only select members of the Brotherhood who had been in the Society for some time.[655] The Battalions were launched in 1937, comprising of three groups of forty men each. They met once a month for a rigorous night of prayer and meditation, as well as 'spiritual instruction' on a range of subjects, including Sufism. 'The training programme for the Battallions[656],' writes Lia, 'contained a night vigil and the practicing of dhikr.'[657] These night sessions were extremely important for the discussion of Sufī concepts and beliefs.[658]

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[650] Al-Banna, *Al-Ma`thurāt*, p. 7.
[651] ibid, p. 7.
[652] Al-Banna, 'Al-Dhikr, wa Ahkamahu wal Shar`au wal Bid'a Minhu', p. 82.
[653] Al-Banna, *al-Ma`thurāt*, p. 11.
[654] ibid, p. 12.
[655] Lia, p. 173.
[656] Mitchell R., p. 196.
[657] Lia, p. 115.
[658] Mitchell R., p. 196.

Because of the questionable practices which took place at Sufī gatherings of *dhikr*, it was very important that al-Banna establish that these gatherings had an *adāb*, or decorum, that all Brothers must learn.  He writes that among the conditions of *dhikr* is that if it is done in a group 'one should not be late, and if one is late he recites what the others are reciting…and after finishing all should leave with reverent silence, avoiding talking which will take away the benefit of the *dhikr*.'[659]  Further, he argues, these gatherings are not permissible if they 'disturb the one who is praying in the masjid, or contain laughing and talking in idle matters, or unsubstantiated rituals, and other than this of acts that contradict the shar`ia.'[660]  Thus, after establishing the textual basis for group *dhikr*, al-Banna proceeds to define how these gatherings would be carried out by the Ikhwān.  In establishing a protocol for these gatherings, al-Banna is able to persuade members that group *dhikr* would not be allowed to descend into chaos.

Second, the Imām instituted the *bay'a*, the oath of allegiance—new members to the Brotherhood swore allegience to the Supreme Guide and to the organization much like the *bay'a* of the newly initiated *murīd* to his shaykh.[661]  His son observed that those close to him obeyed his wishes without him ever using force, and that they simply recognized his spirtual authority, that he was 'one of the *awliyā* of Allah.'[662]  As Ahmed Saif al-Islām points out, the Imām had exhibited many spiritual gifts to his followers which placed him in a position of spiritual authority with his inner circle.[663]

Third, al-Banna, like Shaykh al-His f , worked to reestablish the Sufī concept of spiritual authority with his followers among the Muslim Brothers.  Over the centuries of the development of classical Sufism this idea was expounded upon by numerous Sufīs whose writings established the shaykhs not only as 'the Prophet's deputies', but as his own 'essence.'[664]  However, as we discussed in Abun-Nasr's study, since the 1920s shaykhs of the

[659] Al-Banna, *al-Ma`thurāt*, p. 9-10.
[660] ibid, p. 12.
[661] Mitchell R., p. 300.
[662] Interview with Ahmed Saif al-Islām al-Banna, February 5th, 2007, Cairo.
[663] ibid.
[664] Abun-Nasr, p. 69.

Salafiyya movement in Egypt 'sought to discredit the Sufī shaykhs as spiritual guides.'[665] Al-Banna worked to restore authority to the spiritual realm by teaching the Brothers the secrets of this spiritual hierarchy; as Mitchell argues, his choice of the title of *murshid* rather than *qa'id* or *ra'īs* reveals his desire 'to establish a relationship between himself and God rather than with other men.'[666] Members advanced because of their relationship with God, not with other members. This was especially true in the Battalions, which were meant to be special units comprised only of advanced members who were 'spiritually trained'[667] to be ready when the time came for *jihād*.

The spiritual hierarchy within the Ikhwān also resembled the hierarchy within the Sufī order. Those closest to the shaykh were expected to exhibit the highest degree of submission and trust. In his *Risalat al-Ta'alīm*, eventually one of the most popular Ikhwān publications, al-Banna describes the three stages of loyalty as acquaintance, formation, and execution.'[668] The first stage applies to the general membership and 'complete obedience is not compulsory.'[669] In the second phase, formation, members should be ready to perform jihād 'uniting on the basis of Sufi spirituality and military action.'[670] These members are required to be completely obedient, al-Banna utilizing the phrase, *`amr wa ta'a'*, meaning that they hear and obey.[671] The final stage, execution, refers to those involved at the time of the jihād, also completely obedient and without hesitation.[672] These stages mirror the stages of obedience in our earlier discussion of the Sufī shaykh and his relationship to his students. After taking an oath of allegiance, murīds vary in their degree of loyalty and nearness to the shaykh. Those closest to him submit completely to his authority accepting his authority as their spiritual guide with complete trust and without question.

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[665] Abun-Nasr, p.238.
[666] Mitchell R.*,* p. 299.
[667] Lia, p. 174.
[668] Mitchell R., p. 300.
[669] ibid.
[670] ibid.
[671] ibid.
[672] ibid.

Several scholars have studied the new organizations in Egypt at the start of the twentieth century and their importance for social mobilization.[673] Several have also described the role of these organizations in the articulation of some sort of identity on the part of its members. This section will discuss the role of these organizations in the articulation of an indigenous Islamic identity and argue that al-Banna's inclusion of Sufī teachings serves also to create an authentic Islamic identity for the Muslim Brothers. Second, that al-Banna 'standardized' Sufism for the orders, so to speak, establishing the position of the Ikhwān on a number of Sufī concepts and gathered it into a manual for Brothers to review. The third and final argument concerns al-Banna's methodology for co-opting followers of the orders into the Ikhwān, specifically by respecting Sufī symbols and rituals and mobilizing the shaykhs for Islamic work.

At the end of the nineteenth century, a number of Islamic associations were started that aimed to engender a sense of pride in a distinctly Islamic identity. These organizations, such as *Jama`at al-Shubban al-Muslimin*, or the Young Mens' Muslim Association, formed from a need of some to articulate an Islamic identity in a novel way. Similarly, for Hasan al-Banna and the Brotherhood, the resassertion of Islamic beliefs in the form of Sufī teachings actually served as an assertion of indigenous identity. As Gilsenan puts it, 'The Brothers satisfied the need to confront in some way the forces they identified as disrupting society (the unbelievers and those that were 'against' religion).'[674] This is a familiar argument; as Musa Budeiri puts it in his essay on Palestinian religious identity, 'the Arab nation is deemed to be under seige both physically and morally' and so 'if nothing else, Islam serves to define a distinct identity for the people, while at the same time providing a sense of

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[673] Several books have been written on this subject. Among them are Gershoni and Jankowski's book as well as the study by Michael Gasper entitled *The Power of Representation: Publics, Peasants, and Islam in Egypt* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2008).

[674] Gilsenan, *Recognizing Islam,* p. 221.

psychological compensation for the people.'[675] In this case of Egypt, reassertions of identity took many different forms, even within the Islamic milieu. With the Salafiyya, this reassertion of identity manifested itself in a call to returning to the teachings of the early Muslims who lived in a time when Islam was strong and Muslims were not subjugated by colonialism. In al-Banna's case, this was a good perspective but he did not wish to exclude the stories of the Sufīs that they might continue to be emulated by the people as well.

The important question emerges as to why al-Banna did not found a *tarīqa* himself as a means to mobilize the people and bring about change. Al-Banna's inclusion in the *effendiyya* class may explain his reason for seeking alternative avenues for religious reform. Al-Banna himself alludes to some of the problems with the traditional hierarchy when he states that, 'I did not want to become involved in competing with the other orders, and I did not want it to be restricted to one group of Muslims or one aspect of Islamic reform. Instead, I wanted it to be a general message based on learning, education, and jihād.'[676] The egalitarian nature of the *effendiyya* movement and the desire to move away from old definitions is apparent when he says he believed in the right of people to be involved in an organization which allowed them to practice Islam as they wished so long as it was within the acceptable bounds.[677] The overall theme in his message to the Sufī shaykhs was that unity was the key; for disunity and division would destroy the *umma* in trying times such as these.

Though all-encompassing in its scope, al-Banna's agenda in the founding of the Muslim Brotherhood was not to replace the traditional landscape of Islamic associations but rather to incorporate and redirect those same institutions that earned the devotion of the people for centuries past. Al-Banna's own attachment to the orders meant that he could not imagine a *da`wa* movement without their involvement. Though as we have established the orders would not be the primary vehicles for the dissemination of al-Banna's message, he intended that they come under the umbrella of the movement and therefore reached out to its leaders. Al-

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[675] Budeiri, Musa. 'The Palestinians: Tensions between Nationalist and Religious Identities' in Gershoni, Israel and James Jankowski ed. *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East*. (New York, Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 192.
[676] Mitchell R., p. 215 and for the original Arabic see al-Banna, *Mudhakkarāt*, p. 67.
[677] Shaikh, p. 155.

Banna 'never violently attacked or openly broke with it (Sufism), nor did he ever lose his faith in the validity of 'pure' or 'true' Sufism.'[678] The question for him, in his own words, was not if but how the orders might be useful to Islamic society.[679] He approached the matter 'with an eye to restoring Sufism to all Muslims as a universal and transcendent way of living.'[680] In this section, we will propose two arguments; first, that al-Banna believed that the orders should play a role in the restoration of the Muslim polity, and second, that he employed a number of strategies to involve the orders in the movement--namely, co-opting Sufī leaders, including Sufī terms and meanings in *Ikhwān* teachings, reinforcing positive meanings, establishing a universal standard for spiritual practice, and re-creating the image of the Sufī-*mujāhid* as a model for contemporary truth seekers.

> 'Not much more is needed except that one of the righteous and activist `ulemā and one of the trustworthy preachers commit themselves to the study of these people and the wealth of traditional scholarship on the subject and also to ridding them (*the orders*) of those corrupt practices that have become associated with them, and to leadership of these people thereafter in the best way.'[681]

Futher evidence that al-Banna felt the orders were an important part of the Egyptian *da`wa* effort is that he recommends that the *turuq* be reformed, not abolished. 'Rather,' he writes, 'they are most amenable to reform and correction provided they are approached rightly.'[682] He goes on to say that,

> 'had these three powerful sources such as the scholarly power of al-Azhar, the spiritual power of the mystics, and the practical power of the Islamic movements worked as one, it would have created an ideal *ummah* in the world.'[683]

This statement by al-Banna gives the reader a feeling of how al-Banna envisaged the place of the orders in the broader context of Islamic activists. Particularly, he believed that Islamic institutions must work in tandem as they once did, each one manifesting a particular attribute and each one complementing the other. His conclusion is that mutual cooperation between these institutions, including the *turuq*, is the only way the

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[678] Mitchell R., p. 214.
[679] Al-Banna, *Mudhakkarāt*, p, 21.
[680] Mitchell R., p. 214.
[681] Al-Banna, *Mudhakkarāt,* p. 23.
[682] Shaikh, p. 77.
[683] ibid.

Muslim world might be saved, so that the *umma* could be 'in the position of a guide and not a follower, a leader and not the led.'[684]

The re-introduction of Sufism as part of the Islamic movement served another function—it can be argued that a second look at classical Sufism would serve to unite members of the orders and skeptics alike in the essential spiritual message championed by the early Sufīs. As for the followers of the *turuq*, he felt that many had become too involved in ritual and forgotten their true purpose, sometimes at the expense of other aspects of the faith. A second look at 'true' Sufism might benefit them. He confronted the shaykhs of the *turuq* with 'the ignorance of the people with the priorities of their faith, and the imperative of breaking their chains..'[685] As for the skeptics, Sufism had strayed so far from its roots that most people could not see the benefit in it and shied away in suspicion. We mentioned in Chapter One that the *turuq* came under serious scrutiny in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Egypt because their economic and political incapacitation left them particularly vulnerable to attack from those who would say that the people maintained their allegiances to shaykhs that could no longer benefit them.[686] By making critics aware of the 'true' Sufism of the first generations, he was urging them to take a second look and not judge based on the state of the orders in their day.

Most importantly, it is clear that if al-Banna had felt that the *turuq* were dispensable, he would not have spent much time engaging the leaders of the *turuq* as he did. Nor would he have allowed members of the *Ikhwān* to maintain their ties with the *turuq*. He states that whoever of his members desires a 'personalized *tarbiya*' was free to seek it.[687] If he felt they were irrelevant, he might have ignored them altogether, and certainly would not have attended their *hadras* and requested private meetings to discuss the affairs of the

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[684] Shaikh, p. 77.
[685] Al-Banna, *Mudhakkarāt*, p. 68.
[686] Michael Gilsenan makes this argument in *Saint and Sufī in Modern Egypt: An Essay in the Sociology of Religion*. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1973).
[687] Al-Banna, *Mudhakkarāt*, p. 67.

Muslims with them as he did in al-Isma`iliya.[688]  Al-Banna's dealings with the shaykhs points to his continued

attachment to the Sufī world and his desire to maintain his ties with them.  Mitchell has even suggested that al-

Banna continued to see himself as one of them even after the founding of the Muslim Brotherhood and was

speaking not as an outsider but as a fellow *murīd* treading the spiritual path.[689]

Further, al-Banna searched for allies from among the Suf s who could help him to reconcile between his

love of the *turuq* and what he saw as their excesses.  Sayyid Muhammad al-Hāfiz al-Tijānī (d. 1978) is an example

of a like-minded shaykh from the world of the Suf s; Shaykh Muhammad's writings reveal a scholar with similar

opinions to al-Banna particularly on the subjects of Sufism and emphasizes the need for activism in those

times.[690]  Al-Banna states that Shaykh Muhammad was touring Isma`iliya to warn Muslims of the threat of Bahai

proselytization, further evidence of his activist and *da`wa*-oriented agenda.  Al-Banna describes him as a man

who possessed 'knowledge, beneficence, faith, and covetousness in matters of religion.[691]  They spent many

nights in long discussions, sometimes discussing the excesses of the *tarīqa tijaniyya*, of which Sayyid

Muhammad was a member, and he would attempt to explain where he could, and condemned anything that

contradicted Islamic doctrine.[692]  Al-Banna clearly appreciated this and commended his companion for his desire

to distance himself from those excesses al-Banna had discussed with him.[693]

In his own writings on Sufism, al-Tijānī expresses makes a distinction between 'true' Sufīs and those who

claim to be Sufīs but are not because they follow a path which actually takes them away from Allah and changes

their *aqīda*.[694]  He blames those who do not follow the path of *al-salaf al-sufiyya*, or those righteous Sufīs of the

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[688] Al-Banna, *Mudhakkarāt*, p. 68.
[689] On p. 51 in the *Mudhakkarāt*, for example, al-Banna cites the 'mutual Sufī upbringing' when describing his relationship with Shaykh al-Dajwī.  Also, Mitchell cites the example on p. 215 of al-Banna's statement that one of the reasons he did not want to establish the Ikhwān as a *tarīqa* is that he did not want to enter into disputes with the 'other' adherents of the path (p. 67)
[690] al-Tijānī, Muhammad Hāfiz. *Ahl al-Haqq al-Arifūn Billah: Al Sāddah al-Sufiyya*. (Cairo, al-Zawiya al-Tijaniyya al-Qubra, 1980).
[691] Al-Banna, *Mudhakkarāt*, p. 67.
[692] Al-Banna, *Mudhakkarāt*, p. 67.
[693] Ibid.
[694] Al-Tijānī, p. 26.

past, are 'the enemies of Islam and the Muslims'.[695]  Al-Tijānī's writings are very similar to al-Banna in that he views Sufism as a science much like *fiqh* or *kalām* and as such rejects any innovation besides what classical scholars have already established.  Second, like al-Banna he is very much concerned with giving Sufism authenticity by explaining its basis in the Quran and *sunna* and in fact stating that the Sufīs are the 'defenders of that Quran and *sunna* in knowledge and in actions.'[696]

Al-Banna's conversation with Sayyid Muhammad is important for several reasons.  First, al-Banna's willingness to engage in a discourse with al-Tijānī suggests that al-Banna was drawn to a man of the *turuq* who championed the same activist type of Sufism that al-Banna himself adhered to.  More importantly, their shared opinions on what they saw as the corruption of Sufism and the desire to define what Sufism meant to them may be indicative of a larger trend of Sufī reformers anxious to restore the image of *tasawwuf* before their readership and adamant in distancing themselves from popular practices that had come to be associated with the Sufīs.  The creation of the 'anti-Sufī'[697] model was meant to show readers that those within the realm of *tasawwuf* condemned those that had deviated from the 'original' path while putting forth that their activist Sufism could continue to thrive in a time demanding action and activism.

The next argument concerns al-Banna's methodology for incorporating the orders into his Islamic movement.  One way was to mobilize Sufī leaders for the purpose of Islamic work.  He was 'always sensitive to the importance of this tradition as to the significance of local spiritual hierarchies and the prestige of men who held religious positions.'[698]  This strategy allowed al-Banna to make use of existing grassroots organizations in his greater movement that already enjoyed the loyalties of vast numbers of people.  He was able to do this by approaching these religious leaders individually or before assemblies of people and address the religious crisis he felt was taking place and ask the scholar before him to take action.  His interaction with Shaykh Abdel Wahāb al-Dandarāwī which al-Banna reports in his memoirs serves as one example. The shaykh visited Isma`iliya while

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[695] Al-Tijānī, p. 26.
[696] Ibid, p. 27 and p. 38.
[697] Al-Tijānī literally calls them '*al-dukhalā*" those who intruded on the true *Sufīs*. p. 26.
[698] Gilsenan, *Recognizing Islam*, p. 221-222.

al-Banna was working there and al-Banna attended his *hadra* and then asked the shaykh for an opportunity to speak with him in private. Once in a private room, al-Banna proceeded to take off his *tarbūsh*, and to remove the shaykh's *`imma*, and place them both on a chair. He explained to the shaykh that he wished to remove all apparent signs of difference between them, before talking with him about his concerns. He said to the shaykh, 'I would like to speak with you as the Muslim youth Abdel Wahāb al-Dandarāwī, and as for the Shaykh Abdel Wahāb al-Dandarāwī, we have left him at the gathering outside.'[699] Al-Banna then proceeded to ask the shaykh if he was content with his followers, who spend the night with him in *dhikr* and *inshād*, but remain ignorant of the basic teachings of their faith and less than proud of their Islamic heritage. The shaykh asked al-Banna what he should do, and al-Banna advised him to teach his followers knowledge of their religion, organization, and to maintain strict supervision of their development. He also asked that he offer them the pious predecessors and especially the *mujahidīn* as their models. Their conversation ended with an oath that each of them would do what was in his capacity to make these changes. Shaykh Abdel Wahāb never defaulted on his oath; each time he passed through al-Isma`iliya he visited al-Banna first and reaffirmed his commitment to their pledge.[700]

The symbolic removal of the head coverings deserves further interpretation. Part of his reaching out to the shaykhs was his attempting to lift the tangible and symbolic barriers which separated him from them. Al-Banna's gesture of removing the *tarbūsh* and *`imma* reflects his belief that such things cause one to draw conclusions and make assumptions about the 'other' which may hinder their cooperation. By removing the symbolic head coverings, the two men were forced to see the humanity in the other and to address one another as equals and as brothers in faith. One must also reflect on the meaning of their respective head coverings. In the Islamic world, head coverings possess meanings that reflect much about the wearer.[701] In Shaykh Abdul-Wahāb's case, his donning of the traditional Islamic *`imma* reflects his position as a leader in the traditional religious establishment. For al-Banna, his wearing of the *tarbūsh* is indicative of his membership in a particular

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[699] Al-Banna, *Mudhakkarāt*, p. 68.
[700] ibid, p. 69.
[701] For a study on the significance of dress in the Islamic world, see Stillman, Yedida Kalfon. *Arab Dress: A Short History: From the Dawn of Islam to Modern Times*. (Leiden, Brill, 2003).

class of Egyptians, he *effendiyya*. As discussed earlier in the chapter, this meant that al-Banna, like others of this social grouping, were formally educated and usually graduates of higher institutes like Cairo University or Dar al-Ulūm. As Gershoni argues, the *effendiyya* were to prove to be the most important social grouping in the Egyptian nationalist movement; namely because they emerged post-1919 with a profound sense of optimism in the future after independence came in 1922.[702] However, the economic depression and political suppression that followed left many of them disillusioned and frustrated with existing political parties like the Wafd. As dissatisfaction grew, the *effendiyya* became increasingly associated with political activism[703] as many sought alternative avenues of political expression and organization. If we attempt to place Hasan al-Banna in this context, it becomes possible to understand his frustration with existing political groupings and his search for alternative avenues for religious and political mobilization. In removing the head coverings, al-Banna, a 'man of the *tarbūsh*'[704], reflects the new egalitarianism of the *effendiyya* and their desire to cast off the old social hierarchies which seemed to them to be holding them back.

Further, al-Banna was able to co-opt Sufī leaders into his organization by having them write for his journal. A regular column in *al-Jarīda* entitled 'Selections from the law and Sufism' shows his commitment to explaining Sufī beliefs as well as his desire to give Sufī shaykhs a voice through his journal. For example, in the June 8th 1934 column Shaykh Ibrahīm Khalīl al-Shadhilī comments on the validity of prayers derived from the Quran.[705] In another instance, in the August 9th 1934 edition of the *Jarīdat*, Shaykh Ibrahīm contributes a piece on the proper celebration of the *mawlid* and true and false *karamāt*.[706] In the April 23 1935 edition al-Banna includes an article by Shaykh Tantawī Jawharī on the recitation of surat Yasīn[707] and *karamāt*.[708] The inclusion of

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[702] Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation*, p. 3.
[703] Ryzova, p. 129.
[704] Dr. Nelida Fuccaro, Personal Communication, April 15th, 2008.
[705] Al-Shadhilī, Ibrahim Khalīl. 'Fusul Mukhtāra min al-Fiqh wal Tasawwuf' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 2 (June 8 1934): p. 145.
[706] Al-Shadhilī, Ibrahīm Khalīl. 'Fusul Mukhtāra min al-Fiqh wal Tasawwuf' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimin* 2 (August 9 1934): p. 422.
[707] The recitation of Yāsīn in groups is another common ritual in the Sufī *dhikr*.
[708] Jawharī, Tantawī. 'Qira`at Surat Yāsīn wal Karamāt' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 3 (April 23 1935): p. 53.

Sufī shaykhs in a publication of the Ikhwān ensured a continuation of their teachings and solidified al-Banna's alliance with these important religious communities.

Another method al-Banna employed in his agenda to involve Sufī groups in his mission was to incorporate Sufī meanings into the teachings of the Ikhwān. He stated in the *Mu'tamar al-Khāmis* that the Brotherhood was 'A Salafī *da'wa*, a Sunnī *tariqa*, a Sufī reality...'[709], an indication that *tasawwuf* was part of the ideological framework of the new Brotherhood. Al-Bashīr adds that al-Banna put Sufism in the definition of the organization because he believed that the inner state of his members was the most important criterion for success of the organization. 'The source of all goodness,' he writes, 'was purification of the soul.'[710] It may also be that al-Banna combines references to these very different schools of thought in one definition to bring together Islamic workers who might otherwise be at odds and transmit to them his respect for their varied contributions to the Muslim cause. Al-Banna felt he needed to articulate the position of the Ikhwān on Sufī teachings not only because it was important to him personally, but because he wanted his followers to know how Sufism could have a place in their lives as well. In as much as his writings contain prohibitions of reprehensible Sufī practices, they also contain those teachings of Sufism he found valid. In his *Risalat al-Ta'līm*, he states that a Muslim should not go to graves to seek the favor of the person buried there, but in the same *risāla* he states that a Muslim should dwell often on the lives of these pious people of the past and praise them much as a means of drawing nearer to his Lord.[711]

Respecting Sufī symbols and meanings was another way al-Banna was able to recruit shaykhs and members of the orders to work with him towards his goals. Al-Banna was conscious of the highly charged nature of the debates on Sufism during his day and tried not to offend leaders by appearing to be more 'orthodox' than they were. He never, argues Hāmid, attacked individuals by name or stated his argument in such a way that the reader would know precisely which individual or organization he was referring to. Rather,

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[709] Hāmid, p. 66.
[710] Al-Bashīr, p. 6.
[711] Al-Banna, *Risalat al-Ta'līm*, p. 7-8.

he spoke generically about an action which he believed to be incorrect.  Respecting Sufī rituals is also clear from his interactions with different Sufī shaykh's during his time in al-Isma`iliya.  Al-Banna would always participate in a shaykh's *hadra* or gathering before approaching the shaykh to speak with him personally.[712]

In addition, al-Banna was able to put forward his case for Sufī reform and revival by reinforcing those teachings of *tasawwuf* he felt were important and religiously sound.  Paired with this was his establishing of a universal standard for Sufī practices.  As Hāmid puts it, the standard was simple--he praised whatever he saw was in agreement with the Qurān and *sunna* and criticized whatever practices contradicted them.[713]  This is clear in his *Risalat al-Ta'līm* where he encourages prayer, *dhikr*, *istighfār*, and fasting and instructed his followers to make these rituals part of their life.[714]  He encouraged his students to lead a life of asceticism without acquiring too many worldly possessions[715].  Praising positive qualities ensured that al-Banna did not lose those in the Sufī camp who might be his allies and helpers in his cause.  Also, it reinforces our earlier argument that al-Banna integrated certain Sufī meanings into his mission believing them to be vital.  The establishment of the Qurān and *sunna* as a standard by which Sufī practices were evaluated was meant to diminish some of the theological stalemate that resulted when scholars tried to engage these issues.

Finally, al-Banna was also able to incorporate the orders into his vision for reform by creating a universal ideal of the Sufī-*mujāhid*, the historical figure who is both *zāhid* and warrior, devoted to a life of both the inner and outer struggle.  Al-Banna's synthesis of this ideal serves not only to show his commitment to the teachings of Sufism, but also to urge his followers to strive towards the well-roundedness of Islam's past heroes.  In the *Risalat al-Jihād*, he writes that, 'Muslims in all ages before this oppressive age never left the duty of *jihād*, even the scholars and Sufīs..'[716]  The implication here is that readers may think, based on contemporary suppositions

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[712] Al-Banna, *Mudhakkarāt*, p. 64.
[713] Hāmid, p. 64.
[714] Al-Banna, *Risalat al-Ta'līm*, p. 22-23.
[715] Al-Banna, *Bayna al-Ams wal Yawm*, p. 5.
[716] Al-Banna, Hasan. *Risalat al-Jihād*. (Aleppo, Qism Nashr al-Da`wa, no year), p. 36.

of what it meant to be a Sufī, that *ahl al-tasawwuf* were not engaged in jihād, but spent their time in worship. Al-Banna is able to refute this notion by telling of those historical figures that were able to do both.

The synthesis of a well-rounded historical model serves to create a prototype that contemporary Muslims could relate to on some level and aspire to his well-roundedness. It is also meant to show Muslims that this was not always the way things were. Al-Banna writes that, 'they believed in an order that was both practical and spiritual, upholding their faith and their state, and their Qurān and their sword.'[717] It was meant also to expose Muslims to one who was able to cultivate qualities which, in the modern context, were difficult to find in one person. This 'imbalance', al-Banna observes, is characteristic only of this age, as Sufī-*mujāhids* such as Imām `Abdullah ibn Mubārak[718], who was both *faqīh*, *zāhid*, and *mujāhid* were many in classical Islamic history. 'Where are we,' he asks, 'compared to this history?'[719] Even those remembered best for their scholarship, such as Imām al-Shafa`ī, showed great physical strength and bravery, in this case, the Imām could shoot ten arrows and never miss his mark.[720]

For al-Banna, the figure of the Sufī-*mujāhid* also serves to encourage contemporary Sufī shaykhs to teach their followers the duty of *jihād*, something he felt was lacking. He cites examples of Sufī shaykhs, such as Shaykh Shaqīq al-Balkhī, who promoted the teaching of *jihād* and urged his students to take part in it.[721] For al-Banna and for others, the reintroduction of a Sufī-warrior ideal served to cultivate those aspects of Islam needed in a time of crisis--in hopes that these figures would enter the popular consciousness and become the new heroes.

For al-Banna, the establishment of Sufī beliefs as they appear in his main didactic text *Risalāt al-Ta`līm*, informed the Brothers that Sufism would not be eliminated from their religious understanding but rather that limits would be placed to prevent excesses. Al-Banna taught the Brothers to accept varied religious

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[717] Hāmid, p. 67.
[718] Al-Banna, *Risalat al-Jihād*, p. 36.
[719] ibid.
[720] ibid.
[721] Hāmid, p. 67.

interpretations in preparation for the clashes that would inevitably occur between Brothers of different religious sensibilities. Further, he set limits to Sufī rituals such as grave visitation, so that the Brothers would not lose their credibility with the general public. Finally, he argued that the Brothers would be free to seek out spiritual truths as long as their queries were based on firm belief and not intellectual rationalism.

Though al-Banna incorporated these Sufi concepts into the main teachings of the organization, he did not wish to replace the orders which already existed. Instead, as discussed in the second part of the chapter, al-Banna embarked on an effort to co-opt the orders into his revival and to encourage them to work under the umbrella of the Ikhwān. He did this by reaching out to shaykhs of *turuq*, thereby diffusing their hostility, by incorporating basic Sufi beliefs into the Ikhwān manuals, and by inculcating students with a deep respect for Sufī meanings and symbols, such as respecting the *majlis* or *hadra* of the shaykh. Finally, al-Banna oft discussed image of the Sufī warrior served to incorporate those elements of Sufī spiritual life al-Banna so admired with the activism that the public would appreciate. This along with his campaign to subject Sufī rituals to the test of legalism created an atmosphere where Sufism had a chance to continue, albeit in a new guise. His efforts to marry the sharia with the *haqīqa* would certainly attract those who desired a spirituality within the confines of the law and relevant to the greater Muslim body.

It also appears that al-Banna's background as a Sufi allowed him to reach a broader base of support among the Egyptian people; after all, Sufism at this point was not favored by the elites, and it was largely the laborers and rural classes that could still grasp his message. Eventually, his call spread to other classes as well. Abu-Rabi' argues that it was precisely al-Banna's origins in popular Sufism that allowed him to speak to the masses about social change in a language they understood. He 'did not talk of democracy or constitutional rights, or use the elaborate terminology of lawyers trained in Paris. He was always mass-oriented.'[722] Al-

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[722] Abu-Rabi', p. 67.

Banna's background as a Sufī, argues Lia, certainly helped him to draw in youths who were drawn to Sufism, but 'were disenchanted by Sufī excesses and backwardness.'[723]

In the history of Islamic organizations, historians agree that the Brotherhood enjoyed a large base of support because of its ability to draw loyalty from both the traditional classes and the younger, educated class of professionals in the cities.[724] Bearing in mind the religious and cultural mood in Cairo in the 1930s, it seems unlikely that a new *tarīqa* would have been popular had al-Banna founded one. The key difference between the *turuq* and the Ikhwān came simply down to the mood and language of the time; al-Banna recognized that times had changed, and that 1930s Cairo required a certain type of organization that did not exist at that point. Early members of the Ikhwān were aware of the resemblance their organization bore to the orders; when members of the Ikhwān defined their movement as a 'movement of effendiyya', it was done to disassociate from the perceived stigma of the mystical orders, and especially from the sense of futility which they represented.'[725] Where an order would be rejected by the educated milieu of Egyptians, a religio-political organization with a far-reaching social message would not.

*Conclusion*

We have discussed here three important theories connected to Hasan al-Banna's relationship with Sufism; namely, the argument that al-Banna was a Sufi counter-reformer who utilized the Ikhwān as a means of ensuring the continuation of Sufī teachings. Second, we have suggested that in al-Banna's treatment of Sufī esoterism he was candid and frank with audiences in hopes of winning over the educated portion of the population and re-orienting them with the spiritual world. Third and finally, that al-Banna sought to continue the spiritual teachings of the Sufī orders through the establishment of the Muslim Brotherhood.

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[723] Lia, p. 115.
[724] Gilsenan, *Recognizing Islam,* p. 221.
[725] Mitchell R., p. 216.

We have argued here that Sedgewick's model on Sufī 'counter-reform' is an excellent way to understand al-Banna's insistence on generating a Sufī revival. Al-Banna utilized a new form of organization to restore a traditional system of beliefs he felt too valuable to let fade away just as other shaykhs were doing across the Muslim world in the post-Salafī era. To spark this revival, he borrowed aspects of Sufī teachings and incorporated them into the Brotherhood, anxious to benefit from the wisdom of the traditional scholars while attracting the allegiance of the new generation of educated youths and elites. Second, al-Banna made use of his journal to familiarize an educated, largely urban population with the concepts and teachings of Sufism. Although he could not expect to convince the majority that *tasawwuf* was still a legitimate and relevant subject, he hoped at the very least to keep the knowledge of the subject in their consciousness. Finally, the nuanced and overt references to Sufism as well as its physical manifestations in the Ikhwān show how al-Banna established a *tarīqa* in the guise of a new organization. Beginning in the nineteenth century, these organizations become the main vehicles for the mobilization of the Egyptian people and the articulation of their Islamic identity. As such, Sufism would continue to be inculcated in members of the Ikhwān until al-Banna's successors determined that it was no longer to have a role.

**CHAPTER SIX**

**SPIRITUALITY, ISLAM, AND THE STATE: ATTITUDES TOWARDS SUFISM AMONG MUSLIM BROTHERS AFTER AL-BANNA'S DEATH**

After the Free Officers' Coup of 1952, the head of the Turuq Administration, Shaykh Muhammad al-Sāwī, called for the establishment of a panel with the task of reforming the activities of Egypt's Sufī orders. Among the participants in the panel were several prominent members of the Ikhwān. By this time, the Brotherhood had become so influential in the religio-political sphere, that they were able to persuade other members of the panel that the Sufī orders could not be reformed and should instead by abolished.[726] The recommendation was announced by Supreme Guide Hasan al-Hudaybī himself in May 1953, but was never acted upon. This was because the Free Officers recognized that the Ikhwān was a greater threat to their new government than the orders would ever be. This was because the Ikhwān had a clear political agenda and enjoyed widespread popularity, making them a formidable rival to Nasser's new regime.

But al-Hudaybī's proclamation that the orders were beyond reform is a far cry from the optimistic attitude of his successor. In Chapter Five, we articulated Imām al-Banna's attachment to Sufī teachings and his desire to inculcate the Brothers with his beliefs on spirituality. After al-Banna's death in 1949, the Brotherhood's commitment to Sufism decreased significantly as they no longer felt obligated to tolerate the orders for the sake of the *murshid*. As Mitchell puts it, 'The esteem accorded to their leader in this aspect did not minimize the widespread revulsion and contempt felt by the articulate and the urban Brothers for Sufism.'[727] By the end of the 1950s, the Brothers began to express their true position on the Sufīs—al-Banna's death had 'created an ideological vacuum, which in turn gave free reign to the expression of tendencies which, while claiming allegiance to al-Banna's doctrinal legacy, interpreted it in very different ways.'[728]

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[726] Abun-Nasr, p. 247.
[727] Mitchell R., p. 215.
[728] Kepel, Gilles. *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet and the Pharoah*. (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2003), p. 36.

We will suggest three conjectures in this chapter. First, the Ikhwān authors argued for the rationalization of religious ideals, that is, they emphasized logical interpretation and rejected the transmitted devotional texts. Second, Ikhwān writers contextualized any discussion of spirituality within their broader social and political mission. Third and finally, that the writings of the Ikhwān authors reveal a move towards a more 'socio-political' Islam that would set the stage for their involvement in national politics. Until now, no comprehensive study has been completed on the Brothers' break with their leader on the topic of Sufism. Yet we have found that the Brothers' ideological shift away from Sufism has broad implications for the study of political Islam and the development of Islamic political parties in the twentieth century.

It is also important to note that the socio-political scene in 1950s Egypt was very different from the world al-Banna lived in. At this point, colonialism was in the past and Egyptians ushered in a new era under the leadership of President Gamāl `Abdul Nasser (d. 1970). Nasir and the Free Officers seized power in a coup against King Farouk (d. 1965) in 1952, ushering in a period of optimism as Egyptians felt for the first time that they ruled themselves. Additionally, the coup left Egyptian ideologues and intellectuals dreaming of the possibilities of the new state. Throughout the 1930s, al-Banna utilized his journal to articulate his ideas about nationalism and Islamic statehood. In developing their ideas on rational Islam and social spirituality, Brotherhood writers from the 1950s were only continuing a project started by al-Banna, and developing it as the new political ideology of the organization.

For the Brothers, the battle regarding Sufism was essentially a political debate over who would control the hearts, minds, and political allegiances of the people. As Rozehnal puts it, Sufism as a social and political movement is 'impacted by (and responsive to) broader social, cultural, and political forces.'[729] In Egypt, the question of authority looms large in the battle between the Brotherhood and the orders even until the present day. By challenging the authority of shaykhs and transmitted religious texts, the Brothers were essentially

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[729] Rozehnal, Robert. *Islamic Sufism Unbound: Politics and Piety in Twenty-First Century Pakistan*. (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 19-20.

empowering themselves as the sole religious authority.  Thus, in post -1952 Egypt, the battle against organized

Sufism was namely a debate over who would define religion in new Egyptian state.

*The Muslim Brotherhood After al-Banna's Death*

In 1948, King Farouk's regime banned the Muslim Brotherhood, a move meant to silence al-Banna's calls

for a return to sharia law in Egypt.  In response, a sect of Muslim Brothers assassinated Egyptian Prime Minister

Mahmūd Fahmī al-Nuqrāshī, a move that al-Banna himself condemned.[730]  He 'argued that the Brothers who

incited terror and engaged in terrorist activities had no orders to do so, and in fact, misunderstood the aims of

the organization.'[731]  It is widely believed, though not substantiated, that the King's regime arranged for al-

Banna's assassination on 12 February 1949 as a response to Nuqrāshī's assassination.[732] Further, Nuqrashi's

successor as Prime Minister, `Abdel Hadi of the Sa'adī government, was determined thereafter to 'spell the end

of the Brotherhood' by ordering further arrests and repression.[733]

In 1951, after several years without incident the government lifted the ban on the Brotherhood.  In

1952, the Brothers decided to support Nasser, his colleague Muhammad Nagīb, and the Free Officers in

overthrowing the King, believing they would have a say in how the new state would be run.  After the Officers

successful coup in October 1952, Nasser made quick steps to dissolve all political parties but left the

Brotherhood, referring to them as an 'association' rather than a 'party'.[734]  Nasser eventually lost patience with

the Brothers' calls for the application of sharia law and after a staged attempt on his life in Alexandria in 1954,

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[730] Sullivan, Denis Joseph. *Islam in Contemporary Egypt: Civil Society Versus the State*. (Boulder, Lynne Reinner Publishers, 1999), p. 42.  Also Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood,* p. 14.
[731] Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood,* p. 14.
[732] See Mitchell R., p. 71 for sources related to al-Banna's assassination and the subsequent trial of his assassins.
[733] Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 13.
[734] Sullivan, p. 43.

he launched a tremendous crackdown on the organization.  This measure proved catastrophic for the Brothers; 'more than one thousand members were imprisoned and tortured, and its leaders were executed.'[735]

There is no doubt that the scandal associated with al-Nuqrashī's assassination and al-Banna's death afterwards left the Ikhwān in a serious crisis.  As Zollner points out, having been outlawed, the organization was operating mainly in secret at this point, 'being kept alive by a circle of leaders and their network.'  Indeed, the Brothers' personal connections to men of influence and status proved vital for the survival of the organization during this period.  Mustafa Mu`min, Secretary General of the Brotherhood, maintained good relations with Wafd politicians, who needed an alliance with the Brotherhood against their adversaries in the rival Sa'adī government.  These alliances would prove vital in 1950, when the Ikhwān would face its most difficult trials in court.  Most importantly, good relations with the government allowed the Brotherhood to turn to the critical task of returning to legitimacy and electing al-Banna's successor, the next *murshid*.[736]

A new *murshid* would have to be selected, but it would be difficult to do so as members of the leading circle of the Brotherhood had very different, and sometimes opposing, ideologies.  Given the stigma associated with most of the Brothers in the leading circle, such as Salah al-Ashmawī, Deputy Leader of the Brotherhood, and Abdul Rahmān al-Banna, Hasan's brother, the candidate would have to be someone who was not well known.  Al-Ashmawī, for example, headed the notorious Secret Unit that was suspected of carrying out assassinations and violence against political opponents.  The new *murshid* would have to have a shining reputation and be well-connected in the political circles of the time.  Hasan al-Hudaybī was first approached by Brotherhood leaders in 1950, and it became clear by 1951 that they considered him an ideal candidate for the position.  He was a former 'high ranking representative of the judiciary' who also had connections to the palace.  The Brothers hoped that al-Hudayb 's spotless reputation would improve their image in Egyptian society, and his connections to elites in the government might prove useful should the Brotherhood be brought before a court

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[735] Sullivan, p. 43.
[736] Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 16-18.

again. Their aim, Zollner argues, was to elect a man who lacked significant strength or influence so that they could continue to have a say in the administration of the Brotherhood.[737]

It is worth nothing that al-Hudaybī's nomination to the position of *murshid* in October 1951 went against the constitution of the Brotherhood, which stipulated that the *murshid* should be a member of the Consultative Assembly for five years. The Assembly was comprised of between 100 and 150 members at any given time; each member had to be at least 25 years old and an active member of the organization. Most importantly, the Consultative Assembly was responsible for choosing the Guidance Council, the body of twelve members responsible for 'shaping and executing the policy of the Society.'[738] But the Brotherhood leadership felt desperate action would have to be taken to salvage the organization, which included appointing a man who was not associated with the Brotherhood's recent past. He was also a man who lacked formal religious training, having graduated from the School of Law in 1915 was a product of the new government secular schools. As such, his perspective would be an interesting departure from the Islamic overtones of al-Banna's teachings. Al-Hudaybī's time as a student also coincided with the peak of anti-British sentiment in Egyptian colleges, where students demonstrated against colonial occupation, and he was heavily involved in these activities.[739]

Soon after assuming his duties as *murshid*, al-Hudaybī angered the Brotherhood elites such as al-Ashmawī by making executive decisions and exercising his control over the organization. He was, after all, not supposed to be a 'true' *murshid*, having been appointed to pacify public opinion and to utilize his valuable connections in the service of the Brotherhood. More so, the changes he made to the internal structure of the organization created unnecessary instability and created enemies for al-Hudaybī. After all, 'the challenge of dissolution was still fresh in the memory of Brothers, and many believed that secret networks and personal relations were the safeguard for the organization's survival.' In addition, the 'Secret Unit' of the Brotherhood,

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[737] Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 17-20.
[738] Mitchell R., p. 166-169.
[739] Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 21.

responsible for the terrorist attacks of the past, operated almost independantly of the main organization, and owed its loyalty to al-Ashmawī, not al-Hudaybi.[740]

Most interestingly, it was al-Hudaybī's congenial relations with the rulings elites of the 1950s that angered the Brothers most. Salih al-Ashmawī and Muhammad al-Ghazālī in particular, openly criticized al-Hudaybī for his good relations with the palace, though they had initially chosen him for just that. They saw his politiking as threatening to the stability of the organization. Al-Hudaybī made it clear that he intended to restructure the organization as he saw fit, including dismantling the Secret Unit, the controversial section of the Brotherhood whose members received combat training and that had caused so much controversy in the past. As the public came to know about the internal strife between the Brothers, it appeared that choosing al-Hudaybi had not brought stability to the organization after all.[741]

The Revolution of July 1952 significantly altered the internal dynamics of the organization as well as its relations with the state, for it had created a sense of hope among leaders in the Brotherhood that for the first time they would have a role in the wider political arena. Because many of the Brothers had good relations with the leaders of the coup such as Nasser and Nagib they expected to be included in the plans for the new government. Immediately after the coup, in fact, al-Hudaybi visited Nagib, who was to become the first president of independent Egypt and meetings with Nasser followed soon after.[742] These good relations continued until Nasser could no longer accommodate the demands of the Brothers, and seeing them as a challenge to his 'absolute'[743] rule, utilized the assassination attempt of 1954 to remove them from the political arena.

But problems within the organization itself had also diminished the Brothers' credibility as viable participants in the project of nation building. Al-Hudaybī and al-Ashmawī continued to compete for power within the organization, each one advancing his model of what the role of the Ikhwān would be. Further, the

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[740] Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 23.
[741] ibid, p. 24.
[742] ibid, p. 27.
[743] Zollner makes this argument in *The Muslim Brotherhood*, introduction.

controversy of the Secret Unit was still not resolved, increasing tensions between the two men and threatening their credibility to the wider public.[744] By November of 1953, al-Ashmawi, now operating an anti-Hudaybi wing of the Brotherhood, began to take steps to remove al-Hudaybi from power.[745] He demanded al-Hudaybī's resignation and when it did not come, chained himself and his supporters inside the headquarters and disallowed access to any who were not part of the coup. The fued had to be resolved by Nasser, who brokered a compromise between the feuding parties. A general meeting was called shortly afterwards and the general public declared their overwhelming support for al-Hudaybī. In doing so, they were fulfilling what they saw as the meaning of the *bay'a*, their oath of loyalty to the leader. Following this meeting, al-Ashmawī was expelled from the organization, along with several of his supporters. He swiftly condemned al-Hudaybī as a 'dictator', who had expelled him without 'accusation, investigation, or trial.'[746] Al-Hudaybī's main victory from this ordeal was that it gave him the ability to dismantle and re-constitute the Secret Unit and purge it of terrorism.[747]

Nasser died of a heart attack in 1970, and was succeeded by his vice-president Anwar Sadāt. Sadāt, unlike his predecessor, began his presidency by distancing himself from the USSR and seeking domestic alliances with organizations like the Ikhwān.[748] Sadāt recognized the influence of the Brotherhood and sought to use it to combat his enemies on the Left. As Zollner points out, though the ban on the Brothers was never lifted, Sadat's leniency in the 1970s gave the Brothers the chance to 'regroup publicly.'[749] Thus, the Sadat period ushered in a new era for the Brothers and a drastic shift in policy. Under the leadership of Hasan al-Hudaybī, the Brothers 'sought to influence politics through social structures and institutions.'[750] He believed that the Ikhwān must win the people by participating in professional and student unions. Though voices within the Ikhwān called for more

[744] Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 27.
[745] Mitchell R., p. 122.
[746] ibid, p. 124.
[747] ibid, p. 125.
[748] Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 48.
[749] ibid.
[750] ibid.

'radical' opposition to the government, al-Hudaybī's teachings on social engagement form the basis for the organization's strategy until today.[751]

*Al-Hudayb  and the Rise of Qutbism*

As we have shown, the Brotherhood experienced painful disputes following al-Banna's death, both ideologically and politically.  Questions over who was to lead, and what role the Ikhwān was to play in the wider political scene lingered with the Brothers well into the mid 1950s.  There is no doubt, however, that al-Hudaybī's ability to consolidate his power and to remove al-Ashmawī as his main challenger determined a great deal about the ideological direction of the organization thereafter.  Al-Hudaybī was against the use of violence by the Brothers, either against the colonizers or against the government.  In dissolving the Secret Unit, he saw himself as 'purifying the Muslim Brotherhood from crime.'[752]  He had decided to bring former members of the Secret Unit back into the general membership of the Brotherhood since they had a wide base of support among the masses.  However, al-Hudaybī was cautious and recognized a radicalized wing of the Brothers, and believing firmly in a moderate blend of Islam and politics, utilized his position to promote his agenda.[753]  These ideas centered around the meaning of belief, and who it was permissible to kill in the name of Islam and just rule.  After the crackdown on the Brothers of 1954, al-Hudaybī saw it as his obligation to respond to radical notions on belief and unbelief put forward by Ikhwān ideologue Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966), by devising his own treatise, *Duat la Qudat,* contesting his views.  Sayyid Qutb was born in 1906 in the Egyptian province of Asyūt.  He studied in local government schools before graduating from Cairo's Dar al-Ulūm in 1933.  He went on to accept a position with the Ministry of Public Instruction, and in 1948 was sent to observe the American education system on behalf of the Ministry.  It was on this trip, Kepel argues, that Qutb rediscovered his religion which eventually drew him to

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[751] Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 49.
[752] Ashour, Omar. The De-Radicalization of Jihadists: Transforming Armed Islamic Movements. (New York, Routledge, 2009), p. 66.
[753] This argument is made by Zollner in *The Muslim Brotherhood*, conclusion.

the Muslim Brotherhood.[754]   Qutb was outraged at what he saw as American promiscuity and love of money. When he returned to Egypt, he was so outspoken regarding his anti-American sentiments that the Ministry released him.  In 1951, he was recruited to the Ikhwān by al-Ashmawī himself.  About this, Qutb declared himself 'reborn.'[755]   After the Free Officers Coup in 1952, Qutb was filled with optimism about the new government and had cordial relations with Nasser and Naguib until the confrontation with the Brothers in 1954. Qutb was imprisoned and tortured along with al-Hudaybi and others of the Brotherhood elites, and searched for answers for the barbarity of the Nasser regime through his writing.

Qutb outlined his ideas in a pamphlet titled '*Ma`alim fil Tar q*' (Milestones) that was widely read by imprisoned Brothers, and which served as their justification for waging war on the Nasser regime.  Qutb's ideas might have been adopted by all Muslim Brothers were it not for al-Hudaybī's response in *Du t la Qud t*.  Indeed, al-Hudaybī's response proved essential as it was soon adopted as the manifesto for the organization, filling an ideological vacuum that would have otherwise been occupied by the works of Qutb.

In 2007, Barbara Zollner published an important article which raised questions as to whether or not al-Hudayb  authored *Du t la Qud t* and examines the implications of this revelation 'for the texts relevance as the official statement' of the Brotherhood.[756]  The fundamental purpose of *Du t la Qud t* was to negate the Qutbian emphasis on *takf r* by arguing that the *shahada*, the testimony of faith, was all that was required for an individual to be considered a Muslim.  Personal accounts suggest that the text was written by al-Hudayb 's son and an inner circle of Brothers who consulted with Azhar  scholars.  The implications of this, Zollner points out, are startling, because the involvement of the scholars of Azhar, 'Egypt's central religious insitution', implies that Nasser's government had knowledge of and endorsed this coordinated effort to combat Qutb's ideas.[757]

Qutb's ideas did not vanish, and his supporters continued to publish and teach his works in the vast networks of Islamists that had been pushed underground by Nasser's repression.  He is largely credited in

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[754] Kepel, p. 40.
[755] ibid, p. 41.
[756] Zollner, 'Prison Talk', p. 412.
[757] ibid, p. 424.

Western academics as being the founder of what is now called 'Islamism', the ideology that holds Islam to be a total political system. John Calvert has recently composed an important study on Qutb's intellectual development, suggesting a more nuanced undertanding of the ideological path in the 1940s that led him to Islamic radicalism. Qutb began his career as a man of letters, a novelist and cultural observer, a nationalist incensed by the surge of British troops in Egypt during the Second World War.[758] Reading Calvert's account of the 'Qutb' of the 1940s, one feels perplexed at the end game of his thought. Even when, in the mid 1940s, Qutb made his first effort to write an exegesis of the Quran, he did not begin with the 'piestic' phrase 'In the Name of Allah, the Beneficient and Merciful'; Calvert points out that even Islamists remember that he was 'a latecomer to the cause.'[759] Qutb joined the Muslim Brotherhood in 1951, having lost patience with the Left who in his view had failed to secure the popular support needed to withstand the effect of British imperialism. He was particulary attracted to the Brotherhood's socio-economic potential, having witnessed the 'unemployed effendiya and rural poverty.'[760] He channeled his energy by establishing a Journal 'New Thought' along with fellow Muslim Brother Muhammad al-Ghaz l  where his first ideas on an Islamist solution for Egypt's socio-economic problems began to take shape.[761]

But it was really the Qutb of Nasser's prison that Islamists until today look to for inspiration. In the dark cell where he penned *Milestones*, the 'concise summary of his mature Islamist thought', Qutb argued that in a world on the brink of oblivion, Islam was the only solution not only for the Muslims but for all of humanity.[762] In his own words, 'Islam can not fulfil its role except by taking concrete form in a society, in a nation.'[763] It was Qutb's fusion of morality and politics that eventually led him to his condemnation of not only Western

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[758] Calvert, John. *Sayyid Qutb and the Origins of Radical Islamism*. (New York, Columbia University Press, 2010), p. 111.
[759] ibid, p. 115.
[760] Ibid, p. 124.
[761] Ibid.
[762] Ibid, p. 232.
[763] Qutb, Sayyid. *Ma'alim fil Tarīq (Milestones).* (no place, SIME books, 2006), p. 2.

imperialism but the 'collaborators'[764] who supported their infiltration of Muslim lands.  Eventually, it was these collaborators that would be branded as '*jahil*' for neglecting Allah's commands.  'This declaration,' Qutb maintains, 'means that the usurped authority of God be returned to Him and the usurpers be thrown out-those who by themselves devise laws for others to follow, thus elevating themselves to the status of Lords and reducing others to the status of slaves.'[765]  They were thus to be fought and shown no mercy, even if they professed to be Muslims.

*From 'Traditional' to 'Rational' Islam: the Brothers and Islamic Tradition*

The 1950s saw a plethora of writings by members of the Ikhwān such as Muhammad `Abdullah al-Sammān, Muhammad al-Ghazālī (d. 1996), and Anwar al-Jindī (d. 2002), and others seeking to define the position of the Brotherhood on a number of subjects.  Consequently, 'between 1949 and 1954 there was a proliferation of work by Muslim Brethren and their fellow-travellers : Abdul-Qadir `Awda, Muhammad al-Ghazali, Sayyid Qutb, al-Bahi al-Khuli, and Muhammad Taha Badawi all sought to continue al-Banna's work in their own writings, for the late Supreme Guide had left scarcely a thought on paper .'[766]

Regarding Sufism, the Brothers' are very clear to point out their objections but always by arguing that they objected to the orders, and not Sufism itself.[767]  Though Mitchell correctly suggests that writings of Ikhwān authors reveal their anti-Sufī inclinations, further examination of their writings suggests an anti-'traditional' tone as well.  By this we mean that the Brothers argued for a primacy of logic and reason when analyzing traditional sources.  This approach meant that any source could be questioned, whether it was *tafsīr*, hadīth, or a classical

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[764] Calvert, p. 118.

[765] Qutb, *Ma'alim fil Tarīq*, p. 36.

[766] Kepel, p. 36.

[767] Al-Sammān, *Al-Islām al-Musafa*, p. 60.

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work compiled by a classical scholar.[768]  The wider implications of these arguments are critical—namely, by deconstructing these traditional sources of religious authority, the Brothers stood poised to set the religious agenda after 1952.

Specifically, we will discuss three themes challenged by the Ikhwān authors.  First, the Ikhwān authors rejected common beliefs regarding the status of the Prophet Muhammad.  Second, they questioned the station of the scholars and the reliability of books of religious knowledge.  Third and finally, the Brothers no longer accepted the political 'pacifism' practiced by some Sunnīs, that is, the unconditional support for the Muslim ruler.

The Brothers' exposés on the Sufī orders do not contain references to books by Sufīs or about Sufism— the books are very polemical and seem to stem from their own personal experiences with the Sufīs.  However, they serve as an important source for understanding the position of the Brotherhood leadership at this point in history and its agenda to move away from an important part of its legacy.

Brothers who wrote about the *turuq* after 1950 display little tolerance for their transmitted traditions and devotion to the Prophet and the *awliyā*.  Their attitude is directly linked to the trend of rationalist Islam in 1930s Cairo discussed in earlier chapters.  The idea that the practices of the Sufīs were not compatable with the intellect is transmitted by Muhammad Abdullah al-Samman, born in the Egyptian province of Suhāg.  He became a member of the Ikhwān in the early 1940s.  After al-Banna's death, he established himself as one of their leading thinkers and writers.   For example, al-Sammān writes that, 'Islam is a religion that does not speak to the hearts until the *aqīda* has been established in it...Islam begins first by addressing the intellect because it is the source of all thinking.'[769]  The Brothers' were very concerned with challenging the transmission of tradition that was not scrutinized by the intellect.  The idea that the orders do not support rational thinking is also supported by Muhammad al-Ghazālī when he writes,

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[768] See for example, Muhammad `Abdullah al-Sammān's *Muhammad: Al-Rasūl al-Bashar* where the author does not hesitate to question the work of Qadī `Iyyād, a well known Malikī jurist.
[769] Al-Sammān, *Al-Islām al-Musafa*, introduction.
[769] Mitchell R., p. 216.

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'And in one crowd there are those with strong sentiments and sincere exaggerations and in another crowd there is the sound of horns and various kinds of music which attract people to this Sufī philosophy, and invade lives and distract the people and defeat knowledge and logic and sound thinking.'[770]

Here Sufī rituals, with their horns and exaggerated emotion, are juxtaposed with knowledge and logical thought, which al-Ghazālī feels should be occupying the minds of the people.

Al-Sammān and al-Ghazālī's statements reflect the view of the prominent Brothers in the 1950s that the views of the Sufīs were doctrinally incorrect and socially harmful as well. The Sufīs, and those who suggest that there was a realm that defied logic, were 'the first blow which struck at Islamic thought, and indeed at the existence of the Islamic nation.'[771] Their thinking, Anwar al-Jindī argued, was not Islamic at all, but the result of Hellenistic and Indian influences on Islam.[772] Al-Jindī was born in the Egyptian province of Asyūt in 1917. He was a journalist before the establishment of the Ikhwān, his first article appearing in the magazine "Al-Balāgh" in 1933. He joined the Ikhwān and began to write for them in 1946. During his long career, he produced many books and articles including a biography of Imām al-Banna. Like al-Sammn, al-Jind challenged the unquestionable authority of the Suf shaykhs and encouraged Muslims to read religious texts with an analytical eye. This concern of the Brothers over the control the orders had over the minds of the people is reflected in their writings. 'The Sufī orders in Egypt and Sudan and in the West and in the East of the Muslim lands,' al-Sammān wrote, 'are based on trickery and magic..and more important than all this, complete control over the intellect of the ignorant and the simple.'[773] Al-Sammān likens them to sheep, 'being led astray by their shepherd.'[774]

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[770] Al-Ghazālī, Muhammad. *Al-Islām al-Muftara 'Alay: Bayn al-Shu'uiyīn wal Rasmaliyīn*. (Cairo, Dar al-Kitāb al-Arabī bi Masr, 1951), p. 50.
[771] Mitchell R., p. 216.
[772] Al-Jindī, Anwar. *Al-Shubuhāt wal Akhtā' Al-Sha`iqa fi Al-Adāb al-Arabī wal Tarājim wal Fikr al-Islāmī*. (Cairo, Matba`at Hijāzī, 1981), p. 30.
[773] Al-Sammān, *al-Islām al-Musafa*, p. 68.
[774] ibid.

The Brothers' view of the Sufīs must be contextualized within the historical watershed that was the Officers' Coup of 1952. The Brothers had high hopes for the new regime until the crackdown of 1954 and fought any group that threatened Egyptian unity. As Mitchell argues, the orders, or any group that encouraged factionalism and threatened national cohesion, was seen as a threat.[775] As we mentioned earlier in the chapter, al-Hudaybī and his fellow Brothers were very eager to be included in the new Egyptian government under Nasser and utilized their political contacts to gain influence. If the Brothers were to be engaged in the project of nation-building, it would be problematic to have the orders with the loyalty of their membership to the shaykh, and not to the Ikhwān or to the state. Further, it was the Brothers' view that the *turuq* discouraged activism[776], that they taught members to spend their time in worship rather than community service[777], and that therefore their members would be of no use to the nation when the time came to work. As al-Sammān puts it,

> 'this complicated philosophy (Sufism) that is based on stupidity has led to the development of many divergent ideas that attack the very basis of the sharia and prevent the progression of life as Islam intended it to be carried out.'[778]

Further, he writes that the orders taught the *murīd,*

> 'to absolve himself of the world and its cares, and that he should not be united with the Muslims or be involved in their problems, or their affairs that is connected to their nation.'[779]

The reference here to the 'nation' (*watan*) is quite important and reflects the Brothers' concern that the devotion of the *murīd* to his order or shaykh actually challenged his devotion to his country. This was especially true in an era when nation building was seen as of prime importance. Elsewhere al-Sammān writes that 'their members do nothing all year but travel from one grave of a righteous person to another, hoping for some

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[775] Mitchell R., p. 216.
[776] ibid.
[777] See for example, the theme of rejecting too much worship in Abdullah al-Sammān's book al-Islām al-Musafa.
[778] Al-Sammān, *al-Islām al-Musafa*, p. 62.
[779] ibid, p. 65.

*baraka*'[780]—the critique here being again that members of the orders did not contribute anything to society or to helping their nation.

Thought the Brothers wrote with a sense of urgency about the need for every Egyptian man and woman to be involved in the project of nation-building, the realities of British colonialism were still very much a part of their memory. The Brothers argued in their writings that it was unacceptable for Muslims to live under foreign rule. Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966), the important Ikhwān ideologue, wrote that, 'Islam prohibits its followers to fall under any foreign rule, and any system of law that is not the sharia of Islam.'[781] Further, the Ikhwān authors were wary of any group that appeared to have cooperated with the colonial authorities. Al-Sammān writes that, 'These Sufī orders serve colonialism in the Muslim countries that have been occupied, because they gain control over the minds of a good part of the general consensus of the people, and obscures their vision from seeing the realities of occupation.'[782] Further, he writes, the shaykhs of the *turuq* stand accused of accepting large bribes from the colonial powers both in Egypt and elsewhere in the Muslim world, so much so that their influence and their activities depended on foreign control.[783] Ghazālī seconds al-Sammān's accusations when he writes, 'They (Sufi shaykhs) put themselves at the service of arrogant *khalīfas* and oppressive rulers.' Further, al-Ghazāli continues, the shaykhs misled their followers by teaching them that 'Islam calls people to poverty'[784] while they themselves live in opulence. Qutb, too, suggests that the British were helped by the Sufī shaykhs in their occupation of Egypt when he writes that, 'the occupation was helped by other factors as well…the people were poisoned by men of religion, especially by the shaykhs and the dervishes, who represent intellectual stagnation…or illusions and ignorance.'[785]

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[780] Al-Sammān, *al-Islām al-Musafa*, p. 66.
[781] Qutb, Sayyid. *Ma`rakat al-Islām wal Rasmaliyya*. (no place, Dar al-Saudiyya lil Nashr wal Tawzia, 1969), p. 98.
[782] Al-Sammān, *Al-Islām al-Musafa*, p. 67.
[783] ibid, p. 66.
[784] Al-Ghazālī, Muhammad. *Al-Islām al-Muftara 'Alay: Bayn al-Shu'uiyīn wal Rasmaliyīn*. (Cairo, Dar al-Kitāb al-Arabī bi Masr, 1951), p. 50.
[785] Qutb, Sayyid. *Ma`rakat al-Islām wal Rasmaliyya*. (no place, Dar al-Saudiyya lil Nashr wal Tawzia, 1969), p. 100.

To conclude, Brotherhood writings from the 1950s were characterized by an increasingly rational approach to religion that rejected the rote rituals of the orders.  The Brothers argued against the relevance of the orders and pointed out their apparent dangers.  This was particularly important in light of their relationship with the Free Officers and their hope to be included in Nasser's regime.  For this reason, they urged the Egyptian people to cast off their loyalties to shaykhs of *turuq* in favor of the project of nation building.

*Challenging the Sacred: The Brothers and Veneration of the Prophet*

The Brothers' desire to harness religious authority in the post-1952 era also accounts for their objections to the Sufīs'overwhelming love for the Prophet Muhammad.  Valerie Hoffman-Ladd has composed an extensive study of contemporary Sufī veneration of the Prophet and his family in Egypt.[786]  Though love of the Prophet is expressed by all Muslims, she argues that the Sufīs 'consider themselves set apart by the intensity of their love for the Prophet.'[787]  Ikhwān authors took offense to this 'extreme'[788] devotion to the Prophet Muhammad and argued against it in their writings.  Muhammad al-Sammān, a leading writer for the Muslim Brothers, writes that 'Muhammad was only a man and not a persona that should be sanctified.'[789]  His argument against veneration of the Prophet is that 'these extremists who are concerned with placing Muhammad in a station above the rest of humanity, they actually are not doing him justice, and they are running against natural human logic.'[790]  In addition, he writes that, 'Muhammad's message actually came to speak to the intellect of people with sound

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[786] Hoffman-Ladd, Valerie. 'Devotion to the Prophet and His Family in Egyptian Sufism'. International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies 24: p. 615-637.
[787] Hoffman-Ladd, 'Devotion to the Prophet and His Family in Egyptian Sufism', p. 618.
[788] Al-Sammān refers to them as *'muta'asibīn'*, extremists.
[789] Al-Sammān, Muhammad `Abdullah. *Muhammad: Al-Rasūl al-Bashar*. (Cairo, Al-Maktab al-Fanī lil Nashr, 1957), introduction.
[790] ibid, introduction.

logic.'[791]   The emphasis here on 'reason' and 'logic' suggests that al-Sammān wishes readers to assess all devotional acts not only with the heart, but first with the intellect.

More so, al-Sammān is willing to challenge centuries of Muslim scholarship to the test of intellectual credibility.  He argues that many of the hadīths which support the elevated station of the Prophet are in fact fabricated[792] and that even traditions relating how the Prophet spoke to his mother, Amina bint Wahb, while still in the womb, heralding his arrival to earth as messenger of God, are untrue.[793]  He challenges the narrations of Tabarī, a known collector of hadīth, as well as the work of Qadī `Iyyad, a Maliki *qādī* who was not a known Sufī, saying that 'he, too, in his book al-Shifā, transmitted this nonsense.'[794]  The books of *sīra*, accepted as reputable by most Muslims, are also flawed, he argues, in that 'they rely on the stories of the storytellers and fabricated hadīths.'[795]

How does al-Sammān recommend Muslims view sources on the Prophet?  He argues for a re-writing of the *sīra* 'from a realistic perspective that leaves no room for imagination.'[796]  He also suggests a re-examination of the classical works of *sīra* literature 'with a developed intellect…and sound reason.'[797]  This project, he writes, was begun by Rashid Rida and his colleagues and should be continued.  Keeping in mind the views of Salafī thinkers like Rida on the subject of Sufī rituals and religious interpretation, it is not surprising that al-Sammān mentions them in this context.  Already being suspicious of Sufī practices, and not particularly concerned with the sanctity of classical sources, Salafī thinkers leaned towards precisely the same rational interpretation as al-Sammān proposes here.  Thus, a key link exists between the Salaf s and the Muslim Brothers in that both sought to challenge traditional Islamic persuasions about the scholars and the texts especially in the context of 1930s Cairo, where the intellectual milieu was very supportive of such a self-examination.

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[791] Al-Sammān, *Muhammad: Al-Rasūl al-Bashar,* introduction.
[792] ibid, p. 94.
[793] ibid.
[794] ibid, p. 93.
[795] ibid, introduction.
[796] Al-Sammān, Muhammad `Abdullah. *Muhammad: Al-Rasūl al-Bashar*, p. 114.
[797] ibid, p. 114.

Beneath his concern about the station accorded to Muhammad by Sufīs and other lovers of the Prophet, al-Sammān reveals in his writing his desire to remove the very 'holiness' surrounding the Prophet's station. This is what Muslims refer to as '*hayba*', the aura surrounding the Prophet, which is largely derived from their belief that the Prophet is '*ma`sūm*', or protected by God from committing sin. He writes,

> 'Infallibility is not necessarily an attribute of Prophethood. And those who consider Muhammad to have been infallible before he became a Prophet should be debated, and those who consider him infallible after he became a Prophet are making an illogical statement that cannot be accepted.'[798]

Though al-Sammān's position against attributing miracles to the Prophet may be rooted in Salafī influences like Rashid Rida, it is also possible that he was influenced by the new wave of Islamic 'modernist' writers that first became important in 1930s Cairo. Writers such as Muhammad Husayn Haykal and Tawfīq al-Hakīm approached the life of the Prophet intellectually without discussing his miracles[799] or those aspects of Islamic belief that might be considered 'anti-modern'. For some, Haykel's work represented a marriage between their desire to be progressive—able to research and keep up with modern writing, and their attachment to their tradition. As Gershoni puts it, 'In its rationalist portrait of the Prophet capable of appealing to modern sensibilities, 'it has attracted many falsifiers back to belief in the prophecy of Muhammad, the seal of the Prophets.''[800] Fully aware that Egyptian sensibilities had changed, writers such as Haykel tried to capture that mood and appeal to the sensibilities of their rational-minded audience.

Though not as bold as al-Sammān in his assertions, the Egyptian scholar and Ikhwān member Shaykh Muhammad al-Ghazālī (d. 1996) also made use of his writings to argue that Muhammad should be seen as a Prophet but also a man. Al-Ghazālī, an Azhar graduate, was born in 1917 in the Egyptian province of Buhayra. He memorized the Quran at a young age and went on to earn his bachelor's and Masters degrees before becoming a speaker at al-Azhar and eventually a manager of their da'wa program. He joined the Ikhwān while a

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[798] Al-Sammān, *Muhammad: Al-Rasūl al-Bashar*, introduction.
[799] Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation,* p. 76.
[800] ibid.

student at al-Azhar and authored several publications thereafter.  He died in 1996.  Al-Ghazālī argues that love for the Prophet should not lead to according to him what he himself did not accord to himself.  'Allah,' writes al-Ghazālī, 'taught the Prophet to say, 'Say, I do not have any power to hurt or to harm myself except what Allah wills!'.[801]  The reason for mentioning these verses in this context appears to be to be sure that love of the Prophet does not translate into rituals of excess.

Al-Ghazālī also takes specific offense to the practice of giving this same excessive reverence to the Prophet's family.  He is of course referring to the rituals of adoration that take place in Egypt at the various shrines built over the graves of his family members and descendents, including Sayyida Nafīsa and Sayyida Zaynab, two grand-daughters of the Prophet.  He writes that, 'We respect the family of the Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, and we believe that part of respecting him is loving his family.  And we felt pain when his noble family experienced killing and torture at the hands of corrupt rulers.'[802]  This adoration is expressed by thousands of Egyptians who visit these shrines to express their love for the Prophet and his family.  As Hoffman-Ladd puts it, 'Egyptian Sufīs believe that the Muhammadan light was not taken away when the Prophet died, but was passed on to his heirs and their successors, both his natural descendents and the saints of God, generation after generation…While the Sufī must love and respect all the companions and saints of God, the people of the House (the ahl al-bayt) command special reverence and love.'[803]  Hoffmann-Ladd confirms the existence of a modern religious trend in Egypt to place the family of the Prophet 'on a par with other pious Muslims and denying that they have any special status…'[804]  However, she argues, there has been a recent series of publications by Egyptian authors aimed at restoring the Prophet's family to this special status[805], arguing that the descendants of the Prophet are the ones who inherited the Prophet's light and his way, and it is imperative that every Muslim grasp onto their memory if he or she hopes to be guided.

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[801] Al-Ghazālī, *Al-Islām wal Istibdād al-Siyāsī*, p. 185.
[802] ibid.
[803] Hoffmann-Ladd, 'Devotion to the Prophet', p. 621-622.
[804] ibid, p. 622.
[805] ibid.

But in the view of Ikhwān writers, to have more than sympathy for the Prophet's family is to go to excess.

Al-Ghazali goes on to write, 'Did not the Prophet tell his own daughter Fatima, 'I cannot help you before

Allah'[806]' meaning that even the Prophet's daughter will be judged for her deeds like the rest of humanity.

Although this view is justified by the 'rational' mindset we argued characterizes Ikhwān writers from this period,

there appears to be beneath it a desire to create a more 'egalitarian' Islam without special classes based on

*nasab* or birth.  We say this because just as there are hadīths that suggest that the Prophet's family had no

special rank, there are several as Hoffmann-Ladd points out that indicate their special status with the

believers.[807]  This is reflected too in Sayyid Qutb's discussion of 'Islamic' dress.  He writes, 'since when are some

Muslims distinguished from others by their dress?'[808]  There seems to be this obsession with being sure that no

individual is accorded a special rank over another.  After centuries of monarchical rule, the Ikhwān appear to be

rejecting the 'feudalism' that had consumed Egypt that al-Sammān criticizes so often, and to argue that even the

Prophet's own family did not distinguish themselves from the rest of the Muslims.

According to this perspective, the Prophet should be seen as a man not distinguished from other men

except that he was chosen by God to deliver His message.  In his book *Al-Islām al-Musafa*, al-Sammān writes

that, 'The miracles that are attributed to the Messenger have no basis and they do not raise his station. The

Qurān is enough of a miracle to attest to his mission.'[809]  While the Sufīs encourage reflection on the holy station

of the Prophet to encourage his adoration, the Brothers argues that such reflections are merely distractions not

supported by logic.

In political terms, there were wider implications to veneration of the Prophet that concerned the

Brothers.  Their main objective is to place limits on this love, both because it was irrational and because the

Brothers needed to position themselves as interpreters of the faith.  Al-Azhar was weak at this time and unable

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[806] Al-Ghazālī, *Al-Islām wal Istibdād al-Siyāsī*, p. 185.
[807] Hoffmann-Ladd, 'Devotion to the Prophet', p. 622. For example, she cites the hadith where the Prophet says
'The people of my family are like the ark of Noah, whoever holds onto them will be saved, whoever does not will
be consumed by Hellfire' along with other hadīths.
[808] Qutb, Sayyid. *Ma`rakat al-Islām wal Rasmaliyya*, p. 70.
[809] Al-Sammān, *Al-Islām al-Musafa,* introduction.

to confront the need for religious authority.  In a world where many interpreters of Islam existed, the Brothers felt their understanding to be correct and most complementary to Nasser's state.  Hence, their depictions of the orders as backwards and non-political.  Further, Egyptians were still working out questions about their identity— what it meant to be Egyptian and Muslim.  The Brothers were fully aware of the need for a religious party to help define the Islamic component of identity in the context of the Nasser regime.  Thus, in the context of the new state and the weakness of al-Azhar, the Brothers stood poised to establish their organization as a 'center of political authority and religious authenticity'. [810]

*The Validity of Religious Authority: Traditional Scholars and Sources Questioned*

Along with al-Sammān's suggestion that the classical sources on the Prophet's life be re-examined, comes a new conception of who can interpret these sources.  Another theme which permeates the Brothers' writings is the notion that scholars should no longer be given exclusive privilege to interpret religious texts—this was a task any Muslim could learn to do.  Frustrated with the inability of Musilm scholars to confront decades of colonial rule and Muslim weakness vis-à-vis the West, Qutb is willing to allow each Muslim to interpret the texts himself.  In doing so, he is essentially challenging the relevance of the ulema and empowering the individual Muslim to define his religious path.

In order to promote their revisionist approach to religion, the Brothers had to first deconstruct the traditional framework that had defined Egyptian religious life for so long.  This meant a general theme of disregard for the religious symbols that had given the shaykhs their status for so long.  Sayyid Qutb took offense to the Sufī shaykhs emphasis on traditional dress and ritual as a symbol of their status, arguing that

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[810] Rozehnal, Robert. *Islamic Sufism Unbound: Politics and Piety in Twenty-First Century Pakistan*. (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 21.

'even this particular dress that only the dervish shaykhs wear, it has no basis in the religion, in fact there is no Islamic dress and un-Islamic dress, Islam has not designated a certain kind of dress for people. Dress is determined by where one lives, even Muhammad the son of Abdullah simply wore the clothes of his people.'[811]

It appears that Qutb takes offense to the shaykhs claim that their traditional dress links them in some way with the tradition of the Prophet, lending them authority and legitimacy he does not think they should have.

For centuries, Egyptians relied on the scholars of al-Azhar to produce treatises on religion and to issue fatwas on contemporary issues. The Brothers' objected to this reliance on scholars for religious guidance, but it must be noted that this trend of interpretation of religion by non-scholars actually began two decades before al-Sammān's writing. In their study *Redefining the Egyptian Nation*, Gershoni and Jankowski argue that the transformation of Muhammad Husayn Haykal into an Islamic writer was a critical moment. They write, 'The composition of modernist biographies of the Prophet and his Companions by non-`ulama'* intellectuals was an implicit challenge to the dominant position of the `ulama'* as the authoritative interpreters of the Islamic heritage.'[812] Haykal, who had previously argued that the East must seek its inspiration, both material and spiritual, from the West, experienced a change of heart in the 1930s when he decided to focus his attention on indigenous culture and religion. 'It was now clear to him, 'write Gershoni and Jankowski, 'that the spiritual aspects of Egyptian life, as opposed to its science and technology, could be built only on the basis of Islam considered both as a source of values and a framework of collective identity.'[813] After Haykal's composition of *Hayat Muhammad*, his biography of the Prophet's life, Egyptian youth began to broaden their vision of who could interpret the religion—even the 'reform-minded' Shaykh al-Azhar, Muhammad Mustafa al-Marāghī, 'praised it as an honest treatment of Islam.'[814]

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[811] Qutb, *Ma`rakat al-Islām wal Rasmaliyya*, p. 69.
[812] Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation,* p. 75.
[813] ibid, p. 71.
[814] ibid, p. 75.

Many, including some members of the Brotherhood, welcomed the end of the scholars' monopoly on interpretation. Al-Sammān writes that, 'The calamity with the Muslims is that they say in every situation—where is al-Azhar? But al-Azhar is not responsible for Islam alone, and the scholars of the religion are no longer the protectors of Islam.'[815] He also writes that, 'all Muslims are obligated to become knowledgeable in their religion so that they may work in *da`wa* and to fight against those who fight Islam from the missionaries and the Orientalists.'[816] Elsewhere he argues that 'We do not believe in men of religion, because we consider every Muslim a 'man of religion' and that 'Islam does not require official men of religion, in fact it allows every educated Muslim, regardless of his station, to speak in the name of Islam.'[817] Qutb concurs when he writes that 'in Islam there are no men of religion.'[818] This view is a major departure from the traditional approach, in which scholars were consulted for their religious opinions based on their tireless study of the texts.

Besides al-Sammān's rational take on religious interpretation, his opinion on scholarship is a result of his frustration with the scholars of his day. He argues that these scholars were complacent with regards to the 'corruption' of the monarchy of King Farūq[819] and objects to the various addresses and praises accorded to the King by various shaykhs of al-Azhar. He criticizes also their seeming contradictory positions on important issues when he writes,

> 'Your amazement will only increase if you were to know that the celebration of the *mawlid* of the Prophet is viewed as a *bid`a* by al-Azhar, but they consider the *sunna hasana* to be the celebration of the mawlid of (King) Farūq who imposed its celebration on al-Azhar every year.'[820]

This could be understood as the criticism that typically happens after a regime has been replaced, but we sense that this is the familiar critique of several authors we have encountered in the course of our research. In all cases, including the writing of Imām al-Banna, the main qualm was that the shaykhs of al-Azhar failed to

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[815] Al-Sammān, *Muhammad,* p. 114-115.
[816] ibid, p. 115.
[817] Al-Sammān, *al-Islām al-Musafa*, p. 68.
[818] Qutb, *Ma`rakat al-Islām wal Rasmaliyya*, p. 70.
[819] Al-Sammān, *al-Islām al-Musafa*, p. 148-149. King Farūq (d. 1965) was the reigning monarch at the time of the 1952 Officers' Coup.
[820] ibid, p. 149.

confront political authority when they were needed.  The subservience of al-Azhar to political authority, which al-Sammān complains of here, may also have resulted in the backlash against that same religious authority we see in his writings—the idea being that if al-Azhar is so weak, why do the Muslims need them?

Al-Sammān's opinions on classical books and scholars are inextricably connected to his experience with British colonialism.  He maintains that the reason that Westerners are able to get the better of the Muslims is because they make use of classical books on the Prophet which are 'only filled with stories'[821] to attack the Muslims and declare them backwards.  The underlying notion here is that the West has gotten the better of the Islamic world, and tradition has not saved the Muslims.  The scholars have not acted as they should have, and so the Muslims can no longer put their trust in them.  Now, each man should go forth and read, enlightening himself in what his religion teaches, and do so with an intellectual approach that will not be scoffed at by the West, for it is based on reason, and that is an approach no one can criticize.  This position closely resembles the trend of 'rational' interpretation inaugurated by Muhammad `Abduh and continued by his students.  The notion being that the Muslim world was in such a state of decay because of centuries of '*taqlīd*', or imitation of tradition, and that these sources must be re-visited and re-interpreted for modern times.

Underneath al-Sammān's critique of al-Azhar and the shaykhs lies the feeling the traditional can actually be harmful.  Al-Banna refrained from condemning the shaykhs of the orders, choosing instead to advise them about reform and to co-opt them into his movement.  After al-Banna's death, the Brothers' proceeded to accuse the shaykhs of the *turuq* of corrupting their followers and acting in their own self interest.  Al-Sammān writes, 'The shaykhs (of *tasawwuf*) who have corrupted Sufism as a way of earning their living and of perpetuating their whims of charlatanry and magic.'[822]  Ahmad Anas al-Hajjajī too speaks out in his book against what he saw as the 'taking advantage of people's pure souls and their religious potential'[823] by the shaykhs.  He writes that, 'They have managed to distract the minds of people with their illusions' and that 'they have taken them away from

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[821] Al-Sammān, *Muhammad,* introduction.
[822] Al-Sammān, Al-Islām al-Musafa, p. 66.
[823]  Al-Hajjajī, Ahmad Anas. *Al-Imām: `Ard wa Taqdīm lishakhsayat al-Imām al-Shahīd Hasan al-Banna*. (Cairo, Maktabat Wahba, 1952), p. 23.

real Islamic learning.'[824]  The point here once again is that if the Egyptian people are distracted, they will not be making any contribution to their nation.  There is also a question of authority here.  If the people are loyal to their shaykhs, then how can they be loyal to a new political leader?  Al-Hajjajī writes that, 'Its shaykhs (Sufīs) own so much capital..from their word that is listened to their opinion that is obeyed!'[825]

Not only were the shaykhs of orders distracting their followers with their emphasis on ritual, but they were also the main opponents of any effort to reform the '*taqlīd*' that had caused the stagnation of Egyptian religious life.  Both al-Sammān and al-Hajjaji argue in their books that the *turuq* were the main obstacle to any real religious revival.  Al-Hajjajī writes that, 'This army (the Sufīs) are the biggest obstacle in the view of reformers and the men of revival to any progress—especially since they seem to be against any reform movement that is not *taqlīdiyya* because of their belief that these movements come to reform them (the Sufīs) or to remove them.[826]

Further, shaykhs of orders who were believed to be *awliyā* might delude the people by leading them to believe that they have some power other than what Allah has given them.  In his commentary on the *Risalat al-Ta`līm*, `Abdul Mun`im Ahmed Ta`līb argues that limits must be placed on the understanding of the *walī*.  Because it is a commentary on al-Banna's own writing, it is an interesting source which allows for comparison between al-Banna's writing and the views of one of his students.  Ta`līb writes that,

> 'The word *awliyā* means the beloved ones, and loving those who are beloved to Allah is from
> the root of Islam, but Allah loves those from among his servants who is sincere in his intention,
> and hard working in his worship, and beautified himself with his manners, and treated people in
> the best way both with his money and words and actions.  These are the *awliyā* of Allah.[827]

By defining the *walī*, al-Ta`līb appears to be removing the mystery surrounding their spiritual station.  Further, he writes that 'when Allah ta'ala loves a servant or a *walī* like these he puts affairs on his shoulders that

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[824] Al-Hajjajī, *Al-Imām,* p. 23.
[825] ibid.
[826] ibid.
[827] Ta`līb, `Abdul-Mun`im. *Al-Bay`a: Sharh Risalat al-Ta`līm*. (Cairo, Maktabat Dar al-Kitāb al-`Arabī, 1952), p. 25.

others would not be capable of, and this is what is meant by a *karama*.'[828]  Here again this explanation is very matter of fact and suggests that both the servant and the *walī* might be granted this *karama*, and not the *walī* alone.  He goes on that even the station of *walī* has limits, and 'does one expect that even the greatest *walī* could reach the station of the Prophet peace be upon him?'[829]  Further, he argues, even the Prophet Muhammad was told by Allah that he 'does not have the power to help or harm myself or others'[830], and so too should the people believe that the *walī* is limited.  He writes, 'If this is the position of the Prophet peace be upon him then it is impossible for the *awliyā* to have power to help or harm either themselves or others.'[831]  Of course, part of al-Banna's original text does address the limits of the powers of the *awliyā*, but the fact that al-Ta`līb expounds on these limits in great detail is significant and reflects his desire to curb Sufī regard for their saints.

In his same commentary, al-Ta`līb elaborates on al-Banna's mention of the visitation of graves and gives his own views on the subject.  Though al-Banna only prohibits asking the dead for favors and wiping ones hands on the grave to absorb blessings[832], al-Ta`līb goes much further in saying that 'going to the grave on a specific day' is prohibited and that 'none of the early Muslims traveled to a specific grave and Islam has prohibited such travel'[833].  This is a reference to the Sufī ritual of *ziyāra*, when Sufīs sometimes traveled long distances to visit the graves of the *awliyā*.  In fact, he writes, 'Islam has commanded us only to travel to visit the masjid al-harām (Mecca), the masjid al-nabawi of Medina, and the masjid al-aqsa of Jerusalem.'[834] Interestingly, al-Ta`līb does not reflect on al-Banna's recommendation that one should visit the graves as long as the correct dua is recited and nothing else.  Therefore, his commentary on al-Banna's opinion reflects his own desire to comment on Sufī practices he feels are not permissible.

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[828] Ta`līb, *Al-Bay`a*, p. 25.
[829] ibid.
[830] ibid.
[831] ibid, p. 26.
[832] Ta`līb, *Al-Bay`a*, p. 26-27.
[833] ibid, p. 27.
[834] ibid.

Critiques like this of Sufī shaykhs were common in Ikhwān writings in the 1950s, as the Brothers' fought to dismantle this system of loyalties and encourage readers to seek other forms of organization. Through their attacks traditional forms of authority, the Brothers were empowered. Before 1954, Ikhwān members clung to the hope that the Nasser regime would adopt them as the ideological impetus behind the political machine. As late as August 1952, Sayyid Qutb chaired a conference attended by Nasser and 'everyone who was anyone in revolutionary Cairo'[835] on emancipation in Islam, further evidence that the Brothers saw themselves as the interpreters of Islam for the new regime. However, this was not to be the case. When Nasser broke with the Brothers in 1954, the result was a terrible shift in ideology as Qutb and his followers waged holy war on the regime that had betrayed them. To Qutb, Nasser had shown that he was 'not prepared to establish an Islamic system'[836] and therefore was to be fought. Qutb's radical declaration signified the birth of Islamic militant thought in Egypt which continues until the present day; as Calvert puts it, Qutb 'provided Islamic militants the justification for forcefully, even violently, confronting the secular bureacratic-authoritarian regimes of the Muslim world—what Islamists since the 1980s have called the "Near Enemy"…'[837]

*Sunnī Islam and Political Revolt: The Brothers' React*

One of the prominent critiques of the *turuq* by the Brothers' is the claim that their shaykhs taught their *murīds* to be politically pacifist—that is, that Muslims must fall into line with the leader even if he is corrupt. As we saw in Chapter Three, the fact that most Sufī shaykhs accommodated British colonial rule only re-enforced this belief. Though this was historically the Sunnī Muslim position on unjust rule, this view became problematic after the 1952 coup in Egypt and the overthrow of the monarchy. After the revolution, Ikhwān leaders preached

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[835] Kepel, p. 41.
[836] Khatab, Sayed. *The Political Thought of Sayyid Qutb: The Theory of Jahiliyyah*. (Oxon, Routledge, 2006), p. 57.
[837] Calvert, *Sayyid Qutb and the Origins of Radical Islamism*, p. 4.

to the people on the importance of standing up against 'corrupt feudal rule'[838] and the dangers of 'the silence of public opinion'.[839]  In this section we will argue that the Brothers made use of their writings to criticize political quiescence, especially after 1954, as well as the reliance on Messianic prophecies as a means of finding solace in challenging times.

The Islamic concept of rebelling against an unjust ruler, or commanding the right and forbidding the wrong, has been debated by scholars since the time of Abu Hanīfa—the Brothers' position on the topic appears to be informed by the political circumstances of their time.  The Brothers' utilized their writings to suggest that it was in fact the obligation of Muslims to rebel against political tyranny and to oppose the monarchic rule of King Farūq and later Nasser.[840]  As Michael Cook points out in his study *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought,* the opinion among early Sunnī scholars like Imām Abu Hanīfa was that it was not correct for a group to rebel against the leader even if they were on the right, because the harm of doing so far outweighs the benefit.[841]  Cook describes how the Brothers themselves were divided on the topic of commanding and forbidding, Imām al-Banna preferring giving 'good admonition'[842] to people while others in his organization promoted changing things with the hand.[843]  Further, Cook points out, the Brothers maintained that the ruling on commanding the wrong only applies pending the existence of an Islamic state.[844]  In that case, it was the Brothers' duty to work towards its establishment.

However, it appears that the Brothers did not wait for the establishment of the state to speak out against what they saw as political corruption.  Al-Sammān relates how he once gave a Friday sermon on the subject of the danger of political quiescence, and was approached afterwards by a Sufī shaykh who told him that 'we must

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[838] Al-Sammān, *al-Islām al-Musafa*, p. 68.
[839] ibid.
[840] Calvert argues that the Prison Massacre of 1957, when 21 Muslim Brothers were killed for disobeying a prison guard, convinced Sayyid Qutb that Nasser's regime was bent on destroying Islamism.  This event convinced Qutb, Calvert argues, that reform within the framework of the state was impossible.  Thus, the state must be resisted by force.  Calvert, p. 202.
[841] Cook, p. 8.
[842] ibid, p. 523.
[843] ibid.
[844] Ibid, p. 529.

be accepting of every scenario, because it is the will of Allah, and there is no way to change what is.'[845]  Al-Sammān says he did not know how to answer the shaykh, except that he says 'I looked at his huge red turban with a mocking look, and his dusty beard!'[846]  Al-Sammān's personifies his exchange as one between a progressive minded, young revolutionary and a 'dusty' scholar of the old world, appearing ridiculous to him because of his large turban and his retrograde opinions.

Along with the Brothers' objection to political quiescence came their rejection of reliance on Messianic prophecies as a means of dealing with the realities of tyranny.  Throughout the Muslim lands, it is a common occurrence for people to seek solace in the foretold coming of the *Mahdī*, the descendant of the Prophet Muhammad who, according to hadīth, will come towards the end of time to bring justice to the world.  He is a figure 'many Muslims believe will appear at the end of time to restore righteousness briefly—over the span of a few years—before the end of the world.'[847]  It is also common to hear discussion of the *Masīh al-Dajjāl*, the Anti-Christ, who is foretold to come at the end of time to spread evil on the earth. The Dajjāl will ultimately be defeated by Jesus, who is foretold to come again by the Prophet Muhammad.  Stories about the end of time, which are derived from the hadīth, serve to provide a sense of hope and solace to the Muslims in times of political or social malaise.  The Brothers, however, took offense to the invocation of these end-of-time narratives as a way of coping with the intolerability of reality.  As al-Sammān writes, 'The intercession of the Prophet and the Dajjāl, and the Mahdī, and the second coming of Jesus at the end of time, are illusions that simple people cling to for hope.'[848]  The real solution, he maintained, was that people begin to work to change their condition.

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[845] Al-Sammān, *al-Islām al-Musafa*, p. 68.
[846] ibid.
[847] Glassé, Cyril. "Mahdī" in *The New Encyclopedia of Islam*. (Lanham, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2008), p. 316.
[848] Al-Sammān, *al-Islām al-Musafa*, introduction.

**'SOCIAL SPIRITUALITY' AND THE DEFINING OF A BROADER VISION**

As we saw in the previous section, the Brothers considered the orders to be more of a hindrance than a help in their programme for social and religious reform in Egypt.  But how did they conceptualize the role Sufism would play, if at all?  Also, as the Brothers' became more engaged in the political realm, how did Sufism fit in to their aspirations?

First, we will argue here that the Brothers, fully aware that Sufism could not be completely eliminated from the lives of Egyptians, promoted a type of spirituality which they called '*al-ruhaniyya al-ijtima'iyya*'[849], or social spirituality.  This was in order to eliminate the aspects of the orders which they disliked while still arguing that their movement did not neglect matters of the heart.  At the same time, the Brothers redefined spirituality by ceasing to use the term '*tasawwuf*' perhaps because of its negative associations, and choosing instead to use the word '*ruhaniyya*', literally, spirituality.  Second, the 1950s saw a plethora of Ikhwān writings on politics and statehood.  We will contextualize these writings in light of our discussion on Sufism and argue that the Ikhwān's position on the Sufīs was rooted in their growing desire for involvement in the new Egyptian state.

*Social Spirituality*

In the Brothers' view, spirituality in itself had no function unless it was tied to a broader social purpose.[850]  Muhammad Tawfiq Zakī, an influential Ikhwān author, wrote in the 1950s that,

> 'the spiritual aspect is the first pillar, and of central importance in the *da'wa* of the Ikhwān al-Muslimīn.  As a matter of fact, it is the issue that preoccupies them at all times, as they make sure that their spiritual philosophy is based on three things—belief in Allah, social spirituality, and a positive outlook.'[851]

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[849] This term was first used by Imām al-Banna in his writings.
[850] Zaki, Muhammad Tawfīq  *Al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn wal Mujtam`a al-Misrī*. (Cairo, Dar al-Ansār, 1980), p. 46.
[851] ibid.

This insistence that spirituality be tied to social activism is stated very clearly here by Zakī. He writes that 'The Brothers' believe that the science of *tasawwuf* is from the heart of Islam[852] but they see that it is for the betterment of society that the group that has corrupted this strong spiritual discipline be driven out, so that they may be a practical example to the people…and so that these teachings may have a strong effect in social reform.'[853]

The social mission of the Brotherhood is articulated again here and Zaki is sure to refer to al-Banna's definition of Sufism. While al-Banna had suggested that scholars gather to study the issue of *turuq* reform and give guidance to these groups, Zakī goes on to suggest that Egyptian society must eliminate Sufī elements that they do not agree with through an alliance between the Ikhwān, al-Azhar, and other Islamic organizations.[854]

Along with the Brothers' articulation of what social spirituality is went their insistence to define what it was not. Zaki writes in his book that, 'The Muslim Brotherhood does not believe in the concept of '*al-ruhaniyya al-itizaliyya*', that is believed and promoted by the extremists of the Sufīs, which is closer to the monasticism of the Christians than the real Sufism of Islam.'[855] We see here also the insistence on the term '*ruhaniyya*' and not '*tasawwuf*'—Zakī goes on to say

> 'The Muslim Brothers are *ruhaniyyūn* or *rabaniyyun* living their lives as far as their worship is concerned just like the people of *tasawwuf* do, but they are also *ijtima'iyyūn* that eat food and walk in the marketplaces and interacting with all societies regardless of the differences, and spreading their da'wa…and considering themselves in both states to be doing *jihād*.'[856]

The Brothers' felt it very important to distinguish themselves from the Sufīs, who as we have seen were no longer socially accepted as religious leaders among the new *effendiyya* of Cairo. But as we see here they also felt it very important to articulate the Ikhwān's position on spirituality, perhaps because a good portion of their religious readers might feel this element to be lacking. Further, it is possible that the Ikhwān authors believed

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[852] This is a reference to al-Banna's term '*min lubb al-Islām*' that he used to describe Sufism in his *Mudhakkarāt*.
[853] Zaki, *Al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn,* p. 54.
[854] ibid.
[855] Zaki, *Al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn,* p. 53.
[856]ibid. The references here to 'eating food and walking in the marketplaces' refers to the Quranic verse in which Qurayshites expressed bewilderment over the Prophet Muhammad's human interactions despite being a Prophet.

their movement derived at least some of its legitimacy from its link to the Imām.  But it was their task to define which aspects of his message would be emphasized to readers.  Here Zakī's aim is to point out the social dimensions of al-Banna's spiritual message and to emphasize its holistic nature.  He writes, 'the first *murshid* al-ustadh al-Banna used to say that this *da'wa* will not be successful unless it covers all aspects of life.'[857]  It is true that al-Banna himself defined the concept of social spirituality, but as we have seen, he saw Sufism as a personal quest just as he understood it as a social calling.  This is particularly true for the Brothers in post-1952 Egypt, when it was vital that they assume the role of interpreters of Islam.  What did this mean for the Brothers?  After the revolution, Ikhwān leadership faced political obscurity and being declared irrelevant, bogged down with the burden of the legacy of their founder.  Sceptics declared Brotherhood ideas on political leadership 'impractical and culturally impossible'[858] because of their insistence of the implementation of sharia law in Egypt.  In light of the political climate in 1950s Egypt, it was imperative for the Brothers to emphasize the social element of al-Banna's teachings and say very little if anything at all about his devotional life.

*Sufis and the New Islamic State*

Ikhwān writers of the 1950s made it clear that, unlike al-Banna, they believed the shaykhs of *tasawwuf* were discredited and therefore had no place in the new Islamic order they wished to create.  What would this new Islamic order look like?  The Brothers envisaged a partnership between their organization and the Free Officers, serving as the Islamic ideologues which inspired Nasser's political machine.  They expected members to see themselves first as *duāt,* preachers, and then as politicians.  They also believed Brothers should see themselves as Islamic nationalists, first part of the greater Muslim umma while maintaining their loyalty to their native Egypt.

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[857] Zaki, *Al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn,* p. 53.
[858] Youssef, Michael. *Revolt Against Modernity: Muslim Zealots and the West* (Leiden, Brill, 1985), p. 72.

Underneath their desire to exclude the shaykhs was the Brothers' suspicion of the unquestionable leadership of the shaykhs, who claimed they derived their legitimacy from God. Sayyid Qutb writes that, 'There are some that imagine that in our Islamic order means a rule by Sufī dervish shaykhs! Where did they get this idea?'[859] His statement has a denigrating tone and is clearly meant to suggest the absurdity of such a thought. He goes on to write, 'This is a delusion prevalent among this generation..but the true Islam does not know this scenario, not in principle or in its history.'[860] Qutb devotes a great deal of his study to debunk any thought that the Sufī shaykhs would play a role in Islamic leadership in the future. He writes,

> 'For those who are afraid, if Islam rules…to find in the Ministry of Finance a babbling shaykh, or a Sufi just because he read the book *Fiqh al-Sunna*, or memorized the core texts and their explanations, or perfected (his recitation) of *Dal`ail al-Khayrāt*, they should rest assured. The historical reality of Islam indicates…that it only recognizes a specific person for a specific task.'[861]

Qutb goes on to say,

> 'One day the *mashayikh* will not be the elites, and the dervishes will not be the heroes, they are the *sayyids* of this era but they will be the rejected ones if they do not reform themselves and change the means by which they earn their livelihood, and work with the workers in the field of productivity, the field of life.'[862]

The suggestion here is that even in the Islamic system the Brothers envisaged, the shaykhs would not be given the absolute authority over the people that they once enjoyed. Fear of the absolute, unquestioned authority the shaykhs wielded continued to inform the Brothers perspective on the orders and to cause them to isolate them from their dialogue on the Islamic state.

Another challenging view that appears in the Brothers' writings is their objection to hereditary leadership, both political and religious. This is of course a response to the centuries of transmitted political rule in the Muslim lands, which Shaykh Muhammad al-Ghazālī deems invalid and a source of corruption. For al-Ghazālī, his assessment of the development of political power in the Muslim world comes during a time when

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[859] Qutb, *Ma`rakat al-Islām,* p. 69.
[860] ibid.
[861] ibid*,* p. 70.
[862] Qutb, *Ma`rakat al-Islām*, p. 75.

many things in Egypt were being questioned.  He writes that, 'Our purpose is learn from the experiences of yesterday and the lessons of history ..'[863] He writes that, 'The four rightly guided caliphs had sons..but never passed leadership onto them.'[864]  Rather, he argues, political leadership should be passed on to the one who has merit.  'Prophecy itself,' he argues, 'which is the origin, is not passed on through lineage.[865]  Al-Ghazālī is quick to point out that after the first four caliphs, power was passed from father to son, even if the son was not qualified to rule.  This, he argues, was the undoing of the Muslims.  'We are told by the Prophet,' he writes, 'to emulate the example of the first four rightly guided caliphs, and he warned us against any *bid'a* that is introduced after their example.'[866]

Religious leadership as well should not be inherited, al-Ghazālī argues.  This is, of course, a direct critique of the Sufī orders, where authority is passed within the order from father to son.  Al-Ghazālī, writing as a Sunnī scholar, observes and objects to the transmission of religious authority within the Sufī orders in Egypt and elsewhere.  'This *taqlīd*', he writes, 'began with the Muslims because they are in a time of weakness and decay.'[867]  'The Sufīs,' he continues, 'in our country bequeath the *mashyakha* to their sons, and write long papers filled with *ansāb* that connect them back with so and so.'[868]  His mention of the Sufīs is important and supports our argument that the Brothers considered the Sufīs, with their elaborate chains of *isnād* and their belief that spiritual authority was inherited, represented a corrupted system that needed to be reformed.  Throughout al-Ghazālī's writings, there is a message that one must learn from history, and in this case, avoid a pitfall that has plunged the Muslims into weakness.

In sum, the Brothers believed the Sufī shaykhs did not have a place in the Islamic government they envisaged.  It appears from their writings that readers were particularly concerned with the excesses of political and religious authority, so the Brothers set out to reassure readers who might think about traditional individuals

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[863] Al-Ghazālī, *Al-Islām wal Istibdād al-Siyāsī*, p. 169.
[864] ibid, p. 182.
[865] ibid, p. 180.
[866] ibid, p. 182.
[867] ibid, p. 183.
[868] ibid.

such as the Sufī shaykhs and hesitate about the idea of Islamic government.  They also criticized Sufī practices related to religious leadership and authority, particularly the Sufī practice of passing religious authority from father to son, in an effort to suggest that this was not the only way Islamic governance could be observed.

*Towards Islamic Nationalism*

Gershoni and Jankowski argue that the Ikhwān played a crucial role 'in the elaboration of Egyptian Islamic nationalism.'[869]  Through examination of their writings, it becomes clear that the Brothers were responsible for the articulation of a brand of nationalism with a distinctly 'Islamic' character, as opposed to the territorial nationalism of their predecessors in Egypt in the 1920s.[870]   The Brothers saw themselves as continuing al-Banna's work on nationalism which he began in the *Jarīda* two decades before.[871]  For the Brothers, just like al-Banna, Islamic nationalism was 'part of faith'[872] as they sought to pursuade readers about the imperative of establishing an Islamic state.

As we saw in Chapter Four, al-Banna himself articulated his ideas on Islamic nationalism in his journal.  In his writings he argued that the establishment of an Islamic order was 'imperative' and even outlined the requirements for Islamic statehood, specifically, the responsibility of the ruler, the unity of the umma, and respect for their will.[873]   Islam, he argues, allows for the establishment of governments to organize society, thereby preventing anarchy.[874]  Al-Banna writes with great enthusiasm about the statement by Shaykh al-Azhar that 'Egypt is the nation of Islam and Islam is a nation for all of us'[875]; he argues in the same article that Egypt

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[869] Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation,* p. 79.
[870] ibid.
[871] Gershoni and Jaknowski suggests that al-Banna's *Rasa'il* represented 'the most comprehensive as well as the most authoritative expression of Egyptian Islamic nationalism.' Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation*, p. 80.
[872] Zaki, *Al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn,* p. 75.
[873] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Ila Ay Shay`in Nad`u al-Nās' in *Majmu`at Rasa`il al-Imām al-Shahīd Hasan al-Banna*. (Cairo, Dar al-Mandlas, no year), p. 363.
[874] Ibid, p. 358.
[875] Al-Banna, Hasan. 'Al-Islām Watana Jami`an' *Jaridat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* 3 (May7th 1935): p. 34.

possessed a history of opposing enemies of the faith, and that it is the Muslim character of the Egyptians that unites them.

Despite this, al-Banna's writings contained warnings for the Brothers about the dangers of chasing political power.  He writes that the Brothers should not want leadership for themselves but rather for the umma at large, and should willingly support the politician who will take the responsibility of rule.  However, he adds, if such an individual does not exist, then 'governance is their agenda, and they will act to rid the Muslims of rule by any government that does not carry out the commands of Allah.'[876]  Al-Banna encouraged the Brothers to study the example of the first four caliphs and several of the early Islamic leaders such as the Abbassid caliph `Umar ibn `Abdul Azīz[877] to understand how they ruled justly.  Thus, al-Banna's writings contain ample evidence that he would have been supportive of an Islamic state.

The important distinction appears to be that al-Banna did not wish the Brotherhood to be identified primarily as a political organization.  Rather, he tried always to keep the identity of the Brotherhood based on Islam, politics being only one element of that identity.  In his risala '*Ila Ay Shay`in Nad`u al-Nās*', he responds to attacks that the Ikhwān was merely a 'political party'.  Al-Banna writes that,

> 'we call you to Islam and learning Islam and the laws of Islam and the guidance of Islam.  If this is considered politics then this is our politics.  And if whoever calls you to these principles is a politician then praise Allah we are politicians.'  If you would like to call this politics then say what you will.'[878]

Here the Imām is chiefly concerned to establish that his organization is primarily an Islamic one while moving away from its personification as a competitive political party.  Thus, in his view, the Brotherhood's involvement in national politics should be understood as secondary to its *da`wa*.

The Brothers who wrote in the 1950s utilized the watershed moment of the revolution to argue that nationalism was in fact an Islamic concept.  Muhammad Tawfīq Zakī maintained in 1952 in his chapter entitled 'Islamic Nationalism', that 'these ideas may be new to the ears, but it is the correct description of nationalism as

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[876] Al-Banna, 'Risalat al-Mutamar al-Khāmis', p. 273.
[877] Al-Banna, 'Ila Ay Shay`in Nad`u al-Nās', p. 364.
[878] ibid, p. 131.

the Ikhwān understands it.'[879]   But the Brothers were not shy to maintain that their ultimate goal was the

establishment of an Islamic state.   'The goal of the Muslim Brothers,' Zakī believes, 'is the establishment of

Islamic government that would apply an Islamic system completely and correctly.'[880]   According to the Brothers,

Egyptians must reject the concept of 'territorial' nationalism, which they saw as 'a device introduced by the

West into the East to divide and thereby weaken it.'[881]   Instead, Egyptians must see themselves first as part of

the greater Muslim *umma*, without feeling superior or exclusivist while maintaining their natural attachment to

their homeland.   Qutb, too, rejected the notion that the Islamic nation was restricted to a territory, arguing

instead that the Muslim's homeland was a 'theological space'…one that 'embraced all Muslims everywhere, and

should eventually include all of humanity.'[882]

*Nationalism as an Islamic Belief*


The Brothers developed al-Banna's ideas on nationalism in hopes that they could provide a viable model

for Nasser and his co-politicians.   This section will argue that the Brothers' made use of religious sources as

evidence that nationalism could be Islamic.   Then, the Brothers launched a campaign to define Islam both as a

social and a political order.

The Ikhwān authors propagated the view that the nationalist cause was actually an Islamic one.   The

Prophet Muhammad, Zakī writes, once said that 'nationalism is part of faith'[883] and this is why 'nationalism (for

the Ikhwān) is part of the religion.'[884]   They argued that Imām al-Banna himself accepted that Egyptians have

'positive feelings for one's country' which are 'prescribed by Islam.'[885]   Religious references allowed the Ikhwān

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[879] Zaki, *Al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn,* p. 75.
[880] ibid, p. 74.
[881] Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation,* p. 81.
[882] Calvert, p. 17.
[883] Zaki, *Al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn,* p. 75.
[884] ibid.
[885] Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation,* p. 84.

writers to argue for the legitimacy of nationalist sentiments, especially in the context of the 1952 revolution. 'Acting for the nation', writes Zakī, 'is a kind of worship.'[886] Working for the nation, he continues, should be seen as a 'way of attaining nearness to Allah'[887] because it is a means of fulfilling the social obligation that is upon every Muslim. Here we see the reason why it was important for the Brothers to develop the concept of social spirituality, as the solitary worshipper would be detrimental to the group. Zakī also writes that, 'This argument makes sense when one considers the Ikhwān's all-encompassing understanding of the religion, and their linking the religion with real life.'[888] The argument here, that service to the nation is not only sanctioned but an act of worship, allowed the Brothers to develop their own political calling.

In the 1950s the Brothers began to personify Islam as a social and political mission, as evidenced by their effort to describe the religion as a socio-political reform movement. While they understood 'social spirituality' to be one of the pillars of their *dawa*, building an Islamic society was understood as the ultimate goal.[889] This is especially clear in the works of Muhammad Tawfīq Zakī, Muhammad al-Ghazālī, and Sayyid Qutb. Thus, one finds titles such as 'Islam as a social system'[890] and 'Islam and politics'[891] as the Brothers worked to justify the attention they gave to politics. As Zakī puts it, 'The Brotherhood is a social calling first and before anything else. It aims at social reform at the individual, family, national, and governmental levels.'[892] Further, he writes, the key to the reform of each level lies in Islam. 'The Brotherhood tries to present to each of these a reform programme as Islam sees fit.'[893] Here Islam is presented as a system of social reform also capable of reforming all levels of social organization, from the family to the government.

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[886] Zaki, *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn*, p. 75.
[887] ibid.
[888] Zaki, *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn*, p. 75.
[889] This argument is made by Zakī, p. 69.
[890] ibid, p. 46.
[891] ibid.
[892] ibid, p. 69.
[893] ibid.

The Brothers' works from this period are characterized by a noticeable shift from talking about the individual's relationship with Allah to the social dynamics of the faith. Thus, we see Muhammad al-Ghazālī argue that

> 'Islam is a belief system and a system of social order. The belief system lives in the heart and the system of social order organizes the group. The actions based on the belief system are not meant to reform the individual alone…in fact the entire society and government is based on its firm foundation.'[894]

Here the belief that fuels the individual is also the foundation that solidifies the group. He goes on to write that, 'The individual, if he is replicated again and again, makes a society, and from this society comes the state.'[895] Thus, when an individual reforms himself, even through his private worship, he is doing a service to the greater Muslim polity.

The argument by the Brothers that Islam was 'both a religion and a state'[896] meant that all actions, even spiritual pursuits, were inextricably linked to their broader social vision. Zaki quotes Imām al-Banna as having said that 'Islam is a belief system and a system of worship, and a nation and a nationality, and politics and strength, and culture and law, and each Muslim is expected to check his own faith.'[897] If one improved himself, it was so that he could improve his family and community, and in doing so help the nation. This mentality led to an explosion of writings by the Brotherhood on the imperative of establishing an Islamic order in the near future.

*The Call for Islamic Statehood*

Linked to the argument that Islam was a social and political calling was the Brothers' insistence on Islamic statehood. Like nationalist sentiments, the Islamic state is also a concept supported by the sources and

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[894] Al-Ghazālī, *Al-Islām wal Istibdād al-Siyāsī*, p. 168.
[895] ibid.
[896] Zaki, *Al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn,* p. 85.
[897] ibid, p. 86.

mandated by the religion. Zakī understands the Quranic verse 'And Allah said to the angels, I have appointed a

vicegerent on the earth' to mean that Allah has appointed man as his vicegerent on earth, and nations too.[898]

Therefore, it is the obligation of nations to act according to Allah's sharia because of the trust He has placed on

them.  He writes,

> 'There are two types of vicegerency.  There is the vicegerency of nations, and the vicegerency of
> individuals…The vicegerency of nations means their liberation and independence to rule
> themselves.'[899]  Thus, he concludes, 'Islam requires that the state operates according to the
> *shari`a*…so that they might work to spread their beliefs among other nations because they are
> the true principles upon which Allah based their vicegerency.'[900]

Fully aware that his analysis is only one interpretation of the verse, Zakī writes, 'Someone may say that

these verses do not contain a clear command stating that ruling by the Quran is obligatory…so I will provide

more verses that prove we must rule with the Book of Allah.'[901]  After citing the verses, Zakī writes, 'Here are the

verses that prove the imperative of ruling by the book of Allah, and no one would negate this except one who

allows for himself unbelief, and oppression, and corruption.'[902]  By making use of Quranic references, Zakī has

effectively linked religious obligation to the state.  Gershoni confirms this sense of duty when he writes, 'Islam

itself, they (Islamic nationalists) retorted, regarded the struggle for the independence and freedom of the entire

Islamic *umma* as a sacred duty.'[903]

In fact, argues Zakī, most of Islam's teachings concern the relationship between the Creator and

governments, not the Creator and the individual.  This, he says, is because 'Islam is a religion and a state

combined.'[904]  If Allah had not placed a primacy on matters concerning the state and society, he continues, He

would not have mandated laws in the Quran for how people should interact with others.[905]  By shifting the focus

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[898] Zaki, *Al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn*, p. 83.
[899] ibid.
[900] ibid, p. 84.
[901] ibid, p. 84.
[902] ibid, p. 85.
[903] Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation*, p. 85.
[904] Zaki, *Al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn,* p. 85.
[905] ibid. This is a reference to the '*hadd*' punishments for the thief or the adulterer.

of his audience away from the individual to the level of state and society, Zakī is able to argue for an Islam-based discussion of national politics.

*Conclusion*

This chapter has aimed to highlight several themes in the writings of Ikhwān authors of the 1950s and to focus particularly on their writings on Sufism. Through their books, the Brothers promoted a revisionist, rationalist brand of Islam that questioned the sources of authority that had given the Sufī shaykhs their legitimacy for centuries. They criticized many important Sufī rituals in an effort to move away from the culture of transmitted beliefs propagated in Sufī circles. After severing their ties with the traditional order, the Brothers utilized their writings to define themselves as a holistic movement that gave attention to not only the spiritual, but the social as well. In doing so, they were able to cast themselves as a holistic socio-religious movement and to participate in the nationalist movement taking place at the time.

The Brothers also made use of their writings to justify their transition into national politics. Utilizing verses from the Quran as well as quotations from their founder, the Brothers were able to suggest to readers that the nationalist movement was not only sanctioned by Islam, but a religious obligation. They wrote extensively on the social and political realities of Islam and the religion's ability to provide a 'constitution' for a new Islamic state.

The Ikhwān writers also shifted the dialogue on Islam from talking about the individual's relationship with God to a discussion of the individual's relationship to the group. They argued that the individual, if he improved himself, was no longer only benefiting himself but was performing a service to the nation. As al-Ghāzāli put it, 'Giving one child an Islamic upbringing is a deed that has wide implications, because he has realized an expansive goal, he has benefited himself as an individual and he gives to society a clear and developed

conscience, and he gives to the state the spirit of devotion in meeting her needs.'[906] This position would give

Egyptians a sense of greater purpose and a feeling of national cohesion, for even by improving themselves their

struggles were in the service of the nation.

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[906] Al-Ghazālī, *Al-Islām wal Istibdād al-Siyāsī*, p. 168.

**CHAPTER SEVEN**
**JIHĀD, NATIONALISM, AND THE STATE: DEPICTIONS OF IMĀM AL-BANNA BY IKHWAN LEADERS**
**IN TWO PERIODS—THE 1950S AND 1990S-2000S**


Just as the Brothers did not emphasize Sufism as one of the foundations of their organization, so too did they not wish their leader, now deceased, to be remembered as a Sufī leader. This chapter will compare biographical materials on the Imām written by Ikhwān writers from two phases, the 1950s and then again in the 1990s into the new millenium. Very few biographies were written by Brothers on al-Banna in the interim period between 1960 and the late 1980s. Then, in the 1990s, a wave of biographies appeared again, due to the fact that those who knew al-Banna were approaching the end of their lives and wanted to document what they knew about him.

This chapter will argue that biographers from both periods portrayed al-Banna as a committed social activist with a model for the resuscitation of Egyptian state and society. Writers from the 1950s portrayed him as the inheritor of activism after the failure of the secular nationalist movements of the 1930s. The later biographers, on the other hand, reflect on the failure both of the secularists and the Nasserists to establish a viable Islamic state. Further, both the early and later biographies reject depicitons of al-Banna as a man of Sufism.

One other primary difference is that the early biographical pieces on al-Banna were published in the Brotherhood journal, *al-Daʿwa*, with a few exceptions, whereas the later ones were published in the forms of books. The other primary difference is that the Brothers who wrote later in the 1990s and 2000s had the opportunity to challenge decades of depictions of al-Banna by other writers and by politicians.

The second part of this chapter will show how the Brothers, convinced that secular nationalism had failed, argued that they should be entrusted to pursue the nationalist aspirations of the Egyptian people. The Brothers who wrote in the 1950s were adamant about the need to establish an Islamic state, whereas writers

from the end of the century appear more flexible and willing to work with the existing government to realize al-Banna's goals.

Understanding why the later biographers appear more flexible is critical to our discussion.  The answer appears to be that Brothers writing after the Islamic resurgence of the 1970s wished to distance themselves, and Imām al-Banna, from the austere, and sometimes militant, brand of Islam promoted by the Salafīs of Egypt. `Abbās al-Sīsī was an Ikhwān member and a contemporary of al-Banna who published a second edition of his biography to mark the Egyptian Islamic movement of the 1970s.  Al-Sīsī writes that he was compelled to publish a second edition in 1981 because 'it was the right of the new generation that I give them what I learned from the founder of the movement.'[907]  Al-Banna, he writes, was not a Salafī but a 'founder of an umma.'[908]  `Asaf writes for the same reason, stating that he was motivated to write when he realized that the *da'wa* in Egypt had taken a wrong turn.  'By writing these memoirs,' he writes, 'I wanted to show the new generation….those who through no fault of their own responded to incorrect *da'wa* and guidance.  They filled their minds (with this faulty thinking) and made them stubborn and extremist.'[909]  Both authors wrote to remind Islamic activists who al-Banna really was.

The later biographers also used their biographies to respond to attacks on their organization by the Egyptian government and the international press.  For example, al-Samman's biography of al-Banna, published in 2003, argues that since the 1940s, the Western media is responsible for a campaign to scare people away from the Ikhwān.  This campaign, he argues, was part of a broader effort by the Western media to block the success of *da'wa* efforts across the Muslim world. Western media outlets and politicians, in his view, were concerned that the Brothers said '*Allahu akbar*' instead of 'long live the leader, so and so, and long live the king,

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[907] Al-Sīsī, `Abbas. *Hasan al-Banna: Mawaqif fī al-Da`wa wal Tarbiya*. (Alexandria, Dar al Da`wa, 1981), p. 7-8.
[908] `Asaf, Mahmūd. *Ma`a al-Imām al-Shahīd Hasan al-Banna*. (Cairo, Matba`at Ayn Shams, 1993), p. 6.
[909] ibid, p. 5.

who we sacrifice our lives for.'[910]  Thus, the Brothers gave their allegiance first to their faith and then to their political leaders, which al-Samman believed angered the West.

Further, al-Samman maintains that the Ikhwān's allegiance first to their faith angered secularists at home.  The secularists (*almaniyīn*) accused the Brotherhood of being behind undermining the palace, again because they refused to give their allegiance first to the king.  The reality, he argues, is that it was the palace that was threatened by the Brotherhood and arranged for the assassination of Imām al-Banna.  He writes that, 'they (the palace) opened fire on him in front of the headquarters of *Jamaat al Shubban al Muslimin.* He (al-Banna) walked on his feet for hundreds of meters to the ambulance clinic, where he was transferred to the Asr al-Aynī hospital, where the royal command came that they should leave him to bleed to death until his soul left his body and returned to her lord.'[911]  Al-Sammān argues that the assassination of Imām al-Banna was a scandal that was covered up by the Palace and that those involved were forbidden to speak about it by government intelligence.  For proof he cites a medical journal from the 1950s called 'Asr al `Aynī', which attempted to publish an article on Hasan al-Banna's assassination.  Al-Samman says he waited with great anticipation for it to be published.  However, shortly before its publication date, General Intelligence learned about the article and it was never published.[912]

By the time of the publication of al-Sammān's biography in 2003, the Brothers had made a full transition into the Egyptian political system.  Despite this, al-Sammān was concerned to legitimize the Brothers' involvement by evoking the Imām's political teachings.  He addresses those who question the Brothers' development into a political party, arguing that this was a transition initaiated by the Imām himself.[913]  Imām al-Banna taught that government is one of the pillars of Islam, and that the Prophet Muhammad established the

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[910] Al-Sammān, *Ayām Ma`a al-Imām al-Shahīd Hasan al-Banna,* p. 13.
[911] ibid.
[912] ibid.
[913] ibid, p. 17.

government as one of his teachings. The Brothers do not seek to lead, he argues, but to support the leader who rules by Islam. If they find such a leader, the Brothers are 'his soldiers and supporters.'[914]

Further, years of repression by subsequent governments resulted in a process of self-discovery for the Brothers. Authors like al-Sammān reflect a willingness to accommodate the status quo and work with the Mubarak regime. He argues that the Brotherhood accepts the legitimacy of the current Egyptian constitution, arguing that it is the closest that exists in the world to an Islamic constitution. 'The Brothers,' he writes, 'would not replace it with another system, except for two things—the sources that the text draws from, and its mode of application, which has proven to be a failure.'[915] This flexible approach coincides with the Ikhwān's entrance into the parliamentary elections, and their new-found belief that their goals would be better achieved through participation in Mubarak's government.

*Imām al-Banna as Intellectual*

Brotherhood biographies of the Imām from both periods reflect their desire to portray him as an activist committed to social causes. The Brotherhood's ambition to be included in Nasser's government in the 1950s necessitated this emphasis on the social element of Imām al-Banna's vision because it was critical that they appear useful to the building of a new Egypt post-revolution.

Though the Brothers wanted their leader to be understood as an Islamic nationalist leader, they did not wish him to be understood as connected to 'traditional' Islamic reformers who came before him. In fact, they made effort to argue that their Imām was unlike any other Islamic reformer that came before him. One Ikhwān author, Muhammad `Abdullah al-Sammān, writes in 1954 that Egyptian society was in such a state of stagnation,

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[914] Al-Sammān, *Ayām Ma`a al-Imām al-Shahīd Hasan al-Banna*, p. 15.
[915] ibid, p. 17.

that the Imām appeared 'foreign' (gharīb)[916] in the sense of alien in that environment because of his ideas on

Islamic revival. He was also alien in the span of Islamic history; al-Samman writes that,

> 'We admit that in the span of history, both old and recent, that there have been religious leaders and religious organizations to no end. But we must point out an important distinction between the man, Hasan al-Banna, and his idea, the Ikhwān, and these religious leaders and their organizations. These religious leaders, the few that they were, did not enjoy the level of genius (of Hasan al-Banna), and clear vision…'[917]

It appears from his statement that al-Sammān does not see al-Banna as continuing the work of his

predecessors in da'wa. He wants readers to understand that al-Banna was unlike any other Islamic thinker they

may have encountered. He criticizes the transmitted knowledge of traditional scholars, who practice 'al-za`ama

al-taqlīdiyya'[918], or rote leadership and Islamic organizations who were, in his view, 'only keeping people busy

and filling up the void.'[919] Al-Banna, he argued, was an Islamic leader who practiced something entirely

different. 'The genius of Hasan al-Banna,' he writes, 'is in the fact that he was able to present Islam in new

terms, with a strong attraction, easy and convincing.'[920] The implication is that al-Banna was effective when

traditional Islamic activists, including Sufī shaykhs, were not.

Thus, biographers of the 1950s did not wish the Egyptian people to relate al-Banna to traditional shaykhs

of the past, who appeared at that point to the general public as incompetent. After the official ban on the

Muslim Brothers in 1954, Nasser's regime took great interest in the orders and promoted their brand of Islam

'to combat the opposition inspired by the Brothers.'[921] Thus, as De Jong argues, all efforts to reform the orders

were halted, as the regime sought to use the allure of popular Sufism for its favor.[922] Shaykh Ahmad al-Saw ,

then Shaykh Mashayikh al-Turuq al-Sufiyya, was forced to resign and his successor, Shaykh Muhammad `Ilw n,

initiated a period of revival of popular Sufism without much concern for reform. Shaykh Muhammad oversaw

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[916] Al-Sammān, *Hasan al-Banna*, p. 18.
[917] ibid, p. 28-29.
[918] ibid, p. 19.
[919] ibid, p. 29.
[920] ibid, p. 30.
[921] De Jong, 'Political Involvement of Sufī Orders', p. 196.
[922] ibid.

the creation of a magazine entitled *al-Islam wal Tasawwuf*, which was to serve as 'the official mouthpiece of

organized Islamic mysticism', and membership in the orders increased.[923]  Our examination of the magazine *al-*

*Islām wal Tasawwuf* reflects the publications strong links to the regime, with photographs and articles in praise

of Nasser appearing in its pages in 1958.[924]  Nasser is referred to in one article as '*mujaddid al-islām*'[925], a

renewer of the faith, a term typically reserved for scholars who devoted themselves to revival of the religion.

Nasserist propaganda is apparent throughout, with a regular column entitled '*Risalat al-Thawra*' (The Message

of the Revolution) written by the newly appointed Shaykh Mashayikh al-Turuq al-Sufiyya Muhammad `Alwān.

`Alwān maintains that Nasser was 'a *mujāhid*', the man who is a believer in his Lord, a believer in his nation

(*watan*), a believer in his Arab identity (`*uruba*).'[926]  This column was meant to solidify the bond between the

orders and Nasser as well as to argue that his socialist regime was fully supported by the Quran and the

hadith.[927]

Further, there is little reference to the *bid`a*, or innovations, of the orders in *al-Islam wal Tasawwuf*

which we observed in Rida's *al-Manār* or even in al-Banna's *Jarīdat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn*.  This suggests that De

Jong is correct in saying that the reform movement initiated by Shaykh Muhammad Tawfīq al-Bakrī less than a

century earlier had been abandoned.

Rashida Chih challenges Gilsenan's argument that modernity meant the extinction of the orders and

argues that the orders not only survived modernity but thrived in it.   'It has become increasingly evident,' she

writes, 'that the *turuq* not only have persisted but actually function meaningfully in modern societies.'[928]  Chih

draws our attention to the informal Sufī networks of the cities and the villages that have not received scholarly

attention.  In the ghettos of Cairo and the villages of the delta, popular Sufism continued to thrive throughout

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923 De Jong, 'Political Involvement of the Sufī Orders', p. 196.
924 No author, 'Jamāl `Abdul Nasser: Mujaddid al-Islām'. *Al-Islam wal Tasawwuf* 1 (1958): p. 22.
925 Ibid.
926 `Alwān, Muhammad Mahmūd. 'Risalat al-Thawra fi Hayatina al-Khalqiyya wal Ijtima`iyya' *Al-Islam wal Tasawwuf* 3 (1959): p. 3.
927 ibid, p. 6.
928 Chih, Rachida. 'What is a Sufī Order?  Revisiting the Concept Through a Case Study of the Khalwatiyya in Contemporary Egypt' in van Bruinessen, Martin and Julia Day Howell. *Sufism and the Modern in Islam*. (London, I.B. Tauris, 2007), p. 21.

the 1960s and 1970s, being encouraged by the regime and unscathed by the infamy of the Muslim Brotherhood. Sufī shaykhs in contemporary times have insured their survival by seeking patrons from among the elites and establishing informal spiritual relationships with those who seek them out.[929]

But it was not likely that the educated milieu of Egyptian society in the 1950s would accept the orders if they were no longer concerned with reform. It becomes clear, then, why Ikhwān writers did not wish the Imām to be associated with the orders at this point. They chose to contend with allegations that he was a man of Sufism by downplaying his Sufī past as much as possible. This was a difficult task because Al-Banna himself did not conceal his attachment to Sufism from his students. In a gathering of Brothers he is cited by Ahmad Anas al-Hajjājī, his close friend and confidante, as having said,

> 'What would you say, oh Brothers, that we form a group on the path of the Shadhiliyya and live in that good way keeping our link to the Prophet peace be upon him? And spend it performing jihād for the sake of Allah ta'ala, and dying in a pure way, and meet Allah as martyrs and be guaranteed paradise…all of these (shaykhs) have a link to the Prophet, but al-Shadhilī in this matter is on the sunna of his noble teacher (the Prophet Muhammad) peace be upon him.'[930]

Al-Hajjājī makes no effort to conceal this conversation in his account of his relationship with the Imām. However, in what follows al-Hajjājī makes no further comment on al-Banna's reference to the Shadhiliyya or his suggestion that the early Brothers follow that path. His only comment on this incident is that he believed it showed how al-Banna had always 'sought martyrdom'[931] and also his commitment to jihād. Though this may be coincidence, the treatment of al-Banna's Sufī inclinations by other Brothers suggests a pattern.

One Brother, al-Fadīl al-Wartalanī (d. 1959), described how when he first met the Imām in the 1940s he believed him to be a Sufī. He writes that, 'during a meeting in Cairo with the Imām the conversation turned to spiritual matters related to Sufism. I began to form an impression of the Imām that he was a Sufī, no more or less than that.'[932] Al-Wartalanī himself was an Algerian who came to Cairo in 1939. His negative opinion of the Sufīs, he writes, stems from the fact that 'we were fighting those who claimed to be Sufīs in Algeria for the *bid`a*

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[929] Chih, 'What is a Sufi Order', p. 38.
[930] Al-Hajjājī, Ahmed Anas, *Qalū `An al-Imām Al-Banna*, p. 138.
[931] ibid.
[932] Al-Wartalanī, al-Fadil. *Qalū `An al-Imām Al-Banna*, p. 280.

they had introduced into our society.'[933]  He joined the Ikhwān shortly after moving to Cairo and helped

establish numerous charitable and political causes for them.  At that same gathering in Cairo, Al-Wartalanī

began a debate with the Imām about Sufism, and he realized that this was 'a man of knowledge, influenced by

his knowledge, and I gathered a different picture of him different from the impression of him as a Sufī that I had

before.'[934]After al-Banna's death, he traveled to Yemen to participate in the resistance movement there under

Imām Yahya and also established a similar resistance movement in Algeria.  He died in Turkey in 1959.

Thus, al-Wartalanī was relieved to discover that al-Banna was not a Sufi as he had originally thought.  He

tells readers that he already had a negative opinion of the Sufīs because of the '*bid`a*' they had introduced into

Algerian society. His anti-Sufī position suggests that the *turuq* of Algeria came under scrutiny from modernist

reformers in the early twentieth century just like in Egypt.  Al-Wartalanī is pleased to discover that al-Banna was

'a man of knowledge' rather than a Sufī.  Afterwards, he and al-Banna became 'friends, and then brothers.'[935]

Another biographer, Tawf q al-Wa` , expresses the same concern that al-Banna not be understood as a

Sufī, though he is writing much later than al-Wartalani, in 2005. Al-Wa`ī argues that it has become commonplace

for people to 'accuse' al-Banna of being a Sufī, 'and if you asked one of them what *tasawwuf* is or who the Sufīs

are, he would explain without hesitation that they are a misguided group of *kufar*.'[936]  Al-Wa`ī addresses what he

calls '*shubuhāt*', or allegations, against al-Banna related to Sufism.  Other allegations against the Im m include

his belief in intercession (*tawassul*) and grave visitation (*al-quburiyya*).  Al-Wa` writes, 'And some have accused

the organization (the Ikhw n) of not fighting against the evil of grave visitation…but Im m al-Banna said, people

live in a hut built from their various *aqa`d* (beliefs).  Rather than tear down their hut, build beside it a castle

made of the correct *aq da*, so that they themselves will tear down their huts.'[937]  Al-Wa` argues here that it was

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[933] Al-Wartalanī, al-Fadil. *Qalū `An al-Imām Al-Banna*, p. 280.
[934] ibid, p. 281.
[935] ibid, p. 280.
[936] Al-Wa`ī, p. 17.
[937] ibid, p. 59.

not the way of the Ikhwān to fight the faulty beliefs of others with force, but rather to instruct them in the correct understanding.

Anwar al-Jindī, writing in 2000, was concerned like al-Waʿ that al-Banna not be remembered as a Sufī. He argues that the Imām was never a passive follower of a Sufī shaykh, but a shrewd critic of Sufism all the time. Al-Jindī writes that, 'And so we find that Ustadh al-Banna never took Sufism in its totality, but that his understanding was that it was a program for self-discipline.'[938]  Al-Jindī writes that al-Banna was always involved in discussions with his elders, as he himself writes in his memoirs.  However, al-Banna never articulates of what nature these discussions were.  Al-Jindī's interpretation is that these discussions 'revolved around his objections to the *turuq* and the *awliyā* and the Sufīs as a whole, and many other issues, especially pertaining to the sunna and the *bidʿa*.'[939]  Al-Jindī wishes readers to understand that al-Banna did not accept all of Sufism, and questioned most of it.

In addition, al-Jindī wishes readers to understand that the Imām's experience with Sufism was only one facet to al-Banna's personage as a *daʿī* to the faith.  Seen in this light, al-Banna should be understood as a complex individual set out to 'understanding who the *daʿī* to Allah is.'[940]  In another instance al-Jindī contextualizes al-Banna's Sufī lifestyle by calling it 'the facet of worship.'[941]  This pragmatic thesis leaves readers with the plausible belief that al-Banna's obvious attachment to Sufism should be understood as one part of who he was, a complex individual with many dimensions to his identity.

Linked to this is argument is al-Jindī's attempt to link even al-Banna's spiritual activities to his broader social role as a *daʿī* to the faith.  Even when taking sentences directly from the *Mudhakkarāt*, al-Jindī does not elaborate very much on the Sufī practices al-Banna mentions, choosing instead to draw readers' attention to al-Banna's broader future role.  In one instance, he quotes al-Banna as saying,

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[938] Al-Jindī, *Hasan al-Banna,* p. 26.
[939] ibid,  p. 25.
[940] ibid, p. 26.
[941] ibid, p. 28.

'On Friday nights after the *hadra* we would study the books of Sufism as well as the *Ihyā*[942] and *Jam`a Usūl al-Awliyā*, *wal Yaqūt wal Jawāhīr* and other ones as well, and then we would make *dhikr* of Allah until the morning. This was among the holiest programs of our lives.'[943]

Commenting on this statement, al-Jindī writes that,

'And so we see three main components intertwine in the makeup of the personality of this young *da`ī*…'[944]

He also writes in his comments,

'The first facet (of his personality) was the facet of worship, as for the second facet it was study and research, and this was the task that preoccupied him in attending circles of knowledge, and in reading the *Ihyā* before salat al fajr, and his debates with his teachers, and reading the books of the shaykh in the library, and attending the circles of his father in his watch store…'[945]

Though al-Banna's statement is indicative of his deep immersion in the Sufī way of life, al-Jindī's failure to address these Sufi elements is important. There are specific books and rituals mentioned here that al-Jindī does not approach in his commentary. He does not address al-Banna's attending the *hadra* or reading the books of Shaykh Hasanayn. Instead he refers to al-Banna as *'da`ī'*, drawing readers attention away from the specifics of these rituals and towards al-Banna's future mission. In al-Jindī's second comment, he is clearly shifting his readers' attention away from the Sufī references and encouraging them to see this period of al-Banna's life as a period of study and contemplation. His use of the word '*bahth*', research, reflects his desire to articulate to readers that al-Banna's exploration into Sufism was cerebral rather than an emotional attachment to a shaykh or ritual. According to al-Jindī, even al-Banna's reading of the *Ihyā*, Imām al-Ghazālī's important work on the spiritual sciences, or shaykh Hasanayn's books was not reflective of his spiritual quest but his commitment to research and knowledge.

Al-Jindī's use of terms such as '*bahth*' show how he is concerned to remind readers that al-Banna 'researched' Sufism much as a scientist conducts an experiment before believing in his findings. He writes that, 'During this phase the Imām traversed a treacherous ocean of scholarly research, studies, and debates, and at

[942] Al-Jindī, *Hasan al-Banna*, p. 28.
[943] ibid.
[944] ibid, p. 29.
[945] ibid, p. 26.

the same time he took the path of worship and *dhikr*.'[946]  The reference here to 'scholarly research' seems to be

al-Jindī's effort to show readers that al-Banna approached Sufism intellectually without suspending his

judgement.  *Dhikr* and worship, the most common practices associated with the orders, are mentioned second.

In another example, al-Jindī cites the incident from the *Mudhakarrāt* when the Hasafiyya brothers would sit

together to talk about Shaykh Hasanayn's *karamāt*.  Al-Jindī writes that, 'His (Hasan al-Banna) position was clear

on the issue of visiting the *awliyā*, the *bid`a* and the permissible of it, and so too was his position clear on the

question of *karamāt*, especially regarding his own shaykh.'[947]  Al-Jindī reminds readers that this sort of

discussion did not interest the young Imām[948], who preferred instead to dwell on the shaykh's ability to call

people to the faith.[949]  Again the purpose in telling this story appears to be to show how al-Banna was not a

blind follower of a shaykh.

It is probable that readers of al-Jindī's book would have encountered Sufī *murīds* at some point and

observed their mannerisms.  Al-Jindī's telling of this story seems intended to distinguish al-Banna from other

*murīds* who were taught never to question the teachings of their shaykh.  Al-Jindī's suggestion that al-Banna's

distanced himself from the Hasafiyya brothers who did discuss the *karamāt* shows that his Sufism was always

checked by '*fiqh*', the legal corpus of Islam.  He writes that, 'And so we see here this maturity in one so young,

especially in his understanding and his ability to marry between the science of *fiqh* and the science of

*tasawwuf*.'[950]  This reference to the law is meant to remind readers that the Imām was a man dominated by his

intellect.

Despite al-Jindī's hesitation to portray al-Banna as a *murīd*, al-Banna himself writes with adoration for

Shaykh Hasanayn.  One can only wonder, then, why Shaykh Hasanayn does not figure into Ikhwān biographies

about their Imām.  A great deal can be learned from what does not appear in the Brothers' accounts.  For

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[946] Al-Jindī, *Hasan al-Banna*, p. 25.
[947] ibid.
[948] ibid.
[949] This story is taken directly from the *Mudhakarrāt*.  However, the fact that it is mentioned in this context is significant.  Al-Jindī seems to be using it as proof that al-Banna was no interested in Sufī esotericism.
[950] Al-Jindī, *Hasan al-Banna*, p. 26.

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example, in al-Jindī's biography, though he allows that Shaykh Hasanayn had a profound impact on the young Imām, there is no specific mention of the shaykh's teachings or to his writings which Imām al-Banna himself studied.[951] Al-Banna's own writings devote far more space to discussing these experiences with Sufism than do his biographies. What is most interesting about this exclusion of Shaykh Hasanayn from the biographies is that as we have discovered, Shaykh Hasanayn himself was a reforming shaykh who could have easily been incorporated into the Brothers' accounts as a scholar dissatisfied with the activities of the orders. Shaykh Hasanayn, as we have seen, believed that Sufī rituals must be checked by the sharia. Despite this, al-Jindī chooses not to depict al-Banna as the student of a Sufī reformer, but as a shrewd observer of Sufism who opposed much of what he saw.

Al-Jindī's portrayal of the Imām's early experience with Sufism also indicates the Brothers' attempt to separate themselves from Sufī rituals that by this time were extremely unpopular with the Egyptian masses. After describing al-Banna's immersion in Sufism as a youth al-Jindī feels it necessary to disassociate the Imām from the orders. He writes that,

> 'He (Imām al-Banna) was a man who wished to build the society around him on sound manners, utilizing Islamic discipline (*tarbiya*), and rising above the agendas of the *turuq* to what is more holistic and general and useful to building the Muslim individual.'[952]

By al-Jindī's account, the orders are guilty of distracting the masses from the useful function of building the individual, and therefore building society. Al-Hajjājī echoes this view when he writes, 'These men (Sufīs) have forgotten the true Islamic spirit…the spirit that created the *qutbs* of the Sufīs who were also *mujahidīn* and heroes.'[953] Now the Sufīs, he continues, 'take people away from these meanings and keep them immersed in ignorance and passivity.'[954] Al-Hajjājī maintains that there are still those 'pure Sufīs who preserve the dignity of

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[951] Hasan al-Banna writes in the *Mudhakkarāt* that he studied the *Manhal*, written by Shaykh Hasanayn's student `Alī al-Ja`farāwī.
[952] Al-Jindī, *Hasan al-Banna*, p. 30.
[953] Al-Hajjājī, *Al-Imām*, p. 24.
[954] ibid, p. 24.

Islam and study the religion of Allah…as for these few, they deserve every respect.'[955]  It is his fear that the orders take hold of the Egyptian people, and make them passive and unwilling to engage in the project of Islamic nation-building, which fuels his attacks on the orders and their shaykhs.

The negative reference to the orders here is reflective of the general popular contempt for these groups. By this time, the orders and their shaykhs were largely discredited and accused of misleading the masses. Ikhwān biographers were faced with the task of explaining to readers the seemingly deep attachment their Imām had with Sufism.  They chose to explain this part of al-Banna's life by arguing that it should be seen as one facet of al-Banna's makeup.  They also argued that al-Banna was never like other *murīds*, in that he never suspended his intellect out of love for a shaykh.  In light of public disdain for organized Sufism at the time of their writing, it was critical that the Brothers' personify their leader as they did.  If the Ikhwān was to play an important role in national politics and social activism, it was necessary to remove any association between the Imām and Sufī rituals from the public mind.

The question arises as to how the Brothers reconciled between their own love for Imām al-Banna and their disdain for the devotion given to Sufī shaykhs by their *murīds*.  In some instances the Brothers' accounts of al-Banna even resemble the *manāqib* literature written by a *murīd* about his shaykh.  For example, al-Hajjājī writes,

> 'My teacher and *imām* and *murshid*: from the streams of light, and the glow of inner knowledge, I took a path to you and reached the doors of wisdom, and arrived at the secrets of existence. And from the spring gushing forth from your *imān*, I grasped the light that glows from the milestones of life…you taught me that life was chivalry (*rujūla*), that it was manners and imān, and that the life of the believer is pride and being elevated by that imān.  You raised me on this truth (*haqīqa*) based on Allah ta'ala's saying 'Truly you are the loftier ones.'[956]

Other brothers also uphold the Imām's lofty status; Muhammad al-Hubaybī writes that, 'He is the educator both spiritual and intellectual (murabī) of the umma, and the teacher of generations, and the imām of this age, and the renewer (*mujaddid*) of the Islamic da`wa in the fourteenth century hijrī, and the *da`wa*

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[955] Al-Hajjājī, *Al-Imām*, p. 24.
[956] ibid, introduction.

continued to spread through his students in every corner of the world..'[957] Omar al-Tilmisānī (d. 1986), the third

*murshid* of the Brotherhood, concurs when he writes, 'Oh my beloved, which aspect of your nature can this pen

comment upon?   And all aspects of your nature are great and glorious.'[958]   In his eulogy for the Imām, al-

Tilmisanī writes that 'we are the ones desirous of your leadership and your light, and you watch over us from

lofty gardens in your eternal resting place.'[959]

The praise the Brothers bestowed upon their deceased Imām reveals their deep devotion to their

teacher, and there appears to be no effort to curb these expressions of love for him.   Many of the same

dynamics still exist and suggest continuity rather than disruption; love for the shaykh or *murshid*, allegience to

one group over another, and the creation of a collective identity based on shared ideals.   One factor that

appears to have changed was that the Brothers appear insistent that their love for the Imām is checked by their

intellect; this may be a reaction to the way of the orders that made them so distasteful to the Brothers in the

past.


*Imām al-Banna as Social and Political Activist*


Another similarity between the early and later biographies is that both emphasize Imām al-Banna's

contributions to social and political causes.   Al-Hajjājī focused a great deal of attention in his biography on

practical teachings the Imām transmitted to him.   To him, the Imām was a person of 'principle and manners,

*da`wa* and action.'[960]   When describing how he wished the Imām to be remembered, al-Hajjājī wrote that,

'Among the things I learned from you, that the sincere believer lives by the laws of his *imān* in a practical,

[957] Hudaybī, Muhammad al-Ma`mün. Introduction in `Abdul-Azīz, Goma`a Amīn. *Qalū `An al-Imām Al-Banna*. (Cairo, Dar al-Tawzi`a wal Nashr Al-Islamiyya, 2003), p 6.
[958] Al-Tilmisānī, Omar. *Qalū `An al-Imām Al-Banna*, p 70.
[959] ibid, p 71.
[960] Al-Hajjājī, *Qalū `An al-Imām Al-Banna*, p. 140.

activist (`amalī) way.'[961]  Al-Hajjājī maintains that it was this practical approach to the religion that accounted for the success of the Muslims over the centuries.  'And so with this practical (`amaliyya) belief system and the application of these virtues the Muslims once lived respected and revered.'[962]  The Muslims, he argued, knew the sincere worker for the faith because 'what was believed in the heart was followed up with actions.'[963]  Al-Hajjājī subtly challenges the beliefs of some Sufīs when he writes, 'One would know how to differentiate the *imān* from the *mumin* through one truth which can not be corrupted: what is believed in the heart must be confirmed by action.'[964]  The suggestion that what is believed is not sufficient, that belief must be followed by action, stemmed from the activist mentality inspired by al-Banna, but certainly emphasized by the Brothers during this period.

Al-Banna's commitment to his social role is a theme emphasized by biographers from both periods as well.  To Muhammd al-Ma`mün al-Hudaybī, writing in 2000, argued that al-Banna should be counted among the 'activist' scholars, literally '*al-ulemā al-`amilın*'.[965]  Al-Hudaybī, the former *murshid* of the Brotherhood and son of Hasan al-Hudaybı, argues that any Muslim who did not commit himself to a life of service to society was in fact selfish and was a great harm to the Muslims.  He writes that, 'There are some people who live for themselves alone, not concerned with anyone but himself, and not thinking of anyone but himself, not acting for anyone but himself...this is a great loss for the entire umma, and for them our tears fall, and our hearts are saddened.'[966]  Here al-Hudaybī emphasizes the individuals responsibility to the collectivity and continues by arguing that this was in fact the belief of Imām al-Banna himself.  He writes, 'Our Imām was of this generous nature, this is how we see him although only Allah knows the true nature of people.'[967]  Al-Hudaybī maintains that the Imām himself understood his educating the individual as a means of building a Muslim society.  He

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[961] Al-Hajjājī, *Al-Imām*, p. 7.
[962] ibid.
[963] ibid, p. 9.
[964] ibid, p. 9.
[965] Hudaybī, *Qalū `An al-Imām Al-Banna*, p 6.
[966] ibid.
[967] ibid.

writes, 'He (Hasan al-Banna) took on the responsiblity of educating the sincere Muslim individual, hence the conscientious Muslim family, hence the Islamic society, hence the Islamic state...'[968] Thus, the Muslim individual should be educated in his faith in order to serve as a building block for the greater Muslim polity.

The Brothers also emphasized al-Banna's egalitarian approach to *da`wa* as evidence that all classes of Muslims should be involved in building an Islamic society.  According to Hasan al-Hudaybı, the Imām 'was not like other leaders who only went to upscale neighborhoods to receive extravagant welcomes from hypocrites, instead he looked for the sincere hearts of believers...he believed that it did not matter how many followers he had...'[969] Al-Banna was known to travel to remote villages to speak to people about Allah[970] and not necessarily mingling only with notables.  This approach positioned him as an important social leader attracting followers from all social classes.  Party leaders who preceeded him had tried to incorporate the masses into their respective movements; Sa`ad Zaghlūl, for example, founder of the Wafd, 'courted lower class groups'[971], but this led to his being ridiculed by political elites.  The example of the Wafd is complex, because although not an Islamic party, Zaghlūl made use of religious symbols to gain a following among the lower classes.[972]  Al-Banna, too, felt that his organization would not succeed if it was restricted to the elites of Cairo.  By disregarding the class divide, al-Banna was able to unite Egyptians under the banner of the Brotherhood based on the meanings shared by all Muslims.

In addition to al-Hudaybī's comments, the important Ikhwān ideologue Sayyid Qutb, writing in the 1950s, also contributes to the legacy of the Imām as activist.  He argues that it was al-Banna's own genius that caused him to develop an organization that did not focus on religious teaching alone, which would lead to 'religious mania'[973] of some sort, but taught students to focus their energies on a variety of activities all under the

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[968] Hudaybī, *Qalū `An al-Imām Al-Banna*, p 6.
[969] ibid, p 67.
[970] ibid, p 66.
[971] Whidden, James. 'The Generation of 1919'. in Goldschmidt, Arthur. *Re-envisioning Egypt 1919-1952*. (Cairo, American University in Cairo Press, 2005), p. 24.
[972] ibid, p. 30.
[973] Qutb, *Qalū `An al-Imām Al-Banna,* p. 84.

umbrella of the organization.  This all took place 'through the bookstores, the camps, the companies of the Brothers, and those who did da`wa, and the fighters who witnessed battle in Palestine and on the Canal.'[974]  In Qutb's view, 'study of the religion was not enough'[975] to quell the energy of youth.  But there is also a suggestion that the Ikhwān was never intended to an organization of religious study alone, but a socially oriented group committed to economic and military growth.

The later biographies appear to be bolder in describing Imām al-Banna's political aspirations. Muhammad Abdullah al-Sammān's biography of the Imām published in 2003 is particularly forthright in saying that Imām al-Banna intentionally simplified his message in the early years of the *da'wa* with the intention of laying the groundwork for political participation.  Al-Sammān argues that al-Banna preached to a people 'who were humble in their understanding of cultural awareness.  So he understood the need for simplicity and ease and simple language and that the goal was to make it understood to his audience.'[976]  To al-Sammān, however, this was only the beginning.  Al-Banna wished to transmit to the 'rabble' (literally *umiyīn*) basic religious concepts with ease.  After giving these basic teachings some attention, al-Sammān argues, al-Banna transmitted to his students what Islam really meant.  Al-Sammān calls this section '*Al Islam ba'ad dhalik*', and proceeds to argue that Islam called for the marriage between religion and state, or *dīn wa dawla*.  This definition is a clear effort by al-Sammān to tie Islam to nationalism, and tie Islamic nationalism to Imām al-Banna.[977]  Brothers who wrote at the end of the twentieth century also had the advantage of being able to reflect on nearly half a century of events in their writings.  Since Imām al-Banna's vision was never fully realized it was possible for them to argue that Egypt's problems could still be resolved by implementing his teachings.  Mahmūd `Asaf was a close friend and confidante of al-Banna and writes that 'recent history has wronged him.'[978]

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[974] Qutb, *Qalū `An al-Imām Al-Banna,* p. 84.
[975] ibid.
[976] Al-Sammān, *Ayām Ma'a al-Imām*, p. 11.
[977] ibid, p. 12.
[978] `Asaf, *Ma`a al-Imām al-Shahīd Hasan al-Banna*, p. 5.

*'The forces of history have worked so that the center of leadership has moved from one mindset to another, from one school to another.  This new mindset is an Islamic one, pure and uncorrupted, and this school is that of Mohammed peace be upon him.'[979]*

In their writings, Brotherhood authors argued that the way to honor the legacy of the Imām was to 'act and strive for the good of Islam and the Muslims, and remembering that one who is not concerned with the affairs of the Muslims is not one of them.'[980]  Al-Hudaybī argued that in order to be true to the Imām's message, the Brothers should be 'people who act and not talk'[981], and called his fellow Brothers to 'be firm and act.'[982]  For example, al-Hajjājī writes that, 'believing in Hasan al-Banna has become tantamount to believing in the *da`wa* of the Ikhwān al-Muslimīn, and by believing (*imān)* we mean leadership and martyrdom…and whoever does not believe in this is not one of us nor shall we even know him.'[983]  Thus, loyalty to the Imām's legacy was depicted as synonymous with accepting the agenda of the Brotherhood, and those who did not partake in the activist program of the Brotherhood would be excluded.  Further, al-Hajjājī writes that, 'whoever is ready to involve himself in this *da`wa* will receive what he deserves, and whoever weakens under the weight of this burden will be deprived the reward of the *mujāhidīn*, and he will be among the offensive ones, and be among those who stayed behind, and Allah will replace his *da`wa* with the *da`wa* of another people.'[984]  These statements reflect a significant transition from Imām al-Banna's approach which we discussed in an earlier chapter.  The Imām's strategy, we argued, was to co-opt members of different Islamic groups and bring them under the umbrella of the Brotherhood.  As such, it was understood that they would maintain their individual approach while working together to create an Islamic revival.  Al-Hajjājī's statements reflect a rapid transformation from Imām al-Banna's view and an exclusivist language not previously utilized in Brotherhood writings.

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[979] `Asaf, *Ma`a al-Imām al-Shahīd Hasan al-Banna*, p. 18.
[980] Hudaybī, *Qalū `An al-Imām Al-Banna*, p 68.
[981] ibid, p. 69.
[982] ibid.
[983] Al-Hajjājī, *Qalū `An al-Imām Al-Banna*, p. 139.
[984] ibid, p. 140.

By emphasizing al-Banna's activist legacy, the Brothers were able to argue that social responsibility was as important as the spirtual bond between man and God. Man should live 'for Allah and for society'[985] in the view of al-Hajjājī, making a point to extract man's social role and mention it with his devotion to God. The struggle against colonialism, they argued, was in reality a struggle between Islam and the West. The Brothers presented Islam as a viable social and political order that could compete with Western models. At the same time, they made use of their publications to position themselves as the representatives of an authentic Islamic identity and a viable alternative to secular nationalist parties that preceded them.

Imām al-Banna's students argue that al-Banna did provide them with a model for a future Islamic state, though it was an abstract model with a great degree of flexibility. Al-Banna believed that eventually, 'civil, commercial, and criminal affairs' must originate from the sharia. [986] At the same time, al-Banna's model did not call for the achievement of an Islamic state through revolution, nor did he support the overthrow of governments. But he did expect that when given the chance, the Egyptian government would find a way to use the sharia 'as a reference point in the making and amending of laws.'[987] This is the way the Brothers' remember him in their writings; Muhammad al-Sammān describes the Imām's response to the 1948 order of dissolution of the Brotherhood as one example of his commitment to an Egyptian state whose laws derived from the sharia. At that time, several of the Brothers were angry and vengeful that Prime Minister Nuqrāshī had implemented this measure. However, al-Sammān writes that al-Banna censured them against any violent response and argued that the Brothers, in not reacting violently, 'were more concerned about their homeland and its future' and 'its unity and independence.'[988] Thus, by al-Sammān's account, al-Banna was a committed nationalist, urging the Brothers to abstain from violence to achieve their long term goals.

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[985] Al-Hajjājī, *Al-Imām*, p. 11.
[986] Al-Banna, *Majmuāt al Rasa`il*, p. 162. This is also cited in Moussalli, Ahmad. 'Hasan al-Banna's Islamist Discourse on Constitutional Rule and Islamic State'. *Journal of Islamic Studies* 4 (1993): p. 169.
[987] Al-Banna, *Majmuāt al Rasa`il*, p. 168.
[988] Al-Sammān, *Hasan al-Banna*, p. 33.

After the Imām's death, the Brothers elaborated on these views and developed them in such a way that positioned the Ikhwān as primarily a religio-political organization. They used al-Banna's model, elaborated in articles he wrote such as *al-Dīn wal Siyāsa (Religion and Politics)* and his collection of *Rasa`il (Letters)* to justify their push for a constitution based on sharia. From as early as the 1950s, the Brothers cited Islamic statehood as the highest priority of the group. As Mustafa Mashhūr (d. 2002), the fifth *murshid* of the Ikhwān, argues, 'The Ikhwān focuses on the establishment of the (Islamic) state, and this is the most important and difficult phase especially when it is a high, strong building in the face of the enemy.'[989] The Brothers believed themselves to be the true champions of the Islamic ethos, unique from other groups, citing their founder's saying, 'You are not a political party like the parties that already exist…but you are a new spirit that runs through the heart of this umma.'[990] Their focus now on statehood, the Brothers moved forward to distinguish themselves from all existing political organizations.

In order for the Brothers to present Islam as a viable political system, they first had to discredit secular nationalist parties of the past. As Gershoni puts it, 'Egyptian Islamic nationalists completely rejected the modern, Western–derived concept of the nation as an exclusive or ultimate repository of collective identity.'[991] Writing on the occasion of the anniversary of the passing of Sa`ad Zaghlūl (d. 1927), al-Hajjājī cites his obvious contributions to the Egyptian political landscape but writes that Zaghlūl 'took a particular approach, that is gone with his death.'[992] Al-Hajjājī's confidence in discussing the downfall of the Wafd and the rise of the Islamic nationalist party is easily understood when one considers the situation of the Wafd on the eve of the 1952 revolution and the search by Egyptians for political alternatives. Several decades before, the Wafd was seen as a viable voice able to present Egyptian interests to the British High Commission. Sa`ad Zaghlūl, the party's founder, rose to prominence for his role in anti-British agitations leading to his being exiled to Malta in 1919. He returned to Egypt in 1920 but was exiled again this time to Seychelles for his role in opposition to a new

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[989] Mashhūr, *Qalū `An al-Imām Al-Banna*, p. 81.
[990] ibid, p. 80.
[991] Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation*, p. 80-81.
[992] Al-Hajjājī, *Al-Imām*, p. 17.

Egyptian government favorable to the British. He returned in 1923, and in 1924 his party, the Wafd, won the overwhelming majority of the vote in the parliamentary elections.

However, the failure of the Wafd to engineer a definitive withdrawal of British forces from Egypt eventually led to widespread disillusionment with the party. At the time of al-Hajjājī's writing, the Wafd was attempting a return to power after almost five years of exclusion from the political scene.[993] The cycle of violence that had characterized Egyptian politics from 1944 to 1950 'marked a period of increasing disillusion with parliamentary rule that encompassed all sectors of Egyptian society.'[994] The people's disatisfaction was largely due to the failure of the Wafd to remove the British from Egypt and also to economic hardships that were becoming more difficult for the people to bear.[995] As a result, 'talk of revolution, fearful or hopeful, filled the air.'[996] The final blow to the Wafd's credibility came in 1950, when the party returned to power promising reform. However, as Joel Gordon argues, these promises by Wafd leaders went unfulfilled, and corruption ran rampant within the party.[997] Further, the Wafd's policy of appeasing the palace served to 'undermine the Wafd's popular base'[998], leading people to call for alternative leadership. Al-Hajjājī's narrative is more easily understood in light of this narrative. The sad state of the Egyptian government on the eve of the revolution allowed him to suggest that since Egyptians had tried parliamentary government and it had failed, they should now turn to an 'Islamic mindset.'

As al-Jindī argues, it was the reality of European colonialism that engendered the creation of a new form of leadership. The physical and symbolic takeover of places such as Palestine served as a rallying point that transcended national interests, a 'supra-Egyptian'[999] nationalism as Gershoni has called it, that would bring together Muslims of many 'nations' to fight the colonizers. Al-Banna's form of nationalism is precisely what

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[993] Gordon, Joel. 'The False Hopes of 1950: The Wafd's Last Hurrah and the Demise of Egypt's Old Order.' *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 21 (1989): p. 193.
[994] ibid.
[995] ibid.
[996] ibid.
[997] ibid.
[998] ibid.
[999] Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation*, p. 83.

Gershoni describes as 'supra-nationalist'—having rejected both secular territorial nationalism and Pharaonicism al-Banna searched for a 'new framework of identity which could reconcile particularlist loyalties with the universal bond of Islam.'[1000] Islamic supra-nationalists like al-Banna and the other Ikhwān authors believed that the British occupation represented a cultural and religious as well as a physical takeover. The issue of colonialism, al-Jindī argues, was never an issue of the British occupying Egypt, but in reality it was a cultural and religious hegemony aimed at undermining Islam. He writes that, 'He (Imām al-Banna) believed that the issue was greater than just the occupation of Egypt by the British. It was really the Western takeover of the Islamic world, and the issue was not just the occupation but control over the Muslim umma and taking it away from its God-centered worldview.'[1001] Their emphasis on a cultural and religious takeover of the Muslims, as well as their uncompromising attitude to the occupying countries, established Islamic nationalists as an authentic resistence to Western occupation.

More so, Ikhwān authors argued that nationalist parties weakened the umma by encouraging factionalism that would only make the *umma* weaker against colonialism. Al-Hajjājī writes that, 'These political parties were responsible for leading the people to social decline and national (*watanī*) ruin, and political decay and the breakdown of religion and morals.'[1002] Al-Banna himself, al-Jindī argues, 'did not belong to any party.'[1003] Al-Jindī also argues in several places that the secular nationalist parties are limited in their vision and their agenda. He writes that, 'It is not the only issue (nationalism) and that is the root of difference between the understanding of the Ikhwān al-Muslimīn and the other parties.'[1004]

Having established themselves as the voice of indigenous Islamic identity, the Brothers set out to define the ideal Islamic political system they wished to create. The Brothers fundamental goal was to establish a state where the law derived from the sharia. The sharia, in turn, had two primary sources—the Quran and the

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[1000] ibid.

[1001] Al-Jindī, *Hasan al-Banna*, p. 30.

[1002] Al-Hajjājī, *Al-Imām*, p. 20.

[1003] Al-Jindī, *Hasan al-Banna*, p. 30.

[1004] Al-Jindī, *Hasan al-Banna*, p. 31.

tradition of the Prophet Muhammad.  Their Imām, now deceased, had only spoken generally about the need for

a state based on the sharia.  However, the reality of revolution in 1952 made al-Banna's students much more

concerned to define specifics about the state than he had been.[1005]  Two authors in particular whom we have

discussed, Sayyid Qutb and Muhammad al-Ghazālī, expounded on what powers would be given to the Muslim

head of state so that he may rule in the interest of the people.  The sharia was flexible in their view and could

accommodate modern life, and even difficult rulings like the *hadd* punishments could be explained.[1006]

They knew very well what it was not; they did not want readers to understand that it was a government

run by men 'doing *dhikr* and *tasbih*'[1007], meaning that a Muslim politician would not be a Sufī.  It was actually the

Europeans, al-Hajjājī argues, that were to blame for turning Islam into a religion of 'spiritual meanings, having

nothIng to do with a political or social system.'[1008]  Muslim politicians themselves, the Brothers argued,

reinforced European critiques by criticizing the viability of Islam as a social and political system.  Secular

nationalists, in al-Hajjājī's view, promoted the view that 'the Quran was revealed only to be recited at the

graves.'[1009]  These men, he continues, 'were taught by Europe that it was idiotic to imagine that Islam could

serve as a complete social system.'[1010]  Like Imm al-Banna, al-Hajj j  intended to show them that Islam was an

active social force and that the Quran could serve as a constitution for life.[1011]

The imperative to establish an Islamic state was intensified because for years Egypt was ruled by foreign

powers[1012]—their push for sharia was as much an anti-colonial calling as it was a religious one.  Al-Jindī writes

that, 'the British occupation spanned from Egypt to Sudan and Iraq, and the French occupation over Syria and

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[1005] Mitchell R., p. 237.
[1006] ibid, p. 240-241.
[1007] Al-Hajjājī, *Al-Imām*, p. 21.
[1008] ibid.
[1009] ibid.
[1010] Al-Hajjājī, *Al-Imām*, p. 21.
[1011] The idea that Islam was a complete social system that could provide a legal framework for the state originated
with al-Banna and was later developed by Brothers like al-Hajjaj .  See Al-Banna, Hasan. *Hal Nahnu Qawmun
`Amil n?* (Cairo, Dar al-Tawz a wal Nashr al-Islamiyya, 1983), p. 105-106.
[1012] Mitchell R., p. 236.

Lebanon and the Maghrib in its entirety…'[1013]  The point here is to establish that colonialism was not only an Egyptian problem but a Muslim one too.  Mashhūr echoes this argument when he writes that Imām al-Banna 'spread his message to most of the cities and villages of Egypt, and even to nearby countries, and he would participate in the issues affecting the Muslim world and called for freedom from occupation by the colonizers.'[1014]  Mashhūr uses the example of Palestine to show how the Imām was concerned with the affairs of Muslims abroad—the situation in Palestine was 'among the most important issues that occupied his mind and to which he gave his full attention.'[1015]  By raising awareness about the imperative of being concerned for the Palestinians, Ikhwān authors would compel readers to see themselves in a very different light.  Indeed, those who were influenced by Brotherhood writings would begin to see themselves not as inheritors of a Pharoanic or distinctly Egyptian identity, but as Muslims linked to a greater body struggling against occupation and non-belief.

Brotherhood writers did not see a contradiction between their desire to establish an Islamic state in Egypt and their loyalty to the greater Muslim body politic.  This is due to the fact that, as Gershoni points out, Islamic supra-nationalism allowed for the existence of multiple loyalties.[1016]  Though now immersed in Egypt's political landscape, the Brothers continued to see themselves as linked to the rest of the Muslim world, for as Gershoni writes, 'all other identifications and loyalties came after and were subordinate to a primary religious identity and allegiance.'[1017]  For example, the Brothers understood that members would feel loyalty to to the Muslim *umma* while at the same time maintaining their sympathies for the Egyptian nation.  Al-Jindī, while introducing his Imām's ideas on nationalism and the occupation, pre-qualifies his arguments by writing that 'He (al-Banna) had his nationalistic feelings.'[1018]  Elsewhere he writes that, 'His (Imām al-Banna) agenda was complete and comprehensive, and nationalism was a part of it.'[1019]  Thus, Islam itself allowed for nationalist

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[1013] Al-Jindī, *Hasan al-Banna*, p. 32.
[1014] Mashhūr, *Qalū `An al-Imām Al-Banna*, p 78.
[1015] ibid.
[1016] Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation*, p. 83.
[1017] ibid.
[1018] Al-Jindī, *Hasan al-Banna*, p. 30.
[1019] ibid, p. 31.

sentiments, as did Imām al-Banna, and the Brothers made use of this argument to justify their increasing involvement in the political arena.

*Conclusion*

This chapter examined biographical materials on al-Banna written in the period immediately after his death (1950s) and then later in the 1990s and 2000s. Earlier biographies were largely shaped by the optimism of 1952; at last, al-Banna'a aspirations for a moral, Islamic-oriented society could be realized.

Both early and later biographies were adamant in their rejection of depictions of al-Banna as a man of Sufism. For the Ikhwān to be accepted as leaders their Imām could not be linked to traditional Islam, which was largely discredited at this point because of the failure of the ulema, including the Sufī shaykhs, to address the socio-religious crisis of the day. Instead the Brothers emphasized the activist aspect of al-Banna's life to suit the political climate of post-1952 Egypt.

In addition, the Brothers diverged from their Imām's accepting attitude towards Muslims of different schools of thought, such as the Suf s. As discussed in this thesis, al-Banna's approach had been to include members of all groups in his *da'wa* efforts. After his death, the Brothers argued that one who was not engaged in *da`wa*, activism, and jihād should not be accepted by the group. Consolidation of the membership served to ensure cohesion within the organization and prevent the possibility that the priorities of the movement would change.

This chapter also argued that the Brothers positioned themselves through their writings as the inheritors of the Imām's nationalist ambitions. Al-Banna, himself, they argued, was committed to the idea of a state whose laws derived from the sharia. However, he had not been specific about how sharia would be applied— this was up to them. Their reading into al-Banna's works to suit the political climate would define their agenda up until the present day.

The Brothers were also strengthened by the fact that after centuries of foreign rule, Egyptians were ready to rule themselves. They portrayed themselves as the champions of an authentic Islamic spirit after the failure of other political parties to reflect an indigenous identity and to address the challenge of foreign occupation. After arguing that Islam was a religion of activism and social responsibility, it was not difficult for them to argue now that they should be trusted with a role in government.

**CONCLUSION**

This dissertation began by examining how the history of the Sufi orders in Egypt sheds light on the changing nature of authority in Egyptian society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Over the course of our research, it soon became clear that the delegitimization of the Sufi shaykhs and the *turuq* had long term implications especially in light of the budding Egyptian nationalist movement. The shaykhs entered the twentieth century compromised both economically and politically, and yet the reforms which stripped them of their power do not adequately explain their loss of authority. Thus, the true blow to the position of the orders in Egyptian national consciousness was the decision of many Sufi shaykhs to accommodate British colonial rule at the beginning of the twentieth century. The Egyptian people, immersed in a period of self-awareness and creativity, could not accept for leaders those who appeared concerned chiefly with their own survival.

Thus, at the start of the twentieth century, the meaning of authority in Egypt was forever altered. Having disqualified themselves from the national dialogue on self-determination and anti-colonialism, the Sufi shaykhs continued to function but retreated somewhat to their bases of influence in the countryside. Al-Banna, born at the turn of the century, absorbed their devotions and carried this love with him as he transitioned to Cairene life. Our second research theme comes into play here, as al-Banna appears in his writing constantly absorbed in the effort to negotiate between the traditional, as represented by his attachment to the *turuq* and the 'modern'. He never abandoned his love for the Sufis but found he had to utilize modern methods to disseminate his ideas to the Egyptian public. He founded an organization, a 'modern' construct, instead of a Sufi order, which he felt would limit his influence. But al-Banna's shift from writing about Sufism to writing about Islamic nationalism in 1936 reveals a deeper transformation within his psyche—he became fully aware that political authority in Egypt no longer rested with the orders and that Sufism, as an institution, should be preserved as a private conversation between man and God. His defensive posture thereafter was always about Sufi beliefs, especially when engaging with Salafi opponents, and never about the viability of Sufi leadership within the context of the conversation on Islamic statehood.

Finally, we set out to understand the Muslim Brothers' revulsion to Sufism after al-Banna's death and whether or not this was linked to their political aspirations after 1952.  The Brothers were aware that their Imām defended the ideology of the Sufīs during his lifetime, but he had never argued that they should become their leaders.  The new leaders of the Ikhwān did not share al-Banna's sentimental attachment to the orders, and they did everything they could through their writings to free themselves of any association with the *turuq* in the Egyptian popular consciousness.  The Brothers saw themselves as representatives of a new, rational brand of Islam based on the rejection of transmitted tradition.  Why was it so important to the Brothers to distance themselves from traditional Islamic structures such as the Sufī orders while combating the popularity of socialist and secular parties?  The question is complex, but the answer is that the Brothers feared for the extinction of Islamism in the post-1952 era, and their rebuttal of Sufīsm should be understood as a part of their effort to salvage Islamist political discourse.

In January of 2011, a popular revolution swept across Egypt and ended the thirty year rule of Hosni Mubarak.  Immediately, different parties, many which had been repressed during Mubarak's reign emerged and expressed desire to participate in the political dialogue.  The Brotherhood too, which suffered bouts of repression under the Mubarak regime, emerged as a strong voice for the compatibility of Islam and the nation state.  In the prelimary parliamentary elections which took place in December of 2011 and January of 2012, the Brotherhood won a decisive majority of seats and appeared poised to control the Egyptian parliament.  In a remarkable turn of events, Brotherhood leadership has shown powers of accommodation both with the ruling Supreme Council of the Armed Forces and also with foreign powers, especially the United States[1020], as they seek to consolidate their power.  An article which appeared in the New York Times on January 4th, 2011, stated that the Obama administration has made amicable gestures to the Muslim Brotherhood in recent months, including meeting with Brotherhood leaders, an indication of the administration's awareness of the changing political climate in Egypt.  For their part, the Ikhwān have made it clear that they do not with to be seen as the

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[1020] Kirkpatrick, David and Steven Lee Myers. 'Overtures to Egyptian Islamists Reverse Longtime U.S. policy'. *The New York Times* (New York) January 4th, 2011, New York edition, p. A1.

party of militant Islamism, and continue to offer 'assurances that its lawmakers want to build a modern democracy that will respect individual freedoms, free markets and international commitments, including Egypt's treaty with Israel.'[1021]  It remains to be seen how far the Brothers will extend themselves to accommodate domestic and international pressures and also how their stance will be perceived by the Egyptian people, who may view any accommodation as a betrayal of the authentic Islamic spirit the Brothers claim to represent. Further, it will also be important to observe the interaction between the Ikhwān and neo-Sufī political parties, which have risen to prominence post-revolution, and claim to represent Sufī political activism reminiscent of Shaykh Muhammad Māḍī Abul-Aza`im of the early twentieth century.  Whether or not the Brothers will engage these Sufī activists remains to be seen.

Finally, the revival of Islamic nationalist language is one of the most fascinating results of the revolution. The varied voices that 'speak' for political Islam include the Brotherhood, a Sufī political coalition led by Shaykh `Alī Abul-Aza`im, a Salafī revivalist party known as al-Nour, and al-Azhar under the leadership of Grand Muftī `Alī Gomaa.  Our historical discussion of the development of these oft-competing voices is all the more interesting in the context of their trajectories today.

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[1021] Kirkpatrick, p. A1.

Jamal Al-Banna, January 2007

The Masjid of Shaykh al-Hisāfī, Damanhūr

روضة الشيخ حسنين الحصافي رضي الله عنه

الخميس ٩ جمادى الأولى ١٣٥٢ هـ

بأرضِ دمنهورَ أزورُ فتىً لهُ — مشاهدُ توحيدٍ ينالُ بها الخيرا

أزورُ بها المولى الحصافي مجدِّدًا — عهودًا بها قد صدَّقَ الخبرَ والخُبرا

سلامٌ على المولى الحصافي تحيةً — وشوقٌ لأيامٍ خلت جدَّدت ذكرا

وحقِّكَ لم أنسَ عهودًا وثيقةً — وقلبي لساني في الصفا سيدي يقرا

سقيتَ بآدابِ الطريقِ لطيفةً — شرابًا وكنتَ الشيخَ قد تقبَّلَ العذرا

وبنيتَ آدابَ الشريعةِ ناهجًا — على منهجِ الأفرادِ كنتَ لنا بدرا

حسنينُ إني والذي فلقَ النوى — على العهدِ باقٍ في هواكَ ولا هجرا

أجاهدُ نفسي أن تكونَ على الذي — تحبُّ وربي يمنحُ الرشدَ والبرا

يوفقني ربي لما قد تحبُّهُ — وليسعدُني مولاي شهري والدهرا

أموتُ على الإسلامِ في بهجةِ الرضا — بمقعدِ صدقٍ قد أفوزُ بها قدرا

أرى الخيرَ في الأولادِ والأهلِ خلتي — نالَ الرضا والخيرَ والعفوَ والغنا

إلهي بمجلى الذاتِ أفضلِ مرسلٍ — يا ربِّ سخِّر لي به البرَّ والبحرا

من ديوان ضياء القلوب: من فضل علام الغيوب الجزء الثاني للإمام المجدد
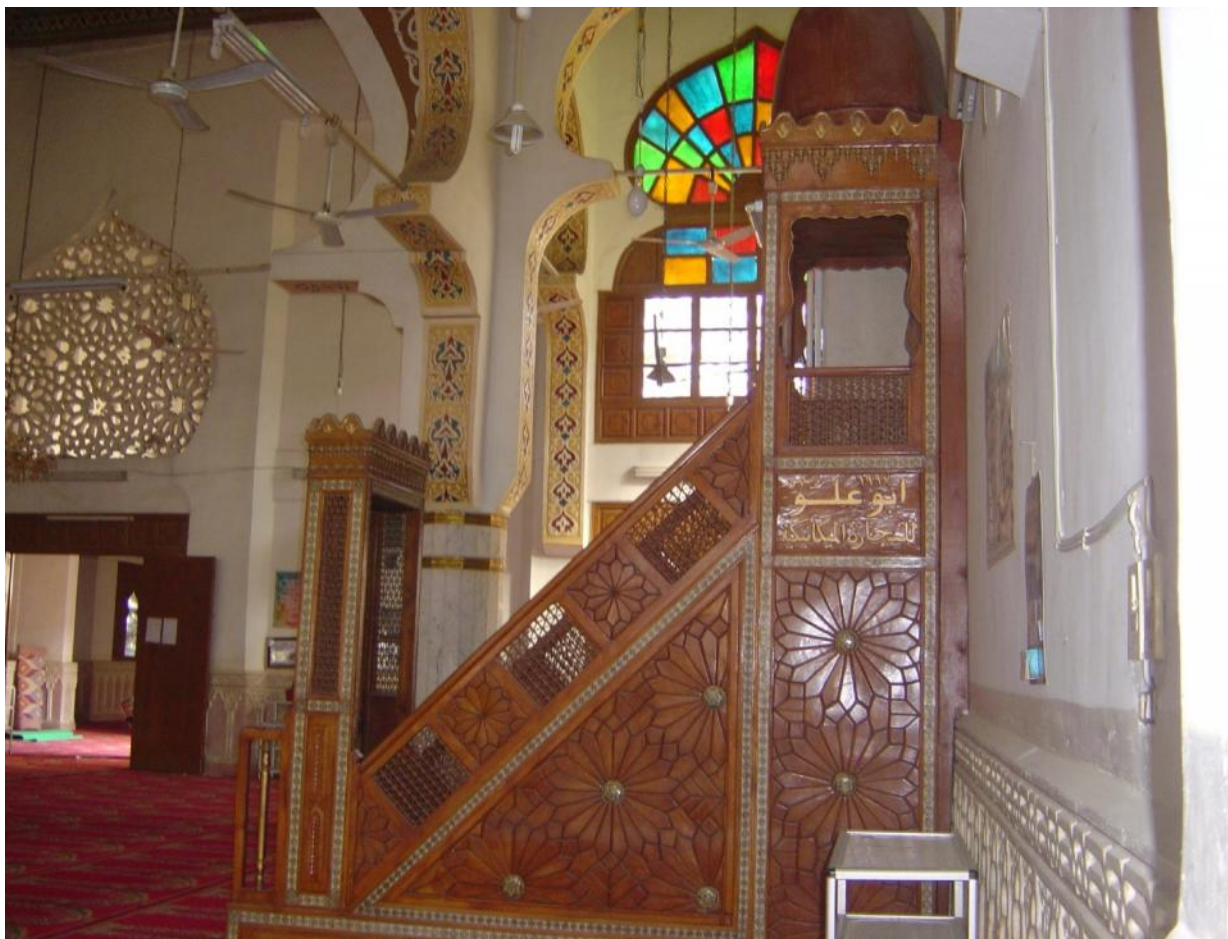السيد محمد ماضي أبو العزائم سليل آل البيت وضريحه بشارع مجلس الشعب بالقاهرة

Poem on Grave of Shaykh Hasanayn al-Hisāfī

Plate marking the grave of Shaykh `Abdul Wahāb al-Hisāfī

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Maqām of Shaykh al-Hisāfī

Inside the Masjid of Shaykh al-Hisāfī

Another view of the inside of Masjid Shaykh al-Hīsafī and the location of their *hadra*

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