

Al-Ṭarīqa Al-Shāthuliya Al-Yashruṭīyah

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Abstract

“Mohamad asked a slave woman: Where is God? She replied: He is up in the sky. He then asked her: Who am I? She said: You are the Messenger of God. He said: Let her go, she is a believer, *mu'minah*.” In this tradition, *ḥadīth*, the Prophet of Islām lays down the rule of tolerance and acceptance to the other. The question about God is one the main questions that occupy the human mind, and is often tackled from different approaches, and separate paths: “*walau shāa' rabbuka laj'ala al-nāsa ummatan wāḥidah*.”² It is His will that He wanted them to be that way, and He accepts them as such. ‘The Truth’ lies wherever an individual or a community believes, and the paths followed in search of ‘The Truth’ are in number equal to the number of human souls. But God states: “*We (God) are nearer to him (man) than his jugular vein*.”³ In this verse, āyah, we find our guidance properly defined, as to where the search begins and where it ends. It defines that: “The Truth and the Path are within you.”

The Sufi *ṭarīqa*, *Al-Ṭarīqa al-Shāthuliya al-Yashruṭīyah* is the institute where a dedicated path-minded⁴ follower of knowledge finds his objective through the cultivation of the Soul by love and brotherhood, to become liable to realize ‘The Eternal Truth’. It is a philosophical discipline that encourages critical and

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² Quran 11:118

³ Quran 50:16

⁴ Shaykh al-Yashruṭī said: “a *faqīr* who is path minded towards us is sitting on our knees, though he is in the far West.” This *ḥadīth* is in ‘*kitāb Nafaḥāt al-Ḥaqq*’ by Faṭimah al-Yashruṭīyah, *ḥadīth* no. 527

independent thought and is capable of working towards a better understanding of the world and promoting tolerance and peace.

Key Words: Sufism, *ṭarīqa al-Yashruṭiyah*, Philosophy, Shaykh Ali Nūr al-Dīn al-Yashruṭī, Poetry.

Shaykh Ali Nūr al-Dīn al-Yashruṭī and the establishment of the Ṭarīqa¹

The Ṭarīqa was established in the city of Acca Palestine, as Shaykh ‘Ali Nūr al-Dīn al-Yashruṭī started preaching in the Zaitūna mosque in Acca Palestine in 1266 Higra year. With the charismatic grandeur God bestowed upon him and his convincing eloquence, a new era of Sufism was instigated in the horizons of *Bilād al-Shām*, and therefrom spread to the four corners of the world. People there, in the Zaitūna mosque congregated around the Shaykh to obtain the wisdom, *mawārid* down-flowing directly from his heart. The audience was thirsty for such a Sufi discourse, as the country had not witnessed such a Sufi surge subsequent to the days of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulī (1050/1641-1143/1730). As the Shaykh expounded the *Ṭarīqa* and its doctrine, a great number of *fuqaha* scholars and artisans of various trades and social statuses espoused the *Ṭarīqa*. The first one was Shaykh Qāsim al-‘Urābī, the *mufti* of Acca, followed by *Hajj* Ahmad al-Dallāl, a prominent merchant of Acca, Abu-Ayyūb al-Qablāwī, and the commanders of the Turkish garrison in Acca², The Zaitūna mosque in the early fifties of the nineteenth century witnessed the birth of “*al-Ṭarīqa al-Shāthuliyah al-Yashruṭiyah*”.

Shaykh Ali Nūr al-Dīn al-Yashruṭī (1208-1316H) was one of the dignitaries of ‘Ḥammūdah Bey of the Ḥasanid régime in Tunisia³. He was born in Banzirt, of

¹ This literature is a brief translation cited from ‘*Kitāb Riḥlah ilā al-Ḥaqq*’ Journey to the Truth, by the daughter of the Shaykh, Fāṭima al-Yashruṭiya, , 4th edition 1997/1418

² The city of Acca was the place where the Ottoman regime banished learned political adversaries

³ Al-Thawādi Rashīd ‘*A ‘alām min Banzirt*’ Tunis, no publisher, 1971 p.171

the Ottoman *ayālah*¹ of Tunis, died in the city of Acca in Palestine, and was buried in his *zāwīyah* there. He came from a noble ancestry, which goes back in genealogy to Prophet Mohammed; His father, Mohammad Nūr al-Dīn al-Yashrūṭī al-Ḥasanī al-Idrīsī was the head of al-Yashruṭī family, one of the influential families in the community of Banzirt. He was active in the political life of the country, and was for a period, the commander in chief of the Tunisian Army². His mother, Maryam Tājriyah, was the only daughter of a very rich well-educated merchant. She had seven children; three of them died in their early childhood, and the other four died in their youth in the great plague, which swept the population in Tunisia. The disaster was catastrophic to the mother, who had passed the age of pregnancy and childbirth. But, miraculously she got pregnant and gave birth to a son, whom she named Ali Nūr al-Dīn.

Shaykh Ali Nūr al-Dīn, later in Acca, told the story of how his mother conceived him. He said: "My mother had always loved the kinsfolk of God. Upon the disaster of her loss of her children, she reverted into solitude and isolated herself with God alone. The only time she used to go out of her solitude was to visit the tombs of her dead sons. On her return home from one of her visits to the cemetery, she met Shaykh Šāleh Jallūl³, who said: "O! Maryam; you shall conceive a baby boy who you name Ali Nūr al-Dīn. The year of his birth is in the Quranic *āyah*: "and our father is an old man, *wa abūna shaykhun kabīr*."⁴ He then handed her a small pebble, and said: "Keep this pebble for your son until he comes out of age. Give him then this pebble and extend my greetings to him". Then he said: See how deep was her faith! She knew that it was merely a small

¹ Ayala is the Ottoman Turkish term for district

² Šawāfiṭa, Wafā, 'Al-Madrasah al-Shāthuliyah al-Yashruṭīyah' ed.1 no publisher, 2003 p.189

³ Shaykh Jalloul was a well-known sufi saint in Tunisia

⁴ Quran 28:23 calculated to 'Gumal arithmetic' summed to 1208 H

pebble with no harm or benefit, but she kept it until I grew up, and she then gave it to me, and she extended to me the Shaykh's greetings."¹

His early childhood and youth are summed up in one verse from the Quran *Kareem*: "And thou art of an exalted standard of character."² He did not leave home except for the mosque, or to visits to holy men. He was devoted to the poor, and he used to give them his daily allowance. He had his formal education in law *sharī'ah*, jurisdiction *fiqh*, and tradition *Hadīth*, at *Jam'ī al-Zaitouna* in Tunis. But his main interest was in God's followers, *ahl Allāh*, the *Sufīs*. He dedicated himself to them and to their service. In his search for 'The Truth', he realized that knowledge and the purification of the soul could be attained only by the guidance of a spiritual master, *Murshid*, al-Qutb. In his search for the *Murshid*, the Perfect Man³, he accompanied a number of scholars, sages and *shaykhs*, and also joined a number of Sufi paths, but none satisfied his quest. He came to join the path of *Shaykh* Mohamad Ibn Īsā (d. 1523), which is a branch of the Jazūlī *ṭarīqa*, but still the achievements he got were short of his goal. He finally, saw *Shaykh* Ibn Īsā in a vision where the *Shaykh* addressed him: "O! My son: Are you still steady on your quest?" *Shaykh* Ali answered: "Yes Master, and if you got more knowledge, please stretch it to me." The *Shaykh* Ibn Īsā said: "You know that I am in the ismuth *barzahk*, and I don't have more knowledge to pass to you. But I shall guide you to that person, who shall pass to you the legacy which Prophet Mohammad delivered to Ali Ibn Abī Ṭālib". A few days later, *Shaykh* Ali Nūr al-Dīn came to the acquaintance of *Shaykh* Mohamad Ibn Ḥamza Zafer al-Madānī, through *Shaykh* Ahmad 'Abd al-Wārith. *Shaykh* Ali, then

¹ al-Yashrutiyah, Fatimah '*Ri'hlā ila al-'Haqq*', 4th edition 1997/1418 pp.174-75

² Quran 48:4. The prophet Mohamad attained the exalted manners and Mohamadan morals are an inheritance to "*al-warathah al-Moḥamadiyyūn*", who follows the Mohamadan path.

³ The perfect man is a Sufi term used to denote '*al-Wārith al-Moḥamadī*' who inherits and carries the legacy of Mohamad

joined al-Madānī's *ṭarīqā*, and dedicated himself for thirteen years in free service, *maqām al-tajrīd* at al-Madānī's *zāwīyah* in Muṣrāṭah. He later, on the death of Shaykh al-Madānī, assumed the leadership of the Ṭarīqa, moved to the East where he established *al-Ṭarīqa Al-Shāthuliya Al-Yashruṭīyah*.¹

The Shaykh lived in Acca for thirteen years, but because he suffered from the humidity in the seaside city, he moved his residence to the town of Tarshīhā in the highlands of al-Jaleel, where he established his first *zāwīyah* in 1268 H.² "But as the followers and novices visiting him grew in numbers to such an extent that the Ottoman authorities assumed that the Shaykh had assembled one hundred thousand warriors in his castle, conspiring a revolution. So the authorities sentenced the Shaykh to exile to Rhodes, an island in the Mediterranean. There, he lived in the house of the *mufti* of Rhodes where new novices joined the *Ṭarīqah* and established a *zāwīyah* to which the Ottoman authorities allocated ten golden Dinars every month³. The Ottoman authorities released him after twenty one months of exile in 1285 H. He was asked to be appointed in the position of the Sultan's Shaykh, but he chooses to go back to Tarshīhā. The authorities allowed him to stay in Acca with a permission to stay in in Tarshīhā during the summer season."⁴ In the meantime, Sultan Abd al-Ḥamīd and a number of his ministers joined the Ṭarīqa. Shaykh Mahmud Abu al-Shamat the *mukaddam*⁵ of the Ṭarīqa in Damascus was sent as an envoy to represent Shaykh Ali Nūr al-Dīn at the Sultan's court.

¹ Van Ess pp. 10-11, taken from a manuscript '*Jawharat al-Muḥibbīn*' by Ali al-Ṭaqtāq al-Ḥarastānī'

² Yashruṭīyah, F. '*Riḥlah ilā al-Ḥaqq*' p.22

³ Ibid 229

⁴ This kind of treatment to the Shaykh negates the defamatory accusations by *fuqahā*, and confirms the political charge

⁵ Mukaddam is the position of a Shaykh's deputy or assistant in the running and delivering the Shaykh's orders

The Ṭarīqa and its Doctrine

Al-Ṭarīqa Shāthuliyah Yashruṭiyah is a branch of the main Ṭarīqa Shāthuliyah named after Shaykh Abu al-Ḥasan al-Shāthuli (1196-1258), a major Sufi path which branched into a number of Sufi *ṭuruq*. The shaykhs of the main Ṭarīqa Shāthuliyah are advanced scholars in a versatile of sciences, i.e. *Fiqh*, *Ḥadīth* and *Tafsīr*, and on top of all that they are *imāms* in Sufism. They were privileged with the sciences of, *asrār*, *anwār*, *maqāmāt*, and *aḥwāl*, which are the science of *sulūk* and the science of the Truth. This privileged science is the gift of inspiration *ilhām* endowed by God upon Sufis.

The general stance of the *Ṭarīqa Shāthuliyah Yashruṭiyah* was expounded in the speech delivered by Dr. Ali Yashruṭi, son of Shaykh Ahmad Yashruṭi and the projected fifth shaykh of the Yashruṭi Ṭarīqa, at the Zāwiyah in Acca, Palestine on Saturday, 19th day of *Ramadan*, 1416 H. - February 8th, 1996, on the centennial of Shaykh Ali Nūr al-Dīn Al Yashruṭi:

“Ṭarīqa Shāthuliyah Yashruṭiyah made it easy for us to understand the divine and as well as the human intellectual orders without interfering with those orders. It amalgamates for us, the ‘universal comprehensiveness in Islam’, together with the ‘love in Christianity’, and the claimed specialty (electivity, chosen people) in Judaism. We are attached to Ali Nūr al-Dīn because he accumulated for us the gist that humanity has acquired in its intellectual life, and at the same time, he introduced from the Islamic point of view, intellectual orders (systems) which had origins, not only in heavenly revelations, but also in earthly religions as well, after ridding them from their stains and impurities. All these were ethical principles adopted by Buddhism, Hinduism, and Greek Hellenistic philosophers. There is also some ideas of Western philosophers, some of which we like to take into consideration, and others which we just pass by them occasionally.

Emanuel Kant and Descartes and many others are such examples of the former case.

We therefore are spiritually attached to Ali Nūr al-Dīn, because he compiled for us the gist of the intellectual achievements of humanity, amalgamated with the pure divine teachings, and simplified it in such a way as to make it easier for us to consume in our simple minds. Man in his nature tends to like and assimilate simplified issues. On the other hand, from the secular side, he left for us a way of life that made a very tight relationship amongst the followers of the Ṭarīqa in particular and in between the Ṭarīqa and their society in general. This pattern of life is based upon love, serenity, and open mindedness. Time may tend to make us forget some of his instructions, but the basics retain their authenticity and firmness, and they never change with time. These basic authentic principles shall retain their clarity with some special certain groups, whereas it may be misunderstood by others, and they appear in a distorted manner contrary to its real significance and intentions. Ali Nūr al-Deen instructed us that Sufism, and consequently the Ṭarīqa does not legitimize the prohibitions, and also that Sufism does not relieve or cancel the charges and religious duties sanctioned by Islam. He also, taught me to care for my brother's welfare before mine, and to protect my sister in faith with my utmost efforts.

And finally He taught me to accommodate my family and children with the best possible facilities, to have a life much better than the one that was available for me. All of that, which Ali Nūr al-Dīn gave us, is a devotion to life as sanctioned by all heavenly religions.”

The doctrine of the Ṭarīqa is predominantly based upon Quran and *Sunnah*,¹ and the *murīd* has to fully submit and observe *Sharī'ah* issues, in order to achieve the

¹ Nafa'hat 1

Truth *‘haqīqah*: “Underneath each canonic rule of *Sharī‘ah*, abides a treasure of the reality, this treasure shall not be attained without full practice and perfection of the *Sharī‘ah* rule, “*kullu ḥukm min aḥkām al-sharī‘ah taḥtahu kanz min kunūz al-ḥaqīqah, wala yunālu hāthā al-kanz illa bi itqān thālika al-ḥukm al-shar‘ii.*”¹ The Shaykh established that love is the most essential pivot around which all the four principles of the *Ṭarīqa* doctrine rotate: “love, remembrance, intellect, and submission are the four pillars of the path: *Maḥaba, thikr, fikr, taslīm.*”²

Love is the most vital instrumental key in *Ṭarīqa* that opens the realm of reality. This love is manifested in remembrance of God and the love of the Shaykh, “*al-Ṭarīqa hia thikru Allāh wa maḥabat al-Shaykh*”³ But this love for the Shaykh, basically is the love for God and *Rasūl Allah*, and at the same time is the first step in the path of return *m‘aād* to the presence of God, “*inna allathī faraḍa ‘alaika Al-Quran larādduka ilā m‘aād.*”⁴ Love is manifest in the collective clemency and forbearance and the brotherhood that the Shaykh implants amongst the *murīdīn*, either in their secular daily life, or in their spiritual *Ṭarīqiyah* daily gatherings and in the weekly Thursday night meetings⁵, Friday noon prayers, and also on annual gatherings in the *zāwiyah* for the celebrations of feasts, *eid al-fīṭr* and *eid al-aḍḥā*. The Prophet’s birthday is the most important anniversary ceremonial celebration, where the followers, *murīdīn* come to Amman to visit the Shaykh, and share in the celebration. They read the episode of *al-mawlid al-nabawī*, written by the great Sufi poet of the *Ṭarīqa Yashrutiyah*, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Ḥimṣī al-Shāthuli al-Yashruṭī.

¹ Ibid 65

² Ibid 30

³ Nafa‘hat 3

⁴⁴ Quran 28:85

⁵ The Thursday night meeting may be rearranged to suit the country and current conditions

The *Zāwīyah* is the central place of the gatherings of the followers of the *Ṭarīqa*. Of the first *zawāya* established by the Founder Shaykh, were the mother *zawīyah* of Acca, which was completed by Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Yashruṭī son of Shaykh Ali Nūr al-Dīn, and that in Tarshīḥa built in 1279 H¹, and a third one in Damascus Syria called “*zāwīyat al-balṭajīya*” the axe warriors of the Sultan. Numerous *zawāyā* were built later in Aleppo and in the villages in the vicinity of Damascus and Aleppo, in Jerusalem and in the Lebanese *Biqā’a* valley. Shaikh Ahmad Yashruṭī, the present and the fourth shaykh of the *Ṭarīqa*, ordered renovations to these *zawāyā* at the outset of the twenty-first century, and concurrently indorsed the construction of new spacious well modernly accommodated *zawāyā* in Amman, Damascus, Aleppo, Beirut, and in Kamed al-Louse and the other seven hamlets *ḍay’aāt* in the *Biqā’a* valley in Lebanon. The followers established *zawāya* in the Comoro Islands, Nigeria and other states in East Africa. The followers of the *Ṭarīqa* in Brazil, as well as in Calgary Canada constructed marvelous *zawāyā* complexes, with libraries, study rooms, and computer facilities. The *zawāyā* are funded by donations from the Shaykh and by voluntary contributions from the followers, each within his ability and to his personal disposition.

Al-Ṭarīqa al-Shāthuliyah al-Yashruṭīyah

The *murīdīn* believe that they were chosen for the *Ṭarīqa* by the Shaykh from eternity. Shaykh Ali Nūr al-Dīn said in one of his speeches, *muthākarāt*: “*each prophet and shaykh had chosen his followers from eternity in ‘aalam al-arwāḥ, and then, when in this world, delivers them through states and stages to come and give their allegiance in real life.*”² On initiation into the *Ṭarīqa*, the *murīd* or novice is ordered first to fully adhere and perform the basics of *Sharī’ah*, and to perform the litanies of the *Ṭarīqa*, *awrad* as sanctioned by the Shaykh: “*Istighfār*

¹ Yashruṭīyah, F. ‘*Riḥlah ila al-Ḥaqq*’ ed.4 p.225

² Nafahāt no. 59

in the form: “*astaghfiru Allāh al-‘athīm allathī lā ilāha illā huwa al-ḥayy al-qayyūm wa-atūbu ilayhi*”. And ‘*al-salātu ala al-nabiyyi*’ in the form: “*allāhumma salli ‘alā sayyidina Mohamad al-nabiyyi al-ummi wa- ‘alā ālihi wa-sahbihi wa-sallim.*” The third wird is to witness that there is no God but Allāh in the form: “*lā ilāha illa Allāh*”. These *awrād* are to be recited one hundred times twice daily, to be followed by the idiom: “*Mohamad rasūl Allāh*”. The greater wird is *al-wathīfa al-Shāthuliyah al-Yashruṭiyah*,¹ to be recited twice daily individually and in groups as well, especially on Thursday evening assemblies, and the three main festivals of *īd al-ḥijr*, *īd al-aḥḥā*, and *al-mawlid*, the greatest yearly assembly for the celebration of the birthday of Prophet Mohamad. The *murīdīn* assemble in hundreds from all around the world to the *zāwiyah* in Amman, the residence of the Shaykh.

The relation between the Shaykh and the murideen is spiritual, but “the murīdīn are essentially required to make at least a yearly visit to the Shaykh to acquire traits and ethical attributes, *ṣifāt*.”² The Shaykh stresses that the *Ṭarīqa* is the mohamadan ethics³. The Shaykh Ali Nūr al-Dīn said: “*al-Ṭarīq kulluhā ādāb*.”⁴ The *Ṭarīqa*, although an institutional group, is gave full freedom to the *faqīr*: “*There you are on your own, hā anta.*”⁵ On another occasion he said: “*Back up your zāhir to al-Kitāb and Sunnah, and free your ‘bāṭin’ to ‘al-ḥaqq’, and fear from neither your Shaykh nor any other, “asnid thāhiraka lil-kitāb wa al-Sunnah, wa aṭliq bāṭinaka li al-ḥaqq, walā takhaf min shaykhika walā min aḥad.*”⁶

¹ It is also called ‘*Al-Wathīfa Al-Mashīshiyah*’ in relation to Shaykh Abd al-Salām ibn Bashīsh, or ibn Mashīsh

² Nafaḥāt no. 120

³ Ibid no. 120

⁴ Nafaḥāt no. 2

⁵ Ibid 542

⁶ Ibid 62

The Shaykhs of *al-Ṭarīqa al-Shāthuliyah al-Yashruṭīyah*

The spiritual legacy of the Prophet Mohamad is transmitted to the shaykhs in the main Shāthuliyah chain *silsila*, and each assumes in his period the *mashyakha* and the title *al-wārith al-Moḥamadī*, the bearer of Mohamad's heritage. The shaykhs of al-Ṭarīqa al-Shāthuliyah al-Yashruṭīyah proper are:

1. Ali Nūr al-Dīn al-Yashruṭī (1208/1794-1316/1899): the founder Shaykh
2. Ibrāhīm ibn Ali Nūr al-Dīn al-Yashruṭī (1844-1927)
3. Mohamad (al-Hādī) ibn Ibrāhīm al-Yashruṭī (1900-1980)
4. Ahmad ibn Mohamad (al-Hādī) al-Yashruṭī (born Oct 2, 1928)
5. Dr. Ali ibn Ahmad Al-Yashruṭī- the eminent shaykh (born Aug 22, 1956)

Transmission of *Mashyakha* in *Ṭarīqa al-Shathuliya al-Yashruṭīyah*

The Mohamadan heritage is not built on a genealogical blood relationship, but is based on the spiritual relationship. A subject often questioned is that the transmission of *mashyakha* in *al-Ṭarīqa al-Shāthuliyah al-Yashruṭīyah* descended through its four generations from father to his son, which is not familiar in Sufi orders. Shaykh Ali Nūr al-Dīn al-Yashruṭī said: “*my son is the son of my heart and not the son of my loins, ‘ibnī ibnu qalbī, wa laisa ibnu ṣulbī.’*”¹ Shaykh Ahmad al-Yashruṭī, the present *Shaykh* in an interview commenting on this subject said:

“Some of the followers of my grandfather Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Yashruṭī, tried to espouse the mashyakha, but the responsibility was beyond their capacities and they failed.² Even the sons of the Shaykh, are not all capable of assuming the responsibilities of ‘Irshād’, excepting that who acquired some certain potentials and qualifications: the first of

¹ Yashruṭīyah, F. *Nafaḥāt* 566

² Shaykh Ahmad is referring to schismatic movements stated in F. De. Jong in ‘the Sufi Orders in 19th & 20th century Palestine’ pp. 174-75

these qualifications is the eternal spiritual specialty, al-khuṣūṣiyah,¹ the second is the particular potentials and the capability to assume the responsibilities, the third is the scientific and religious achievements, the fourth is the tarbiyah in its spiritual and official stages in the process of preparation and cultivation by the current shaykh to the chosen heir.”².

The Zāwiya as the center of the Ṭarīqa

The zāwiya is the central place for the meetings of followers, *murīdīn* to perform their daily religious rituals; it is the place of prayer, reflection, invocation, meditation, and performance of the circles of *ẓikr*, *ḥalaqāt al-ẓikr*. The structure of the buildings of the zāwiya developed with the change in the requirements and the increasing number of followers, from two to three rooms with ablution facilities, into spacious modern fully accommodated compounds. The first zāwiyah was built in 1279/1862³ in the town of Tarshīḥa, but the center of the Ṭarīqa was and still is the mother zāwiya built later in the city of Acca in Palestine. As an outcome of the Palestinian 1947-48 crisis and the Palestinian exodus, the center of the Ṭarīqa moved to Beirut Lebanon, as the *Shaykh* of the Ṭarīqa, *al-Shaykh* Mohamad (al-Hādī) al-Yashruṭī, choose Lebanon to be his refuge. Currently the center of the Ṭarīqa is in Amman, Jordan as *al-Shaykh* Ahmad Yashruṭī, the *Shaykh* of the Ṭarīqa lives there. Furthermore, with the migration of Palestinian, Lebanese and Syrian followers from their home lands to the West, the Ṭarīqa established basis in the Americas and in Europe. The age of *Shaykh* of Ahmad al-Yashruṭī is called the age of *Zawāyā*, ‘*aṣr al-zawāyā*’. Eight new *zawāyā* were built during the last twenty years; a new zāwiyah was built in San Bernardo in Brazil in 1990 on a fifty four thousand square meters of

¹ Yashruṭiya, F. *Nafahāt* 439

² Sawafta, W. *al-Madrasah al-Shathuliyah al-Yashruṭiyah* p. 841-42

³ Yashruṭiya, F. ‘*Riḥlah*’ p.225

land. Similarly new *zawāyā* were built in Calgary Canada, in Khilda Beirut, in Kāmid al-Lawz and Bakka in Lebanon, others in Damascus, and Aleppo in Syria. Recently, Shaykh Ahmad Yashruṭī made a visit to Cyprus in August 2016, for the establishment and construction of a new *zāwiya* in Nicosia.

Al-Tarbiya in Ṭarīqa Shāthuliyah Yashruṭīyah

Another subject of utmost importance in the path is ‘brotherhood’. Brotherhood is the revitalization of the *ukhuwwah* that the prophet instigated amongst Moslems in Mecca, and later in between *Muhajirin and Ansar* in al-Madina al-Munawwara. The Shaykh stressed the importance of the service to the brothers: “had the faqir realize the reality of his brother, he would desert this world and the hereafter and commit himself to the service of his brother.”¹ Shayk poetsaid emphasizing the effect of unity of brothers in attainment of knowledge and proximity:

*"Join thy brother shoulder to shoulder, and never wave from him
Accompany him like a shadow, preserve him, and furthermore "be
him"*

*Therefore, had any of you attained this state, you would realize the
spiritual relation, God exalted himself had instigated"*

The station *al-Iḥsān*, maqām al-Iḥsān, is defined by the prophet as: “worship God as if you see Him.”² The principle: “as if you see Him” is the basic rule in al-tarbiya in the process of cultivation of the soul in al-Ṭarīqa al-Shāthuliyah al-Yashruṭīyah in order to attain knowledge perfection and proximity. To identify this principle of “as if you see Him”, Shaykh al-Yashruṭī said: “Annihilate your soul in your Shaykh, and annihilate your Shaykh in Mohamad, and annihilate Mohamad in God, *a’fnu a’nfusakum fī shaykhikum, wa’fnu shaykhikum fī*

¹ Nafaḥāt 832-839

² Al-Munthirī, ‘Mukhtaṣar Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim’ published Ministry of Awqāf of Kuwait, 1389H Ḥadīth no.2

Mohamad, wa a'fnu Mohamad fi Allah”, the Ḥadīth mentioned above. The follower in his path, aiming to attain perfection, sees himself ‘as if’ being directly attended by his Shaykh; he is a reflection of the Shaykh, the Shaykh a manifestation of Mohamad, Mohamad a manifestation of God. Aisha, Mohamad’s wife said that Mohamad’s morals were the Qurān. So the followers aim, through the guidance of the Shaikh, at achieving the morals of Mohamad, which in turn are the divine morals. So the first step for perfection is to know the Perfect Man and follow him. Shaykh Ali Nūr al-Dīn said: “*Pleasure is to that, that realizes God in the Perfect Guide al-Murshid al-Kāmil, accompanied him, and was fostered and cultivated by him, hanā'n li man 'arafa Allāh bi al-Murshid al-Kāmil, wa ṣāḥabahu, wa tarabbā 'alā yadaihi.*”¹

Al-Tarbiyah in *al-Ṭarīqa al-Shāthuliyah al-Yashruṭiyya* commences with the birth of the child. The parents, with their newly born baby come to the *zāwīya* on a Thursday evening ceremony, ask for the *Shaykh*'s blessings and the blessings of the followers as well. The child is breastfed on the love of the Shaykh, and the followers. As he grows up the boy or girl accompany their parents to the *zāwīyah* where they acquire from the older generations how to conduct themselves with the Shaykh² and the followers. He learns how to pray and read the *wathīfa* and how to chant Sufi songs, *nashīd*. They are encouraged to participate in discussions in the principles of the *Ṭarīqa* and other issues that arise in the sessions. The Shaikh encourages the followers to meet and discuss matters of the *Ṭarīqa* and interpretations of verses of the Qurān, and Ḥadīth of the prophet or any of the *Shaykh*'s sayings in '*Nafahāt al-Haqq*', the encyclopedic book compiled by Faṭīma al-Yashruṭiyah, or explain a stanza of the followers religious Sufi poems. So the followers in their method of *tarbiyah* follow the Shaykh's saying: “*The son of the faqīr turn out to be a faqīr, if he follows the path of his*

¹ Ibis 112

² Children of four or five years, after taking *Salām* of the Shaykh do not turn their back to the Shaykh, but retreat backwards to the door of the meeting hall

*father, ibn al-faqīr faqīr, ithā ittab ‘a sunnata abīh.’*¹ The *tarbiya* in *al-Ṭarīqa al-Yashruṭīya* in cultivation and purification of the soul is a continuous life process within the community of the *Ṭarīqa*, in compliance with a saying of Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Yashruṭī, often quoted by the followers: “*The Shaykh gives birth, and al-fuqarā (the followers) cultivate, al-Shaykh yuwallid wa al-fuqarā turabbi.*” The young boys and girls have a monthly meeting in the *zāwiya* where one of them submits a paper on a topic for discussion on *al-Ṭarīqa* Sufi subject and its effect of ‘*al-Tarbiya al-Ṭarīqiyah*’ on the followers in their daily life within their inner circles and how it should be reflected on the morality of the general society.

The main guides that control the *faqīr* are himself and his truthful brother: “*When a faqīr meets a disputable matter or he is not sure of his judgement, it is recommended that he asks the Shaykh for guidance, but in case the Shaykh is not available, he consults a brother for his advice.*”²

Shāthuli Yashruṭī Sufi poetry

Sufi Poetry has a major role in Sufism in general and the *Yashruṭīyah Ṭarīqa* in particular. The age, ‘*aṣr*’, of Shaykh Ali Nūr al-Dīn witnessed a great number of poets who produced marvels of poetry. The poems embraced the doctrine of the *Ṭarīqa*, and the dedication and love of the followers to Shaykh and the *Ṭarīqa*. Of the great poets is Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-H Ḥimṣī al-Shāthulī al-Yashruṭī. In one of his poems is the verse which he says: “*our boat sailed in the sea of purity, stirred by the breeze of our souls. None would discern the draught of our love, except that with a pure heart.*”

*“Sāra fī baḥr al-ṣafā merkabuna, rīḥuhu al-anfās
Laisa yadrī fī al-hawa mashrabana, ghairu thi al-qalbi”*

¹ Nafahāt 612

² Ibis 123

The distinguished Arabic Syrian diplomat and poet ‘Umar Abu-Rīsha, on hearing this verse said: I wish that I had said this verse for all my poetry.”

One of the marvelous productions of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Ḥimṣī is his *‘Treaties on Al-Mawlid Al-Nabawī al-Sharīf’*. The way he composed the *Episode* is a miraculous act of revelation, which is widely quoted in gatherings of the followers:

*“He was called to the dīwān of al-amīr ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jazāi’rī where the ‘Ulama, fuqaha and traditionists were conferring on the method the Quran was revealed to the Prophet. Shaykh ‘Abdu asked for food, baqlāwa sweets and coffee, while at the same time, he underwent meditation demanding his Shaykh’s madad, and abruptly asked somebody to write where he dictated the six chapter ‘Mawlid Episode’, and a marvelous poem related to the Birth of Mohamad. He then said: this is how Quran was revealed.”*¹

The composition of this treaties exhibits the *‘ilhāmāt’* endowed upon al-Ḥimṣī, where he envisaged and envisioned a six chapter treatise on the metaphysical theory on the spiritual outburst of *‘Al-Nūr al-Moḥamadī’* of prophet Mohamad, by the divine word: *“be Mohamad, kūnī Moḥamad’*.” The opening paragraph positions *‘al-Nūr Moḥamadī’* as the First Manifestation of God and that *Nūr* was the source from which the whole creation came into existence. Its relation to beings is as Adam is to mankind, *“al-ḥamdu lillāhi allathī aḏhara min bāṭini khafāi’ ‘amāi’ laili huwiyyati al-aḥadiyah, maṭali’aa anwāri fajri subḥi Ḥaḍrati al-Ḥaḳīqati al-Moḥadiyah, thumma salakha minhā jamī’aa al- ‘ālam, fakānat lil ashyāi’ fī nasābati Adam”*. Yashruṭī Sufī poetry and poets would cover volumes on explication, so only name of some of those poets are pointed out in this paper: Naṣūḥ al-Jābiri al-Ḥalaby, Ḥasan al-Ḥakīm from Aleppo, Rashīd

¹ Al-Ṭayyib, ‘Āatif al-Shāthulī al-Yashruṭī, *‘Ta’mmulāt Rūḥiyah’* [Spiritual Reflections], n.p.: n.p., 2016

Sinān and Maḥmūd Abu-al-Shāmāt from Damascus, Ahmad ‘Abbas al-Azharī and Muṣṭafā Najā from Beirut.

The Role of Women in al-Ṭarīqa

The *Ṭarīqa* as the path to get closeness and awareness of Allah is not special for males. The female has an equal share or maybe she had the better share in the social and spiritual life in the *Ṭarīqa*, most importantly in raising of the children in the Path. Commenting on the *ḥadīth Sharīf*: “*ḥubbiba ilaya min duniākum thalath: al-nisāa’ , wa al-ṭīb, wa ju‘ilat qurratu ‘ainī fī al-salāt,*” Shaykh “Ali Nūr al-Dīn said: “*al-nisāa’ (is) the image of beings, al-ṭīb is the untainted of them, and in al-ṣalāt I find my comfort in the reflection of Him in them*”¹

A topical configuration of women in *Ṭarīqa* is Fāṭima al-Yashruṭīyah (1893-1980), the daughter of Shaykh Ali Nūr al-Dīn. She was raised by her father to love and care for the followers.² In his introduction to Leslie Cadavid’s book ‘Two who attained, Twentieth-Century Sufi saints: Shaikh Ahmad al-‘Alawi & Fāṭima al-Yashruṭīyah’, Seyyed Hossein Naṣr met Fāṭima Yashruṭīyah, describes her:

“I did however, have the singular honor of meeting Sayyidah Fatima more than once in Beirut in 1960 and a profound bond of friendship developed between us. When I first met her, she was already biologically old but had the presence of a young beautiful woman. Ibn Arabi has written of one of his female spiritual teachers in Andalusia who was very old but appeared a young beauty. The same was true of Sayyida Fāṭima. She exuded a presence of remarkable gentleness, refinement and humility combined with a beauty marked by the luminosity of sincerity and receptivity of and transparency before the Truth. She exemplified on an

¹ Yashruṭīyah, F. ‘*Nafahāt al-Ḥaqq*’ 908

² Yashruṭīyah, F. ‘*Riḥlah ila al-Ḥaqq*’ pp. 23-27

exalted level female sanctity whose supreme exemplar in Islam is the daughter of the Prophet, Fatimah, after whom she was named. One sensed in the presence of Sayyida Faṭimah al-Yashruṭiyah a distinct perfume of feminine spirituality in addition to the ubiquitous barakah which surrounds those devoted to the remembrance of God”.

On conclusion, The Sufi *ṭarīqa*, *Al-Ṭariqa al-Shāthuliyah al-Yashruṭiyah* is the institute, where a dedicated path-minded follower of knowledge finds his objective through the cultivation of the Soul by love and brotherhood, to become liable to realize ‘The Eternal Truth’. It is a philosophical discipline that encourages critical and independent thought and is capable of working towards a better understanding of the world and promoting tolerance and peace.

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