Dreams, Shrines and Mystic Sufi in Palestine

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Abstract: This paper describes common Sufi beliefs regarding dreams and shrines in Palestine during the 20th century. These beliefs developed during joint and private seasonal visits (ziara). Gaining insight into the sociology of the Sufi cult of saints can enrich our understanding of similar cults in other places and shed light on the reasons for their absence in other societies. The research examines the phenomenon of true dreams at saints' shrines, and explores the historical and contemporary scope of dream pilgrimages to these shrines.

Ceremonies that involve visiting saints' shrines have encouraged socio-cultural and psychological-therapeutic dependence of the pilgrims with regard to these shrines. This dependence relationship is deeply rooted in their collective psyche and reinforced and legitimized through Palestinian folklore.

This paper is based on primary and secondary sources, interviews with Sufi and people who have been active in participating in these rituals, as well as archival and documentary material, a review of published and unpublished materials, books, and scientific journals.

Keywords: Dreams, Shrines, Mystic, Sufis, Islam and Palestine.

"Yusuf said to his father: "O my father! I did see (in my dream) eleven stars and the sun and the moon: I saw them prostrate themselves to me!" The father said: "My (dear) little son! Say nothing of this dream (vision) to your brothers, lest they concoct a plot against you: for Satan is to man an avowed enemy"[1].

INTRODUCTION

Dreams play an important role in the lives of human beings, particularly among *Sufis*: They serve as a vehicle for communing with the 'heavenly spheres' and they disclose what is hidden when one is awake. In contrast with trivial or false dreams, a "true dream" is a dream with a spiritual or heavenly source that is viewed as part of prophethood: a good dream of a righteous person which comes true is a part of one of the forty-six parts of prophethood [2]. In the post-prophetic era (after the prophet Mohammed) true dreams became the province of the Friends of God, a small circle of saints and righteous souls who bestow such dreams through their special inspirational powers. Sufis call this kind of inspiration *ilham*, in order to differentiate it from *wahy*, the revelations of prophets.

Allah reveals himself into two ways: to men individually by knowledge cast into their minds (*ilham*), and to men generally by messages sent through the Prophets (*wahy*). Saints are the recipients of this *ilham*

because their hearts are purified and prepared for such a role. *Ilham* differs from *wahy* not only in that the messenger angel who brings *wahy* may be seen by the Prophet, but also the destination *wahy* brings a message to be communicated to all mankind, while an *ilham* carries instruction for a particular recipient [3].

As in the case of mystical revelations, a dream can also reveal sights and divine visions. Consequently, a dream can be experienced as a mystical experience, and like any experience, when the subject is awake, it can trigger a change in the dreamer's personality and behavior. In dreams, prophets, angels, saints and even Allah Himself can be revealed to the dreamer. As in a vision or in physiognomy, the dream is an extrasensory vehicle to knowledge: knowledge of the truth, knowledge of the future, knowledge of the heavenly spheres, self- knowledge, knowledge of others, knowledge of the true path and so forth. The dream is considered a miracle (*karamat*) that occurs to Friends of God through Allah's benevolence. Many dreams are didactic messages revealed to seekers of the true path by Allah, an angel, a holy spirit, or an inner voice or the voice of the Sufi sheikh, such as what level *maqam* (e.g. a spiritual station on the mystical path to God) the individual has achieved, how the seeker can mend his ways or heal his ills, or what is the true meaning of a passage in the Quran. The dream resides within a middle sphere that lays between imagination and reality, the thin line between the dream while asleep and reality when awake. Therefore, it happens that things that occur in a dream seemingly occur parallel to reality [4].

One important aspect of *ru'ya*-vision (nocturnal vision or a dream) is the distinction between the true

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dream rendered by *ru'ya* and the false dream that results from passion and preoccupations of the soul, and between dreams inspired by God and dreams inspired by Satan. Muslim tradition adopts the following saying: "The *ru'ya* comes from God and *hulm*-dream-from Satan" [5] (*al-Bukhari*, 324). In other words, true dreams have their origin in God and bear a prophetic character, while false dreams come from Satan; they are dreams connected with man's nature and therefore incapable of predicting anything about the future. In Sufi literature, the dream mainly appears as a means for conducting a dialogue with deceased Sufis and holy men or even with the Prophet, and for receiving messages, warnings or bits of advice. Islamic philosophy, going back to the Quranic-mystical interpretation of dreams, considers them to be a means to transmit the truth, whereas its prophetic-divine origin serves as a reason that caused discussions about the postulates of dreams [6].

Sufis believe that the blessing and the beneficial grace (*baraka*) of the saint pervade all things and individuals that come into direct contact with him. Such miracle-working grace does not cease with the saint's death. It is thought to be inherited by his offspring. On the other hand, the saint's *baraka* is also immortalized in the saint's shrine as well as his personal effects. Both symbolize the saint's invisible presence among his relatives and followers [7]. These beliefs were normally applied to leaders of Sufi communities or heads of holy lineages who inherited the spiritual authority and blessing of a revered saintly founder [8]. In certain situations, Sufis engage in what might be termed 'spiritual diplomacy', using dialogue and negotiation, even in dreams, to solve political and economic problems [9]. Sometimes the ritual of *dhikr* [10] includes healing and expulsion of *jinni*. The richest locus of sacred shrines, the dream may serve as an illustration of some extant practices that can be found today in different countries in the Islamic world.

The Quran draws Muslims' attention to the fact that Allah can choose to communicate a command through a dream. In a dream he had Abraham (Ibrahim) was commanded by the Almighty to sacrifice his son, Ishmael [11]. The mother of Moses (Musa) faced a terrible ordeal at the hands of Pharaoh [12]. On the eve of the battle of Badr, Allah caused the army of the Quraish to appear in a dream of the Prophet Muhammad, as a small band – smaller in number than they actually were [13]. Allah revealed to the Prophet Muhammad in his dream how Mecca would be conquered and the Sacred Masjid entered [14]. The

Prophet Joseph had a dream in which he saw the sun, the moon and eleven stars prostrating themselves before him [15]. The Prophet Muhammad said, "When any of you has an evil dream, he should spit three times to his left as soon as he rises from sleep, and then refrain from narrating that dream to any one at all. Then the dream would not harm him in any way" [16]. The spitting was meant to be a purely symbolic act (e.g. only the sound being emitted without any saliva actually leaving the mouth). The importance of this act seems to be psychological, underscoring to the self that the evil is being dispelled [17]. It is well known that unfulfilled desires can lead to mental distress and inner disequilibrium, and a dream often functions as nature's means of seeking to restore mental peace and equilibrium. As such, a dream can reveal the cause of the distress [18], and it is said that dreams are part of a larger whole that may be described as intuitive experience.

Case Study: <u>A Nightmare Come True</u>: The place: Student Dorms at Brunswick Square, London. July 1980:

On the night between the Sabbath and Sunday, I had a dream that accompanies me my entire life. In it I saw a number of Bedouin tents next to one another, arranged in one vertical row. Father's Makhladyih [19] mare galloped parallel to the tents from south to north. When it arrived at the northernmost tent (the men's tent) [the mare] went on and stood behind the tent. As it galloped, I tried to discern who was riding the mare, but his face was unclear/gray and could not be identified. I ran after the mare behind the men's tent, and I looked at the mare and I didn't see father or whoever was mounted on her, and then I looked and saw my mother and three sisters sitting in a circle near the mare, their heads bowed and crying, like in a *manaha* [20] ceremony. I asked them who had died, and no one answered me; they all continued to cry. I looked at the mare, and then I saw her standing and neighing loudly. There was no rider on the saddle [21]. I woke from the nightmare sweating and my mouth was dry. I got up and splashed water on my face and [in my] mouth. Shaking, I sat on the bed, trembling with fear. I cursed the devil, read several passages from the Quran, and tried to fall asleep, but to no avail. In the morning I descended from the 5th floor for breakfast in the basement. I didn't shave that morning. The dream accompanied me as I waited in line in the cool dining room, as I ate, and after I finished and returned the tray to the empty tray cart. It was supposed to be my last week in London for the school year during which I

studied anthropology. That day I planned to go take a walk in Kew Gardens to get an impression of the botanical gardens before I returned home. I had bought a plane ticket and the date of the fight had been set for the following week. When I arrived at the botanical gardens, I toured around, took some explanatory pamphlets and walked from section to section trying to identify species from the Middle East. Between sections, I tried to assist myself [in identification] using the smell of Middle Eastern and tropical African plants in order not to think about the dream. The hum of bees and other insects resonated in my ears and filled my head with the sound of my mother's and my sisters' crying and the sound of my father's mare. I drank coffee, tea and I ate a sandwich. All this didn't help me. Only bad thoughts filled my head. In the afternoon, I stood to return to the dorms. I waited for the tube. While waiting, I ran into Professor Emanuel Marx, an anthropologist from Tel Aviv University who was a friend of mine and my family. After we shook hands and exchanged some polite words, the train arrived. Emanuel and I sat down facing one another. In the course of the trip he asked me if I had received news from home. I told him I had all the news. Emanuel gazed into my eyes and tried to understand what my eyes revealed (physiognomy) as I did with him. The two of us gazed into each other's eyes, without talking, each hoping for the other to break the silence. Finally I said, 'Emanuel, I received all the news about the tragedy that occurred; just tell me, please, who was there? Emanuel, in the guarded manner typical of him, answered with the question, 'What do you mean by 'there?' I answered, 'In the mourning tent.' Emanuel told me about the consolers, Bedouin sheikhs, Jews, doctors and simple folk. He didn't forget to tell me that my brother Dr. Younis didn't feel well during the funeral. He also didn't forget to note that the doctors (his work colleagues) who came from Soroka Hospital to express their condolences were the doctors who treated my father. Within seconds, the bell rang. I knew the dream was about my father. That week I had read Laurence's book- *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* [22]. I tried to maintain the bearing of the tough Bedouin, to restrain myself and not cry. But I felt how I was getting choked up. I took a bottle of water and quenched my thirst. A British anthropologist named Shelagh was with Emmanuel, who suddenly helped break the silence between me and Emanuel by saying, 'Emanuel is going with me to drink tea and you are invited to join us.' I said thanks - and of course accepted the invitation. During the journey I didn't exchange a word. I only used all my senses and nerves not to break down and cry, convincing myself by saying to myself, 'These are western anthropologists – nothing is holy to them - [and] tomorrow they will write an article and say you broke into tears and you're not a true Bedouin.' And I held on. We arrived at Shelagh's home and drank tea and ate cake. Everything tasted bitter, bitter like wild cucumber/colocynth. After about half an hour, I thanked them politely, got up and went back to the dorms. I went to the public telephone and called my brother Dr. Younis, and then I broke into tears. He tried to calm me, and in the end asked when I would return home. I told him next week - that I had already ordered a ticket. Before I finished the call, he asked me how I knew and I told him that 'I dreamed a bad dream.' I went up to the 4th floor, where I had a close friend, a Jordanian Bedouin student named Mohammed Najdawi from Jordan. I knocked on his door and told him that my father had died. Mohammed embraced me and tried to calm me. We went up to my room and all those from Arab countries came to console me. They brought bitter coffee and we drank it together. The next morning, Mohammed came to me and we went downtown to try and change the atmosphere. We were there all day and returned in the evening. He didn't want to leave me alone in the dorms. In the evening we gathered together with some friends. At the end of the week, I flew out and returned to the tribe, and before I returned home my brother and first cousins took me to the cemetery, where I read passages from the Quran and communed with my father's grave. From there, I returned home to meet my mother and my other siblings. During the summer vacation, friends and relatives came on one hand to console, on the other hand to invite us to their house. This is customary among Bedouin tribes. As October approached, before I returned for my second year of study at London University, we went to my father's grave and read passages from the Quran to bless his soul. Twenty years after this event, my mother joined my father [23]. On holidays and on Ramadan we visit their graves. Every once in a while I meet them in a dream and we talk, and when I wake up it consoles me that our souls, in death and in sleep, meet to converse through dreams. Thanks to them, I stand here before you this day. The truth is, I already talked with several friends about this dream, but it took me 32 years to gather the courage to put it in writing. And this is my contribution to understanding the tie between life and death, and between death and life [24].

LITERATURE REVIEW ON DREAM NARRATIVES

There is no a priori assumption of the superiority or inferiority of cultural systems of thought, and it is

generally assumed that anthropological studies should address dreams as social and cultural phenomena [25]. According to Tedlock [26], people embrace vivid dreaming for different reasons and in different ways; she addresses how and why dreams are important in some cultural worlds, and not in others.

For example, the Ongee people of the Andaman Islands discuss their dreams and experiences from the preceding day just before they go to sleep, and they take directions from these dreams to find food sources in their environment. They locate ripening fruit by registering the smell of it during the day, but it is their soul that can detach from the sleeping individual and go forth while they are asleep to confirm this knowledge, weaving a dream that instructs them when and where to go to gather this fruit [27].

Dreaming functions like holography, in which whole images can be projected from a small fragment. Dream narratives result from the provocation presented by a fragmentarily remembered image which a person then feels compelled to elaborate upon. Dreams themselves are taken to be ruminations on emotionally-upsetting incidents for which the self does not possess a ready schema or cognitive handle [28]. American women experienced dreams indicating the onset of cancer. These examples support the contention that dreams represent the state of the body–mind [29].

The science of dream interpretation merged the traditions of the Near East and of the Greeks. The most famous Greek influence (on Islamic *Oneirocriticism*) was that of the *Oneirocritica* of Artemidorus of Ephesus, which the Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mun (r. 813-833) ordered translated into Arabic, by Hunayn b. Ishaq (d.873) [30].

Dreams, in Freudian theory, are all forms of "wish fulfillment", attempts by the unconscious to resolve a conflict of some sort, whether something recent or something from the recesses of the past. However, because the information in the unconscious is in an unruly and often disturbing form, a "censor" in the preconscious will not allow it to pass unaltered into the conscious. During dreams, the preconscious is more lax in this duty than in waking hours, but is still attentive. As such, the unconscious must distort and warp the meaning of its information to pass it through the censorship. According to Freud such, images in dreams are often not what they appear to be and need deeper interpretation if they are to inform us about the structures of the unconscious [31].

The role of Abu Hanifa [32] in Islam is attested in the following dream: Abu Hanifa saw in a dream that he was digging the bones of the Prophet. He collected them and pressed them to his breast). Ibn-Sirin [33] was told this dream and said, "This is a man who will revive the *sunna* of the Prophet [34]. A woman told Ibn-Sirin that she dreamt that the moon was entering into the Pleiades [35]; a herald from behind her ordered her to go to Ibn-Sirin and to tell him the story. Ibn-Sirin's interpretation was that he would die within seven days; he died, in fact, on the seventh day. Sagacity was shown by Ibn-Sirin in the interpretation of the following dream: A man saw in a dream that Yazid b. al-Muhallab [36] put up an arch between his house and that of the dreamer. Ibn-Sirin asked the man: "Did your mother cohabit with Ibn al-Muhallab?" The man asked his mother and she admitted that she had been a slave-girl (his concubine) of Ibn al-Muhallab later marrying the dreamer's father.

Two different interpretations of an identical dream, both based on the Qur'an, were issued by Ibn-Sirin. Two different persons dreamed that they were calling to prayer as *mu'adhdhins.* Ibn-Sirin predicted to the first one that he would perform the *hajj;* to the other he foretold that his hand would be cut off as punishment for theft. When asked about this opposite interpretation of the same dream he said, "In the first person I noticed marks of good countenance and based my interpretation on *Surat al-Hajj* (pilgrimage):*"And proclaim the Pilgrimage among men; they will come to thee on foot and (mounted) on every kind of camel, lean on account of journeys through deep and distant mountain highways*" [37]. I was not pleased with the countenance of the other man and I interpreted according to *Surat Yusuf*: "*At length when he had furnished them forth with provisions (suitable) for them, he put the drinking cup into his brother's saddle-bag. Then shouted out a Crier: "O ye (in) the Caravan! behold! ye are thieves, without doubt!"* [38].

According to al-Ghazzali [39], the spiritual life of the devout Muslim is formed not only through prayer but also through aesthetic practices. Among these is the art of *sama'* (audition), which denotes acts of listening and bodily practices associated with the achievement of ecstatic states. Through the practice of *dhikr* (remembrance), Muslims in Aleppo fulfill a Qur'anic obligation to invoke God and at the same time they may seek to attain physical and emotional states that promote spiritual transformation. Participants desired to achieve moral states through physical training in which

the body is the primary medium for spiritual transformations [40].

Dreams and visions are a common topic of conversation at almost every gathering among men and women who have been devoted followers of Shaykh Qusi in Upper Egypt. Numerous members of the community regularly see the Prophet Muhammad and his saintly descendants, and the group keeps a collective record of its members' dreams and visions. All of Shaykh Qusi's followers have cultivated and refined their ability to see beyond the visible [41].

Dreams and visions of Sufis saintly predecessors might be of as much consequence for their spiritual progress as those of prophets, and memories are full of theses encounters, as demonstrated in the recollections of al-Sha'rani [42]. Although these saintly dead might appear unaided by any action on his part, more commonly their visitations in dreams would be induced by hours spent in prayers for their souls, or by a pilgrimage to their graves. Such practices which could be expected to result in dreams of the deceased holy man were indeed very popular. They could also involve sleeping at a mosque, tomb site, following special prescribed prayers. Some dreams of venerated dead offered clear information or instruction to the living and could be classified as literal dreams; the message of other dreams was less amenable to interpretation [43].

Although al-Nabulusi cites *hadith*s that support the value of good dreams [45], he notes that the Prophet first began to receive revelation through the medium of dreams. According to al-Nabulusi, the influence of the humours [46] can account for some dreams, but some may have other natural causes, such as those produced by human anxieties or desires and wet dreams of adolescence. Others may be the result of outside interference, especially the nightmares induced by the devil, but also those which are brought on by the magic of a jinn and humans. It is worth noting that the 'good dream' (*al-ru'ya al-saliha*) emanates from God, either literally or symbolically [47]. According to the al-Nabulusi, the dream interpreter should be learned, clever, pious, and free of grave sin, knowledgeable concerning the Quran, *hadith* of the Prophet, the Arabic language, its proverbs and colloquial usage [48].

Among the categories of dead holy persons that could take on symbolic significance in dreams, the most prominent are prophets, others being Prophet Muhammad's Companions, his wives and his daughter Fatima. According to al-Nabulusi (P.430) the vision of the Prophets is normally a sign of salvation. Another Sufi scholar named Rida [49] had some limited experience himself of a visionary nature, seeing the Prophet with Abu Bakr and a sheikh of the *tariqa* while in a state between sleeping and waking during a communal recitation of the Naqshbandi office. For some time he accepted the validity of views on the value of contacts between the living and dead holy persons and their significance.

Sufism

Ibn al-Arabi's Vision

Ibn al-Arabi Muhyi al-Din (1165–1240), a prominent medieval mystic and visionary, enriched the Sufi tradition of Islam with his numerous and profound spiritual writings. Known as "the greatest *shaykh*," Ibn al-Arabi was born in the town of Murcia in Andalusia (Muslim Spain). Ibn al-Arabi was said to have sought the guidance of known masters of the spiritual path in southern Spain, including two women, Shams of Marchena and Fatima of Cordoba, who each proclaimed to be his "spiritual mother." Ibn al-Arabi left home for the first time in the 1190s, when he went to North Africa in search of spiritual guidance. In 1202, inspired by a vision, he went to Mecca for the *hajj*, stopping in Alexandria and Cairo en route. While in Mecca, he had spiritual inspirations and visions, prompting him to begin writing one of his most important works, *The Meccan Revelations (Al-Futuhat al-Makkiya).* Later, he visited Baghdad, Egypt, Mecca, and Konya (the capital of a Turkish dynasty) where he was embraced by Sufi disciples. Ibn al-Arabi traveled widely in Asia Minor, Iraq, Syria, and Palestine until 1223, when he finally settled in Damascus. He had a vision of the Prophet Muhammad in 1229 that he claimed inspired his most influential work, *The Bezels of Wisdom* (*Fusus al-hikam*).

Ibn al-Arabi's knowledge was based on a scholarly command of Islamic tradition, including Sunni *fiqh*), the teachings of other mystics and visionaries, and the originality of his own religious experiences and visions [50].

It is said that Ibn al-Arabi had foreseen that the Ottoman sultan Selim I would conquer Syria and Egypt. It is also said that Ibn al-Arabi visited the sultan through the sultan's dream/vision. Ibn al-Arabi was buried in Damascus and his tomb, which became a sacred place of pilgrimage, was embellished with a mosque and Sufi hospice by the Ottoman sultan Selim I in 1516-17,

when he returned from his victories over the Mamluks in Egypt. The vision of Ibn al-Arabi had been fulfilled.

SAINTS AND SHRINES IN PALESTINE

In order to understand Sufi rituals and their activities in Palestine, some background information about them is necessary. After Jerusalem was conquered in 637 by Islamic armies, Muslims were drawn to live there, including saints, *zuhhad* (ascetics) who wished to spend their life close to the al-Aqsa mosque. During and after the second Islamic century (8th century) a large number of Sufis came to Palestine. They spread Sufi ideas in their *zawiyas* [51], which also served as social centers. Although Sufis began organizing themselves in religious orders in the 9th century, their popularity only peaked in the 14th century. Sufi *zawiya*s multiplied, mainly in Jerusalem, Hebron and Nabulus [52].

During the Middle Ages of Islam (1000-1500), the mystical current in Islam was gradually transformed from a marginal elitist, individualistic current of those who seek God, into a major force in the social order and in the public sphere of Islamic societies. Sufi sheikhs spread the tradition that provided Muslim believers with a special blend of religious spiritual-psychic experience, intellectual instruction and moral guidance, creating local communities and playing a significant role in the formulation of societies and Islamic spaces [53]. In the context of Palestine in the Middle Ages, the sanctity of the Holy Land impacted on the progressive spread of Sufism (*tasawwuf*). Among the factors driving this development were the attraction of the region's cities as a destination for pilgrims, the aura of its holy sites where one could achieve perfection in the worship of God, and the flowering of Sufi institutions under the Mamluk Sultanate (1250-1517) [54].

In the 13th century, a circle of followers emerged that included believers from all levels of society. It was believed that Sufi sheikhs were among the Friends of God, those saints and righteous men who enjoyed an intimate relationship with Allah due to their spiritual works and lofty morals, which included moderate asceticism, generosity, patience and concern for others over personal gain (altruism). Eminent Sufi sought to inculcate these values in society at large, as a lamp unto their feet. The Sufi sheikh was perceived as a person who could ennoble the divine grace with which he was blessed and direct it towards healing the sick, granting prosperity or protecting against exploitation by

others. Thus, in his life and by proximity to his grave, the Sufi sheikh enlarged his congregation of believers by fulfilling the expectations of various believers and paved the way for transforming the communities that formed around him. The migration of ascetics and mystics from the expanses of the Islamic world to the cities of Palestine, particularly to Jerusalem and Hebron, accelerated after the Crusader period. Ascetics and their followers rooted themselves in the cities and spiritual centers of the region and became part-and-parcel of religious and social life. Those exemplified by spiritual and moral virtues and extraordinary attributes became a focal point of social life in their lifetimes, and their graves were even more venerated as shrines after their deaths [55].

Saintly spirits often appeared in the dream of a person who slept next to the grave, or in one of the rooms or tents in the vicinity of the gravesite. The sainted one healed such a petitioner, or gave the visitor the answer to a problem that plagued him. All those partaking in the public celebration in honour of such a deceased saintly persona were united in their veneration, forging a highly-motivated and close-knit religious community bound together by shared ideas. Words of praise and glorification of the sainted figure were passed and spread by word of mouth, fueling the warm sense of communion that permeated such congregations. The participants in such public displays of veneration experienced an almost *physical* presence of the saint among them who appeared both when adherents were awake and in their dreams [56].

It should be noted that the aftermath of the Crusades sparked a religious awakening amongst the Muslims, who began building and reconstructing many religious structures in Palestine. The fear of a renewed Crusade drove Muslim political leaders to concentrate large armed forces in key cities and strategic sites – such as Jerusalem, Ramleh, Gaza, and Acre – at dangerous periods of the year. This objective was partially accompanied by the foundation of centers that were sacred to the Muslims, such as known saints' tombs that were visited by the Muslims on set holidays. The spiritual leaders supported the rulers, since they saw their actions as a vehicle for spiritual awakening. The visitors were usually armed and mounted on horses. Charitable endowments (*waqf*) [57] contributed much land to important tombs, and covered the expenses of visitors and the cost of festivities. In addition, the roads leading to the tombs were repaired, and *khan*s were built nearby to ease access.

The building of the Nabi Musa tomb illustrates this process. The structure was first erected by the Royal Sultan Baybars I, the fourth royal sultan of the Mamluk period (1250-1517), al-Malik al-Zāhir Baybars (r. 1260-1277), Baybars also stood at the head of the festivities. After his pilgrimage to Mecca, he paid visits to Damascus, Jerusalem, and Hebron. There, in Nabi Musa in 1270, he built the tomb's superstructure, and beside it, a mosque. He established Islamic endowments (*waqf)* whose revenues were applied to cover the needs of the *takiya*, supplying food for visitors and those sojourning at the site [58]. The site was renovated and expanded in 1480 and was later surrounded by a wall and other buildings. The *maqam* received its present shape only in the 19th century, when the *khan* was renovated and enlarged to better accommodate all the people who came for the pilgrimage and festivities. The complex consists of several structures, including the holy shrine which is surrounded by rooms that together form a wide yard. The room of the tomb itself is bordered on the northern and the eastern sides by an arched courtyard. Many articles of clothing to be used for medical purposes after they have absorbed the healing powers of the shrine are tied to bars on the windows. Over the door is a sign testifying that the site was renovated by 'Abdallah Pasha, who rebuilt the place in 1867' [59-60]. The structure was intended to commemorate the presence of the Muslims in Palestine. The Nabi Musa shrine is situated seven kilometers southwest of Jericho, just south of the road leading from Jerusalem to Jericho [61]. The saint is highly honoured by all Muslims of Palestine. People come from villages and towns from all over Palestine to participate in the feasts held there. The majority of the visits to Nabi Musa's tomb are during the spring, the most pleasant season of the year. The encounters between Bedouin, fellahin and dwellers of cities at the different ceremonies are a major source of cultural exchange [62].

The *takiya* there also served as a bedroom and room for receiving guests visiting the Nabi Musa *maqam* during the *ziara/ zwara* season.

The shrine of Nabi Rubin [63] is situated nearby al-Nabi Rubin [64]. The site is located 16 kilometers west of Ramleh and 20 kilometers south of Yafo. The *makam* is situated on the southern bank of the Rubin watercourse, 3 kilometers from the seashore. It should be noted that in 1945 there were 31,000 dunam of land that belonged to Nabi Rubin. In addition, there were three springs on the land that the Bedouin who lived in the area called *al Nabi Reuben*, or *Arab Abu Suayreh,*

whose origins go back to the al-Malalheh tribe in the Sinai. There were 1,420 inhabitants of Nabi Rubin in 1945, and in 1946 an elementary school for boys was established in the village. The inhabitants raised herds and tilled the soil, primarily growing wheat and barley as well as citrus, figs, grapes and vegetables. The people of Nabi Rubin also engaged in commerce during the *mawasim* celebration traditionally held in the month of September, which attracted people from throughout the region, particularly from Gaza and Yafo. The celebrations included religious ceremonies in which the Sufi *takiya* played a significant part. Restaurants and coffee houses catered to the visitors, along with choirs or bands, singing and dancing. There were also horse races. Visitors from afar lived in pavilions and large tents were erected for the occasion [65].

Among the Bedouin in the Middle East, the saint, in general, represents both the tribe and the wider external world. His role is to mediate between the two worlds which together sustain the Bedouin tribes. For example, the Bedouin in Sothouther Sinai, make pilgrimages to the gravesite of the saints to strengthen ties on three levels: among members of one tribe, between the tribes/ clans of southern Sinai and between the tribal members and all of Islam [66].

The tombs of saints are important both to the Bedouin and their animals. Every visit to the tomb must be consecrated by the sacrifice of a sheep or goat, sealing the bond between the Bedouin and his flock. Since the flock constitutes the primary link between the Bedouin and the saints, and since every sacrificial ceremony is followed by a festive family gathering, the flock contributes to the cohesion and consolidation of the family in different forms and ways. The flock is the connecting link not only between human beings, but also between individuals and their God, their prophets, their saints, and venerated pious figures [67]. Such visits and rituals are sometimes part of healing processes [68] as well.

In Palestine, the right to control the shrines of saints was frequently invested in certain families who could claim the saints buried there as their ancestors. Some of these families traditionally belonged to a *tariqa* [69] and heads or members of these families occasionally assumed *tariqa* leadership. In cases where such *tariqa* leaders were beneficiaries of revenues from the *waqf* lands attached to these shrines, the partial dissolution of these lands may have affected the financial base of such leadership positions. Some of the *tariqas*, have a

tradition in Palestine going back to the early Mamluk era [70].

The heads of these endowed *zawiya*s derived their authority from the imperial *firman* they receive from the Ottoman Empire that invested each of them as *shaykh al-zawiya*. According to Weismann [71], during Ottoman rule in Palestine the Sufi brotherhoods were less organized and of more limited social significance. In Palestine, as elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire, the office of head of a *zawiya* tended to be hereditary in the male line, while the residents of the establishment could also propose a candidate or had at least to agree upon the acceptability of a potential incumbent to the office. Like the *tariqas*, the *zawiyas* in Jerusalem and in Palestine at large did not come under a central authority, except for the *qadi*, power that in the final analysis hinged on the fact that *zawiya*s were supported through *waqf* endowments [72].

The large number of *zawiyas* in Jerusalem during the 19th and 20th centuries reflects the fact that Jerusalem was a centre of Muslim learning and pilgrimage. Multiple memberships in *tariqas* and the collection of *ijazat khilafa* [73] existed. These are generally justified and explained as bestowing *baraka* (blessing) and serve no other purpose but the acquisition of status and prestige. The implication is that the importance of the *tariqas* in 19th century Palestine must have been rather small in terms of the numbers of adherents as well as social significance [74].

The existence of the *zawiyas* in Hebron was undoubtedly the product of the presence of the shrines of the Patriarchs in the mosque of Ibrahim al-Khalil. Some of these *zawiyas* certainly catered to the needs of visitors drawn to this holy site, while proximity enabled the founders of the *zawiyas* to bask in the sanctity of such a hallowed place. In other words, the concentration of *zawiyas* in Hebron demonstrates the significance of the sanctuary as a center of devotion for Muslim pilgrimage [75]. At the same time, the existence of the *zawiyas* controlled by different *tariqas* made Hebron one of the focal points of *dervish* life in Palestine [76]. There were, however, other focal points in different locations in Palestine in the 19th and early 20th century where one or more *zawiyas* could be found.

The presence of active *tariqas* in 19th century and early 20th century in Palestine is revealed in several sources that describe or mention the participation of the *dervish* in public celebrations. During these celebrations, their presence was prominent, notably during the *mawsim* (season visits) of Nabi Rubin and Nabi Musa. On both occasions, visitors from all over Palestine used to attend and the members of the *tariqas* participated in the processions held near the shrines. In addition to participation in these and other *mawsim*, *tariqas* occasionally manifested themselves in processions held as part of circumcision celebrations [77-79].

Sufism, which embodied the beliefs and practices associated with distinctive Sufi orders, is a mystical path to purification attained through contemplation, experiential-inner knowledge of God, and organized rituals and practices [80]. The lack of internal cohesion which characterizes most *tariqas* in Egypt, seems, in the long run, to emanate from the almost inevitable conflict between the charisma required for effective mystical leadership and the institutionalization of this leadership dictated by the need for its continuity [81]. Only where a functional relationship developed between a *tariqa* (or *tariqas* in general) and the state and its agencies does organizational continuity, including the continuity of a central authority, seem to have existed. In other words, continuity over a period of time is the product of interest in and/or involvement of the state with the wellbeing of the *tariqas*. This was the case in Egypt for the greater part of the 19th century.

At Sufi tombs in Egypt in 1960s, those making the *ziyara* bound themselves with conditional vows that, if a requested favour was granted (health, wealth, children, etc.) the worshiper would in turn make offerings or sacrifice or perform a set of rituals. The pilgrim hoped to obtain a direct experience of *baraka* through touching the tomb or the cloth over the shrine or by gathering the dust. The holy person is thus a living presence and active agent in the world, existing between God and his believers and as a go-between [82].

In specific periods, the Bektashi and the Mawlawiyya orders in the Ottoman Empire appear to constitute examples of individual *tariqas* in which organizational continuity was dependent upon a functional relationship with the State [83]. In Israel [84], there are three brotherhoods, namely the Qadiriyya, Yashrutiyya, and Khalwatiyya-Rahmaniyya, tried to adapt themselves to the realities of Israeli life, in ascending order of success. They accommodated their orders to modern circumstances and by the close of the 20th century branches from these brotherhoods had

managed not merely to preserve their mystical traditions but also at times to expand into new enterprises in the educational, socioeconomic, and political realms [85]. Furthermore, one should note an Israeli version of the Abrahamic Way (*tariqa Ibrahimiyya*), a new and unique construct formed at the end of the 20th century. This path seeks to enhance an interfaith dialogue in Israel between Jewish and Arab traditions. The members habitually meet to read Sufi texts and perform the *dhikr* under the guidance of Muslim Sufi *shaykhs* [86].

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN PALESTINE IN THE 20TH CENTURY

The 20th century has largely been a period of decline for the *tariqas* in most parts of the Arab world. This decline has generally been attributed to the process of secularization which occurred in the Ottoman Empire and in Arab lands from the mid-19th century onwards. In Palestine as well, the decline of organized Islamic mysticism has been witnessed from the early decades of this century: *zawiyas* ceased to function [87-88] and public *hadarat* [89] ceased to be held. From 1917 [90] no *hadarat* at all were held in al-Haram al-Sharif [91] due to an administrative ban, a directive by the occupying British forces. In 1930 *hadarat* were prohibited near the Wailing Wall by the Mandatory authorities as part of an effort to reduce tension between Muslims and Jews. At the onset of the Second World War, the Nabi Musa celebrations were also discontinued by executive order [92]. Passage of the United Nations Partition Plan Resolution (29 November 1947), which called for the division of Palestine between Jews and Palestinians, led to termination of the British Mandate in Palestine in mid-May 1948. As a result of this process, war broke out between Arabs and Jews [93, 94]. Most of Sufi activities were eliminated by the disruption of the war in 1948 as well as the expulsion of most of the Palestinians from their homeland. Those that did survive will be discussed below.

THE SUFI ORDERS IN PALESTINE

There are eight Sufi orders that have operated in Palestine at various times in the past, a few of which exist to this day.

Al-Yunusiyya

In the late Mamluk period, al-Yunusiyya had adherents in Jerusalem, where they inhabited their own *zawiya* [95]. The lineage (*silsila*) of this *tariqa* goes back to Yunus al-Shaybani (d. 682), the father of the founder of the al-Sa'diyya *tariqa*, Sa'd al-Din al-Jibawi (d. 736). The common origins and the similarities of both may well have resulted in the absorption of al-Yunusiyya into al-Sa'diyya, in particular from the early 18th century onwards when such an amalgamation process must have been facilitated by the additional prestige that al-Sa'diyya and its leaders would have derived from the favoritism several Ottoman Sultans accorded this *tariqa*, as manifested in *waqfs* established, monetary privileges and exemption from military service granted to Sa'd al-Din's descendents [96, 97]. Al-Sa'diyya is reported to have been introduced into Palestine at the end of the 17th century, when it became most prominent in the area. Originally, the adherents of the *tariqa* seem to have been centered at Nabulus, from where it spread to other parts of the region [98].

Al-Wafa'iyya

A branch of al-Sa'diyya that emerged at the end of the 17th century, known as al-Wafa'iyya, may also have been represented in Palestine. A branch was founded by Abu al-Wafa' Ibrahim al-Dimashqi (d.1140) [99]. It had two *zawiyas* in Jerusalem [100]. This *tariqa* should not be confused with a similarly named branch of al-Shadhiliyya, which enjoyed considerable popularity in Egypt during the Ottoman era and whose powerful leaders controlled extensive assets at this time. Al-Wafa'iyya al-Shadhiliyya had members in Palestine from the early Mamluk era onwards and in Jerusalem the buildings of two former *zawiya*s of al-Wafa'iyya still exist, although today they are merely domestic residences called by this name [101]. Al-Wafa'iyya does not seem to have survived into the 19th century, and it is only in Egypt that al-Wafa'iyya al-Shadhiliyya has retained active adherents well into the 20th century [102].

Al-Ahmadiyya and al-Disuqiyya

Both orders originated in Egypt. It is possible that one or more of the Ahmadiyya [103] and Disuqiyya [104] branches active in Egypt were also active in Palestine and Syria. In the 19th and early 20th century the following *zayia*s existed: the al-Disuqiyya in Qaryat al-'Irab near Jerusalem [105, 106]; al-Ahmadiyya in Jerusalem, Yafo and Gaza [107].

Al-Rifa'iyya [108]

This order was known to have had a very active membership in Palestine in the 19th and 20th century; it

has *zawiyas* in Jerusalem, Hebron and Nabulus [109-110].The Mawlawiyya and al-Rifa'iyya have disappeared altogether, the first already by the beginning of the 20th century and the latter in 1948 [111].

Al-Qadiriyya

This order was named after its founder, Abd al-Qader al-Jilani (1078-1166) and had an active membership in Palestine in the 19th century [112]. Various local groups of al-Qadiriyya were active in Palestine in towns and villages during the Ottoman period. These groups disintegrated in 1948, but in recent years new ones have appeared in the same fragmented fashion, under leaders who received the path from different *shaykhs* in the West Bank and Gaza. They include Sa'id Abu-Laban, a descendant from the leading Qadiri family of Ottoman Ramla which was responsible for the *ziyara* at Nabi Salih's tomb; 'Abd al-Salam Manasara from Nazareth, who adheres to a more moderate form of Sufism; and Abu Filastin from Sakhnin in the Lower Galilee [113-114]. Al-Qadiriyya's presence has also been noted elsewhere in Jerusalem and other locations [115-116].

Al-Yashrutiyya

The Al-Yashrutiyya order, founded in Acre by the Tunisian Shadhili-Madani Shaykh 'Ali Nur al-Din Yashruti (1815–99), developed in Palestine during the mid-19th century. Al-Yashrutiyya spread inside and outside Palestine in a rather spectacular manner and *zawiyas* were established in some of the major towns of the region [117], in Gaza [118], in Sha'b near Acre, and in the town of Acre itself [119]. It spread swiftly throughout the region, from Aleppo in the North to Gaza in the South, attracting both orthodox educated urban elites and disaffected villagers from the countryside. The leadership of the Yashrutiyya has remained within the founder's family, while its center moved first to Beirut in the wake of the war of 1948 and then to Amman in 1980 in the midst of the Lebanese civil war [120]. After the 1967 War, the members of al-Yashrutiyya in Israel were again able to establish direct contact with their brethren in Gaza and West Bank. New contacts and the transfer of funds from the Islamic world to the *tariqa*'s former center are now possible again. In addition, at least one new *zawiya* has recently been constructed (1970) in Umm al-Fahm in the northern part of what is presently known as 'the Triangle' (*al-Muthallath*), and regular weekly *hadarat* are being held again in all *zawiya*s of the *tariqa* in the territory controlled by the State of Israel [121, 122].

Khalwatiyya-Rahmaniyya

The Khalwatiyya-Rahmaniyya order was founded immediately after World War I by 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sharif, a former deputy (*muqaddam*) of the Yashrutiyya in Hebron who switched to the Khalwati lineage (*silsila*), returning to the great 18th -century reviver of the brotherhood, Mustafa al-Bakri. In his footsteps, the Rahmaniyya order has proliferated [123-124] and al-Khalwatiyya in Yafa has also flourished [125]. In Palestine, the adherents of al-Rahmaniyya *tariqa*, named after 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sharif, who split from al-Yashrutiyya, were found (and still can be found) in a few villages in the northern sector of the Triangle – namely, the villages of Baqa al-Gharbiyya, Jatt, Mu'awiyya, al-Tayyiba, and Zayta [126]. At Baqa al-Gharbiyya a Muslim religious academy [127] was established in 1986 that grants academic degrees and prepares enrollees for teaching and education careers [128].

Al-Naqshbandiyya

This order was founded by Bah al-Din Muhammad al-Naqshbandi (1318-89), from Bukhara. The presence of al-Naqshbandiyya in Palestine goes back to the early 17th century when a certain 'Uthman al-Bukhari established a *zawiya* in Jerusalem [129]. It headed by Sheikh 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Bukhari and in Nabulus by Sheikh al-Burukini [130].

SUMMARY

The dream-vision is a gift from God or Prophets and/or saints. Many of the persons I interviewed emphasize that one needs a certain degree of special ability (*baraka*) to perceive matters beyond the range of ordinary perception in order to be able to see dreams of this kind. The dreams these people tell affirm the Sufi saint's authority in many contexts: social, economic, or religious.

Sufism thrived and contributed to the shaping of Islamic society and social space in Palestine, from the early Islamic period in Palestine and the classical period in the history of Sufism and Islam as a whole. It also succeeded in building bridges between Sufis and jurists and between Sufis and society as a whole. Sufism spread, appearing in cities such as Jerusalem and Hebron, and in towns on the Mediterranean coast as well as in rural areas. Shrines and Sufi lodges in Palestine functioned as crucial generative points of authority through the circulation of social and cultural goods through many centuries.

Needless to say, the dissemination and teachings of ascetic and mystical Sufi movements in Palestine had their origins in the eastern and western Muslim world [131]. By the 12th century, representatives of the main Sufi tradition in Palestine engaged in the study and transmission of traditional and legal sciences and gained recognition and fame as *hadith* and legal experts. The reconciliation between Sufis and jurists and the integration of Sufism within the scholarly world of the jurists of the *madhahib*s allowed learned Sufi *shaykhs* to assume teaching positions in the great *madrasa*s founded in Jerusalem for members of the Shafi'i jurisprudence, the dominant Sunni *madhhab* in the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods. The Sufi *zawia* in Mamluk Palestine functioned as the home, realm, and burial place of the charismatic *shaykh*. The *zawia* was transformed into an Islamic public space and became a focus of religious and communal life for Muslims of all social segments who sought to receive the *shaykh*'s guidance and blessing and partake in his community – each individual and group in its own way.

During the latter part of the Ottoman period, the major widespread Sufi *tariqa*s in Palestine were of limited scope and significance or declined and disappeared entirely. However, other *tariqa*s were able to accommodate themselves to the challenges of modernity. Some of the *tariqa*s were urban in origin and considered to be *Shari'a*-oriented in doctrine and practice, and they penetrated the villages of the Galilee and rural areas of Hebron and Nablus in the 19th century [132]. During the 20th century, Sufism found itself under attack, on one side by the growth of secularized states, on the other side by Islamic fundamentalists and the established of the state of Israel and the 1948 war. Under these two forces, many Sufi *tariqa*s have declined or disappeared, while other *tariqa*s successfully adapted themselves to the changing circumstances by developing new forms of disseminating their *tariqa*s.

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[10]   *Dhikr* is Arabic for remembrance of Allah. The idea of remembrance has assumed an especially important place in Sufism, in which *dhikr* refers both to a word or phrase pronounced repeatedly during their ritual practices and to the ritual practices themselves. Among the sacred words and phrases used most commonly by Sufis in this regard are Allah, or one of God's other divine names; *la ilaha illa Allah* "there is no god but God"; *Allahu akbar* "God is greater"; *al-hamdu lillah* "Praise God"; and simply *hu* "He." Encyclopedia of Islam, Dhikr, 1965; 2:223-226.

[11]   Quran 37:102-109.

[12]   Quran 28:7, 20:39

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[14]   Quran 48:27.

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[18]   Ibid., p.73

[19]   There are numerous strains of Arabian horses: Koheilah [or Qhayleh], 'Obeyah, Dahamah, Shuwaimah, Makhladyih and Saqlawiah (O. Hamdan, 'Horses in Palestinian Folklore', In'ash al- Usra Society; al-Bireh: Heritage and Society, The Palestinian Folklore and Social Research Society, 1974;1:4-30 ; Musil A, The Manners and Customs of the Rwala Bedouins. New York: American Geographical Society 1928; 383.

[20]   Women used to perform the lamentation ritual (*manaha*), which consists of standing in a circle, scratching their faces and tearing their clothes while crying and extolling the virtues of the deceased. The relatives, for their part, respond by crying loudly, beating their faces and falling down when the name of the deceased is uttered, for more details see Abu-Rabia A, and Khalil N, 'Mourning Palestine: Death and Grief Rituals', Anthropology of the Middle East, 2012;7:1–18.

[21]   Therefore it is fitting to recall Qeysar Aminpour: …… henceforth, return the horses without their riders amount, galloping as they do with their blood-red saddles and manes. (Translated from Persian by Hamid Marashi, cited from Pedram Khosronejad, Saints and their pilgrims in Iran and neighbouring countries. Sean Kingston Publishing; 2012.

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[45] e.g. "Whoever sees me in his sleep has truly seen me and it is not possible for the devil to take my shape".

[46] Greek theory about four humours was based on Galen's humoural theory, according to which the four basic fluids of blood, phlegm, black bile, and yellow bile determine, by their relative proportions in the body, determine a person's physical and mental constitution. For more details about Galen's philosophy of therapeutics theories, see Eastwood B, The elements of vision: The micro-cosmology of Galenic visual theory according to Hunayn Ibn Izhaq. Philadelphia, American Philosophy Society; 1982.

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[127] The current name/title is: Al-Qasemi Academic College of Education.

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