Redefining Sufism in Its Social and Political Contexts:
The Relationship between Sufis and Salafis in Contemporary Sudan[1]

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I. Introduction

In this article, I tackle the complexities and confusion surrounding the issue of what Sufism is and, more specifically, which features of Sufism can be usefully regarded as its identifying and distinguishing attributes. It is evident that the way in which Sufism has been represented by interested observers——including both insiders (such as tariqa members) and outsiders (such as non-Sufis, non-Muslims, and researchers like myself)——includes an extensive spectrum of stances, ranging from its depiction as *Islamic mysticism* to its portrayal as a set of *popular practices*, exemplified by the various saint veneration activities in which Sufis engage, such as visiting the tombs of Sufi saints and celebrating the anniversary of Sufi saints' birthdays or deaths.

When Sufism is categorized as *Islamic mysticism*, its mystical dimension is taken—— if only inferentially——to be the most prominent or dominant of its extensive range of dimensions [e.g., Schimmel 1975]; when it is categorized as *popular practices*, its popular dimension is taken as such. I maintain, however, that while the mystical dimension remains a major feature of Sufism today, it is no longer anywhere near as prominent as it once was. That is, the mystical dimension has declined markedly in importance within Sufism as a movement relative to certain other dimensions.[2] In my view, Sufism has undergone a major transformation, from being what might be appropriately regarded as *Islamic mysticism* to having become far more *exoteric*——more open and accessible——in its appearance or style.

For the purpose of examining, analyzing, and making sense of Sufism as a multi-dimensional phenomenon that has been transformed over time, I will draw on the framework provided by Yasushi Tonaga. For Tonaga, Sufism exhibits three pivotal axes, or principal

2 However, this does not necessarily mean that Sufism has also declined in the contemporary Islamic world. Rather, a resurgence of Sufism and a revival of Sufi orders have been obvious [Bruinessen 2009: 135, 140].

dimensions, which he calls i) mysticism, ii) ethics, and iii) popular cult [Tonaga 2006: 11–12], but which I will refer to as i) the mystical, ii) the ethical, and iii) the popular. According to Tonaga, in the early years——or first phase——of Sufism, the mystical and ethical axes were the most prominent [Tonaga 2006: 13]. He claims that the twelfth century saw the emergence of Sufism's popular axis, followed by its ascendancy to the point at which Sufism acquired the status of a popular cult [Tonaga 2006: 13]. Subsequently, says Tonaga, a further modification occurred. Starting in the eighteenth century, there was a resurgence of the ethical axis, so much so that it became more prominent, important, and influential within Sufism than the mystical, the popular, or any other dimension [Tonaga 2006:12–13, 15–18].

While there is no doubt about the rise of the ethical dimension of Sufism over the last couple of hundred years or so [Tonaga 2006: 14 (figure 2-c)], in my view Tonaga has misrepresented the concurrent development in the part played by and significance of Sufism's popular dimension. For me, the popular dimension has retained a considerable presence, to the extent that Sufism continues to qualify as a popular cult. Nonetheless, I wish to argue that despite its continuing importance within Sufism, the popular dimension *has* given ground to yet another dimension, one that Tonaga appears to have neglected. This is what I will refer to as *the communal dimension*.[3]

The popular dimension and the communal dimension share at least one basic component. Both dimensions entail people identifying with Sufism. However, whereas the popular dimension is inclusive, or extensive, in character, the communal dimension is exclusive, or restrictive, in character. Concomitantly, the communal dimension entails a deeper, more intensive identification with Sufism than the popular dimension entails. The communal dimension is that whereby contemporary Sufis share and are bound together by *communality*, or a deep-seated feeling of and commitment to a Sufi community——to Sufi solidarity, to the (relative) exclusion of non-Sufis, of *outsiders*.

The communal dimension of Sufism is that aspect through which Sufis can be and are *at one with each other*,[4] whereas the mystical dimension entails a set of ideas, principles, and practices whereby Sufis can be——are able to be——*at one with Allah* or, at least, *at one with Allah's way*, in the sense of Allah's wants, expectations, demands, and the like. Basically,

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3 As mentioned above, saint veneration is regarded as one of the typical examples within the popular dimension of Sufism. Sufis venerate the eponymous shaykh of their tariqas and his successors as saints. In addition non-disciples, that is non-Sufis, also revere Sufi saints. Because "popular beliefs and practices around Sufism have spread beyond the frameworks of Sufi organizations," Akahori proposes that the popular dimension "is not integral, but rather a kind of grafted or 'add-on' component to Sufism" [Akahori 2014b: 1–2; Akahori 2015: 58]. In this article I mainly focus on tariqa-based Sufism, therefore I employ the communal dimension, which is closely relevant to tariqas, as a core dimension of Sufism. I would like to discuss the popular dimension of Sufism more fully in a separate article.

4 I wish to express my thanks to Professor Paul Close (visiting fellow of the Institute of Education, University of London) for drawing my attention to the phrase and notion of *being at one with* and its variants, something which subsequently proved to be of considerable value in writing this article.

Sufism's mystical dimension is about what can be known and not known, understood and not understood about Allah and Allah's way, and concomitantly about the circumstances that are or are not conducive to achieving union with the latter in so far as union in each case is theoretically possible.

Whereas the mystical dimension of Sufism is about Sufis *being at one with Allah* or *with Allah's way*, and the communal dimension is about Sufis *being at one with each other*, the ethical dimension is about Sufis being at one with others more inclusively, more widely. It is about Sufis *being at one with people in general*. Sufism's ethical dimension entails a set of ideas about how Sufis should act toward, interact with, and conduct relationships with not only each other, insiders, but also everyone else, outsiders. In other words, it involves a set of ideas that amounts to a non-exclusive or universal code of conduct, or practice, in accordance with which Sufis are required to treat everyone, whoever they are, in a non-discriminatory, equal, proper, fair, and egalitarian manner.

Ethics are rooted in and underpinned by morals but are not to be confused with the latter. Morals are ideas, beliefs, and values in accordance with which people make evaluations, judgments, and assessments about people——including themselves; about what people think, about what people do, about what people believe, and so on. Morals are used by people to decide between such alternatives as good and bad, right and wrong, and the like. Sufis, for example, subscribe to a set of morals on the basis of which they judge themselves (insiders) and their ways to be good and right, in contrast to how they assess others (outsiders) and their ways. Ethics, at least in the case of Sufism, are a set of ideas or principles in accordance with which Sufis are required to treat others, all others, in a non-discriminatory manner irrespective of how Sufis morally evaluate others, including any——such as Salafis——they judge to be morally inferior, deviant, degenerate, or something of the kind.

As with each of the other aforementioned dimensions of Sufism, the communal dimension is, in the first instance, or fundamentally speaking, ideational. Moreover, as with the ethical dimension in particular, the communal dimension concerns how to be at one with people. However, whereas the Sufi ethical code is about *being at one with people in general*, Sufi communal ideas are about *being at one with each other*——with fellow Sufis——only. The prevailing theme and thrust of *communality* among Sufis is the foundation upon which they distinguish and discriminate in practice between themselves as insiders and everyone else as outsiders, and especially those outsiders who they regard as their competitors, opponents, adversaries, foes and the like, and so above all between themselves and Salafis.

To summarize: for me, contemporary Sufism displays three principal or core dimensions.[5] The mystical dimension concerns Sufis' relationship with Allah or, at least, with

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5 I recognize that contemporary Sufism has a number of other dimensions. It has, for example, economic, political, and spiritual dimensions. However, in this article I concentrate on Sufism's core dimensions, that is,

Allah's way; the ethical dimension concerns Sufis' relationships with others in general, and so with people and society overall; and the communal dimension concerns Sufis' relationships more exclusively, that is with each other.

While Tonaga's three-dimensional framework represents a useful starting point for examining, analyzing, and making sense of contemporary Sufism and its historical development, he fails to provide sufficient empirical evidence for its retention without modification [Akahori 2014a: 303]. In what follows, I will draw on a body of original fieldwork data that supports my alternative three-dimensional scheme, while at the same time indicating how the mystical dimension of Sufism is indeed far less important than the ethical dimension and the communal dimension. Although the mystical dimension was dominant in the past——so much so that Sufism may well have qualified as *Islamic mysticism*——it has been superseded in importance by those dimensions that are about being at one with people. In other words, currently, ethics and communality constitute the central, mainstay, and driving elements of Sufism.

In this article, the focus is on the way in which the ethical and communal dimensions of Sufism have gained ground together, in unison, with special reference to two tariqas—— al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-ʿArakīya and al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya——in contemporary Sudan. What is more, I draw attention to how the communal dimension has gained the most, as can be observed in a strong and growing community-formation trend within Sufism and, more specifically, on the part of tariqas in response to perceived external threats.

II. The Relationship between Sufism and Salafism: The View from al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-ʿArakīya

This section addresses the overall relationship between i) Sufism as a doctrine and movement and ii) Salafism as an alternative and rival doctrine and movement a) under Islam and b) within contemporary Sudanese society. It draws on what can be gleaned about the Sufi-Salafi relationship from evidence, including original fieldwork data, on the approach and activities of one particular, carefully selected Sufi tariqa, this being al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya.

Al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya is highly instructive for the purpose at hand. It has a long history, having been introduced into Sudan——from Iraq via Hijaz——in the middle of the sixteenth century,[6] and today is one of the most staunchly traditional of all Sufi tariqas.[7] Moreover, it is one of the seven largest, most prominent and most influential tariqas, alongside al-Ṭarīqa

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its mystical, ethical, and communal dimensions.

6 Tāj al-Dīn al-Bahārī al-Baghdādī (ca. 1520–ca. 1600) introduced al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya into Sudan in the second half of the sixteenth century [Karrar 1992: 21; Kramer *et al.* 2013: 359]. He entered Sudan (from Baghdad via Hijaz) around 1577 [Ḥasan 1992: 8], and taught in the Gezira region for seven years [Karrar 1992: 22; Kramer *et al.*: 2013: 359].

7 Al-Ṭarīqa al-Shādhilīya, which was introduced in the fifteenth century, is the first tariqa that spread into Sudan [Karrar 1992: 36].

al-Sammānīya, al-Ṭarīqa al-Khatmīya, al-Ṭarīqa al-Burhānīya, al-Ṭarīqa al-Aḥmadīya, al-Ṭarīqa al-Idrīsīya, and al-Ṭarīqa al-Tijānīya.

Al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya has an extensive network of branches deriving from its shaykhs' genealogical lines. These branches include al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-ʿArakīya (its eponym being ʿAbd Allāh al-ʿArakī[8]), al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-Kabbāshīya (its eponym being Ibrāhīm al-Kabbāshī, d. 1869/70[9]), al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-Badrīya (its eponym being Muḥammad wad Badr, d. 1884), and al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-Mikāshfīya (its eponym being ʿAbd al-Bāqī al-Mikāshfī, d. 1960). I will focus on al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-ʿArakīya[10] given how it is the most traditional of al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya's branches while holding considerable sway over Sufism overall, as a movement within Sudanese society. All things considered, in my view, al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-ʿArakīya provides an especially useful case study for elucidating Sufism's general character, its activities and relationships within Sudan today, and most importantly its interaction with Salafism.

With reference to the principal dimensions of Sufism as a movement (as outlined in the Introduction), I will clarify al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-ʿArakīya's particular and somewhat distinctive interpretation of Sufism as a doctrine and its implications for the points of conflict between Sufism and Salafism.

Al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-ʿArakīya overtly emphasizes the importance of one particular dimension of Sufism above all others in how it operates, and consequently in how it shapes its members' everyday lives, activities, and relationships, this being the movement's ethical dimension. According to one of al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-ʿArakīya's shaykhs, Muḥammad, who I interviewed in 2010, from the perspective of the tariqa, Sufism is the primary source of "knowledge [about] human beings" (*ʿilm al-bashar*), human life, human development, and human progress. Muḥammad neatly summarized the tariqa's ethical stance in the following way:

> First of all, Sufis must love Allah and [the prophet] Muḥammad. It is also important [for Sufis] to love their parents and all mankind […]. Sufi thinking [encourages] respect for all people (*iḥtirām kull al-nās*). Sufis should respect all religions (*yaḥtarimūn kull al-adyān*). They do not regard any religions as infidel because this [charge of unbelief] is Allah's work.

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8 The year of his death is unknown. ʿAbd Allāh al-ʿArakī is said to have lived around 1570 [Hill 1967: 4; Kramer *et al*.: 2013: 69].

9 Although Hill's biographical dictionary states that the year of his death is 1865 [Hill 1967: 173], I adopt 1869/70 (1286 AH) on the basis of the references [Karrar 1992: 31; Majlis 2004: 376].

10 It is problematic to define the range and scale of the tariqa. As well as other tariqas, al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-ʿArakīya has many sub-branches all over Sudan. These sub-branches identify themselves as al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-ʿArakīya. Because they more or less act independently, we might regard each sub-branch as a tariqa. In this article, I do not distinguish a sub-branch from others. However, I regard al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-ʿArakīya as one particular tariqa.

It would seem that al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-ʿArakīya is unequivocally committed to having its members interact with others in accordance with an ethical code of conduct that i) emphasizes "respect and love" (*iḥtirām wa maḥabba*) and ii) applies equally, and so without discrimination, or universally, to *all* others——to Sufis and non-Sufis alike, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, and so on. It applies, in other words, to how the tariqa's members treat, act towards, and relate to Salafis, which is of note in that theologically, philosophically, and doctrinally speaking, Salafis are Sufis' closest neighbors and, not unconnectedly, greatest rivals, opponents, and adversaries.

Al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-ʿArakīya's members are expected to abide by its respectful-cum-universal ethical code in an unmitigated, unswerving manner under all circumstances. To this end, the tariqa is overtly engaged in performing an educational function. It claims to be "an Islamic school" (*madrasa islāmīya*) in which its shaykh is "the teacher" (*ustādh*). The purpose is to have its members, or students, fully develop their Islamic faith and their ethical awareness, competence, and conduct, doing so to the benefit not only of its members themselves, but also of the tariqa, of Sufism, and of society. My informant, Muḥammad, told me:[11]

> Sufism has two aspects. One is a personal aspect (*jānib fardī*). The other is a social aspect (*jānib ijtimāʿī*). As to the personal [level], disciples should put their efforts into the development and consolidation of their private relationship with Allah. Disciples should not distance their souls from Allah through disobedience, fault, or sin. As to the social [level], disciples should live together and acquire Islamic knowledge from each other. What is more, disciples should develop such ethical tenets as modesty, respect, love, and honesty (*tawāḍuʿ wa iḥtirām wa maḥabba wa istiqāma*). Sufis should start from [ensuring] their own spiritual improvement (*iṣlāḥ al-nafs*). This influences their family (*usra*) and neighbor (*jīrān*). If all individuals do this, every society [becomes] right and wholesome (*kull mujtamaʿ ṣaliḥ wa nāfiʿ*).

At the personal level, in terms of Sufism's mystical dimension, the tariqa's members are required to reinforce their faith and consolidate their personal relationship with Allah. But in addition, also at this level, in terms of Sufism's ethical dimension, its members are required to improve their grasp of those principles that when implemented in practice have welcome consequences for their and everyone else's mundane, everyday relationships, and thereby for society.

For al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-ʿArakīya, the successful realization of its educational

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11 I summarize his interview held in 2013 for quotation and translation purposes.

function hinges upon its members engaging in one particular activity, or ritual——in, that is, *dhikr* (the recitation of the name of Allah). Its members are expected to perform *dhikr* regularly, frequently, and, most importantly, in a highly disciplined manner. Moreover, they are required to perform *dhikr* not individually, but instead collectively. Performing collective *dhikr* in a highly disciplined manner means doing so with the greatest degree of self-restraint and self-control, something that, while being necessary for the tariqa members' educational progress, also happens to be conducive to both the smooth communal performance of *dhikr* and the cohesiveness and solidarity of the tariqa, not to mention in turn to Sufism as a movement overall.

Under the tutelage, guidance, and surveillance of the presiding shaykh and his assistants, the tariqa members are required to recite the same phrases and repeat the same movements to the same rhythm,[12] the emphasis being on coordination and synchronization. In effect, this *dhikr* code of practice promotes in its members a disciplined, controlled, and orderly approach to being at one with each other.[13] At the same time, however, al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-'Arakīya allows men who are not its members to participate in *dhikr*, as a result of which on occasions even as many as half of participants are non-members.[14] Consequently, *dhikr* provides a means by which the tariqa members can and do engage in good, smooth, and harmonious relationships with non-members——or, that is, by which they can be and are at one with *external others*, so to speak. In effect, if not by design, *dhikr* provides a valuable educational tool that helps to further in practice the ethical principles upon which the tariqa lays considerable emphasis. This spin-off benefit of *dhikr* is widely recognized within the tariqa, as was made clear by several of my fieldwork interviewees. A considerable emphasis is placed on *dhikr* participants being thoroughly at one with each other, an experience that has a welcome spillover for members' relationships overall, both internally and externally, and concomitantly for the tariqa's external relationships. For al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-'Arakīya, being at one with each other during *dhikr* helps to promote the principle and practice of being at one with people whoever they may be, in general, universally.

Given its *dhikr* code of practice, the possibility arises of there being within the tariqa

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12 Participants practice *dhikr* by bending their elbows and moving their arms back and forth in front of their chest. Moreover, they repeat the phrases such as "*Allāh*," "*Yā Allāh*" (Oh Allah), and "*Lā ilāh illā Allāh*" (There is no god but Allah). In the slower rhythm, practitioners recite *Allāh* repeatedly. In the faster rhythm, they repeat *yā Allāh* or *lā ilāh illā Allāh*. The presiding shaykh specifies the phrases on the basis of the tempo. *Dhikr* is not practiced in the same tempo, but the slower and faster tempos alternate. The practice of *dhikr* usually continues for one to two hours.

13 What are thought of as immoderate, excessive, or fanatical actions are strictly prohibited. If a participant's self-restraint slips, he is immediately and severely admonished by the supervising shaykh or one of the shaykh's assistants. He is sternly reminded of his obligation to abide by the correct way of performing *dhikr*, and how failure to do so may result in his being told to leave, something that would cause him considerable embarrassment.

14 In turn, non-members of the tariqa who participate in *dhikr* are required to keep to the regulations during the *dhikr* practice.

a degree of tension between this tariqa's ethical dimension and its communal dimension. However, while this possibility cannot be ignored, what is also germane is how the tariqa's commitment to an ethical code according to which its members are required in principle to act in a non-discriminatory way towards everyone internally and externally is not fully realized in practice.

For instance, the tariqa members have acted in a markedly inconsistent, or deviant, manner toward outsiders, in particular one specific faction of outsiders, namely, Salafis, these being——far from coincidentally and accidentally——Sufis' closest philosophical neighbors, so to speak, and their greatest religious rivals. This can be amply and poignantly illustrated by making reference to what happened during and following the violent clashes of 2012, in which Sufis engaged with Salafis, and with one Salafi faction, Jamāʿa Anṣār al-Sunna al-Muḥammadīya (hereafter, Anṣār al-Sunna), in particular.[15] During and following the clashes, many, if not all, al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-ʿArakīya's members simply and readily abandoned those ethical principles according to which they are required to treat everyone in a universal, equal, proper, and fair way; that is, to treat everyone without exception with unshakeable tolerance, whatever their religious, philosophical, or other outlook. The members of the tariqa have not concealed their disdain for Salafism and hatred of Salafis. They insultingly describe Salafis as "Wahhabis" (*wahhābīya*), as being overly demanding, strict, and oppressive, as being "extremists" (*mutaṭarrifīn*) in their religious views and activities, and even as being "terrorists" (*mujrimīn*).

Al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-ʿArakīya's dismissive and discriminatory approach toward Salafis is all pervasive, extending from its shaykhs to its ordinary disciples. For example, according to one of the shaykhs, Muḥammad, in contrast to the rigid and dictatorial way in which Salafis are required to accept and apply Salafi principles and practices, Sufi practices are not performed "under [any kind of] duress" (*bi-l-ʿaskar*) [Maruyama 2013b: 114], but instead with an emphasis on choice and latitude. This claim as to a major distinction between *the Sufi way*, on the one hand, and *the Salafi way*, on the other, is indicative of a widely held Sufi view, namely, criticism and rejection of Salafism that appear to ignore the details of how Sufis themselves are required to practice *dhikr*. After all, as we have already seen, Sufis perform *dhikr* under considerable pressure and duress——under a regime of force, threats, and sanctions of the kind they scornfully associate with what they claim to be the distinctive Salafi way.

In addition to the spontaneous and tolerant attitude towards Sufi practices, the spiritual genealogy of Sufism becomes another conflictive point between Sufism and Salafism. As well as other Sufi tariqas in Sudan, al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-ʿArakīya has *silsila*s (continuous

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15 Regarding the details of this clash and the hostility between Sufis and Salafis (in particular, Anṣār al-Sunna members) that escalated from 2012, see my article [Maruyama 2013b: 109-116].

chains of spiritual descent from the prophet Muḥammad to the current shaykh). The members of this tariqa respect and admire the late and current shaykhs on the basis of this spiritual genealogy. However, Salafis totally reject this notion. According to an Anṣār al-Sunna informant, "genealogies do not decide [who qualifies as] saints (*awliyāʾ*). Only Allah decides it." Moreover, he rejected "the worship of particular person" (*ibāda al-shakhṣ al-khāṣṣ*) such as Sufi shaykhs, and therefore claimed that "Sufis go against monotheism" (*tawḥīd*). The Salafis' intention is "the return to the original [Islam] and the purification of Islam" (*taʾṣīl wa taṣfiya al-islām*). Because Salafis regard Sufi activities as "innovations" (*bidaʿ*), Salafis propose to remove Sufism from their purified Islam.

The members of the tariqa are at one with each other in vehemently condemning Salafis and in accusing them of being a threat to Sufis and the distinctive *Sufi way*, as demonstrated in how Salafis——it is claimed——were responsible for the destruction in 2011 of Sufi shaykhs' tombs and for the violent clashes in the following year that occurred during *mawlid al-nabī* (the birthday of the prophet Muḥammad). More fundamentally, in comparison with and in contrast to the morally sound Sufi interpretation and application of Islam, the Salafi version is decidedly immoral. It is specifically on these grounds that Sufis, including this tariqa members, argue that Salafism and Salafis are a serious threat not only to Sufism and Sufis but also to Islam, to Muslims, and to Sudan; and, therefore, that Salafism should be opposed and rejected in Sudan and even that Salafis should be ejected from Sudan [Maruyama 2013b: 116]. In other words, al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-ʿArakīya's communal dimension resorts to the exclusion of Salafis and Salafism from Sudan and Islam. It is on these grounds——or so it is rationalized——that Sufis should resist Salafis, should stand together against Salafism and Salafis, and so should be, as a priority irrespective of all other considerations including ethical ones, *exclusively* at one with each other (fellow Sufis).

While al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-ʿArakīya's self-representation entails both an ideal Islamic moral outlook——by which it distinguishes itself from outsiders, in particular Salafis——and an ideal approach to Sufi ethics, whereby its members are required to treat everyone (insiders and outsiders alike) in the universal, non-discriminatory, and equitable way, there is the potential and prospect here for a considerable degree of conflict between principles and practices, which is then realized in the discrepancy between al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-ʿArakīya's ethical code, on the one hand, and its morally rationalized, or excused, practices in relation to Salafis, on the other.

Of course, al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-ʿArakīya's acerbic stance and aggressive practices in relation to Salafism and Salafis, while explained in terms of the immorality of Salafis and so the moral threat posed by Salafis to Sufism, Sufis, Islam, and Sudan, a) are similar, if not identical, to those Salafi attitudes and activities that Sufis evaluate and dismiss as immoral (that is, that Sufis claim to be symbolic of Salafism's moral degeneracy); b) qualify as unethical

when judged in terms of the tariqa's own, proclaimed ethical code and, in turn, conflict with those Islamic morals (as can be read in or into, for instance, the Qurʾān) that underlie this code; and c) can be accounted for not so much in terms of what Sufis claim to be the immorality and moral threat of Salafis, but in terms of the threat of Salafism to Sufism as a movement or force within Sudan understood not in narrow religious or philosophical terms, but in broader socio-political terms.

III. Bridging the Divide between Sufism and Salafism: The Ethics and Communality of al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya[16]

In the last section, I explored how the relationship between Sufism as a doctrine and movement and Salafism as an alternative and rival doctrine and movement under Islam and within Sudanese society could be elucidated with reference to the approach and activities of al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-ʿArakīya. I pointed out that al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-ʿArakīya provides a highly instructive case study for examining the Sufi-Salafi relationship.

Al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-ʿArakīya can be contrasted with the tariqa I have chosen as the case study for Section III, namely, al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya. I will discuss the approach and activities of al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya in relation to the religious, philosophical, and ideational divide between Sufism and Salafism, doing so with reference to this tariqa's stance vis-à-vis the principal dimensions of Sufism as a movement (as outlined in the Introduction), and in particular to the implications of its ethical outlook, on the one hand, and its communal position, on the other.

The first point of contrast to note between al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-ʿArakīya and al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya is that the latter has a far shorter history, having been created in 1918 by Muḥammad Aḥmad al-Rukaynī (d. 1964). The second, and not unrelated point of contrast, lies in the fact that since its inception, al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya appears to have been firmly committed to bridging the divide between Sufism and Salafism. Certainly, its self-declared, driving mission is to try to pursue this task successfully.

In light of these facts, a number of basic questions come to mind, such as i) in what way, or to what extent, does al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya want to bridge the Sufi-Salafi divide?; ii) how successful has it been and can it be in its bridging mission?; iii) what difficulties stand in the way of it realizing its mission?; and iv) what is the relevance of the core dimensions of Sufism as a movement to al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya's bridging goal? In my view, the character of Sufism's ethical and communal dimensions and the relationship, in principle and especially

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16 Although this section overlaps the examples and evidence of the previous article [Maruyama 2013a] to a certain degree, the points of argument are different between them. The previous article focuses on the doctrinal and educational aspects of al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya, while this article mainly concentrates on the ethical and communal characters of this tariqa. Regarding the references of the previous article, I wrote al-Majlis al-Qawmī li-l-Dhikr wa al-Dhākirīn as Majlis al-Qawmī li-l-Dhikr wa al-Dhākirīn [Maruyama 2013a: 37] by mistake, which I should correct.

in practice, between these two dimensions are of the greatest importance to this tariqa's prospects of bridging the divide between Sufism and Salafism. The importance of this relationship to al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya's bridging mission hinges upon what is, it seems to me, the inherent and therefore inevitable tension, even incompatibility, between this tariqa's outward-looking ethical code and its inward-looking communality.

Basically, there are two somewhat distinct possibilities——or projects——for bridging the Sufi-Salafi divide: a narrow (restricted or exclusive) one and a broad (unrestricted or inclusive) one. Thus, does al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya wish merely to bridge the divide between Sufism and Salafism in a restricted, doctrinal sense within the tariqa itself? Or, alternatively, and more inclusively, does it wish to bridge the divide between Sufism overall, as a movement, and Salafism overall, as a movement? While the broad bridging project is far more embracing and ambitious than the narrow one, there is evidence to suggest that it is this broad approach to bridging the religious, philosophical, and ideational divide between Sufism and Salafism to which al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya is committed.

Al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya's broad bridging intention can be read in how it describes itself as *al-ṭarīqa al-ṣūfīya al-salafīya*; that is, as the Sufi and Salafi order. This self-identification reflects the fact that al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya was, at the outset, just as it remains today, inspired and driven by *taṣawwuf al-salaf*, that is, by the Salaf's Sufism. It was and still is intent upon incorporating into Sufism what it calls *manhaj al-salaf* (the Salaf's way), something that makes it unique within Sufism as a movement. Of course, the Salaf[17] are iconic figures not only for Sufis but also for Muslims in general, and embracing the Salaf's way by itself does not necessarily mean that al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya's mission is to bridge the divide between Sufism as a movement and Salafism as a movement. However, that the broad bridging project is one to which al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya is indeed committed is indicated by further evidence, including my own original fieldwork data.

In my interviews with him in during 2011 and 2012, ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, the director of al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya's Khartoum branch, acknowledged that al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya has elected to fulfill a mission on behalf of both Sufism and Salafism. Thus, ‘Abd al-Raḥīm asserted that al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya has, as he put it, "the responsibilities (*mas'ūlīyāt*)[18] [to correct both Sufism and Salafism] as a renewing tariqa (*ṭarīqa mujaddida*)." As if not only to underline al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya's corrective responsibility on behalf of both Sufism and Salafism, but also to suggest that its broad, movement-oriented bridging mission is a feasible

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17 The Salaf includes in the first instance the companions of the prophet Muḥammad. In addition, it includes such other seminal figures as the founders of the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence (Shāfi‘ī, Ḥanafī, Mālikī, and Ḥanbalī schools) and the two Islamic theological schools (Ash‘arī and Māturīdī schools). For a more detailed account on the range of the Salaf, see my article [Maruyama 2013a: 20–21].

18 In the previous article, I wrote this term as *mas'ūliyāt* [Maruyama 2013a: 19] by error, which I want to correct.

quest, ‘Abd al-Raḥīm explained that the source of the antagonism and hostility between contemporary Sufis and Salafis is not religion itself but their poor understanding of Islam [Maruyama 2013a: 19].

For al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya, it is possible for Sufis and Salafis to make common progress in their grasp of their over-arching religion, Islam, and thereby come together around a singular, undifferentiated path to being faithful to Allah and becoming "perfect Muslim[s]" (*muslim kāmil*). For ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya's responsibility in this regard derives from the fact that it is best placed to promote the coming together of Sufism and Salafism in practice, given its unique appreciation, acceptance, and embrace of the Salaf's way. In my interviews with him, ‘Abd al-Raḥīm argued that al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya's approach to the relationship between Sufism and Salafism as movements is "the right way" (*ṭarīqa ṣaḥīḥa*) if only because it is "the middle way" (*ṭarīqa wasaṭīya*), the apposite solution to any bridge-building challenge.

Still, despite al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya's commitment and ‘Abd al-Raḥīm's confidence, the question remains: What are the chances of al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya being successful in its bridging mission? Al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya's bridging prospects largely depend upon the (internal) character of and (external) relations among the core dimensions of Sufism as a movement, and above all upon i) the principles and practices of the ethical dimension, which in my view (as I have made clear in the Introduction) is the main distinguishing dimension of Sufism in Sudan today, and ii) how these characteristics dialectically relate to, in turn, the principles and practices of a) the mystical dimension and b) the communal dimension in particular.

The mystical dimension is without doubt fundamental to Sufism as a doctrine and movement, even though its relative importance in shaping Sufism appears to have waned considerably. The weakening of the mystical dimension within Sufism has been exhibited in a highly distinctive manner in al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya. Whereas *being at one with Allah* (such as *fanā'*, annihilation) can be regarded as the traditional, conventional, and widely accepted goal toward which all Sufis strive, for al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya, *being at one with* (what they call) *Allah's desire* (*irāda Allāh*), or with (what I will call) *Allah's way*, is sufficient. According to al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya, *being at one with Allah* is an out-of-reach ideal, while *being at one with Allah's way* is a realistic possibility and all that is required for disciples to demonstrate their faith in Allah and become perfect Muslims, or at least to become as close as can be expected to perfect Muslims. It is argued that *Allah's way* cannot be directly known (that is, directly accessed), but is nonetheless exemplified by *the Salaf's way* (*manhaj al-salaf*), the Salaf being venerated as the perfect Muslims, or at least near-perfect Muslims, that have ever existed in practice.

The Salaf's way is both a) the necessary and the sufficient means by which all Muslims

of whatever kind――Sufis, Salafis, and so on――can be faithful and become (close to being) perfect, and b) the means by which i) Sufis and Salafis can be drawn together, and ii) Sufism as a movement and Salafism as a movement can be bridged. The question arises: What precisely is the Salaf's way, *manhaj al-salaf*, or the Salaf's Sufism, *taṣawwuf al-salaf*? Basically, the Salaf's way entails two interdependent, mutually influential strands, or components, the first whereby followers relate to Allah and Allah's way, the second whereby followers relate to each other and to other people in general. As 'Abd al-Raḥīm put it in my interview with him in March 2012, the second component of the Salaf's way provides guidelines on "cooperation among people" (*ta'āmul ma'a al-nās*) [Maruyama 2013a: 27].

The first component of the Salaf's way reflects the presence of and part played by the mystical dimension of Sufism as a movement from its beginnings, while the second component reflects the presence of and parts played by the other two core dimensions (the communal and ethical dimensions)――those which today, in my view, are more prominent than the mystical dimension in Sufis' everyday lives while nonetheless being rooted in the latter――in how Sufis relate in principle and in practice to Allah and Allah's way.

The relevance and value of the Salaf's Sufism to the disciples of al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya in their everyday lives, relationships, and experiences can be illustrated by reference to its guidance on how they should use their money. At all times and in all circumstances, followers should use their money only in a religiously, morally, and ethically correct manner, and so only in ways that benefit each other, people in general, and society as a whole. They can put this principle into practice by making good-cause donations, by alms-giving, by assisting the poor [Maruyama 2013a: 27], and by making similarly pious and virtuous, morally respectable, and ethically sound contributions to people's welfare and society's well-being.

On this matter, as on all others, disciples should be guided by the Salaf's Sufism at the expense of any other considerations or influences that might affect their desires and decisions, their judgments and actions, and their social interactions and relationships. For al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya, in effect, followers of the Salaf's Sufism are required at all times and in all circumstances to control and constrain their desires, decisions, and actions in accordance with certain personal, or inner, qualities that have moral, ethical, and (socially) beneficial ramifications, at the forefront of which is one particular quality, that of modesty [Maruyama 2013a: 28].

According to al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya, modesty (*tawāḍu'*) provides the main means by which its members can and do act in compliance with Sufism's ethical code of conduct, the code that is primarily responsible for distinguishing Sufism from other movements, in particular, Salafism. Al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya's emphasis on modesty is consistent with the requirement of its members to conduct themselves in accordance with Sufism's other ethical principles, in particular those whereby they are expected to show respect for and love toward

others, and not only each other but also everyone else. That is, disciples are expected to show respect for and love toward all human beings whoever they are, whatever they believe, whatever they think, whatever they do, and so on. Thus, the Salaf's Sufism offers guidance on the full range of disciples' everyday concerns, from how they can consolidate, realize, and express their *inner being* to how (externally) they can and should conduct themselves in their social relationships, thereby acting in the interests of both themselves and everyone else, and so of greater society and social progress. As 'Abd al-Raḥīm put it in my interviews with him, the Salaf's Sufism is the way for people to attain the respect and love for other people, which results in society becoming more cohesive [Maruyama 2013a: 29].

Al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya's commitment to the Salaf's way means that it is well placed, indeed uniquely placed, to help Muslims shape and re-shape their morals and ethics, and by extension to help them both *be at one with Allah's way* and, concomitantly, *be at one with people in general*, this being conducive and essential to social unity and cohesion among Muslims, *all* Muslims. What is more, the tariqa does not exclude Salafism from Islam and Sufism but rather brings together Salafis and Sufis under the umbrella of its Salaf's Sufism. Because of this, the communal position of this tariqa seems to be more outward and inclusive.

At the same time, however, in my interviews with him, 'Abd al-Raḥīm qualified al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya's achievements so far in this regard. He repeatedly suggested that today, while Salafis are invariably far too strict and stern in their approach to Islam, Sufis in turn often stray from the prescribed religious path [Maruyama 2013a: 19]. Today, albeit somewhat differently, Salafis and Sufis are both guilty of deviating from true Islamic principles, those reflected in the Salaf's way, in particular vis-à-vis their morals and moral judgments, their morality (how they can be evaluated in terms of their own morals), and their lifestyles (how these stand up to the test of what is morally acceptable). As mentioned above, 'Abd al-Raḥīm attributed the recent (sometimes violent) clashes between Sufis and Salafis to a misunderstanding of Islam, while nonetheless arguing that, everything considered and on balance, al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya offers the best way forward for not only its disciples but all Sufis and all other Muslims, including Salafis. Reflecting this status, 'Abd al-Raḥīm described al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya as a renewing tariqa on behalf of Muslims and Islam, a depiction that may be regarded as questionable if only in view of what 'Abd al-Raḥīm himself had made clear is al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya's *best way forward*.

Here, of course, there is an indication of the perhaps insurmountable difficulty facing this tariqa in any attempt it makes to achieve reconciliation and harmony between Sufism and Salafism. According to al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya, the Salaf's Sufism embraces the method for being at one with people without exception and showing respect for all people. However, in order to rationalize its Salaf's Sufism as the best way for Islam, al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya disdains other Sufis and Salafis as ignorant of Islam. As a consequence, it opposes deviation

from the Salaf's Sufism's ethical code of conduct and its communal position. In this sense, the ethical practice of this tariqa can be regarded as more exclusive.

Al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya also proposes to bring other people with different philosophical backgrounds into accord and to share the Salaf's Sufism in order to bridge the gap between Sufism and Salafism. Although this proposal seems to be reflected by the ethical principle and the communal position, the exclusive access to knowledge of the Salaf's Sufism implies al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya's privileged status over any other factions, including Sufi tariqas and Salafi groups. Because this approach distinguishes between people in terms of their knowledge, it has the potential to discriminate between people, thereby instituting a new contradiction between ethical principle and practice.

IV. Concluding Remarks

In this article, I have tried to shed light on the representation of Sufism in two particular tariqas in Sudan, al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-'Arakīya and al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya, doing so a) in terms of what in my view are the three core dimensions of Sufism; b) with reference to the issue of the distinction between principles and practices; and c) drawing attention to the implications for the relationship between Sufism and Salafism.

For members of al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-'Arakīya, Sufism instills in its followers an ethical awareness that directs them to treat everyone with equal respect. In principle, the tariqa members are expected to share Islamic knowledge with each other, participate in collective *dhikr*, and act in a disciplined manner. Learning this harmonious and coordinated approach through this tariqa's practices helps the followers to improve their ethics.

For al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya's members, having the Salaf's Sufism as its guiding doctrine provides the best, and indeed *only*, reliable means by which Muslims can acquire the truest religious faith together with the fullest array of personality traits that are most conducive to establishing and maintaining social harmony. This tariqa also has a mission to bridge the divide between Sufism and Salafism. Therefore, the communal dimension that this tariqa embraces is more inclusive than that of al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-'Arakīya.

In principle, the ethical dimension of Sufism within al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādirīya al-'Arakīya and al-Ṭarīqa al-Rukaynīya requires all disciples to be at one with all human beings (including even Salafis) by showing respect and love. Moreover, the communal dimension, which depends on an ethical outlook, plays an important role in improving followers' ethics. It also provides helpful clues for disciples to learn how to be at one with people more widely and with society. In this regard, the communal and ethical principles of Sufism are consistent in promoting oneness with others.

However, in practice, these approaches are severely tested and come under considerable strain because of the way in which Sufis regard themselves as moral but others, especially

Salafis, as immoral. Under current circumstances, including the escalated antagonism with Salafis, both tariqas prioritize their moral judgment (or ethical practices), which leads to their being at one with fellow Sufis only. What is more, the two tariqas also run the risk of trying to conduct their affairs around a considerable discrepancy between the ethical dimension (and its idealized self-representation around its commitment to these principles) and the communal dimension (and its restricted and exclusive manner). In particular, there seem to be discrepancies between i) their ethically oriented principles and ii) their morally oriented actions and reactions toward the threat of religiously distinct factions, such as Salafism.

Future progress in this research depends upon gathering and analyzing further evidence on such matters as i) these two tariqas' historical and current interaction with and influence on Sufi tariqas and Salafi factions; ii) two tariqas' interaction with, influence on, and, in turn, dependency upon Sudanese society and institutions, not least those associated with the state and iii) the assessment of the core dimensions of Sufism (in particular, ethical and communal dimensions) through making comparisons of various tariqas in Sudan as well as in the Islamic world.

Acknowledgements

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