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of affairs, by the gradual transformation from nomadism into sedentarism.” In this respect, the improvement and multiplication of means of communication in their modern form have made a large contribution. The major and pressing problems of combating illiteracy and infant mortality, improving sanitation and applying the principles of preventive medicine, and educating women are being given serious attention.

6. Another feature of this movement is that the effervescent young men and the enlightened women are playing an important part everywhere. As a consequence of internal evolution in the reality of life, the Oriental youth has become, in a remarkably short time, the hope of the old generation which has neither the possibilities of organizing a State, nor the scientific and administrative knowledge necessary for the comprehension and conduct of modern political movements. 88

7. There is going on everywhere a movement for the reconstruction of Islamic philosophy and theology to satisfy the reflective and inquisitive minds of those trained in the philosophical traditions of Plato and Aristotle.

Thus, an Islamic system of thought is being created which can adequately meet the intellectual doubts to which the modern world is prone. The leaders of Islamic renaissance have fully realized the need of an affirmation of Islam against the onslaught of modern scepticism which has come in the wake of modern science. This is how the door of tertullian, sealed for centuries, has been re-opened. In their efforts to harmonize the scientific and social discoveries of the modern age with the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, they sometimes make a departure even from the fundamentals of Islam. Such a trend is rightly considered dangerous by the "ulama" and the masses.


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Renaissance in North Africa: The Sanusiyah Movement

A RISE OF THE SANUSIYAH ORDER

The rise of the Sanusiyah Order is closely bound up with that of other revivalist movements in Islam during the thirteenth/nineteenth century. For this reason it is not possible nor indeed advisable to discuss the rise and impact of this Order without first touching upon the nature of the events preceding and accompanying it; consideration must also be given to the forces which played a considerable role in preparing the way for shaping and directing the trend of thought and action of the Sanusiyah movement.

The second half of the twelfth/nineteenth century was a period of dormancy in the history of modern Islam, and the beginning of the thirteenth/nineteenth century proved to be a grave time for the Muslim peoples. The Ottoman Empire, once an edifice of glory and achievement, began to weaken both politically and spiritually. The world of Islam—to which the Ottomans had for centuries stood as guardians and to which they had claimed the right of primary—started to disintegrate. Soon, therefore, the call for political and spiritual reforms began to be heard; attempts were now being actively made to revitalize the Empire and to turn it once more into a vigorous and superior institution along the lines of the advancing European nations.

In the spiritual field the need was particularly felt for a rejuvenation of the Islamic faith, the source of inspiration and the very backbone of the Islam. Arab Empire from the first/seventh to the seventh/thirteenth century. By the beginning of the twelfth/eighteenth century Islam had been practically forgotten, and a great many alien ideas and practices had crept into it. The original purity of the doctrine of Islam was to be found nowhere; abuse of its rites was increasing day by day. The feeling that reform was necessary was thus, 1457
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a natural phenomenon of the time. And when the Ottoman Sultan—who was also the Caliph of Islam and, therefore, the de facto ruler of the three holy cities of Islam—could no longer command the confidence and allegiance of the Muslims and demonstrate his willingness and ability to restore to Islam its purity and its vigour, his position as protector and defender of the faith weakened. Opposition to his authority began to rear its head.

Besides this internal strain in the Ottoman Empire itself, there was the external threat, both political and economic. By the turn of the thirteenth/nineteenth century the leading European powers had started coveting the lucrative territories of the Ottoman Empire both in Asia and in Africa. Accordingly, it was these two motive forces combined—the desire to ameliorate the condition of the Muslims and the determination to resist foreign danger—which led Muslim thinkers and leaders at that time to rise and call for reforms in the Muslim world, and later to make plans for overcoming the obstacles in the way of an Islamic renaissance.

It was against this background that the Sanâ‘iyyah Order was founded and began to grow. Its rise was indeed a reaction to both the spiritual disintegration of the external political threat to the very existence of Islam. Its aim was three-fold: first, to work for the restoration of the original purity of Islam and the advancement of Islamic society; secondly, to bring about the solidarity and unity of the Muslim countries and, thus, revive the community of Islam; and, thirdly, to combat the growing encroachments of European imperialism upon the Muslim homeland.

The founder of the Sanâ‘iyyah Order, Sayyid Muhammad bin ‘Ali al-Sanâ‘i (known as the Grand Sanâ‘i), was born in 1202/1787 in the village of al-Wasita, near Mustaghânem, in Algeria. Politically, socially and economically, this was a time of great instability and discontent in Algeria. The Ottoman governors—the hopes, as they were called—had misruled the country and inflicted so many hardships on the people that resentment had reached a high degree, and the very authority of the Sultan had become exceedingly unpopular in the country.

By the time Sayyid Muhammad bin ‘Ali reached his twentieth year and was able to think rationally and to analyse the state of affairs into which the Algerians had drifted, he became exceedingly bitter about the disintegration of Algerian society as well as about the oppressive rule of the Ottoman governors. Indeed, in his earlier years, while still receiving instruction at the hands of Muslim Shâfi’i in Algeria, he showed a keen interest in the welfare of the Algerian Muslims as well as enthusiasm for the unity of Muslim territories all over the world. From the trade caravans that used to pass frequently through Algeria, he used to hear about the backwardness of Muslims in other Muslim lands. Once he told his father, expressing his feelings about the doûdele of Muslims at the time, (the Muslims) are vanquished everywhere. [Muslim] territories and policies are being abandoned by the Muslims constantly and with the speed of lightning, and Islam is, thus, in a state of fearful decline. This is [indeed] what I am thinking of, 0 father!"

The Grand Sanâ‘i received his early education from a number of Shâfi’i in Algeria—at Mustaghânem and later at Maxm. His instructors included Abu Talib al-Maxmni, Abu al-Mahdi, Ibn al-Qanduz al-Mustaghânemii, Abu Ras al-Mukarrari, Ibn al-Mulâ khâ, and Muhammad bin ‘Abd al-Qâdir bin Râwaishî. Under these Shâfi’i he studied the Qur’an, the hadith, and Muslim jurisprudence in general. Then he moved to Fez, where for eight years he studied in its grand mosque school, generally known as Jama’ al-Qaradîgîn, to which innumerable students of Muslim theology used to come from all parts of North Africa. There he studied under a number of learned Shâfi’i, including Hammâmî bin al-Ba‘ji, Sidi al-Tayyib al-Kirâmî, Sidi Muhammad bin ‘Amîr al-Mî’dhî, Sidi Abu Bakr al-Ifrîsî, and Sidi al-Arâsi bin Ahmad al-Dîrâqî. But he did not seem to have been happy in Fez. This was not only because of the pathetic state of morals and the lack of security and stability in the place, but also on account of the discouraging attitude which seems to have been taken by the authorities towards his teachings. Accordingly, while still in his early thirties, he left Fez for Egypt. There he studied under Shâfi’i al-Milî al-Tûnisî, Thalâshî, al-Sawî, al-Kassî, al-Qa‘asî, and al-Nâjjîr. From there he went to the Hijaz, where he studied under Shâfi’i al-Sudamîn al-Ajamî, Abu ‘Abd al-Qâdir bin ‘Abd al-Karîm al-Masîrî, and ‘Imâm Abu al-Abâs Ahmad bin ‘Abd Allah bin Idrîs.

While studying under all these Shâfi’i, Sayyid Muhammad bin ‘Ali seems to have fallen under the influence of their Sufi teachings, particularly those of the Tijâniyyah Order in Morocco. Later, however, he became a member of other Sufi Orders, including the Naqshî, Naqshî, and Qadîrîyyah. But he does not seem to have been wholeheartedly in favour of their teachings. His purpose in joining them appears, as we shall see later, to be to make himself acquainted with their rites and teachings and to choose the best from every order so as to be able later to combine them in a new Order which would, thus, be the "crown of Sufi thought and practice.""^1

In pursuing his studies in Algeria, Morocco, and Egypt, Sayyid Muhammad

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1 This is the date given by Sayyid Ahmad al-Sahîf al-Sanâ‘î in his book, al-Awzar al-Qadîyah fi Mustaghânem al-Turq a Sanâ‘iyyah, and also by E. E. Evans-Pritchard, The Sufis of Cyrenaica, Oxford University Press, London, 1946, p. 11, and by M. Fu‘ad Shukri, al-Sanâ‘iyyah Dîn wa Dunyât (The Sanâ‘iyyah as a Religion and as a State), Cairo, 1948, p. 11. Other authorities, however, mention other dates: 1209/1791, 1209/1792, 1211/1790, 1218/1803.

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10 Sultan bin ‘Amîr, op. cit., p. 9.

11 Ibid., p. 12.

12 Ibid., pp. 5-6.

13 Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., p. 12.
had ample opportunity to examine the state of affairs into which the Muslims had drifted, particularly the state of decadence prevailing in North Africa at the time. Comparison between the glorious past of the Muslims and their condition in his time seems to have occupied his mind greatly, and the thought that the Muslims were in a state of material and spiritual degeneracy haunted him constantly. In trying to discover the cause of this backwardness and find the remedy for it, he came to the conclusion that only by the restoration of the original purity of Islam and the unity of the Muslims the world over, could the future of Islam be made secure. This he now made the mission of his life and the object of all his efforts and preaching. And, in order to obtain further spiritual strength, he decided to pay a visit to the Hijaz, the birth-place of the Prophet Muhammad pbuh and the original spring-board of the Muslims in the establishment of their empire in the first, seventh and second centuries. The ostensible reason for his journey was to perform the pilgrimage, but his actual motive was much more than that, namely, to invigorate his yearning spirit and to add to his additional spiritual stamina which he wished to obtain during his visit to the holy cities of Islam. Moreover, there seems to have been a political reason for his departure. While teaching at Fez, he appears to have shown a critical attitude towards the Ottoman authorities there, in a manner now mild and admonitory, now severe and repressive; he drew their attention to their misadministration and to the sorry conditions then prevailing in Fez. As a consequence, his presence in Morocco was considered dangerous; the authorities considered him a threat to their prestige, fearing that his religious teachings would develop into a political challenge and, thus, lead to the end of the Ottoman rule in Morocco. In order, therefore, to avoid further friction with the authorities, Sayyid Muhammad decided to leave for Laghouat, in Algeria. This place had a highly strategic situation for the purpose of trade caravans to and from the Sudan in addition to holding a key position in the Atlas Sahara. One of Sayyid Muhammad's main objectives in his choice of Laghouat was his desire to preach his ideas in that area and to carry on with his preaching for the reform of Islam and the unity of the Muslim world. Soon, however, he realized he could not accomplish this to the full, for he found himself shut away in the Sahara, far from all useful activity. He, therefore, left for Gabis in Tunisia, and then went on to Tripoli, Misrata and Benghazi in Libya, as well as to Egypt and the Hijaz. It was indeed at this stage of his life that he began to exercise his influence successfully on the people of North Africa, preparing thereby the way for the founding of the San'atīyah Order.

He had already succeeded in converting to his viewpoint a considerable number of Algerians and other "Brethren" (Ikhānīn). These were now his disciples, and a few of them accompanied him on his journey eastward through Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and the Hijaz, and helped him in the dissemination of his teachings.

Sayyid Muhammad's stay in Tunisia and Libya was relatively short, but even during this short period he remained actively engaged in the preaching of his teachings. Similarly, his stay in Egypt was brief, lasting only for a few weeks. He had originally intended to study at al-Azhar University in Cairo in order to improve his education, but he was soon defeated in his plans. The Shāhīd of al-Azhar decided to combat his influence, perhaps out of jealousy of the success of his movement, or perhaps genuinely thinking that his teachings were not in accordance with the prevailing docile attitude taken by them towards the authoritarian rule of Muhammad 'Ali, then Governor of Egypt. In addition, seeing that the Sayyid and his followers viewed their autocratic rule with more than suspicion, if not actual hostility, Governor Muhammad 'Ali decided for his part to stifle the rapid advance of the Saniyah teachings. He is, in fact, said to have suggested to the Shāhīd of al-Azhar to oppose the very presence in Cairo of the Sayyid and his disciples and even encouraged them to do so. This hostile attitude of the Shāhīd of al-Azhar and the authorities in Egypt, coupled with the persistent desire of the Sayyid to perform the pilgrimage, soon made him leave Egypt for the Hijaz. But his studies in Egypt left a deep impression on his mind. There Muhammad 'Ali had succeeded in shaking the authority of the Ottoman Sultan and establishing his own rule instead. Accordingly, Egypt, although nominally a vassal State and subject to Turkish suzerainty, had in fact declared its independence of the Turkish Sultan and was beginning to emerge as an autonomous entity among the States of the world. Already the inability of the Ottoman Empire to repell the French invasion of his own country, Algeria, had pointed to the weakness of that Empire. To the Sayyid all this provided a concrete example of the growing decadence of the Ottoman Empire and of the actual feasibility of a rising in the face of the Sultan. It was, indeed, an incentive to him to redouble his efforts in order to end the pathetic state of affairs into which the Muslims had drifted. And yet the Sayyid felt he was hardly ready for such a move. Although he was encouraged by the example of Muhammad 'Ali, he seems to have felt that the kind of political triumph of the latter over the authority of the Sultan was not the real victory he would wish for himself. He wanted a political victory to be coupled with a real movement for reform and advancement. He, thus, concluded that his aim might be better served by his own superior education, by his striving to combat the influence of sectarianism and authoritarian regimes, and by the dissemination of knowledge which would include the teaching of technical subjects to all classes of Muslims. Moreover, he advocated the popularization of sports, particularly the use of arms and horsemanship, and resolved, above all, to realize those aims without delay.

2 Salīm bin 'Amīr, op. cit., p. 12.
4 Salīm bin 'Amīr, op. cit., p. 2.
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It was with this in mind that the Suyyid set out for the Hijaz. There he stayed for six years, mostly at Makkah, where he resumed his studies and preaching. He developed close relations with many prominent figures in the Hijaz, but was particularly influenced by Sāliḥ Ahmad bin Ḥabīb al-Ṣafī, the fourth head of the Islamic Order of the Qadiriyyah which had its headquarters in Makkah. In addition, through his contacts with the pilgrims, he extended his influence to all parts of the Islamic world. He wrote extensively on the condition of the Muslims, developing his own theology and contributing to the Islamic sciences.

Having thus fortified his theological and other studies, acquiring in this way a broader knowledge of the Islamic world, he began to feel he was in a position to start his own Order.

Upon the death of Suyyid Ahmad bin Ḥabīb in the Yemen (where he had gone into exile following the hostility of the Maliki Shāfiites at Makkah), Suyyid Muhammad al-Sanṣurī proceeded in 1225/1837 to establish a new Order, which was actually a sub-Order of the Qadiriyyah and chose as its seat Mā'ā, Abu Qabah, near Makkah. Here he made great progress, particularly among the Bedouin tribes of the Hijaz. He was able to persuade the tribes to accept his teachings, and they proceeded to provoke opposition to his movement, as they had previously opposed that of Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhāb. In this they found great support in the attitude of the 'ulama' and the Shāfiites of Makkah and the Turkish administration, which was apparently because the Order seemed to threaten the prestige and privileges of these authorities. Objection was also made to the manner in which the Order "lowered" the standards of piety of its members. It was not until after the death of Suyyid that the Hijaz, in the same way as he had previously been compelled to leave Egypt. But he was faced with the difficult task of choosing a new seat for his movement. First, he knew his movement had not much to offer in the way of wealth, and that it was important to have a seat of authority. This led him to the idea of establishing a new seat for his movement, and he proceeded to do so, choosing the town of Makkah as the site of his new seat. This was considered to be a wise choice, as Makkah was considered to be the holiest city in Islam, and having a seat there would give his movement a great deal of prestige and respect.

In 1225/1837, Suyyid Muhammad al-Sanṣurī founded his first lodge (ṣawājiq) near Sidi Raff, on the central Cyrenaica plateau (al-Ṣawājiq al-Muṣṭaf). This lodge came to be known as the White Lodge (al-Ṣawājiq al-Baḍī), and it was from here that the Suyyid began to direct his teaching and propaganda activities for the first few years of his life. In 1230/1846, however, he returned to Makkah, where he stayed for seven years, during which time his discipled carried on his teaching and preaching in his absence. In 1270/1853, he returned to Cyrenaica and, in the following year, he moved his seat to Jūfīsh, about one hundred and fifty kilometres south-south-east of Sidi Raff, and made it the centre of his order. His purpose in this was to direct his activities southward, particularly in the pagan and semi-pagan countries of the Sahara and Equatorial Africa and beyond. He was now out of reach of the Turkish, French, and Egyptian Governments, as well as on the main pilgrim route from North.

11 Salmān bin 'Āmir, op. cit., p. 3.
13 Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., pp. 63-68.
15 Salmān bin 'Āmir, op. cit., p. 3. See also Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., p. 14.
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West Africa through Egypt to Makkah; at Jubbah itself, this route bisected one of the trade-routes from the coast to the Sahara and the Sudan. Jubbah was also centrally located for the purpose of his movement, lying as it was at fairly equal distances from his lodges in Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, the Western Desert of Egypt, and the Sudan. Actually, Sayyid Muhammad al-Sanusi’s transfer of the seat of his Order to Jubbah heralded a new stage in the history of the development of the Order. Whereas previously the Order had confined itself to being mainly an internal movement aiming at the rejuvenation and reform of Islam as a faith, it now began to disseminate Islamic teachings and to extend the influence of Islam. Sayyid Muhammad must have been alarmed by the Christian missionary work in the Sudan, and he seems to have wanted to combat their activities. In this he was encouraged by the success which his movement had already scored in the coastal regions and the successful establishment of so many Sanusi lodges in North Africa.

Jubbah soon became not only a centre for the Sanusi movement, but also a seat for an Islamic university which brought under its fold a total of some three hundred learned teachers and students in a community of some one thousand Sanuis and ‘Brethren.’ This community included the Algerians, Tunisians, Moroccans, Libyans, and others.

As time went on, the University of Jubbah, with its team of scholars, poets, theologians, and others played an important role in the revivalist movement of Islam and its expansion in Africa during the thirteenth/nineteenth century. It was at this university that the future leaders of the Sanusi Order were trained, and it was from here that Sayyid Muhammad bin ‘Ali, his followers, and successors directed their missionary activities in Libya, the Sahara, and the Sudan.

When the Sayyid died in 1276/1859, he had already founded twenty-one lodges in Cyrenaica alone. In addition, his Order had spread so widely in Cyrenaica and Tripolitania—and elsewhere—that the Ottoman Government was compelled to take his influence and prestige seriously into account; it, thus, wanted to win his friendship and support in order to use his prestige for improving the then deteriorating Turco-Arab relations and to quell the risings which were taking place in Tripolitania. It is even reported that one of the Turkish governors in Tripolitania at the time (‘Abdur Rahman) became a member of the Sanusi Order. In accordance with this courteous attitude of the Ottoman Government towards the Sanusiyyah Order, Sultan ‘Abd al-”

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Majid I issued in 1273/1856 a firman exempting Sanusi properties from taxation and permitting the Order to collect a religious tithe from its followers. The Grand Sanusi was succeeded in 1276/1859 by his elder son, Sayyid Muhammad al-Mahdi, as head of the Order. Following a short period of regency. During Sayyid al-Mahdi’s tenure the Order expanded considerably with twenty-two new lodges founded in Cyrenaica, apart from those in Tripolitania and Central Africa. In fact, so influential did the Order become that not only the Turkish Government but also the leading European Powers of the time sought its friendship and support. Sultan ‘Abd al-Aziz (1276/1860–1285/1870) issued a firman confirming the privileges granted by the earlier firman of Sultan ‘Abd al-Majid (1273/1856) and further recognized the right of sanctuaries within the confines of the Sanusi lodges. Yet, in spite of these flattering advances made by the Ottoman Government towards them the Sanusiyyah leaders refused to take any part in Turkish political entanglements abroad. In 1294/1877, thus, they refused to accede to the Sultan’s request that they should send troops to fight for him in the Russo-Turkish war. Moreover, in 1301/1883 they denounced the rising of the Mahdi in the Sudan and refused to give him help in his movement against the British. The head of the Sanusi Order seems to have taken this attitude as a matter of principle, particularly in view of what he considered to be the ‘false pretensions’ of the Sudanese Mahdi.

In 1304/1886 the Ottoman Sultan sent General Sidiq Pasha to Jubbah with presents for Sayyid al-Mahdi (al-Sanusi). Ten years later, Bashid Pasha, Governor of Cyrenaica, dressed in civilian clothes and unarmed, visited the Sayyid and paid him homage.

Sanusi relations with the European Powers were on the whole conducted with great caution and circumspection. In 1298/1882, Germany unsuccessfully tried to collect the support of the Sayyid al-Mahdi and to rope him in to rebel against the French in both North Africa and French West Africa. In 1299/1881, the Sanusis remained unresponsive to Italian presents and flattery. One year later they refused to give support to ‘Arabi Pasha’s rising in Egypt, although at the time there were some who thought that ‘Arabi was a mere tool in the hands of the Sanuis and that he had risen in revolt under their influence.

In 1313/1895 Sayyid al-Mahdi moved the seat of the Order to Kharga, a hitherto insignificant oasis, about one hundred and fifty kilometres south
of Jāhālī. This may have been done to be out of the reach of the Turkish authorities.14 It may also have been instigated a reaction to the attitude of Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II who, it is alleged, arranged with the ‘alamiyya’ of al-ʿĀrās University in Caire to issue a fatwa discrediting the Order by condemning Sânîsī practices which they considered to be innovations in the rules of prayer.15

Following this transfer of the seat of the Order to Kufa, the affairs of the Order continued to prosper. Economically, the Order profited greatly from customs dues and as well from directly engaging in trade. Kufa now became a relatively important commercial centre through which caravans were constantly passing.16 In the political and religious fields the Order extended its influence to the then independent Sultānates in the Sahara: Kāwar, Tibesti, Borku, Ennedi, Darfur, Wadai, Kāne, Chad, the Azār, the Agar, the Sudan, and Baghirmi. It also reached the Sudan.17 In fact, contact with some of these Sultānates had already been made by the Grand Sânîsī shortly after his move from Ṣahhālī in 1273/1856. But it was not until Sayyid al-Mahdī’s tenure, that the Order began to infiltrate into the Sahara and the Sudan. This not only brought the various Sultānates in the area under Sânîsī influence and led to the foundation of new lodges in their territories, but also swelled the revenues of the Order as a result of improvement in the security of the desert routes and the consequent prosperity of trade activities in the region.18

This advance of the Sântūśiyya into the Sahara and the Central Sudan brought the Order face to face with the French, and Franso-Sânîsī relations henceforth became greatly strained. In 1317/1899, therefore, Sayyid al-Mahdī moved the seat of the Order from Kufa to Qirṣah, in Kāne, in order to organize resistance to the French, to administer the vast regions recently won by the Order, and to direct the propaganda activities of the Order in a more effective manner in the region.19

Between 1317/1899 (the date of the Anglo-French Declaration concerning disputed frontiers in the area) and 1320/1902, a number of armed clashes took place between the French garrisons and the Sânîsī forces in the area, with results alternating between Sânîsī victory and French ascendency.20 With the death of Sayyid al-Mahdī at Qirṣah in the summer of 1320/1902, however, the Order suffered a great blow and its resistance against the French began to crumble. Sayyid Ahmad al-Shafī‘—the successor of Sayyid al-Mahdī—apprehensive of French advance and of the designs on Afrīn harboured by the other leading European powers, was careful to avoid any friction with

14 See Franso-Priœchaud, op. cit., p. 21.
15 Cumming, op. cit., p. 22.
16 Franso-Priœchaud, op. cit., p. 21.
17 Ibid., pp. 21-22.
19 Franso-Priœchaud, op. cit., p. 22.

B

TEACHINGS AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE SĀNTŪSĪYYA ORDER

It has already been stated that the main objective of the Sântūsīyya movement, when it first began to take shape, was to purify the religion of Islam from the heresies and alien beliefs and practices which had in the course of centuries crept into it. It was, thus, a puritan and reformist movement, the chief purpose of which was to restore the original purity of Islam and to guide the Muslims to a better understanding of their religion. It continued to be an internal reformist movement until its founder, the Grand Sânîsī, moved the seat of the Order in 1273/1856 to Jāhālī. It was at this stage of the development of the Order that it embarked on a new course, i.e., that of preaching and extending the teachings and influence of Islam to wider regions. But even in this it did not confine itself to being a religious and missionary movement. It soon began to be a political movement, concerning itself essentially with political matters. Its development from the purely spiritual level to the political one as well, together with the ground it covered and the problems it encountered in these two fields, must, therefore, be discussed at some length.

In its nature the Sântūsīyya Order was a strictly Sufi Order calling for puritanism and a return to the true tenets and rites of Islam. This it strove to reach through what it considered the achievement of the purity of the soul which would ultimately lead to communion with God. The process of accomplishing this “salvation” is described by the Grand Sânîsī himself in three of his nine books: al-Sabūt al-Maʿṣūm b. al-Tawīq al-Arbaʿin (The Sweet Spring of the Forty Orders), wherein he describes seven stages through which the soul has to pass in order to become purified and united with God; Kābul al-Maʿṣūm al-Aṭṣab, al-Maṣṣumah Baghāyī al-Maṣṣūm al-Maʿṣūm al-Khulṣāyī al-Maṣṣūm (The Book of the Ten Problems, Called the Purpose of Desires and the Summary of Intentions), in which he discusses ten of the problems which

14 See Franso-Priœchaud, op. cit., p. 23.
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the Muslims encounter in their daily prayers), and *I‘tidāl al-Warrāq fī al-A‘nāl bi al-Hadīth u-al-Qur‘ān* (Awakening the Slumberer through Observance of the Hadīth and the Qur‘ān), in which, in an effort to extol the virtue of following the Prophet’s sayings and practices, he deals with the various ways and means followed by the Muslim ‘a‘lims’ for understanding the Hadīth. 

But the San‘ūnīyya Order differed in many respects from other Sufi Orders. These other Sufi Orders believed in and encouraged meditation, liturgical recitations, and the practice of the familiar bodily exercises (particularly, the rhythmic movements of the body together with music playing, singing, dancing, drumbeating, and taking out of processions) which were supposed to enable the Sufi to rid himself of his physical self and attain spiritual union with God. In opposition to this, the San‘ūnīyya leaders declared themselves in favour of the rational approach to religion and the reform and guidance of Muslims. 

This was not only the attitude of the founder of the San‘ūnīyya Order and his immediate successors, but is also that of the present leaders of the Order (I‘zz al-Dīn al-Mis‘īz), who, shortly after his proclamation as the first king of independent Libya, issued orders to his followers not to resort to what he called antiquated physical practices. 

A basic feature of Sufism is to attempt to combine and reconcile the two methods familiar to Islamic religious thought: that of the ‘a‘lim who adheres to the Shī‘a and that of the Sufis. In this he tried to follow the example of al-Hārīthī. But the Grand San‘īnī, in trying to follow the path of the ‘a‘lim, admired and was greatly influenced by Ibn Taimiyya, though he differed with him in his attitudes towards Sufism, for Ibn Taimiyya had evinced open hostility to all Sufi teachings and methods, while the Grand San‘īnī (and his successors) showed tolerance towards these Orders. 

It has already been stated that the Grand San‘īnī carefully studied the teachings of a number of Sufi Orders (all of which were Sunni Orders) before he decided to establish his own, and that he made it a point to choose from each of these Orders those principles which he considered most suited for incorporation into a new Order. His book al-Salisi‘ al-Ma‘ṣūm contains an account of the chief Orders which he had studied including the Muhammadiyya, the Shāfi‘īyya, the ‘Alawīyya, the Rifa‘īyya, the Naṣawīyya, the Ahmadīyya, and the Shī‘īYYa. But although he studied all these Orders and was influenced by them, his own Order was not, as has been sometimes claimed, a mere conglomerate of them. On the contrary, it was a "consistent and carefully thought out way of life." 

As for a brief summary of the contents of these books, consult Ṣahhārī, op. cit., pp. 41–44.


See Dīr al-Judul, Benghazi, June 25, 1953.

Ṣahhārī, op. cit., p. 44.


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is his Order a mere offshoot of the Shī‘īYYa Order. What he in fact seems to have intended was to bring together and unite the various Islamic Orders and so, eventually, to unite all Muslims. 

In its teachings the San‘īnīyya Order did not make an intrinsically new contribution to Islam; it did not introduce any essentially original principles or ideas. It was only a modern revivalist movement derived from the Sunni sect, and is in fact considered to be one of the most orthodox Orders. It followed the Mālikī school of Muslim thought which was and still is prevalent in North Africa. The Grand San‘īnī placed great emphasis on the Sunnah which, together with the Qur‘ān, he regarded as the basic source of Islamic Law. Though he also attached a certain degree of importance to ijāra (analogy) and ijma’ (consensus of opinion) as the sources of law in Islam he considered these to be of secondary importance.

But the most courageous stand which the Grand San‘īnī took in this connection was his recognition of ijtihād (independent reasoning) as a method for understanding and developing Islam. It was in fact this doctrine which evoked the hostility of the ‘a‘lims’ of the time in Egypt and the Hijaz and made him stand at variance with them; for many centuries before, it was considered that the door of ijtihād had been closed, and the ‘a‘lims’, therefore, held that the advocacy of this method was likely to lead to innovations in Islam.

C

ACHIEVEMENTS: AN EVALUATION

The success of the San‘īnīyya Order was spectacular in more ways than one. The rapid progress which it scored among the tribes of Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, and the Fezzan, together with the extension of its influence to other countries, particularly Tunisia, Egypt, the Hijaz, and Central Africa, has been especially conspicuous in three main fields.

In the religious field, the movement found ready acceptance wherever it went. By 1325/1916, when Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif relinquished the headship...
ship of the Order in favour of Sayyid Isidr, one hundred and forty-six lodges had been founded in Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, the Peshan, Egypt, Arabia, Central Africa, and the Sudan. The success of the movement was, at least partly, due as much to the devotion of its leaders as to the simplicity and originality of its teachings. Its original purpose, as we have noted earlier in this chapter, was to reform Islam by combating alien beliefs and practices which had been creeping into Islam throughout the centuries. This purpose, which is actually the avowed purpose of all modern Islamic revivalist movements, was all the easier to realize since it came at a time when Muslim all over the world began to feel the need for the reformation and reinvigoration of their faith. What served to help the Order in this respect was the fact that when it emerged the Muslims in the countries to which it addressed its call were in a state of extreme poverty and backwardness. They were, indeed, ignorant of their religion and in dire need for some spiritual orientation, particularly when Sunni teachings took as their basis the true and original tenets and rites of Islam. This, no doubt, explains why the Sunniyya teachings readily acceptable to these people, since it not only gave them the spiritual stimulus they had needed, but also reassured and confidence in their own values by acknowledging and in fact reinforcing the true principles and rites of their own religion.

On the other hand, the poverty, backwardness, and ignorance of the Muslim peoples at the time must not be carried too far as an explanation for the rapid progress which the Sunniyya Order achieved. For, then, the success of the Order would (unjustifiably) be attributed rather to the nature of the people than to the rational appreciation on their part of the intrinsic values of its teachings.

Nor should the Sunniyya Order be misunderstood, as it has been by several writers and thinkers, to be a purely reactionary and fanatical movement, seeking self-gratification through a negative attitude not only towards other religions but also towards life in general. The Sunniyya Order is indeed a constructive movement which aims primarily at introducing a positive element into the Umma Al-Islam (the Islamic community) which it tried to recreate and transform into a healthy and progressive society. The methods which it employed to realize this end were peaceful; it did not advocate violence or aggression and would not agree to incite rebellion even in territories falling under colonial regimes, unless provoked to do so by the attitude of these regimes; it professedly and openly declared that its foremost weapons were “guidance and persuasion.”

Considered in this light, the Sunniyya Order is far from deserving the accusations of extreme puritanism and fanaticism which H. Duveyrier and other

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levelled against it. He asserted that the Sunniyya prohibition of drinking and smoking is a reflection of this fanaticism. He even went to the extreme of saying that assassinations of Europeans in North and Central Africa at that time could have been committed by none other than the Sunni agents, and even considered that the Sunniyya propaganda was in fact at the root of every misfortune which befell the French interests. Similarly, Professor Arnold J. Toynbee has accused the Sunniyya of “Zealotism,” that is, “archaism evoked by foreign pressure” seeking, in self-defence when encountering Western civilization, to take refuge from the unknown into the familiar. In his opinion when it joins battle with a stranger who practices superior tactics and employs formidable new-fangled weapons, it finds itself getting the worst of the encounter, and, therefore, responds by pretending its own traditional art of war with abnormally scrupulous exactitude.

These and many other similar accusations are as unfounded as they are misleading; they lack evidence to substantiate their assertions. This constructive aspect of the Sunniyya Order has been manifested by Sunni leaders and their teachings in several ways. It will suffice to mention in this connection that the Order showed a most tolerant attitude towards other reformist movements as well as towards the cult of saints which was so common and widespread throughout North Africa. This tolerance may be attributed to the broadmindedness and compliant disposition of the Sunni leaders themselves, and the high degree of learning and accomplishment they had attained. It may have been because the Sunniyya Order itself partook of and was influenced by many Sufi Orders which had been in existence before it came to flourish. We have already noted that the founder of the Order himself had deliberately studied the tenets and rites of these various Orders and had chosen the best of each for incorporation into the Order which he was going to establish in his own name. In any case, as the Sunniyya Order was, par excellence, a movement calling for a return to true Islam and the actual implementation of its principles, it was inevitably natural and logical that it should show tolerance, which is one of the chief characteristics of Islam itself, not only towards other Sufi orders and cults, but also towards other religions and indeed towards humanity as a whole. Admittedly, the Sunniyya Order was a conservative movement, but the claim that it was reactionary and fanatical is a completely different thing.

In the political field too the Sunniyya Order scored considerable success. Although starting originally as a purely “religious” movement, the Order soon found itself entangled in political matters, both internal and external. |
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This was invariable in view of the Grand Sanûdi's keen interest in the welfare of the Muslims in general and his early anxiety about the fate of the Ottoman Empire as the protector and defender of the faith. The "political" conditions of the Muslims and their endangered situation, particularly in the face of the growing threat of Europe, an imperialism in Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Morocco, made a deep impression on the Sanûdi leaders, and they, therefore, strove for the political advancement and liberation of Muslim lands. In addition, Islam being by its very nature both a code of ethics and a way of life, not recognizing any real distinction between what are commonly known as "political" matters and purely "religious" matters, it was inevitable and indeed natural that any approach by the Sanûsiyya Order to the religious affairs of Muslims should have also touched upon their political affairs.

The attitude of the Sanûsiyya Order towards the position of the Ottoman Sultan as Caliph of all Muslims is of great interest here and should, therefore, be noted. It has already been mentioned that the Grand Sanûdi and his successors wanted to maintain cordial relations with the Sultan, that the Ottoman Government for its part tried to cultivate friendship with them, and that it was on that basis that the Ottoman Government accorded its recognition to the Sanûsiyya Order. What actually happened in this respect is that the Sanûdi leaders were ever ready to support the Ottoman Sultan as the Caliph of all Muslims, provided that his Government did not in any way encroach upon their much cherished autonomy. It was in fact on that basis that they also accepted the secular authority of the Sultan as the political head of the Ottoman Empire. But it is doubtful whether they were profoundly and wholeheartedly in favour of the Turks as such. However, when the Sanûdis saw that, equally with the Turks, were being threatened by common foreign enemies, particularly France and Italy, they hastened to rally around the Sultan. That, as we shall see later in this chapter, became all the more evident when Italy proceeded to occupy Libya, thereby provoking the Sanûdi leaders, together with other prominent figures in Libya, to rise on the side of the Turks and declare a war of jihad against the Italians.

What is of particular interest at this juncture is to note how the Sanûsiyya Order developed from being a purely spiritual movement into one also political.

One important factor which helped the Sanûdi leaders to score political influence in Libya was that the Order did not confine itself to purely preaching activities, but soon grew into a coherent movement with a common direction and developed into an organization of its own, identifying itself with the tribal system of the Bedouins of Libya. The Grand Sanûdi and his successors came, thus, to be regarded not only as holy men who had come to preach, in the way it had been done by others before them, but also as national leaders who exercised great political and religious influence and commanded not only the respect and affection of the tribes but also their allegiance. 49

49 Ibid., pp. 10-11, 84-89.

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It was actually in the economic and social fields that the Sanûsiyya Order made its greatest contribution to Libyan life, and it was this role which helped to make its impact on Libyan life durable and more conspicuous. Although the Order rallied around it the tribal people of Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, and the Fezzan, as well as a limited number of the townsmen of these territories, and although it educated these people in the matter of their religious duties, its effect on their life proved to be much more lasting and conspicuous than any other reformist movement which had influenced the Bedouins of Libya. As noted earlier in this chapter, the Sanûsiyya Order won much more than a personal and local following among the Libyan populace; its founder and his successors were able to establish themselves as leaders of a national movement which has continued to affect and indeed direct the destinies of the country up to the present day. The secret of this lies, not only in the captability, devoted, and commanding personality of the Sanûdi leaders themselves, but also in the social, economic, and political conditions under which the Libyans had been living before the advent of the Sanûsiyya movement and which made the teachings of the movement more acceptable to them than the Sanûdi leaders were able to give also in the type of organization which the Sanûdi leaders were able to create people who were "healthy in body and mind." 50

50 It has been already noted that it was the avowed purpose of the Sanûdi leaders to associate their movement with the tribes themselves. This is why the vast majority of the Sanûdi lodges were founded in tribal centres and not in towns, and the distribution of the lodges also followed tribal divisions. 51

The distribution of the lodges was carefully planned by the Sanûdi leaders. They were designed to comprehend the principal tribal groupings, the more important lodges being built at the centres of tribal life, while most of the other lodges were placed on important caravan-routes. Professor E. E. Evans-Pritchard, while commenting on the wisdom of the Sanûdi leaders for concentrating their lodges on Gracco-Roman foundations in conformity with a "politic-economic plan," remarks that "where the Greek and Romans and Turks found it convenient or essential to build villages and posts was where the Sanûsiyya established its lodges." 52

In fact, it was the tribes themselves that established the lodges which came, thus, to be regarded as tribal institutions. This was usually done following the grant of permission by the head of the Sanûsiyya Order each time a lodge was to be established. The head of the Order would, thus, send the tribe concerned a Shâhid from among his followers at the seat of the Order. This Shâhid was called the muqaddam and acted as a custodian of the
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lodge; he was helped in the performance of his duties by another Shahih called the wakil who was primarily responsible for the financial and economic affairs of the lodge.\footnote{Shahri, op. cit., p. 49.}

The lodges were, thus, administered by the principal Shahih, each of whom represented the head of the Order in his particular lodge. The functions of each of these Shahih, covered the settlement of disputes between members of the tribe; leading the triobesmen in jshad (the holy war); looking after security matters in the area covered by the lodge; acting as intermediary between the tribe and the Turkish administration; receiving foreigners and offering them hospitality; supervising the collection of tithe; directing the cultivation of grain and care of stock; dispatching surplus revenues to the seat of the Order; acting as Juma on Fridays; and assisting in preaching and teaching.\footnote{Evans-Pritchard, The Sanusi of Cyrenaica, p. 80. See also Shahri, op. cit., pp. 48-49.}

Every lodge, small or large, usually contained a mosque, school-rooms, guest-rooms, living quarters for teachers and pupils, and houses for the Ibadin (Brethren)—those Shahih who accompanied the principal Shahih of the lodge to help him run it); clients and servants and their families. Some of the lodges had small gardens, and the local cemetery was usually close to the lodge.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 76-77.}

The various tribal sections would donate to the lodge the lands adjoining it. Often other donations were also made, such as wells, springs, date-oals, flocks, crops, and camels. The total lands of the Order amounted to 200,000 hectares in Cyrenaica alone, while the endowments of the Order totalled some 50,000 hectares.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 77-78.}

Most of the work needed at the lodge was usually carried out by the lodge community itself, though often the triobesmen helped the Shahih of the lodge in the cultivation of the lands.

The lands attached to the lodges belonged to the various lodges to which they were given and not to the Shahih of the lodges or even to the Sanusi leaders themselves. They were considered waw properties, and the Shahih of the lodges were only the legal representatives of the properties of these lodges. In this way, the revenues of one lodge could not be used for the maintenance of another lodge. Even the head of the Order possessed no authority to interfere directly in the administration of the estates of the lodges. Members of the Sanusi family and the teachers and administrative officials of the Order usually lived at Jaghfab and Kifin, and the lodges used to supply them regularly with gifts of various products, local or imported, such as skin, wool, grain, butter, honey, meat, rice, tea, sugar, and cloth.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 76-77.}

In fact, the relations between the seat of the Order and the various lodges became very strong and regular, particularly during the tenure of Sayyid al-Mahdi. For this purpose, a postal system was established, and horses were

for the most part used to carry correspondence from the seat of the Order to the various lodges and vice versa. In this way, Jaghfab was closely connected with Egypt, Tripolitania, the Fezzan, Wadai, and the rest of Cyrenaica.\footnote{Shahri, op. cit., p. 61.}

Later, however, during the life-time of Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif, abuse of the affairs of the lodges became common; it became now the practice to earmark the surplus revenues of particular lodges for particular members of the Sanusi family, and these members came to be regarded as patrons of the lodges which supplied them their needs and were under their supervision.\footnote{Evans-Pritchard, The Sanusi of Cyrenaica, p. 77.}

In addition, although, as stated above, the estates of the lodges did not belong to the head of the Order or to the Shahih of the lodges, the hereditary system of Shahihdom soon became an established practice in many of the lodges. In the early days of the Order, it was the practice that once the head of the Order sent a Shahih to found a new lodge and once that lodge was established, that particular Shahih was transferred to another lodge. Later on it became the practice to leave a Shahih in charge of a lodge till his death and then nominate his successor from among his nearest relatives, with the consent of the tribe and on the advice of the Shahih of the neighbouring lodges. In most cases this happened following a request by the members of the tribe concerned for the appointment of the son or brother of the deceased Shahih as director of their lodge, upon which the head of the Order sanctioned their nomination. In course of time the families of these Shahih came to regard themselves as having a hereditary title to their lodges and also a pre-emptive claim to their administration and to the enjoyment of their revenues.\footnote{Ibid., p. 80-88.}

The importance of the Sanusi lodges in the history of Libya and, indeed, of every other country to which the Sanusiyah order extended its influence, does not lie in the religious and missionary field only. It lies also, and in a particularly conspicuous manner, in the economic and social progress attained by the Order in these countries. The lodges were, of course, places of worship and centres for teaching the principles and rites of Islam. They also served to extend the influence of Islam into hitherto pagan or semi-pagan lands. But the lodges were not conceived paying no attention to the course of worldly events and developments, nor were they places for mystical meditation and exercises. On the contrary, they were (in addition to being centres for religious instruction and missionary propaganda) community centres bustling with great educational, economic, and agricultural activities. The Sanusi lodges provided the countries in which they were founded with a unique educational machinery which served to instruct both tribesmen and townspeople (last but the former) in their language, history, and religion, as well as to teach them purely secular subjects, including mathematics, chemistry, agriculture, and the use of weapons.\footnote{Shahri, op. cit., pp. 58-61.} The Sanusi leaders are, in fact, known for insisting that
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their followers should work hard and avoid accosting themselves to a lazy and leisurely life. Agriculture and commerce, thus, progressed, and Libya in particular experienced a degree of material progress which it had not known for centuries. Sanussi influence in Libya, as indeed in the other countries to which the Sanussiyah Order addressed itself, was, thus, two-fold: spiritual which consisted of the religious instruction and the missionary work carried on in the various territories falling within the orbit of the Order’s activities; and material consisting of the social and economic progress attained by the Sanussi lodges in these territories.

D

DECLINE AND RECOVERY

By the turn of the fourteenth/twentieth century the “Sick Man of Europe” had become, as one might say, so sick that there was very little prospect of his recovery or improvement. By this time, too, the importance of the Mediterranean, for a long time the centre of political and economic interests of Europe, had doubly increased, particularly in view of the opening of the Suez Canal. The Mediterranean now became the scene of conflict and a bone of contention among the leading Powers of Europe. Great Britain, France, Germany, Spain, and Italy were keenly interested, for various motives, in the welfare of that sea. The race for the acquisition of overseas territories was now in great progress. As it happened, Italy was left more or less free to annex Libya.72

By this time the Sanussis had succeeded in establishing in Libya a position almost independent of the Turkish administration, recognizing only the de facto authority of the Turkish Sultan, which in practice amounted to no more than a nominal acknowledgment of his already enfeebled representation in the territory. At the same time, however, Italy was busy securing the diplomatic support of the leading powers of Europe for the occupation of Libya. Pending the arrival of the right opportunity for her to launch her offensive against Libya, she had proceeded to penetrate that country peacefully, particularly in the economic and commercial fields.

By 1328/1908, when the Young Turks came to power, Turco-Italian relations had reached a critical stage. Italian public opinion was greatly alarmed at the mistrust in Italian projects shown by the Turkish administration in Libya. The mood of the Italian official and semi-official circles was hostile, and it was becoming clearer every day that Italy was busy trying to provoke

72 For a detailed account of Europe’s, particularly Italy’s, designs over Libya, see W. C. Askew, Europe and Italy’s Acquisition of Libya, Duke University Press, 1942. See also Roberto Cantalupo, L’Italia Murabaena, Rome, 1920.
for the British and who seems to have been impressed by the understanding reached at the time between the Arabs and the British Government,14 preferred to join Britain against Turkey and, thus, reach an understanding with the Italians.15

By March 1916 the Turks and Libyans were in retreat. By this time, too, the differences of opinion between Sayyid Ahmad and Sayyid Idris had become too great to be in any way bridged.16 This was all the more evident since these differences were of a basic nature and reflected the difference in outlook and in the basic philosophy with which each of the two Sayyids looked upon the task of continuing the war against Turkey. In view of the openly professed colonial and religious considerations underlying and motivating Italy's invasion of Libya, Sayyid Ahmad considered the continuation of Libyan resistance to be both a religious duty and a matter of necessity. On the other hand, Sayyid Idris seems to have looked upon the Italian occupation of Libya as an inevitable evil, and thought it was no use continuing the struggle against such a formidable enemy.

It was, thus, natural that some decisive measure should have been taken to call a halt to the duel that was going on between the two Sanā'is Sayyids. In this it was Sayyid Idris who took the initiative. He now wanted to take over the leadership of the Sanā'ī Order himself. He considered that leadership of the Order had devolved upon Sayyid Ahmad following the death of Sayyid al-Mahdi (1320/1903) only because he, Sayyid Idris, as the elder son of Sayyid al-Mahdi, was then too young to succeed his father. Now, however, he argued, matters had changed, and he had become old enough (twenty-seven) to take over the command. Eventually, Sayyid Ahmad, looking with grief at this attitude of his cousin and in view of the failure of his own plans to continue the resistance movement against Italy, decided to hand over political and military authority to Sayyid Idris. According to this arrangement, a number of leading Sanā'is were to share with the new head the management of Sanā'i affairs in Cyrenaica and the Fezzan. At the same time, Sayyid Ahmad was to remain the religious head of the Sanā'ī Order, while Sayyid Idris himself agreed to designate Sayyid al-'Arabī (Sayyid Ahmad's eldest son) as his successor as the head of that Order.17

Following this, Sayyid Ahmad retired to Jāhālib, but was soon forced to leave it under British threat to destroy that place and demolish the tomb

14 Reference is made here to the Jumān-McMahon negotiations for Arab participation in the First World War against Turkey and on the side of the Allies, in return for British recognition of Arab unity and independence at the end of the War. Consult on this point George Antonius, The Arab Awakening, London, 1946, passim.
15 See Shukri, op. cit., p. 165.
16 Ibid., pp. 163-82.

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of Grand Sanā‘ī. From there he went to the Oases of Aujila and Marsada and then to Jufra, with the intention of proceeding from there to the Fezzan and, if need be, to the Sudan. Upon the insistence of Nūrī Bay, however, he had to go to Aujila, some 250 kilometers south-west of Benghazi, in order to continue the struggle against Italy. There he remained until August 1918, when he left for Istanbul at the invitation of the Turkish Government. He was received as a great hero and came to be treated with the utmost courtesy. In 1337/1918, when Wāhīd al-Dīn came to the throne of the Ottoman Empire, the ceremony of "coronation," which had hitherto been performed by the head of the Maulawi Dervishes, was carried out by Sayyid Ahmad al-Sha‘īfī. "It was," remarks Sir Harry Lake, "probably in order to stimulate sympathy for the Sultan in Islamic circles that [Sayyid Ahmad] was invited to officiate."18

In April 1921, the Turkish Parliament nominated him as King of Iraq. He proved to be a staunch supporter of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and later tried hard for the restoration of the Khalīfah to Istanbul. He went afterwards to Damascus in order to bring about a reconciliation between Syria and Turkey, but was forced by the French authorities to leave Syria in 1343/1924. From there he went to the Hijāz, where he was well received by King the Šu‘ādī and remained there until his death at Madīnah in 1353/1935.19

Sayyid Idris took over control of Sanā‘ī affairs at a very critical time. The Sanā‘īs under the leadership of his predecessor had suffered a catastrophic defeat at the hands of the British forces in Egypt. Moreover, a devastating drought had overcome the country in 1332/1915. It was followed the next year by large swarms of locusts, and the year after by a general famine and epidemic throughout the country. Sayyid Idris, therefore, decided with the approval of Sayyid Ahmad who was still in Cyrenaica to enter into negotiations with the British and Italian authorities with a view to reaching a modus vivendi with the latter. This was indeed Sayyid Idris's long-awaited opportunity for establishing himself not only as the political leader of the Sanā‘ī movement, but also as its spiritual head. However, although an agreement (Aıkman Agreement of April 1917) was reached between Sayyid Idris and the Italians (with the help of the British) whereby a truce was established, the Italians soon violated the agreement by insisting on the acquisition of sovereign rights over Libya, a course to which Sayyid Idris could not agree without meeting the opposition of the Sanā‘ī leaders.20 Eventually, in 1335/1929, another agreement (Agreement of al-Rajma) was concluded between Sayyid Idris and the Italians. According to the terms of this agreement, the Italian Government agreed to grant the Sanā‘ī Order a limited degree of self-government within specified areas. Sayyid Idris was designated as the hereditary chief of this "Sanā‘ī Government" with the title of Amir. The Sanā‘īs were exempt from taxation, and a parliament was to be
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set up on the basis of proportional representation from the oases under the Amir's jurisdiction. The Italian Government, moreover, promised to respect Arab lands and properties including those of the Sanusi lodges. Among other things, the Amir promised to put an end, within eight months of the signing of the agreement, to all the Sanusi military camps and other military forma-
tions within his area.82

In the meantime, the Tripolitanian leaders who had been anxious from the start of the resistance to co-ordinate their policies with those of the Sanusi leaders in Cyrenaica and the Fezzan, eventually met at Gharyun in Tripolitania, proclaimed a "Tripolitanian Republic" in 1340/1921, and decided to invite Sayyid Idris to be its head.83 Following this, in 1341/1922, a Tripolitanian delegation left for Ajdabya—seat of the Sanadilyahe Government since 1339/1920—in order to lay before and explain to the members of that Govern-
ment the resolutions adopted at the Congress of Gharyun. On November 22, 1922, Amur Idris formally accepted the Tripolitanian offer.

The Tripolitanian bid to Amur Idris stands as a landmark in the history of Libya for being particularly one of the most important formal bases on which Libyan unity has come to be erected in recent times. It is all the more remark-
able since, in spite of the differences which had earlier existed between the Sanusi leaders and the Tripolitanians, it made it possible for the latter to accept Sanusi hegemony.

This did, in fact, prove to be a deadly blow to Italy’s prestige and chances in Libya. It was now obvious that Italy’s position in Tripolitania had become greatly jeopardized.84 Even Amur Idris, under pressure from the Cyrenaican tribes, could not suppress the military camps and other formations within eight months in accordance with the Agreement of al-Rajma. This in fact proved to be of great annoyance and displeasure to the Italian authorities who were ever-approving of the establishment of a unified and strong Libya. They always felt that they had come to terms with the Libyans as a result of the pressure of their own political and military circumstances.

With the rise of the Fascists and their assumption of power in Italy in October 1922 matters came to a head. Determined to uphold Italy’s name and prestige in Libya and to reassert the acquisition of Italian sovereignty over that country, the Fascist regime proceeded to launch a new offensive on Libya. On April 21, 1923, the Italian forces occupied Ajdabya, the seat of the Sanusi Government, and three days later the Italian Governor declared the unilateral abrogation of all the agreements concluded between the Sanadilyahe Order and the Italian Government.85 Libyan resistance was once again weakening. By the end of 1342/1923 resistance in Tripolitania had collapsed, and the Italians had established

82 Evans-Pritchard, The Sanussi of Cyrenaica, pp. 44-49.
83 Khokh, op. cit., p. 204.
84 See Khokh, op. cit., p. 12.
85 See Khokh, op. cit., p. 272.

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themselves firmly in that territory. In December 1922, Amur Idris fled secretly to Egypt. Before leaving the country, however, he appointed his younger brother, Sayyid al-Rajma, as spiritual head of the Sanadilyahe Order in Cyrenaica and ‘Umar al-Makhzah as political and military leader of the territory. Cyre-

naican resistance continued until the end of 1350/1931, when ‘Umar al-Makhzah, at the time eighty years of age, was caught and executed by the Italians. With this the resistance movement in Cyrenaica completely collapsed. A new phase in Italy’s occupation of the country thus started. It now became possible for the Italians to carry out their plans for the colonization of the country and the settlement therein of Italian farmers and other colonists.

Italy’s occupation of Libya lasted until 1366/1949 and formally ended with the conclusion of the Italian peace treaty in February 1947. During the thirty years of Italian rule in Libya, Sanusi fortunes suffered terribly; almost all the Sanusi leaders were forced to leave the country and live in the neighbour-
ing Arab lands, particularly in Egypt. On December 22, 1930, a Royal Decree was issued, whereby the various pacts between the Italians and the Sanusi were formally revoked and the lodges were closed. The sequestration of the estates and goods of those lodges was ordered. By this Decree all movable and immovable property of the lodges was confiscated and transferred to the patrimony of the “Colonies” (i.e., Libya). The Decree even expressly forbade any recourse to the courts against seizures thus made by the Italian ad-

ministration. The Sanadilyahe Order itself was considered by the Italians to be an illegal association.86 By the outbreak of the Second World War the Order had been finally crippled both as a spiritual and as a political force. It was not until August 1939 that the Sanusi leaders again began to recover their lost position as liberators and leaders of Libya. And it was not until December 1951, following many internal and external developments, that Libya emerged as an independent and sovereign State under the political and, to a much lesser extent, spiritual leadership of the Sanadilyahe Order.

86 For a brief but able exposition of the legal aspects of Italy’s treatment of the Sanadilyahe Order, including the sequestration of its estates, see Evans-Pritchard, “Italy and the Sanadilyahe Order in Cyrenaica,” Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Vol. XI, Part 4, pp. 545-55.

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Tarqiq al-Sanadilyah; Evans-Pritchard, The Sanussi of Cyrenaica, Oxford Uni-

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their position in Muslim lands would not become stable. They, therefore, besides tightening their political control, tried to change the outlook of the younger generations of the Muslims by encouraging Christian missionary activity and foreign educational efforts.

“Throughout the Muslim world in general and the Arab world in particular this relentless political penetration galvanized Muslims into a reaction consonant with Islam’s politico-religious structure. This structure being both a religion and a State at the same time, weakness in one was deemed by the Muslims weakness in the other and vice versa” (Nabi Amin Faris). This feeling culminated in a form of movement which aroused the Muslims on the one hand to defend their lands against the incursions of Western imperialism and on the other to save their faith against the aggression of the Christian missionary. That is how the Muslims came to realize that they could not, even if they wanted to continue to live as they had hitherto lived, be completely secure in the illusion that the pattern of life accepted as valid in the past must for ever remain valid, for that complacency, that security of convictions and illusions, was shattered to pieces by what had happened to them in the last few decades. It was the realization of this time-lag between the demands of a new situation and their traditional ways of thinking and living which inspired them with a strong desire to cast off their fatal inertia.

The Muslims were, thus, awakened to the need of taking stock of their cultural holdings. They observed that only paying lip-service to their ideology could not help them to solve the problems which had cropped up as a result of the penetration of Western Powers in their respective lands. If they really wanted to defend their freedom without obliterating Islam as a basis of their civilization, they must make a fresh start in terms of Islamic programme and thus resurrect their society from the old ashes of convention and decay. In case they did not realize the gravity of the situation and simply clung to old notions and conventions in their entirety, they would be playing the game of the proverbial ostrich that buries its head in the sand in order to escape the necessity of making a decision.

If Muhammad bin ’Abd al-Wahhab of Arabia (Chap. LXXII) and Shah Wali Allah of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent (Chap. LXXIII) be considered to be precursors of the modern awakening in Islam and their movements the signs of the coming dawn, Jamāl al-Dīn al-’Afdhānī (1254/1838-1314/1897) must be taken to be the foremost leader of this awakening and his movement the first glow of the dawn. He was the greatest Oriental thinker of the nineteenth-twentieth century. It has rightly been said that the message of al-’Afdhānī burst through the reigning obscurantism as a splendid lightning. He was a thinker and at the same time a man of action, endowed with a penetrating intelligence and a great heart. His rare intellectual gifts and his high moral qualities gave to his personality the magnetism peculiar to all great leaders and drew to him many followers. Al-’Afdhānī was for the Muslim world a comprehensive personality, being at the same time a great thinker,