



Summary of Proposed Governance Model

Nine months ago the SSC Board was facing severe financial challenges. They asked the whole community for help to stay open and to operate in a more sustainable manner. Volunteers from the community came forward to address how to improve the organization's governance, finances, and communications so that all beloveds can feel confidence in it and want to support it.

As the Governance Circle we have worked hard to develop a new governance structure that will be a way for everyone to see clearly what the organization is doing, and to give their voice and participate so that we may grow as a tariqa, have more success, and be as one hand, one heart. It is our sincere intent that this model be in accord with the teachings of the Prophet (saws).

We have presented this to the leaders, the tariqa as a whole and our guide, and received and incorporated their input. In this document you will find a summary of our proposal and the results of our interview with our Guide

This process is a collaborative effort and the model will be implemented in steps, with adjustments and refinements as we move forward. We invite all beloveds to participate in shaping the new organization. Councils and circles will be formed based on what is needed by the tariqa. This is our time to create and actualize a one hand, one heart organization, which embodies the teachings of our Guide and the Prophetic model.

The following is a description of the main points and changes which will result from the restructuring of the organization to be One Hand, One Heart. The full proposal can be viewed and downloaded from the website, along with a transcript of the 45 minute meeting with Sidi at Sufi School East:

http://www.suficenter.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=132:tariqa-governance-circle&catid=43:circles-news&Itemid=49.

Insha'llah,

1. We rely on Allah and His Holy Books and Messengers and our Guide, Sidi, as our sources for wisdom and guidance in our human affairs. (See Sections I. and IV.)
2. A new One Hand One Heart Board of Trusted Servants will form from representatives of four administrative councils, and the Council of the Honest. Three of these councils currently exist (the University and the Council of Shadhiliyya Communities, and the Council of the Honest). Two new admin councils will form from the current responsibilities and functions of the SSC – a Mother Center Council and a National

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Tariqa Administration Council. This will allow the Mother Center to be primarily guided by local beloveds who are most familiar with it, and the National Administration to be guided by beloveds from the whole tariqa and better focus on the needs of the national and satellite international communities. (See Sections II. B, C and D.)

3. The One Hand One Heart Board will focus on guiding and coordinating the activities and initiatives of the organization, rather than on managerial decision-making, so that the tariqa can more truly be One Hand, One Heart. (See Section II. D.)
4. The role of the Council of the Honest will be expanded and actualized as the membership body of the non-profit corporation. They are responsible for reviewing the actions and progress of the organization as well as guiding and safeguarding the organization spiritually. (See Section II. E.)
5. The daily administration and decision-making of the tariqa will be the responsibility of the circles and councils, and those we delegate/hire to fulfill certain roles. Outer level circles will form as needed around specific responsibilities, functions or projects and are open to all beloveds. Representatives are elected from those outer circles to form the next inner circle or council. In this way more of us can be involved, and can actively participate on councils or circles, so that more perspectives can be represented and more skills and ideas can be in service. (See Sections III. A, B and D.)
6. Circles are self-organizing and semi-autonomous entities in their own right, responsible for specific goals and accountabilities which are mutually defined and agreed upon. Communication and information flow through double-links between circles. (See Section III. A. I.)
7. Consultation (shura) is to be the fundamental approach to decision-making. Decisions will be made using a consent process where the goal is to incorporate all points of view into a decision, using objections to identify and clarify those perspectives. Total agreement on a proposal is not required, only the affirmation that there are no principled and paramount objections, so that members won't block it or undermine it, knowing it can in most cases be revised by consent as new information is available. (*This is more efficient than most common forms of consensus.*) (See Section III. C.)
8. We have a set of defined principles for assessing and guiding our actions and decisions. These principles represent the highest intentions of our members and our organization. Some key organizational policies will naturally flow down from these principles, as well as evolve along with the implementation of this new structure. (See Section IV.)

The following is a summary of our meeting with our Guide, starting with the questions we had for him.

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1. One of the main goals of the new governance model is to unite the Tariqa under one board that will be responsible for guiding and coordinating the actions of all the councils and groups. The University, the Mother Center, the Communities, the National Administration and the Council of the Honest would each have 2 representatives on this Board.

Question: Is this OK?

Answer: Yes

2. The current Shadhiliyya Sufi Center would become two councils – the Mother Center will have its own council/board and the national tariqa administration would have its own council/board. This is so the Mother Center can be run by local beloveds on behalf of the California community and the tariqa as a whole, and the national administration can be guided by all the beloveds around the country.

Question: Is this OK?

Answer: Yes

3. Is it appropriate for the University, the Mother Center, the Communities and National Administration to have equal representation on the One Hand One Heart Board?

Answer: Yes.

4. In the past two years, the Council of the Honest has played a role only for the University.

Question: In the process of unifying the Tariqa under one board, is it OK to expand the role of the Council of the Honest to be for the entire Tariqa?

Answer: Yes, of course, this is for the whole tariqa.

5. Proposed roles of the Council of the Honest in the Tariqa governance model under one board

- a. Have approval authority for appointments of new members of the One Hand, One Heart Board and the Administrative Councils of the University, Mother Center, Communities and National Tariqa Administration.
- b. Receive periodic reports from the One Hand, One Heart Board, and provide comments and guidance to the Board through shura.
- c. Support our Tariqa and all of its components, including outreach and support of enrollment for the University, thru active participation and leadership.
- d. Provide spiritual guidance and support the guardianship of our core Sufi principles (Quran, Sunnah and Hadith) within the Tariqa.

Question: Is this ok?

Answer: Yes, however item a. is not necessary as long as representatives are elected by the people.

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(Note: Because the Council of the Honest will be the members of the corporation, and members are legally responsible for selecting the Board, the Council of the Honest will need to approve the representatives who sit on the One Hand, One Heart Board.)

Sidi spoke at length about several matters related to the Mother Center and Land. The following key points are paraphrased and represent our best understanding of what Sidi said.

1. Sidi requested the creation of a circle consisting of 2 reps from each community whose aim is to support the Mother Center development as soon as possible after we get the new model underway. He gave his approval for the new governance model, and made it clear that the support and development of the Mother Center is the first priority as we go forward.
2. It is important to have an Imam, otherwise we could jeopardize our status as a non-profit church. Sidi feels that we have the money to pay for a full-time Imam, and had requested us to hire Sa'id bin Yunus full time. He was very disappointed that the Board had not moved to approve this right away. (Note: This is being/has been approved as of Sept 23. The Board originally delayed the approval in order to ascertain that we had the cash flow and to give time to create a solid job description and employment contract.)
3. It is very important that the land we own be made productive. It is not right that we have this land and are not making use of it for farming. If none can be found among the beloveds who want to farm it, we can hire workers, giving them some of the land and providing housing. Sidi is concerned that if we do not make use of it, we could lose the land.

September 18, 2008