

**Transcript of the Governance Circle Meeting with Sidi at the Farm of Peace 9/6/08**  
**Regarding the Proposed New Governance Model**

The following governance circle members were present at the meeting: Abd al-Qadr Davies, Bilqis Loeliger, Ishaq Loeliger, Khadija Gigliotti, and Wahida Kass. Amany Shalaby did the translation.

The introductory statement of the meeting was an attempt to explain how the governance circle came about and the purpose of its creation.

Nine month ago the SSC Board was facing the possibility of foreclosure and bankruptcy.

Amany: Sidi, remember when the center was in bankruptcy and about to collapse?

Sidi: There was no bankruptcy. This was not true. There are a lot of resources. This was a false impression and I have explained to them the truth. Last year when they came to me with the problem, I said that it was not true. Do not tell me that there is no money. I will not be harsh and explain the mistakes you have made but I want to explain what will be in the future.

The government looks at you as a non-profit spiritual organization. Sidi is sanctified, qualified in universal law and served as a judge. He has a certificate in studying universal law and knows that the spiritual centers are exempt from taxes. The center should not be paying any taxes and they have paid taxes. Sidi asked Salih Cotton to bring an attorney and ask the government to return the money paid in taxes. They got all the tax money back.

I also talked about why you bought all this land and did not make use of it? I explained that the land around the center and the mosque is tax exempt, and you should use it for that purpose. You could make use of the rest of the land by farming it or buying goats or things like that.

You have a lot of young people who may be waiting to learn and work on the land, to make use of it. If you are unable to find people amongst the beloved, then you hire Mexican people to work on the land. Give them a piece of the land and simple housing and they can stay while they work. They are ready to work and the water is ready. There are two fountains of water found there. There are springs and fountains that they already have which can be deepened and cleaned out. It will be a good resource, and there will be more water there for the center. I am certain it has a spring there.

For example, Hakima did so. She took a piece of the land there, and I said dig it and she dug as deep as a meter and one half and found the water. The water is still gushing today. I advised her to plant olive oil. She followed my advice and she planted 100 olive trees and they are now producing. I told her to plant more olive trees, and she is going to do that this year. One tree

can produce three or four tons of olive oil, and from olive oil you can have forty thousand dollars if you have many trees.

The water is there and the weather is suitable. I know this because I am a farmer. When she plants 200 olive trees, look how many tons of olive oil she will produce. She can also plant grapes. It will not cost a lot. It is just the effort, but most Americans do not like to do that work. Therefore you can hire Mexicans to do it. You can hire them, and they would like to work and would be happy to work. You build simple housing for them. This is allowed under the law here. And if the government actually sees this happening, if they see farmers farming a new land like that, then they are obliged to give support and grants to help. The government can buy the seeds and what is needed, because they know the land is rich and they want it to produce.

I saw the land myself and there is a stream there. You must clean the spring because it is very old. You can make use of it. This spring had a ten inch stream of water coming from it. But then it became clogged. I advised my daughter to dig a well and the water came. This the richest, full well there. So with your hands you can do a lot with this land. It has been in your hands for nine years, so why are you burying it like that? You must make use of it.

Khadija interjects: Sidi, we are not from the mother center.

Sidi: I started telling them three years ago, that this place does not belong to one group of people. It belongs to the beloveds of the Tariqa. We are one body. Our work is in believing that we are one body. It is unity, one body. We are not like individuals. We are actually one being and we have to build that body strong and healthy. The land does not belong to Ibrahim or so and so. It belongs to everyone in the Tariqa. We must cooperate and participate in building it. This place has to contain 2,000 people. Everyone can have their own house and their own farm. This is how much it can contain. This must happen.

I have built communities like this before in many countries. In the Jordanian desert, a Bedouin tribe used to live in tents. I lived with them for a while and I encouraged them to farm. We dug three meters and the water started to come. I stayed with them for about three years and I changed the desert to farms. They built houses and it became more like a village and not a desert. There were four thousand families living there.

Thirty years ago, they planted a half million olive trees. They exported this olive oil overseas. Grapes were also planted as well as other things. This desert was transformed into gardens and meadows. If I lived on the land for two years, you would have seen a lot of trees and animals living there. Some people do not know how to manage the land, but I have given my advice to them many times. They worry about carrying the money, but they do not put it in the right place.

Whoever puts his hand on one piece of the land must know that it does not give him control or authority over others.

Sidi is approving what Amany is describing with regard to the one Hand, One Heart board. She uses the term the highest council. Two from every center come and it is all by election. The people know that they are expert, trustworthy and a specialist. They will come and be represented here from all the communities. Then a president will be elected to manage the meeting like a chairperson, however everything is still voted upon. A circle is formed having expertise in farming, and raising animals. Eventually all the communities have to follow this way of farming and raising animals. The land should not be left like that. He wants all the communities to have their own farms and buildings. This is the dream that you all have to work toward. Just to ask people to help and then there is no participation or results, is not good.

Bilqis: Sidi, we want to ask you about the function of the SSC.

He is approving it as it was explained in the model.

Khadija: Question regarding the additional roles of the Council of Honest was asked.

Sidi: The Council of Honest duties is not just to help in the university, but to help the Tariqa in general. Who else will build it? They are the people who will build it.

Khadija: This is a model for decision making in our community with shura and consent.

Sidi: Any organization has to have a highest council that has an expert in all the areas needed. Every expert knows what to look for. There would be one specialist in financing, in farming and different areas of the company. Sidi mentioned once again about the fact that he told a single woman to follow this guidance and she did it. Go and look at what she achieved. She is a single woman and alone, and she did what tens of people could not do. They were lazy but she really followed the instructions and worked hard. Now she has everything. I told her to buy four more Romanian goats. Every year you bring four more Romanian goats. Buy them when they are four months old. They give birth twice a year. In one year you can have one hundred and then produce dairy products from the milk. If you raise chickens then you can have more chickens and eggs.

You do not need many people to manage a farm. Only four or five people are needed to manage it. You do not need to buy food for the goat, everything is there on the land. Laziness is there but I do not want my beloveds to be lazy. I apologize in saying this, but the American people are lazy and they do not work hard. They do not love farming and they do not love the land. We love farming. We remove the rocks and we plant. We do not leave an area of land that is not planted.

Do you have any other questions about the system? Amany states that Sidi likes the system.

Sidi says to Bilqis: You visited my home. Did you see the many gardens I planted from my hand. I planted all those trees. Now I have built a school for the children. It took only six months to construct and I made everything. Now this year, there are two hundred children, ages four to five. There are fifteen female widow teachers. Those children have lost their fathers. I care about them. They have food plus teachings. They learn English first and then the Arabic. Now they know how to read nearly one Juz Amma by heart. They begin to write. Also there are two cars that take them in the morning and then return them to their homes in the night. It is the first school in Israel, where the mother can see her child from the internet when she is at home. She can see what her child is doing. Also every teacher is straight. It only took one year and a half. That is all.

Last year I made two rooms because each room has only twenty children. There are four teachers to share the children because they need help. This is not important. I do not know what you ask from me. Lazy people, they do not work. Allah created you to work. Listen, I am very sad about this but inshallah, this lady (Hakima) makes me happy because she listens to me.

Abd al-Qadr: Is it a good idea for the Council of the Honest to elect a council of elders within, to be able to manage and administer with the Council of the Honest.

Sidi: He wants the focus to be on saving the land. The urgency right now is to save the land, otherwise it will go. We will lose it. Now we have money in the bank for the land, but if the land is not saved and being used to produce weekly, then what will happen? We will lose it to the government.

Wahida: We feel that the Tariqa as a whole does not always understand the importance of the land. We hope this model, inshallah will help them feel empowered and able to participate.

Sidi: You must convince the leaders or representatives here and tell them that this is the first issue of urgency in which we seek council. It should not be from five or seven people. It should be from all the communities which I explained, two from each community, like thirty one.

Khadija: Those representatives that are elected, should the Council of the Honest be the ones to approve those elections.

All the people in each community elect two members as representatives to the council. In Austin they elect two and in the Farm of Peace, they elect two. Every community elects two.

Khadija: And then the Council of Honest approves them?

Sidi: It is not important, if the community elects.

Wahida: Does he understand that these are not from the communities but the communities go to here (pointing to the diagram), and then two from here and two from here. It is about ten to twelve members.

Amany: No, he does not really. It is too detailed.

Sidi: He also wants a circle from the communities to overlook saving the land. (Amany states that even though she understands the diagram, it is difficult for Sidi to understand it. It is a lot detail.) He approves of this. From every center come two representatives working with experts in every area. The circles are important as well as a circle to save the land and to help the people in the local community. It is a priority. Yes, we have be one hand, one heart. All of us, as well as the local community are responsible for the land. We do not want it to remain like this. We want to make use of it. In ten year, they could not build a road. How could people go there?

Wahida: Raising money has been difficult. People give less and less for these projects because they cannot see where the money goes.

Sidi: This is the problem and this is why I ask and it makes me more than angry. I not see everything fine. This is wrong. There must be transparency where the money goes. If I am here not more than two weeks, I would make all the road. I would make it. There is no road for the school.

There was no road at the school he built. The length was 250 meters and the width was made 5 meters. Sidi made this road in six days. It is all ready. It is not like a trail but a real road. It did not take more than six thousand dollars. He also made a basketball court for the children.

Abd al-Qadr: So Sidi, do more people from the communities serve on the council for the mother center and not just the local community?

I think what he is saying is that the two representatives are ok, but one priority becomes to form a circle to help the mother center. He wants also to get help from other communities for the mother center.

Wahida: That is important because the mother center is actually pushing people away and saying that they do not want help.

Sidi: I understand, I see and I speak with them. Four people, it is not enough. I like to see from every center two and two and two...and I like to see everything change. You lose many things. Many people write money, money, but where is the money? It is very important to see where the money goes. When the government says that there is no money, I say that there is money. Then I told him that it was very important to get a lawyer and he got the money.

I like to put Said bin Yunus as the Iman. I want him to be the Iman, but I do not want him to be lazy. I want him to work and care about the mosque and to teach because I taught him. He can teach the people in the right way.

For that reason it is important to put him as the Iman. He says that there is no money. No, you have money. Sidi is explaining that when they say we cannot pay salaries, you can. I see you have not less than two hundred thousand dollars. I do not like them to say to me, no. It is a must because the Iman will protect the land as a nonprofit church. The center has a money asset of at least two hundred thousand dollars. It is a must that the center has this. Let me tell you about the rule of this government. They will return the money to you because this is spiritual, and there is no tax.

Sidi was responsible for all the mosques in Jerusalem, Jordan and the West Bank. I told them it is spiritual and for that reason they returned the money. Now the government wants to see that it is spiritual. So you need an Iman or you break the law. How can you say it is spiritual. It is not spiritual and then they return and take all and put their hand on the land. It is very important to put him there. For one month until now, I ask Said if he is working. He says that there is no money. I do not know. This is wrong. I asked them why I do not see Said as the Iman? We must have him now, not tomorrow, direct. The people want to see if there is an Iman, is it spiritual? Speaking is nothing.

Abd al-Qadr: He will be there to strengthen the community and bring them together.

Sidi: It is easy for the government to come and check and ask, where is the Iman? There is no Iman. What happens? You do not qualify.

Wahida: Is it ok to take a little time to make sure that we have the money to pay him?

Sidi: My love, this is not the right time. First, I would like to fix all that we spoke about. It is very important to know how to fix it. Sidi also talked to the local community about how to produce Said's salary. About a month ago, I talked about how Salih cannot take care of this land alone. I think only three people are working on the land. How can these three people take care of this big land alone? You could not make everything. Inshallah, this is a very special thing that I am talking about and I would like to see everything moving.

Amany explained to Sidi that this was not formed to help with this, although helping will be the first priority, however it would help with the communities.

Sidi: See what Hakima has made. This is only one woman by her herself and now Said was working with her help.

Khadija: Hadi helped, Hadi helped...

Bilqis asks Amany: He does not want the Council of the Honest to approve?

Amany: No, the people elect two representatives that are qualified.

Wahida: So do we have your blessing on this? We have worked very hard on this.

Sidi: Sure! From a long, long, long time.

Amany states that this is what Sidi has been trying to get people to do, to participate and work together.

Wahida: We want your blessing because some people are not sure they like this way.

Sidi: Not care about some people.

Amany asked him if he would appoint or would it all be by election?

Sidi: All by election. This is the way of Allah.

Abd al-Qadr: No approval. So the function of the Council of Honest would be more to receive the reports and help.

Sidi: sure

Ishaq: Is there an ideal number or size for this board?

Sidi: It could be thirty-one. Anyone who is ready to help, welcome for him.

Khadija: We have already approached the university and the boards, and our plan now is that we want to work more with the leadership to work out the details.

Sidi: Only work with this land. Leave the other for later. This is the priority.

Abd al-Qadr: So should we wait on the one hand, one heart board?

Amany: No, he is saying to do it, but the first priority to achieve is the land. Later will come other things for other communities.

Abd al-Qadr: One question is in terms of whether we can have one non-profit legal corporation to run...

Sidi: The land has the name of who? Who owns the land?

Abd al-Qadr: The SSC

Sidi: How many people are in the SSC?

Abd al-Qadr: All the beloveds are members of the SSC and there is a board...

Sidi: So the documents say that the land belongs to the organization and the organization is managed by who? What are their names?

Amany: For the organization, there must be registered names with the government.

Abd al-Qadr: The names of the people on the board. It is about twenty people.

Sidi: I would like to know the names of the people who are on the board. Bring the names to me first. I would like to ask those twenty what do you do, what is your work, to ask them, to judge them, where, what, when...

Sidi is explaining a point. Some beloveds might be enthusiastic, but they do not have a legal position to have decision making on the land. The people who are on the board have the legal say.

Khadija: He is talking on our topic now.

Sidi: The people who are registered as the managers, (the board of the land), have the legal say. That goes to the very question you are asking. You have to bring the names to Sidi and maybe work from there. She will ask those people in front of the government. They will be responsible, so they will also care about what is happening with the land. You have to work this out.

Abd al-Qadr: When we set up the one hand, one heart board it will be different people.

Amany: But they would still be the ones who are legally responsible. They have the say and are responsible. So you have to bring their names to Sidi, and they will be asked what they did and how they are managing. And then that step might change. Those people are the ones responsible.

Abd al-Qadr: We are changing the structure of the corporation to allow this model to be implemented.

Sidi: First, you ask in a friendly way what is going on and how this will be handled. Do not rush into it legally. I would like to help, but I would like to know who are these people.

Abd al-Qadr: So set up the structure first, then change the legal structure.

Amany: It will be as a counseling. The legal will come later. You have to work as just a council first even though you do not have a legal thing. See how it goes from there.

Khadija: Inshallah, we become one legal body.

Sidi: Sure but later. Right now try to work with those twenty people. I am sure that he will not say no. He is ready to say yes. He likes people to help. He is very tired and he does not know how to control everything. I am sure. I am sure. I talk with him inshallah. Bless you.

Thank you, Sidi.

Sidi: Allahu Akbar, Bismillah