



As salaam alaykum, beloveds,

Warm Greetings from the Communication Circle!

Welcome to the first edition of your newborn tariqa newsletter. This is an exciting time of transformation for our community. Many new circles, groups, and committees have been forming to make a new creation that is truly one hand and one heart. This process started during Sidi's 2007 visit with the formation of the Council of the Honest Committees to address tariqa-wide and University issues, and has continued in response to the SSC's call for support in November with the birth of numerous Circles. Many beloveds have stepped in and given deeply of their time and their himma to serve Allah and their brothers and sisters on the path.

With so much change, it's sometimes confusing to keep track of all that is happening. We at the Communication Circle are committed to opening the doors of communication and helping all beloveds to access information about the exciting new developments in our community. We will be providing you with periodic updates about tariqa news and events. We are also retooling the SSC website to create a place where you can go to get instant access to the latest information and links to local communities.

In this issue, we offer a summary of many of the groups and organizations, old and new, in the tariqa. Thanks and blessings to all the beloveds who shared their good news with us so we could bring it to you. Lots of these circles and committees are still in a formative process of defining their identity and purpose, so we will add more information as they develop.

Most groups are open and welcoming new members. This is an unprecedented opportunity for beloveds to step in and shape not only the present but the future of our beloved tariqa. So, if your heart has ever longed to see things moving differently, now is the time to be the son or daughter of your moment and take your chance to make a new creation!

Latest News:

Lenders Group/Mortgage Circle Retires Land Mortgages

USHS Leadership Team Releases Strategic Initiatives

SSC Board Expanded to Include Representatives of New Circles

Al-Wasi' Circle Addresses Tariqa Diversity

[Click here for the full newsletter in PDF](#)

Join us! If you are creative, artistic, techie, a wordsmith, or just plain have himma to support communication in the tariqa, come use your skills to serve Allah and your brothers and sisters on the path. To join, contact noorupshaw@gmail.com with subject "subscribe to comcircle."

Credits

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This Issue: A Guide to Tariqa Groups

Contents

(click title to jump to a section)

Tariqa Organizations

- Shadhiliyya Sufi Center (SSC)
- Shadhiliyya Sufi Retreat Center (SSRC)/Mother Center/Northern California Community
- The University of Spiritual Healing and Sufism (USHS)
- Shadhiliyya Sufi Center East/The Farm of Peace
- The Council of Shadhiliyyah Communities (CSC)
- Shadduli Center (SC)
- Sidi Muhammad Press

Tariqa "Grassroots" Circles

- Mortgage/Lenders Group Circles
- Tariqa Governance Circle
- Communications Circle
- Razzaq Fundraising Circle
- Programs Committee at the Mother Center
- Community Land Circle

Council of the Honest Committees

- Shadhiliyya Diversity Circle – al-Wasi'
- Community Issues Resolutions committee (CIR)
- Local Walking Programs
- Online Teaching Programs
- Community Building and Mentoring
- Organizational and Administrative Outreach

Tariqa Organizations

Shadhiliyya Sufi Center (SSC)

www.suficenter.org

The Shadhiliyya Sufi Center (SSC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the study and practice of the teachings of the Shadhiliyya Sufi path, a tariqah or path of return to God. The Shadhiliyya Sufi Center was formed to actualize principles of spiritual discipline and development, and spiritual living in the context of daily life. The Center's purpose is to spread the message of peace, love, mercy, justice and freedom in the world through worship, spiritual practice, service to humanity and life in spiritual community. The SSC supports travelers on this path with retreats, workshops, community-building and opportunities for service and healing.

CEO: Salih Cotten: Salih@suficenter.org

SSC is also the home of the ever-popular **gift shop** full of treasures to sweeten the path at **Sufi Gifts** - www.sufigifts.com.



Shadhiliyya Sufi Retreat Center (SSRC)/Mother Center/Northern California Community

Last fall, the Mother Center went into 'hibernation.' There was only a skeleton crew keeping it open; everything was pretty much 'powered down.' But closing was not an option. Sidi asked the local community near the Mother Center to take responsibility for the management of the Center. This was a major change as we had never had a voice in the running of the Center; our local community previously existed under the umbrella of

SSC. Since Sidi gave his directive, the Center and the local community have been working together to move into a new creation. We are working together toward actualizing Sidi's vision for the Mother Center and the land.

Many action groups/circles have sprung up locally and nationally in support of the Center. Locally, we have had to come to terms with the need for volunteer labor to run the Center. We have had volunteer work days to take care of the facility; and much of what needs to be done administratively that cannot be handled by the staff is handed off to volunteers to accomplish.

We have all been pedaling as fast as we can, and the Center is now up and running. Our first event of the year is the USHS Zawiyah Retreat that is open to the University students, assistants, staff and the whole tariqa as well. Insha'llah, it is the first of many events and programs at the new Mother Center.

One goal for the new creation is to open wide the doors of the Mother Center and to make sure that zawiyah retreats are as accessible to the entire tariqa as possible. In order to become more inclusive in our offerings, the local Mother Center community met recently and came to a consensus decision that we will do whatever is necessary to bring the cost of the operation of the zawiyah retreats down in order to reduce the pricing. This is because as the Mother Center, this is the home of the national tariqa. Our home must be open for all to visit, insha'llah. Insha'llah, this new policy will help more to come and experience the Mother Center's holiness.

Here is a snapshot of life at the Mother Center: There are four residents who pay rent and also care for the Center in various ways, including cooking, cleaning, watering, and maintenance. The offices of

SSC and the retreat Center are on the premises. Salih Cotten, Laila Smith and Hadia Tirben take care of the administrative functions of the office, the Center, and the gift shop. All three of them wear many, many hats. These three are carrying so much, very gracefully, in complete surrender. *(Note: This was not written by any of them!)*. Everything happening at the Center is a labor of love; it is an honor for the staff and the volunteers and the community to have stewardship of this holy place.

Various committees/circles have been planning events and participating in decision-making. The local community as a whole is a partner in this new venture. We already have a calendar that is being mapped out for the rest of the year. These events will be put together much like the Sufi gatherings (around the country) are handled: everyone pulling together -- something like year-round Sufi School!



This is an exciting time in Pope Valley. A new model is developing faster than we could have imagined. To keep our Center accessible to many, we will be changing the way we hold the events. When you visit the Mother Center these days, you will be held in the love at the same time as you are handed your set of sheets and towels. It is a lot like going home to visit your mother; you are most welcome *and* everyone pitches in to make things work. We love our guests, and we still accommodate everyone's needs the best that we can. We hope that everyone's experience of the new Mother Center will be one of holiness and love.

So please come and be part of this new creation. We are so happy to have the chance to serve the tariqa in this way. Insha'llah, in the not too distant future, in addition to the healing mineral spring, we

may have other micro-businesses and agricultural projects under way. The new Center is bursting with potential; we look forward to whatever Allah brings.

Everyone in the tariqa is welcome to be part of the development of the Mother Center, the heart center of our tariqa. The Center has to be 'tasted' to be appreciated. So, come for a visit, or move here and join our local community; just know that this is your home too.

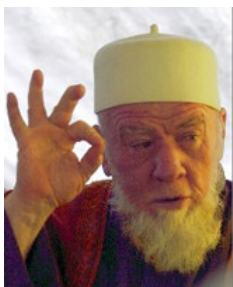
Contact: Salih Cotten Salih@suficenter.org or 707-965-0700 x23.

The University of Spiritual Healing and Sufism (USHS)

www.sufiuniversity.org

The mission of The University of Spiritual Healing and Sufism is to seed the world with peacemakers who heal, serve, and lead in the way of God.

The University of Spiritual Healing & Sufism is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the teachings of the Shadhiliyya order of Sufism. We present the Sufi teachings principally through the teachings of spiritual healing and spiritual transformation.



Our students first experience self-healing through learning how to be in an intimate and holy relationship with God. They experience profound personal transformation, an

expansion of love, and uncover their personal missions for a life of divinely guided service. Our aim is to help each student embody the love, peace and mercy of God. As individuals bring this consciousness of love and divinely guided service into their spheres of influence, first

with their relationships, family, co-workers and then into larger arenas of community, transforming their world to one of peace and love becomes possible.

The USHS is currently involved in the beginning of a 3-year strategic planning process, with input from members of the University Board, staff, faculty, Council of the Honest, and Council of Shadhiliyya Communities (CSC). In a two-day meeting at the Land in February participants identified four USHS strategic initiatives to pursue over the next 3 years.

The proposed strategic plan has four major initiatives. Committees are now forming to work deeply with each initiative and to create action plans for each one. The committees and their conveners are:

1. One Hand/One Heart Committee aspires to join together with SSC, SSRC & CSC as one organization to build a coordinated and mutually supportive national tariqa that brings our message to the world. Convened by Wadude Laird drlaird@sufiuniversity.org.
2. Financial Stability seeks to create a stable financial base for the university. Convened by Salima Adelstein salima@sufiuniversity.org.
3. Allah's University Committee's goal is to Build a nationally recognized university that makes a positive difference in the world through its curriculum, programs and service projects Convened by Sukaynah Joyan ceo@sufiuniversity.org.
4. Enriching Organizational Culture Committee intends to create a culture of organizational excellence that enriches and nourishes faculty, assistant teachers, staff, and board Convened by Kamila Shenmen cshenmen@comcast.net.

The University is now seeking members of the student body with professional expertise in these areas to participate in this effort. Please contact the conveners for more information.

The USHS website offers free teleclasses, articles, audio downloads, and a free email course. It includes a calendar of workshops and other events by USHS faculty and alumni and an online store.

Contact outreach@sufiuniversity.org



Shadhiliyya Sufi Center East/The Farm of Peace

www.suficentereast.org

The Shadhiliyya Sufi Center East serves the hearts of residents of the Maryland, Virginia, Washington, D.C., and southern Pennsylvania area, and anyone anywhere who is seeking to experience God's love more deeply. Our community is dedicated to sharing God's love, peace, mercy, justice, freedom and unity through teachings and programs that serve to unfold anyone's spiritual growth.

Our Mission: The Farm of Peace is a spiritual community that provides love, peace, healing, nourishment and spiritual guidance to all of creation. We seek to bring peace and healing to individuals—adults and children—and the world by putting into practice the Love at the core of all religions.

We do this by following Divine guidance and the Shadhiliyya Sufi teachings. We provide ministerial services, children's programs, healing processes, education

and training, community living, outreach and healthy natural foods. We also care for God's creation through demonstrating ecologically sensitive farming, building practices and lifestyle.

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The Council of Shadhiliyya Communities (CSC)

The Council of Shadhiliyya Communities consists of representatives from each of ten regions from around the country. It is intended, inshallah, to facilitate communication between beloveds in local communities around the country and the Shadhiliyya Sufi Center Board of Directors. Many of the representatives are serving on the many circles and committees that have formed to serve tariqa interests or are helping facilitate the formation of these groups. We have three members of the CSC on the SSC Board who are responsible for communications between the board and the CSC.

Representatives are master teachers or above, serve a two year term and are selected by beloveds within their region. We work with a consensual model of governance and rotate moderators every three months.

Our vision is to support the developing Shadhiliyyah communities and the SSC Board of Directors to work as one hand and one heart to bring divine peace, love, mercy, freedom and justice to the world through the Sufi teachings of the guide, Sidi Shaykh Mohammad Sa'id al-Jamal ar-Rafai ash-Shadhuli of Quds ash-Sharif.

Our mission is to listen deeply to the hearts of each member of the community and the SSC Board of Directors. As elected representatives, each member of the council represents a geographic region. As such, members of the council will provide clear, accurate and timely

information to convey the needs of the community to the board, and the needs of the board to the community. The council will facilitate mutual support between communities by providing information, open communication and problem solving opportunities.

The CSC is currently seeking representatives from the mountain states and the southeast regions. Contact Moderator Nur Hrabko at doctornur@gmail.com.

Shadduli Center (SC)

www.healingthebrokenheart.org
www.healingthebrokenheart.com/links.htm

The Shadduli Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization which has been in existence for over a decade. It was created to introduce and support the teachings of Sidi Shaykh Muhammad Said al-Jamal ar-Rifa'i ash-Shadhuli, known affectionately all over the world as Sidi.



The Shadduli Center serves as a support center for Sidi as he helps to heal all people, regardless of race, color or creed, who are in search of healing either physically, spiritually or emotionally.

Healing the Broken Heart website was created by the Shadduli Center in 2008 with the purpose of offering a powerful tool for people to use to introduce Sidi, his teachings, the University, SSC, and local communities to new people worldwide. When people opt in, they will start receiving emails that will contain short teachings, invitations to free teleclasses, announcements of events in certain communities, and a variety of other information which will gradually bond

them to our community, and hopefully one day lead them to meet Sidi and then attend the schools. We are actively seeking links with other sites to increase search engine optimization. Eventually there might be a monthly or yearly membership at a small fee, which will allow a discount for certain products that will be added later. It is the intention of the site to promote Sidi's books a lot, so we are looking for testimonials. We will also add short video and audio testimonies about what the path has done for people's lives.

Free and low-cost offerings:

- ❖ There is an **inspirational video**, "Love of the Poor," to email friends, family, and anyone on your email list that is generic in nature and will drive people to the www.healingthebrokenheart.org site, where they will hopefully leave their email and address in return for a newsletter, free teleclass, or free chapter of an ebook. The next video will be based much more on Sidi's teachings and will be used as a follow-up.
- ❖ There are three short 5-minute **video clips** to watch for free from the two-hour, two-part documentary about Sidi, "The Truth of A Sufi," and the possibility to view the entire film online for as little as \$5.
- ❖ There is a **free chapter download** from "My Journey to Know the Truth: Healing the Broken Heart," and one can download the entire book in ebook form for \$5. There is an audio intro on the site which tells people if \$5 is too much, to contact the site and they will get help. 100% of the profits go to Sidi and the poor.
- ❖ **The blog** is currently updated daily with an excerpt from one of the books and some of them have accompanied audio readings. Currently a station is being added each day in written and audio formats.

Contact Salih Tony Kent
tony@tonykent.com

Sidi Muhammad Press

Publisher of the books of Sidi Shaykh Muhammad al-Jamal. The website features excerpts from Sidi's books and an online store.



Contact Amina al Jamal
www.sufimaster.org

Tariqa "Grassroots" Circles

These circles were formed from the national calls in November and December 2007.

Mortgage Circle/Lenders Group

The mortgage circle is a group of beloveds who came together spontaneously to look for ways to help the SSC financially in the following ways:

- ❖ To protect the Mosque and other parcels and SSC's equity from being lost to foreclosure
- ❖ To stop the loss of \$108,000 per year in interest payments
- ❖ To remove the crushing financial pressure upon SSC and allow it time to re-emerge with clarity and widespread support for moving forward.
- ❖ To give hope and himma to all of the beloveds who are committed to fulfilling Sidi's request to keep the Center open and help it thrive.

The mortgage circle began functioning in late December 2007 and brought forward the "Lenders' Group" initiative. This was

an initiative that sought to raise the \$1,392,000 required to pay off the current mortgages and lines of credit on the mosque land and the new land, by means of a three-year interest free loan to the SSC. Beloveds from the Tariqa and the University were invited to participate in this pool, with the SSC lands acting as collateral. The lenders are to be compensated for this interest-free investment by a 10% equity participation in any sales of parcels of new land. The lenders' group is to be repaid in full on or before March 1st, 2011.

The Mortgage Circle was successful in raising \$1,312,500 or 97% of the SSC debt load we wanted to refinance. Al-hamduli'llah! In addition, we raised \$3,000 toward the modest closing costs. About \$81,000 remains unpaid on an unsecured line of credit. Closing took place on the refinancing early in the third week of March. So, the **SSC lands are currently free of mortgage payments** for the three year period of the loan, the land is safe from foreclosure and we thank Allah for granting us success in our endeavor!

Since the Mortgage Circle completed the mission it was created for, it won't be meeting any longer or looking for members. Questions? Contact Kamila Shenman at cshenmen@comcast.net.



Tariqa Governance Circle

The Tariqa Governance Circle came out of the national calls held in December when the SSC sent out an appeal for assistance in the face of dwindling financial

resources. The purpose of the governance circle is to develop a proposal for a new governance model and organizational structure, for the North American Shadhiliyyah tariqa of Sidi Shaykh Muhammad al Jamal with the following qualities: inclusive, participatory, consensus based decision making, dynamic, and in service to the tariqa members, a unified board/organization and Sidi's vision for sharing our message with the world, which are believed to be at least some of the medicine for the past difficulties.

For its first tasks the Circle supported the implementation of the CSC's recommendations to the SSC Board by proposing an interim period until a new governance model could be approved. During this interim (until July 24, 2008) there is 1) a temporary expansion of the SSC Board of Directors to include representatives from the new circles and 2) a change in the membership body of the corporation (which selects the Directors) from one member to all the board directors. As part of our final proposal, we will also propose a new definition of the Members, as this interim solution is deemed to be better than before, but not yet ideal.

To develop a new governance model, we are learning about and including aspects of Sociocracy/Holocacy, the Prophetic model of community building, and principles of Board purpose within an organization. We are striving to pay attention to and include recognition of our values and what organization and decision making structures best reflect and support those values. Currently we are experimenting with the Holocratic model in our meeting process. We are working on a milestones timeline to help us meet our deadline of July 24th for a completed proposal to present to the SSC Board. New voices are most welcome. Everyone may view more information on our nexo

site: tariqagovernancecircle.nexo.com/generalinformationpage.

The Governance Circle is currently open to new members! To join, contact Wahida Kass at jyoungkass@verizon.net.

Communications Circle

The Communication Circle's purpose is to make it easy for all members of our community to connect with one another. This includes circles, sub-circles, individuals, local communities, leadership, Boards and any other group that may develop as a result of the reorganization of SSC.

To accomplish this aim, we are building an open and flexible website that can adapt to the changing needs of the tariqa and facilitate its growth. In addition, insha'llah, we will be compiling and sending out regular newsletters and special emails to keep our community informed. Our vision also includes an opt-in, SSC-wide member directory. Talk with us by emailing share@suficenter.org and let us know how we can serve you.

The Communication Circle is currently open to new members! To join, contact noorupshaw@gmail.com with subject "subscribe to comcircle."

Razzaq Fundraising Circle

While there is as yet no formal overall Finance Circle, the Fundraising Circle represents a "sub-circle" of beloveds interested in supporting fundraising for the tariqa so that we can continue to bring services, including programs at the Mother Center, a website and general communication, to the tariqa.



This circle became active in February and we have been working diligently on ideas

for fundraising activities, as well as working to collect and provide information to clarify the current state of the tariqa, its history, mission, and its finances in order to support transparency and clarity for beloveds wanting to understand what's been changing and how they can help. New voices and ideas are welcome!

The Razzaq Grassroots Fundraising Circle is currently open to new members! To join, contact Wahida Kass at jyoungkass@verizon.net

Programs Committee Retreat/Mother Center

Contact Nura Mansfield at heartvisionhome@gmail.com or Rabia Houle at pollyhou2@aol.com

Community Land Circle

Contact Moderator Maryam Hand at marhand@gmail.com



Council of the Honest Committees

The Council of the Honest was created by Sidi in 2005 to support the University. Its members are Muqaddams and Naqibs who take a special promise to support the USHS. The Council is also the membership body of the University, and is responsible for electing the Board of Directors.

This past year members of the Council identified issues in the tariqa that need addressing. Committees were formed around these issues and have begun to work. Some issues are directly related to the USHS, while others are tariqa-wide. Many are just getting off the ground at this time, so if you see something that

speaks to you here, please know that the door is open to your participation. You do not need to be a member of the Council to participate.

Shadhiliyya Diversity Circle – al-Wasi'



We are very excited to have a diversity circle for our tariqa. We have adopted the name:

Shadhiliyya Diversity Circle – al-Wasi', the all embracing. Appropriately our circle is open to everyone in the tariqa. We welcome input from anyone to our circle that has expertise or something worthwhile to share concerning diversity, especially those who come from underrepresented groups within our tariqa. Our circle includes specialists of diversity as well as a widely represented circle of beloveds who share the himma to develop diversity and inclusion in our tariqa. We hope to raise the awareness of issues and solutions on this vital subject throughout our communities.

The Shadhiliyya Diversity Circle – al-Wasi' is currently open to new members! To join, contact Nur Hrabko at doctornur@gmail.com

Community Issues Resolutions Committee (CIR)

Our name is the best indicator of what we do, for now, and we are still in the process of defining our role and responsibilities and what service(s) we may, insha'llah, provide to the larger community of our tariqa. We are governed by consensus. Our membership limited to Council of Honest members only, per the President's office at USHS. However, all COH members who wish to join are warmly welcomed.

The Community Issues Resolutions committee (CIR) is open to new members (Council of Honest members only). To join, contact Mahabba Arthur at mahabba@cox.net or Rabi'ah Houle at pollyhou2@aol.com

Local Walking Programs

Contact Moderator Sumayah O'Neil at yopeggy@aol.com.

Online Teaching Programs

Contact Moderator Maryam Reimer at maryamr@suficenter.org.

Organizational & Administrative Outreach

Contact Moderator Hakima Graefer at Debbie@healthyfastfood.net.

Community Building and Mentoring

Contact Maryam Whalen at maryam@maryamwhalen.com.



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Are you part of a group, organization, circle or committee that was not listed here, or was listed with inaccurate or incomplete information? We've done our best to provide accurate summaries of many groups in the tariqa, but we are just beginning. Please send information or corrections for your group to Ihsan at elizabethmrose@msn.com and we'll do our best to keep your listing up to date!

Ma Salaam