Sufism and Tariqas Facing the State: Their Influence on Politics in the Sudan

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This study focuses on the political influence of Sufism and tariqas in the Sudan. Previous studies have emphasized the political influences of Sufi shaykhs and tariqas on Sudan’s history and demonstrated why and how Sufis and tariqas have exercised their political influence over time; however, the problem is that these researches are largely limited to only two particular religious orders, the Khatmiya order and the Anṣār, that have their own political parties. Therefore, this study stresses on the political importance of Sufis and tariqas without their own political parties and aims to reveal their presence in present Sudanese politics, with special references to the strategies and activities of the government and the remarks of Sufis at meetings held by several tariqas during the national election campaign in 2010. In order to reveal the influences of Sufism and tariqas without their own political parties in Sudanese politics, this study introduces four sections. The first section traces the historical transition of the political influences of Sufism and tariqa from the rudiment until the present Islamist government. The second section introduces the thoughts of Islamists toward Sufism in the Islamic Movement (al-Harakat al-Islāmiyya) such as the introduction of new terminology ahl al-dhikr (people that remember [Allāh]), which accentuates the political attitude toward Sufism, and the third section deals with the policies and activities of the present government with regard to Sufism and tariqas, such as the foundation of the committee for Sufis and tariqas. The fourth section discusses the relationship between Sufis and the president, focusing attention on their speeches at the meetings held during the national election.

Keywords: Sufism, tariqa, Islamism, dhikr, Sudan

I. Introduction
This paper focuses on the relationship between Sufism, tariqas, and the government of contemporary Sudan. In respect of political relations, two particular religious orders, the Khatmiya order and the Anṣār (the followers of

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the Mahdi movement), have continued to play an important role throughout the history of this country. Both groups were established during the nineteenth century and they gained political power through their alliances with, or their antagonism against, the ruling administrations in the colonial era; however, the political influence of other tariqas was limited. Eventually, the Khatmiya order became the core of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP, previously the National Unionist Party and the People’s Democratic Party), while the Anṣār established its own party called the Umma Party. Both groups have served to mobilize political support until now.

Many researchers have expressed concerns about the political influence of these two orders, whereas, there are few studies about the political influence of other tariqas. However, tariqas without their own political parties could be involved in politics. Hence, the government has tried to use politically unaffiliated tariqas as a means to gain political support and enhance its Islamic legitimacy in recent years. For example, the state introduced the term *ahl al-dhikr* (people who remember [Allāh]) or *dhākirān* (those who remember [Allāh]) as the alternative of Sufi. The use of this language highlights just one of the political attitudes toward Sufism. In addition, Sufi shaykhs openly expressed their support for the incumbent president and the ruling party during the national election campaign in 2010. Some of the tariqas held political meetings to show their solidarity with the candidates of the ruling party; hence, the shaykhs backed the ruling party at these meetings, and the current president and candidates also praised the significant roles played by Sufism, tariqas, and shaykhs in the Sudan. In view of this situation, this study stresses how and why Sufis and politically unaffiliated tariqas wield political influence in present-day Sudan.

In order to understand the political importance of these Sufis and tariqas, this study consists of four sections. The first section traces the advance of Sufism and tariqas into politics from the time of the expansion of Islam into the Sudan until the present Islamist government. The second one introduces the thoughts and attitudes of Islamists toward Sufism, and the third section deals with the policies and activities of the government in relation to Sufism and tariqas. The fourth section discusses the concerns of Sufis and the president as seen through their speeches.

II. The Advance of Sufism and Tariqas into Politics: Historical Background

1. The Advent of Sufism and Tariqas in the Political Arena

Sufis have played an important role in the spread of Islam into the Sudan. One of
the key factors was the promotion of Islamization through the policy of the Kingdom of Funj. This kingdom was formally converted to Islam after its establishment in the early sixteenth century. This kingdom invited foreign scholars and Sufi teachers from abroad, some of whom taught the knowledge of Islamic Law (‘ilm fiqh) and some of whom introduced the way of the Sufi (adkhala ṭarīqa al-ṣūfīya) into the Funj. With the introduction of tariqas into the Sudan around the sixteenth century, Sufis began to play an important role as teachers of Islamic thought and Sufism; meanwhile, khalwa (Qur’ān School) and zāwiya established by tariqas increased. In addition, Sufi shaykhs were believed to perform karāma (miracle); thereby, they were venerated as wāli (friend of Allāh; saint). Through their religious influence, shaykhs could also obtain political influence and act as mediators between the rulers and the people in political affairs. The state aimed to establish close links with the shaykhs and sought to secure their support and that of their followers. Therefore, the state granted several privileges to shaykhs, such as subsidies, land, and exemption from taxation; Sufi shaykhs were often consulted by and offered advice to rulers. In this context, Sufi shaykhs and their tariqas developed as “a means of uniting the society to the structure of the rulers.” Although the doctrine of the tariqas has expanded, each tariqa in this period existed independently and had its distinctive chains for the transmission of spiritual authority. Thus, the range of activities of each tariqa and its influence tended to be limited to that of the village society with which the tariqa had a relationship.

2. The Political Rise and Fall of Tariqas
The political involvement of tariqas changed due to the appearance of the Khatmāya order and the Mahdi movement in the nineteenth century. The Khatmāya order, one of the representatives of the integrated and centralized tariqas, attracted large numbers of followers, especially in the northern Sudan, and established networks. This order also gained the support of the Turco-Egyptian rulers. The Mahdi movement precipitated political change among the tariqas. Tariqas were banned in 1883–84 with the progress of this movement. This attitude on the part of Mahdism was not based on criticism and opposition to Sufism and tariqas. Rather, it aimed at the dissolution of tariqas for the sake of reform. In other words, the Mahdi movement sought to supplant Sufism with Mahdism, promoting itself as the developed form of Sufism. Several tariqas expressed their approval and cooperation with the Mahdi, whereas the Khatmāya order refused to join the Mahdi movement, because this tariqa had a good relationship with the Turco-Egyptian dynasty and regarded the rise of the
Mahdi movement that aimed to overthrow that dynasty as a “threat to its position and privileges.”

After the collapse of the Mahdi state, the Khatmiya order was favored by the Anglo-Egyptian colonial rule because of its opposition to the Anṣār and its support of the state; whereas the surviving Anṣār was suspect and suppressed by the authorities, and other Sufi orders were “regarded as superstitious and viewed with suspicion.” However, this relationship between the Khatmiya order and the Anṣār changed when the Khatmiya order “turned to Egypt as a counterbalance to both the Anṣār and British.” On the one hand, the British looked with great favor on the Mahdists; on the other hand, the Khatmiya order “advocated a union between Egypt and Sudan which was not to the liking of the British.”

Throughout these power struggles among the Khatmiya order, the Anṣār and the state, the Khatmiya order and the Anṣār have continued as the religious and political opposition to this day. However, many Sufi orders, excluding the Khatmiya order, “withdrew on the whole to the background and limited their roles to the religious sphere”; thus, they “became politically insignificant.”

3. The Reemergence of the Political Influence of Tariqas in al-Numayrī’s Regime

The influence of politically unaffiliated tariqas reemerged under al-Numayrī’s regime. Al-Numayrī, who gained power through a military coup in 1969 and became the president in 1971, tried to obtain support from these tariqas, because he was competing against the Khatmiya order and the Anṣār. On the one hand, the Khatmiya order and the Anṣār were subjugated and oppressed by the state. On the other hand, al-Numayrī held official and unofficial meetings with Sufi shaykhs and sought “the private counsel of local Sufi shaykhs.” Besides, he gave financial aid to various tariqas, except for the Khatmiya order and Anṣār; thus, all tariqas except the Khatmiya order and the Anṣār manifested “their approval of the regime’s policy and their emphatic support at an event in Omdurman” in 1976. In this way, Sufi shaykhs and politically unaffiliated tariqas could influence the politics of the Sudan.

It must also be noted that al-Numayrī’s policy in support of Islamization in the Sudan prompted the Islamists under the direction of Hasan al-Turābī to enter the political arena. This movement led to the implementation of the sharī’a all over the Sudan as the state law in September 1983 and strengthened the tendency toward Islamization in the Sudan. After the collapse of al-Numayrī’s regime in 1985, the National Islamic Front (NIF, al-Jabha al-Islāmiyya al-
Qawmitya; currently National Congress Party) headed by al-Turābī was organized, and this group challenged the two traditional political powers—the Umma Party and DUP. Finally, in 1989, NIF assumed political power through a military coup d’état, and thereby, the incumbent government under ‘Umar Ḥasan ʿAbd al-Bashīr, who is still the president of the Sudan, was established.

III. Islamists’ Thoughts regarding Sufism and Tariqa

1. Islamists’ Thoughts regarding Sufism and Tariqa

What are the attitudes of Islamists toward Sufism and Tariqa? Many researchers have pointed out the Islamists’ critical views of them. For instance, Islamists are apt to espouse an “anti-Sufi ideology that [has] a closer affinity with Wahhabism” and they display an attitude that “represents a form of religiosity diametrically opposed to Sufism.” Al-Turābī himself “delegitimizes Sufis” and “has no place for Sufism…in his enterprise of Islamic revival.” Moreover, he has sought to break the traditional legitimacy and monopoly of the Sufi orders. Regarding this attitude toward Sufism, this section aims to understand the approach of Islamists and their Islamic Movement (al-Ḥaraka al-Islāmīya) to recognizing Sufism and tariqa in their activities, placing a special emphasis on al-Turābī’s book al-Ḥaraka al-Islāmīya fī al-Sūdān: al-Manhaj wa al-Kasb wa al-Taṭawwrūr (The Islamic Movement in the Sudan: Its Method, Achievement, and Development).

In this book, Sufism is categorized within traditional section (al-qītā’ al-taqlīdī) “outside the attention (wa’y) and concern (hamm) [of the Islamic Movement].” In spite of this categorization, the Islamic Movement needs to avoid being separated from the religious manner and mores of traditional society. Rather, the Movement needs to pay attention to traditional society in order to influence the whole society. By doing so, al-Turābī would ensure the participation of Sufis in the Islamic Movement under the slogan (shīrār) of “the victory of Islamic regulation and the shart’a (nasr al-dustūr wa al-shart’a al-Islāmīya).” Although the modern Islamic Movement does not have a direct relationship with Sufism, there is an indirect relationship between them, because the tradition of Sufism shapes common religiosity in the Sudan; for instance, Sufism’s influence is evident in such matters as peacefulness (musālama), moderateness (i’tidāl), tolerance (tasāmūḥ), and reconciliation (tasālūh).

By what strategy does the Islamic Movement seek to mobilize Sufis and tariqas? Al-Turābī tolerates diversity in the forms of dhikr, including the practice of Sufis. Further, he indicated that the absence of prescribed dhikr particular to the Islamic Movement also helps the Movement to “embrace all the forms and
kinds of dhikr (tastaw'ib kull amnāt al-dhikr wa alwān-hī).” The Movement also admits religious songs (al-anāshid al-dīnīyā) like madīth (a song of praise for the Prophet Muḥammad). These attitudes do not bring the practices of religious groups such as tariqas into conflict with those of the Movement, and help preserve the ritual characteristics of tariqas. Further, al-Turābī has reevaluated Sufism. According to him, present-day Sufism is guilty of such failings as innovations and ignorance regarding theology and practice (bidʿyyat wa jahāla fī al-ʿtiqād wa al-ʿamāl), excessive ritualism (kathāfa tuğās), laxness with regard to Islamic legality (rākhāwa sharʿīyya), and excessive allegiance and obedience to shaykhs that almost separate people from Allāh (farṣ walaʾ wa ittibāʿ yakād yahjud ʿan Allāh). These traits are contrary to the legacy of Sufism (turāth al-taṣawwuf), al-Turābī explains, which was founded on the principle of moderateness, renunciation, and discipline (ašl zahāda wa tajjurrud wa niṣām), as well as the principles and methods of education (uṣūl wa manāhib tarbiya) for promulgating the faith, and providing religious guidance. On the one hand, he obviously criticizes the excessive elements and practices of Sufism as innovations or extravagance; on the other hand, he appreciates the principles of Sufism where these do not clash with his ideas.

This estimation of Sufism arises out of concern for unity between the modern and the traditional whose differences lead to discord and disruption in Islam. The modern Islamic Movement needs to learn lessons from traditional section such as Sufism, and base the renewal (tajdīd) and the unification (tawḥīd) on it. Thus, if unity between the modern Islamic forces and traditional ones (wahda al-quwā al-İslāmīyya al-ḥadītha wa al-taqālīdyya) is realized with the forming of the National Islamic Front (ṣīgha al-Jabha al-İslāmīyya al-Qawmīyya), al-Turābī insists, this would enrich the modern Islamic Movement (yuqawwim al-ḥaraka al-taqālīdyya), reform the traditional movement (yuqawwim al-ḥaraka al-taqālīdyya), and mobilize the power of Muslims (yaḥṣid tāqa al-muslimīn).

It is certain that al-Turābī is critical of Sufism; however, he does not oppose the existence and activities of Sufism and tariqas or ignore them. Rather, he accepts Sufism and tariqas in the enterprise of the Islamic Movement; moreover, he aims to modify Sufism in line with his principles and involve Sufis and tariqas in the Movement and NIF. In fact, NIF has alliances with several tariqas such as the Tijānīyya order and the Sammānīyya order. In order to advance the cause of the Islamic Movement and realize unity in Islam, the Islamic Movement adopts a conciliatory approach, one demonstrating tolerance toward Sufism.
2. Who is *Ahl al-Dhikr?* Sufism and Tariqa from the viewpoint of *Ta’sîl*

During the mid-1990s, the term *ta’sîl* became “a keyword of Islamist discourse.” According to the periodical titled *al-Ta’sîl*, the meaning of *ta’sîl* is “the return to the origin (al-rujû’a’ ilâ ašl),” or “the connection with the origin (al-wašl bi al-ašl).” Because the origin of everything traces back to Allâh, the understanding of *ta’sîl* firmly connects with the “principles of the belief in Allâh (mabâdi’ al-ta’âlî bi-hi ta’âlâ).” By promoting this attitude, Islamists attempted to base their own terminology on the usage found in the Qur’ân, besides speaking in the usual way about Sufism. They introduced *ahl al-dhikr* (people of the remembrance [of Allâh]) or *dhâkirûn* (those who remember [Allâh]) as a comprehensive term, and thereby *ṣâfî* or *mutašawwîf* was referred to as one of *ahl al-dhikr* or *dhâkirûn*. Although the Sufi was recognized as a part of *ahl al-dhikr*, words related to Sufism and tariqas continue to be used until now.

The Revolution of National Salvation (*Thawra al-Inqâdh al-Wâṣânt*), the government-led Islamic project, had aimed at constructing a world that was in accordance with the way of Allâh (‘imâra al-dunya’ wafqa minhaj Allâh), which would enhance the worth of Islam and consolidate its doctrine in Muslims’ minds (i’lâ’ qiyam al-din wa tamkîn al-’aqîda ft nufts al-muslimîn) through the original Islamic method (al-na‘îf al-Islâmi al-ašl). In order to fulfill this project, *dhikr* became filled with meaning. *Dhikr* is regarded as the remedy (‘ilâj) and the way of purifying (tazkiya) the mind (nafs). This expression of remedy and purification seems to imply a deviation (bid‘a) of Islam; therefore, Muslims need to remove the deviation and recover their original faith. Using quotations from the Qur’ân, the government advocates the necessity for Muslims to practice *dhikr*, in order to purify their minds and follow the path of Islam correctly. In this context, *ahl al-dhikr* does not merely mean the people who remember Allâh, but includes the people who “accomplish the obligation of *da’wa*, the memorization of the Qur’ân, [the understanding of] knowledge [of the Qur’ân] and the works of mind” (qâmû bî waqîj al-da’wa wa bifz al-Qur’ân wa ‘ulûm-hi wa al-a‘mâl al-qalb).” Further, the people of Sufism (ahl al-tašawwûf) are considered as being at “the forefront (muqaddîma) of *ahl al-dhikr* and *dhâkirûn*,” because of their contribution toward the dissemination and teaching of Islam.

The basic meaning of *ahl al-dhikr* is people who practice *dhikr*. Because it is essential for Muslims to practice *dhikr* as devotees of Islam, *ahl al-dhikr* can be interpreted as Muslims. If *ahl al-dhikr* corresponds to Muslims, why do Islamists adopt *ahl al-dhikr*? This section considers what *ahl al-dhikr* means, by
referring to articles from the conference on dhikr and dhākirān whose details are discussed in the next chapter, Mawsū’ā Ahl al-Dhikr (The Encyclopedia of Ahl al-Dhikr) and al-Fayd. These latter texts are the publications of Majlis al-Qawmt li al-Dhikr wa al-Dhākirān (National Committee for Dhikr and Dhākirān), also mentioned in the next chapter.

The derived meanings of ahl al-dhikr from chapter 33 verses 41–42 of the Qur’ān, in accordance with the way of ta’līl, are as follows: those who glorify [Allāh] (musabbiḥān), those who praise [Allāh] (ḥāmidān), those who follow [Allāh] (tālān), those who pray (muṣallān), those who perform the rite and law of Allāh (maqīmūn li al-sha’ā‘ir wa sharā‘i’-hi), those who love Allāh (muḥibbūn lillāh) and His messenger [Muḥammad] (rasāl Allāh), those who love the brothers (ikhwā) in Islam and those who pay attention (mustajībūn) to His order through dhikr for Allāh. These meanings coincide in the basic attributes that Muslims should have.

The encyclopedia of Ahl al-Dhikr refers to the profession of ahl al-dhikr. The ahl al-dhikr selected as models (namādhij) in the encyclopedia can be classified into five categories as follows. The first one is the Sufi. Although Islamists tried to introduce new terminology for Sufism and tariqas as a part of ta’līl, this does not mean that they avoid use of the terms Sufism and tariqas or replace the traditional terms of šāfi’ya or mutassawīfa with ahl al-dhikr. On the one hand, this usage aims to bring Sufis under a comprehensive term, ahl al-dhikr, while Islamists continue to use Sufi together with ahl al-dhikr; on the other hand, they evaluate Sufis as the front line of ahl al-dhikr.

Ahl al-dhikr does not mean the Sufi only. The second category is the learned such as a scholar (‘ālim) and a jurisprudent (faqīḥ) that are engaged in Islamic education and studies. The third one is people who engage with the Qur’ān. This category includes people who memorize the Qur’ān (ḥāfīz), teachers (mu‘allim) and reciters (mujawwid) [of the Qur’ān]. A singer of madīth (mādiḥ) is the fourth category. Lastly, the range of ahl al-dhikr includes people who are indirectly associated with dhikr in that they offer spaces and provide the environment for dhikr; for example, a constructor of religious institutions like mosques and khalwa, or a provider of support to students and emigrants to khalwa from inside or outside the Sudan. In addition, this encyclopedia includes even political figures such as al-Numayrī, al-Bashīr, Ḥasan al-Turābī, and ‘Alī ‘Uthmān Muḥammad Tāhā. These persons can be considered as models that contributed to the prevalence of dhikr. The advantage of this usage for political figures is that the encyclopedia becomes an important means to reinforce politicians’ religious image.
To sum up, the selected *ahl al-dhikr* includes not only religious figures and authorities, but also people that contribute toward supporting *dhikr*, and even political figures. For that reason, *ahl al-dhikr* becomes a term hard to define. Although *ahl al-dhikr* is ambiguous, the use of such an extensive definition that includes political and religious figures seems to be designed to unite various Muslims under *ahl al-dhikr*.

The government calls for Muslims to unite under the name of *ahl al-dhikr*. This way of thinking fosters the establishment of the state of the *shart’a* (*dawla al-shart’a*) in the Sudan through assuring the connection with *ahl al-dhikr* (*talqab ahl al-dhikr*) and the unity of the Sudanese community (*talqab wa al-umma al-Sudan‘ia*), on the basis of *ta’sil*. Because the *Qur‘an*, the *Sunna*, and the biography of the virtuous ancestors (*salaf li al-Da‘l*) are the resource (*marji‘ya*) for Muslims, Muslim society has to protect (*yar‘*) this resource. In fact, Sufi activities in the Sudan “have involved the wide dissemination of the *Qur‘an* and the *Sunna* (*multazim bi al-Kitab wa al-Sunna*).” On the basis of this logic, *ahl al-dhikr* have to combine faith (*imân*), love for *Allâh* (*ma‘abba fi Allâh*), and the following of His messenger (*al-iqtidâ’ bi rasûl Allâh*) [as role model], with the origins of the theology (*ushul al-a‘lîda*), the profit of the society (*na‘ al-mujtama‘*), and the call to [the religion of] *Allâh* (*al-da‘wa lillâh*). This expression seems to mean the three steps toward the establishment of the state on the basis of the *shart’a*. The first is the step for individual Muslims to combine their faith with the original doctrine by means of *ta’sil* and follow the model, such as Muhammad. In this stage, each individual should abide by the original teachings of the *Qur‘an* and the *Sunna*. Secondly, Muslims must seek to connect Islam with their society. Each individual shares his or her faith with other Muslims, and all aim to profit the society on the basis of Islam and the *shart’a*. Lastly, they should expand the range of Islam to other people or other societies through *da‘wa*. These stages aim to establish the unity of the Sudanese community under Islam.

Muslims have various identities or come from different cultural backgrounds and belong to different groups; however, *dhikr* is the practice common to all Muslims despite their varying attributes. The government selected *ahl al-dhikr* as the comprehensive term that can include all Muslims who devote themselves to the fundamental practices of *dhikr*; thereby, the government aims to realize the unity of Islam beyond all identities and affiliations.
IV. The Contemporary Political Policy toward Sufism

1. The Conference on Dhikr and Dhakirun Organized by the Government

This chapter focuses on the political policies toward Sufism and tariqas, keeping in mind the activities of the present government. In keeping with the tendency of taʿṣīl mentioned above, Multaqā al-Dhikr wa al-Dhākirūn (the conference on dhikr and dhakirūn) took place under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Planning (Wizāra al-Takḥīṭ al-Ijtimaʿi) from July 11 to 14, 1994.56 This conference was regarded as part of “the return to the original meanings of dhikr on the basis of the Qurʾān and the Sunna (taʿṣīl dalālāt al-dhikr ‘alā al-Kitāb wa al-Sunna).”57

This conference emphasized the dissemination of the knowledge of Sufism. This goal can be distilled to three main activities: the presentation on Sufism at the conference, the expansion of Sufism through publication and education, and the improvement of the facilities related to Sufism and tariqas. First of all, this conference delivered papers on the history of ahl al-dhikr in the Sudan, the role of Sufi movements, the connection between dhikr and daʿwa, the effect of madīnah and Sufi poets on the faith, and the relation between Sufism and jihād. These papers emphasized not only the influences that ahl al-dhikr, above all Sufis, have had on the Sudan, but also the roles that ahl al-dhikr should play, such as in connection with jihād.58

According to the government’s position on Sufism in education and teaching, Sufism, as well as the Qurʾān, the Hadīth, and Islamic Jurisprudence (fiqh), should be learned from the early childhood stage through to the level of higher studies (min marḥara al-tuḥlī al-bākira ilā mustawā al-dirāsāt al-ʿālyā).59 In other words, Sufism is positioned as an essential subject in the education program. Additionally, the education in Sufism is regarded as returning to the original doctrine on ethics (taʿṣīl al-akhlāq).60 In addition, the government aims to disseminate thinking on Sufism through publication of books. This task is mainly undertaken by the committee named Majlis al-Qawmī li al-Dhikr wa al-Dhākirūn, under the direct control of the government, mentioned in the next section.

Educational facilities and institutions to diffuse Islamic knowledge also need to be improved. The government proposes to construct a learning center for the studies of Sufism and Islamic heritage (inshāʾ markaz ʿilm li dirāsāt al-taṣawwuf wa al-turāth al-Islāmi)61 to aid the students of the Qurʾān named musāʿada ahl al-Qurʾān (the support for people [that study] the Qurʾān),62 and to expand the utilization of Sufi centers, khālwa, and mosques for the teaching of Islamic knowledge. In fact, al-Bashīr has constructed several religious
complexes, the latest one being the Complex of the Light of Islam (Mujamma’a al-Nūr al-Islāmī), which opened in June 2010; additionally, he has visited famous Sufi centers and he has given financial aid to several tariqas. Since 2006, the project of developing khalwa in the Sudan (mashrā’ i’l-mār al-khālāwī bi al-Sūdān) has been undertaken by the president, the Ministry of Religious Guidance and Endowments (Wizāra al-Irshād wa al-Awqāf), and the Ministry of Finance (Wizāra al-Māliyya).

2. The Establishment of the Committee for Dhikr and Dhākirūn
In the midst of these activities, the Sudanese government founded a subdivision named Majlis al-Qawm li al-Dhikr wa al-Dhākirūn in the Ministry of Religious Guidance and Endowment in 1995, mostly in keeping with the proposal put forth at the conference on dhikr and dhākirūn. This committee is assigned to several activities such as representing Sufis and ahl al-dhikr, preserving and disseminating the heritage of Islam and Sufism, and improving religious institutions.

First of all, this committee does not aim to institute tariqas, contrary to the widespread suspicion that this institution was created in order to achieve centralized control over the tariqas. Rather, this committee acts as the representative (tamthīl) of the tariqas and ahl al-dhikr, in general. For instance, this committee arranged the meeting between the government and tariqas at Khartoum. As their representative, the committee issued a declaration against United Nations Security Council Resolution 1593 that remitted the situation in the Darfur to the International Criminal Court, on 2005. Although the committee integrates the opinions of tariqas and of ahl al-dhikr, it does not intend to direct tariqas and does not demand factional commitment (iltizām ḥizbī) in politics, but refers to the shaykhs for a decision. Additionally, the committee arranges matters among tariqas and ahl al-dhikr, and takes steps to develop the association (taṣawwūr ’alāgāt) among tariqas locally and overseas.

Second, this committee aims at the revival of the Islamic legacy (ba’th al-turāth al-Islāmī) and the spread of the method of Sufism (baṣṣ minḥaj al-taṣawwuf). The publication of books seems to play an important role in this activity. The committee has published the periodical titled al-Fayd and various books about Islam and Sufism, including the series Kitāb (book) al-Dhākirūn and Rasā’īl (letters) al-Dhākirūn. The periodical al-Fayd deals extensively with topics about Sufism, for example, the current news about Sufism, descriptions of Sufi beliefs, the history of eminent Sufi shaykhs and their institutions, the understanding of madīth, and so forth. This periodical publicizes the activities of Sufism and
tariqas in the Sudan. Besides, the committee published the encyclopedia, titled Mawsāʿa Aḥl al-Dhikr bi al-Sūdān. This project, intended to document religious, cultural, and Sufi heritage, began in 1999 and finished in 2004. The encyclopedia consists of six volumes and includes one thousand five hundred and fifteen persons selected from among ahl al-dhikr, the history of tariqas, and their strongholds. The third activity endeavors to ensure the supply of stable resources for khalwa, mastd, and centers of dhikr and [Islamic] knowledge (tijād mawārid thābita li yaʿūd rt'-ha ʿalā al-khalāwī wa al-mastd wa marākiz al-dhikr wa al-ʿilm).69

While this committee affords facilities to tariqas for their activities, it utilizes the power and abilities (istifāda min qudrāt wa inkānāt) of Sufis and tariqas in the work of daʿwa and the provision of religious guidance, because people put faith in the tariqas and tariqas have their own network of disciples. Besides, the committee also looks to Sufis and tariqas to find solution (ḥall) or treatment (muʿālaja) for social problems because they can cross boundaries, such as tribal boundaries (ḥudūd qabālī).70 From this perspective, it is clear that the government recognizes that tariqas should be involved not only in religious matters such as the expansion of Islam but also in the social or political affairs that involve crossing boundaries.

As indicated by the name of the committee, the target of this national committee is not only the Sufis or tariqas, but includes all of ahl al-dhikr. This committee intends to foster a religious identity that transcends any particular affiliation.71 In this respect, the committee aims for unification of the groups (tawḥīd al-jamāʿāt) among ahl al-dhikr, including Sufism (al-Ṣāfiyya) and Salafism (al-Salafyā).72 According to al-Ṣāfī Jaʿfar al-Ṣāfī, who is the current secretary general of the committee, there is no essential difference (khilāf) between Sufism and Salafism; rather they have many similarities (qawāṣim mushtaraka kathra) that form ahl al-Qibra.73 Obviously, ahl al-Qibra indicates people that turn in the direction of al-Qibra for prayer. Because prayer is one of the obligations, in this sense, ahl al-Qibra can correspond to Muslims more than ahl al-dhikr. As the next step to dissolving the differences among the groups of ahl al-dhikr, this committee now pursues the unification of ahl al-Qibra (tawḥīd ahl al-Qibra).74 This principle of minimizing the differences among Muslims characterizes the political objective of the unification of all Muslims.

3. The Attempt to Mobilize Aḥl al-dhikr into Jihād
Why does the government stress unification under ahl al-dhikr? Because of the necessity to unite in the fight against the South Sudan under the name of jihād.75
This section discusses the relationship among Sufism, *ahl al-dhikr*, and *jihād*, with reference to presentations at the conference and articles in *al-Fayd*, because these presentations at the government-led conference and articles in the government journal reflect the thoughts of the state.

In these materials, it is emphasized that Sufis have been involved in *jihād*. For example, early Sufis such as Ibrāhīm ibn Adham were mentioned as models (*namādhij*) practicing *jihād*. Observing developments in the Sudan, many Sufi shaykhs joined *jihād* in the Mahdī movement, after the Revolution of Salvation (*Thawra al-Inqād*). Further, *jihād* is regarded as the spirit of Sufism (*rūḥ al-taṣawwuf*), and Sufis are thought to be foremost in the history of valiant warriors (*madār al-taʿrkh muḥāribīn ashdā*). These opinions suggest that *jihād* is one of the essential roles that Sufis have played. In addition, the Sufis’ commitment to *jihād* seems to be sought.

According to the Qurʾān, believers (*muʾminūn*) are those who fight (*jāhidāt*) for *Allāh* by means of their wealth and their lives; whereas *Allāh* orders believers to practice *dhikr*. That is to say, *dhikr* is inseparable (*yuḥājim*) from *mujāhid* (those who fight [for the way of *Allāh*]) as the course of believers. In another sense, *ahl al-dhikr* are interconnected with *jihād*. *Ahl al-dhikr* are propagandists (*duʿā*) for *Allāh*, and *jihād* is one of the pillars of the call to Islam (*arkān al-daʿwa ilā al-İslām*). Therefore, *ahl al-dhikr* and *jihād* have a close connection as the obligatory practice and call to Islam.

In the Sudan, *jihād* is tied to soldiers (*junūd*). It is evident that this expression implies the fight against the South Sudan under the name of *jihād*. Using incendiary words, the virtue of *jihād* is explained. For example, Aḥmad ‘Alī İmām, who holds an advisory position with the president on matters [related to] *taʿṣīl* (*mansbī mustashhārīya raʾts al-jumhūrīya li shuʿāʾ al-taʿṣīl*), suggests that the paradise after *jihād* is assured; he states that the paradise is under the protection of the swords (*al-jamāʿa zulāl taḥta suyūf*). In addition, he uses florid expressions such as the radiant (*nādir*) faces of *dhākirān* through *dhikr* devoted to Paradise (*mataʿallaq bi al-farāḍīs*), the lights (*anwār*) coming from the graves of martyrs (*qubār shuhadaʾ*) through the sky and the fragrance of musk that diffuses from the blood of martyrs. Moreover, he mentions that those who grasp the cock [of a rifle] (*zinād*) at the warfront practice *dhikr* and glorify *Allāh* (*tasbih*) a great deal. These are the expressions that serve to persuade people to make a commitment to *jihād* or martyrdom in *jihād*. According to him, praying (*ṣalā*), bowing [for prayer] (*rukāʿ*), prostration (*ṣuḥūd*), good deeds (*fiʿl...*)
al-khayr), worship of Allāh (‘ibāda lillāh), and pious deed (ja'a), as well as fighting against the enemy (jihād li al-'adāw), are all jihād; besides, these practices lead to the purification of the mind (tazkiya li al-nafs). In this way, the motif of jihād as the purification of the mind is deeply tied in with dhikr and ahl al-dhikr, because dhikr is also the purification of the mind mentioned above. Stressing the relationship between dhikr and jihād, and the virtues of jihād for ahl al-dhikr, the state aimed to mobilize ahl al-dhikr, including Sufis, to the arena of jihād.

V. The Contemporary Relationship between the Regime and Sufi Orders
1. Participation of Tariqas in Politics
Sufi shaykhs and politically unaffiliated tariqas have opportunities to make known political stances. In 1998, more than thirty shaykhs gathered at al-Turābi's house to discuss their objection to the missile strike by the United States on Khartoum, and expressed their condemnation of it. When United Nations Security Council Resolution 1593 was issued in 2005, some Sufi shaykhs made known their position at the political meeting. For example, ‘Abd al-Rahmān Muḥammad Šāliḥ said that “the people of tariqas do not have any interest in political affairs (ihtimām bi al-'amal al-siyās); however, they will rise (yaqīf) to confront people who threaten their national interests (yuḥaddid qawmiyya al-bilād).” Setting aside whether Sufis and tariqas have political interests, they do have opportunities to comment on political affairs. This chapter concentrates on the roles that Sufi shaykhs and tariqas played during the national election held in 2010, and reveals the relationship between the regime and Sufi orders.

2. Sufis' Declaration of Support for the President and the Ruling Party
Some tariqas held meetings, such as the meeting in support of the Qādiriya ‘Arakiya Order for Candidates of the National Congress Party (hafl al-munāṣira al-Tariqa al-Qādiriya al-'Arakiya li murashshaht al-Mu'tamar al-Waṭant), the meeting of [the president] al-Bashīr with people of the good news (Liqā' al-Bashīr bi Aḥl al-Bishāra), and the ceremony to bestow honor on the president [al-Bashīr] of the Republic [of the Sudan] (Takrir al-Ra'īs al-Jumhūriya), in order to demonstrate their favorable relationship and solidarity with the ruling National Congress Party, to the public as well as their followers. These meetings were organized by tariqas during the national election campaign in 2010. At most of these meetings, Sufi shaykhs made speeches that indicated their support for the president and his political party; these speeches were followed by an
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address of al-Bashîr to his followers. By focusing on the speeches that several Sufi shaykhs made at these meetings, this section aims to reveal the political relationship that exists between Sufis and the government.

What did the shaykhs emphasize in their speeches? The emphases can be divided into three important common elements: the premise that the Sudan and Islam have enemies; the Islamic justification for al-Bashîr’s authority as president; and the continuous support of tariqas for the government. First, most Sufi shaykhs shared the understanding that the Sudan and Islam are threatened by outside enemies. In many cases, the brunt of criticism was borne by the United States, the International Criminal Court (ICC, al-Mahkama al-Jinā’īya), and the Security Council (Majlīs al-Ann) of the United Nations. As the background to this criticism, for example, the United States has imposed economic sanctions against the Sudan, and the ICC issued an arrest warrant for al-Bashîr on March 4, 2009. Regarding these decisions, al-Shaykh al-Fatîh ‘Abd al-Rahîm al-Bura’î, one of the most famous shaykhs in the Sudan, expressed the view that “aliens to Islam have poisoned Muslims surreptitiously (nâs ajāniyâ ‘alâ al-Islâm yudissû al-summ fî al-Muslimûn),” and that the current situation is “a struggle between truth and error (ṣīra’ bayna al-ḥaq wa al-bāṭil)” for Muslims in the Sudan.94 Another one, al-Shaykh Muhammad Ḥasan al-Fatīh Qarîb Allâh, who is also the preeminent shaykh of the Sammâniyâ order, stated that the decisions of the ICC and the Security Council were wrong (abâṭîl), and hence, the Sudanese people resented (sakhaṭa) them.95 Sufi shaykhs consistently regard events that threaten their country as evil, and are therefore antagonistic toward them. On this premise, shaykhs appealed for Muslims to find the truth, unite, and stand up against the enemy. On the one hand, al-shaykh al-Fatîh insisted on the necessity of reviving the religion of Muḥammad [Islam] (ahyâ’ ‘alâ al-dîn rasâl Allâh Muḥammad).96 On the other hand, al-Shaykh al-Muḥammad called for Muslims in the Sudan to unite under “the flag (rîya) of lâ ilâha illâ Allâh,” that is the principle of Islam.97 Sufi shaykhs constantly denounced outsiders like the ICC as intervening in the country’s affairs and infusing erroneous ideas into the Sudan and Islam. Therefore, Muslims in the Sudan must judge what the right way is and restore Islam; they also need to unite for the fight against the enemies. In order to fulfill this purpose, the shaykhs stress that it is necessary to follow (istamasaka) al-Bashîr and support (nâsara) him, saying “Stand up, walk, and give [our votes to] the president (gowmû, amushû, addû al-ra’îs).”98 Besides, it is also stressed that voters should have “confidence (thîqa) and hope (amal)”99 in al-Bashîr’s Islamic movement.

Why should al-Bashîr have political power and guide Muslims in the
Sudan in the right way? Why should Muslims in the Sudan support al-Bashir? The second and most important point in common is the Islamic justification for both al-Bashir’s authority and the country’s solidarity behind him. The president is not necessarily a religious figure, but his religious position as well as his political position would be reinforced and confirmed with the shaykhs’ support. Because al-Bashir is thought to “be born for eminent individuality (tabt’a fādila),” formed and made sophisticated by Islam, Sufi shaykhs praise the president for his virtue, ability, and faith, thereby providing reasons for all Muslims to unite under his authority. An example of this reinforcement is provided as follows. In this context, two verses of the Qur’an were mentioned. First, the authority for his sovereignty is, for example, chapter 3 verse 26 of the Qur’an. This verse implies that Allah can give sovereignty to whom He will and Allah can take sovereignty away from whom He will. This authority suggests that al-Bashir continues to be the current president, because Allah desires to select him and give sovereignty to al-Bashir, not to remove sovereignty from him. Another authority is chapter 2 verse 247 that has almost the same meaning as chapter 3 verse 26. An objection against the king selected by Allah is mentioned in this verse; however, the verse concludes that only the person whom Allah selects is appropriate for sovereignty. These two verses offer the proof that Allah selects and endows al-Bashir with the authority to govern the Sudan; thereby, he must be the proper person to be the president of the Sudan. All Muslims should keep the decision and will of Allah; thus the explanation based on the Qur’an serves to reinforce the evidence for al-Bashir’s religious authority. From this point of view, he continues to be the incumbent president and is qualified to exercise continual political power until now.

The third point is the emphasis on the continuous support of tariqas for the government and the evaluation of the policy on Islam. It is stated that the support of tariqas did not recently begin, and they appreciated al-Bashir and his political party’s policy on Islam. For example, al-Shaykh Anis, one of the famous Qadi’i shaykhs known as the people of Yunus (al-Yunus) in Abū Harāz (Gezira State), said that the Islamic Charter Front (Jabha al-Mithaq al-Islami), the Islamic movement (al-Ḥaraka al-Islāmiyya), and the National Congress Party (al-Mut’tamar al-Waṭanī) led Muslims to the right ways to the book of Allah [the Qur’an] (kitāb Allah) and the Sunna of the Prophet [Muhammad] (Sunna al-Nabi), and that some shaykhs were committed to the foundation of or the recruitment to these activities. Another shaykh, al-Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Mikāshfi, appreciated the announcement that “those who memorized the Qur’an (hāfiz al-Qur’an) are considered to be equivalent
(musawâ) to those who have university certificates (shahâda al-Jam'îa) when seeking employment (ta'yîn waqâ'îf) in the country.”

In other words, Sufi shaykhs seem to support al-Bashir and his party, because of the contribution to the preservation and dissemination of Islam.

After al-Bashir’s reelection, many Sufi shaykhs commented very favorably on it in the newspapers. According to them, al-Bashir is the president selected by the grace [of Allah] (al-ra'is al-muntakhab bi fa'dî-hî), and his reelection is interpreted as the will of Allah (mashti' Allah), a victory for Islam (al-naṣr li al-Islâm), or preparation for flourishing of the call to Islam in the Sudan (tawaqqu’ izdihar al-da'wa al-Islâmiyya fî al-Sûdân).

To sum up their assertion, this result is entirely attributed to Islam and Allah, as contended by the shaykhs during the election campaign.

3. Speech of President Bashir at the Sufi Meetings

This section focuses on the speeches made by the president, al-Bashir, and examines how the president evaluates Sufism and tariqas and what he requests of them. There are two similarities among his speeches: the praise of Sufis and tariqas, and the request for cooperation based on the Qur’an and Islamic logic.

“We came here because we love Sufis by God (wa Allah nuḥîbb al-ṣâfiyya). We did not love them [Sufis] because of the acquisition of political [power] (mâ nuḥîbb-hum ‘ashâän kasb siyast).”

The first similarity is that al-Bashir demonstrated his love for Sufism by performing dhikr and applauding the activities of Sufis and tariqas throughout the history of the Sudan. For example, he stated that Sufi shaykhs “set up (assâsî) the method of Islam, built (banî) the religion [of Islam] in the Sudan, planted (aghrasî) it [Islam deeply], and established it [Islam] firmly in the minds of the people (makkanu-hu fî nufûs al-nâs).”

Referring to the activities of Sufis in constructing mosques and khalwa, teaching the Qur’an to people, and diffusing the knowledge of Islam, al-Bashir considers Sufis and tariqas as contributing to the entrenchment of Islam in the Sudan. On this premise, he urged Sufis and their disciples to rise against the enemies and unite under Islam as custodians of Islam. Moreover, al-Bashir requested that Sufi shaykhs and their followers support (ta’yyid, da’m, or sanad) him and petition (du’â’) for the success of the president and his party.

It seems that gaining the support of the Sufis and their followers is not his only goal. Because his speech contained political appeals for the unity of Islam and fighting against enemies, his statements are directed toward all Muslims, including Sufi shaykhs and their followers. He also shared the shaykhs’ opinion
that the Sudan was threatened by the outside world mentioned above; therefore, in his speech, al-Bashir repeatedly urged the reinforcement of Islam in the Sudan (tamkin al-Islām fī al-Sūdān); hence, it was necessary for Muslims in the Sudan to maintain solidarity under the declaration lā ilāha illā Allāh and the love of Allāh (mahābbat Allāh). He requested the cooperation of Sufis and urged the necessity of unity, on the basis of the Qur’ān and Islamic logic.

He underlined that the Sudanese had to unite and cooperate, not because of parties (ḥizbīya), sects (tā’fīya), or tribes (gabdīl), but because of their love of Allāh. This statement mentions that tariqas can move beyond sectarian differences because of their devotion to Islam, and clearly indicates his desire to disregard the distinctions among Muslims and unite them only under Islam. Through the obvious differentiation between Islam and others, al-Bashir intended to counter external influences, and thereby protect and consolidate the internal unification of Muslims in the Sudan.

As seen above, it is clear that al-Bashir desires the support of Sufis and tariqas, contrary to his statements. Because tariqas have wider networks of followers, he aims to mobilize these networks and expand their support for him; he also aims to gain religious legitimacy as the president, on the authority of Sufi shaykhs.

VI. Conclusion

Sufis and tariqas, at first, functioned as propagandists and teachers that diffused Islam and Sufism. In doing so, they gained political as well as religious influence. Thus, for some time, they played the role of intermediates between the followers and the rulers. Because tariqas in this period acted independently, the range of activities and influence of each tariqa tended to be limited to that of the society surrounding the tariqa. After that, the rise and power struggle of the Khatmiyya order and the Anṣār in the political sphere from the nineteenth century onward resulted in the withdrawal of many tariqas, excluding the Khatmiyya order, from the political sphere, and their roles were limited to the religious sphere. However, in al-Numayri’s regime, the political influence of politically unaffiliated tariqas reemerged, because he was competing against the Khatmiyya order and the Anṣār, and thus tried to obtain support from the unaffiliated tariqas. In this way, Sufi shaykhs and politically unaffiliated tariqas regained political influence in contemporary Sudan.

With the expansion of Islamist policies, the political situation surrounding Sufism and tariqas has varied. The government has sought to achieve two objectives through these groups. First, the government needs wider popular
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support, including that of tariqas, in order to challenge the Umma Party and the DUP as well as to fight against the South. Tariqas have wider networks of followers; hence, the government has tried to assist various unaffiliated tariqas so as to gain their support. Second, the government wishes to minimize the differences among Muslims, for example, their identities, whether they are modern or traditional, and whether they practice Sufism or Salafism, and to unify them under the expansive term *ahl al-dhikr*. Al-Bashir emphasized the internal solidarity of Muslims against outside enemies, stressing the roles that Sufism and tariqas have played in the expansion of Islam in the Sudan. At the same time, the government recognizes that tariqas are free to cross boundaries; thus, the state has sought the participation of Sufis and tariqas in the movement as the vanguard of *ahl al-dhikr* to resolve differences and achieve unity.

As for the Sufi shaykhs and their tariqas, most of them express solidarity with the president and the government, in order to carry favor with the government and demonstrate their favored status to the public. Further, because the current president has a military background, and thus he needs religious confirmation of his power, Sufi shaykhs invest al-Bashir with religious authority on the basis of the logic of Islam and the Qur’an. In this sense, they testify to his legitimacy. In addition, Sufi shaykhs have also recognized the existence of their enemies; therefore, they requested the cooperation of their followers in the unification of Muslims under Allah, and asked them to support the president and government. In this way, Sufis and politically unaffiliated tariqas have established a reciprocal relationship with the state in contemporary Sudan.

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Notes


4 The curricula in the schools included the Qur’an and the Hadith, theology (ʿilm al-kalām),


7 E.g., Ibn Dayf Allāh, Kitāb al-Tabaqāt, 49-65. See also John L. Esposito, “Sudan’s Islamic Experiment,” The Muslim World 76/3-4 (1986), 182; Karrar, The Sufi Brotherhood, 20. Because of their political power as well as their religious influence, some shaykhs “did not conceal their contempt for the state” (Muhammad Mahmoud, “Sufism and Islamism,” 166). Although they accepted material support from the government, the majority of shaykhs “maintained a distance from [the] regime and avoided political involvement” (Neil McHugh, Holymen of the Blue Nile: The Making of an Arab-Islamic Community in the Nilotic Sudan 1500-1850, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1994, 168).


9 This tendency means that they essentially developed as the “decentralized” groups (Karrar, The Sufi Brotherhood, 20).

10 Later, especially in the time of the rule of the Muhammad ‘Ali Dynasty, the exemption from taxation and the privileging of the Sufis brought about a huge gap within the societies that was closely based on the tariqas, and the poor fled from their communities and scattered. This process caused the decline of this style of tariqa (Kurita, Regime Transformation, 70-71).


12 Kurita, Regime Transformation, 118-119.

13 For instance, the Majdhubiya order opposed the invasion of Isma’il Pasha and believed that the Mahdi would come from the west. Thus, they supported the Mahdi. Further, the Tijāniya order, propagated from northern and western Sudan in the middle of the eighteenth century, was persecuted under Egyptian control and, hence, this tariqa sided with and swore allegiance to the Mahdi movement. As for the Majdhubiya order, see Trimingham, Islam, 225-226. Regarding the Tijāniya order, see Karrar, The Sufi Brotherhood, 122-124.

14 Therefore, as the Mahdi movement intensified, al-Mīrghāni escaped to Egypt.

15 See al-Shahi, “A Noah’s Ark,” 17.


For example, in 1969, a portion of wealth of the Khatmiyya order and the Ansâr were sequestrated by the state (Tim Niblock, *Class and Power in Sudan: The Dynamics of Sudanese Politics, 1898-1985*, London: Macmillan, 1987, 245; Kurita, *Regime Transformation*, 432). Besides, al-Numayri ordered “the bombardment of Aba Island, the Ansâr stronghold in the White Nile, and thousands of Ansâr were killed or wounded” (G. R. Warburg, “Islam and State in Numayri’s Sudan,” 403).


For example, al-Shaykh Dafa’ Allâh al-Sâ’îm al-Dîma, a shaykh of the Qâdiriyya order, visited the president without an appointment, and negotiated with al-Numayri over the decision of the governor of Khartoum to transfer a saint’s tomb. Al-Numayri ordered that the governor change the decision immediately. For further information on this example, see *Al-Fayd* 17 (2005), 56-57.


Seesemann, “Between Sufism and Islamism,” 33.


Seesemann, “Between Sufism and Islamism,” 53.

This periodical deals with the treatises about *ta’âṣil* on various fields such as politics, economics, science, and education as well as religious matters.


Seesemann, “Between Sufism and Islamism,” 34-35.

This paragraph is based on the leaflet of the conference on *dhîkr* and *dhâkîrân*.

Five verses, chapter 8 verse 2, chapter 7 verses 201 and 205, chapter 13 verse 28, and chapter 18 verse 110, are quoted from the *Qur’ân* in the leaflet of *Muṣâdaq al-Dhîkr wa al-Dhâkîrân* (the conference on *dhîkr* and *dhâkîrân*).

This seems to refer to ethics and moral.

Ahmad ‘Âl Imâm, “Aḥî al-Dhîkr wa Sâḥîh al-Jihâd,” *Ta’âṣîl* 1 (1994), 96. This article was the expanded version of his paper “Aḥî al-Dhîkr wa Sâḥîh al-Jihâd,” presented at the conference on *dhîkr* and *dhâkîrân*, and was reprinted in *Al-Fayd* from vol.13 to vol.15 in three parts. Regarding the comment for this article, see also Seesemann, “Between Sufism and Islamism,” 36-37.

Although Seesemann mentioned that the aim of Islamists was to avoid their traditional usage of terms such as “Sufism” and “Sufi orders” (Seesemann, “Between Sufism and Islamism,” 34), these words have been widely used up to now.

It is notable that his grandfather is Ḥamâd al-Nâhrân, known as Wâd al-Turâbi or ibn al-Turâbi, who is one of the influential Sufi of the seventeenth century. For further information, see Ibn
Dayf Allāh, Kitāb al-Tabaqāt, 160-173.

49 He was mainly concerned with the conference on dhikr and dhākirān as the minister of Social Planning, and is now the second vice-president.


51 This is an excerpt from the article " al-Tāh dīkū wa al-Dhā kirān ḍa al-nilāf"

52 This information is based on an interview at the National Committee for Islamic Movement, June 20, 2010. In addition, the government announced that those who memorized the Qurʾān are considered to have an education equivalent to graduates from universities.

53 See the leaflet of the conference on dzikr and dhākirān.


56 According to the concluding remarks of this conference, guests from abroad such as Libya, Iraq, Jordan, Senegal, Syria, Turkey, Somalia, France, Mauritania, Egypt, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, Chad, Switzerland, and Iran participated in the conference. See Wizāra al-Takhfīṭ al-Ijtimāʿī, al-Bayān, 10-11.

57 Wizāra al-Takhfīṭ al-Ijtimāʿī, al-Bayān, 2.

58 The relationship among ahl al-dhikr, Sufism, and jihād will be discussed later.


60 See al-Fayyāḍ 8 (1999), 15.

61 Wizāra al-Takhfīṭ al-Ijtimāʿī, al-Bayān, 5.

62 This information is based on an interview at the National Committee for Dhikr and Dhākirān, June 20, 2010. In addition, the government announced that those who memorized the Qurʾān are considered to have an education equivalent to graduates from universities.

63 Seesemann, “Between Sufism and Islamism,” 35.

64 This is based on the interview of ‘Uthmān al-Bashīr al-Kabbāshī, the former secretary general, in the article “Ḥiwr ‘an al-Majlis al-Qawmī li al-Dhikr wa al-Dhākirān (Dialogue about the National Committee for Dhikr and Dhākirān)” on the website (http://www.sudansite.net/2009-06-21-20-02-15/-mainmenu-72/1211-2008-09-12-23-24-28), accessed on December 16, 2009.

65 For further information, see al-Fayyāḍ 18 (2005), 12-15.

66 This is based on the article “Ḥiwr ‘an al-Majlis.”

67 Al-Fayyāḍ 16 (2004), 22.

68 The nineteenth and last issue of the periodical was published in January 2008; however, the committee suspended this publication.

69 Al-Fayyāḍ 16 (2004), 22.

70 This paragraph is based on the article “Ḥiwr ‘an al-Majlis.”

71 Seesemann, “Between Sufism and Islamism,” 35.

72 This is based on the interview at the National Committee for Dhikr and Dhākirān, June 20, 2010.


74 This sentence is based on the interview at the National Committee for Dhikr and Dhākirān on June 20, 2010.

75 See also Seesemann, “Between Sufism and Islamism,” 34-36.

76 For further information on the models of early Muslims and Sufis, see Aḥmad ʿAlī Imām, “Ahl
al-Dhikr,” 104-112.
77 The Mahdi movement denied tariqas; however, most articles deal with this movement as the activities of the Sufi.
79 Al-Fayd 8 (1999), 10.
80 Chapter 49 verse 15.
81 Chapter 33 verse 41.
89 For further information, see al-Fayd 6 (1998), 1, 10.
90 For further information, see al-Fayd 18 (2005), 12-15.
91 This meeting was held on March 17, 2010, for the candidates of the National Congress Party for National Assembly.
92 This was held by the Sammāniya Order at al-Mujāhidīn (Khartoum), on March 28, 2010.
93 This meeting was held by the Sammāniya Ta’yībiya Garibīya Ḥasanīya Order at Wad al- Naba’w (Omdurman) on March 15, 2010.
94 Excerpt from a speech made by al-Shaykh al-Fāṭih ‘Abd al-Raḥīm al-Bura’i, a shaykh of the Sammāniya order, at the meeting named “al-Bashīr with people of the good news (Liqā’ al-Bashīr bi Ahl al-Bushārā),” at al-Mujāhidīn (Khartoum), March 28, 2010.
95 An extract from the speech made by al-Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Fāṭih Qarīb Allāh, on March 15, 2010.
97 This was based on a speech made by al-Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥasan.
98 In Sudanese Colloquial Arabic, qāf is pronounced as gāf. Gomwā corresponds to Qawmā. This expression is an excerpt from a speech made by al-Shaykh al-Fāṭih.
99 This is based on a speech made by al-Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥasan.
100 This is an excerpt from a speech made by al-Shaykh al-Fāṭih.
101 This is based on a speech made by al-Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥasan.
102 This is based on his speech which appeared in Aḥl Allāh (the supplement that appears in the newspaper al-Rā‘id every Friday), 6, issued on April 9, 2010.
103 See Aḥl Allāh, 4, issued on April 9, 2010.
104 It is difficult to evaluate in detail how Sufi shaykhs and their followers affected the election; however, it is notable that, in the presidential election, al-Bashīr gained around 86.5% of the votes in the Northern Sudan where Muslims are in the majority, while the candidate from the Umma Party, Ṣādiq al-Maḥdī, gained 0.01%. Sirr al-Ḥātim, who is the candidate for the Democratic Unionist Party, obtained 0.02%, and Yāsir ‘A[r]mān from the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement got 0.03% of the vote in the Northern Sudan. The boycott by such parties as the Umma and Democratic Unionist Party also seems to have contributed to this landslide victory of al-Bashīr and his political party. This data is calculated based on the results from the National Election Committee of the Republic of the Sudan. The results can be accessed at the website (http://nec.org.sd/new/new/lre/rais.htm).
106 Excerpt from al-Bashīr’s speech at Omdurman, March 15, 2010.
107 In addition to this, he praised particular shaykhs who were remembered in connection with the...
places where the meetings were held.

108 Excerpt from his speech at Omdurman, March 15, 2010.

109 Excerpt from a speech made by al-Bashir, which appeared in Abl Allâh 4, issued on April 9, 2010.

110 Excerpt from al-Bashir’s speech at Omdurman, March 15, 2010.

111 The former is based on al-Bashir’s speech at Omdurman, March 15, 2010, and the latter is an excerpt from his speech at al-Mujâhidin, March 28, 2010.