

Shadhiliyya Order

Sufism (Islam)

Website: www.suficenter.org

www.jaffeinstitute.org

www.lionhrt.com

This profile was researched and written by student Miranda Meadow of Reed College, under the direction of Dr. Kambiz GhaneaBassiri.

The Shadhiliyya Sufi Order in Portland, Oregon has its roots in the former School of Energy Mastery (EMS) in Pope Valley, California. This school was started by Dr. Robert Jaffe (now Dr. Robert Ibrahim Jaffe) in the early 1990s. At that time, the main focus of EMS was energy healing. In 1994 a Portland woman began attending EMS. Halfway through her studies, Dr. Jaffe, while traveling in Jerusalem, met Sheikh Muhammad Sa'id al-Jamal ar-Rifa'i ash-Shadhuli, the head of the Shadhiliyya Order. Dr. Jaffe became a Sufi teacher under the tutelage of Sidi Muhammad, as his followers call him. Upon his return to EMS, he changed the name of EMS to the Jaffe Institute (www.jaffeinstitute.org) and began to shift its focus toward spiritual healing and Sufi teachings. He told the students about what he had learned and offered the *bayah*, allegiance to the Sufi master, to anyone who wanted it. The Portland woman, who knew virtually nothing about Sufism or Islam at the time, took the *bayah*.

Upon completion of her studies at the Jaffe Institute, this woman returned to Portland to put her knowledge of energy and Sufi healing into practice. The first "client" to come to her was a business consultant in 1997. He became instantly attracted to the type of energy healing she provided and a few months later decided to attend the Jaffe Institute himself. While there, he met Sidi Muhammad and gave him *bayah*. Upon his return to Portland, he felt that a community needed to be created to promote the teachings of Sidi Muhammad. He proposed this idea to his wife and to his spiritual healer, and they began a Sufi circle in the late nineties to which they invited friends and family. The circle grew by word of mouth, drawing people from all religious backgrounds.

Organization

The Shadhiliyya Order is structured hierarchically. At the top is Sidi Muhammad. Below Sidi Muhammad are *muqqadam*s (deputies). Next are the co-directors. Following the co-directors are the city/regional directors, of which there are usually about two, but in Portland there are currently four. Next are the master teachers, then the teachers, and finally anyone who has given *bayah* to Sidi Muhammad. New initiates and those who are promoted within the spiritual ranks of the order, at the time of their *bayah* or promotion, usually donate a recommended sum of money to the order to support its administrative costs and charitable activities.

Demographics

Members of the Shadhiliyya estimate their numbers at about 150 members. The age of members vary widely, but the majority of members are people in their thirties and forties. Women outnumber men, perhaps by a ratio of three to four. The community is primarily Caucasian, and most members are converts from the Jewish or Christian traditions. Few Muslims have also joined the order. Most of the Portland Shadhiliyya community is involved in either business consulting or traditional/alternative medicine. Many of the members who have joined were seeking spiritual guidance or respite from physical or emotional ailments, and found relief in the sort of healing practiced by the Shadhiliyya order.

Activities

The Shadhiliyya are active throughout the United States. A 600-acre stretch of land in PopeValley, CA, is home to the Shadhiliyya Sufi Center (www.suficenter.org). The mission of the center is to share "the unity of God's peace, love, mercy and justice through the example of the holy prophets and the Shadhiliyya Way taught to us by our living guide, Sidi Muhammad Sa'id al-Jamal ar-Rafa'i ash-Shadhuli, head of the Higher Sufi Council in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, teacher at the holy mosques at al-Aqsa in Jerusalem". "Beloveds" – as members of the Shadhiliyya call one another – from all across the United States can visit the center. Also, money donated from the Beloveds goes to support the Center, as well as to Jerusalem where Sidi Muhammad resides. It is hoped that eventually the PopeValley land in addition to a center will also house a school for Sufi teaching and a hospital for holistic healing.

Members, of the Portland Shadhiliyya Order stress the importance of the five pillars of Islam, not only as an Islamic obligation but also as a tool to help one's heart become open and to strengthen one's intimate connection with God. They have regular classes on the teachings of Sidi Muhammad, which are open to the public but only advertised through word-of-mouth. The classes are held on Wednesdays at the house of one of the teachers. The first Wednesday of every month is directed specifically at people new to Sufism. The classes begin with "Remembrance" or *dhikr* as a way to calm one's heart and open it to healing. This is followed by a discussion of how everyone is progressing on the Sufi path. The teachers ask for people to share their experience, to be honest about difficulties they have, and offer advice. Finally, *wird* is performed; this is a session of chanting in which participants ask for forgiveness and guidance from God.

The community also gathers each Sunday for a more formal *dhikr* ceremony, a traditional Sufi practice involving the chanting of divine names. They rotate their gatherings among the houses of the teachers in the community. Classes are offered periodically by different community members on subjects such as "women's issues," "energy healing," and "cooking." A monthly e-mail newsletter announces the classes and any other event to the community; the newsletter may include requests for financial assistance or a prayer for members of the community.

Corporate or Business Healing

A number of the leaders of the Portland Shadhiliyya community work in corporate or business healing. In particular, one of the founding members of the Portland community has a corporate consulting business called Lionheart, Inc., which he started in the early 1980s. At the time he met his spiritual healer from the Shadhiliyya Order, his business was not doing very well. However, after attending the Jaffe Institute he decided to bring Sufi healing principles to his consulting firm. Lionheart now focuses on "healing the wounded heart of the business world." The principles applied by Lionheart are taught at the Jaffe Institute in their "Business and Organization Healing Major," a three year program which, according to the website, "prepares students to carry the healing light of God into business, government and organizations." Other Shadhili-inspired consulting firms in Portland are Heart of Business and Robinhood Consulting.

Conclusion

The Portland Shadhiliyya Order, despite the variety of its activities and the diversity within its membership, is unified by its belief that the development of spiritual life through the teachings of Prophet Muhammad as they are interpreted by their living guide, Sidi Muhammad, leads to improvements in all aspects of one's life and thus heals any malady one may experience physically, emotionally, financially, or otherwise.

Prepared by Student Researcher
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