



Shaykh Sīdī al-Būzīdī al-Bujrāfī¹
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¹ Translated from *Muḥajjāt al-Dhākirīn fī al-Radd ‘alā al-Munkirīn*

² The Muqaddam of the Shaykh, his part in this biography has been translated from the book *Muḥajjāt al-Dhākirīn*

His name and early life, may Allah preserve him

His full name is al-Ḥajj al-Yazīd al-Bujrāfī. His Shaykh, Moulay Sulaymān, gave him the name al-Buzīdī. One day, he said to the assembled *fuqarā*:³ ‘We have changed this disciple’s name from ‘al-Yazīd’; do not call him by this name from this day forth. Rather, say ‘al-Būzīdī’; for our master, Sīdī Moulay al-‘Arabī al-Darqāwī, had a disciple named Sīdī al-Buzīdī al-Ghumārī, who was the inheritor of his secret, as the Shaykh himself stated clearly. Also, the Shaykh of our Shaykh al-‘Allāwī⁴ ؑ was named Sīdī Ḥamū al-Būzīdī;⁵ in our time, too, we have our own Būzīdī!’ Changing a name for a better one has a precedent in the Prophetic Sunnah. When the *fuqarā* heard these words from Shaykh Moulay Sulaymān ؑ, they held a great and blessed gathering to celebrate the new name. After that, the Shaykh was known to all and sundry by the name al-Būzīdī ؑ.

He was born in 1925 CE to the tribe of Banī Shikar, of the Rif. He memorised the noble Quran under the tutelage of his father, may Allah have mercy on him, a man of knowledge who had memorised the Quran and served as imam to several mosques in the region throughout his life, and who had taken the spiritual way from Shaykh al-‘Allāwī ؑ. When Shaykh al-Būzīdī reached the age of nineteen, in 1943, his father took him, in the company of the *muqaddam*⁶ Sīdī Bin‘īsā, to Sīdī Muḥammādī Bil-Ḥājj ؑ, who gave him the general litanies of the ‘Allāwī order. This confirmed what Moulay Sulaymān had once said to him: ‘You are from us, and we are from you.’ Moulay Sulaymān was overjoyed when Sīdī al-Būzīdī entered the order.

His spiritual tutelage at the hands of Shaykh Moulay Sulaymān, may Allah be pleased with them both

One day, the Shaykh, accompanied by his friend Sīdī ‘Abdul Salām ibn Ḥamū al-Sīdānī, went to Shaykh Muḥammādī Bil-Ḥājj with the intention of invoking the Supreme Name.⁷ After a time, he authorised them to do so, and ordered them to keep the company of Shaykh Moulay Sulaymān, informing the latter that their spiritual training would continue under his instruction.

Moulay Sulaymān ؑ was delighted by his disciple, saying of him one night, in the presence of the *fuqarā*, many of whom are still alive today: ‘Bear witness, O *fuqarā*, that this man has today become a son to me; so venerate him!’ This was in 1944. Moulay Sulaymān singled out his student al-Būzīdī with this lavish praise, and this high status amongst the disciples. From this point on, Sīdī al-Būzīdī remained in the company of his Shaykh, doing his utmost to serve his master, and his *zāwiya*.⁸ He took charge of the affairs of the *zāwiya*, leading the chorus of singers of spiritual odes in the gatherings, as well as serving as imam for the five-daily prayers,

³ Plural of *faqīr*, ‘needy person’. The *fuqarā* are in need of their Lord, and so have taken a spiritual path to seek Him.

⁴ Shaykh Aḥmad ibn Muṣṭafā al-‘Allāwī, of Mustaghānam, Algeria, also known as ibn ‘Alīwa and, more usually in the West, al-‘Alawī.

⁵ Sīdī Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥabīb al-Būzūdī, also of Mustaghānam.

⁶ The name for a representative of a Shaykh of a Sūfī order.

⁷ ‘*Allāh*’, also termed the ‘special litany’ of the order.

⁸ Sūfī hospice.

all by the permission of his Shaykh, and with his blessings. By his hand, Allah increased the numbers of the *fuqarā*, and the order began to grow, and expand. Thanks to his ceaseless efforts to raise funds, the *zāwiya* was extended, and rebuilt.

Allah gifted the Shaykh with a strong memory. He memorised all of Moulay Sulaymān's poems, numbering two hundred and fourteen in all, as well as the collected poems of Shaykh al-'Allāwī. Moulay Sulaymān was not a man of letters, and he charged Sīdī al-Būzīdī with the responsibility of writing down his poems. They would often come to him suddenly, in the middle of the night, and he would go into the street and call on Sīdī al-Būzīdī to wake, and come down to write the poem before it escaped him. He would then tell him to memorise it by morning, and compose a melody for it. He would then sing it for the assembled *fuqarā*. His voice was beautiful and deeply moving; everyone agreed that he was blessed with a 'flute from the House of David'.

In 1946, Allah vouchsafed Moulay Sulaymān with prior knowledge of the passing of the great Gnostic, Sīdī Muḥammādī Bil-Ḥājj, may Allah have mercy on him. He said to his student, Sīdī al-Būzīdī: 'Strive, and do your utmost: for after eight days, we will establish a new order.' The matter was as he said, for eight days later, news came of the death of Sīdī Muḥammādī Bil-Ḥājj ﷺ. The *fuqarā* to a man pledged allegiance to Moulay Sulaymān ﷺ.

Soon after, Sīdī al-Būzīdī saw his Shaykh in a dream. He said to him: 'Rise, and strive; for I will marry you into my family, outwardly and inwardly.' This was a subtle indication that Sīdī al-Būzīdī would inherit the spiritual legacy of his Shaykh ﷺ. He married his Shaykh's daughter in 1947. Moulay Sulaymān undertook to settle the dowry himself, for he knew that his student was too poor to pay it. Shaykh al-Būzīdī remained faithful to his Shaykh, along with a group of pious brethren, who bore the standard of the order, and strove in Allah's cause, as He merits:

«Some of them have fulfilled their vow in death, and some of them wait still; they have not changed in the slightest.»⁹

The Shaykh served in the army, where he had a great influence over the division in which he was based. By Allah's will, he was able to enter a large number of fellow soldiers into the order, and guide them to Moulay Sulaymān. They became *fuqarā*, and made much remembrance of Allah. They would hold gatherings of *dhikr*, singing spiritual odes and performing the *ḥaḍra*,¹⁰ even within their barracks. Praise be to Allah, this was an amazing sight to behold. By His grace, many of them rose to become elite among the Sūfīs, after they had at one time been engaged in frivolity, lewdness, alcoholism and debauchery.

In 1953, he left the army and focussed all his efforts on serving the *zāwiya* and the brethren, by the permission of his Shaykh, Moulay Sulaymān. He remained without work until 1955, when he took a job as a security guard at a steelworks in the region of Ṣūtūlāsā, Nador, where his Shaykh's *zāwiya* was based. He was like a replenishing rain: it brings benefit wherever it falls. He remained steadfast in calling to Allah, until Allah guided by his hand a great number of his fellow employees, who began to visit Moulay Sulaymān every week, following the path of the order, may Allah be praised. In the end, there were around fifty *fuqarā* who all worked together at the company.

⁹ 33:23

¹⁰ The Sūfī 'dance' of the order, also called (especially in Morocco) *'imāra*.

Moulay Sulaymān's final years, and the passing of the line to Sīdī al-Būzīdī, may Allah be pleased with them both

The Shaykh ﷺ began to consider extending the *zāwīya*, which was unable to accommodate the vast numbers of people who had begun to visit it from all around. The Shaykh strove to collect donations and assistance for the project, and Allah gave him success in the matter, and brought to him a group of Spanish engineers, who had the privilege of installing water and electricity to the *zāwīya*, which had been in need of both. When the work was finally completed, the *fuqarā* were invited from all around to attend a celebratory gathering. It was a grand occasion, attended by around two thousand people.

Moulay Sulaymān ﷺ was now in his eighties, unable to move, or to leave his house. Sīdī al-Būzīdī undertook responsibility for his Shaykh's whole family, by his permission. This was in addition to his responsibilities to the *zāwīya*, and organising the gatherings of the *fuqarā*, and the travel and celebrations that took place annually. He attended twenty-five annual gatherings with his Shaykh Moulay Sulaymān ﷺ, and he alone was charged with the task of the preparations, including organising the food, and the expenses.

When the time of Moulay Sulaymān's passing drew near, he gathered his closest, most sincere disciples, and told them: 'I counsel you, and say to you what Moulay al-'Arabī al-Darqāwī said in his letter, concerning his disciple, al-Būzīdī: "No one has served me as al-Būzīdī has served me; nor has anyone spent his wealth on me as al-Būzīdī has; nor has anyone tired themselves out with me as al-Būzīdī has." He has served us, and striven for the sake of our order. It is my will that he be the imam of this *zāwīya*, and the leader of the *fuqarā*.' He indicated to them that al-Būzīdī would be his successor after his death. Moulay Sulaymān knew, however, that some people would be envious of his disciple, and so he counselled him, saying: 'If they leave you in peace in the *zāwīya*, then you are its imam; if not, then go, and take your children and your wife with you.' He advised him to take his own wife with him, and his two sons, Sīdī 'Abdul 'Azīz and Sīdī Muḥammad, and said to him: 'Wherever you go, you will find success.'

Moulay Sulaymān ﷺ passed away in 1970, at the age of one hundred and three. Sīdī al-Būzīdī indeed remained in the *zāwīya* for only two years, before tribulations caused him to leave, acting in accordance with his Shaykh's counsel. He established his own *zāwīya* in the city of Zaghaghan, in Nador, and the vast majority of the *fuqarā*, who had heard the counsel of their Shaykh, Moulay Sulaymān, went with him.

His character, may Allah preserve him

For the last thirty-seven years until this day, he has remained in charge of the order, striving in Allah's cause, true to the spirit of the way, and the soul of his Shaykh ﷺ, bearing the standard of *there is no god but Allah*, steadfast in the call to Allah. He is not found except to be making remembrance of Allah, or teaching his disciples. He urges the believers to remember Allah at all times, and to maintain truthfulness, love, community and companionship. He always wears the dress of the Sūfīs, a rosary around his neck, and a white turban on his head, walking with a cane: simple Sūfī clothes, with no hint of a desire to seek fame, or any innovation. His outward manner is that of the prophetic Sunnah, and his inward state is focussed on the oneness of Allah. His state shows his purity, and his loyalty, and his sincerity, may Allah be pleased with him, and cause him to be pleased, and extend for us his life.

He holds an annual gathering in his *zāwiya* in Zaghanghan, during the month of the Prophet's birth ﷺ, Rabī' al-'Awwal. It is attended by many hundreds of *fuqarā*, who come from all over Morocco to celebrate the birth of the best of creation ﷺ. The Shaykh always leads the remembrance and the singing of spiritual odes at these occasions, despite his age and ill-health, and he is still to be seen in the centre of the circle in the *ḥaḍra*, guiding the *fuqarā* therein, as he has been doing for most of his life. If guests come to see him, he greets them heartily, with generosity and hospitality. When guests from overseas attend a gathering, he always insists that they be brought to the front to sit close to him, so he can help them feel welcome. He encourages his guests to eat well, and makes sure they have everything they need. He often says: 'Eat well, so that you have strength to remember Allah well!'

His teachings, may Allah preserve him

When the Shaykh gathers with his disciples, visitors often remark on their discipline. They all sit cross-legged, with their faces turned down and their hands in their laps, with their eyes closed. When the Shaykh speaks, there is utter silence from the people gathered, the only sounds coming from the sobs of those who are moved to tears by his words.

His spiritual teaching is generally imparted by means of stories about the great men and women who have trodden the spiritual path in the past. The main emphasis of his teaching is the importance of the remembrance of Allah, and keeping the company of the other disciples. He constantly encourages his disciples to remain close together. He has often said that keeping the company of the brethren is the highest of spiritual exercises, and gives benefit to the disciple that no litany can, even the Supreme Name, if it is performed without keeping their company. This, the Shaykh says, is because maintaining the company of the brethren results in consistency in one's state; whereas being separated from them may cause even those of high states to regress.

The Shaykh is deeply concerned with preserving the correct tone of the *zāwiya*. When people gather together for an event, they may fall into idle chat. The Shaykh stresses that the *zāwiya* is a place intended solely for the remembrance of Allah, and that if the brethren wish to talk about the affairs of this worldly life, it is better that they go out to talk, and return to the *zāwiya* when they are finished. The Shaykh himself sits in silence for long periods, speaking only to impart spiritual teachings, or to make remembrance of Allah.

His works, may Allah preserve him

The Shaykh has composed many poems, which are sung by the *fuqarā* along with those of his Shaykh, and of the other Shaykhs of the spiritual chain of transmission of the order. Some of Sīdī al-Būzīdī's poems make mention of the unique characteristics of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and make his praise. Others concern the spiritual teachings of the order, and the love of the righteous. In others, he praises his Shaykh, Moulay Sulaymān ة, and describes his states.

Once, the *fuqarā* went with the Shaykh to Tangiers. They were sitting with a scholar of the Islamic sciences who lived in the city. They began to sing spiritual odes, and sang the Shaykh's poem *Ayyuha al-Rasūl al-Amjad*, a long poem comprised of stanzas of four lines ordered in accordance with the Arabic alphabet, each stanza ending with the words *Ya Muhammad!* The scholar did not know the poem, and when they finished, he said: 'See the state of those who went before us! See the love they had for their Prophet ﷺ!' He had assumed that the poem

was written by one of the great masters of old. One of the *fuqarā* said: ‘What would you say if you knew the man who wrote this poem is sitting here before you?’ He gestured to the Shaykh. The scholar approached the Shaykh, and kissed his forehead, saying: ‘I did not know that such people remained on the face of the earth.’

The Shaykh has also written two books:

- *Ittiḥāf Dhawī al-Nuhī wa al-Başā’ir*, a collection of the biographies of Shaykh Aḥmad al-‘Allāwī and several other Shaykhs from the order, including his own Shaykh Moulay Sulaymān.
- *Muḥajjat al-Dhākirīn fī al-Radd ‘alā al-Munkirīn*, a presentation of the evidences from the Quran and Sunnah to support the validity of many Sūfī practices.

He has also written several epistles in which he answers questions put to him regarding aspects of the Sacred Law.

He continues to compose new poems, which he brings to every special religious occasion, making every meeting we have with him a cause for celebration.

May Allah preserve him, and may He send his benedictions and salutations upon our master Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allah, and upon his family, and his companions, and his descendents; and upon the inheritors of his legacy, the Awliyā of Allah.

*I know of those who, by their rank,
Loom high above the brows of men.
Though I may not be one of these,
I have esteem through loving them.*

