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Sufism Amongst the Cameleers

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Introduction

This talk aims to introduce the Cameleer manuscripts in Australia and highlight their adherence to Sufism. After an introduction to the importance of the Cameleers in Australia and the difficulties of the existing assertions of Sufism amongst the Cameleers. We will provide an overview of the existent Cameleer manuscripts which, despite their rarity, provide an important yet unexamined insight into the spirituality of the Cameleers. The discussion will then explore the elements of Sufism within the manuscripts and how this indicates the strongest evidence of Sufism amongst the Cameleers to date.

The Cameleers

Between 1860 and 1920 approximately 20,000 camels were imported into Australia, with 2,000-4,000 Cameleers being utilised to manage what was deemed an unruly beast.[1] The study of Australia's cameleer heritage presents some challenges. It must be acknowledged "little remains of the heritage of Australia's

[1] Hanifa Deen, "Excavating the Past: Australian Muslims," *The La Trobe Journal* 89 (2012): 63 – 64; Anthony H. Johns and Abdullah Saeed, "Muslims in Australia: The Building of a Community," in *Muslim Minorities in the West*, eds. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Jane I. Smith (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 2002), 197.

Muslim cameleers" and "theirs is a fragmentary history of an era that has almost slipped from view, but which has been critically important in Australia's national story."[2] The limitations regarding available records are further constrained by the view that "in many ways the cameleers were treated as being of secondary importance to the camels, thus the records of camel importations are often more detailed than those that pertain to the Muslim handlers who made it all possible."[3] They represent "the earliest of the many ethnic groups that have come to constitute a Muslim presence in today's Australia,"[4] making important contributions to Australia as a nation and to Australian Islam. The Cameleers came to Australia on temporary work contracts to tend and drive the camels that were used "as a major form of transport across much of mainland Australia."[5] The Cameleers transported almost anything, including food, mail, pianos, and even houses. They accompanied numerous exploratory expeditions, opened the otherwise inaccessible outback, established a network of tracks that later became the main roads, and were vital for the development of key infrastructure. The Cameleers were so proficient in delivering goods that it was said their camel trains could be timed to the hour. There are numerous instances of the Cameleers and their deliveries saving townships during times of drought, when the bullock teams could not travel due to the amount of feed they needed to carry, and during times of flood, due to the ground being too soft for the bullock carts to travel. While their history is not well known, the importance of the Cameleers for the development of Australia cannot be underestimated. Most drivers hailed from different provinces of what later became Pakistan, such as Baluchistan, Punjab, the Sindh, the Northwest Frontier Province and the protectorate Kingdom of Afghanistan,[6] as well as other parts of India and what was to later become Bangladesh, all areas with rich heritages of Sufism. While it is

[2] Philip Jones and Anna Kenny, *Australia's Muslim Cameleers* (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 2007), 15.
[3] Rebecca Parkes, "Traces of the Cameleers: Landscape Archaeology and Landscape Perception," *Australasian Historical Archaeology* 27 (2009): 88.
[4] Johns and Saeed, "Muslims in Australia," 197.
[5] Parkes, "Traces of the Cameleers," 87.
[6] Hanifa Deen, "Excavating the Past," 64.

acknowledged that a majority of the Cameleers were Muslim, there is a recurrent hint by most scholars of a connection between the Cameleers and Sufism, though they lack explicit evidence for such a connection.

The Problem with Existing Assertions of Sufism Amongst the Cameleers

Exploring the early history of Sufism in Australia amongst the Cameleers presents some challenges. First and foremost, from an academic perspective Sufism is difficult to define, with "its definitions featur[ing] in practically every Western academic study or Muslim religious tractate directly or indirectly relevant to the subject" and "each such definition reflect[ing] the intellectual or devotional position of the defining subject."[7] Additionally, "ordinarily, a 'Sufi Muslim' is hard to distinguish from a 'non-Sufi Muslim'"[8] due to the differences between the two often being in degree, and not in kind. As "the Sufi heritage is an 'inner' or 'hidden' dimension of Islam, its members and their specific practices are often indistinguishable from the general Muslim community, at least to the non-Muslim observer" and, for this reason, "have generally experienced a degree of anonymity in Australia, a tendency that makes a traditional narrative history of Sufism in Australia a somewhat challenging task.[9] Nevertheless, this is what has been attempted by various scholars without the requisite knowledge of Islamic, and specifically Sufic, orthopraxy.

[7] Alexander Knysh, "Definitions of Sufism as a Meeting Place of Eastern and Western 'Creative Imaginations," in *Sufism East and West*, Eds. Jamal Malik and Saeed Zarrabi-Zadeh (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 69.
[8] Milad Milani, "Sufism in Oceania (Australia and New Zealand)," in *Sufism in Western Context*, Eds. Marcia K. Hermansen and Saeed Zarrabi-Zadeh (Leiden: Brill, 2023), 378.
[9] Milad Milani and Adam Possamai, "Sufism, Spirituality and Consumerism: The Case Study of the Nimatullahiya and Naqshbandiya Sufi Orders in Australia," *Contemporary Islam* 10 (2015), 69.

The history of Sufism in Australia has, aside from studies on the Cameleer manuscripts, been scarcely examined. It has been suggested by Milani and Possamai "the history of the arrival of Islam to Australia begins with the arrival of Indonesian and Afghan visitors and migrants … While the cultures of these early arrivals possess a strong Sufi heritage, Sufism was formally introduced to Australia in 1927 through non-Muslim representation."[10] Though this position has since been reassessed, stating "the first Southeast Asian encounter (the fishermen and the Cameleers) [is] where we find an infused Sufi practice as part and parcel of Islamic practice"[11] Milani holds "the earliest recorded presence of Sufism in Australia and New Zealand is connected to the teaching of Inayat Khan (1882-1927)" for, despite the "Sufi-infused Islamic practice of the Macassar fishermen and later the Afghan Cameleers," the later are presumed to have been "neither promoting nor teaching Sufism per se."[12] This echoes Genn's position, who states Inayat Khan's Sufi Order of the West "for over 50 years this was virtually the only Sufi order in the West and the only group readily available to Westerners,"[13] echoed by Kerkhove's description of this movement as "Australia's first Sufi group."[14] Milani concludes this matter in stating, "nor do we take this as a period [the time of the Cameleers] where Sufism was intentionally being promoted and/or disseminated on foreign soil, but rather its presence abroad was purely an accident of history, and ultimately, inconsequential."[15] Such a dismissive views needs reevaluating.

Despite suggestions there was little of significance to be found within their spiritual practices, there has repeatedly been assertions there were Sufi practitioners amongst the Muslim Cameleers. Rajkowski

[10] Milani and Possamai "Sufism, spirituality and consumerism," 69.
[11] Milad Milani, "Sufism in Oceania," 378.
[12] Ibid., 379.
[13] Celia Anne Genn, "The Development of a Modern Western Sufism," in *Sufism and the "Modern" in Islam*, eds. Martin von Bruinessen and Julia Day Howell (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 257.
[14] Ray Kerkhove, *Francis Brabazon Collection: Significance Assessment Report* (Woombye: Avatar's Abode, 2008), 3.
[15] Milad Milani, "Sufism in Oceania," 379.

suggests "it is very likely that 'Sufis' were among the more devout Mohammedan cameleers"[16] and cites Keith Preston as stating, "Most Afghan Muslims were followers of Sufism and the Afghans who arrived in Australia in the early 1890s would have imitated what they experienced in their Moslem or Sufi mosques in their homeland,"[17] without providing specific evidence for these assertions. Rajkowski further asserts that "during empire building of colonies with an Anglo-Saxon language dominance the colonial narrative of Australian cameleers excludes identifying aspects of Sufism, which was an inner dimension of Islam in Afghanistan."[18] Despite the accurate observation that the colonial narrative showed little interest in the diversified religious practices of the Cameleers, it is shortsighted in identifying Sufism solely with Islam in Afghanistan and it fails to acknowledge some of the fleeting glimpses into the religious practices of the Cameleers that can be gained through the newspaper reports of the period. Haveric states,

> *it would be misleading to consider early Afghan settlers only as camel drivers and hawkers. Among them, there were also successful explorers, merchants, scholars and scribes, polyglots, religious leaders and Sufis, social activists, healers, craftsmen of various fields, different artists including musicians, athletes, a range of professionals and businessmen, entrepreneurs and even philanthropists.*[19]

Further adding,

[16] Pamela Rajkowski, *In the Tracks of the Camelmen*. 2nd ed. (St Mays: Openbook Howden Print & Design, 2021): 246.
[17] Ibid., 250 n.13.
[18] Ibid., 246.
[19] Dzavid Haveric, *History of Islam and Muslims in Australia: Early Encounters, Settlements and Communities Prior to the Mid-1940s*, (Australia: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2019): 74.

> *The heterogeneity within Muslim communities was reflected in the festivals. The polyethnic festivity embraced Muslim settlers of whatever ethnic background – Afghans, Indians, Bengalese, Turks, Arabs, Javanese, Malays as well as Englishmen with Sufi convictions. Such Islamic festivals usually attracted from 50 to 150 worshippers. During these festivals the three major sects – Sunni, Shia and Sufi – took part.*"[20]

Additionally, "these Muslims were mostly Indians; however, there were a number of 'Arabs and Englishmen who belonged to the Sufi sect'"[21] and "there were Arabs and English Muslims of a certain 'Sufi sect' in Melbourne."[22] Again, "although in most historical accounts the Muslim house of prayer in Broken Hill was referred to as a mosque, different newspapers, such as the *Australasian*, mentioned it as a *zaweya* (*tekke* or Sufi lodge), a place for Sufi gatherings. It further described: 'it was situated near a running stream, so that worshippers may easily perform the elaborate ablutions which are necessary'" where "visitors could catch a glimpse of 'the mysticism of the Ganges and the far-off hills of Afghanistan.'"[23] These points are taken from newspaper articles and, while interesting and relevant to the topic at hand, Haveric does not supply deeper analysis to establish the accuracy of such assertions nor are they furnished with additional supporting evidence.[24] Haveric further asserts "the Bengali Lascars introduced the Qādirīyyah order to Australis's inland regions,[25] without providing explicit evidence for

[20] Ibid., 171 – 72.
[21] Ibid., 175.
[22] Ibid., 162.
[23] Ibid., 156.
[24] This, unfortunately, is characteristic of Haveric's work. For instance, he asserts "Sufi Murshid Ali El Senossi of the Burhaniyya-Dasuqiyya-Shadhuliyya order [and Director of the Almiraj Sufi and Islamic Study Centre] established his first Sufi centre in Perth – it was a coffee shop on the corner of a street. It was like a Sufi Centre … their Sufi centre moved to the old Broken Hill Mosque" (Haveric, *Muslims Making Australia Home* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2019): 238). A search of the Almiraj Sufi and Islamic Study Centre website clearly shows a) the bookshop established in Perth was not a coffee shop and b) the Sufi Centre in Broken Hill is not located at the historic, Cameleer built Broken Hill Mosque. Such assertions highlight a lack of scholarly nuance and academic rigor.
[25] Dzavid Haveric, *Muslims Making*, 226.

this assertion. Despite subsequent research supporting Qādiri adherents amongst the Cameleers,[26] Haveric's assertion a) provides no evidence for this assertion and b) there is no evidence that supports the view this was specifically, or only, amongst the Bengali Lascars.

Khatum's identification of a Cameleer artifact lithograph of *Kasasol Ambia*, previously mislabelled as a Qur'an, at Broken Hill is also identified as a Sufi text without substantive evidence.[27] While loose allusions to *Kasasol Ambia* being a Sufi work abound in Khatum's work, the closest she comes to explicitly stating it is in in the statement "while many readers were discarding Sufi stories at this historical juncture, an 1895 edition of *Kasasol Ambia* captivated one traveller to the Australian colonies."[28] Despite mentioning "Sufi texts," "Sufi epistemes," "Sufi philosophy," "Sufi narratives," and "Sufi romances," Khatum lets allusion do more work than providing evidence. Statements such as these, common amongst literature discussing the Cameleers, are both interesting and problematic. They are interesting because they highlight a possibility of Sufi practitioners amongst the Cameleers. However, due to the lack of additional evidence, such assertions are problematic at best.

There is some evidence for Sufism amongst the Cameleers from newspaper reports of the time. For instance, an 1897 report on "the annual Mohammedan festival" following the month of Ramadan there were "a number of Arabs and Englishmen who are really Mohammadans, but they belong to what is known as 'the Sufi sect'," clarifying that "the Sufis are mystics and philosophers, and represent the highest grade of Mohammedanism."[29] That there are reportedly Indians, Arabs, and Englishmen who, in 1897,

[26] See Abu Bakr Sirajuddin Cook and Rami Dawood, "On the History of Sufism in Australia: A Manuscript from the Broken Hill Mosque," *Journal of Sufi Studies* 11 (2022).
[27] Samia Khatun, *Australianama: The South Asian Odyssey in Australia* (London: C Hurst and Co Publishers, 2018): 2.
[28] Ibid., 33.
[29] "Our Melbourne Letter," *Hay Standard and Advertiser for Balranald*, March 20, 1897, 2.

belonged to a "Sufi sect" directly contradicts the view that "while the cultures of these early arrivals possess a strong Sufi heritage, Sufism was formally introduced to Australia in 1927 through non-Muslim representation"[30] and contrary to the previously mentioned assertion that the Sufi Order of the West was the first only group readily available to Westerners"[31] or "Australia's first Sufi group."[32] As noted above, in 1922 it was reported that at the camel camps of Broken Hill "you can glimpse the mysticism of the Ganges and the far-off hills of Afghanistan"[33] and in 1926 it was reported there is "a Zaweya in Broken Hill (N.S.W.)," a "Zaweya is a place of prayer, or 'prayer corner', placed near a running stream, so that worshippers may perform easily the elaborate ablutions which are necessary."[34] While interesting for the study of Sufism in Australia that such reports exist within Australia's early print media, these are not, without further corroborating evidence, sufficient for establishing the practice of Sufism amongst the Cameleers.

Aside from general allusions to Sufism amongst the Cameleers, there are some individuals singled out as possible Sufi practitioners. Individuals such as Abdul Karim,[35] Bejah Dervish, Mohamet Allum,[36] Mullah Merban,[37] Mullah Sher Ali,[38] and Mohamed Hasan Musakhan have all been alluded to as having links with Sufism with the existing literature. Repeatedly within the existing literature the best supporting

[30] Milad Milani, Adam Possamai, and Firdaus Wajdi, "Branding of Spiritual Authority and Nationalism in Transnational Sufism" in *Religions, Nations, and Transnationalism in Multiple Modernities*, eds. Patrick Michel, Adam Possamai, and Bryan S. Turner (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2017), 207.
[31] Genn, "The Development," 257.
[32] Kerkhove, *Francis Brabazon Collection*, 3.
[33] "Back and Beyond," *The Australian Worker*, March 22, 1922, 5.
[34] "Moslem Mosque," *The Australasian*, March 13, 1926, 48.
[35] Dzavid Haveric, *Muslims Making*, 226; Rajkowski, *In the Tracks*, 246; Christine Stevens, *Tin Mosques and Ghan Towns*. 2nd ed. (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1989): 198; Jones and Kenny, *Australia's Muslim Cameleers*, 189.
[36] Stevens, *Tin Mosques*, 198; Rajkowski, *In the Tracks*, 246; Dzavid Haveric, *History of Islam*, 101; Daud Abdul-Fattah Batchelor, "Mahomet Allum: Australia's Leading Herbalist-Benefactor," *Australian Journal of Islamic Studies* 3:3 (2018): 127.

[37] Dzavid Haveric, *Muslims Making*, 226.
[38] Dzavid Haveric, *History of Islam*, 157.

evidence has been listed as cultural influences, which is circumstantial at best. More often than not, these allusions have been made without providing references and are left unsubstantiated.

The existing assertions of Sufism amongst the Cameleers create a dilemma. While agreeing with the conclusion there were practitioners of Sufism amongst the Cameleers, the evidence for such a position is not supported by sufficient evidence in existing scholarship. There are problems even if as wide a net as possible is cast and Sufism is defined in the same manner as Kynsh, who states, "our own position regarding the issue of defining Sufism privileges inclusion over against exclusion" with "events, personalities and practices that various groups or observers (both insiders and outsiders) associate with Sufism should be included into its definition unless there are compelling reasons not to do so."[39] Whilst there are benefits to being inclusive, such definitions are liable to become so broad as to be rendered meaningless and are perhaps better placed as "Suficate," being to Sufism as "Islamicate" is to Islam. Even if assertions that someone was associated with Sufism, as is most often evident in existing scholarship, places them within the sphere of Sufism, it brings to bear little more than a mere assertion and provides minimal, if any, evidence of what this might mean in terms of that individual's beliefs and practice. To overcome this, despite the dearth of materials, artifacts become increasingly important because it gives something concrete that can be interpreted in light of what may be considered the boundaries of Sufic orthopraxy and belief. Manuscripts are one such artifact that can be examined irrespective of their place of origin, for if they were written in Australia they can be seen as such importance as to have been produced or reproduced while the diasporic community resided in Australia and if they were written in the country of the owner's origin then they can to be seen as being of such importance to warrant

[39] Knysh, "Definitions of Sufism," 69.

travelling with. For this reason, identifying and examining Cameleer manuscripts are of vital importance for determining what, if any, evidence there is for the practice of Sufism amongst the Cameleers.

The Manuscripts

To date, only three manuscripts with strong connections to the Cameleers have been identified. Two at the Cameleer built Broken Hill Mosque, and one found in the Cameleer funded Perth Mosque. While attempts have been made to source and identify additional Cameleer manuscripts, no other examples have been forthcoming and studies of the existent examples of Cameleer manuscripts have not been included in the bulk of the available literature on the Cameleers.

The Broken Hill Mosque Manuscript

The unassuming Broken Hill Mosque Manuscript was the first Cameleer manuscript to be identified and studied. It is a small work, both in size and length. The work is written in a clear and readable Arabic script and has vowels throughout the manuscript, with an occasional word in Persian. The first half of the manuscript mostly consists of the author's genealogy (*nasab*), showing the author, Ahmed al-Qādirī to be a descendent of both Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, founder of the Qādiriyya Sufi Order, and the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ through Hasan ؓ. It is important to note the Qādiriyya Sufi Order was one

of the first Sufi Orders to be established and continues to exist across the globe today. The next section contains the author's spiritual chain (*silsila*) and a *hadith qudsi*, a Divine saying on the tongue of the Prophet Muhammad, emphasising the "the word of Divine Oneness" (*kalimat al-tawhid*). The importance of a *silsila* with in Sufism cannot be overlooked as it documents the "continuity in authority and legitimacy" within a Sufi order and traces an order's "spiritual pedigree back through a succession of major shaykhs as far back as the Prophet."[40] In this sense, a *silsila* can be thought of as "the Sufi counterpart of the *isnad* (chain of transmitters) that assured the veracity of sayings of the Prophet"[41] for "completeness and authenticity of the initiatic chain is indispensable to the legitimacy of anyone claiming to be a Sufi Shaykh."[42] The author provides a licence (*ijaza*) for the litany (*wird*) of "the statement of Divine Oneness" (*kalimat al-tawhid*), being the repetition of this phrase 165 times "after every obligatory prayer" and "during all other times, considering what is easy." The manuscript concludes with a section on the titles of Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī and then a list of the children of Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, though neither of these lists are comprehensive. The manuscript states it was written in 1322AH/1901CE. The manuscript follows the general outline of Burton's "Specimen of a Murshid's Diploma, in the Kadiri Order of the Mystic Craft El Tasawwuf," with some variances.[43]

The Perth Mosque Manuscript

The Perth Mosque Manuscript is smaller in size and over five times the length of the Broken Hill Mosque Manuscript. It was uncovered by Murshid F. A. Ali ElSenossi, Spiritual Director of the Almiraj Sufi and

[40] John Renard, *Historical Dictionary of Sufism* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 187.
[41] Ibid., 187.
[42] Cyril Glasse, *The New Encyclopedia of Islam* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2013), 499.
[43] Richard F. Burton, *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to El-Medinah and Meccah*, vol. 2 (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1855), 341–46.

Islamic Study Centre and Shaykh within the Burhāniyya Dasūqiyya Shādhuliyya Sufi Order, in a hole in a basement wall of the Perth Mosque and is currently in the private collection of Shaykh Farid Safi, representative of Murshid F. A. Ali ElSenossi in Western Australia. The work is written in a scrawling script, with few vowels, shifting between Persian and Arabic. The text is predominantly in Persian and the Arabic sections are predominantly verses of Qur'an and supplications (*du'a*). The manuscript opens with several stories that refer to some of the supplications that occur later in the manuscript. The manuscript contains prayers that invoke four *silsila*s, being Chishti, Suhrawardi, Qādirī, and Kubrawi. The Qādirī *silsila* is the only complete spiritual genealogy within this manuscript. Following the *silsila*s there is a selection of additional supplications (*du'a*) and prayers, including the times they should be performed and their uses.

The Broken Hill Notebook

The third manuscript is held at the Broken Hill Mosque and has been listed within the catalogue of the Broken Hill Historical Society as a "Notebook." Again small in size, and, if complete, it would be a similar length to the Perth Mosque Manuscript. The text is predominantly in Urdu, with Arabic used for verses of Qur'an and supplications (*du'a*), and a few phrases in Farsi. The manuscript consists of three treatises, the second and third of which appear to be complete. The first treatise is severely damaged, with many of the initial folios torn out, and the existing folios detail several actions to bring about benefit. It is unclear from the remaining folios what the intended purpose of some the recommendations refer to as it reads obscurely, e.g. "Another/next method: Bring some soil from where the vulture ventures, and from there place it on a food tray. One must eat from the tray. Not just the pious one, but all will laugh like madmen." All of these involve some degree of supernatural involvement where the intended outcome

does not follow as an apparent consequence of the methodology suggested. The second treatise describes itself as a "book of bibliomancy (*fālnāma*)," use to divine is a course of action is deemed beneficial. *Falnama* typically occur in two prominent formats, "a large-scale illustrated codex, fully independent of the Qur'an, wherein a plethora of painted illustrations are paired with longer passages" or "a ruled grid inserted at the end of a Qur'anic manuscript wherein the letters of the Arabic alphabet are arranged schematically and paired with short auguries."[44] While not connected to a Qur'anic manuscript, the second treatise, after a brief introduction providing instructions for use, has a table of the Arabic alphabet followed by auguries for each of the letters that pair them to specific verses of the Qur'an, the outcome, and additional recommendations. The third treatise contains "the Supplication of the Treasure of the Throne (*du`ā'-yi ganj al-`arsh*)," also known as *duʿā' kanz al-ʿarsh*, and begins with a frame story reporting the history of the supplication. Throughout the manuscript are several magic squares and additional tables. The first and third treatises have colophons, with the first stating it was completed on Sha'ban 14, 1272/April 19, 1856, and the third completed on Safar 17, 1279/August 13, 1862. This would mean it is likely that all three of the texts were composed in the owner's homeland and were later brought to Australia.

Sufism Amongst the Cameleers

Throughout the manuscripts there are many elements of Sufism present. Consistent amongst these manuscripts are an association with the Qādirīyya Sufi order (*tariqa*). This is explicit in both the Broken Hill Mosque and the Perth Mosque Manuscripts through the inclusion of spiritual genealogies (*silsilas*),

[44] Heather Coffey, "Diminuitive Divination and the Implications of Scale: A Minature Qur'anic *Falnama* of the Safavid Period," in *Minature Books: The Format adn Function of Tiny Religious Texts*, Kristina Myrvold and Dorina Miller Parmenter eds. (Sheffield: Equinox, 2019), 73.

connecting them to what "is commonly viewed as the first of the [Sufi] brotherhoods to emerge in the form of a structured organisation"[45] and is "one of the oldest of all mystical [Sufi] orders."[46] In addition to the *silsila*s, there are implicit evidences of affiliation with the Qādirīyya Sufi order. Within the Perth Mosque Manuscript is a prayer asking for the assistance of the Prophet Muhammad and by ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī. The prayer, and its associated practices, is:

> [59r, ٦٧] Between nightfall and retiring, two units of prayer. In the first unit after the Fātiḥa, recite "Say, 'Oh disbelievers'" eleven times; in the second unit, Ikhlās eleven times. After the salām, praise [the Prophet] eleven times, take eleven steps in the direction of ʿIrāq and remain standing. Praise [the Prophet] eleven times, say Yā Allāh eleven times, and one time say "My God, for the sake of the Shaykh of the Princes, Muḥyī al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī; my God; for the sake of the World's Succour, Muḥyī al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī; my God, for the sake of Shah Muḥyī al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī; [59v, ٦٨] my God, for the sake of these exalted and ennobled names, fulfil my need for the good, by Your kindness and the perfection of Your generosity, by the Unlettered Prophet and his august family, by Your mercy, oh Most Merciful of those who show mercy!

Saint veneration, as is apparent within this supplication, is validated by both mainstream Sufism and most jurists, considered by many to be a normal aspect of premodern Islam.[47] However, more than a form of veneration, this is a mode of seeking assistance (*istighatha*) or drawing near by a means

[45] Franklin Lewis, "Tariqa," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: MacMillan Reference, 2005), 9007.
[46] Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 2, *From Sixteenth Century to Modern Century* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manharlal Publishers, 2009): 54.
[47] Vincent J. Cornell, *Realm of the Saint: Power and Authority in Moroccan Sufism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998): 94.

(*tawassul*).[48] This is a practice that has been maintained by the practitioners of Sufism, as is evident by the array of collected litanies of each Sufi order (*awrad*) and by those who argue for the permissibility of this practice within the modern age. Similarly, within the Broken Hill Notebook is the recommendation to "write down the forty *kāf's* (*chehel kāf*) and wear [as an amulet] around the neck," referring to a supplication (*du'a*) most frequently associated with, and originating from, Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī. With no equivalent practices consistently associated with for the founders of other Sufi orders, it appears there is a consistent and direct affiliation of the Cameleer manuscripts with the Qādiriyya Sufi order.

Most remarkably for its relevance to the history of Sufism in Australia, the Qādirī *silsila*s of the Broken Hill Mosque and the Perth Mosque Manuscripts trace their spiritual genealogy through Shaykh Ḥasan al-Qādirī. This is almost certainly the same individual as Sayyid Hasan Gailani (so anglicized). A descendant of ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, born in Baghdad in 1862, travelled through British India, moved to Afghanistan in 1905, and became the main authority of the Qādirī order there.[49] The locations Hasan Gailani travelled also correspond to areas the Cameleers came from.[50] The Gailani family continues to maintain a significant spiritual and political influence in Afghanistan to this day.[51] Whilst it is currently unclear what relationship either Ahmed al-Qādirī, author of the Broken Hill mosque manuscript, or ʿAbd al-Salām al-Qādirī, first in the Perth Mosque manuscript Qādirī *silsila*, had to Sayyid Hasan Gailani, the manuscripts indicate both familial and spiritual ties. With the possibility of one or both manuscript

[48] Habib Kazim al-Saqqaf, *Seeking Allah Through the Means of Tawassul & Istigatha*, trans Imran Rahim (United Kingdom: Islamic Village, 2017): 2-3; Dawud Ibn Sulayman al-Naqshabandi al-Baghdadi, *Guardian of the Cloak*, trans. Amjad Mahmood (Hertfordshire: Heritage Press, 2015): 100.
[49] Abdul Rashid, "The Afghan Resistance," in *Afghanistan The Great Game Revisited*, ed. Rosanne Klass (London: Freedom House, 1987): 212 – 16.
[50] Joshua Nash, "Linguistic Spatial Violence: The Muslim Cameleers in the Australian Outback," *Refract: An Open Access Visual Studies Journal* 1 (2018): 105.
[51] Rashid, "The Afghan Resistance," 212 – 16.

authors being amongst the Cameleers, there is an interesting possibility there were descendants of Shaykh ʻAbd al- Qādir al- Jīlānī residing in Australia during the late 19th or early 20th centuries.

Additionally, there are multiple other indications within these manuscripts that highlight a connection to Sufism, providing strong evidence the original owners were affiliated with a Sufi order. The Broken Hill Mosque Manuscript referred to the manuscript recipient, Ahmed Akbar Khān al-Afghānī, as a "dervish", a term that has "come to refer more loosely to the generality of Sufis."[52] With the exception of one, all of the figures specifically mentioned within the Perth Mosque Manuscript have places of prominence within most, if not all, Sufi orders. The practices advocated for within the Perth Mosque Manuscript and the Broken Hill Notebook place them within the broader milieu of Sufism and Islamic scholarship that connected the Indian Ocean World with Central and Western Islamic Lands from the late 17th through the early 20th centuries.

Conclusion

As additional research into Cameleer manuscripts is conducted and published, a fuller understanding of the extent of their Sufic influences will become apparent. Previous examinations of Cameleer Sufism have neither looked at the available materials through an Islamic lens nor shown sufficient insight into Sufi orthopraxy, resulting in repeated allusions without sufficient evidence or scholarly nuance for the claims made. The study of the existent Cameleer manuscripts provides artifacts from which strong evidence can be drawn to the practice of Sufism amongst the Cameleers. These manuscripts provide us

[52] John Renard, *Historical Dictionary of Sufism* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 91.

with deeper insight into Cameleer religious practice and their adherence to the Qādirī Sufi Order, along with an ability to situate them within the history of Sufism in Australia.

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