

The Darqawi Way

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Letters from the Shaykh to the fuqara'

Moulay al-'Arabi ad-Darqawi

Translated by Aisha Abdurrahman Bewley

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A Song of Welcome

Oh! Mawlay al-'Arabi, I greet you!
The West greets the West –
Although the four corners are gone
And the seasons are joined.
In the tongue of the People
I welcome you – the man of the time.
Wild, in rags, with three hats
And wisdom underneath them.
You flung dust in the enemy's face
Scattering them by the secret
Of a rare sunna the 'ulama forgot.

Oh! Mawlay al-'Arabi, I love you!
The Pole greets the Pole –
The centre is everywhere
And the circle is complete.
We have danced with Darqawa,
Supped at their table, yes,
And much, much more, I
And you have sung the same song,
The song of the sultan of love.

Oh! Mawlay al-'Arabi, you said it!
Out in the open you gave the gift.
Men drank freely from your jug.
The cup passed swiftly, dizzily –
Until it came into my hand.
I have drunk, I have drunk,
I am drinking still, the game
Is over and the work is done.
What is left if it is not this?
This wine that is not air,
Nor fire, nor earth, nor water.
This diamond – I drink it!

Oh! Mawlay al-'Arabi, you greet me!
There is no house in which I sit
That you do not sit beside me.
We are both from bel-Habib, the Ghawth,
The Great. How strange! We are
From him – you coming before, and
I coming after. He is our source.
He is our stillness, vortex, seal.
This is one hadra, one circle,
One grain of sand beneath
The sandal of Muhammad.
Salallahu alayhi wa salam.

Shaykh ' Abd al-Qadir as-Sufi ad-Darqawi



Letters of the Supreme Name, from the end-piece of a hand-written edition of the *Darqawi Way* in Ksar Souk, Morocco

Introduction

The Darqawi Way The Letters of Shaykh ad-Darqawi

This work is used in the circles of the Darqawi Way not only in Morocco but across North Africa, as well as at Darqawi zawiyas in England, the United States, Argentina, Spain, Malaysia, and Makkah. The work also serves as a very vivid and clear introduction to the great masterwork of Sufic science, *The Meaning of Man*, for its author was Sidi ‘Ali al-Jamal, the Master of Shaykh ad-Darqawi.

His letters have never before been translated into English and this translation will help increase knowledge of the great teacher throughout the world. A short extract from the letters has appeared in English but it was an odd performance marred by an intrusive masonic vocabulary that has no place in Islamic Sufism. This therefore is the first appearance of the text to contain the complete range of instructions and teachings.

The Darqawi Way has two practices which its adepts perform as part of their discipline. One is the Dance, called *hadra* or *raqs*, and the other is the *dhikr* or invocation of the Supreme Name. Referring to these, Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Habib, our noble and great Master, said in his *Diwan*:

Here are the ones (meaning the Sufis) who have obliterated their selves
and plumbed every depth in the oceans of love.

So submit to them for what you see of their ardent love,
and their dancing and singing at the invocation of
the Beloved

If you had only tasted something of the meaning of our
words

you would already be experiencing every (inner)
state.

The Dance, which is really the invocation of Allah while standing and swaying, as described in the Qur'an and also in the *hadith* literature, is usually preceded by the singing from the *Diwans* of the great Sufis. The *Diwans* of the Darqawi Way are among the most sublime in the literature of the Way. Of these, mention should be made of the *Diwan* of Shaykh al-Harraq, whose Master was Shaykh ad-Darqawi himself; the *Diwan* of Shaykh al-'Alawi of Algeria; and the renowned *Diwan* of Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Habib which is sung all round the world in the gatherings of the sufis.

The invocation of the Supreme Name is referred to in these letters many times and this work contains passages of great importance for the Darqawi *fuqara'*, for here their Imam refers to both the technique and his own personal enlightenment through its use. The significance of these references is that they refer not to the traditional method of its invocation used in the Shadhili Way, which preceded the Darqawi Way, but because they speak of the technique which Sidi 'Ali al-Jamal taught to him. He, in turn, writes that he found this method in the Shadhili texts passed on to him by his own Masters. This technique involves the visualisation of the letters of the Supreme Name – ALLAH – in the first Station of the Supreme Name, as well as certain changes in the visualisation. Far from being merely a concentration technique this method is very far-reaching in its effects, due to the meanings and secrets which Allah

has attached to the letters of His own Name.

The purpose of this great invocation is nothing less than *fana fillah* – annihilation in Allah. This central theme is expounded again and again, helping and guiding the seekers on their path to illumination. Here is a book for the adept to use, It should be studied and gone over until it is understood and until the promised states and stations of gnosis reveal themselves to the seeker. This is the meaning of the Way and the purpose of the letters. These are despatches from the battlefield of the *ruh* (spirit) in its war against the self and its ignorance. It is filled with the taste as well as the promise of victory – and to the muslims the word victory and the word opening – inner opening – are the same.

Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qadir as-Sufi ad-Darqawi

Foreword

These are the letters of the great Shaykh and famous gnostic, high in rank and noble of lineage, who built the supports of his Tariqa on the basis of obscurity and *adab*: Abu ‘Abdillah, Sayyidi Muhammad al-‘Arabi b. Sayyidi Ahmad al-Hasani ad-Darqawi, may Allah be pleased with him and profit us by him. Amin.

Since they have no opening address or preface they were given an opening address by the Shaykh, the Faqih, Ibn ‘Abbas, Sayyidi Ahmad b. Muhammad az-Zagari, al-Hasani, called Ibn al-Khayyat. The discourse contains something about the states of the Shaykh. May Allah give benefit to all by His favour and generosity. Amin.

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate. May Allah bless our Lord and Master, Muhammad, and his family.

Praise be to Allah who placed in every age one who calls to Allah and is a guide to the treatment of the sicknesses of the selves and to the path of putting hearts right. Whoever answers his call is happy. Whoever is arrogant or shy continues with the hobbling-cord of his sickness. Glory be to Him! He purifies the hearts of whomever He wills of His slaves and makes them Imams in the path of guided conduct. They travel on the Path to Allah and they recognise its states. They have insight into the machinations of the self. They know its actions. Their Master has guided them to His Path after much striving. Their selves have been put at rest after struggle and suffering. They have drawn near to

their Master with sincere intention and their Master has drawn near to them as befits the sublime essence.

I testify that there is no god but Allah alone, with no partner. He teaches knowledges direct from the divine presence to whomever He wills among His slaves. I testify that Sayyiduna Muhammad is His slave and Messenger. Whoever imitates him has risen through resplendent elevations, may Allah bless him and grant him peace and his family, who did without in this abode, and acted with love for the essence of Allah – glory be to Him! It was not for good in the Garden or fear of the Fire. May He bless him with a blessing and peace by which we enter into the mesh of those who love the dutifully obedient, and by which we obtain the privilege of You along with whoever You love in the Abode of Permanence (the Next World).

These are the letters of the Shaykh, the Imam, the Ghawth who benefits the elite and the common, the famous wali and is firmly established and firmly rooted, the lofty mountain which joins the Shari'a of Muhammad and the reality, bewildered in every station of his realisation, the Cave of mankind and the shelter of the elite and common. He is the sign of the Merciful and the rarity of the age, the word of Allah from His direct presence, and the shelter of His resplendent *tajalli*-manifestation. He is the Sharif ad-Darqawi al-Hasani, the teacher, endowed with noble qualities, our lord and master al-'Arabi, may Allah give us the benefit of his *baraka* and send back some of his fragrant breezes to us. He sent the letters to those who had the benefit of his company and entered under his banner and came to his presence. He is loved by those from whom the veils have been lifted and from whom others are distant. With them, the night becomes the awakening of day. The cosmos is crushed and annihilated in their eyes since they see the

One, the Conquerer. What a contemplation it is! How sweet it is! What a station it has! How high they are!

These are letters which tell about the station of their sender and make his gnoses known in what they say. Their drink is clear and pure for the thirsty. Those kept in seclusion with them manifest the splendour of the sun to the eyes. They join words and effects, warnings and signs for consideration. The intellects do not see because of it and all examinations agree that the knowledge of their author is an overflowing sea. In them are the commands and words of the Shari'a of Muhammad, and the *Sunna* and actions of the Tariqa, and the secrets and states of the reality. All this is in the most concise phrase and exact expression and clearest indication. He wrote them according to events. The answer is according to the question. Each letter is enough for the one who has it with the greatest possible richness. It takes him to the end of hope and desire.

The one who receives these letters does not turn to any other books and means except them. O brother! grab on to them and act according to them. Take on their character. All that there is in them is the Shari'a of the master of the Messengers, the path of the wayfarers, indications of the realised gnostics who have arrived, and the ecstasies of the beloved lovers. They, like their author, are well-known and famous in every land. They are spread out as this Darqawi order is spread out, the group of the dutifully obedient.

The author of these letters is the Shaykh, the Imam, the Ghawth, the sovereign gnostic, the eternal realised one, the Shaykh of the Shaykhs. He does not seek shelter with other than his Lord and Master. He is the Hasani sharif, possessing noble qualities, our master al-'Arabi b. Ahmad ad-Darqawi. He, may Allah be pleased with him, is among our pure ones, the Sharifs, the people of the House of the Chosen Messenger from whom filth falls away. The sun