

The Gift

I have journeyed to the Zowia in Madagh for the last week of Ramadan and am guided to a room with the faqirat of France. My companions speak some English and I, a few words of French, but the heart is the language by which we communicate. My French sisters take me, with great love, under their wings.

One evening I am awakened by a gentle hand on my shoulder. "Amina", the voice whispers, Sidi Munir is meeting with the French faqirat on the terrace. He will be speaking in French, but if you want to come . . ." I move quickly from my place of rest and join my sisters moving silently in the night. Beneath us, the men are in prayer and song; This Laylatil Qadr, The Night of Power.

Sidi Munir, our Sheik's grandson is seated at a table. His face is as gentle as the moon, but his presence and voice are powerful. He asks for a question and one of our sisters speaks. His answer is endless and I imagine that he is speaking to the hearts and souls of all present. I understand only a small part of his response; "When Mary was pregnant", he says, "She didn't worry. She just kept doing her ziker".

My sister Yamin sits next to me. She leans over and speaks softly to Sidi Munir, "Une petite question" - "A little question". He does not turn to her and continues to talk.

A few minutes later Yamin whispers again, this time, with a some urgency, "Une petite question" I know what it is like to have a question that wants answering, but I have misunderstood her intention. Sidi Munir does not look at her. Now he is rising. He is going to leave. Now, for the last time, Yamin touches his arm, and asks "Une petite question". Sidi Munir turns to her. I do not need to know French to understand her words. "There is one American here who speaks English. . ."

He looks at me for a moment and then in English says, "If you want your heart to be pure, keep doing your ziker".

Sidi Munir turns and is gone.

My sister Yamin has taken her moment in time with Sidi Munir, which is to be in the presence of our beloved Sheik, and given it to me.

May Allah be well pleased with her.