

The Contemporary Islamic Religion and Society Conference Series
Fifth Conference
April 22-24, 2021
Harvard Divinity School

The Fayḍa Tijāniyya Sufi Community in the Twenty-first Century: A Major Articulation of Global Islam

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With tens of millions of adherents worldwide, the Tijāniyya Sufi order is no doubt a major articulation of global Islam. It was born in North Africa, but its center of gravity shifted to West Africa in the course of the twentieth century, and, in the 21st century, it was carried by the African diaspora to the rest of the World. Very instrumental in this spread of Tijāniyya is the action of Senegalese leader Ibrahim Niasse and his followers. In 1930, Ibrahim Niasse claimed to be the bringer of the divine flood of Ahmad al-Tijāni who would lead to the global spread of the Tijāniyya. His teachings have reached tens of millions of people worldwide.

Tijanis have written considerably about the doctrine of their order in the last two centuries since the creation of the Tijāniyya, and many biographies of prominent Tijani masters are available in Arabic. Yet, the first monograph introducing this fascinating Sufi order to a Western audience was published as recent as 1965 (Jamil Abun-Nasr's *The Tijaniyya: A Sufi Order in the Modern World* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), a work which hardly told the entire story of the Tijaniyya. It took another thirty years or so for another thorough study of this Sufi order to appear (David Robinson and Jean-Louis Triaud *La Tijaniyya: une confrérie musulmane à la conquête de l'Afrique*, Paris: Karthala, 2000). This was mostly the work of historians and Islamicists, and focusing on the spread of the Tijaniyya from North Africa to Sub-Saharan Africa.

Since not only had the Tijāniyya had spread in other continents, but the field of Tijāni studies has grown exponentially attracting scholars from all social sciences including anthropologists, political scientists, religious studies specialists, musicologists, philologists and more. Dozens of master and Ph.D. dissertations have been completed on the Tijāniyya in Western and African universities, and many works of Tijāni scholars in the Arabic language have been edited and published and/or translated in Western languages.

Furthermore, the Tijāniyya has spread in South Africa, Western Europe, North America and South East Asia where hundreds of Tijāni zāwiya have been created in recent years. Tijāni from West Africa in particular are travelling constantly between their countries of origin and those far regions to give lectures, initiate disciples and connect with like-minded Muslims in a global Sufi campaign against opponents. Tijāni shaykhs have also re-appropriated the new technologies of information and communication to reach to global audiences. Religious celebrations in West Africa are now attracting significant audience from both within and outside the continent.

The international conference: The Fayda Tijāniyya in the 21st century: A Major Articulation of Global Islam will address these new developments. Among questions that participants will address the following will be paramount? What contributions had West African scholars made in the articulation of Tijāni doctrines? How fast is the Tijāniyya, and especially, the Fayda spreading outside the African continent, and especially Western Europe, North America and



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South and South East Asia? What impact had the translation into Western languages of major Tijānī works of West African scholars such as Umar Tāl and Ibrahim Niasse having in the reception of the Tijāniyya in the World? What are the new pilgrimage routes opened by the African diaspora and connecting their host societies in the West and pilgrimage centers, especially Tijānī zāwiya in Africa? What are the new legal forms of Tijāni Sufi associations? Panelists in this conference will include scholars from various disciplines in the social sciences working on different regions of the World. It will also include some Tijani practitioners in the World. This conference will include a keynote speech, and six panels as well as a concert.

Panel 1

Epistemological foundations of Tijāniyya Sufism I

The Kitāb al-Rimāh of Umar Tāl	Farah El-Sharif, Harvard University
The Safinat al-Sa'āda of 'Umar Tāl	Amir Syed, University of Pittsburg
A New Generation of Nigerian Tijāniyya writings "L'Orientale"	Andrea Brigaglia, University of Napoli
Haqiqa Muhammdiyya in Tijani epistemology	Abdulatif Finch, University of Exeter

Panel 2

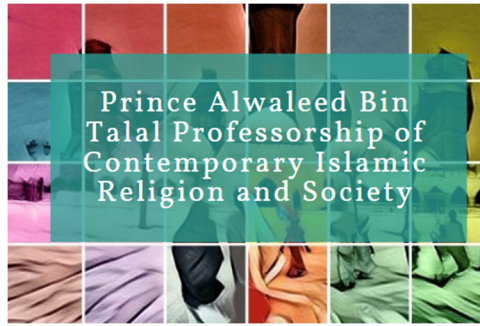
Ibrahim Niasse's intervention in major Theological debates I

The Kāshif Al-Ilbās of Ibrahim Niasse	Zachary Wright, Northwestern University
Muhammad b. Abdallah, the Pen of the Fayda	Adrian Adnan Wood Smith, Harvard University
The Jawāhir al-rasā'il of Ibrahim Niasse	Sidi Ali Niasse, Senegalese Consulate Morocco

Panel 3

Ibrahim Niasse's intervention in major Theological debates II

Sabil al-salam fi ibqa al-maqam	Salim Niang independent scholar Dakar
Poetic, Prophetic Cosmology and epistemology of Ibrahim	Oludamini Ogunnaike, University of Virginia
Gonsis Shaykh Ibrahim's poetry	Fakhruddin Owaisi, International Varsity College



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Panel 4

Global Spread of the Fayda Tijāniyya

The Fayda Tijāniyya in India

A Personal journey of a Tijani in Singapore

The Fayda leadership after Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse

The Islamic Society for Spiritual Cultivation in Boston

Tijānī festivals in Europe

Suhail Chitrath, Tijani zawia of Kerala

Khalid Ajmain Singapore

Cheikh Abdoulaye Niang, UCAD University Senegal

Armaan Siddiqi, Harvard University

Ahmad Boukar Niang, Al-Najah Institute, Senegal

Panel 5

Transnational linkages

Fez and the African Tijānis

Tiānī conversations in social medias

Between Britain, Fez and Madina Baye: The Baraka Boys

New ‘umra/ziyāra pilgrimage routes

Johara Berriane, Marc Bloch Center, Berlin

Antonio Gonzales, University of Sevilla

Amadu Kunatch, Harvard University

Ousmane Kane, Harvard University

Panel 6

New Fayda Tijānī Female leadership

Shaykha Umm Khayr Niasse of Niger

Shaykha Ruqayya Ibrahim Niasse

Shaykha Mariam Ibrahim Niasse

Female Tijānī leaders in Senegal

Zahra Hassoumi, Independent scholar, Niger

Babacar Niang, Al-Najah Institute, Senegal

Shaykh Ben Omar kane, Dar al-Quran Senegal

Joseph Hill, University of Alberta