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THE FAYḌA TIJĀNIYYA SUFI COMMUNITY IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: A MAJOR ARTICULATION OF GLOBAL ISLAM

CONVENER: OUSMANE KANE
ALWALEED PROFESSOR OF CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC RELIGION AND SOCIETY
CHAIR OF THE ISLAM IN AFRICA INITIATIVE HARVARD UNIVERSITY

https://scholar.harvard.edu/ousmanekane
With tens of millions of adherents worldwide, the Tijānīyya 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 the Tijānīyya is the action of the Senegalese Shaykh Ibrahim Niass and his followers. In 1950, Shaykh Ibrahim Niass claimed to be the bringer of the divine flood predicted by Ahmad al-Tijānī who would lead to the global spread of the Tijānīyya. His teachings have reached tens of millions of people worldwide.

Tijānīs have written considerably about the doctrine of their order in the last two centuries since the birth of the Tijānīyya, and many biographies of prominent Tijānī masters are available in Arabic. Yet the first monograph introducing this fascinating Sufi order to a Western audience was published as recently as 1965 (Jamal Abun-Nasr’s The Tijānīyya: A Sufi Order in the Modern World (London: Oxford University Press, 1965)), a work which hardly told the entire story of the Tijānīyya. It took another twenty-five years for another thorough study of this Sufi order to appear (David Robinson and Jean-Louis Triand’s La Tijānīyya: 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 Tijānīyya from North Africa to Sub-Saharan Africa.

Since, not only has the Tijānīyya spread to other continents, but the field of Tijānī studies has grown exponentially, attracting scholars from all the social sciences, including anthropologists, political scientists, religious studies specialists, musicologists, philologists, and more. Dozens of Master’s theses and Ph.D. dissertations and hundreds of articles have been completed on the Tijānīyya in Western and African universities, and many works of Tijānī scholars in the Arabic language have been edited and published and/or translated into Western languages. Furthermore, the Tijānīyya has spread in South Africa, Western Europe, North America, and South and South East Asia, where hundreds of Tijānī zawiyas have been created in recent years. Tijānīs from West Africa in particular are constantly travelling 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. Tijānī shaykhs have also re-appropriated the new technologies of information and communication to reach global audiences. Tijānī religious celebrations in West Africa are now attracting significant audiences from both within and outside the continent.

The international conference “The Fayḍa Tijānīyya in the Twenty-First Century: A Major Articulation of Global Islam” will address these new developments. Among questions that participants will answer, the following will be paramount: What contributions have West African scholars made to the articulation of Tijānī doctrines? How fast is the Tijānīyya—and especially the Fayḍa spreading outside the African continent, particularly in Western Europe, North America, and South and South East Asia? What impact is the translation into Western languages of major Tijānī works of West African scholars such as ‘Umar Tāl and Ibrahim Niass having on the reception of the Tijānīyya in the world? What are the new pilgrimage routes opened by the African diaspora that connect their host societies in the West and pilgrimage centers, especially Tijānī zawiyas in Africa? What are the new legal forms of Tijānī Sufi associations?

Panelists in this conference will include scholars from various disciplines in the social sciences working on different regions of the world as well as some Tijānī practitioners. The conference will include a welcome address and seven panels, as well as a concert performed by three leading Fayḍa Tijānīyya singers.
Debating the need for a Spiritual Guide in the Contemporary Tijaniyya. The Kāshif al-albās

Zachary Wright, Northwestern University

The Jawāhir al-Rasā‘īl of Ibrahim Niasse A Source for understanding of the Rise of the Fayda Tijāniyya

Sidi A. Niasse, Senegalese Consulate Morocco

Shaykh Ibrāhīm Niasse’s Unknowability: A Tentative Appraisal of the Import of the Transcendent First-Personality and the Tijāniyya

Abdulatif Finch, University of Exeter

Al-Būḍūr al-Sutta’; A commentary on Al-Juyūsh al-Tulla’ of Muhammad Niasse; A Rejoinder to the Anti-Tijānī Pamphlet by Khidr b. Mayaba al-Jakānī

Ousmane Kane, Harvard University
PANEL 2
SHAYKH IBRAHIM’S INTERVENTION IN MAJOR DEBATES II
Chair: Farah El-Sharif, Harvard University
APRIL 22, 2:00 PM-3:30 PM EASTERN TIME

The Theological Legacy of Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse and its Contemporaneity The Example of “Sabīl al-Salām fī l’Ibqā’ al-Waqām”
Salim Niang Independent Scholar, Dakar

All Muhammad, All the Time: The Poetic, Prophetic Cosmology and Epistemology of Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse in Three Treatises and Poems
Oludamini Ogunnaike, University of Virginia

The diwāns of Shakh al-Islam Al-Hajj Ibrahim Niasse: A Detailed Introduction
Fakhruddin Owaisi, International Peace College, South Africa

PANEL 3
GLOBAL SPREAD OF THE FAYḌA TIJĀNIYYA I
Chair: Zachary Wright, Northwestern University Qatar
APRIL 23, 8:00 AM-9:30 AM EASTERN TIME

From Medina Baye to Singapore. How the teachings of African Sufi arrived in Singapore
Khalid Aijman Singapore

Introduction and expansion of Tijaniyah in South Asia with special reference to Kerala
Suhail Chitrath, Kerala India

The metamorphosis of leadership in the Fayḍa of Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse”
Cheikh Abdoulaye Niang, UCAD

Finding Medina in Africa: Black American Muslims and African Sufi Networks
Rasul Miller
"In the Floodplains: the Islamic Society for Spiritual Cultivation and its Tijāni Roots
Armaan Siddiqi, Harvard University

Tijāni festivals in Europe
Ahmad Boukar Niang, Al-Najah Institute

The Flood in the South: The Fayda of the Tariqah Tijāniyyah in South Africa
Muhammad Milanzi

Grace Extended! Barakaboy and Young Muslim Spiritual Practice Online
Amadu Kunateh, Harvard University

Ahmad al-Tijāni of Fès: the Multivocality of a Transnational Pilgrimage Site
Johara Berriane, Marc Bloch Center, Berlin

From Dreams to Reality: African American Tijani Youth Studying in Medina Baye
Samiha Rahman

The limitless zawiya. The fayda Tijaniyya and the Social Media
Antonio de Diego González
PANEL 6  
**EPISTEMOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF TIJĀNIYYA SUFISM**

Chair: Ayodeji Oggunnaiké, Bowdoin College  
**APRIL 24, 8:00 AM-10:00 AM EASTERN TIME**

- Interauthors in the dhawq Sphere: The Prominence of Early Ottoman Egyptian Scholarship in the Kitāb al-Rimāḥ  
  Farah El-Sharif, Harvard University

- The “Nigeria Tijaniyya Project” (NijTijProj) An Assessment of the Literary Production of the Fayḍa in Nigeria  
  Andrea Brigaglia (University of Naples “L’Orientale”) & Ayesha Khan (University of Cape Town)

- Epistemic foundation of Tijāniyya in Qur’ānic verses of Dhikr: Analysis of Shaykh Dahiru Bauchi’s commentary in Nigeria (1950s -2020)  
  Umar Tahir, Columbia University

- The Zayd of the Fayḍah Muhammad Ibn al-Shaykh ‘Abdullāh and His Compilations  
  Adrian A. Wood Smith, Harvard University

PANEL 7  
**NEW FAYDA TIJĀNI FEMALE LEADERSHIP**

Chair: Armaan Siddiqi, Harvard University  
**APRIL 24, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM EASTERN TIME**

- Shaykha Ruqayya Ibrahim Niasse  
  Babacar Niang, Al-Najah Institute

- Shaykha Mariam Ibrahim Niasse  
  Ben Omar Kane, Dar al-Quran Senegal

- Shaykha Ummul Khayr Niasse of Niger  
  Sekou Aboubacar Hassoumi, Ministry of Mines of Niger

- From Hidden to Resplendently Wrapped Treasures: Tijāni Women’s Changing Spiritual Authority  
  Joseph Hill, University of Alberta
Introduction to Madiḥ poetry in West Africa: Oludamini Ogunnaike University of Virginia

3:00 PM-3:15 PM EASTERN TIME

Recitation 3:15 PM-4:15 PM

Tijani Ben Omar, Oumar Niane and Pape Oumar Niang

Singing praise poems from Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse collections of poetry:

- Dīwān Jabr al-Kasr
- Dīwān Tuḥfat atāyib al-Anfās
- Dīwān Taṣṣīr al-wuṣūl
- Dīwān Sayr al-Qalb

Tijani Ben Omar: Qad Ṭala‘al Hilālu (Dīwān Jabr al-Kasr)

Oumar Niane: Ṭabībī qarībūn (Dīwān Sayr al-Qalb)

Oumar Niane: Īwān Kirsā (Dīwān Sayr al-Qalb)

Pape Oumar Niang: Abal qalbu (Dīwān Taṣṣīr al-wuṣūl)

Pape Oumar Niang: Habānī khayrūn nāsi birran (Dīwān Sayr al-Qalb)