

SUFISM DA'AWA AND MODERNITY IN THE CIRCLE OF JAMĀ'AT AL-FAYDAH AT-TIJANIYA IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study aims to provide an example of how Jamaat al-faydah in northern Nigeria have responded to the challenges modernity through their leadership fatwa and activities, and how they transformed traditional Sufism in Northern Nigeria. By inventing new Da'awa techniques, accepting mass media for da'awa and establishing sort of new educational schools alongside traditional Qur'anic ones.

Key word : Alfaydah Congregation; Da'awa; Sufism; modernity.

A. INTRODUCTION

The Arabic root fa-ya-da from which some terms recurring very often in the language used by Niasse are derived (such as fayda afāda mufīd) literally means to overflow, to flood, to gush out, to pour out abundantly, to emanate, to spread out, to shed. It suggests an urgent outward movement implying also the idea of exuberance superabundance.

The founder of the Tijaniyyah Sūfī Order Shaykh Ahmad at-Tijani,(1150-1230AH) predicted that Divine flood would occur on his Sūfī disciples when people would be joining his Sūfī Order in multiple, Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse (1900-1975) is a Senegalese Tijani, and Sufi reformist Saint who declared himself as the Flag-bearer of this divine flood in 1937. Since then Niasse expand his Sufi activities many West African Countries, and His Followers known as Jama'at Al- Faydah.

In only a few years, the new network of Kanobased Tijani scholars known as the "people of the flood (fayda)" (in Hausa 'yan faila), building on its association with a group of dynamic traders of the same city, was able to link up with most earlier Tijani networks in the country (Borno, Nguru, Zaria, Yola, Nupeland, Ilorin) and beyond (Chad, Ghana,

Cameroon, Niger) and to absorb them within a common agenda: spreading the news that the awaited fayda had occurred at the hands of the Senegalese Ibrahim Niasse, and transmitting the latter's method of spiritual training (tarbiya), which was claimed to guarantee the aspirant the attainment of ma'rifa (divine knowledge) in an exceptionally short time.

Nowadays, Faydah network is the largest Islamic Sufi Community in the whole African Continent, Niasse attracted followers from all over West Africa and beyond, becoming probably the largest single Muslim movement in twentieth-century West Africa. yet the network is spread into the US, Europe and many Arab countries, but northern Nigeria became the stronghold of the movement.

The response by the great Sufi scholars of Faydah under the leadership of Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse (1900-1975), to the issues related to modernity is neither capitulation to modern Western civilization in the manner of liberal Muslim modernists, nor a blindly rejection of modernity without any understanding of its nature or arguments.

The argument of modernity within the Muslim movements in recent studies of Islam in the Muslim world is based on that they are modern and technically are progressive. The method of reformation within Islam; Modern Islamic movements in the Arab world generally subscribe to the ideal of a return to the way of the pious forefathers (al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ). This Salafi ideal, though it has always been part of the Muslim creed, became the hallmark of religious reform in the latter part of the nineteenth century as a reaction to the growing challenge of modernity.

B. METHODE

The formation of modernity according to researchers like Kane involved several process, each of these process brought about radical transformation effecting human social and social existence in modern

societies, in all spheres of its aspects of social, political economic and cultural life. From this point, I argue that, such process has already started in northern Nigeria before the establishment of Izala with the coming of Tijaniya revival faydah.

As we mentioned Niasse was a foreign Sufi scholar. He was invited by Emir of Kano Abdullahi Bayero, d.1953 during their meeting at Medina in 1937. However, the scholars whose became the pioneer Nigerian Faydah figures such as Abubakr Atiq d.1974, Tijani Usman d.1970 Sani Kafanga d.1989 and Usman Maihula d.1992 are considered as the founders of the movement and their scholarly works pave the way of a new Sufism in the region.

Niasse was an International Islamic figure



Apart from boosting the esoteric training that was almost extinct

within the Sufi orders in Nigeria their activities also boosted socio-economic life of Muslim in Northern Nigeria, they became first scholars to accept and boost modern publication of Islamic Books locally as well as the first to send their scholarly works to Egypt and Lebanon for publication, which became a turning point of Islamic book history in Nigeria, which since then started to migrate from handwriting copy of Manuscripts to modern publication.

C. RESULTS

Niasse's peculiar combination of facilitating access to mystical knowledge with a conscious way of tackling the exigencies of colonial and post-colonial modernity is perhaps the most important factor driving his Sufi revival.

In his response to modern issue such as using radio station to air Quran Niasse Fatwa have come positive, the book wrote by him brought a huge change in the field of mass media in northern Nigeria.

During the 1950s as Nigeria approached independence from British colonial rule in October of 1960, there was a controversial debate about the legality of reciting Qur'an through Radio and other media devices, the Emir Of Zazzau, Ja'afar ibn Ishaq is well respected Islamic scholar and emir, asserted that doing so is haram, he authored a fatwa opposing radio broadcasting of Qur'an recitation.

However, The Fayda community did not accept his view, and they wrote a letter to their spiritual leader Niasse who answered positively in two letters and later his books *Al-ḥujjah al-bāligah fī kaun itha'at al-Qur'an fī Rādiyo ṣā'iga*.

The importance of Fayda lay in their massive boosting of Islamic scholarship and literature in West Africa and in Nigeria specifically, this why Brigaglia (2014) argue that virtually the entire corpus of twentieth-century

Tijani literature from Nigeria has been produced by scholars associated with the fayda network.

D. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of Brigaglia his article is quiet interesting, he concluded after comparing the lia boosting of literary works in Nigeria under the Usman B. Fodio movement and that of Fayḍa network that the later can be rightly considered as the most remarkable phenomenon in the literary history of Nigeria after the Sokoto jihad in the early nineteenth century.

The number of titles produced by Usman, his brother ‘Abdallah, his sons Muhammad Bello, Muhammad al-Bukhari, al-Hasan, Ahmad al-Rufa’i and Abu Bakr al-‘Atiq, as well as his daughters Khadija, Maryam and Asma’u, together with their close associates and the first two generations of successors, can be assessed at about 480.

As for the Tijani writings, Brigaglia added at least five hundred writings to the several hundred titles provided in the already rich list of John O Hunwick in *Arabic Literature in Africa : The writings of central Sudanic Africa (ALA II)*.

Usually Da’awa in Nigeria starts with local Islamic schools, traditional schools such as Makarantun Allo, and Makarantun Zaure where all Muslim learning basic to advance Islamic education and Islamic morals and ethics.

Another way of da’awah is by the organizing presentation or series of lectures in a specific time, such as public Tafsir during Ramadan.

Ramadan Tafsir is one of the most important event of Islamic Da’awah nowadays in Nigeria, However, the emergence of the Salgawa Tijaniya network which later transformed to Jama’at fayda is one of the turning oint of public Tafsir in Kano city and in Nigerian system of Da’awa.

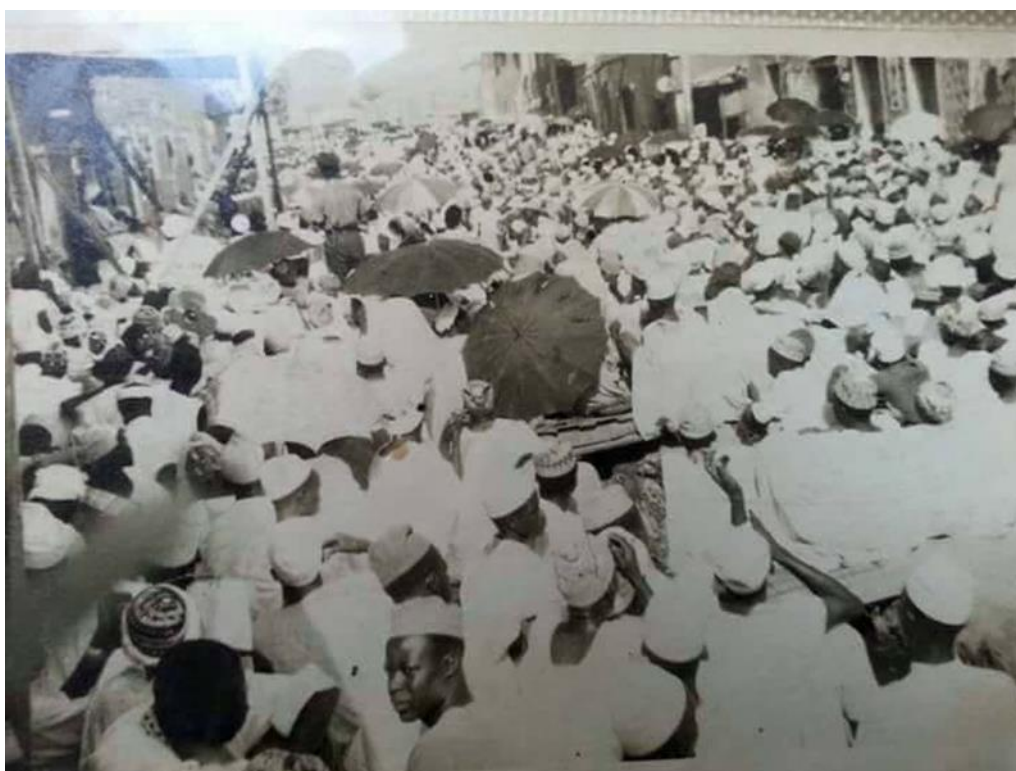
In the late 1930s, when the older tradition of tafsīr teaching at some older schools such as Jar Kasa in Kano was reaching its peak under one Mālam Shamsu’s headship, still there were only about three or four

locations in Kano where public sessions of Ramaḍān tafsīr were performed. But in the early 1960s the number of public Ramaḍān tafsīr in town could be ranged at about fifty.

This dramatic increase in the popularity of public tafsīr according to Andrea Brigalia was the result of the efforts of the scholars who, following Ibrāhīm Niasse, rallied under the banner of the fayḍa tijāniyya.

The salgāwā network, in particular, was the main responsible for popularization of tafsīr, and, at the same time, of the Tijānī ‘flood’ in Kano.

Tijani Usman gathering of Maulud



Mālam Tijānī ‘Uthmān belonged to first group of Kano scholars that travelled to Kaolack to undergo training at the hands of Shaykh Ibrāhīm Niasse.

Upon his return he started to organize annual public activities (night gatherings based on dhikr and reading of poetry during the month of Rabīʿ al-Awwal, the month of the Prophet's birthday; sessions of public Qur'ānic exegesis during the early afternoons of the month of Ramaḍān) that transformed his school into the most popular venue of Kano collective devotional life during through the 1950s and 1960s.

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