

THE SPIRIT OF GOOD MORALS

SAMPLE

Third revised edition 2016 by Fayda Books
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New translation by Talut b. Sulaiman Dawood al-Tijani

ISBN 978-0-692-82125-1

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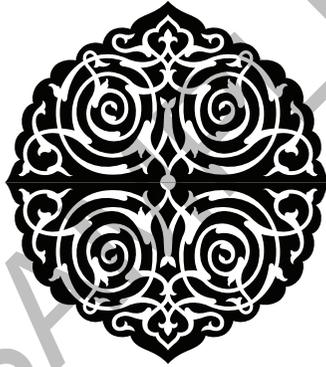
Printed and printed in the United States of America

All enquiries should be addressed to:
Fayda Books Publishing and Distribution
2741 Church St.
Atlanta, Georgia 30344
USA

www.faydabooks.com
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THE SPIRIT OF
Good Morals

روح الأئمة



SHAYKH AL-ISLAM
AL-HAJJ IBRAHIM NIASS

Revised translation by
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Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Ajib Abdus-Salaam and the organization he heads, Nasrul Ilm America. Their generous contribution helped bring this revision to life.

This revision is dedicated to their mission to keep the legacy of Shaykh Ibrahim Niass and Shaykh Hassan Cisse alive.

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Publisher's Foreword

I heard directly from the mouth of Shaykh al-Hassan Cisse these words. "For the true murid of Shaykh Ibrahim Niass, the most important book after the Holy Qur'an and Hadith literature is the *Ruhul Adab*". He went on to explain how all of what is needed to understand the external and internal knowledge of the religion is contained within this book and if followed correctly, the murid will attain perfection and complete knowledge of God. This is what motivated Fayda Books to continue revising and republishing this monumental translation.

Our beloved brother Alhaji Abdul Hakim Halim already did the majority of the hard work, years ago. He transcribed and edited the original voice recording of Shaykh Hassans' translation and commentary of his grandfathers' poem/book. May Allah reward his efforts and grant him immense benefit for making this work available to the English speaking community around the world.

I pray for the success and victory of our dear brother Talut Dawood, for this revised translation of the poem/book. He was also monumental in making available the various duas and litanies translations and transliterations. I also ask that Allah bless and uplift my brothers, Imam Fakhruddin Owaisi and Zachary Wright for helping me locate the various Ahzab (Litanies) mentioned by Shaykh Ibrahim in this poem. We re-sourced the litanies with their instructions from the *Jawahir al-Ma'ani* and the *Ahzab wa-Awrad*, to make it easy for the murids to access and use, with permission from the Shuyukh.

I thank Imam Cheikh Tidiani Cisse and Shaykh Mahy Cisse for encouraging me to continue translating and publishing the works of their grand Father, our Shaykh, the *Qutb al-Gawth* and means of access to Allah, Shaykh Ibrahim Niass. May Allah increase them and grant them all of the good of both the worlds.

Finally, I am indebted to my Shaykh and Murabbi, Shaykh Hassan Cisse, for instilling in my heart, the love for Allah and His beloved messenger. I pray that this humble effort will one day be the deed that insures my living and death as a true murid of Shaykh Ibrahim Niass. Amin

I pray this revised edition proves to be of benefit to the followers and of interest to the seekers. May Allah bless us all with a Spirit of Good Morals.

IBRAHIM AHMED DIMSON
Fayda Books

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Preface

The subject of this discussion, Shaykh al-Islam Al-Hajj Ibrahim Niasse, was a knowledgeable and talented individual and the possessor of many gifts from Allah, the Almighty. However, if we were limited to describing the Shaykh in one word, we would definitely say that the Shaykh was a muslim throughout his life, in every time, place, and situation. Most assuredly, he was a muslim doing his best to follow in the footsteps of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. He mentioned in one of his poems, “If I am asked what your Madhhab is, and who is your beloved, I will definitely answer that the Prophet ﷺ is.”

Early in his life, Shaykh Ibrahim joined the Tariqa Tijâniyya, a tariqa based purely on the Qur’an and Sunnah and can be summarized simply as a method to rule oneself according to the teachings of Qur’an and lifestyle of the Prophet ﷺ. Its founder was Shaykh Ahmad Al-Tijâni, may Allah be pleased with him, who lived from 1737 to 1815. Shaykh Al-Tijâni received it directly from the Prophet ﷺ. It should be noted, that to see the Prophet after his death is not impossible. Virtuous Muslims have, and continue see and meet him. In a hadith reported in Bukhari, the Prophet ﷺ said, “Whoever sees me in a dream has seen me in reality, because Shaytan cannot take my form.” In another report he said, “Whoever sees me in a dream will see me.”

Therefore, we should know that to see the Prophet ﷺ today is not impossible and Allah can provide this gift for His beloved and righteous servants.

Since Shaykh al-Tijâni passed, many of the Ulama of the Tariqa have come and performed their duty in propagating Islam and ex-

panding the Tariqa. People such as Shaykh Umar al-Fûti, Shaykh Muhammad al-Hafiz al-Tijâni, who was the Mauritanian Shaykh that brought the Tariqa to West Africa for the first time, Shaykh Al-Hajj Abdullahi Niase, the father of Shaykh Ibrahim, and Shaykh Al-Hajj Malik Sy. People who were contemporaries of these great leaders respected them as eminent Ulama. Whoever met them or read their writings also considered them to be highly knowledgeable.

In time, the responsibility of leadership passed to the hand of Shaykh Ibrahim Niase, who was to play an even greater role in spreading Islam and the Tariqa in that part of the world. Indeed, he has achieved accomplishments in this field that have no parallel in the history of the world. To this day, contemporaries bear witness to his achievements, whether they were with or against him.

The Tariqa Tijâniyya was a major motivating force in the life of Shaykh Ibrahim. This well-known hadith best capsulizes the intent, substance, and developmental thrust of the Tariqa Tijâniyya:

On the authority of ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), who said:

“One day while we were sitting with the Messenger of Allah (may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) there appeared before us a man whose clothes were exceedingly white and whose hair was exceedingly black; no signs of journeying were to be seen on him and none of us knew him. He walked up and sat down by the Prophet ﷺ. Resting his knees against his and placing the palms of his hands on his thighs, he said: “O Muhammad, tell me about Islam.” The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “Islam is to testify that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, to perform the Prayers, to pay the Zakat, to fast in Ramadan, and to make the Pilgrimage to the House if you are able to do so”. He said: “You have spoken rightly.” He said: “Tell me about Imân.” He said: “It is to believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Last Day, and to believe in Divine Destiny, both the good and the evil thereof.” He said: “You have spoken rightly.” He said: “Tell me about Ihsan.” He said: “It is to worship Allah as though you are seeing Him, and while you see Him not yet truly He sees you.” He said: “Then tell me about the Hour.” He said: “The one questioned about it knows no better than

the questioner.” He said: “Then tell me about its signs.” He said: “That the slave girl will give birth to her mistress and you will see the barefooted, naked, destitute herdsmen competing in constructing lofty buildings.” Then he took himself off and I stayed for a time. Then he said: “O ‘Umar, do you know who the questioner was?” I said: “Allah and His Messenger know best.” He said: “It was Gabriel ﷺ, who came to teach you your religion.” It was related by Muslim.

This Hadith makes it clear that a human being has greater needs than an animal. In the same way he needs food for his body, he also needs to feed his spirit, and the best food for the spirit is the Remembrance of Allah. Zikr provides the direct link between the servant and Allah. Surely, there is wise counsel in the saying: “The Remembrance of Allah is the means to acquire Sainthood... to be one of the Awliyâ.”

The Tariqa Tijâniyya is Based on Three Principles

1. Asking Allah for forgiveness. (It is really unconscionable for a Muslim to stop his brother in Islam from saying Astaghfirullah. None of us are infallible. The same way we do something right today, we may do it wrong tomorrow. Consequently, the Prophet ﷺ has directed us by saying, “*Your sickness is your sin and the remedy of your sickness is to say Astaghfirullah.*” In addition, there are many verses in the Qur’an ordering us and advising the community to say Astaghfirullah. Just to mention one, in Sura Hadid (57), v. 21, we are told, “*Be ye foremost (in seeking) forgiveness from your Lord...*” And, then, there is the example of our most excellent guide, the Prophet ﷺ. In spite of the infallibility of his station, and that Allah has stated clearly in Sura Fath (48), v. 2, that He has forgiven all his sins, the previous and the latest, the Prophet ﷺ used to ask Allah forgiveness and repentance on every day more than one hundred times. If that is the case with him, what should be the case with those of us who live in this corrupt time when disbelief and sinfulness pervade the world?
2. The second principle is to say La-ilaha-illa-llah. In the Hadith, the Prophet ﷺ said, “*The best word I have ever said together with the previous Prophets is the word La ilaha illa-llah.*” And, again, in the Qur’an Sura Baqara (2), v. 152, “*Then do you remember Me; I will*

remember you.” And in Sura Imran (3), v. 191, “Men who celebrate the praises of Allah, standing, sitting, lying down on their sides...” And, again, in Sura Jumu’ah (62), v. 10, “...and celebrate the Praises of Allah often (and without stint): that ye may prosper.” Surely, when Allah, with His unlimited wealth says something often, that wording is not to be taken lightly. When Allah, the Possessor and Dispenser of all wealth, suggests that something be done often, we must remember that the perspective of the wealthy is not like the perspective of the poor. And Almighty Allah, has everything. It is even inconceivable to even say Allah is the richest, because everything is under His control.

3. And the third point is Salatal ‘alâ Nabi, the offering of prayers upon the Prophet ﷺ. Allah ordered the believers in his community to offer prayers upon the Prophet after He has himself done this together with His angels, (Sura Ahzab (33), v. 56). Moreover, the Prophet ﷺ said in the Hadith, “Whoever offers one prayer upon me, Allah will offer ten upon him.” In another report, “Whoever offers one prayer on me, Allah will offer ten on him; if he makes it ten, Allah will make it one hundred for him; if he makes it one hundred, Allah will make it one thousand for him; if he makes it a thousand, he will enter Paradise shoulder-to-shoulder together with me.”

So these are the principles and some of the proofs that support the fact that the Tariqa Tijâniyya is solely derived from the Qur’an and Sunna. In the final analysis, we are Muslims looking for the Truth, and wherever we see the Truth, we shall follow.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

“Ye have indeed In the Apostle of Allah an excellent pattern (of conduct). For anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day, And who engages much In the praise of Allah.”

(Q. 33:21)

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The Poem

1. Says Ibrahim, the son of Hajj
Abd al-Ilah, our blazing full moon¹
يَقُولُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ نَجَلُ الْحَاجِّ عَبْدُ الْإِلَهِ بَدْرِنَا الْوَهَّاجِ
2. After invoking the name of Allah, then praise
Is due to Allah, Generous and Grand in Majesty²
مِنْ بَعْدِ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ذِي الطَّوْلِ الْعَظِيمِ الْمَجِيدِ
3. A sincere advice from me to our brethren,
Adhere to the Tijani Path
نَصِيحَةٌ مِنِّي إِلَى إِخْوَانِي فَلْتُمْسِكُوا طَرِيقَةَ التَّجَانِي
4. A path of pure grace and and favor,
Founded upon the Sunnah and the Criterion³
طَرِيقَ مَحْضِ الْفَضْلِ وَالرِّضْوَانِ أُسَّسَ بِالسُّنَّةِ وَالْفُرْقَانِ
5. And adhere to what is obligatory in the Path
By that, you will obtain profit without doubt
وَلَا زَمُوا لِأَزْمِ ذِي الطَّرِيقِ بِدَا يُنَالُ الرَّبْحَ بِالتَّحْقِيقِ

6. But you will not, by taking the Path, profit
Except that you always act honorably⁴
فَلَسْتَ فِي أَخْذِ الطَّرِيقِ تَرْبِحَ إِلَّا إِذَا كُنْتَ دَوَامًا تَصْلِحُ
7. Perfectly observing its established conditions
Embodying its demonstrated etiquettes⁵
مُكَمَّلًا شُرُوطَهُ الْمُقَرَّرَهُ مُكَابِدًا آدَابَهُ الْمُعْتَبَرَهُ
8. Honoring all of its people
Especially its elite, whom you should obey
مُعَظَّمًا لِأَهْلِهِ جَمِيعَ لَا سِيَّمَا الْأَخَاصَّةَ كُنْ مُطِيعًا
9. When you prepare to perform the litany
Observe its decorum as much as possible⁶
إِذَا شَرَعْتَ فِي ادِّكَارِ الْوَرْدِ فَلَا زِمَ الْأَدَبَ قَدَرَ الْحَدِّ
10. Observing discipline outwardly and inwardly,
By that a man is raised to lofty places⁷
تَأَدَّبَ فِي ظَاهِرٍ وَبَاطِنٍ بِهِ يُرَقَّى الْمَرْءُ لِلْمَوَاطِنِ
11. And envision your Shaykh who trains you
As well as his Shaykh without doubt⁸
وَاسْتَحْضِرَنَّ شَيْخَكَ الْمُرِّيَّ كَذَلِكَ شَيْخَهُ بِدُونِ رَيْبٍ
12. Observe presence of heart and tranquility
Likewise, seclusion will assist one quickly
وَلَا زِمُوا الْحُضُورَ وَالسُّكُونَ كَذَلِكَ خَلْوَةٌ تُعِينُ حِينًا

13. Seek an experienced teacher⁹, with sound advice
Perfect in knowledge of God, a pious Imam¹⁰
وَاطْلُبْ مُرَبِّيًا خَيْرًا نَاصِحًا كَامِلَ عِرْفَانٍ إِمَامًا صَالِحًا
14. Submit yourself to him and do not try to direct yourself,
Be like the dead body always and you will be informed¹¹
مَلَكُهُ نَفْسَكَ فَلَا تُدَبِّرْ وَكُنْ كَمَيِّتٍ دَوَامًا تُخْبِرُ
15. And do not disobey him, even if the error of his opinion
Becomes clear, instead always be a follower
وَلَا تُخَالِفْهُ وَلَوْ بَانَ فَسَ دُرِّيهِ فَكُنْ دَوَامًا ذَا اتِّسَا
16. For the mistake of the Shaykh is more upright and more
Certain than the adept, according to those who reason¹²
فَخَطَأُ لِلشَّيْخِ أَقْوَمٌ وَأَلْسِيُقُ مِنَ المُرِيدِ عِنْدَ مَنْ عَقَلَ
17. And do not incline to anyone else in the world,
Be (with him) as if the world did not exist¹³
لَا تَلْتَفِتْ لِغَيْرِهِ فِي العَالَمِ وَكُنْ كَمَا لَوْ كَانَ دُونَ عَالَمٍ
18. And there is nothing for the adept except this Saint¹⁴
Along with the Messenger, then his Exalted Lord
فَلَيْسَ لِلمُرِيدِ غَيْرُ ذَا الوَلِيِّ مَعَ الرَّسُولِ ثُمَّ مَوْلَاهُ العَلِيِّ
19. As long as other than them remain in his heart, he will not
attain
Knowledge of the Lord, I say with all certainty
مَا دَامَ غَيْرُهُمْ بِقَلْبِي لَا يُنَالُ مَعْرِفَةَ المَوْلَى أَقُولُ بِارْتِجَالِ

20. Be with the Shaykh always and you will prosper
And be mutually loving and you will succeed

وَكُنْ مَعَ الشَّيْخِ دَوَامًا تَرْيَحُ وَكُنْ مُحِبًّا وَامِقًّا فَتُفْلِحَ

21. In proportion to your love for him, you will attain
His spiritual assistance, as was expressed by the People
of the Path

بِقَدْرِ مَا حُبُّهُ تَنَالُ إِمْدَادَهُ فَالْقَوْمُ هَذَا قَالُوا

22. Spend what you have inherited and earned with seeking
His pleasure, and respond to his signals and you will hit
the mark¹⁵

أَنْفِقْ طَرِيفًا تَالِدًا فِي طَلَبِ رِضَاهُ بَادِرٌ إِنْ أَشَارَ تُصِيبُ

23. Satisfy your Shaykh, even if he should make you cry,
Because verily he has guided you to good¹⁶

وَأَرْضِ شَيْخِكَ وَلَوْ أَبْكَأَكَ لَكِنَّهُ لِلْخَيْرِ قَدْ هَدَاكَ

24. And covet your time with utmost covetousness,
Be warned that you will be afflicted with decline¹⁷

وَاحْرِضْ عَلَى الْأَوْقَاتِ أَيَّ حِرْصٍ وَاحْدَرْ مِنْ أَنْ تُبْلَى بِلَاءَ نَقْصٍ

25. When you see the manifestation of beauty
Do not exceed limits, and be patient with the manifesta-
tion of Glory¹⁸

إِذَا رَأَيْتَ مَظْهَرَ الْجَمَالِ لَا تَطَّعْ وَارْضَ مَظْهَرَ الْجَلَالِ

26. For all of that is what has been enacted by the Decree of God,
Who is far too exalted to be blamed for what He has
enacted¹⁹

فَكُلُّ ذَا أَمْرٍ الْإِلَهِ يُسَدِّي قَدْ جَلَّ أَنْ يُعْتَبَ فِيمَا أَسَدِي

27. Do not feel injury when you experience
The abuse of the creation; for that were you created²⁰

لَا تَتَأَلَّمَنَّ إِذَا رَأَيْتَ إِذَايَةَ الْخَلْقِ لِذَا خُلِقْتَا

28. Abuse appears from them so that you will not depend
on them; Nay only on God rely!

أَجْرِي الْأَدَى مِنْهُمْ لِيَلَّا تَرْكَنَ إِلَيْهِمْ بَلْ لِلَّهِ فَارَكْنَا

29. If you are afflicted with difficulty and disaster
Be patient. Relief and happiness will follow

وَإِنْ بُلِيَتْ بِأَشْتِدَادٍ وَشُرُورٍ فَاصْبِرْ سَيَاتِيكَ انْفِرَاحٌ وَسُرُورٌ

30. For ever night is followed by day
And every difficulty is followed by ease²¹

فَكُلُّ لَيْلٍ بَعْدَهُ نَهَارٌ وَكُلُّ عُسْرٍ بَعْدَهُ يَسَارٌ

31. Nay! After every difficulty is double the ease
As has come down from Aḥmad, the Adnānī

بَلْ كُلُّ عُسْرٍ بَعْدَهُ يُسْرَانٌ كَمَا آتَى عَنْ أَحْمَدَ الْعَدْنَانِ

32. When you have understood that, you will be satisfied
With the Divine Decree at all times thereafter

إِذَا عَلِمْتَ ذَا تَكُونُ رَاضِي حُكْمِ الْإِلَهِ كُلِّ وَقْتٍ بَاقِيَا