

A DEFENCE AND CLARIFICATION OF THE
TARIQA TIJANIYYA AND THE TIJANIS

SAMPLE

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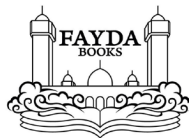
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*A Defense and Clarification of the
Tariqa Tijaniyya and the Tijanis*

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Publisher's Preface



This short book exists in order to present to the Muslim as well as the non-Muslim english speaking public, a simple yet concise explanation of the Tariqa Tijaniyya. It was written by Shaykh al-Islam al-Hajj Ibrahim Niasse, as a defence of the Tijani Sufi Path and its adherents.

It is with great pride and excitement that we were able to publish and present the English translation of this critically important work to the world.

Anyone that reads it with the eye of fairness will be forced to surrender to the proofs and truths that the Shaykh brings forth.

May Allah bless our guides, may He benefit us by them and may we draw closer to Allah and His Beloved Messenger. Amin

Ibrahim Ahmed Dimson
PUBLISHER, FAYDA BOOKS

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In the Name of Allah, Boundlessly Gracious, the Merciful

اللَّهُمَّ صل على سيدنا محمد الفاتح لم أغلق والخاتم
لم سبق ناصر الحق بالحق والهادي إلى صراطك
المستقيم وعلى آله حق قدره ومقداره العظيم

Translator's Introduction



This book, written by Shaykh al-Islam Al-Hajj Ibrahim “Baye” Niassé (d.1975) is a concise and lucid clarification of the Tariqa, or Sufi order of Shaykh Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Tijani (d.1815). The Tariqa Tijaniyya is a Spiritual Path which is based entirely upon the Glorious Qur’an and the Sunnah (traditions) of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. It is therefore a Muhammadan Path (*Tariqa Muhammadiyya*), whose adherents have extinguished themselves in the love for their illustrious exemplar, while holding firm to his ways. *“Indeed in the Messenger of Allah you have a good example to follow—for him who hopes for (the Meeting with) Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah much.”* (33:21). The followers of the Tijani path are devoted to emulating his noble characteristics, in both word and deed, as his character has been described as *“the Qur’an walking”* and his sole mission was the beautification of character traits.¹ So, within the boundaries of these two things is found the Tariqa and *“outside of the Qur’an and the Sunnah there is nothing called the Tijaniyya.”*² The founder of the Tariqa

has clearly expressed this in his well-known words: *“If you hear anything attributed to me, weigh it on the scale of the Sacred Law (Shari’a). Whatever is in conformity with it, take it; whatever contradicts it, leave it.”*

The essence of the Tariqa Tijaniyya is the spiritual reality of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, or *Haqiqatul Muhammadiyya*, which means his existence as a Messenger to the entire Universe of men, jinn and all existing things and has a message that extends beyond space and time. *“And We have only sent you (Muhammad) as a mercy for the ‘Alamin (mankind, jinn and all that exists).”* (21:107). The Prophetic Truth is omnipresent, evident and able to be seen in all things, for it is the honorable spirit (*ruh*) of the Prophets, which Allah has created first of all.³ In recent years there has been an attempt made by some to disconnect *Tasawwuf*, or Sufism, along with its esoteric knowledge and elucidation, from the Islamic tradition itself—leaving only a shell and a form of the broad and comprehensive *Deen* of Islam. It is like removing the spirit from the body! This novel and new-fangled conception of Islam has caused one writer to observe: *“In these days, when the image of Islam provided by modernist and fundamentalist Muslims seems so superficial and uninspiring, it is good to hear from great traditional authorities...”*⁴ The reason for this lack of inspiration in this distortion of Islam is precisely because it does not consider the spiritual essence (*ruh*) of the human being and only busies itself with issues of controversy and scandal, while ignoring the great traditional (classical) authorities of Islam, as well as the contemporary ones. Allah says in the Qur’an, *“They know only the outside appearance of the life of this world and they are heedless of the Hereafter. Do they not think deeply (in their own selves) about themselves...?”* (30:7-8) and *“They ask you about the Ruh (spirit). Say: the spirit is from the order of my Lord and you have been given very little knowledge of it.”* (17:85).

According to Shaykh Ahmad Zarruq (d.1493), “*Sufism has been defined, described and explained in approximately two thousand ways, all of them related to the importance of genuine dedication to Allah, and each perspective represents an aspect of it, but Allah knows best.*”⁵ Imam al-Junaid (d.910) has been quoted as saying, “*It means that The Real makes you die to yourself and live for Him.*” and “*It means that you exist for the sake of Allah without any other attachment.*”⁶ When asked about the reality of Sufism, Sidi Abu Hamza al-Baghdadi said, “*It is imitation of the Messenger of Allah. There is no guide on the path to the Lord except in following the Beloved Messenger. Whoever makes his soul adhere to the courtesies of the Sunna, Allah will illuminate his heart with the light of direct experiential knowledge of Allah (ma’rifa). Indeed, there is no spiritual station more noble than following the Prophet in his commands, deeds, words and character.*” According to Shaykh Ahmad Tijani, “*Sufism is carrying out the Divine commands and avoiding the prohibitions, externally and internally, with regards to what pleases Him and not what pleases you.*” Shaykh al-Islam Ibrahim Niasse succinctly expressed the central point of the subject, writing in his luminous book “*Kashif al-Ilbas*” (Removal of the Cloak): “*Sufism is the expression of a knowledge flaring forth from the hearts of the Saints until their hearts have obtained enlightenment through acting on the Qur’an and the Sunna. For all who act in this way will be awakened and ignited knowledge, secrets, and realities impossible for tongues to describe.*”

From these few statements we can deduce and conclude that Sufism is not an innovation, or *bid’a*, as some claim, but is clearly established upon the Book of Allah and the Sunna of the Prophets. Sufism is the Islamic Science of self-realization and its objective is the preparation for that which will unite one to perfection. The ultimate aim and purpose of *Tasawwuf*, or Sufism, is the purification of the heart of Muslim men and women, so those who wish may enter the

third and final stage or dimension of the *Deen* of Islam—which is the station of spiritual perfection, or *Maqam al-Ihsan*...described by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ in his saying: “(It implies) that you worship Allah as if you are seeing Him, and if you are not seeing Him, (then perceive) that He is seeing you.”⁷

The Tariqa Tijaniyya is a shoreless ocean of spiritual jewels and a treasure chest of Divine knowledge that puts Muslims on the path of the Prophets—which is the path of Nearness and Proximity with Allah. Simply put, it is the path of *Ihsan*. Allah says in His Noble Qur’an, “Who is better in Deen than the one who submits his face to Allah, being a *Muhsin*?” (4:125) and “Verily, Allah loves those who have *Ihsan*” (2:195) and “Allah’s mercy is near to those with *Ihsan*.” (7:56) and “Verily, Allah is with those who have *Ihsan*.” (29:69). What more incentive does anyone need to aspire to other than being among those whom Allah is loving and is constantly with? Shaykh Hassan Ali Cisse ؒ (d. 2008) has given further illumination on the objective of the Spiritual Path when he wrote: “*Tariqa is built upon sincerity in the truthful attention to Allah, by expelling anything else in one’s dealing with The Truth. This is not possible for him who secretly delights in his ego-self (nafs), plunging it into lusts and wicked desires. The Sufis are the true servants, they are the ascetics in every age.*”⁸

The Spiritual Path of Shaykh Ahmad Tijani ؒ is indeed the “firm handhold that will never break” (2:256), which leads its members to the Straight Path (*siratul mustaqim*), as Allah says: “And whosoever submits his face (self) to Allah, while he is a *Muhsin*, then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold.” (31:22). The Tariqa is the gateway to righteousness and fearful awareness or *Taqwa*⁹, and the fear of God is indeed, the beginning of wisdom and the path by which a person is freed from any material or spiritual difficulty. “And whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will

make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty). And He will provide him with sustenance and wealth from sources he never could imagine.” (65:3).

The author of this book demonstrated in both word and deed that the Tariqa Tijaniyya is among the ‘orthodox’ Sufi schools for the souls purification and refinement, completely adhering to the way of Prophet Muhammad. He said,

Let the humans and jinn (*al-thaqulan*—the ‘two dependents’) bear witness that we hold fast to the rope of the Muhammadan Sunna; that we hold fast to the path of the Prophet, the Master of the first and the last (*sayyid’l awwalin wa’l akhirin*). We walk in the light of his teachings, and vie in following his guidance, which is the savior from calamities (*al-’asim min al-qawasim*). The Tariqa is one of the schools of purification (*tazkiyya*), Spiritual training (*tarbiyya*) and refinement of character (*tahdhib*). So praise be to Allah, Who guided me to hold fast to it, to adopt its discipline, draw from its lights, benefit from its blessings, work with its pioneers and men of distinction. Within the Tariqa I live, and within it I will die, and I will be resurrected with my Master, Abu’l Abbas Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Tijani al-Hasani, may Allah be pleased with him and grant him His pleasure and may He be pleased with us through him. Ameen! This Tariqa Tijaniyya is the Tariqa of the scholars and the righteous (*tariqatul ’ulama wa’s sulaha*) it is a school that produces the guardians of the Deen and the Sacred Law (*hama’t deen wa’s Shari’a*), beginning with Shaykh Tijani himself...¹⁰

This translation of the Arabic work of “Shaykh al-Islam” al-Hajj Ibrahim Niasse into English is a much needed clarification of the Tariqa Tijaniyya in particular and of Sufism in general. Being the most influential and consummate Muslim scholar and Sufi mystic from the African continent in the 20th century, as well as being the “Owner of the Tijani

Flood”,¹¹ Shaykh Ibrahim ibn Al-Hajj Abdullahi Niasse ؒ is more than qualified to make such a defense and clarification of the principles of this noble Tariqa, and we are obliged to learn from such an authority! “So ask the people of Dhikr if you do not know.” (16:43/21:7)... “These things are given to us and to the people through the Grace of Allah, but most of the people are not grateful.” (12:38). We include in this preface a brief overview of the life of the founder of the Tariqa taken from texts such as “*Jawahir al-Ma’ani*” by Sidi Ali Harazim, “*Al-Fath ar-Rabbani*” by Shaykh Muhammad ibn Hasanayn at-Tafsawi, “*Futuhat ar-Rabbaniyya*” by Shaykh Ahmad Shinqiti, “*Bughyat al-Mustafid*” by Shaykh al-Arabi ibn as-Sa’ih, “*Khashif al-Hijab*” by Shaykh Ahmad Sukayrij, and “*The Path of the Prophet: Shaykh Ahmad Tijani and the Tariqa Muhammadiyya*” by Sidi Zachary Valentine Wright.

Shaykh Sidi Abu’l Abbas Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Tijani ؒ was born on the 12th of *Safar* in the year 1150 AH¹²/1737 in the blessed town of ‘Ain Madi in the Southwestern Sahara, a Moroccan territory which is today under Algerian control. He was a descendant of Prophet Muhammad through Fatima az-Zahra’s first son, al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib ؑ. His father was Sidi Muhammad ibn al-Mukhtar ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Salim ؒ and his mother was Sayyidah A’isha bint Muhammad ibn Sanusi ؒ, both of whom were perfect models of erudition, righteousness and piety. Three generations before the birth of Shaykh Tijani, his grandfather Sidi Muhammad ibn Salim, a righteous saint from the town of Asfi, Morocco, who used to engage in spiritual retreat (*khalwa*) so much, he would have to walk to the Masjid for prayer with his face covered, otherwise onlookers would fall helplessly in love with him and be unable to separate from him due to his lofty station in *Wilaya*¹³, moved to ‘Ain Madi and settled among the clan of “Tijana”. He married into them and thus got the nickname of “*Tijani*”, a surname that permanently passed on to his descendants.

Shaykh Tijani ﷺ became an orphan at the age of 16, with both his mother and father dying on the same day to a devastating plague. The Shaykh was the only surviving member of his family¹⁴ and although this was a tremendously difficult time, he continued to apply himself to his religious studies arduously. Having memorized the entire Qur'an at the early age of 7, according to its own interpretation (*bi tafsihihi*). He then studied the fundamentals of the Islamic Jurisprudence (*usul fiqh*) of Imam Malik ibn Anas ﷺ from texts like the "Risala" of Shaykh Khalil; the "Mukhtasar" of Abdur-Rahman al-Akhdari (d.953AH/1538); the "Risala" of al-Qushayri (d.467AH/1052); in Logic (*mantiq*) the "Muqaddama" of Ibn Rushd (Averroes); he studied the "Mudawwana" of Sahnun (Abdul-Salam ibn Sa'id Qayrawani, d.240AH/854) with local scholars, such as Sidi Muhammad ibn Hammu al-Tijani (who was widely praised for his deep knowledge of Qur'an and his visionary experience of the Prophet), Sidi Isa Bouakkaz al-Madawi al-Tijani, and Sidi Mabruk ibn Bu'afiyya al-Madawi al-Tijani. He also studied the Prophetic traditions (*hadith*), Qur'anic recitation (*tajwid*), Arabic grammar (*nahw*), and literature (*adab*), along with the other branches of traditional Islamic sciences, all of which he mastered. Shaykh Tijani ﷺ described his firm resolve in the path of knowledge by saying, "When I begin something, I never turn from it." The Shaykh had been blessed with such great intellectual aptitude and photographic memory, that nothing escaped his comprehension. It has been reported that by the age of 20 he was already a great scholar, jurist and man of letters, such that people were coming to him to partake of his knowledge. (Wright, 2005)

In 1171 AH/1758, at the age of 21, during the reign of the righteous Sultan, Mawlay Muhammad ibn Abdullah (d.1204AH/1789) who ruled Morocco from 1757 to 1789, Shaykh Tijani traveled from 'Ain Madi and entered the famous Al-Qarawiyin University in Fez to obtain all degrees

in the Prophetic traditions (*al-hadith nabawi sharif*), such as those collected by Imam al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim. Fez had been the long-established spiritual, intellectual, cultural and political capital of the *Maghrib* founded by the righteous descendant of the Prophet, Sharif Mawlay Idriss II ؑ (d.213AH/798).

While in Fez Shaykh Tijani busied himself with study and with meeting the city's famous scholars and Sufi masters and submerging himself in their science...that of the soul's purification (*tazkiyya't nufus*). Though he had already, by this time, become a Mufti (a scholar licensed to issue legal decisions), he now directed his zeal and determination (*himmah*)¹⁵ to investigating the Divine mysteries and discovering the spiritual realities. This marked the beginning of his inclination towards the Sufi path. He first met the head of the Tariqa *Shadhiliyya-Wazzaniyya*, Shaykh Sidi at-Tayyib ibn Muhammad al-Sharif of Wazzan ؑ (d.1181AH/1767), who gave him permission to give spiritual instruction (*tarbiyya*) only to have Shaykh Tijani refuse in order to work harder on himself before becoming a spiritual guide. He also met Sidi Abdullah ibn al-Arabi ibn Ahmad ibn Abdullah Mada'u al-Andulusi ؑ (d.1188AH/1778), who told him that Allah was guiding him "by the Hand."

Shaykh Tijani was also initiated into the Tariqa *Qadiriyya*¹⁶ while in Fez by Sidi Ahmad al-Yemeni. He then took the Tariqa *Nasiriyya* (named after Sidi Muhammad ibn Nasir Dar'i ؑ (d.1085AH/1694) from Sidi Muhammad ibn Abdullah al-Tazzani. He then entered the Tariqa *Ghumariyya* (named after Sidi Ahmad ibn Abdul-Mu'min Ghumari al-Hasani, d.1262AH/1847), first from a *muqaddam*, and then from its founder in a dream. He also took from the saint of Traza, Shaykh Sidi Abu'l Abbas Ahmad al-Habib Tawwash al-Sijilmasy ؑ (d.1206AH/1791), who predicted an exalted spiritual attainment was in store for Shaykh Tijani and counseled him to increase invocation and remembrance (*dhikr*).

He likewise met Sidi Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Wanjili Zabibi ؒ (d.1185AH/1770), a man well known for his saintliness, who told him at first sight, “*You will attain the station (maqam) similar to that of the great Qutb, Sidi Abu’l Hassan ash-Shadhili*” (d.656AH/1241),¹⁷ and gave the indication that his illumination (*fath*) was to occur in the desert. Shaykh Tijani did not stay in Fez long thereafter and traveled to spend time in another Saharan *Zawiya*, known as “*Sidi al-Shaykh*”, where lies the grave and shrine of the famous *Shadhili* Qutb and saint, Sidi Abdul-Qadir ibn Muhammad al-Abyad Smahi ؒ (d.1025AH/1610), and he stayed there in spiritual retreat for 5 years. In the following years Shaykh Tijani traveled back and forth between the desert *Zawiyas* and the towns of the region, like Tlemcen. He busied himself with teaching the interpretation (*tafsir*) of the Qur’an and the Prophetic narrations (*hadith*) in whatever town he stayed in, while continuing his scrupulous discipline of asceticism, which included frequent fasting and supererogatory acts of worship (*nawafil*).

In 1186AH/1773, at the age of 36, Shaykh Tijani decided to travel to Mecca to perform the major pilgrimage, or *Hajj*. Traveling to the East, he was devoted to meeting the well known Islamic scholars and spiritual masters of the time, just as he had done in the West (*Maghrib*). In Algiers he met the Sufi master and the *Idrisi Sharif*, Sidi Muhammad ibn Abdur-Rahman al-Azhari ؒ (d.1208AH/1793)—who would later become the eponym of the Tariqa *Rahmaniyya* which has spread widely in Algeria. Shaykh Tijani took the Tariqa *Khalwatiyya* from him and was reinitiated into it when in Cairo, Egypt by the Shaykh Sidi Mahmoud al-Kurdi al-Iraqi al-Misri ؒ (d.1195AH/1780).¹⁸ While in Tunis, he began teaching at the famous Jami’at al-Zaytuna Masjid and University (which predates both al-Azhar in Cairo and al-Qarawiyyin in Fez) and made such an impression there that he was offered a lucrative permanent teaching position by

the Emir, Bey Ali (who ruled from 1757-1782). Although the Shaykh refused and continued on his journey to the East, this time spent at Zaytuna (where the Shaykh was well received) no doubt prompted a later rector of Zaytuna, Shaykh al-Islam Ibrahim ar-Rayyahi ؒ (d.1266AH/1850)¹⁹, to pay him homage in Fez and become a major propagator of the Tariqa Tijaniyya in Tunisia (Wright, 2005).

In Egypt, upon first seeing Shaykh Tijani, Sidi Mahmoud al-Kurdi told him, “*You are the beloved of Allah in this world and the next!*” The next day, he asked the traveler, “*What is your desire?*” Shaykh Tijani replied, “*My desire is for the great Polehood (al-Qutbaniyya al-‘Adhami).*” Shaykh al-Kurdi informed him, “*For you there is much more than that!*” (*laka akthara minha*). He gave Shaykh Tijani an *Tjaza mutlaq*, or unlimited license, to initiate into the Tariqa *Khalwatiyya* and he was given a *Silsila*, or spiritual chain of transmission in this Tariqa. From Egypt, Shaykh Tijani left for Mecca and arrived in the Holy Precincts to perform the ancient rites of the pilgrimage just after Ramadan in 1187AH/1774.

In Mecca, he heard of the saint Sidi Ahmad ibn Abdullah al-Hindi ؒ (d.1187AH/ 1774)²⁰ —the student of the venerated *Shadhili* master, Sidi Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Nasir Dar’i (d.1129AH/1714, who is buried in the Tal’a district of Fez)—so he went to meet him. This mysterious saint from India had not been receiving any guests, as he had made a vow not to speak with anyone except his servant. After persisting with this servant to gain audience and after announcing himself by name, he was granted entrance. Shaykh al-Hindi informed his visitor that “*You are the inheritor of my knowledge, secrets, gifts and lights.*” He informed Shaykh Tijani that he himself was to die in a matter of days (and it happened on the exact day he had predicted for himself), but gave instruction that he should go visit the Cardinal Pole of the Age (*Qutb Zaman*), Sidi Muhammad ibn Abdul-Karim as-Samman ؒ (d.1189AH/1775) in Medina, and also gave him glad tidings

that he would attain the spiritual station of the *Qutbaniyya* of Sidi Abu'l Hasan ash-Shadhili (d.656AH/1241) just as he had been told by Sidi Muhammad Wanjili of Fez.

In Medina, Shaykh Tijani performed all the rites of visitation (*ziyara*) to the tomb of the Messenger of Allahs, where Allah “*completed his aspiration and longing to greet the Prophet.*”²¹ Having been informed of the presence of Shaykh as-Samman, he sought to meet with him. Shaykh Muhammad ibn Abdul-Karriem as-Samman was the guardian of the Prophet’s blessed grave and an erudite scholar who authored several Sufi books, one of which is “*al-Futuh al-Ilahiyya fi’l Tawajjuh ar-Ruhiyya*” (Divine Openings in the Spiritual Pursuits), where he expounds on the concept of *Haqiqa al-Muhammadiyya* and the method of attaining union with its reality.

It was on account of his founding a new *Tariqa* that Shaykh as-Samman became widely known. He combined the *Qadiriyya*, *Nasariyya*, and *Naqshabandiyya* orders with the *Khalwatiyya* (through his Shaykh Mustafa al-Bakri ؒ of Egypt, d.1162 AH/1749).²² This became known as the *Tariqa Sammaniyya*. The two had an intense spiritual connection as Shaykh Tijani ؒ was told of what lay in store for him by Shaykh Muhammad as-Samman. He gave Shaykh Tijani the prediction that he was to realize his highest spiritual aspiration and gave him the glad tidings that he would attain the “Greatest Comprehensive Pole” (*al-Qutbaniyya al-Jami’ al-’Udhma*). He was given special license (*ijaza*) in the “Beautiful Names” (*Asma al-Husna*)²³, the “The Prayer of the Sea” (*Hizb al-Bahr*) of Shaykh Abu'l Hassan ash-Shadhili (d.656AH/1241), the “Daily Office” (*Wazifa*) of Shaykh Ahmad Zarruq (d.899AH/1484), the “*Dalail al-Khayrat*” of Shaykh Muhammad ibn SulaIman al-Jazuli; and the “*al-Durr al-’Ala*” of Shaykh Muhyideen ibn al-’Arabi al-Hatimi (d.636AH/1221).

Leaving from the Holy Precincts (*Haram ash-Sharif*), Shaykh Tijani then traveled back to Tunis and from there went to Tlemcen and stayed for 3 years. In 1191AH/1779, when the Shaykh was around 42 years old, he made his second trip to Fez from Tlemcen with the intention of visiting the shrine of the founder of the city of Fez, Mawlay Idris II (d.213AH/798). On the way, he met with his first two permanent disciples, Sidi Muhammad ibn al-Mishry al-Hasani²⁴ ❦ (d.1224AH/1809) of Takrak (Constantine) and Sidi Ali Harazem al-Barada²⁵ ❦ (d.1218AH/1803). Sidi Muhammad al-Mishry had been a *Faqih* (doctor of law) in Algeria, who was also known for his poetry and mysticism. He used to write the replies and answers on Shaykh Tijani's behalf, as well as lead the prayers as Imam for Shaykh Tijani and his followers until 1208AH/1793, the year that Shaykh Tijani started to lead the prayers himself, in compliance with the instruction of his noble ancestor, Prophet Muhammad.

Sidi Ali Harazem, who is called "*Khalifa al-Akbar*", was also an erudite scholar and consummate mystic. When Shaykh Tijani first met him in Wajda, Eastern Morocco, he told him: "*You have long been notified in dreams that your guide on the Path is a man named Ahmad Tijani.*" When Sidi Ali affirmed the words spoken by Shaykh Tijani, the Shaykh said "*I am he.*" The Prophet is reported to have told Shaykh Tijani in a vision, "*O Ahmad, consult with your greatest servant (khadimik al-akbar) and your beloved Harazem, for he is for you what Aaron was for Moses.*" The two of these close disciples were initiated into the Tariqa *Khalwatiyya* and taught certain spiritual secrets and special knowledge. He told them of his continued need to go on seeking greater illumination and that they should anticipate more.

After visiting the shrine of Mawlay Idriss II, Shaykh Tijani ❦ went back to Tlemcen and then departed to the Qasr al-Shallala and then to Abu Samghun, a Saharan oasis located south of Geryville, where he settled. A year later,

in 1196AH/1784, he announced that the Holy Prophets had authorized him, in a wakeful daylight vision (*yaqazatan*)²⁶, to establish his own Tariqa...the *Tariqa Ahmadiyya-Muhammadiyya Ibrahimiyya Hanifiyya Tijaniyya*²⁷. The Prophet told him that he no longer had need for any of the chains of authority (*silsila*), which had been the tradition of all the Sufi orders. The Prophet ﷺ had granted him permission to give “*Spiritual training to the creation in both the general and universal.*” This was during a period when the Shaykh had fled from contact with people in order to devote himself to his own personal purification and development, and had therefore felt unworthy to consider himself a Shaykh until this permission was granted. He was commanded by the Holy Prophet ﷺ to cease his devotion to all the orders that he was previously affiliated with and informed him that he was to take the path to the knowledge of God (Sufism) directly from the Prophet himself, saying:

You are not indebted for any favor from the Shaykhs of the Path, for I am myself your medium and means (*wasita*) and your support in the (spiritual) realization, so abandon all that you have taken from all other orders and hold fast to this Tariqa—without seclusion (*khalwa*), or withdrawing from the people (*‘uzla*)—until you reach your promised spiritual station (*maqam*), and you will attain your state without constriction, difficulty or excessive effort. And leave (or stop seeking from) the assembly of the Saints.²⁸

The Prophets had furthermore given him the basis of a new litany (*wird al-lazim*) to transmit without restriction, to any Muslim (male or female) who seeks and desires it and accepts to abide by its conditions.²⁹ This *wird* consisted of 100 *Istighfar* (to seek Allah’s forgiveness), as repentance and the request for Divine forgiveness is the means to become cleansed of any stain of sin; and 100 *Salat ‘ala Nabi* (prayers upon the Prophet), by which one merges into the purity and

light of the Prophets...the best of which is “*Salatul Fatihi*”. In 1200AH/1787, the Prophets completed the *wird al-lazim* by adding 100 *Hailalah*—“*la-ilaha illa’Allah*”, the proclamation of the Oneness of Allah—“There is no god but Allah”.

This sacred Tijani *wird* is clearly based on the principles of Qur’an and Sunnah. Allah says, “...and seek for His forgiveness, for He is always forgiving.” (110:3) and “...nor would Allah punish them while they seek for His forgiveness.” (8:33) and the Prophets is reported as saying, “By Allah! I seek Allah’s forgiveness and turn to Him in repentance more than seventy times a day.”³⁰ And in another narration, “...one hundred times a day.” Allah says in His Book, “Verily, Allah and His angels are sending blessings on the Prophet. O you who believe, send salutations of peace and blessings upon him.” (33:56) and the Prophet ﷺ has said, “Whoever offers one Salat (prayer) on me, Allah makes ten for him. When he prays on me ten times, Allah will pray upon him one hundred times. When he offers one hundred prayers upon me, Allah will return one thousand prayers to him and if he offers one thousand prayers upon me, he shall rub shoulder to shoulder with me at the gate of paradise.”³¹ Allah says, “So know! There is no god but Allah, and seek forgiveness for your sin, and also for the believing men and believing women ...” (47:19) and “O you who believe! Remember Allah with much remembrance.” (33:41) and “Therefore remember Me, I will remember you. Be grateful to Me and do not reject (faith)...” (2:152) and “...and remember Allah much, so that you may be successful.” (62:10). The Prophets said, “The best declaration of remembrance is the one which I and all the prophets before me recite, it is the Divine phrase ‘*La ilaha il Allah*.’”³² In a *Hadith Qudsi*, Allah says through the Prophets, “*La ilaha il Allah is My fortress, whoever enters My fortress is saved from My punishment.*”³³

Due to the abundant *baraka* contained in this sacred Muhammadan *wird*, the Tariqa Tijaniyya gained wide acceptance immediately after its birth, with Shaykh Tijani ﷺ

becoming so well-known that great masses of people started visiting him to receive his *wird* and to gain a connection with him. After this grand spiritual illumination (*fath al-akbar*), the Shaykh remained in Abu Samghun for about fifteen (15) years. In 1213AH/1798, when the Shaykh was 63 years old, he permanently settled in the blessed city of Fez along with his closet companions, who began to hear “*from him what we had not heard before in regard to the sciences and the secrets.*”³⁴, and this marked the real beginning of his Tariqa. In Fez, he was well received by the Amir al-Mumineen, Sultan Mawlay Sulaiman ؒ (d.1238AH/1823).³⁵ This is also the year he gave Sidi Ali Harazim ؒ the instruction to begin the compilation of the book “*Jawahir al-Ma’ani wa-Bulugh al-Amani fi Fayd Sidi Abu’l Abbas at-Tijani*” (The Pearls of Meanings and Attainment of Aspirations in the Flood of Sidi Abu’l Abbas Tijani) by an order from his noble ancestors. The Prophet said to him, “*This is my book and I am its author.*” (*Kitab-i huwa wa ana al-ladhi katabtuhu*).

One year after his return to Fez in the sacred month of *Muharram* of 1214AH/1799, Shaykh Tijani ؒ attained the station of “The Great Comprehensive Cardinal Pole” (*maqam al-qutbaniya al-jami’ al-’udhma*), which he had ardently sought. One month and a few days later (on the 18th of *Safar*) he was promoted to the spiritual station of “Concealment” (*al-Katmiya*)—being called the “Hidden Cardinal Pole” (*al-Qutb al-Maktum*). Shaykh Tijani declared that the Prophets appeared to him in daylight (in a wakeful state, not sleeping) and told him that he is in fact the *al-Qutb al-Maktum* and the *Khatm al-Wilayat Muhammadiyya* (Seal of Muhammadan Sainthood).³⁶ Asking the Prophets about the nature of this station, he told him: “*He is the one whom Almighty Allah has concealed from all, including His angels and His prophets, except me*”.

There exists an invisible spiritual hierarchy of Saints according to a hadith narrated on the authority of Ibn Mas’ud ؓ, the Prophet ﷺ said:

Allah has on the earth three hundred (servants) whose hearts are in the state of the heart of Adam; He has forty whose hearts are in the state of the heart of Musa; He has seven whose hearts whose hearts are in the state of the heart of Ibrahim; He has five whose hearts are in the state of the heart of Jibril; He has three whose hearts are in the state of the heart of Mikail; and He has one whose heart is in state of the heart of Israfil. If the one (last mentioned) dies, Allah will replace him with one of the three; If one of the three dies, Allah will replace him with one of the five; If one of the five dies, Allah will replace him with one seven; If one of the seven dies, Allah will replace him with one of the forty; If one of the forty dies, Allah will replace him with one of the three hundred; And if one of the three hundred dies, Allah will replace him with one of common folk. Allah uses them to drive affliction away from this Community.³⁷

The one who is mentioned in this Prophetic tradition (as the only one of his kind) is the Cardinal Pole (*Qutb*), he being the Spiritual Helper (*Ghawth*), and his position and his rank among the Saints is like the point at the center of a circle, the focal point of the well-being of the Universe.

The holder of this station is widely known in Sufi literature as the “*Khatim al-Awliya*”, or the Seal of the Saints. In his book entitled “*Khatim al-Awliya*”, al-Hakim Tirmidhi ؓ (d. 318 AH/905)³⁸ informs us the “*Khatim al-Awliya*” is the person “upon whom the leadership (*imama*) of the saints is incumbent; who holds in his hand the ‘banner of sainthood’; and whose intercession all the saints have need of, just as the Prophets have need of (the intercession of) our Prophet Muhammad.” Al-Hakim Tirmidhi goes on to explain that the authority of the “*Khatim al-Awliya*” even extends to the eschatological realm. On the Day of Resurrection he will come forth as the Proof (*hujja*) of the Saints, just as the Seal of the Prophets, our master Muhammad, will come forth

as the Proof of the Prophets. Indeed, Shaykh Tijani told his Companions, *“When Allah assembles His creatures at the place of standing, a herald will proclaim at the top of his voice, so that everyone at the place of standing will hear him: “O people of the final congregation, this is your Imam, from whom you obtained your support!”*

Al-Hakim Tirmidhi ؓ put forward numerous questions in his book *“Khatim al-Awliya”* pertaining to the spiritual station of the *“Seal of the Saints”*, his thirteenth question was: *“Who is it that is worthy (of being called) the ‘Seal of the Saints’ (khatim al-Wilaya), even as Muhammad (may Allah bless him and keep him) is worthy of the (title) Seal of prophecy (khatm al-nubuwwah)?* Shaykh Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Arabi al-Hatimi ؓ (d.1240), who is known as *“Shaykh al-Akbar”* (the greatest Shaykh), wrote in his monumental and illuminating work entitled *“Al-Futuh al-Makkiyya”* (The Meccan Revelations) more than five hundred years before the physical birth of Shaykh Tijani ؓ and some three hundred years after al-Tirmidhi posed his question:

As for the Seal of Muhammadan Sainthood, it belongs to a man of the Arabs, of the noblest of them in lineage and power, who exists today in our own time. I was introduced to him (‘urritu bi-hi) in the year 595AH (1198), and I saw the distinguishing Sign (al-‘alamah) which he has, which The Real has hidden in him, concealed from the eyes of His servants (sci., mankind), but which He revealed to me in the city of Fez, so that I might discern in him the Seal of Sainthood (khatam al-Wilaya), he being the Seal of Absolute Prophecy (khatam al-nubuwwah al-mutlaq) about which most people know nothing. Allah has afflicted (the Seal) with the people who refute and censure him (ahl al-inkar alayhi) concerning that which he ascertained from The Real in his innermost heart. But just as God has sealed the Prophethood of (all) Laws (nubuwat al-shara’i) with

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Muhammad (may Allah bless him and keep him), so has He sealed the Muhammad ‘Seal’ the Sainthood which emanates from the Muhammadan Heritage (al-wirth al-Muhammadi)—as opposed to what derives from the other Prophets. For, indeed, among the Saints are those who inherit from (the Prophets) Abraham, Moses and Jesus (etc.), so that these may well be found to exist after this Muhammadan Seal; but after him there shall be no Saint belonging to the Heart of Muhammad (‘ala qalbi Muhammad). This is the meaning of the Seal of Muhammadan Sainthood...but I shall not name him.³⁹

For more than forty years, Shaykh Tijani ؒ was himself the foremost propagator of the Tariqa. From Fez, he organized the international Sufi order which had spread in the lands of the East and West during his lifetime. During this time he appointed *muqaddam* and *khulafa* (representatives and successors), who were also great scholars of the Shari’a themselves, who established new *Zawiyas* in Morocco and elsewhere. Shaykh Tijani ؒ remained in Fez until he transitioned from this life to his eternal abode On High, Thursday, the 17th of the month of Shawwal 1230AH/1815 at the age of eighty years old. After performing his *Subhi* (morning) prayer, he requested a cup of water and took some drinks and then laid down on his right side and this noble and righteous servant returned to his Lord. The great scholar Sidi Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ibrahim Dukkali ؒ led his *janaza*, or funeral prayer, at the Qarawiyin Masjid, and it was attended by numerous eminent scholars, nobles and saints. Shaykh Ahmad Tijani ؒ was buried in his sacred *Zawiya*.⁴⁰

Today there are more than 300 million followers of the Tijani Way in the four corners of the world and approximately 100 million of them have their connection through Shaykh al-Islam Ibrahim “Baye” Niasse-Owner of the Tijani Flood! Speaking at the “*International Conference of Tijaniyya*” in

Fez, Morocco in 2007 ⁴¹, Shaykh Imam Hassan Cisse (may Allah sanctify his secret) fluently articulated the cause for the continued expansion of the Tariqa saying: “On the foundation of the Book of Allah and the Sunna of Prophet Muhammad, this Tariqa has spread to all horizons, for it is a Tariqa of Truth, and the Truth prevails and is not prevailed upon. If you find the Tariqa Tijaniyya actualizing the brotherhood of Islam, its success lies in rending apart the walls of the ego-selves (*nafs*), penetrating into its depths and illuminating its hidden recesses with beneficial Divine Knowledge. In a similar way, this Tariqa has nullified the borders of nations and erased the differences between the servants of Allah. So here we are in this conference hall meeting with representatives from all parts of Africa: west, east, central and north; and here we have Americans from all different areas: New York, Chicago, Memphis, Atlanta, Detroit... and they are one community! What is between them is only love in Allah, and they have freed themselves of worshipping other than Allah—so that by the Oneness of Allah, the veils have been lifted from them and they have been brought to extinction (*fana’*) and substantiation (*baqa’*) in Allah. They have refused to concern themselves with anything other than Allah. These are indeed true, vigorous Sufis, clothed in the Sunna. Their secret thoughts have been made pure and their external selves have remained steadfast on the Book and the Sunna. They have escaped from the frivolities of the ego-self and have become immersed in Truth’s baptism...“the baptism of Allah—and who is better than Allah to baptize.” (2:138)” ⁴²

We bring this introduction to a close by seeking the pardon of Allah and the reader for any mistakes that are found herein and with hope for His Boundless Grace, Mercy and Compassion. May Allah accept this humble effort as sincere for His sake and for the benefit of the Muslims and humanity. May He grant abundant reward to all who have assisted in the

publication of this book—whether financially or by personal effort. By His Benevolence, may all those who contribute to this work be guided in the direction approved by Him and may He fully gratify us, including our Shaykhs, parents, and children, by the grace of our Prophet Muhammad, who receives from Allah the sole privilege of distributing His copious blessings among His patient servants, and by the *Baraka* and *Madad* of our spiritual master, Shaykh Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Tijani ؑ and of his sublime mysticism, which transcends space and time. Ameen!

نصيحة مني الى اخواني فلتمسكوا طريق التجاني
طريق محض والفضل الرضوان اسس بالسنة والفرقان
خير شيوخ الدهر بالإطلاق إمامنا التجاني ذو أخلاق
برزخ كل عارف وأس لهم وينبوع وهو شمش
وخير كل الطرق بالإجماع طريقه ايضا بلا نزاع

*An advice from me to my brothers,
Adhere to the path of Tijaniyya,
A path of pure grace and satisfaction,
founded and established upon the path of the Prophet and the
Qur'an,
The most excellent Shaykh of all time in any respect,
is our leader al-Tijani—the possessor of great virtues,
The intermediary and foundation of every scholar of Divine
Knowledge,
he is to them the flowing fountain and the Sun,
And the best path (or Sufi order) by consensus,
is again his Path without any dispute.⁴³*

عليكم بحبل الله للعبد واثقا فنهج يناوي الذكر نهج شقاء
وإن قلت هل ذا الورد نهج محمد أقول نعم وردي لنيل صفاء
فما الورد إلا الذكر لله وحده تصلي على المختار خير وراء
فما فيه ذكر الشيخ أو ذكر غيره فوردي لداء العبد عين دواء
رويدكم لا تنكروا عن جهالة لبغي و عدوان و عين جفاء

*You must hold firm to the rope of Allah,
For a path which deviates from the Remembrance is a path of
misery,
And if you should ask me: 'Is this litany (wird) the path of
Muhammad?'
I will say: 'Yes, my wird is for obtaining purity!'
The wird is nothing but the remembrance of Allah and He alone,
And sending peace and blessing upon the Chosen One—the best
of creation,
In it there is no mention of the Shaykh or any other,
My wird is the source of medicine for the servants sickness and
disease,
Tread lightly and slowly so as not to deny or refuse out of
ignorance,
For injustice and enmity are the sources of estrangement.⁴⁴*

Muhammad Hassiem Abdullahi al-Tijani

10 RAMADAN 1430 AH

31 AUGUST 2009