

DEBATING SUFISM: THE TIJĀNIYYA AND ITS OPPONENTS

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the larger theme of Sufism and anti-Sufism through the lens of debates between proponents of the Tijāniyya Sufi order and their Salafī opponents in the twentieth century as reflected in writings by authors hailing from Morocco, Mauritania, Mali, Sudan, Egypt and Saudi-Arabia. The conflict is basically a battle about who speaks for Islam, drawing on different sources of authority. Salafis underline the importance of textual and discursive knowledge extracted from Islam’s foundational texts: they perceive the Qur’ān and the Sunna as the only true sources of religious authority. For them, all other possible sources of authority are fallible, and, by the same token, devoid of evidentiary value. For the protagonists of the Tijāniyya, however, the sources of authority extend from the foundational texts to include the God-given knowledge embedded in the spiritual experiences of the supreme master of their brotherhood, as well as that derived from daylight communications with the Prophet.

Whereas earlier, nineteenth-century debates surrounding the Tijāniyya often involved other Sufis, especially from the Qādiriyya, and were strongly shaped by their competition for followers and political influence, the case studies subjected to scrutiny in this dissertation demonstrate that the Salafī critics were strongly motivated by their endeavor to engage in *da‘wa* (propagation of “proper” Islam) and to spread a “correct” understanding of *tawḥīd* (Oneness of God). The Tijānī authors who responded to their attacks considered the defense of the Tijāniyya a religious duty and a compulsory service to Aḥmad al-Tijānī, the founding figure and supreme master of the brotherhood, perceived as the perfect embodiment of the religion of Islam.

As the dissertation shows, the vast field of theological and doctrinal debates allowed both protagonists and antagonists of the Tijāniyya to flex their muscles, construct their own authority and enhance their personal recognition. Polemical literature produced by Salafis became standard references for opponents of the brotherhood, whereas Tijānī shaykhs who responded appeared as heroic scholars to their constituencies. The analysis also reveals a gradual change in the perception of certain Tijānī tenets among some of its representatives. This is best illustrated by the changing perception of the extraordinary reward for the recitation of the *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ*, which suggests the emergence of a *sharī‘a*-centric argumentation attracting mostly the younger generations among the Tijānīs. On the other hand, the spread of Salafism in previously Tijānī-dominated areas also made Tijānī authors resort to a harder and sharper tone in their polemical writings, thus pointing to the increasing tensions between Sufis and their opponents over the course of the twentieth century.

Technical Note

The rules observed in the transliteration of Arabic words here are those of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. Non-English words are italicized, except for the names of persons, places, and organizations. English translations of the non-English words are given in parentheses following their first appearance, e.g.: “*bid‘a* (reprehensible innovation)”, and repeated wherever deemed necessary. Elsewhere, English translations of non-English words may appear in the text with the words themselves following in parentheses, e.g.: “reprehensible innovation (*bid‘a*)”.

In general, dates are given in both the Islamic Calender (AH) and the Common Era (CE) format, in that order, thus: AH/CE. Some exceptions are given in only one format or the other, in which case the format is specified.

Dedication

To my father Mohammad Aman Ahmadi and my mother Ruh Afza Ahmadi, without whom I would have not been

and

to my academic teacher Prof. Dr. Rüdiger Seesemann, without whom this thesis would not have been completed.

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Glossary

aḥbāb: Lit., beloved one, a term used by Tijānīs for the fellow Tijānīs

al-yāqūta al-farīda: a particular Tijani litani which cannot be recited without ablution

awliyā': Plural of *walī*

baqā': The state of sobriety and subsistence that is perceived to follow the *fanā'*

bid'a: Reprehensible and unlawful innovation; the opposite of Sunna (example of the Prophet Muḥammad)

dhikr: Lit., remembrance; recitation of divine names

du'ā': Supplicatory prayer

fanā': Lit., extinction and annihilation: loss of the self in the moment of mystical experience of the divine

fath: Lit., opening; spiritual illumination

faḡḡa: Lit., emanation; overflow; effusion; outpouring; in Tijānī parlance the Divine Flood predicted by Ahmad al-Tijānī

ḡaḡra: presence often used for divine or prophetic presence

ḡaḡīqa: Lit, truth, reality; Sufi spiritual path

ḡaylala: The formula *lā ilāḡa illa Allāḡ* (“there is no deity but Allah”)

ijāza: License and authorization to teach and transmit knowlege; Sufi technical term for permission to initiate new members and to appoint deputies

ijāzāt: Plural of *ijāza*

ijtihād: independent juridical reasoning which leads to the fomulation of legal opinions on the basis of direct recourse to the Qurā'n and the Sunna

'ilm al-bāḡīn: Hidden and esoteric knowledge

‘ilm al-zāhir: Discursive and exoteric knowledge

imām: term applied to the guide and leader of ritual prayer

istighātha: Asking for divine help

istighfār: Asking for divine forgiveness often in the form of reciting particular formulas

katmiyya: In Tijāniyya a technical term often used together with *khatmiyya* to express a prerogative of Aḥmad al-Tijānī perceived as the hidden pole (*quṭb maktūm*)

khalīfa: Lit., successor; lieutenant; heir to the mystical and spiritual knowledge of the master

khaṭīb: technical legal term often used with *imām* used for one who delivers sermons and leads the worshippers in Friday prayer.

khatmiyya: In Tijāniyya a technical term often used together with *katmiyya* to express a prerogative of Ahmad al-Tijānī, perceived as seal of the Muhammadan sainthood (*khaṭm al-awliyā`*)

kitmān: concealment; hiding

madad: support, spiritual help

ma`rifa: Cognizance; mystical knowledge of God

munkirīn: Plural of *munkir* (denier); in Tijaniyya a term applied to their opponents

muqaddam: Deputy; representative: a rank in Tijani hierarchy that allows the holder to initiate disciples

qabd: Position of the arms crossed and folded in front of the navel during ritual prayers

quṭb: Lit., pole, Sufi technical term to express the supreme saint of his time

quṭbāniyya: a Sufi rank whose holder is perceived as the supreme saint of his era

raqs: Lit., dance; Sufi ritual of dance

sadl: Position of the arms outstretched along the body during ritual prayers

ṣalāt ‘alā l-nabiyy: sending blessings on the Prophet

ṣalāt al-fātiḥ: in Tijaniyya a particular litany in praise of the Prophet

sharī‘a: the ordinance of the religion of Islam

shataḥāt: Plural of *shaḥ*; ecstatic utterances made by a Sufi in the state of *fanā’*

shaykh: Lit., old; in Sufism master

silsila: chain of initiation

sunna: Example of the Prophet Muhammad

tafsīr: Interpretation of the Qur’ān

taqlīd: blind imitation; the opposite of *ijtihād*

tarbiya: Spiritual education

ṭarīqa: Lit., path, method; Sufi order

taṣawwuf: Sufism

tasbīḥ: glorification of God often in form of *dhikr*

tawassul: supplication and invocation of the divine help through human beings

tawḥīd: term applied to the doctrine of Islamic monotheism

Ṭruruq: Plural of *ṭarīqa*

‘ulamā: Plural of *‘alim*; scholars, people of knowledge

umma: the universal Muslim community

waḥdat al-Shuhūd: Lit., unity of seeing; arrival at God’s presence and finally annihilation in him

waḥdat al-wujūd: Lit., unity of existence; the doctrine of unification with God

walī: Singular of *wliyā’*, friend of God, divinely elected saint

wazīfa: Lit., duty, assignment; in Tijani parlance, the daily group recitation of certain litanies

wird: Lit., watering place; Sufi term for the litanies recited by members of a Sufi brotherhood

zāwiya: Lit., corner; loge, Sufi center

INTRODUCTION

1. Research Questions

Islamic polemics began with the establishment of the religion in the Arabian Peninsula in the first half of the seventh century. At first the polemics pitted Muslims against non-Muslims, particularly followers of monotheistic Judaism and Christianity—a struggle that has persisted to the present time, and will probably continue for as long as these religions co-exist.¹ In the centuries following the establishment of Islam, Muslims started to engage in polemics with each other, due to certain theological concerns, among other things. These are documented in the vast corpus of polemical literature that has been produced in various fields of Islamic knowledge, including those of Sufism or Islamic mysticism.

This dissertation, “Debating Sufism: The Tijāniyya and its Opponents”, is an attempt to find congruent explanations for the repeated occurrence of doctrinal debates between the two conflicting sides of Sufis and Salafīs in general, and of Tijānī Sufis and their Salafī adversaries in particular. Why are these debates repetitive in nature? What are the repetitive elements in these debates and why are they repeated? What could be learned from the repetitive nature of such debates? What are the sources of authority for Sufi shaykhs, and how do they constitute their religious authority? What are the strategies they have applied in refutation of their opponents? What are the objectives and strategies of Salafī-minded Muslims who reject Sufi tenets and practices? Another focus of this dissertation is on the elements that characterise the debates occurring in different contexts. Another main theme that has emerged from critical engagement with the data is the evolution of the polemical strategies produced by conflicting parties throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The conflict between Tijānī Sufis and their Salafī opponents is basically a battle of “speaking for Islam”, drawing on different sources of authority. Salafīs underline the importance of textual and discursive knowledge extracted from the foundational texts of the religion: they perceive the

¹ See for instance, Samir Khalil Samir and Jorgen S. Nielson, *Christian Arabic Apologetics during the Abbasid Period*, Leiden: Brill, 1914; Rifaat Ebied and David Thomas, *The Polemical Works of ‘Alī al-Ṭabarī*, Boston: Brill, 2016; David Thomas, *Early Muslim Polemics Against Christianity: Abū ‘Isā al-Warrāq’s “Against the Incarnation”*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002; Adem Özen, *İslâm-Yahudi Polemiği ver Tartışma Konuları, Dîvân 2000/2*, pp. 237-256; Mustafa Göregen, *Müslüman-Yahudi Polemikleri*, İstanbul: Hikmetevi Yayınları, 2014.

Qur'ān and the Sunna as the only true sources of religious authority, infallible and unerring. For them, all other possible sources of authority are fallible, and, by the same token, devoid of probative value. For the protagonists of the Tijāniyya, however, the sources of authority extend from the foundational texts of the religion to include the God-given knowledge embedded in the spiritual experiences of the supreme master of their brotherhood, as well as that derived from daylight communications with the Prophet. Among his disciples, a Sufi saint resembles the Prophet among his *umma*. Individual Tijānīs, however, display various levels of reliance on, and recourse to the spiritual authority of their supreme master: while some highlight the spiritual knowledge and authority of the founding figure of the brotherhood as legitimizing evidences for his teachings, others prefer to use discursive knowledge in the face of criticism, though not without occasional and implicit references to the spiritual authority of their supreme master. I will return to these issues in subsequent sections of this chapter.

Another crucial observation is that attempts to acquire authority occur while the actors engage in the sensitive art of polemics. The polemical literature produced by Tijānīs and their opponents constitute platforms where the discursive knowledge each side has accumulated may be displayed—knowledge that, in each case, is coloured by their own respective traditions. Proponents of the Tijāniyya are required to defend the brotherhood and its doctrines at any cost, even if they seem to be at odds with divine instructions or the practice of the Prophet. For a Tijānī, underestimating the spiritual authority of the founding figure of the brotherhood would amount to a serious decline of one's authority within the brotherhood, or even its total extinction.

The assumption that anti-Sufi protagonists (particularly Salafīs) are too radical, compromise too little, and use strong language towards their Sufi counterparts, is revisited here in the light of three case studies, as is the general assumption that Sufis are less radical and use softer language in their discourse. All three of the Sufi cases examined here show that previous studies have somehow overlooked the fact that Tijānī Sufi polemics have evolved, from the use of a soft tone, to the adoption of more antagonistic and troublesome forms of language in the rebuttal of their opponents. This trajectory will be discussed in this thesis in some detail.

2. Sufism² and Anti-Sufism

If one takes a close look at the history of Sufism, from its inauguration at the second half of the second/eighth century AH/CE, one encounters different stages that can be divided roughly into three phases, as follows.³ The first phase, of asceticism and devotion, occurred before the turn of the third century AH. The distinctive features of this phase lie in the fact that good deeds (*‘amal*), worship (*‘ibāda*), good character (*akhlāq*), divine fear (*khashyat Allāh*) and straightforwardness (*istiqāma*) were given precedence over knowledge of the divine (*ma‘rifa*), divine inspiration (*ilhām*), revelation (*kashf*), divine love (*maḥabbat Allāh*) and saintly miracles (*karāmāt*). In short, it could be said that practice was given precedence over theory during this phase. Certain Sufis of this era set the tone for the generations to come: Ibrāhīm b. Adham (d. 161/777–778),⁴ who left his native Balkh in present-day Afghanistan upon meeting a stranger or hearing the call for repentance from the pommel of his saddle, and gave up his previously luxurious lifestyle for a complete renunciation of the worldly, became “the principle prototype of the Syrian ascetical tradition”.⁵ In a similar vein, his fellow countryman Shaqīq al-Balkhī (d. 194/809) turned his back on his own extravagant youth to lead an ascetic life, gaining the reputation of having been “the earliest teacher of the East-Iranian tradition of asceticism”.⁶ In the second phase, the phase of *taṣawwuf*, the situation changed and theory prevailed. From the turn of the third/ninth century, *‘amal* was replaced with *ḥāl* (lit: condition. State of consciousness in Sufi terminology);⁷ outward

² The terms “Sufi” and “Sufism” are most likely derived from the Arabic word for wool (*ṣūf*). While those we now recognize to have been Sufis in the second/eighth AH/CE were century simply known as renunciants, in the third century AH/ninth century CE, those radical renunciants (*zāhid*) who adopted the wearing of wool as a sign of their extreme renunciation came to be known as Sufis. For details, see: Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007, pp. 6-7, and Al-Sāsi ‘Amamera, *al-Khiṭāb al-ṣūfī wa-ishkālātuhu al-tawāṣuliyya: al-ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya namudhajan* (PhD thesis, University of Biskra, Algeria, 2015), pp. 43-53.

³ The three-phase model presented here is based on the observations of scholars like the pro-Sufi Turkish scholar Süleyman Uludağ, and the anti-Sufi Saudi scholar ‘Alī b. Muḥammad Dakhīl Allāh . There have been other models, proposing different stages in the history of Sufism: the German specialist of Islam and Sufism Fritz Meier, for example, has proposed a four-phase model, (comprising the pre-classical, classical, post-classical and neo-classical stages). See: Fritz Meier, “The Mystic Path”, in Bernard Lewis (ed.), *The World of Islam: Faith, People, Culture*, London: Thames and Huston, 1992, pp. 117-128.

⁴ On him, see: N. Hanif, *Biographical Encyclopaedia of Sufis*, New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2002, pp. 79-82.

⁵ Gerhard Böwering, “Early Sufism Between Persecution and Heresy”, in Frederick de Jong and Bernd Radtke (eds.), *Islamic Mysticism Contested: Thirteen Centuries of Controversies and Polemics*, Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill 1999, pp. 45-67, (p. 46).

⁶ Gerhard Böwering, “Early Sufism Between Persecution and Heresy”, pp. 46-47.

⁷ For detailed information on the three phases of Sufism and their representatives see: Süleyman Uludağ, *İslam Düşüncesinin Yapısı: Selef, Kelam, Tasavvuf, Felsefe*, Istanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2010, pp. 114-16. This formulation of phases is that of a pro-Sufi author, while anti-Sufi authors use slightly different language. For example, Dakhīl Allāh names the three phases in the history of Sufism as the phase of worship and devotion; the

piety gave way to the inward kind, and Sufis were more concerned with their own inner self-purification.⁸ This “inward turn manifested itself in new discourses on spiritual states, stages of spiritual development, closeness to God and love”.⁹ Exoteric knowledge was to be complemented and refined by esoteric knowledge of the interior (*‘ilm al-bāṭin*), which was acquired through the training of the human soul and direct access to the divine. Claims of direct encounters with the divine led some Sufis to turn their back on large segments of Muslim society, viewing themselves as the divinely chosen elite, and their other fellow believers as ordinary. The mystical achievements of Sufis were held to equal the experiences of the prophets.¹⁰ In addition to their reciprocal relationships of love with God, this culminated in theologically unacceptable ecstatic utterances which were heretical in nature. As a result, this era in the history of Sufism, characterized as it was by a transition from asceticism to mysticism, saw not only clashes between ascetic Sufis and those who stood for a more gnostic and mystical spirituality, but also the advent of inquisitions for the interrogation of mystics. Some faced charges of heresy and disbelief, while others were tortured, exiled, put in prison or punished with death.¹¹

The introduction of the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd* (the unity of being or the unity of existence) into the Sufi world marked the beginning of the third phase, in which Sufism again transitioned, this time towards philosophy, leaving asceticism and devotion in the background.¹² The aim of

phase of corporal deeds (hunger, poverty and mental adventures); and the phase of deviation, in which ideas like *waḥdat al-wujūd*, *ittiḥād* and *ḥulūl* were introduced into the Sufi corpus, along with practices such as excessive trances and dancing. See: ‘Alī b. Muhammad Dakhīl Allāh, *al-Tijānīyya: Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqa’id al-Tijānīyya ‘alā ḍaw’ al-kitāb wa-l-sunna*, Riyad: Dār al-‘Āṣima li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzī’, 1491/1998, pp. 27-28.

⁸ Fritz Meier, *The Mystic Path*, pp. 118-19.

⁹ Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period*, p. 2.

¹⁰ Al-Bisṭāmī for example is reported to have even laid claim to a higher status than divine messengers. On one occasion when he compares the knowledge of divinely saints and that of the divine messengers he supposedly belittles the knowledge of the latter. See Muḥammad Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya ilā al-tā’ifa al-Tijānīyya*, n.p. [Medina]: no publisher [Islamic University of Medina Press], 1393/1973, p. 120. Ibn Abi al-Hawari was forced to flee from Damascus upon saying he preferred divinely saints to prophets. See: Christopher Melchert, “The Transition from Asceticism to Mysticism in the Middle of the Ninth Century C.E.”, in Lloyd Ridgeon (ed.), *Sufism: Critical Concepts in Islamic Studies, Volume I: Origin and Development*, London and New York: Routledge, 2008, p. 52.

¹¹ Christopher Melchert views the middle of the ninth century CE as the transition from asceticism to mysticism, in which esoteric versus exoteric disputes surfaced. See: Christopher Melchert, “The Transition from Asceticism to Mysticism in the Middle of the Ninth Century C.E.”, pp. 44-63. For details on the inquisition to which early Sufis were subject, see: Gerhard Böwering, *Early Sufism Between Persecution and Heresy*, pp. 54-65. For a more historically comprehensive account, see: Süleyman Uludağ, *İslam Düşüncesinin Yapısı*, pp. 103-106. On the Baghdad trial of Nuri, along with other Sufis, and Nuri’s responses concerning passionate love with God and various puzzling utterances, see: Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period*, pp. 11-13.

¹² Süleyman Uludağ, *İslam Düşüncesinin Yapısı*, p. 116.

Sufi mystical endeavour during this era was to liberate human beings from their worldly forms and equip them to make their way to their origin in God, whom al-Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191) equated with absolute light. Likewise, Ibn ‘Arabī described mystical endeavour appearing as “the liberation of a light and its return to its source...derived from philosophical and non-Qur’ānic systems”, to quote the exact words of Fritz Meier.¹³ Later, whereas the early history of Sufism was characterized by individual endeavour, viewed essentially as drawing closer to God, it evolved into a collective endeavour, anchored in orders and brotherhoods. Since then “aspiring Sufis increasingly relied in achieving spiritual advancement on initiation to one or more *ṭarīqas* and the spiritual guidance of their *shaykhs*, rather than seeing to achieve it by their own efforts”¹⁴ as Jamil Abun-Nasr aptly puts it.

Sufi epistemology is basically built on direct access to the divine world. Through inspiration (*ilhām*) and seeing through things (*kashf*), the Sufi may access a sort of knowledge which is hidden to others. This Sufi mentality came to prominence in the third phase of the history of Islamic mysticism, when the *shaykh al-ta’līm* (the instructor who teaches mystical doctrines) was elevated to the status of *shaykh al-tarbiya* (the master who shapes the life and character of his disciple). One essential result of this transition was the subsequent expectations of the disciple’s unconditional obedience to the master, and uncritical acceptance of his instructions and teachings.¹⁵ This was probably due to the fact that, unlike other denominations within the world of Islam, Sufism claims to have access to fresh knowledge at any given time, due to Sufis’ direct access to the divine. This is perhaps the biggest difference between Sufis and their Kalāmī and Salafī rivals: many protagonists of *kalām* (scholastic theology) lean more toward rational rhetoric and reasoning, while defenders of Salafism stand firmly on the side of the foundational religious texts (the Qur’ān and the Sunna) and avoid any reasoning that might prove harmful to the mentality of giving precedence to those texts at any given time. This, however, does not mean that Sufis deny the authority of religious texts; on the contrary, they will constantly claim the Qur’ān and the

¹³ Fritz Meier, “The Mystic Path”, p. 119.

¹⁴ Jamil Abun-Nasr, *Muslim Communities of Grace: The Sufis Brotherhoods in Islamic Religious Life*, London: Hurst & Co, 2007, p. 176. He uses for this purpose the term of “religious communalism”. For details see: Abun-Nasr, *Muslim Communities of Grace*, p. 180. For a brief discussion of the difference between the Sufism of the third century AH and that of the eighth century AH, see: Josef van Ess, “Sufism and its Opponents: Reflections on Topoi, Tribulations, and Transformations”, in Frederick De Jong and Bernd Radtke (eds.), *Islamic Mysticism Contested: Thirteen Centuries of Controversies and Polemics*, Leiden: Brill 1999, pp. 22-44, (pp. 36-37).

¹⁵ Josef Van Ess, “Sufism and its Opponents”, p.36.

Sunna to be their principle sources of knowledge.¹⁶ However, the way that they approach religious texts differs from that of their Salafī counterparts. Besides the Qur’ān and the Sunna of the Prophet, they also accept *ilhām* and *kashf* as sources of direct access to the divine knowledge called *ma’rifa* or *‘ilm al-ladunnī* that, they, hold may be bestowed upon a Sufi shaykh who possess specific qualities. Thus, whatever that Sufi master has said or says thereafter is of a binding nature for his disciples. The latter have no right to contest or even check the authenticity of the knowledge articulated by their unquestionable master, according to the principle of *ḥusn al-ẓan* (trust in the master). Moreover, this master–disciple relationship is viewed as comparable to that of the Prophet among his companions. The master may even sometimes be greeted with prostrations and the kissing of his feet.¹⁷ This type of relationship is justified by the interpretation of Qur’ānic passages and Prophetic statements in such a way so as not to contradict a saying of the master’s. According to their doctrines, Sufis might even go to the extent of undermining explicit divine statements that seem to clearly and explicitly contradict Sufi doctrines, or of referring to Prophetic statements and traditions that are dismissed by Muslims and experts in the sciences of *ḥadīth* as invented (*mawḍū’*), in support of the sayings of the founder of the brotherhood.¹⁸ This gives rise to the appearance that Sufis firmly believe in the infallibility of their masters: while Sufis would regard the masters as the embodiment of Qur’ān and the Sunna, their opponents would cast them as a third source of information alongside the Qur’ān and the Sunna. To modern Salafīs, the latter perspective constitutes an infringement on the authority of the Qur’ān and the Sunna, and indeed accusations of this nature have been directed at Sufism right from its beginnings.

Tijānī Sufism has been no exception. Tijānīs have been criticized by their opponents for their unconditional submission to their master and uncritical acceptance of his sayings, no matter how incongruent they might be. Some Tijānī tenets have been dismissed as unacceptable while others have been labeled, even, as disbelief (*kufr*) and polytheism (*shirk*).¹⁹ For their part, Tijānīs have reacted by outrage by these allegations directed at them. They see no contradiction whatsoever between the doctrines promoted by their supreme master and the authoritative sources of the religion. Indeed, their saint-based understanding of the religion obliges them to submit to the

¹⁶ For details, see: Süleyman Uludağ, *İslam Düşüncesinin Yapısı*, pp. 117-119.

¹⁷ This soldier-like obedience is perceived to be the source from which Sufi brotherhoods have drawn their strength and cohesion. See: Josef Van Ess: “Sufism and its Opponents”, pp. 36, 41.

¹⁸ Many such examples are provided in the forthcoming chapters.

¹⁹ Examples are provided in the fourth, fifth and sixth chapters.

unshakable spiritual authority embedded in the master. It should be noted as before, however, that the history of Tijānī polemics is also a history of its evolution. The earlier generations of Tijānī writers and defenders were rather radical and uncompromising whenever the spiritual authority of their master or the authenticity of their main textual source *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*, were the subjects of the debate. In the twentieth century, particularly the second half, this radicality eventually made way for more moderate styles and approaches to be taken. However, it is hard to determine whether this change was wrought by a necessity to adopt a more modest approach in order to mitigate the criticism of their adversaries, or by strategic considerations or sincere conviction. As will be seen in the chapters that follow, Roman Loimeier, for example, suggests that necessity and strategy played a role when the Nigerian Tijānī *sharīf* Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ chose to undermine the authority of *Jawāhir*.²⁰ In the case of the Sudanese ‘Umar Mas‘ūd’s rejection of the reward of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* as mentioned in *Jawāhir*, this occurred in a quite different context, since, unlike Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ, the Sudanese did so while addressing fellow Tijānīs, and not their opponents—see section 4.2, on the reward of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ*. Either way, what is certain is that, following this strategic shift (and unlike their nineteenth century predecessors), the Tijānī protagonists of the twentieth century were sometimes less than moderate when they targeted the personalities of their opponents: many polemical texts of this era are, subsequently, replete with swear words directed against their antagonists, at a level rarely found in earlier periods.

3. Previous Studies of the Tijāniyya

The first comprehensive academic monograph on the Tijāniyya was conducted by Jamil Abun-Nasr, a renowned specialist on North African history and Sufism in the African context, particularly the Tijāniyya Sufi order. Published in 1965 CE, his monograph *The Tijaniyya: A Sufi Order in the Modern World* is nowadays outdated, but still widely considered as an effective introduction to the brotherhood. It provides particularly systematic coverage of the life of the order’s founder Aḥmad al-Tijānī; as well a critical examination of his teachings, the essential elements of Tijānī doctrine, and the causes that gave rise to the tensions between his followers and other Muslims. Another, albeit this time highly sympathetic, study of the founder’s life and

²⁰ Roman Loimeier, argues that by developing the flexible strategy of claiming “that none of the presently circulating copies of the book (*Jawāhir*) are really authentic, Ṣāliḥ is in a position to take the wind out of the sails of the Yan Izāla”. Roman Loimeier, *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1997, p. 275.

teachings comes from Zachary Wright, an American scholar and practicing Tijānī currently teaching at Northwestern University in Qatar. Published in 2005 CE, the aim of his book *On the Path of the Prophet: Shaykh Ahmad Tijani and the Tariqa Muhammadiyya*, is to establish the synonymy of Islam and Sufism, particularly that of the Tijānī type, on the basis of primary sources and interviews with Tijānī leaders from Senegal, Morocco and Egypt. Wright's depiction of the supreme master of the Tijāniyya as the prototypical follower of the Prophet—and an enigmatically charismatic one—comes at the expense of ignoring the criticism of non-Tijānī Muslims, and thus changes the character of this book away from an academic study towards a kind of a hagiography.²¹

The focus of another study by Wright, his *Living Knowledge in West African Islam: The Sufi Community of Ibrahim Niasse*, published in 2015 CE, is, as the name suggests, that of the community of Shaykh Ibrāhīm Niyās in West Africa. Besides providing important information on the Senegalese shaykh, his community and disciples, the main argument of this work is that “Sufism in West Africa is best understood as the culmination of a long scholarly tradition of inscribing knowledge in people”.²² Thus, for Wright, Sufi knowledge in West Africa is a continuation of traditional Islamic learning, which not only has not undermined Islamic orthodoxy, but has rather played a crucial role in its preservation. He argues that the Sufi transmission of the experiential knowledge of God (*maʿrifa*) via the form of the disciple–master relationship draws on the ancient Muslim tradition and habitus of teacher–student practices. Moreover, in fact, the Tijānī model is said by Wright to have reenacted and strengthened that tradition. Here too, the author does not desist from making value judgements: Sufi masters (particularly Tijānīs in the Sufi community of Niyās) are portrayed as personifications of knowledge whose physical presence reproduces the exemplary presence of the Prophet; thus, Sufism is defined as the essence of Islam. In contrast, anti-Sufi Muslims are implicitly portrayed as having missed the essence of Islam and

²¹ For details, see: Zachary V. Wright, *On the Path of the Prophet: Shaykh Ahmad Tijani and the Tariqa Muhammadiyya*, Atlanta, African American Islamic Institute, 2005. The name of the book seems to have been taken from a *khuṭba* (preaching session) by Ibrāhīm Niyās, entitled *The Tariqa Tijāniyya is the Path of the Prophet*. This *khuṭba* has been translated into English by Muḥammad Abdullahi al-Tijānī al-Ibrāhīmī. See: <https://npartee.wordpress.com/2014/11/25/the-tariqa-tijaniyya-is-the-path-off-the-prophet-saw-khutbah-of-shaykh-al-Islām-ibrāhīm-niasse-ra/>.

²² Zachary V. Wright, *Living Knowledge in West African Islam: The Sufi Community of Ibrāhīm Niasse*, Leiden: Brill, 2015, p. 287.

instead lingered at the shell, an argument Sufis have often made to discredit their opponents.²³ Likewise, no less problematic is the conclusion he offers on the difference of intention between Sufis and their opponents; the latter are said “to produce good servants of an idealized Islamic state”, while the former have been “producing good servants of God”.²⁴ A contrasting example of rigorous research on the movement of Ibrāhīm Niyās is *The Divine Flood: Ibrāhīm Niasse and the Roots of a Twentieth-Century Sufi Revival*, by Rüdiger Seesemann. Published in 2011 CE, the book provides a rare window onto the community, relying on a cross-disciplinary methodology combining philological scrutiny of primary texts with empirical fieldwork. For Seesemann, the Community of the Divine Flood constitutes an enduring example of a Sufi revival in the age of modernity. Alongside this main argument, which corrects the misconception, held by some experts on Sufism, that Sufism was “on the way out”, the study opens up a new window on the emergence and expansion of this Sufi community, as well as on the understanding of its doctrinal aspects.²⁵

4. Data and Analysis

As will be seen in the following chapter, there has been no shortage of attacks on the Tijāniyya, from its establishment until the present day. Non-Tijānī Muslims, Sufis and Salafīs alike, have revealed their distaste toward the lofty claims put forward by the founder of the order Aḥmad al-Tijānī regarding his own status and the status and that of his order, of his litanies and followers. Some of these attacks are less well-known than others, and others are only vaguely remembered. However, there are some which are widely known, to the point of being cited by almost all anti-Tijānīs. Prominent examples of the latter type include: *al-Anwār al-rahmāniyya li-hidāyat al-firqa al-Tijāniyya* (Divine Lights for the Right Guidance of the Tijānī Community) by the Malian Salafī ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ifrīqī (d. 1377/1957), who studied and died in Saudi Arabia; *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya ilā l-tā’ifa al-Tijāniyya* (The Guiding Gift to the Tijānī Group) written by the Moroccan Salafī Muḥammad Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī (d. 1407/1987), during his teaching years at the Islamic University of Medina; and *al-Tijāniyya: Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā’id al-Tijāniyya ‘alā ḍaw’ al-kitāb*

²³ For example the famous thirteenth century Persian Sufi poet and eponymous founder of Mawlawiyya, Muḥammad Jalāl ad-Dīn al-Balkhī/al-Rūmī (1207-1273), best known as Mawlānā Rūmī, argued in a rather bold fashion that Sufis like him have chosen the brain of Qur’ān and left the shell to dogs by which he means the opponents. “*Mā zi Qur’ān barguzīdim maghz rā, post rā pīshi sagān andāktim*”. See Süleyman Uludağ, *İslam Düşüncesinin Yapısı*, p. 128.

²⁴ Zachary V. Wright, *Living Knowledge in West African Islam*, p. 291.

²⁵ See Rüdiger Seesemann, *The Divine Flood: Ibrāhīm Niasse and the Roots of a Twentieth-Century Sufi Revival*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

wa-al-sunna (The Tijāniyya Brotherhood: A Study of the Most Important Beliefs of the Tijāniyya in the Light of Qur’ān and the Sunna) by ‘Alī b. Muḥammad Dakhīl Allāh (b. around mid twentieth century), a Salafī scholar from Saudi Arabia. Anti-Tijānī discussions held on social media platforms are full of references to these works,²⁶ this is one of the main reasons why these sources have been chosen for investigation here. It should be noted, however, that these are not the only well-known attacks on the Tijāniyya. *Mushtahā al-khārif al-jānī fī radd zalaqāt al-Tijānī al-jānī* (Wishes of the Demented Lunatic: Refutation of the Errors of the Criminal al-Tijānī) by Muḥammad al-Khiḍr b. Māyābā (d. 1354/1935), was the first major attack on the brotherhood in the twentieth century, and served as the inspiration for many others to come. As Ibn Māyābā’s work is already well studied by Western scholars of Islam and Sufism,²⁷ however, it has been decided to leave it out of this study and focus instead on works that are less well-known to Western academics.

The refutation of attacks on the brotherhood seems to be perceived as a religious duty by Tijānīs.²⁸ None of the above-mentioned onslaughts went unanswered; protagonists of the Tijāniyya brotherhood responded in defence of their order and constituencies. In refutation of al-Ifriqī’s allegations, for example, Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ b. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Tijānī al-Miṣrī (d. 1398/1978) of Egypt produced a treatise entitled *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn ‘alā ahl al-yaqīn* (Refutation of the Lies of the Slanderers Attributed to the People of Certitude). This was followed and complemented by *al-Radd ‘alā al-Ifriqī difā’an ‘an l-ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya* (The Refutation of al-Ifriqī in Defence of the Tijāniyya Brotherhood), written by a contemporary Sudanese disciple of Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, ‘Umar Mas‘ūd al-Tijānī (b. 1368/1948). The latter also provided a partial response to al-Hilālī, in a treatise entitled *al-Tijāniyya wa-khuṣūmuḥum wa-l-qawl al-ḥaqq* (Tijānīs, their

²⁶ See, for example, websites such as <http://majles.alukah.net/t90144/>; <http://fatwa.islamweb.net/fatwa/index.php?page=showfatwa&Option=FatwaId&Id=139109>; <http://www.ajurry.com/vb/showthread.php?t=33833>.

²⁷ See for example: Ousmane Kane “Muhammad Niasse (1881-1956) es sa réplique contre le pamphlet anti-tijāni de Ibn Mayaba”, in: David Robinson & Jean Louis Triaud (eds.), *La Tijāniyya. Une confrérie musulmane à la conquête de l’Afrique* Paris: Karthala, 2000, pp. 219-136; Abdel Wedoud Ould Cheikh, “Les perles et le soufre: une polémique mauritanienne autour de la Tijāniyya”, in: David Robinson & Jean Louis Triaud (eds.), *La Tijāniyya. Une confrérie musulmane à la conquête de l’Afrique* Paris: Karthala, 2000, pp. 125-164 and Jean-Louis Triaud, “Le Tijāniyya, voie infaillible ou ‘voie soufie inventée’: author du pamphlet anti-tijāni d’Ibrāhīm al-Qattān”, in: David Robinson & Jean Louis Triaud (eds.), *La Tijāniyya. Une confrérie musulmane à la conquête de l’Afrique* Paris: Karthala, 2000, pp. 165-200.

²⁸ Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijaniyya: A Sufi Order in the Modern World*, London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1965, p. 166.

Adversaries and the Truth). Another reply to al-Hilālī came from Aḥmad b. al-Hādī al-‘Alawī al-Shinqīṭī (d. 1430/2009), a Mauritanian Tijānī who died in Medina, in the form of a book called *Shams al-dalīl li-itfā’ al-qindīl wa-muḥiqq mā li-l-Dakhīl wa-l-Hilālī min-turrāhāt wa-abāṭīl* (The Guiding Sun in Extinguishing the Candle and the Eraser of the Gibberish and Nonsense of al-Dakhīl²⁹ and al-Hilālī). As the title of the book suggests, it is a simultaneous refutation of the polemical onslaught against the Tijāniyya by Dakhīl Allāh as well. In the following, these sources will be subjected to a critical reading, along with other complementary sources written by both parties, the Salafīs and Sufīs.

This study combines historical and philological approaches to the examination and analysis of these polemical writings, all of which were produced in the twentieth century, with the exception of Aḥmad b. al-Hādī’s *Shams al-dalīl*, published in 2006 CE. In addition to this combined approach, special importance is given to the biographical accounts of the authors, as looking at their religious backgrounds and experiences enables us to identify the events that have shaped their religious views and understandings of Islam. It was initially planned that I would conduct fieldwork in Morocco and Egypt for the purpose of observing Tijānīs firsthand, in the light of the accusations directed at them by their adversaries, in addition to making library visits and conducting interviews intended to be conducted with leading figures of the brotherhood, as well as its ordinary followers. Unfortunately, legal restrictions and political circumstances have not permitted me to conduct fieldwork in either of those two countries. Fortunately, however, the rich material held by the University of Bayreuth, and especially the Tijānī collection held in the personal library of my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Rüdiger Seesemann, closed the gap and provided me with all the sources I needed to consult for this dissertation. I was also further able to conduct informal discussions with Tijānī scholars and experts on Sufism who visited the University of Bayreuth on several occasions. This gave me a feeling of having conducted a portion of fieldwork, even while being at my home institution.

5. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

5.1. Authority in Islam as either textual and restricted, or as spiritual and extended

²⁹ Dakhīl Allāh is referred to as “al-Dakhīl” which means “the intruder”. Playing with names is a way of ridiculing the opponent that is practiced in the art of refutation.

Authority, as defined by Max Weber, is the ability to make others follow and obey one's rules or rulings without any usage of coercive power. This factor distinguishes authority (*Autorität*) from power, or might (*Macht*).³⁰ However, it is not easy to distinguish religious authority from power, as it is not easy to clearly define; it assumes a number of forms and functions. It is the ability, power and right to define true belief and practice, and to differentiate these from the false and corrupted kind, such as deviance and heresy, in a way which will eventually shape and form the views and conduct of others. As Weber puts it, authority is connected to legitimacy and trust. Thus, religious authority rests on certain qualities and may be ascribed to individuals, groups and institutions; what makes religious authority effective is the trust and readiness of others to credit that person, group or institution with it.³¹

In the case of the proponents of the Tijāniyya, the goal of whose polemical writings is to reassure their own constituency as observed by Seesemann,³² the main source and basis of authority is Aḥmad al-Tijānī, the founding figure of the brotherhood himself. The authority conferred on him by the brotherhood is the spiritual authority of a Sufī saint, along with the doctrinal scholarly authority of a shaykh as well.³³ Defending the legitimacy of the doctrines he established is thus regarded as a religious duty, and it is for this reason that proponents of the Tijāniyya often tend to portray themselves in terms of being the “tongue” or “pen” of the supreme master of the brotherhood. They will even try to attribute their own knowledge to the supreme master, calling it a “drop from his [Aḥmad al-Tijānī’s] ocean”.³⁴ If they succeed to convince the Tijānī milieu of

³⁰ For Max Weber's definition of authority and more, see: Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, Tübingen, 1922.

³¹ Gudrun Krämer and Sabine Schmidtke, “Introduction: Religious Authority and Religious Authorities in Muslim Societies: A Critical Overview”, in *Speaking for Islam: Religious Authorities in Muslim Societies*, Gudrun Krämer and Sabine Schmidtke (eds.), Leiden: Brill, 2006, pp. 1-14, (pp. 1-2).

³² Rüdiger Seesemann, “Three Ibrāhīms: Literary Production and the Remaking of the Tijāniyya Sufī Order in Twentieth-Century Sudanic Africa”, *Die Welt des Islams* 49, 2009, p. 309.

³³ In his work on Moroccan Sufism, Vincent J. Cornell highlights eight forms of religious authority, as embodied by eight ideal types of saints. These are the ethical authority of the *ṣāliḥ*, the exemplary authority of the *quḍwa*, the juridical authority of the *watad*, the social authority of the *murābiṭ*, the doctrinal authority of the *shaykh*, the generative authority of the *ghawth*, the religio-political authority of the *imām* and the inclusive authority of the *quṭb*. For details, see: Vincent J. Cornell, *Realm of the Saint: Power and Authority in Moroccan Sufism*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998, pp. 272-285. The supreme master of the Tijāniyya conforms to at least half of these patterns of authority.

³⁴ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ depicts his endeavour of responding to opponents as a form of service to the supreme master of the Tijāniyya. He himself (al-Ḥāfiẓ) is nothing more than a “tongue among his several tongues, a pen among his several pens and a drop from his ocean” (*wa-mā ana fī dhālika illā lisān min alsinatihī wa-qalam min aqlāmihi.. wa-qaṭra min bahrihi*). See: Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn ‘alā ahl al-yaqīn*, ed. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, n.p. [Cairo] 1369/1950, p. 4.

their claims, the consequences translate into a visible enhancement of their status and acceptance in Tijānī circles. By contrast, any shortcomings in their mission to do so could bear drastic consequences, leading to the diminution of their authority, or even their total rejection by fellow Tijānīs. (A case in point is the challenge issued by the Sudanese Ibrāhīm Sīdī, in the face of the transnational authority of Ibrāhīm Niyas of Senegal and Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz of Egypt; he accused both of taking too soft of a stance vis-à-vis the opponents when they should have striven to defend the brotherhood and its teachings with every means available).³⁵ Proponents of the Tijāniyya who take it upon themselves to defend it against the onslaught of outsiders are well aware of all of these facts. They thus work to consolidate the authority of the supreme master in their literary productions, which in turn leads to the establishment of their own authority. Indeed, for Tijānīs, along with the scriptural ability to quote from the foundational texts of the religion, references to the founding figure of the Tijāniyya serve as the cornerstone for the formation of their own authority. And, as Jamil Abun-Nasr has aptly observed, “Aḥmad al-Tijānī was to his followers what he claimed to be”.³⁶

Where the conflict between Tijānīs and their opponents involves Salafīs, it is basically a struggle between two different sorts of authority. Both parties are battling to “speak for Islam”, drawing on their own religious knowledge, on the basis of different sources of authority. Salafīs underline the importance of discursive and textual knowledge extracted from the foundational scriptures of Islam, the holy divine speech of the Qur’ān and the Sunna of the Prophet.³⁷ Indeed, for them, the only source of religious authority is that which God has revealed in his book, and which his messenger has illustrated by his perfect example. Other, human sources of authority are fallible, and therefore devoid of probative value.³⁸

³⁵ For details of the accusations directed at Ibrahim Niyas and Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, see: Ibrāhīm Sīdī, *al-Irshādāt al-aḥmadiyya fī shamm rā’iḥat al-khatmiyya wa-l-katmiyya* (completed in late October 1995 and printed together with *al-Anfās al-rahmāniyya fī rashḥ fuyūd al-ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya*), n.p. [Khartoum], 1995. A detailed account of the issue is given in the following chapters.

³⁶ Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijaniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, p. 182.

³⁷ Gudrun Krämer and Sabine Schmidkte, “Introduction: Religious Authority and Religious Authorities in Muslim Societies. A Critical Overview”, in: *Speaking for Islam: Religious Authorities in Muslim Societies*, Gudrun Krämer and Sabine Schmidkte (eds.), Leiden: Brill, 2006, pp. 2-14 (p. 9).

³⁸ This argument was developed at least as early as third and fourth centuries after the Prophet. For the appearance of this method of argumentation in the discourse of Dawūd b. ‘Alī al-Isfahānī (d. 270/884) and Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064), see: Camilla Adang, “‘This Day I Have Perfected Your Religion for You’: A Zāhirī Conception of Religious Authority”, in: Krämer, Gudrun and Schmidkte, Sabine (eds.), *Speaking for Islam: Religious Authorities in Muslim Societies*, Leiden: Brill, 2006, pp. 15-48.

The protagonists of Tijānī Sufism, however, also draw on God-given knowledge that they perceive to be embedded in the spiritual experiences of the supreme master of the brotherhood, and derived from his daylight communications with the Prophet. The perception, in later Sufism, of the Sufi master as a legitimate source of religious authority is a well-known phenomenon,³⁹ which finds its acme in the discourse of the eighteenth century Moroccan Sufi author al-Lamaṭī (d. 1156/1743), who claimed that if the schools of jurisprudence were to disappear, the illuminated mystic (*al-maftūh ‘alayhi*) with direct access to the Prophet would be able to restore the whole of the *sharī‘a*.⁴⁰ This is sufficient evidence of the fact that the “Sufi saint becomes a new source of authority in his own right”, as one researcher has put it.⁴¹ The master’s role in his local community and immediate environment is held to resemble the role of the Prophet among his global community, known as the *umma*. It should again be emphasized that Sufis, including Tijānīs, do perceive the Qur’ān and the Sunna as the two supreme sources of religious authority—but not necessarily the only ones.⁴² This is exactly the point that distinguishes them from Salafīs, for whom religious authority is confined to these two foundational scriptures of the religion alone, access to which is obtained through “discursive engagement”, to use Qasim Zaman’s formulation.⁴³ Thus, the altercation between the two sides may be seen to be a battle between “textual and spiritual authority”, to borrow from Gudrun Krämer and Sabine Schmidkte.⁴⁴ Here it should also be noted that proponents of the Tijāniyya display different levels of reverence towards the spiritual authority of their

³⁹ For an account of the issue, see: Simon Digby, “The Sufi Shaikh as a Source of the Authority in Medieval India”, in *Islam et société en Asie du Sud*, Marc Gaborieau (ed.), Paris, 1986, pp. 57-77.

⁴⁰ “*Wa-law ta ‘aṭṭalat al-madhāhib bi-asrihā la-qara ‘alā ihyā al-sharī‘a*” he argues. See: Aḥmad b. Mubārak al-Lamaṭī, *al-Ibrīz min kalām sayyidī ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Dabbāgh*, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1423/2002, p. 356. This statement is quoted by the influential nineteenth-century Tijānī spiritual master and military commander in West Africa Al-Ḥājj ‘Umar (d. 1864). See: ‘Umar al-Fūfī b. Sa‘id al-Fūfī, *Rimāḥ ḥizb al-Raḥīm ‘alā nuḥūr ḥizb al-rajīm*, vol. I, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1383/1963, p. 88. See also: Bernd Radtke, “Ijtihād and Neo-Sufism”, 48, 3, 1994, pp. 909-921, (p. 920); Bernd Radtke, John O’Kane, Knut S. Vikor and R.S.O’Fahey, *The Exoteric Aḥmad Ibn Idrīs: A Sufi’s Critique of the Madhāhib & the Wāḥhābīs*, Leiden: Brill, 2000, p. 18.

⁴¹ Devin DeWeese, “Authority”, in: Jamal J. Elias (ed.), *Key Themes for the Study of Islam*, Oxford: Oneworld, 2010, pp. 26-52, (p. 49).

⁴² Along with the authoritative scriptures of the religion, Sufism recognizes other sources of authority: “In addition to the claim to contact with and access to the living reality of the Prophet, Sufism also claims contact with a rich spiritual world that is imagined in neatly classified and hierarchical terms...as a source of immediate and undeniable religious authority”. See: Devin DeWeese, “Authority”, p. 48.

⁴³ He makes this pronouncement in relation to the distinctiveness of the ‘*ulamā*’s’ mode of argumentation, “a style whose distinctiveness and authority rests on its discursive engagement with the history of earlier scholarly debates”. See: Muhammad Qasim Zaman, “Consensus and Religious Authority in Modern Islam: The Discourses of the ‘*Ulamā*’”, in: Gudrun Krämer and Sabine Schmidkte (eds.), *Speaking for Islam: Religious Authorities in Muslim Societies*, Leiden: Brill, 2006, pp. 153-180, (see p. 155).

⁴⁴ Gudrun Krämer and Sabine Schmidkte, “Introduction: Religious Authority and Religious Authorities in Muslim Societies. A Critical Overview”, p. 10.

supreme master in their polemical literature. While, for example, the Mauritanian Aḥmad b. al-Hādī highlights the unique nature of his master’s authority as a legitimate source of evidence for his teachings, the Egyptian Muḥammad al-Hāfīz often soft-pedals in this regard and prefers to base his arguments on discursive authority, with only implicit references to the probative value of the spiritual authority of the founder of the brotherhood.⁴⁵

Another equally crucial point to consider relates to the patterns by which authority may be acquired. In both cases, this depends not only on one’s ability to deal with acquired discursive knowledge, but also, and probably most importantly, on one’s personal reputation and perceived degree of faithfulness to the tradition to which one belongs. Thus, here authority is something that is exercised with reference to discursive learning, and acknowledged by its subjects with reference to the level of the exerciser’s connectedness to a given tradition of the one exercising it.⁴⁶ Both Tijānī shaykhs and their Salafī counterparts are aware of this fact. As before, each of their polemical literatures is a display of their acquired discursive knowledge and, as such, coloured by their own respective traditions in each case. For Tijānīs, it is unimaginable that they would undermine either the statements of the brotherhood’s founder and supreme master or any of its authoritative sources on the basis of their own acquired religious learning; far from it, they are required, on the contrary, to defend the doctrines of their order at any cost. Thus, even if the teachings promoted by the Tijānī master were found to be at odds with divine instructions or the practice of the Prophet, it would be their ineluctable religious duty to find a means of reconciliation that would distract criticism on the one hand and enhance their personal reputation among their fellow Tijānīs on the other. The underestimation of the spiritual authority of the supreme master or one of his deputies would cause a serious decline or even the total extinction of their authority within the brotherhood.

5.2. Embodied and Disembodied Authority

⁴⁵ For instance, in his refutation of Ibn Māyābā, the Mauritanian Tijānī dedicates a long preamble to stressing the lofty status of his master as one bestowed with spiritual authority as well as the textual kind. See: Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Muntahā sayl al-jārif min tanāquḍāt mushtahā al-khārif*, Rabat: Maṭba‘a al-Karāma, 2001, pp. 5-26.

⁴⁶ On the dual nature of authority in this sense, see: Benedikt Pontzen, “‘Speaking for Islam’ and Religious Authority in Zongos in Asante, Ghana”, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 47, (1), 2017, pp. 42-71.

Tijānīs and their detractors each refer to different types of authority in justifying their own appropriation and reappropriation of religious themes. Protagonists of the Tijāniyya defend the doctrines of the order with an appeal to the perception of saints and sainthood, as these figure in their shared imagination. According to the descriptions offered by the most authoritative Tijānī sources, including *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī* and *Rimāḥ ḥizb al-Raḥīm*, as well as Sufi manuals more generally, sainthood (*walāya*) can not be discovered by the human intellect. Human striving to attain sainthood is doomed to absolute failure. Its conferral or assignment is an act of grace on the part of almighty Allah, and He confers it on those who are destined for it, regardless of their moral status and intellectual distinction.⁴⁷ Furthermore, Tijānīs hold that a divinely elected saint is bestowed with constant communion with the Prophet, from whom the saint derives his knowledge of the *sharī‘a*. Only the saint himself is entitled to decide whether his teachings have departed from divine law or not.⁴⁸ The ratification of such a saint constitutes a religious duty for Tijānīs, while rejecting his sainthood or bearing any sort of animosity toward him has its consequences, which can reach as far as one’s expulsion from the religion itself. To emphasize embodied authority of the saint, Sufis in general, refer to a statement of the prophet which reads: “Allah said, whoever shows hostility to a Wali of Mine, I will declare war against him. And the most beloved things with which My slave comes nearer to Me, is what I have made obligatory upon him; and My slave keeps on coming closer to Me through performing supererogatories till I love him, and when I love him, I become the hearing through which he hears, and the seeing through which he sees, and his hand with which he grips, and his leg with which he walks; and if he asks Me, I will give him, and if he asks for my refuge, I will give him My refuge”.⁴⁹ The sources of the Tijānī brotherhood are full of stories in which prominent saints strike their enemies with divine

⁴⁷ *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī* relates a statement by the founder of the Tijāniyya in which he speaks of three hundred divine traits of behaviour, each of which entitles its bearer to enter paradise. Those among the Muslims who are endowed with these traits are not necessarily superior to a saint who is not characterized by any of them. On the contrary, the saint may be of higher status when compared with the bearers of those traits. See: ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm b. Barāda, *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī wa-bulūgh al-amānī fī fayd Sayyidī Abī l-‘Abbās al-Tijānī*, vol. II, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1383/1963, p. 84.

⁴⁸ *Rimāḥ ḥizb al-Raḥīm*, one of the most authoritative sources of the brotherhood, argues that, for the same reason, the four orthodox schools of law in Sunni Islam could not serve as yardsticks for the contestation of the knowledge of a divinely elected saint, for such a one is constantly guarded by the Prophet himself and bestowed with access to the divine truths. ‘Umar al-Fūtī, *Rimāḥ ḥizb al-Raḥīm*, vol. p. 88. For a detailed account of the spiritual knowledge of great saints which encompasses the *sharī‘a* in its entirety, see: Muḥammad Muḥammad al-‘Arabī b. al-Sa‘īh, *Bughyat al-mustafid li-sharḥ Munyat al-murīd*, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1393/1973, pp. 10-21, particularly p.16.

⁴⁹ It should be mentioned that such a interpretation of this Prophetic statement, reported by Bukhari on the authority of Abu Hurayra, is a uniquely Sufi concept. For a non Sufi perception of the statement see:

<https://binbaz.org.sa/audios/2177/39-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%AF%D8%A9>

vengeance. To distinguish a true saint from a fraud, Tijānī sources lay down two fundamental stipulations as requirements: the saint himself must be convinced of his divine mission, and this mission must be recognized by the public.⁵⁰ In the case of Aḥmad al-Tijānī, both stipulations are fulfilled; not only was he sure of his own capacity as the bearer of a special divine mission, but millions of followers also reassured him of this fact, through their sincere affiliation to his path.

It is on the basis of this trust that Tijānīs unconditionally surrender to the teachings of their supreme master. He is, for them, a perfect personification of truth and embodiment⁵¹ or actualization of knowledge.⁵² And, because he is perceived as embodied and actualized authority, by the same token, he is seen as exempt from having committed mistakes. His spiritual teachings are seen as so pure, and thus so necessarily compliant with the religion of Islam, that, in his lifetime, “his very being communicated an Islamic religious subjectivity”.⁵³ As such, his teachings are perceived to be closed to any sort of rational discussion or contestation. Furthermore, as he is understood to have been most often accompanied by the Prophet, this is seen to provide a sort of protection against his having committed any possible errors⁵⁴—one source of the importance of his purported daylight communications with the Prophet. He is thus understood to have embarked on a mission which the Prophet assigned to him, and saints, in their capacities as bearers of the divine mission, are immune to error.

As for Salafīs, they rely on textual and disembodied knowledge, and subsequently disembodied authority, in the sense that the text serves as the source of authority, in contrast to the spiritual

⁵⁰ For a complete account of the Tijānī perception of saints and sainthood, see: Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijaniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, pp. 163-165.

⁵¹ For details on embodied religious knowledge in this context, see: Rudolph T. Ware, *The Walking Qur'an: Islamic Education, Embodied Knowledge, and History in West Africa*, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014 particularly pages 253-254. This paradigm is interpreted by another scholar of Islam in Africa, Louis Brenner, as an esoteric episteme. See: Louis Brenner, *Controlling Knowledge: Religion, Power and Schooling in West African Muslim Society*, London: Hurst, 2000. For the use of embodiment in Islamic studies, see: Shahzad Bashir, *Sufi Bodies: Religion and Society in Medieval Islam*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2011 and Scott Kugle, *Sufis and Saints' Bodies: Mysticism, Corporality, and Sacred Power in Islam*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007.

⁵² Zachary Wright prefers to use the term “actualization” instead of “embodiment”. For details, see: Zachary V. Wright, *Living Knowledge in West African Islam: The Sufi Community of Ibrahim Niasse*, Leiden: Brill, 2015.

⁵³ Though this statement was made with specific reference to the community of Ibrāhīm Niyās, it also holds true for all Tijānīs and their perception of the founding figure of their Bbotherhood. See: Zachary V. Wright, *Living Knowledge in West African Islam*, p. 31.

⁵⁴ Not to forget that supreme master of the Tijāniyya had claimed impeccability (‘iṣma) for himself, often regarded a prerogative of the divine messengers who are believed to have been protected from committing errors. On Ahmad al-Tijānī’s claim to ‘iṣma, see: Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijaniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, pp. 34-36.

person or body of the master, as in Sufi thought. The following observation by Rudolph T. Ware captures the rationale of disembodied knowledge and authority; as Ware writes, this “way of knowing sought to make knowledge abstract, to divorce it from its particular embodied bearers, and to see it as a universally accessible and uniform good. Knowledge unbound from its embodied human bearers thus became quantifiable, alienable, and observable”.⁵⁵ Reliance on embodied authority reaches such a peak in the Tijānī system of thought that it seems to their opponents, fellow Sufis among them, that Tijānīs hold it to be coequal with the foundational sources of the religion. For example, the influential nineteenth-century Qādirī shaykh of West Africa Aḥmad al-Bakkā’ī (d. 282/1865) highlighted precisely this point in the letters of reprimand he sent to proponents of the Tijāniyya. In one of his letters, addressed to Alfā ‘Umar, a lieutenant of the renowned Tijānī scholar and commander al-Hājj ‘Umar al-Fūtī (d. 1280/1864),⁵⁶ Alfā ‘Umar is chastised for his alleged confusion concerning the hierarchical structure of authority in Islam, with regard to Allah, the Prophet and the saints. Alfā ‘Umar is advised to approach the Prophet in the light of the divine command, to adhere firmly to his Sunna, and to accept from his master Aḥmad al-Tijānī only that which conforms with the Sunna. Otherwise, al-Bakkā’ī warns him, he will have to face divine wrath and a bitter end. “Approach the prophets as God has commanded you... and do not let any *walī* or *‘ālim* lead you astray; for only the prophets are infallible, and none but they are sent with a [divine] message”.⁵⁷ Salafī critics of the brotherhood also stress the fact that impeccability is reserved for the Prophet alone; therefore, along with divine commands, his Sunna should serve as the yardstick for the evaluation of Sufi doctrines. One Salafī author reminds his Tijānī interlocutors of the command of their own supreme master, which explicitly made it incumbent upon Tijānīs to apply the measure of *sharī‘a* while dealing with his (their master’s) own sayings.⁵⁸

5.3. Acquiring Capital

⁵⁵ Rudolph T. Ware, *The Walking Qur’an*, p. 205.

⁵⁶ On the life of Al-Hājj ‘Umar, see: Aḥmad Sukayrij, *Kashf al-ḥijāb ‘amman talāqā ma ‘a l-Shaykh al-Tijānī min l-aṣḥāb*, Fez, 1381-1961, pp. 334-342; Muḥammad al-Ḥafīz, *‘Umar al-Fūtī al-Fūtī: sulṭān al-dawla al-Tijāniyya bi-gharb Ifriqyā shay min jihādihi wa-tārikh ḥayātihī*, Cairo: al-Zawiya al-Tijāniyya, 1383 AH; B.G. Martin, *Muslim Brotherhoods in Nineteenth-Century Africa*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, pp. 68-98; David Robinson, *The Holy War of Umar Tal*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985.

⁵⁷ For a detailed account of the letter, see: Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijaniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, p. 168.

⁵⁸ Muḥammad Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, pp. 37-38.

Writing polemical treatises in defence of a specific set of values or religious doctrines is a process in which one transcribes one's cultural capital—both via its embodied state (such as when one manifests it through culture, cultivation and *Bildung*, as articulated by Bourdieu, as well as via esoteric knowledge and the sciences, as well as exoteric knowledge and sciences, according to Kane⁵⁹), and via its objectified state (such as when it is manifested in the forms of writings, paintings, monuments and instruments, for example)—into social capital and symbolic power, yielding titles of honour, nobility and recognition.⁶⁰ While cultural capital is related to the individual, social capital is related to the group. When the first is converted to the second,⁶¹ the group confers a special status on its owner. Thus, just as in a patriarchal family, the father, as the eldest and most senior family member, is perceived by other members as the only authority who may speak on behalf of the family, in all sorts of official situations and other circumstances, in this context, a producer of polemical writings gains the right to speak on behalf of the group, in the eyes of his followers. Proponents of the Tijāniyya who defend the brotherhood against its opponents are viewed as defenders of the collective honour of the group. Therefore, they are entitled to act as spokespersons for the order, authorized to define its borders, and to cure the individual lapses that may occur among its members. If any such a lapse is irredeemable, they also have the authority to excommunicate the member responsible for the embarrassment.

Defending the brotherhood (*tarīqa*) is, and always has been, a legitimate means of acquiring social capital that is recognized as such by fellow Tijānīs. Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, for example, is praised

⁵⁹ In an application of Bourdieu's theory to the religious field of Northern Nigeria Ousmane Kane develops five types of capital: a) Non-formally certified cultural capital such as exoteric knowledge and esoteric sciences of Sufism; b) formally certified cultural capital such as esoteric knowledge like university certificate or mastery of Qur'ān; c) economical capital such a material wealth; d) symbolic capital such as fighters of the cause of Islam; e) social capital such as supporters, clients and disciples among others. See details in: Ousmane Kane, *Muslim Modernity in Postcolonial Nigeria: A study of the Society for Removal of Innovation and Reinstatement of Tradition*, Leiden: Brill, 2003, pp. 21-23.

⁶⁰ According to Bourdieu, capital can present itself in three guises. 1) economical capital, institutionalized in the form of property rights; 2) cultural capital, institutionalized in educational qualifications, and 3) social capital, consisting of social obligations and connections, institutionalized, for example, in the form of a title of nobility. Cultural capital is further divided to three subforms: its embodied state, its objectified state, and its institutionalized state. See: Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of capital", in: John Richardson (ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education*, New York: Greenwood Press, 1986, pp. 241-258. For a more detailed account of Bourdieu's theory, see: Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977. For an application of the theory to the puritanical Salafi Movement of Izāla, see: Ramzi Ben Amara, *The Izāla Movement in Nigeria: Its Split, Relationship to Sufis and Perception of Shari'a Re-implementation*, (PhD thesis, University of Bayreuth, Germany, 2011), pp. 47-56.

⁶¹ On the convertibility of one form of capital to another, see: Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital", where he discusses "conversions".

by the Sudanese Tijānī author al-Fātiḥ al-Nūr for having undertaken the task of defending the brotherhood for no less than forty years.⁶² Producing polemical treatises thus serves as a serious method for acquiring a certain kind of authority that distinguishes its owner from others, and this renders such sources into sources of legitimacy in return. Just as Michael Chamberlin describes the *a'yān* (elite) of medieval Damascus as “models for opinions on the questions of the time”,⁶³ the producers of polemical writings occupy a similar place in Tijānī world, as the ones who may define the true doctrines and defend their legitimacy. To illustrate this point, when I sought to know the personal views of some of ‘Umar Mas‘ūd’s disciples on certain controversial Tijānī tenets, they deliberately avoided sharing their own takes with me. Instead, it was recommended that I should refer to those of the treatises written by the Sudanese shaykh himself that address the issues in question. The production of polemical writings in defence of the brotherhood is as important to Tijānī scholars in enhancing their personal recognition as the accumulation of prestigious *ijāzas*, authoritative licenses that link them, via their chains of transmission, to the founding figure of the order. As in medieval Damascus, where “books were emblems of prestige for the elite”,⁶⁴ in the world of the Tijāniyya, the production of literature in defence of the the brotherhood is a strong marker of one’s distinction and authority. A scholar who has produced a large amount of polemical literature is entitled to a higher social status than others. This is also perceived a sign of his solid spiritual, as well as discursive, knowledge.

The efforts displayed by the Sudanese Tijānī ‘Umar Mas‘ūd in his refutation of al-Ifrīqī may also be described in terms of the concept of capital. His treatise, *al-Radd ‘alā al-Ifrīqī*, provides nothing particularly new when compared to that of this Egyptian master Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, except that, in ‘Umar Mas‘ūd’s treatise, the polemical tone reached the level of mockery and ridicule. These aspects of his polemical discourse strongly suggest that the intention behind his producing such a treatise, in the first place, was to enhance his personal recognition in Tijānī circles, both within and outside of Sudan. Certainly, his polemical writings, including this one, have gained him

⁶² The author in question is the Sudanese writer al-Fātiḥ al-Nūr. See: Al-Fātiḥ al-Nūr, *al-Tijāniyya wa-l-mustaqbal*, El-Obeid: Dār Kordofan li-l-Ṭabā‘a wa-l-Nashr, 1997, p. 198.

⁶³ Michael Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190–1350*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 109.

⁶⁴ Michael Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190–1350*, p. 136.

recognition at both a national and an international level.⁶⁵ He uses his discursive knowledge, as well as his esoteric knowledge of the doctrine of the order (cultural capital), to generate recognition among his fellow Tijānīs (social capital). The absence of novel aspects to its discourse does not mean that his treatise is of no use at all; rather, it ensures continuity in the production of polemical writings, confers prestige and recognition upon its author, and assures the ordinary followers of the Tijāniyya of the consistency and reasonableness of the doctrine and tenets of the brotherhood. Moreover, in fact, this is the goal par excellence of Tijānī polemical writings.⁶⁶ In addition to this, ‘Umar Mas‘ūd invests a great deal of energy in proving his opponent’s purported ignorance regarding the religious sciences. His attempt to portray al-Ifrīqī to Tijānīs as an ignorant person, one who is devoid of the requisite scholarly credentials,⁶⁷ and thus needs to educate himself prior to engaging in serious and sensitive spiritual affairs, is in line with an observation made by Louis Brenner concerning the the tasks of dogmatic argumentation. Brenner argues that dogmatic argumentation revolves around three crucial topics, one of which is the demonstration of the opponent’s ignorance.⁶⁸

The same line of argumentation can be developed to an even greater extent with regard to Dakhīl Allāh’s treatise, *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā’id al-Tijāniyya*, and to a lesser extent, al-Hilālī’s *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*. At the time of composing his treatise, the latter was a newly recruited professor at the Islamic University of Medina. Transcribing his own cultural capital (that is, his exoteric and discursive knowledge of the religion, along with his familiarity with the esoteric knowledge of Sufism) into the form of a written book (objectified cultural capital) would certainly have enhanced his social capital (scholarly authority and recognition among fellow Salafīs), and this may be seen to have paid off in the form of support from the famous Salafī Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Bāz (d. 1419/1999),⁶⁹ the chairman of the University at the time. Ibn Bāz not only encouraged him to write such a treatise in the first place, but also helped him with the process of its publication, through

⁶⁵ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd’s treatise is displayed online, on the website named after the eminent Moroccan propagandist Aḥmad Sukayrij: <http://www.cheikh-skiredj.com/>. This could be interpreted as signifying that he has gained a fair degree of recognition outside of Sudan, due to *al-Radd ‘alā l-Ifrīqī*.

⁶⁶ For the primary target of Tijānī polemical literature, see: Rüdiger Seesemann, “Three Ibrāhīms: Literary Production and the Remaking of the Tijāniyya Sufi Order in Twentieth-Century Sudanic Africa”, pp. 299-333.

⁶⁷ See analysis of the the treatise below in chapter four.

⁶⁸ See: Louis Brenner, *Controlling Knowledge: Religion, Power and Schooling in West African Muslim Society*, p. 135.

⁶⁹ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mufakkirūn ‘araftuhum*, vol. I, Cairo: Dār al-Shuwāf, 1992, pp. 77-106.

the provision of resources. The book has since gained the status of a standard source of reference for Salafī detractors of the Tijāniyya. As for Dakhīl Allāh himself, his own motivation for compiling a polemical treatise was the countless questions, concerning the legal status of the brotherhood, the Saudi house of *fatwā*'s was receiving from Muslims particularly from the African continent. This compelled him to conduct research trips in Africa, the continent that gave birth to this unique form of Islamic spirituality, in order to meet with high-profile representatives of the brotherhood. The book gained him a great deal of recognition among anti-Tijānī Salafīs, albeit less than his African predecessors, such that, besides Ibn Māyābā and al-Hilālī's, his treatise is the third most important standard source of reference for pro-Salafī websites.

5.4. Discarding Stereotypes

In studying encounters between the protagonists and antagonists of Sufism, it is important to eschew stereotyping that echoes colonial discourse. This may be found in much of the existing literature about Sufism and Salafism, portraying African Sufis as inherently “peaceful”, “moderate” and “syncretistic”, while their Arab Salafī opponents and coreligionists are depicted as predisposed to “harshness” and “rigidity”.⁷⁰ Some of the postcolonial literature, also distinguishes African Islam, or “Islam Noir”, from Arabic Islam along almost the same lines, as both early and later colonial-era literature, that is, by conflating religion with race.⁷¹

Some of the misconceptions about Sufism have fortunately been corrected by more recent studies taking a more nuanced approach, as Seesemann suggests.⁷² Nevertheless, one trope of the colonial discourse that has proved to be everlasting is that of the purportedly inherent peacefulness of Sufism, and the allegedly rigid and xenophobic character of Salafism.⁷³ Salafīs, particularly those

⁷⁰ Alexander Thurston, “Polyvalent, Transnational Religious Authority: The Tijaniyya Sufi Order and Al-Azhar University”, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 2018 (advance article, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/lfx090>), pp. 3-4.

⁷¹ Rüdiger Seesemann, “Sufism in West Africa”, *Religion Compass* 4/10, 2010, pp. 606-614, (see pp. 606-607); Rüdiger Seesemann and Benjamin Soares, “Being as Good Muslims as Frenchmen: On Marabouts, Colonial Modernity, and the Islamic Sphere in French West Africa”, in *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 39 (1), (pp. 91-120).

⁷² Seesemann divides scholarship on Sufism and Islam in Africa to three categories: 1) works by colonial administrators, most often without academic training, produced in the first half of the twentieth century; 2) works by Christian missionaries that were produced after the independence of the colonies in Africa, roughly around the 1960s; and 3) more recent works by anthropologists, historians and specialists in Islamic studies which are said to have corrected some of the misconceptions. See: Rüdiger Seesemann, Sufism in West Africa, p. 606-607.

⁷³ French colonialism saw Islam in Africa (or as they labelled it, *Islam Noir*) “as fundamentally more tractable and less of a threat to their rule than Islam as practiced in North Africa or the Middle East, which they thought was

who have studied or taught at the religious centres of the Middle East such as Dār al-Ḥadīth, or the Islamic University of Medina, after its establishment at the turn of the 1960s (CE) are often said to be extremely exclusivist, prone to labelling Sufis as disbelievers (*kuffār*), polytheists (*mushrikīn*) or tomb-worshippers (*quburiyyūn*) at the very least. They (Salafīs) are said to substantiate these accusations by the application of terms such as “reprehensible innovation” (*bid’a*), “disbelief” (*kufr*) and “polytheism” (*shirk*), while Sufis are supposed to be much more inclusivist in their approach and practice, in comparison to Salafīs. The data in this study, however, demonstrates that the picture is not that simple, as some studies would like the reader to believe.

All three of these Salafī polemics—al-Ifriqī’s, al-Hilālī’s, and Dakhīl Allāh’s—are subjected here to thorough scrutiny, revealing that the primary objective was not just to discredit Tijānī Sufis and destroy their belief. Rather, in each case, the objective was to win them over and introduce them to what the Salafī authors of these polemics believed to be the true creed and correct practice of the religion of Islam. Chronologically the first of the three, al-Ifriqī repeatedly calls his interlocutors brothers (*ikhwān*) and tries to appeal to their hearts. The second in chronological order, al-Hilālī’s polemic demonstrates a high reverence and respect towards the founding figure of the Tijāniyya. Moreover, he asserts that Aḥmad al-Tijānī had already shown his followers the true way to deal with certain problematic Sufi tenets, by insisting that if they were found to contradict the parameters of the religion, they would no longer bear any sanctity and should ultimately be discarded. Thus, he addresses the followers of the Tijānī master, imploring them to follow his example. Chronologically the last of the three, Dakhīl Allāh restricts himself to the scrutiny of Tijānī doctrine without hurting the feelings of his opponents. While it is true that on occasion, all three of these Salafī authors label certain practices of the Tijānīs as *bid’a* and even *shirk*, none of the three depict their opponents themselves as disbelievers or polytheists.

It should also be remarked at this stage that not all opponents of the Tijāniyya have approached the Tijānīs in the same way as the three Salafīs mentioned above: some antagonists of Tijānī Sufism have applied extremely harsh and exclusivist styles of critique. A typical example is that of the Mauritanian Ibn Māyābā who did not hesitate to attack Tijānīs as “soldiers of Christian French colonialism”, nor to attack Aḥmad al-Tijānī in a rather direct way, portraying him as a liar

inherently ‘xenophobic’ and anticolonial”. See: Rüdiger Seesemann and Benjamin Soares, “Being as Good Muslims as Frenchmen”, p. 95.

who had deceived gullible people in order to attain worldly gains. Some of Ibn Māyābā's Jordanian disciples even depicted the Tijānī master as satanic saint (*al-walī al-shayṭānī*).⁷⁴ Here, however, the reader should also be reminded that neither Ibn Māyābā nor his Jordanian disciples were Salafī or Wahhābī. Ibn Māyābā was himself a Sufi, belonging to the Qādiriyya, a rival order to the Tijāniyya at the time.⁷⁵ This does not mean, however, that no Salafī ever composed any such harsh critique of the Tijāniyya, nor had recourse to abusive language and name calling. Hāshim Ḥusayn Rajab, a Salafī from the Sudanese city of Atbara, for example, produced a refutation of Tijānī doctrine at least as harsh as Ibn Māyābā's, and had many debates with Tijānīs, the first of which, held in the house of 'Umar Mas'ūd, was transmuted into public confrontations during preaching sessions in the mosques of the city.⁷⁶

Unlike what the stereotypes would lead one to believe, Tijānīs for their part, are occasionally appear to have lost their tempers and raised accusations of disbelief against their opponents, should they not recant and withdraw their criticism. Most frequently of all, they may be seen to have attempted to transpose the level of debate from that of a mere discussion to something quite different, wherein instead of providing counterarguments and refutations of their adversaries, they have attacked them personally, calling them names and targeting their scholarly credentials. Both 'Umar Mas'ūd and Aḥmad b. al-Hādī may be seen to have repeatedly had recourse to this strategy. Responding to al-Ifrīqī, for example, 'Umar Mas'ūd portrayed him as the ultimate liar (*kadhḥāb*), who had filled his treatise with excessive cursing and swearing directed towards the Tijānīs,⁷⁷ whereas, in fact, it is hard to find a single swear word in al-Ifrīqī's discourse that is directed at the followers of the Tijāniyya brotherhood. 'Umar Mas'ūd's master, the Egyptian Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ did not hesitate to call al-Ifrīqī a pseudo-scholar (*shuwaykh*) who lacked the required scholarly credentials to engage in debate. Aḥmad b. al-Hādī's replies to his opponents, including al-Hilālī, are filled with such epithets that one would hardly believe it possible to find such ill-

⁷⁴ Ibrāhīm al-Qaṭṭān, one of Ibn Māyābā's Jordanian disciples, for example, titled his anti-Tijānī polemical treatise as *Makhāzī al-walī al-shayṭānī al-mulaqqab bi-l-Tijānī al-jānī* (Disgraceful [Beliefs] of the Satanic *Walī*, Nicknamed as the Criminal al-Tijānī).

⁷⁵ Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijāniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, p. 174.

⁷⁶ 'Umar Mas'ūd, *Iṭfā' al-qandīl wa-bayān mā fīhi min l-kidhb wa-l-ghish wa-l-tahrīf wa-l-tabdīl*, n.p. [Khartoum], n.d., p. 2

⁷⁷ 'Umar Muḥammad Mas'ūd al-Tijānī, *al-Radd 'alā al-Ifrīqī difā'an 'an l-ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya*, n.p. [Khartoum] n.d., p. 1.

natured name-calling in any Sufi's discourse.⁷⁸ On one occasion, he describes one of his opponents, thus: "The world of his heart being filled with obsession with disbelief and polytheism to the extent that when he opens his mouth he speaks of it",⁷⁹ adding elsewhere "This stupid ignoramus took the path of Khawārij and followed in their footsteps".⁸⁰ Thus, the data shows that "rigidity" and "harshness" are, not, as some have presumed, the preserve of Salafis and Salafism; Sufis and Sufism are also shown here to have had recourse to them.

6. Outline of the Dissertation

This dissertation comprises an introduction, six chapters and a conclusion. The introduction is dedicated to highlighting the different methodologies used by Sufis and their opponents, along with a short summary review of the academic research undertaken thus far on the Tijāniyya Sufi brotherhood. This is followed by an outline of the research questions that constitute the backbone of the study. Finally, an overview of this study's data and analysis is given to illuminate the reader as to the case studies and methods applied here.

The first chapter sheds light on the history of polemics between the Tijāniyya brotherhood and its opponents over a period of roughly two centuries. The second and third chapters are each allocated to biographical accounts of the authors: in the second chapter, the Malian al-Ifrīqī, the Moroccan al-Hilālī and the Saudi Arabian Dakhīl Allāh, all antagonists of Tijānī Sufism, are introduced to the reader, while the third chapter introduces the Egyptian Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, the Sudanese ʿUmar Masʿūd and the Mauritanian Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, all Tijāniyya protagonists. The fourth chapter is dedicated to al-Ifrīqī's allegations against the Tijāniyya in a brief treatise known for short as *al-Anwār al-raḥmāniyya* (The Divine Lights), and the Tijānī responses to it, *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn* (Refutation of the Lies of the Slanderers) and *al-Radd ʿalā al-Ifrīqī* (The Refutation of al-Ifrīqī), written by Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ and his Sudanese disciple ʿUmar Masʿūd respectively. The fifth chapter comprises the accusations outlined by another anti-Tijānī author, al-Hilālī, in his concise treatise *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya* (The Guiding Gift), which contains an account of his own journey from a zealous defender to staunch opponent of the brotherhood. Aḥmad b. al-Hādī's

⁷⁸ See for instance his address to his adversaries, in: Aḥmad b. al-Hādī al-ʿAlawī al-Shinqīṭī, *Shams al-dalīl li-ṭifāʾ al-qandīl wa-muḥiqq mā li-l-Dakhīl wa-l-Hilālī min turrāhāt wa-abāṭīl*, Rabat: Maṭbaʿa al-Karāma, 1427/2006, p. 7.

⁷⁹ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 22.

⁸⁰ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 40.

response to al-Hilālī, in the form of *Shams al-dalīl* (The Guiding Sun), is also investigated in this chapter. The focus of the sixth and last chapter is Dakhīl Allāh's *Dirāsa li-ahamm 'aqā'id al-Tijāniyya* (A Study of the Most Important Beliefs of the Tijāniyya Brotherhood), in which the author lists those tenets and doctrines of the brotherhood which, he claims, contradict the teachings of Islam. Aḥmad b. al-Hādī's pro-Tijānī book *Shams al-dalīl* too contains a stern reply to Dakhīl Allāh's *Dirāsa*, as also is discussed in this chapter.

The conclusion highlights the outcomes of these investigations, undertaken via a thorough historical and philological approaches. The reader's attention is directed to a summary of the main arguments presented in this study, in addition to the contribution of this dissertation to the field of the study of polemical and doctrinal debates between Sufis and their opponents.

CHAPTER ONE: TIJĀNĪS AND THEIR OPPONENTS

1. A History of Polemics

In this chapter, I will provide a brief history of polemics between the antagonists and protagonists of the Tijāniyya. The objective is by no means to give a full and comprehensive account of the polemical history of the order; rather, it is to highlight the history of tension that has been generated around certain controversial Sufi tenets.

Attacks on the Tijāniyya had already begun within the life time of its founding figure, Aḥmad al-Tijānī. Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Salām al-Nāṣirī (d. 1239/1823),⁸¹ a Nāṣirī Sufi shaykh, relates his encounter with the supreme master of the brotherhood, portraying him as a young man who, after divorcing his wife, was wandering in the desert in search of spiritual illumination. This encounter seems to have occurred prior to the establishment of the Tijāniyya brotherhood, a period in which al-Tijānī is claimed to have given precedence to Khidr over the prophet Moses, purportedly on grounds of his (Khidr’s) being more knowledgeable (*a lam*).⁸² This rather negative portrayal of the Tijānī master by al-Nāṣirī in his *al-Riḥla al-ḥijāziyya* (The Journey to Hijaz), is debunked by the influential Moroccan Tijānī scholar Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Kansūsī (d. 1293/1877),⁸³ printed on the margin of the same source. For al-Kansūsī, the fact of whether or not the supreme master of the Tijāniyya was together with his wife or separated from her does not constitute a deficiency for which he should be targeted; he therefore reprimands the author of *al-Riḥla* for poking his nose into the personal matters of others. As to the matter of al-Tijānī having considered Khidr to be more knowledgeable than Moses—albeit not as superior to him, since knowledgeability is different

⁸¹ For brief information on his life and writings see: <http://www.almakaz.ma/Article.aspx?C=5630>.

⁸² Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Salām al-Nāṣirī, *al-Riḥla al-ḥijāziyya* as reported in Aḥmad Sukayrij, *Jināyat al-muntasib al-‘ānī fīmā nasabahu bi-l-kidhb li-l-shaykh al-Tijānī*, vol. II, Cairo: Dār al-Ṭabā‘a al-Ḥadītha, n.d. p. 88.

⁸³ Al-Kansūsī met al-Tijānī and even attended his funeral but could not take the *ṭarīqa* from him. He was introduced to the Tijāniyya through Muḥammad al-Ghālī, al-Ṭayyib al-Sufyānī, Muḥammad b. Abī al-Naṣr and ‘Abd al-Wahhāb b. al-Aḥmar after the demise of the supreme master. Muḥammad al-Kansūsī, *al-Jawāb al-muskit fī l-radd ‘alā man takallama fī ṭarīq al-Imām al-Tijānī bi-la tathabbut*, p. 36 as reported in Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Ben ‘Abdallāh, *‘Ulamā’ al-ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya bi-l-maghrib al-aqṣā* (Scholars of the *Ṭarīqa* Tijāniyya in Morocco), n.p, n.d, pp. 68-69. Born in Sūs, he studied in Fez where he occupied high governmental posts and passed away in Marrakesh; he was known among Tijānīs for his defence of the brotherhood for the above mentioned refutation of Aḥmad al-Bakkā’ī and for being an instructional source of Muḥammad al-‘Arabī b. al-Sā’ih. For an account of his life, see: al-Ḥajūjī, *Bahjat al-nufūs fī dhikr ba’ḍ manaqib Sīdī Muḥammad Akansūs*; Aḥmad Sukayrij, *Kashf al-hijāb ‘amman talāqā ma’ a l-Shaykh al-Tijānī min l-aṣḥāb*, Fez: 1381-1961, pp. 328-34; al-Ziriklī, *al-‘Ālām*, vol. VI, Beirut: Dār al-‘Ilm li-l-Malāyīn, 2002, p. 19. ‘Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu’allifīn*, vol. III, Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Risāla, 1414/1993, p. 92.

from superiority—al-Kansūsī argues that this was based on Khidr’s access to hidden esoteric knowledge (*‘ilm al-bāṭin*), whereas Moses’ knowledge was confined to that of the exoteric. Al-Kansūsī then tries to consolidate his argument on the authority of a Prophetic tradition which is widely seen to offer textual support in favour of the ascendancy of hidden esoteric knowledge over the exoteric kind. Thus, al-Nāṣirī’s accusation of giving wrongful priority to Khidr only holds true, if Khidr is to be considered as an ordinary human being; if, like Moses himself, he is to be considered as one among the divine prophets, however, then al-Nāṣirī’s accusation is nullified, since on the basis of Qur’anic evidence,⁸⁴ al-Kansūsī argues, a hierarchy among the prophets is inevitable: Indeed, it is God who has established such a hierarchy by giving precedence to some of them over the others.⁸⁵

The first recorded well-organized onslaught against the brotherhood, however, came from an Egypt-based Tunisian scholar called ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Mīlī (d. 1248/1833).⁸⁶ His critique, known as *al-Ṣawārim wa-l-asinna fī naḥr man ta’aqqa ahl al-sunna* (“The Sharp Swords and Spears Directed at the Upper Chest of the One Who Falsely Accused Followers of the Prophet”) was directed at Aḥmad al-Tijānī himself. The question raised therein concerns the relationship between the Qur’ān and *kalām Allāh al-qadīm* (divine eternal speech). According to the founding figure of the Tijāniyya, the words that proceeded from Allah almighty are not identical with those that one utters while reading the Qur’ān; they are, however, united in their reference to the same meanings.⁸⁷ He is therefore accused by al-Mīlī of viewing the Qur’ān as having been created, a notion defended by Mu‘tazilites and Hashwiyya in the early history of Islam. The supreme master of the Tijāniyya is therein labelled by al-Mīlī as a *dajjāl* (“false guide”, in Islamic parlance; also a reference to the person who will claim divinity and mislead people at the end of times) and as a *kāfir* (infidel).⁸⁸ Al-Mīlī’s book was forwarded to the notable Tunisian Tijānī scholar Ibrāhīm al-Riyāḥī (d. 1266/1850),⁸⁹ who replied with his *Mibrad al-ṣawārim wa-l-asinna fī l-radd ‘alā man*

⁸⁴ Al-Baqara 2:253.

⁸⁵ Aḥmad Sukayrij, *Jināyat al-muntasib al-‘ānī*, vol. II, pp. 88-89.

⁸⁶ Al-Mīlī was a follower of the Mālikī legal school, best known for his expertise in scholasticism and Qur’anic exegesis. See al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām*, vol. V, p. 17; ‘Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifin*, vol. II, p. 527.

⁸⁷ For details, see: ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*, vol. I, pp. 175-76.

⁸⁸ Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijāniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, p. 167.

⁸⁹ For an account of al-Riyāḥī’s life see: ‘Umar al-Riyāḥī’s *Ta‘īr al-nawāḥī bi-tarjamat al-Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Riyāḥī*, Tunus: Maṭba‘a Bakar, 1320; Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijāniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, pp. 82-83;

akhraja al-Shaykh al-Tijānī ‘an dā’irat ahl al-sunna (“Defence Against the Sharp Swords and Spears in Reply to the One Who Excommunicated the Tijānī Shaykh From the Community of the Followers of the Prophet”),⁹⁰ a treatise blessed and endorsed by al-Tijānī himself. According to al-Riyāḥī, while al-Tijānī’s stance on the issue of divine speech may be partially identical with that of the Mu‘tazilites, there is a pronounced difference between the two which al-Mīlī had failed to recognize, which is that while the Mu‘tazilites deny the eternity of the divine speech, the founding figure of the Tijāniyya certainly approves it.⁹¹ In rebuttal, al-Mīlī is said to have written no less than forty-five treatises tackling the issue of Islamic scholasticism.⁹² What is striking that, initially, as Jamil Abun-Nasr quite rightly observes, “al-Mīlī’s attack was of no historical significance. Indeed, it would have gone unnoticed had it not been for Ibrāhīm al-Riyāḥī’s reply”.⁹³ The fact that al-Riyāḥī later went on to meet al-Mīlī in Egypt during a pilgrimage to the holy lands⁹⁴ demonstrates the fact that Tijānīs were not too much offended by an attack which was solely a product of al-Mīlī’s own religious zeal.

Another critical account of the Tijāniyya and its founder was produced by the famous Moroccan historian Abū l-Qāsim b. Aḥmad al-Zayyānī (1249/1833), in his *Tarjumāna al-kubrā fī akhbār al-ma‘mura barran wa-bahran* (“The Greatest Interpreter Regarding the News of the World by Land and Sea”). Here, the Tijānī master is introduced as “the Satan” (*al-shayṭān*)⁹⁵ and accused of being involved in money counterfeiting in the city of Tlemcen. This is said to have attracted the wrath of the Bey of Algeria Aḥmad b. ‘Uthmān, who imprisoned al-Tijānī for some time and then exiled him from the city. Thereupon, al-Tijānī headed to Abū Samghūn (Boussemgoun), where he introduced himself as a Sufi master and gathered some people around him. The Bey of Oran is then said to have reproached the inhabitants of the area and encouraged them to expel the

⁹⁰ This treatise is reproduced in ‘Umar al-Riyāḥī’s *Ta‘īr al-nawāhī*, vol. I, pp. 36-60.

⁹¹ Abun-Nasr, however argues that Ibrāhīm al-Riyāḥī defended his master as not being alone in voicing the doctrine of the creation of the Qur’ān; indeed it was the consensus among the Sunni scholars. See: Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijāniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, pp. 167-68. Such a reading of the *Mibrad al-ṣawārim wa-l-asinna* seems to have been inaccurate. See details in: Ibrāhīm al-Riyāḥī, *Mibrad al-ṣawārim wa-l-asinna*, in ‘Umar al-Riyāḥī’s *Ta‘īr al-nawāhī*, Tunus: Maṭba‘at Bakar, 1320 AH, pp. 30-60, (pp. 40-41).

⁹² Muḥammad b. ‘Uthman al-Sanūsī, *Mūsāmarāt al-zarīf bi-husn al-ta’rīf*, vol. I, ed: Muḥammad al-Shādhilī al-Nayfar, Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmi, 1994, p. 302.

⁹³ Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijāniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, p. 167.

⁹⁴ Muḥammad b. ‘Uthman al-Sanūsī, *Mūsāmarāt al-zarīf*, p. 303.

⁹⁵ Al-Zayyānī, *al-Tarjumāna al-kubrā fī akhbār al-ma‘mura barran wa-bahran*, (ed: ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Fīlālī), Rabat: Dār Nashr al-Ma‘rifa, 1412/1991, p. 462.

purportedly fake shaykh, who left for Fez to begin a new phase of his life.⁹⁶ Tijānī responses to these accusations were issued in the form of al-Kansūsī’s *al-Jaysh al-‘aramram al-khumāsī fī dawlat awlād mawlānā ‘Alī al-Sijilmāsī* (“The Quintuple Crowded Army Regarding the Kingdom of the Offshoots of Our Master ‘Alī of Sijilmasa”),⁹⁷ and *Bishārāt al-Tijānī* (“The Glad Tidings of the Tijānī Master”), a poem produced by a certain Abū l-Faṭḥ b. al-Khalīfa. The former was in line with the scholarly tradition of polemical replies (*rudūd*, sing. *radd*) while Abū l-Faṭḥ fiercely attacked his opponent and threatened him with excommunication. He asserted that, as the Tijānī doctrine claims, anyone who chooses to oppose a divinely elected saint—in this case the founding figure of the Tijāniyya—was going to end up in *kufṛ* (disbelief), a calamity which would eventually strike al-Zayyānī as well.⁹⁸

In Western Sudanic Africa, Tijānī political dominance under the leadership of al-Ḥājj ‘Umar resulted in confrontations between Tijānīs and their fellow Muslims and attracted severe criticism to the brotherhood such as that of Aḥmad al-Bakkā’ī (literally, “the weeper”), a Qādirī master belonging to the family of the influential Sīdī al-Mukhtār al-Kuntī (1226/1811) in today’s Mali. Of Arab ancestry, the Kunta family had settled in the region in the sixteenth century. Sīdī al-Mukhtār gained a widespread reputation for his abilities as a Qādirī spiritual guide, as well as for his outstanding religious learning and successful mediation skills in tribal disputes.⁹⁹ His spiritual efforts and reshaping of the Qādirī practices are viewed as the beginning of the shift from elitist Sufism to the popular form, though the complete realization of this enterprise and the conversion of Sufism into great mass movements was to happen in the twentieth century.¹⁰⁰ Upon inheriting

⁹⁶ For further information see: al-Zayyānī, *al-Tarcumāna al-kubrā*, pp. 260-262.

⁹⁷ While the book is actually a political history of the current ruling dynasty of Morocco, it nevertheless also contains a refutation of al-Zayyānī. See: Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Kansūsī, *al-Jaysh al-‘aramram al-khumāsī fī dawlat mawlānā ‘Alī al-Sijilmāsī*, 2 vols., (edit. Aḥmad b. Yūsuf al-Kansūsī), Marakesh: al-Maṭba‘a wa-l-Warrāqa al-Waṭaniyya, 141/1994; Aḥmad Sukayrij, *al-Qawl al-muṣīb*, pp. 9-10 and Aḥmad Sukayrij, *Jināyat al-muntasib al-‘ānī*, vol. II, p. 90.

⁹⁸ Aḥmad Sukayrij, *Jināyat al-muntasib al-‘ānī*, vol. II, p. 90.

⁹⁹ Rüdiger Seesemann, “Sufism in West Africa”, p. 608. For further details see: Aziz A. Batran, “An Introductory Note on the Impact of Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti (1729–1811) on West African Islam in the 18th and 19th Centuries”, *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, vol. 6, no. 4, 1973, pp. 347-352.

¹⁰⁰ See details in Aziz A. Batran, *The Qadiriyya Brotherhood in West Africa and the Western Sahara: the life and times of Shaykh al-Mukhtar al-Kunti*, Rabat: Publications de l’Institut des Études Africaines, 2001; Louis Brenner, “Concepts of Tariqa in West Africa: The Case of the Qadiriyya”, in: Donal B. Cruise O’Brien and Christian Coulon (eds.), *Charisma and Brotherhood in Africa Islam*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001 and Charles Stewart, *Islam and Social Order in Mauritania: A Case Study from the Nineteenth Century*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1973. For an account of the shaykh’s life, see: Aḥmad b. al-Amīn al-Shinqīṭī, *al-Wasīt fī tarājim udabā’ Shinqīṭ*, p. 361; Usman Muḥammad Bugaje, “The Tradition of Tajdid in Western Bilad al-Sudan: A Study of the Genesis,

the leadership of Kunta from his grandfather, al-Bakkā'ī wrote several letters to the charismatic Tijānī *jihād* leader al-Ḥājj 'Umar and his lieutenant Alfā 'Umar. All of these letters were politically charged, due to al-Bakkā'ī's political grievances against the Tijānīs, and fears of a possible invasion of Timbuktu by Umarian troops. In his letters, he subtly accuses al-Ḥājj 'Umar of ignorance by stressing his military rank rather than his spiritual standing and scholarly credentials. Indeed, even while the critique of the Qādirī shaykh was politically charged as he encouraged the king of Massina to wage war against the Tijānīs, it has been said that his “subtlety of mind and argumentative ability qualify him to be considered the ablest [nineteenth-century] critic of the order”.¹⁰¹ In his letters to Alfā 'Umar, he attacks Tijānīs as heretics constituting a serious threat to Muslims. Meanwhile, busy with armed struggle, the *jihād* leader was not able to respond himself, and instead ordered one of his followers Mukhtār b. Wadī'atallāh, known as Yirkoy Talfi, to do so. His response appeared under the name *Tabkiyat al-Bakkā'ī* (“Making al-Bakkā'ī Weep”), and is loaded with detrimental quotations from the writings of al-Bakkā'ī's grandfather and spiritual guide, Sīdī al-Mukhtār.¹⁰²

Others of his letters were addressed to al-Kansūsī. In an epistle known as *al-Faṭḥ al-quddūsī fī l-radd 'alā Abī 'Abdallāh al-Kansūsī* (“The Divine Opening in Refutation of Abī 'Abdallāh al-Kansūsī”), al-Bakkā'ī avoided a frontal attack on the founding figure of the Tijāniyya, stating, rather, that it was rather his followers who bore responsibility for certain tenets in Tijānī doctrine which he considered to be reprehensible innovations. He seems to have been particularly outraged by the Tijānī tenet depicting Aḥmad al-Tijānī as the greatest saint of all times, thus claiming his ascendancy over 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, the revered master of the Qādiriyya. The founder of the Tijāniyya, from his perspective, was certainly a learned man but not the chief *walī* of all times.¹⁰³ The epistle was written in response to Al-Kansūsī's *al-Jawāb al-muskit fī l-radd 'alā man*

Development and Patterns of Islamic Revivalism in the Region 900–1900 AD”, (PhD thesis, University of Khartoum, Sudan, 1991), particularly pp. 170-200. Yahya Ould el-Bara, “The Life of Shaykh Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti”, in: Jeppie, Shamil and Diagne, Souleymane Bachir (eds.), *The Meanings of Timbuktu*, Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2008, pp.193-212; Mahamane Mahamoudou, “The Works of Shaykh Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti”, in: Jeppie, Shamil and Diagne, Souleymane Bachir (eds.), *The Meanings of Timbuktu*, Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2008, pp. 213-230 and Abdel Wadoud Ould Cheikh, “A man of letters in Timbuktu: al-Shaykh Sidi Muhammad al-Kunti”, in: Jeppie, Shamil and Diagne, Souleymane Bachir (eds.), *The Meanings of Timbuktu*, Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2008, pp. 231-248.

¹⁰¹ Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijāniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, p. 169.

¹⁰² See details in B.G. Martin, *Muslim Brotherhoods in Nineteenth-Century Africa*, p. 94.

¹⁰³ See details in: Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijāniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, pp. 169-170.

takallama fī tarīq al-Imām al-Tijānī bi-lā tathabbut (“The Silencing Answer in Reply to He Who Spoke About the Spiritual Path of Ahmad al-Tijānī Without Proofs”), which itself was written in response to an earlier letter of al-Bakkā’ī’s, in which he had criticized the Tijāniyya and its founding figure. Al-Kansūsī seems to have systematically refuted all the accusations raised in the letter, in turn.¹⁰⁴ His arguments were further developed by Aḥmad b. Maḥam from the tribe of Idwa ‘Al (the local Mauritanian term for “Awlād ‘Alī”, “the Offspring of ‘Alī”) in Shinqīt, in a treatise known as *al-Ghaḍab al-yamānī fī l-radd ‘an shaykhinā Aḥmad al-Tijānī* (“The Auspicious Anger in Defence of Our Master Aḥmad al-Tijānī”)¹⁰⁵ Accomplished Tijānī poets from around Shinqīt further endorsed al-Kansūsī’s responses to the Qādirī shaykh, mostly in the form of poetical commendations.¹⁰⁶

The Tijāniyya underwent rapid dissemination in the nineteenth century. Shinqīt (Chinguetti) in Mauritania came to be recognized as a strong hold of the brotherhood at the time, due to the efforts of Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ al-‘Alawī (d. 1245/1829),¹⁰⁷ a direct disciple of the Aḥmad al-Tijānī. In particular, the tribe of Idwa ‘Al had almost completely surrendered to the Tijānī call. This, however, attracted severe criticism from their detractors. Idyayj b. ‘Abdallāh al-Kumlaylī (d. 1270/1853),¹⁰⁸ an accomplished poet and uncompromising critic of the order, incited great anger among members of the Idwa ‘Al through his satirical poetry, denouncing of the Tijāniyya and its tenets. His bitter attacks went without response during the lifetime of Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, who instructed his followers to ignore his outpourings.¹⁰⁹ After al-Ḥāfiẓ’s demise, however, members of the Idwa ‘Al composed refutations of al-Kumlaylī, and the altercations between them were entirely conducted “in the pre-Islamic Arabian fashion of satire (*hijā*)”.¹¹⁰ Bāba b. Aḥmad Bayba

¹⁰⁴ Muḥammad Yahyā Wuld Bābāh, *al-Ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya min khilāl maṣādirihā*, (PhD thesis, Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar, 2007-2008), p. 114.

¹⁰⁵ Muḥammad Yahyā Wuld Bābāh, *al-Ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya min khilāl maṣādirihā*, p. 115. Some scholars have mistakenly written Idwa ‘Al as Idaw ‘Alī, For the proper pronunciation of the word, see: Muḥammad al-Amīn al-Shinqīṭī, *Al-Wasīṭ fī tarājim udabā’ Shinqīt wa-l-kalām ‘alā tilk al-bilād taḥdīdan wa-takhṭīṭan wa-‘adātihim wa-akhlāqihim wa-mā yata‘alaq bi-dhālik*, Cairo: Maṭba‘a al-Madanī, 1409/1989, p.1.

¹⁰⁶ Muḥammad b. al-Khalīfa al-Shinqīṭī and Muḥammad al-Ṣaghīr al-Shinqīṭī are some of these. See: Aḥmad Sukayrij, *Kashf al-hijāb*, p. 33.

¹⁰⁷ His full name reads Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ b. al-Mukhtār al-‘Alawī al-Shinqīṭī. For an account of his life, see: Aḥmad Sukayrij, *Kashf al-hijāb*, pp. 354-364; Muḥammad Muḥammad al-‘Arabī b. al-Sa’ih, *Bughyat al-mustafid*, pp. 257-258.

¹⁰⁸ For an account of al-Kumlaylī’s life, see: Muḥammad al-Amīn, *Al-Wasīṭ fī tarājim udabā’ Shinqīt*, pp. 368-372.

¹⁰⁹ Muḥammad al-Amīn, *Al-Wasīṭ fī tarājim udabā’ Shinqīt*, p. 368.

¹¹⁰ Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijāniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, p. 171.

(d. Ca. 1260/1844),¹¹¹ his son Aḥmad b. Bāba (d. After 1250/1834)¹¹² and Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ṣaghīr al-Tīshītī (d. 1284/1867),¹¹³ all members of Idwa ‘Al, are the three important Tijānī poets who then undertook the task of defending the brotherhood. The latter is said to have composed a poem of four hundred verses, entitled *Sāriyat al-falāḥ* (“Pole of Salvation”), which purportedly silenced al-Kumlaylī, and which, in addition to a prose treatise called *al-Jaysh al-kafīl bi-akhdh al-tha’r mimman salla ‘alā l-Shaykh al-Tijānī sayf al-inkār* (“The Army Capable of Taking the Revenge on the One Who Raised the Sword of Denial Against Shaykh al-Tijānī”),¹¹⁴ first published in 1938 CE, came to be known as one of the most effective defences of the Tijāniyya. The book provides an account of al-Kumlaylī’s criticism, followed by detailed responses.¹¹⁵ Refutations composed by Tijānī poets of other tribes were sent to al-Kumlaylī as well. Of these, ‘Abdallāh b. Aḥmad Dam¹¹⁶ from the tribe of Idwa Ḥasan and Muḥammad Bāba b. U‘bayd (d. 1277/1860)¹¹⁷ of Banī Dimān are worth mentioning. Both composed numerous poems in refutation of their opponent, who would send them incitements in the form of satirical pieces. Portions of these poems are documented in *al-Jaysh al-kafīl*.¹¹⁸

Towards the turn of the twentieth century, the ambitious leader of the Kattāniyya order Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Kabīr al-Kattānī wrote a critique of the Tijāniyya entitled *Khabī’at al-kawn* (“The Hidden Universe”). According to Aḥmad Sukayrij, the author’s motive for writing this book was his jealousy of Aḥmad al-Tijānī’s lofty status as *khātim al-awliyā’*—“the supreme saint of all times”, in Tijānī parlance.¹¹⁹ Al-Kattānī issued an open challenge to proponents of the Tijānī brotherhood, to which quite a few Tijānī polemicists responded. The challenge was issued in the

¹¹¹ For an account of his life, see: Muḥammad al-Amīn, *Al-Wasīṭ fī tarājim udabā’ Shinqīṭ*, pp. 34-37; ‘Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥāle, *Mu’jam al-mu’allifīn*, vol. I, p. 419.

¹¹² For an account of his life see: Muḥammad al-Amīn, *al-Wasīṭ fī tarājim udabā’ Shinqīṭ*, pp. 69-72; al-Ziriklī, *al-A’lām*, vol. I, p. 103; ‘Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥāle, *Mu’jam al-mu’allifīn*, vol. I, p. 108; Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. ‘Umar b. Qāsīm Makhluṭ, *Shajara al-nūr al-zakiyya fī ṭabaqāt al-mālikiyya*, vol. I, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1424/2003, p. 569.

¹¹³ Muḥammad al-Amīn, *Al-Wasīṭ fī tarājim udabā’ Shinqīṭ*, pp. 89-90.

¹¹⁴ Aḥmad Sukayrij, *Jināyat al-muntasib al-‘ānī*, vol. II, p. 91.

¹¹⁵ See: Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ṣaghīr al-Shinqīṭ al-Tīshītī, *al-Jaysh al-kafīl bi-akhdh al-tha’r mimman salla ‘alā l-Shaykh al-Tijānī sayf al-inkār*, Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1380/1961, p. 196. For a partial account of the criticism and the responses to it, see also: Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijāniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, p. 172.

¹¹⁶ For an account of his life see: Muḥammad al-Amīn, *Al-Wasīṭ fī tarājim udabā’ Shinqīṭ*, pp. 287-299.

¹¹⁷ For an account of his life see: Muḥammad al-Amīn, *Al-Wasīṭ fī tarājim udabā’ Shinqīṭ*, pp. 236-238.

¹¹⁸ Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ṣaghīr, *al-Jaysh al-kafīl*, pp. 62, 83, 88, for instance.

¹¹⁹ Aḥmad Sukayrij, *Qurrat al-‘ayn fī l-ajwiba ‘alā as’ilat mu’allif khabī’at al-kawn*, n.p., n.d, p. 2; Aḥmad Sukayrij, *Jināyat al-muntasib al-‘ānī*, vol. II, p. 93

form of at least thirty-five questions, causing a stir among Tijānīs of the Maghrib, some of whom replied in an extremely insulting and offensive style. ‘Allāma al-Sibā’ī al-Marrākishī composed a number of epistles of such nature which, when published, were later confiscated from the market by supporters of the Kattānī shaykh. Aḥmad Sukayrij, however, who composed *Qurrat al-‘ayn fi l-ajwiba ‘alā as’ilat mu’allif khabī’at al-kawn* (“Sweethearted Responses to the Questions of the Author of *Khabī’at al-kawn*”) in refutation of his Kattānī adversary, displayed a great deal of reverence to the scholarly and spiritual credentials of his opponent. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Salām Kanūn (Guennoun) replied with two treatises: *al-Durr al-manzūm fi naṣrat al-quṭb al-maktūm* (“The Pearls Organized in Support of the Hidden Pole”) and *al-Nuṭq al-mafhūm fi ḥall mushkilāt al-Durr al-manzūm* (“The Comprehensible Speech in Correction of the Problems of the Organized Pearls”), and al-Bū‘azāwī al-Shāwī composed one; his *Bi-l-intiṣār billāh* (“Through Divine Support”).¹²⁰

The third decade of the twentieth century witnessed a marked increase in the production of polemical exchanges between protagonists and antagonists of the brotherhood. This new wave of altercations in the region of Shinqīt was due to the most violent critique of all time, *Mushtahā al-khārif al-jānī* composed by Ibn Māyābā, a Qādirī shaykh of the Tajkant tribe who had migrated to the holy lands in the aftermath of the French invasion of the region. The book was completed in Jerusalem on 21 Muḥarram 1344/ 11 August 1925 CE¹²¹ and published two years later in Egypt. Its circulation in Mauritania, particularly in the region of Shinqīt, created serious agitation. Its uncompromising style and harsh approach, along with its hostile interpretation of the statements of the supreme master of the Tijāniyya,¹²² were due partially to Ibn Māyābā’s affiliation to the Qādiriyya,¹²³ a rival Sufi order which lost considerable ground to the Tijāniyya after the latter’s establishment; and partially due to Tijānī cooperation with the French colonial authorities, which

¹²⁰ For a discussion of Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Kabīr’s onslaught and the responses provided by Tijānī defenders, see: Aḥmad Sukayrij, *Jināyat al-muntasib al-‘ānī*, vol. II, pp. 92- 93; Aḥmad Sukayrij, *al-Qawl al-muṣīb*, p. 10. For a short discussion of *al-Nuṭq al-mafhūm* see: Muḥammad Yahya Wuld Baba, *al-Ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya min khilāl maṣādirihā*, pp. 120-122.

¹²¹ Muḥammad al-Khiḍr b. Māyābā, *Mushtahā al-khārif al-jānī fi radd zalaqāt al-Tijānī al-jānī*, ed. Ibrāhim al-Qaṭṭān, Amman: Dār al-Bashīr, 1405/1985, p. 599.

¹²² For an example of the hostile interpretation of the statements of Aḥmad al-Tijānī by Ibn Māyābā, see: Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijāniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, p. 173.

¹²³ He does not hide his affiliation to the Qādiriyya brotherhood; on one occasion he refers to the eponymous founder of the brotherhood ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jālanī as his master (*shaykhuna ‘Abd al-Qādir*). Ibn Māyābā, *Mushtahā al-khārif al-jānī*, p. 482.

seems to have outraged non-Tijānī Muslims in North and West Africa.¹²⁴ Upon the book's circulation, the Tijānīs of Idwa 'Al approached the French authorities demanding an immediate ban, but the French authorities were not willing to interfere in a religious dispute. The Tijānīs then went to the *amīrs* of Tararza, Aḥmad al-Sālim, Muḥammad Būn and Aḥmad al-Dīd, asking them to get the book banned; instead, however, the latter chose to facilitate for a direct debate among the rival parties.¹²⁵

The debate took place in 1929 CE in Boutilimit, with Aḥmad Sālim b. Sīdyā of the tribe of Tajkant representing the anti-Tijānī camp, and Mukhtār b. Muḥamdū b. 'Amm representing the Tijānīs of Idwa 'Al. The task of arbitration was assigned to two *qāḍīs* (judges), Muḥammad 'Abdallāh b. Aḥmadhī from the tribe of Idwa Ḥasan and Muḥammad Maḥmūd b. 'Abdallāh. They were asked to write an account of the debate, which was going to be published later in Cairo together with the eulogies of some prominent scholars.¹²⁶ Based on the account written by 'Abdallāh b. Aḥmadhī, the Tijānīs failed to defend their doctrines, claiming instead that ordinary people, who lack the required spiritual credentials, could not understand the teachings of the founding figure of the Tijāniyya. Upon stating this, they were asked by the *qāḍī* whether one could claim divine mercy for disbelievers, a statement reported in *Jawāhir al-ma'ānī* on the authority of the Tijānī master. According to Mukhtār b. Muḥamadū, who was representing the Tijānī camp in the debate, the credibility of such a claim was dependent on the spiritual status of its owner. An ordinary man would excommunicate himself from the community of Muslims (*irtadda*) if he dared to claim such a thing, but it would be a different story (*lam yartadd*) if such a claim were to come from a man of the calibre of Aḥmad al-Tijānī. This anomalous reply caused a wave of rage among the attendees to the extent that the Tijānī debater retreated from his position. He was told to leave the court of the *amīr* and never show up again. The anti-Tijānī camp, thus, prevailed and the *qāḍī* encouraged

¹²⁴ Ibn Mayābā harshly denounces Tijānīs for their collaboration with “Christian colonialism”, serving in the French army which systematically invaded Muslim territories in Africa. See Ibn Mayābā, *Mushtahā al-khārif al-jānī*, pp. 210, 224, 446, 460, 532.

¹²⁵ Opponents of the Tijāniyya claimed that almost all inhabitants of the region of Shinqīt with the exception of Idwa 'Al and their followers had abandoned the brotherhood upon the arrival of *Mushtahā al-khārif* to the region, which forced them to seek the help of French authorities. See, Muḥammad al-Khiḍr b. Māyābā, *Ḥuṣūl al-amānī bi-taqrīz Mushtahā al-khārif al-jānī*, Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Ṣidq al-Khayriyya, 1349/1930, p. 16. This claim seems to be a product of exaggeration.

¹²⁶ For the eulogies see *Taqārīz ba'd 'ulamā' quṭr al-shinqīt wa-ḥukm qāḍihā bi-buṭlān al-ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya* in *Ḥuṣūl al-amānī bi-taqrīz Mushtahā al-khārif al-jānī*, pp. 15-52.

followers of the brotherhood to abandon all that contradicted the Sunna of the Prophet.¹²⁷ Proponents of the Tijāniyya, for their part, then disowned the judge as arbiter, composing a number of poems in which he was denounced.

The Tijānī version of the event has a different story to tell, as follows. Mukhtār b. Muḥamdū b. ‘Amm reportedly happened to debate a crowd of Ibn Māyābā’s followers alone. The debate, that was held in the presence of the *amīrs*, continued for a few days and ended as related by the *qāḍī*. Then, when the Tijānīs of Idwa ‘Al got the news of the debate they stormed to Boutilimit to back up their lone wolf. Sensing the fragility of the situation, a certain Tijānī, ‘Abdallāh b. Sīdyā, fetched a group of their opponents, including the *qāḍī* himself, to apologize to the newly arrived Tijānīs. Upon being asked to specify a single point in *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī* which might contradict *sharī‘a*, the *qāḍī* preferred to remain silent. This calmed the things down and the gathering came to an end. The proponents of the brotherhood, did not therefore deem it necessary to publish a denunciation of the account written by the *qāḍī*.¹²⁸

The verdict of the *qāḍī* was published in Egypt in 1930 CE together with eulogies in praise of Ibn Māyābā’s book by distinguished scholars of al-Azhar.¹²⁹ Muḥammad Ḥabīb Allāh b. Māyābā al-Shinqīṭī (d. 1363/1944)¹³⁰ praised the author as a unique scholar whose refutation of the Tijāniyya had awakened the people of the his era from the negligence into which they had fallen.¹³¹ Muḥammad Bakhīt al-Muṭī‘ī (d. 1354/1935)¹³² praised Ibn Māyābā for unveiling the “wickedness”

¹²⁷ Muḥammad ‘Abdallāh b. Aḥmadhī wrote that certain Tijānī tenets are in utmost contradiction with the fundamental sources of the religion. The statement of Aḥmad al-Tijānī which claims divine love for disbelievers (*maḥbūbiyyat al-kuffār ‘indallāh*), granting them access to what they will from food, and drinks (*wa-aklihim mā yashahūn*), is given as an example. For a detailed account of the event see:., pp. 16-18.

¹²⁸ See for details: Muḥammad Sa‘īd b. Muḥamdī b. Baddī, *Ḥusn al-taqāḍī fi ḥukm aḥad al-muḥakkamayn ‘alā ghā‘ib qabl al-i‘dhār fi-mā yakhtaṣṣu bi-amr al-qāḍī*, Damascus: Dār al-Bayrūtī, 1429/2008, pp. 13-15.

¹²⁹ The prestigious al-Azhar University was founded between 970 and 972 during the Fatimid Era as an institution that exclusively confers higher religious education. Its transformation into a modernized university happened during the last two centuries. See further: Indra Falk Gensik, *Islamic Reform and Conservatism: Al-Azhar and the Evolution of Modern Sunni Islam*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2014 and Alexander Thurston, “Polyvalent, Transnational Religious Authority: The Tijaniyya Sufi Order and Al-Azhar University”, pp. 8-9.

¹³⁰ He was born and educated in Shinqīṭ, lived for some time in Marrakesh and then in Hijaz where he had his own madrasa. Upon a dispute with King ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, he moved to Egypt and settled there until his demise in Cairo. In al-Azhar he was teaching *usūl al-dīn* (principles of the religion). See: al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām*, vol. VI, p. 79; ‘Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, vol. III, p. 209. For his *ijāzāt* (certificates of authorization) and writings, see: <http://cb.rayaheen.net/showthread.php?tid=17042>

¹³¹ Ibn Māyābā, *Ḥuṣūl al-amānī bi-taqrīz Mushtahā al-khārif al-jānī*, pp. 2, 7.

¹³² Muḥammad Bakhīt studied in al-Azhar and was later appointed as professor of *tafsīr* there. He is best known for his expertise in *tafsīr* and *fiqh*. He occupied the post of Grand *Muṭī* of Egypt from 1914 till 1921. He is said to have had contact with Jamlā al-Dīn al-Afghānī, but later turned out to be a diehard opponent of Muḥammad ‘Abduh’s

embedded in Tijānī doctrines, particularly the tenet of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ*; some five years earlier, al-Muṭī‘ī had himself made similar arguments in response to a question he had received from an anonymous interlocutor.¹³³ ‘Alī Sarwar al-Zankūnī (d. 1359/1940–1941) found the book worthy of praise as a container of extraordinary religious themes, widening the religious horizons of not only apprentices but also those of learned experts. He supplicated to Allah that the author might live a long time so that people might benefit from his knowledge. Muḥammad Ḥasanayn Makhlūf (d. 1354–1355/1936)¹³⁴ praised the Shinqītī shaykh as a perfect role model for scholars with a zeal for defending the religion of Islam.¹³⁵ Makhlūf himself followed in the foot-steps of Ibn Māyābā and composed a treatise entitled *al-Manhaj al-qawīm fī bayān anna l-ṣalāt al-fātiḥ laysat min-kalām Allāh al-qadīm* (“The Correct Approach Explaining that *Ṣalāt al-Fātiḥ* is Not a Component of the Divine Eternal Speech”), forcefully rejecting the Tijānī conviction that *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* was a component of the divine eternal speech. Furthermore, he called upon Tijānīs themselves to abstain from such “absurd” ideas, which he said caused irredeemable damage to the reputation of their master and, most importantly make them look like fools.¹³⁶ A reply to the treatise was made by the Moroccan polemicist Aḥmad Sukayrij, entitled *al-Ṣirāt al-mustaqīm fī l-radd ‘alā mu’ allif al-Manhaj al-qawīm* (“Straight Path in Refutation of the Author of *al-Manhaj al-qawīm*”).¹³⁷ In it, Makhlūf was repeatedly charged with the misquotation and alteration of Tijānī statements.¹³⁸ Sukayrij also wrote in refutation of Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb (d. 1389/1969),¹³⁹ the founder and

reform movement. He passed away in Cairo. For further details of his life and writings see: al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām*, vol. VI, p. 50.

¹³³ Ibn Māyābā, *Ḥuṣūl al-amānī bi-taqrīz Mushtahā al-khārif al-jānī*, pp. 9-12.

¹³⁴ Makhlūf was also a graduate of al-Azhar, later appointed as a professor, who would have taught *tawḥīd*, *tafsīr*, *fiqh* and *adab* there. He was one of the founding figures of the library of al-Azhar, and a member of the board of directors. He is said to have written more than thirty-seven books, from *tafsīr* to polemical altercations with followers of Sufī orders. See: al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām*, vol. VI p. 96.

¹³⁵ Ibn Māyābā, *Ḥuṣūl al-amānī bi-taqrīz Mushtahā al-khārif al-jānī*, p. 13.

¹³⁶ Makhlūf praised Aḥmad al-Tijānī and held it improbable that a Sufī master of his calibre would promote such ideas. He might, he said, have been the victim of his followers, who had spread absurd claims on behalf of their master. Tijānīs are called upon to stop spreading such claims. See: Muḥammad Ḥasanayn Makhlūf, *al-Manhaj al-qawīm fī bayān anna l-ṣalāt al-fātiḥ laysat min-kalām Allāh al-qadīm*, Cairo: Maṭba‘at Ḥijāzī, [published most probably in 1354 AH shortly after its compilation], pp. 14-15 and 109. On his stance regarding *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* see pp. 33-37.

¹³⁷ Sukayrij wrote it in three volumes, the first of which was published in 1358 AH in Tunis in Maṭba‘a al-Nahḍa. The remaining two volumes are still in their manuscript forms. All three volumes are currently available online as entry number 93, here: <http://www.cheikh-skiredj.com/tous-les-livres-cheikh-skiredj.php>

¹³⁸ For a brief discussion of the altercation between Makhlūf and Sukayrij, see: Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijāniyya: a Sufī Order in the Modern World*, pp. 183-84.

¹³⁹ Al-Khaṭīb was born in Damascus in 1886 but resided in Cairo where he established the journals of *al-Zuhra*, al-Azhar and *al-Faṭḥ*. He is said to have been one of the diehard anti-Tijānīs to have composed a book in refutation of

director of the journal of *al-Faṭḥ*, who on 16 Rajab 1353 AH had published an article on behalf of Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, entitled *Barā'a min al-kufrīyāt al-wārida min kutub al-Tijāniyya* (“Disowning the Blasphemies Embedded in Tijānī Sources”), together with an eulogy (*taqrīẓ*) of it. In it, as the title suggests, the brotherhood was severely criticized. The article was forwarded to Sukayrij by one of his Egyptian disciples, Ḥusayn Ḥasan al-Khashshāb, at which Sukayrij responded with his treatise *al-Qawl al-muṣīb fī bayān mā khaḍiyya 'alā mudīr majallat al-Faṭḥ al-maṣriyya Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb* (“The Precise Explanation of What the Director of the Egyptian Journal of *al-Faṭḥ* Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb Failed to Understand”). This was meant to educate this opponent in the tenets of the Tijāniyya which he had purportedly criticized without sufficient knowledge of them.¹⁴⁰

The political situation in Morocco was different from that in Shinqīt. There, the Salafiyya was on the rise, and the French authorities were sensitive to religious publications coming in from outside the country, particularly from Egypt. Thus, *Mushtahā al-khārif al-jānī* was banned from circulation there. The intention was to prevent a further escalation of the religious dispute that had started with a condemnation of the Tijāniyya by Sultān ‘Abd al-Ḥafīẓ (r. 1908–1912 CE), in which he denounced Tijānī teachings about the origin and efficacy of the *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* as disbelief. The sultān did so under the dual influence of his Salafī vizier, Abū Shu‘ayb al-Dukkālī, and Ibn Māyābā, who was residing in Morocco at the time, prior to his migration to the holy lands.¹⁴¹ The 1920s (CE) were a period of time in which the Tijānīs were subjected to extensive and reckless

the brotherhood entitled as *Min l-Islām ilā l-imān ḥaqā'iq 'an l-firqa al-sufiyya al-Tijāniyya*. For an account of his life, see: al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, vol. V, p. 282.

¹⁴⁰ The main topic seems to have been that of daylight encounters with the Prophet. Sukayrij attempted to prove that Tijānīs were able to have daylight encounters with Prophet by virtue of the *Jawharat al-kamāl*. See: Aḥmad Sukayrij, *al-Qawl al-muṣīb fī bayān mā khaḍiyya 'alā mudīr Majallat al-Faṭḥ al-miṣriyya Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb*, n.p., n.d, pp. 4-8. We do not know whether Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb found out about *al-Qawl al-muṣīb*.

¹⁴¹ Sultān ‘Abd al-Ḥafīẓ’s denunciation of the Tijāniyya is known as *Kashf al-niqāb 'an i'tiqādāt tawā'if al-ibtidā'*. However, he himself later came to join the Tijāniyya after his abdication in 1912, and composed poems in which he not only gave an outline of the Tijānī history and litanies, but also offered extensive praise to the supreme master of the brotherhood and its defender in Morocco Aḥmad Sukayrij. These verses were published in Tunis in 1930 under the title *al-Jami' al-'irfāniyya al-waḥfiyya al-wāfiyya bi-shurūṭ wa-jull fadā'il ahl al-tariqa al-Tijāniyya*. See: Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijāniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, p. 175. He is said to have changed his mind after meetings with Aḥmad Sukayrij in which the latter convinced him about the Tijāniyya. Sukayrij reports that the abdicated Sultān once told him that his book, which was perceived as a refutation of the Tijāniyya, was actually directed against certain followers of the Shaykh Ma' al-'Aynayn, rather than the brotherhood itself. See: Aḥmad Sukayrij, *Jināyat al-muntasib al-'ānī*, vol. II, p. 93. The abdicated sultan would later even write a refutation of Ibn Māyābā, called *Naḥr al-juzūr*. For an account of his life and writings, see: Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-'Azīz Ben ‘Abdallāh, *'Ulamā' al-tariqa al-Tijāniyya bi-l-maghrib al-aqṣā*, pp. 42-43.

onslaughts by their Salafī opponents throughout the whole of North Africa. As Jamil Abun-Nasr quite rightly observes, the reasons for this were not only theological but also political. The close contact between the Tijāniyya and the French colonial authorities paved the way for Salafī attacks. In Morocco, the Council of Learning at al-Qarawiyyīn University passed a *fatwā* dated 29 Rajab 1343/24 February 1926, in which both the minister of justice and the sultān were called upon to punish Maḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Wāḥid al-Sūsī al-Nazīfī (d. 1366/1947),¹⁴² who, in one of his writings, *al-Ṭīb al-fā’ih wa-l-wird al-sāniḥ fī ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* (“The Radiating Fragrance and the Satisfactory Litany of *Ṣalāt al-Fātiḥ*”), claimed the *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* to be a part of the divine eternal speech.¹⁴³ Furthermore, the council suggested that his writings were to be burnt.¹⁴⁴ Thanks to the interference of al-Tihāmī al-Kalāwī (d. 1375/1956),¹⁴⁵ the Pasha of Marrakesh, no action was taken against al-Nazīfī or his writings. The *fatwā* went on to be published by Salafīs in Algeria in the newspaper of *al-Najāḥ* under the title “The Zeal of the Learned Men of Qarawiyyin for the Faith”. Tijānīs, on the other hand, undertook the task of defending al-Nazīfī: for example, Aḥmad Sukayrij wrote his *al-Ḥaqq al-mubīn li-intiṣār al-Tijāniyyīn ‘alā ‘ulamā’ al-Qarawiyyīn* (“The Evident Truth in Support of the Tijānīs Against the Scholars of al-Qarawiyyīn University”) in defence of his friend and shaykh and Muḥammad Manāshū (1882-1884/1933)¹⁴⁶ wrote his *Risāla al-maslak al-ḥanīfī fī naṣrat al-shaykh al-Nazīfī* (“The Middle Way in Support al-Nazīfī the Master”), in full support of his fellow Tijānī.¹⁴⁷ Another treatise in defence of al-Nazīfī, *al-Naṣr al-wādiḥ fī l-dhubb ‘an mu’allif al-Ṭīb al-fā’ih* (“The Clear Victory in Defence of the Author of *al-Ṭīb al-fā’ih*”) was written by Sīdī ‘Umar b. al-Madanī al-Mazwarī.

¹⁴² For an account of his life, see: al-Mukhtār al-Sūsī, *al-Ma’sūl*, vol. XIX, Casablanca: Maṭba‘at al-Jāmi‘a, 1381/1961, pp. 137-144; al-Ziriklī, *al-A’lām*, vol. VI, p. 185.

¹⁴³ For the claim that *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* is a part of divine eternal speech, see: Maḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Wāḥid al-Nazīfī, *al-Ṭīb al-fā’ih wa-l-wird al-sā’ih fī ṣalāt al-fātiḥ*, Casablanca: Dār al-Rashād al-Ḥadītha, n.d., p. 14.

¹⁴⁴ For the text of the *fatwā* see: Aḥmad Sukayrij, *al-Ḥaqq al-mubīn li-intiṣār al-Tijāniyyīn ‘alā ‘ulamā’ al-Qarawiyyīn* (edit: Muḥammad al-Rādī Guennoun), n.p. n.d., pp. 3-11

¹⁴⁵ He was himself a Tijānī and a sincere ally of the French, and thus came to clash with Muḥammad al-Khamīs in 1950 due to the latter’s support for *ḥizb al-istiqlāl* (the Independence Party), the main political force struggling for the independence of Morocco. For an account of his life, see: al-Ziriklī, *al-A’lām*, vol. II, p. 89.

¹⁴⁶ Muḥammad Manāshū b. ‘Uthmān was a Tunisian Tijānī, a graduate of the Zaytuna University who later possessed a teaching post there as well. He is said to have established a periodical entitled *al-Badr* in 1921. For an account of his life, see: Muḥammad Maḥfuz, *Tarājim al-muallifīn al-tunisiyyīn*, vol. V, Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1405/1985, pp. 387-388.

¹⁴⁷ For Manāshū’s *Risāla al-maslak al-ḥanīfī*, see: Muḥammad Manāshū, *Qam’ al-ta’aṣṣub wa-ahwā’ a’ dā’ al-Tijānī bi-l-mashriq wa-l-maghrib*, n.p., n.d., (pp. 2-30).

The publication of the *fatwā* in *al-Najāh* was followed by two separate attacks on the Tijānī brotherhood by Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā (d. 1354/1935), published in the periodical *al-Manār* 29 Sha‘bān of 1344/14 March 1926. His critique was mainly concentrated on the tenets of the master’s daylight encounters with the Prophet, and the origin and efficacy of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ*. The Tijāniyya was declared responsible for the deviation of millions of Muslims in Africa, and its founding figure was depicted as *dajjāl*.¹⁴⁸ Riḍā’s antithetical depiction of the order and its supreme master seriously outraged Egyptian Tijānīs, some of whom previously had been enthusiastic fans of *al-Manār*. They wrote a grave letter of condemnation undermining Riḍā’s scholarly credentials and attacking him for unjustly criticizing the founder of the brotherhood.¹⁴⁹ It was not easy to refute a scholar of the calibre of Riḍā; nevertheless, Muḥammad Manāshū gave it a try. He wrote a treatise called *Risāla fath al-absār ‘alā mawāqī‘ uthār ṣāhib al-Manār* (“The Eye-Opening Epistle Regarding Points Missed by the Owner of *al-Manār*”), reproaching his opponent for his hostile depiction of Aḥmad al-Tijānī, which he claimed, undermined the available historical data about the Tijānī master.¹⁵⁰

In 1929 CE, three years after the al-Nazīfī affair, Aḥmad Sukayrij found himself involved in an unwanted debate¹⁵¹ with some highly eminent representatives of the Salafiyya in Morocco. The debate took place on two separate occasions. At an official gathering in Rabat, which brought a number of high-ranking authorities together, he confronted al-Dukkālī, Muḥammad b. al-‘Arabī al-‘Alawī, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ḥajawī and Muḥammad al-Mu‘ammarī (d. 1392/1972),¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ See details in Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijāniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, p. 177.

¹⁴⁹ A copy of the letter is provided by Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ in his *al-Risāla al-thālitha*, where the author is simply referred to as “the Tijānī” (there is great probability that the author is Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ himself). See: Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ *al-Risāla al-thālitha; al-intiṣāf fī radd al-inkār ‘alā al-ṭarīq*, n.p. [Cairo], no publisher, 1352/1932, pp. 19-40.

¹⁵⁰ It is worth noting that, unlike in his treatise in defence of al-Nazīfī, in which he fully supported the latter’s claim about *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ*, Manāshū took a more restrained position on the issue in *Risāla fath al-absār*. Here, he discredited the claim of the *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* being a component of divine eternal speech, and even spoke of the necessity of *ta’wīl* regarding Aḥmad al-Tijānī’s statement about the efficacy of the *wird*. See: Muḥammad Manāshū, *Risāla fath al-absār ‘alā mawāqī‘ uthār ṣāhib al-Manār*, (published in Manāshū’s *Qam‘ al-ta’assub wa-ahwā’ a’ dā’ al-Tijānī bi-l-mashriq wa-l-maghrib*, pp. 31-42), n.p. n.d., pp. 37-38.

¹⁵¹ This debate is reported by Aḥmad Sukayrij himself in *Iḥqāq al-ḥaqq wa-daf‘ al-harā’ fī-dhikr munāzarāt jarrat baynī wa-bayn ba’ d al-wuzarā’* (“The Realization of Truth and Demolition of Nonsense Invoking a Debate Took Place Between Myself and Some Ministers”), dictated to his son ‘Abd al-Karīm Sukayrij due to the continuous insistence of the latter.

¹⁵² Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Mu‘ammarī of Algerian origin, was assigned the task of educating the royal family members during the reign of Sulāṭn Yusūf. He later had close contact with Muḥammad al-Khamīs. See: Muḥammad Ḥajjī, *Mawsū‘a a’ lam al-maghrib*, vol. IX, Tunis: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2008, p. 3440.

among others.¹⁵³ The conversation revolved around Sufi brotherhoods and the purportedly reprehensible innovations they spread among lay Muslims. Sukayrij had no intention of entering into a debate, but when Muḥammad b. al-‘Arabī al-‘Alawī brought up the issue of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* as having the effect of erasing the virtue of Qur’ān, he had no choice but to fire back. The conversation extended to other Tijānī litanies as well. Tijānīs were also criticized for promoting the belief that he who denounced the brotherhood, after having been affiliated to it, would die as an apostate. This belief, according to Sukayrij, either did not belong to the founding figure of the brotherhood, or if it did, he had not really been using the term “die of disbelief” in its outward meaning, but rather to mean ingratitude towards the grace of Allah (*kufṛ al-ni‘ma*).¹⁵⁴ It seems that Sukayrij must have felt himself under tremendous pressure to defend his order in the face of a crowd of opponents, and was thus not able to develop a consistent line of argumentation.¹⁵⁵ In the second part of the debate, which occurred in the court of al-Tihāmī al-Kalāwī in Marrakesh, in the context of another official gathering, al-Dukkālī reportedly attacked some highly revered Sufi authorities, like Ibn ‘Arabī and ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī (d. 832/1428),¹⁵⁶ alleging that the latter had attempted, in his book *al-Insān al-kāmil* (“The Perfect Human”), to justify Satan’s refusal to prostrate himself in honour of the prophet Adam when he was ordered to do so. Sukayrij accused his opponent of insolence towards his brothers in faith, now deceased; a matter which the Prophet had strictly prohibited. This accusation outraged al-Dukkālī, who asked his opponent to cut short the gathering and leave.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ For a detailed list of those at the gathering whom Sukayrij faced as his opponents, see: Aḥmad Sukayrij, *Iḥqāq al-ḥaqq wa-daf‘ al-harā’ fi-dhikr munāẓarāt jarrat baynī wa-bayn ba‘ḍ al-wuzarā’*, ed. Muḥammad al-Rāḍī Guennoun, n.p., n.d, pp. 9-12.

¹⁵⁴ Aḥmad Sukayrij, *Iḥqāq al-ḥaqq*, p. 18.

¹⁵⁵ Criticism raised by opponents of the Sukayrij seems to have convinced some of the Tijāniyya sympathisers to cease their moral support to the brotherhood. For instance, Qadūr b. Aḥmad b. Ghabrīt, a prior sympathiser of the Tijāniyya, denounced the brotherhood upon hearing the criticism raised by Muḥammad al-‘Arabī al-‘Alawī pertaining the efficacy and virtue of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ*. See: Aḥmad Sukayrij, *Iḥqāq al-ḥaqq*, p. 15. Ibn Ghabrīt held high-ranking positions in Morocco. He played a crucial role in establishment of the Grand Mosque in Paris of which he acted as chairman until his death in 1954. See: Muḥammad Ḥajjī, *Mawsū‘a a‘lām al-maghrib*, vol. IX, p. 3292.

¹⁵⁶ ‘Abd al-Karīm b. Ibrāhīm al-Jīlī was a famous Sufi from the family of ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī with a commentary on *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*. For an account of his life, see: al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām*, vol. IV, pp. 50-51; Yūsuf Ilyān Sarkīs, *Mu‘jam al-matbū‘āt al-‘arabiyya wa-l-mu‘arraba*, vol. I, Port Said: Maktabat al-Thaqāfa al-Dīniyya, n.d, p. 728 and Ismā‘īl Bāshā al-Baghdādī, *Hadiyyat al-‘arifīn asmā’ al-mu‘allifīn wa-āthār al-muṣannifīn*, vol. I, Istanbul: Mu‘assasat al-Tārīkh al-‘Arabī, 1951, p. 610-611; N. Hanif, *Encyclopaedia of Sufis*, pp. 83-109.

¹⁵⁷ Aḥmad Sukayrij, *Iḥqāq al-ḥaqq*, pp. 21-22.

Another onslaught generated by an anti-Tijānī of Morocco was Muḥammad b. al-Ṣiddīq al-Zamzamī's (d. 1408/1988)¹⁵⁸ *I'lām al-muslimīn bi-mā fī kalām al-Tijānī min al-kidhb al-zāhir wa-l-kufr al-mubīn* ("Informing Muslims About the Apparent Lies and the Clear Disbelief in the Statements of al-Tijānī"), probably written in the late 1940s or early 1950s (CE). He was reportedly asked by a certain Aḥmad al-Ḥarfūsh about a number of Tijānī tenets, including *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ*, its efficacy and relation to Muslim belief.¹⁵⁹ In reply to the questions directed at him, al-Zamzamī accused Aḥmad al-Tijānī of ignorance, and of the inculcation in his followers of anti-Islamic ideas. These heavy accusations attracted many replies from Tijānīs. 'Abd al-Wāḥid Ben 'Abdallāh (d. 1991 CE)¹⁶⁰ wrote a refutation of *I'lām al-muslimīn* with a parallel title *I'lām al-muslimīn bi-l-ḥujja wa-l-burhān li-naqz mā fī kalām al-Zamzamī b. al-Ṣiddīq min l-zūr wa-l-buhtān* ("Informing Muslims with Proof and Evidence of the Falsifications and Slanders Contained in the Statements of al-Zamzamī b. al-Ṣiddīq"). Another refutation called *Tahāfut al-Zamzamī wa-istihtāruhu bi-l-sharī'a al-Islāmiyya* ("al-Zamzamī's Inconsistency and his Insolence Towards the Religion of Islam"), came from his son 'Abd al-'Azīz b. 'Abdallāh (d. 1433/2012), and the third was a long poem entitled as *Muḥyī al-sunna* ("Reviver of the Sunna") written by Idrīs b. al-Ḥasan al-'Alamī (d. 1428/2007).¹⁶¹

In neighbouring Algeria, the Tijānī brotherhood was unequivocally criticized by the Jam'iyat al-'Ulamā' al-Muslimīn al-Jazā'iriyyīn (the Society of Muslim Scholars of Algeria) over Tijānī collaboration with French colonial rule. Muḥammad al-Bashīr al-Ibrāhīmī (d. 1358/1965), the vice-president of the society, denounced the Tijāniyya during their fifth annual congress held in October 1935 CE in Algiers. He also consolidated Riḍā's labelling of Aḥmad al-Tijānī as *dajjāl*,

¹⁵⁸ Al-Zamzamī was born in Egypt in a Sufi family. He settled in Morocco and denounced Sufi brotherhoods including al-Ṣeddīqiyya, the one to which his entire family was affiliated. He was known as one of the dihard enemies of Sufis. On Him and his writings see: <http://saaaid.net/feraq/el3aedoon/30.htm>.

¹⁵⁹ Aḥmad al-Ḥarfūsh's letter could be found in al-Zamzamī's response. See Al-Zamzamī, *I'lām al-muslimīn bi-mā fī kalām al-Tijānī min al-kidhb al-zāhir wa-l-kufr al-mubīn*, Tangier: Anṣār Al-Sunna, n.d, pp. 1-3. A copy of the book could be found online on <https://ia800803.us.archive.org/7/items/Benseddiq/i3lam.pdf>.

¹⁶⁰ For an account of 'Abd al-Wāḥid Ben 'Abdallāh's life and his writings, see: Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-'Azīz b. 'Abdallāh, *'Ulamā' al-tariqa al-Tijāniyya bi-l-maghrib al-aqṣā*, pp. 55-59.

¹⁶¹ These refutations were published together in one book called *Turrāhāt al-Zamzamī* in the late 1950's by Maṭba'a al-Fuḍāla either in Rabat or Casablanca. See: Rüdiger Seesemann, "The Takfir Debate Part II: The Sudanese Arena", p. 90.

and for the same reasons.¹⁶² The society's president 'Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Bādīs (d. 1358/1940)¹⁶³ wrote and published a refutation of the Tijānī doctrines in his periodical *al-Shihāb* in 1357/1938, in reply to the questions of a certain Ibrāhīm Rābishtī from Shkoder in Albania, which were initially directed to Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Ḥajawī, the minister of the religious affairs in Morocco at the time. The minister, whose father was himself a follower of the brotherhood, replied with a great deal of caution, offering simultaneous criticism and praise of the Tijāniyya, all of which was published in the issues 266, 267 and 268 of the Egyptian periodical of *al-Risāla*. Many Tijānīs volunteered to respond, including Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, whose reply appeared in issue number 270 of the same periodical, under the title *Ḥawl al-ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya* ("Regarding the Tijāniyya Brotherhood"). Another, relatively harsh response appeared in an Algerian periodical called *al-Waddād* under the title *al-'Allāma al-Ḥajawī fī l-maydān* ("The Great Scholar al-Ḥajawī in the Arena"). Neither of these two replies was taken into consideration by Ibn Bādīs when he published his own reply to Rābishtī, with reference to al-Ḥajawī's moderate criticism. Besides the Tijānī claims surrounding *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ*, the tenet of the exemption of the followers of the Tijānī brotherhood from divine judgement and punishment in the hereafter was depicted by Ibn Bādīs as a clear deviation from Islamic teachings.¹⁶⁴ This caused a stir among the Tijānīs of North Africa. The leader of the Tijānī *zāwiya* in Tamacine, Aḥmad b. Bisām al-Tijānī, sent a letter to Aḥmad Sukayrij inciting him to silence Ibn Bādīs, depicted as an atheist fool who had introduced reprehensible innovations (*al-mulḥid al-bid'ī* and *al-mulḥid al-safīh*) into the religion.¹⁶⁵ A similar demand by Ibn 'Umar (known as Benamor) b. Muḥammad al-Kabīr (d. 1381/1962), a great-grandson of Aḥmad al-Tijānī compelled Sukayrij to produce a rejoinder called *al-Imān al-ṣaḥīḥ fī l-radd 'alā l-jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ* ("The True Faith in Repudiation of *al-Jawāb al-Ṣaḥīḥ*").¹⁶⁶

¹⁶² Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijāniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, pp. 178-179.

¹⁶³ His full name was 'Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā b. Makkī b. Bādīs; known for his anti-colonialism, he established the periodical of *al-Shihāb*, and in 1931 also the Society of the Learned Men of Algeria, of which he was charmain until his death in 1940. See: al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lam*, vol. III, p. 289.

¹⁶⁴ For an account of Rābishtī's questions and Ibn Bādīs's replies see: Ibn Bādīs, *Jawāb ṣarīḥ fī bayān muḍādda al-ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya li-l-Islām al-ṣaḥīḥ*, Maktaba al-Maḥajja, n.p, n.d; Aḥmad Sukayrij, *al-Imān al-ṣaḥīḥ fī l-radd 'alā l-jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ*, Tunis: Maṭba'a al-Nahḍa, 1358 AH, pp. 22-123. See also: Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijāniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, pp. 178-80.

¹⁶⁵ An account of this letter can be found in Aḥmad Sukayrij, *al-Imān al-ṣaḥīḥ*, pp. 8-10

¹⁶⁶ This is probably the most vicious refutation produced by Aḥmad Sukayrij, in which Ibn Bādīs is introduced as Satan whose most beloved pastime is to prevent people from the remembrance of God. On another occasion he is depicted as an animal in the form of human being as well as a fanatic and extremist Jew. See Aḥmad Sukayrij, *al-Imān al-ṣaḥīḥ*, respectively p.p 11-12, 17 and 19. As for al-Ḥajawī, however, he is exempted from criticism and on one occasion he is even portrayed as a defender of the brotherhood. See for instance p. 90.

The year after, in 1938 CE the Tunisian newspaper *al-Zuhra* published an anti-Tijāniyya refutation in the form of an onslaught upon Aḥmad Sukayrij’s book *al-Kawkab al-wahhāj li-tawdīḥ al-minhāj fi sharḥ al-Durrat al-tāj wa-‘ijālat al-muḥtāj* (“The Shining Star Illustrating the True Approach in Discovering the Pearl of the Crown and Haste of the Needy”), itself a commentary on ‘Abd al-Karīm Benīs’ (d. 1350/1931) poem known as *Durrat al-tāj* (“Pearl of the Crown”). Sukayrij’s book was already in circulation, as indeed it had been for almost forty years since its first publication in 1900 CE. The author of the article, whose identity was kept secret by the newspaper, was a certain Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh b. al-Muwaqqit (d. 1369/1949).¹⁶⁷ The appearance of the article was part of an anti-Tijānī campaign by the newspaper, marked by political grievances against Tijānīs who were considered sincere allies of the French in Tunisia.¹⁶⁸ The criticism raised there once again concerned the tenet of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ*. Sukayrij was accused of depicting it (*ṣalāt al-fātiḥ*) purportedly invented by the close confidante of the order’s founder, the author of *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī* ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm (d. 1217/1802-1803),¹⁶⁹ as superior to the divine eternal speech. Sukayrij dismissed the accusations, responding with articles such as *al-Furqān ma‘a ḥummat al-Qur’ān* (“The Difference with the Protectors of the Qur’ān”) and *Ilaykum al-jawāb* (“Here is the Answer”), the latter having appeared in the newspaper *al-Najāḥ* in Morocco.¹⁷⁰ Ibn al-Muwaqqit seems to have responded with the excommunication of his opponent, which incited followers of Sukayrij to write harsh replies returning the favour.¹⁷¹ This was not the only

¹⁶⁷ Ibn al-Muwaqqit was born in Marrakesh. Though he was once affiliated to the al-Faṭḥiyya order in Morocco, he turned his back on Sufism and became its diehard opponent. His altercation with Sukayrij should be seen as reflection of his general disdain of Sufism. For an account of his life and anti-Sufism, see:

<http://www.alsoufia.com/main/3819-1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%A7-%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A4%D9%82%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%83%D8%B4%D9%8A-.html>. He had already published a refutation of the Tijāniyya in 1932 in Morocco, entitled *Mir’āt al-masāwī al-waqtiyya*, to which Sukayrij had responded with *al-Hijra al-maqtiyya fi kasr mir’at al-masawi al-waqtiyya*. See: Aḥmad Sukayrij, *Zawāl al-ḥīra bi-qāti‘ al-burhān bi-l-jawāb ‘ammā nasharathu jarīda al-Zahrā’ taḥta ‘unwān: ayna ḥummāt al-Qur’ān*, Fez: Maṭba‘at al-Jadīda, 1358/1939, p. 46

¹⁶⁸ Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijāniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, p. 181.

¹⁶⁹ On ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, see: Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijaniyya: A Sufi Order in the Modern World*, pp. 24-25; Aḥmad Sukayrij, *Kashf al-ḥijāb*, pp. 68-97.

¹⁷⁰ For further information on Ibn Muwaqqit’s accusation and Sukayrij’s response see: Aḥmad Sukayrij, *Zawāl al-ḥīra*, pp. 3-46. For the article of *al-Furqān ma‘a ḥummat al-Qur’ān*, see the same source, pp. 65-73.

¹⁷¹ Based on Sukayrij’s account many articles were published in his defence. An article called *Ayna ḥummat al-Qur’ān?* written by a certain al-‘Alawī al-Satā‘ī appeared in *al-Zuhra* the same newspaper which had published Ibn Muwaqqit’s criticism. Another article written by Muḥammad ‘Alī b. Fatā al-Shinqīfī under the title *Jawāb aḥad ḥummāt al-Qur’ān* was published by the newspaper *al-Najāḥ* in Morocco. Another article appeared in defence of Sukayrij, probably in Morocco, called *‘alā ḥāmish ayna ḥummāt al-Qur’ān*. These articles are quoted in full in *Zawāl al-ḥīra*. See respectively pp. 47-55, 56-65, 73-77.

confrontation between Sukayrij and Ibn al-Muwaqqit, who was once himself a Sufi affiliated to the al-Faṭḥiyya order in Morocco. In 1932 CE, after his denouncement of Sufism, Ibn al-Muwaqqit attacked all of the Sufi orders in Morocco in his *Mir'āt al-masāwī al-waqtiyya* (“Mirror for Discovering Errors”), also known as *al-Sayf al-maslūl ‘alā l-mu‘riḍ ‘an sunna al-Rasūl* (“The Drawn Sword Against the One Who Turns Away from the Sunna of the Prophet”) with a special focus on the Tijāniyya. Followers of the brotherhood were splitted into two hostile camps, he said, each excommunicating the other in a fashion similar to that in which Jews and Christians had once done so.¹⁷² Quite a few Tijānīs wrote replies to him, including Sukayrij, who at first did not consider it necessary to reply to such an opponent, but due to the insistence of his fellow Tijānīs, composed a long polemical poem, published in two volumes as *al-Ḥijāra al-maqtiyya li-kasr al-mir'āt al-masāwī al-waqtiyya* (“The Potent Stone for Shattering *al-Mir'āt al-Masāwī al-Waqtiyya*”).¹⁷³

West Africa in the twentieth century displayed remarkable similarities with North Africa, in terms of opposition to the Tijāniyya by Salafīs and reform-minded Muslims. As a considerable body of literature has already been written on confrontations between Salafī movements and Sufi brotherhoods in this part of the continent, here let us confine ourselves to mentioning some examples in passing.¹⁷⁴ In Senegal, the first anti-Sufi reform movement was established in 1935 CE by Salafīs who had graduated from universities in North Africa and the Middle East. The movement was called Ikhwān al-Muslimūn (“Muslim Brothers”, probably inspired by the Egyptian Muslim Brothers) and headed by ‘Abd al-Qādir Diakhaté. Sufi brotherhoods including the Tijāniyya were attacked and criticized for allegedly spreading cultural, political, economical

¹⁷² An account of Ibn al-Muwaqqit’s criticism is provided by Sukayrij. See Aḥmad Sukayrij, *al-Ḥijāra al-maqtiyya li-kasr al-mir'āt al-masāwī al-waqtiyya*, vol. II, Fez: Maṭba‘a al-Jadīda, 1356/1937-38, pp. 33,64 and passim.

¹⁷³ Aḥmad Sukayrij, *al-Ḥijāra al-maqtiyya*, vol. I, p. 6. Other Tijānīs who composed poems in refutation of Ibn al-Muwaqqit are Marzūq b. al-Ḥasan from Sudan, Ibrāhīm Niyās and his brother Muḥammad Niyās from Senegal, Abū Bakr b Aḥmad al-Dimānī and Muḥammad ‘Alī b. Fatā from the region of Shinqīt in Mauritania. For their replies see: Aḥmad Sukayrij, *al-Ḥijāra al-maqtiyya*, vol. II, respectively pp. 47-48, 49-51, 57-63, 51-51 and 53-57.

¹⁷⁴ See Roman Loimeier, *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1997; Lansine Kaba, *The Wahhabiyya: Islamic Reform and Politics in French West Africa*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974; Lucy C. Behrman, *Muslim Brotherhoods and Politics in Senegal*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970; Abdulai Iddrisu, *Contesting Islam in Africa: Homegrown Wahhabism and Muslim Identity in Northern Ghana, 1920-2010*, North Carolina: Carolina Academic Press, 2013 and Ramzi Ben Amara, *The Izāla Movement in Nigeria: Its Split, Relationship to Sufis and Perception of Shari‘a Reimplementation*, (PhD thesis submitted to the University of Bayreuth 2011) among others.

and social resignation and stagnancy within Senegalese Muslim society.¹⁷⁵ Anti-Sufi activities were intensified in the 1950s CE upon the establishment of the UCM (Union Culturelle Musulmane) under the leadership of Shaykh Touré. The UCM was an active, open association with numerous branches in Senegal, Mali, Guinea and Ivory Coast, and a monthly periodical called *Le Réveil Islamique* (The Islamic Revival), mostly criticizing esoteric Sufi practices and the Sufi cooperation with French authorities, among other things.¹⁷⁶ Shaykh Touré, a graduate of the Ben Badis Institute of Algiers, labelled Sufi Islam as colonial Islam.¹⁷⁷ Salafis were not the only group in Senegal who attacked Sufis; leftist nationalists attacked Sufis for the same reasons. Sufi leaders had to face charges of complicity; they were often portrayed as collaborators in colonialism, feudalist exploiters and religious frauds.¹⁷⁸ Towards the end of the century, similar views were even to be found among some of the elite Senegalese Sufi families. Sīdī Lamine Niyās (b. 1950 CE), for example, a cousin of Ibrāhīm Niyās, criticized the Senegalese social contract¹⁷⁹ as conferring a “*feudal posture*” to Sufi shaykhs.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁵ For details on the Muslim Brothers of Senegal see: Muḥammad al-Tāhir Maygharī, *al-Shaykh Ibrāhīm Niyās al-Sinighālī, ḥayātuhu wa-’ārā’uhu wa-ta’ālīmuhu*, Dār al-’Arabiyya li-l-Ṭibā’a wa-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzī’, Beirut: 1981/1401, pp. 159-160; For their goals and opposition both to Sufis and French colonial power see: Lucy C. Behrman, *Muslim Brotherhoods and Politics in Senegal*, pp. 160-61. According to Loimeier, a number of similar associations were established in the 1920s and 1930s in the urban centres of the country. Among the main struggles of them were purification of the religion from *bid’a* (reprehensible innovation) and the reduction of ostentatious ceremonies which proved costly for the lay people. Notably, most of the members were Sufis, particularly Tijānīs. Roman Loimeier, “Political Dimensions of the Relationship Between Sufi brotherhoods and the Islamic Reform Movement in Senegal”, in Frederick De Jong and Bernd Radtke (eds.), *Islamic Mysticism Contested: Thirteen Centuries of Controversies and Polemics*, Leiden: Brill, 1999, pp. 341-356, (pp. 343-344).

¹⁷⁶ For information on the formation, agendas and activities of the UCM see: Lancine Kaba, *The Wahhabiyya: Islamic Reform and Politics in French West Africa*, pp. 234-252. Roman Leomeir states that Sufism per se was not the target of the UCM. Shaykh Toure, the leader of the UCM, continued to maintain his affiliation with the Tijāniyya (albeit Shaykh Toure’s anti-Sufi discourse seems to contradict this claim. In his book *Afin que tu deviennes croyant*, he claimed to see Sufi brotherhoods as a plague on Islam in Africa). It was, rather certain maraboutic practices and the collaboration of Sufi leaders with colonial authorities that attracted the criticism of the reform movement. For a detailed account, see: Roman Loimeier, “Political Dimensions of the Relationship Between Sufi Brotherhoods and the Islamic Reform Movement in Senegal”, pp. 341-356. See also: Benjamin F. Soares, “Islam and Public Piety in Mali”, in Armando Salvatore and Dale F. Eickelman (eds.), *Public Islam and the Common Good*, Leiden: Brill, 2004, pp. 205-226, (see pp. 215-216).

¹⁷⁷ John Hunwick, “Sub-Saharan Africa and the Wider World of Islam: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives”, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, vol. 26, no. 3, 1996, pp. 230-257, (see p. 236).

¹⁷⁸ Elisabeth Siriyyeh, *Sufis and Anti-Sufis: The Defence, Rethinking and Rejection of Sufism in the Modern World*, London and New York: Routledge, 2003, p. 144; Rudolph T. Ware, *The Walking Qur’an*, pp. 211-212.

¹⁷⁹ The Senegalese social contract positions Sufi shaykhs as intermediaries between their followers and the state. This goes back to the time of colonialism, in which, through negotiation, Sufi leaders managed to create an environment of mutual accommodation with colonial rule. See details in Leonardo A. Villalón, *Islamic Society and State Power in Senegal: Disciples and Citizens in Fatick*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

¹⁸⁰ Alexander Thurston, “Polyvalent, Transnational Religious Authority: The Tijaniyya Sufi Order and Al-Azhar University”, p. 18.

A few years earlier, in 1949 CE, the Salafīs of Mali, Guinea and Gambia, most of whom were returnees from the University of al-Azhar, and who would later join the UCM, had established the association of Shubbān al-Muslimūn (Muslim Youth), named after the Egyptian Jamā‘a Subbān al-Muslimin (Society of Muslim Youth) founded by ‘Abd al-Ḥamid Sa‘īd in 1927 CE, as part of their anti-Sufi struggle.¹⁸¹ The Shubbān was based in Bamako, with regional branches in neighbouring cities. They regarded Sufis, and Tijānīs in particular, as their main opponents, denouncing them for binding the issue of salvation to affiliation to Sufi brotherhoods, thus generating an exaggerated sense of security. Sufis were attacked for creating a class system within the society, headed by the brotherhoods’ leaders. In this sense, Sufi brotherhoods were seen as synonymous with feudalism. They were variously accused of either the mass exploitation of lay Muslims, or the promotion of social irresponsibility through seclusionary practices which were said to violate Qur’ānic commands regarding work and social action.¹⁸² When the Shubbān movement was displaced by the UCM, the Tijānīs responded with a counter-reform movement of their own, the Jamā‘at al-Murshidīn (Association of the Guides), formed by a certain ‘Abd al-Wahhāb. It was modelled after the teachings of Tierno Bokar Salif Tall (d. 1939 CE),¹⁸³ one of the descendants of al-Ḥājj ‘Umar.¹⁸⁴ Regardless, Tijānī cooperation with French colonial rule made them lose considerable ground to the Salafiyya, which allied itself with the cause of nationalism in a joint struggle for independence.¹⁸⁵

Another fertile ground for confrontations between Tijānīs and their opponents was Northern Nigeria. From the time of its penetration into the region in the first half of the nineteenth century, the Tijāniyya started to replace the Qādiriyya, which had acquired the status of official brotherhood of the Sokoto caliphate since the ‘Uthmān b. Fūdī’s *jihād* campaign of 1803 CE. The gradual spread of the Tijāniyya intensified during the mid-twentieth century with the introduction of the

¹⁸¹ John Hunwick, “Sub-Saharan Africa and the Wider World of Islam: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives”, p. 237.

¹⁸² Lancine Kaba, *The Wahhabiyya: Islamic Reform and Politics in French West Africa*, pp. 116-117.

¹⁸³ On his Sufi teachings see: Louis Brenner, “The Sufi Teaching of Tierno Bokar Salif Tall” *Journal of Religion in Africa*, (3), 1976, pp. 208–226.

¹⁸⁴ Lancine Kaba, *The Wahhabiyya: Islamic Reform and Politics in French West Africa*, p. 246.

¹⁸⁵ The UCM was politically suppressed in Senghor’s era (1960s and 1970s). In the 1980s, however, with the establishment of *Jamā‘a ‘Ibād al-Raḥmān* by Shaykh Toure the reform movement concentrated its efforts on its struggle against the secular state. Sufi brotherhoods were seen as their natural allies in this, and thus a strategy of peace and harmony was established between them. Roman Loimeier, “Political Dimensions of the Relationship Between Sufi Brotherhoods and the Islamic Reform Movement in Senegal”, pp. 34-56.

fayḍa movement by Ibrāhīm Niyās of Senegal. In a short span of time it turned into a mass movement, posing a serious threat to the social and economic base of the Qādiriyya. To put a stop to this dangerous process, Muḥammad al-Nāṣir al-Kabārī, also known as Nasiru Kabara (1925-1996 CE),¹⁸⁶ the most potent Qādirī shaykh of Northern Nigeria at the time, launched a counter campaign of reform (in Paden’s words), or of renewal (in Loimeier’s words), a core part of which was direct confrontation with the Niyāsiyya branch of the Tijāniyya, on both spiritual and legal levels. Around 1950 CE, Nasiru Kabara published a work entitled *Sulālat al-miftāḥ min-minaḥ al-fattāḥ* (“Offspring of the Key to the Divine Donations”) in which he declared himself *ghawth*, meaning the supreme saint of the time, a title to which Ibrāhīm Niyās had laid claim some twenty years earlier, after the declaration of the *fayḍa*. Five years later, in 1955 CE Kabara published another work entitled *Naf’ al-‘ibād bi-ḥaḳīqat al-mī‘ād fī madīnat al-Baghdād* (“Serving the Mankind with the Truth about the Appointments in the City of Baghdad”), followed with the publication of *al-Nafahāt al-nasiriyya fī ṭarīqa al-Qādiriyya* (“The Nasirī Inspirations Concerning the Qādiriyya Brotherhood”) in 1958 CE. In the first, he emphasized his spiritual links with the celebrated *jihād* leader ‘Uthmān b. Fūdī, and his successor Muḥammad Bello; while in the second, he elaborated in detail upon the spiritual superiority over other saints of ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, until the Day of Judgement, as a source of divine emanation. Kabara rejected the spiritual authority of Niyās and demanded that his followers must submit spiritual evidence (*karāmāt*). This challenge outraged Nigerian Tijānīs, who returned the favour in full swing with their polemic rebuttals.¹⁸⁷ Another theme developed by Kabara was that of the supremacy of the followers of the Qādiriyya, who were prohibited from leaving the order for other Sufi denominations including the Tijāniyya. Although both of these claims had been previously made by the Tijāniyya, Kabara’s publications attracted the wrath of his Tijānī counterparts. Abū Bakr ‘Atīq (d. 1394/1974), a Tijānī scholar from Kano, responded with *Risāla fī taḥḍhir al-‘iṣāba* (“The Warning Treatise Regarding Narrow-mindedness”), accusing the Qādirī shaykh of hypocrisy for banning his followers from affiliating themselves with other brotherhoods while criticizing the Tijāniyya for the same reason.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ On his life and writings, see: Roman Loimeier, “The Writings of Nasiru Kabara (Muhammad al-Nāṣir al-Kabārī)”, *Sudanic Africa*, II, 1991, pp. 165-174.

¹⁸⁷ Followers of Ibrāhīm Niyās used particularly unfavourable language in their refutations of Nasiru Kabara. See details in Muḥammad al-Tāhir Maygharī, *Shaykh al-Islām Ibrāhīm Niyās*, pp. 337-338.

¹⁸⁸ Roman Loimeier, *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria*, pp. 78-79.

Parallel to these spiritual and doctrinal disputes, altercations of a legal nature intensified the rivalry. The question of *qabḍ* and *sadl*,¹⁸⁹ during compulsory ritual prayers, was a contested issue during the 1950s and 1960s (CE). In his teaching circle, Kabara condemned Niyās for introducing the *qabḍ* culture to Northern Nigeria, where the Mālikī legal school dominated the religious landscape. Tijānīs who attended his circle informed Muḥammad al-Thānī Kafanga (d. 1989 CE)¹⁹⁰ of the issue. The latter then wrote a treatise with the title of *Faṣl al-maqāl* (“The Decisive Discussion”), inviting his opponent to hold an open debate. Niyās had already issued an open challenge to all scholars in his *Raf‘ al-malām ‘amman rafa‘a wa-qabaḍa iqtidā’an bi-sayyid al-anām* (“Removing the Blame From He Who Practices *Raf‘* and *Qabḍ* Following the Example of the Master of the Creation”), in which he stated that anyone who could prove the rectitude of *sadl* on the authority of the Prophet would be granted all of his personal library. In a book published in 1958 CE with the title of *Qam‘ al-fasād fī tafḍīl al-sadl ‘alā l-qabḍ fī hādhihi ‘l-bilād* (“The Removal of Corruption Through Preferring *Sadl* over *Qabḍ* in this Country”), Kabara took up the challenge, claiming that the Prophetic traditions in favour of *sadl* were more numerous than those favouring *qabḍ*. Niyās was accused of generating disunity and strife within the Muslim society of Nigeria, through the practice of *qabḍ*; this despite the fact that Kabara himself had been practicing *qabḍ* prior to the spread of the Niassine Tijāniyya, in Kano and elsewhere. Niyās was further accused of ignorance for not knowing these Prophetic accounts regarding *sadl*. A response on the part of the Tijānīs came from Kafanga in a treatise called *Sabīl al-rashād fī l-radd ‘alā mu’allif Qam‘ al-fasād* (“The Authentic Way to Refute the Author of *Qam‘ al-Fasād*”), dismissing the Prophetic accounts favouring *sadl* as unreliable, in addition to a severe reproach directed at Kabara for disrespecting high-profile religious scholars.¹⁹¹ Supporters of the Qādirī shaykh produced a number of treatises in his defence while Tijānīs came to the aid of Kafanga and Niyās with polemical writings of their own.¹⁹² The rift between the two sides grew to the extent that even the

¹⁸⁹ *Qabḍ* indicates a particular position of the arms crossed and folded in front of the navel during ritual prayers, and *sadl* the position of the arms outstretched along the body.

¹⁹⁰ For a life account of Kafanga and his writings see: *Arabic Literature of Africa: The Writings of Central Sudanic Africa*, vol. II, John O. Hunwick (ed.), Leiden: Brill, 1995, pp. 304-308; John N. Paden, *Religion and Political Culture in Kano*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1973, p. 103.

¹⁹¹ See for a detailed account of the *qabḍ sadl* dispute in: Tāhir Maygharī, *Shaykh al-Islām Ibrāhīm Niyās*, pp. 141-47; Roman Loimeier, *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria*, pp. 79-80.

¹⁹² Aḥmad Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad al-Kabīr and Muḥammad al-Mustafā b. Muḥammad al-Thānī each involved themselves in the dispute. They respectively wrote *Tanwīr al-bilād fī qaṭ‘ khaza‘ balāt Qam‘ al-fasād* and *Qawl al-sadad fī l-radd ‘alā shubuhāt sāhib qam‘ al-fasād* in support of Kafanga. ‘Alī Kumāshī, a Qādirī scholar, wrote two treatises in support of Kabara called *Fath al-ḥakam al-‘adl fī ta’yīd sunna al-sadl fī radd ‘alā Faṣl al-maqāl* and

political efforts of Ahmadu Bello and his grand *qāḍī* Abū Bakr Gumi, made through the Kaduna Council of Malamai, an organization of religious scholars initiated by Bello, failed to put an end to the conflict.¹⁹³ In the aftermath of the assassination of Bello in 1966 CE by military officers, and the consequent disorder, the dispute was forgotten as both parties had other problems to deal with.

In the 1970s (CE), the doctrinal attacks on Sufis by Abū Bakr Maḥmūd Gumi and his followers pushed both rival brotherhoods to join ranks against this new challenge.¹⁹⁴ Gumi was concerned with the religious and political unity of the Muslim society in the country, to which movements like Aḥmadiyya and Sufi brotherhoods were, in his eyes, a major obstacle, responsible for the fragmentation of the society, and must therefore, be fought on both intellectual and grassroots levels. In addition to his *tafsīr* (Qur’anic exegesis) sessions broadcasted from Radio Kaduna,¹⁹⁵ in 1972 CE he published his influential treatise *al-‘Aqīda al-ṣaḥīḥa bi-muwafaqat al-sharī‘a* (“The Correct Faith in Compliance With the *sharī‘a*”) in which, beside the Qādiriyya, the Tijāniyya in particular was a target. Along with the exploitative behaviour of their local leaders, the litanies of both brotherhoods were claimed to be reprehensible innovations, with no basis in the religion. The revelation of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* and its efficacy to Muḥammad al-Bakrī (d. 994/1586) and Aḥmd al-Tijānī was discussed in detail.¹⁹⁶ It did not take long for his opponents to respond: Kafanga wrote *al-Minaḥ al-ḥamīda fī l-radd ‘alā fāsīd al-‘aqīda* (“The Praiseworthy Gift in the Reply to the One Who is Corrupted in Faith”) and Kabara replied with *al-Naṣiḥa al-ṣarīḥa fī l-radd ‘alā al-‘Aqīda*

Dalīl al-sadīl fī sunna ashraf al-awākhir wa-l-awā‘il fī radd ‘alā sabīl al-rashād wa-tanwīr al-bilād. For further information, see: Tāhir Maygharī, *Shaykh al-Islām Ibrāhīm Niyās*, pp. 148-152.

¹⁹³ For details on the efforts of Kaduna Council of Malamai, see: John N. Paden, Ahmedu Bello: Sardauna of Sokoto: Values and Leadership in Nigeria, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1986, pp. 548-555; Roman Loimeier, *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria*, pp. 81-82.

¹⁹⁴ Gumi was actively supported in his anti-Sufi campaign by Saudi Arabia through the *Rabiṭa al-‘Ālam al-Islāmi* (Islamic World League), a Mecca based organization dedicated to proselytizing Wahhābī/Salafī ideals in the world. See: Elisabeth Sirriyeh, *Sufis and Anti-Sufis*, p. 159.

¹⁹⁵ Gumi’s radio *tafsīr* sessions, which he successfully used to propagate his ideas among the masses, throughout the 1960s, 1970s and beyond. Brigaglia speaks of three phases in Gumi’s *tafsīr* agenda: in the first phase, between 1961 and 1966, he criticized Sufism; in the second phase, from 1966 to 1976, he moderated his tone for political reasons; and in the third phase, which began in 1977 with another change of strategy, a harsh polemical tone prevailed in his *tafsīr* sessions, going as far as accusing Tijānīs of disbelief. See: Andrea Brigaglia, “Two Published Hausa Translations of the Qur’ān and their Doctrinal Background”, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 35 (4), 2005, pp. 424-449 (pp. 429-430).

¹⁹⁶ Roman Loimeier provides a detailed discussion of *al-‘Aqīda al-ṣaḥīḥa* in: Roman Loimeier, *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria*, pp. 186-196; see also Ramzi Ben Amara, *The Izāla Movement in Nigeria: Its Split, Relationship to Sufis and Perception of Shari‘a Re-implementation*, pp. 118-121.

al-ṣaḥīḥa (“The Frank Advice in the Reply to *al-‘Aqīda al-Ṣaḥīḥa*”), both published in the same year of 1972 CE. Although Gumi himself maintained a moderate tone, the responses he attracted were pretty harsh, attacking him personally and demanding his excommunication from the community of believers.¹⁹⁷

In 1978 CE, certain students of Gumi’s took the struggle against Sufi brotherhoods to a new level with the establishment of the Izāla.¹⁹⁸ In the same year, *al-‘Aqīda al-ṣaḥīḥa* was translated, with a strong polemic tone, into the local language of Hausa, and was made available to the public. A vigorous anti-Sufi campaign was initiated on the grassroots level. In Ilorin, for instance, adherents of the organization reportedly excommunicated followers of the Sufi brotherhoods during their preaching sessions. In a joint initiative supported by the governor of the state, Tijānīs and Qādirīs returned the favour by publishing *Raf‘ al-shubuhāt ‘ammā fī l-Qādiriyya wa-l-Tijāniyya min l-shaṭaḥāt* (“The Removal of the Doubts From the Ecstatic Utterances of the Qādiriyya and the Tijāniyya”), written by the Tijānī ‘Alī Abū Bakr Jabāta and the Qādirī Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Nuwāfī.¹⁹⁹ Another attack on the Tijāniyya that is worthy of mention was made via the publications of Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir Maygharī, a former Tijānī and *muqaddam* (representative/deputy) of the brotherhood. He was a close friend of Ṭāhir b. ‘Uthmān Bawshī, best known as Dahiru Bauchi, an influential contemporary Tijānī scholar from Bauchi State. Inspired by Gumi, Maygharī published two books in refutation of his former brotherhood. In the first one, *al-Shaykh Ibrāhīm Niyās al-Sinighālī: ḥayātuhu wa-ārā’uhu wa-ta’ālīmuḥu* (“Shaykh Ibrāhīm Niyās of Senegal: His Life, Views and Teachings”),²⁰⁰ he dismissed certain tenets developed by Niyās, particularly in his *Kāshif al-ilbās ‘an fayḍa al-khatm Abi l-‘Abbās (Removal of Confusion Concerning the Flood of the Saintly Seal Abu l-‘Abbās)*, tracing back the genealogy of Tijānī teachings first to Ibn ‘Arabī,

¹⁹⁷ For a detailed discussion of the refutations produced by Kafanga and Kabara see: Roman Loimeier, *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria*, pp. 197-206.

¹⁹⁸ The full name of the organization is *Jama‘a Izālat al-Bib‘a wa-Iqāmat al-Sunna* (Association for the Removal of the Innovation and for the Establishment of the Sunna). It is better known in Nigeria and West Africa as Yan Izāla. For its development and struggle against the Sufi brotherhoods see: Ramzi Ben Ammara, *The Izāla Movement in Nigeria: Its Split, Relationship to Sufis and Perception of Shari‘a Re-implementation*, pp. 125-290; Roman Loimeier, *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria*, pp. 207-266.

¹⁹⁹ For a discussion of the arguments developed in *Raf‘ al-shubuhāt*, see: Roman Loimeier, *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria*, pp. 267-269.

²⁰⁰ This book was initially written as a master’s thesis submitted to the Department of Islamic Studies at the University of Bayero in Kano, in 1979. However, it was published two years later by Dār al-‘Arabiyya in Beirut, with the financial support of the Islamic University of Medina, thanks to the intercession of Gumi and the promise of ‘Abdallāh ‘Abdallāh al-Zā‘id, deputy chairman of the university at the time. The book was published with an eulogical foreword written by Gumi.

then via the Ismā‘īlī doctrines of the Fatimids and Neoplatonism to the Upanishads, the sacred scriptures of Hinduism.²⁰¹ As one might expect, the Tijānīs responded forcefully. Maygharī was accused of, among other things, having sold his religion for *shahāda* (the master’s degree he obtained from Kano University). He reiterated his earlier convictions about the Tijānī brotherhood in a new work entitled *al-Tuḥfa al-saniyya bi-tawdīḥ al-ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya* (“The Masterpiece in Explanation of the Tijāniyya”).²⁰² The doctrinal disputes between the Salafīs and Sufīs²⁰³ were taken to a grassroots level by the Izāla on certain occasions, culminating in bloody confrontations.²⁰⁴ In 1988 CE, however, both sides came to bury the hatchets toward the greater common goal of Muslim unity, for both religious and political purposes.²⁰⁵ This was further consolidated by the process of re-implementing *sharī‘a* in the North of the country. The Izāla shifted its strategy from one of direct confrontation to a more indirect one,²⁰⁶ a phenomenon described by researchers as the “domestication of the Izāla”.²⁰⁷

²⁰¹ See details in: Muḥammad Sani Umar, “Sufism and its Opponents in Nigeria: the Doctrinal and Intellectual Aspects”, in Frederick De Jong and Bernd Radtke (eds.), *Islamic Mysticism Contested: Thirteen Centuries of Controversies and Polemics*, Leiden: Brill, 1999, pp. 357-385, (in particular pp. 374-375).

²⁰² The Tijānī replies to Maygharī were ‘Abdallāh al-‘Alawī’s *Indhār wa-ifāda ilā bā‘i ‘dinihi bi-l-shahāda* (Warning and Advice to He Who Sold his Religion for a University Certificate) and Muḥammad b. al-Shaykh al-Muritānī’s *al-Radd bi-l-Ḥadīth wa-l-Qur’ān ‘alā mā fī kitāb Maygharī al-Nayjirī min l-zūr wa-l-buhtān* (Refutation of the Falsifications and Slanders Embedded in the Book of the Nigerian Maygharī in the Lights of Qur’ān and Sunna). For a short analysis of Maygharī’s response to them with his *al-Tuḥfa al-saniyya*, see: Muḥammad Sani Umar, *Sufism and its Opponents in Nigeria: the Doctrinal and Intellectual Aspects*, pp. 375-376.

²⁰³ For a list of polemical literature produced by Sufīs of both the Tijāniyya and Qādiriyya brotherhoods against their Salafī opponents see: *ALA II*, pp. 260-316.

²⁰⁴ A chronology of the clashes between the two sides is provided in: Roman Loimeier, *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria*, pp. 347-349.

²⁰⁵ Political defeats at the hand of Christians pushed Muslims to join ranks against their common enemy. Thus, on two separate occasions in January 1988, leading authorities of both the Izāla (including Gumi himself) and two Sufi brotherhoods (Nasiru Kabara for Qādiriyya Tāhir Būshī, Khalīfa Ismā‘īl and Ibrāhīm Ṣālīḥ for Tijāniyya) came together to embrace each other and to perform a public display of unity. For details see: Roman Loimeier, *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria*, pp. 291-324. This reconciliation was maintained during the struggle for *sharī‘a* implementation and afterwards, at least, the inter-Muslim conflicts were swept under the carpet for the greater good. See: Ramzi Ben Amara, *The Izāla Movement in Nigeria: Its Split, Relationship to Sufīs and Perception of Shari‘a Re-implementation*, pp. 339-43

²⁰⁶ Ramzi Ben Amara, “We Introduced Sharī‘a: The Izāla Movement in Nigeria as Initiator of Shari‘a Re-implementation in the North of the Country: Some Reflections”, in: John A. Chesworth and Franz Kogelmann (eds.), *Shari‘a in Africa Today: Reactions and Responses*, Leiden: Brill, 2014, pp. 125-45, (see p. 126).

²⁰⁷ For details on the domestication of Izāla see: Ousmane Kane, *Muslim Modernity in Postcolonial Nigeria: A Case Study of the Society for the Removal of Innovation and Reinstatement of Tradition*, pp. 207-226.

Attacks on the Niyāsiyya branch of the Tijāniyya surfaced in mid-twentieth century Ghana via the activities of Al-Ḥājj Yūsuf Soaliḥu (d. 2004 CE),²⁰⁸ better known as Afa Ajura, and his followers, some of whom would initiate a second phase of struggle against Sufism after their graduation from the universities of Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Open-air denunciations, coercive sermons, chastising poems and direct debates were used as tools demonstrate the faultiness of a number of Tijānī tenets, including *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* and *jawaharat al-kamāl*, in addition to some social un-Islamic social practices that had been accommodated within the society.²⁰⁹ In 1391/1971, ‘Umar Ibrāhīm Imām, likely a disciple of Afa Ajura, had an article published in the journal *al-Da‘wa*, attacking the Tijānīs.²¹⁰ Tijānīs who gathered around Abdulai Maikano (d. 2005 CE), also known as Baba Jalloo, a *muqaddam* of Niyās and the leader of the Tijāniyya in Ghana, responded with their own anti-Salafī campaign. Doctrinal altercations culminated in serious physical clashes over an extended period of time, which are said to have been “a mix-up of local politics”, meaning struggles for the leadership of the community in which religious disputes “served as a clock”.²¹¹

2. Conclusion

This cursory survey of the history of doctrinal disputes between proponents of the Tijāniyya order and their detractors unfolds important insights not only about the contents of the altercations but also about the actors involved and the forms of confrontation. These may be enumerated as follows:

- a. The polemical history of the Tijāniyya dates back to the establishment of the brotherhood itself.

²⁰⁸ On Afa Ajura see: Patrick J. Ryan, “Ariadne auf Naxos: Islam and Politics in a Religiously Pluralistic African Society”, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 26, no. 3, 1996, pp. 308-329; Abdulai Iddrisu, *Contesting Islam in Ghana*, pp. 22-25.

²⁰⁹ Abdullī Iddrisu, *Contesting Islam in Africa*, pp. 115-122 and 162-166. It should be noted that Tijānī tenets seem to have created agitation among the Muslims of Ghana even prior to the Salafī activities of Afa Ajura. Aḥmad Babā al-Wā‘iz, in his *Risāla al-manṣūr fi l-radd ‘alā risāla dasīsāt al-inkār (The Victorian Treatise in Reply to the Pamphlet of Rogue Denial)*, relates a letter written to him by a mallam from Kumasi asking his stance on the unislamic beliefs that were purportedly widespread among the Tijānīs of Ghana. For the contents of this letter, see: Tāhīr Maygharī, *al-Shaykh Ibrāhīm Niyās al-Sinighālī*, p. 178.

²¹⁰ Upon being asked by a Saudi journalist about this attack by ‘Umar Ibrāhīm Imām and the accusations directed at his followers, Ibrāhīm Niyās provided a diplomatic answer, neither refuting nor approving the accusations. See details in Tāhīr Maygharī, *al-Shaykh Ibrāhīm Niyās al-Sinighālī*, pp. 176-177.

²¹¹ Abdulai Iddrisu, *Contesting Islam in Africa*, p. 169. The major clashes between the two took place in 1964, 1965, 1966, 1975, 1976, 1977 and 1997, with minor confrontations occurring throughout this period. For details, see: Abdulai Iddrisu, *Contesting Islam in Africa*, pp. 122-129 and 166-170.

- b. The order was not only opposed by the proponents of Salafism but also by rival Sufis, particularly followers of the Qādiriyya, the dominant Sufi *ṭarīqa* on the African continent prior to the Tijāniyya. While the latter gained significant ground in its struggle against the Qādiriyya in the nineteenth century, it nonetheless faced considerable setbacks in altercations with the Salafiyya, particularly in the twentieth century.
- c. In both North and West Africa, such debates were informed by a cluster of reasons, consisting of political grievances, doctrinal differences and the competition for followers and dominance.
- d. The topics of dispute were not restricted to spiritual doctrines alone. Issues of legality and jurisprudence were also important.
- e. Along with claims of the superiority of the supreme master of the Tijāniyya and his followers over fellow Muslims, the litany of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* and related teachings of the order were the topics that attracted the most criticism.
- f. Altercations took place not only through polemical literature such as books, threatises poems, and direct debates but also through open air contestations, teaching circles, preaching sessions and sermons.
- g. Some actors changed sides during the course of polemical altercations. Sulṭān ‘Abd al-Ḥafīz²¹² of Morocco and Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir Maygharī²¹³ of Northern Nigeria are just two examples.
- h. Confrontations between the Tijānī brotherhood and its opponents seem to have lost their previous density and intensity for various important reasons: these include the disappearance of colonialism, and, in Northern Nigeria, the “domestication” of the Izāla organization.

²¹² The sultan was initially a critic of the Tijāniyya, and had even written a refutation of its doctrines. After his conversion to Sufism, however, he then became a staunch proponent of the Tijānī brotherhood (as detailed above).

²¹³ Maygharī was a representative (*muqaddam*) of the brotherhood in Nigeria who, under the influence of Abū Bakr Gumi, denounced Sufism and wrote refutations of the Tijānī doctrines. He particularly targeted the spiritual teachings of Ibrāhīm Niyās (as per the relevant sections above).

CHAPTER TWO: ANTI-TIJĀNĪ AUTHORS—THE *MUNKIRĪN*

This chapter discusses the life stories of three Salafī authors whose anti-Tijānī writings are highly revered in Salafī circles around the world, to the extent that their polemical onslaughts against the followers of the Tijāniyya brotherhood serve as reference points for ordinary antagonists of Tijānī Sufism. Countless internet websites²¹⁴ contain references to their puritanical Salafī productions.

1. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Yūsuf al-Ifriqī

1.1. Early life and Education

‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Yūsuf al-Ifriqī, or, as he is known for short, al-Ifriqī, belonged to the well-known Fulani tribe from Mali. He was born in around 1326/1908–1909 in the village of Fafa, located on what was then an island, near the Niger River close to the Assango region of Gao, in Mali.²¹⁵ He grew up in a period of history during which a large part of the African continent, including his native country, was undergoing a systematic conquest by the colonialist West. Thus, like his peers, therefore, in his childhood and adolescence al-Ifriqī received a French education.²¹⁶

After completing his elementary education, he joined a French missionary institute in Bamako, where he studied for eight years. ‘Umar Muḥammad Fallāta (d. 1419/1999),²¹⁷ one of his students of African descent who was born in Mecca and raised in Medina, reports that al-Ifriqī was selected by a French official, whose duty consisted of controlling local school curriculums and making sure that they were free of anti-colonial material, to be sent to Bamako. The young boy’s clever responses to this French official caught the latter’s attention, upon which he summoned al-Ifriqī’s father and expressed his desire to send the boy to a better institution in hope of a brighter future. It was a time in which the colonial state was at pains to enrol African children in their schools by force of recently designed regulations, schools which were reportedly perceived as unappealing

²¹⁴ Here are a few examples of such websites: <http://majles.alukah.net/t90144/>;
[http://fatwa.Islamweb.net/fatwa/index.php?page=showfatwa&Option=FatwaId&Id=139109](http://fatwa.Islamweb.net/fatwa/index.php?page=showfatwa&Option=FatwaId&Id=139109;);
<http://www.ajurry.com/vb/showthread.php?t=33833>.

²¹⁵ For details see: Chanfi Ahmed, *West African ‘ulamā’ and Salafism in Mecca and Medina*, Leiden: Brill, 2015, pp. 45-46; ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Radd ‘alā al-Ifriqī difā‘an ‘an l-ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya*, p. 6.

²¹⁶ Louis Brenner, *Controlling Knowledge: Religion, Power and Schooling in West African Muslim Society*, London: Hurst & Company, 2000, p. 96.

²¹⁷ For an account of ‘Umar Muḥammad Fallāta’s life see: Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘araftuhum*, vol. I, pp. 151-164; <https://saaid.net/Warathah/1/falatah.htm>.

and suspicious by religious Africans.²¹⁸ Nevertheless, the colonial authorities were committed to “civilizing” their subjects through the educational institutions built for the realization of assimilation, presented by the French as the “mission civilisatrice”.²¹⁹ Education was seen a crucial means of converting the alleged barbarians into Frenchmen.²²⁰ Al-Ifriqī’s father accepted the proposal, but warned his young son of the anti-Islamic atmosphere of the mission institute. He was barely twelve years old when he bade farewell to his village. Eight years later he was granted a high school certificate. Upon his graduation, he occupied a teaching post in the same institute, where he taught the French language for three years. He could not bear the oppressive atmosphere of the institute: the constant belittling of the African character in contrast to the sublime European one which was fundamental to the institute’s educational policies, in addition to insulting Islamic values and personalities. So-called “African backwardness” was attributed to the religion of Islam to which Africans had been purportedly subordinated by sword and tyranny, whereas European advancement was perceived to be a direct result of their religion allowing them to overcome all sorts of hardships. Al-Ifriqī was certain that this state of affairs was not a result of Muslims’ affiliation to Islam, but he could not then match the well-educated missionaries of the institution in order to defend his religion against them. Meanwhile, his father’s advice that “indeed the task of their school is to exterminate the Muslim beliefs” was resonating in his ears. So, he decided to leave the institute and join the Meteorological Service (*maṣlahat al-anwā’ al-jawiyya*) where he would later occupy the seat of assistant director.²²¹ His Islamic knowledge was thus not acquired until a relatively late stage, after he settled in Hijaz.

1.2. Migration to the Holy Land and Pilgrimage

The young Malian did not neglect to visit his native village, spending all of his vacation periods there during his years of both education and then teaching at the French mission institute, and this

²¹⁸ Paul Mary, head of the Muslim Affairs Office between 1912–1921 in French West Africa, admits the humiliating defeat of the the less appealing French schools by the more attractive local Qur’ān schools. For Mary’s confession see: Rudolph T. Ware, *The Walking Qur’an*, p. 165.

²¹⁹ On the French mission civilisatrice, see: Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa 1895-1930*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.

²²⁰ For further information on this ambitious mission see: Michael Crowder, *Senegal: A Case Study in French Assimilation Policy*, London: Methuen, 1967. On the suppression of local Muslim educational institutes, which some times reached to the point of closing such schools, and the responses of the Muslims, including their distrust of the French schools, see: Rudolph T. Ware, *The Walking Qur’an*, p. 192-193.

²²¹ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘arafūhum*, Cairo: Dār al-Shuwāf, 1992, vol. I, pp. 63-65; ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Radd ‘alā l-Ifriqī*, p. 6.

continued unbroken during his period of duty at the colonial Meteorological Service; thus unlike a lot of his African peers, al-Ifrīqī did not fall prey to colonial cultural pressure. Colonial rule had facilitated the activities of Christian missionaries, some of whom were even employed in high governmental posts. Yet even while their missionary activities were in full swing, the young al-Ifrīqī managed to retain his connections with his Africanness and the religion of Islam. His humble character, desire for simplicity and Islamic values had gained him both disgrace and admiration in the eyes of his missionary teachers and friends in the mission institute, and despite his two years of visible success in his duties at the Meteorological Service, his affiliation to the religion of Islam was incomprehensible for his French employers.²²²

His migration (*hijra*) to Hijaz was primarily motivated by constant disputes with one of his French colleagues over Islam. His colleague's criticism characterized Islam as a backwards religion, and al-Ifrīqī's then-preliminary knowledge of his own religion rendered him incapable of silencing his opponent.²²³ Around the same time, the new Muslim associations that were developing in the urban centres, most of whose members were colonial civil servants, were encouraging and facilitating the *hajj*.²²⁴ The pilgrimage to the holy land was not only a religious duty, but was also being undertaken by some West Africans in order to acquire religious knowledge as well. Thus, he decided to leave Mali in pursuit of further knowledge and perhaps empowerment. Louis Brenner explains al-Ifrīqī's journey to Hijaz as having been generated from a similar incident. In Louis Brenner's version of the story, al-Ifrīqī left for the Middle East following an unfortunate incident in which he was falsely accused of theft by his French employers.²²⁵

Al-Ifrīqī recounted that the director of the Meteorological Service once summoned him to his office and, after delivering words of gratitude and acknowledgment, added "I regret, oh 'Abd al-Raḥmān, that someone like you stays faithful to the traditions of the backward people". The young African understood his elderly director's point but wanted to hear more about his view point in this regard. Therefore, he asked politely, "If you could explain what you mean". "Listen, 'Abd al-Raḥmān", continued the director, "don't you see that you are committed to Islam more than necessary. The coloured ones among your friends limit themselves to a [mere] affiliation to this

²²² Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *'Ulamā' wa-mafakkirūn 'arafūhum*, vol. I, p. 66.

²²³ Chanfi Ahmed, *West African 'Ulamā' and Salafism in Mecca and Medina*, p. 65.

²²⁴ Benjamin F. Soares, "Islam and Public Piety in Mali", pp. 213-214.

²²⁵ Louis Brenner, *Controlling Knowledge: Religion, Power and Schooling in West African Muslim Society*, p. 96.

religion, whereas you do not accept but to bind your actions with its static and heavy restrictions”.²²⁶ Al-Ifriqī’s response was direct, and evidently irritating to the director: “Islam is a smooth, divine religion; a believer is only restricted from evils by it. His talents are free as free as possible in the arenas of benefaction and good deeds”.²²⁷

These words must have angered the old missionary, such that he found no solution but to re-address the issue with much sharper words. “This is an emotional defence, but it does not change the reality. Islam is the religion of the retarded. As far as humankind knows, Christianity is the religion of developed and superior people” said he.²²⁸

For his part, al-Ifriqī preserved his cool and politeness, saying “Why should not the words of the director be emotional? I have studied most of the doctrines of Christianity, and researched its foundations; I did not come across that which addresses the [human] intellect. It is, rather, a mere submission to the sayings of people representing the authority of church”.

The director took a small pause and continued “Yes, yes. This is indeed the secret of its superiority, because all these sayings do not bear a binding character. You can stay a Christian without adhering to a church or following certain behaviours”.

For al-Ifriqī, this argument was far from proving the superiority of the Christianity, so he responded: “This is not an advantage Mr Director. It is an affirmation that Christianity is not a divine revelation. Indeed, it is mere human diligence, having been prepared by some experts like any other human affair”.

²²⁶ The description of Muslim youth given by the Director holds true to a great extent. Many West Africans were nominal Muslims at the time, with little or no observation of religious duties at all. This sort of practice was wide spread among the Muslims of West Africa prior to colonial rule. Only the elites—scholars, most of whom were hereditarily attached to a scholarly lineage—were expected to observe religious duties in a complete form. This trajectory changed, however, during colonial rule, and a standardized form of Islam gradually prevailed in the public sphere in the twentieth century. See for details: Benjamin F. Soares, “Islam and Public Piety in Mali”, pp. 207-208.

²²⁷ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘araftuhum*, vol. I, p. 67. The translation of the whole conversation is taken from Chanfi Ahmed, with more or less unchange.

²²⁸ The idea of retardedness and backwardness of Africans was a common-place among French colonial authorities. In line with this idea, they perceived colonization as a prompt way “to save Afircans from savagery” and introduce them to enlightenment. A typical example of this kind is Marcel Cardaire. See: Lancine Kaba, *The Wahhabiyya: Islamic Reform and Politics in French West Africa*, pp. 102-103.

The irritated missionary replied “Ok, isn’t developing opinions more suitable for advancement than sticking to commands that do not allow human beings movement from within their closed limits? Yes, my dear secretary, Islam is a rigorous attempt at freezing human life. How can it be comparable to our uninhibited Christianity which does not permit stagnancy?”²²⁹ The discussion was thus brought to end, and the young African was not allowed the right of further response.

In the meantime, however, the French colonial authorities were allowing restricted numbers of Muslims to visit the holy lands for pilgrimage, and the young African was one of them. The caravan arrived at Mecca after following the route across Sudan. After visiting the holy house of the *Ka’ba* and attending other rituals in Mount Arafat and Mina, it was time to go to the holy city of the Prophet. When he first arrived in Medina, he knew not much about Islam. Although Chanfi Ahmed records 1345/1926 as the year of his arrival in Hijaz, based on the information provided by al-Ifriqī’s disciple ‘Umar Fallāta it seems to have occurred much later than Chanfi Ahmed suggests.²³⁰ Al-Ifriqī had only a primary knowledge of the Qur’ān on his arrival, restricted to mere recitation, without the ability to understand its meaning or interpretation.²³¹ It was in Medina that he began his journey of acquiring religious knowledge. His late introduction to intellectual Islam is regularly interpreted by his opponents as an insufficiency of knowledge of his part.²³²

The pilgrimage broadened his horizons; while witnessing the throngs of pilgrims, his belief in the magnificence of Islam deepened. During his stay in Mecca, he was exposed to the preaching of a Salafī missionary of African origin. He decided to stay in Hijaz longer than his travelling companions, but was not sure whether he could bear the hardship of being away from his home and his loved ones. It was in this state of mind that he performed *istikhāra*.²³³ Now he was sure, and his heart was filled with tranquillity.²³⁴ As soon as he had performed his pilgrimage, he endeavoured to take courses of study in the religious sciences at the Mosque of the Prophet. Shaykh

²²⁹ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘arāfūhum*, vol. I, p. 68.

²³⁰ According to Chanfi Ahmed’s account al-Ifriqī was barely eighteen years old at the time of his arrival at Hijaz. In light of Chanfi Ahmed’s description of the young African as a member of the elite class of Mali before his journey to the holy lands, it seems necessary to approach his version of the events with caution.

²³¹ Chanfi Ahmed, *West African ‘Ulamā’ and Salafism in Mecca and Medina*, p. 16.

²³² ‘Umar Mas’ūd, one of the contemporary Tijānī Sufi authorities in Africa (Sudan), uses this factor as a pretext for denigrating al-Ifriqī’s religious intellectual credentials. The Malian, according to him, was thus not entitled to criticize the doctrines of the Tijāniyya brotherhood. See details in ‘Umar Mas’ūd, *al-Radd ‘alā l-Ifriqī*, pp. 6-9.

²³³ *Istikhara*, according to Islamic tradition, is an act of worship in which one asks Allah to guide one to the right thing concerning any affair in one’s life, especially when one must choose between two permissible alternatives.

²³⁴ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘arāfūhum*, vol. I, p. 70.

Sa‘īd Ṣiddīq (d. 1353/1934) was one of the scholars there at the Mosque of the Prophet who helped him overcome his lingual insufficiency in Arabic through intensive training in the grammar of the language. Under his supervision, the young African spent the whole of the following year taking courses on the basic texts of Mālikī jurisprudence (*fiqh*) such as the *al-Risāla* (The Treatise) by the tenth-century (CE) Tunisian Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī (d. 383/996), along with some of its commentaries: the *Mukhtaṣar* (User’s Manual) by the sixteenth-century (CE) Algerian ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Akhḍarī (d. 953/1545), and the *al-Murshid al-mu‘īn* (The Helping Guide) by the seventeenth-century (CE) Moroccan ‘Abd al-Wāḥid b. ‘Āshir (d. 1040/1631). After obtaining a basic of knowledge of the Mālikī legal school, the dominant *madhhab* in North and West Africa, and some basics in the science of *ḥadīth* like the *al-‘Arba‘īn* (The Forty Prophetic Traditions) by al-Nawawī, he decided to return to his native country. Thus, after performing a second *ḥajj*, he headed to Jeddah to catch one of the few departing ships to Africa.²³⁵

1.3. The Mysterious Traveller

Once in Jeddah, however, while waiting for his ship to set out for Africa, he met a mysterious traveller who persuaded him to change his decision and remain in the holy lands for the accumulation of further knowledge. After an exchange of views, the young African realised his own insufficiency in the sciences of *ḥadīth*, of which his interlocutor seemed to be a master.²³⁶ Upon asking al-Ifrīqī about his own intellectual interests and masters, and being informed of his interest and expertise in Mālikī jurisprudence, the traveller rebuked him, saying “If only you paid the same amount of attention to the creed of the pious forefathers (*‘aqīda al-salaf*)”. Al-Ifrīqī replied: “Since we are all Muslims who believe in the unity of Allah, I do not deem it necessary to engage myself in this field of knowledge”. This answer failed to convince the traveller, who continued “My son, *‘aqīda* is the basis of Islam. If you think deeply about the affairs of Muslims, and the factors which have caused disunity among them throughout their history, you will come to know that they were never caused by anything but disagreements over issues of *‘aqīda*”.²³⁷ The traveller then went on to explain how Allah had sent prophets to liberate people from worshipping others than Him, and how demons had polluted their creed and caused them to sin in misery. For

²³⁵ ‘Aṭīyya Muḥammad Sālīm, *Min ‘ulamā’ al-Ḥaramayn*, Medina: Dār al-Jawhara, 1426/2005, pp. 378-379.

²³⁶ ‘Aṭīyya Muḥammad Sālīm, *Min ‘ulamā’ al-Ḥaramayn*, p. 379.

²³⁷ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘araftuhum*, vol. 1, p. 71.

al-Ifrīqī, this situation had been changed when humankind was taken to the straight path of *tawhīd* (true monotheism) by the last Prophet. For the traveller, this was true as far as the first generations of the Muslim community—those who resembled the fresh blood in the vessels of humanity—were concerned. After them, however, he insisted that the situation had altered rapidly as new ideas from Persia, India, and Greece, as well as the legends of the peoples of the book had made their way to the community of the faithful. This, he said, had played a tremendous role in polluting the true *‘aqīda*. Al-Ifrīqī objected, saying “Nevertheless, are not all Muslims adhering to these true realities today?” The traveller replied, “Let me ask you my son, do you know that there are Muslims who reject adherence to what Allah has approved for himself among the attributes?” The African listened to the traveller with an attentive ear as the latter went on to support his assertion with examples from the Qur’ān and the Sunna. The conversation continued, and the traveller addressed the African as follows:

Let me ask you also, during your stay in Medina, have not you seen Muslims touching the walls of the Prophet’s Mosque with the intention of obtaining benefit from it for themselves? Have not you seen people calling upon certain dead saints with the intention of dispelling a calamity or attaining a benefit? Have not you seen or heard, one day, that some Muslims offering vows to tombs with the expectation of success and demanding intercession?²³⁸

Al-Ifrīqī had indeed seen people engaging themselves in these activities; so, he replied in the affirmative “By Allah, yes—I have seen and heard of a lot of this and that”. Upon hearing this, the traveller asked, “Does this conform with the true creed (*‘aqīda*) which Allah has sent his messengers?” The African preferred to remain silent and listen to the wise man, who continued:

My son! Allah has differentiated the human being with dignity by creating him in his own image. When the human being accords with this shame, he loses his divine privilege and falls to the lowest levels of the animal. Oh my son: [Imām] Mālik’s jurisprudence will neither benefit you nor your nation unless you organize your lives in accordance with [this] statement of Mālik’s: the end of this *umma* will not prosper but with what the beginning of this *umma* prospered with.²³⁹

²³⁸ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘araftuhum*, vol. I, p. 73.

²³⁹ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘araftuhum*, vol. I, p. 73; ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Radd ‘alā l-Ifrīqī*, p. 8.

This was the turning point in al-Ifriqī's religious career. That night, after the encounter with the mysterious traveller, he could not go to sleep. The words of the wise man had left an unprecedented impression upon him. Early the next morning, he packed his stuff and left back to Medina, a city he would never leave for the rest of his life.

1.4. Studies in the Mosque of the Prophet and the Dār al-Ḥadīth

Motivated by the speech of the mysterious interlocutor, al-Ifriqī returned to Medina and started attending courses in the Mosque of the Prophet, in various of the religious sciences. First, as might be expected, he learned the creed of the pious forefathers (*'aqīda al-salaf*) from one of the scholars in the Mosque. In due time, he worked hard to further strengthen his proficiency in the Arabic language, as was also inevitable if he wanted to achieve his goals. Al-Ifriqī's master in the Mosque of the Prophet, Shaykh Sa'īd Ṣiddīq, under whom he studied various branches of religious knowledge for a total of eight years, was amazed by the hardworking approach of his student, and took him to the Dār al-Ḥadīth (the House of the Ḥadīth, an institution founded in 1350/1931 to empower new generations of Salafīs with the knowledge of the Prophetic traditions) where he quickly became the favourite of the chairman Aḥmad al-Dihlawī (d. 1375/1955).²⁴⁰ The latter played a pioneering role in shaping and sharpening al-Ifriqī's knowledge of the Prophetic traditions.²⁴¹ Al-Ifriqī concentrated his efforts on mastering the sciences of *ḥadīth*, including the science of the principles of *ḥadīth*, and thus became, in Chanfī Ahmed's words "a Salafī of [the] Ahl al-Ḥadīth (people of the Prophetic traditions) trend".²⁴²

It seems that his anti-colonialist sentiments also strengthened during his stay in Medina, to the extent that he hated the French language and viewed it as the language of the enemies of Islam.

²⁴⁰ Aḥmad al-Dihlawī as his name suggests, was one of the leading figures of the Ahl al-Ḥadīth in South Asia (India), who settled in Hijaz in 1345/1926 and founded the Dār al-Ḥadīth of Medina in 1350/1931. For details on this institution and its branch in Mecca founded in 1351/1932 see: Chanfī Ahmed, *West African 'Ulamā' and the Salafism in Mecca and Medina*, pp. 80-88.

²⁴¹ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *'Ulamā' wa-mafakkirūn 'araftuhum*, vol. I, p. 74; 'Umar Mas'ūd, *al-Radd 'alā l-Ifriqī*, pp. 8-9.

²⁴² Chanfī Ahmed, *West African 'Ulamā' and the Salafism in Mecca and Medina*, p. 9. Despite their sharing many fundamental aspects of religious discourse and epistemology, there are differences between the Ahl al-Ḥadīth and the Wahhābīs, who nonetheless both fall into the category of Salafīyya. One such difference is the Ahl al-Ḥadīth's non-attachment to any school of law, while the Wahhābīs follow the Ḥanbalī legal school. For details, see: Henri Lauzière, *The Evolution of the Salafīyya in the Twentieth Century Through the Life and Thought of Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī*, (PhD thesis, Georgetown University, 2008), p. 27. On the establishment and expansion of the Ahl al-Ḥadīth movement see: Chanfī Ahmed, *West African 'Ulamā' and the Salafism in Mecca and Medina*, pp. 89-114.

Once he was present in the knowledge circle of Shaykh Alfā Hāshim (d. 1349/1931),²⁴³ the latter received a letter in French which had apparently come from his interlocutors in Africa; indeed, after leaving West Africa for the holy lands and taking up residence in the city of the Prophet, he had been regarded as the leader of West African Tijānīs in exile.²⁴⁴ The shaykh took a short break to look at the contents of the letter, but since his knowledge of French was limited he could not understand it. After the lesson, al-Ifrīqī took the opportunity to remain there alone with the shaykh, and asked him: “Is it permitted for a Muslim to use the language of the enemies of Islam in the Mosque of the Prophet?” The shaykh smiled and replied: “Did you forget, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, that the Prophet had assigned to some of his companions [the task of] learning the language of the Jews?” The shaykh then expressed regret for his insufficient knowledge of French, stating that otherwise he would have read and responded to the letter. To his amazement, the African said: “If so, give it to me, I will present a translation right away”. He took the letter and retreated to a corner, and after a short period of time did indeed present a translation of the letter to the shaykh. The news of his excellent command of the language spread quickly, and started to receive job offers. But since his priority was to enhance his knowledge of Islam, he could not but refuse these proposals.²⁴⁵

Al-Ifrīqī’s time in Medina was divided between his quest for knowledge and the work he did to support his studies. He is said to have worked at various jobs, carrying water, serving as a tailor’s apprentice, and working in bakeries. It was due to his hard work and solid willpower that he overcame all barriers, and made it to become one of the most sought-after scholars of his time. He

²⁴³ The shaykh (full name is Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Sa‘īd al-Fūtī) was a nephew of the famous Tijānī warrior ‘Umar al-Fūtī. Due to the encroachment of the French, he first moved from present-day Mali to Sokoto (Nigeria) and from there along with considerable number of his followers, to the holy lands, in the aftermath of the British invasion of Northern Nigeria. In Hijaz, he acted as the head of the Tijāniyya and hosted Tijānī pilgrims coming from West Africa. See Rüdiger Seesemann, “The History of the Tijāniyya and the Issue of *tarbiya* in Darfur (Sudan)”, in David Robinson & Jean Louis Triaud (eds.), *La Tijāniyya. Une confrérie musulmane à la conquête de l’Afrique* Paris: Karthala, 2000, pp. 393-437, (see p. 401); Roman Loimeier, *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria*, p. 26; al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām*, vol. 6, p. 22; Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Ṭa‘mī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Tijāniyya*, Cairo: Maktaba al-Jundī, 1429/2008, pp. 131-133. His death date differs, according to various researchers, from 1930 to 1932. Here I have preferred 1931 due to the fact that it is given thus by Chanfi Ahmed, who conducted field work in Medina where Alfā Hāshim died and was buried.

²⁴⁴ Rüdiger Seesemann, *The History of Tijāniyya and the issue of tarbiya in Darfur (Sudan)*, p. 401; John N. Paden, *Religion and Political Culture in Kano*, p. 84.

²⁴⁵ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘arāfūhum*, vol. I, p. 74.

completed his studies with success and attained various certificates from the scholars of the Mosque of the Prophet and Dār al-Ḥadīth.²⁴⁶ He occupied teaching posts in both institutions.²⁴⁷

1.5.Mission Work and Personality

In the aftermath of the second world war, Dār al-Ḥadīth was afflicted by a lack of donations that it had been previously receiving from rich individual donors. The professors of the House of the Ḥadīth thus had to seek for new sources of revenue. This coincided with the ascendance to power of the Salafīs. In 1364/1944, King ‘Abd al-‘Azīz sent al-Ifrīqī as an itinerant missionary (*dā’ī mutajawwal*) to the Bedouin tribes of the town of Yanbu al-Nakhl.²⁴⁸ Al-Ifrīqī dedicated the following four years of his life to promoting Salafī ideas among the Bedouins there. After achieving some evident success in his mission, he was summoned back by the king to revive the activities of the Dār al-Ḥadīth.²⁴⁹

‘Aṭīyya Muḥammad Sālim (d. 1420/1999)²⁵⁰ was an Egyptian student of al-Ifrīqī’s who later became one of the leading scholars in Saudi Arabia, serving until his death as the president of the Islamic Courts of Justice (*ra’īs al-maḥākīm al-shar‘iyya*) there. Under the supervision of the African shaykh, Sālim studied *al-Muwattā’* (The [book] Prepared [for the public]) by Imām Mālik, in addition to other *ḥadīth* works such as *Bulūgh al-marām* (Fulfilling the Dream), *Nayl al-awṭār* (Attaining the Need), *Riyāḍ al-ṣāliḥīn* (The Meadows of the Righteous) and the principles of *ḥadīth*.²⁵¹ In his biographical notes on al-Ifrīqī, ‘Aṭīyya narrates his first encounter with his beloved shaykh in detail. The young ‘Aṭīyya first saw his master in 1363/1943 in the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina. The African shaykh was surrounded by students, who were listening to his clear and attractive voice in a *Muwattā’* circle with a visible audience in addition to his regular students. ‘Aṭīyya was struck by the humbleness and the welcoming personality of the African shaykh, as

²⁴⁶ Sources suggest that he studied under various scholars in Hijaz including West African scholars who were involved in the educational activities of the Mosque of the Prophet such as Alfā Hāshim, Sa‘īd b. Siddīq, Shaykh al-Ṭayyib al-Timbuktī and the Indian founder of the Dār al-Ḥadīth Aḥmad al-Dihlawī.

²⁴⁷ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘araftuhum*, vol. I, p. 75.

²⁴⁸ Chanfi Ahmed, *West African ‘Ulamā’ and Salafism in Mecca and Medina*, pp. 9, 51; ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Radd ‘alā l-Ifrīqī*, p. 9.

²⁴⁹ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘araftuhum*, vol. I, p. 76; ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Radd ‘alā l-Ifrīqī*, p. 9.

²⁵⁰ For an account of the life of ‘Aṭīyya Muḥammad Sālim, see: Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘araftuhum*, vol. II, pp. 201-226.

²⁵¹ ‘Aṭīyya Muḥammad Sālim, *Min a‘yān ‘ulamā’ al-Ḥaramayn*, p. 376.

well as his skilled interpretations, radiating human warmth to his interlocutors. The very next day he decided to join the circle and become a disciple.²⁵² He depicts al-Ifrīqī's personality as follows:

His smile when he spoke, his open heart toward those who were talking with him, his kindness to whomever he asked a question, all that contributed to cementing a strong bond with him. Even in the first encounter one would have the impression of having met him several times before. . . It was as if all his students were his dearest children. . . In a short period of time I found myself living as if among family, and among a group of brothers bound to each other by a strong and sincere friendship.²⁵³

His achievements as an expert in the Prophetic traditions and the pioneering role he played in the revival of the Dār al-Ḥadīth contributed to his reputation in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, as soon as the Ma'had al-Riyāḍ al-'Ilmī (The Higher Learning Institute of Riyadh) was established in 1371/1951, like many of his West African colleagues, al-Ifrīqī was offered a teaching post there. Two years later, when the University of Imām Muḥammad b. Sa'ūd was founded in 1953 CE, he was appointed as a professor in the faculty of *sharī'a*. Despite his busy schedule, the African shaykh did not forget the Mosque of the Prophet or the Dār al-Ḥadīth, two important institutions in the establishment of his religious career. During his vacations, he taught at both institutions, and after the demise of his beloved Indian master Aḥmad al-Dihlawī, he took over the responsibility of the House of the Ḥadīth. Al-Ifrīqī is credited with the modernization of Dār al-Ḥadīth through introducing modern methods of teaching to the House.²⁵⁴

'Aṭīyya also informs us that upon the assignment of the African shaykh to Ma'had al-Riyāḍ al-'Ilmī, some of his students followed him to Riyadh for further studies. His private home there was not only a daily meeting point for his students but also provided a warm shelter for those of them who had left Dār al-Ḥadīth to follow their master all the way to Riyadh. As for those who preferred to continue their studies in the House of Ḥadīth in Medina, the shaykh did not forget them. He

²⁵² This description of the African shaykh which is related by an insider stands in contrast to that of J.L. Triaud's presentation of the shaykh as a "tormented personality" in his biographical study on "Abd al-Rahman l'Africain". For a detailed refutation of this tormented personality claim, see: Chanfi Ahmed, *West African 'Ulamā' and Salafism in Mecca and Medina*, pp. 176-179.

²⁵³ 'Aṭīyya Muḥammad Sālim, *Min a'yān al-'ulamā' al-Ḥaramayn*, 1426/2005, pp. 375. The translation is taken from Chanfi Ahmed with slight alterations.

²⁵⁴ Chanfi Ahmed, *West African 'Ulamā' and Salafism in Mecca and Medina*, p. 52; Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *'Ulamā' wa-mafakkirūn 'arafihum*, vol. I, p. 76.

visited them during vacations and instructed them in his free time. His generosity and dedication to his disciples, whom he perceived as no less than his own sons, were well-known to all. During a discussion with his students, al-Ifriqī is reported to have said that his hand did not know how to retain a dirham. When ‘Aṭīyya recited a poem, which goes “the dirham does not remain long in my purse, it passes only for a moment and goes out very quickly”, the compassionate shaykh smiled and replied, “For me, the dirham does not even come to my purse. It goes out before it arrives in my purse”.²⁵⁵ ‘Aṭīyya’s description is in line with the biographical note of another of al-Ifriqī’s students, namely ‘Umar Fallāta, who relates how the shaykh used to spend money on people in need to the extent of neglecting his own households. ‘Umar Fallata relates: “Whenever he was told ‘leave some of it to your children’, he used to say: “I am leaving something better for them: Allah”.²⁵⁶

In his teaching circles, al-Ifriqī used to adhere to what Chanfi Ahmed calls “the culture of open discussion”. His students could ask him whatever they wanted, and he listened to the opinions expressed with an open heart, even if he held an opposite viewpoint. He presented the subjects in a well-organized way, used a literary style, and chose simple words to explain the matter at hand. These were the characteristics that distinguished him from a lot of other scholars. Thursday evenings, according to ‘Aṭīyya, were dedicated to free discussion, which the shaykh used to teach the methods of how to give preference to one opinion over others. In case of seemingly contradictory Prophetic traditions, he would ask one of the students how to reconcile them and bring them together. If the student could not do so, or provided a partial response, he would ask another student to either provide his own response, or to complete the previous one. This continued until everyone had comprehended the matter.²⁵⁷

Al-Ifriqī taught his students to show respect for the opinions of their opponents and not to adhere to sectarianism and blind imitation. He himself was careful to respect the opinions of his opponents, even those who lacked scholarly credentials. In one particular instance, ‘Aṭīyya informs us, a pilgrim of Sufi affiliation came to him, contradicting him on a specific religious issue. Al-Ifriqī expressed his stance on the matter but the pilgrim refused to accept it. Both then had recourse

²⁵⁵ ‘Aṭīyya Muḥammad Sālim, *Min a ‘yān ‘ulamā’ al-Ḥaramayn*, p. 91. The translation is taken from Chanfi Ahmed.

²⁵⁶ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘araftuhum*, vol. I, p. 76.

²⁵⁷ For a detailed treatment of al-Ifriqī’s teaching method see: Chanfi Ahmed, *West African ‘Ulamā’ and Salafism in Mecca and Medina*, pp. 179-182.

to the opinion of Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Sāliḥ, the *imām* and *khaṭīb* of the Mosque of the Prophet at the time. After hearing the opinion of Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, the pilgrim changed his viewpoint and became a strong adherent of Salafism, who would later engage himself in spreading Salafism upon returning home. This man thus came as an opponent but left as a missionary of the Salafī creed, a brand of Islam to which he had seriously objected prior to meeting the African shaykh. Al-Ifriqī’s high esteem for his opponents and his observance of the ethics of debate are apparent in his *al-Anwār al-raḥmāniyya li-hidāyat al-firqa al-Tijāniyya*, a book in which he tries to explain why Tijānī doctrines are not in conformity with the teachings of Islam.²⁵⁸ For al-Ifriqī, what mattered most to him was scriptural evidence: any view without a solid basis in the scriptures should be discarded. When someone approached him for a scholarly debate, he used to say to his interlocutor: “First of all you should free yourself from the fanaticism, as the cause of uncritical adhesion to a view. We will discuss the issue as if we do not know anything about it in advance, and only that which is supported with evidence will be given precedence”. This statement by the African shaykh highlights the fact that in Salafī tradition, authority is embedded in religious texts rather than religious personalities. He applied the same method while inscribing scholarly ethics within the bodies of his disciples. He would often remind his students: “If you are convinced of the authenticity of an idea, submit it to the court of the scholarly public. If it is consolidated by everyone, keep it. If it is rejected by everyone and the embedded weakness is shown to you, reject it. This will save you from committing an error”.²⁵⁹

1.6. Instructing African Pilgrims and Anti-Colonialism

The African shaykh is credited for the establishing the tradition of introducing pilgrims to the Salafī creed and instructing them in the practice of Islam, particularly those coming from West Africa, where people were suffering from strict colonial rule, in addition to the alleged ignorance of the adherents of Sufi brotherhoods. It was in this context that al-Ifriqī came into conflict with the proponents of the Tijāniyya Sufi order, against which he wrote a small but highly effective treatise.²⁶⁰ To make sure this tradition was continued, during the last years of his life, he introduced some of his clever disciples to Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Sāliḥ, the chief *imām* and *khaṭīb* at the

²⁵⁸ In it, he constantly refers to his interlocutors as *ikhwan*, which means “brothers” in Arabic. He never calls them unbelievers, as often happens in literature of this type.

²⁵⁹ ‘Aṭīyya Muḥammad Sālim, *Min a ‘yān ‘ulamā’ al-Ḥaramayn*, p. 394.

²⁶⁰ See his influential treatise *al-Anwār al-raḥmāniyya li-hidayat al-ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya*.

Mosque of the Prophet as well as the head of the court of justice of Medina at the same time, for him to appoint them to engage in pilgrim instruction. The suggestion was accepted and the students were duly appointed. Some of these students, such as ‘Umar Fallāta, who after the demise the African shaykh was widely viewed his adherent, went on to become well-known authorities in the future.²⁶¹

As alluded to earlier, the reason behind al-Ifriqī’s migration to Hijaz had been to acquire sufficient knowledge of the Islamic sciences that was apparently not available in his home country, at least to him. Another, if somewhat less urgent factor that seems to have motivated his migration was that of the colonial rule and plunder of African Muslims by the French colonial system. The French colonial authorities had begun to suppress intellectual voices with increasingly nationalist tones in the 1950s (CE). These Muslim intellectuals encompassed a great range of personalities, trained both inside as well as outside of the country, in al-Azhar in Egypt and Dār al-Ḥadīth in Saudi Arabia.²⁶² When al-Ifriqī undertook his migration to the holy lands, these voices had been absent or less audible. At that time, French colonial officers had managed to establish strong control over most Muslim intellectuals and scholars, turning them into propaganda machines in favour of colonialism. One strong example is that of Seydou Nourou Tall, a grandson of Al-Ḥājj ‘Umar and the grand marabout of French West Africa, who proselytized in favour of colonial rule.²⁶³

After his migration to Hijaz, al-Ifriqī’s disdain to colonialism grew stronger over time. There is no evidence, however, that he engaged in direct political activities against French colonial rule. Instead, in service of the ideal of the liberation of West African Muslim communities from the systematic oppression and exploitation of French colonialism, he dedicated his life to the education and training of students. Unlike other West African personalities motivated by the same factor, he saw education as the perfect means of actualizing his ideals. This side of his personality is well documented by Marcel Cardair, a French agent assigned with the mission of gathering information about the activities of West African pilgrims and the network of Hijaz-based ‘*ulamā*’ who were seen to be responsible for the spread of anti-French sentiments in Francophone Africa. This was a time in which both the British and French were highly suspicious of those West African

²⁶¹ Chanfi Ahmed, *West African ‘Ulamā’ and Salafism in Mecca and Medina*, p. 54.

²⁶² See details in Benjamin F. Soares, “Islam and Public Piety in Mali”, pp. 214-215.

²⁶³ On his pro colonial propaganda see: Benjamin F. Soares, “Islam and Public Piety in Mali”, pp. 210-211

Muslims who travelled to the Middle East for higher education,²⁶⁴ some of whom chose to reside there, and who were assumed to be important exporters of anti-colonialism to West Africa. Al-Ifriqī, at the time, was at the centre of a network of West African students which extended from the Middle East into all of Muslim sub-Saharan Africa. The network accommodated students from West Africa in Hijaz, where students were exposed to anti-colonial sentiments; the African shaykh with his widespread reputation among the pilgrims provided a source of leadership for these likeminded Muslims and students, whose network in turn provided an ideal context for the free exchange of ideas and an invaluable means of communication.²⁶⁵ Encounters with the African shaykh caused many West African visitors to embrace Salafī ideas, as in the case of the Sufi pilgrim mentioned above, and take them back home to others.²⁶⁶ Cardaire describes al-Ifriqī as a non-political but still extremely dangerous Wahhābī who could use his love of God as an effective tool for raising anti-colonial sentiments among his visitors from West Africa, calling him a “pious, religious man who is motivated to convince others through his love of God”.²⁶⁷ When the African shaykh was asked by one of these pilgrims about the nature of his Salafī mission and whether it had to do with politics or not, he replied: “Take it as you wish; we only see it as an application of the Quranic law”.²⁶⁸ This behaviour could be witnessed in many West African scholars trained in religious institutions of Saudi Arabia and Egypt who, after returning to their homelands, were deliberately left unemployed by their governments: that, despite the economic challenges, they continued to educate their fellow Muslims without receiving compensation.²⁶⁹

After al-Ifriqī had spent twenty-six years of his life in the holy lands, striving to spread what he deemed as the true creed of the pious predecessors and reviving anti-colonial sentiments in West African Muslims, his body failed to endure the heavy work tempo that it had used to. He grew seriously ill in 1957 CE, and when he was sent to Beirut for medical treatment it was too late. His

²⁶⁴ John Hunwich, *Sub-Saharan Africa and the Wider World of Islam: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, pp. 236.

²⁶⁵ Louis Brenner, *Controlling Knowledge: Religion, Power and Schooling in West African Muslim Society*, pp. 96-98.

²⁶⁶ Lancine Kaba, *The Wahhabiyya: Islamic Reform and Politics in French West Africa*, p. 52.

²⁶⁷ AMI, “Rapport du Capitaine Cardaire, Commissaire du Gouverneur de l’AOF au Pèlerinage à la Mecke en 1952.” quoted in Louis Brenner, *Controlling Knowledge: Religion, Power and Schooling in West African Muslim Society*, p. 97.

²⁶⁸ AMI, “Rapport du Capitaine Cardaire, quoted in Louis Brenner, *Controlling Knowledge: Religion, Power and Schooling in West African Muslim Society*, p. 98.

²⁶⁹ Abdulai Iddrisu, *Contesting Islam in Africa*, p. 235.

corpse was brought back to Medina, where his funeral took place, a place dearer to him than any other.²⁷⁰

1.7.Writings

For a list of al-Ifrīqī's writings, see appendix I.

²⁷⁰ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *'Ulamā' wa-mafakkirūn 'araftuhum*, vol. I, p. 76.

2. Muḥammad Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī

2.1. Early Life and Affiliation to Sufism

A man called ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Hilālī, had a dream vision in which he was told to name his as-yet-unborn son Muḥammad al-Taqī, and duly did so. Later, however, the child would come to be known as Muḥammad Taqī al-Dīn, after being called by this name by the people of India; as well as by the nickname Abū Shākib, since he had named his first son after Shakib Arslan, one of his mentors, who had helped him during his stay in Europe. Here, we will simply refer to him as al-Hilālī. He was born either at the end of 1311 AH or at the turn of 1312 AH, equivalent to 1894 CE, in a small village called Ghayḍa and Farkh²⁷¹ in Sijilmassa, a district in the region of Tafilalt, in the south-east of what today is Morocco. His family, locally known for producing scholars, had migrated to the country from the famous city of Kairouan in Tunisia towards the end of the ninth century AH. His genealogy goes back to Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī, a grandson of the Prophet Muḥammad.²⁷² His father, ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Hilālī, was one of the few scholars in the area, serving as *imām* and vice-judge of the village. He began his education at home under the supervision of his father, from whom he learned the Qur’ān until he had mastered it by heart, as early as when he was twelve years old. He mastered the science of *tajwīd* (the science of the recitation of the holy Qur’ān) under the supervision of a certain Shaykh Aḥmad b. Šāliḥ, as per his father’s wishes, albeit posthumously fulfilled.²⁷³ While sources do not mention much about al-Hilālī’s childhood studies, given the fact that his father was one of a few scholars in the area, and that he belonged to a family of literacy, it is not hard or unreasonable to imagine that he studied at least the basics of some of the religious sciences in his childhood. Sporadic hints in his writings suggest that after his initiation into the Tijāniyya, he also studied basic Tijānī sources such as the *Munyat al-murīd* (The Wish of the Disciple) by Ibn Bābā and *Bughyat al-mustafīd* (The Demand of the Wayfarer) by Ibn ‘Arabī al-

²⁷¹ The village had two names, according to al-Hilālī.

²⁷² Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘araftuhum*, vol. I, pp. 193-94. The pedigree of al-Hilālī’s family as proceeding from Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī has been approved by many scholars as well as Ḥasan the first, Sultān of Morocco, during one of his visits to Sijilmassa in 1311 AH. For a full genealogy of al-Hilālī’s relation to the grandson of the Prophet see: al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fi aqtār mukhtalifa fi aqtār mukhtalifa*, Sharjah: Maktaba al-Šaḥāba, 1424/2004, p. 3.

²⁷³ Al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fi aqtār mukhtalifa*, p. 3; al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 9; Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘araftuhum*, vol. I, p. 194.

Sā'ih, the latter being a commentary upon the former, alongside the *Jawāhir al-ma'ānī* by 'Alī Harāzim,²⁷⁴ the most authoritative book of the order.

Historical sources suggest that Sufi brotherhoods were widespread in the region.²⁷⁵ The Sufi teachings of the Tijāniyya and other competing brotherhoods played a key role in the daily lives of the inhabitants,²⁷⁶ for whom affiliation to one of these brotherhoods was considered an inseparable part of their identity. Al-Hilālī's remarks on the educational atmosphere and exceptional striving of Sufism are in line with historical documents. He relates:

I grew up in Sijilmassa...and I found the people of our area to be fond of the Sufi brotherhoods. You would hardly come across one person, either literate ('*ālim*) or illiterate (*jāhil*), who was not engaged in the service of one of the brotherhoods, and not bound to its master with a strong bond. He would recall him [the master of the brotherhood] while dealing with hardships and seek his help while facing misfortunes. He would constantly utter his thankfulness to him [the master] and praise him; if he had benefitted from a favour, he would be thankful to him, but if he was struck by calamity he would blame himself for negligence, in the love of his master, and in following his *ṭarīqa*. He would never think that his master was incapable [of intervention] in the matters of heavens and earth, for [according to him] his master is competent in all things. I have heard people saying: "He who does not have a master, Satan is, indeed, his master." They would repeat Ibn 'Āshūr's saying in his *arjuza* [a specific type of poem] about the Ash'arī faith, Mālikī jurisprudence and Sufi principles:

One [should] accompany a master who knows all the routes,

Who [can] rescue him from all sort of dangers on his way.

²⁷⁴ For an account of the life of 'Alī Ḥarāzim, see: Aḥmad Sukayrij, *Kashf al-hijāb*, pp. 68-94.

²⁷⁵ The remarks of Walter B. Harris, in his book *Tafilet: Narrative of a Journey of Exploration in the Atlas Mountains and the Oasis of the North-West Sahara* are illuminating in this regard. In his words, "the love of belonging to some particular brotherhood is extremely noticeable amongst the superstitious people of the Sahara, who are far more religious than their brethren in Morocco proper". Brotherhoods like the Ṭayyibiyya, Ḥammādiyya and Darqāwiyya were then on the rise, and most of the people were affiliated to one or another. For further detail, see: Walter B. Harris, *Tafilet: The Narrative of a Journey of Exploration in the Atlas Mountains and the Oases of North-West Sahara* London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1895, pp. 298-299.

²⁷⁶ The importance of Sufism in Moroccan Islam has been highlighted by a number of studies on the topic. For an excellent study, see: Dale F. Eickelman, *Moroccan Islam: Tradition and Society in a Pilgrimage Center*, Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1976; Ernest Gellner, *Saints of the Atlas*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969.

Who reminds him of Allah when he sees him,
and who takes a servant to his lord.²⁷⁷

According to al-Hilālī, the competing Sufi brotherhoods of the region were of two types: (a) those to which most of the scholars and elites of the region were affiliated, and (b) those which mostly recruited the ordinary people of Tafilalt. He was more inclined to the first type, to which the Tijāniyya and some other brotherhoods like the Kattāniyya²⁷⁸ and the Darqāwiyya²⁷⁹ reportedly belonged. He relates that his father would have joined the Tijāniyya, was it not for the rigorously exclusive attitude of the brotherhood preventing its followers from venerating and visiting the shrines of any saints other than the shrine of the Prophet, those of his companions, and those of Tijānīs. Thus, as his father could not afford to cease visiting the shrine of his own grandfather, ‘Abd al-Qādir b. Hilāl, one of the divinely elected saints whose tomb constituted a regular site of visitation in the region, he was prevented from joining the Tijāniyya.²⁸⁰ Despite his father’s deliberate distance from the Tijāniyya, al-Hilālī states that he decided to join the order when he had barely reached the age of puberty.²⁸¹ He went to a Tijānī *muqaddam* (representative/deputy) called ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Manṣūrī and revealed his interest in the Tijāniyya and his intention. Apparently delighted by the interest of his young visitor, Al-Manṣūrī initiated him into the brotherhood and gave to him the litanies. For the following nine years, al-Hilālī would stick to the litanies of his *ṭarīqa* with the greatest sincerity. Whenever he was afflicted by misfortune, he would invoke the supreme master of the brotherhood Aḥmad al-Tijānī, though without any help offered

²⁷⁷ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 7.

²⁷⁸ The Kattāniyya is a Sufi brotherhood founded by Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahid al-Kattānī (d. 1289/1872) in Morocco. For information of its founder, see: Muḥammad b. Ja‘far b. Idrīs al-Kattānī, *Salwat al-anfās wa-muḥādatha al-akyās bi-man Uqbira min al-‘ulamā’ wa-l-sulahā’ bi-Fās*, vol. I, ed. Muḥammad Ḥamza b. ‘Ali al-Kattānī, n.d, n.p, pp. 132-134.

²⁷⁹ The Darqāwiyya was founded by Abu Ḥamid Aḥmad al-‘Arabī al-Darqāwī (d. 1823 CE), a contemporary of the founding figure of the Tijāniyya. The importance of the Darqāwiyya in nineteenth-century Morocco may be observed in the fact that more than half of the biographies dating from the period after 1930 in *Salwat al-anfās*, by the influential Muḥammad b. Ja‘far al-Kattānī, are devoted to associates of this brotherhood. See: Bettina Dennerlein, “Asserting Religious Authority in late nineteenth/early twentieth Century Morocco: Muḥammad b. Ja‘far al-Kattānī (d. 1927) and his *Kitab Salwat al-Anfās*”, in: Gudrun Krämer and Sabine Schmidkte (eds.), *Speaking for Islam: Religious Authorities in Muslim Societies*, Leiden: Brill, 2006, pp. 128-152, (p. 144). On al-Darqāwī and his order see: J.S. Trimminghem, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, New York: 1998, pp. 110-114; and R. Le Tourneau, “Darkāwā”, in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition, vol. II, p. 160.

²⁸⁰ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, pp. 7-8.

²⁸¹ This information is given by al-Hilālī in *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, but a close investigation of al-Hilālī’s writing suggest that he became affiliated to the brotherhood when he was at least eighteen years old.

on the part of the latter. One of these situations happened when he decided to cross the border to the neighbouring Algeria in 1333/1915, so as to make himself a living.²⁸²

The young Moroccan was accompanied on the journey by a friend with a camel at his disposal. One day, in a place called al-Mushariyya near the border of Morocco, al-Hilālī was asked to look after the camel. However, the camel managed to run away into the desert; al-Hilālī chased it but in vain. Then, to his amazement, the camel started playing with him. It would run a fair distance and stop until al-Hilālī had almost arrived there, and then it would jump up again, run to another place and wait for him to come after it. It was the afternoon, the hottest time of the day in the desert, with unbelievable waves of heat. The young Moroccan realized that it was time to call on his supreme master, Aḥmad al-Tijānī, and seek his help. Though his appeals resulted in disappointment, he failed to attribute this to the shortcomings of his master, instead, blaming himself for his own lack of sincerity and deficiency in the service of the brotherhood.

Although new aspirants were supposed to confine themselves to the books of the *ṭarīqa* and abstain from reading others—a recommendation made to new affiliates by Tijānī shaykhs, according to al-Hilālī,²⁸³—he came across a volume of al-Ghazālī’s magnum opus *Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn* (The Revival of the Religious Sciences), which he read and was impressed by. Apparently distressed by failing to obtain the favour of his supreme master al-Tijānī, and deeply influenced by *Iḥyā’*, he began to dedicate most of his time to divine worship. One midnight, while performing supererogatory prayers, he witnessed a gigantic white cloud coming from eastward. A man came out of the cloud and started praying behind him. The darkness rendered it impossible to see the face of the visitor; thus, he then felt afraid to the extent he could no longer focus on his recitation of the Qur’ānic verses. Both the guest and host prayed together without talking to each other. Indeed, al-Hilālī was not supposed to talk, for withdrawal from worldly activity was a part of his

²⁸² Muahammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘araftuhum*, p. 194. See also Henri Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism: Islamic Reform in the Twentieth Century*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2016, p. 52. Sources relate that prior to the journey to Algeria al-Hilālī spent at least two years in the *zāwiya* of *Ayāt Ishaq* in the tribe of Ayāt Akhlaḥ, presumably for educational purposes. See: al-Hilālī, *al-Da’wa ilā Allāh fi aqṭār mukhtalifa*, p. 3.

²⁸³ Shaykh Toure, the leader of the UCM, a reformist group formed in 1950s Senegal, raised a similar question in his own anti-Sufi discourse. Many disciples (*talibe*) of the marabouts in Senegal, according to him, knew the teachings of these masters better than the divine instructions revealed in the Qur’ān. See: Roman Loimeier, “Political Dimensions of the Relationship Between Sufi Brotherhoods and the Islamic Reform Movement in Senegal”, p. 347.

journey to God. The guest also did not break his silence, and at the end of the sixth *rak'a*²⁸⁴ he walked away to the awaiting cloud and disappeared from the scene. In search of the meaning of the incident, al-Hilālī went to a pious shaykh from the tribe of Himyān and sought his counsel. He was told that it was nothing but a visit from Satan, for if it was an angel, al-Hilālī would not have felt the fear he did.²⁸⁵ The young Moroccan initially found this argument convincing, but later in his career, upon learning of event of the Prophet Muḥammad's first encounter with Gabriel in the cave of *Hirā'*, he was to develop quite another conviction. Regardless, the truth would remain hidden to him for the rest of his life, and he himself asserts that occurrences of the extraordinary (*zuhūr al-khawāriq*) do not necessarily signify the elevated rank of a person. The following is an excerpt:

Back then I was a polytheist (*mushrik*). I was seeking the help of others apart from Allah, and I was fearful of others, and I had expectations of others apart from Allah. This shows that the occurrence of the extra ordinary (*khawāriq*), and that which belongs to the realm of the unseen (*'ālam al-ghayb*) is neither a proof of the righteousness of one who experiences them, nor is it a sign of sainthood in any way. For anyone who engages himself with the spiritual exercise [of retreat] experiences the extraordinary, regardless of his religious affiliation. We have heard and read of the idol worshippers of the people of India witnessing extraordinary events.²⁸⁶

A few days after his encounter with the mysterious man from the cloud, the young Moroccan would dream a vision of the Prophet, tall, thin and white-bearded.²⁸⁷ He would take the hand of the Prophet and after kissing it, plead for guidance: “O Messenger of Allah! take me to Allah”. The Prophet would then advise him: “Seek knowledge”. Since, after his affiliation to the Tijāniyya, his priority had shifted from mastering exoteric sciences to esoteric ones, he would then ask the Prophet about the nature of the knowledge he should seek, whether it was *'ilm al-zāhir* (discursive

²⁸⁴ A *rak'a* is a chapter of the prayer; each prayer consist of many *rak'as* for example the morning prayer from two and the afternoon prayer from four.

²⁸⁵ For full details of the story, see: al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, pp. 9-10.

²⁸⁶ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, pp. 10-11.

²⁸⁷ Visions of the Prophet with such characteristics imply a deficiency in the seer, according to al-Hilālī. For him, this had to do with his affiliation with the Tijāniyya. See: al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 12. Chanfi Ahmed claims that al-Hilālī “does not specify whether” the encounter with the Prophet occurred “in a dream or a waking state”. He claims, furthermore, that the Prophet ordered al-Hilālī to become affiliated with the Tijāniyya. These observations are based on a serious misreading of the crystal-clear data available. See: Chanfi Ahmed, *West African 'ulamā' and Salafism in Mecca and Medina*, p. 159; Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *'Ulamā' wa-mafakkirūn 'arafūhum*, vol. I, p. 194.

and exoteric knowledge) or *‘ilm al-bāṭin* (hidden and esoteric knowledge). Thereupon, the Prophet would explicitly specify exoteric knowledge,²⁸⁸ meaning the study of exegeses of the Qur’ān, the sciences of Prophetic traditions, jurisprudence, theology etc. Since Algeria, where the vision happened, was occupied by infidels (the French), the young Moroccan could not think of seeking knowledge there. Back in his homeland, Moroccan scholars would reinitiate into Islam even those who had conducted ordinary journeys to Algeria. Even their marriage bonds with their wives would be renewed. Thus, he would ask the Prophet where to pursue exoteric knowledge: “In a Muslim country or in the country of infidels?”, and the Prophet would reply: “All the countries belong to Allah”. Thereupon, the young Moroccan had one last wish; that the Prophet should pray for him to die as a Muslim. “O Messenger of Allah! Pray to Allah on my behalf so that I end in faith”. But the Prophet would not. Instead, he would only raise his forefinger towards the sky and leave the matter to God, saying: “It belongs to Allah”.²⁸⁹

This was the first of al-Hilālī’s two visions of the Prophet. He would experience the second one after his denunciation of the Tijāniyya, due to his debate with Muḥammad b. al-‘Arabī al-‘Alawī, a prominent modernist Salafī scholar of Morocco, over the alleged daylight communications with the Prophet of Aḥmad al-Tijānī.²⁹⁰ This second time, he saw the Prophet in a completely unique way. The young Moroccan was then preoccupied with a statement by his previous master al-Tijānī pertaining to the fate of he who denounces the order and turns his back on its litanies.²⁹¹ It seems that even after being convinced of the falsehood of the Tijāniyya, al-Hilālī went through a sort of spiritual crisis. Thus, he was quick to ask the Prophet to pray for him: “O Messenger of Allah! Pray to Allah so that I end in faith”. Unlike the first vision, the Prophet ordered him to pray himself while he sealed it with *āmīn*: “You pray and I will say *āmīn*”. The young Moroccan prayed and the Prophet joined him in *āmīn*, lifting his hands towards the sky. Al-Hilālī subsequently achieved a better state of mind. He interpreted the difference of the two visions—namely, the reluctance of

²⁸⁸ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘araftuhum*, vol. I, p. 194.

²⁸⁹ For full details, see: Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘araftuhum*, vol. I, pp. 194-195; al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 11.

²⁹⁰ An account of this debate will be provided while discussing al-Hilālī’s objections to the Tijāniyya, further on.

²⁹¹ The supreme master of the Tijāniyya claims that denouncing the brotherhood after affiliation causes enormous calamities in both worlds, including the occurrence of one’s death in a state of disbelief. This was allegedly communicated to him by the Prophet in a daylight encounter. Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 11. (For a similar warning, see: ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*, vol. I, p. 123) The same would be the fate of he who execrates him and does not repent. For further information, see: ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*, vol. I, p. 133.

the Prophet to pray for him in the first vision, and his accompanying him in the prayer in the second—to his break with the Tijāniyya, meaning a break with unapproved acts of polytheism and compliance with the doctrine of *tawhīd*, which he put into practice after years of darkness.²⁹²

2.2. Quest for Knowledge, Journeys and Controversies

Taking the order of the Prophet into consideration, he embarked on a search for such knowledge. He went to a certain Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb Allāh al-Shinqīṭī (d. 1920 CE), a pious scholar from the tribe of Tandagh in Shinqīṭ, seeking his advice on where to travel to find better exoteric knowledge. As he disclosed his vision, the shaykh suggested instead that he should stay with him for some time and pursue knowledge under his supervision. The young Moroccan accepted the suggestion and remained with the old shaykh for quite some time,²⁹³ during which he studied Mālikī jurisprudence as well as Arabic grammar. Approximately two years later, in 1920 CE al-Hilālī decided to return to Morocco. Soon after that, in Oujda, the famous Tijānī scholar and chief jurist (*qāḍī al-quḍāt*) of that city Aḥmad Sukayrij placed his son ‘Abd al-Karīm and his nephew ‘Abd al-Salām under al-Hilālī’s supervision for him to teach them Arabic literature. Although the young Moroccan was offered the chance to serve in the judiciary by the chief jurist, al-Hilālī preferred to leave for Fez in quest of further knowledge. There the Moroccan would visit the learning circles of some well-known scholars from al-Qarawiyyīn, such as Shaykh al-Fāṭimī al-Sharādī (d. 1344/1925)²⁹⁴ and Muḥammad b. al-‘Arabī al-‘Alawī, a former Tijānī, who would free the young man from his Tijānī shackles.²⁹⁵ He was well received, held in high esteem and treated as a teacher.

²⁹² Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, pp. 11-12.

²⁹³ Al-Hilālī provides contradictory dates for his stay with the Shinqīṭī shaykh. Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, ‘*Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘arāftuhum*, p. 195. He composed a eulogy in the praise of the Shinqīṭī shaykh, which after his conversion to Salafīyya, he revised due to certain problematic terms. See: Muḥammad Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī, *Minḥa al-kabīr al-muta‘ālī fī shir wa akhbār Muḥammad Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī*, ed. Mashhūr b. Ḥasan Āl Salmān, Amman: Dār al-Athariyya, 1432/2010, p. 25. For the poem, see: pp. 309-312, 701-702. For a short account of the shaykh’s life, see: pp. 567-570.

²⁹⁴ Al-Fāṭimī b. Muḥammad al-Sharādī belonged to the tribe of Sharārda in Fez. He studied under some well-known scholars of the time and later occupied judiciary posts in the city of Sus before working as vice-president of learning council (*al-majlis al-‘ilmī*). See: Muḥammad Ḥajjī, *Mawsū‘a a‘lam al-maghrib*, vol. VIII, p. 2947; Yūsuf al-Mar‘asī, *Nathr al-jawāhir wa-l-durar fī ‘ulamā al-qarn al-rābi‘ ‘ashar*, vol. I, Beirut, Dār al-Ma‘rifā, 1427/2006, pp. 963-964.

²⁹⁵ A full account of his encounters with the two shaykhs will be provided below. Al-Hilālī gives two reasons for why he did not accept Aḥmad Sukayrij’s offer: 1) He had seen his excessive gratitude to the French authorities and his loyalty to them (*yatamallaq li-lmurāqib al-faransī wa-yastashīruhu qabl al-bat fī qadāyā al-muhimma*). 2) The hate he had for the colonial administration and his intention of resistance that he would try his best to do throughout his life. See: Muḥammad al-Madhjub, ‘*Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘arāftuhum*, pp. 202-203.

The certificate (*shahāda*) he received from al-Qarawiyyīn would later be accepted by the University of Bonn as qualifying him for the pursuit of further studies.²⁹⁶

As will later be discussed in great detail, the encounter between the young Moroccan and Muhammad b. al-‘Arabī al-‘Alawī caused the former to denounce Sufism. Al-Hilālī relates that after the incident he returned to Oujda to visit Aḥmad Sukayrij, to find that the decision of his former disciple had shocked the chief jurist of the city. He gathered the important Tijānī figures of the area to persuade al-Hilālī to return to the Tijāniyya, one’s departure from which was seen by Tijānis as equivalent to one’s destruction, both here and in the hereafter. Nevertheless, his efforts to win over the young Moroccan were rendered useless. Al-Hilālī was determined, and by his own account, he succeeded in gaining the upper hand in debate against the Tijānī protagonists that had been summoned by the chief jurist.²⁹⁷ Thereafter, the Moroccan continued to hold the chief jurist in high esteem, even composing poems in his praise. Nevertheless, it seems that he did not avoid directing criticism towards him.²⁹⁸

Towards the end of 1340/1922, his quest for further knowledge forced him to leave for the East. Egypt was a popular destination for the knowledge-seekers of North Africa at the time. Despite all, Aḥmad Sukayrij helped him to obtain a passport by writing a letter of recommendation to the French ambassador at Cairo.²⁹⁹ The religious landscape of Egypt at the time was marked by ‘Abduh’s (d. 1323/1905) modernist agenda, maintained by his faithful student Rashīd Riḍā, and his inner circle.³⁰⁰ Upon arrival in Alexandria, al-Hilālī was warmly received by a former student of Riḍā’s, ‘Abd al-Zāhir Abū l-Samḥ (d. 1370/1951),³⁰¹ who was then serving as *imām* and *khaṭīb* of a Salafī mosque known as the mosque of Abū Hāshim al-Muhandis. The Salafīs there were pejoratively labelled as Wahhābīs by their opponents. In a debate with some of the jurists of the

²⁹⁶ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘araftuhum*, pp. 195-196; al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fī aqṭār mukhtalifa*, p. 4.

²⁹⁷ Al-Hilālī, *Sabīl al-Rashād fī hudā khayr al-‘ibād*, vol. II, al-Dār al-Athariyya, 1427/2006. pp. 118-119.

²⁹⁸ Al-Hilālī, *Minḥa al-kabīr al-muta‘ālī*, pp. 32, 60. For an example of his praise in the honour of Sukayrij and his indebtedness to the latter see: Al-Hilālī, *Minḥa al-kabīr al-muta‘ālī*, p. 504-509.

²⁹⁹ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘araftuhum*, vol. I, p. 205-206.

³⁰⁰ On the religious atmosphere of the time in Egypt and the reformist agenda of ‘Abduh, and Riḍā, see: Albert Hourani, *Arab Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798–1939*, London: Oxford University Press, 1962; Malcolm H. Kerr, *Islamic Reform: The Political and Legal Theories of Muḥammad ‘Abduh and Rashīd Riḍā*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966.

³⁰¹ For information on ‘Abd al-Zāhir Abū l-Samḥ, see: ‘Abdallāh Sa‘īd al-Zahrānī, *A‘immat al-Masjid al-Ḥarām fī ‘Ahd al-Sa‘ūdī*, Riyadh, Dār al-Ṭarafayn, 1426/2005, p. 35; Henri Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism*, p. 73.

region, Abu l-Samḥ was beaten and reported to the governor of Alexandria on charges of kindling the fire of *fitna* (sectarian strife) in the region and calling people to a fifth denomination (*madhhab*), rejecting all four established legal schools, and denigrating certain Sufi practices like *istighātha* (seeking one's spiritual help) and *tawassul* (supplication and invocation of the divine help through human beings) by the means of the Prophet. When Abu l-Samḥ was banned from preaching, the newly arrived Moroccan Salafī was ready to take over the task on his behalf. This invoked bitter objections by the jurists, but since he had come as a citizen of French North Africa, all charges against him were dismissed by the local authorities, who issued a strict warning to the malevolent jurists that they would be held responsible if any kind of religious *fitna* was witnessed in the region. This relieved Abu l-Samḥ, who had at first secretly attended the congregational prayers for two months, but then started to show up without facing any threat thereafter. Once the threat from the jurists was eliminated, al-Hilālī was finally able to proceed to the capital of Egypt.³⁰²

In Cairo, he met Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā and other important reformist Salafīs, including Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Razāq b. Ḥamza (d. 1392/1972)³⁰³ who would later accompany him on his adventure to Hijaz.³⁰⁴ Besides attending some lectures in al-Azhar, he was very much interested in the sciences of *ḥadīth*. Shaykh al-Zankūlī, one of the senior professors at the al-Azhar therefore encouraged him to go to India in order to master the sciences of the Prophetic traditions.³⁰⁵ Indeed, the sciences of *ḥadīth* were flourishing in India, where a considerable amount of research already had been produced by the ‘*ulamā*’ of the subcontinent. By al-Hilālī’s own account, Riḍā once stated that Indian scholars, by their efforts, had played a pioneering role in preserving these beloved sciences.³⁰⁶ It was not the al-Azhar that would shape al-Hilālī’s intellectual career, but rather Riḍā’s private sessions (*majālis*) in which the Moroccan was a persistent participant. It was in these sessions, and via Riḍā’s sharp discussions that he would earn his serious intellectual

³⁰² For further details on the events at the mosque of Abū Hāshim, see: al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fi aqṭār mukhtalifa*, pp. 13-15; Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, ‘*Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘araṭuhum*, vol. I, pp. 196, 206-08.

³⁰³ On Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Razāq b. Ḥamza see: al-Zirikī, *al-A‘lām*, vol. VI, p. 203; ‘Abdallāh Sa‘īd al-Zahrānī, *A‘immat al-Masjid al-Harām fi ‘Ahd al-Sa‘ūdī*, pp. 36-37.

³⁰⁴ Al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fi aqṭār mukhtalifa*, p. 9.

³⁰⁵ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, ‘*Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘araṭuhum*, vol. I, p. 196.

³⁰⁶ Chanfi Ahmed, *West African ‘Ulamā’ and Salafism in Mecca and Medina*, p. 161.

maturity. His relationship with Riḍā strengthened over time; al-Hilālī came to be a regular visitor of his mentor, and wrote articles in the journal *al-Manār*.³⁰⁷

During his short stay in Egypt, al-Hilālī was active in *da'wa* activities as well. When he decided to perform *hajj*, his financial resources at the time were not sufficient to facilitate the journey. Thus, it was inevitable that he must go to Upper Egypt where he could earn enough money to go from his teaching and preaching activities in the mosques. Meanwhile, a certain Ismā'īl al-Sayfī, head of a local Salafī community in the village of al-Rirmūn in the city of Mallawi had invited him to that village. The village was dominated by Sufis,³⁰⁸ with a few Salafīs residing there. In the brief period of only three months that he spent there, thanks to his superior argumentative skills, the Moroccan Salafī had succeeded in converting most of the population to Salafiyya. Except for a few Sufis, the entire population, including the head of the village, Shaykh Yūsuf, responded to his call in the affirmative and denounced Sufism.³⁰⁹ Shaykh Yūsuf then suggested that al-Hilālī undertake the duty of teaching and preaching in the central mosque of the area from which Salafīs were previously banned. This, however, did not meet with the approval of the mayor, who, under pressure from the local Sufis, invited a professor from al-Azhar to confront al-Hilālī. The Moroccan had no intentions of debating with the professor; this certainly would have caused more trouble. His hesitancy, however, boosted the arrogance of the mayor and the professor. This, along with popular pressure, seems to have convinced the Moroccan Salafī to confront his opponent. Then, in any case, the mayor invited him for a cup of coffee, and to his amazement the professor was waiting for him in the house. The professor started asking him questions to which al-Hilālī provided solid responses, by his own account. He himself gives no further clues regarding the content of the debate, but the context of the whole controversy strongly suggests that the debate revolved around issues related to Sufism and the doctrine of *tawḥīd*. As soon as the people got the news that this debate was going on, they rushed into the house of the mayor. The Moroccan Salafī

³⁰⁷ Henri Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism*, p. 61.

³⁰⁸ Al-Hilālī does not provide any clue whatsoever regarding the Sufi affiliation of the village. He contents himself with saying that the Sufi population was dominant.

³⁰⁹ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *'Ulamā' wa-mafakkirūn 'araftuhum*, vol. I, p. 197; al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, pp. 28-29.

dominated the debate, resulting in the concession of his opponent, who reportedly admitted his defeat.³¹⁰

The Moroccan Salafī relates that four years later, when he revisited al-Rirmūn for a second time, he was informed by the inhabitants of their altercation with a Sufī shaykh, who, prior to the conversion of the inhabitants to Salafiyya, had used to visit them to collect annual gifts. The unprecedentedly abnormal attitude of the villagers towards him was a shock for the shaykh, and as soon as he learned that the village had turned its back on Sufism he was occupied with rage. When a peasant among the inhabitants told him that they would never again worship him as in the past they had used to, the shaykh became insulting and told his interlocutor that he had killed a thief who was stealing a watermelon from his field on the edge of Nile, using his spiritual power of *himma*. The peasant reportedly spotted two errors in the shaykh's speech: First, the watermelon field had already been struck by a natural disaster, resulting in the obliteration of the entire harvest. Second, he would never consent to the murder of a soul, be it Muslim or not, for a single watermelon. The Sufī shaykh was thus, reportedly, defeated and had no choice but to leave the village.³¹¹

2.3. Pilgrimage and Journey to India

Upon his return to Cairo, he received thirteen gold dinars as a gift from the people of al-Rirmūn. This was enough for a pilgrimage journey. Thus, in 1341/1922–1923, accompanied by some Salafīs of al-Rirmūn, he left for the holy lands where he would see the pathetic conditions of the Salafīs under Sharifian rule.³¹² The Ashrāf were strict anti-Salafīs: they even had forced some Indonesian pilgrims to denounce Salafī teachings. In the mean time, al-Hilālī had engaged himself in a debate with Ḥabīb Allāh b. Māyābā, the brother of the famous anti-Tijānī scholar Muḥammad al-Khiḍr b. Māyābā, over the issue of the true meaning of the notion of *tawḥīd* and the obligation to follow the example of the Prophet (*itibā' al-sunna*). As a matter of fact, Ḥabīb Allāh had also played a significant role in the investigation of the Indonesian Salafī pilgrims, which could be the

³¹⁰ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘araftuhum*, vol. I, pp. 208-210. A full account of al-Hilālī's adventures in the village of al-Rirmūn is provided in *al-Da’wa ilā Allāh fī aqtār mukhtalifa*. See: al-Hilālī, *al-Da’wa ilā Allāh fī aqtār mukhtalifa*, pp. 17-35.

³¹¹ Al-Hilālī, *al-Da’wa ilā Allāh fī aqtār mukhtalifa*, pp. 34-35; al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiyya*, p. 29.

³¹² In those days, the Salafīs of Hijaz were more lost than orphans, according to him (*kān al-salafīyyūn fī l-Hijāz fī dhālik al-zamān adya’ min l-aytām*). Al-Hilālī, *al-Da’wa ilā Allāh fī aqtār mukhtalifa*, p. 160.

reason for al-Hilālī's visit to his *madrasa*, located near the Grand Mosque, to elicit his view about Salafīs. Despite the moderate tone displayed by the Moroccan Salafī, and his respect for the scholarly credentials of his opponent, Ḥabīb Allāh not only disrespected his guest but also dismissed Salafī teachings as anti-Islamic. Salafīs, according to him, were divisible into three types or tendencies: the Salafīs of Najd, the Salafīs of Sham and Egypt, and the Salafīs of India. The Salafīs of Najd, he held to be unbelievers (*kuffār*), for they believed Allah to be in heaven. The Salafīs of Sham and Egypt, he held, were lost (*ḍullal*) for defending the notion of independent reasoning (*ijtihād*). While the Salafīs of India were wrong (*mukhṭ'ūn*), he held, their situation was nevertheless better than those of the other two groups, for, after all, they were visiting the tomb of the Prophet in Medina. Al-Hilālī then carefully explained to him that there was no difference between the three, and that indeed it was Ḥabīb Allāh who wrongfully denigrated them.³¹³ While, as before, the Moroccan Salafī had profound respect for his opponent's scholarly credentials, his opponent insisted in rejecting al-Hilālī as a scholar. After the conquest of Hijaz by King 'Abd al-'Azīz, Ḥabīb Allāh fled to Egypt, due to his fear of death in the aftermath of a personal doctrinal dispute with the King, where he was granted a teaching post in al-Azhar. There, when he was asked about the scholarly credentials of al-Hilālī, the Shinqīṭī shaykh presented his opponent in negative terms which seem to have angered the Moroccan Salafī to the extent that he wrote an equally denigrating response, including a piece of satirical poetry.³¹⁴

According to al-Hilālī, the prevailing situation in Hijaz at the time was not suitable for the version of Islam of which he was a fervent follower. Furthermore, as his primary goal was to fulfil his dream of mastering the sciences of *ḥadīth*; he shortly afterwards left for India. His first stay on the subcontinent was divided into short segments of teaching and learning. When he first arrived in Delhi, he was hosted by al-Ḥājj 'Abd al-Ghaffār al-Dihlawī, due to a letter of recommendation

³¹³ Al-Hilālī would later come to know the reason why Ḥabīb Allāh b. Māyābā was more lenient toward the Salafīs of India in comparison to those of Najd, Sham and Egypt: an Indian Salafī merchant called 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Dihlawī was one of Ibn Māyābā's benefactors. This was the reason why he only called Indian Salafīs *mukhṭ'ūn*, despite the fact that there was no apparent difference between them and the other two kinds. Al-Hilālī, *al-Da'wa ilā Allāh fi aqṭār mukhtalifa*, p. 162.

³¹⁴ Although the letter was written by al-Hilālī during his short stay in Cairo ahead of his second visit to Hijaz, Ḥabīb Allāh b. Māyābā received it only after he had send Ibrāhīm al-Marākishī to fetch his wife from Medina. He thought that it was al-Marākishī who had brought the denigrating letter. He was outraged to the extent he called al-Hilālī *jahūl* (the persistent ignorant). For further information on the treatment of Salafīs by the Ashrāf and the al-Hilālī-Labīb affair, and the latter's escape to Cairo, see: al-Hilālī, *al-Da'wa ilā Allāh fi aqṭār mukhtalifa*, pp. 160-168; Chanfi Ahmed, *West African 'Ulamā' and Salafism in Mecca and Medina*, pp. 162-165.

issued by his nephew Shaykh ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Dihlawī in Hijaz. The Moroccan Salafī later met Nawāb Ṣadr al-Dīn, a fluent speaker of Arabic who ran a local *madrasa* named ‘Alī Khān. Since the students of the *madrasa* were weak in spoken Arabic and used to study the sciences of *ḥadīth* in the local Urdu language, al-Hilālī accepted the owner’s request that he teach Arabic literature there, including the famous poetry collection of al-Mutanabbī. His stay lasted six months,³¹⁵ after which the Moroccan left Delhi for Lucknow where he visited a famous expert of Prophetic traditions, Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn b. Muḥsin al-Anṣārī al-Yamānī (d. 1343-1344/1925), under whom he studied sections from all six canonical collections of *ḥadīth* and received complete authorization (*ijāza*). From there he travelled to Benares where ‘Abd al-Majīd al-Ḥarīrī, a graduate of the Aligarh, offered him a teaching post. From Benares, he went to Mubarakpur to study the sciences of *ḥadīth* under the supervision of the prominent Indian scholar ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Abd al-Raḥīm Mubārakpūrī (d. 1353/1935), the author of the well-known commentary of al-Tirmidhī’s famous *ḥadīth* collection *Tuḥfat al-aḥwadhī* (The Omnipotent Masterpiece).³¹⁶ In Azamgarh he would visit Nadwat al-‘ulamā’ (The Assembly of Scholars, an Islamic learning centre at Lucknow city) and meet its chairman Sulaymān al-Nadawī for the first time. This would later prove significant, as he would be invited to India by al-Nadawī after facing difficulties in dealing with the persistent ignorance of certain Wahhābīs in Hijaz.³¹⁷ The Moroccan visited many other Indian cities, making short stays and meeting with important scholars of the subcontinent.³¹⁸

³¹⁵ It seems that al-Hilālī’s initial intention was to learn the Urdu language and earn some money during his stay with Ṣadr al-Dīn, but an educational conflict with a certain ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Naqrāmī over a poem of al-Mutanabbī’s discouraged him from extending his stay at the *madrasa*. On the conflict, from which al-Hilālī reportedly emerged as the winner, see: Al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fi aqṭār mukhtalifa*, pp. 172-76; Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mufakkifūn ‘araftuhum*, vol. I, p. 212-214.

³¹⁶ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mufakkifūn ‘araftuhum*, vol. I, p. 197. Al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fi aqṭār mukhtalifa*, pp. 176-177. Mubārakpūrī let and enduring influence on the Moroccan Salafī. Al-Hilālī’s high esteem for his teacher has manifested in his placing Mubārakpūrī in the list of the six personalities most influential upon his outstanding career; and in his composition of a eulogical poem in praise of his master. See: Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mufakkifūn ‘araftuhum*, vol. I, p. 201 and Al-Hilālī, *Minḥa al-kabīr al-muta‘ālī*, pp. 28-29.

³¹⁷ Al-Hilālī had to face the enmity of some ignorant Wahhābīs on his second visit to Hijaz clashing with some of them. His debate with Ibn Belhīd will be described in a subsequent section.

³¹⁸ During his first stay in India he visited many cities, meeting with prominent scholars of the subcontinent such as ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Farāhī (d. 1930) in Bahria; Abu l-Kalām Āzād (d. 1958) in Calcutta; Shaykh Idrīs b. Shams al-Ḥaqq in Azimabad; and Shaykh Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn in Bhopal, among others. His stay with Abū l-Kalām Āzād was restricted to fifteen days, during which he published three articles on the Berbers of the Maghrib in an Arabic journal supervised by Āzād. To his amazement, the editor of the journal, ‘Abd al-Razāq Malīḥābādī, was a heretic (*zindīq*), falsely praising Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī for being an atheist, and detesting ‘Abduh and Riḍā for allegedly failing to recognize the philosophy of al-Afghānī. Al-Hilālī informs us of an altercation he had with Malīḥābādī; about the outcome, however, he remains silent. For the complete details of al-Hilālī’s travels to different cities in

2.4. Back to Iraq and Hijaz

During his adventure on the subcontinent, al-Hilālī met Shaykh Muṣṭafā al-Ibrāhīm, a highly influential merchant of pearls from Iraq. Even though entrance to Iraq was then restricted by the British, due to their altercation with the Ottomans over the city of Mosul, Muṣṭafā al-Ibrāhīm facilitated the entry of his guest. Thus, after approximately fifteen months in India, the Moroccan Salafī arrived in Iraq, where he met Muḥammad al-Amīn al-Shinqīṭī.³¹⁹ The latter offered the hand of his daughter ‘Āisha to him in marriage,³²⁰ and he was assigned the task of teaching and preaching at the local mosque at the village of al-Dawra, where he resided. The Salafī teachings he disseminated among the inhabitants brought him into conflict with local opponents.³²¹ This was not the only conflict the Moroccan experienced during his first stay in Iraq, which lasted three years, between 1924 CE and 1927 CE.

Iraq was home to both Sunnī and Shī‘ī traditions, two important subdivisions of Islam. It was there that al-Hilālī became embroiled in controversies with Shiism for the first time in his life. Based on his own account, it was during an excursion to the Eastern side of Shaṭ al-‘Arab known as Muḥammara (nowadays called Khurramshahr, in Iran) that he collided with ‘Abd al-Muḥsin al-Kāzimī, one of the local religious authorities of the Ja‘farī Shī‘a. The debate was held in a Ḥusayniyya—according to al-Hilālī, a place where Shī‘a Muslims gather to express their mourning for Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī, who was killed in Karbala during the reign of Yazīd b. Mu‘āwiya, the second Umayyad caliph. It mainly revolved around epistemological issues, with reference to the legitimate leadership after the death of the Prophet. Al-Kāzimī claimed that ‘Alī was the gate of knowledge, and that all others should receive their knowledge from him. The legal basis of his argument was a Prophetic tradition reading “I am the city of the knowledge and ‘Alī is its door”.³²²

India during his first visit, see: al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fi aqṭār mukhtalifa*, pp. 145, 181-84; Chanfi Ahmed, *West African ‘Ulamā’ and Salafism in Mecca and Medina*, pp. 156-167.

³¹⁹ A biography of this shaykh by al-Hilālī was published in issue no. 319 of the Egyptian periodicals of al-Faḥ, 18 Rajab 1352 and al-Manar in April 1933. See: Al-Hilālī, *Minḥa al-kabīr al-muta‘ālī*, p. 259. He should not be mistaken for the famous Salafī activist Muḥammad al-Amīn al-Shinqīṭī, who occupied a teaching post at the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina, as the latter’s date of birth (1325/1907) suggests that he was junior to al-Hilālī by c. 13–14 years. See: ‘Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, vol. III, pp. 146-147. For an account his life, see: Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘araḥtuhum*, vol. I, pp. 171-192.

³²⁰ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘araḥtuhum*, vol. I, p. 197.

³²¹ For further information on al-Hilālī’s confrontation with local denigrators of the Salafī teachings, see: al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fi aqṭār mukhtalifa*, pp. 187-192.

³²² Similar traditions are often cited by Shi‘a to highlight the excellence of ‘Alī with regard to the knowledge (including that of the unseen (*ghayb*) and the esoteric knowledge which is believed to have been conferred to him by

For further textual support, he cited a Qur'ānic verse³²³ which supposedly requires the Prophet to deliver his knowledge exclusively to 'Alī. For al-Hilālī, the meaning of the verse was rather of a generic nature, demanding the Prophet reveal his knowledge to *all* Muslims; and yes, 'Alī was indeed one of the gates to the city of knowledge, but certainly not the only one. The Moroccan further asserted that the status of the respective Prophetic statement in question was weak (*da'if*) according to the Sunnī tradition. For al-Kāẓimī, however, it was of solid status (*mutawātir*): it was narrated by the infallible *imam* of Shī'ī tradition. The debate took a new shape when the Shī'ī shaykh went a step further and claimed that 'Alī's name had been mentioned in al-Mā'ida 67, but the Quraysh, the tribe of the Prophet, had deliberately deleted it afterwards. Al-Hilālī then tried to prove the illogicality of the convictions of his opponent by resorting to the same dialectical method which Muḥammad b. al-'Arabī al-'Alawī had once applied against him. He asked his opponent, if someone claimed that al-Mā'ida 67 implied Abū Bakr instead of 'Alī, “What would you say to him?” At this point, the Shī'ī shaykh reportedly started insulting Abū Bakr as an alleged ignoramus who did not know the meaning of the Qur'ān,³²⁴ and could not be compared to 'Alī. The Moroccan explained to his opponent that the Qur'ān is and always has been preserved by Allah against any alteration, addition or deduction.³²⁵ His opponent nevertheless insisted that some elements of the divine speech had been altered to suppress the truth of 'Alī's lofty spiritual status, the esoteric knowledge that he possessed, and his right to rule the Muslim community after the death of the Prophet.³²⁶

As Henri Lauzière aptly observes, the Moroccan Salafī used logical propositions and hypothetical scenarios to silence his seemingly unskilled opponent. Had Allah wished to appoint 'Alī to rule the Muslim community after the Prophet, he argued, why did He never mention his name at all in the Qur'ān? If such a Qur'ānic verse had ever existed and was altered afterwards, why did—and

the Prophet and subsequently transmitted in its entirety to following *imāms*) that qualified him to succeed the Prophet after the latter's demise. The advent of all kinds of sciences, such as tafsīr, *fiqh*, *kalām*, *taṣawwuf*, Arabic grammar and eloquent speech are attributed by the Shī'a to 'Alī's excellence in knowledge. For a detailed account of the Shī'a argumentation on the subject see: Asma Afsaruddin, “The Epistemology of Excellence: Sunni-Shi'i Dialectics on Legitimate Leadership”, in: Gudrun Krämer and Sabine Schmidte (eds.), *Speaking for Islam: Religious Authorities in Muslim Societies*, Leiden: Brill, 2006, pp. 49-69, (see pp. 59-66).

³²³ Al-Mā'ida 5:67.

³²⁴ According to al-Kāẓimī, Abū Bakr did not know the meaning of the word *abban* in 'Abasa, 31. Al-Hilālī argued that Abū Bakr not only knew the normal meaning of the word known to Arabs, but was of the opinion that the word might have other connotations as well.

³²⁵ The Qur'ānic passage of al-Ḥijr 15:9 guarantees the intactness of the divine eternal speech.

³²⁶ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiyya*, p. 136.

how could—‘Alī not impose the correct version of the divine speech during his caliphate? Why did only one copy of this allegedly authentic divine revelation circulate? Why did the true version of the Qur’ān disappear with the purported twelfth *imām* of the Shī‘a? Reportedly, al-Hilālī was the absolute victor of the debate and the replies of his opponent were confined to deifying the value of reason (*‘aql*). The news of the victory created a sense of jubilation among the Sunnīs on the Western side of Shaṭ al-‘Arab.³²⁷

In the meantime, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Zāhir Abu l-Samḥ, whom he had met and helped to overcome the jurists’ affair in Alexandria, had written several letters encouraging him to come to Hijaz and take part in the work of *da‘wa*.³²⁸ After the conquest of Mecca, Abu l-Samḥ was appointed by King ‘Abd al-‘Azīz as *imām* and *khaṭīb* of the Grand Mosque. In 1927 CE, on the way to Hijaz, al-Hilālī paid a visit to his mentor Rashīd Riḍā in Cairo. The latter wrote a letter of recommendation to the king, praising his disciple as one of the most well-versed scholars ever to have been to Hijaz.³²⁹ The Moroccan Salafī was well received by the king, and stayed as his guest for the following four months in Mecca. He was offered a position as the supervisor of the *‘ulamā’* teaching in the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina by Shaykh ‘Abdallāh b. Ḥasan Āl al-Shaykh, the chief judge of Hijaz.³³⁰ He thus headed to the city, accompanied by the shaykh and Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Razāq. As soon as he arrived in Medina, he came to discover that one of the teachers at the Mosque of the Prophet belonged to the Tijāniyya. This was Alfā Hāshim, the *muqaddam* of the Tijānī brotherhood in Hijaz, who had migrated to the holy lands upon the invasion of his homeland by French troops. The Moroccan Salafī immediately reported him to the chief judge, providing him with a paper listing thirteen of the Tijānī beliefs. The chief judge was shocked by the allegations listed. He summoned the Tijānī shaykh and asked him for his response to the

³²⁷ For a complete account of the debate, see: al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fi aqṭār mukhtalifa*, pp. 193-201.

³²⁸ Al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fi aqṭār mukhtalifa*, p. 164.

³²⁹ Rashīd Riḍā’s collaboration with Saudi authorities, and his sending students to assess the Wahhābī establishment played a crucial role in the evolution of modernist Salafiyya toward a more puristic form. Indeed, towards the end of his life, he himself developed more puritanical inclinations and became much more puristic than his predecessors. See: Henri Lauzière, “The Evolution of the Salafiyya in the Twentieth Century”, pp. 27-28.

³³⁰ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘araftuhum*, vol. I, p. 197. The initial offer was for the post of *imām* and *khaṭīb* in the Mosque of the Prophet. Al-Hilālī would have accepted, was it not for his habit of long prayers which was going to cause problems for the people of Medina. Thus, Shaykh ‘Abdallāh Ḥasan proposed the post of teacher supervision to him. Al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fi aqṭār mukhtalifa*, p. 166. Henri Lauzière argues that al-Hilālī’s visit to Hijaz was a part of Riḍā’s unconditional support—despite some disagreements—for Wahhābism. The latter used to send some of his outstanding disciples to Hijaz as part of the rehabilitation of Wahhābism. See: Henri Lauzière particularly chapter three, entitled “Rashīd Riḍā’s Rehabilitation of Wahhābism and its Consequences”.

charges laid against him by the newly appointed supervisor. The Moroccan Salafī himself was present at the assembly: as because the chief judge was not familiar with the doctrines of the Tijāniyya, his help was required. In Henri Lauzière's words, al-Hilālī acted in the capacity of a religious "watchdog",³³¹ and conducted most parts of the interrogation. Alfā Hāshim was handed the paper and asked to read it. He did so, and proceeded to provide the following justification: "Though we find in the sources of the brotherhood all that is mentioned here in this paper, I myself do not adhere to all of this". At this point his adversary intervened, asking whether the charges levelled against his brotherhood were true or not. The Tijānī shaykh, apparently outraged by the interference of al-Hilālī, replied that the chief judge did not need his help. However, the chief judge justified the latter's intervention due to his personal lack of information on the brotherhood, which the Moroccan Salafī knew very well.

As soon as Alfā Hāshim admitted that the charges were true, he was ordered by 'Abdallāh b. Ḥasan to repent and write a declaration publicizing his denouncement of the Tijāniyya and listing the errors of his brotherhood. The declaration was meant to be given to al-Hilālī for final corrections before it would meet with the approval of chief judge for publication and subsequent dissemination; first and foremost among the disciples of the Tijānī shaykh, and then to all of the students in the city.³³² Though he promised to write the treatise and submit it to his opponent, the Tijānī shaykh never did so. The Moroccan Salafī, on the other hand, was determined to follow through on the matter. A few days later he demanded that the Tijānī shaykh submit the treatise. The latter made no response but to assert that he had not finished it yet. When the pressure increased, Alfā Hāshim had recourse to the help of the *amīr* (governor) of Medina, 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Ibrāhīm Āl al-Shaykh, with whom he was on good terms. The *amīr* then summoned al-Hilālī to his presence: now it was his turn to be interrogated. The Moroccan Salafī provided a fully-fledged response, arguing that he had been assigned the task of controlling the treatise by 'Abdallāh b. Ḥasan, the chief judge himself. The governor then stated that he would take care of the treatise himself and send it to the chief judge.³³³ The Moroccan Salafī was aware of the former's empathy with the accused Tijānī shaykh. Thus, he responded that only he could know the whereabouts of

³³¹ Henri Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism*, p. 77.

³³² Al-Hilālī, *Minḥa al-kabīr al-muta'ālī*, p. 217.

³³³ Al-Hilālī, *al-Da'wa ilā Allāh fī aqṭār mukhtalifa*, pp. 207-208.

the brotherhood, a *ṭarīqa* about which the governor, apparently, knew nothing. He addressed the governor as follows:

You would never know from the content of the treatise whether it meets the request or not. Shaykh ‘Abdallāh b. Ḥasan assigned me the task of reading it before sending it to him. Since I was a disciple of this brotherhood for nine years, I know this *ṭarīqa* well, and know what should be said by one who repents of it.³³⁴

The *amīr*’s intervention on behalf of the Tijānī shaykh nonetheless rescued the latter from having to make a public denunciation of the Tijāniyya. The Algerian periodical of *al-Shihāb* published a detailed account of the event in its issue number 151, informing its readers of Alfā Hāshim’s departure from the brotherhood. The account was signed by al-Hilālī, along with the confession of the Tijānī shaykh himself. This caused a certain degree of disdain towards him among North African Tijānīs: a certain Tijānī called Abū Ṭāhir al-Maghribī, who wrote a refutation to al-Hilālī under the title *Ifhām al-khaṣm al-mulid bi-l-difā‘ ‘an al-shaykh al-mumid* (Silencing the Stubborn Opponent in Defence of the Potent Shaykh), for one, disliked Alfā Hāshim’s behaviour and described him as someone who either did not know the whereabouts of the order, or who was afraid of the wrath of the authorities.³³⁵

Alfā Hāshim’s personal account of the event, however, gives a different story. In a letter to Muḥammad al-Kabīr, a descendant of Aḥmad al-Tijānī and spiritual leader of the brotherhood at the time, he makes mention of the local authorities with praise, showing that good relations existed between himself and the *amīr* of Medina. In it, he describes how Tijānīs had been able to gather in the *zāwiya* for congregational sessions of *dhikr* (remembrance of God) until al-Hilālī³³⁶ and Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Razāq had arrived at the city.³³⁷ He writes of how they encouraged the authorities to act against the Tijānīs, which led to an altercation between the Tijānī shaykh and the

³³⁴ Al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fi aqṭār mukhtalifa*, p. 208. For a slightly different translation of the passage see: Chanfi Ahmed, *West African ‘Ulamā’ and Salafism in Mecca and Medina*, p. 170

³³⁵ See Abū Ṭāhir al-Maghribī, *Ifhām al-khaṣm al-mulid bi-l-difā‘ ‘an al-shaykh al-mumid*, n.d, n.p, p. 60.

³³⁶ Alfā Hāshim refers, derogatively, to al-Hilālī with this name.

³³⁷ Research has shown that Hijaz, and particularly Mecca provided a place in which Sufism and Sufi orders could thrive towards the end of the nineteenth century. See: Esther Peskes, “The Wahhābiyya and Sufism in the Eighteenth Century,” in: Frederick De Jong and Bernd Radtke (eds.), *Islamic Mysticism Contested: Thirteen Centuries of Controversies and Polemics*, Leiden: Brill 1999, pp. 145-161, (p. 160) and Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka: Aus dem heutigen Leben*, vol. II, Den Haag, 1989, pp. 277-290.

newly arrived anti-Tijānī supervisor. He informs Muḥammad al-Kabīr of a successful defence of the order in the face of the accusations, at first orally and afterwards by writing a treatise denouncing whatever doctrines that contradicted the precepts of the religion of Islam. Some of the charges, he claims, were baseless accusations while some tenets of the brotherhood were misunderstood by the opponent.³³⁸ We do not know for sure which one of the two accounts reflects the truth, but one thing is for sure: the news of the Tijānī shaykh's denunciation of the order was so renowned, even many decades later, that in 2008 CE, when Shaykh 'Umar Fāllata was asked by Chanfi Ahmed whether Alfā Hāshim had remained a Tijānī or not, he responded: "What we are sure about is that he rejected many of the Tijānī doctrines. He did that before Shaykh 'Abdallāh b. Ḥasan Āl al-Shaykh, the new chief of the quḍāt in the Hijaz and the Western province at the time".³³⁹

This altercation with Alfā Hāshim may have been part of what caused al-Hilālī to play a pioneering role, along with his friend Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Razāq, in the 1928 CE establishment of a project for training local guides for pilgrimage. The project began with a proposal made by Shaykh 'Abd al-Rashīd al-Afghānī to King 'Abd al-'Azīz, and was intended to train guides in the notion of *tawḥīd* so that they could teach pilgrims the proper way of conducting pilgrimage and visiting graves, including that of the Prophet.³⁴⁰ The same project was continued by 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ifriqī, and, after his death, by his disciples in the following decades of the twentieth century.

Alfā Hāshim was not the only Sufi shaykh with whom the Moroccan Salafī and his Egyptian friend collided. Shaykh al-Ṭayyib al-Anṣārī al-Timbuktī, whose affiliation was to the Qādiriyya, was another Sufi shaykh who had to deal with the Salafī zeal of the supervisor of the teachers at the Mosque of the Prophet. In al-Timbuktī's case, however, no frontal attacks had to be faced. After an indirect confrontation that lasted six months, al-Timbuktī kneeled and, reportedly, gave up his affiliation with the Qādiriyya. Furthermore, he left the Mālikī legal and the Ash'arī theological schools, and fully converted to Salafīyya, upon which, al-Hilālī and Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Razāq

³³⁸ Alfā Hāshim's letter to Muḥammad al-Kabīr of Morocco is published in: Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiz, *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn 'alā ahl al-yaqīn*, pp. 36-46. He seems to have written a treatise in response to his Moroccan Salafī opponent, called *Silāḥ al-tijāniyyīn fī l-radd 'alā al-muḡtaribīn wa-l-mu'taridīn*. A copy of the book is preserved in the personal library of Prof. Dr. Rüdiger Seesemann in the University of Bayreuth.

³³⁹ Chanfi Ahmed, *West African 'Ulamā' and Salafism in Mecca and Medina*, p. 26.

³⁴⁰ See details in al-Hilālī, *Minḥa al-kabīr al-muta'ālī*, pp. 214-15; Henri Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism*, p. 77.

facilitated a better salary for him.³⁴¹ Thus, while in the case of Alfā Hāshim al-Hilālī could not quite achieve the desired result in the case of al-Timbuktī the Moroccan Salafī was able to taste the triumph.

The tensions between al-Hilālī and the governor of Medina, which were initially caused by al-Hilālī–Alfā Hāshim affair, reached a peak when the Moroccan Salafī decided to extend his mission to the rural areas around Medina. He wanted to visit al-Henakiyyah, while the governor wished instead to send him to the Shī‘ī villages of al-Jaraf and al-‘Awālī. The Moroccan Salafī thus duly visited this area, but soon returned without having achieved a visible result. After some time, he then went to al-Nakhīl without the consent of the *amīr*. Upon his return, the governor wrote to King ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, voicing his complaints about the rebellious Moroccan and his Egyptian colleague.³⁴² The Moroccan Salafī was thus called back to Mecca, where he was first appointed as a professor at the Ma‘had al-Riyāḍ al-‘Ilmī,³⁴³ and was later, for some unknown reason, reduced to a mere teacher at the Grand Mosque. In the meantime, he had received invitations from Sulaymān al-Nadawī of India and Shaykh Aḥmad al-Sirkatī of Indonesia, each wishing to offer him a teaching post in their education centres. For obvious reasons, al-Hilālī preferred India over Indonesia—he was familiar with the subcontinent from his first visit, and besides teaching Arabic literature at Nadwat al-‘ulamā’, he could obtain a university diploma there.³⁴⁴ The situation in Mecca being not as he would have wished, he soon decided to leave Hijaz, but the Saudi authorities

³⁴¹ In their respective capacities as the teaching supervisor, in al-Hilālī’s case, and *imām* and *khaṭīb*, in the case of ‘Abd al-Razaq Ḥamza, of the Mosque of the Prophet, al-Hilālī and ‘Abd al-Razaq Ḥamza were each received a salary equivalent to ten dinars, while all other teachers at the Mosque were given six dinars. Upon al-Hilālī and Ḥamza’s intervention, al-Timbuktī’s salary was raised to ten dinars. Another scholar with sectarian zeal for the Mālikī legal school who denounced sectarian fanaticism is Shaykh Maḥmūd al-Shuwayl. The latter is said to have become a strict Salafī after some altercations with al-Hilālī. For further information on both incidents, see: al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fī aqṭār mukhtalifa*, pp. 213-214. Apart from the Sufīs of Medina, some of the more uncompromising Salafīs, such as ‘Abdallāh b. Belhīd, caused the Moroccan Salafī a serious headache. The tension between these two concerned the shape of the Earth. Despite the initially condescending attitude of his adversary, al-Hilālī gained the upper hand, but only after his personal library arrived from Iraq, which allowed him to use the writings of Ibn Taymiyya and his disciple Ibn Qayyim to support his argument. Belhīd would never publicly admit his defeat, but al-Hilālī would nonetheless maintain his respect for the former. For a full account, see: al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fī aqṭār mukhtalifa*, pp. 210-12. See also Henri Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism*, pp. 81-82.

³⁴² Both were accused of inappropriate attitudes in their *da‘wa* mission and intrigues against the government. See details in al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fī aqṭār mukhtalifa*, pp. 215-217; Al-Hilālī, *Minḥa al-kabīr al-muta‘ālī*, pp. 216-217.

³⁴³ This Ma‘had was founded by King ‘Abd al-‘Azīz for inculcating the young generation with the Salafī doctrine. To upgrade the level of education offered there, in addition to al-Hilālī, both Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Razaq and Bahjat al-Bayṭār were recruited by the authorities. Henri Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism*, p. 79; Chanfi Ahmed, *West African ‘Ulamā’ and Salafism in Mecca and Medina*, p. 173.

³⁴⁴ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘arafūhum*, vol. I, p. 198.

were not willing to grant him the necessary documents, resulting in his recourse to the French embassy, as, since his homeland was occupied by the French, he was officially a French citizen, and was thus able to obtain the help he needed there. The vehement anti-colonialist would later admit that, had it not been for this harsh treatment by the Saudi authorities, he would never have sought the help of the French against them.³⁴⁵

2.5. India, Iraq and Europe

While in Hijaz, al-Hilālī had realized that he could not fulfil his ambitions unless he obtained a university diploma. For him, a scholar without a diploma was like a traveller without a passport (“*anna al-‘ālim bi-lā shahāda ka-l-musāfir bi-dūn jawāz safar*”).³⁴⁶ Thus, for the above-mentioned reasons, India suited his situation best. In 1349/1930 he went to Lucknow and taught there for the following three years, and while he could not succeed in obtaining an official diploma, he did manage to master English,³⁴⁷ which would prove helpful in encouraging him to go to Europe.

As soon as he took on the task of teaching Arabic and Arabic grammar in Nadwat al-‘Ulamā’, he introduced a new teaching technique, which, compared to the traditional one, proved much more efficient.³⁴⁸ In short, he rejected the method of teaching the language through translation to the local Urdu and started to use Arabic as the medium of teaching and, in a brief time, he succeeded to reap the fruits of his efforts as the students started speaking fluent Arabic. He is thus credited with playing a pioneering role in spreading the Berlitzian method for learning the Arabic language.³⁴⁹ In order to maximize the efficiency of the students’ own efforts, he established *al-Diyā’*, the first Arabic journal in India, to provide students with the opportunity to hone their

³⁴⁵ His having recourse to the help of the French made him notorious in the eyes of Saudis, including the chief judge. The latter purportedly denigrated his former employee for having done so. Al-Hilālī would later explain his reasons in a letter he sent from Mumbai, but to which the chief *qāḍī* never responded. For a detailed story, see: Henri Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism*, pp. 91-92.

³⁴⁶ Al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fī aqṭār mukhtalifa*, p. 240.

³⁴⁷ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, ‘*Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘araftuhum*, vol. I, p. 198.

³⁴⁸ Al-Hilālī states in his autobiography that he was inspired to implement the new technique by the well-known German pedagogue Maximilian Berlitz (d. 1921 CE). Chanfi Ahmed, *West African ‘Ulamā’ and Salafism in Mecca and Medina*, p. 173; Henri Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism*, p. 107.

³⁴⁹ See, for example: Hayreddin Karaman, *İslami Hareket Öncüleri*, where he introduces al-Hilālī as the teacher of Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Nadawī. As above, al-Hilālī relates that he used the Berlitzian method, which is based on the active usage of the target language itself as the medium of teaching it. On the details of the method as applied, see: al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fī aqṭār mukhtalifa*, pp. 240-241.

Arabic skills.³⁵⁰ The journal, which also received significant contributions from outside the Indian subcontinent, would indeed play a crucial role in shaping and sharpening some of al-Hilālī's students, some of whom would later become outstanding religious figures, such as Abu l-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Nadawī (d. 1420/1999)³⁵¹ and Mas'ūd 'Ālim al-Nadawī (d. 1373/1954).³⁵² The Moroccan would stress the significance of Arabic on many occasions: for him, Indian Muslims' lack of familiarity with the language of revelation manifested itself in the form of their accepting innovations and heretical movements.³⁵³

Al-Hilālī's own strong emphasis on language-learning was not confined to Arabic alone. He came to realize the importance of learning English if one wanted to proselytize for Islam and continue the *da'wa* mission. His personal motivation for learning English was evoked by two incidents: the unsatisfactory English pronunciation of the students at Nadwat al-'Ulamā', and the effective use of the English language by the Ahmadiyya Community to enhance its own missionary activities. He therefore started to take private lessons from an evangelical pastor in Lucknow, who would agree to teach him only if al-Hilālī would attend church sessions held in English. During the process, the Moroccan Salafī became embroiled in yet another dispute, this time with a young American minister who had been very critical of the Qur'ān. Meanwhile, the Islamic messianic movement of Ahmadiyya, founded by Ghulām Aḥmad al-Qādiyānī (d. 1326/1908), had already begun to spread its *da'wa* through missionary work in many parts of the world, including Europe, and had printed a new English translation of the Qur'ān.³⁵⁴ These two incidents pushed al-Hilālī to realize the undeniable significance of foreign languages in opening up new audiences and parts of the globe to proselytization. He wrote a substantial number of articles on the subject, explaining the necessity for Muslims to learn foreign languages, going so far as to declare this *farḍ kifāya* (a

³⁵⁰ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *'Ulamā' wa-mafakkirūn 'araftuhum*, vol. I, p. 202; al-Hilālī, *al-Da'wa ilā Allāh fī aqṭār mukhtalifa*, p. 180.

³⁵¹ For detailed information on the life and works of Abu l-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Nadawī, see: Hayreddin Karaman, *İslami Hareket Öncüleri*, İz Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 2012, pp. 387-432 and Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *'Ulamā' wa-mafakkirūn 'araftuhum*, vol. I, pp. 135-154.

³⁵² Muḥammad Nāzim al-Nadawī and Abū l-Layth Shir Muḥammad al-Nadawī are other famous personalities who were taught by al-Hilālī in Nadwat al-'Ulamā'. Al-Hilālī, *al-Da'wa ilā Allāh fī aqṭār mukhtalifa*, p. 241.

³⁵³ Henri Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism*, pp. 107. Al-Hilālī's stress on proper Arabic is linked with his attitude towards the Ahmadi movement which he claimed had thrived on the Indian subcontinent because of Indian Muslims' lack of familiarity with Arabic, and thus their inability to read the original authoritative texts of the religion in the language of revelation.

³⁵⁴ Henri Lauzière, "The Evolution of the Salafīyya in the Twentieth Century", pp. 217-218.

technical term for a religious duty incumbent upon the Muslim community, deemed to be fulfilled when performed by some members of the community).³⁵⁵

His second stay in India coincided with important religious and political incidents in neighbouring Afghanistan. King Amān Allāh Khān (d. 1379/1960)³⁵⁶ is claimed to have attempted to forbid the Islamic code of dress for women and introduce Western-style of clothing instead, as part of his modernization policies. Due to popular opposition to such policies, coupled with increasing corruption in the government, the king lost his throne. Nādir Khān, his successor, then reversed his secular policies in line with the demands of the people. Being curious enough to find out about the situation of the Muslims in Afghanistan, al-Hilālī decided to undertake a journey, arriving in Kabul in 1933 CE. In his short stay of fifty days in Afghanistan, he met with high Afghan officials, including the king himself. In addition to his warm reception by the authorities, he came to gather with prominent scholars such as Shaykh Sayf al-Raḥmān, Shaykh Maṣṣūr and Muḥammad ‘Umar al-Afghānī. While his portrayal of Afghan society is positive over all, he was shocked by two aspects: the widespread adherence to Sufism in the region, and the blind imitation of the Ḥanafī legal school. Afghans were fond of Sufism to the extent that the Moroccan Salafī supposed that only westernized and secular Afghans were not its adherents.³⁵⁷ For most of the Afghans, the Ḥanafī legal school was equivalent to the religion itself. The legal sectarianism the Moroccan noticed in Afghanistan was deeply disturbing to him, to the extent that his activities in Afghanistan were restricted to the task of informing the inhabitants that the legal opinions of the Ḥanafī scholars

³⁵⁵ In refutation of the Christian doctrine, al-Hilālī wrote the treatise *al-Barāhīn al-injīliyya ‘alā anna ‘Isā ‘alayhi al-salām dakhīl fī l-‘ubūdiyya wa-la haḥḥa lahu fī l-uluhiyya*. On Qādiyānīs, he wrote a paper called *al-Qādiyāniyūn: ba‘ḍ mā lahum wa-mā ‘alayhim*, published in the Egyptian journal of *al-Faṭḥ* in 1932. For further information on al-Hilālī’s encounter with the evangelical pastor, his subsequent debate with the American minister, his attitude toward the Aḥmadiyya movement and his endeavour to encourage Muslims to master foreign languages to use them as means of proselytization of their religion, See: Henri Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism*, p. 112.

³⁵⁶ King Amān Allāh Khan was greatly influenced by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk of Turkey (and to lesser extent by Iranian Shah) who had earlier implemented similar practices and laws in order to secularize the Muslim society of Turkey. While Atatürk had achieved his mission to a significant extent, King Amān Allāh failed in the face of heated revolts against his policies by the Afghans. See for example: Nazif M. Shahrani, “Afghanistan from 1919”, in: Francis Robinson (ed.), *The New Cambridge History of Islam vol. 5, The Islamic World in the Age of Western Dominance*, Cambridge Histories Online: Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp. 542-547, (see pp. 542-45).

³⁵⁷ He relates that the Mujaddidiyya and Qādiriyya were the two most widespread Sufi brotherhoods among Afghans. King Nādir Khān himself did not hold back from kissing the hand of the Mujaddidī shaykh who was assigned even the post of minister of justice. The post was initially rejected by the shaykh, since he would be obliged to attend official assemblies alongside other ministers, which purportedly would reduce the reverence held for him among the people. He then accepted the post, provided that his brother-in-law would appear on his behalf at official gatherings. Al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fī aqṭār mukhtalifa*, pp. 248-249.

were not equivalent with Islam per se, and that other schools of jurisprudence had to be viewed as valid interpretations of the religion.³⁵⁸

Upon his return to India al-Hilālī fell victim to the malaria that was threatening the subcontinent at the time. He then travelled to Basra where he would spend the following three years teaching in the Madrasat al-Najāt (The Salvation Learning Center) before leaving for Geneva.³⁵⁹ In Basra he continued his *da'wa* work during which he came to debate another prominent Shī'ī scholar, Mahdī al-Qazwīnī (d. 1358/1939) who seemingly enjoyed a widespread reputation as *mujtahid* (a technical term for one who can apply the independent reasoning called *ijtihād*). Unlike al-Kazīmī, whom al-Hilālī had debated during his first stay in Iraq, al-Qazwīnī denied any alteration of the Qur'ān at the hand of the Quraysh. The debate with him evolved around the issues concerning domes built on shrines which al-Hilālī dismissed as innovations. The Shī'ī shaykh seems to have condoned such domes provided that the buildings shouldn't be turned into objects of worship, while according to the Moroccan, no lenient opinions could be condoned pertaining to the issue at hand, which, for him, touched upon the very core of the belief. A Shī'ī author who had previously explained the matter in one of his writings in the journal of *al-Manār* by quoting Prophetic traditions³⁶⁰ on the authority of the Ja'farī *imams*, reportedly proved that there was no difference of opinion between Sunnīs and the *imāms* of the Shī'a. The Moroccan had thus collected these respective Prophetic statements and sent them to al-Qazwīnī, asking whether these accounts were considered authentic in Shī'ī traditions. If yes, why would he, al-Qazwīnī, remain silent about the domes built on shrines in the cities of Najaf, Karbala, and Kazim among others? The latter could not dismiss the *ḥadīths*, which meant an implicit victory for his adversary; rather, he condemned the author of the article and denigrated Rashīd Riḍā for having published it. In addition, he asked al-Hilālī to undertake the task of judging between him and the Egyptian. Thereupon, the Moroccan wrote seven articles under the title *al-Qāḍī al-'adl fī ḥukm al-binā' 'alā l-qubūr* (The Just Judge

³⁵⁸ He offers a detailed account of how strong a hold sectarianism had on the Afghan society. On more than one occasion, his *raf' al-yadayn* (the practice of moving the hands upwards during certain intervals in the prayers) was viewed by many as a sign of portent. For a full account of al-Hilālī's journey to Afghanistan, see: al-Hilālī, *al-Da'wa ilā Allāh fī aqṭār mukhtalifa*, pp. 244-262. On his view of the legal schools, see: Henri Lauzière, "The Evolution of Salafiyya in the Twentieth Century", pp. 225-226.

³⁵⁹ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *'Ulamā' wa-mafakkirūn 'araḥtuhum*, vol. I, pp. 198, 215.

³⁶⁰ One of those *ḥadīths*, according to al-Hilālī, is to be found in Bukhārī and Muslim, the two *ḥadīth* sources accepted by Sunnīs as the best of the books after the holy Qur'ān. It reads: "May Allah curse [those] Jews and Christians [those of them] who took the graves of their prophets as places of worship", ("*la'ana Allah al-yahūd wa-l-naṣārā ittakhadhū qubūr anbiyā'ihim masājid*").

Concerning the legal Status of Constructions on Graves) to be published in *al-Manār*, upholding the side of Riḍā. The articles were later published as a book under the subsidization of King ‘Abd al-‘Azīz.³⁶¹

After a stay of three years in Iraq, his second home and the home of his wife, al-Hilālī was ready to undertake another journey, quite different than the previous ones. Thus, in 1936 CE he left, first for Syria, where he stopped by Bahjat al-Bayṭār (d. 1396/1976). The Syrian Muslim press praised him as a renowned writer and many Arab diplomats visited him there, including Iḥsān Sāmi Ḥaqqī, a Syrian-born Palestinian journalist who arranged the Moroccan’s trip to Europe via the help of the Swiss ambassador in Damascus. Al-Hilālī left Syria for Alexandria and from there to Switzerland via Italy.³⁶² In Geneva, he was received by Shakib Arslan (d. 1366/1946), a prominent modernist Salafī known for his efforts to modernize Muslims along the lines of Islamic nationalism. He acted as the second mentor, after Riḍā, of al-Hilālī. The Moroccan thus held him in high esteem, to the extent that he named his first son after him.³⁶³ As al-Hilālī’s aim was to obtain a university degree, Shakib Arslan contacted Curt Prüfer (d. 1959 CE), a high-ranking officer in German Foreign Office, who in turn introduced the Moroccan to the German Orientalist Paul Kahle (d. 1964 CE), head of the Oriental Seminar at the University of Bonn. Thus, in 1936–1937 CE al-Hilālī was admitted to that university as a student of Oriental Studies, devoting his first year to obtain a diploma attesting to his proficiency in the German language and the following two years to his PhD dissertation while additionally teaching Arabic literature courses. His collaboration with Kahle on projects of translating old Arabic texts would prove fruitful, for which the German Orientalist would later praise his student on several occasions.³⁶⁴ However, the Nazi’s anti-Jewish policies forced the Jewish Professor Kahle to leave for Great Britain in 1939 CE. This was the beginning of a problematic period for the Moroccan as well: Kahle’s successor Wilhelm Heffening (d. 1944 CE) rejected his thesis, and he had to face the increasingly unfriendly attitude

³⁶¹ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘araftuhum*, vol. I, pp. 215-216; al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fi aqtār mukhtalifa*, pp. 202-205.

³⁶² Umar Ryad, “A Salafī Student, Orientalist Scholarship and Radio Berlin in Nazi Germany: Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī and His Experiences in the West”, in Ryad, Umar.; Nordbruch, Götz. (eds.), *Transnational Islam in Interwar Europe: Muslim Activists and Thinkers*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp. 107-156, (see p. 112-113).

³⁶³ On the Islamic nationalism of Shakib Arslan see: William L. Cleveland, *Islam Against the West: Shakib Arslan and the Campaign for Islamic Nationalism*, London: al-Saqi Books, 1985.

³⁶⁴ Muḥamma al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘araftuhum*, vol. I, pp. 188-189. For details on his cooperation with Kahle and the latter’s praise, see: Umar Ryad, “A Salafī Student, Orientalist Scholarship and Radio Berlin in Nazi Germany: Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī and His Experiences in the West”, pp. 113-116.

of some of his colleagues. When the German ministry of propaganda offered him a job at the newly inaugurated Berlin Arabic Radio station, he left for Berlin. There, besides working in radio as a linguistic authority, he was a university lecturer and student under the supervision of Richard Hartmann (d. 1965 CE). Working in radio provided him with the opportunity to take his anti-colonial sentiments to his audiences at a larger scale.³⁶⁵ In 1940 CE, he defended his dissertation at the university before a committee of ten highly qualified Western scholars, including the famous twentieth-century German Orientalist Carl Brockelmann (d. 1956 CE). The topic of his dissertation was an annotated translation of the preface of *al-Jamāhīr fī maʿrifat al-jawāhir* (The Messes in the Knowledge of Gems) by al-Bīrūnī (d. 440/1048). In it, by al-Hilālī's own account, he successfully debunked the convictions of both Carl Brockelmann and Martin Hartmann (d. 1918 CE). The members of the dissertation committee approved al-Hilālī's stance and decided to pay the printing costs of the dissertation themselves.³⁶⁶

2.6. Return to His Homeland, Morocco

In the following year, while the Moroccan was busy with his anti-colonial work on Radio Berlin, Muḥammad al-Amīn al-Ḥusaynī (d. 1394/1974),³⁶⁷ the *muftī* (an official religious scholar entitled to issue legal opinions to the public) of Jerusalem, arrived in Germany and contacted him. The Moroccan Salafī was requested to deliver a political message to ʿAbd al-Khālīq al-Ṭarīs (d.

³⁶⁵ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *ʿUlamāʾ wa-mafakkirūn ʿaraftuhum*, vol. I, p. 200. Al-Hilālī's anti-colonial sermons had a huge impact on North African resistance movements. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm, the leader of the Rif war which lasted two years and targeted both the French and Spanish occupations, would confess to him that nothing had made him happier than his eloquent sermons on Berlin Arab Radio. This happened during a 1947 visit of al-Hilālī's to Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm in Cairo, while the latter was in exile there. Al-Hilālī, *al-Daʿwa ilā Allāh fī aqṭār mukhtalifa*, p. 52. For details on al-Hilālī's work on Berlin Arab Radio station, see: Henri Lauzière, "The Evolution of the Salafiyya in the Twentieth Century", pp. 251-259.

³⁶⁶ Hartmann, in the introductory remarks of his commentary on al-Bīrūnī's *Tarīkh mā li-l-Hind*, had reportedly claimed that al-Bīrūnī was a heretic (*zindīq*), and that he was too intelligent to believe in the religion of Islam. He also wrote that he had denigrated the Arab sciences, while Brockelmann, in his *History of the Arabic Literature*, consolidated Hartmann's assertion that al-Bīrūnī was right in denigrating the Arabic sciences. In addition, he claimed that he was initially a Shiʿī who only became a Sunni after his encounter with Sulṭān Maḥmūd al-Ghaznawī. Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *ʿUlamāʾ wa-mafakkirūn ʿaraftuhum*, vol. I, pp. 200-201. For a complete account of al-Hilālī's academic, intellectual and professional work during his stay in Berlin, see: Umar Ryad, "A Salafī Student, Orientalist Scholarship and Radio Berlin in Nazi Germany: Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī and His Experiences in the West", pp. 118-139.

³⁶⁷ On Muḥammad Amīn al-Ḥusaynī, see: al-Ziriklī, *al-Aʿlām*, vol. VI, pp. 45-46; ʿUmar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam al-muʿallifīn*, vol. III, p. 1448. He served in many high ranks in Palestine and was in broad contact with the wider Arab world. In 1941, he worked closely with Rashīd ʿAlī al-Kayālī, the Prime Minister of Iraq at the time, to dislodge British presence and hegemony. In the aftermath of the failed coup, which had happened to favour the Axis at the expense of the Allies, he fled to Berlin, the strongest partner in the Axis camp. See: ʿImād Ḥusayn, *Amīn al-Ḥusaynī yajib an yamūt*, on <http://archive.islamonline.net/?p=239> (last consultation 16.10.2016).

1390/1970), leader of the *Ḥizb al-Iṣlāḥ al-Waṭanī* (Party of National Reform), whom al-Hilālī mentions as a great North Moroccan warrior.³⁶⁸ While al-Hilālī provides no further clues about the nature of the message he was to deliver to his anti-colonial interlocutor in Morocco, beyond confining himself to mentioning that it was in the best interest of the Muslims there, Chanfi Ahmed claims that his aim was to mobilize Moroccans against France and Britain and in favour of Hitler.³⁶⁹ Whatever the case may be, al-Hilālī accepted the request and prepared to return to his native Morocco for the first time in twenty years. The Iraqi embassy in Berlin refused to renew al-Hilālī's passport due to instructions from Britain. Nevertheless, he succeeded to reach Tetouan with a Moroccan passport, facilitated by al-Ṭarīs.³⁷⁰ Upon his arrival in Tetouan in 1942 CE, he was detained by the Spanish authorities who suspected him of spying for Germany. His release was conditional upon his writing an article in the newspaper of *al-Ḥurriyya*, the tongue of *Ḥizb al-Iṣlāḥ al-Waṭanī*, denouncing any claim of Germany's over Morocco. Al-Hilālī consulted al-Ṭarīs over the issue and decided to do so. In fact, he published an article in which he denounced all foreign claims of hegemony over his native Morocco.³⁷¹ Since the Spanish authorities suspected that al-Hilālī belonged to the area called *Sulṭaniyya*, currently under the domination of French, he was forced to promise not to collaborate in any way with the nationalists of Morocco; otherwise, he would be handed over to the French authorities.³⁷²

His initial plan was to deliver the message to al-Ṭarīs and return to Berlin as soon as he could but his passport was taken away from him and he had to stay in Morocco longer than he had planned. His five-year stay was marked by a series of *da'wa* activities. Aḥmad b. al-Ṣiddīq, a shaykh of the *Darqāwiyya* brotherhood in Tangier, was the first there with whom al-Hilālī had an altercation there. The shaykh was a graduate of al-Azhar, and despite his anti-*taqlīd* (technical term for “blind imitation”) sentiments, he was a vehement defender of Sufi doctrines, including *waḥdat al-wujūd*

³⁶⁸ “*Al-mujāhid al-akbar fī shimāl al-maghribī*”. Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘araftuhum*, vol. I, p. 222. For more on al-Ṭarīs, see: al-Ziriklī, *al-A’lām*, vol. III, pp. 291-292.

³⁶⁹ Chanfi Ahmed, *West African ‘Ulamā’ and Salafism in Mecca and Medina*, p. 175.

³⁷⁰ Al-Hilālī, *Minḥa al-kabīr al-muta’ālī*, p. 173.

³⁷¹ Al-Hilālī informs us that in his long article he wrote, “Morocco belongs to Moroccans, neither French nor Spanish nor Germans have the right to occupy it”. (“*Inna al-maghrib li-l-Maghāriba lā ḥaqqā li-Faransiyyīn wa-lā li-Īsbāniyyīn wa-lā li-Jirmāniyyīn fī l-Istīlā’ ‘alayh*”). Al-Hilālī, *al-Da’wa ilā Allāh fī aqtār mukhtalifa*, p. 36. Al-Hilālī also wrote additional articles in *al-Ḥurriyya*, which would periodically cause bans and cash fines to be issued by French authorities. Al-Hilālī, *al-Da’wa ilā Allāh fī aqtār mukhtalifa*, p. 51.

³⁷² Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘araftuhum*, vol. I, p. 204; al-Hilālī, *al-Da’wa ilā Allāh fī aqtār mukhtalifa*, pp. 36-37.

(see footnote).³⁷³ The clash took place over an article al-Hilālī had published in *Ṣaḥīfat al-akhbār*, also due to requests by the Spanish authorities. Both side exchanged their arguments through the press; by al-Hilālī's own account, Aḥmad b. al-Ṣiddīq eventually approached him for a truce through his brother Muḥammad al-Zamzamī b. al-Ṣiddīq.³⁷⁴ At a feast in honour of al-Hilālī in Tangier, both parties decided not to publish further polemics in denigration of one another. The shaykh would even go on to write a recommendation for *al-Ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm fī ṣiffat al-ṣalāt al-nabyy al-karīm* (The Straight Path Concerning the Description of the Praise of the Generous Prophet), a book al-Hilālī wrote during his stay in Morocco, although a brother of the shaykh would severely criticize the Moroccan Salafī in one of his treatises of the latter's travel to Iraq in 1947 CE.³⁷⁵ Al-Hilālī's pro-Salafī activities in Morocco at the time seem to have been fruitful. He published and disseminated influential Salafī sources such as *Kashf al-shubuhāt* (The Disclosure of the Suspicions) by Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb and *Ziyārat al-qubūr* (Visiting the Tombs) by Ibn Taymiyya. Both sources were published with annotations and slight changes to the names of the authors. Another source which the Moroccan claims to have taught repeatedly to the public was 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥasan Āl al-Shaykh's *Faḥ al-majīd* (The Glorious Openings), a commentary on Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb's *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* (The Book on True Monotheism). The Saudi authorities provided him with huge quantities of these publications, which he disseminated in cities like Meknes, Tetouan and Erfoud.³⁷⁶ His successful *da'wa* earned him a lot of friends as well as enemies. When he allegedly criticized 'Abd al-Salām b. Mashīsh (d. 626/1228), one of the most influential Sufī masters in the history of Morocco, he angered the head of the local tribe of the Banū 'Arūs. The tribe reportedly planned to kill the Moroccan as revenge for their patron saint, and then settle the issue afterward through paying blood money (*diyya*) to the victim's tribe. It appears that, after consultation with al-Ṭarīs, al-Hilālī either sought the help of the *amīr* of Larache

³⁷³ In Sufism, *waḥdat al-wujūd* refers to the unity of universe. Opponents of Sufism denigrate Sufis for blurring the lines between God (the creator) and the universe (the creation) through this doctrine. For more details, see the criticism of Dakhīl Allāh in chapter six.

³⁷⁴ Muḥammad al-Zamzamī b. al-Ṣiddīq was a Salafī-minded scholar of strong anti-Sufi sentiment. He wrote a treatise in refutation of the Tijāniyya and played a pioneering role in the reconciliation of al-Hilālī with his brother Aḥmad b. al-Ṣiddīq. The Moroccan Salafī mentions him, with great respect, as "*al-Ustadh al-Shaykh*" (the master and the scholar). Al-Hilālī, *al-Da'wa ilā Allāh fī aqtār mukhtalifa*, p. 45.

³⁷⁵ Al-Hilālī was charged with collaborating with American and British missionaries active in the region. The reason for this was al-Hilālī's returning from Europe with an outlook that purportedly did not fall in with the tradition of the country. These serious allegations seem have angered al-Hilālī so much that even after twenty-five years he responded to the author with consistently harsh statements. For details see: al-Hilālī, *al-Da'wa ilā Allāh fī aqtār mukhtalifa*, pp. 39-55.

³⁷⁶ See details in al-Hilālī, *al-Da'wa ilā Allāh fī aqtār mukhtalifa*, pp. 56-58.

Khālīd al-Raysūnī, or that the latter, due to his respect for the Moroccan Salafī convinced the tribe of Banū ‘Arūs to quit their plan.³⁷⁷

In the course of his stay in Morocco, al-Hilālī undertook a rigorous campaign of Salafiyya proselytization. His activities included giving sermons in mosques, during which he warned people against blind imitation of the Mālikī legal school; he opposed the Ash‘arī creed in favour of the Salafī one; he combatted Sufism and its adherents. The goal was to spread the teaching of *ḥadīth* which, he intended, would eventually purify the religious life of the country. A great deal of his time was devoted to preaching the proper way of worship, topics such as *tawḥīd*, *tawakkul* (trust in Allah) and *istighātha* (seeking divine help) were inextricable components of his sermons, in addition to confrontations with local scholars over various legal and religious issues.³⁷⁸ It was during this campaign that he undertook a vehement altercation with an unnamed Tijānī shaykh,³⁷⁹ who was active as grand *mufti* of Northern Morocco and had even occupied the post of minister of justice at some time. This shaykh denigrated the Moroccan Salafī in his preaching sessions, to which the latter responded with some satirical poetry: a total of three poems (*qaṣā’id*), supposedly resembling in their effectiveness long-distance German missiles, known at the time for their degree of destruction. The shaykh was reportedly dismissed by Sulṭān Ḥasan b. Maḥdī due to exploitative legal opinions (*fatwās*), as spotted by the Spanish authorities.³⁸⁰

The Moroccan was determined to take his *da‘wa* to the next level; therefore, in 1946 CE in Tetouan, he founded *Lisān al-Dīn* (The Language of the Religion), a journal through which he would proselytize his Salafī convictions. *Lisān al-Dīn* adopted a global outlook, as *al-Manār* had already done, and informing readers about the situation of Muslims all over the globe. Salafīs from all over wrote articles for the journal. Mas‘ūd al-Nadawī, one of al-Hilālī’s favourite students from the subcontinent, wrote several exclusive articles on Islam on the Indian subcontinent. ‘Abd al-Zāhir Abu l-Samḥ, al-Hilālī’s friend and a fellow Salafī who still occupied the position of chief

³⁷⁷ For a full account of the issue, see: al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fī aqṭār mukhtalifa*, pp. 59-62 and al-Hilālī, *Minḥa al-kabīr al-muta‘ālī*, pp. 203-206.

³⁷⁸ For a complete account on al-Hilālī’s *da‘wa* work and the subsequent controversies in which he involved himself in during his stay in Morocco 1942–1947, see: Al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fī aqṭār mukhtalifa*, pp. 36-105; Henri Lauzière, “The Evolution of the Salafiyya in the Twentieth Century”, pp. 273-284

³⁷⁹ Al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fī aqṭār mukhtalifa*, p. 63. While al-Hilālī avoids mentioning the shaykh by name, one of his disciples, Bū Khabza, specifies him to be Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Rahūnī al-Tijānī, the historian of Tetouan known for his dry *taqlīd*. See: al-Hilālī, *Minḥa al-kabīr al-muta‘ālī*, p. 127.

³⁸⁰ See the full story in al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fī aqṭār mukhtalifa*, pp. 62-70.

imām at the Grand Mosque of Mecca, also wrote for the journal.³⁸¹ Al-Hilālī's own contributions concentrated on fighting the dominant Ash'arī creed of North Africa, whose founder Abu l-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī, according to al-Hilālī, had in fact regretted some of his own previously held beliefs and denounced them all. Thus, he argued, it was unfair to link al-Ash'arī with something he had repented of. This uncompromising campaign against polytheists and innovators—as al-Hilālī would put it—brought him face to face with a jurist from Tetouan. A close ally of the Spanish occupation, the jurist wished to incite the Spanish authorities against al-Hilālī. His demand was that the Moroccan Salafī should not publish his articles in *Lisān al-Dīn* until each one of them had been closely investigated by a group of scholars. In addition, he used his public lectures to attack al-Hilālī. Due to his superior skills of argumentation, the latter, by his own account, managed to deflect the danger, and composed a piece of poetry against the jurist. The poem reportedly evoked a wave of joy among the people, since the jurist was notorious for his collaboration with colonial authorities. The jurist attempted to respond with a poem of his own, but, tuned with abusive language, it failed to match that of his opponent; whereupon al-Hilālī composed another satirical piece to chastise the jurist further. The jurist even complained to Muḥammad b. al-'Arabī al-'Alawī, the beloved master of the Moroccan Salafī, as the latter would learn during his visit to Rabat to see his master.³⁸² At the same time, due to persistent demands on the part of his disciples,³⁸³ al-Hilālī produced a book entitled *Mukhtaṣar hady al-khalīl fī l-'aqā'id wa-'ibādāt al-jalīl* (The Handbook From the Friend Concerning the Creed and Worship of the Dignified). This evoked severe criticism from his opponents, who took the issue to Ḥasan b. Mahdī, the brother of Sulṭan Muḥammad V. The Moroccan Salafī was charged with denigrating the creed of the Ḥasan b. Mahdī's forefathers. Thus, he had recourse to 'Abdallāh Guennoun, a member of al-Majma' al-'Ilmi fī-al-Qāhira (The Scientific Association of Cairo), whose exculpation rescued al-Hilālī from the wrath of the King's brother.³⁸⁴ It was during his intense religious campaign that he received a letter from Ḥasan al-Bannā, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, inviting the Moroccan to

³⁸¹ For more details of the literary output of al-Hilālī and the work of *Lisān al-Dīn*, see: Henri Lauzière, "The Evolution of the Salafiyya in the Twentieth Century", pp. 280-284.

³⁸² For a full account of the event and al-Hilālī's satirical poems, see: al-Hilālī, *al-Da'wa ilā Allāh fī aqṭār mukhtalifa*, pp. 76-92.

³⁸³ It seems that al-Hilālī, in contradiction to his promise to the Spanish occupation, maintained close contacts with Ḥizb al-Islāh al-Waṭanī and took an active role in educating the cadres of the party. It was due to the insistence of his disciples from the party, particularly 'Abd Allah Quraysh and al-'Ayyāshī al-'Alamī, that he wrote *Mukhtaṣar hady al-khalīl*. See al-Hilālī, *al-Da'wa ilā Allāh fī aqṭār mukhtalifa*, p. 105.

³⁸⁴ Al-Hilālī, *al-Da'wa ilā Allāh fī aqṭār mukhtalifa*, pp. 71-73.

fulfil the duty of correspondent for the journal of *Ikhwān al-Muslimūn* (The Muslim Brothers), published between 1942 and 1946 CE. Since it was another opportunity to fight colonial atrocities, al-Hilālī accepted the offer without any financial concession and wrote a few articles under a pseudonym. The British and Spanish authorities would discover the collaboration and punish the Moroccan with jail; however, demonstrations by the people of Tangier would force the authorities to release al-Hilālī, who would soon head to Iraq.³⁸⁵

On the way to Iraq, the Moroccan first visited Madrid, and from there left for Cairo, where he was received by Muḥammad Ḥāmid al-Fiqī (d. 1378/1959)³⁸⁶ and other Salafīs. It was also an opportunity to meet Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Khaṭṭābī (d. 1382/1963),³⁸⁷ the leader of the Rīf war, then residing in exile in Egypt. Al-Ḥājj al-Amīn al-Ḥusaynī, who had sent the Moroccan on a mission to Morocco from Berlin, threw a feast in honour of the esteemed guest.³⁸⁸ In 1947 CE al-Hilālī arrived in Iraq for a third time. After an initial stay of six months in Mosul, occupied with *da‘wa* activities, he took residence in Baghdad instead of going to Basra as he had done on two previous occasions. He was appointed as professor of Arabic literature, Qur’ān and *ḥadīth* at the University of Baghdad, but then faced the enmity of the Shī‘ī prime minister Ṣāliḥ Jabr, who prevented the Moroccan from teaching at the university on the basis that the latter had returned to Iraq using a foreign passport, meaning that he was no longer possession of the citizenship of the country. Al-Hilālī would, however, soon discover that his rights to citizenship had been preserved,

³⁸⁵ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘araftuhum*, vol. I, p. 204. The colonial authorities did not want to punish him directly for his collaboration with Ikhwān; rather, they mobilized the minister of justice and governor of Shafshawan (Chefchaouen) Yazīd b. Ṣāliḥ, as well as Ḥasan al-‘Amratī, a judge working under the governor, to punish him. The plan was to detain him under the pretext that he was disturbing the religious life of Moroccan society due to his opposition to the collective recitation aloud of the Qur’ān in the mosques. The plan initially worked, but the rejection of al-Hilālī’s detention by the people of Chefchaouen and Tangier forced the authorities to release him again, as related in detail by al-Hilālī. In future, Yazīd b. Ṣāliḥ, the governor of Chefchaouen, would come to repeatedly ask al-Hilālī’s forgiveness; we do not know whether the Moroccan granted his wish or not. We do know that he produced satirical poems pertaining to all three figures responsible for his betrayal and subsequent short detention. See details in *al-Hilālī, al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fī aqtār mukhtalifa*, pp. 105-129.

³⁸⁶ Muḥammad Ḥāmid al-Fiqī was the founder of Jamā‘a Anṣār al-Sunna. He was born in 1892 in the city of Beheira. During his studies at al-Azhar (he graduated in 1917), he developed a strong tendency towards spreading the creed of Islam, which led to the foundation of the Anṣār al-Sunna in 1926. He passed away in 1959. For details of his life and writings, see: Mawfaq b. ‘Abdallāh ‘Alī Kadsa, *Juhūd al-shaykh Muḥammad Ḥāmid al-Fiqī fī nashr al-‘aqīda al-salafīyya*, (master’s thesis submitted to Umm al-Qura University) 1423-24.

<https://www.sahab.net/forums/index.php?app=forums&module=forums&controller=topic&id=47535> and http://www.alrased.net/main/articles.aspx?selected_article_no=6412.

³⁸⁷ On al-Khaṭṭīb, see: al-Zirikī, *al-A‘lām*, vol. VI, pp. 216-17.

³⁸⁸ It was not an easy task to leave Morocco for Iraq; al-Hilālī faced all sorts of obstacles from the Spanish and English authorities. For a detailed account of the difficulties he went through and his meetings with the above-mentioned Salafī friends, see: al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fī aqtār mukhtalifa*, pp. 130-138.

and that the prime minister had used the issue as a pretext. His personal file held by the Department of Criminal Investigation revealed that he was charged with entertaining enmity toward Shiism, with reference to his previous debate with al-Qazwīnī.³⁸⁹ Demonstrations against the government soon brought an unexpected dramatic change to the office of prime minister. The next prime minister Muḥammad al-Ṣadr, although a Shī'ī, albeit a moderate one, reissued al-Hilālī's citizenship and restored to him his previous teaching position.³⁹⁰

For the following two years, besides his academic commitments, al-Hilālī continued his Salafī *da'wa* in a small mosque in A'zamiyya. He then moved his preaching sessions to a newly built mosque near the great mosque of Abū Ḥanīfa. In his capacity as *imām* and *khaṭīb* of the mosque, he launched a new campaign against Sufis and Ḥanafī fanatics, those who followed the school of Abū Ḥanīfa in legal matters (*furū'*), but ignored his views regarding the creed (*uṣūl*), in which Abū Ḥanīfa was a strict follower of the pious forefathers.³⁹¹ The Moroccan Salafī thus warned the people against blind imitation and uncritical acceptance of someone's views, a matter Abū Ḥanīfa himself had prohibited. Furthermore, he persistently refused to pray in the mosque of Abū Ḥanīfa, claiming that it contained a legally unlawful shrine. Most of his energy was spent trying to eradicate the innovations that had become rooted in the realm of worship, such as unjustified prostrations, unknown modes of the recitation of the Qur'ān in the mosque, or the performance of an extra call to prayer (*ādhān*). Al-Hilālī's *da'wa* work was to prove helpful, and he would succeed into gathering a fair number of followers within a brief time. However, his *da'wa* activities would also earn him the enmity of the Ḥanafī inhabitants of the area as well. They accused the Moroccan of being a Wahhābī who wanted to destroy the *madhhab* of Abū Ḥanīfa. Sufis, extremist Ḥanafīs and the *mufīī* of Baghdad complained of al-Hilālī to the authorities, first to the minister of the religious endowment and eventually to the royal palace. Both attempts, al-Hilālī informs us, ended in disappointment for his opponents,³⁹² and thus his activities in the mosque of Dahhān continued for a total of ten years. In 1958 CE, Iraq witnessed a sharp political change, in the form of a military coup. The sudden change did not please the Moroccan, particularly for religious reasons. The new

³⁸⁹ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *'Ulamā' wa-mafakkirūn 'araftuhum*, vol. I, p. 215.

³⁹⁰ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *'Ulamā' wa-mafakkirūn 'araftuhum*, vol. I, pp. 216-217.

³⁹¹ Al-Hilālī, *al-Da'wa ilā Allāh fī aqṭār mukhtalifa*, p. 141. On the Salafī creed of Abū Ḥanīfa see his treatise *Fiqh al-akbar*, in which his opinions are identical with those of Salafīs except for one issue: that of the relationship of pious deeds to faith (*imān*). While Abū Ḥanīfa claims that one's faith may become weaker or stronger based on one's deeds, the Salafī creed articulates the impact of deeds on faith in terms of increase and decrease.

³⁹² For a detailed account of these events, see: al-Hilālī, *al-Da'wa ilā Allāh fī aqṭār mukhtalifa*, pp. 139-147.

government, under ‘Abd al-Karīm Qāsim (d. 1382/1963), was a military dictatorship which provided unconditional support to communist activists who previously had been kept in prison. In the following years, under various pretexts, they would challenge the Muslims and the practice of Islam in the country.³⁹³ The Moroccan thus decided to leave the country. The only viable way for him to do so was to leave for Bonn, Germany in 1959 CE, and from there to his native, now independent, Morocco.³⁹⁴

In Morocco, he settled in Fez, in the house of his master Muḥammad b. al-‘Arabī al-‘Alawī.³⁹⁵ This stay would continue for approximately nine years, until 1968 CE, during which time he would serve as university professor, state-appointed preacher and author, writing on a wide range of issues. At the same time, his stay was full of discomforts and frustrations due to the lenient religious life of Morocco in the post-colonial era.³⁹⁶ Soon after his arrival, he was appointed as professor of Arabic language and literature at the University of Muḥammad V (d. 1380/1961), a university recently founded, indeed just two years earlier in 1957, in Rabat. In addition to Arabic literature, he also taught Hebrew.³⁹⁷ The atmosphere of the university was not one that pleased the Moroccan. A critical attitude towards religion prevailed in the scholarly circles of the university, forcing al-Hilālī to write several articles in condemnation of agnosticism and atheism.³⁹⁸ Though he was initially warned by his master al-‘Arabī of the Moroccan society’s stubborn failure to respond positively to the sincere purifying missions of Salafī scholars such as himself and his beloved master Shu‘ayb al-Dukkālī, al-Hilālī could not hold back. His *da‘wa* activities were not confined to the university alone. The minister of endowments (*ḥabūs*) at the time, Makkī Bādū, became impressed by al-Hilālī’s scholarly credentials during a lecture given at the mosque of the al-‘Anāniyya religious institution in Fez. Makkī Bādū offered him a preaching post (*wā‘iz*) which

³⁹³ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘araftuhum*, vol. I, p. 217.

³⁹⁴ Al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fi aqṭār mukhtalifa*, pp. 152-153.

³⁹⁵ Al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fi aqṭār mukhtalifa*, p. 267.

³⁹⁶ In *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fi aqṭār mukhtalifa*, he relates at least three incidents of confrontation with Sufis and sectarian jurists in Morocco revolving around the doctrine of unity, true forms of worship, Sufi tenets and the Mālikī legal school. For details, see: al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fi aqṭār mukhtalifa*, p. 267-276.

³⁹⁷ His command of Arabic literature and foreign languages was so strong that some of his opponents thought that his area of expertise was limited to languages alone. When the Mauritanian Tijānī shaykh Muḥammad Fāl Abbā was asked by his disciple Aḥmad b. al-Hādī al-‘Alawī al-Shinqīṭī for his opinion on *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, the Mauritanian shaykh discredited the book, arguing that al-Hilālī lacked the necessary expertise in religious sciences. According to him, al-Hilālī was an expert in languages and literature, particularly the Hebrew. See Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 252.

³⁹⁸ Henri Lauzière, “The Evolution of the Salafīyya in the Twentieth Century”, p. 317.

allowed al-Hilālī to instigate a new Salafiyya campaign—the start of a new series of controversies for him. His strict definition of the notion of *tawḥīd*, his suspicious attitude toward the Mālikī legal school, and more importantly his condemnations of Sufism and the Sufi festivals known as *mewāsim*, made during preaching sessions in Meknes, caused him problems. He had moved from Fez to Meknes for the proximity of the latter to Rabat and its university, at which the Moroccan was teaching. Some Sufis, and some of the jurists of Meknes took the issue to the Ministry of Endowments, accusing the Moroccan of attacking the religious tradition of the region and demanding his dismissal. Nonetheless, thanks to the newly appointed minister Aḥmad Birkāsh and the presence of high-profile Salafīs such as ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dukkālī, son of Shu‘ayb al-Dukkālī at the ministry, the opponents did not have their wish fulfilled. Furthermore al-Hilālī’s outstanding oratory skills, by his own account, gained him the upper hand on almost every occasion.³⁹⁹

In the course of his vigorous campaign, the Moroccan condemned the annual veneration of Mawlay Idrīs (d. 177/793), an alleged descendant of the Prophet and patron saint of the city of Meknes. The event attracted thousands of visitors from all over the country. His mission work was also causing problems, not only for local peoples but for the government as well. The government of Ḥasan II was consistently supportive of religious pluralism for its own reasons, honouring local saints and even sending delegations to the annual veneration of some.⁴⁰⁰ Al-Hilālī’s struggle against the innovations that he saw prevailing in the religious life of the country continued in the Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Ḥasaniyya (The Ḥasaniyya House of Ḥadīth), founded in 1384/1964 by the king, at which al-Hilālī had been appointed as a professor of exegesis and Prophetic traditions by Aḥmad Birkāsh. During a course devoted to the *Muwattāʾ* of Imām Mālik, he came to clash with some of

³⁹⁹ On the accusations made against him by his opponents, and al-Hilālī’s connections to Salafīs occupying high posts at the ministry, and their supportive role, see: al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fi aqṭār mukhtalifa*, pp. 268-273.

⁴⁰⁰ Henri Lauzière, *The making of Salafism*, p. 181. During one of his lectures on the doctrine of *tawḥīd*, one of his numerous opponents asked him whether the king, Ḥasan II, also belonged among the polytheists, due to his support for Sufis and the strong presence of the government in Sufi festivals, which purportedly contained many acts of polytheism. The intention of this opponent was to bring al-Hilālī into direct conflict with the government, which attempt, thanks to his outstanding oratory skills, the latter overcame. Al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fi aqṭār mukhtalifa*, p. 274. However, he still came to direct serious criticism toward the government in his articles published in *Da‘wāt al-Ḥaqq* over the Bahā’ī affair. The Moroccan government was under immense pressure to overturn the decision, given by a local court, to execute a number of Bahā’ī missionaries who are said to have converted many people to their creed. In his writings in 1963 al-Hilālī, defended the decision for religious reasons, and criticized the government for its unwillingness to implementing the decision. Subsequently the Bahā’ī missionaries were released by the Supreme Court and the charges were dropped. For a complete account of the Bahā’ī affair, see: Henri Lauzière, “The Evolution of the Salafiyya in the Twentieth Century”, pp. 322-328; Henri Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism*, pp. 186-189.

the students, who were affiliated to the Tijāniyya brotherhood. Though few in number, they had the backing of some of the directors at the institute who were fond of Sufism.⁴⁰¹ Frustrated and disappointed by their constant transgressions and sabotage of the course, the Moroccan had to leave the Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Ḥasaniyya, which he had once praised and seen as the institute from which the true Islam would spread throughout Morocco. He resigned from his post after only two and a half months of being assigned to it.⁴⁰²

2.7. Teaching at the Islamic University of Medina

Meanwhile, during a pilgrimage season in Mina, he met Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Bāz, who was in charge of the Islamic University of Medina at the time. The latter offered him a teaching post at the university. Given the disappointing conditions of post-colonial Morocco, al-Hilālī immediately accepted the offer.⁴⁰³ This would reportedly give him the chance to conduct his *da‘wa* work in a relatively free environment, compared to his native country. Therefore, he once again moved to the holy lands and devoted the following six years to teaching and preaching activities in Medina. There, al-Hilālī collaborated with Dr Muḥammad Muḥsin Khān (b. 1345/1927), a native Pakistani and director of the university’s hospital, publishing an annotated English translation of the holy revelation based on the commentaries of al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī and Ibn Kathīr. Although the Hilālī-Khān translation of the Qur’ān has been subjected to severe criticism for its literary and conservative approach, it continues to maintain its status as the most widespread English translation in Europe, particularly in English-speaking countries.⁴⁰⁴ The Moroccan also helped Muḥammad Muḥsin Khān to complete an English translation of the *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (The Canonical Collection of Prophetic Traditions by al-Bukhārī), a project Khān had previously begun. Al-Hilālī’s *da‘wa* mission and literary output during this period was not confined to Muslims: groups from other faiths were equally interesting to him. In 1973 CE, he wrote *al-Barāhīn al-injīliyya ‘alā anna ‘Isā ‘alayhi al-salām dakhīl fī l-‘ubūdiyya wa-la hazza lahu fī l-uluhiyya* (Evangelical Proofs that Jesus is a Servant of God and Has Absolutely No Divine Status), a book

⁴⁰¹ Al-Hilālī informs us that the dean of the faculty himself was a Sufī who believed that Sufī masters, after reaching the state of *fānā* (annihilation), were no longer required to fulfil their religious duties; due to their lofty status they could then commit grave sins otherwise forbidden for Muslims. Al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fī aqṭār mukhtalifa*, p. 278.

⁴⁰² Al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fī aqṭār mukhtalifa*, pp. 276-78. For a piece of poetry composed by al-Hilālī in praise of *Dār al-Ḥadīth*, see: al-Hilālī, *al-Da‘wa ilā Allāh fī aqṭār mukhtalifa*, pp. 278-281.

⁴⁰³ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘araḥtuhum*, vol. I, p. 217.

⁴⁰⁴ Chanfi Ahmed, *West African ‘Ulamā’ and Salafism in Mecca and Medina*, p. 175.

in which he undertakes a frontal attack on the very doctrinal basis of Christianity. The study examined many passages from the Bible in general and from Matthew in particular, aiming at proving the illogicality of the doctrine of the Incarnation and thus that Christianity was an untenable religion. The purpose was to provide Muslims with irrefutable arguments in their debates against Christians.⁴⁰⁵

In 1974 CE, the Moroccan left his teaching post at the university and returned to his native Morocco once again.⁴⁰⁶ He chose to settle in the city of Meknes where he had been the object of several controversies prior to his most recent stay in Saudi Arabia. Some momentous events had taken place during his absence which politically enabled him to conduct his *da'wa* with a fair degree of ease.⁴⁰⁷ Towards the end of the decade, this also enabled him to publish his magnum opus, *Sabīl al-rashād* (The Path of Right Conduct), a Qur'ānic exegesis described by Henri Lauzière as undeniably “the crowning achievement of his career”. Unlike traditional exegetical studies it did not provide a complete commentary on the Qur'ān; rather, it is concentrated on those passages that pertain to the doctrine of *tawhīd*, divided into four parts: on that of lordship (*tawhīd al-rubūbiyya*), on that of worship (*tawhīd al-'ibāda*), on that of divine names and attributes (*tawhīd al-asmā' wa-l-ṣifāt*), and on adherence (*tawhīd al-ittibā'*), that is, on following both the Qur'ān and the Sunna.⁴⁰⁸ *Sabīl al-rashād* was first published in Morocco towards the end 1970s and a few years later reissued in a three-volume edition distributed free of charge at al-Maktab al-Thaqāfī al-Sa'ūdī bi-l-Maghrib (the Saudi Cultural Centre in Rabat, Morocco).⁴⁰⁹

In the early 1980s CE, the old Moroccan moved to Casablanca and resettled there. He devoted his life, as usual, to *da'wa* activities, from sermons in the mosques, including the popular neighbourhood of 'Ayn al-Shuq (Aïn Chock), to articles in various religious magazines, to private

⁴⁰⁵ Henri Lauzière, “The Evolution of the Salafiyya in the Twentieth Century”, pp. 360-362.

⁴⁰⁶ Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *'Ulamā' wa-mafakkirūn 'arāfūhum*, vol. I, p. 217.

⁴⁰⁷ The failed coups of 1971 and 1972 had left their marks on the political landscape. Al-Hilālī's arrival and engagement in mosque circles was welcomed by King Hasan II. See: Muḥammad b. Sa'ad al-Shuway'ir, *al-Shaykh Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī* 1311-1407; also an online article on <http://www.al-jazirah.com/2008/20080321/ar3.htm>. While in return, al-Hilālī repeatedly praised the king for his promotion of *ḥadīth* literature, this should not, however, be seen as an attempt on the part of al-Hilālī to confer legitimacy to the regime. Rather, it was a mutual pragmatic exchange. For more details, see: Henri Lauzière, “The Evolution of the Salafiyya in the Twentieth Century”, pp. 367-371.

⁴⁰⁸ Al-Hilālī, *Sabīl al-rashād fī hudā khayr al-'ibād*, vol. I, p. 131.

⁴⁰⁹ For a detailed account of the content of the work, see: Henri Lauzière, “The Evolution of the Salafiyya in the Twentieth Century”, pp. 381-89; Henri Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism*, pp. 210-211.

lessons in his own house for committed followers and students. There, he would once again condemn Sufis: this time, a leader of the Sufi-inspired group al-‘Adl wa-l-Iḥsān (Justice and Beneficence), ‘Abd al-Salām Yasīn would constitute the object of his criticism; he was charged with unbelief and religious innovation.⁴¹⁰ Approaching the end of his life, al-Hilālī criticized Shiism and Khumaynī over a number of issues, which in his view contradicted the Sunna of the Prophet: the doctrine of believing in a hidden *imām* who would reveal himself at the end of times, their considering the first three rightly guided caliphs as oppressors, were among the many other, for him, untenable religious allegations that he raised.⁴¹¹ He did not stop his dense proselytizing mission for what he perceived to be the true Islam until he passed away in Casablanca on 25 Shawwāl 1407 equivalent to 22 June 1987 CE. He seems to have got married at least twice, once in Medina and once in Basra. While not much conclusive information is available on his offspring, we know about his son Shakib al-Hilālī, and daughter Khawla al-Hilālī; the latter taught Arabic literature in many Universities in Iraq.⁴¹² As far as his students are concerned, they were scattered from North Africa to the Indian subcontinent and from Middle East to Europe.

2.8.Writings

Besides being a vehement activist and preacher, the Moroccan Salafī was a prolific author, whose literary production extends to a number of the Islamic sciences: from Qur’ānic exegeses to Prophetic traditions, from jurisprudence to Arabic language and its grammar, and from polemics and controversies to poems and tales. For a list of his writings, see appendix II.

⁴¹⁰ His critique of Yasīn was solely informed by theological concerns, although Yasīn had challenged the authority of King Ḥasan II. This shows that al-Hilālī was an apolitical purist Salafī, pursuing a rigorous struggle against Sufis. For the Moroccan’s excommunication of Yasīn, see: Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Dhu l-Fiqār, *Mashā’ikh al-sūfiyya: al-inḥirāf al-tarbawī wa-l-fasād al-‘aqdī: ‘Abd al-Salām Yasīn ustadhan wa murshidan*, Rabat: Tūb Press, 2005, p. 121. Dhu l-Fiqār relates the issue on the authority of ‘Umar al-Ḥadushī’s *al-Jahl wa-l-ijrām fī ḥizb al-‘adl wa-l-iḥsān*.

⁴¹¹ For further details of al-Hilālī’s criticism of the Sufi ‘Abd al-Salām Yasīn and Khumaynī, see: Henri Lauzière, “The Evolution of the Salafīyya in the Twentieth Century”, pp. 367-375.

⁴¹² See the preface by Mashūr b. Ḥasan Āl Salmān in al-Hilālī’s, *Minḥa al-kabīr al-muta‘ālī*, p. 9. An uncertified source claims that the Moroccan married at least one Algerian, one Iraqi, one German, two Saudi and three Moroccan women, and had a total of six children.

3. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad Dakhīl Allāh

Unfortunately, we lack sufficient information on the life of Dakhīl Allāh. The scant data provided here were mostly acquired via online correspondence with the man himself.

3.1. Early Life and Education

‘Alī b. Muḥammad Dakhīl Allāh, also known as ‘Alī al-Suwaylim, was born in Saudi Arabia around mid twentieth century. In his childhood, he studied under a number of different scholars.

3.2. Anti-Tijānism

It is not generally surprising for Salafīs to compose anti-Sufi treatises; doing so is perceived as part of the *da‘wa* mission which Salafīs themselves view as the ineluctable method for spreading the true Islamic creed. However, there is always a precise reason for writing in refutation of a specific Sufi denomination, and in the case of Dakhīl Allāh, it was the questions received by Saudi House of Legal Opinions about the the doctrines of the Tijaniyya brotherhood, particularly those coming from Northe and West Africa. It seems that after his confrontations with the dynamic and intensive Tijānī presence in Indonesia he published a short version (*mukhtaṣar*)⁴¹³ of his anti-Tijānī book. At the time he was serving as the Saudi missionary and supervisor of the Ma‘had al-‘Ulūm al-Islāmiyya wa-l-‘Arabiyya fī Indonesyā (The Institute for Islamic and Arabic Sciences in Indonesia) which was initially established in 1400/1980 as the Ma‘had Ta‘līm al-Lugha al-‘Arabiyya (The Institute for Teaching the Arabic Language), under the umbrella of the Jāmi‘a al-Imām Muḥammad b. Sa‘ūd al-Islamiyya (Al-Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud). In 1432/2012. In the aftermath of a systematic and intensive period of expansion, its status was elevated from that of an institute for teaching the language alone, to a fully fledged institute involved in teaching the Islamic sciences at university level, in addition to its initial task of expanding literacy in the Arabic language in Indonesia. In its first teaching year, the Ma‘had had a total of 141 students, a moderate number in comparison to its 2912 students in the academic year of 1433–1434/2013–2014. A total of twelve thousand students have successfully graduated from the institute to date, and it has opened three branches in the country, along with undertaking the task of supervision of the Ma‘had

⁴¹³ The short version of his anti-Tijānī study was published in 1422/2002 by the Saudi publishing house of Dār al-‘Āṣima. For an online copy of it see: https://ia800308.us.archive.org/33/items/abu_yaala_muktasar_tijaniya/muktasar_tijaniya.pdf

Khādim al-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn fī Bandā Ātshiyya (The Institute of Khādim al-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn in Banda Aceh), a relatively new institute for teaching the Islamic Sciences. The achievements of the Ma'had have led to its visitation by many local and external high-ranking political and scholarly officials.⁴¹⁴

3.3.Current Task

Dakhīl Allāh is married and father of an unknown number of children. Currently, he teaches at the Kuliyyat Uṣūl al-Dīn (The Faculty for Teaching the Fundamentals of the Religion) in the Islamic University of Al-Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud in Riyadh, where he has supervised numerous master's and PhD dissertations.⁴¹⁵

3.4.Writings

For a list of Dakhīl Allāh's writings, both published and unpublished, see appendix III.

4. Conclusion

All three of these Salafī opponents of the Tijāniyya have forged careers in their own unique ways. The Malian al-Ifriqī was born in a Sufi-friendly environment, acquiring an intensive secular training during his childhood and adulthood, in addition to some small degree of religious knowledge prior to his enrolment in the French missionary institution in Timbuktu. He felt the need for more sophisticated religious knowledge in the aftermath of his altercations with Christian missionaries at the institution, and during his subsequent career as a teacher and government employee. These debates, among others, forced him to undertake migration to the holy lands, where he would become acquainted with the Salafī doctrine to which the remaining years of his life were dedicated. His confrontation with the Tijāniyya was not intentional. He even remained a faithful student to a Tijānī shaykh in the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina. However, his zeal for spreading what he knew to be the true creed of the religion among African pilgrims brought him face to face with proponents of the brotherhood. Thus, as will be seen in chapter four, his brief treatise in refutation of the Tijānī doctrines was not intended to be polemical in nature; rather, he

⁴¹⁴ For further and detailed information on administrative structure, strategic purposes, history and achievements of the Ma'had al-'Ulūm al-Islāmiyya wa-l-'Arabiyya see its official website <http://lipia.org/new/index.php/ct-menu-item-3>.

⁴¹⁵ Online correspondence with Dakhīl Allāh on 7.11.2017.

composed his treatise upon the request of his interlocutors, whom he repeatedly addressed as brothers. Such a soft approach is one of a kind in the history of polemical debates between the Tijānīs and their adversaries. Unlike his anti-Tijānism, his adoption of anti-colonial attitude was intentional and intense. The most effective method of fighting colonialism, in his eyes, was the education and training of the new generations. Nothing could prove more effective in the struggle against foreign hegemony over Muslim West Africa than the true Islamic creed. His presence at the centre of an Hijaz-based *'ulamā'* network played a crucial role in spreading anti-colonial sentiments, attracting the attention of French officials who categorized him as a non-political but extremely dangerous Wahhābī. His relationship with his disciples, based on their own accounts, was sincere and full of love and compassion. Many incidents related in this regard reveal his attitude towards religious authority as embedded in the foundational texts of the religion.

Like his Malian predecessor, the Moroccan al-Hilālī was born in an intense Sufi milieu, resulting in his embrace of the Tijāniyya for no less than nine years. Eventually, he broke up with the brotherhood, occasioned by eye-opening debate with a sophisticated Salafī scholar in Rabat, leading to a radical change in his religious affiliation and the magnificent international career that followed. To deepen his Salafī convictions, the Moroccan travelled to various destinations from the Middle East to the Indian Subcontinent, where he not only established long-lasting relationships with leading religious figures of the time but also gained the empowering knowledge of the sciences of *ḥadīth*. Unlike al-Ifriqī, his confrontations with opponents were intentional and strategic. In Egypt, he combatted Sufis of different denominations. In Hijaz, he purposefully attacked the leading Tijānī figure of the region and reportedly succeeded to silence him. Sufis were not the only group among his opponents: in the following years, he faced a wide spectrum of opponents, from rigid followers of the Ḥanafī legal school to narrow-minded Shī'ī scholars, and from Christian missionaries to well-known Orientalists, during his European adventure in Germany. This period of his life was marked by fierce anti-colonial struggle, making him a persona non grata in the eyes of Spanish, French and British colonial authorities in North Africa and the Middle East. He had to go to jail and face various intrigues and punishments at the hands of cruel colonial officers. His stance in favour of textual religious authority in contrast to personified authority is documented on many occasions.

His struggle against proponents of the Tijāniyya began as early as his own departure from the brotherhood. Nonetheless, his written attack on the order came relatively late, during his teaching years at the Islamic University of Medina. As may will be seen in chapter five, his treatise carries the hallmarks of polemical writings. In it, Tijānīs were attacked for nurturing anti-Islamic convictions; their supreme master, however, was highly esteemed by the Moroccan, who held that his reputation had been destroyed by ignorant Tijānīs themselves. Al-Hilālī's appreciation of Aḥmad al-Tijānī may be observed in the panegyric *qaṣīda* (a piece of poetry) he composed in honour of the supreme master of the Tijāniyya, which, although it was composed in his old Tijānī days, was published in issue 538 of the Moroccan journal *al-Mīthāq* in 1424 /July 1987, shortly after al-Hilālī's death.⁴¹⁶ The uncompromising polemical style of this extremely confident Moroccan, who went so far as to excommunicate some of his opponents from the realm of Islam, earned him the epithetical nickname of Shaqī al-Dīn (The Miserable Believer) in parallel to his original name as Taqī al-Dīn (The God-fearing Believer).⁴¹⁷

The career of the Saudi Dakhīl Allāh has not too much in common with his African predecessor's, except for his zeal for the Salafī creed and anti-Tijānism. He was born in a Salafī/Wahhābī dominated milieu. Questions about the the status of the Tijāniyya brotherhood directed to the Saudi House of legal Opinions served as his motivation for following in al-Ifriqī's and al-Hilālī's footsteps, leading to his composition of a refutation of the Tijānī doctrines. When compared to his predecessors, Dakhīl Allāh takes a rigorously methodical approach in his well-organized treatise, as will be seen in chapter six.

⁴¹⁶ The poem is included in al-Hilālī, *Minḥa al-kabīr al-muta'ālī*, pp.729-731.

⁴¹⁷ Henri Lauzière relates that he heard many of al-Hilālī's detractors in Rabat, Sale and Casablanca derogatively calling him by this title. See: Henri Lauzière, "The Evolution of the Salafīyya in the Twentieth Century", p. 371.

CHAPTER THREE: TIJĀNĪ AUTHORS—THE DEFENDERS

1. Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ b. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Tijānī al-Miṣrī

1.1. Early Life and Education

Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ (b. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Tijānī al-Miṣrī, occasionally henceforth “the Egyptian”) was born in the present-day Governorate of Monufia in Egypt in 1315/1897, into a family claiming dual lineage with the Prophet.⁴¹⁸ Having memorized the holy Qur’ān by heart while still being a young boy,⁴¹⁹ he devoted himself to the study of Islamic sciences such as Qur’ānic exegesis,⁴²⁰ the science of the Prophetic traditions,⁴²¹ jurisprudence⁴²² and Sufism, as well as Arabic literature and grammar.⁴²³ He mastered the art of calligraphy under a certain Muḥammad Murtaḍā Ṣābir. His main area of interest was *‘ulūm al-ḥadīth* (the science of the Prophetic traditions), for which he would later become famous. His quest for knowledge took him to many different cities in Egypt, and among the notable instructors with whom he studied during the earlier phases of his education, Shaykh ‘Abdallāh Ḥamāda, Shaykh Sulaymān al-Bannā, Shaykh Yūsuf al-Kawmī, Shaykh Muḥammad al-Mahdī, Shaykh Ismā‘īl al-Islambūlī, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Mun‘im Qāsim, Shaykh Yūsuf al-Jadawī, Shaykh Muḥammad Māḍī al-Rakhāwī, Shaykh Salāma al-‘Azāmī and Shaykh ‘Abd al-Majīd Khalīl are worthy of mention.

⁴¹⁸ ‘Abd al-Bāqī Miftāḥ, *Aḍwā’ ‘alā al-shaykh Aḥmad al-Tijānī wa-atbā’ih*, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2009, p. 288. Through his father, he is said to be a descendant of Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī, the grandson of the Prophet, whereas through his mother he is related to Ḥasan b. ‘Alī, also a grandson of the Prophet. See Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Ḥujjat al-islām al-‘arīf billāh sīdī Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Tijānī*, Cairo: Dār Gharīb, 2004, p. 3; Al-Fātiḥ al-Nūr, *al-Tijānīyya wa-l-mustaqbal*, p. 198.

⁴¹⁹ He mastered the ḥafṣ recitation style under ‘Abdallāh Ḥamāda and Sulaymān al-Bannā, and partially under Shaykh Khalīl al-Jināīynī. Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Ḥujjat al-islām*, p. 11; Al-Fātiḥ al-Nūr, *al-Tijānīyya wa-l-mustaqbal*, p. 198.

⁴²⁰ His master in Qur’ānic exegesis was Yūsuf al-Dajawī. Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Ḥujjat al-islām*, p. 11; Al-Fātiḥ al-Nūr, *al-Tijānīyya wa-l-mustaqbal*, pp. 198-199.

⁴²¹ One of his earliest masters in the sciences of the *ḥadīth* was Shaykh ‘Abd al-Majīd Khalīl, of whom he was more like a friend than a student. The latter even issued an *ijāza* (oral or written certificate of authorization) to Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ’s son Aḥmad. See: Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Ḥujjat al-islām*, p. 14.

⁴²² He learned *fiqh* from ‘Abd al-Mun‘im Qāsim. See: Al-Fātiḥ al-Nūr, *al-Tijānīyya wa-l-mustaqbal*, p. 198.

⁴²³ ‘Abd al-Bāqī Miftāḥ, *Aḍwā’ ‘alā al-shaykh al-Tijānī wa-atbā’ih*, p. 288. His knowledge of Arabic grammar and literature (*‘ilm al-lughā*) came from Shaykh Yūsuf al-Kawmī, Shaykh Muḥammad al-Mahdī and Shaykh Ismā‘īl al-Islambūlī. See: al-Fātiḥ al-Nūr, *al-Tijānīyya wa-l-mustaqbal*, p. 198 and Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Ḥujjat al-islām*, p. 11.

1.2. Love for Sufism and Initiation into the Tijāniyya

Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ is said to have shown a great interest in Sufism from a very young age. He was first initiated into the Khalwatiyya order by Ismā‘īl b. al-Shaykh Salīm b. Salīm al-Sibā‘ī al-Khalwatī as a young boy of just twelve years of age. After the death of his master, he submitted himself to the authority of Shaykh Maḥmūd b. Khalīl,⁴²⁴ albeit he was familiarized with Shaykh Ṣā‘ al-Sibā‘ī’s *al-Sir al-mukattam fī ism al-a‘zam* (The Hidden Secret Regarding the Greatest divine Name), by Salīm b. Ismā‘īl, the son of his late master. He was initiated into the Shādhiliyya and Naqshabandiyya orders on the authority of Muḥammad al-‘Aqqād and Shaykh Jawda al-Naqshbandī respectively. The Egyptian would later renew his adherence to the Naqshabandiyya, and probably received an *ijāza* from Salāma al-‘Azāmī, the lieutenant (*khalīfa*) of the famous Shaykh Muḥammad al-Amīn al-Kurdī al-Naqshbandī, the author of *Tanwīr al-qulūb fī mu‘āmalat al-‘allām al-ghuyūb* (Enlightening the Hearts Regarding the Affairs of the One Who knows the Hidden Secrets of Hearts).⁴²⁵ However, his authority to initiate others into the order was received from Shaykh Amīn al-Baghdādī al-Naqshbandī. In addition to the three above-mentioned orders, his successor and the previous head of the Tijāniyya *zāwiya* in Cairo, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ (d. 1439/2017)⁴²⁶ also mentions the Bayūmmiyya, another Sufī order, with which Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ became affiliated prior to the Tijāniyya brotherhood.⁴²⁷ The turning point in his life was his meeting in 1337/1919 with Aḥmad al-Sibā‘ī al-Biqārī, originally from Marrakesh but residing in Egypt, who initiated him into the Tijāniyya. A strong bond developed between the two, and the Egyptian studied certain Tijānī sources under the Moroccan shaykh at the latter’s home. As well al-Biqārī, he was also initiated to the order by Shaykh Badr Salāma and Shaykh Muḥammad Abū Madkūr al-Ṭaṣfāwī, both of whom took their authorization from the Mauritanian Shaykh Aḥmad al-Tijānī al-Shinqīṭī. The Egyptian would later meet with al-Shinqīṭī himself and take authorization directly from him,⁴²⁸ and, still later, received countless *ijāzāt* from leading Tijānī figures of North and West Africa. A prestigious *silsila* (chain of transmission) was passed

⁴²⁴ According to ‘Abd al-Bāqī Miftāḥ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ spent a whole year constantly reciting the *haylala*, the first of many *dhikr* formulas in the Khalwatī order, accompanied by heavy supererogatory worship marked by fasting during the day and holding vigil at night. See ‘Abd al-Bāqī Miftāḥ, *Aḍwā’ alā al-shaykh al-Tijānī wa-atbā’ih*, p. 288.

⁴²⁵ Shaykh Salāma al-‘Azāmī played a crucial role in the consolidation of Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ’s religious education. See: ‘Abd al-Bāqī Miftāḥ, *Aḍwā’ alā al-shaykh al-Tijānī wa-atbā’ih*, p. 288.

⁴²⁶ On Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ see: Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Ṭa‘mī, *Ṭabaqā’at al-Tijāniyya*, pp. 307-311.

⁴²⁷ Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Hujjat al-islām*, p. 9.

⁴²⁸ Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Ṭa‘mī, *Ṭabaqā’at al-Tijāniyya*, pp. 58.

to him in 1356/1937 by Shaykh Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Ḥumma al-Tijānī (d. 1346/1978),⁴²⁹ the leading Tijānī figure in Algeria and head of the *zāwiya* of Temacine at the time.⁴³⁰

1.3. Journeys and Acquisition of *Ijāzāt*

Although, the Egyptian was born in lower Egypt, in his youth he chose to reside in Cairo, where he would later built his own *zāwiya*.⁴³¹ He was also keen to visit other Tijānī centres and establish contacts and friendly relationships with fellow Tijānīs.⁴³² To this end, he visited many Islamic religious centres in the Middle East, as well as in North and West Africa. Over the course of his journeys to Palestine, Syria, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and more than once each to Sudan and Hijaz, he paid visits to some of the most distinguished Muslim and Tijānī scholars. In Syria he met Badr al-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī and received a number of authorizations pertaining to various religious sciences, such as Qur'ānic exegesis, jurisprudence and *Kutub al-sitta* (the six canonical sources of the Prophetic traditions in Sunnī Islam).⁴³³ During his travels to Morocco, he visited the spiritual master of the Kattāniyya order, 'Abd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī (d. 1382/1962).⁴³⁴ He, like the Syrian shaykh, seems to have issued *ijāzāt* to the Egyptian in many religious fields, including exegesis, jurisprudence, and Prophetic traditions, particularly the *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Muwattā* of Imām Mālik. For the later source, he also obtained an *ijāza* from Amat Allāh, the daughter of the famous Indian *ḥadīth* expert Shaykh 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Dihlawī.⁴³⁵ Other outstanding Sufi personalities

⁴²⁹ Shaykh Ahmad b. Ḥumma al-Tijānī was a great grandson of al-Ḥājj 'Alī al-Tamāsīnī, the *khalīfa* of Aḥmad al-Tijānī and the first head of the Tijānī *zāwiya* in Temacine. He undertook the leadership of the *zāwiya* from 1927 until his death in 1978. For an account of his life, see: 'Abd al-Bāqī Miftāḥ, *Aḍwā' alā al-shaykh al-Tijānī wa-atbā'ih*, pp. 291-292.

⁴³⁰ 'Abd al-Bāqī Miftāḥ, *Aḍwā' alā al-shaykh al-Tijānī wa-atbā'ih*, pp. 288-289. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz mentions several chains of transmission attained by the Egyptian. For a complete account of his *ijāzāt* in the Tijāniyya order, see: Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, *Hujjat al-islām*, p. 11-14. Al-Fātiḥ al-Nūr claims that the Egyptian received Tijāniyya from no less than forty Tijānī authorities, all of whom had reached the rank of *quṭbāniyya*. See: Al-Fātiḥ al-Nūr, *al-Tijāniyya wa-l-mustaqbal*, p. 199.

⁴³¹ Rüdiger Seesemann, "The History of the Tijāniyya and the Issue of tarbiya in Darfur (Sudan)", pp. 204-205.

⁴³² This was a common goal and undertaking of leading Tijānī figures, which in addition to establishing contacts, was meant to bring them a certain amount of prestige and acceptance in Tijānī circles. Aḥmad Sukayrij travelled extensively in North and West Africa for the same reason. See: Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijaniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, 1965. Another Tijānī figure known for his travels to different Tijānī centres is Ibrāhīm Niyās. See: Rüdiger Seesemann, *The Divine Flood*, 2011.

⁴³³ Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, *Hujjat al-islām*, p. 14.

⁴³⁴ On 'Abd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī see: al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, vol. 6, pp. 187-188.

⁴³⁵ Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, *Hujjat al-islām*, p. 14. 'Abd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī is identified by many as one of the most ardent enemies of the Tijāniyya. See, Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijāniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, pp. 24-25. For al-Kattānī's anti-Tijānī sentiments, as reported by al-Hilālī at a time when the latter was still affiliated to the order, see: al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiyya*, pp. 13-14. Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz's visit to such a personality, known

with whom the Egyptian exchanged *ijāzāt* were Aḥmad Sukayrij of Morocco⁴³⁶ and Alfā Hāshim, who was the leading Tijāni *muqaddam* in Hijaz until his death. In addition the renewal of his adherence to the Tijāniyya, al-Ḥāfiẓ received authorizations in *Kutub al-sitta* from Alfā Hāshim.⁴³⁷ In the first half of the previous century, the holy lands were a favourite destination for scholars from all around the world. This fact enabled al-Ḥāfiẓ to visit many scholars during his travels to Hijaz. There, he met a number of *shuyūkh*, including ‘Abd al-Bāqī al-Anṣārī Shaykh ‘Abd al-Sattār al-Ṣiddīqī al-Hindī, ‘Abdallāh al-Ghāzī al-Hindī, and Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynī (in Mecca), and Muḥammad al-Khafājī al-Dimyāṭī,⁴³⁸ collecting and exchanging as much *ijāzāt* as he could. Amongst the countless authorizations he received over the course of his journeys, his favourite was the one issued by Muḥammad al-Kabīr, a great-grandson of Aḥmad al-Tijānī and the head of the brotherhood at the time. Muḥammad al-Kabīr is said to have provided al-Ḥāfiẓ with a full authorization (*al-iṭlāq al-‘āmm*) to initiate people into the order, as well as to appoint as many *muqaddams* as he would like to. Tijānī sources speak also of a mysterious guarantee obtained from the shaykh by the Egyptian, which was to raise eyebrows and cause a certain jealousy in Tijānī circles.⁴³⁹ Muḥammad al-Kabīr was not the only descendant of the supreme master of the order to authorize al-Ḥāfiẓ: the Egyptian had the privilege of meeting and receiving authorizations from several other members of the Tijānī family including Sīdī Maḥmūd b. Sīdī al-Bashīr.⁴⁴⁰ Another precious *ijāza* for which, exclusively, he travelled to Sudan, was the one issued by Sharīf Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Mun‘im (1353/1935), known as “the man with the golden *silsila*”,⁴⁴¹ directly connecting him to the supreme leader of the Tijāniyya through Muḥammad al-

for his anti-Tijānīsm, consolidates our conviction in the the moderateness of al-Ḥāfiẓ, which can also be observed in the fact of his moderate responses to opponents, which sometimes even evoked criticism from his fellow Tijānīs.

⁴³⁶ In Morocco, besides visiting the leading defender of the order at the time, Aḥmad Sukayrij, the Egyptian met with many other Tijānī scholars, such as Muḥammad Al-Nazfī, the author of *al-Durra al-kharīda*. See, Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Hujjat al-islām*, p. 13.

⁴³⁷ Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Hujjat al-islām*, p. 15.

⁴³⁸ Another of al-Ḥāfiẓ’s authorizations in *Kutub al-Sitta* was provided by Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Bāqī, with different authorizations obtained from the rest of the scholars mentioned here. See: Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Hujjat al-islām*, p. 15.

⁴³⁹ Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ refers to this guarantee without further description of its contents. However, some of the statements of Muḥammad al-Kabīr provide us with a clue allowing us to estimate the nature of the guarantee: the head of the brotherhood is said to have referred to the Egyptian as “beloved in *dārayn*” (meaning both here and hereafter), regardless of the latter’s acts or conduct. This suggests that the guarantee issued was of admission to paradise in the company of Muḥammad al-Kabīr. See: Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Hujjat al-islām*, p. 13; Al-Fātiḥ al-Nūr, *al-Tijāniyya wa-l-mustaqbal*, p. 199.

⁴⁴⁰ Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Hujjat al-islām*, p. 13. For a full list of the descendants of Aḥmad al-Tijānī from whom Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ received *ijāzāt*, see: Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Ṭa‘mī, *Ṭabaqā’ t al-Tijāniyya*, p. 59.

⁴⁴¹ Sharīf Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Mun‘im was a disciple of Muḥammad al-Ghālī al-Shinqīṭī, the *khalīfa* of Aḥmad al-Tijānī. Originally from upper Egypt but residing in Kordofan, the sharīf was reportedly born before 1800. The

Ghālī. He is also claimed to have received the Tijānī litany directly from Aḥmad al-Tijānī by means of spiritual transmission (*al-akhdh al-rūḥī*).⁴⁴² In addition to gaining precious *ijāzāt* on his journeys, the Egyptian was keen to stop and visit libraries, expanding his personal knowledge and gathering manuscripts not available elsewhere. Some of the most valuable manuscripts in the library that he was later to establish were obtained during these journeys.⁴⁴³ Anecdotes related by Tijānīs disclose the extent of his thirst for knowledge; he would enter a library and continue to stay there until he had read all of the books that were not available elsewhere. Another sign of his love for knowledge was his extravagance in collecting and copying manuscripts from the various libraries that he visited. His personal library at Cairo is perceived to be one of the richest in the East.⁴⁴⁴

As a specialist in the *‘ulūm al-ḥadīth*, the Egyptian dedicated the better part of his life to teaching and educating students in the sciences of the Prophetic traditions. Indeed, his expertise in the sciences of *ḥadīth* caught the attention of many. ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd (d. 1397/1978), the grand shaykh of al-Azhar from 1973 CE until his death, did not hold back from posthumously praising him as the *shaykh al-muḥaddithīn fī-‘asrihi* (the most expert master of *ḥadīth* of his era).⁴⁴⁵ He taught *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* more than forty times, and many other collections of *ḥadīth* that he is said to have known by heart. Muḥammad Mutawallī al-Sha‘rāwī (d. 1419/1998), the minister of *awqāf* in 1976 CE; Dr Muṣṭafā Maḥmūd (d. 1430/2009); Muḥammad Sayyid Ṭaṇṭāwī (d. 1431/2010), the shaykh of al-Azhar between 1996 and 2010 CE; ‘Alī Jum‘a (b. 1372/1952), the grand *mufī* of Egypt between 2003 and 2013 CE; Ibrāhīm Ṣālīḥ (b. 1358/1939), the chairman of the supreme

Egyptian was able to meet him in the village of Umm Sa‘dūn in Northern, Kordofan in the January of 1935, the year in which the sharīf died at an extremely advanced age. Rüdiger Seesemann, *The History of Tijāniyya and the issue of tarbiya in Darfur (Sudan)*, p. 403. For an account of his life, see: Al-Fātiḥ al-Nūr, *al-Tijāniyya wa-l-mustaqbal*, pp. 223-226.

⁴⁴² His son Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ claims that his father’s spiritual illumination (*fath*) took place at an extremely young age. See, Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Hujjat al-islām*, p. 9.

⁴⁴³ For some of the manuscripts and precious books he collected from various libraries, including Dār la-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, the library of ‘Akka, and the library of Medina, see: Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Hujjat al-islām*, pp. 6-7. For the names of some of the libraries that he visited during his journeys, beside those located in Egypt, see: Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Hujjat al-islām*, p. 25.

⁴⁴⁴ A good example of his thirst for knowledge is his dedication of a period of no less than four years to making a copy of the book *al-Maṭālib al-‘āliya fī zawā’id al-masānid al-thamāniyya* of Ibn Ḥajar, which he found in the library of Medina during one of his numerous visits to the city. See, Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Hujjat al-islām*, p. 7.

⁴⁴⁵ Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Hujjat al-islām*, p. 16. The same epithet is used by ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, one of his Sudanese disciples. It is claimed that he repeatedly passed the examinations that were set for him by other scholars, who wanted to put his knowledge of the *ḥadīth* to test, often ending in a display of extreme reverence and respect on their part toward the Egyptian. See Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Hujjat al-islām*, p. 50.

council for Islamic affairs of Nigeria and ‘Umar Mas‘ūd al-Tijānī are among his long list of students.⁴⁴⁶

1.4.Struggle for the Dissemination of the Tijāniyya, and Polemics

Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ played a great role in spreading the *ṭarīqa* Tijāniyya in Egypt, Sudan, Turkey, North and West Africa, through establishing numerous *zāwāyā* and issuing *ijāzāt*.⁴⁴⁷ Sudan in particular was his operational area; to borrow words from Seesemann, “very few personalities have left such an imprint on the Tijāniyya order in the Sudan as Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ”.⁴⁴⁸ His efforts, particularly in Darfur, helped to transform of the order from a largely rural brotherhood to an urban-centred one, resulting in his recognition as one of the main authorities of the Tijāniyya.⁴⁴⁹ He visited the country several times, during which he appointed numerous *muqaddams* and built several *zawāyā*.⁴⁵⁰ He is credited with the expansion of the brotherhood into some parts of Europe as well. One of his disciples, Paolo Urizzi known as ‘Abd al-Ṣamad Yaḥyā al-Tijānī, played a crucial role in recruiting for the order in Italy. The latter had converted to Islam in 1974 CE and studied under al-Ḥāfiẓ for some time in Cairo.⁴⁵¹

The achievements of the Egyptian, in his defence of Islam in general and of the Tijāniyya in particular (see below), were a source of inspiration for his disciples and fellow Tijānīs. In addition to his outstanding command of the Arabic language, his printing and publishing abilities, put to work in the service of the order, made him the leading Tijānī warrior in Egypt. In the aftermath of his establishing his own *zāwiya* in Cairo, fierce polemical altercations occurred between him and Rashīd Riḍā, the most eminent Salafī scholar and activist in Egypt of his time.⁴⁵² The Egyptian was one of the few Tijānī scholars with expertise in the field of the history of religions. He wrote

⁴⁴⁶ Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Ṭa‘mī, *Ṭabaqā’at al-Tijāniyya*, pp. 39-40.

⁴⁴⁷ ‘Abd al-Bāqī Miftāḥ, *Aḍwā’ alā al-shaykh al-Tijānī wa-atbā’ih*, p. 289.

⁴⁴⁸ Rüdiger Seesemann, “The History of Tijāniyya and the issue of tarbiya in Darfur (Sudan)”, p. 402.

⁴⁴⁹ Rüdiger Seesemann, “The History of Tijāniyya and the issue of tarbiya in Darfur (Sudan)”, p. 402; Al-Fātiḥ al-Nūr also writes of his role in the dissemination of the Tijāniyya in Sudan, in addition to receiving *ijāzāt* from several well-known Sudanese Tijānīs. See Al-Fātiḥ al-Nūr, *al-Tijāniyya wa-l-mustaqbal*, pp. 198-99. See also: Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Hujjat al-islām*, p. 13-14.

⁴⁵⁰ Regarding the number of al-Ḥāfiẓ’s visits to Sudan, Tijānīs provide different accounts. Whereas al-Fātiḥ al-Nūr claims the number his visits to Sudan to have been no less than fourteen. (see, Al-Fātiḥ al-Nūr, *al-Tijāniyya wa-l-mustaqbal*, p. 201.) His own son, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, restricts the number of his father’s journeys to Sudan to eight. See, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Hujjat al-islām*, p. 23.

⁴⁵¹ ‘Abd al-Bāqī Miftāḥ, *Aḍwā’ alā al-shaykh al-Tijānī wa-atbā’ih*, p. 269.

⁴⁵² Rüdiger Seesemann, “The History of Tijāniyya and the issue of tarbiya in Darfur (Sudan)”, p. 403.

treatises in refutation of the Qādiyāniyya⁴⁵³ and the Bahā'iyya, two sects that are considered heretical by Muslims. Qādiyānī missionaries were then quite active in the cities of Cairo, Damietta, Sharqiya and Ismailia with a fair degree of success. However, in the aftermath of their altercations with the Egyptian, some of the renowned Qadiyānī missionaries, such as Aḥmad Ḥamdī, 'Abd al-Ḥāmid al-Sayyid, 'Alī Fāḍil, 'Abd al-Salām Aḥmad, Aḥmad 'Abd al-Salām, Sayyid 'Abd al-Salām and Ḥasan Aḥmad 'Abd al-Salām, renounced their Qadiyānī faith and accepted Islam. The Egyptian is also said to have silenced the Qādiyānī Abu l-'Atā' Afandī and the Bahā'ī 'Abbās Ḥusayn al-Mazandarāni (known to have introduced himself as 'Abd al-Bahā') during debates with them.⁴⁵⁴ Ḥasan al-Bannā (d. 1368/1949) praises his efforts in defending Islam and the Muslim community against Bahā'ī missionaries, who were quite active in the North-Eastern Egypt city of Ismailia in the 1920s (CE). The Egyptian visited the city to alert the community to the Bahā'ī's intensive missionary activities. In a series of extended night-time meetings, Ḥasan al-Bannā, who was yet to found Ikhwān al-Muslimūn, was impressed by the scholarly credentials of al-Ḥāfīz. During these meetings, the future leader of the Muslim Brotherhood asked the Egyptian about certain controversial Tijānī tenets known to the people of the city, and determined to his own satisfaction that the Egyptian “was applying the principle of *ta'wīl* to those tenets which were interpretable while rejecting those which contradicted the pure Islamic creed and disavowing them fiercely”.⁴⁵⁵

The Egyptian debated with Christian missionaries as well as Jews over different issues, ranging from the authenticity of the Old and New Testaments to the virginity of Mary and the controversies surrounding the issue of sacrifice on the part of prophet Ibrāhīm.⁴⁵⁶ His vast knowledge, command of foreign languages and superior skill in the art of argumentation were the essential tools that helped him, on the account of his own sone Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, to emerge with the upper hand in these teleological altercations. A typical example would be his debate with the famous

⁴⁵³ His treatise in refutation of the Qādiyāniyya is entitled *Radd awḥām al-Qādiyāniyya fī-qawlihi ta'alā wa-khatam al-nabiyyīn* (al-Aḥzāb:40).

⁴⁵⁴ 'Umar Mas'ūd, *al-Radd 'alā l-Ṭanṭāwī wa-mā nasharahu fī Jarīda al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ 'an l-Tijāniyya*, n.p. [Khartoum], n.d, pp. 67-68.

⁴⁵⁵ Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Mudhakkirāt al-da'wa wa-l-dā'iya*, Kuwait: Maktaba Āfāq, 1433/2012, p. 79.

⁴⁵⁶ Some Tijānī authors argue that his debates in defence of Islam were crucial in the conversion of many Christians to the religion. See, Al-Ḥājj Makkī 'Abdallāh al-Tijānī, *al-Intishār al-'ālamī li-l-tarīqa al-Tijāniyya*, (an article published online here): http://www.nafahat7.net/index.php?page=education_spirituelle_2).

American missionary Samuel Marinus Zwemer (d. 1952 CE),⁴⁵⁷ nicknamed “the Apostle to Islam”, when Zwemer visited Egypt in 1930 CE. During a ceremony in the city of Bilbeis in the Eastern Governorate, the Apostle to Islam was challenged to prove the authenticity of any Bible. While the holy book of Muslims is connected through various authentic channels to the time of revelation and the Prophet of Islam, the holy book of Christians, according to al-Ḥāfīz, could and would not ever be traced back to the time of the prophet Jesus. Reportedly, the Apostle to Islam retreated from the debate and left Egypt immediately.⁴⁵⁸

The Egyptian was a prolific author with a huge literary oeuvre,⁴⁵⁹ within which his occasional poetical compositions are greatly overshadowed by his outstanding prose. One of his most marvellous achievements was *Tariq al-ḥaqq*, a journal he established in 1370/1950. The purpose was not only to defend Tijānī doctrines against the opponents but also to repair the public perception of Sufism in general,⁴⁶⁰ which was highly negative at the time, within a political climate that cast it as representative of backwardness, superstition and ignorance—all things that nationalist and socialist political elites wanted to leave behind.⁴⁶¹ He thus wrote extensively in defence of the Tijānī doctrines, such as in his *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn ‘ala ahl al-yaqīn*, for example, a treatise in which he replies to al-Ifrīqī and (albeit to a lesser extent) to Ibn Māyābā by name. Knowledge, however, was not the only concern of al-Ḥāfīz. Tijānī sources allude to his close relationship with the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, Ḥasan al-Bannā, who the Egyptian is said to have initially supported in his building of the organization.⁴⁶² Prior to this, he had actively

⁴⁵⁷ For an account of Zwemer’s own life and struggle, see: J. Christy Wilson, *The Apostle to Islam: A Biography of the Legacy of Samuel M. Zwemer*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1952. On his opinions on Islam rejected by Muslims, see: Muhammed Güngör, “İslam Dünyasına Gönderilen Misyon Elçisi: Samuel Marinus Zwemer ve İslam’a Bakışı”, *Dini Araştırmalar*, 17 (44), 2014, pp. 189-208.

⁴⁵⁸ Theological debates with Christians were one of his particular areas of interest. Tijānī sources relate that he confronted Christians on countless occasions and managed to silence them almost every time that he debated with them. For a detailed account of his polemical encounters, see: Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, *Hujjat al-islām*, pp. 64-68.

⁴⁵⁹ ‘Abd al-Bāqī Miftāḥ provides a list of no less than thirty-two items in various religious fields, from *tafsīr* and *ḥadīth* to *fiqh*, Sufism and polemics. See ‘Abd al-Bāqī Miftāḥ, *Aḍwā’ ‘alā al-shaykh al-Tijānī wa-atbā’ih*, pp. 290-91. See also: Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, *Hujjat al-islām*, pp. 50-52; Al-Fātiḥ al-Nūr, *al-Tijānīyya wa-l-mustaqbal*, p. 200.

⁴⁶⁰ Al-Fātiḥ al-Nūr, *al-Tijānīyya wa-l-mustaqbal*, p. 198.

⁴⁶¹ On the decline of Sufism and Sufi orders in the 1950s and 1960s (CE), see: Elisabeth Siriyeh, *Sufis and Anti-Sufis*, pp. 141-143.

⁴⁶² It seems that he stopped actively supporting the Muslim Brothers after his advice was not taken seriously. He was not in favour of heavy political activism on the part of the organization; instead, he thought that priority should

taken part in the 1919 CE uprising against the occupying British troops in Asyut, the same year in which he became affiliated to the Tijāniyya.⁴⁶³ These facts suggest that unlike many more passive Sufis, he managed to combine Sufism with political activism as well. In 29 Jamādī al-thānī 1398/5 June 1978 he passed away in Cairo, after a tireless and amazing intellectual career spanning more than half a century. The shrine at the *zāwiya* bearing his name is a place of attraction for Tijānīs. After his passing, the responsibility for the *zāwiya* was borne by his son and heir Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, the leader of the Egyptian Tijānīs until his own demise in 2017 CE. Currently, it is headed by Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, a grandson of the Egyptian.

1.5. Writings

As above Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ was a prolific author and poet whose literary production was not confined to matters of Sufism and polemics alone. For a list of his writings see, appendix IV.

have been given to da'wa activity. On his advice to the Muslim Brothers, see: Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Hujjat al-islām*, pp. 27-28.

⁴⁶³ On his struggle against the occupation see: Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Hujjat al-islām*, p. 34.

2. ‘Umar Mas‘ūd Muḥammad al-Tijānī

‘Umar b. Mas‘ūd b. Muḥammad al-Tijānī⁴⁶⁴ (occasionally here “the Sudanese”) is one of the most important contemporary Tijānī authorities in Sudan. He received the *ṭarīqa* from many esteemed scholars of the order, including, for example, Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ and Yūsuf Ibrāhīm Baqawī (Bogoy). His polemical writings have gained him recognition and acceptance in a number of circles, both within and outside of Sudan. The Sudanese is also known as an outspoken defender of the brotherhood. To date, however, the available information on his life story is, unfortunately, still rather scant.

2.1. Early life

The Sudanese was born into a religious and Sufi oriented family on Monday Muḥarram 1368/15 November 1948, in the city of Port Sudan. His father Mas‘ūd b. Muḥammad⁴⁶⁵ was known in the city as a man of piety and generosity, whose house was open to pilgrims, particularly Sufis, who were passing through the city on their way to, or back from, the holy lands. Indeed, Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ praised him for this generosity in the periodical of *Ṭarīq al-ḥaqq*. Mas‘ūd also had close contact with a number of the descendants of Muḥammad b. al-Mukhtār al-Tijānī al-Shinqīṭī (d. 1299/1881-1882),⁴⁶⁶ who was a disciple of the Moroccan Sharīf Muḥammad al-Saqāf who was a direct disciple of the order’s founder Aḥmad al-Tijānī. (Before taking up residence in Berber around 1870 CE, the Shinqīṭī shaykh had travelled extensively, both within Sudan, in the regions of Kordofan and Darfur, and outside of the country, including to Egypt, Turkey, and the holy lands in Hijaz.⁴⁶⁷ Towards the end of the 1970s (CE), he established his *zāwiya* on the Sudanese island of Umm Harahir, and *zāwāyā* set up by his Sudanese students could be found all over the country.) In addition to the family of Muḥammad b. al-Mukhtār, Mas‘ūd b. Muḥammad was acquainted with

⁴⁶⁴ His genealogy is claimed to go all the way back to Ḥasan b. ‘Alī and thus to the house of the Prophet. For the complete genealogy, see: Haytham b. ‘Umar al-Tijānī, *Shadharāt min tarjamat shaykhinā al-wālid*, n.p. [Khartoum], n.d, p. 5.

⁴⁶⁵ A biography of him, entitled *Amīr al-muḥsinīn* (The Commander of the Benefactors), was written by his son, ‘Umar Mas‘ūd. Source, online conversation with Haytham b. ‘Umar al-Tijānī on 16.5.2017. For a brief biography of Mas‘ūd b. Muḥammad, see also Haytham b. ‘Umar al-Tijānī, *Shadharāt min tarjamat shaykhinā al-wālid*, pp. 5- 7.

⁴⁶⁶ Ṭāhā al-Shaykh al-Bāqir, *Mawsū‘at ahl al-dhikr bi-l-Sūdān*, vol. V, Khartoum: al-Majlis al-Qawmī li-l-Dhikr wa-l-Dhākīrīn, 2004, pp. 1802-1803; Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijaniyya: A Sufi Order in the Modern World*, pp. 158-159. For the writings of Muḥammad al-Mukhtār see: *Arabic Literature of Africa: The Writings of Eastern Sudanic Africa to c. 1900*, vol. I, John O. Hunwick and R.S. O’Fahey (eds.), Leiden: Brill, 1994, pp. 287-288.

⁴⁶⁷ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-‘Arif al-rabbānī al-Shaykh Yūsuf Ibrāhīm Bogoy*, n.p. [Khartoum] n.d, p.13.

the family of another highly respected Tijānī shaykh, Muḥammad Wad Dulib of Kordofan. Wad Dulib was the head of the Dawālib tribe in the city of Khursi, who supported Mawlūd Fāl in his dissemination of the Tijāniyya doctrine when the latter arrived in Sudan.⁴⁶⁸ In addition to a number of other scholars in the area, Mas‘ūd also played an important role in the primary religious education of his own son ‘Umar, who completed his primary, secondary and high school education in the city of Port Sudan.⁴⁶⁹

2.2.Higher Education

The Sudanese travelled to England for his higher education, where he studied economy, accounting and British law. He obtained an HND (Higher National Diploma) from Salford College of Technology in Manchester, and a postgraduate DMS (Diploma in Management Studies) from Liverpool Polytechnic in 1979 CE.⁴⁷⁰ He received two invitations to undertake a PhD, one from United States of America and the other from France. He chose in favour of Europe, and attended the Schiller International University in Paris, where he was awarded his PhD for a thesis on energy absorption.⁴⁷¹

2.3.Affiliation with the Tijāniyya, and Masters

While, as mentioned above, his own father, Mas‘ūd b. Muḥammad was a Tijānī *muqaddam*, who himself is known to have initiated a small number of Tijānīs into the brotherhood,⁴⁷² the Tijāniyya initiation of ‘Umar Mas‘ūd occurred at the hands of the well-known Egyptian Tijānī master Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, in March 1968 CE. Just married, and wishing to perform *hajj* together with his wife Ṣafiyya b. Ibrāhīm, the young ‘Umar had thus met the Egyptian shaykh in Mecca during the pilgrimage season. The meeting must have impressed the Sudanese, as evidenced by his subsequently undertaking countless journeys to Egypt at short intervals. He is claimed to have travelled many times each year to Cairo in order to benefit from the spiritual blessing of his

⁴⁶⁸ On the efforts of all three Tijānī shaykhs to proselytize for the order in Sudan, see: Seesemann, “The History of the Tijāniyya and the Issue of tarbiya in Darfur (Sudan)”, p. 95.

⁴⁶⁹ <https://ashsyifa.wordpress.com>, last consultation May 6, 2017.

⁴⁷⁰ Haytham b. ‘Umar al-Tijānī, *Shadharāt min tarjamat shaykhinā al-wālid*, p. 11.

⁴⁷¹ <https://ashsyifa.wordpress.com>, last consultation May 6, 2017

⁴⁷² Kamāl ‘Umar al-Amīn is one of the four Tijānī s who were affiliated to the Tijāniyya at the hands of Mas‘ūd Muḥammad (online conversation with Haytham b. ‘Umar al-Tijānī on May 17, 2017). For his biography, see: Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Ṭa‘mī, *Ṭabaqā‘t al-Tijāniyya*, pp. 353-356.

Egyptian master as much as possible.⁴⁷³ The latter would also issue him with a valuable *ijāza*.⁴⁷⁴ Shortly after becoming affiliated with the brotherhood, he came into contact with the Sudanese Tijānī scholar Yūsuf Ibrāhīm Bogoy (d. 1409/1988), with whom he had developed a special kind of spiritual bond due to a vision he had prior to their actual encounter, which took place in the holy city of Mecca. It was this Sudanese shaykh from whom ‘Umar Mas‘ūd would receive an extensive education in various Islamic sciences, including jurisprudence, Qur’ānic exegesis, and the sciences of the Prophetic traditions, in addition to receiving *ijāzat* in spiritual education (*tarbiya*) and proselytization (*irshād*).⁴⁷⁵ Bogoy himself had been affiliated to the Tijāniyya by Muḥammad al-Ṭāhīr al-Sanūsī, a disciple of the Moroccan sharīf Muḥammad al-Saqāf, a direct disciple of Aḥmad al-Tijānī. Bogoy was also a close friend and disciple of Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz. He was known for his successful use of the Qur’ān in healing certain sicknesses, and for his considerable literary output, both published and unpublished.⁴⁷⁶ In addition to the Egyptian al-Ḥāfīz, Bogoy is another Tijānī authority who seems to have made an enduring impact on his Sudanese disciple. This may be observed in the fact that ‘Umar Mas‘ūd wrote two biographical accounts in his honour, entitled *al-‘Arīf al-rabbānī al-shaykh Yūsuf Ibrāhīm Baqawī al-Tijānī* (The Divine Saint: Shaykh Yūsuf Ibrāhīm Bogoy al-Tijānī) and *al-Shaykh Yūsuf Ibrāhīm Baqawī al-Tijānī fī l-dhikrā al-sanawīyya al-‘āshira li-intiqālihi ilā al-rafīq al-‘alā* (Shaykh Yūsuf Ibrāhīm Bogoy al-Tijānī on the Tenth Anniversary of his Transfer to the Supreme Comrade). Furthermore, the Sudanese authored a collection poetry called *Yūsufiyāt* (Features Exclusive to Yūsuf) which contains a considerable number of poems in the praise of Bogoy.

In a biographical account of the Sudanese, his own son Haytham b. ‘Umar provides a lengthy list of those masters, both within and outside of Sudan, from whom the Sudanese received both spiritual and discursive religious knowledge. Most prominent among these include the Syrian expert of jurisprudence and its principles ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghudda (d. 1417/1997), the Sudanese

⁴⁷³ Online conversation with Haytham b. ‘Umar al-Tijānī on May 16, 2017.

⁴⁷⁴ Ṭāhā al-Shaykh al-Bāqir, *Mawsū‘at ahl al-dhikr bi-l-Sūdān*, vol. IV. p. 1508.

⁴⁷⁵ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-‘Arīf al-rabbānī al-Shaykh Yūsuf Ibrāhīm Bogoy*, p.19.

⁴⁷⁶ For an account of his life, his masters and his writings, see: ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-‘Arīf al-rabbānī al-Shaykh Yūsuf Ibrāhīm Bogoy*; ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Shaykh Yūsuf Ibrāhīm baqawī al-Tijānī fī l-dhikrā al-sanawīyya al-‘āshira li-intiqālihi ilā al-Rafīq al-‘Alā*; Al-Fātiḥ al-Nūr, *al-Tijānīyya wa-l-mustaqbal*, pp. 266-270; Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Ṭa‘mī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Tijānīyya*, pp. 277-293; Ṭāhā al-Shaykh al-Bāqir, *Mawsū‘at ahl al-dhikr bi-l-Sūdān*, vol. V. pp. 2015-217.

Tijānī master Muḥammad al-Majdhūb b. al-Mudaththir al-Ḥajjāz (d. 1405/1985)⁴⁷⁷ and the Moroccans Bensālim b. Muḥammad al-Kabīr (d. 1415/1994),⁴⁷⁸ Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Kabīr, and Muḥammad al-Ghalī b. Aḥmad, these last three belonging to the family of the brotherhood's founder Aḥmad al-Tijānī.⁴⁷⁹

2.4. Academia, University Occupations and Controversies

During the 1980s CE, 'Umar Mas'ūd lived for quite some time in Riyadh, where he worked as a lecturer in the Department of Business Administration within the Faculty of Management at King Saud University.⁴⁸⁰ In the course of his stay in the Saudi capital, he was a source of inspiration for the Tijānīs of the country, who would regularly come together in his house on the campus of the university. One of these visitors at the time, who would later become a sincere disciple, describes him as an extremely modern and reasonable Sufi whose command of religious sources attracted him to Sufism.⁴⁸¹

Towards the end of the decade, he left Saudi Arabia to settle in the city of Atbara, located some 310 kilometres north of Khartoum, in the River Nile State. His house came to be a gathering point for local Tijānīs to perform their rituals and benefit from the spiritual blessings of the shaykh. The house also served as a venue for debates with non-Tijānīs, some of which evolved into extended controversies, such as that which occurred between the Sudanese and his guest Hāshim al-Ḥusayn

⁴⁷⁷ In 1949, during a visit by Ibn 'Umar b. Muḥammad al-Kabir, al-Ḥajjāz was appointed as *ra'īs al-hay'at al-'āmm li-l-tarīqa al-Tijāniyya fi l-sudan* (president of the general assembly of the Tijāniyya brotherhood in Sudan). In 1976, he occupied the post of dean of the faculty of Islamic Studies at Omdurman Islamic University. For an account of his life, see al-Fātiḥ al-Nūr, *al-Tijāniyya wa-l-mustaqbal*, pp. 239-45; Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Ṭa'mī, *Ṭabaqā't al-Tijāniyya*, pp. 224-228.

⁴⁷⁸ During his years as the spiritual head of the brotherhood from 1973 until his death in 1994, Bensālim b. Muḥammad al-Kabīr visited Sudan many times. For his biography, see al-Fātiḥ al-Nūr, *al-Tijāniyya wa-l-mustaqbal*, pp. 185-190; Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Ṭa'mī, *Ṭabaqā't al-Tijāniyya*, pp. 201-205.

⁴⁷⁹ For a complete list of his many masters, see: Haytham b. 'Umar al-Tijānī, *Shadharāt min tarjamat shaykhinā al-wālid*, pp. 14-16.

⁴⁸⁰ The Sudanese was part of many different developmental, educational and administrative programmes at King Saud University. For a full account, see: Haytham b. 'Umar al-Tijānī, *Shadharāt min tarjamat shaykhinā al-wālid*, pp. 11-12.

⁴⁸¹ See: <http://sudaneseonline.com/board/52/msg/%D8%B4%D9%8A%D8%AE-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%89-%D9%85%D8%AA%D9%88%D9%81%D9%89-%D9%8A%D9%87%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%89-%D9%83%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%A7-%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%AF-%D9%88%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%87-%D9%88%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%84%D9%86%D9%89-%D8%A5%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%87-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%B0%D8%AE-%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A7-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%AF-1189111787.html>.

Rajab, a Sudanese Salafī, which would later take the form of a bitter contest that was carried over into public discussions and even mosque sermons. According to ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, the Salafī fell short of proving his point; thus, he choose to attack the Tijāniyya through his book *al-Qindīl li-kashf mā fī kutub al-Tijāniyya min l-zaygh wa-l-bātil* (The Lantern to Reveal the Aberration and Deviation Embedded in Tijānī Books), which was filled with material inappropriate to the original issues that had sparked the controversy.⁴⁸²

While in Atbara, he worked for the Atbara Cement company for some time, before occupying many different administrative and pedagogical roles at the Nile Valley Univerisity, including as a member of the advisory committee, chairmanship of the committee for formulating curricula and Islamic studies at the faculty of education, membership of the board of professors, membership of the council of the faculty of Islamic and Arabic Studies and membership of the board of trustees of the *sharī‘a* law support fund. He also worked as vice dean of the faculty of commerce, and was finally elected as dean of the same college. His work at the college was abundantly praised by the authorities of the university.⁴⁸³ While it is unknown precisely when and for how long he occupied the post of dean, the controversy into which he entered with Shī‘īs of the city, over the issue of the impeccability of *imāms*, seems to have occurred during this time. At the last minute, it appears that the the Sudanese retreated from a public debate over the issue that had been planned to take place under the title *Hiwār sākhin bayn al-Shī‘a wa-l-Duktur ‘Umar Mas‘ūd* (A Heated Discussion Between the Shī‘a and Dr ‘Umar Mas‘ūd), due to information provided by Shī‘ī sources. The reason for his sudden retreat was the unexpected appearance of a certain Shī‘ī shaykh called Mu‘taṣim al-Sudānī, with whom the Sudanese had previously met, without informing him of the forthcoming debate.⁴⁸⁴ The same issue would nonetheless later form the topic of an informal discussion between the two that was held in ‘Umar Mas‘ūd’s office at the Nile Valley University, though without reaching a result.⁴⁸⁵ Like his Egyptian master Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, the Sudanese reportedly debated with Christians on many occasions, both within and outside of Sudan,

⁴⁸² ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *Itfā’ al-qandīl wa-bayān mā-fihī min al-kidhb wa-l-ghishh wa-l-tahrif wa-l-tabdīl*, p. 2.

⁴⁸³ Haytham b. ‘Umar al-Tijānī, *Shadharāt min tarjamat shaykhinā al-wālid*, p. 12.

⁴⁸⁴ ‘Abdallāh al-Ḥasan, *Munāẓarāt fī l-imāma*, vol. IV, n.p., Sharikat Dār al-Muṣṭafā li-Iḥyā al-Turāth, n.d, pp. 621-623; ‘Abdallāh al-Ḥasan, *Munāẓarāt al-mustabṣirīn*, n.p, n.d, pp. 433-435.

⁴⁸⁵ For further details, see: ‘Abdallāh al-Ḥasan, *Munāẓarāt fī l-imāma*, pp. 636-642; ‘Abdallāh al-Ḥasan, *Munāẓarāt al-mustabṣirīn*, pp. 448-458.

particularly in Great Britain. He is said to have known both the Old and the New Testament by heart, which proved to be a significant asset in his altercations with Christian missionaries.⁴⁸⁶

In the course of his academic career at the Nile Valley University he appeared at a number of international conferences, such as the Conference of the Union of Arab Universities on the Islamization of Knowledge, held on 2 February 1994 CE, and the Sufi Studies Conference in Sudan, held jointly by the Universities of Bergen and Khartoum on 28 December 1995 CE. On 23 June 1999 CE, he left the university and moved to the capital, Khartoum, to teach economics at the prestigious Jāmi‘a Ifriqiyyā al-‘Ālamiyya (International University of Africa),⁴⁸⁷ which was first established as al-Ma‘had al-Islāmī al-Ifriqī (The Islamic African Institution) in 1966, then became the al-Markaz al-Thaqāfī al-Islāmī (The Islamic Culture Centre) in 1977 CE, and was finally elevated to the status of university in 1991 CE. The university currently hosts students from around seventy-five different countries. At present, the Sudanese dedicates his energy and time to Sufism, hosting the Tijānīs of the Arkuweet neighbourhood, where he lives, at his house. The Friday evening gatherings there are particularly important for his disciples and other Tijānīs who visit the shaykh for spiritual purposes.⁴⁸⁸

2.5. Writings

‘Umar Mas‘ūd is one of those Tijānī shaykhs who dislike circulating their books in public; for that reason, most of his writings remain unpublished, and some of his writings are reportedly missing, for the same reason.⁴⁸⁹ Of his published writings, the majority are said to have been printed between 1995 and 1997 CE. He has a number of treatises to his name, covering a wide range of topics in various of the Islamic sciences.⁴⁹⁰ While having written on different topics, he is best known for his polemical writings in defence of the brotherhood, and is therefore credited as a defender of the order in present-day Sudan. His fame is apparent both inside and outside of the country. Many of his TV appearances in Sudan, as well as in other North African countries, may

⁴⁸⁶ Haytham b. ‘Umar al-Tijānī claims that his father, ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, could recite the holy books of Christianity from memory in Arabic as well as in the widely spoken European languages of English and French. Online conversation with Haytham b. ‘Umar al-Tijānī Mas‘ūd, May 9, 2017.

⁴⁸⁷ Haytham b. ‘Umar al-Tijānī, *Shadharāt min tarjamat shaykhinā al-wālid*, p. 13.

⁴⁸⁸ Online conversation with Khalid Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (one of ‘Umar Mas‘ūd’s disciples), May 5, 2017.

⁴⁸⁹ Online conversation with Haytham b. ‘Umar al-Tijānī, May 9, 2017.

⁴⁹⁰ According to one of his disciples, he wrote about seventy books and treatises: Online conversation with Khālīd Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, May 6, 2017.

be found on YouTube. Paying visits to the Tijānīs of North Africa, particularly in Fez, where the corpse of the founder of the brotherhood is buried, continues to be one of his main pursuits. Of those of his writings that are known to us, some are available online, while others are either ready to be published or as yet unfinished.⁴⁹¹ For a list of his writings, see appendix V.

⁴⁹¹ See: <https://ashsyifa.wordpress.com>; <http://atijania-online.com/vb/showthread.php?t=5813> last consultation 6.5.2017; See also the back cover to ‘Umar Mas‘ūd’s *Akhtā’ al-Albānī wa-awhāmuhu fī Kitāb al-tawassul: anwā’uhu wa-aḥkāmuhu (khabar Malik al-Dār)*, n.p. [Khartoum], n.d.

3. Aḥmad b. al-Hādī al-‘Alawī al-Shinqīṭī

Written information on the life of Aḥmad b. al-Hādī (henceforth occasionally here “the Mauritanian”) is hard to find. The limited data presented here is largely derived from informal conversations with Prof. Dr. Muhammad Yahya Wuld Babah (b. 1374/1953), a Mauritanian scholar of philosophy who had close contact with Aḥmad b. al-Hādī during the latter’s life time. Prof. Babah reportedly had a friendly relationship with Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, to the extent of sharing tea-drinking sessions with him on many occasions.⁴⁹² Another informant who happened to have met the Mauritanian Tijānī a few times, and who provided me with information on him, is Ghassān b. Sālīm al-Tūnisī of Saudi Arabia.⁴⁹³

3.1. Early Life and Education

Aḥmad b. al-Hādī was born into a Tijānī Sufī family of the Idwa ‘Al tribe, near the village of al-Nabbāghiyya, in the Qibla district of the Tararza province of Mauritania. Judging from the recorded age at which he died and date of death, he seems to have been born around 1945 CE. He received his early education within the family, particularly from his father al-Hādī b. Bidī,⁴⁹⁴ one of the notable scholars of the region. According to the local tradition, young seekers of knowledge were expected to learn the holy book of the Qur’ān by heart; only then could they proceed to the study of other religious sciences. There is thus a strong probability that Aḥmad b. al-Hādī underwent the same process.

Apart from his father, he studied under Muḥammad Fāl Abbā (b. 1939 CE),⁴⁹⁵ a contemporary Tijānī scholar of Idwa ‘Al tribe, who played a crucial role in shaping the spiritual world of his

⁴⁹² Conversation with Prof. Babah, Bayreuth, April 20, 2017.

⁴⁹³ Ghassān b. Sālīm al-Tūnisī told me that his acquaintance with Aḥmad b. al-Hādī went back thirty years, to when he first met the shaykh at the house of a certain Sīdī Aḥmad Wuld Ṭalba, in Medina, coincidentally the same time at which Ghassān had decided to join the brotherhood. Online conversation with Ghassān b. Sālīm al-Tūnisī, August 9, 2017.

⁴⁹⁴ Al-Hādī b. Bidī should not be mistaken for al-Hādī b. al-Sayyid, a well-known disciple of Ibrāhīm Niyās who is said to have played a crucial role in the expansion of the Niyassiye Tijāniyya in Nigeria. The latter is a descendant of Mawlūd Fāl of the Idayqub tribe (the tribe of al-Ya‘qūbiyyīn). Conversation with Prof. Babah, Bayreuth, April 21, 2017.

⁴⁹⁵ Muḥammad Fāl Abbā b. ‘Abdallāh b. Muḥammad Fāl al-‘Alawī (his full name) is accepted as one of the foremost contemporary authorities of the Tijāniyya brotherhood. For an account of his life, see:

<https://www.mahdara.org/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D9%8A%D8%AE-%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF->

disciple, who in his writings, frequently refers to him as “our master Abbā (*shaykhunā Abbā*)”.⁴⁹⁶ The Mauritanian studied various Islamic sciences at the *Maḥḍara*, (mobile Bedouin Learning Institution) of Muḥammad Fāl Abbā, whose students are introduced to a wide range of sciences, such as the sciences of the Prophetic traditions, jurisprudence and its principles, Islamic philosophy, dialectical reasoning, Arabic grammar, and the art of eloquence and poetry. Aḥmad b. al-Hādī would later take on the responsibility of teaching jurisprudence at the same compound.⁴⁹⁷

3.2. Affiliation to Sufism

As per usual in that region, as he grew up, Aḥmad b. al-Hādī became affiliated to the Tijāniyya brotherhood. He is said to have been introduced to the order by his maternal grandfather Muḥammad al-Amīn b. Baddī, a grandson of Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ al-‘Alawī.⁴⁹⁸ He was thus an heir to the spiritual heritage of the man responsible for the introduction of the order to West Africa. Apart from this *sanad* (chain of transmission) via al-Ḥāfiẓ, he possessed another which ran via Muḥammad al-‘Arabī b. al-Sā’ih, the author of *Bughyat al-mustafīd*. This chain of transmission was obtained from his master Muḥammad Fāl Abbā, one of whose grandfathers, Muḥammad Fāl, had reportedly met al-‘Arabī b. al-Sā’ih in Fez during a pilgrimage journey to the holy lands and had thus been reintroduced to the order.⁴⁹⁹

3.3. Lifestyle and Death

Aḥmad b. al-Hādī possessed a permit for residence in Saudi Arabia, which country he often visited, both for purposes of pilgrimage and other, personal reasons such as visiting his relatives and kinsmen there. One Tijānī informant who happened to have met him, a few years before his death, in the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina, describes him as having been an “extremely humble person with a short rosary, very silent while coming to the Mosque of the Prophet, always reflective, inclined to speak very little to others, then with few words”.⁵⁰⁰ During one of his visits to the country, he passed away in Jeddah on 19 Muharram 1430/16 January 2009 and was then

<http://atijania-online.com/vb/showthread.php?t=377>

⁴⁹⁶ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Muntahā sayl al-jārif*, passim. Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, passim.

⁴⁹⁷ Conversation with Prof. Babah, Bayreuth, April 20, 2017.

⁴⁹⁸ <http://atijania-online.com/vb/showthread.php?t=377>.

⁴⁹⁹ Conversation with Prof. Babah, Bayreuth, April 21, 2017.

⁵⁰⁰ Online conversation with Ghassān b. Sālim al-Tūnisī, August 7, 2017.

buried in Medina in the respected cemetery of *Baqī'*,⁵⁰¹ known as the cemetery of the companions of the Prophet. His age at the moment of his death coincided with that of the Prophet at the time of his death. All of these facts are interpreted by Tijānīs as signs of his lofty rank as a divine saint.⁵⁰² He left behind four daughters and two sons. The eldest of his sons, al-Mishrī, is a graduate of Nabbāghiyya *maḥḍara* of Muḥammad Fāl Abbā, and has occupied teaching posts in various Yemeni universities such as the Ahqaff University in Mukalla and the Iman University in Sana'a. The youngest of his sons, Muḥammad al-Amīn, is also a graduate of Nabbāghiyya, now living in Medina and teaching at the Mosque of the Prophet.⁵⁰³

3.4. Writings

Alas to date, we possess only limited knowledge of Aḥmad b. al-Hādī's writings. As a scholar of the Tijāniyya order, one might expect him to have left behind quite a few books and treatises, but comprehensive data on his literary output is yet to be compiled. Nonetheless, we know that two of his defences of the Tijāniyya are well-known among Tijānīs both in Mauritania and beyond. For his polemical writings, see appendix VI.

4. Conclusion

Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ was a celebrated Tijānī scholar whose fame was not restricted to Egypt, where he was recognized as the greatest *muqaddam* of the Tijāniyya brotherhood during his life time. He owed his widespread recognition, both among Tijānī circles and beyond, to his accumulated knowledge of the sciences of *ḥadīth*. In his adulthood he studied a wide range of Islamic sciences under a number of shaykhs. He was keen to gain as many chains of transmission as he could, both with regard to exoteric discursive knowledge and esoteric spiritual knowledge. He was well-respected in the neighbouring land of Sudan, as well as in Northwest Africa and beyond, and is one of the few African scholars with followers outside the continent. His initiation into the Tijāniyya came at a relatively young age, and he succeeded to make a name for himself through his indefatigable efforts in defence of the *ṭarīqa* thereafter. He produced a considerable amount of literature to this end (see appendix IV). His polemical output was not confined to the

⁵⁰¹ Online conversation with Prof. Babah, September 13, 2018.

⁵⁰² Online conversation with Ghassān b. Sālīm al-Tūnisī, August 9, 2017.

⁵⁰³ Conversation with Prof. Babah, Bayreuth, April 21, 2017.

brotherhood alone; he also wrote in refutation of heretical Islamic sects as well as Christianity. Many well-known and revered religious figures in Egypt's recent history either studied under him or had a relationship of affinity and mutual respect with him.

His Sudanese disciple 'Umar Mas'ūd made a name for himself as an outspoken defender of the Tijāniyya in Sudan. His professional expertise concerned the secular sciences, and therefore his religious knowledge was not of the same calibre as his Egyptian master's. Nonetheless, he did not hesitate to challenge many famous international religious authorities, on themes concerning both Sufism and Islam. Viewed against this background, his polemical output is nothing less than remarkable (see appendix V), though much of his polemical literature is yet to be published. Muslim adversaries of the brotherhood were not the only group against whom he was active; following the example of his master, he also wrote to discredit the Christians performing missionary activities on the Sudanese soil. Currently, he resides in the Sudanese capital Khartoum, undertaking regular visits to the neighbouring country of Egypt, as well as to North and West Africa. He thus seems to be well-connected with various Tijānī spiritual centres. A glimpse of his personal authority may be observed from the key role he played in the crowning of the new Tijānī master in Egypt after the untimely death of Shaykh Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ in 2017 CE.

The Mauritanian Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, a disciple of the master of the Nabbāghiyya Muḥammad Fāl Abbā, is another Tijānī religious figure who earned publicity in various Tijānī circles through his polemical literature. Though little is currently known about his literary output, and we are yet to have a comprehensive account of his life and activities, it seems certain that he was not as prolific as his Egyptian predecessor or his Sudanese contemporary. He seems rather to have been completely occupied by the spiritual affairs of the brotherhood, and thus preferring a quiet and humble lifestyle of withdrawal over that of an activist, as pursued by the other two exemplars in this chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: AL-ANWĀR AL-RAḤMĀNIYYA AND THE TIJĀNĪ RESPONSES

1. *Al-Anwār al-Raḥmāniyya li-Hidāyat al-Firqa al-Tijāniyya*: the Preface, and a Solid Ground for Attack

Like many other Salafī missionaries, al-Ifrīqī (henceforth sometimes “the Malian Salafī”, or simply “the Malian” from hereon), was fond of preaching and teaching. So much so, in fact, that he hardly had time to sit down and set down his thoughts on paper. He was surrounded by numerous students, and simultaneously engaged in active *da‘wa* with all his heart. Nevertheless, he did have to provide written responses to those of his interlocutors who were out of the reach of his voice. *Al-Anwār al-raḥmāniyya li-hidāyat al-firqa al-Tijāniyya*, a short pamphlet of approximately thirty-two pages which stands as his only written attack on the Tijāniyya, is a product of such circumstances. On the very first page, he mentions why he had felt himself obliged to reply in written form. During one of the pilgrimage seasons, he states, he had held a friendly discussion with some people he refers to here as brothers (*ikhwān*) over the ever-hot topic of innovation (*bid‘a*). For the Malian Salafī, innovation was whatever had not been considered to be part of the religion by the pious first-century Muslim forefathers. It was later demanded of him by the congregation that he should provide evidence for this definition, particularly regarding the points he had raised against the Tijāniyya; and it was because this demand was directed toward him in written form that he responded with a pamphlet, as he states therein. In his own words: “Dear brothers! I have received your letter, I have read it and understood your demand. Here I am writing to you the answer of it, if God wills, and he I invoke for help”.⁵⁰⁴ He goes on to state that in responding he had felt himself obliged to compile what Muslim scholars had had to say in condemnation of innovation in the light of the Qur’ān and the Sunna. The treatise consists of two parts, in masterly combination. In the first part, the Malian Salafī attempts to lay a solid foundation for the second, thus preparing his interlocutors for a healthy assessment of his objections to the doctrine of the brotherhood. At the very end, there is also an appendix providing information on the activities of the Dār al-Ḥadīth, of which he was general secretary at the time. Here he makes particular note of the facilities provided to students for the sake of spreading the pure doctrine of monotheism (*al-tawḥīd al-khālīṣ*), as the main goal of the Salafī *da‘wa* mission. This shows the

⁵⁰⁴ Al-Ifrīqī, *al-Anwār al-raḥmāniyya*, p. 3.

extent of al-Ifriqī's enthusiasm when it came to proselytizing the brand of Islam that he stood for. He even encourages his interlocutors to send their beloved ones to Dār al-Ḥadīth to acquire knowledge of the Prophetic traditions in the holy city of Medina, the city in which the Prophet spent much of his most precious time.⁵⁰⁵

Al-Ifriqī employs a soft tone in the treatise, while addressing his Tijānī interlocutors. He speaks of the Tijāniyya and Tijānīs as a third party, and unlike some hardliners among the opponents of brotherhood, he never calls them unbelievers (*kuffār*) or polytheists (*mushrikīn*). His goal is to win over their hearts by calling them brothers and not opponents, which attitude is quite in line with the descriptions we have of his character. 'Aṭīyya Muḥammad Sālim, one of his closest students, describes his master as having held his opponents in high esteem, be they scholars or commoners. This "conciliatory spirit" attracted the admiration of others and even turned some of his one-time opponents into close followers. For example, a pilgrim of Sufi inclination once came to find out al-Ifriqī's stance on a particular issue. His response could not persuade the Sufi, who refused to agree, and took the issue to Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Ṣāliḥ, then the *imām* and *khaṭīb* of the Prophet's Mosque. The shaykh confirmed al-Ifriqī's view. The man then came back to al-Ifriqī, this time not as an opponent but as a supporter, and even actively participated in missionary work upon his return to his native country.⁵⁰⁶

The Malian relied on direct quotations from the Qur'ān and Prophetic traditions as the two most authoritative religious sources for his arguments. This can be seen as a tacit strategy to highlight the importance of these two sources in religious matters. Nevertheless, when the need arose, he would draw on other sources, mainly by authors belonging to Mālikī school of jurisprudence. Thus, besides invoking the authority of the founder of the school Imām Mālik, he would also draw on sources like the *al-I'tiṣām* (The Maintenance) of al-Shāṭibī⁵⁰⁷ and the *Risāla* of Abū Zayd al-Qayrawānī, for example. Applying "polemicist's logic",⁵⁰⁸ he knew that his references to the very sources of his opponents would serve as an undeniable reinforcements of his arguments. His criticism of the Tijāniyya order is confined to the doctrines and tenets of the brotherhood, and he applies a great deal of prudence in addressing his interlocutors, such that neither they nor the

⁵⁰⁵ For further details see: Al-Ifriqī, *al-Anwār al-raḥmāniyya*, pp. 31-32.

⁵⁰⁶ See chapter two.

⁵⁰⁷ On Abū Ishāq al-Shāṭibī see: 'Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, vol. I, p. 77.

⁵⁰⁸ Chanfi Ahmed, *West African 'Ulamā' and Salafism in Mecca and Medina*, p. 62.

brotherhood's founder Ahmad al-Tijānī are directly accused of any indecency. Unlike his predecessor Ibn Māyābā, who would take each and every opportunity to discredit the supreme master of the Tijāniyya, al-Ifriqī carefully avoids any sort of frontal attack on the shaykh or his followers. This strategically soft approach renders al-Ifriqī's criticism into what, in her discussion of Muḥammad 'Uthmān al-Sanūsī's *al-Rihla al-hijāziyya*, Anne Laure Dupont terms "a controlled polemic".⁵⁰⁹ Indeed, al-Ifriqī's *al-Anwār* may be said to owe its success to its simple and soft tone. In addition, the Malian Salafī engages with Tijāniyya tenets therein from a broad and more modernist perspective: he not only cites theological proofs in order to discredit or refute Tijānism, but also recurrently refers to the human intellect as an invaluable asset that may easily discover the fallacies he finds to be wrapped up in Tijānī doctrine. The success of *al-Anwār* may be observed in the repeated publication of the treatise, running to at least four editions,⁵¹⁰ to be distributed free of charge, particularly to pilgrims from West Africa.

Al-Ifriqī begins the introduction of the pamphlet, largely dedicated to the reason of its authorship, with a powerful verse from the Qur'ān, referring to the arrival of truth and the disappearance of falsehood.⁵¹¹ This provides the reader with a hint of the degree of his certainty regarding the type of Islam he assumes to be the true one. It takes him approximately twenty pages to deliver his critique of the Tijāniyya, as he clearly knew that it would be simply absurd to give his opinion of the Tijānī tenets without providing a framework for the context in which he wanted his objections to be understood, and which would thus give weight and meaning to his points. Therein, he refers to numerous verses of the Qur'ān in order to stress that the attitude of Muslims should be determined by divine commands. All of the quoted verses unanimously demand that Muslims should obey the Prophet Muḥammad, stick to his orders and abstain from disobeying him at any

⁵⁰⁹ Written in the second half of the nineteenth century, *al-Rihlat al-hijāziyya* gives a detailed account of the author Muḥammad 'Uthmān al-Sanūsī's pilgrimage adventure, and other important events related to his journey to the holy lands. It contains also a fine and controlled criticism of Tijānī exclusivism, which according to al-Sanūsī, was causing rifts among Muslim at a time when Muslims needed more than ever to close their ranks against the increasing encroachments of the West. For details, see: Anne-Laure Dupont, "An Expression of Pan-Islamism in Tunisia at the Beginning of the French Protectorate: The Critique of the Tijāniyya in the *Rihla al-hijāziyya* by Muḥammad b. 'Uthmān al-Sanūsī (d. 1900)", in: Rachida Chih, Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen and Rüdiger Seesemann (eds.), *Sufism, Literary Production, and Printing in the Nineteenth Century*, Würzburg: Ergon, 2015, pp. 401-36.

⁵¹⁰ For the purposes of this study I have relied on its third edition, published by the Medina-based Maṭba' al-Da'wa, a Salafī missionary institution. The first edition seems to have met its readers as early as 1356/1937, judging from the dates providing by the author himself on page four. The fourth edition was published by the Islamic University of Medina in 1394/1974. See: Chanfi Ahmed, *West African 'Ulamā' and Salafism in Mecca and Medina*, p. 58.

⁵¹¹ Al-Isrā 17:81.

cost, or else they will not be able to escape the hellfire as their final destination.⁵¹² One of these verses concerns the attitude which should be displayed by Muslims in case of internal disputes, again stating that they should have recourse to the instructions of the Prophet and abstain from showing any sign of discomfort concerning the outcome; otherwise, it says, they are not entitled to call themselves Muslims.⁵¹³ Another Prophetic tradition is cited that highlights the importance of subordinating human desires to the guidelines introduced by the Prophet. This is said to be the hallmark of true Muslims, without which no one of them may portray himself as a true believer.⁵¹⁴ A true Muslim, for al-Ifriqī, is one who surrenders himself willingly to the divine revelation given to the Prophet, both inwardly and outwardly, in all his sayings, doings and behaviours. The Qur’ān explicitly appeals to Muslims to restrict themselves to the divine revelation and abandon other *awliyā’* (protectors and helpers).⁵¹⁵ Particularly in the case of disputes, he says, a true believer would give priority to the Prophetic traditions, preferring them over the sayings of all of humankind, whatsoever. Likewise, an honest believer would restrict himself to the authentic litanies reported by the Prophet and give these primacy over all other litanies promoted by Sufi brotherhoods. Only then, states al-Ifriqī, can a Muslim be a faithful believer. These quotations are solid proofs of the Malian Salafī’s mindset with regard to religious authority, which he sees as embedded in the divine eternal speech and the Sunna of the Prophet—in these texts and not in persons.

Al-Ifriqī believes that distinguishing the Sunna from innovation is a religious duty for all Muslims. Here, “Sunna” means commentary on the Qur’ān provided by the Prophet in the form of words (*qawlan*), deeds (*fi’lan*) or his approval of a specific situation (*taqrīran*). The Sunna is equal to the religion of Islam, for al-Ifriqī, who is certain that only innovators (*mubtadi’*) would not comprehend this fact. Here, “innovation”, in contrast, means any addition to the religion after its completion in the era of the Prophet and the rightly guided caliphs. Here, the Malian Salafī accuses Tijānīs—not, directly, his interlocutors—of innovations, stating that: “The people of innovations have turned the innovations into a firmly based religion, acting against which is not allowed in the perception of the Tijānīs and other Sufis”.⁵¹⁶

⁵¹² Al-Hashr 59:7; al-Nisā’ 4:14; al-Jin 72:23; al-Nūr 24:63.

⁵¹³ Al-Nisā’ 4:65.

⁵¹⁴ Al-Ifriqī, *al-Anwār al-rahmāniyya*, p. 6.

⁵¹⁵ Al-‘arāf 7:3.

⁵¹⁶ Al-Ifriqī, *al-Anwār al-rahmāniyya*, pp. 7-8.

For al-Ifrīqī, innovation may be divided into two categories: innovation in religion, and innovation in worldly affairs. Only the first of these categories is forbidden. The following is an excerpt:

It is absolutely impermissible for a Muslim to modify (*yughayyira*) or falsely interpret (*yu'awwila*) any of the Prophetic tradition; to conduct a deed, utter an expression, or allocate to himself a litany which is not in conformity with the practice of the Prophet, or to follow a path apart from the path of the Prophet. These are innovations and deviations.⁵¹⁷

To justify his position, he draws on two Prophetic traditions which define innovation as a deviation which leads to hellfire. The Prophet is said to have dismissed any sort of practice not commanded by himself as a rejected one. When it comes to worldly affairs, however, al-Ifrīqī asserts that there is nothing wrong with innovation unless a principle of the religion is harmed or destroyed. He then draws the attention of his Tijānī interlocutors to another Prophetic statement which clearly draws a line between the two separate natures of the Prophet: as a Messenger of God and as a normal human. He goes on to observe that while the Prophet required obedience from his companions in religious affairs, they were given full freedom to implement their own wills when worldly affairs were at stake.⁵¹⁸ Here a tacit criticism is directed at the unconditional submission of Sufis to their masters, since the obedience of his companions to the person of the Prophet was restricted to religious affairs guided by divine revelation. Once again, we observe al-Ifrīqī's point that religious authority is not embedded in persons, as Sufis presume it to be, but rather in divine instructions, whether in the form of the Qur'ān or the Sunna.

After laying down a solid foundation, the time is ripe for al-Ifrīqī to strike. He declares that the Tijānī *wird* (litany) is an innovation devoid of any kind of legitimacy. As a theological basis for this attack, he refers to the notion of the perfection of the religion, as promoted by the Qur'ān itself.⁵¹⁹ Since the religion of Islam is perfectly complete, any innovation would, by its nature, pose a contradiction to this notion. Thus, he exhorts his interlocutor:

Think for a while, in which category of innovation would you put the Tijānī litany? If you would put it in the first category—as is expected of you—then Allah, exalted is He, says: “This day I have perfected for you your

⁵¹⁷ Al-Ifrīqī, *al-Anwār al-rahmāniyya*, p. 8.

⁵¹⁸ Al-Ifrīqī, *al-Anwār al-rahmāniyya*, p. 8.

⁵¹⁹ Al-Ma'ida 5:3.

religion and completed My favour upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion” Thus, whatever was not part of the religion then cannot be considered to be part of the religion today.⁵²⁰

To further enhance his argument, he invokes the authority of great Mālikī scholars such as al-Shāṭibī and Ibn Mājishūn (d. 212/827), both of whom deprive religious innovations of any sort of legitimacy. Innovation on the part of innovator, states Ibn Mājishūn (on the authority of the founder of the Mālikī school Imām Mālik), amounts to the sin of attributing betrayal to the the Prophet in his divine mission. The crux of the matter, from al-Ifrīqī’s perspective, is that the Tijāniyya constitutes a new path, which neither existed in the time of the Prophet nor in the era of the rightly guided caliphs. It is, in fact, his stated conviction that it is one of the seventy-two sects mentioned by the Prophet that will end up in hellfire; another statement of the Prophet’s is put forward to further consolidate his position, as follows. The Prophet had predicted that there would be disagreements and disputes after his death. This prediction of great disagreement (*ikhtilāfan kathīran*) is interpreted by the Malian Salafī to mean that there would be many paths and brotherhoods. In such a situation, the Prophet instructed his companions that they should stick to his—the Prophet’s—own practice and that of the rightly guided caliphs after him. Moreover, the novelties (*muḥdathāt al-’umūr*), of which the companions were warned by the Prophet, are interpreted by al-Ifrīqī as meaning newly established brotherhoods.

Al-Ifrīqī then warns against the danger of engaging with innovations. The religion of Islam and innovation are two contradictions, he says, which can by no means exist together. The innovator (*ṣāḥib al-bid’a*) departs from the religion as a hair is removed from the dough. No matter how nicely he performs the fundamental rituals of the religion, such as the five daily ritual prayers, fasting during the holy month of Ramadan, payment of the legal taxes of alms, and pilgrimage to the holy lands; none of these will benefit him, because Allah almighty does not accept an act of worship with innovation. The only way out, the Malian says, is to cease the innovation and repent from the heart. A Prophetic tradition which talks of divine refusal to accept the good deeds of the innovator until he gives up that innovation consolidates his argument.⁵²¹ People, according to the Malian Salafī, have certain obligations in the fight against innovation. Showing or providing any

⁵²⁰ Al-Ifrīqī, *al-Anwār al-raḥmāniyya*, pp. 8-9

⁵²¹ Al-Ifrīqī, *al-Anwār al-raḥmāniyya*, p. 10.

sort of respect or help to an innovator is equal to the sin of destroying the religion of Islam. Here, the writings of al-Shāḥibī, ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī and Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī (d. 131/748)⁵²² provide al-Ifrīqī’s textual support. Next, he goes on to say that neglecting the practice of the Prophet is also tantamount to an act of deviation. According to Ibn Mas‘ūd, a revered companion of the Prophet, states al-Ifrīqī, neglecting the Sunna was equal to deviation, and, in another narration to disbelief or heresy. The Prophet explicitly stated that he would leave behind two precious sources, referring to the Qur’ān and his Sunna, going on to say that Muslims would not deviate as long as they held on to them. If they ever left them, however, they would certainly be departing from the right path.⁵²³

When it comes to the reasons for innovation, al-Ifrīqī holds the lower desires of human nature responsible for it. Through fabricating lies and ascribing them to the Prophet, the Malian Salafī states that some people will try to lead mankind astray, even while the Prophet had already warned Muslims against these liars (*kadhhabūn*) and charlatans (*dajjālūn*). One may speculate that the Malian might be hinting at Aḥmad al-Tijānī here. While that may be so, in conformity with the conventional tradition of polemics, the Malian never refers to the supreme master of the Tijāniyya by name, a further indication of the soft lines along which he develops his arguments. The innovator, according to al-Ifrīqī, carries two burdens: one for introducing the innovation, and the other for the sin of those who follow in his footsteps. There is a Prophetic tradition stating that one who revives a Sunna practice after the death of the Prophet will have a reward equivalent to all of those of the people who follow in that practice, without their own rewards being diminished in any aspect. Likewise, one who introduces an evil practice against the consent of Allah and His Messenger will bear a burden like all of those of the people who follow in that evil practice, without their own burdens being diminished in any aspect.⁵²⁴

Struggle against innovation, argues the Malian Salafī, is a religious duty for scholars as well. He cites one Prophetic tradition that demands that scholars should fight innovations by using their knowledge and by providing Muslims with the necessary information whenever innovations are introduced to the community. Scholars who fail to do so will have to deal with the divine curse,

⁵²² Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī see: Ahmad b. ‘Abdallāh al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā’ wa-ṭabaqāt al-asfiyā’*, vol. III, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1416/1996, pp. 3-14; al-Ziriklī, *al-A’lām*, vol II, p. 38.

⁵²³ Al-Ifrīqī, *al-Anwār al-raḥmāniyya*, pp. 10-11.

⁵²⁴ Al-Ifrīqī, *al-Anwār al-raḥmāniyya*, p. 11.

that of the angels, and that of all of humankind. The author of *al-Anwār* further holds that innovators are the fastest of people to commit a probable heresy, adding that according to some scholars they even deserve death by the sword. Here, he resorts to quotations of first generation scholars like ‘Abdallāh b. Zayd al-Jurmī al-Baṣrī, better known as Abū Qulāba (d. 104/722–723),⁵²⁵ and Muḥammad b. Sīrīn (d. 110/728–729)⁵²⁶ in favour of his argument. It is so, he says, because innovations nourish hostility among Muslims and lodge a serious threat to the very existence of the community. A striking example would be the Tijānī-supremacist notion of abstaining from visiting divine saints who do not belong to their own brotherhood. By putting such beliefs into practice, he says, Tijānīs, reject the Qur’ānic declaration that all Muslims are brothers,⁵²⁷ as well as the Prophetic command encouraging Muslims to visit each other. “Should we abandon this Qur’ānic verse and the related Prophetic tradition for the statement of an ordinary person?”⁵²⁸ the Malian Salafī asks rhetorically, answering that such would be an act of departure from divine command, and a dispersion of the community of Islam. Moreover, he says that innovation deprives its owner from the intercession of the Prophet, who would outright disown the innovator, and isolate him from his intercession on the day of resurrection.

Not even repentance can spare the innovator from divine retribution, says al-Ifriqī, since religious innovations destroy the Sunna of the beloved Prophet. He cites another Prophetic tradition that simply claims that Allah denies the repentance of the innovator. Here the Malian reiterates his previous statement regarding the *ṭarīqa* Tijāniyya as an innovation causing one’s expulsion from *ḥawḍ al-kawthar* (a pool of sweet water promised to the Prophet Muḥammad in the hereafter). One Prophetic statement explains how some people would be blocked from reaching the pool, much to the dissatisfaction of the Prophet, who would be told that they had committed the sin of invention in religion. The pious forefathers, argues al-Ifriqī, were aware of this fact; they regularly warned each other of the dangers of innovation. Here, he quotes a long piece of advice from ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (d. 101/720),⁵²⁹ regarding the importance of sticking to the practice of the Prophet and

⁵²⁵ On Abū Qulāba, see: Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *Siyar a’lām al-nubalā’*, Beirut: Bayt al-Afkār al-Duwaliyya, 2004, no. 3229.

⁵²⁶ On Muḥammad b. Sīrīn, see: Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *Siyar a’lām al-nubalā’*, no. 5256.

⁵²⁷ Al-Ḥujurāt 49:10.

⁵²⁸ Al-Ifriqī, *al-Anwār al-rahmāniyya*, pp. 8-12.

⁵²⁹ For details of his life and achievements, see: ‘Alī Muḥammad Muḥammad al-Ṣallābī, *al-Khalīfa al-rāshid wa-l-muṣliḥ al-kabīr: ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz wa-l-ma’ālim al-tajdīd wa-l-iṣlāḥ al-rāshidī ‘alā minhaj al-nubuwwa*, [Libya]: published online by Maktaba al-Qusaymi, n.d.

disparaging innovation. The author of *al-Anwār* then concludes that since innovations originate from the lust of the lower self, against divine commands, it is most likely for innovators to end up being defeated by Satan and die ill-fatedly.⁵³⁰

In the subsequent section of the pamphlet, the issues of the perfection of the religion and the characterisation of the *ṭarīqa* Tijāniyya as an innovation are raised once again. Again, for the Malian Salafī, those who strive to come up with innovations tear apart the notion of the religion as being already perfected. The Prophet warned Muslims of such people, while ‘Ā’isha, the mother of the faithful, equated assistance to such people with the sin of participating in the destruction of Islam. Al-Ifrīqī is of the opinion that praising Allah in a way which was not known in the times of the Prophet is an innovation, and must thus be rejected. Ibn Mas‘ūd, who had reproached a group of people performing divine remembrance in the Mosque of the Prophet in a strange innovative way that was obviously not in conformity with the practice of the Prophet, had raised his disapproval thus: “Verily you have unjustly come up with an innovation”. “Such, too, is the *ṭarīqa* Tijāniyya and [such are] other Sufi brotherhoods”, states the Malian Salafī: “I disapprove them because they have invented for themselves new ways of praising Allah that were not existent in the times of the Prophet”.⁵³¹ He advises his Tijānī interlocutors to follow the model of the Prophet alone. Here, he draws their attention to a pamphlet by Abū Zayd al-Qayrawānī (d. 383/996),⁵³² a tenth-century Mālikī jurist, regarding the importance of following the Prophet and leaving behind all kind of innovations, then rebuking his interlocutors: “By God who is free of imperfection, you read his *Risāla* day and night. Still you do not grasp its meaning”. He further advises them to look at chapter 110 of the Qur’ān known as *al-Naṣr* (divine support) in order to grasp the issue of the perfection and completion of the religion, unlike those Tijānīs who believe that the Tijānī litany was granted to them by the Prophet.⁵³³

He continues to advise his interlocutors by warning them of their inevitable end if they do not quit their innovations. The Qur’ān, he argues, informs us of a harsh disownment by the innovators (*ahl al-bida’*) by each other on the Day of Judgement.⁵³⁴ Therefore, while addressing his interlocutors

⁵³⁰ Al-Ifrīqī, *al-Anwār al-rahmāniyya*, pp. 12-15.

⁵³¹ Al-Ifrīqī, *al-Anwār al-rahmāniyya*, p. 16.

⁵³² For more on him, see: Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *Siyar a’lām al-nubalā’*, no. 3230.

⁵³³ Al-Ifrīqī, *al-Anwār al-rahmāniyya*, pp. 15-17.

⁵³⁴ Al-Baqara 2:166.

as brothers (*ikhwān*), he wants them to cut off their ties with the Tijāniyya and disown it before facing the awaiting regret on the last day. The Qur’ān further reports the situation on that day of people who, having been led astray by their leaders and chiefs against whom they will raise complaints, are effectively begging for double divine torment and curse.⁵³⁵ “Brothers”, the Malian Salafī continues, “use your intellects in understanding the meaning of these verses”. By this we may understand that his interlocutors, those with whom he had initially discussed the issue of innovation, were not all commoners. Some of them might have been scholars who, instead of directly drawing on the original religious sources, relied heavily on the scholarly authorities of their predecessors and Sufi masters. He therefore softly rebukes them, stating that a true scholar would not accept what is in contradiction with the Qur’ān and the Sunna; it would not suit such a one to say that “if it was not true, so-and-so would have not done it”.⁵³⁶

Obedying ‘*ulamā*’ at the expense of the divine precepts and prohibitions is equal to no less than the act of worshipping them. The Qur’ān describes this situation using the example of Jews and Christians who took their rabbis and monks to be lords beside Allah.⁵³⁷ When ‘Adī b. Ḥātam al-Ṭāī (d. 66-69 AH),⁵³⁸ a companion of the Prophet and a former Christian, found this hard to believe, the Prophet asked him: “Weren’t they forbidding what Allah has made permissible? And you were accepting the forbidden. They were declaring divinely forbidden things as permissible and so were you”. ‘Adī replied in the affirmative. Hence, the Prophet equated their blind submission to religious authorities with the act of worshipping them. For al-Ifriqī this contains a lesson to all those who blindly follow their scholars.⁵³⁹ “Brothers”, he once again addresses his interlocutors, “contemplate the meaning of the verse”. Only then, after setting out this solid preface, does he provide his critique of the Tijānī tenets. “All that I will narrate from their books” he says, “is either unbelief (*kufṛ*) or lies ascribed to Allah and to the Prophet”.⁵⁴⁰

⁵³⁵ Al-Aḥzāb 33:67-68.

⁵³⁶ Al-Ifriqī, *al-Anwār al-rahmāniyya*, pp. 17-18.

⁵³⁷ Al-Tawba 9:31.

⁵³⁸ Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *Siyar a’lām al-nubalā’*, no. 3746.

⁵³⁹ The same argument was brought to the fore by Ibn Ḥazm, in his altercations with his opponents, followers of the legal schools—mostly Mālikīs—in Andalus. Endowing authority on the founders of legal schools without a critical reading of their legal opinions was, he claimed, to tantamount to their deification. For details, see: Camilla Adang, “‘This Day I have perfected Your Religion for You’: A Zāhirī Conception of Religious Authority”, pp. 36-37.

⁵⁴⁰ Al-Ifriqī, *al-Anwār al-rahmāniyya*, p. 20.

2. *Radd Akādhīb al-Muftarīn ‘alā Ahl al-Yaqīn, a Harsh Counter Criticism to al-Ifriqī*

Written by the Egyptian Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, the primary intention of this treatise was to defend the Tijāniyya against the accusations of an Egyptian adversary of the brotherhood, Muḥammad Ḥasanayn Makhlūf (d. 1354–1355/1936). As mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis, Makhlūf had already written a eulogy upon Ibn Māyābā’s well-known book. By his own account, in 1343/1924–1925 his opinion (as well as that of other scholars from the celebrated al-Azhar University) on the issue of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ*’s origin, its rewards and whether it was part of the divine eternal speech, was demanded by a certain Muḥammad al-A‘tābī, a Tijānī shaykh of Moroccan origin who was then residing in Egypt. Al-A‘tābī claimed that he had received a letter⁵⁴¹ from the Tijānīs of Morocco asking for a detailed response. Makhlūf, however, expressed doubts concerning this account. Judging from the contents of the letter, he predicted that anyone could have been its author, including al-A‘tābī himself, who have been asking so as to consolidate his own conviction about *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ*, rather than to find out the truth. We do not know the exact content of the response Makhlūf provided, but it must have been highly unfavourable toward the Tijānī beliefs, such that certain Tijānīs later asked him for a clarification. Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, for one, wrote to him in 1353/1934–1935 asking for a copy of the response. Instead of sending him his first response, Makhlūf produced a lengthy treatise, containing fifty-eight chapters, to further enlighten the issue.⁵⁴² The book was published a year later in 1354/1935–1936, forcing the Egyptian Tijānī to write a tacit refutation. In it, instead of mentioning Makhlūf by name, he chose to define him as the heir to Ibn Māyābā and al-Ifriqī.

Regardless of its aforementioned background, *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn* may be considered to be a refutation of al-Ifriqī for two reasons: First, because prior to compiling the book, Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz had had a direct confrontation with the Malian Salafī in Hijaz; second, because according to al-Ḥāfīz’s own account, Makhlūf relies on the two pillars of Ibn Māyābā and al-Ifriqī for his critique of the Tijāniyya brotherhood.⁵⁴³ The pamphlet, which first appeared in 1950 CE, is a short

⁵⁴¹ The letter’s point of reference, regarding the reward and origin of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ*, was Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Wāḥid al-Nazīfī’s book *al-Ṭib al-fā’ih*, in which it was declared an integral component of the divine eternal speech. See the letter in Muḥammad Ḥasanayn Makhlūf, *al-Manhaj al-qawīm*, pp. 3-5.

⁵⁴² For details, see: Muḥammad Ḥasanayn Makhlūf, *al-Manhaj al-qawīm*, p. 6.

⁵⁴³ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn*, p. 5. Some Sufī authors see this treatise as a refutation of those who accuse North-African Tijānīs of collaboration with French colonialism. Likewise, they claim that the treatise provides biographical information on a number of Tijānīs and their unifying features as Sufī personalities, such as

one, consisting of a preface and a rebuttal of the accusations; forty-five pages in total.⁵⁴⁴ The author informs his readership that he had enjoyed the blessing of reading the pamphlet to Sīdī Benamor al-Tijānī (d. 1381/1962), a fifth-generation grandson of the supreme master of the Tijāniyya, upon its completion. He takes no credit for his defence of the *ṭarīqa*; rather, attributes it to the founder of the Tijāniyya, Ahmad al-Tijānī, considering himself one amongst his many tongues, a pen amongst his pens, and a drop from his ocean. Standing for a just cause, he says, is a divine order.

Since refutations of lies attributed to the righteous ones is deemed equal to the pious act of defending believers against the aggression...I have written these words in defence of the honour of the possessor of the divine cognizance and the eternal pole, my master Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Tijānī.⁵⁴⁵

Moreover, al-Ḥāfīz tacitly argues that his defence of the Tijāniyya is also a favour to his opponents. The Prophet, he states, had once instructed his companions to come to the help of their Muslim brother, whether he is the aggressor (*ẓālim*) or the one aggressed against (*mazlūm*). When he was asked how one should help the aggressor, he described the very act of preventing his aggression as helpful to the aggressor. Thus, holds the Egyptian Tijānī, the opponents of the brotherhood serve the Tijāniyya no less than its supporters and followers. A considerable number of outsiders, he says, had turned into zealous followers of the order when they compared the unjust accusations directed against the Tijānīs with their pious deeds and constant adherence to the Prophetical code of conduct.⁵⁴⁶ His immediate address to the Tijānīs, right after the preface, leaves no doubt that the Egyptian compiled the pamphlet for his fellow Tijānīs rather than their opponents. The aim of the pamphlet is to protect his own constituency against the attacks against them, rather than to engage in a full rebuttal of the offences with which they are charged. Here, he informs his fellow Tijānīs that when he went through the charges levelled against the brotherhood, he found out that they belonged to one of the following three categories: they were either invented lies which had

Sīdī Maḥmūd, a descendant of Aḥmad al-Tijānī, who reportedly reconciled several tribes in Morocco with each other. See: ‘Abd al-Bāqī Miftāḥ, *Aḍwā’ ‘alā l-Shaykh al-Tijānī wa-atbā’ih*, p. 291. This description of the *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn*, I hold to be false: the treatise neither touches upon the issue of Tijānīs and their perceived collaboration with French colonialism, nor does it provide biographical information on Tijānī shaykhs.

⁵⁴⁴ It is important to mention that these forty-five pages also contain a preface by the editor Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, as well as an appendix which is a letter by Alfā Hāshim to Muḥammad al-Kabīr, then the supreme leader of the brotherhood. The letter is a short account of Alfā Hāshim’s confrontation with al-Hilālī.

⁵⁴⁵ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn*, p. 5.

⁵⁴⁶ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn*, p. 12.

been attributed to the order, such as that they had claimed that *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* was a part of the holy Qurʾān; or they were frauds injected (*tadlīs*) into the legitimate tenets of the Tijāniyya; or other charges that, he says, stemmed solely from the misjudgement of the opponents and their incompetent failure to comprehend the true interpretation of the Tijānī doctrine.⁵⁴⁷

Non-Tijānīs, from the perspective of Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, are of two types: people of justice (*ahl al-inṣāf*), who, despite their non-affiliation to the order, can see the reality of the Tijānī doctrines; and people with prejudice (*dhawū al-aghrād*), who follow their own agendas and interpret the doctrines of the Tijāniyya in the most wicked way possible. Anti-Tijānīs are subjected to severe criticism, being called opponents without honour and dignity (*khuṣūmun lā sharafa la-hum*): liars (*kādhībūn*); fabricators (*affākūn*); slanderers with no divine fear (*yakhtaliqūn al-buḥṭān wa-lā yattaqūnallāh*); the deceived (*al-makhdū*); the stupid (*al-makhbūl*); the daydreamer (*al-mahkyūl*); the tenacious ones (*al-mutanaffi ʿūn*), the ignorant ones (*al-jāhilīn*); and the deficient ones (*al-naqiṣīn*).⁵⁴⁸ He even makes a comparison between anti-Tijānīs and Jews, both, he says, sharing the attribute of defamation and the fabrication of lies against their opponents. Nevertheless, the opponents are called upon to show sympathy to their fellow Muslims and to try to understand their position; Muslims should always understand and interpret the statements of ʿulamāʾ in way which conforms to the *sharīʿa*, because the sublime *sharīʿa* demands that they try to comprehend statements of any scholar whose reason is not affected by dementia (*khabl fī ʿaqlih*) according to their true meaning.⁵⁴⁹ The Egyptian goes on to state that adversaries had better know that what they understand of Tijānī doctrines is not the same as the Tijānī interpretation. Elsewhere, he accepts the fact that there are elusive and unclear (*mūhima*) statements in Tijānī texts. Fortunately, he states, there also exist enough crystal-clear (*ṣarīḥ*) statements that not only help one to understand the unclear ones, but also leave one in no doubt that neither the founder of the order nor his disciples have meant by them what their detractors would like to assert. Therefore, the order's opponents are called upon to interpret elusive statements in the light of those which are explicit in meaning. This, according to the Egyptian Tijānī, is an accepted scholarly tradition. The

⁵⁴⁷ For a full discussion of these three categories, see: Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn*, pp. 8-11. Other Tijānī writers often resort to the same categorization. See, among others, Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, pp. 253-55.

⁵⁴⁸ See, for example, pp. 7, 8, 30, 31.

⁵⁴⁹ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn*, p. 12.

Prophet, he states, has demanded that Muslims should stay punishments due to even trivial doubts that might discredit the procedure as unjust.⁵⁵⁰

Likewise, his fellow Tijānīs are called upon to weigh the tenets of the brotherhood in the scales of the *sharī'a*. This touches on a very sensitive issue, much debated among Tijānīs—the question of whether or not lies may have been attributed to Aḥmad al-Tijānī, and if so, how they should tackle the matter? The supreme master of the brotherhood was himself once asked whether or not lies could be attributed to him. His response was in the affirmative, thereafter instructing his followers to take a close look at what had been narrated on his behalf (that is, as having been said by him), and assess whether or not it complied with the *sharī'a*. He then ordered them to reject whatever breached the rules of divine law. Al-Ḥāfīz takes this instruction of the supreme master's as proof that not only may lies have been, and be, attributed to the founder of the brotherhood, but also that, like any other Muslim, the master himself abided by the established rules of the *sharī'a*, which thus serve as a common measure, or set of scales, for the master and his followers. Therefore, it follows that all that has been narrated on his behalf (as having been said by him) may have two aspects: one that is in accordance with the *sharī'a*, and another that contradicts it. Tijānīs should condone the aspect of a narration that conforms to the *sharī'a*, and reject the other; and if there is no possibility of such a reconciliation, it should be rejected outright and considered to be a lie that has been attributed to him.⁵⁵¹

Another important characteristic of the treatise is that of its repeated references to the transcendent spiritual authority of the Qur'ān and the Sunna of the Prophet over that of Sufi shaykhs. Here it should be noted that al-Ḥāfīz's discourse is heavily affected by the social and political challenges faced by Sufism during the mid-twentieth century in Egypt, where Sufism had come to be considered an abode of ignorance and superstition which should be eliminated from the society. Three main political and social factors were responsible for its decline: 1) In the eyes of the nationalist, socialist political elites, Sufism had nothing to offer. This image was fostered by studies conducted on Sufism at the time. 2) By the middle of the century, the movement of the Muslims Brothers, which at the time of its establishment in 1928 CE had itself been Sufi, had gradually evolved into anti-Sufi organization. 3) Sufi orders lacked the necessary dynamic and

⁵⁵⁰ For further information see: Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn*, pp. 33-34.

⁵⁵¹ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn*, p. 8.

solid leadership to keep them intact. It was common at the time to witness leadership disputes and the appearance of sub-branches of any given order.⁵⁵² All of these factors had put Egyptian Sufis on the back foot, a reality that is clearly reflected in al-Ḥāfiẓ's discourse. Unlike previous Tijānī political pamphlets, which had repeatedly referred to the spiritual authority of the supreme master of the Tijāniyya for their justification, al-Ḥāfiẓ's *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn* rather consolidates the supremacy of religious texts and places the spiritual authority of the Tijānī master under it, and is at pains to declare that Sufi authority should be recognized only when it conforms to the principles of the religion.

ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, argues al-Ḥāfiẓ, had mendaciously related himself to Ifriqyā, a place that, according to Arab custom, consisted of a part of Tripoli, together with Tunisia and Algeria. But ʿAbd al-Raḥmān did not come from any of these places; rather, he belonged to Bilād al-Takrūr, outside of Ifriqyā. The Malian Salafī is further accused by al-Ḥāfiẓ of cheating and misquoting, which the latter takes as clear signs of unfaithfulness. The Egyptian Tijānī then proceeds to inform his readers of a debate that took place between himself and al-Ifrīqī, pertaining to the latter's claim that *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* was perceived by Aḥmad al-Tijānī to be part of the holy Qur'ān. According to al-Ḥāfiẓ, the debate, took place in Medina, in 1359/1940, and was attended by al-Ifrīqī's mentor (*shaykhihi*), his followers and some of the Tijānīs residing in the city. Al-Ḥāfiẓ presents himself as having been the undisputed winner of the battle, against the Malian Salafī, who had purportedly failed to substantiate his claim that *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* was reportedly promoted in *al-Ifāda al-aḥmadiyya* as a component of the divine eternal speech. For this, the Malian Salafī is alleged to have attracted condemnations even from some of his followers.⁵⁵³ For al-Ḥāfiẓ, this very act of misquotation is reason enough to disregard his opponent, as he states that faithfulness in quotation is a matter upon which both the earlier scholars (*al-salaf*) and their followers (*al-khlāf*) were united. Scholars are to be valued according to their faithfulness and sincerity. If one tries his best to understand a matter but fails to do so, this may be tolerated; but if he transgresses the rules established and respected by scholars, then he must bear responsibility for that. Throughout their history, he says, Muslims have debated with each other, and have occasionally applied harsh approaches in their discourses; but they have always respected the rules of quotation in support of their arguments. "I did not

⁵⁵² Elisabeth Sirriyeh, *Sufis and anti-Sufis*, pp. 141-142.

⁵⁵³ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn*, p. 5.

think” he says, “that a scholar could use the weapon of lies, which is a sign of hypocrisy (*nifāq*), and betray the established principle of trust (*amāna*) upon which rests the dignity of the ‘*ulamā*’.”⁵⁵⁴ When one loses his dignity by lying to others, states the Egyptian, he belongs no more to the venerated ‘*ulamā*’. He becomes, rather, a prototype for wicked scholars (‘*ulamā*’ *al-sū*).

As may be seen, attacking the personality of one’s adversaries instead of refuting their criticism is nothing new for proponents of the Tijāniyya. In fact, almost all of those Tijānī writers who have taken it upon themselves to defend the tenets of their brotherhood have applied this strategy, and the Egyptian Tijānī is no exception. In contrast to Ibn Māyābā, towards whom al-Ḥāfiẓ’s attitude is a mixture of admiration and discontent, al-Ifrīqī is the target of harsh chastisement by the Egyptian, who calls him a liar and an impostor, one who only pretends to be a scholar (*shuwaykh*).⁵⁵⁵ Also, since the Malian Salafī had studied under both Shaykh al-Ṭayyib al-Timbuktī (d. 1362/1943)⁵⁵⁶ and his master Alfā Hāshim, al-Ḥāfiẓ presents al-Ifrīqī’s critique of the Tijāniyya as a case of his objecting to his own master and attempting to lecture him about the true path of the religion. The following is an excerpt:

The *shuwaykh* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, who is a liar, and those like him thought that they were sent out to guide their masters and teachers, the beloved Tijānī authorities. The *shuwaykh* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān was a student of Shaykh Ṭayyib al-Timbuktī and he in turn was a disciple of Shaykh Alfā Hāshim, one of the elites Tijānīs affected by the lies of the opponents.... Can a sane person imagine that Shaykh Alfā Hāshim, an exemplary scholar in all of the Islamic sciences, needed the student of his student, namely ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, to admonish him [and teach him] that the Prophet did not conceal what he had to disclose... [?] ⁵⁵⁷

3. *Al-Radd ‘alā al-Ifrīqī Difā‘an ‘an al-Ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya*

Another of the Tijānī rejoinders to al-Ifrīqī is *al-Radd ‘alā al-Ifrīqī difā‘an ‘an l-ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya*, an unpublished pamphlet of fifty-six pages authored by the Sudanese ‘Umar Mas‘ūd

⁵⁵⁴ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn*, p. 7.

⁵⁵⁵ See, for example: Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn*, p. 7.

⁵⁵⁶ His full name is Muḥammad al-Ṭayyib al-Timbuktī. He was born in North Africa but settled and taught at the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina. (See ‘Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, vol. III, p. 372). He was a follower of the Qādiriyya brotherhood but denounced it after a debate with the Moroccan al-Hilālī. See also: al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām*, vol. VII, pp. 47-48.

⁵⁵⁷ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn*, pp. 30-31.

Muḥammad al-Tijānī.⁵⁵⁸ It consists of four chapters, an epilogue, and a prologue that elaborates on the reason for the pamphlet’s composition. By the author’s reference to specific Qur’ānic verses,⁵⁵⁹ his fellow Tijānī readers are reminded of the intrigues of the *munkirīn*, whose criticism should not be believed. Tijānīs, he says, should instead seek and discover the reality for themselves. The reason for ‘Umar Mas‘ūd’s rejoinder was, by his own account, the constant reprinting and redistribution of al-Ifrīqī’s pamphlet by his Salafī followers. The Sudanese Tijānī informs his readers of the confrontation between his own master Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ and al-Ifrīqī which is claimed to have taken place in Medina, in Muḥarram of 1353 AH.⁵⁶⁰ The Malian Salafī, he argues, had filled his pamphlet with disgusting abusive phrases and lies. Some Tijānī scholars had then confronted him, and proved that he was a liar not worthy of trust. He was then handed *al-Ifāda al-aḥmadiyya*, page eighty of which he had alleged to describe *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* as part of the Qur’ān. Al-Ifrīqī was demanded to prove his claim, which he could not. The Sudanese Tijānī therefore accuses his opponent of hypocrisy, and of having lost his scholarly honour through his dishonesty. The following is an excerpt:

Who would have thought that a person who claims knowledge and counts himself among scholars would use the weapon of lying in his fight against divinely elected saints (*awliyā’ Allāh*), even though he knew that lying is a sign of hypocrisy (*nifāq*) as mentioned in an authentic Prophetic tradition. Thus, he has chosen to be counted among hypocrites and to entirely lose his scholarly reputation for honesty.⁵⁶¹

Alas, continues ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, although proponents of the brotherhood had successfully refuted al-Ifrīqī’s allegations, his followers had continued to spread the nonsense. The repeated printing and distribution of *al-Anwār* by Saudi *da‘wa* foundations and others, seems to have forced the Sudanese Tijānī to take the initiative and respond. As he puts it: “Those who lie and do not fear the day in which the hearts and eyes will turn about from fear, continued to print, reprint and spread these baseless fabrications. They distributed it free of charge. This was done even by some

⁵⁵⁸ An online copy of it is available at www.cheikh-skiredj.com/defendre-Tijaniyya-africain.pdf. The self-published version is printed in big letters, and is fifty-six pages in total.

⁵⁵⁹ See, in particular, al-Ḥujurāt 49:6 demanding Muslims to put what they hear about others to a solid test before they fall prey to lies spread by unreliable ones and regret their actions.

⁵⁶⁰ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd’s account of the date of the debate differs from that of his master Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ. According to the latter, it occurred in 1359 AH. See: Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn*, p. 5.

⁵⁶¹ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Radd ‘alā l-Ifrīqī*, p. 2.

foundations”.⁵⁶² Elsewhere he makes mention of Anṣār al-Sunna al-Muḥammadiyya,⁵⁶³ leaving no doubt that his written reply to al-Ifrīqī was indeed at once a response to the anti-Tijānīs of Egypt and Sudan.⁵⁶⁴ Despite all of this, al-Ifrīqī’s pamphlet is then claimed to have served the brotherhood, purportedly contributing to its continuous spread. The Sudanese Tijānī further presents the Tijāniyya as a congregation of pious people who make constant recitations of the Qur’ān, to which they attach the utmost value, as the divine eternal speech. With this, the Sudanese Tijānī not only assures his fellow Tijānīs of the doctrine of the brotherhood towards the Qur’ān, but also warns his opponents of the mistake they have committed. Anṣār al-Sunna and other anti-Tijānīs are called upon to cease following in the footsteps of al-Ifrīqī, lest they should have to confront Tijānīs in divine court on the Day of Judgement. He states:

I hope that the group who have assisted al-Ifrīqī will quit spreading his lies and absurd claims, and [hopefully they will come to] support the truth. If they do so, that is what we expect from each and every one who searches for truth; but if they do not then Allah will judge between us and He is the best of judges.⁵⁶⁵

3.1. Tijānī Denigration of al-Ifrīqī

One may wonder why ‘Umar Mas‘ūd would compile a brand new refutation of al-Ifrīqī, instead of simply issuing a reprint of his master Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ’s own polemical pamphlet, just as, by his own account, Anṣār al-Sunna had attacked the brotherhood by their reproduction and redistribution of al-Ifrīqī’s *al-Anwār*. While a fully satisfactory reply to this question may not be possible for the time being, two possible factors that might have forced him to think that a newly

⁵⁶² ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Radd ‘alā l-Ifrīqī*, p. 2.

⁵⁶³ Anṣār Al-Sunna al-Muḥammadiyya is an Egypt-based Salafī organization with active branches in Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Tanzania, Chad, the Central African Republic, Liberia, and South Africa, on the African continent, as well as in other countries like Sri Lanka and Thailand outside the continent. Founded in 1926 by Muḥammad Ḥāmid al-Fiḳī (d. 1959 CE), Anṣār al-Sunna maintains close doctrinal and political links with the Saudis. It is currently headed by ‘Abdallāh Shākīr al-Junaydī. Their anti-Sufī struggle forms an essential part of the organization’s puritanical campaign for the elimination of alien substances which they say have been injected into the doctrines of Islam. For further information, see: <http://www.saaaid.net/feraq/mthahb/8.htm> last check 1.6.2016; <http://www.ansaralsonna.com/web/pageother-659.html>; <http://www.saaaid.net/feraq/mthahb/8.htm>. last check October 5, 2017. A detailed account of the Anṣār is given by Faṭḥī Amīn ‘Uthmān (b. 1935 CE), known as the historian of the organization (*mu’arrikh al-Jama‘a*) in his *Jama‘a Anṣār al-Sunna al-Muḥammadiyya: Nashatuhā wa-ahdafuhā, wa-rijaluhā*.

⁵⁶⁴ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Radd ‘alā l-Ifrīqī*, p. 12.

⁵⁶⁵ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Radd ‘alā l-Ifrīqī*, p. 3.

written reply would better serve his goals than the reproduction of the *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn*, are as follows:

- a) That of Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz’s accommodation of his opponents’ critique, and his giving credit to them. Indeed, the twentieth-century Tijānī authority Ibrāhīm Sīdī had admonished the Egyptian for the allegedly soft tone he used against his adversaries.⁵⁶⁶ Thus it may be said that within certain Sudanese Tijānī milieus of the time, the religious landscape was still affected by anti-Ḥāfīzian sentiments. As such, it may be that ‘Umar Mas‘ūd did not want to reignite the fire of intra-Tijānī conflict by reprinting his master’s pamphlet, though one may easily deduce, from his own publications, that he had thoroughly followed in the footsteps of his Egyptian shaykh. Indeed, except for the unprecedentedly harsh and occasionally vulgar language used by the Sudanese, the responses provided in his *al-Radd ‘alā al-Ifrīqī* seem to have been inspired and shaped by those of his master’s *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn*.
- b) That, in general, one’s scholarly refutation of one’s opponents may help one to enhance one’s personal authority and prestige. Tijānī shaykhs are no exemption in this regard, in the sense that, their polemical confrontations with outsiders could gain them considerable prestige within Tijānī circles.⁵⁶⁷ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd’s refutation of the Malian Salafī seems to be of a nature in which the personality of the opponent is brought under fire.⁵⁶⁸ The aim of such refutations is to prove that one’s adversary is unworthy of a response in the first place, a strategy that prevailed in the second half of the last century. Other Tijānī protagonists may also be seen to have displayed a similar attitude.⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶⁶ Ibrāhīm Sīdī condemns al-Ḥāfīz’s relatively soft tone in response to his opponents as too accommodating. See Ibrāhīm Sīdī, “*al-Irshādāt al-Aḥmad iyya fī sham ra’iha al-khatmiyya wa al-kawniyya*”, n.p.n.d., see in particular p.15.

⁵⁶⁷ One could think here of Aḥmad al-‘Ayyāshī Sukayrij of Morocco, who, due to his polemical writings in refutation of opponents, came to be known as the leading protagonist of the Tijānīs in West and North Africa during his life-time. For more details, see: Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijāniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, p. 182.

⁵⁶⁸ Targeting the personality of one’s opponents seems to be a relatively well-established tradition among Sudanese Tijānīs. Rüdiger Seesemann provides an account of controversies between the Niyasiyya branch of the brotherhood and traditional Tijānīs who refused to submit to the authority of Ibrāhīm Niyās, in which the latter, having seen their position weakened, resort to directing personal attacks against their adversaries. See Rüdiger Seesemann, “The History of the Tijāniyya and the issue of tarbiya in Darfur (Sudan)”, p. 422.

⁵⁶⁹ A good example of this kind is Aḥmad b. al-Hādī’s *Muntahā sayl al-jārif fī tanāquḍāt Mushtahā al-kharif* in refutation of Ibn Mayābā.

Two out of four chapters in Umar Mas‘ūd’s *Radd ‘alā al-Ifrīqī* serve to denigrate the scholarly capabilities of the Malian Salafī. In the very first chapter, a short account of the life of al-Ifrīqī is provided, with special emphasis on two phases of his life which are considered to have shaped his intellectual career. The reader’s attention is attracted to al-Ifrīqī’s eight years of study in the French mission college in Timbuktu, and to his subsequent five years’ of service as a teacher of the French language at the same institution. The other aspect upon which importance is placed the Malian’s alleged lack of knowledge regarding the Islamic sciences, particularly the Arabic language. It is well-known that the Malian Salafī came relatively late to gaining a high standard of religious education in Dār al-Ḥadīth, a Salafī/Wahhābī institution in Medina.⁵⁷⁰ On the basis of this fact, ‘Umar Mas‘ūd tries to convince his fellow Tijānīs that they might well expect to receive criticism from someone whose early stages of life were so thoroughly shaped by his French education, followed by his exposure to a heavily anti-Sufī education in the so-called House of the Prophetic Traditions. The Malian is portrayed as someone who pretends to have expertise in the field of *ḥadīth*, whereas the Sudanese Tijānī claims that his lack of knowledge, particularly regarding the Arabic language, is obvious in his arguments.

In the fourth chapter, ‘Umar Mas‘ūd takes particular care to elaborate on his opponent’s purported incompetence in the Islamic sciences. The condescending style of argument applied therein is obvious from the chapter’s title, “*al-muḍḥikāt al-mubkiyāt*” meaning that which makes one simultaneously laugh and cry. In a total of eleven pages, the Sudanese Tijānī sets out twelve issues that he claims prove al-Ifrīqī’s lack of knowledge and indifference in quoting Prophetic traditions. For example, in his discussion of innovations, the Malian Salafī has cited a Prophetic statement from the *Sharḥ al-Sunna* (Commentary on the *Sunna*) by Imām al-Baghawī, and from the *al-Arba ‘īn* by Imām al-Nawawī, which goes: “By [Allah] who controls my soul that none of you would be a true believer until he subjugates his lower self to what I have brought to you”. This statement, according to al-Ifrīqī, is reported by al-Nawawī in *al-Arba ‘īn* with a true chain of transmission (*sanad*); whereas, ‘Umar Mas‘ūd claims that *al-Arba ‘īn* does not contain any single Prophetic tradition, let alone one with a true chain of transmission. He goes on to argue that this fact is explicitly mentioned in the the book’s prologue; thus the Malian Salafī is mocked for his alleged lack of knowledge. This is a book, the Sudanese asserts, that is memorized by heart by

⁵⁷⁰ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Radd ‘alā l-Ifrīqī*, pp. 6-10.

little boys, while al-Ifriqī, a teacher at the Dār al-Ḥadīth, is ignorant of it. Al-Baghawī is said to have reported it to have a weak chain of transmission (*sanad ḍaʿīf*). The authority of Shuʿayb al-Arnawṭ (d. 1438/2016) and Zuhayr al-Shāwīsh (d. 1434/2013)—two prominent Salafī experts in the sciences of *ḥadīth* and disciples of the eminent Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī (d. 1419/1999) a towering figure, credited with shaping contemporary Salafism,⁵⁷¹—is then invoked for further textual support, as in a commentary on al-Baghawī’s *Sharḥ al-Sunna*, both scholars articulate that the above-mentioned tradition is weak (*ḍaʿīf*) due to the existence of a certain Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād in the chain of transmission.⁵⁷² Al-Albānī had already passed a similar verdict on Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād in his *Zilāl al-janna* (The Shadows of Paradise). This allegedly obvious lack of knowledge is meant to prove al-Ifriqī’s incompetency in the field of Prophetic traditions, which is enough to make one simultaneously laugh and cry. Furthermore, he is charged with the fabrication of lies and their attribution to the Prophet. The original form of the tradition reported by al-Baghawī and al-Nawawī, according to ʿUmar Masʿūd, goes: “No one of you will be a true believer until he subjugates his lower self to what I have brought to you”, whereas al-Ifriqī’s version contains the addition of “By [Allah] who controls my soul”. Any addition to the text of a Prophetic statement is a fabrication of lies. Thus, ʿUmar Masʿūd’s claims: “This [addition to the text] is considered by authorities in the field of *ḥadīth* as a sort of attribution of lies to the Prophet, the committer of which is [not only] a liar [but also an] attributor of lies to the Prophet, even if he was a teacher at Dār al-Ḥadīth”.⁵⁷³ Another purported indication of the Malian’s incompetence in the field of *ḥadīth* is his constant reference to, and quotation of, Prophetic traditions from al-Shāṭibī’s *al-Iʿtiṣām*. The Sudanese states:

We know that al-Shāṭibī’s book is not a source of Prophetic traditions. Despite this, al-Ifriqī refers to [the] Prophetic traditions in it, so we laughed. These Prophetic statements are known in the sources of *ḥadīth* but the teacher of Dār al-Ḥadīth was not competent enough [to know], so we cried”.⁵⁷⁴

⁵⁷¹ Al-Albānī is one of the foremost authorities for all of the different orientations of the Salafī movement. On his life see: Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *ʿUlamāʾ wa-mafakkirūn ʿarafūhum*, vol. I, pp. 287-326. For his impact on contemporary Salafism in favour of the apolitical tendency, see: Stéphane Lacroix, “Between Revolution and Apoliticism: Nasir al-Din al-Albani and his Impact on the Shaping of Contemporary Salafism”, in Roel Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism: Islam’s New Religious Movement*, London: Hurst & Company, pp. 58-87.

⁵⁷² ʿUmar Masʿūd, *al-Radd ʿalā l-Ifriqī*, p. 34.

⁵⁷³ ʿUmar Masʿūd, *al-Radd ʿalā l-Ifriqī*, p. 36.

⁵⁷⁴ ʿUmar Masʿūd, *al-Radd ʿalā l-Ifriqī*, p. 38.

Elsewhere, the Malian is even charged with lies regarding his name. Following Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, the Sudanese targets his opponent for falsely naming himself al-Ifriqī, whereas Ifriqyā, a well-known geographic territory, does not contain Bilād al-Takrūr, the Malian’s true place of origin.⁵⁷⁵ Therefore, ‘Umar Mas‘ūd argues, he should have named himself after Takrūr (*fal-yunsib nafsahu inshā‘a takruriyyan*). He condescendingly continues by stating that Ifriqyā has produced many valuable scholars, among which no Takrūrī could be found. “One might argue” he hypothesizes, “that ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ifriqī might have named himself after ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. An‘um al-Ifriqī, since naming oneself after esteemed people is a sign of salvation”.⁵⁷⁶ This, however, would entirely fail to rescue him from damage to his reputation since ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. An‘um al-Ifriqī was known for his narrations of fabricated Prophetic traditions on behalf of reliable authorities. “This, I would say”, concludes the Sudanese, “is a similarity between the two”⁵⁷⁷—because of which, he archly implies, the Malian might have named himself after this liar.

‘Umar Mas‘ūd then asks his adversary for the reason for the animosity and hatred between Salafī circles—this because the Malian, in his own pamphlet, had held innovations responsible for rifts and hostility between Muslims. If so, asks ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, then why would the bitterest enemies of innovations, namely the Salafīs, fall pray to disunity? They are even said to have accused each other of the greatest polytheism (*al-shirk al-akbar*). He goes on to quote a prominent Salafī authority from Aleppo, Muḥammad Nasīb al-Rifā‘ī (d. 1413/1992),⁵⁷⁸ the founder of a Salafī organization in Syria known as Jamā‘at al-Da‘wa al-Muḥammadiyya li-l-Sirāṭ al-Mustaqīm (The Association of the Muhammadan Call to the Straight Path), complaining about the inter-Salafī rifts. The Sudanese continues: “al-Ifriqī should let us ask him, while laughing and crying, a simple question: what is the reason for hatred and hostility among Salafīs, who are claimed to be strict followers of the Sunna [?]”⁵⁷⁹ To demonstrate inter-Salafī disagreements, at least eight additional Salafī sources, including those of al-Albānī, are then brought to reader’s attention. All of them indicate rifts and allegations made within the Salafī movement.⁵⁸⁰ The Malian is then further

⁵⁷⁵ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd relies on Mu‘jam al-Buldān’s description of the territorial boundaries of Ifriqyā, which excludes al-Ifriqī’s homeland Mali. For details, see: ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Radd ‘alā l-Ifriqī*, p. 15.

⁵⁷⁶ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Radd ‘alā l-Ifriqī*, p. 16.

⁵⁷⁷ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Radd ‘alā l-Ifriqī*, p. 17.

⁵⁷⁸ For an account of his life, see: ‘Iṣām Mūsā Ḥādī, *Nafaḥāt min ḥayāt al-‘Allāma Muḥammad Nasīb al-Rufā‘ī*, n.p., n.d.

⁵⁷⁹ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Radd ‘alā l-Ifriqī*, p. 40.

⁵⁸⁰ For a list of these sources and their authors, see: ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Radd ‘alā l-Ifriqī*, pp. 41-42.

admonished for his alleged confirmation of ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī’s litanies in *Ghunyat al-ṭālibīn* (Wealth of the Knowledge Seekers), some of which, according to the Sudanese, are devoid of Prophetic origin:

Al-Ifriqī has evoked the authority of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī al-Baghdadī and his book *Ghunyat al-ṭālibīn*, although some of the litanies mentioned in the book are not reported with true chains of transmission from the Prophet (*ghayr ma’thūra*). Thus, who wants to laugh should do so and who wants to cry should do so”.⁵⁸¹

Thus, the Malian is accused of double standards for allegedly supporting al-Jīlānī in the issue of litanies not verifiably transmitted from the Prophet, while condemning al-Tijānī for the same reason. The Sudanese Tijānī ignores the fact that neither al-Ifriqī nor other protagonists of the Salafī movement admonish unverified litanies: they even believe in a certain reward for them. What is denied by Salafīs is that there are unprecedented and unmatched sublime rewards attached to them, which they say are not ascribed even to litanies with Prophetic origins; it is this context in which *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* is denied. It is chiefly this condescending chapter, along with the short biography of the Malian, which sets ‘Umar Mas‘ūd’s polemical pamphlet apart from that of his Egyptian master.

3.2. Refutation of al-Ifriqī’s Allegations

Although *al-Radd ‘alā al-Ifriqī* relies heavily on *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn*, nevertheless there are elements that set them apart from each other. Since the former was written in the 1990s (CE), quite a few decades later than its Egyptian predecessor, it refers on quite a few occasions to contemporary Salafī authorities such as Aḥmad Shākīr (d. 1377/1958)⁵⁸² and al-Albānī, as mentioned above, quoting them for textual support. This pattern is clearly a new one when compared to the treatise by al-Ḥafīz; its goal is to discredit the opponent in the eyes of the Tijānī readership, for whom the treatise was written in the first place. ‘Umar Mas‘ūd also applies a far harsher tone than his master. As we have seen, the Malian is not only described as a liar, but as a

⁵⁸¹ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Radd ‘alā al-Ifriqī*, p. 43.

⁵⁸² Aḥmad Shākīr was an Egyptian Salafī scholar and graduate of the prestigious al-Azhar University. He was particularly known for his expertise in the sciences of the *ḥadīth*, in addition to his excellent command of the sciences of *tafsīr*, *fiqh* and *adab* (Arabic literature), leaving quite a number of literary works behind him. For details, see: ‘Umar Riḍā Kaḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, vol. I, p. 284.

liar who does not spare even the Prophet from his lies. Another substantial characteristic of his pamphlet is that of mockery, to which a whole chapter is dedicated. In it, the Malian Salafī is the recipient of numerous epithets and sobriquets: he is called “a liar” (*kadhdhāb*) and “the poor one” (*al-miskīn*), in various nominal forms, no less than eight times; and if the verb forms are taken into consideration, the number of insults rises drastically. The opponent is described, for example, as “one who does not fear God” (*rajul la-yattaqi Allāh*), “the ignorant one” (*al-jāhil*), “the indifferent one” (*al-ghāfil*), and as “a fabricator of lies against the Prophet” (*waddā*).⁵⁸³

While there are, ‘Umar Mas‘ūd admits, certain disputed issues of which, the Tijānīyya, like any other Muslim community, has its own exclusive understanding and interpretation, he claims that the objections of the opponents of the Tijānīyya are either lies and slanders (*kidhb wa-iftirā*) or distortions and misinterpretations of the order’s doctrine.⁵⁸⁴ Likewise, he claims that almost all of al-Ifriqī’s criticisms are either slander or scandal. The Sudanese also follows his own sequence, irrespective of that in which *al-Anwār al-raḥmāniyya* is articulated. In the following section I will present a part of the dispute between the Malian Salafī and his Tijānī opponents from Egypt and Sudan.

4. The Themes

In the following section, Tijānī tenets related to the litanies of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* (the opening praise), and *jawharat al-kamāl* (the pearl of perfection), two of the most controversial litanies of the brotherhood, will be discussed in detail. Though al-Ifriqī does not thematize the pearl of perfection, since the condition attached to it by the followers of the brotherhood is not less controversial than is the reward of the opening praise, it is deemed important for it to be scrutinized here as well.

4.1. *Ṣalāt al-Fātiḥ* and the issue of *Kitmān* (Concealment)

The issue of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ*, also known as *al-yāqūta al-farīda* (the unique sapphire)⁵⁸⁵ has been a continues focus of criticism directed at the Tijānīyya brotherhood—becoming *the* bone of contention between its protagonists and antagonists. It is not uncommon for anti-Tijānī writers to

⁵⁸³ See for example: pp. 1, 2, 17, 20, 36.

⁵⁸⁴ For further details, see: ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Radd ‘alā l-Ifriqī*, p. 46.

⁵⁸⁵ ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*, vol. I, p. 140. Both terms appear interchangeably here.

open their criticism with this issue,⁵⁸⁶ and *al-Anwār* is no exception in this regard. According to al-Ifrīqī, Tijānī sources maintain that both the Tijānī litany (*wird*),⁵⁸⁷ meaning *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ*, and the tremendous reward that they hold to be attached to were kept aside for their master by the Prophet, who did not even reveal it to his own companions. *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*,⁵⁸⁸ and *al-Jaysh al-kafīl* are the two sources to which the Malian Salafī here refers, stating that the former claims, on the authority of none other than the founding figure of the brotherhood himself, that the Tijānī *wird* was put aside for him (al-Tijānī), while the latter claims that the reward of *al-yāqūta al-farīda* was disclosed by the Prophet to the supreme master of the Tijāniyya alone. Both sources, he claims, contain the statement “He (the Prophet) did not teach it to any of his companions” (*wa lam yu‘allimhu li-aḥadin min ashābihi*).⁵⁸⁹ (I myself was unable to find such a statement in the above-mentioned sources; nor, as we shall see later, do defenders of the Tijāniyya brotherhood admit the existence of such a phrase in their sources). From al-Ifrīqī’s perspective, these claims contain at least two major problematic points: Firstly, they mean that the Prophet had in fact failed to entirely fulfil his mission, a dangerous implication, which, he says, all other Muslim scholars would unanimously consider to be disbelief, not to mention the fact that this also appears to contradict a Qur’ānic verse in which the Prophet is ordered to convey divine instructions with honesty.⁵⁹⁰ Any such concealment of the divine mission (*kitmān*), argues the Malian, is impossible for prophets. Furthermore, he asserts, the Tijānī master’s claim to such a lofty rank would entail his superiority to Abū Bakr, the confidant of the Prophet and the first caliph of Islam, since Abū Bakr is implied to have lacked the necessary credentials to receive the Tijānī litany and the reward of *al-yāqūta*

⁵⁸⁶ Many anti-Tijānīs tend to give their comments on *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* at the very beginning of their criticism. See, for example, Ibn Mayābā’s *Mushtahā al-khārif al-jānī*, which starts with the issue of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* and *kitmān*.

⁵⁸⁷ In the Tijānī lexicon, the term *wird* refers to certain litanies of paramount importance in one’s initiation into the brotherhood. For further details on *wird* and the conditions attached to it, see: ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*, vol. I, pp. 122-124; Al-‘Arabī b. al-Sā’ih, *Bughyat al-mustafīd*, pp. 328-355.

⁵⁸⁸ *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*, written by ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, a close companion of the Tijānī master, is the most authoritative of the brotherhood’s sources. It contains the life story and sayings of the order’s supreme master; its special significance comes from the fact that when ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm presented it to Aḥmad al-Tijānī after its compilation, the latter approved it. Tijānīs even believe that Prophet appeared to al-Tijānī in one of their daylight encounters, and affirmed that it was his own book and had been he who had composed it. See: Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijaniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, p. 24.

⁵⁸⁹ Al-Ifrīqī, *al-Anwār al-rahmāniyya*, p. 20.

⁵⁹⁰ Al-an‘ām 6:25.

al-farīda. The Tijānī master’s statements are therefore said to be not only devoid of relevance, but also to be of the utmost effrontery.⁵⁹¹

The Tijānīs rejected and continue to reject the accusation of *kitmān* in the strongest possible terms. The supposed concealment of the Tijānī *wird*, claimed by the Malian Salafī on the authority of a purported quotation of Tijānī sources,⁵⁹² is dismissed by Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, who claims that no statement of this kind is to be found in any Tijānī source, let alone in *Jawāhir* or *al-Jaysh*. “I have checked *Jawāhir* line by line and word by word”, argues the Egyptian, “but did not find any trace of this statement. Then I checked other books of the *ṭarīqa* and I could not find it there either. I then realized that these people [the antagonists of the Tijāniyya] are liars; they invent lies without having any fear of God”.⁵⁹³ He goes on to state that the founding figure of the brotherhood had never uttered such a statement, claiming that the opponents of the Tijāniyya to have betrayed the scholarly principle of reliability (*amāna*) and “slaughtered themselves with the weapon of lying”.⁵⁹⁴ As for the Tijānī *wird*, he states, it consists of *istighfār* (asking for divine forgiveness), *ṣalāt ‘alā l-nabiyy* (sending blessings on the Prophet) and *haylala* (admitting the oneness and uniqueness of God), none of which was kept undisclosed by the Prophet, No single Tijānī, the Egyptian asserts, believed that the Prophet had ever concealed even a small component of his Prophetic mission. In his own words:

I have found the *wird*, of which the antagonists assume the master to have claimed its concealment for himself on the authority of the Prophet, consisting of *istighfār*, *ṣalāt ‘alā l-nabiyy* ... and *haylala*. So, what is it exactly, that the Prophet concealed of these things [?]”⁵⁹⁵

The source of the Malian Salafī’s unforgivable mistake is Ibn Māyābā, who had raised the same issue in the same fashion a decade earlier. This provided al-Ḥāfiẓ with a perfect opportunity to persuasively argue that the allegation of *kitmān* in relation to the wording of the Tijānī *wird* was baseless, and he was right to do so. Neither the Malian, nor Ibrāhīm b. Yāsīn al-Qaṭṭān, one of Ibn

⁵⁹¹ He states: “*Wa-hādhā kalāmūn fī ghāyat al-fasād, bal fī ghāyat al-waqāḥa*” meaning “This is an extremely corrupt statement, as a matter of fact, an extremely rude statement”. See: al-Ifriqī, *al-Anwār al-raḥmāniyya*, p. 21.

⁵⁹² The allegation of *kitmān*, from the perspective of the antagonists of the brotherhood, was informed by an alleged quotation from *Jawāhir* and *al-Jaysh*, reading: “The Prophet kept this litany a side for me and did not teach it to any of his companions”. See Al-Ifriqī, *al-Anwār al-raḥmāniyya*, p. 20; Ibn Mayābā, *Mushtahā al-khārif al-jānī*, p. 19.

⁵⁹³ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn*, p. 8.

⁵⁹⁴ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn*, p. 10.

⁵⁹⁵ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn*, p. 9.

Māyābā's Jordanian disciples who would repeat the same mistake years later after the death of his mentor, had any solid point of reference for this claim.⁵⁹⁶ But if the allegation of *kitmān* were to be directed at the reward of the Tijānī *wird* then the story would take a different direction. It is true that *istighfār*, *ṣalāt 'alā l-nabiyy* and *haylala*, were not concealed by the Prophet; nevertheless, the reward attached to the Tijānī *wird* is claimed to have been disclosed to Aḥmad al-Tijānī alone. This is something that no Tijānī would deny. The question is, then, *is* the Prophet supposed to have concealed this reward from his companions? If yes, would this constitute a basis for the allegation of *kitmān* or not? Unfortunately, neither the Egyptian al-Ḥāfiẓ nor the Sudanese 'Umar Mas'ūd addressed this question, and for good reasons.

As for the accusation of *kitmān* in relation to the reward of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ*, the Tijānīs' response is as follows. For them, the issue stems from the dishonesty of Ibn Māyābā, who had claimed, on the authority of *al-Jaysh*, that the supreme master of the brotherhood had denied that the Prophet had disclosed any information regarding the reward of *al-yāqūta al-farīda* to any of his companions (*wa-lam yadhkurhu li-aḥadin min aṣḥābih*). The phrase “to any of” (*li-aḥadin min*), is held by al-Ḥāfiẓ, to be a fabrication and infiltration (*tadlīs*) of *al-Jaysh* by Ibn Māyābā, the liar.⁵⁹⁷ Why would he do such a thing? Because without this addition, argues the Egyptian, the statement in question would not have provided the desired meaning. Claiming that it was not disclosed to the companions is not the same as claiming that it was not disclosed to *any* of them. For al-Ḥāfiẓ, while the statement of the order's founder does indeed imply the former, this does not negate the possibility of its disclosure to *some* of the companions, if not all. Thus, he argues: “When Ibn Māyābā saw that the statement did not support his argument, he came up with this addition, a clear proof of his indifferent behaviour and unreliable personality. He was followed in this *tadlīs* by the self-proclaimed scholar (*al-shuwaykh*) 'Abd al-Raḥmān”.⁵⁹⁸ Furthermore, he argues, the Prophet was divinely granted the freedom of the disclosure or concealment of certain matters, such as the paper (*ṣahīfa*) he had wanted to write before his death but which, due to disagreement among his companions, he had denied so-doing. If it was necessary for that information to be disclosed, continues the Egyptian, the Prophet would not have changed his mind, and if it was necessary to

⁵⁹⁶ See Ibrāhīm al-Qaṭṭān, *Makhāzī al-walī al-shayṭānī al-mulaqqab bi-l-Tijānī al-jānī*, (printed as an appendix to *Mushtahā al-khārif al-jānī*), Amman: Dār al-Bashīr, 1405/1985, p. 603.

⁵⁹⁷ One should note that after calling him “the master”, “the great 'ālim”, now al-Ḥāfiẓ is now calling him “a liar”.

⁵⁹⁸ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn*, p. 13.

keep it undisclosed, he would not have asked for a paper in the first place.⁵⁹⁹ So too, he argues, with the reward of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ*: the Prophet was given the right of disclosure or concealment. As far as the formula itself is concerned, it was known prior to the Tijānī master, having been narrated by the fourth caliph of Islam ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.⁶⁰⁰

The same line of argumentation is maintained by ‘Umar Mas‘ūd. He states that to claim, on the authority of Tijānī sources, that the *wird* was concealed by the Prophet is nothing but slander and fabrication by opponents of the brotherhood. “This is a great slander (*buhtān ‘aẓīm*)”, says he. “It is naught but a fabrication of the diseased imagination and a result of manifest lies”.⁶⁰¹ Neither *istighfār*, *ṣalāt ‘alā l-nabiyy* nor *lā ilāha illā Allāh* were concealed by the Prophet, and nor do Tijānīs believe so. He goes on to state that the divinely elected saints (*al-ṣāliḥīn*) could indeed receive formulas for prayers and divine remembrance from the Prophet, which neither poses any contradiction to the religion nor means that there has been any concealment on the part of the Prophet. For textual support, the Sudanese turns to *al-I’tiṣām* by al-Shāṭibī and *al-Madkhal* (The Entryway) by Ibn al-Hājj,⁶⁰² two sources widely used among the supporters of Anṣār al-Sunna al-Muḥammadiyya,⁶⁰³ the organization responsible for the reprinting and distribution of *al-Anwār* in Egypt, as well as in Sudan, in the last decade of the twentieth century. Al-Shāṭibī confirms the validity of the dream visions of saints in which they may receive certain litanies from the Prophet. These visions, he says, should not be underestimated unless they interrupt an established rule of *sharī‘a*. Al-Shāṭibī therefore also approves the dream visions experienced by Sufis such as al-Kattānī and al-Biṣṭāmī. In addition to this fact, he says, it must also be mentioned that Ibn al-Qayyim, the celebrated Salafī theologian, also approves certain spiritual experiences of the Sufis (*tajribāt al-sālikīn*) in his *Madārij al-sālikīn* (The Runways of the Wayfarer). On the authority of his master Ibn Taymiyya, he even declares a certain tiny litany to be the greatest divine name (*al-*

⁵⁹⁹ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Radd akādhīb al-muṣṭarīn*, p. 14.

⁶⁰⁰ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Radd akādhīb al-muṣṭarīn*, p. 9.

⁶⁰¹ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Radd ‘alā l-Ifriqī*, p. 11. It should be noted that ‘Umar Mas‘ūd does not consider the whole quotation to be a fabrication, as we may also understand from other Tijānī sources: the part which is referred to as a concoction is the phrase “to any of” (*li-ahadīn min*).

⁶⁰² On Ibn al-Hājj see: al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām*, vol. VII, p. 264; ‘Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, vol. III, pp. 682-683.

⁶⁰³ It is interesting to note that instead of referring to Sufi manuals, the Sudanese prefers to quote from two sources which are widely respected among Salafīs. This point constitutes a peculiarity of *al-Radd ‘alā l-Ifriqī* and could be perceived as another effective to attempt to convince the Tijānī constituency of al-Ifriqī’s contradiction of his own sources.

ism al-a‘zam), the regular recitation of which has been claimed to grant the heart eternal life.⁶⁰⁴ Quoting from Ibn al-Hājj’s *al-Madkhal*, ‘Umar Mas‘ūd narrates an anecdote regarding a group of people who encountered great difficulties, forcing them to complain of their situation to the famous thirteenth-century Mālikī scholar Ibn Abī Jamra (d. 699/1296).⁶⁰⁵ Thereupon, Ibn Abī Jamra instructed them to recite certain litanies he had received from the Prophet in a dream vision. The problematic situation was indeed relieved upon the recitation of the litanies in the manner he had described.⁶⁰⁶

Elsewhere, the Sudanese states that it would be the utmost illogicality to contemplate the idea that the Prophet had been instructed by God to convey any of the Tijānī litanies, including the *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ*, and that he had not done so, since such a conviction would lead to the domain of disbelief. The Prophet was protected by God through angels: therefore, it was impossible for him to forget any part of his mission that was to be delivered, let alone to conceal it.⁶⁰⁷ Nevertheless, he asserts that not only *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* but also its reward were already known to Sufis prior to Ahmad al-Tijānī, who himself had come across it in a book entitled *Wirdat al-juyūb* (The Rose of the Pockets). The Tijānī master had stuck with the litany’s recitation during his return journey from pilgrimage, until he arrived in the city of Tlemcen. However, when he left for Boussemghoun he decided to replace it with another litany of higher reward; whereupon, in a daylight encounter with the Prophet, he was instructed to overturn the decision.⁶⁰⁸ Now, this statement pertaining to the knowability of the reward of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* is worthy of discussion, since one will not come across it in other Tijānī polemical writings; not to mention that it goes against the traditional perspective of the brotherhood, which assumes certain rewards attached to *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* to be an exclusively Tijānī prerogative. Tijānīs believe that it was their master to whom the Prophet revealed a very special dimension of reward for the *al-yāqūta al-farīda*. He was told, among other things, that one recitation of it was equal to six thousand recitations of the Qur’ān. ‘Umar Mas‘ūd’s discourse,

⁶⁰⁴ For further details on the litanies received in dream visions by al-Kattānī and al-Biṣṭāmī, as well as the *dhikr* formula of Ibn Taymiyya, see: ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Radd ‘alā l-Ifriqī*, pp. 12-13.

⁶⁰⁵ His full name is ‘Abdallāh b. Sa‘d b. Aḥmad b. Abī Jamra al-Andalūsī. He was born in al-Andalus and died in Egypt. He was known for his expertise in history, Quranic exegesis and the sciences of Prophetic traditions, with a number of books to his name. See ‘Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, vol. II, p. 243.

⁶⁰⁶ For a full account of the anecdote, see: Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Mālikī, *al-Madkhal ilā tanmiyat al-a‘māl bi-taḥsīn al-niyāt wa-l-tanbīh ‘alā ba‘d al-bida‘ wa-l-‘awāid allati intaḥalat wa-bayān shanā‘atihā wa-qubḥihā*, vol. IV, Cairo: Maktaba Dār al-Turāth, n.d, p. 129.

⁶⁰⁷ ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*, vol. I, p. 207.

⁶⁰⁸ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Radd ‘alā l-Ifriqī*, pp. 48-49.

however, gives the impression that this reward was known by others before to the founding figure of the brotherhood. In so claiming, he refers to a specific part of the daylight communications between the Tijānī master and the Prophet, in which the former was instructed to return to the recitation of the *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ*. According to ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, when the supreme master of the brotherhood was ordered to overturn his decision, he asked for a reason to do so, upon which the Prophet revealed the above-mentioned reward of *al-yāqūta al-farīda*.⁶⁰⁹ This part of the communication is missing in ‘Umar Mas‘ūd’s quotation, in which, instead of providing the full picture, he mentions only the result. Such an unorthodox stance may only be understood when the context in which his refutation was written is taken into account; doubtless, it was the undeniable pressure of the proponents of the Salafī doctrine that pushed him to do so. Anṣār al-Sunna were quite successful in their campaign against Sufis in Sudan at that time, during which the treatise of al-Ifrīqī was reprinted and distributed there and in Egypt. The allegation of *kitmān* pertaining to the reward of *al-yāqūta al-farīda* could only be avoided if the merits attached to this problematic formula were said to have been known prior to Aḥmad al-Tijānī, as was the case with the formula itself. This is one point among others, that separates ‘Umar Mas‘ūd’s treatise from that of his Egyptian master and bestows it with a unique slant. This line of argument is maintained by him in a later pamphlet, written upon the persistent requests of his fellow Tijānīs, in which he explicitly argues that the reward was known even prior to the establishment of the Tijāniyya.⁶¹⁰

4.2. The Reward attached to *Ṣalāt al-Fātiḥ*

Another tenet criticized in relation to *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* is the issue of the merits attached to it. The author of *Jawāhir* ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm claims, inter alia, that the reward for one recitation of it is equal to the reward for all of the prayers of glorification to God (*tasbīḥ*) that have ever been said in this universe, all prayers in remembrance of God (*dhikr*), every invocation (*du‘ā*) long or short, and six thousand recitations of Qur’ān.⁶¹¹ From al-Ifrīqī’s point of view, this is nothing less than

⁶⁰⁹ For details, see: ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*, vol. I, pp. 135-136.

⁶¹⁰ The treatise in question is *al-Tijāniyya wa-khuṣūmuḥum wa-l-qawl al-ḥaqq*, written upon the persistent request of a fellow Tijānī Hamza ‘Abd al-Mun‘im, complaining about ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abd al-Khāliq’s *al-Fikr al-ṣufī fī ḍaw’ al-Kitāb wa-l-Sunna*, first published in 1974 CE and reprinted at least three times in 1984, 1986 and 2016 CE. The book purportedly claims that *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* is a Tijānī invention. In response, ‘Umar Mas‘ūd argues that even the reward attached to the litany was known prior the existence of Tijāniyya brotherhood, let alone the litany itself. ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Tijāniyya wa-khuṣūmuḥum wa-l-qawl al-ḥaqq*, n.p. [Khartoum], n.d, p. 10. An online copy of this book is available at <http://www.cheikh-skiredj.com/tijaniya-negateurs.pdf>

⁶¹¹ ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*, vol. I, p. 136. One should note that this was not the only merit of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* mentioned in Tijānī sources which are loaded with the lofty merits and rewards of this small prayer formula. See for

disbelief (*kufṛ*), apostasy (*riḍḍa*) and departure from the community of Islam (*khurūj ‘an l-milla al-Islāmiyya*). “Is there any Muslim who would not announce the holder of this claim to be an infidel?”⁶¹² he asks his Tijānī interlocutors, with great disappointment. He even goes a step further, stating that “He who does not reject this claim and show signs of consent is an infidel himself. Such a person will be asked to repent and if doesn’t he will be killed”.⁶¹³ The Malian Salafi reproaches his interlocutors for not using their intellects, a precious divine gift, in order to find out the truth for themselves.

For al-Ifriqī, this conviction contains several problematic issues that are briefly discussed in *al-Anwār*. It not only entails believing in the continuation of revelation after the Prophet, a sin the Qur’ān denounces in strong words,⁶¹⁴ but as such also entails the litany’s superiority over the divine eternal speech, the Qur’ān. He seems to be stunned by this exalted claim, asking: “What can be superior to the Qur’ān? Is it possible for something to descend to mankind after the Prophet Muḥammad, let alone for it be superior to the Qur’ān?”⁶¹⁵ One who claims this, according to the Malian, can neither have achieved to know the Prophet in the true sense of the word, nor the blessings he had brought to humankind, nor the reason he was sent as a messenger.⁶¹⁶ For al-Ifriqī, this is enough of a reason to denounce the Tijāniyya. In the following paragraph, his interlocutors are called upon to relinquish their ties with the order, labelled by the Malian as an order of infidelity (*al-ṭarīqa al-kufriyya*). Any sort of comparison between the divine eternal speech and that of God’s creation is unacceptable to al-Ifriqī. He attracts the attention of his interlocutors to a Prophetic tradition in which the superiority of the holy divine speech over all other speech is compared to the superiority of God Himself over His creation.⁶¹⁷ Like all of the brotherhood’s antagonists the author of *al-Anwār* then argues that such a claim (the alleged supremacy of the litany) must be seen as an attempt to establish the superiority of the Tijānīs over the Prophet and his companions, since the latter could not have had the chance to worship God with this litany that is claimed to be

example ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*, vol. I, pp. 136-140; Muḥammad Muḥammad al-‘Arabī b. al-Sa’ih, *Bughyat al-mustafīd*, pp. 370-77; Maḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Wāḥid al-Nazīfī, *al-Durra al-kharīda fī sharḥ al-Al-yāqūta al-farīda*, vol. 4, Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1392/1972, pp. 200-30.

⁶¹² Al-Ifriqī, *al-Anwār al-raḥmāniyya*, p. 21.

⁶¹³ Al-Ifriqī, *al-Anwār al-raḥmāniyya*, p. 21.

⁶¹⁴ See: al-Aḥzāb 33:40.

⁶¹⁵ Al-Ifriqī, *al-Anwār al-raḥmāniyya*, pp. 21-22.

⁶¹⁶ Al-Ifriqī, *al-Anwār al-raḥmāniyya*, pp. 21-22.

⁶¹⁷ Al-Ifriqī, *al-Anwār al-raḥmāniyya*, pp. 22-3.

superior to the divine speech. “Do you really worship Allah with something superior to the Qur’ān?” asks he his interlocutors. “In this case, I swear to God (*wallāhi*) you are superior to the Prophet and his companions, for they did not worship Allah with anything superior to the Qur’ān. The Prophet and likewise his companions recited parts of the Qur’ān as litanies every night”.⁶¹⁸

The alleged supremacy of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ*, in his view, causes the attention of ordinary Muslims to deviate from the divine eternal speech. Irritated in the extreme by the degree of supremacy attached to this tiny litany, he tries to mock his interlocutors for their affiliation to an order which regards the Qur’ān to be inferior to human speech, holding that a proper mind cannot accept the alleged ascendancy of *al-al-yāqūta al-farīda* over a single one of the prayer formulas reported on the authority of the Prophet, let alone all the prayers that have ever been uttered in this universe. At this point, the Malian Salafī cannot hold back from tarring all Tijānīs with a single brush, referring to them as ignorant (*jahūl*) and stupid (*ghabī*) ones who have failed to comprehend the simplest fact of *haylala*’s having been declared by the Prophet to be the best *dhikr* formula ever recited by a divine messenger. The extraordinary merits attached to *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* may also be interpreted as a laying claim, on the part of the Tijānī master, to an otherwise inaccessible rank, entailing his superiority over all divine messengers, the Prophet Muḥammad included: Thus the Malian Salafī seems to have understood the issue. He therefore puts another question to his interlocutors: “O people! were not Adam, Noah, Moses, Jesus and Muḥammad, peace be upon them all, remembering Allah? Is it possible for the inventor of this order to be superior to them?”⁶¹⁹

The traditional Tijānī strategy for refuting such allegations differentiates between the issue of reward and the issue of superiority.⁶²⁰ Reward is by divine grace, they say, and should not be

⁶¹⁸ Al-Ifrīqī, *al-Anwār al-raḥmāniyya*, p. 22. Al-Hilālī, writing several decades after the Malian, similarly underlines the same point. Each Tijānī, he argues, has to recite *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* at least 150 times each day—with the exclusion of supererogatory recitations—which would purportedly bring a reward of nine hundred thousand recitations of the Qur’ān, whereas one proper recitation of the divine eternal speech requires a time period of three days. This would mean that the Prophet and the companions could not, in the course of their lifetimes, have earned, and thus received, the reward which ordinary Tijānīs get in a single day. Hence, he states, “What kind of deviation could match the deviation of he who claims for himself much more reward than the Prophets... and the righteous servants of God”. See: al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiyya*, p. 105.

⁶¹⁹ Al-Ifrīqī, *al-Anwār al-raḥmāniyya*, p. 23.

⁶²⁰ See for instance Muḥammad Fāl Abbā’s refutation of al-Zamzamī, in which he differentiates between supremacy/superiority (*aḡḡaliyya*) and distinction (*maziyya*). One less superior (*maḡḡūl*) may possess a distinction that is missing in a superior one (*aḡḡal*), he argues. The Prophet, for example, bestowed distinctions upon some of his companions: upon Ubay b. Ka’b, upon whom he bestowed the distinction of the proper recitation of the Qur’ān, and upon Mu’āz b. Jabal, upon whom he bestowed the distinction of the knowledge of *halāl* and *harām*, but these

mistaken for a sign of the recipient's superiority. The same pattern of argumentation is followed by al-Ḥāfīz:

When someone is told by the Prophet "Allah will reward you, due to your praise of me with a thousand recitations of the Qur'ān (*alf khatma*)", the wise (*'uqalā'*) would immediately understand that either as sheer divine grace, rather than a reward deserved by the reciter; or, that he is superior to others; or that his formula of *ṣalāt 'alā l-nabiyy* is superior to the Qur'ān.⁶²¹

As one may notice, the Egyptian Tijānī is at pains to turn the tables on his opponents and accuse them of being stupid enough to interpret the merit allocated to the litany by the Prophet himself as equating to its supremacy over the divine eternal speech. From this point of view, he claims, the ascendancy of the Qur'ān is obvious for Tijānīs, to the extent that they need not engage themselves with the matter. Thus, he addresses his opponents: "Understand the reward for *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* in the way your hatred permits. As far our belief is concerned, the Qur'ān is superior to all other speech".⁶²² Despite the gigantic reward attached to the recitation of *al-al-yāqūta al-farīda*, he says, Tijānīs have not ceased their recitation of the Qur'ān. The deceivers (*mukhdī 'ūn*) should know, he continues, that the Tijānī master had determined the daily recitation of one thirtieth of the book (*juz'*) to be the lowest acceptable requirement for his disciples. Tijānīs are portrayed by al-Ḥāfīz as among the leading supporters of the Qur'ān and the Sunna, which fact, he says, their adversaries would comprehend if they had the opportunity to live among them.⁶²³ Likewise, he says, neither the supreme master of the brotherhood nor his followers had perceived themselves to be superior to the companions of the Prophet on the basis of the reward attached to their litany. Such a belief, according to the Egyptian, would not only pose a contradiction to the Prophetic traditions but would also go against the statements of the founding figure of the Tijāniyya, who perceived the companions as intermediaries between the Prophet and his *umma* (the universal Muslim

distinctions did not entail their supremacy over Abū Bakr, who is unanimously considered the best among the Prophet's companions. For details and other examples, see: Muḥammad Fāl Abbā b. 'Abd Allah b. Muḥammad Fāl al-'Alawī, *Rashq al-Sihām fī-ma fī kalām al-munkir 'alā l-shaykh al-Tijānī min l-aghlāṭ wa-l-awhām*, Rabat: Maṭba'a al-Amniyya, 1394/1974, pp. 63-64.

⁶²¹ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn*, p 28.

⁶²² Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn*, p 28.

⁶²³ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn*, pp. 24-25.

community), who for the same reason would continue to benefit from the pious deeds performed by members of this community.⁶²⁴

The same statement is reiterated by ‘Umar Mas‘ūd as proof of Tijānī convictions regarding the companions of the Prophet.⁶²⁵ The gigantic reward of *al-yāqūta al-farīda* is left untouched in his discourse; rather, he restricts himself to another statement of the Tijānī master’s, in which any sort of comparison between divine speech and that of humankind is dismissed: “The superiority of the Qur’ān over all other formulas of prayer (*adhkār*), and *salāt ‘alā l-nabiyy*, and others, is a matter brighter than the sun”.⁶²⁶ Unlike his Egyptian master, who explicitly argues against any connection between reward and relative superiority, the Sudanese confines himself to this forceful remark by the founding figure. This is another point which differentiates his reply from that of his master. In a recent lecture given in Hijaz, in a Tijānī *zāwiya* known as the “Bride of the Lodges” (*‘arūs al-zawāyā*),⁶²⁷ however, he adopted a much more radical stance on the reward of the litany.⁶²⁸ The main topic of the lecture was a comparison between *ṣalāt ‘alā l-nabiyy* and the holy Qur’ān from the point of view of the reciter. In it, ‘Umar Mas‘ūd argued: “The one who recites the Qur’ān without conforming to its injunctions invites divine retribution. He should better recite formulas in the praise of the Prophet instead”.⁶²⁹ Nevertheless, when he was asked about the reward of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ*, the Sudanese rejected its apparent superiority to the Qur’ān, stating: “Six thousand’, this phrase has not been uttered by the master Aḥmad al-Tijānī”.⁶³⁰ The absence of any such phrase in either *al-Jāmi‘* or *Rawḍ al-muḥibb al-fānī* (The Garden of the Evanescent Lover) by al-Mishrī (who, along with ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, was responsible for recording the statements of the supreme master), argued the Sudanese, is clear evidence of the fact that this sentence does not belong among the authentic statements of the supreme master. Therefore, he said, this must have been a printing

⁶²⁴ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn*, p. 35. The supreme master of the Tijāniyya argued that since a special rank was allocated to his disciples and followers by the Prophet himself, no one else could attain this rank no matter how great and plentiful his pious deeds might be. See the full statement in: ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*, vol. I, p. 142.

⁶²⁵ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Radd ‘alā l-Ifrīqī*, p. 51.

⁶²⁶ ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*, vol. I, p. 176.

⁶²⁷ According to a Tijānī informant residing in Saudi Arabia, the precise location of *‘arūs al-zawāyā* in Hijaz is deliberately kept hidden. Online conversation with Ghassān b. Sālim al-Tūnisī on 06.08.2017.

⁶²⁸ This lecture took place during ‘Umar Mas‘ūd’s recent journey to Hijaz in May-June 2017. Online conversation with Haytham b. ‘Umar al-Tijānī on 05.08.2017.

⁶²⁹ I possess an audio recording of the lecture, obtained on 12.08.2017 from the eldest son of ‘Umar Mas‘ūd.

⁶³⁰ Audio recording of the lecture obtained from ‘Umar Mas‘ūd’s eldest son Haytham ‘Umar al-Tijānī.

mistake,⁶³¹ and should be treated in the light of the authentic sayings of Aḥmad al-Tijānī. The instruction of the founding figure of the Tijāniyya to evaluate statements reported on his behalf in the light of the sublime *sharī‘a*, according to the Sudanese, should certainly be applied here. This stance seems to have outraged certain Tijānīs, both within and outside of Sudan. Ghassān b. Sālim al-Tūnisī, a Saudi Tijānī who had missed the lecture,⁶³² referred the matter to ‘Umar Mas‘ūd’s son Haytham b. ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, for him to illuminate the issue. Ghassān is a disciple of Muḥammad Mawlūd b. Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Sa‘dī al-Shinqīṭī’s, who took the litanies of the brotherhood also from ‘Umar Mas‘ūd and has considerable service in the proseleytization of the Tijānī brotherhood in Hijaz to his name.⁶³³ From his perspective, the argument of a printing mistake seemed baseless. Not only the printed version of *Jawāhir* but also the manuscript versions, as studied by Muḥammad al-Rāḍī Guennoun, approved the reward as such, and needless to say, it was never doubted by any of the earlier Tijānī shaykhs.⁶³⁴ Haytham, however, tried to address the issue in relative terms, arguing that while his father had rejected a comparison between *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* and the Qur’ān in their essence, a comparison between their rewards is a different issue, particularly when the spiritual state of the reciter is taken into consideration, and one which he said that his father had never dismissed. No such vague response would satisfy Ghassān, who repeated his question and demanded this interlocutor to preserve discretion in correspondence.⁶³⁵

4.3. The Origin of *Ṣalāt al-Fātiḥ*

Another important criticism that the author of *al-Anwār* directs against *al-yāqūta al-farīda* concerns the issue of its origin. On the authority of *al-Ifāda al-aḥmadiyya*,⁶³⁶ al-Ifrīqī accuses

⁶³¹ As will be seen, this strategy was first adopted by Sharif Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ of Nigeria, and gained strong recognition among his followers in Sudan.

⁶³² Ghassān told me that had he been present at the lecture he would have challenged ‘Umar Mas‘ūd on the issue, this despite the great respect he has for the Sudanese. Online conversation with Ghassān b. Sālim al-Tūnisī, August 7, 2017.

⁶³³ Online conversation with Haytham b. ‘Umar al-Tijānī, 05.08.2017.

⁶³⁴ Ghassān asks how, if the reward occurs as such in the unprinted manuscripts of the *Jawāhir*, could ‘Umar Mas‘ūd claim that it was not uttered by the shaykh, and was added later due to a printing mistake? Online conversation with Ghassān b. Sālim al-Tūnisī, August 7, 2017.

⁶³⁵ The correspondence started as an exchange of thoughts on Facebook: however, when differences were to be discussed on the issue of the reward, Ghassan suggested that they use email instead of Facebook, and thus, we do not know quite how it evolved. I have preserved the part of the correspondence that occurred through Facebook and can make it available if needed.

⁶³⁶ Its full title is: *al-Ifāda al-aḥmadiyya li-murid al-sa‘āda al-abadiyya*. Written by a disciple of al-Tijānī named Muḥammad al-Ṭayyib al-Sufyānī (d. 1259/1843-1844), it contains the sayings of al-Tijānī. Despite of the fact that it remained unpublished, it has spread widely among Tijānī circles, mainly due to its brevity and clarity. See: Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijāniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, p. 25.

Tijānīs of perceiving the litany as a component of the holy Qur’ān, a conviction required for obtaining its reward. This, from his view point, not only entails the continuation of divine revelation after the Prophet, an obviously heretical belief, but also its descension to an ordinary person—in this case, the supreme master of the Tijāniyya—well below the status of a divine messenger. The Malian proceeds to argue that “He who believes that *al-yāqūta al-farīda* is a part of the holy Qur’ān, he has committed a clear act of infidelity (*faqad kafar kufran zāhiran*)”.⁶³⁷ Divine revelation does not descend *but* to prophets, whereas the Tijānī litany is not to be found in an apocryphal *ḥadīth* (*fī ḥadīth mawḍū’*), let alone in the Qur’ān itself. Al-Ifriqī argues that Tijānīs may therefore have mistaken their master for a divine messenger. Was the founding figure of the brotherhood a saint or a divine messenger? He seems very keen to know. In order to demonstrate the inextricable situation into which he believes the Tijānīs have fallen, the author of *al-Anwār* thus applies a simple analogy: Tijānīs must either accept the litany as a component of the divine eternal speech, or deny holding any such conviction. In the first case, they would lose their membership in the community of Islam, while in the second case they would risk their affiliation to the brotherhood, and may no longer be considered to *be* Tijānīs, for rejecting a doctrine so clearly stated by one of their highly respected sources. In either case, he says, they are doomed to lose.⁶³⁸

Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ forcefully rejects the accusation of his opponent. The litany concerned was neither considered to be a component of the Qur’ān, nor of a *ḥadīth qudsī*,⁶³⁹ nor even a part of divine revelation descending to prophets (*min waḥy al-nubūwwa*). *Al-Ifāda* itself, he argues, rejects such an accusation. Page eighty of this book, upon which antagonists of the brotherhood base their criticism, does not even contain the word “Qur’ān”, let alone declare *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* to be a component of it, a conviction only apostates would entertain.⁶⁴⁰ The Egyptian proceeds to give a hypothetical scenario in which such a statement had in fact been made by the supreme master of the brotherhood. Since, he says, the sayings of a spiritual authority of the calibre of Aḥmad al-Tijānī deserve to have a true interpretation (which is an established rule as well), one would need

⁶³⁷ Al-Ifriqī, *al-Anwār al-rahmaniyya*, pp. 23-24.

⁶³⁸ Al-Ifriqī, *al-Anwār al-rahmaniyya*, p. 24.

⁶³⁹ *Ḥadīth qudsī* is a sacred tradition in which the chain of transmission is traced back directly to God instead of ending with the Prophet. The meaning is revealed by God while the phrasing is formulated by the Prophet; therefore, it is also called *ḥadīth rabbānī* and *ḥadīth ilāhī* (divine *ḥadīth*). For details, see: Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ al-‘Uthaymin, *Muṣṭalah al-Ḥadīth*, Cairo: Maktaba al-‘Ilmiyya, 1415/1994, pp. 5-6.

⁶⁴⁰ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Radd akādhīb al-muṣṭarīn*, pp. 22-23.

to interpret them in a way compliant with the rules of *sharī'a*. This would mean that *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* is extracted from the Qur'ān (*ma' khudh min l-Qur'ān bi-ṭarīq al-iqtibās*). The argument of *iqtibās* is a typical Tijānī strategy, one developed by earlier protagonists of the brotherhood. As far as we know, Muḥannad Bāba⁶⁴¹ was the first polemicist to come up with it.⁶⁴² As for Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiz, he is the first to have troubled himself to specify certain passages in the Qur'ān as possible sources from which the litany could have been extracted. Once it is affirmed that *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* could have been extracted from the Qur'ān, it would be easy to argue that it was a part of the divine eternal speech.⁶⁴³ This strategy has been used by certain Tijānī authorities in West Africa against their opponents. In a debate that took place in Tamale, Ghana in 1968 CE, Mallam Abdulai Maikano of Ghana, a Tijānī *muqaddam* affiliated to the Niyāsiyya branch of the brotherhood, had recourse to the argument that the *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* was derived from various Qur'ānic passages. However, when he failed to extract all of the components of the litany from Qur'ān, the gathering was not convinced, and his opponent al-Haji Yūsuf Soalihū Ajura thus accused him of fabrication.⁶⁴⁴ It should be noted that Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiz, in his own attempt at claiming derivation, likewise fails to find a source of reference for each and every component of the litany, and thus could face the same accusation.

While it is true that *al-Ifāda* did not refer to *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* as a part of the Qur'ān, a fact which many opponents of the Tijānīs, including al-Ifriqī, have failed to notice, the source does indeed state that *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* is a part of the divine speech (*kalām Allāh*), regardless of whether one disregards Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wāḥid al-Nazīfī's description of the litany as part of the divine eternal speech ("*kalām Allāh al-qadīm*", a term used exclusively to define the Qur'ān).

⁶⁴¹ Muḥannad Bāba was a contemporary of al-Kumlaylī's, and best known for his polemical altercation with him. See: Ahmad b. al-Amīn, *al-Wasūt fī tarājim 'ulamā' Shinqīṭ*, pp. 236-238.

⁶⁴² See Muḥannad Bāba al-Shinqīṭī's argument, quoted in: Muḥammad Fāl Abbā, *Rashq al-sihām*, p. 109.

⁶⁴³ According to the description provided by the Egyptian, *allāhuma* is taken from Yunus/10 "*subhānaka allāhuma*"; *Salli 'alā* from al-Aḥzāb/56 "*innallāha wa-malā' ikatahū yuṣallūn 'alā al-nabiyy yā ayyuhallazīn āmanū ṣallū 'alayhi wa-sallimū taslīmā*"; *Sayyidinā* from al-Baqara/196 "*sayyidan wa-ḥaṣuran*"; *Muḥammad* from al-Fath/29 "*Muḥammadun Rasūl Allāh*"; *al-fātiḥ limā ughliqa* from al-Fath/1 "*innā fatahnā laka fathan mubinā*" and al-Mā'ida/19 "*qad jā' akum rusulunā yabayyinu lakum 'ala fatratin min al-rusul*"; *al-khātīm limā sabaq* al-Aḥzāb/40 "*wa-lākin rasūl Allāhi wa-khātem al-nabiyyīn*"; *nāṣir al-ḥaqqi bi-l-ḥaqq* is taken from Muḥammad/7 "*in tanṣurullāha yanṣurkum*"; and Hūd/88 "*wa-mā tawfīqī illā bi-Allāh*"; *al-hādī ilā ṣirāṭik al-mustaqīm* from al-Shūrā/52 "*wa-innaka latahdī ilā ṣirāṭin mustaqīm*"; *wa- 'alā ālihi* from al-Aḥzāb/33 "*yurīdullāhu li-yudhhibā 'ankum al-rījsa ahl al-bayti wa-yuṭāḥhirakum taṭhīrā*"; *ḥaqqā qadrihi* from al-An'ām/91 "*wa-ma qadarullāha ḥaqqā qadrihi*" and from al-Ḥijr/72 "*la 'amruka innahum lafī sakratihim ya 'mahūn*"; *wa-miqdārihi* from al-R'ad/8 "*wa-kullu sha' in 'indahū bimiqdār*"; and *al- 'azīm* from al-Qalam/4 "*wa-innaka la 'alā khuluqin 'azīm*". See: *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn*, pp. 19-21.

⁶⁴⁴ Abdulai Iddrisu, *Contesting Islam in Africa*, pp. 125-126.

Furthermore, al-Nazīfī, one of the most well-known Tijānī authorities of the Maghrib, who had the privilege of mentoring Aḥmad Sukayrij, places the litany on the same footing as the Qurʾān, stating that as a component of the divine eternal speech, *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* should be regarded as equal to the Qurʾān.⁶⁴⁵ Al-Ḥāfiẓ, for his part, goes so far as to argue that “the divine speech” is a general term whose use is neither confined to the Qurʾān nor the rest of the divine books. Thus, he says, *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* could have been extracted from the divine speech, of which the Qurʾān is only one component. The Prophetic traditions, he continues, approve the fact that there were people in earlier nations who were spoken to by angels, without their having reached the status of prophethood. One Prophetic statement describes ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb to be among them.⁶⁴⁶ In subsequent writings, however, the Egyptian Tijānī would develop a rather more flexible strategy of response. In 1966 CE, during a random meeting with a young Salafī, he would try to give the impression that the lofty merit of *al-yāqūta al-farīda*, as reported on the authority of the founding figure of the brotherhood, might have been affected by distortion.⁶⁴⁷ In a later treatise, he would even deny that *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* was a component of the divine speech. Drawing on the authority of Muḥammad al-‘Arabī b. al-Sā’ih, he refers to al-Mishrī’s usage of the term *kalām Allāh* in relation to *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* as the result of his (al-Mishrī’s) own personal understanding of the actual statement made by the supreme master (*rivāyet bi-l-ma’ nā*),⁶⁴⁸ claiming: “He who described *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* as a component of the divine speech reported the statement of the shaykh according to his own understanding”.⁶⁴⁹ while he approves the term “*kalām Allāh*”, Maḥmūd b. Bensālim,⁶⁵⁰ a great-grandson of the supreme master, nevertheless suggests a metaphorical interpretation of the term. It is divine speech in the outward meaning of that term, he argues, in the sense that one may recite

⁶⁴⁵ Al-Nazīfī, *al-Ṭib al-fā’ih*, p. 14.

⁶⁴⁶ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn*, p. 21.

⁶⁴⁷ This young Salafī, in point of fact, was ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abd al-Khāliq, who was studying at the Islamic University of Medina at the time. He was reportedly labelled as Wahhābī by al-Ḥāfiẓ, who wanted to test him on some questions of theology. To the amazement of the Egyptian, the young Salafī was able to provide solid responses, enabling him to turn the tables and bring up the issue of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ*’s reward and whether or not it could be considered as superior to the Qurʾān. Al-Ḥāfiẓ, allegedly then distracted him from the topic, telling his interlocutor: “It is possible to report and spread something on behalf of a certain human being which he did not really say”. For the full conversation, see: <http://www.dd-sunnah.net/forum/showthread.php?t=16320>

⁶⁴⁸ The treatise in question is ‘*Ulama’ tazkiyat al-nafs*, written in response to a letter he received from a certain (Sudanese) Ibrāhīm Maḥmūd Faṭḥ al-‘Alīm, who complained about the ruthless attacks made by the brotherhood’s opponents (probably the Anṣār Al-Sunna al-Muḥammadiyya of Sudan) on certain Tijānī topics including *al-yāqūta al-farīda* and its merits. It is in this context that al-Ḥāfiẓ refers to al-Mishrī’s definition of the litany as his own understanding of the issue.

⁶⁴⁹ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, ‘*Ulama’ tazkiyat al-nafs*, p. 8.

⁶⁵⁰ For more on him, see: Al-Fātiḥ al-Nūr, *al-Tijānīyya wa-l-mustaḡbal*, pp. 194-96 and Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Ṭa’īmī, *Ṭabaqā’at al-Tijānīyya*, pp. 210-212.

it in obligatory ritual prayers. Likewise, he holds up the existence of the word “*sayyidinā*” in the litany as another hint that favours such a metaphorical understanding. Even ordinary Tijānīs, he argues, are aware of this issue.⁶⁵¹ The argument in favour of a metaphorical understanding has been brought to the fore by other Tijānī authors as well. Muḥammad Fāl Abbā interprets the term “*kalām Allāh*” via the term “*ilhām*” (divine inspiration). From his perspective, in the parlance of Sufis, the term “divine speech” (*kalām Allāh*) refers only to divine inspiration inserted into the hearts of saintly figures.⁶⁵² The contemporary Tijānī, Muḥammad b. Sa‘īd, depicts Abbā’s interpretation as the only acceptable understanding of the issue, with extensive quotations from earlier Sufi authorities.⁶⁵³

As far the issue of its revelation to al-Bakrī on a sheet of light⁶⁵⁴ is concerned, this does not bother al-Ḥāfiẓ at all. It was, he argues, a divine instruction, in the form of inspiration for saints, which the supreme master declared had descended as a formula from the unseen (*waradat min l-ghayb*).⁶⁵⁵ He also argues that the Qur’ān speaks of a certain kind of revelation to the mother of Moses, even though she was not a prophet,⁶⁵⁶ and that, according to a principle established among Muslim scholars, Allah may indeed bestow saints with a supplication (*du‘ā*) or a formula in praise of the Prophet (*ṣalāt ‘alā l-nabiyy*) received in the form of divine overflow (*fayḍ Allāh*) and divine grace (*faḍlihi*).⁶⁵⁷ His disciple ‘Umar Mas‘ūd reflects very briefly on the issue, stating that neither *al-Ifāda* nor any other Tijānī source ever claimed the litany to be part of the Qur’ān. This was a lie of al-Ifrīqī’s himself, he says, of which he states: “How ugly a lie becomes when [it is] invented by a Salafī missionary and a teacher at the Dār al-Ḥadīth”.⁶⁵⁸ Nevertheless, he remains silent on the fact that *al-Ifāda* had used the term “*kalām Allāh*” in relation to the litany in question, and elsewhere, besides denying the litany to be a component of the divine eternal speech, following

⁶⁵¹ Maḥmūd b. Bensālīm, however, fails to provide a sufficient metaphorical interpretation of “*kalām Allāh*”, a term used in *al-Ifāda al-aḥmadiyya* for *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ*, instead attempting to deflect the attention of the reader with some vague statements. For further information, see: Maḥmūd b. Bensālīm, *al-Tijānīyya bayn l-intiqād wa-l-i’tiqād*, Rabat: Maṭba‘at wa-Warrāqa al-Karāma, 1433/2012, pp. 158-59.

⁶⁵² Muḥammad Fāl Abbā, *Rashq al-sihām*, pp. 90-91.

⁶⁵³ For details, see: Muḥammad b. Sa‘īd, *Ḥusn al-taqāḍī*, pp. 298-309

⁶⁵⁴ See, for example: ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*, vol. I, p. 138.

⁶⁵⁵ ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm reports that he had asked the supreme master about the fact of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* being devoid of *salām ‘alā l-nabiyy* while it mentions only *ṣalāt ‘alā l-nabiyy*. Aḥmad al-Tijānī replied that it had descended from the unseen so (*waradat min l-ghayb ‘alā ḥādhi al-kayfiyya*), and thus the absence of the *salām* did not devalue it. See ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*, vol. I, p. 139.

⁶⁵⁶ Al-Qaṣaṣ 25:7 reads “We inspired the mother of Moses” (*wa-awḥaynā ilā ummi Mūsā*).

⁶⁵⁷ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Radd akādhib al-muftarīn*, p. 23.

⁶⁵⁸ Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Radd ‘alā l-Ifrīqī*, p. 14.

his Egyptian master, he declares the owner of such a conviction to be a liar (*kādhīb*), and a disbeliever (*kāfir*) who has departed from the community of Islam.⁶⁵⁹

4.4. *Ṣalāt al-fātih* as an Arena for Inter-Tijānī Polemics

In the first half of the last century, both Ibrāhīm Niyās and Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ developed the conviction that there had been the interpolation of alien substances into Tijānī sources, particularly the *Jawāhir*.⁶⁶⁰ However, in a departure from a statement by the supreme master—in which he refers to the sublime nature of the *sharī‘a* and forcefully asserts that nothing that contradicts the *sharī‘a* can have a binding nature, including his own teachings and practices, as well as his advice to his own followers to weight even his own teachings with the scale of the *sharī‘a*—both Ibrāhīm Niyās and Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ may be seen to have failed, or at least hesitated, to apply the scale of the *sharī‘a* where the sayings of their master were concerned. Thus, not a single passage was marked by either of them as an addition (*dass*) of the adversaries of the brotherhood.⁶⁶¹ However, this conviction nonetheless paved the way for subsequent Tijānī scholars to take this line of argumentation a step further. The second half of the twentieth century witnessed the rise of Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ,⁶⁶² a leader in the Niyāsiyya branch of the Tijāniyya, who enjoys widespread recognition in Tijānī circles in Nigeria and beyond, and who undertook the burden of completing the mission of the purification of Tijānī sources.

In one of his books *al-Takfīr akḥṭar bid‘a tuḥaddid al-salām wa-l-waḥda bayn al-muslimīn fī Nigeria* (Excommunication [of Muslims from the religion of Islam] is the Greatest Danger Threatening the Unity of Muslims in Nigeria), known for short as *al-Takfīr*,⁶⁶³ Ṣāliḥ dares to

⁶⁵⁹ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Radd ‘alā l-Ifrīqī*, p. 47.

⁶⁶⁰ See details in Mohammad Ajmal Hanif, “An Evolution in Tijāniyya Perception of *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*”, in: *1st International Sufi Studies Graduate Student Symposium March 9-11 Papers*, (published online by Nefes Yayinevi, Istanbul, 2018, https://issuu.com/hernefes/docs/tebligler_tag).

⁶⁶¹ See Rüdiger Seesemann, “Three Ibrāhīms”, p. 307; Rüdiger Seesemann, “The Takfīr Debate: Part II: The Sudanese Arena”, *Sudanic Africa* 10, 1999, pp. 65-110, (see p. 77).

⁶⁶² Full name Ibrāhīm b. Ṣāliḥ b. Yūnus al-Ḥusaynī. On his life and writings, see: *ALA II*, pp. 407-415; Roman Loimeier, *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1997, pp. 271-277.

⁶⁶³ The book’s full title is *al-Takfīr akḥṭar bid‘a tuḥaddid al-salam wa-l-waḥda bayn al-muslimīn fī Nigeria*. Written as a response to the opponents of the Tijāniyya, namely Abū Bakr Gumi, the book starts with a discussion of the development of different factions in matters of jurisprudence and faith. Other main topics include the origin of Sufism and its development, various Sufi brotherhoods, and the issue of excommunication (*takfīr*), with particular reference to anti-Tijānism, etc. It was first published in 1982 in Cairo by Mustāfā al-‘ābi al-Ḥalabī. Rüdiger Seesemann, “The Takfīr Debate: Sources for the Study of a Contemporary Dispute Among African Sufis, Part I: The Nigerian Arena”, *Sudanic Africa*, 9, 1998, pp. 39-70. (see p. 44). The edition I consulted for this paper was printed

question the issue of the reward of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ*, marking the beginning of an extreme departure from the conventional policy of the brotherhood. The common Tijānī belief of one recitation of *al-yāqūta al-farīda* being equivalent to six thousand recitations of the whole Qurʾān had attracted fierce criticism from Abū Bakr Maḥmūd Gumi (d. 1413/1992),⁶⁶⁴ a diehard anti-Sufist in Nigeria. In a book known for short as *al-ʿAqīda al-ṣaḥīḥa* (The True Creed), he condemns Tijānīs for comparing their litany with—and even giving it precedence over—the divine eternal speech. Gumi’s onslaught shocked younger generations of Tijānīs, forcing substantial numbers of them to leave the brotherhood. A renowned example is that of Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir Maygharī, who not only denounced the *ṭarīqa* Tijāniyya, but then also began to voice his criticism in writing. Ṣāliḥ thus produced *al-Takfīr* as a written response to Gumi⁶⁶⁵ with the intention of discrediting both Gumi and his followers, the Izāla movement,⁶⁶⁶ who had reportedly accused Tijānīs of disbelief. Ṣāliḥ denied the possibility of any kind of comparison between *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* and the divine eternal speech, arguing that the common Tijānī perception of the litany’s equality to six thousand recitations of the Qurʾān was inaccurate and needed to be fixed, not to mention the fact that it was in sharp contradiction with other passages in *Jawāhir*.⁶⁶⁷ He claimed that it was certainly either an addition to the most authoritative source of the brotherhood by some of their enemies, or a printing

in 1998 in Khartoum by Aru li-l-Ṭabāʿat wa-l-Tijāra al-ʿĀmma with an introduction and appendix by Abū ʿArakī ʿAbd al-Qādir, a Sudanese disciple of Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ.

⁶⁶⁴ Abū Bakr Gumi held the post of grand judge (*qāḍī al-quḍāt*) of Northern Nigeria for a long time. On his life story, his struggle with Sufi brotherhoods and his influence within the religious and political arena of Northern Nigeria, see: Roman Loimeier, *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria*, pp. 148-207; Huzaifa Aliyu Jangebe, “Islamic Reform in Nigeria: The Contributions of Sheikh Abubakar Mahmud Gumi” *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, vol. 5, No. 9, September 2015, pp. 176-181.

⁶⁶⁵ Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ never mentions Gumi by name and remains silent about the identity of his opponent, except on one occasion where his opponent is indirectly referred to as the former chief judge of Northern Nigeria. Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ, *al-Takfīr akḥṭar bidʿa tuḥaddid al-salām wa-l-waḥda bayn al-muslimn fi Nayjrīā* (with an introduction and appendix by Abū ʿArakī ʿAbd al-Qādir), Khartoum: Uru li-l-Ṭibāʿa wa-l-Tijāra al-ʿĀmma, 1998, p. 8.

⁶⁶⁶ Yan Izāla is the Hausa short form for the Arabic Jamaʿa Izālat al-Bidʿa wa-Iqamat al-Sunna (Association for the Removal of Innovation and for the Establishment of the Sunna). For a full account of its establishment and anti-Sufi engagement, see: Roman Loimeier, *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria*, pp. 207-266. For a more recent account, see: Ramzi Ben Amara, *The Izāla Movement in Nigeria: Relationship to Sufis and Perception of Shariʿa Re-implementation*, (PhD Thesis, University of Bayreuth), 2011, pp. 150-290.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ refers here to a passage in *Jawāhir* that declares one recitation of *al-ism al-aʿzam* (God’s greatest name) to be equivalent in reward to that of six thousand recitations of *salāt al-fātiḥ*, and then, in the same passage goes on to claim that one recitation of the *al-ism al-aʿzam* is equal to no more than a single recitation of the Qurʾān. This passage thus contradicts that which states the reward of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* to be equal to six thousand recitations of the Qurʾān. Only one of these passages could be accurate, he argued, and that had to be the passage of *al-ism al-aʿzam*, since this made better common sense. This argument was further consolidated by another passage in *Jawāhir* which equalizes one recitation of *al-ism al-aʿzam* to six thousand recitations of *salāt al-fātiḥ*. Furthermore, with the exception of one passage, nowhere else in *Jawāhir* is the Qurʾān mentioned in the context of the reward of *salāt al-fātiḥ*. Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ, *al-Takfīr akḥṭar bidʿa*, pp. 89-90. For a full discussion of Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ’s argument see: Rüdiger Seesemann, “The Takfīr Debate...” Part I, p. 51-53.

mistake that had supplied the enemies of the supreme leader with the means to attack him.⁶⁶⁸ In an interview with Roman Loimeier, Ṣāliḥ would argue that more than ten different versions of *Jawāhir* were in circulation at the time: ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm himself, the book’s author, had produced three versions, none of which was approved by the supreme master, due to linguistic flaws. The second version had then been sent to Ibrāhīm al-Riyāḥī,⁶⁶⁹ the prominent Tunisian Tijānī scholar, for possible improvement, who had not time to work through the whole book. His students, however, had somehow come to copy the faulty text and take it to Cairo, where further copies, and versions, were produced. The first serious attempt at correction, according to Ṣāliḥ, had been undertaken by the Egyptian al-Ḥāfiẓ, while the second serious attempt was then in progress, by a committee of Moroccan and Nigerian scholars under his own supervision.⁶⁷⁰

This line of argumentation developed by Ṣāliḥ, and praised by some researchers as a flexible strategy, to the benefit of the Tijāniyya,⁶⁷¹ makes sense when the context in which *al-Takfīr* was produced is taken into consideration. Yan Izāla was on the march; Sufis in general and Tijānīs in particular were in a defensive mood. They had already lost considerable ground to Gumi’s Salafī followers; the conventional perception of the unconditional and uncritical acceptance of all that had been reported to have been said by the supreme leader was no longer of any good. An innovative approach to the issue was needed, and it was Ṣāliḥ who made the attempt. Thus, he said, the contents of Tijānī sources had to be investigated in light of the *sharī‘a*: this not only because it was the command of the supreme leader that it should be so, but due also to the fact that the instructions of Allah and his messenger must have, and indeed are, the last say. Therefore, the problematic contents of Tijānī sources must be made to comply with the rules of the *sharī‘a*, through interpretation and revision, and those offering no possibility of revision had to be eliminated.⁶⁷² Aḥmad al-Tijānī was indeed a divinely elected saint, but not impeccable; so Ṣāliḥ

⁶⁶⁸ Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ, *al-Takfīr akḥṭar bid‘a*, p. 87.

⁶⁶⁹ On the life of Ibrāhīm al-Riyāḥī, see: ‘Umar b. Muḥammad, *Ta‘īr al-nawāḥī bi-tarjama al-Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Riyāḥī*, Tunus: Maṭba‘a Bikar wa-Shurakā’ih, 1320.

⁶⁷⁰ According to Loimeier, this interview took place on 27 March 1988. Roman Loimeier, *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria*, pp. 274-275. It should be noted that other Tijānīs speak of only two versions having been produced by ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, the second of which, they say, was approved by Aḥmad al-Tijānī.

⁶⁷¹ Roman Loimeier, argues that in developing this more flexible strategy by claiming “that none of the presently circulating copies of the book are really authentic, Ṣāliḥ is in a position to take the wind out of the sails of the Yan Izāla”. Roman Loimeier, *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria*, p. 275.

⁶⁷² Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ, *al-Takfīr akḥṭar bid‘a*, pp. 48-49. Here Ṣāliḥ quotes an important statement of al-Tijānī’s reported in *Jawāhir*. The founding figure of the Tijāniyya dismisses scholarly opinions that do not comply with those of

asserted in his response to Gumi, when the latter had accused the Tijānī master of giving himself precedence over prophets by claiming that he had been given, in *sab' l-mathānī*, that which even the prophets, apart from the Prophet Muḥammad, had not been granted.⁶⁷³ Ṣāliḥ stated that since this claim had been reported in *Rimāḥ* and attributed to al-Tijānī on the authority of an unknown person, it should not be taken into consideration; while at the same time claiming that it belonged to the domain of ecstatic utterances (*shaṭaḥāt*) which Allah may forgive due to the good deeds of His servants.⁶⁷⁴ He further recalled the authority of al-Ḥāfīz, who stated that the statements of Sufi masters should be rejected if no proper interpretations were possible.⁶⁷⁵ This itself hints at the fact that some of the teachings of the Sufi masters may contradict the *sharī'a*, while insisting that the last say belongs to the latter. Ṣāliḥ thus also explicitly admits that the Tijānī master's daylight encounters with the Prophet are no more valuable than communications occurring in an ecstatic state, or that which is based on a visionary dream.⁶⁷⁶ Ṣāliḥ's attempt to purify Tijānī sources had serious repercussions within the brotherhood. He was accused of distorting the original teachings and practices of the founding figure; some asked him for a clarification, while others even accused him of collaborating with Izāla against the Tijāniyya.

Ṣāliḥ's flexible strategy caused a split between the Nigerian Tijānīs. His attempt to justify his position on the authority of a copy of the *Kitāb al-jami'* by al-Mishrī, which he had borrowed from Ismā'īl Khalīfa (b. 1932 CE),⁶⁷⁷ a Tijānī leader in Northern Nigeria, further complicated the issue, as it would have meant that not only were printed versions of *Jawāhir* affected by additions, but also that, except for the Khalīfa's copy, the *Kitāb al-Jami'* had shared the fate of *Jawāhir*. The reality turned out to be otherwise. Muḥammad al-Thānī Kafanga, one of the eldest Tijānī shaykhs at the time, wrote to Ṣāliḥ's mentor Aḥmad b. 'Alī Abu l-Faṭḥ (d. 1424/2003),⁶⁷⁸ informing him that he was withdrawing his consent from Ṣāliḥ. Kafanga and Tāhir 'Uthmān Būshī (b. 1347/1927) better known as Dahiru Bauchi, for their part, regarded the new strategy as suicidal, and as a

Allah and his messenger. This is called by Ṣāliḥ "the only foundation on which Tijāniyya is built". See 'Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma'ānī*, vol. II, p. 206 as mentioned in *al-Takfīr*.

⁶⁷³ This statement is reported in *Rimāḥ* on the authority of an unknown person. See: 'Umar al-Fūtī, *Rimāḥ ḥizb al-Raḥīm 'alā nuḥūr ḥizb al-rajīm*, vol. II, p. 28.

⁶⁷⁴ Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ, *al-Takfīr akḥṭar bid'a*, p. 49. Though Ṣāliḥ would later provide another interpretation of the statement, claiming that it might have been uttered in a state of *fanā'* in the Prophet, it is astonishing for him to have quoted Ibn Qayyim on the issue, stating that impeccability belongs to the Prophet alone.

⁶⁷⁵ Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ, *al-Takfīr akḥṭar bid'a*, p. 59.

⁶⁷⁶ Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ, *al-Takfīr akḥṭar bid'a*, p. 94.

⁶⁷⁷ On Ismā'īl Khalīfa, see: *ALA II*, pp. 286-287.

⁶⁷⁸ On Abu l-Faṭḥ, see: *ALA II*, pp. 400-403.

capitulation to the opponents of the brotherhood. Nevertheless, it gained Ṣāliḥ a considerable following, particularly among young Tijānīs.⁶⁷⁹ Abu l-Faṭḥ succeeded in calming things down in favour of his disciple, whereupon it was agreed between Tijānī scholars in Nigeria that they would remain silent on the issue and keep it as a secret known only to themselves.

This silence, however, was broken by a harsh reply, known for short as *al-Summ al-zu'āf*, by Ibrāhīm Sīdī,⁶⁸⁰ a Tijānī shaykh from Sudan.⁶⁸¹ In it, Ṣāliḥ was described as someone who only pretended to be a Tijānī defending the honour of the supreme master, while, in reality, defending his opponents. The damage Ṣāliḥ's book had inflicted upon the brotherhood, the Sudanese argued, had not been inflicted by Gumi, to whom Ṣāliḥ had pretended to reply. Indeed, Ṣāliḥ's own accusations had exceeded those made by the opponents. According to Sīdī, the ill-fated day (*al-yawm al-mash'ūm*) on which one pretending to be a Tijānī would rally with the brotherhood's opponents had arrived. The Nigerian was claimed to be an example of the renouncer who, in writing his book, excommunicates himself from the brotherhood. Thus, Sīdī declared, he should look for another Sufī order to join; certainly, his knowledge could not be deemed any kind of yard stick for Tijānīs. In his comments regarding Tijānī sources, Ṣāliḥ had not only disrespected their authors, but also the founding figure himself, argued Sīdī. In doing so, he said, the Nigerian had “drowned himself in an inch of water”, for these Tijānī sources had been in circulation for the past two centuries, and no one before him had besmirched their credibility. From Sīdī's perspective, Ṣāliḥ's remarks on *Jawāhir* constituted misbehaviour towards its author 'Alī Ḥarāzim, and a contradiction of the book's Prophetic guaranty. If that source had been infiltrated, argued the Sudanese, then what was left for Tijānīs?⁶⁸² Sīdī then provided a detailed discussion of how to

⁶⁷⁹ Roman Loimeier, *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria*, p. 276.

⁶⁸⁰ For an account of Ibrāhīm Sīdī's life and writings, see: *ALA I*, pp. 301-303; Rüdiger Seesemann, “The writings of the Sudanese Tijānī shaykh Ibrāhīm Sīdī (1949-1999), with notes on the writings of his grandfather, shaykh Muḥammad Salmā (d. 1918), and his brother, shaykh Muḥammad al-Ghālī (b. c. 1947)”, *Sudanic Africa* 11, 2000, pp. 107-124.

⁶⁸¹ According to Seesemann, *al-Summ al-zu'āf al-mudamman fī kitāb al-Takfīr li-ifsād al-Ṭarīqa wa-l-itlāf* (“The Folded Poison that is Hidden in the *Kitāb al-Takfīr* aiming at the Distortion and Destruction of the Order”) is only known in limited number of Tijānī circles in Sudan, Northern Nigeria and in some parts of Chad. Rüdiger Seesemann, “The Takfīr Debate...part I”, p. 43.

⁶⁸² Ibrāhīm Sīdī, *al-Summ al-zu'āf al-muḍamman fī kitāb al-Takfīr li-ifsād al-ṭarīqa wa-l-itlāf*, (completed on 8 Dhū l-Ḥijja/1404/3 March 1984 and printed with *al-Hidāya al-hādīya* and *al-Najm al-thāqib al-Tijānī*), n.p [Khartoum], n.d [c. 1985], pp. 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 33, 34. See also: Rüdiger Seesemann, “The Takfīr Debate...Part I”, pp. 50, 55, 57.

understand the book’s purportedly contradictory statements about the reward of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ*.⁶⁸³ The Tijānī authorities, he asserted, were united on the topic of reward for one recitation of *al-yāqūta al-farīda* being equivalent to that for six thousand recitations of the holy Qur’ān. The *Rimāḥ* by al-Ḥājj ‘Umar, *al-Kawkab al-wahhāj* by Aḥmad Sukayrij, *Kāshif al-ilbās* by Ibrāhīm Niyās, and *al-Jawhar al-mu‘azzam* by his own grandfather, Muḥammad Salmā (d. 1337/1918-1919),⁶⁸⁴ were here recalled for textual support for his concluding statement that what was stated in *Jawāhir* was an unshakable fact.⁶⁸⁵ The author of *al-Takfīr* had achieved nothing, said Sīdī, except for breaking this consensus.

Ṣāliḥ responded with a voluminous but relatively restrained rejoinder known as *al-Mughīr*, in which he carefully avoided the repetition of his previous comments on additions. However, he did stick to one point—that of the possibility of weighing of the sayings of Aḥmad al-Tijānī in the scales of *sharī‘a*, a point which earlier authorities had already made. Indeed, the supreme master himself had applied this method of assay, and saw his followers as capable of doing so.⁶⁸⁶ Ṣāliḥ also returned Sīdī’s favour in full swing, portraying *him* as poking his nose into others’ business.⁶⁸⁷

Events in Sīdī’s native Sudan, however, took a different direction. Ṣāliḥ’s position was consolidated by almost all the Sudanese Tijānī circles, whether of the *tarbiya* faction or otherwise. His followers in particular were seriously hurt by the excommunication of their beloved shaykh by Sīdī. Several rejoinders appeared in justification of Ṣāliḥ’s application of the *sharī‘a* scales to the sayings of the supreme master. Sīdī, for his part, continued to respond with rebuttals of his

⁶⁸³ Calling upon the authority of his grandfather Muḥammad Salmā Ibrāhīm, Sīdī announced that one recitation of God’s greatest name was equal to three million, six hundred thousand recitations of the Qur’ān, whereas the passage in *Jawāhir* that declares one recitation to be equal in reward with one recitation of the Qur’ān, on which Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ had based his argument, was restricted to a recitation by the ordinary man. A Tijānī reciting it with the full authorization of his master and being aware of its sublime features, he stated, undoubtedly receives the above-mentioned reward and much more. For further details, see: Ibrāhīm Sīdī, *al-Summ al-zu‘āf*, pp. 34-35; Rüdiger Seesemann, “The Takfīr Debate...Part I”, pp. 55-56.

⁶⁸⁴ Muḥammad Salmā was, among other things, a disciple of Muḥammad Al-‘Arabī b. al-Sā’ih, the celebrated nineteenth-century Tijānī scholar and the author of *Bughyat al-mustafīd*. He played a crucial role in the proselytization of the Tijāniyya brotherhood in Sudan, particularly in Darfur. For an account of his life, see: Rüdiger Seesemann, “The History of the Tijāniyya and the issue of tarbiya in Darfur (Sudan)”, pp. 397-400; Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijāniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, p. 159; ALA I, pp. 300-301; Al-Fātiḥ al-Nūr, *al-Tijāniyya wa-l-mustaqbal*, pp. 234-235.

⁶⁸⁵ Ibrāhīm Sīdī, *al-Summ al-zu‘āf*, pp. 28-30; Rüdiger Seesemann, “The Takfīr Debate...part I”, pp. 53-54.

⁶⁸⁶ Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ b. Yūnis al-Ḥusaynī *al-Mughīr ‘alā shubuhāt ahl al-ahwā’ wa-akādhīb al-munkir ‘alā Kitāb al-Takfīr*, Beirut: Mu’assat Fu’ād li-l-Tajlīd, 1406/1986, pp. 446.

⁶⁸⁷ See full details in Rüdiger Seesemann, “The Takfīr Debate...Part I”, pp. 57-70.

own, firmly standing behind his denunciation of his Nigerian opponent,⁶⁸⁸ who, he calimed, had allegedly objected to an authentic saying by the Tijānī master. This, by implication, meant for Sīdī that Ṣāliḥ had made an objection to the Prophet as well, since the reward of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* had been conveyed to al- Tijānī by the Prophet in a daylight communication between the two.

In all of his subsequent writings, Sīdī attacks his Nigerian opponent in harsh terms, alleging him to have consolidated a Wahnābī accusation and adopted a Wahnābī strategy, thus misleading the ordinary followers of the order.⁶⁸⁹ He even compares Ṣāliḥ with Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī, the Moroccan former Tijānī who had denounced the brotherhood and joined the Salafiyya. Approximately ten years prior to the publication of *al-Takfīr*, al-Hilālī had also encouraged Tijānīs to weigh the teachings of their master in the scales of the *sharī'a*.⁶⁹⁰ He, at least, Sīdī argues, had been brave enough to announce his departure, whereas the Nigerian, who had adopted the same strategy, had not had the guts to make his departure public.⁶⁹¹ Ṣāliḥ is advised to spare his efforts toward purging the *Jawāhir* of alien elements, which Sīdī argues he would never be able to accomplish with the little knowledge he possesses. Moreover, Sīdī argues, senior nineteenth-century scholars of the order such as 'Alī Ḥarāzīm, al-Ḥājī 'Umar al-Fūtī, al-'Arabī b. al-Sā'ih, Muḥammad al-Ṣaghīr and as well as scholars of the twentieth century such as Sukayrij, Niyās and al-Ḥāfiẓ, had already scrutinized *Jawāhir* and confirmed the authenticity of its contents. Any attempt at further examination thus deserved harsh condemnation, he argues; let alone its being conducted by someone whose knowledge should itself be a subject of scrutiny. "We do not believe

⁶⁸⁸ These rejoinders consist of *Sabīl al-salām ilā hudā khayr al-anām* by a Tijānī committee in the region of al-Geneina, Ibrāhīm Daf 'Allah's *Tanbih sibāb al-ahsrāf ilā 'lladhī minhu al-mu' min yakhāf*, Ibrāhīm b. Abū l-Qāsim's *al-Tiryāq*, Abu 'Arakī b. 'Abd al-Qādir's *al-Ṣārim al-khaṭṭāf 'alā rāqim al-Summ al-zu 'āf*. Ibrāhīm Sīdī struck back with his *al-Hidāya al-hādiya li-Muḥammad Taqī al-Dīn takshīf kawn ṣāḥib al-Takfīr Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ min al-wahnābiyyīn* (January 1985), *al-Najm al-thāqib al-Tijānī bi'l-burhān al-qāti' min zawāl al-ḥīra li-Sukayrij al-'arīf al-rabbānī yubaddid turrahāt ṣāḥib al-Takfīr al-jānī* (Jun-Julay 1985), *al-Nafīr li-shann al-ghāra 'alā fulūl jaysh al-Takfīr* (April 1985) and *al-Sahm al-ṣā'ib al-muwajjah ilā l-mad'ūw Jidda al-kādhīb* (June 1986). His other writings remained in the form of manuscripts. A detailed discussion is provided in Rüdiger Seesemann, "The Takfīr Debate Part II", pp. 75-107.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibrāhīm Sīdī, *al-Futuḥāt al-nāhiya*, p. 119.

⁶⁹⁰ Al-Hilālī had argued that the application of the *sharī'a* scales to the teachings of the founding figure of the Tijāniyya would prove his innocence and restore his reputation. See: al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, pp. 37-38.

⁶⁹¹ Ibrāhīm Sīdī, *al-Hidāya al-hadiya li-Muḥammad Taqī al-Din takshīf kawn ṣāḥib al-Takfīr Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ min al-Wahnābiyyīn*, (completed on 18 Rabi' al-Thānī 1405/10 January 1985 and published together with *al-Summ al-zu 'āf* and *al-Najm al-thāqib*), n.p, n.d, p.19. For full details of al-Hilālī's break up with the Tijāniyya, See al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, pp. 12-22.

that you are even a scholar; how could we be sure of your scrutinizing the contents of Tijānī sources in the lights of the Qur’ān and the Sunna [?]”⁶⁹² Sīdī admonishes his opponent.

Sīdī’s understanding of the matter of *sharī’a* scales may be seen to have evolved. At first, he was of the opinion that his Nigerian adversary had misunderstood the issue, as by advocating the application of *sharī’a* scales, Sīdī stated, the supreme master of the brotherhood had not meant to give permission for his own authentic sayings, as reported in *Jawāhir* as well as other sources, to be laid open to scrutiny and discussion. Rather, he had cautioned his followers about inauthentic sayings, reported on his behalf, which might oppose his true teachings. Such sayings should be evaluated in the light of the authentic statements of his that were contained in *Jawāhir* and other books, sources whose contents correspond, in value and authenticity, to *mutawātir* (a report documented on the authority of crowds or groups that leave no place for any kind of doubt); unlike statements that might have been reported as having been made by him outside of these sources, and which whether narrated by Tijānīs or otherwise, correspond to *khobar al-gharīb* (a report based on a single narration). Thus, argued Sīdī, Aḥmad al-Tijānī’s advice to weigh his sayings was directed toward reports resembling *khobar al-gharīb*. This was what he meant by the scales of *sharī’a*.⁶⁹³ Elsewhere, Sīdī claimed that the intended recipients of this instruction were the brotherhood’s opponents, rather than Tijānīs. A Tijānī disciple should understand that the supreme master’s intention of the supreme leader in uttering such a phrase was to present a bitter deterrent to their enemies.

He was telling the [brotherhood’s]enemies that “All my sayings are based on the Qur’ān and the Sunna of the Prophet. If you understand any of my instructions otherwise, this is a result of your lack of knowledge and the deficiency of your status... As far as I am concerned, I have no shaykh other than the sublime book of God and the Sunna of His Prophet”.⁶⁹⁴

⁶⁹² Ibrāhīm Sīdī, *al-Hidāya al-hadiya li-Muḥammad Taqī al-Din takshīf kawn šāhib al-takfīr Ibrāhīm Šāliḥ min al-wahhabīyyīn*, p. 18.

⁶⁹³ Ibrāhīm Sīdī, *al-Summ al-zu’āf*, p. 5; Ibrāhīm Sīdī, *al-Nadhīr al-’uryān li-l-ḥadhr min dasā’is šāhib al-takfīr fī tariqa al-Tijān* (completed on the first Friday of Ramaḍān 1405/24 May 1985), n.p [Khartoum], n.d, [c. 1996], p. 8; Ibrāhīm Sīdī, *al-Irshadat al-aḥmadiyya fī sham ra’iḥa al-khatmiyya wa-l-katmiyya*, (completed late October 1995), n.p [Khartoum], 1995, p. 39.

⁶⁹⁴ Ibrāhīm Sīdī, *al-Kitāb al-karīm fī bayān ahmiyya shurūṭ tariqa al-Shaykh al-Tijānī al-karīm*, as quoted in *al-Futūḥāt al-nāhiya ‘an al-munkar wa-l-ghayy fī tawḍīḥ ma’nā qawl sayyidinā al-shaykh Aḥmad al-Tijānī raḍīya Allāhu ‘anhu: Idhā sami’tum ‘annī shay’* (completed in August 1997 and published together with other writings of Ibrāhīm Sīdī in volume II by Muḥammad al-Šādiq Aḥmad al-Māḥī al-Tijānī pp. 96-135), n.p. [al-Fāshir], n.d., p. 123.

Simultaneously to this, and in contradiction to his initial explanation, he admitted that the intended recipients of the *sharī'a* scales instruction were *indeed* Tijānīs, but that the sayings of the supreme master's that he had insisted should be evaluated in the light of *sharī'a* were those related to the affairs of the religion, rather than his spiritual teachings. Thus, said Sīdī, Tijānīs should only apply the scales to statements that concerns religious affairs.

If you hear me saying anything about the matters of the *sharī'a*... pertaining to manners (*'ādāt*) or acts of worship (*'ibādāt*) whether they be obligatory (*farā'id*), or stemming from the traditions of the Prophet (*sunan*), or supererogatory (*faḍā'il*), and etc., you may weigh [what you have heard from me in these matters] with the scales of *sharī'a*. See whether my sayings are in compliance with the Qur'ān and the Sunna, because, for me, only these possess a binding nature."⁶⁹⁵

In a subsequent treatise, written in August 1997 CE, Sīdī tried to bring his previous comments together. The supreme master's *sharī'a* scales instruction now had two faces: it was at once an address to the beloved one (*aḥbāb*), and to the enemies of the brotherhood (*li-l-a'dā' ahl al-i'tirād wa-l-inkār*). As an address to Tijānīs, Sīdī stated, it was directed to a small circle of disciples who had achieved the goal of illumination (*ba'd al-kummal li-ahl al-faḥ*); they alone should evaluate the statements ascribed to the master that were contained in *Jawāhir* and other sources in the light of his instructions. But, he added, even those statements reported as the master's that do not comply with the authentic sayings contained in *Jawāhir* and other sources should not be rejected out of hand. Thus one may easily see that towards the end of his life, Sīdī had developed a much more radical stance on the issue, wherein even while he reserved the right to apply the *sharī'a* scales for a small group of qualified Tijānīs, he was nonetheless not ready to accept the outright rejection of any of the sayings that had been ascribed to the brotherhood's supreme master. Rather, for Sīdī, if Tijānīs, even the most qualified among them, failed to find a logical, *sharī'a*-compliant explanation for a particular saying, they should keep quiet and leave the matter to others who may yet succeed in settling it.⁶⁹⁶ As far the Tijānī's enemies are concerned, they are invited to approach the teachings of the master from a *sharī'a*-centric perspective; from which, Sīdī insists, they will fail to find any contradiction between Tijānī tenets and the *sharī'a*, but only if they succeed in

⁶⁹⁵ Ibrāhīm Sīdī, *al-Kitāb al-karīm*, as quoted in, *al-Futūḥāt al-nāhiya*, p. 123.

⁶⁹⁶ For the full discussion, see: Ibrāhīm Sīdī, *al-Futūḥāt al-nāhiya*, pp. 128-131.

suppressing their animosity—otherwise, he warns, they will continue to fail to see the interconnectivity that exists between *sharī‘a* rules and the statements of the Tijānī master.⁶⁹⁷

Sīdī’s critique was not restricted to Ṣāliḥ alone: Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz and Ibrāhīm Niyās each received their own share of it, despite the fact that during the 1980s (CE), Sīdī had been a staunch propagator and defender of the teachings of Niyās, incidentally turning him into a target of criticism for other Tijānīs, who understood Niyās’s spiritual education (*tarbiya*) to be an innovation introduced to the Tijāniyya.⁶⁹⁸ Indeed, in his *al-Summ al-zu‘āf*, Sīdī repeatedly praises both shaykhs—on one occasion, ironically, for their comments on *Jawāhir*.⁶⁹⁹ During the 1990s (CE), however, their views on the printed version of the book were no longer tolerable for the Sudanese; it was their compromising approach that had served as the point of departure for his Nigerian adversary. Tijānīs are thus cautioned, by Sīdī, against the positions taken by these two authorities on certain issues, even though their intention had been to defend the brotherhood against its opponents and win their hearts. For Sīdī, however, the attempt to win over the opponents of the brotherhood was a miscalculation, one which only led to the accommodation of their accusations, eventually culminating in the rejection of authentic statements by the supreme master. Ṣāliḥ’s departure from the traditional stance of the brotherhood, he said, was nothing but a result of this miscalculated soft strategy.⁷⁰⁰

Sīdī notably had the support of Aḥmad al-Tijānī’s descendants from Aīn Madhi, Fez, Nouakchott and Dakar. This, however, neither dissuaded the Nigerian Ṣāliḥ from insisting on the necessary purification of Tijānī sources, nor stopped his followers from discrediting the Sudanese, nor succeeded in saving the recognition which previously had been Sīdī’s as one of the leading representatives of the Tijāniyya in Sudan.⁷⁰¹ Ṣāliḥ was obsessed with the accusations directed at

⁶⁹⁷ Ibrāhīm Sīdī, *al-Futūḥāt al-nāhiya*, pp. 132-133.

⁶⁹⁸ Rüdiger Seesemann, “The writings of the Sudanese Tijānī shaykh Ibrāhīm Sīdī”, p. 113. Sīdī wrote quite a few treatises in defence of Niyās’s spiritual education (*tarbiya*): *al-Ḥujaj al-dāmiḡha* (1981), *al-Nuṣūṣ al-wādiḡha* (1982) and *al-Ifāda al-rabbāniyya* (1992) are some of them. See Rüdiger Seesemann, “The writings of the Sudanese Tijānī Shaykh Ibrāhīm Sīdī”, pp. 118 and 121.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibrāhīm Sīdī, *al-Summ al-zu‘āf*, passim. On p. 18, Niyās and al-Ḥāfīz are praised for keeping their decorum with regard to *Jawāhir*.

⁷⁰⁰ See details in Mohammad Ajmal Hanif, “An Evolution in Tijāniyya Perception of *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*” (forthcoming).

⁷⁰¹ Rüdiger Seesemann, *The Writings of the Sudanese Tijānī Shaykh Ibrāhīm Sīdī*, p. 114. Here Seesemann relates his conversation with ‘Alī Ḥaydara, a descendant of Aḥmad al-Tijānī residing near Dakar, over the dispute between the Nigerian Ṣāliḥ and the Sudanese Sīdī. Ḥaydara seems to have, at least, tacitly supported the Sudanese, stating

him, to the extent that he could not stop attacking his opponent, even years after his death. In *al-Kāfī fī ‘ilm al-tazkiya* (The Adequate Instructions Regarding the Science of the Purification of Heart),⁷⁰² published in 2004 CE, he refers to Sīdī on many occasions, opening on how “This ignorant Sudanese (*al-Sudani al-jahūl*)”⁷⁰³ had failed to comprehend the intention and scholarly arguments of *al-Takfīr*. Sīdī is compared with opponents of the brotherhood such as Ibn Māyābā, al-Bakkā’ī al-Kuntī, al-Ifriqī, al-Marzūqī and al-Hilālī, and his extremism is portrayed as more detrimental to the brotherhood than the attacks of the above-mentioned adversaries. “If one looks at the enthusiasm of the author of the falsehood (a reference to Sīdī and his book *al-Sum al-zu‘āf*) he would assume him to believe in something other than the religion of Islam”,⁷⁰⁴ argues Ṣāliḥ.

For textual support in favour of the initial argument he makes in *al-Takfīr*, the Nigerian has recourse to the comments on *Jawāhir* and its author ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm made by Ibrāhīm al-Riyāḥī in his *Mibrad al-ṣawārim wa-l-asinna* discussing them in detail. According to al-Riyāḥī, not everything documented in *Jawāhir* is precisely equivalent to the exact statements of Aḥmad al-Tijānī. Al-Riyāḥī goes on to argue that the confusion observed in word choices and the linguistic flaws in the book prove that ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm’s documentation was based on his own understanding of the events, stating: “All these are proofs of the fact that these statements do not reflect the exact wordings pronounced by the shaykh”.⁷⁰⁵ Thus, Ṣāliḥ attempts to give the impression that the rejection of certain passages, whether in that book or any other Tijānī source, should not be understood as a rejection of the book itself—or the supreme master. As example, Ṣāliḥ recalls that Aḥmad Sukayrij had denounced two treatises, written in praise of the supreme master by certain of his followers, that had contained unsustainable lofty claims.⁷⁰⁶

From Sīdī’s perspective, all of the direct disciples of Aḥmad al-Tijānī were trustworthy (*thiqāt*), and, by the same token, all of their reports of statements made by the supreme master were valid

that the Nigerian had not immersed himself in Sufism, while the Sudanese had not immersed himself in jurisprudence. Rüdiger Seesemann, “Three Ibrāhīms”, p. 332.

⁷⁰² Based on his conversations with Ṣāliḥ’s followers, Rüdiger Seesemann suggests that “the book is about to achieve the status of Ṣāliḥ’s magnum opus”. Rüdiger Seesemann, “Three Ibrāhīms”, p. 321.

⁷⁰³ Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ, *al-Kāfī fī ‘ilm al-tazkiya*, vol. IV, Cairo: al-Nahār li-l-Tab‘ wa-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzī‘, 2004, p. 134.

⁷⁰⁴ Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ, *al-Kāfī fī ‘ilm al-tazkiya*, p. 193.

⁷⁰⁵ Ibrāhīm al-Riyāḥī, *Mibrad al-ṣawārim wa-l-asinna*, pp. 205-206.

⁷⁰⁶ One of the treatises is *al-Kanz al-madfūn* and the other is *Ya‘ sūb al-sir al-rabbānī fī manāqib al-Tijānī*. Sukayrij relates that both sources contain additions which proves the deficiency of their authors. Al-Tijānī, he argues, disowns such excessive claims on his behalf. *Ya‘ sūb al-sir* was even burned, by either by Muḥammad al-Ḥabīb, the son of al-Tijānī, or Muḥammad al-Bashīr, his grand-son, when it was presented to them. See: Aḥmad Sukayrij, *Ṭuruq al-manfi‘a*, as reported in Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ, *al-Kāfī fī ‘ilm al-tazkiya*, p. 207.

and true. Furthermore, he argued, the command to apply the scales of the *sharī‘a* was not a general command, intended to surpass all of the Tijānī sources. Ṣāliḥ accepted that the disciples of the supreme master were undoubtedly trust-worthy; nevertheless, he said, this could not be a hindrance to the weighing of their reports with the scales of the *sharī‘a*. As for excluding *Jawāhir* from such assaying, it would mean nothing but the rejection of a crystal-clear instruction by the founding figure of the brotherhood. Furthermore, the same assaying had constituted a point of departure for Alfā Hāshim, who, when debating al-Hilālī, had made it very clear that the content of the Tijānī sources should be considered in the light of the Qur‘ān and Sunna (as has been observed in chapter two).⁷⁰⁷

This approach seems to have attracted more acceptance in Tijānīs circles with the passing of time—we have already referred above to ‘Umar Mas‘ūd’s recent stance on the issue of comparison between the rewards of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* and the divine eternal speech. According to his son Haytham b. ‘Umar, his father’s line of argumentation is a continuation of the strategy established by the Nigerian Ṣāliḥ.⁷⁰⁸

4.5. *Jawharat al-Kamāl* and the Condition of Ritual Cleanliness

Another problematic issue to which al-Ifrīqī attracts the attention of his interlocutors is the requirement of achieving the condition of ritual cleanliness using water (*tahāra mā‘iyya*) before the recitation of another famous Tijānī litany, the name of which can be translated as “the pearl of perfection” (*jawharat al-kamāl*).⁷⁰⁹ *Jawāhir* postulates that such ritual cleanliness is a prerequisite for its recitation, stating: “*Jawharat al-kamāl* cannot be read without ablution [being first] undertaken with water”.⁷¹⁰ Almost all of the antagonists of the order have taken serious issue with

⁷⁰⁷ Alfā Hāshim made these statements in a letter addressed to Muḥammad al-Kabīr, a grand-son of al-Tijānī’s, informing him of a debate that had occurred between himself and al-Hilālī in Medina in the late 1920s CE. For Alfā Hāshim’s statement, see: Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ, *al-Kāfi fī ‘ilm al-tazkiya*, p. 211. The whole of Alfā Hāshim’s letter is published as an appendix to Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ’s *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn ‘alā ahl al-yaqīn*, as mentioned in chapter two.

⁷⁰⁸ Details available in online (Facebook) correspondence between Haytham b. ‘Umar al-Tijānī and his interlocutor from the Hijaz, Ghassān b. Sālim al-Tūnisī. (This part of the correspondence has been preserved and can be made available if necessary).

⁷⁰⁹ For the text of *Jawharat al-kamāl*, the conditions for its recitation during journeys and normal residence, and its merits, see: ‘Umar al-Fūfī, *Rimāḥ ḥizb al-Raḥīm*, vol. I, p. 229; vol. II, pp. 81-82; ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ḥamza, *Fiqh al-tarīqa al-Tijānīyya*, n.p, 1420/2000, p. 49; al-Nazāfi, *al-Durra al-kharīda*, vol. III, pp. 201-202.

⁷¹⁰ Tijānīs believe that during the recitation of *Jawharat al-kamāl*, the Prophet attends the session; thus, its recitation without full ritual cleanliness achieved with water is not allowed at all. See: ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*, vol. I, pp. 124-125; ‘Umar al-Fūfī, *Rimāḥ ḥizb al-Raḥīm*, vol. I, p. 229. According to the Tijānī doctrine, the condition of

this condition, which is not deemed necessary for the recitation of the Qur’ān,⁷¹¹ implying the superiority of the pearl of perfection over the divine eternal speech. Thus, al-Ifriqī: “I say this is the book of Allah, whose recitation is permissible with or without ritual cleanliness, since the Prophet and his companions were reciting it without ablution (*wuḍū’*)”.⁷¹² The impermissibility of the recitation of the pearl of perfection without full ritual cleanliness is regarded by antagonists of the brotherhood as a sort of attempt on the part of the Tijānīs to create new legislation (*tashrī’ jadīd*), an accusation also directed at the followers of the brotherhood by al-Ifriqī, who claimed that neither Allah nor His Prophet would approve of such a thing. The obvious unsoundness of this Tijānī tenet, according to him, frees one from the necessity of further elaboration on the issue. Al-Hilālī would reiterate the same argument decades later, stating that the religion of Islam equates ritual cleanliness obtained using soil with that obtained using water. Furthermore, he said, the Prophet had depicted earth as a source of ritual cleanliness in the absence of water, no matter how long this absence may extend. Therefore, differentiating between the two types of cleanliness is claimed to be a correction of Allah and His Prophet (*istidrāk ‘alā Allāhi wa-rasūlih*). The reason behind this absurd idea, al-Hilālī claimed, was the attempted self-establishment of Tijānī ascendancy over their fellow Muslims. “Tijānīs wanted to elevate the status of this formula in the praise of the Prophet in order to establish their own status whereas with their lack of knowledge they excommunicated themselves from *sharī‘a* and from the religion of Islam”.⁷¹³ According to Tijānī tenets, if the necessary condition of ritual cleanliness is missing the pearl of perfection should be replaced with *salāt al-fātiḥ* during daily *wazīfa*⁷¹⁴ (a set of litanies recited by Tijānīs on a daily basis).⁷¹⁵ This, according to Al-Hilālī, constituted another deficiency of the Tijānī tenets, since *salāt al-fātiḥ*, a formula which was reportedly considered by them to be superior to the

ritual cleanliness achieved with water is required for the recitation of the *Fātiḥa* (the first chapter of the Qur’ān) and *al-yāqūta al-farīda* if they are recited with the intention of the greatest divine name (*al-ism al-a‘zam*). See: ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ḥamza, *Fiqh al-ṭarīqa al-Tijānīyya*, p. 66.

⁷¹¹ See for example al-Hilālī’s objection to the merit and necessity of this precondition for reciting *Jawharat al-kamāl*. He condemns the claim that the condition of ritual cleanliness is prerequisite for its recitation as “a new religion” (*tahri’ jadīd*). Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 112.

⁷¹² Al-Ifriqī, *al-Anwār al-raḥmāniyya*, p. 25.

⁷¹³ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 112. Another Salafī opponent of the Tijānīyya accuses followers of the order of the elevation of their invented litany over the Qur’ān and obligatory ritual prayer, both of which may be performed with the ritual cleanliness of *tayammum*, while the brotherhood requires that the pearl of perfection must be recited with full ritual cleanliness, performed with water. See: ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abd al-Khāliq, *al-Fikr al-ṣūfī fī daw’ al-kitāb wa-l-sunna*, Kuwait: Maktabat Ibn Taymiyya, 1984, p. p. 364.

⁷¹⁴ For details on *wazīfa* and its conditions, see: Al-Nazīfī, *al-Durra al-kharīda*, vol. III, pp. 204-206; ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ḥamza, *Fiqh al-ṭarīqa al-Tijānīyya*, pp. 49-55.

⁷¹⁵ See for instance: ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ḥamza, *Fiqh al-ṭarīqa al-Tijānīyya*, p. 50.

Qur'ān, and which is certainly more eloquent, in terms of its words and meaning than the pearl of perfection, is here depicted to be of lesser status and value than the *jawharat al-kamāl*: for, if twelve recitations of the pearl of perfection are the required number in daily *wazīfa*, which, in case of the absence of the required ritual cleanliness should be replaced with twenty recitations of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ*, then given the proportion of twelve to twenty, one recitation of the latter is equated to less than one recitation of the former.⁷¹⁶

The protagonists of the brotherhood have failed to develop a convincing line of argumentation regarding the issue of why, without ritual cleanliness, the recitation of the inferior (*jawharat al-kamāl*) is prohibited, while the recitation of the superior (Qur'ān) is allowed. Muḥammad Al-Ḥāfīz attempts to explain the issue via the argument of “the vow” (*nadhīr*), asking: “What is wrong if one vows to remember Allah with full ritual cleanliness?”⁷¹⁷ He goes on to reason that if one vows to recite any *dhikr* formula with full ritual cleanliness and does so, one’s commitment to doing so should be regarded as a fulfilment of that vow, instead of its being accused of being an unlawful act.⁷¹⁸ It is neither, he argues, a new piece of legislation (*tashrī‘ jadīd*), nor does it entail the supremacy of the litany of the pearl of perfection (*al-dhikr al-mandhūr*, as he calls it) over the Qur'ān. Nor, he says, had any single Tijānī reportedly presumed the pearl of perfection to be superior to many other formulas of *dhikr*, let alone to the divine eternal speech. What’s more, the scholars of the legal schools have unanimously agreed on the meritorious (*mandūb*) status of ablution for the recitation of any formula of divine remembrance. Moreover, Muḥājir b. Qanfadh is said to have greeted the Prophet with *salām* while the latter was answering the call of nature (*yabūl*). The Prophet delayed the response until he had performed ablution afterwards, and apologized for the obligatory delay since he did not want to recite a divine name without being in a state of full ritual cleanliness.⁷¹⁹

⁷¹⁶ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ḥamza, *Fiqh al-ṭarīqa al-Tijānīyya*, p. 112.

⁷¹⁷ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, *Radd akādhīb al-muṣṭarīn*, p. 42.

⁷¹⁸ In a subsequent text, ‘*Ulamā’ tazkiyat al-naḥs*, he extends this argument to all Tijānī litanies. Contrary to the conventional explanation often provided by Tijānī, he labels all of the litanies of the brotherhood to be vows by the disciple himself. Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, ‘*Ulamā’ tazkiyat al-naḥs*, p. 14. The vow argument is also used by a great grandson of Aḥmad al-Tijānī’s, Maḥmūd b. Bensālim, with regard to *jawharat al-kamāl*. The pearl of perfection, he says, is recited with full ritual cleanliness because it is thus vowed. Maḥmūd b. Bensālim, *al-Ṭarīqa al-Tijānīyya bayn al-intiqād wa al-i’ tiqād*, p. 156.

⁷¹⁹ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, *Radd akādhīb al-muṣṭarīn*, p. 27.

This argument is further expanded by ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, according to whom, this delay was not due to the call of the nature, as some scholars like Imām al-Tirmidhī have understood it; rather, it was the absence of ritual cleanliness which caused the delay. Otherwise, the Prophet would have returned the greeting of Muhājir b. Qanfadh as soon as he was done with answering the call of the nature. This is reportedly consolidated by another incident in which the Prophet was greeted in the same way, but no response was to be heard on his part until he had performed *tayammum* (ritual cleansing with soil). ‘Umar Mas‘ūd evokes the authority of Salafī shaykhs such as Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī and Aḥmad Shākir. According to the former, known for his expertise in the field of Prophetic traditions, since the Prophet hated to recite the divine name of *al-salām* without ablution, it is not permitted to issue unconditional *fatāwā* concerning the permissibility of the Qur’ān’s recitation without full ritual cleanliness, as many Salafīs would do.⁷²⁰ The latter emphasizes the superiority of ritual cleanliness for performing *dhikr*, particularly for invocation (*du‘ā*). Engaging a number of sources, ‘Umar Mas‘ūd highlights the fact that some highly renowned authorities of the sciences of *ḥadīth*, such as Imām Mālik and Imām al-Bukhārī, had been praised by fellow scholars for their rigorous attention to performing ritual cleanliness before the collection and teaching of Prophetic traditions. If their attitude was appreciated by Muslims, he asks, “Why would it harm Tījānīs to praise the Prophet after performing ablution?”⁷²¹

A careful examination of both the critique raised by their antagonists and the responses provided by protagonists of the Tījāniyya reveal that Tījānī scholars are at pains to shift the attention of the reader to a whole new aspect of the issue. While the explanation offered by al-Ḥāfīz is based on the permissibility of a vow (*nadhhr*) to attach certain conditions to the recitation of a specific prayer formula, ‘Umar Mas‘ūd provides a rather vague explanation, however that it may be a masterly, organized one. Through focusing on certain Prophetic traditions, which do not enforce the necessity of ritual cleanliness as a requirement for either *dhikr* or the recitation of the Qur’ān, he manages to avoid the core of the criticism. The point with which their opponents had taken issue was the Tījānī tenet of the impermissibility of the recitation of the pearl of perfection without ablution, while the superior Qur’ān was allowed to be recited without it; whereas ‘Umar Mas‘ūd

⁷²⁰ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Radd ‘alā l-Ifṛīqī*, p. 20-21.

⁷²¹ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Radd ‘alā l-Ifṛīqī*, p. 23.

elaborates on the virtues of ritual ablution and on how, in certain circumstances, the Prophet and scholars of *ḥadīth* had paid special attention to ritual cleanliness.

Furthermore, the precondition of ritual cleanliness is not the only Tijānī requirement for the recitation of the pearl of perfection, nor is the above-mentioned criticism the only problematic point their opponents have raised in relation to the litany. According to the Tijānīs, there are a number of other preconditions attached to its recitation as well. First, they spread out a clean piece of white cloth of a size adequate to serve six persons during their daily *wazīfa* sessions, originally due to the belief that the Prophet and his four caliphs were expected to attend the session.⁷²² Here it should be noted that this conviction is, not maintained by later generations of Tijānīs: Maḥmūd b. Bensālim, a grandson of the founding figure, for instance, rejects it, although he does preserve and continue the custom of cloth-spreading, which, according to him, is done rather to protect the form of the circle (*ḥalaqa*) by creating a space between the attendees to correctly separate them from each other.⁷²³ According to al-Ḥāfiẓ, the reason for the cloth is to create distance between the breath (*anfās*) of each of the performers in the circle, which should not mix.⁷²⁴

Another precondition for its recitation, as well as for any other Tijānī litany, is that of proper permission being issued by an authorized Tijānī *muqaddam*, without which the recitation is not entitled to the promised reward.⁷²⁵ This, in other words, means that affiliation to the brotherhood is a precondition for accessing the reward. The traditional justification for this conviction is based on the daylight encounters of the founding figure with the Prophet, during which, it is claimed, it was the Prophet himself who attached such preconditions to certain Tijānī litanies. Thus, when Aḥmad al-Tijānī was asked by one of his followers for the justification for the requirement of ritual cleanliness for the recitation of *jawharat al-kamāl*, his response was a clear one: Tijānīs should

⁷²² Al-Nazīfī, *al-Durra al-kharīda*, vol. III, pp. 199-200.

⁷²³ Maḥmūd b. Bensālim, *al-Ṭarīqa al-Tijānīyya bayn al-intiqād wa-l-‘itiqād*, p. 153.

⁷²⁴ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *I’lān al-ḥujja ‘alā a’ dā’ al-ṭarīqa al-Tijānīyya*, p. 86.

⁷²⁵ The author of *Rimāḥ* enumerates some of the merits associated with recitation of the pearl of perfection. The Prophet and the rightly guided caliphs reportedly attend the session of *wazīfa* with the seventh recitation of *jawharat al-kamāl* and stay as long as the recitations continue. Its daily recitation on a regular basis paves the way to the rank of sainthood and Prophetic love of a special kind (*muḥabba khāṣṣa*). Seven recitations of it before going to bed guarantee a dream vision of the Prophet, provided it has been recited with proper ritual cleanliness, in addition to the cleanness of the bed. Twelve recitations made while ascribing its reward as a gift to the Prophet are held to be equal not only to the reward of visiting the Prophet at his shrine, but also to the reward of visiting all of the divine saints, from the beginning of the world until the time of its recitation. ‘Umar al-Fūṭī, *Rimāḥ ḥizb al-Raḥīm*, vol. II, pp. 81-82.

follow Prophetic orders and not ask for explanations or justifications, lest they risk disobedience to the Prophet.⁷²⁶ As we have seen above al-Ḥāfiẓ’s explanation of the issue in terms of a vow (*nadhr*), deviates from this traditional explanation of the brotherhood’s, a fact of which some of the Tijāniyya’s antagonists are aware as well. Dakhīl Allāh informs us that the Egyptian’s reference to a vow was his own innovation;⁷²⁷ Tijānīs, he argues, do not abide by the conditions of their litanies because they have vowed to so, but rather because their supreme master was informed by the Prophet that it should be so.⁷²⁸

As far as the content of *jawharat al-kamāl* is concerned, antagonists of the Tijāniyya take issue with the litany due to the presence in it of the allegedly prosaic words (*alfāẓ rakīka*) of the ill (*al-asqam*) and talismanic (*muṭalsam*), as they dismiss the attribution of such problematic words to the Prophet. “He who truly knows the language of Arabs”, argues al-Hilālī, “would not believe that this prosaic speech was uttered by a member of the Arab community”.⁷²⁹ The term *al-asqam* is claimed by al-Hilālī to be an abusive term that could neither be used in relation to the Prophet, nor to define the word *ṣiraṭ* (“path”, here meaning *sharī‘a*), for which it is meant to function as an adjective. He goes on to state that while nineteenth-century antagonists of the brotherhood such as al-Kumlayī,⁷³⁰ had objected to the usage of such problematic terms, they had failed to discover the reason behind it. The reason for their usage, according to al-Hilālī, was due to a certain Muḥammad b. al-‘Arabī al-Tāzī, whom Tijānīs considered to have been the greatest channel of communication (*al-wasiṭa al-mu‘azzam*) between their supreme master and the Prophet prior to the commencement of daylight communications between the two. Aḥmad Sukayrij had reportedly informed al-Hilālī that *jawharat al-kamāl* was first communicated al-Tāzī, who then passed it to the supreme master. Therefore, the appearance of the prosaic *al-asqam*, which may be translated as *aqwam* (straight) in the vernacular Arabic of the Maghrib, owes its existence to the illiterate Moroccan al-Tāzī.⁷³¹ The same is reportedly the case with *muṭalsam*, used as an adjective for the

⁷²⁶ Al-Nazīfī, *al-Durra al-kharīda*, vol. III, p. 200.

⁷²⁷ For his criticism of the avowal argument, see: Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā‘id al-Tijāniyya*, p. 243.

⁷²⁸ ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm argues that his master was informed by the Prophet that quitting the recitation of Tijānī litanies would cause serious destruction and bring punishment upon he who does so. ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*, vo. I, p. 123.

⁷²⁹ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 110.

⁷³⁰ On al-Kumlayī, see: Aḥmad b. al-Amīn al-Shinqīṭī, *al-Wasīṭ fī tarajim udabā’ Shinqīṭ*, Maṭba‘a al-Madanī: Cairo, 1409/1989, pp. 268-372.

⁷³¹ Another argument advanced by al-Hilālī is that since “*aqwam*” had already been used as adjective for the phrase “*ayn al-ma‘ārif*” in the same formula, in order to prevent its repetition and to preserve the desired assonance

Prophet. In fact, the whole formula, according to al-Hilālī, provides enough clues of its being far from the speech of an eloquent Arab, let alone that of the Prophet. Aḥmad b. al-Amīn (d. 1331/1913),⁷³² the author of *al-Wasīṭ fī tarājim udabāʾ Shinqīṭ* (The Mediator Pertaining to the Life Stories of the Scholars of Shinqīṭ), who had written to justify *al-asqam* as being the superlative of the word *muṣṭaqīm* (straight), allegedly repented towards the end of his life, and relinquished his ties with the Tijāniyya.⁷³³

ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿAbd al-Khāliq (b. 1939 CE), a contemporary leading Salafī figure, accuses Tijānīs of the defamation of the Prophet (*sabb li-l-rasūl*) due to the existence of such problematic terms in the litany.⁷³⁴ In his response on behalf of the brotherhood, ʿUmar Masʿūd is clearly at pains to dismiss the accusation. He embarks on a long linguistic discussion in an attempt to prove that the usage of *asqam* and *muṭalsam* does occur in the language of Arabs.⁷³⁵ He further argues that the same litany consists of numerous terms of eulogy which, apparently, the accuser did not see. If Tijānīs were to defame the Prophet, he argues, they would not have used such terms in relation to him. In addition to the conventional line of argumentation made by ʿUmar Masʿūd, Maḥmūd b. Bensālim, a descendant of the Tijānī master, suggests a strange metaphorical interpretation of the term *al-asqam*, which, according to him, does indeed mean deficient and imperfect; likewise, he argues, the term *ṣirāṭ* for which it is used as an adjective is itself imperfect and deficient not in itself, but rather because of its subjection to human deficiency. It may earn perfection, with divine mercy.⁷³⁶

5. Conclusion

Al-Ifriqī's criticism of the Tijānī tenets came at a time when the anti-Tijāniyya sentiments, on the African continent and elsewhere, were already effectively stimulated by Ibn Māyābā's virulent

(*saja*), al-Tāzī find no other solution than to use “*al-asqam*” in relation to the term “*ṣirāṭ*”. Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 110.

⁷³² Best known for his expertise in the Arabic language, Aḥmad b. al-Amīn was born in Shinqīṭ and passed away in Cairo. See: al-Ziriklī, *al-Aʿlām*, vol. I, p. 101; ʿUmar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam al-muʿallifīn*, vol. I, p. 108; Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Ṭaʿmī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Tijāniyya*, pp. 163-162.

⁷³³ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya* pp. 109-111. Aḥmad b. al-Amīn al-Shinqīṭī's book in defence of the presence of the term “*al-asqam*” in the pearl of perfection is *al-Radd al-muḥkam fī siḥḥat al-asqam*. Protagonists of the Tijāniyya have written a great deal in defence of the *jawharat al-kamāl*.

⁷³⁴ ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿAbd al-Khāliq, *al-Fikr al-sūfī*, p. 364.

⁷³⁵ See details in: ʿUmar Masʿūd, *al-Tijāniyya wa-khuṣūmuḥum*, pp. 11-16.

⁷³⁶ See: Maḥmūd b. Bensālim, *al-Tijāniyya bayn al-intiqād wa-l-iʿtiqād*, pp. 174-176.

attack on the brotherhood. Campaigns against the followers of the order were unleashed by Salafīs in North Africa as well as in Egypt.⁷³⁷ The criticism of the young Malian (al-Ifrīqī) was, however, not a direct onslaught; it came into existence in Hijaz, as part of the *da'wa* activities he undertook to proselytize for the brand of Islam he perceived to be the truest. In fact, was it not for the written demand of his Tijānī interlocutors, he may not have composed his critique into a written form. Unlike his predecessor Ibn Māyābā, he chose to pin down his thoughts in a short but highly effective style. It was due to this factor that the Saudi establishment decided to print and distribute his treatise among African pilgrims visiting the holy lands for religious purposes. His approach to Tijānī doctrines is not a puristic one, solely based on religious texts. He repeatedly referred to reason and intellect as offering effective assistance to one's reading of religious texts, in order to distinguish the logical from the illogical and the common sense from nonsense. Nevertheless, his critique is not flawless; on at least two occasions, following in the footsteps of Ibn Māyābā, he makes claims that have no actual basis in Tijānī sources.⁷³⁸

Throughout the treatise, his general attitude towards the protagonists of the Tijāniyya is friendly. He calls his Tijānī interlocutors brothers (*ikhwān*), clear proof of the fact that Salafism was and is not as entirely unfriendly as some would like to claim. His Tijānī respondents, on the other hand, failed to display the same attitude. Both al-Ḥāfiẓ and his Sudanese disciple 'Umar Mas'ūd not only rejected the scholarly credentials of their Malian adversary but portrayed him as a liar, whereas Ibn Māyābā, who had even excommunicated followers of the Tijāniyya, ironically appeared, in al-Ḥāfiẓ's account as a master and the ultimate scholar (*al-ustādh al-'allāma*).

Both respondents exploit and elaborate on the weaknesses and false allegations made in *al-Anwār*. Another common feature is their avoidance, as much as possible, of quoting the so-called illusive and problematic statements identified by their opponents in Tijānī sources. The tone of the response in *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn* is less aggressive and well-ordered than that of *al-Radd 'alā al-Ifrīqī*, which came to prominence for its combative nature and vigorous tone. This was perhaps the result of the successful anti-Sufī campaigns of the Anṣār al-Sunna al-Muḥammadiyya in both Egypt and Sudan. The more Tijānīs felt threatened, the more aggressive their tone, the fiercer their

⁷³⁷ For a detailed information of anti-Tijāniyya campaign in North Africa and Egypt, see: Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijāniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, pp. 163-185.

⁷³⁸ See above the discussion of *kitmān* in relation to the Tijānī *wird*.

tongues became. While Tijānīs often reiterated the same arguments in refutation of their opponents, al-Ḥāfiẓ was able to come up with innovations to distinguish his treatise.⁷³⁹ ‘Umar Ma‘ sūd, on the other hand, attempted to discredit his opponent in the eyes of his Tijānī readership by concentrating on his adversary’s alleged deficiency in the Islamic sciences, particularly in the field of Prophetic traditions. To highlight this alleged deficiency, he quoted the then contemporary Salafī authorities like al-Albānī and Aḥmad Shākīr, a characteristic not seen in the response of his Egyptian master al-Ḥāfiẓ.

One of the inevitable components of the anti-Tijānī discourse in *al-Anwār* concerns the doctrine of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* in its various aspects. It was not easy for Tijānīs to defend the litany while staying faithful to the conventional strategy of the order. In the first half of the twentieth century, this matter was only debated between Tijānīs and those they regarded as deniers (*munkirīn*). In the second half of the century, however, the issue of the gigantic reward attached to this tiny formula for remembering God became a source of internal contention between Tijānīs themselves. Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ of Nigeria rejected the authenticity of a phrase in *Jawāhir* which equates the reward for one recitation of the litany with that of six thousand recitations of the divine eternal speech, the holy Qur’ān. Though his position has been praised by one researcher as flexible, and as taking the wind out of the sails of his opponents, it failed to convince the established authorities of the Tijāniyya, and Ibrāhīm Sīdī of Sudan went so far to excommunicate his Nigerian counterpart Ṣāliḥ from the brotherhood, and a prolonged controversy was generated between the two sides. Though Ṣāliḥ unwillingly gave up, in the face of the back-breaking criticism contained in the ensuing rebuttals, the repercussions of his discourse can still be seen among the young generations of Tijānīs in Nigeria and Sudan. ‘Umar Mas‘ūd’s recent remarks in a hidden Saudi *zāwiya* is a vivid instance which may prove to serve as an indicator of a shift—perhaps an evolution—in the polemical strategy of the Tijāniyya, and probably also in its beliefs, which can be observed in certain circles.

CHAPTER FIVE: AL-HADIYYA AL-HĀDIYA AND THE TIJĀNĪ RESPONSES

⁷³⁹ See for example his reply of avowal (*nadhr*) in relation to the attachment of certain conditions to the recitation of Tijānī litanies.

In this chapter I will discuss al-Hilālī's critique of the Tijāniyya, and how proponents of the brotherhood dealt with it.

1. *Al-Hadiyya al-Hādiya ilā l-Ṭā'fa al-Tijāniyya*

While al-Hilālī's written critique of the Tijāniyya brotherhood only appeared at the beginning of the 1970s (CE), his altercations with Sufis in general, and Tijānīs in particular, had begun as early as the 1920s (CE). Till then, he had been a faithful believer in the Tijāniyya, one for whom leaving the brotherhood was equivalent to committing heresy and turning one's back on the religion of Islam, by his own account. He could not then have imagined that he would one day relinquish his own ties with Sufism. As mentioned in chapter two, however, he had nonetheless started to entertain doubts regarding the authenticity of his beliefs as early as his first visit to Algeria, when, while facing some difficulties during that journey, he had invoked the *madad* (support, help) of his master Ahmad al-Tijānī, only to experience repeated disappointment. Regardless, his actual departure from the brotherhood only began when 'Abd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī, the official master of the Kattāniyya⁷⁴⁰ and an ardent enemy of the Tijāniyya (*'adūw li-l-ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya*),⁷⁴¹ paid a visit to Aḥmad Sukayrij, the chief judge of the city of Oujda at the time. Al-Hilālī, who happened to be in the company of the chief judge, greeted the esteemed visitor with a piece of poetry in his praise. To his surprise, the guest was impressed and insisted that al-Hilālī should pay him a visit,

⁷⁴⁰ Based on the information made available to him by followers of the Kattāniyya brotherhood, particularly by a certain Shaykh 'Abdallāh b. Sa'id al-Salawī, al-Hilālī relates that the French authorities had assigned the leadership of that brotherhood to 'Abd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī in the aftermath of the death of his older brother Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Kabīr al-Kattānī, the founding figure of the order. Due to his animosity toward his older brother, the order's founder, al-Hilālī states that he was then allegedly rejected by the overwhelming majority of Kattāniyyīn. Al-Hilālī further relates that the fact that 'Abdallāh al-Salawī's detestation of 'Abd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī was reflected in Shaykh al-Salawī's use of abusive language when discussing the French-imposed master. Al-Hilālī avoids mentioning the background of the alleged animosity between the Kattānī brothers. See: al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 12. This piece of information should be handled with a great deal of care, since, prior to the invasion of Morocco by France, 'Abd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī was perceived to be among the most ardent adversaries of that colonial power. He is known to have supported the 1908 Hāfiẓiyya uprising of the sultan 'Abd al-Ḥāfiẓ against his brother 'Abd al-'Azīz, for his weak position toward French's increasing intervention in Morocco including the bombardment of Casablanca in 1907, and to have written a revolutionary political book, known for short as *Mufākaha*. It is thus hard to imagine any such close relationship between him and the French. See details in Sahar Bazzaz, "Printing and the Ṭarīqa Kattāniyya: 'Abd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī's *Mufākahat dhū l-nubl wa-l-ijāda ḥaḍrat mudīr jarīdat al-Sa'āda*," in Rachida Chih, Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen and Rüdiger Seesemann (eds.), *Sufism, Literary Production, and Printing in the Nineteenth Century*, Würzburg: Ergon, 2015, pp. 437-452.

⁷⁴¹ This description reflects the true character of 'Abd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī's anti-Tijānism. He would later emerge as an important player in an anti-Tijānī campaign in Morocco that was inaugurated by Salafis in the mid 1920s (CE). On his efforts as a member of The Council of the Learned Men of Qarawiyyin, see Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijaniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, p. 176.

if ever he were to go to Fez one day. Al-Hilālī's visit to Fez coincided with Rabī' al-Awwal 1340/1921–1922. Upon his arrival in the city, he went to see the Kattānī shaykh straight away, finding the latter to be joyful over the arrival of his new-born son. The guest was asked to compose a poem in celebration of the beloved new family member, which he did. On the seventh day, as is traditional, a huge party was thrown to celebrate the birth. At the end of the party, al-Kattānī and his followers proceeded to perform their *dhikr* rituals, to which the host was also invited. The latter hesitated, for a sincere Tijānī was not supposed to participate in the rituals of other Sufi brotherhoods. The *Bughyat al-mustafīd*, according to al-Hilālī, relates a dreadful event in which a certain Tijānī was subjected to divine punishment due to his participation in a non-Tijānī congregation.⁷⁴² Despite his initial refusal, the Tijānī guest decided to join the ritual circle after all, only to find it remarkably ugly, irritating and meaningless.⁷⁴³ This was the first time he found himself entertaining real doubts pertaining to the legitimacy of a Sufi ritual. Indeed, he found it difficult to believe that such a thing could be considered an act of worship to God. Then again, as the Tijānī rituals were of almost the same nature, he tried to get rid of these thoughts.

During that “ugly” congregation, al-Hilālī reports that the Kattānī master started criticizing the Tijāniyya as not worthy of one's affiliation. A decent man, he said, would never join such a brotherhood. As any sincere Tijānī would do, the guest felt obliged to defend his order and question the legitimacy of the Kattāniyya—where upon the Kattānī master submitted that *all* Sufi orders were scams, established to enslave gullible people and exploit them for their property. When al-Hilālī asked him to justify this allegation, the host pointed to statements by the founding figures of the Tijāniyya and Kattāniyya brotherhoods as evidence for his claim. The supreme masters of both brotherhoods believed that the Prophet attended their *dhikr* sessions, which belief, from his perspective, besides being the utmost disrespect to the Prophet, was not only impossible but illogical as well. He went on to inform his Tijānī guest about the accusations of plagiarism surrounding *Jawāhir*,⁷⁴⁴ the most authoritative source of the Tijāniyya, which Tijānīs believe to

⁷⁴² It seems that the reference point here is a certain *faqīh* from Meknes, who is said to have failed to stand by the conditions of the Tijānī *wird*. This led to his punishment by al-Tijānī. For further information, see: Al-'Arabī b. al-Sā'ih, *Bughyat al-mustafīd*, pp. 307-308.

⁷⁴³ The congregation, according to al-Hilālī, ranged from young kids to old people, all chanting meaningless utterances. On the purportedly ugly utterances which so irritated him, see: al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiyya*, p. 13.

⁷⁴⁴ The plagiarism affair is one of those issues that is constantly referred to by the opponents of the Tijānīs, as an accusation to which Tijānīs could offer no convincing reply. Tijānī authorities of the twentieth century such as Aḥmad Sukayrij and Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, had no option but to admit 'Alī Ḥarāzīm's literary theft from *al-Maqṣad*

have been dictated by the Prophet himself to their supreme master Aḥmad al-Tijānī.⁷⁴⁵ The host said he had personally compared *Jawāhir* with *al-Maqṣad al-aḥmad* by Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh, only to find that the first volume of the former was a thoroughly verbatim copy of the latter.⁷⁴⁶ Being unaware of this matter, the guest was unable to defend his beloved order and its book.

Still, the final nail of doubt was yet to be hammered into the coffin of his Tijāniyya affiliation. A few days later, al-Hilālī visited a friend of his called ‘Umar b. al-Khayyāt, a bookseller who was based near Qarawiyyīn. The latter encouraged him to pay a visit to Muḥammad b. al-‘Arabī al-‘Alawī (1384/1964),⁷⁴⁷ allegedly the best scholar in Fez and the owner of a huge library. Al-‘Alawī was once a faithful follower of the Tijāniyya, but in the aftermath of a debate with the famous Salafī of Maghrib Abū Shu‘ayb al-Dukkālī (d. 1356/1937),⁷⁴⁸ he reportedly came to realize the absurdities of the Tijānī teachings, resulting in his departure from the order to become one of its

al-aḥmad. Nevertheless, they insisted that it was not a plagiarism but an established practice among scholars. See among others: Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā’id al-Tijāniyya*, p. 59; Aḥmad Sukayrij, *Jināyat al-muntasib al-‘ānī fimā nasabahu bi-l-kidhb li-l-Shaykh al-Tijānī*, vol. II, p. 53; Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiz, *I’lān al-ḥujja ‘alā a’ dā’ al-tarīqa al-Tijāniyya*, pp. 88-89.

⁷⁴⁵ Tijānīs hold that *Jawāhir* was dictated by Aḥmad al-Tijānī to his confidant ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm. (see ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma’ānī*, vol. II, pp. 285-86). Upon its completion the latter read it back to Aḥmad al-Tijānī, who then approved it on 3 January 1802 CE. (see Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijāniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, p. 240). Ultimately, the supreme master of the Tijāniyya even attributed *Jawāhir* to the Prophet himself, claiming on the basis of a daylight encounter that the Prophet had referred to it as his own book. See Aḥmad Sukayrij, *Kashf al-ḥijāb*, p. 62; Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijāniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, pp. 24-25.

⁷⁴⁶ Research on the topic reveals that it was ‘Abd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī and Muḥammad b. al-‘Arabī al-‘Alawī who first discovered the literary theft in *Jawāhir*, shortly after its first printing in 1927. The two scholars had little in common except for their hostility to the Tijāniyya, in 1932 CE, for this common cause, they printed *al-Maqṣad al-aḥmad* and thus made the fraud known. See Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijāniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, pp. 24-25.

⁷⁴⁷ Muḥammad b. al-‘Arabī al-‘Alawī was a prominent figure in the religious landscape of Fez in the 1920s CE. He had studied in Qarawiyyīn and had been a student of Abū Shu‘ayb al-Dukkālī’s, a graduate of al-Azhar who is often referred to as “the ‘Abduh of Morocco”, and by whom Muḥammad b. al-‘Arabī al-‘Alawī was exposed to modernist Salafiyya. After an unsuccessful armed struggle against French colonialism, Muḥammad b. al-‘Arabī al-‘Alawī came to realize that the best way to fight the foreign occupation was to educate the younger generation and arm them with “the guns of knowledge”. His teaching job in Qarawiyyīn from 1912 CE onwards, in addition to his profession as a judge, should be viewed in this light. See: Henri Lauzière, “The Evolution of Salafiyya in the Twentieth Century”, pp. 95-97. His life story and anti-colonial struggle have been the subject of many books in the Arab world. See: Ḥammād al-Qabbāj, *Ḥayāt Shaykh al-Islām Muḥammad b. al-‘Arabī al-‘Alawī al-‘ālim al-mufakkir wa-l-muslim al-munādīl*; ‘Abd al-Raḥīm al-Wardīghī, *al-Munaḍīl Shaykh al-Islām Muḥammad b. al-‘Arabī al-‘Alawī*, 1996 and ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Sahrāwī, *Shaykh al-Islām Muḥammad b. al-‘Arabī al-‘Alawī*, 1965, among others.

⁷⁴⁸ Abū Shu‘ayb al-Dukkālī has attracted enormous attention on the part of researchers. Among others, see: ‘Abd al-Ḥakīm Barkāsh, *Al-Shaykh Abū Shu‘ayb al-Dukkālī: Akadimiyya ‘ilmīyya tasīr ‘alā rijlayhā wa-tughayyir ma’ahā majrā al-tārīkh*, Rabat: Maṭba‘at al-Ma‘ārif al-Jadīda, 1989; Muḥammad Riyāḍ, *Shaykh al-Islām Abū Shu‘ayb al-Dukkālī al-Siddīqī wa-juhūdahu fī l-‘lm wa-l-iṣlah wa-l-waṭaniyya ma’a dhikr thulla min talāmīdhihi wa-athārih*, Casablanca: Maṭba‘a al-Najāh al-Jadīda, 1426/2005 and ‘Abd al-Ghanī b. al-Mu’adhhdhin, *Ṣafaḥāt min ḥayāt al-‘Allama Abī Shu‘ayb al-Dukkālī al-Maghribī*, n.p, Markaz Salaf li-l-Buḥūth wa-l-Dirāsāt, n.d.

ardent opponents. He is credited with the development of adoption by the ruling elite (*makhzan*) in Morocco of the Salafiyya as an effective instrument in the struggle against the increasing influence of Sufi brotherhoods, and evolving from a mere ideological movement with a strong Wahhābī character, to a liberating force fighting shoulder to shoulder with nationalists against colonial oppression.⁷⁴⁹ Though al-Hilālī entertained some doubts at first, he later decided to take up his friend's suggestion, and went to visit al-ʿAlawī on 12 Rabīʿ al-Awwal. He was impressed by the warmth of his host's greeting and the hospitality that he was shown by him. The first session of their conversation was confined to intellectual issues, in which he found his host was indeed as valuable as he had been portrayed to be by ʿUmar b. al-Khayyāṭ. However, when new visitors joined the congregation after the *maghrib* ritual prayer, the discussion extended to Sufism and Sufis. The Kattāniyya and its rituals were fiercely denigrated; their host spoke about the absurdities embedded in the order, claiming that a young man seemingly affiliated to the order had visited him with the intention of repenting of Sufism. When al-ʿAlawī asked him for the reason for this, the young man had had a strange story to tell. He had once drunk wine and committed adultery, leading to his negligence of the compulsory ritual prayers of *ʿaṣr*, *maghrib* and *ʿishāʿ*. Under the effect of the wine, he said, he had found himself in the *zāwiya* of the Kattāniyya order where Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Kabīr (d. 1327/1909)⁷⁵⁰ and his disciples were busy performing the ritual of *raqṣ* (a Sufi ritual of dance). When the ritual was over, Muḥammad al-Kabīr had kissed him on the mouth, claiming that he saw the Prophet doing so. At that point, said al-ʿAlawī, the young man had realized the absurdity of Sufi orders, and decided to visit al-ʿAlawī and repent. When the discussion hosted by al-ʿAlawī shifted on to the Tijāniyya, al-Hilālī could no longer bear to be present. According to the Tijānī teachings, being in the company of denigrators was a legitimate cause of clamities both here and in the hereafter. He thus left the assembly, but due to the curfew then imposed on the city by the French colonial authorities, he was not able to leave the house. This situation did not escape the attention of his host, al-ʿAlawī, who asked the reason for his discomfort. The guest replied that, since he himself was a Tijānī, he was not pleased with the course the discussion had taken. The

⁷⁴⁹ Muḥammad al-ʿĀbid al-Jābirī, *al-Maghrib al-muʿāṣir: al-khuṣūṣiyya wa-l-huwiyya...al-ḥadātha wa-l-tanmiyya*, Casablanca: al-Markaz al-Thaqāfi al-ʿArabī, 1988. pp. 24-25.

⁷⁵⁰ For an account of his life, see: Muḥammad al-Baqīr b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Kabīr al-Kattānī, *Tarjamat al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Kattānī al-Shahīd al-musammāt: Ashraf al-amāni bitarjama al-Shaykh Sīdī Muḥammad al-Kattānī*, edi. Nur al-Huda ʿAbd al-Raḥman al-Kattānī, Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 1426/2005; Zakī Muḥammad Mujāhid, *al-Aʿlām al-sharqiyya fī miʿa al-arbaʿa ʿashara al-hijriyya*, vol. II, Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1994, pp. 593-94.

host then assured him that there would be no further discussion related to the Tijāniyya—unless, however, the guest wished to find out the truth, in which case he was welcome to engage in a debate, under one condition: that if he were to lose, he would have to quit the Tijāniyya, whereas, if he were to win, the host would announce his own re-affiliation to the brotherhood. It would have been shameful for a staunch Tijānī like al-Hilālī to retreat from defending his *ṭarīqa*: thus, he accepted the challenge out of chivalry (*al-nakhwa*). Furthermore, he did want to find out the truth for himself: by his own account, he could not consent to sticking with the brotherhood out of ignorance.⁷⁵¹

1.1. The Debate and Denunciation of Sufism⁷⁵²

The debate was confined to a single point, namely the alleged daylight communications between the supreme master of the Tijāniyya and the Prophet, and his receipt of instructions from him. This, for Tijānīs, constitutes the backbone and basis of their brotherhood. They take the purported daylight encounters to have been a sign of favour from the Prophet to their master, and by extension toward them as well. It is precisely for this reason that they refer to their brotherhood as *al-ṭarīqa al-muḥammadiyya*—the order of the Prophet.⁷⁵³ This being the case, al-‘Alawī knew that if he was able to shake the firm belief of his guest in these daylight encounters, he would easily convince him of the falsehood of the rest of his convictions. Thus, he deliberately meant to confine the discussion to this point. The debate started with a discussion of the first dispute that occurred between Muslims over the issue of succession after the death of the Prophet. Both parties in the dispute, the *Muhājirs* and the *Anṣārs*, had claimed the right to succeed the Prophet in his capacity as the leader of the Muslim state. The dispute had lasted for three days and delayed the burial ceremony of the Prophet as well. Thus, the host asked:

If the Prophet was to communicate to someone after his death, he would have talked to his companions and reconcile them. This was certainly more important than his appearance to Shaykh al-Tijānī after a period of one

⁷⁵¹ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiyya*, pp. 12-17.

⁷⁵² Al-Hilālī’s own oral account of this debate is partially available as audio: <http://www.4shared.com/audio/jZVq8RE6/html>

⁷⁵³ Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijāniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, pp. 37-38. Tijānīs give a number of other reasons for their order being called *al-ṭarīqa muḥammadiyya*. For further information, see: Muḥammad al-‘Arabī b. al-Sa’ih, *Bughyat al-mustafid*, pp. 79-81.

thousand and two hundred years. After all, why would the Prophet appear to him?⁷⁵⁴

The young Tijānī could offer no convincing reply. He had recourse to a statement by the founding figure of the Tijāniyya, often recited by proponents of the brotherhood as a response to similar questions, in which he had claimed that the Prophet, during his lifetime, had conveyed general ordinances (*aḥkām āmme*) to all Muslims, and ordinances of a special nature (*aḥkām khāṣṣa*) to some of the elites of his *umma*. This first type had ceased to be issued with his demise, while the second had continued.⁷⁵⁵ Therefore, what the Tijānī master had received during his daylight communications with the Prophet, he said, was of this type. This argument was dismissed by al-‘Alawī, who stated that there were no general and special ordinances in the *sharī‘a*: such categories had never existed. Furthermore, as demonstrated by a Prophetic tradition that he had quoted as textual support, even the people of the Prophet’s household (*ahl l-bayt*) were not singled out to receive these so-called special ordinances. Religious ordinances (*aḥkām al-shar‘*), said al-‘Alawī, were of five types, by which he meant the five categories of *al-wājib* (compulsory), *al-mustaḥabb* (supererogatory), *al-mubāḥ* (permissible), *al-makrūh* (disliked) and *al-ḥarām* (forbidden). Since Tijānī litanies are loaded with huge rewards, he said, they must surely belong to the first two categories of the *wājib* or *mustaḥab*, only this could not be true, as the Prophet had explained all compulsory and supererogatory ordinances before his departure from this world.⁷⁵⁶

Another important event that occurred in the time of the companions was the dispute between the first caliph, Abū Bakr (r. 11–13/632–634), and the daughter of the Prophet, Fāṭima (d. 11/632), over the issue of the estate of the Prophet. While Fāṭima demanded her share, Abū Bakr turned down her request on the authority of a Prophetic tradition that denied the possibility of inheriting from the prophets. To him, what the Prophet had left behind was charity, not inheritance. Thus, if the Prophet was to manifest himself to anyone after his death, asserted al-‘Alawī, he would either have appeared to Abū Bakr, telling him to give Fāṭima her share of the estate, or to Fāṭima, advising her to listen to the caliph. In the same vein, during the reign of the fourth caliph, ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (r. 35–40/656–661), discord had occurred between the caliph and the beloved wife of the Prophet, ‘Ā’isha (d. 58/678), who was supported by preeminent companions, the likes of Ṭalḥa (d. 36/656)

⁷⁵⁴ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 18.

⁷⁵⁵ ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*, vol. I, pp. 140-41.

⁷⁵⁶ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 18.

and Zubayr (d. 36/656). This discord had resulted in the regrettable war of Camel in Basra, leading to the murder of countless companions on both sides. The Prophet, according to al-‘Alawī, could have prevented the war with a single statement, if he were to have appeared to make one to someone. How could he have consented to this bloodshed between his beloved companions? he asked al-Hilālī. The latter apparently had no response except to reiterate his master’s statement, as mentioned above. Al-‘Alawī then brought the attention of his guest to a further two examples of bloody discord drawn from the early period of Islam. In the first example, political altercations between ‘Alī and Mu‘āwiyya b. Abī Sufyān (r. 40–60/661–680) had culminated in the battle of Ṣiffīn,⁷⁵⁷ where innocent companions were killed on both sides including ‘Ammār b. Yāsir (d. 37/657)⁷⁵⁸. The second example concerned the rebellion of Khawārij,⁷⁵⁹ which, posing a serious threat to the existence of the Muslim state, forced ‘Alī to destroy them in the battle of al-Nahrawān.⁷⁶⁰ Thus, asked al-‘Alawī:

Why would the Prophet not appear to [his companions,] the best of the people after him, when this would bear much greater interest, such as the hindrance of bloodshed, the reunification of Muslims and the melioration of their affairs...why would he appear to Shaykh al-Tijānī, much later and for a purpose of less importance?⁷⁶¹

Al-Hilālī was stunned and could not respond. He was thus advised to think about it while the continuation of the debate was delayed until a later time. In the following days, further sessions took place, starting in the evening and continuing until late at night. The young Tijānī finally came

⁷⁵⁷ For information on the battle of Ṣiffīn, see: Qaḥṭān Qudūri Muḥjam, “al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī, mawāqifuhu wa-khilāfatuhu” *al-Ustādh*, 201, 1433/2012, pp. 351-384, (pp.363-365).

⁷⁵⁸ For an account of his life, and his death in the battle of Siffin, see: Mehmet Nadir Özdemir, *İslām Tarihiinde İlk İhtilafların Ocağında Bir İsim: Ammār b. Yasir*, Toplum Bilimleri Dergisi, 7 (14), pp. 311-343.

⁷⁵⁹ Khawārij (Kharijites) is the name of a splinter group which broke away from the army of Caliph ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib after the battle of Siffin in 657 CE. They turned their backs on ‘Alī due to his agreement to enter arbitration and make a peace deal with Mu‘āwiya, and declared both ‘Alī and Mu‘āwiya to be unbelievers. The group became a source of danger to the state, assassinating ordinary Muslims who happened to pass through the territory where a military camp of theirs had been established. Thus, ‘Alī had no choice but to eradicate the danger in a battle near Nahrawan in 659 CE. A year later, the remnants of Khawārij succeeded in assassinating ‘Alī, while failing to kill Mu‘āwiya and ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ. In the following decades, history was to witness several Kharijite attempts to seize political power in different parts of Muslim world. Their thought and mentality is perceived by some to have made its way into the present time. For a detailed account of their history and conflict with ‘Alī, see: Ghālīb b. ‘Alī ‘Awājī, *Firaq mu‘āshira tantasib ilā l-Islām wa-bayān mawqif al-Islām minhā*, vol. I, Jeddah: al-Maktaba al-‘Aṣriyya al-Dhahabiyya, 1422/2001, pp. 225-297.

⁷⁶⁰ The battle of al-Nahrawan occurred in 38/659. For details, see: Qaḥṭān Qudūri Muḥjam, “al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī, mawāqifuhu wa-khilāfatuhu”, pp. 366-367.

⁷⁶¹ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiyya*, pp. 19-20.

to realize that he was on the wrong side of the disputation: “And then” he says, “I came to realize that I was in manifest error”.⁷⁶²

When he sought to know whether or not other scholars of the Maghrib shared the conviction of his host, the response he received was shocking: Shaykh al-Fāṭimī al-Sharādī, known as the leading Tijānī *muqaddam* in Morocco at the time, was said to entertain the same conviction. He thus went straight to see the shaykh and learn the truth for himself. The old shaykh informed him that his own adventure with Sufism had started with the Qādiriyya, continued with the Wazāniyya, and finally resulted with his initiation into the Tijāniyya, which had earned him the fame of being the leading Tijānī *muqaddam* of his time. However, when he found out the absurdities of the Sufi orders, the old shaykh said, he repented and relinquished his ties with all of them. Al-Hilālī was now fully convinced of the truth of al-‘Alawī’s convictions. “Thus, my certainty of the validity of the result of the debate I had with shaykh al-‘Alawī increased”.⁷⁶³ Twenty years later in 1360/1940, al-Hilālī would encounter a certain ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Idrīs, a disciple of al-Fāṭimī al-Sharādī’, and hear a similar version of the old shaykh’s disdain for Sufi orders. Upon his graduation from the University of al-Qarawiyyīn, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz had wanted to be initiated into the Tijāniyya. Having arrived in the presence of the old shaykh with such a wish, he found himself instead being reprimanded for not contenting himself with the knowledge of the religious sciences and the holy book of the Qur’ān, which he had mastered by heart. The knowledge of the Tijāniyya, said the old shaykh, was not of benefit at all. This story would further reassure al-Hilālī of his departure from the Tijāniyya, something he never would have thought of in his earlier days. By his own account, it was dialectical reasoning (*al-burhān al-‘aqlī*) that had forced him to do so. In Henri Lauzière’s words, this “rational awakening” not only changed his religious orientation but forced him to a total rejection of the esoteric sciences as a source of religious knowledge.⁷⁶⁴ It was not “mere” enumeration of the Qur’ānic passages or Prophetic traditions that caused his turnabout. Rather, it was dialectical reasoning, as a basis for the explanation of religious beliefs—or, to be more precise, an irrefutable mixture of both—that struck the young al-Hilālī in the heart and brought about a huge change in his following career. His denunciation of the order thus debunks Jamil Abun-Nasr’s

⁷⁶² Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 20. According to al-Hilālī, he wrote a separate book on his encounter with Muḥammad b. al-‘Arabī al-‘Alawī and his subsequent denunciation of the Tijāniyya. The book, which I do not have in my possession, is named *Fikāk al-asīr al-‘ānī al-makbūl bi-l-kabil al-Tijānī*.

⁷⁶³ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 20.

⁷⁶⁴ Henri Lauzière, “The Evolution of Salafīyya in the Twentieth Century”, p. 112.

thesis that no Tijānīs “have ever been persuaded to relinquish their doctrines by the criticism which were directed against them”,⁷⁶⁵ arguing that other factors were responsible for any act of denunciation if any such had ever happened.

Al-Hilālī initially thought that these arguments had originated with the Salafī Abū Shu‘ayb al-Dukkālī, who in a similar debate, had successfully persuaded al-‘Alawī to break with the Tijāniyya. However, he would later find out that these arguments were first developed by the famous Syrian Salafī Maḥmūd al-Shukrī al-Ālūsī (d. 1342/1924), in his *Ghāyat al-amānī fī l-radd ‘alā l-Nabhānī* (The Desired Aspirations in Refuting al-Nabhānī),⁷⁶⁶ a book he had written in refutation of the Palestinian Sufī scholar Yūsuf b. Ismā‘īl al-Nabhānī’s *Shawāhid al-ḥaqq fī l-istighātha bi-l-sayyid al-khalq* (Divine Proofs Regarding the Invocation of the Master of the Creation for Help).⁷⁶⁷

During his long career, many confrontations would take place between al-Hilālī and proponents of his previous brotherhood. However, due to his busy life and constant travels, he would not succeed in articulating his own critique in a written form until the early 1970s (CE), a period of time in which he was teaching Islamic sciences and the Arabic language at the Islamic University of Medina, where he seems to have constantly confronted students affiliated to the Tijāniyya brotherhood. He took the issue to Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. ‘Abdallāh b. Bāz, the chairman of the university, informing him of the purported innovations of the brotherhood. By his own account, the shaykh encouraged him to write a book in refutation of the order, which, he said, would not only help in containing the spread of the order but would also enlighten its followers as to the absurdities it countenanced. The chairman of the University further assured al-Hilālī that he would provide the necessary financial support for the publication and circulation of this book, a gesture

⁷⁶⁵ Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijāniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, p. 185.

⁷⁶⁶ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, pp. 20-22. Born to a religious family in Baghdad, towards the end of Ottoman empire, Maḥmūd Shukrī al-Ālūsī was a strong defender of the Salafī creed, which caused him trouble with the ruling elite of Baghdad. During the first world war, he was delegated by Ottoman Empire to go to Hijaz and gain the support of ‘Abd al-‘Aziz b. Su‘ud against the British, who had launched a campaign to invade Iraq. For further information on his life account, see: Muḥammad Bahjat al-Atharī, *A’lām al-Iraq*, Cairo: al-Maṭba‘at al-Salafiyya, 1345 AH, pp. 86-242; al-Ziriklī, *al-A’lām*, vol. VII, pp. 172-173; ‘Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla, *Mu’jam al-mu’allifīn*, vol. III, pp. 810-811. His book, which was held in high esteem by Rashīd Riḍā, was first printed in Cairo by a certain Faraj Allāh al-Kurdī. The printing was financed by two Salafī scholars namely Muḥammad Naṣīf and ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Tilimsānī. See: Maḥmūd Shukrī al-Ālūsī, *Ghāyat al-amānī fī l-radd ‘alā l-Nabhānī*, vol. I, Riyadh: Maṭābi‘ Najd al-Tijāniyya, n. d, pp. 8-9. I refer to the copy financed by ‘Abd al-‘Azīz and Muḥammad ‘Abdallāh al-Jumayh

⁷⁶⁷ On al-Nabhānī see: Kaḥḥāla, *Mu’jam al-mu’allifīn*, vol. IV, p. 145. On his book *Shawāhid al-ḥaqq*, see: al-Ālūsī, *Ghāyat al-amānī fī l-radd ‘alā l-Nabhānī*, pp. 3, 8.

frankly acknowledged by the author. Another who helped the author during the process of publication was Muḥammad al-‘Abūdī, the general secretary of the university at the time.⁷⁶⁸

Al-Hilālī’s *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya* contains three chapters, in addition to a prologue and an epilogue. The three chapters are respectively concerned with the purported merits of Aḥmad al-Tijānī, his disciples and followers, and the litanies he had allegedly received from the Prophet during their daylight communications. Some Tijānī tenets are discussed in the epilogue, while the prologue is dedicated to a detailed account of the author’s own experiences with the Tijāniyya and subsequent denunciation of the order. One important feature of the book is its loose structure, in comparison to other of the sources subjected to investigation in this study. Information pertaining to any given subject is scattered all over the book. The book’s repetitive nature may also cause confusion for a novice reader. This partly stems from the sense of urgency felt by the author upon receiving Ibn Bāz’s instruction to produce a written refutation of the Tijāniyya. Another indication of the haste in which the book was published is its concentration on only two Tijānī sources, *Jawāhir* and *Rimāh*,⁷⁶⁹ albeit the two most authoritative ones. Even though other Tijānī sources, such as *al-Jāmi‘* by Muḥammad al-Mishrī, *al-Ifāda al-aḥmdaiyya* by al-Ṭayyib al-Sufyānī and *Bughyat al-mustafīd* by al-‘Arabī b. al-Sa’ih, are mentioned at the beginning of the first chapter,⁷⁷⁰ they are never quoted for textual support. Given his knowledge and command of the sources of the brotherhood, one would have liked to have seen his objections grounded in a wider variety of Tijānī sources, instead of sticking to the two above mentioned. Then again, perhaps this was done on purpose: he may have wanted to strike where it hurt the most, in which case one could say that it was perhaps the reverence these two sources enjoyed among the Tijānīs which compelled al-Hilālī to quote exclusively from them.⁷⁷¹ This could well have been intended to force followers of the brotherhood to reflect critically on the doctrines of their order, and thus find their way to enlightenment as he, the author of *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya* himself had done, back in the old days.

1.2. Al-Hilālī’s Approach to Refutating the Tijāniyya

⁷⁶⁸ For details, see: al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, pp. 5-6.

⁷⁶⁹ For an analysis of the sources of *Rimāh*, see: Bernd Radtke, “Studies on the Sources of the Kitāb Rimāh ḥizb al-rahīm of Al-Hājj ‘Umar”, *Sudanic Africa*, vol. 6, (1995), pp. 73-113.

⁷⁷⁰ For his introduction of these sources: Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, pp. 23-24.

⁷⁷¹ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 24.

Al-Hilālī's critique of the Tijāniyya seems to have been part of much larger project, namely, the struggle to spread the "true" Salafī convictions and annihilate the purported innovations which had been introduced within the Muslim communities. Among other factors, he perceived Sufism in general to have been responsible for this, the struggle against which was one of his main goals. His life story provides abundant proofs of his undertaking of this huge and ambitious mission. The reason behind his choosing the Tijāniyya in particular as the subject of a written critique lay partly in the fact of his own prior affiliation to the order, which, according to his own account, had enabled him to have a comprehensive knowledge of its doctrines; and partly in the fact that the brotherhood had such a significant following in black African countries. He seems to have assumed this second fact, in particular, as his main motive in writing his treatise. At the time, the Tijāniyya, reportedly enjoyed a following of twelve million people in Nigeria alone. In Senegal, its following was estimated to have been around two million, while at least one third of the population in Chad was affiliated to the brotherhood, based on information provided to al-Hilālī by one of his students at the Islamic University of Medina. Despite the crucial setbacks faced by the brotherhood in the Arab countries of the Northern Africa, the birthplace of the Tijāniyya,⁷⁷² it had continued on its merry way in West Africa, from whence the strength of the brotherhood had thus come to stem, both in terms of population and literary production.⁷⁷³ Another factor which should not be overlooked in this regard is the visibility of Tijānī students in the educational institutions of Saudi Arabia, which had forced al-Hilālī to focus his thoughts on the order, more than half a century after his first clash with the protagonists of Tijānī Sufism. After he had been invited to join the teaching staff at the Islamic University,⁷⁷⁴ by the celebrated shaykh 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Bāz, praised by the Moroccan Salafī himself as "the reviver of the Sunna and eraser of *bid'a*",⁷⁷⁵ al-Hilālī seems

⁷⁷² Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiyya*, p. 139.

⁷⁷³ On the numerical strength of the Tijāniyya in West Africa, see: Andrea Brigaglia, in his outstanding analysis of the literary production of the Niyāssiyya Tijāniyya in Northern Nigeria (despite the late penetration of the brotherhood into that country) provides a glimpse of the vast literary production of the order in West Africa. See: Andrea Brigaglia, "Sufi Revival and Islamic Literacy: Tijani Writings in Twentieth-Century Nigeria", *The Annual Review of Islam in Africa*, Issue No. 12/1, (2013–2014), pp. 102-111.

⁷⁷⁴ The Islamic University of Medina was founded in 1961, upon a proposal by Sayyid Abū l-'Alā Mawdūdī, a Pakistani ideologue, to produce a new cadre of scholars who, unlike traditional scholars, would withstand the encroachment of the West. Abdulai Iddrisu, *Contesting Islam in Africa*, p. 132.

⁷⁷⁵ The reverence shown to Ibn Bāz is a sign of al-Hilālī's close relationship with the former, about whom he wrote a poetical piece in which he is raised above both the Sufī Ibrāhīm b. Adham and the well-known Arab philanthropist Ḥātem al-Ṭāī (d. 605 CE), respectively, for his asceticism and generosity respectively. Upon its publication, Ibn Bāz, in a great show of modesty, criticized the excessive reverence of his beloved friend. For a full account of the story, see: Muḥammad Mūsā al-Mūsā and Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥamd, *al-Rasā'il al-mutabādala bayn l-Shaykh Ibn Bāz wa l-'Ulamā'*, Riyadh: Dār Ibn Khuzayma, 1428/2007, pp. 334-343.

to have perceived there to be a considerable Tijānī presence at the university, an institution at which “denunciations of Sufism are widespread”.⁷⁷⁶ After an initial investigation of the issue,⁷⁷⁷ as we have seen, he had informed the university’s chairman about the Tijānī doctrine, and encouraged him to find a solution to the matter.⁷⁷⁸ As a first step, the shaykh had instructed him to bring together his thoughts on Tijānī doctrine in written form, for the purpose of its circulation within the university. This was meant to function both to rescue those who had already established their own affiliation with the Tijāniyya, and to prevent its possible spread among the other students. Al-Hilālī did so with a great pleasure. It is for this reason that his book is entitled *The Guiding Gift for the Tijāniyya Group*,⁷⁷⁹ and probably out of the same concern to win the hearts of the Tijānīs that he meticulously spares the leader of the Tijāniyya in his objections, a fact which distinguishes his book from previous doctrinal attacks by anti-Tijānīs.

Al-Hilālī’s criticism of the brotherhood is a mixture of polemics and *da‘wa*; in other words, it is a plea for unity amongst the Muslim *umma*, as feasible only through a return to the authoritative sources of Islam, namely the Qur’ān and the Sunna. His critique is neither as sharp as Ibn Māyābā’s *Mushtahā al-khāriḥ*, which launches a direct attack upon the founder of the Tijāniyya,⁷⁸⁰ nor as soft as al-Ifrīqī’s *al-Anwār al-rahmāniyya*, the only motive for which was his *da‘wa* mission to spread the true doctrine of Islam. Al-Hilālī not only abstains from directing any criticism toward Aḥmad al-Tijānī, the founder of the Tijāniyya, but even praises him for his learning in the Islamic sciences. Furthermore, he condemns al-Tijānī’s followers for besmirching his good name through their conduct of un-Islamic practices. This strategy was prevalent within the polemical world of the Salafiyya at the time: Abū Bakr Gumi of Nigeria adopted the same line of argumentation against his own Sufi opponents, the Tijāniyya and Qādiriyya brotherhoods. In his *al-Aqīda al-*

⁷⁷⁶ Alexander Thurston, “Polyvalent, Transnational Religious Authority: The Tijaniyya Sufi Order and Al-Azhar University”, p. 15.

⁷⁷⁷ The sources that al-Hilālī used in this matter were the students themselves.

⁷⁷⁸ A similar attitude was displayed much earlier by al-Hilālī, when he was appointed as the person in charge of the teaching staff in the mosque of the Prophet. Upon his arrival in Medina he complained to the chief judge about Alfā Hāshim, the celebrated Tijānī authority and *muqaddam* in Hijaz, and encouraged him to take action against Tijānīs residing in the city. This resulted in a bitter debate in which both sides claimed to have gained the upper hand. For details, see chapter two.

⁷⁷⁹ For further information, see: al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, pp. 5-6.

⁷⁸⁰ Ibn Māyābā had called Aḥmad al-Tijānī among others as the criminal (*al-jānī*), liar (*affāk*), sinner (*athīm*), slanderer against the Prophet (*al-muftarī ‘ala l-Nabyy*), he who subscribed his fabricated religion to the Prophet (*al-mukhtalaq ‘ala l-Nabyy sharī’atahu*) slanderer (*muftarī*) founder of a new religion (*musharri’*), and he who claimed prophethood but could not disclose it out of fear. See Ibn Māyābā, *Mushtahā al-khāriḥ al-jānī*, pp. 1, 32, 213, 61, 146, 156, 162, 215, 224, 257, 521, 530, 538, 541, 543, 553 and *passim*.

ṣaḥīḥa—a “programmatic treatise”, in Loimeier’s words, first published in Arabic in 1972 CE, followed by the publication of English and Hausa versions in 1976 CE and 1978 CE respectively—Gumi exempted the founding figures of both the Tijāniyya and Qādiriyya from criticism, rather attacking their successors for corruption and the dissemination of dogmatic deviations in their names.⁷⁸¹ According to al-Hilālī, the only way to restore the reputation of the supreme master of the Tijāniyya brotherhood was for contemporary Tijānīs to denounce the innovations that had been attributed to their founder. The Moroccan Salafī, thus, aligns his critique of the Tijāniyya with Aḥmad al-Tijānī’s own statement,⁷⁸² which serves as “the drawn sword upon the necks of the people of innovations” (*huwa sayf maslūl ‘alā riqāb al-mubtadi‘īn*). This is a reference to the Tijānīs, who are said to bear the responsibility for defaming their own master, whose instructions regarding his legacy are argued to have left no doubt that he had disowned in advance the innovations that were later associated with him.⁷⁸³

Al-Hilālī’s refutation may seem to have been a simple reappearance of polemical altercations between the opponents and proponent of the Tijāniyya. However, such a reading of his treatise would obscure the particular relevance of his attack on the Tijānīs. His previous affiliation to the order, his command over Tijānī sources and his familiarity with the fundamental Tijānī tenets, in addition to his personal contact with some of the most esteemed Tijānī authorities such as Aḥmad Sukayrij,⁷⁸⁴ arguably gain him, in my view, the title of the most qualified critic of the brotherhood. Furthermore, his critique is not the mere quotation and enumeration of citations from old sources.

⁷⁸¹ Roman Loimeier, *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria*, p. 196.

⁷⁸² The founding figure of the Tijāniyya is believed to have said that his sayings should be judged in the light of *sharī‘a*. He disconnects himself from those of his sayings that contradict the rules of *sharī‘a*, no matter whether they were really said by him or were reported as such on his behalf. He further instructed Tijānīs to see the issue from this angle. Al-Hilālī uses this as a point of departure for his criticism of the order. By weighing Tijānī tenets on the scales of *sharī‘a*, he argues, he is in reality fulfilling the advice and wishes of the Tijānī master. See al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 38.

⁷⁸³ On al-Tijānī’s disconnection from the absurdities (*bāṭil*) associated with him, see: al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 101.

⁷⁸⁴ By al-Hilālī’s own account, right after his denouncing the Tijāniyya, having been persuaded by Muḥammad al-‘Arabī al-‘Alawī to do so, he had the opportunity of coming together with Aḥmad Sukayrij to have a discussion with him. The discussion seems to have been very tense. Aḥmad Sukayrij was stricken with disappointment and sadness; he gathered together other of the Tijānī shaykhs of Oujda to debate with al-Hilālī, of which debate al-Hilālī emerged the sole winner, if we rely on his version of the events. They are said to have raged in anger threatening al-Hilālī with the retribution of Aḥmad al-Tijānī for renouncing his order after having been affiliated with it, which, according to the doctrines of the brotherhood, causes misfortune in the here and hereafter. Denunciation of the order itself is held by Tijānīs to cause one to die a disbeliever. Al-Hilālī, *Sabīl al-rashād fī hudā khayr al-‘ib‘ād*, vol. II, pp. 118-119.

His personal experiences before and after his affiliation, interspersed in the book, give it a unique flavour, which one hardly finds in other anti-Tijānī texts. Besides being a mighty scholar, he was also an accomplished poet. His ability to not only target Tijānī teachings, but also to decipher them in the simplest way possible further qualify him as the most accomplished opponent of the Tijāniyya. Indeed, he is perceived by the Tijānīs themselves as “the greatest enemy of the Tijānīs” (*akbar ‘adūw li-l-tijāniyyīn*).⁷⁸⁵

The intention lying beneath al-Hilālī’s critical engagement with Tijānī doctrine was not to humiliate those who adhered to it. Rather, as aptly articulated in its title, the intention of *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya ilā l-ṭa’ifa al-Tijāniyya* was to rescue Tijānīs from the dangers he understood to be embedded in the teachings of the brotherhood.⁷⁸⁶ He even argues on one occasion that Tijānīs had exposed themselves to the greatest polytheism (*al-shirk al-akbar*). Moreover, he argues, the prevalence of such polytheism is not restricted to the ordinary Tijānī masses: learned followers of the brotherhood are also engaged in it, by their attribution of divine distinctions to Aḥmad al-Tijānī. Here the Moroccan Salafī quotes a poetical piece from *Baḥr al-kāmil* by Muḥammad Guennoun,⁷⁸⁷ one of the leading Tijānī scholars of the time, as a textual support for his argument, as Guennoun seems to have attributed divine distinctions to the supreme master of the order, not to mention instructing his follow Tijānīs to pay such tribute to the master if they too desired to attain high spiritual ranks. The master is presented in the poem as the succour of the human kind (*ghawth al-warā’*), capable of providing relief and remedy against all sorts of calamities and mischief. The following is an excerpt from the poem as it is presented by al-Hilālī:

“When privation touches you, call upon him [Aḥmad al-Tijānī],

supplicating [for his help], he will rescue you from insolvency;

invoke him, entreating and saying,

I came to your door o Abū l-Abbās;

⁷⁸⁵ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Tijāniyya wa-khuṣūmuḥum wa-l-qawl al-ḥaqq*, p. 5.

⁷⁸⁶ This is reiterated on many occasions. Among others, see: al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 114.

⁷⁸⁷ On the life of Muḥammad al-Rāḍī Guennoun, see: <http://www.atjania-online.com/vb/showthread.php?t=641>.

rescue the one drowning in the sea of his sins,

grant him your favour oh benevolent one;

o lord of lords, o succour of humankind

cure my rigid heart with your mercy”.⁷⁸⁸

From al-Hilālī’s view point, these are obvious signs of the widespread polytheism among Tijānī elites. Nonetheless, he avoids calling his opponents polytheists (*mushrikīn*) or disbelievers (*kuffār*) as some Sufi and Salafī adversaries of Tijānīs had done.⁷⁸⁹ He also draws the attention of the reader to another piece from *baḥr al-rijz*, which, in his Tijānī days, he used to recite with his fellow Tijānīs after the performance of *wazīfa*. The poem invokes the help of the supreme master. It reads:

“o Aḥmad al-Tijānī, o light of hearts,

do not you see the sorrows surrounding us;

do not you see the injustice that has touched us,

while you are the succour, who still responds to invocations;

hurry up hurry up in relieving [our agonies],

o by whom all sublimity is inherited”.⁷⁹⁰

⁷⁸⁸ The poem was brought to al-Hilālī’s attention by Muḥammad b. al-‘Arabī al-‘Alawī, the man responsible for his conversion to Salafīyya. In it, the epithet of the succour of humanity associated with al-Tijānī is repeated many times. For a complete version of the poem, see: al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 140.

⁷⁸⁹ Ibn Mayābā, a Qādirī Sufī, for instance, attempted to humiliate and dehumanise Tijānīs, repeatedly calling them polytheists and disbelievers. See Ibn Mayābā, *Mushtahā al-khārif al-jānī*, passim. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abd al-Khālīq, a Salafī anti-Tijānī, labels the founding figure of the Tijāniyya as “the ultimate liar” (*kadhhab*) and “a heretic” (*zindīq*). See: ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abd al-Khālīq, *al-Fikr al-ṣūfī*, pp. 356, 358.

⁷⁹⁰ “*Yā Aḥmad al-Tijānī yā nūr al-qulūb. Amā tarā mā naḥn fiḥi min kurub. Amā tarā al-ḍaym alladhī aṣābā. Wa-anta ghawth lam tazal mujābā. Al-‘ajal al-‘ajal bi-l-ighātha. Yā man lahu kul al-‘ulā wirātha.*” The word *mujāb*, used in the fourth line, should normally be translated as “one whose invocations are heard and responded to by God”. However, the context does not support such a rendering; here, on the contrary, it implies that it is the supreme master of the Tijāniyya who responds to invocations directed to him for his help. Thus, we have preferred to render it as “who still responds to invocation”. See al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 140.

2. *Al-Tijāniyya wa-Khusūmuhum wa-l-Qawl al-Ḥaqq*

Like his earlier reply to al-Ifriqī, ‘Umar Mas‘ūd’s publication *al-Tijāniyya wa-khusūmuhum wa-l-qawl al-ḥaqq* (Tijānīs and their Opponents and the Truth) is undated; it was probably written in Atbara, Sudan in the 1990s (CE),⁷⁹¹ and comprises three main chapters, in addition to a prologue and an epilogue; forty-three pages in total. It is of interest to note that the treatise is an indirect refutation of al-Hilālī. By ‘Umar Mas‘ūd’s own account, a fellow Tijānī requested that he should give his opinion on *al-Fikr al-ṣūfī fī daw’ al-kitāb wa-l-sunna* (The Sufi Philosophy in the Light of the Qur’ān and the Sunna), a book written by the Kuwait-based Egyptian Salafī scholar ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abd al-Khāliq, currently the leading advocate of non-violent political Salafism in Kuwait,⁷⁹² in which the Tijāniyya was attacked, among other Sufi orders. This fellow Tijānī of ‘Umar Mas‘ūd’s was Ḥamza ‘Abd al-Mun‘im; he had a copy of the above-mentioned book delivered to ‘Umar Mas‘ūd by Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭāhir to ‘Umar Mas‘ūd. Initially ‘Umar Mas‘ūd had no intention of offering a reply, but since his views were insistently demanded, he decided to articulate his thoughts in this pamphlet. In it, the writer of *al-Fikr al-ṣūfī* is presented as “a savage author” who does not fear God. The following is an excerpt:

I read what this savage author [*al-kātib al-jā’ir*] has written, though I had already noticed the book years ago and ignored it. Was it not for the information I received from brother Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭāhir regarding your demand for my views on what [he, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān] has written, I would not have wasted my time responding to this author, who neither fears Allah nor is afraid of bringing disgrace on himself”.⁷⁹³

‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abd al-Khāliq is further accused of lying, of using abusive language, and of displaying a harsh attitude, not to mention of having been strongly inspired by the Moroccan al-

⁷⁹¹ To consult a copy, see: <http://www.cheikh-skiredj.com/tijaniya-negateurs.pdf>

⁷⁹² ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abd al-Khāliq is a graduate of the Islamic University of Medina. He is identified with the activities of Jam‘iyya Ihyā al-Turāth al-Islāmī (Association for Reviving the Islamic Heritage), and also known as an ideologue of Salafī non-violent political activism in Kuwait. The kind of political activism he advocates is often referred to as “the organized Salafism” (*al-Salafīyya al-tanzīmiyya*). See: Bernard Haykel, “On the Nature of Salafī Thought and Action”, in Roel Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism: Islam’s New Religious Movement*, London: Hurst & Company, pp. 33-57, (p. 48).

⁷⁹³ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Tijāniyya wa-khusūmuhum wa-l-qawl al-ḥaqq*, p. 2.

Hilālī. “The author of this book, the so-called ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abd al-Khālīq, has inherited fighting divine saints from al-Hilālī”,⁷⁹⁴ states ‘Umar Mas‘ūd.

One of the strategies applied in Tijānī polemical texts is that of ridiculing and mocking the opponent, in addition to rejecting their scholarly credentials. We have already noted ‘Umar Mas‘ūd’s application of this strategy against the Malian al-Ifrīqī. The same strategy is applied here to the Moroccan al-Hilālī, a highly advanced scholar in comparison to al-Ifrīqī. Al-Hilālī is introduced as a leader of Salafīs and the greatest enemy of the Tijānīs (*kabīr al-salafīyīn wa-akbar ‘adūw’ li-l-tijānīyīn*). The Moroccan Salafī is said to have provided Tijānīs with three testimonies (*thalātha shahādāt*)⁷⁹⁵ that discredit not only himself but other *munkirīn* of the brotherhood as well. By al-Hilālī’s own account, Sufism prevailed in the region where he was born and received his initial education, and, regardless of their social rank, all of the people were affiliated to one or other of the competing Sufī brotherhoods, all of which are presented as belonging to one of the two categories: that of those to which the scholars and the elite of the region were mainly affiliated, and that of those which attracted the attention of commoners. Along the Darqāwiyya and the Kattāniyya, the Tijāniyya, he said, belonged to the first category.⁷⁹⁶ For ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, this description, offered by the allegedly greatest enemy of the Tijānīs himself, disproves ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abd al-Khālīq’s claims about the Tijāniyya, the latter having called Tijānī tenets “nonsense that even children and demented persons would recognize [as such]”.⁷⁹⁷ This description, according to the Sudanese Tijānī, is a clear distraction of the scholars and elite persons who, as reported by al-Hilālī, were affiliated to the Tijāniyya. “Glory be to Allah—glory be to Allah—the scholars and the elite amongst al-Hilālī’s nation are less credible than children and demented persons. What might be the situation of ordinary people, who were affiliated to other orders?!!”⁷⁹⁸ the Sudanese states sarcastically.

Al-Hilālī is accused of being insufficiently knowledgeable in the Islamic sciences. ‘Umar Mas‘ūd directs the attention of his readers to two alleged confessions made by the Moroccan Salafī: one in his debate with Muḥammad b. al-‘Arabī al-‘Alawī, and the other in a subsequent meeting with

⁷⁹⁴ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Tijāniyya wa-khuṣūmuhum*. pp. 1-2.

⁷⁹⁵ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Tijāniyya wa-khuṣūmuhum*. p. 5.

⁷⁹⁶ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 8.

⁷⁹⁷ For details, see: ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abd al-Khālīq, *al-Fikr al-ṣūfī*, p. 358.

⁷⁹⁸ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Tijāniyya wa-khuṣūmuhum*. p. 6.

al-Fāṭimī al-Sharādī. In the first instance, al-‘Alawī had suggested that, despite their short-sightedness and lack of knowledge, they should evaluate each and every issue, whether it belongs to the principles of the religion or is of secondary value, in the light of the holy Qur’ān and the Sunna of the Prophet, accepting only that which conforms to them and rejecting that which fails to comply with them, even if it was uttered by Imām Mālik or Aḥmad al-Tijānī.⁷⁹⁹ When, in the aftermath of the debate, al-Hilālī had asked al-Sharādī for his own take on the issue, the response he received from the old shaykh was: “Know that all that Sīdī Muḥammad b. al-‘Arabī al-‘Alawī told you is the truth beyond any doubt”.⁸⁰⁰ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd attempts to present these conversations as constituting a confession by al-Hilālī of his lack of knowledge, particularly in the Islamic sciences, which al-Hilālī reportedly saw as the yardstick for truth. “We ask, is this [al-Hilālī’s setting up his lack of knowledge as the yardstick for truth] not the nonsense that even children and demented persons would recognize?!”⁸⁰¹ the Sudanese cynically asks. A similar view regarding the Moroccan Salafī is put forward by Maḥmūd b. Bensālim b. Muḥammad al-Kabīr, a great-grandson of the founding figure of the Tijāniyya, who, when asked by an anonymous opponent about al-Hilālī’s and Ādam Ḥāmid’s⁸⁰² departures from the brotherhood after having discovered

⁷⁹⁹ In Arabic, the statement reads “*anna kulla mas‘alā fi l-‘aqā‘id aw fi l-furu‘ yajib ann nariduhā ma‘a qaṣr ba‘inā wa-qillat ittilā‘inā ‘alā l-kitāb wa-sunnat al-rasul sallā Allah ‘alayhi wa-sallam, fa-mā zahara la-nā annhu muwāfiq lahumā qabilnāhu wa-mā zahara la-nā annahu mukhālif radadnāh... wa-qāl bihi al-Imām Mālik aw l-Shaykh Aḥmad al-Tijānī*”. See: al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 20; ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abd al-Khāliq, *al-Fikr al-sūfī*, pp. 453, 54.

⁸⁰⁰ “*fa‘lam anna kulla ma qāla laka Sīdī Muhammad b. al-‘Arabī al-‘Alawī huma-l-haqq alladhi lā shakka fih*”. See: al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 21.

⁸⁰¹ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Tijāniyya wa-khuṣūmuḥum*, p. 7.

⁸⁰² Ḥāmid b. Adam Mūsā was a Sudanese shaykh of the Tijāniyya who, like al-Hilālī, went on to denounce the order and convert to Salafīyya. Prior to his denunciation, he claims to have been one of the four known *quṭbs* with a great deal of command over magic and sorcery. His confessions, made during a series of lectures, are available on YouTube. The first lecture is entitled *kayfa ta‘allamnā al-siḥr* (how did we learn magic?), See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CrwYPBWbvk>. The second lecture is delivered under the title *ruḥāniyya al-dhikr*, (the spiritual side of remembering God). See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bx7IXQSIQWc>. For the third one, entitled *tajārib al-‘amaliyya* (practical experiences), see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nHwCegtO6Ho>. For the fourth, entitled *māhiyya ḥaqīqat al-ḥujubāt-al-tamā‘im* (what is the reality of talismans and amulets), see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2H4iLOsKn6k>. For the fifth one, entitled *kayf yasharūnak* (how do they spell magic on you), see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ozVJxFdTlew>. For the sixth one, entitled *kayf kunnā na‘lam al-ghayb* (how did we know the Unseen), see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KrCKstlynZc>. For the seventh one, entitled *min ‘alāmāt al-sāḥir* (the signs of a magician), see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5EM4-pzKHdQ>. For the eighth one, entitled *khatrāt al-‘Ayn ‘alā l-fard wa-l-mujtama‘* (the danger of the eye to individual and society), see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WR_yMHSru. A short written record of the lectures is available at: <http://www.ahlalhddeeth.com/vb/showthread.php?t=332601>. In a live interview with a Saudi channel in 2014, he confessed that he had practiced magic for seventeen years without realizing the danger inherent in it. See: <http://www.almowaten.net/2014/05/%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%B1-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A-%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%84%D8%AA-%D9%85%D8%B9-286->

the purported decadence in its doctrines, said that their knowledge of the Tijānī doctrines was not only insufficient but also misleading. This, he said, was what had eventually led them to denunciation and denial.⁸⁰³

Another confession by the Moroccan Salafī, which is claimed by ‘Umar Mas‘ūd to discredit anti-Tijānīs relates to his first contact with al-‘Alawī prior to their debate. The latter was known for his anti-Tijānī sentiments, and as such al-Hilālī had only agreed to visit him upon the persistence of his close friend, ‘Umar al-Khayyāt. The latter, seemingly a fan of al-‘Alawī’s, introduced him as not only the city’s judge but also the city’s greatest scholar, with a huge library of books. Their first attempt to pay him a visit was unsuccessful, due to the judge’s being in a meeting with the French authorities that was set to last from noon to late evening. On the second attempt, when al-Hilālī finally succeeded in meeting him, he noted that some of the people of the congregation were playing chess, without any sort of expression of disapproval being made on the part of this judge, allegedly the greatest scholar in the city. “I said to my self that this was evidence of the fact that al-‘Alawī belonged to those scholars who do not act in compliance with their knowledge. Therefore, one could expect him to denounce divine saints,”⁸⁰⁴ relates al-Hilālī. ‘Umar Mas‘ūd moreover accuses al-Hilālī of following a figure who collaborated with the invaders and neglected obligatory ritual prayers due to his meeting with the French authorities, noting that “the objector [al-Hilālī] did not tell us where did his master, the rejecter of the Tijānī tenets, performed the noon and afternoon obligatory ritual prayers.”⁸⁰⁵ This is an attempt on the part of the Sudanese to turn the tables on the antagonists of the brotherhood, who frequently criticize Tijānīs for their collaboration with French colonialism. This is an indicative example of a Tijānī failing to abstain from defaming his opponent at any cost, as, if relations with French authorities were to be taken as proof of one’s unreliability, and could be a valid reason for one’s abnegation, one must wonder what ‘Umar Mas‘ūd’s stance would be on those of the leading Tijānī figures, including the supreme

[%D8%AC%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%8B-%D9%88%D8%AA%D8%A8%D8%AA-%D8%A8%D8%B3%D8%A8%D8%A8/](#)

⁸⁰³ “*flā hum ‘an ‘ilmīn wa-tadabburīn i ‘tanaquhā walā hum ‘an basiratin wa-ma ‘rifatin tarakuhā*” (they had neither embraced the order due to their knowledge and contemplation nor had they denounced it due to clear-sightedness from having obtained true information) says the Tijānī ḥafīd. See: Maḥmūd b. Bensālīm b. Muḥammad al-Kabir, *al-Ṭarīqa al-Tijānīyya bayn l-i‘tiqād wa-l-intiqād*, p. 21.

⁸⁰⁴ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 15.

⁸⁰⁵ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Tijānīyya wa-khuṣūmuhum*, p. 7.

master of the Tijāniyya himself, who maintained close contact and cooperation with the French colonial powers throughout the whole of North and West Africa.

3. *Shams al-Dalīl li-Itfā' al-Qindīl wa-Muḥiqq mā li-l-Dakhīl wa-l-Hilālī min Turrāhāt wa-Abāṭīl*

One of the few Tijānī responses to the Moroccan Salafī('s) is *Shams al-dalīl*, written by the Mauritanian Tijānī Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, initially written in refutation of *al-Qindīl*⁸⁰⁶ by Hāshim al-Ḥusayn Rajab, but also containing responses to Dakhīl Allāh and al-Hilālī. The book, published in 2006 CE, is divided into three main chapters, each of which deals with one of the above-mentioned opponents. In the first chapter, the author of *al-Qindīl* is attacked in harsh terms. Indeed, he is treated in an unprecedentedly harsh manner, being depicted as the worst of the three, who reportedly opens his mouth to speak “the dirtiest, filthiest and ugliest swear words”.⁸⁰⁷ He is likewise accused of creating rifts among the ranks of Muslims. His portrayal of the Tijānīs is said to be a description of himself, rather, and he is threatened with receiving bitter treatment in response.

The last chapter, named *Turrāhāt al-Hilālī* (The Nonsense of al-Hilālī), is dedicated to the refutation of the objections raised by the Moroccan. This chapter is a short one, no more than ten pages; one must wonder why such a short reply is provided to a critique that exceeds one hundred and forty pages. By way of explanation, the Mauritanian Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, asserts that he has already responded to most of the objections made by al-Hilālī in his rebuttals of the other two opponents. This claim remains unconvincing when one finds that most of the critique produced by the Moroccan has gone unanswered. Nevertheless, Aḥmad b. al-Hādī misses no opportunity to underestimate his opponent al-Hilālī and put his scholarly credentials into question.

In the prologue, the Moroccan Salafī is accused of having tolerated blasphemy while visiting a certain Sufī shaykh in the city of Asla. By al-Hilālī's own account, the shaykh had used abusive

⁸⁰⁶ It was written as a response to the polemical debates and disputes between Tijānīs and Anṣar al-Sunna al-Muḥammadiyya in the city of Atbara in the River Nile State of Sudan. By the account of the author, one among the leaders of the Tijāniyya wrote a book to approve the alleged capability of intervening in the universe (*taṣarruf*) on behalf of the dead, in addition to the mockery and disrespect of Salafīs who deny this. Hāshim Ḥusayn Rajab, *al-Qandīl li-kashf mā fī kutub al-Tijāniyya min l-zay' wa l-abāṭīl*, Riyadh: Maktabat al-Fawā'id, 1419/1999, p. 3.

⁸⁰⁷ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 5.

language towards God during congregational ritual prayers, causing the Moroccan to feel a great deal of amazement, whereas the people of the congregation, they had no doubts of the shaykh's saintly status. Al-Hilālī's narration of this situation is, rather astonishingly, held by the Mauritanian Tijānī to be a testimony:

[to the] stupidity of al-Hilālī's [own] mind, the fragility of his religion and the overabundance of his hyper-foolishness to the extent that he did not know the fact that a committer of blasphemy cannot get away with it even if it is committed in the state of intoxication, let alone in a state of sobriety.⁸⁰⁸

The shaykh who committed the blasphemy is said to have been in the presence of Satan, a situation al-Hilālī had allegedly failed to recognize. Aḥmad b. al-Hādī claims that what had happened to him would not happen to any but an ignorant heretic who had no clue of faith (*imān*). Furthermore, the Moroccan is accused of tolerating the blasphemy he had witnessed in return for the food and service he had received from the Sufi shaykh: "Maybe... what you experienced in the form of atrophy of insight was a result of your need for the food provided by the shaykh".⁸⁰⁹

The same line of argumentation is maintained in the epilogue, where the Mauritanian provides his readers with a letter he had received from his master Muḥammad Fāl Abbā, a renowned Tijānī shaykh and the author of *Rashq al-sihām*. The letter was written due to Aḥmad b. al-Hādī's persistence in demanding Abbā's opinion on *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*⁸¹⁰ of al-Hilālī. In it the Moroccan Salafī is described as having been an extremist Tijānī prior to his denunciation of the brotherhood, who had received constant warnings from his masters advising him to quit extremism and adopt the middle ground with regard to Tijānī doctrines. While Abbā does not provide us with any clue as to how to differentiate an extremist Tijānī from a moderate one, the charge may nevertheless be viewed as a confession of the existence of extremism in Tijānī circles. The alleged extremism of the Moroccan is supposed to have manifested itself in the form of his accepting al-'Alawī's challenge out of chivalry (*nakhwa*), despite the fact that he was not reportedly equipped with the required scholarly credentials to enter into a debate. This is said to be the precise reason

⁸⁰⁸ "Qiṣṣatuhu allatī tashhad alayhi bi-sakhāfat aqlihī wa-riqqat dīnihī wa-farṭ jahālatihī haṭṭā jahila anna-l-sāb lā yu 'dhar bi-l-sakr fa-kayfa bi-l-ṣaḥw". See: Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 8.

⁸⁰⁹ "wa-la 'ala... mā shahidta bihi 'alā nafsika min ṭams al-baṣīra ḥājatuka ilā ta 'āmiḥ". See: Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 8.

⁸¹⁰ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 251.

for his defeat.⁸¹¹ The Moroccan, who had stayed for quite some time in Germany, is further accused of spying for that country against Arab lands. This, according to Abbā, had forced King ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Sa‘ūd to expel the Moroccan from Medina during the second world war.⁸¹² Such charges seem to be a further example of the Tijānī habit of accusing their opponents with unsubstantiated allegations. As we have seen (in chapter two) al-Hilālī used his stay in Germany as an opportunity to help the freedom fighters of North Africa in their struggle against the European colonial powers. Moreover, I know of no evidence of a journey being made by al-Hilālī to the holy lands during the second world war, let alone his being expelled from Medina under the accusation of espionage for Germany. As for his scholarly credentials, unlike the Sudanese Tijānī ‘Umar Mas‘ūd and the Mauritanian Tijānī Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, Abbā at least acknowledges al-Hilālī’s expertise in Arabic literature and the Hebrew language. He informs the reader of his encounter with the Moroccan in Rabat, where the latter was purportedly teaching the Hebrew language at Rabat University, in which profession he would reportedly later continue at the Islamic University of Medina. Nonetheless, his credentials in the field of the Islamic sciences are severely questioned. His book written in refutation of the Tijāniyya is viewed as an attempt to excommunicate tens of millions of Muslims from Islam, an attempt Abbā sees as a probable preliminary to the shedding of their blood and the confiscation of their property, rather than an effort to exercise the right of criticism.⁸¹³

The dispute between the Tijānīs and their adversaries, in the eyes of Abbā, is a superficial (*lafẓī*) controversy rather than a real one. The whole reason for it, according to him, is the usage of Tijānī terminology in the sources of the brotherhood. He is nonetheless quick to acquit Tijānīs for such usage, saying that they should not be blamed for putting forward their thoughts within the framework of their own peculiar parlance. The following is an excerpt:

The core of the matter is that there are certain issues in some [of the] Tijānī sources [that have been] written by their authors in compliance with a peculiar terminology of their own...while their opponents perceive these issues as contradictions of the noble *sharī‘a*, Tijānīs themselves interpret them in way that reconciles them with the *sharī‘a*. Therefore, the dispute is a superficial one (*lafẓī*)...scholars [unanimously] state that [further] dispute

⁸¹¹ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 251.

⁸¹² Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 252.

⁸¹³ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 252.

over *alfāz* (words, terms, concepts), after agreement [has been reached] on their meanings is not characteristic of true researchers.⁸¹⁴

A thorough examination of Abbā's discourse suggests that a sort of anorexia had spread among Tijānīs, so unwilling were they to engage in doctrinal confrontations with their adversaries. This is caused partly by the heavy campaigns undertaken by Salafīs throughout the African continent, and partly by a gradual evolution among the leading thinkers of the Tijānī world, who were now calling for the sources of the brotherhood to be purified of alien components.⁸¹⁵ He divides the criticisms raised by the Moroccan into three categories, and treats them as follows: a) some of the objections are claimed to be pure lies, attributed to the Tijānīs; b) in other cases, the purported deficiency in the knowledge of al-Hilālī prevented him from understanding certain tenets which he interpreted in the worst way possible. His deficient intelligence should not be taken as evidence against the brotherhood.⁸¹⁶ This situation, according to Abbā, is a result of the prevailing tendency of people nowadays to write before acquiring sufficient knowledge. If Tijānīs wish to refute their opponents in writing, he says, they may end up replying to an either ignorant or highly ill-equipped opponent who needs to seek further knowledge. If Tijānīs ignore them, he continues, they might be accused of fearing intellectual confrontation.⁸¹⁷ Abbā's third category for al-Hilālī's criticisms are c) those which are seen to be directed toward the miraculous credentials of the supreme master of the brotherhood. Where these are unanimously accepted as heralded utterances that function as fountains of joy for believers, Abbā claims that the knowledge and high degree of piety displayed by Sufi masters should be understood to be legitimating sources for such credentials, in the face of which, neither *sharī'a* nor logic would be grounds to reject them. If one nonetheless persists in rejecting them, he says, his rejection would need to be grounded on solid evidence, a task categorically impossible to achieve.⁸¹⁸

⁸¹⁴ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 252.

⁸¹⁵ A number of leading Tijānī scholars of the twentieth century have emphasized the need to purify Tijānī sources of alien components. Among others, see for instance the stances of the Senegalese Ibrāhīm Niyās, the Egyptian Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ and the Nigerian Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ on the pollution of Tijānī sources, including the most authoritative, *Jawāhir al-ma'ānī*. For details, see: Rüdiger Seesemann, "The Takfir Debate Part I and II"; Mohammad Ajmal Hanif, "An Evolution in Tijāniyya Perception of *Jawāhir al-ma'ānī*" (forthcoming).

⁸¹⁶ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 253.

⁸¹⁷ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 254.

⁸¹⁸ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 255.

4. The Themes

In the following subsections, I will discuss ten objections raised by the Moroccan, and the responses provided by Tijānīs, starting with the crucial theme of the supreme master's daylight encounters with the Prophet that serve as the back bone of the Tijāniyya Sufi path.

4.1. Daylight Communications and *al-Adilla al-Khamsa*

The dispute between protagonists of the Tijāniyya and their adversaries over the alleged daylight encounters between the founder of the order and the Prophet is one of the oldest themes, that has repeatedly appeared, and continues to appear, in the polemical writings of both parties. Here, we should also note that Tijānīs are not the only Sufis who have argued in favour of the alleged daylight encounters of their supreme master with the Prophet, upon which they have established a better part of their tenets.⁸¹⁹ The antagonists of the Tijāniyya refer to scholars who entirely reject the occurrence of such encounters, arguing in their onslaughts, that no textual evidence whatsoever exists to support Sufi claims of daylight encounters with the Prophet, in either the Qur'ān or the Sunna.⁸²⁰ Tijānīs, on the other hand, attempt to establish the fact of their master's daylight communication with the Prophet on the authority of scholars, mostly Sufis, who refer to certain Prophetic traditions as legitimating proofs.

In the canonical body of Islamic scripture, textual evidence in favour of such daylight encounters seems to be scarce: There is one Prophetic tradition that reads "He who has seen me in dream will

⁸¹⁹ For some of the statements that are claimed to prove the Tijānīs' belief in these daylight communications, see: 'Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma'ānī*, vol. I, pp. 30-31, 129; vol. II, p. 228; 'Umar al-Fūṭī, *Rimāḥ ḥizb al-Raḥīm*, vol. I, p. 199; al-'Arabī b. al-Sā'ih, *Bughyat al-mustafīd*, p. 80. Muslim scholars prior to the establishment of the Tijāniyya were also divided over the issue of daylight encounters per se; on the one hand, there were scholars like Jalāl al-Dīn Al-Suyūṭī and Muḥammad b. Abī Jamra, who spearheaded the camp of those who defended the fundamental reality of such daylight encounters, while on the other hand, there were scholars like Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī and al-Qurṭubī, their opponents, who rejected daylight visions altogether. In between these, there were, scholars who either claimed daylight visions of the Prophet to be visions of an image, rather than an essential apparition, or interpreted claims of daylight communication to have taken place in a state not exactly like the state of wakefulness. Al-Ghazālī al-Qarāfī and Qāḍī Abū Bakr b. al-'Arabī and a certain Shaykh Muslim, master of the Muslimiyya brotherhood.

⁸²⁰ Ibn Mayābā, for instance, argues that neither a Prophetic account, nor any statement on the part of the companions has ever been reported in favour of daylight visions of the Prophet. According to him, even fervent defenders of such visions, like Al-Suyūṭī, have failed to provide any such evidence. See: Ibn Mayābā, *Mushtahā al-khāriḥ al-jānī*, p. 91. See also al-Zamzamī, *I'lām al-muslimīn bimā fi kalām al-Tijānī min l-awḥām wa l-aghlāt*, pp. 3-4; Dakhlī Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm 'aqā'id al-Tijāniyya*, pp. 122-123.

see me in daylight”.⁸²¹ Experts in the science of *ḥadīth* have suggested seven different interpretations of this Prophetic account, only one of which really holds it to be possible that a daylight encounter with the Prophet could happen, due to as correlation with a prior dream vision. While protagonists of the Tijāniyya attempt to present this interpretation as textual proof,⁸²² it does not possess any value for antagonists of the brotherhood: a possibility, they say, cannot be treated as evidence. The same goes for the testimonies of certain authoritative Sufi figures, among them widely recognized scholars such as al-Suyūṭī, who claimed to have experienced daylight visions of the Prophet.⁸²³ Since the outward meanings of their statements entail a number of problematic points, these are often interpreted allegorically, and understood as metaphors for subaltern realities.⁸²⁴

Al-Hilālī follows a whole different strategy in his own objections to such daylight encounters. Instead of elaborating on the arguments of previous scholars, as discussed earlier in this chapter and in chapter two, he narrates the sequence of events that made him change his mind about Sufism. A detailed account of what would come to be called *al-adilla al-khamsa* (the five pieces of evidence/arguments), referring to five cases of discord during the early history of Islam, in the aftermath of the death of the Prophet—is presented as evidence against the possibility of daylight encounters with the Prophet, since none had occurred in any of these cases, despite pressing need. These arguments were effectively used by Muḥammad b. al-‘Arabī al-‘Alawī to convince al-Hilālī, eventually leading to his departure from the Tijāniyya and complete denunciation of Sufism as a

⁸²¹ This Prophetic tradition has been narrated in different versions. See: Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Bukhārī, *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (printed together with its commentary *Fath al-bāri of Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalānī*), vol. 12, Cairo: al-Maktabat al-Salafiyya, n.d., p. 383; Muslim b. al-Ḥallāj al-Naysābūrī, *Saḥīḥ Muslim* (printed together with its commentary *Sharḥ al-Nawawī*), vol. 15, Cairo: al-Matba‘a al-Miṣriyya, 1349/1930, p. 26; Abū Dā‘ūd Sulayman b. al-Ash‘ath al-Sijistānī, *Sunan Abī dawūd* (printed together with its commentary *‘Awn al-ma‘būd of Shams al-Ḥaqq al-Azimābādī*), vol. 13, Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 1426/2005, p. 366.

⁸²² See for instance: ‘Umar al-Fūtī, *Rimāḥ ḥizb al-Raḥīm*, vol. I, p. 205; Muḥammad Fāl Abbā, *Rash al-siham*, pp. 4-26; Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *‘Ulama’ tazkiyat al-naḥs*, p. 28-30; Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn*, p. 25; Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Muntaha sayl al-jarīf*, pp. 50-64; Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, pp. 196-197; ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *Radd ‘ala Al-Ifriqī*, p. 25.

⁸²³ Tijānis claim that certain Sufi authorities, such as Abu Madyan al-Maghribī, ‘Abd al-Raḥīm al-Qanāwī, Mūsā al-Zawāwī, Abū l-‘Abbās al-Mursī, Abū l-Su‘ūd b. Abi al-‘Ashā‘ir, Ibrāhīm al-Matbūlī and Jalāl al-Dīn Al-Suyūṭī have experienced daylight visions of the Prophet. Some of them are said to have repeatedly experienced them. See ‘Umar al-Fūtī, *Rimāḥ ḥizb al-Raḥīm*, vol. I, p. 199.

⁸²⁴ Ibn Mayābā, *Mushtahā al-khārif al-jānī*, p. 95; al-Zamzamī, *I‘lām al-muslimīn*, pp. 4-7; Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā‘id al-Tijāniyya*, pp. 123-125.

whole.⁸²⁵ This simple but highly effective strategy has inspired later Salafī adversaries of the brotherhood, such as ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abd al-Khāliq⁸²⁶ and Dakhīl Allāh.⁸²⁷ On the other hand, ‘Umar Mas‘ūd is the only Tijānī to have developed a full response to *al-adilla al-khamsa*.⁸²⁸ He is of the opinion that the “five pieces of evidence” were infact one argument divided into five by al-‘Alawī, allegedly the best scholar of Fez, so as to turn each example of a dispute contained therein into a separate piece of standalone evidence. By doing so, Umar Mas‘ūd argues, al-‘Alawī had provided his opponents with ample evidence against himself. “He was not the best scholar of the Fez. On the contrary, he was one of the commoners”.⁸²⁹

From ‘Umar Mas‘ūd’s perspective, the purported five pieces of evidence are not sufficient to prove the illegitimacy of daylight encounters. He further claims that al-Hilālī knew this, but had hidden his knowledge, and would thus bear that sin.⁸³⁰ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd means by this to accuse al-Hilālī of keeping quiet about the refutations of *al-adilla al-khamsa* which he surely must have seen in *Ghāyat al-amānī fī l-radd ‘alā l-Nabhānī* by Maḥmūd Shukrī al-Ālūsī (d. 1342/1924), whose grandfather Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ālūsī had developed no less than six counter arguments (*sitta tawjihāt*), all of which were mentioned in his book by Maḥmūd Shukrī. The Moroccan al-Hilālī, the Sudanese Tijānī argues, must have ignored them on purpose.⁸³¹ Infact, while Shihāb al-Dīn al-

⁸²⁵ Protagonists of the Tijāniyya severely criticize both al-Hilālī and al-‘Alawī, claiming that it was the former’s short-sightedness and the insufficiency of his knowledge which enabled him to put up with the latter. “Indeed al-Hilālī failed. [It was so] because he relied on his short sight and lack of knowledge. He did not have recourse to scholars of the Tijāniyya to learn how to refute this nonsense which is [falsely] called evidence... if the story, which he related, is true and is not a product of his imagination”. ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Tijāniyya wa-khuṣūmuḥum*, p. 29. As for Muḥammad al-‘Arabī al-‘Alawī, ‘Umar Mas‘ūd harshly criticizes him as well; he is claimed to be neither the best scholar of Fez nor the possessor of the huge library which ‘Umar al-Khayyāṭ informed al-Hilālī about. His library, says ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, is either a poor one or a mere collection of books brought together out of a desire to satisfy his hobby, as according to ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, he did not have the slightest clue about the contents of his own allegedly huge library. At this point ‘Umar Mas‘ūd mentions at least ten sources which could have supplied him with enough accurate information on the issue of daylight encounters with the Prophet. The so-called best scholar in Fez, ‘Umar Mas‘ūd argues, was certainly not superior to all of the scholars who have approved the issue of daylight encounters. ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Tijāniyya wa-khuṣūmuḥum*, p. 30.

⁸²⁶ He discusses the narration in its entirety in one of his writings. See: ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abd al-Khāliq, *al-Fikr al-ṣūfī*, pp. 438-456.

⁸²⁷ He, however, refers to the narration in less detail. See: Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā’id al-Tijāniyya*, pp. 130-131.

⁸²⁸ This does not, however, mean that no Tijānīs before him had touched upon the issue. Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, for one, provided a partial response to the question of why the Prophet did not appear to the companions when the latter had disagreements over the issue of succession. See Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *‘Ulama’ tazkiyat al-naḥs*, pp. 23-25.

⁸²⁹ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Tijāniyya wa-khuṣūmuḥum*, p. 30.

⁸³⁰ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Tijāniyya wa-khuṣūmuḥum*, p. 31.

⁸³¹ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd’s accusation of *kitmān* to al-Hilālī seems to be baseless. It is true that al-Hilālī did not refer to the so-called six counterarguments while speaking of *al-adilla al-khamsa*, but he did so not because he wanted to keep

Alūsī (d. 1270/1854) did mention these six counter-arguments in his own *Ruḥ al-ma‘ānī fī tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘azīm wa-sab‘ al-mathānī* (The Spirit of Meanings in Interpretation of the Great Qur’ān and the Seven Oft-Repeated Verses), he drew but a fragmented picture of the issue at stake. On the one hand, he rejected the existence of any single report that could prove the Prophet’s posthumous daylight communications with his household or companions, despite the bloody disputes motivated by struggle for political power and dominance. On the other hand, he did not dare to deny Sufī testimonies of daylight visions of the Prophet. The reason for this, by his own account, was the abundance of such claims by highly revered Sufī authorities. “It would not be pleasant”, he stated, “if I [were] to assert that each and every testimony reported on behalf of Sufis is a baseless lie. For a huge number of exalted Sufī authorities [have] laid claim to it”.⁸³² Thus, he attempted to find a reasonable explanation for such testimonies. It was in this context that he made mention of the so-called six counter-arguments (*tawjihāt al-sitta*). He also tried to answer the question of why the Prophet did not thus appear to his companions, despite the urgent needs that surfaced from time to time, offering the following six possible reasons for this:

- 1) Due to the divine wisdom of putting the companions to the test (*li-ḥikmat al-ibtālā’*);
- 2) To prevent the generation of further discord among the community of believers (*aw li-khawf al-fītna*);
- 3) It was not necessary since certain companions were perceived by the community to be the mirror of the Prophet;
- 4) Due to the fact that Muslims had instead to turn to the authoritative sources of the religion which would eventually lead to the consolidation and spread of the religion (*fa-yattasī ‘bāb al-ijtihād wa-tantashir al-sharī‘a*);
- 5) That the Prophet may in fact have appeared to some of his companions, but it was kept undisclosed for a greater benefit (*maṣlaḥa*);

them disclosed, it was rather because Maḥmūd Shukrī al-Ālūsī refuted his grandfather’s counterarguments to *al-adilla al-khamsa*. This will be discussed later in the section.

⁸³² Al-Ālūsī, *Ghāyat al-amānī fī l-radd ‘alā l-Nabhānī*, vol. I, p. 22; ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Tijānīyya wa-khuṣūmuhum*, p. 32.

- 6) Or, that the Prophet may have appeared to some, but in an indirect way, like the incident of the companion who witnessed the image of the Prophet instead of his own when he was given the Prophet's mirror by Maymūna, the mother of believers.⁸³³

As one may easily observe, these so-called counterarguments suggest the possibility of daylight encounters, rather than proving it. Due to the complexity of the issue, Shihāb al-Dīn al-Alūsī recommended that his readers should find out the truth for themselves. This line of argumentation is, however, rejected by his grandson Maḥmūd Shukrī, for whom such daylight visions have no basis in the authoritative sources of the religion, the Qur'ān and the Sunna. From his viewpoint, therefore, the testimonies of certain Sufī masters may not be treated as legitimating evidence for daylight encounters with the Prophet, since the human senses may easily be deceived. Furthermore, he argues, if the best of the Muslim community did not achieve daylight communications with the Prophet, the rest would certainly not succeed to do so. Unlike for his grandfather, for him the issue is not complicated at all: posthumous daylight communication with the Prophet presupposes many impossibilities.⁸³⁴

Maḥmūd Shukrī's proclamation has not gone unchallenged. Sufis such as 'Umar Mas'ūd reject the possibility for the human senses to be deceived as a sound basis for the denial of the possibility of daylight encounters, precisely because, he says, a possibility cannot be taken as valid evidence. He goes on to argue that this might be the reason why, of the Salafīs who came after Maḥmūd Shukrī, such as al-Hilālī, his master al-'Alawī, al-Dukkālī and al-Sharādī, none of them had referred to this argument of Maḥmūd Shukrī's,⁸³⁵ even while raising their voices in favour of the improbability of daylight communications. Here it seems that 'Umar Mas'ūd might have forgotten the fact that what he calls the *sitta tawjīhāt* of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Alūsī are also possibilities and probabilities; one wonders how would he justify his stance if confronted with the same argument.

Instead, 'Umar Mas'ūd approaches the issue from a different angle of counterargumentation, stating that, if the argument that the Prophet did not appear to his companions after his death was

⁸³³ Al-Ālūsī, *Ghāyat al-amānī fī l-radd 'alā l-Nabhānī*, vol. I. p. 226.

⁸³⁴ For a detailed analysis of Maḥmūd Shukrī's argument concerning the problems he raises in relation to the possibility of daylight communication with the Prophet, see: al-Ālūsī, *Ghāyat al-amānī fī l-radd 'alā l-Nabhānī*, vol. I, pp. 227-228.

⁸³⁵ 'Umar Mas'ūd, *al-Tijānīyya wa-khuṣūmuhum*, p. 31.

to be treated as evidence against the general possibility of daylight visions of the Prophet, the same argument could be developed against the possibility of dream visions of the Prophet—the “five arguments” made by Muḥammad b. al-‘Arabī al-‘Alawī to al-Hilālī contain no proof of any dream vision of the Prophet either. Thus, he argues:

We have the right to ask the deniers of daylight visions why the companions didn’t experience dream visions of the Prophet, who could have solved their disagreements and put an end to their disputes in this way....thus, if daylight visions may be dismissed by the likes of these [five] arguments, then by counterargument, dream visions could also be dismissed in the same way.⁸³⁶

Another counterargument which ‘Umar Mas‘ūd develops is related to divine inspiration (*ilhām*), an issue upon which both parties, Sufis and Salafīs, are united. Those of the companions who were involved in disputes with each other did not experience the divine inspiration which would certainly have provided fair solutions to their disagreements, any more than they had daylight visions of the Prophet (which they did not). Thus, ‘Umar Mas‘ūd asks: “Would you deny the possibility of divine inspiration, as you have rejected that of daylight visions of the Prophet, on the basis of *al-adilla al-khamsa*?”⁸³⁷ The same strategy was used against an anonymous opponent by Maḥmūd b. Bensālim, who, when he was asked why the Prophet had not appeared to his companions, replied with an anecdote, reported in a Prophetic account. It tells of a man who wanted to visit one of his brothers who lived far away. On the way there, he was asked the reason for his journey by an angel in the guise of a fellow traveller. The reason the man gave was that he was seeking to gain divine satisfaction by making the visit. Upon hearing this, the angel revealed his true identity and granted him the desired divine satisfaction. Thus Maḥmūd b. Bensālim asks his interlocutor why Allah had not sent this angel to solve the disputes of the companions, upon the demise of the Prophet? Was granting this man divine satisfaction more important in the eye of Allah than extinguishing the fire of discord (*fitna*) among the *umma* of the Prophet?⁸³⁸

‘Umar Mas‘ūd proceeds to highlight many Prophetic traditions and statements by the companions⁸³⁹ which he alleges not only foresaw the occurrence of disputes in the Muslim

⁸³⁶ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Tijānīyya wa-khuṣūmuhum*, p. 33.

⁸³⁷ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Tijānīyya wa-khuṣūmuhum*, p. 33.

⁸³⁸ Maḥmūd b. Bensālim, *al-Tijānīyya bayn l-i‘tiqād wa-l-intiqād*, pp. 124-125.

⁸³⁹ For details on these Prophetic traditions and statements by the companions, see: ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Tijānīyya wa-khuṣūmuhum*, pp. 34-37.

community but also pointed to the righteous party in them. In light of this, he argues that a close investigation of *al-adilla al-khamsa* would enable one to conclude why the Prophet did not appear to solve these disagreements: because the companions had already been informed about what would take place after his demise. Thus, he says, the objection that the Prophet did not appear to the companions automatically loses its relevance. The issue of succession which came to constitute a bone of contention between the *muhājirūn* and the *anṣār* had already been addressed during the life time of the Prophet.⁸⁴⁰ As far as the disagreement between Abū Bakr and Fāṭima over the issue of inheritance was concerned, the Prophet had declared his property to be exempt from the rules of inheritance.⁸⁴¹ In the remaining cases of the struggles for power between the fourth caliph and his challengers, the Prophet is said to have referred to ‘Alī as the man who would follow the true path. Likewise, Ḥudhayfa b. al-Yamān (d. 36/656), a companion who was entrusted with crucial secrets by the Prophet’s, is reported to have urged people to side with ‘Alī during his disputes with ‘Ā’isha, Zubayr and Ṭalḥa.⁸⁴² The dispute between ‘Alī and Mu‘āwiya was also addressed by the Prophet, putting ‘Alī being on the right side of the disputation.⁸⁴³ As for ‘Alī’s dispute with Khawārij, ‘Umar Mas‘ūd argues, one needs no evidence to disqualify the latter: they were the dogs of hellfire (*kilāb al-nār*).⁸⁴⁴

This line of argumentation seems to have been borrowed from his master Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, who had partially developed this strategy in ‘*Ulamā’ tazkiyat al-naḥs* (Masters of the Purification

⁸⁴⁰ One Prophetic account allocated succession to Quraysh (though the authenticity of this account is highly contested), another account refers to Abū Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Alī as each suitable to undertake the burden of government. Ibn ‘Umar claims that during the time of the Prophet the general view was in favour of Abū Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthman’s succession respectively. For further information, see: ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Tijānīyya wa-khuṣūmuhum*, p. 35.

⁸⁴¹ One Prophetic account argues that belongings of the prophets are *ṣadaqa*. The rules of inheritance may not be applied to such property. See ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Tijānīyya wa-khuṣūmuhum*, p. 35.

⁸⁴² No single companion is said to have sided with them. The Prophet is reported to have said this on one occasion (referring to ‘Alī [*al-ḥaqqu ma‘a ḥādhā*]) though it does not necessarily refer to the latter’s struggle with the mother of believers ‘Ā’isha and fellow companions at the battle of Camel.

⁸⁴³ One Prophetic account argues that one of the companions would fight for the sake of the interpretation of Qur’ān (*‘alā tawīl al-Qur’ān*) as the Prophet had fought for the sake of its revelation (*‘alā tanzīlīh*). Upon this Abū Bakr and ‘Umar asked the Prophet whether one of them would be that companion. The Prophet in his reply, described him as the repairer of the sandals while ‘Alī at the moment was repairing sandals. Khuzayma b. Thābit, a companion of the Prophet, is said to have abstained from participating in the battle between ‘Alī and Mu‘āwiya until the saw the death of ‘Ammār b. Yāsir, whose death according to the Prophet was going to occur at the hands of rebels. See: ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Tijānīyya wa-khuṣūmuhum*, p. 36-37.

⁸⁴⁴ The Prophet is reported to have revealed his wish to fight Khawārij if he were to find them. Moreover, the group who would fight them is mentioned as the closest of the two parties to the truth. The Prophet likewise has blessed those who would kill and be killed by Khawārij. See: ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Tijānīyya wa-khuṣūmuhum*, p. 36.

of the Heart), in relation to the issue of the dispute over succession after the Prophet.⁸⁴⁵ While his Sudanese disciple extends the argument to apply to the rest of *al-adilla al-khamsa*, he differentiates himself from his master in his conclusion, as follows: For al-Ḥāfiẓ, daylight encounters with the Prophet do not differ from dream visions, either in form or result. Both reportedly take place when a human being does not have full control over his senses, as while dream visions occur in dream, daylight visions take place in the domain of the spiritual world (*amr ruḥānī barzakhī ba 'īd 'an l-mādda*). The instructions received in both cases should be checked in the light of the *sharī'a*, and only those that conform with the established rules should be put into practice, as they possess no value if they do not.⁸⁴⁶ Such proclamations earned Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ severe criticism from some of his fellow Tijānīs, such as the Sudanese Ibrāhīm Sīdī, for example, for whom this stance on the issue of daylight communication is absolutely unacceptable. He accuses al-Ḥāfiẓ and his disciples of the accommodation of Wahhābī sentiments regarding certain Tijānī tenets, including and especially those concerning the issue at hand.⁸⁴⁷

For his part, 'Umar Mas'ūd holds that some of the companions had indeed had daylight encounters with the Prophet, claiming that the Salafī denial of the possibility of daylight encounters is a negative assertion (*shahāda 'alā l-nafi*), which has no legitimacy in the science of jurisprudence. For textual support, he refers to the example of Ḍamra b. Tha'alaba, one of the Prophet's companions, who, during a battle with unbelievers, saw the image of the Prophet appearing to him, once in the ranks of the Muslims, and once behind the ranks of their enemies.⁸⁴⁸ Although this example clearly constitutes the appearance of an image, rather than a physical appearance, the Sudanese Tijānī treats it as undeniable proof of the possibility of daylight communication with the Prophet. As for the Prophetic tradition mentioned above, for which experts in the sciences of *hadīth* have suggested no less than seven interpretations, it is presented by 'Umar Mas'ūd as the final say on the issue at hand. In it, he says, the word *yaqza* is used as the opposite of the word *manām*, referring to the state of wakefulness. While different interpretations of the word have been proposed by scholars, some arguing in favour of its first meaning (*ḥaqīqa*) and some in favour of a secondary meaning (*majāz*), on the authority of the twelfth-century Ḥanbalī mystic Ibn Qudāma

⁸⁴⁵ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, '*Ulamā' tazkiyat al-nafs*', pp. 23-25.

⁸⁴⁶ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, '*Ulamā' tazkiyat al-nafs*', pp. 26, 30.

⁸⁴⁷ Ibrāhīm Sīdī, *al-Irshādāt al-aḥmadiyya fī shamm rā'iḥat al-khatmiyya wa-l-katmiyya*, p. 29.

⁸⁴⁸ 'Umar Mas'ūd, *al-Tijānīyya wa-khuṣūmuhum*, p. 38. See also Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, '*Ulamā' tazkiyat al-nafs*', p. 27.

al-Maqdisī (d. 620/1223), the Sudanese Tijānī argues that when one has to decide between a word's first and secondary meaning, the former has priority.⁸⁴⁹ He then reiterates his previous appeal⁸⁵⁰ to the order's opponents to accept the first, apparent meaning of that Prophetic tradition, which supports the possibility of daylight encounters. He further rejects all of the other possibilities suggested by experts in the sciences of *ḥadīth*. One of these concerns daylight encounters with the Prophet on the Day of Judgement. Here he evokes the authority of al-Suyūfī, and the twelfth-century Mālikī scholar Qādī Abū Bakr b. al-ʿArabī (d. 543/1148),⁸⁵¹ both of whom hold that Prophetic traditions do not restrict the possibility of having a vision of the Prophet on the Day of Judgement to those who have experienced a dream vision in the world. They both dismiss this notion as showing a preference, without offering any legitimate clue as to why this should be so (*takhṣīṣ bi-lā mukhaṣṣiṣ*). Even those who have lapsed from following in the footsteps of the Prophet, they argue, will have the possibility of seeing him. The same argument is brought forth by the sixteenth-century Shāfīʿī mystic Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (d. 973/1566)⁸⁵² and the thirteenth-century Mālikī scholar Ibn Abī Jamra, both of whom hold that, for those who have experienced a dream vision of the Prophet, that constitutes a Prophetic promise that they will have a daylight encounter with the Prophet in this world.⁸⁵³

ʿUmar Masʿūd's line of argumentation is followed by the Mauritanian Tijānī Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, who quotes extensively from the Sudanese in his response to Dakhīl Allāh on the issue. Salafī reliance on the so-called five pieces of evidence is claimed to have been forcefully dismissed.⁸⁵⁴ Deniers of daylight encounters are reprimanded for ignoring the outward sense (*ḥaqīqa*) of the above-mentioned Prophetic tradition that purportedly validates both dream visions and daylight communications. Leaving aside the apparent meaning to prioritize the secondary one (*majāz*) is

⁸⁴⁹ ʿUmar Masʿūd, *al-Tijānīyya wa-khuṣūmuḥum*, p. 40.

⁸⁵⁰ In his refutation of Al-Ifrīqī, he mentions the same Prophetic tradition and calls upon his opponents to take the apparent connotation of the word as the basis for their practice. For further details, see: ʿUmar Masʿūd, *al-Radd ʿalā l-Ifrīqī*, pp. 24-25.

⁸⁵¹ For an account of his life and writings see the introduction to his book *al-ʿAwāṣim min-l-qawāṣim*, Maḥmūd Maḥdī al-Istanbulī, Muḥib al-Dīn al-Khatīb (eds.), Cairo: Maktaba al-Sunna, 1421/1192, pp. 13-29.

⁸⁵² For an account of the life of Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, see: ʿAbd al-Ḥayy b. Aḥmad al-ʿAkarī al-Dimashqī, *Shadharāt al-dhahab fī akhbār man dhahab*, vol. VIII, ed. ʿAbd al-Qadir al-Arnawṭ and Maḥmūd al-Arnawṭ (eds.), Damascus and Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathīr, 1406/1986, pp. 387-389.

⁸⁵³ For further details, see: ʿUmar Masʿūd, *al-Tijānīyya wa-khuṣūmuḥum*, pp. 41-42.

⁸⁵⁴ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī's response to Dakhīl Allāh on the issue of daylight communications is depended on the stance of ʿUmar Masʿūd's *al-Tijānīyya wa-khuṣūmuḥum*, and on Muḥammad Fall Abba's *Rashq al-sihām*. For his lengthy quotation from *al-Tijānīyya wa-khuṣūmuḥum*, see: Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, pp. 205-213.

claimed to be inconsistent and contradictory.⁸⁵⁵ In addition to this, in a previous treatise meant to be a refutation of Ibn Māyābā, the Mauritanian places strong emphasis on the countless stories and anecdotes of Sufi masters who laid claims to daylight encounters with the Prophet. These reports are presented as legitimate proofs of the issue at stake.⁸⁵⁶

4.2. The Feet on the Necks of Divine Saints

Rivalry and claims of supremacy began among Sufi shaykhs with the appearance of Sufi orders in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries CE. The revered founder of the Qādiriyya ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d. 561/1166)⁸⁵⁷ is reported to have consolidated his high spiritual status by metaphorically placing his foot on the necks of divine saints. In the same vein, the followers of Aḥmad b. Alī al-Rifā‘ī (d. 578/1182),⁸⁵⁸ the eponymous founder of the Rufā‘iyya order, call him “the seal of the saints and the possessor of the attributes of the Prophet Muḥammad”.⁸⁵⁹ These claims are undermined by the supreme master of the Tijāniyya, in order to emphasize his own allegedly lofty status. An idea of his supposed supremacy over other saints can be obtained from a conversation that occurred between Muḥammad al-Ghalī (d. 1244/1828-1829),⁸⁶⁰ one of his immediate disciples, who would later assume the task of proselytizing the order in Hijaz, and al-Ḥājj ‘Umar, when the latter paid al-Ghalī a visit while being in Medina. Al-Ghalī informed al-Ḥājj ‘Umar that he had been once summoned by the supreme leader of the Tijāniyya, upon his arrival, the master pointed out to his feet, claiming that they were upon the necks of divine saints. At this, al-Ghalī wondered whether his master was in a state of sobriety and subsistence (*baqā’*), or annihilation and extinction (*fanā’*). The founding figure of the Tijāniyya, however, informed him that he was in full control of his senses, whereupon al-Ghalī asked him about the similar claim made by al-Jīlānī, (as mentioned above) who for that reason was accepted by many as the occupant of the highest rank in the Sufi hierarchy. The supreme master of the Tijāniyya responded that al-Jīlānī’s

⁸⁵⁵ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 197.

⁸⁵⁶ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī argues on the authority of Ibn Māyābā’s brother Muḥammad al-‘Āqib b. Māyābā that Shaykh Mā’ al-‘Aynayn was constantly accompanied by the Prophet. The Prophet was said to have been so consistently in the company of the shaykh that even when the shaykh was eating, his hand was in the hand of the Prophet, and the same when his disciples were kissing his hand. Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Muntahā sayl al-jārif*, pp. 56-57.

⁸⁵⁷ On his life, spiritual authority, books, and spiritual path see: Jamil Abun-Nasr, *Muslim Communities of Grace*, pp. 86-96.

⁸⁵⁸ For al-Rifā‘ī’s life account, see: Mājid Ḥamīd al-Bayātī, *al-Imām Aḥmad al-Rifā‘ī: Sīratuhu wa-akhbāruhu*, Baghdad: Dār al-Kawthar, 1439/2018; N. Hanif, *Encyclopaedia of Sufis*, pp. 137-141.

⁸⁵⁹ See details in Fritz Meier, “The Mystic Path”, p. 125.

⁸⁶⁰ On the life of Muḥammad al-Ghalī see: Aḥmad Sukayrij, *Kashf al-hijāb*, pp. 262-268

statement was confined to the saints of his own era, whereas his own statement was applicable to all saints, from the time of Adam till the Day of Judgement.⁸⁶¹ This seems to be a corollary of his alleged ascendancy over other saints, as the occupant of the elevated rank of the pole of the poles (*quṭb al-aqtāb*) and the seal of the Muḥammadan sainthood (*khatm al-walāya al-muḥammadiyya*), which rank the Prophet had purportedly bestowed upon him in a daylight encounter. As for his elevated status on the Day of Judgement, by on his own account, no divine saint's would ever approach it, be he one of the ordinary saints, or the higher-ranking poles (*aqtāb*).⁸⁶² From al-Hilālī's viewpoint, such exaggerated claims are nothing but signs of arrogance and cockiness, for which Tijānīs bear the blame; the supreme master of the Tijāniyya himself is spared his criticism. Al-Hilālī's takes the position that it is his followers who have crossed the line and gone so far as to attribute such statements to him. It is not logical, he states, that any such claim would be made by a Sufi saint, let alone by one of the calibre of Aḥmad al-Tijānī:

Isn't it contempt, and an insult? How can it be due to a Sufī [a reference to al-Tijānī] who has fought his lower soul, succeeding to discipline it until it found its way to God, or so he thinks, and has been purified from all lameness, stains and dirt, to step upon the people's necks with his feet? We were used to Sufis, for example the Shādhilīs, who would define themselves as the soil beneath the feet of the peoples of Allah. Then came the Tijānīs, with a totally opposite claim. Was it not enough for them to assert that their master was the seal of Muhammadan sainthood, the leader of the cognizant and their sustainer, that they had to lay all the righteous divine saints in front of him, for him to step on their necks with his feet? By God, whom there is no deity apart from, how far the arrogance of his followers took them.⁸⁶³

Such a claim, from al-Hilālī's perspective, not only contradicts the Qur'ān's injunctions but also is irreconcilable with the early Muslim tradition. The holy Qur'ān accentuates the fact that Paradise will be granted only to those who are humble, and do not desire exaltedness over others.⁸⁶⁴ Ibn Mulayke (d. 117/735), a highly esteemed follower of the companions (*tābi 'ī*) and responsible for narration of numerous Prophetic traditions, is said to have met thirty of the Prophet's companions all of whom feared that they may have been guilty of some act of hypocrisy (*nifāq*). Ḥasan al-Baṣrī

⁸⁶¹ For the conversation between Muḥammad al-Ghālī and al-Tijānī, see: 'Umar al-Fūṭī, *Rimāh ḥizb al-Raḥīm*, vol. II, pp. 14-15; Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijāniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, pp. 38-39.

⁸⁶² 'Umar al-Fūṭī, *Rimāh ḥizb al-Raḥīm*, vol. II, p. 29; 'Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma'ānī*, vol. II, p. 176.

⁸⁶³ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 57.

⁸⁶⁴ Al-Qasas/83.

(d. 110/728), another *tābi* ‘ī and the revered master of Basra, is reported to have said that only a believer fears *nifāq*, and only a hypocrite would not fear it. These were clear examples, for the Moroccan Salafī, of the fact that these pious predecessors were humble people. They used to question their own souls, carrying in their chests an immense fear of hypocrisy; whereas Tijānīs are firmly convinced that they are the beloved friends of God, who will be granted Paradise without undergoing any reckoning or punishment. Even the less humble and less decent among the Muslims, the Moroccan states, would not agree to put their feet upon the *feet* of their fellow Muslims, let alone their necks.⁸⁶⁵

The possibility of a similar statement having been uttered by al-Jīlānī is dismissed by al-Hilālī. How could a Ḥanbalī scholar of pure faith, an expert in the science of *ḥadīth* and jurisprudence and one of the elite among divine saints, have uttered such nonsense?⁸⁶⁶ Furthermore, the account of his life that appears in the biographical dictionary covering Ḥanbalī scholars, *Ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila* (History of the Hanbalites), neither contains the above-mentioned statement, nor any indication of his having harboured a sense of his own superiority over other people. Even if, for the sake of the argument, it is supposed that he did perceive himself superior to other saints, he was not infallible, and any such claim is null and void. The only person whose statements are exempt from subjection to scrutiny and are to be accepted unconditionally is the Prophet himself, states al-Hilālī; the statements of all others must abide by the *sharī‘a*.⁸⁶⁷

Tijānīs may be seen to have gone to great pains to defend the lofty claims of their master. The exculpation of al-Jīlānī by al-Hilālī on the authority of *Ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila* is severely criticized by Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, who accuses his opponent of ill behaviour, founded in sectarian politics. Al-Hilālī’s disavowal of the founding figure of the Qādiriyya, due to the latter’s affiliation to Ḥanbalī legal school, is designated as a clear indication of al-Hilālī’s bias against other legal schools—let alone the fact that *Ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila* still contains the statement in question by al-Jīlānī.⁸⁶⁸ The Moroccan is thus accused of distorting facts that are contained in a published source. Starting the

⁸⁶⁵ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 57.

⁸⁶⁶ Respect for the higher learning of al-Jīlānī is widespread in Salafī circles. Even Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, the founder of the Wahhābiyya movement, exempted him from any kind of criticism and instead directed the arrow of his criticism toward others, for their excessive veneration of him. See: Esther Peskes, “The Wahhābiyya and Sufism in the Eighteenth Century”, p. 151.

⁸⁶⁷ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 58.

⁸⁶⁸ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 242.

discussion with this point is a strategic move by Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, as the attention of the readers (most likely the Tijānī readers) is thus directed to the point at which the scholarship of his Moroccan opponent is shown to lack reliability—and therefore to the fact that his critique should not be taken seriously. “Neither shame (*ḥayā*) nor faith (*imān*) could hold him back from lying about the contents of a published book”.⁸⁶⁹ Such is all that the Mauritanian Tijānī has to offer to his readership; he skilfully avoids addressing the core of the criticism, raised by many others apart from the Moroccan Salafī. This has to do with his firm conviction of the spiritual status of Aḥmad al-Tijānī as being at the top of the Sufī hierarchy, the overt reiteration of which could have proved counterproductive, attracting further critique at a time when some of his fellow Tijānīs were trying very hard to find a logical, and, perhaps, convincing interpretation for this statement that elevates the status of their own master at the expense of undermining the spiritual status of the supreme master of the Qādiriyya.

Prior to the Mauritanian’s attempt, other proponents of the Tijāniyya had suggested a metaphorical reading of the statement. The great Moroccan polemicist of the first half of the twentieth century Aḥmad Sukayrij had argued in one of his polemical writings, *al-Imān al-ṣaḥīḥ*,⁸⁷⁰ that the term *qadamāya* (my two feet) used in the statement was either a reference to *sharī‘a* and *ḥaqīqa* (lit., truth, reality; here a reference to the Sufī spiritual path) or to *khatmiyya* and *katmiyya* (two exclusive spiritual distinctions claimed by the supreme master of the Tijāniyya which mean that he was the hidden and the most meritorious saint of all times), rather than his own actual feet.⁸⁷¹ Sukayrij preferred other interpretations as well. In another polemical writing, *al-Ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*,⁸⁷² he asserted that the statement in question was either uttered by the Prophet himself, and if so then Aḥmad al-Tijānī had acted only as a means through which the Prophet had spoken; or, that the term *qadamāya* was a reference to *ḥaḍra muḥammadiyya* and *ḥaḍra aḥmadiyya*, two merits that are preserved for the Tijānī master in the hereafter. In the latter case, the statement

⁸⁶⁹ The doctrine of the Tijāniyya holds one’s affiliation to the brotherhood to be a promise that must be kept, any breach of which would invite severe punishment, both here and in the hereafter. See Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ṣaghīr, *Jaysh al-kafīl*, p. 135.

⁸⁷⁰ This book was written in refutation of Ibn Bādīs, an opponent of the Tijānīs from Algeria. For details, see chapter one.

⁸⁷¹ He asserts this to be the case since the founding figure of the brotherhood did not say *rijlāya*, which refers to actual, physical feet, but had rather preferred to say *qadamāya*, a reference, he says, to either *sharī‘a* and *ḥaqīqa*, or to *khatmiyya* and *katmiyya*. See details in Aḥmad Sukayrij, *al-Iman al-ṣaḥīḥ*, p. 94.

⁸⁷² This three-volume book was written in response to the Egyptian Makhluḥ’s attack on the brotherhood. For further information, see chapter one.

should be perceived as an ecstatic utterance which was pronounced in a moment of joy, in which he saw the merits that were to be bestowed on him in the hereafter.⁸⁷³ For Sukayrij's Egyptian contemporary Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, the term mentioned by the supreme master, was a simultaneous reference to his own spiritual way and status, and to the Tijāniyya and its merits. Thus, not only was his *ṭarīqa*, the Tijāniyya, with all of its divine merits, a respectable brotherhood for all Sufi saints, but he himself was also the occupant of the highest rank, above all other saints.⁸⁷⁴ These metaphorical and semi-metaphorical readings were apparently known to Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, who nonetheless, did not refer to any of them. This in itself could be interpreted as indicative of his disagreement with such metaphorical readings of the statement in question.

Maḥmūd b. Bensālim, a Moroccan great-grandson of the Tijāniyya's founding figure, prefers to read the term "feet" as meaning *sharī'a* and *ṭarīqa*: from his perspective, the supreme master had referred to nothing else but these, whose resemblance to feet he claims to lie in the fact of their taking one to one's destination. Just as feet are assets of mobility, without which one's arrival at one's destination is impossible, one's arrival at divine reality is not possible without *ḥaqīqa* and *sharī'a*. To make his argument convincing, he even denies the occurrence of the word of *hātān* (these two, a reference to the physical feet) which appears in the statement immediately after the word *qadamāya*. In his version of the statement, rather than his actual, physical feet, Aḥmad al-Tijānī had placed his *metaphorical* feet upon the necks of divine saints. He would have formulated his statement in a much more clear and comprehensible manner, says his great-grandson, if he had known that it would be misread after his death.⁸⁷⁵ His great-grandson also puts a tremendous amount of blame on those of his fellow Tijānīs who had committed the mistake of spreading such statements by the founder among the wider public, claiming that they were meant to be for the elites; such Tijānīs had failed to foresee the dangerous repercussions entailed in disclosing them to ordinary people.⁸⁷⁶ This reading of the statement in question seems to be something of a distortion of the narrative as reported by 'Alī Ḥarāzīm, who records that when Aḥmad al-Tijānī

⁸⁷³ Aḥmad Sukayrij, *al-Ṣirāt al-mustaqīm*, p. 668.

⁸⁷⁴ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, *'Ulamā' tazkiyat al-naḥs*, p. 15.

⁸⁷⁵ Maḥmūd b. Bensālim, *al-Tijāniyya bayn l-i'tiqād wa-l-intiqād*, p. 140. Other Tijānī sources explicitly report that the supreme master had indeed said that "these two feet of mine [meaning his actual feet] are upon the neck of each divine saint until the Day of Judgement"; the author of *Rimāḥ* even mentions this statement twice. See: 'Umar al-Fūṭī, *Rimāḥ ḥizb al-Raḥīm*, vol. II, pp. 15, 16. For further clarification see also: Muḥammad al-Ṭayyib al-Sufyānī, *al-Ifāda al-aḥmadiyya*, p. 130.

⁸⁷⁶ See details in Maḥmūd b. Bensālim, *al-Tijāniyya bayn al-i'tiqād wa al-intiqād*, pp. 140-144.

was asked by his confidant Muḥammad al-Ghalī whether he had meant what he had just said (regarding his own supremacy over all other divine saints), or whether it was a mere ecstatic utterance, uttered in a state of ecstasy and absorption, the supreme master of the brotherhood replied that he was fully sober and had meant what he had said. This part of the narrative has been wholly ignored in Maḥmūd b. Bensālim's treatment of the issue. Apart from this fact, his account also implies that the Tijānī master had failed to phrase his intended meaning in a comprehensible manner, which is what had led to misreadings by Tijānīs and their opponents alike. He thus directs a tacit accusation of a lack of knowledge at the overwhelming majority of his fellow Tijānīs, including the likes of Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, the author of *Shams al-Dalīl*, who insist on the exoteric reading of such statements, and perceive any search for their esoteric meanings as a serious blow to the alleged supremacy of their supreme master.

4.3. The Illuminated Pole (*Quṭb*) and the Unilluminated Companion

Another matter with which the Moroccan Salafī takes issue is a conversation which took place between the founding figure of the Tijāniyya and his confidant 'Alī Ḥarāzīm comparing the status of one of the Prophet's companions, who was yet to acquire spiritual illumination (*al-ṣahābī alladhī lam yuṣṭaḥ 'alayh*), with that of a Sufī *quṭb* (pole) who had attained spiritual illumination. 'Alī Ḥarāzīm, who documented the discussion, apparently did not know which one of them was superior, so he had recourse to the opinion of his master. Sufis, responded Aḥmad al-Tijānī, were divided over this issue: some held the unilluminated companion to be superior to the pole and some believed the opposite to be the case. His personal opinion was that the unilluminated companion was superior. Since the superiority of the companions was grounded in Prophetic traditions, he said, their supremacy over all of the spiritual elite except for divinely selected messengers and prophets, should be admitted. Furthermore, he said, the Prophet had warned Muslims not to use abusive language against his companions. The people of later generations, could not reach half of the companions' spiritual degree, even if they were to give, in charity, an amount of gold as big as Mount Uhud. In addition to this, the master said, the generation of the companions takes its place among the first three generations of the Muslim *umma*, that is, the generation of the Prophet and his companions, followed by the generation of their followers

(*tābi 'ūn*), and the generation of the followers of the followers and (*tābi 'ū al-tābi 'īn*), declared by the Prophet to be *khayr al-qurūn* (the best of the generations).⁸⁷⁷

From al-Hilālī's point of view, the whole conversation was nonsense. Not only did he qualify the question as such as *fāsid* (corrupt and decayed), but the answer as *afsad minhā* (even more corrupt and more decayed). The conversation, he says, is indicative of the Sufi mindset which would dare to compare ordinary people with the towering companions of the Prophet. How could the companions, who fought for the cause of the Prophet and supported him unconditionally, have failed to acquire a level of illumination which ordinary people like Sufis would claim for themselves? "What really is this illumination of which the companions are deprived and another has attained?"⁸⁷⁸ asks the Moroccan, when the holy Qur'ān promises the companions the best of rewards in the hereafter.⁸⁷⁹ For him, this discussion promotes two execrable convictions: a) that of the ability of a Sufi saint to achieve spiritual illumination, even though neither his own status and stature, *nor* his generation could come anywhere close to those of the companions'; b) that of the inability of a companion to achieve this illumination, despite the fact that his superiority over Sufi saints is beyond question. Not only is his reward in the hereafter embedded in the holy scriptures, but his generation is also glorified by none other than the Prophet himself. The following is an excerpt:

The conviction that a companion... may not acquire spiritual illumination which a *qutb* might be bestowed with, in the era after that of the companions...an era condemned by the Prophet, who does not speak from his own inclination, is itself defamation of the companions and an insult to them. I wonder what this illumination might be? If it is the knowledge of God, attaining the lofty ranks of worshipping God in due manner (*ihsān*)⁸⁸⁰ and the sublime stations of observation (*murāqaba*), then how can one reconcile such a statement with the issue of respect to companions[?]⁸⁸¹

⁸⁷⁷ For a detailed account of the conversation that took place between 'Alī Harāzīm and his beloved master al-Tijānī, see: 'Alī Harāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma'ānī*, vol. II, p. 158; 'Umar al-Fūtī, *Rimāḥ ḥizb al-Raḥīm*, vol. II, p. 10.

⁸⁷⁸ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, pp. 58-59.

⁸⁷⁹ Al-Hadīd 57:10.

⁸⁸⁰ The notion of *ihsān* is explained by the Prophet in the *hadīth* of Gabriel which contains a detailed treatment of the notions of *imān* and Islam as well. *Ihsān* is declared by the Prophet as to "worship God as if you see Him, for even if you do not see Him, He sees you". For the *hadīth* of Gabriel, see: Sachiko Murata and William C. Chittick, *The Vision of Islam*, New York: Paragon House, 1994, pp.18-20.

⁸⁸¹ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 59.

The very possibility of the existence of a form of divine spiritual illumination out of reach of the companions is unacceptable for Muslims, says al-Hilālī. From the Moroccan’s perspective, any such illumination could be nothing but satanic inspiration, delusion and deviation from the true path of Islam, with serious consequences: only heretics could believe it. The author of *al-Hadiyya* thus thanks God that he has relinquished his former ties with a brotherhood that subjugates its followers to the entertainment of such absurd convictions. For him, the following line of poetry, best defines the situation in which followers of the Tijāniyya find themselves: “These are affairs which fools laugh over; and the wise one cries over the consequences”.⁸⁸²

The Mauritanian Tijānī Aḥmad b. al-Hādī’s response to this critique of al-Hilālī’s is a short but well-organized one. In it, he differentiates between the issue of superiority and the issue of illumination, claiming that the latter does not necessarily entail the former. It is a well-known fact, he argues, that each of the companions had displayed a different level of knowledge in legal issues. Only some of them were known experts in legal matters (*fuqahā*’), thus their narrations and opinions on such matters are given preference over those of non-*fuqahā*’ companions. Likewise, the founding figures of the legal schools of jurisprudence were much more advanced in their knowledge of legal matters in comparison with the majority of the companions, yet no one would tie this fact to the issue of their relative superiority. The Moroccan Salafī is thus condemned for considering the spiritual illumination of a divinely elected saint to be identical with his superiority over an unilluminated companion. He is further asked to provide evidence of the alleged absurdity of the conversation that took place between ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm and his beloved master. For the Mauritanian Tijānī, it was ignorance that had sealed the eyes of al-Hilālī who had defined the question asked by ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm as *fāsīd*, and the response provided by the supreme master of the Tijāniyya as *afsad*.⁸⁸³

Here it should be noted that, whereas the objection raised by the Moroccan is grounded in the context of spiritual illumination—here depicted as *fath*, a distinction Sufis often claim to be beyond one’s personal endeavour, and by whom it is perceived solely as an indication of God’s grace and an essential mark of the supremacy of its holders over others—the refutation provided by the Mauritanian is advanced in the context of discursive knowledge, obtained as a result of personal

⁸⁸² Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiyya*, p. 59.

⁸⁸³ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 243.

endeavour and private enterprise. The Moroccan's objection, in other words, hinges on the question of how a saint, who is obviously inferior to a companion in status and stature, *could* be endowed with spiritual illumination, if that is to be defined in terms of divine knowledge (*ma'rifat Allāh*), and the stages of righteousness (*marātib al-iḥsān*)? There is certainly no indication whatsoever that he denies either that different levels of legal knowledge had existed among the companions, or that a plethora of discursive knowledge had been accumulated by certain experts in legal matters, compared to that held by some of the companions. But, even though the Mauritanian is perfectly aware of the nature of his opponent's critique and the context in which it has been realised, he nevertheless guides the attention of the reader to a whole different issue, in a subtle shift from a mystical context to a discursive one which enables him to provide a seemingly reasonable reply to his adversary.

4.4. The Tijāniyya, the Sufi Denominations and the Issue of Supremacy

In the early history of Islamic mysticism, each Sufi novice possessed the freedom to transition from one Sufi denomination to another, and/or to become affiliated to as many as he would wished to. The Egyptian Shādhilī Sufi 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha'rānī (d. 973/1565),⁸⁸⁴ for instance, is said to have gained affiliation to no less than twenty-six orders.⁸⁸⁵ The situation had changed, however, as increasing competition between orders arose in the following centuries. Sidi al-Mukhtār al-Kuntī, the eminent Qādirī intellectual of the eighteenth century, is quoted to have said that while the Qādirī litany (*wird*) could replace other litanies, no other *wird* could replace it. His contemporary, the Qādirī and also the founder of the Sokoto Caliphate 'Uthman b. Fūdī (d. 1232/1817), better known as Usman dan Fodio, had forbidden his followers to leave that brotherhood and join others.⁸⁸⁶ As for the founder of the Tijāniyya, Aḥmad al-Tijānī, who had himself been a member of quite a few Sufi denominations prior to the establishment of his own one, went a step further and forbade the denunciation of his order in favour of others, declaring it to be a cause of divine wrath and subsequent punishment. This assertion seems to be a natural

⁸⁸⁴ For an account of the life of 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha'rānī, his writings and thoughts, see; Tawfīq al-Ṭawīl, *Al-Sha'rānī: imām al-taṣawwufī 'aṣrihi*, Cairo: Dār Iḥyā al-Kutub al-'Arabiyya, n.d; Ṭahā 'Abd al-Bāqī Surūr, *al-Taṣawwuf al-islāmī wa-l-imām al-Sha'rānī*, Cairo: Dār Nahḍa Maṣr, 1969.

⁸⁸⁵ Another thirteenth-century Persian Sufi is claimed to have collected a hundred and twenty-six patched frocks (signifying affiliation with different Sufi orders), a hundred and thirteen of which were still among his belongings at his death. See: Fritz Meier, *The Sufi Path*, p. 124.

⁸⁸⁶ Muhammad Sani Umar, *Sufism and its Opponents in Nigeria: the Doctrinal and Intellectual Aspects*, pp. 361-363.

correlate of his claim to be the seal of the saints, and a clear declaration of the perceived supremacy of his brotherhood over other Sufi denominations. In the same way in which the religion of Islam had abrogated other divine religions, the Tijāniyya, from his point of view, had already abrogated all other Sufi orders, whereas none of them would ever be able to abrogate the Tijāniyya.⁸⁸⁷ As a result, he declared that any who denounced his previous brotherhood in favour of the Tijāniyya would be guarded against any type of malignity and wickedness he might fear from his previous master, be he dead or alive. Likewise, he would also be guarded against any punishment by the Prophet, and should have no fear of divine punishment either. On the other hand, he said, if, after having received the Tijānī litanies, a Tijānī disciple were to cut his ties and affiliate himself with another Sufi denomination, misfortunes would befall him in the here and the hereafter, and he would never succeed.⁸⁸⁸ According to al-Hājj ‘Umar, the great Tijānī warrior of West Africa, this power of immunity and abrogation belonging to the Tijāniyya, stems precisely from the lofty status of the founding figure of the order as a sustainer and provider of spiritual sustenance to other divine saints. Thus, for a Tijānī disciple to relinquish ties with the source of sustenance (*mumidd*, a reference to Aḥmad al-Tijānī) for ties with he who receives sustenance (*mustamidd*, a reference to other saints) is blameworthy, unlike in the reverse scenario.⁸⁸⁹ Al-Hājj ‘Umar’s North African contemporary Ibn al-Sā’ih, the author of the influential *Bughyat al-mustafīd*, goes so far as to argue that denunciation of the brotherhood is tantamount to denunciation of the Prophet, since it was the Prophet who had assigned the Tijāniyya to its supreme leader.⁸⁹⁰

Al-Hilālī takes this conviction as a clear sign of deviation from the true path, evidencing the production of innovations in the religion of Islam. From his point of view, there are many problematic issues here. The claimed abrogation of other Sufi denominations by the Tijāniyya not only defames those other orders but also constitutes an unjustified claim of superiority on the part of the Tijānīs. Furthermore, he states, the elaboration of this conviction indicates that the Tijānīs

⁸⁸⁷ In fact, the author of *Rimāh* even claims that no further Sufi denomination (*tarīqa*) will ever be established after the Tijāniyya. Towards the end of the time, he states, all Sufi brotherhoods are expected to join the Tijāniyya; it is claimed that even the expected Mahdī will become affiliated to it. ‘Umar al-Fūtī, *Rimāh hizb al-Raḥīm*, vol. II, p. 146. See also, al-‘Arabī b. al-Sā’ih *Bughyat al-mustafīd*, p. 82. The conviction that no further Sufi denominations will appear after the Tijāniyya has been ignored by later Tijānī authors, due to its unsustainability. See Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijāniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, p. 33.

⁸⁸⁸ ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*, vol. I, pp. 123-24; ‘Umar al-Fūtī, *Rimāh hizb al-Raḥīm*, vol. II, pp.16,146; al-‘Arabī b. al-Sā’ih, *Bughyat al-mustafīd*, p. 82; Muḥammad al-Ṭayyib al-Sufyānī, *al-Ifāda al-aḥmadiyya*, p. 98.

⁸⁸⁹ ‘Umar al-Fūtī, *Rimāh hizb al-Raḥīm*, vol. II, p.16.

⁸⁹⁰ Al-‘Arabī b. al-Sā’ih, *Bughyat al-mustafīd*, p. 82.

firmly believe in the Prophet’s ability to bring one benefit or harm, a divine prerogative which should not be attributed to anyone other than God: The holy Qur’ān, during its transmission, had negated the notion that any such distinction belonged to the Prophet and ordered him to let the public know that he was no more than a mere messenger,⁸⁹¹ whose mission consisted of warning people of divine wrath (*nadhīr*), and delivering good tidings to believers (*bashīr*). As such, asserts the Moroccan, “fearing him [the Prophet] makes no sense. He who [has] denounced the Tijāniyya, does not need to fear him, for the Prophet neither affiliated him to the Tijāniyya nor obliged him to stay faithful to it”.⁸⁹² The same applies to the master who is “betrayed” by his disciple’s conversion to the Tijāniyya: regardless of his being alive or dead, he possesses no command over beneficence and evil. Thus, he is neither capable of harming his previous disciple, as neither is the master of the Tijāniyya, and nor it would behove him to do so. He states: “it is not due to a Sufi shaykh who invites people to [join] an innovative and misguiding order to punish them and get his revenge when they leave his denomination and turn in repentance to Allah [even should we perceive that] the Sufi master is capable of punishment and revenge”.⁸⁹³

As far as the fear of divine retribution in the case of one’s denouncing the Tijāniyya is concerned, the Moroccan states that entertaining such a conviction “is an effrontery against Allah. From where did the Tijānīs get this? From the Qur’ān or the Sunna? Or it is a revelation on the part of Satan?”⁸⁹⁴ In the section that follows, he draws a comparison between affiliating oneself to Sufi denominations and committing cardinal sins, claiming that following any brotherhood is worse than breaching religious commands. The sinner at least fears Allah, he says, for he is aware of the consequences of the transgression he has committed, unlike one who has committed reprehensible innovation, who is unaware of the consequences of the same. The Moroccan Salafī wonders how the Tijānīs came to know that denouncing their brotherhood would cause calamities in both worlds. On the contrary, he argues, their denomination itself is a religious innovation, consisting of serious deviations and intrusions, some of which even amount to disbelief.⁸⁹⁵

⁸⁹¹ Al-A‘rāf 7:188.

⁸⁹² Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 64.

⁸⁹³ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 64.

⁸⁹⁴ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 64.

⁸⁹⁵ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 64. In considering Sufi brotherhoods as innovation al-Hilālī’s argument is in line with that of the Al-Ifriqī, who likewise dismissed all Sufi denominations as blameworthy and reprehensible innovations. See for details the relevant section in discussion of *al-Anwār al-raḥmāniyya* above.

It has never been easy for protagonists of the Tijāniyya to address this issue of the abrogation of other Sufi denominations by their brotherhood. It is for this reason that Aḥmad b. al-Hādī points to his opponent's argument in a vague manner, making it very hard for the reader to differentiate between the objection raised and the response provided.⁸⁹⁶ Without being familiar with *al-Hadiyya* by al-Hilālī, the reader cannot really understand what the Moroccan Salafī has objected to, and what the Mauritanian Tijānī is attempting to refute. The latter avoids the issue of abrogation and the consequent injustice, calling the Moroccan's objection a claim without substance. By contrast, his Egyptian predecessor Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, one of the leading defenders of the Tijāniyya in the twentieth century, instead suggested a metaphorical interpretation of the statement in question, made by the founder of the brotherhood, whose intention in making the statement, he says, was to emphasize the completeness and perfection of the Tijāniyya in comparison to other Sufi denominations, rather than claim its actual abrogation of them—this because it was initiated by the Prophet himself, and therefore included the spiritual values of all other brotherhoods.⁸⁹⁷

Notwithstanding the inclination of Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ to find metaphorical justifications for the problematic statements in Tijānī sources, he has little to say on the threat of divine retribution for the disciple who leaves the brotherhood for another denomination. For him, doing so, means one is withdrawing from a covenant made with God, in itself sufficient reason for divine punishment.⁸⁹⁸ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, offers a few additional justifications: from his perspective, quitting the Tijāniyya amounts to breeding animosity towards the supreme master of the brotherhood. Thus, he asks: “Why would Allah not punish he who breeds animosity towards one, who called people to piety and devotion, *istighfār* and *ṣalāt ‘alā l-nabiyy?*”⁸⁹⁹ Affiliation to the Tijāniyya reportedly truly means a life time covenant, a breach of which invokes calamities in both the here and the hereafter; such an act of irredeemable damage that may be compensated for only through one's reaffiliation or divine mercy.⁹⁰⁰ This argument may seem illogical and even absurd to outsiders, who may not see the link between quitting the brotherhood and breeding animosity

⁸⁹⁶ This strategy is best displayed in Aḥmad b. al-Hādī's *Muntahā sayl al-jārif min tanāquzāt mushtahā al-khārif*, a refutation to Ibn Mayābā's well-known criticism of the Tijāniyya *Mushtahā al-khārif*. On many occasions, the author of *Muntahā sayl al-jārif* seems to have deliberately mixed his own arguments with quotations from Ibn Mayābā, which makes it extremely difficult for the reader to trace the argument and determine its owner.

⁸⁹⁷ See for details: Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *I'lān al-ḥujja 'alā a'dā al-ṭarīqa*, pp. 80-82.

⁸⁹⁸ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *I'lān al-ḥujja 'alā a'dā al-ṭarīqa*, p. 84.

⁸⁹⁹ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 245.

⁹⁰⁰ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 246.

towards its founder, and further wonder why breeding animosity toward a human being should inevitably result in divine retribution. But for insiders, it has an inner logic that is that rejection of the supreme master is, by extension, the rejection of the Prophet himself, as the only spiritual master of Ahmad al-Tijānī. In what follows, the Mauritanian, surprisingly, accuses his adversary of having defined the founding figure of the Tijāniyya as being of a malevolent and vengeful nature.⁹⁰¹ In fact, however, a thorough examination of the argument developed by the Moroccan reveals the opposite: the supreme master of the brotherhood is neither accused of malevolency, nor may even a tiny hint of disrespect be found in his argument. On the contrary, as we have seen earlier, the founding figure of the Tijāniyya is not only repeatedly praised as *shaykh*⁹⁰² (lit. master, a title of respect) by al-Hilālī, but also his followers are also called upon to abstain from making unsustainable claims which are detrimental to his scholarly and spiritual reputation.⁹⁰³

4.5. *Sab ' al-Mathānī* and the Divine Sciences

Tijānī sources are filled with statements made by the founding figure of brotherhood regarding his purportedly unique and unmatched high spiritual status. He is reported to have claimed, on the authority of a daylight encounter with the Prophet, that the latter had bestowed him with sciences which, besides the two of them, only God knew.⁹⁰⁴ On another occasion he is even said to have claimed that God Himself had given him *sab ' al-mathānī*,⁹⁰⁵ along with sciences to which only the prophets were entitled.⁹⁰⁶ While Tijānīs accept these claims based on the trust they have in their master, non-Tijānī Muslims find them hard to believe.

Al-Hilālī raises a number of objections touching upon various aspects of the issue at hand. The first claim, he states, entails that some of the sciences that the Prophet had received from God, were kept hidden during his lifetime, and even from the rightly guided caliphs, and up until his alleged communications with the Tijānī master in the twelfth century AH. This conflicts with the divine instructions in the holy Qur'ān which strictly prohibited the concealment of the revelations,

⁹⁰¹ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 245.

⁹⁰² Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, pp. 38, 61.

⁹⁰³ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 101.

⁹⁰⁴ 'Umar al-Fūtī, *Rimāḥ ḥizb al-Raḥīm*, vol, II, p. 14.

⁹⁰⁵ *Sab ' al-mathānī* according to Muslims refer to the opening chapter of the Qur'ān (*al-fātiḥa*). As a matter of fact, it is one among numerous names of the *al-fātiḥa*.

⁹⁰⁶ 'Umar al-Fūtī, *Rimāḥ ḥizb al-Raḥīm*, vol, II, p. 28.

requiring the Prophet to make a complete and punctual delivery.⁹⁰⁷ The interpretation of this command contained in *Tafsīr al-jalālayn*, one of the prestigious commentaries on the Qurʾān that was composed in fifteenth century, argues that the Prophet was obliged to perform the complete delivery of the knowledge he had received, without the option of withholding any of it. For al-Hilālī, this Tijānī tenet contains a further problematic aspect: if the purported Tijānī sciences were of any significance and benefit for Muslims, how could the Prophet deprive the *umma* (the universal Muslim nation) of them for centuries until his encounters with the Tijānī master? The Prophet had certainly achieved his divine mission by delivering to the *umma* all that was of a beneficial nature and warning against that which was malignant in nature, holds the Moroccan. A Prophetic tradition documented by al-Bukhārī, is further quoted to support this argument—as asserted by ʿĀʾisha, the beloved wife of the Prophet and mother of the believers: “Whoever tells you that the Prophet concealed anything of what Allah sent down upon him, he is a liar”. The Moroccan therefore challenges his Tijānī opponents to reveal the sciences in question, if their claims are to be taken seriously. The following is an excerpt:

One may ask what are these sciences with which the Prophet singled out Ahmad al-Tijānī? Did the shaykh teach them to his disciples and followers, or did he keep them undisclosed? If he did disclose them, then you should explain them to us as well. If he did not, then what is the benefit of such sciences? As the Prophet once said: “O my lord! I seek refuge with you... from useless knowledge.”⁹⁰⁸

In the following section, the author of *al-Hadiyya* points to another problematic aspect of the issue. If the divine sciences revealed to the Tijānī master with *sabʿ al-mathānī* were of a beneficial nature, he must have disclosed them to his followers as well, for in that case to do so would be a religious obligation. Thus, if the proponents of the brotherhood were to claim the opposite (that is that he had not), they would be invoking divine retribution upon their master, since the concealment of beneficial sciences constitutes an evil act which deserves bitter punishment. The holy Qurʾān places a divine curse, together with that of the angels and the whole of mankind, on the concealer of the beneficial knowledge.⁹⁰⁹ The Prophet had determined that the kind of punishment the concealer deserves is to be bridled with fire, on the Day of Judgement, as retribution for hiding his

⁹⁰⁷ Al-Māʾida 5:67.

⁹⁰⁸ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 61.

⁹⁰⁹ Al-Baqara 2:159.

knowledge.⁹¹⁰ On the other hand, states the Moroccan, if the sciences claimed to have been bestowed on the supreme master of the Tijāniyya, were either malignant or neutral in nature, the Tijānīs should indeed keep quiet, since the concealment of such sciences would be much more useful than their revelation.⁹¹¹

In their refutation of such critique, protagonists of the brotherhood have often referred to the cases of Abū Hurayra and Ḥudhayfa b. al-Yamān, two of the companions who were believed to have been entrusted with secrets and a certain amount of special knowledge by the Prophet. According to the Moroccan Salafī, however, neither of these two cases, constitute legitimate evidence for the Tijānīs' convictions. Ḥudhayfa, who was entrusted with the names of the hypocrites (*munāfiqīn*) living within the Muslim community of Medina, was supposed to keep this knowledge undisclosed, for special reasons. Nonetheless, prior to his death, he had disclosed it to some of the elites among the Muslim community, as may be seen in a conversation he is reported to have had with 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. When the latter asked whether his name was on the list or not, Ḥudhayfa responded in the negative. As for as Abū Hurayra, he was entrusted with information relating to unpleasant events (*fītan*) that were going to occur after the death of the Prophet. Based on his own statements, he was entrusted with two categories of knowledge. The disclosure of one of these categories of knowledge was unproblematic, and he did disclose it, while, due to possible life-threatening dangers, he largely remained silent about the other category—most of the time. Sporadic hints provided by him nonetheless prove that he, too, did reveal his knowledge, at least to the elite of the society.⁹¹²

Aḥmad b. al-Hādī offers a rather short and partial treatment of the issue in response. He has no doubt regarding the legitimacy of the claims made by his master: divine saints are, no doubt, bestowed with special knowledge; as a kind of light placed in the heart, he states, as explained by Imām Mālik, the celebrated founder of the Mālikī legal school. Furthermore, they do not have to

⁹¹⁰ Ibn Mayābā mentions a number of Prophetic traditions which warns against concealment of knowledge and mentions the severe punishment of concealment. See: Ibn Mayābā, *Mushtahā al-khārif al-jānī*, pp. 14-15.

⁹¹¹ For details, see: *al-Hilālī, al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 72.

⁹¹² Abu Hurayra is reported to have sought refuge with Allah from seeing the community being ruled by children and likewise from seeing the decade of sixties AH (*a'ūdhu billāhi min hudūd al-sittīn wa-amarāt al-ṣibyān*). This invocation is often understood as the period of Yazīd b. Mu'āwiya. For al-Hilālī they are sufficient hints of the fact that Abu Hurayra did indeed reveal his knowledge to some among the elite of the community. See: al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 62. See also: Ibn Mayābā, *Mushtahā al-khārif al-jānī*, pp. 27-28.

disclose it to the public. Thus, the argument that the concealment of knowledge causes one detrimental consequences in the hereafter is dismissed by the Mauritanian as “new religion”, unknown to the scholars of the Muslim *umma*. For textual evidence, he quotes a statement of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib’s, who, pointing to his bosom, had declaimed: “Here is a trove of sciences, I wish I could find someone with the ability to bear it”.⁹¹³ For the Mauritanian, this statement serves as decisive proof that the fourth caliph of Islam did not disclose all his knowledge. In light of this, al-Hilālī’s objection to concealment is made to look like an objection to the conduct of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib as well. Thorough scrutiny of the issue, however, reveals that the Mauritanian had completely ignored the fact that the statement of the fourth caliph in fact hints at his search for someone to whom he could transmit his knowledge; no indication whatsoever is embedded in the statement that the caliph intended to keep his knowledge to himself.

Although the Mauritanian avoids the question of why the Prophet would hide such sciences from the elites of the Muslim *umma* (namely his companions) and disclose it centuries later to purportedly ordinary human beings like Ahmad al-Tijānī, a possible response to this question is to be found in his refutation of Ibn Māyābā. When the latter claimed that the Prophet, during his lifetime, had disclosed all that was of benefit to his *umma* in both the here and the hereafter—meaning that not a single thing which might have been of utility to the *umma* had been concealed⁹¹⁴—Aḥmad b. al-Hādī responded with a Sufi tenet that divides the knowledge of the Prophet into three categories: a) that which contained the like of Qur’ān and the religious duties (*aḥkām*) which the Prophet had to convey; b) that which the Prophet had to keep for himself, like the knowledge of the unseen (*ghayb*) that which was given to him and which was of no utility whatsoever for the *umma*; and c) that for which he was given permission for both its concealment and/or its disclosure, and which was of a kind related to the knowledge of the unseen from which the *umma* could benefit. The reward of the Tijānī litany of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ*, he stated, for example, belonged to this third category.⁹¹⁵ Since perhaps this Sufi conviction was not expected to prove convincing in polemics with Salafīs, it was not mentioned by the author of *Shams al-dalīl* in

⁹¹³ Ibn Mayābā, *Mushtahā al-khārif al-jānī*, pp. 242-243.

⁹¹⁴ For a complete account of the argument, see: Ibn Mayābā, *Mushtahā al-khārif al-jānī*, pp. 32-39.

⁹¹⁵ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Muntahā sayl al-jārif*, pp. 34-35.

response to the Salafī al-Hilālī, whereas in *Muntahā sayl al-jārif*, his reply to the Sufī Ibn Māyābā, this argument was developed, and at quite some length indeed.

4.6. The Claim of Intercession

Another statement by the supreme master of the Tijāniyya, which testifies to his sense of superiority is his claim to have been interceding (*shafā'a*), on the Day of Judgement, for the people of his era, from the time of his birth until his death,⁹¹⁶ and in such a way that on the Day of Judgement all those who were alive during his lifetime will enter paradise without any sort of divine reckoning or punishment. Given the fact that the Tijānī master was born in 1150 AH and died in 1230 AH, his life spanned a total of eighty years; 'Alī Ḥarāzīm then adds an additional twenty years to the period of his intercession, thus extending the scope of his master's claim to cover a full century.⁹¹⁷ This claim of intercession is another issue al-Hilālī could not condone. He notes that neither the *Jawāhir* nor the *Rimāh*, the two sources which contain this lofty claim, mention being Muslim as a condition for benefitting from this intercession, adding that it would nonetheless be a wild stretch of imagination to include non-Muslims within the scope of the statement, as well as a clear breach of the *sharī'a*. And even if the vaunted intercession *were* to be restricted to Muslims, he says, the claim would still be unacceptable, as even “the Prophet who, beyond any doubt, is the leader of the intercessors (*sayyid al-shufā'ā'*) was not bestowed with such a merit”.⁹¹⁸ The Prophet had once passed by two graves, the inhabitants of which were said to be suffering bitter punishments; one for deliberate negligence in the observation of the rules of hygiene and cleanliness, and the other for tale-bearing. The Prophet broke a tree branch in two and placed one stick on each grave, which is believed to have eased their punishment for the time it took the sticks to dry out. Other versions quite convincingly narrate the fact that those occupying the graves were newly buried Muslims. From al-Hilālī's perspective, this event is clear evidence of the fact that not even the Prophet himself was rewarded with the merit of performing absolute intercession for the people of his era, not even for a day, let alone a month, a year or a century. For further textual support, he recalls another Prophetic tradition in which Fāṭima, the beloved daughter of the Prophet, is kindly advised by her father that she would have to save herself from

⁹¹⁶ 'Umar al-Fūṭī, *Rimāh hizb al-Raḥīm*, vol. II, p. 28.

⁹¹⁷ 'Umar al-Fūṭī, *Rimāh hizb al-Raḥīm*, vol. II, p. 28

⁹¹⁸ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiyya*, p. 73.

hellfire, for even her father, in his capacity as divine messenger, would not be able to help her. Thus, the Moroccan concludes that “This [Tijānī] claim (of intercession) constitutes a clear breach of *sharī‘a*, in addition to its being a bold declaration against the will of God and a sign of not fearing him. No one prior to the Tijānīs had ever claimed such a thing”.⁹¹⁹

This seems to have stimulated the anger of Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, the author of *Sahm al-dalīl*, who therein accuses al-Hilālī of ignorance and disrespect to divine messengers and saintly figures. He further states that the issue of intercession should be understood as occurring by the grace of God, which He bestows upon whom He wills. As such, he questions what logical or religious obstacle could possibly serve to refute his master’s claim to intercession, as, in his own words: “Tell me, what kind of religious and logical obstacle could hinder the divine grace of intercession being given to a friend of God?”⁹²⁰ In support of his argument, he refers to a Prophetic tradition in which the third caliph of Islam, ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān, is said to interceded in the hereafter for a large number of people equal to the tribes of Muḍar and Rabī‘a.⁹²¹ For the Mauritanian, this case is no different from the claimed ability of the supreme master of the Tijāniyya to perform intercession, and in full compliance with principles of Islam. The Moroccan Salafī’s critique is then presented by the Mauritanian Tijānī as a direct attack against divine saints and the concept of sainthood in general, rather than against the particular power of intercession that Tijānī sources lay claim to on behalf of their master.

Once again, the actual bone of contention that has been raised by al-Hilālī is avoided by the Mauritanian’s shifting the focus of discussion to a very different aspect of the issue. His opponent had neither rejected intercession itself, as a religious notion, nor the right of certain human beings to perform it. By quoting the above Prophetic traditions, all that the Mauritanian achieves is to prove the right of certain of the companions to perform intercession on the authority of the Prophet; whereas the core of the Moroccan’s critique is directed toward Aḥmad al-Tijānī’s claim to be performing an elevated kind of *shafā‘a* for the people of the era in which he lived, a form of merit that the Prophet himself could not claim to enjoy. Another characteristic of the Mauritanian

⁹¹⁹ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 73.

⁹²⁰ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 246.

⁹²¹ In another Prophetic tradition, the right to perform intercession is granted to an unnamed person who would intercede for a group of people greater in number than the tribe of Tamīm. This person seems to have been either ‘Uthmān or Uways al-Qaranī. See: Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 246.

Tijānī's discourse which should be noted is his obsession with asking for evidence whenever it is seemingly impossible to develop a convincing refutation.

4.7. The Door of Salvation

Another purported distinction of the Tijānī master's, which is criticized by the author of *al-Hadiyya* is his claim to be "the door of salvation" for each and every sinner who knocks at his door. The author of *Rimāḥ* reports a supposed daylight communication between the supreme master of the Tijāniyya and the Prophet, in which he was instructed to undertake the mission of proselytizing for the Prophet's *ṭarīqa*. Not content with the spiritual merits he had been granted, however, Aḥmad al-Tijānī abstained from doing so; he had determined that he was not going to fulfil the Prophetic command unless he was granted the concession of being the door of salvation for every disobedient human being who, though deserving of punishment for trespassing against the divine order, turned to him (the Tijānī master) to ask for his favour (*bāban li-najāt kulli 'āsin musrifin 'alā nafsihī ta 'allaqa bī*). This stipulation is said to have been approved by the Prophet; once granted this merit of salvation, the Tijānī master, is then said to have embarked on the required mission of proselytization, but only after his demand had been accepted.⁹²²

This tenet is criticized by the author of *al-Hadiyya* in harsh words. According to the Moroccan, the very claim that a human being could function as a door of salvation for all disobedient deviants is itself a reprehensible innovation (as well as a rejection of the divine instructions)⁹²³ which contains a number of absurdities. First, there is only one door of salvation in Islam, and that is the door of repentance (*bāb al-tawba*). As described in Prophetic traditions, this door needs neither a janitor (*bawwāb*) or guard (*ḥāris*); it is wide open until the Day of Judgement, when the sun will rise from the West. There is a specific passage in the Qur'ān, he argues, that unequivocally declares the door of repentance to be open to all.⁹²⁴ One only needs to fulfil the necessary conditions for repentance, namely sincerity, submission to God, and following the instructions laid out in binding religious scriptures. He is, further, of the opinion that a simple comparison between the Tijānī master and the Prophet proves the absurdity of the claim reported in *Rimāḥ*, as despite being the

⁹²² 'Umar al-Fūṭī, *Rimāḥ hizb al-Raḥīm*, vol. II, pp. 29, 44.

⁹²³ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 75.

⁹²⁴ Al-Zumar 39:53-55.

best of the divine creation (*afḍal khalq Allāh*), the Prophet himself could not function as the door of salvation, even for his beloved uncle Abū Ṭālib. Historical sources bear witness to the fact that Abū Ṭālib loved his nephew more than his own children, and went through unbearable hardships for his sake. Nevertheless, when he failed to surrender to Islam and subscribe to the notion of absolute monotheism (*tawḥīd*), his beloved nephew could not rescue him from divine torment. When Abū Ṭālib died, the Prophet sought forgiveness on his behalf, invoking serious divine reproach for doing so.⁹²⁵ The Prophet was reminded of his mission, consisting solely of inviting people to the right path, while the issue of guidance was an exclusively divine prerogative.⁹²⁶

Aside from this, asserts the Moroccan, the Prophet had already issued a general authorization enabling each and every individual of the *umma* to proselytize for the religion. There was no need for a new authorization to be issued, as that would be *taḥṣīl al-ḥāṣil* (the conduct of something that has already been done). In what follows, the attention of the reader is directed to what, for al-Hilālī, is another equally important aspect of the issue at stake: Followers of the brotherhood are accused of destroying the reputation of their master, who, he says, had probably never engaged in bargaining with the Prophet. To the Moroccan, the way in which the alleged conversation is reported in Tijānī sources smells of disobedience and pure arrogance, not to mention that the stipulation he is supposed to have put forward therein surpasses the capacity of the Prophet, being a merit that he, the Prophet himself, did not possess. The absurdity of the story thus speaks for itself, for al-Hilālī. In his own words:

How can we imagine the Prophet ordering a Muslim [like Aḥmad al-Tijānī], loyal to his faith, with the utmost respect and reverence for the Prophet, to conduct something, [and him] saying: I will do it but only on one condition. [And] this is when the stipulation is a valid one, whereas the stipulation [in question] demolishes the principles of Islam. Moreover, this is rude behaviour from which an ordinary believer would certainly abstain, let alone the supreme leader of the saints, as you Tijānīs would call him.⁹²⁷

For Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, however, there is no contradiction between *tawba* and the Tijānī master being the door of salvation. For him, in fact, one's affiliation to the Tijāniyya pushes one towards

⁹²⁵ Al-Tawba 9:113.

⁹²⁶ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 75.

⁹²⁷ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 76.

repentance from sin, for *tawba* comes into existence through seeking the forgiveness of God (*istighfār*), an essential element of the litanies of the order. As for the matter of the authorization of proselytization, the author of *Shams al-dalīl* distinguishes between two types of Prophetic authorization: the general (*‘āmm*) and the special (*khāṣṣ*), before going on to argue that the authorization issued by the Prophet to the supreme master of the Tijāniyya was of a special nature, whereas that which was issued to companions and subsequently to all Muslims was of a general nature. The Moroccan Salafī is claimed to lack the capacity to understand the difference between the two types. As for the stipulation allegedly made by the Tijānī master in his daylight encounter with the Prophet, the Mauritanian is of the opinion that it was a petition and supplication (*su’āl isti’āf*), rather than a stipulation, which would normally give rise to negative consequences if rejected. The master’s intention, he says, in laying down the so-called stipulation, was to acquire as much mercy and grace from the Prophet as possible, on behalf of the *umma*.⁹²⁸ The Salafī opponent is then accused of lying in his claim that the Prophet could not grant such a stipulation to the Tijānī master, a claim which is said by the Mauritanian to be unsubstantiated and devoid of any evidence. “How” he asks, “did al-Hilālī [come to] understand that Allah did not grant His Prophet such a merit?”⁹²⁹

Here it seems that the deep-rooted Tijānī conviction that their master received his teachings directly from the Prophet serves as a legitimate basis for the verification of all reported statements by the supreme master of the brotherhood, for the Mauritanian Tijānī. Any attempt at their contestation, is thus necessarily declared by him as null and void. The underlying assumption is that divinely elected saints possess reliable religious authority, and thus whatever they claim—particularly on the authority of their direct access to the Prophet, as in the case of the Tijānī master—should be accepted, no matter how odd it might look to some. Direct access to the Prophet is a kind of divine grace, that can untangle any problem.

4.8. *Dā’irat al-Iḥāṭa*, a Gift from the Prophet

The sources of the brotherhood contain a number of controversial notions, that stress the unique status of the Tijānī master and his relationship with the Prophet. One among these is surely the so-

⁹²⁸ For further details see: Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, pp. 47-49

⁹²⁹ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 49.

called circle of surrender or surrendering circle (*dā'irat al-iḥāṭa*), a special Prophetic prerogative disclosed and granted to the supreme master of the Tijāniyya. Therein, the latter is believed to have received, inter alia, the hidden treasure (*al-kanz al-muṭalsam*),⁹³⁰ the priceless pearl (*al-kharīda al-farīda*), and the authority to entrust the litanies of the order, including the greatest divine name (*al-ism al-a'zam*), to whomsoever he desires, as well as to withhold them from whomever he might choose. The author of *Rimāḥ* describes *al-kanz al-muṭalsam* as a divine name with which only a *quṭb* could be entrusted, so high in value that nothing in the holy Qur'ān or any previous divine book can match it.⁹³¹ Al-Hilālī dismisses this notion, emphasizing the role of the Prophet as a human being whose mission solely consisted of the deliverance of divine instructions, which he had achieved, in the best manner. His elevation to a divine status, as one with the power of bestowing humanity with gifts the like of which are not disclosed by God himself, could bear profound consequences, he warns. Furthermore, according to the Moroccan, the terms mentioned in *Rimāḥ*, are names devoid of substance that are used for achieving certain goals, such as the intimidation of ignorant followers, ordinary people who worship and bow in respect to their masters, due to these imaginary titles and epithets, whereas truly divine names are dependent on the confirmation of authoritative religious scriptures (*tawqīfiyya*). This requires believers to abstain from ascribing names to God which are not mentioned in the Qur'ān and the Sunna. The attention of the reader is next directed by the Moroccan Salafī to the alleged absurdity of the Tijānī conviction of *al-kanz al-muṭalsam* being the greatest divine name, who then informs the reader that in a manuscript composed by Shaykh Mukhtār al-Kuntī, the celebrated eighteenth-century intellectual and Qādirī master of West Africa, he had once seen “two inexplicable, elusive words” “*kalimatayn khanfashāratayn*”⁹³² defined as the greatest divine name. Shortly afterwards, and much to his amusement, the same pair of words were entrusted to him by Aḥmad Sukayrij as the greatest name of God. Thus, he discovered that the illusive and peculiar words he had seen in the manuscript were circulating in all Sufi milieus. These words were, apparently, held in high esteem, and were supposed to be kept out of the reach of ordinary people, to the extent that when al-Hilālī broke with the Tijāniyya, some followers of the brotherhood had interpreted his conversion to

⁹³⁰ Tijānīs translate *al-kanz al-muṭalsam* as “the hidden treasure” while opponents have a different take on the issue, as I will discuss in the following sections.

⁹³¹ For the complete account in *Rimāḥ*, see: 'Umar al-Fūtī, *Rimāḥ ḥizb al-Raḥīm*, vol. II, pp. 30-31.

⁹³² Unfortunately, al-Hilālī fails to disclose the actual words themselves or provide any further information with regard to their meanings; instead, he chooses to refer to them as *kalimatayn khanfashāratayn* (two inexplicable, elusive words).

Salafism as the side effects of his having been undeservedly entrusted with a divine name. This, for the Moroccan, constituted another sign testifying to the ignorance that prevailed in Sufi circles. He relates:

When I left the *ṭarīqa* Tijāniyya, some Tijānīs were of the opinion that as Shaykh Sukayrij had disclosed the greatest divine name to me with the stipulation of a daily recitation that should not extend beyond a certain number, yet nonetheless, I did not observe the stipulation and my recitation of the greatest name exceeded the number determined by the shaykh, it was for this reason that I was [punished by being] stripped of the *ṭarīqa*. To this extent were they dominated by ignorance.⁹³³

The alleged greatest divine name disclosed by Sukayrij is not actually made public, by the Moroccan. As a placeholder, he refers to it as *kalimatayn khanfashāratayn*, and claims the impermissibility of its attribution to God. In exposition of the meaning of *khanfashāratayn*, he relates a strange anecdote, in which a community of learned men is once said to have been visited by a liar asserting himself to be a man of knowledge. If asked, the man would provide useless lengthy replies on any given topic. Fed up with his babbling, the community decided to put his knowledge to the test in a strange way. Each member of the community picked out a random letter, the collection of which brought the word *khanfashār* into existence. When the self-proclaimed scholar was asked about its meaning, he started chattering, as usual, without any hesitation. *Khanfashār*, he claimed, was a plant of an elbow's length, with round leaves generating a white liquid which, due to its distinctive flavour and attractive scent, some people mixed with milk. The man even cited a poem⁹³⁴ in praise of the plant, asserting that it had numerous medical benefits documented by Greek physicians. When he went to quote a Prophetic tradition in support of his claims, a member of the audience extended his hand, shutting the mouth of this stuffed shirt, for whom it was not enough to lie on behalf of the scholars of language, poets and physicians, but he further wanted to attribute lies to the Prophet. The people thus came to call every vague and meaningless word *khanfashāriyya*. The word which the Tijānīs claimed to be the greatest name of God was in no way different from *khanfashār*, asserts the Moroccan Salafī, before claiming that the above-mentioned Tijānī conviction contains a further technical error: if *dā'irat al-iḥāṭa* was

⁹³³ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. p. 77.

⁹³⁴ It goes: "Your love has permeated my heart, as *khanfashar* enriches the milk with a good taste". See al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 78.

peculiar to the Prophet, then how could it have been revealed to the Tijānī master? The following is an excerpt:

How could the Prophet reveal and grant a distinction of his own to the Tijānī master? if so, it would be a distinction of him no more. For distinctions (*khaṣā'is*) of the Prophet cannot be ascribed to others... Their particularity would perish if they are attributed to others. The Tijānīs, however, think that their [allegedly God-given] sciences fall outside of the domain of reason (*'aql*). Therefore, he who intends to understand their sayings should leave his reason behind, and whoever will believe them should throw the Book of Allah and the Sunna of His messenger behind his back. We seek refuge with Allah from such deviation.⁹³⁵

Tijānīs, on the other hand, seem convinced of this Prophetic gift to their master. The author of *Shams al-dalīl* therefore accuses his opponent of spreading lies on behalf of great scholars and divinely selected saints, arguing that “if al-Hilālī knew the high status of these two spiritual leaders [al-Kuntī and Sukayrij] he would not have dared to lie against them”.⁹³⁶ The Moroccan is further reproached for denying the Prophet’s merit as a source of beneficence for humankind. The Prophet, he argues, *could* grant favours to humanity: the greatest intercession (*al-shafā'a al-uzmā*), the entreaty of the prophet 'Isā while crossing the bridge (*ṣirāṭ*),⁹³⁷ the promise of a house in Paradise made to the buyer of the well of Aruma (*bi'r Arūma*), and the promises made to certain companions, such as Hudhayfa b. al-Yamān and Rabī'a b. Kalb al-Aslamī that they would be neighbours to the Prophet in paradise, are only a few of the examples to which the Mauritanian Tijānī directs the reader’s attention, and which he claims to be clear proofs of the Prophet’s capability of providing humankind with favour. According to him, the “circle of surrender” granted to the supreme master of the brotherhood by way of inspiration (*ilhām*) is no different from these other above-mentioned instances of favour granted by the Prophet, and should be perceived as such. For the Mauritanian, the negation of the tenet entails a negation of the notion of *ilhām*, leading inexorably to the rejection of outstanding religious authorities such as the founding figure of the Ḥanbalī legal school Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, the celebrated Mālikī scholar Abū Ishāq al-Shāṭibī,

⁹³⁵ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 78.

⁹³⁶ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 244

⁹³⁷ According to the Islamic faith, *ṣirāṭ* is the name of a bridge over hell that functions as a divine test for humanity. Believers pass over it easily while unbelievers face severe problems. For further details, see: Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Na'īm, *Kayfa tanjū min kurab al-Ṣirāṭ*, n.p. n.d.

http://madrasatomohammed.com/ar_kif_tanjo_min_Krb_Alsrat.pdf

Ibn Qayyim, one of the foremost authoritative figures of the Salafī tradition, all of whom unanimously approved *ilhām*.⁹³⁸

A through scrutiny of the critique raised by al-Hilālī and the response to it provided by the Mauritanian Tijānī reveals the fact that, once again, the core of the objection raised by the Moroccan Salafī has been deflected. Instead of addressing the issue of the legitimacy of *dā'irat al-iḥāta*, the focus of Aḥmad b. al-Hādī's discourse is rather directed towards establishing a connection between the so-called "circle of surrender" and the whole notion of inspiration (*ilhām*). The rejection of the former by the Moroccan is portrayed as a rejection of the latter, a mistake al-Hilālī would never have committed, since like his predecessor Ibn Qayyim, he believed in *ilhām* as a legitimate divine institution. As for the promises, given to certain individuals by the Prophet, like those mentioned by Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, the overwhelming majority of Muslims perceive them as signs of the divine knowledge entrusted to the Prophet, rather than of his own capability to grant human beings their wishes, as the Mauritanian tries to present them as.

4.9.Saints and Ecstatic Utterances

The making of bizarre claims by Sufi saints, often interpreted by followers as proofs of their high spiritual status, is a well-known phenomenon. Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī (d. 261/874–875 or 234/848–849),⁹³⁹ for example, is reported to have laid claim to a higher status than that of the divine messengers. He even claimed to have experienced (*fanā'*), that is, a state of complete annihilation in the divine essence. Maṣṣūr al-Ḥallāj (d. 309/922)⁹⁴⁰ is another famous mystic who referred to himself as the manifestation of God. His Persian master Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 283/896)⁹⁴¹ and the

⁹³⁸ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, pp. 243-244.

⁹³⁹ For more on him, see: 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Badawī, *Shataḥāt al-Ṣūfiyya*, Kuwait: Wakālat al-Maṭbūāt, n.d; N. Hanif, *Biographical Encyclopaedia of Sufis*, pp. 13-19.

⁹⁴⁰ Ḥusayn b. Maṣṣūr al-Ḥallāj was born in the Persian province of Fars, and visited important centres of knowledge such as Basra, Kufa and Mecca. His mystic teachings, and in particular his controversial claim to divinity—"I am the truth/God"—caused great agitation among his opponents, but earned him the respect of many as well. Some, hold that unorthodox claims such as this one were the reason for his dramatic execution in Baghdad in 922 (others find the reason for his death to lie in politics of the time). On his life, teachings and death, see the voluminous work of: Louis Massignon, *The Passion of al-Hallaj: Mystic and Martyr of Islam*, (translated by Herbert Mason), Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982. Herbert W. Mason, *Al-Hallaj*, Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1995. Herbert Mason, *The Death of al-Hallaj: A Dramatic Narrative*, Notre Dame, Notre Dame Press, 1991.

⁹⁴¹ Born in the city of Tustar in south-west Iran he travelled and visited places like Basra, Kufa, Mecca and Egypt, where he may have come together with the Egyptian saint Dhu'l-Nūn (d. 245/860). Marked by the desire to get closer to God, most of his life is said to have been spent in his native town, in seclusion, introspection, austere asceticism and systematic fasting with continuous recollection of God. On him see: Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period*, pp. 38-43.

celebrated Egyptian poet Ibn al-Fāriḍ (d. 632/1234)⁹⁴² also composed poems that were loaded with similar claims. Like Sufis of other denominations, Tijānīs entertain a great deal of reverence for people such as these who are prone to ecstatic utterances (*shataḥāt*).⁹⁴³ The sources of the brotherhood portray ecstatic utterances as products of a special spiritual state known as annihilation (*fanāʾ*) in God, a state in which human existence is claimed to perish and the Sufi to be stripped of his human attributes, including that of reason (*ʿaql*), seeing nothing but the divine essence (*dhāt al-ḥaqq*). At this point, he loses control over his tongue; he may be heard to utter statements such as “How exalted am I and there is no deity but me”, or “My majesty is high and my glory is high”, for which he bears no responsibility. It is reportedly God Himself who then speaks through the tongue of the Sufi, upon whom divine secrets are poured, and who thus speaks of the divine existence (*dhāt al-ḥaqq*) rather than his own. Statements like “Glory be to me, how exalted is my affair”, made by al-Biṣṭāmī, and “I am the Truth” and “There is nothing in my robe but Allah”, made by al-Ḥallāj are all said to have been uttered in this state. For the same reason, says the Mauritanian, statements such as al-Jīlānī’s “O groups of prophets, you are given the title; we are bestowed with things that are not given to you”, and al-Biṣṭāmī’s “We swim in an ocean on the shores of which the prophets stand”, are ecstatic utterances and should not be interpreted as claims of superiority over the prophets. They are said, rather, to be divine secrets bestowed on Sufis in a state beyond the capabilities of humans to describe. Al-Tustarī, for example, once made the statements that “I am the one who desires and the desired one is I”, and “I look a strange thing to he who sees me. I am the lover (*muḥibb*) and the loved one (*maḥbūb*), there is no second one”, and the rapturous utterances of Ibn al-Fāriḍ are of a similar nature. According to the Tijānī sources, one’s openness to such divine transfigurations is completely dependent on one’s spiritual taste (*dhawq*) rather than one’s discursive knowledge or the suspicious faculties of intellect. God manifests Himself in various ways to human beings, due to their capabilities.⁹⁴⁴

⁹⁴² ‘Umar b. ‘Alī b. al-Fāriḍ, an Egyptian of Syrian descent, was born in Cairo and spent fifteen years in Mecca upon his initial enlightenment being caused by a coincidental encounter with a greengrocer in front of the *madrasa* he was enrolled in. He is well-known for his controversial mystic poetry and ecstasies lasting sometimes for up to ten days without eating, drinking, listening and hearing outside noises. For a complete account of his life account see: Th. Emil Homerin, *From Arab Poet to Muslim Saint: Ibn al-Farid, His Verse, and His Shrine*, Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 2001; N. Hanif, *Biographical Encyclopaedia of Sufis*, pp. 35-36.

⁹⁴³ For an account of the ecstatic utterances of Sufi mystics, see: Carl W. Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism*, Albany: State University of New York State, 1985.

⁹⁴⁴ For further details of the issue, see: ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*, vol. II, pp. 71-74. As one should excuse the great receivers of the divine knowledge (*akābir al-‘arifīn*) for their ecstatic utterances, they shouldn’t be held

“Each one of these ecstatic utterances is clear infidelity (*kufr ṣarīḥ*)”⁹⁴⁵ argues al-Hilālī, who finds them as problematic as the Tijānī obsession with producing excuses for them. The simultaneous production of excuses on behalf of those who have made these ecstatic utterances, who are often defined as great receivers of divine knowledge, and the great veneration displayed towards them is said by him to constitute a self-contradictory approach—which attitude, he says, could prove detrimental. The Moroccan thus warns his adversaries of committing such huge mistakes that may even lead to disbelief, asking: “How could Tijānīs codify the absurd statements made by these people, particularly utterances that contain obvious disbelief, revering them for such heretical nonsense...?” Despite excusing their controversial utterances by attributing them to a state of annihilation in which the human intellect allegedly ceases to function, he says:

The Tijānīs would never admit that these people were demented (*majānīn*). On the contrary, they are presented as people of great knowledge, sainthood, piety and high rank... So, if they were in a stable state of mind [while uttering such statements] they have, there is no doubt, committed heresy. But if they were struck with delirium [while uttering such statements], they possess no meritorious status (*fa-lā faḍla lahum*). He among the sane who codifies such heretical utterances and reveres their utterers for making such statements is indeed a disbeliever like them.⁹⁴⁶

responsible for sins they might commit for the purpose of concealing themselves from ordinary people. According to an account provided in *Jawāhir* the founding figure of the Tijāniyya was once asked about the reality of Sufi masters who could guide aspirants to the mystical knowledge of God (*al-shaykh al-wāṣil*). In his response, al-Tijānī depicted *al-shaykh al-wāṣil* as someone who is rewarded with the vision of God causing a full obliteration of all veils that shield human beings from arrival in the divine presence. This could also be described as *fanā’ al-fanā’*, where the distinction between the arrived one (*mawṣūl*) and one who has arrived (*wāṣil*) perishes. The Sufi master, nevertheless, is expected to proceed to the next level where he is able to fully distinguish between divine existence and his own—via a comprehensive knowledge of divine characteristics and secrets. This stage is said to be the last of several stages on the mystical path to God.⁹⁴⁴ The one of such calibre is rewarded with the concession of guiding people to God. This is the master one should search for. Tijānī parlance defines such Sufis as the great ones (*kubarā’*). Aspirants should fall into his hands as a dead body in the hands of the washer. The moral deviations of the ordinary masses, nonetheless, forced them to protect themselves through hiding their true identities. From time to time the danger of disclosure arises to which the great ones may react in odd ways. In order to stay underground the receivers of the divine knowledge (*‘arīfūn*) may have recourse to cardinal sins such as murder, adultery, drinking alcohol and telling lies. These actions, however, are used as instruments of identity concealment only; they manifest themselves to have committed these things whereas in reality they have not. The commoners are deceived by their senses of seeing images without reality. This is said to be a divine merit granted to *al-shaykh al-wāṣil*. For complete description of the *al-shaykh al-wāṣil* according to Tijānī doctrine see: ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma’ānī*, vol. I, pp. 161-162.

⁹⁴⁵ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiyya*, p. 121.

⁹⁴⁶ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiyya*, p. 121.

From the Moroccan's perspective, blind trust in the master is an essential component of the Sufi tradition, to the extent that even his disbelief and infidelity may be interpreted as a sign of his elevation in the sight of God. To enlighten the reader, he recalls a personal experience that took place in the city of Asla, located in the north of present-day Algeria. During his Tijāniyya days, a time he defines as a dark era of deviation (*zamān al-ḍalāl*), he had used to visit a certain Sufi master who would ask al-Hilālī to lead the people, on his behalf, during the congregational ritual prayer. During the prayer, the Sufi master would start to use extremely abusive language towards God. Much to the amazement of the Moroccan, the people would interpret this extreme intemperance as an indication of the allegedly lofty spiritual rank of the Sufi master, who was perceived to be in the divine presence as the time. As soon as the prayer was done, the people would compete with each other to reach out and kiss the hand of the master, in anticipation of blessings. This ignorant attitude, states the Moroccan, was nothing but a result of their blind trust in Sufi masters, a fact he discovered when he left the Tijāniyya and came to know the true doctrine of *tawhīd*. During his Tijānī days, he claims, his eyes too had been blinded by his affiliation to Sufism. In what follows, the attention of the reader is drawn to another of his own experiences, this time made in the district of Abū Samghūn, where the first daylight encounter between Aḥmad al-Tijānī and the Prophet is purported to have taken place. During one of his visits to the city, al-Hilālī had happened to meet a visitor from 'Ayn Mādī (Aīn Madhi),⁹⁴⁷ the birth place of the Tijānī master, who informed him that descendants of the founding figure of the brotherhood were importing wine and prostitutes from Laghouat into the district, for their own personal use. Even though the visitor swore that he was relating what he had just witnessed in Aīn Madhi, without intending any of disrespect to the supreme master of the brotherhood or his descendants, the Moroccan refused to believe him and accused him of lying.⁹⁴⁸ At that time, for the young al-Hilālī, a purported daylight communication between the Tijānī master and the Prophet, in which the latter had allegedly guaranteed the sainthood of each and every adult descendant of the former was

⁹⁴⁷ Aīn Madhi is a town in the Laghouat province of Algeria.

⁹⁴⁸ His immediate response was in fact very harsh. "You are lying, I told him" relates al-Hilālī. When the visitor asked what made him so sure that he was lying, al-Hilālī pointed to the Prophetic guaranty that al-Tijānī claimed to have been granted, and went on to say that he must either reject the testimony of the visitor or the statement of his master, which he could and/or would not. Such is the extent of the ignorance which one sees in the people of the Sufi brotherhoods, according to al-Hilālī. For full details of this incident, and a previous one that al-Hilālī experienced in the city of Asla, see: al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiyya*, pp. 121-122.

enough to reject the testimony of an eye witness and reproach him for relating the truth. This, he says, is the extent of blind trust that gullible Sufi disciples have in their masters.⁹⁴⁹

In reply, Aḥmad b. al-Hādī accuses his opponent of double standards. While threatening Tijānīs with labels of heresy and disbelief for the codification of ecstatic utterances and veneration of their utterers, he claims the Moroccan to have displayed a different attitude towards Ibn Taymiyya and his disciple Ibn Qayyim, who had not only codified certain ecstatic utterances by divine saints, but had also praised their owners as well: yet they are spared of any criticism by al-Hilālī. The Mauritanian then reproaches his opponent for using the term of heretic (*zindīq*) for the utterers of ecstatic utterances, identified by him as the great Sufi masters and the chosen elite of the *umma* (*ṣafwat hādhihi al-umma wa-khiyārihā*).⁹⁵⁰ It is of interest to note that the Mauritanian does not mention which ecstatic utterances are praised by Ibn Qayyim and his master, as while it is true that they might have condoned certain enthusiastic outpourings, these were definitely not the like of those mentioned above.

Sufis often accuse their opponents of being ignorant of Sufi terminology, and the Mauritanian takes the same attitude here, arguing that people with little knowledge of Sufi terminology misunderstand the *shataḥāt* of the Sufi which harbour esoteric hidden meanings, quite unlike their outward, superficial connotations, that are very difficult for outsiders to perceive. People who are unfamiliar with the parlance and writing styles of great Sufi shaykhs like Ibn al-Fārid, Ibn ‘Afīf al-Tilimsānī, Ṣadr al-Din Qūnawī, Ibn Hūd, Ibn Sab‘īn,⁹⁵¹ al-Shushtarī, Ibn al-Muẓaffar and al-Ṣaffār should therefore not engage in studying their books until they have obtained a comprehensive knowledge of the true connotations of the concepts and terminology used by Sufis. According to the Mauritanian, this lack of knowledge was the reason behind the excommunication of the above-mentioned Sufi authorities by certain scholars, while others were fully convinced of their meritorious saintly status.⁹⁵² Upon an attentive reading of *Futūḥāt al-makiyya* and *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, continues Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, Shawkānī, who had once excommunicated Ibn ‘Arabī, had changed his mind and came to understand that *ta’wīl* (the interpretation of Sufi concepts in a way that conforms with the principles of the religion) should be a decisive factor in interpreting Ibn

⁹⁴⁹ al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 122.

⁹⁵⁰ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 250.

⁹⁵¹ On Ibn Sab‘īn, see: N. Hanif, *Biographical Encyclopaedia of Sufis*, pp. 77-79.

⁹⁵² Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 250.

‘Arabī’s Sufi discourse. Regretful of his error of excluding a fellow Muslim, Shawkanī had composed *al-Badr al-ṭāli* ‘ (The Rising Full Moon) announcing his repentance no less than forty years after writing his *al-Risāla*, in which the allegedly greatest Sufi master was denigrated and excommunicated.⁹⁵³

4.10. The Prophet and Poetry

Tijānī sources speak of a certain Abū ‘ Abdallāh Muḥammad b. al-‘ Arabī al-Tāzī, known also as al-Damrāwī (d. 1204/1789-1790),⁹⁵⁴ who is said to have had regular daylight communications with the Prophet and delivered the instructions he received to Aḥmad al-Tijānī, prior to the alleged establishment of the latter’s own direct contact with the Prophet. Al-Tāzī, a disciple of the Tijānī master, is therefore perceived by followers of the brotherhood to have been the link (*wāsiṭa*) between the Prophet and the supreme master of the Tijāniyya.⁹⁵⁵ He is said to have been taught certain lines of poetry (*abyāt*)⁹⁵⁶, in a dream vision, the meaning and interpretation of which would be disclosed to him by the Prophet in a subsequent daylight encounter; and to have been instructed to pass it on to al-Tijānī. Tijānīs assert that it was the love (*maḥabba*) al-Tāzī’s heart for the

⁹⁵³ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, pp. 250-251. While Shawkanī may have changed his opinion on Ibn ‘ Arabī, the latter was nonetheless condemned and excommunicated by a number of scholars, including the leading figures of various Islamic sciences at the time. For a detailed account of the issue, see: Daghash b. Shabīb al-‘ Ajamī, *Ibn ‘ Arabī: ‘Aqīdatuhu wa-mawqif al-‘ulamā’ al-muslimīn minhu min l-qarn al-sādis ilā al-qarn al-thālith ‘ashar*, Kuwait: Maktaba Ahl al-Athar, 1432/2011.

⁹⁵⁴ For an account of his life, see: Aḥmad Sukayrij, *Kashf al-ḥijāb*, pp. 97-126. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ḥajūjī, *Ithāf ahl al-marātib*, vol. I, p. 451.

⁹⁵⁵ Al-Tāzī’s spiritual status, according to the Tijānīs, is consolidated by the special Prophetic love for him. The Prophet is claimed to have instructed al-Tijānī of taking special care of him. Therefore, he was visited by the supreme master of the Tijāniyya many times, not only during his life time but also after his demise. He is said to have been acted as intermediary between the Prophet and the Tijānī master, particularly in matters about which the latter did not dare to directly ask the Prophet. He was also the *khalīfa* of the supreme master of the brotherhood, a post that was occupied by ‘ Alī Ḥarāzīm after his death in 1214 AH. See: Aḥmad Sukayrij, *Kashf al-ḥijāb*, pp. 98-99. Muḥammad al-‘ Arabī b. al-Sā’ih describes him as the greatest link (*al-wasiṭa al-mu‘azzam*). See: Al-‘ Arabī b. al-Sā’ih, *Bughyat al-mustafīd*, p. 255.

⁹⁵⁶ “*Fa-bi-l majd wa-l-tahmīd bihi tanjalī dhātuhu. Wa-bi-l qaṣd kān al-man‘ li waḥdī. Wa-bi-ḥaqq al-ḥaqq bi-l-ḥaqqi turā ḥaqīqatuhu. Wa-bi-l-ḥaqq lā bi-l-ḥaqqi iḥtajaba ‘anni zindī. Wa-fi tadbīr amrihi aḥāṭat qudratuhu. Wa-bi-l-qaṣdī lā bi-l-qaṣdī iḥtajaba ‘anhum akhdhī. Fa-ghriq fi baḥr al-waḥdati tarā waḥdatahu. Tartafī ‘ank al-ḥujubu ḥattā tarā al-aswada bi-l-ḍiddi.*” (With his glory and praise manifests his essence. The intentional prevention belongs to me alone. I swear by truth that with truth one can witness his reality. By truth, not with truth, disappeared my support. In the management of his affairs lies his strength. On purpose and intentionally they lost my reception. Sink in the ocean of unity you to witness his unity. The veils will disappear till you see the black as it opposite.) ‘ Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*, vol. II, p. 153.

supreme master that had enabled him to have dream visions and daylight communications with the Prophet, which he would otherwise never have achieved.⁹⁵⁷

The possibility of receiving *abyāt* from the Prophet is something which has never been approved by opponents of the brotherhood, who unanimously argue that the holy book of Islam itself negates the possibility of the Prophet's involvement in any sort of knowledge related to poetry.⁹⁵⁸ Claiming otherwise, they say, would simply be an act of defaming the Prophet.⁹⁵⁹ The author of *al-Hadiyya*, once a vehement defender of the Tijānī doctrines, admits that he had had great difficulty accepting the lines of poetry attributed to the Prophet, even prior to his break with the brotherhood, finding them to be loaded with signs of their falsehood (*rawā'ih al-kidhb*). He argues that the composition of the verses, against the accepted rules of prosody for Arabic poetry, coupled with the banality of their meanings, renders it impossible for them to have been uttered by the Prophet, who is documented, in a Prophetic tradition to have possessed an elevated level of eloquence. Thus, he argues no contemporary of the Prophet's, let alone the Prophet himself, would have uttered the so-called *abyāt* which Tijānīs believe to have been dictated by him to al-Tāzī. He says:

These verses were stifling my life and besmirching my clarity when I was still affiliated to the brotherhood. The smell of lies was coming from them for many reasons that could not stay hidden from he who possesses even a slight knowledge of Arabic: the aridity of the words being one of them. Thus, he who knows something of Arabic language would realize of these verses [that it is] impossible for them to have been uttered by contemporaries of the Prophet, or even by those who lived in the following generations [when] the Arabic language was practiced in its true, pure and eloquent form.⁹⁶⁰

This is a tacit accusation directed at 'Alī Ḥarāzīm, who that had reported the story in *Jawāhir al-ma'ānī*, of their fabrication. According to the Moroccan Salafī, the deficiency embedded in the contentious *abyāt* bespeaks the fact that the author of *Jawāhir*, despite his acquisition of a certain level of literacy in Arabic, had lacked the required competency for error-free eloquent speech.⁹⁶¹

⁹⁵⁷ For further details, see: 'Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma'ānī*, vol. II, pp. 153-157.

⁹⁵⁸ Yāsīn 36:69.

⁹⁵⁹ See for examples Al-Ifriqī, *al-Anwār al-raḥmāniyya*, p. 25.

⁹⁶⁰ Al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, p. 139.

⁹⁶¹ For the full discussion see: al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, pp. 138-139.

Some proponents of the Tijāniyya vehemently reject the accusation of having attributed poetry to the Prophet at all, and yet are at pains to defend the legitimacy of the lines in question, as well as their interpretation as reported in *Jawāhir*. In his response to al-Ifrīqī, for example, Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, argues that he has taken a close look at what has been defined by the opponents of the brotherhood as poetry and found it rather unmeasured (*ghyr mawzūn*), non-rhyming (*ghayr muqaffā*), and assonant (*saja*). In raising such nonsensical objections, the adversaries of the Tijāniyya are therefore suggested by him to have been driven either by ignorance or a deliberate agenda. “Do they not understand poetry? or did they intend to invent lies?” asks the Egyptian Tijānī.⁹⁶² This is quite at odds with Ahmad Sukayrij’s definition of the lines as poetry (*al-naẓm*).⁹⁶³ Al-Ḥāfīz’s Mauritanian successor Aḥmad b. al-Ḥādī nonetheless follows the same line of argumentation in his reply to al-Hilālī, stating that its lack of obedience to the rules of prosody is in accordance with the Qur’ānic passage which negates the possibility that knowledge in poetry form could have issued from the Prophet.⁹⁶⁴ He therefore reprimands the Moroccan Salafī for rejecting al-Tāzī’s dream vision of the Prophet on the basis of the verses’ alleged lack of eloquence, arguing that such lack of the eloquence could not endanger the legitimacy of a dream vision. As far as the alleged banality of their meaning is concerned, this, he argues, is dependent on the words’ interpretation, the real connotation of which may only be deciphered by Sufis. The Moroccan is thus disqualified, for Aḥmad b. al-Ḥādī; his discourse is presented as chattering nonsense (*hadhayān*), indicative of his mindset. “Such a tasteless and scandalous critique would not be heard from someone who possesses a tiny bit of intellect”,⁹⁶⁵ the Mauritanian concludes.

The replies provided by al-Ḥāfīz and Aḥmad b. al-Ḥādī are substantially different. While the Egyptian carefully avoids remarking on the issue of eloquence, rather stressing that the followers of the brotherhood had never attributed poetry to the Prophet, the Mauritanian does admit the lack of eloquence, which, however, he deems unnecessary for the dream vision to be found to be legitimate. His response overlooks the fact that the Prophet was granted the meritorious faculty of *jawāmi‘ al-kalim* (conciseness of speech),⁹⁶⁶ which surely entails that words which even the

⁹⁶² Al-Ḥāfīz, *Radd akādhīb al-mufarīn*, p. 45.

⁹⁶³ Aḥmad Sukayrij, *Kashf al-ḥijāb*, p. 100.

⁹⁶⁴ Yaṣīn/69.

⁹⁶⁵ Aḥmad b. al-Ḥādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 244.

⁹⁶⁶ *Jawāmi‘ al-kalim* is one of the many special divine gifts to the Prophet that are documented in Prophetic traditions. While a wide range of meanings are suggested for the term, “conciseness of speech” is one of them. For

Mauritanian Tijānī himself find to be rigid and bereft of eloquence should not be attributed to him. This was the core of the objection raised by the Moroccan Salafī, which went unaddressed. The second point that should be taken into consideration is that of the repeated usage of the term *abyāt* (verses), in *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*, in reference to the lines purportedly taught to al-Tāzī. This has encouraged the opponents of the Tijāniyya to think of the verses as a poem, and probably rightfully, as although certain protagonists of the brotherhood have forcefully rejected this definition, they have failed to provide any explanation whatsoever as to why they were depicted as *abyāt* in *Jawāhir*. Instead, such Tijānīs have ignored this usage of the term in the most authoritative source of the brotherhood, as if it had never existed.

5. Conclusion

Al-Hilālī is perhaps the most competent opponent that the Tijāniyya have had to contend with. He likely owed this competence to the combination of his nine years of experience as a zealous follower of the doctrines of the brotherhood and his vast knowledge of the Tijānī sources, coupled with his familiarity and interactions with some of the most highly revered Tijānī authorities then living, like the North African Aḥmad Sukayrij and the West African Alfā Hāshim. Another trait which differentiates him from other antagonists of the Tijāniyya is his deep knowledge of the sciences of the Prophetic traditions, in pursuit of which he went as far as India to meet the leading *ḥadīth* experts of the East.

His own confrontations with the Tijāniyya started as early as the 1920s (CE) when he entered into a debate with his mentor Aḥmad Sukayrij, undisputedly the leading Tijānī polemicist of his time. A few years later in Medina, he unleashed a robust anti-Tijānī campaign against Alfā Hāshim, the nephew of al-Ḥājj ‘Umar, and the brotherhood’s potent representative in Hijaz. His first organized (and probably the only) written criticism, however, only appeared at the beginning of the 1970s (CE), so, quite late; approximately half a century after his first clash with the followers of the brotherhood. The reasons for this include the extensive journeys he undertook for educational purposes, and as well as his other commitments, such as anti-colonial activities, and his proselytization, by various means, of what he perceived to be the authentic version of Islam. His

further information see: <http://www.manyprophetsonemessage.com/2015/04/29/conciseness-of-speech-gods-special-gift-to-prophet-muhammad-pbuh>, last consulted on 22.11.2017.

written critique of the brotherhood's doctrines, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiyya*, should therefore also be understood as a product of his *da'wa* mission, rather than as a purely polemical enterprise.

Unlike the typical onslaughts of the Tijānīs' opponents, al-Hilālī's *al-Hadiyya* is moderate in tone. He avoids denigrating the founding figure of the brotherhood, rather holding the latter in high esteem, in fact, and calls upon Tijānīs to hold back from destroying his reputation. Indeed, he shows none of the same restraint when it comes to the master's followers, who are accused of fabrication and the spreading of lies. This feature separates the Moroccan Salafī from his predecessor 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ifriqī, whose approach in *al-Anwār al-raḥmāniyya* is the other way around: while Tijānīs are addressed as brothers by al-Ifriqī, the supreme master of the brotherhood is the target of his critique on a few occasions, though always tacitly and without specification. Al-Hilālī was the first among the Tijānīs' adversaries to make effective use of what is called *al-adilla al-khamsa* in his negation of the possibility of daylight encounters with the Prophet incarnate. The eloquent presentation of his debate with Muḥammad b. al-'Arabī al-'Alawī at the beginning of *al-Hadiyya* is a *sui generis* feature of the book.

The refutations of his book written by protagonists of the brotherhood are any thing but reverential. In addition to bestowing its author with the title of the biggest enemy of the Tijānīs (*akbar 'adūw li-l-tijānīyīn*), they disqualify his critique on the grounds of his lacking the necessary credentials of a religious scholar. This is claimed to be one of the reasons, among others, that had cost him his affiliation to the brotherhood. For all this, it appears that confrontations with him were not found to be easy, and that Tijānīs attempted to avoid them. Was it not for al-Hilālī's disciple 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Abd al-Khāliq's critical interrogation of the Tijānī teachings, for example, the Sudanese 'Umar Mas'ūd would never have mentioned al-Hilālī in his *al-Tijāniyya wa-khuṣūmuhum*. Likewise, the Mauritanian Muḥammad Fāl Abbā would have preferred to have stayed silent if his opinion had not been insistently demanded by his own disciple Aḥmad b. al-Hādī.

A thorough examination of these responses by the followers of the brotherhood reveals not only the lack of unity in Tijānī circles but also the difficult situation in which they found themselves. The first to respond in detail to his *al-adilla al-khamsa* argument was 'Umar Mas'ūd, drawing inspiration from his Egyptian master Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ; however, the latter's stance on daylight communication and its equation with the dream vision was harshly criticized by certain of his

fellow Tijānīs: Ibrāhīm Sīdī of Sudan, for example, accused him of having failed to stand firmly in the face of what he called Wahhābism.

Aḥmad al-Tijānī's claim to have his feet on the necks of other saints was another issue over which Tijānīs presented a disunited stance. While Aḥmad b. al-Hādī defended it as a proper distinction (*al-martaba fī l-khayr*) of Aḥmad al-Tijānī's, in line with the traditional strategy of the brotherhood, the supreme master's descendant Maḥmūd b. Bensālim took a different stance, instead suggesting a metaphorical interpretation. The term feet, he claimed, was in fact a reference to the two authoritative sources of the religion, the Qur'ān and the Sunna, rather than to his own physical feet. Thus, while the Tijānīs of North Africa (Morocco) felt the need to develop a new line of argumentation, the Tijānīs of West Africa (Mauritania) and Egypt,⁹⁶⁷ were at pains to maintain the traditional strategy of the Brotherhood. These instances of internal conflict show the extent of the effectiveness of the Salafī campaign, conducted against Sufism in general and the Tijāniyya in particular, that has been conducted in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

The responses of the author of *Shams al-dalīl* Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, which attract the attention for their author's brevity, denigration of his opponents, and deflection of the main points of the critique to which he is responding, prove Seesemann's pertinent observation that the polemical literature of the brotherhood has been "primarily written to reassure their own constituency",⁹⁶⁸ rather than a sincere attempt to refute their critics. Nothing could better display this trait than Aḥmad b. al-Hādī's constant denigration of his opponent's scholarly credentials, and attempts to disqualify him on the basis of his alleged lack of knowledge.

⁹⁶⁷ Muḥamamd al-Ḥāfiẓ for instance maintains that the term "feet" refers to the high status of Aḥmad al-Tijānī. See details in Muḥammad al-Ṭayyib al-Sufyānī, *al-Ifāda al-aḥmadiyya li-murīd al-sa'āda al-abadiyya*, ed. Muḥamamd al-Ḥāfiẓ, Cairo: al-Maṭba'at al-'Alamiyya, 1391/1971, p. 139.

⁹⁶⁸ Rüdiger Seesemann, "Three Ibrāhīms" p. 309.

CHAPTER SIX: AL-TIJĀNIYYA: DIRĀSA LI-AHAMM ‘AQĀ’ID AL-TIJĀNIYYA AND THE TIJĀNĪ RESPONSES

In this chapter, a detailed account will be provided of the allegations made against the Tijāniyya brotherhood by the Saudi Salafī Dakhīl Allāh, and the responses of the Mauritanian Tijānī Aḥmad b. al-Hādī. The chapter will begin with a brief introduction of the methods, strategies and structures of their works, and selected themes of their debate.

1. *Al-Tijāniyya: Dirāsa li-Ahamm ‘Aqā’id al-Tijāniyya fī Ḍaw’ al-Kitāb wa-l-Sunna – its Method and Structure*

Dakhīl Allāh’s *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā’id al-Tijāniyya* (A Study of the Principal Tijānī Beliefs) is one of the few anti-Tijānī polemical books⁹⁶⁹ written with a clear methodology and structure. It consists of a preface (*muqaddima*), an introduction (*tamhīd*), and two lengthy chapters, followed by a conclusion (*khātima*). In the preamble, the author mentions a number of the reasons that had persuaded him to investigate and write a refutation of the Tijānī doctrine. He claims that Muslims have been struck by their enemies from both the outside and the inside; in the second category, he includes those deviant Sufis who he claims not only to have polluted the pure Sufism of the first generations, but also to have had an unexpectedly bad influence on the Muslim world. It was Sufis, for example, he says, who had opened the way for colonialism in Africa, and the Tijāniyya brotherhood is considered to have been one among the many Sufi denominations that were responsible for this malevolent outcome. Thus, according to the author, purifying the Muslim world on the inside is as important as closing ranks against its enemies on the outside: Muslims will never be able to withstand their external enemies so long as their castles are not sturdy from within.⁹⁷⁰

He then posits his refutation of the Tijāniyya is effectively a refutation of all Sufi denominations, since, after all, he states, the Tijāniyya is only a continuation of the basic Sufi philosophy with small nuances added, not to mention what he perceives to be the omnipresence of Tijānī malice in

⁹⁶⁹ The other example is Muḥammad al-Tāḥir Maygharī’s *al-Shaykh Ibrāhīm Niyās al-Sinighālī, ḥayātuhu wa-’ārā’uhu wa-ta’ālīmuhu*. As mentioned previously, this book was initially written in fulfilment of the requirements for a master’s degree at the Department of Islamic Studies in Bayero University, Kano, and later published in Beirut with the financial support of the Islamic University of Medina.

⁹⁷⁰ Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā’id al-Tijāniyya*, pp. 5-6.

various parts of the African continent whose inhabitants would ask for the opinion of the Dār al-Iftā' (The House of *Fatwā*) from time to time. Another of the author's cited reasons for writing *Dirāsa li-aham 'aqā'id al-Tijāniyya* is that of fulfilling the duty assigned to each and every Muslim in the Qur'ān and the Sunna of encouraging the good and forbidding the evil. His aim is therefore to prove the falsehood embedded in Tijānī doctrine to its followers, who he claims have been deceived in one way or another and persuaded to put their goods and property at the disposal of charlatans-like Sufis. The author then quotes a passage from Tijānī sources which encourages the disciple to share all his worldly advantages with his master.⁹⁷¹

Next, the author elaborates on the methods and structure of the argumentation he is going to apply, as well as the challenges he faced in the initial stage of the research—the field work he conducted in Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Morocco. He claims to have first searched for Tijānī sources in Riyadh, where he occupied a teaching post at the Al-Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University; he then travelled to Mecca and Medina to collect further material, visiting a number of libraries and scholars there such as Shaykh Hammād b. Muḥammad al-Anṣārī (d. 1418/1997), a Salafī *ḥadīth* expert originally from present-day Mali, who, in the aftermath of the French invasion of that country, had migrated to Hijaz.⁹⁷² As a next step, he travelled to visit the library of Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ in Cairo, where he was well-received by Muḥammad Aḥmad al-Ḥāfiẓ (d. 1438/2017), who had taken over the leadership of the Tijāniyya in Egypt after the demise of his father in 1978 CE. From Cairo, he travelled to Morocco and visited the cities of Casablanca, Rabat, Meknes and Fez, where he was able to collect valuable sources for his research. He reports having been denied entry to the library (*khizāna*) of the Tijānī *zāwiya* of Fez, which is purportedly to be opened by the awaited Mahdī.⁹⁷³ He was able to meet with al-Hilālī in the city of Meknes, however, and discuss the Tijānī doctrines with him. During his one-week stay at the house of al-Hilālī, the latter is said to have provided a total of twenty-eight signed pages of responses given to the twenty questions

⁹⁷¹ The author of *al-Durra al-kharīda* defines this as the decorum of the disciple towards his master. A certain Sufi master, namely Yūsuf al-'Ajāmī, is said to have ordered the gate keeper of his *zāwiya* only to open the door for visitors when they had brought something edible with them. Otherwise, they were not worthy of his time. See Al-Nazīfī, *al-Durra al-kharīda*, vol. II, p. 93; Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-aham 'aqā'id al-Tijāniyya*, p. 7.

⁹⁷² On Hammād b. Muḥammad al-Anṣārī see: 'Abd al-Awwal b. Hammād al-Anṣārī, *al-Majmu' fī tarjama al-'allāma al-muhaddith al-shaykh Hammād b. Muḥammad al-Anṣārī wa-sīratihī wa-aqwālihi wa-rihlātih*, Medina: [probably by the Islamic University of Medina], 1422/2002; Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *'Ulamā' wa-mafakkirūn 'araftuhum*, vol. I, pp. 49-62.

⁹⁷³ The author claims it on the authority of Tijānī sources.

raised by the author.⁹⁷⁴ In addition to the gratitude he expresses towards the Moroccan Salafī and the authorities of various of the faculties at Al-Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, the author states his indebtedness to ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ghadyān (d. 1431/2010) and Ismā‘īl b. Muḥammad al-Anṣārī (d. 1417/1997) for their valuable help during the project.⁹⁷⁵

By Dakhīl Allāh’s own account, he has chosen a limited number of topics for discussion in his book because a detailed elaboration of each and every Tijānī tenet would have required much more extensive research. He then goes on to state that the topics that are presented to the reader are all somehow related to the issue of faith (‘*aqīda*), while those he has left out are either closely connected to the ones that are mentioned, or are so absurd that, so far as the author is concerned, they need no refutation.⁹⁷⁶ The topics in the book are arranged in a manner that is inline with the sequence of the pillars of faith (*arkān al-imān*) in the Muslim creed. Those of the Tijānī tenets that are claimed to concern faith in God (‘*aqīdatuhum fī Allāh*) are followed by those related to faith in the Qur’ān (‘*aqīdatuhum fī l-Qur’ān*), the Prophet (*wa-fī l-rasūl*) and the last day (*wa-l-yawm al-ākhir*). The author’s discussions of each are opened with numerous quotations from Tijānī sources dating from different periods of Tijānī history, with the aim of showing that the tenet in question has been shared and maintained by Tijānīs across different time periods and contexts. These are followed with the author’s refutation of the evidences that has been provided by protagonists of the brotherhood for each particular tenet; the author ends these discussions with what he calls “the conviction of the ahl al-sunna wa-l-jamā‘a” with relevance to that particular Tijānī tenet, often drawing on the writings of Ibn Taymiyya and other Salafī authorities.⁹⁷⁷ These discussions are further enriched by the author’s provision in the footnotes of short biographies of the most important actors and scholars in each case, as well as specifying the sources of the Prophetic traditions quoted. This is a particular hallmark of the *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā’id al-Tijāniyya* that distinguishes it among the critical works produced by what Tijānīs like to call the rejecters, or deniers (*munkirīn*).

⁹⁷⁴ Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā’id al-Tijāniyya*, pp. 12-13.

⁹⁷⁵ Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā’id al-Tijāniyya*, p. 15.

⁹⁷⁶ The author provides a few examples of such tenets, that, he says, are obvious nonsense. See Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā’id al-Tijāniyya*, pp. 8-10.

⁹⁷⁷ Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā’id al-Tijāniyya*, pp. 12-13.

The Tijānī sources most regularly quoted by author, are *Jawāhir al-ma‘āni*, *Rimāḥ ḥizb al-Raḥīm*, *Bughyat al-mustafīd* and *al-Durra al-kharīda*, each of which belongs to a different period of time in the history of the Tijāniyya brotherhood: the first two belong to the formative period, the last one to a relatively late period, and *Bughyat al-mustafīd* belongs to the period in between. These are not the only sources to which the author refers; he also claims to have consulted more than fifty Tijānī sources during his research, in addition to the critical polemical writings by earlier opponents of the brotherhood, like Ibn Māyābā’s *Mushtahā al-khāriḥ*, al-Ifriqī’s *al-Anwār al-rahmāniyya* and al-Hilālī’s *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, as well as some more indirectly critical works that refute Sufism in general.⁹⁷⁸

The author asserts that his own book is not of a polemical nature; rather, he says, its main goal and that of his research, has been to conduct the mission of *da‘wa* and to express the true Islamic faith. In keeping with this declaration, he says, he has maintained a soft unobtrusive approach throughout his discussions; and since his wish is to abstain from hurting the feeling of his opponents, no hurtful phrases are used. Nonetheless, this initially stated goal does not stop him from using indirectly vitriolic statements from time to time.⁹⁷⁹ This enables us to place him between al-Ifriqī and al-Hilālī, in terms of his approach. The former is so soft and sincere as to call his opponents “brothers” (*ikhwān*); the latter, while generous towards the founder of the brotherhood, strongly condemns his followers for allegedly destroying the reputation of their master. For his part, Dakhīl Allāh tries to stand on neutral ground as much as he can do; he abstains from expressing his thinking on the Tijānīs or their master, but can nonetheless be harsh towards the tenet which constitutes the subject of a particular discussion.

The introduction is dedicated to the elaboration of two concepts, namely that of the reprehensible innovation (*bid‘a*), and that of Sufism (*taṣawwuf*) itself. The definition of, types of, reasons for, and legal status of *bid‘a* are given in a systematical manner. Likewise, the attention of the reader is directed towards Sufism, its definition, formation and early history, and the different types and denominations of Sufis that exist in the Muslim world. In the first chapter, a detailed account of the life of the founder of the Tijāniyya is given, in addition to its formation, history and various

⁹⁷⁸ Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā‘id al-Tijāniyya*, pp. 13-14.

⁹⁷⁹ At the end of each discussion, for example, he says that whoever believes in a particular tenet believes in a deviant conviction that comprises disbelief (*kufr*) or polytheism (*shirk*) or sin (*ma‘ṣīya*). See Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā‘id al-Tijāniyya*, pp. 11-12.

factors that have played a crucial role in the expansion of the brotherhood in certain contexts. This is followed with a discussion of certain famous Tijānī authorities, including the direct disciples of Aḥmad al-Tijānī and their works.⁹⁸⁰ It takes the author more than eighty pages to arrive at the discussion of the Tijānī tenets that he deems important, and this he does in the second and longest chapter of the book.

2. *Shams al-Dalīl li-Itfā' al-Qindīl wa-Muḥiqq mā li-l-Dakhīl wa-l-Hilālī min Turrāhāt wa-Abāfīl*⁹⁸¹

2.1. The Admonition of Dakhīl Allāh

In this book's epilogue, its author, Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, shows a great deal of amazement towards the title of *Dirāsa li-ahamm 'aqā'id al-Tijāniyya fī daw' al-kitāb wa-l-sunna*, as a name that, he says, does not fulfil its promises. Instead of an evaluation of the Tijānī tenets in the lights of the Qur'ān and the Sunna, its author Dakhīl Allāh is said to have filled it with empty words that can only impress the foolish. His research "is devoid of scientific investigation and honesty. He relied instead on the fantasies of his imagination",⁹⁸² claims Aḥmad b. al-Hādī. Dakhīl Allāh is further said to have relied heavily on the literary analysis of the religious texts, in addition to making a psychological study of the Tijānīs, and he is admonished for his contact with al-Hilālī and for asking him about Tijānī tenets: if he really wanted to know about the reality of the doctrines of the brotherhood, argues Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, he would instead have contacted its followers, rather than their enemies. While the allegations raised by Dakhīl Allāh are claimed to be less hurtful than those made by al-Hilālī, he is nonetheless admonished for following in the foot steps of the Moroccan Salafī, as follows:

Why would you avoid asking followers of the brotherhood, while at the same time you claim that the intention behind your journeys to Egypt and Morocco was to get to know the Tijānīs? Yet nothing in your book shows that you have ever discussed with a single Tijānī the tenets you attribute to them, as you discussed them with al-Hilālī, to [meet] whom you travelled all the way to the city of Meknes, and resided there for a week, and asked him twenty questions which resulted in twenty-eight pages of responses

⁹⁸⁰ For details, see: Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm 'aqā'id al-Tijāniyya*, pp. 47-84.

⁹⁸¹ Shams al-dalīl is not the only response to Dakhīl Allāh. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṭālib wrote his *al-Sayf al-ṣaqīl fī l-radd 'an l-Dakhīl* in refutation of him.

⁹⁸² Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 6.

decorated with the signature of al-Hilālī.... What prevented you from staying instead with a Tijānī for a week or even less than that and directing the twenty questions [of yours] to him, in order to find the truth about the conviction of the follower of the Tijāniyya...[?] Do you think that Tijānīs are bound by the pages signed by al-Hilālī?... or by your own pages in which you followed in his footsteps, though your style of argumentation is better than his and you are less abusive in comparison to him.⁹⁸³

2.2. Refutation of the Allegations

As observed in the previous chapter, Aḥmad b. al-Hādī maintains the very unusual and vague strategy of not providing his reader with a full picture. While discussing the quotations from Tijānī sources that have been made by his opponent, for example, he intentionally omits the important parts, referring to them only in passing, then following that up with long responses that make it very hard for the reader to understand just what it was to which his opponent had objected, and what he is thus trying to refute. If the reader is not familiar with Dakhīl Allāh's book, he cannot easily ascertain where the Saudi Salafī stops and Aḥmad b. al-Hādī begins. Arguments and counterarguments are given in a complicated mixture, which makes them very hard to understand. A close examination reveals that this is not just a vague discourse, however, but rather a selective approach: of the numerous quotations that are cited by the Saudi Salafī, Aḥmad b. al-Hādī discusses only two, and then in a distorted manner, offering one or two objections, without providing tangible replies; beyond that, all he really does is to deny the legitimacy of his opponent's criticisms.

3. The Themes

In this section, I will elaborate on four important tenets to which the Saudi Salafī had objected and his Mauritanian adversary tries to defend.

⁹⁸³ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 7.

3.1. *Waḥdat al-wujūd*—the Unity of Being, or the Unity of Existence

Waḥdat al-wujūd, meaning the unity of being, or the unity of existence, is a technical Sufi term coined later by al-Sha‘ranī but the substance of which was introduced to the world of Sufism by the Andalusian Sufi-philosopher Ibn ‘Arabī (d. 637/1240).⁹⁸⁴ While Dakhīl Allāh is not the only opponent of the Tijāniyya to have raised the issue of *waḥdat al-wujūd* while critiquing the brotherhood,⁹⁸⁵ he is, as far as we know, the first anti-Tijānī to have opened his critique with this issue and dedicated a lengthy discussion to it. In the case of Dakhīl Allāh this is partly due to the fact that the notion is directly linked to the issue of faith in God, a matter which would always come first for a Wahhābī-Salafī like him; and partially due to his astonishment at discovering such a notion in Tijānī sources. For him, the deviation and invalidity embedded in the notion of *waḥdat al-wujūd* is so obvious that he could not have anticipated the Tijānī belief in such a doctrine, since the religion neither approves it, nor is it logical or in keeping with the pure nature (*fiṭra*) with which human beings are created. In relation to the tenet of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, he states that Tijānīs may be categorized into three groups, the first group consisting mostly of the earlier Tijānī shaykhs who believe in the unity of being, the second group consisting of those later generations of Tijānī scholars who reject *waḥdat al-wujūd*, and exclude those who adhere to it from the community of Muslims, and the third group consisting of ordinary Tijānīs, those who just imitate their shaykhs. For the author of *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā’id al-Tijāniyya*, this is sufficient proof of the fact that belief in the unity of being is not and has not been restricted to ordinary followers of the brotherhood; it is and has been held by their scholars as well.⁹⁸⁶

It was after a close interrogation of the Tijānī sources, according to Dakhīl Allāh, that he came to discover that the conviction of *waḥdat al-wujūd* was held among Tijānīs. Extensive quotations from Tijānī sources, including *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*, the most authoritative of them all, are presented to back up his argument. The supreme master of the order is reported to have divided people into two kinds: the cognizant (*al-‘arifīn*), being those who possess knowledge of the divine reality, and

⁹⁸⁴ For an account of the unity of existence as it appears in the work of Ibn ‘Arabī, see: William Chittick, “Between the Yes and the No. Ibn al-‘Arabi on Wujud and the Innate Capacity”, in: Robert K.C. Forman (ed.), *The Innate Capacity. Mysticism, Psychology and Philosophy*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 95-110.

⁹⁸⁵ Al-Hilālī, for instance, raises the issue of *waḥdat al-wujūd* in his *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, but only in passing, when he discusses the Tijānī perception of the tenet of *al-walī al-wāṣil*. For details, see: al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, pp. 127-128.

⁹⁸⁶ Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā’id al-Tijāniyya*, p. 86.

those who are veiled from it (*aṣḥāb al-ḥijāb*), who cannot see beyond the outward, exoteric appearance of creation. Creation is perceived to be essentially one: the variety of its manifestations makes no difference. Its multiplicity (*kathra*) and unity (*waḥda*) are one and the same thing, in the sight of the cognizant, they who are capable of envisioning the unity of creation in its multiplicity and vice versa, because they have truly tasted the real unity which is impossible to define in words. The cognizant are aware of the unity and separation (*al-waṣl wa-l-faṣl*) in creation;⁹⁸⁷ to them there is nothing in creation which does not contain the divine existence. Indeed, it *is* the divine existence, manifested in the image of creation. While the outward, exoteric appearance of created things (*zāhir al-wujūd*) belongs to them (*al-ghayr wa-l-ghayriyya*), the inner, esoteric aspect belongs to the divine existence and its attributes. The cognizant can see the reality of creation, while the veiled ones (*aṣḥāb al-ḥujub*) are prevented from seeing the divine existence in things by their outward appearances.⁹⁸⁸ Elsewhere, the author of *Jawāhir*, takes the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd* to a whole new level, claiming that each act of worship and prostration performed in front of others is in fact made to Allah Himself, due to his manifestation in a variety of shapes and forms. On the authority of the supreme master of the order, ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm argues that if Allah ceased to exist in these forms, all of them would instantly disappear, and further that it is the divine ardour (*ghīra*) which prevents the attribution of the station of divinity to others. He then presents a Qur’ānic verse in which the prophet Moses is instructed to worship Allah alone⁹⁸⁹ as textual evidence in favour of the argument that no other God who may have been worshipped really existed. Therefore, even he who worshipped idols is said to have worshipped none but Allah Himself.⁹⁹⁰

Dakhīl Allāh then gives a quotation from another Tijānī source, Sīdī ‘Ubayda b. Muḥammad al-Ṣaghīr b. Anbūja al-Shinqīṭī (d. 1284/1867-1868)’s *Maydān al-faḍl wa-l-ifḍāl fī shamm rā’iḥat jawharat al-kamāl* (The Arena of Grace and Favour to Smell the Odor of the Pearl of Perfection), to shed light on the perception of the tenet of *waḥdat al-wujūd* among followers of the brotherhood. The author of the book sets forth a complicated and contradictory discourse in his attempt to differentiate between *waḥdat al-wujūd* and the Tijānī tenet of the unity of being, in which he depicts the latter as a true religious belief approved by sound reason (*al-‘aql al-salīm*), and as the

⁹⁸⁷ ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*, vol. II, p. 92.

⁹⁸⁸ ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*, vol. I, p. 259.

⁹⁸⁹ Ṭāhā 20:14.

⁹⁹⁰ ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*, vol. I, pp. 184-185.

result of divine emanation (*al-fayḍ al-raḥmāni*), even if the human intellectual faculties fail to realize it. Belief in *wahdat al-wujūd* is claimed to be the most perfect form of faith, while objections to it are dismissed as signs of deficient faith. The author draws a correlation between belief in *wahdat al-wujūd* and the possession of true taste (*al-dhawq al-ṣaḥīḥ*), sharp perception (*al-kashf al-ṣarīḥ*) and an all-encompassing confirmation (*al-taṣḍīq al-jāmi*). It is the people of this nature who perceive the absolute divine existence (*al-wujūd al-muṭlaq*) in creation.⁹⁹¹ Divine existence (*wujūduhu ta'ālā*), which has neither shape nor form itself, is claimed to have the capability of manifesting in any created form. Thus, 'Ubayda al-Shinqīṭī argues, one can realize that the existence (*wujūd*) within these apparently different creatures is the very existence of Allah, although their shapes and forms do not belong to Him.⁹⁹²

Protagonists of the Tijāniyya often refer to a Prophetic tradition, collected by Bukhārī and Muslim, in which the Prophet is reported to have said that on the last day Allah will come to believers in an image that is unfamiliar to them, and will declare Himself their lord. They will reject the claim, and seek divine forgiveness for associating anyone with their lord. Thereupon, Allah will manifest Himself in the form familiar to them, a form in which the believers have already seen Him. This time they will recognize their lord and approve His claim to lordship. 'Ubeyda al-Shinqīṭī also makes mention of this Prophetic tradition as textual evidence for *wahdat al-wujūd* without clarifying that this incident is going to take place on the Day of Judgement. In his response, Dakhīl Allāh, therefore points out the fact that this conversation between Allah and His servants will occur on the last day; the Prophetic tradition itself claims it to be so. According to him, however, it contains no indication whatsoever of the truth of the transfiguration of the divine into the forms of the creatures of this world, as Tijānīs tend to claim. Dakhīl Allāh invokes the authority of Ibn Taymiyya, who in his *Majmu' al-fatāwā*, condemns the Sufi conviction of *wahdat al-wujūd* as infidelity, and those who believe in it as infidels (*malāḥida*). He is of the opinion that the aforementioned Prophetic tradition entails the necessity of belief in a divine vision on the last day, when Allah will manifest Himself to His servants in a form that befits His dignity and majesty. As far the Sufi claim that each and every existing thing is a divine transfiguration is concerned, he draws on the rational faculty, using dialectical reasoning to refute it. If we supposedly believe in

⁹⁹¹ 'Ubayda al-Shinqīṭī, *Maydān al-faḍl wa-l-Ifḍāl*, Cairo: Maktaba Madbūlī al-Ṣaḥīr, 1421/2000, pp. 93-94.

⁹⁹² 'Ubayda al-Shinqīṭī, *Maydān al-faḍl wa-l-Ifḍāl*, pp. 96-97.

the notion of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, he argues, then both the rejecter (*munkir*) and the one rejected (*munkar*) in the Prophetic tradition above would be one and the same being. In order to point out the rational deficiency of this conviction, he describes a conversation that took place between a Sufi and his interlocutor, who was probably an opponent. The Sufi said: “Whoever tells you that there are others in the universe apart from Allah, he indeed tells you a lie”. His interlocutor is quick to point out the absurdity of the statement, asking: “Who is the one who tells the lie?”⁹⁹³

The author of *Jawāhir*, ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm reports a statement of his master’s in which the notion of *waḥdat al-wujūd* is claimed to be rationally justifiable. The founding figure of the brotherhood likens the world to a human body, the components of which, despite their differences—blood, meat, bone, hair and brain, each with their different functions—appear to be essentially united. This is said to be the same as the unity of being in *waḥdat al-wujūd*, in which the unifying and unified remains one, despite the differences observed in the functions and natures of its components. Therefore, the objection which supposes it to be a unity of the superior (*sharīf*) with the inferior (*wadī*), as of the two opposites (*ijtimā‘ al-mutanāfiyayn*), is claimed to be null and void. The supreme master of the Tijāniyya proceeds to use another metaphor to further explain his point: According to him, the unity of creation can be understood via the metaphor of ink (*midād*) and the different words and meanings in which it may culminate. As a result of the flow of ink, different letters, words and connotations come into existence. This visible variety in form, shape and function does not contest the idea of their being united in essence (that of ink), even while different in shape and function. Creation, he argues, should be taken in the same way: united in essence, as the subject of divine overflow, while nevertheless differently manifested.⁹⁹⁴

Dakhīl Allāh responds to the first argument, in which creation is held to resemble the human body, in terms of “*qiyās ma‘a l-fāriq*”, a technical jurisprudential term for comparing two incommensurable things with each other. The human body is comprised of different parts with different functions, he agrees, yet all of them are tied to each other, in essence (*muttaḥidun ittiḥādan dhātiyyan*), because they do not accept separation from one another. These components find their meaning in their unity. In creation, however, he argues, each one stands alone. Two

⁹⁹³ Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū‘ al-fatāwā shaykh al-Islām Aḥmad b. Taymiyya*, vol. II, collected by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Qāsim and Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, Medina: Majma‘ al-Malik Fahd li-l-Tabā‘a al-Muḥḥaf al-Sharīf, 1425/2004, p. 342 and vol. XVI, pp. 423-424; Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā‘id al-Tijāniyya*, pp. 88-89.

⁹⁹⁴ For details, see: ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*, vol. II, pp. 98-99.

human beings are not united bodily; their existences continue separately from each other, a contrast (*tabāyun*) that cannot be seen in the case of one body consisting of many components. Thus, he argues, if the unity of two human beings in one body is not possible, how can the creator and his creature be united in one entity? As for the second argument, concerning ink and its manifestation in the form of words and connotations, Dakhīl Allāh rejects the idea that there is any internal union (*ittiḥād dhātī*) between them. While it is true that words are united in origin, being made from ink, he argues that each word is different from each other in shape and meaning. Human beings are not different from words in this sense. They are united in origin, being created first from earth and later from sperms and eggs, as the holy Qur'ān⁹⁹⁵ clearly states; they are also united in terms of their composition, comprising different components and body parts that function in the same way, and yet they are different from each other, due to their lack of internal union: each individual stands on their own. The author of *Dirāsa li-ahamm 'aqā'id al-Tijāniyya* thus holds the Tijānī perception of *waḥdat al-wujūd* to contradict the reality on the ground. He proceeds to recall the argument made by the famous twelfth century theologian and philosopher Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210),⁹⁹⁶ concerning the complete contrast between the creator and his creation. The union of both is impossible, he claims, because if one supposedly assumes a status of union between them, one would have to deal with the following problems: in an imaginary state of union, both creator and the creature are either existent (*mawjūdayn*) or absent (*ma'dūmayn*). In the first case, the two entities exist separately while in the second case no both of them are absent. Thus, in either case, no union has taken place. Likewise, if one of the two continues to exist and the other perishes, the union is once again disrupted, since no union between the present and absent is logically possible.⁹⁹⁷

Dakhīl Allāh is of the opinion that the claim of *waḥdat al-wujūd* is not only logically invalid, but also opposite to both human nature (*fiṭra*) and the religion of Islam as well. He goes on to present

⁹⁹⁵ Al-Ghāfir 40:67.

⁹⁹⁶ Al-Rāzī was born in Rey (present-day Iran) and died in Herat (present-day Afghanistan). He had close contact with Khawarazmian Ghrids, the rulers of central and southeast Asia. He was known for his expertise in many branches of Islamic science, particularly, exegeses, and his full command of the Arabic and Persian languages, writing poetry in both. For further details of his writings, see: al-Ziriklī, al-A'lām, vol. VI, p. 313; Kaḥāla, *Mu'jam la-mu'allifīn*, vol. III, pp. 558-560.

⁹⁹⁷ See al-Rāzī, *Muḥaṣṣal afkār al-mutaqaddimīn wa-l-muta'akhhirīn min l-'ulamā' wa-l-hukamā' wa-l-mutakallimīn*, al-Maṭba'a al-Ḥusayniyya al-Miṣriyya, 1323/1905, p. 112; al-Rāzī, *Muḥaṣṣal afkār al-mutaqaddimīn wa-l-muta'akhhirīn*, ed. Ṭāḥā 'Abd al-Raūf Sa'ad, Cairo: Maktaba al-Kulliyāt al-Azhariyya, n.d, p. 156.

many problematic scenarios that would result as a conclusion of such a claim. For him *waḥdat al-wujūd*, is nothing short of a fantasy (*takhayyulāt*), an illusion (*awhām*). If the creator and the creature were one entity, then religious instructions such as “dos and don’ts” would lose their meaning, he argues, due to the unity of the one who issues the orders (*āmir*) with the one to whom they are issued (*ma’mūr*). If both creator and creature were considered to be one and the same thing, the attributes of the creator *as* creator would have to be rejected: since a thing cannot bring itself to existence, it would be impossible for the creator to create Himself, not to mention that the holy Qur’ān⁹⁹⁸ denies the possibility of self-creation. Belief in *waḥdat al-wujūd*, he argues, thus forces its owner to reject divine attributes of God such as God being the lord of the creatures (*rab al-‘ālamīn*) and the owner of the Day of Judgement (*mālik yawm al-dīn*), for on the Day of Judgement there would be nothing except Him, and He cannot be the owner and the one owned (*mālik wa-mamlūk*) at once. Likewise, he says, *waḥdat al-wujūd* entails rejection of the divine attributions of sustenance (*al-rāziq*), instruction (*al-mu’allim*), and guidance (*al-hādī*), and also entails that the one who fasts (*yaṣūm*), the one who performs the ritual prayer (*yaqūm wa-yarka’ wa-yasjud*), the one who dies, the one who suffers from illness, and the one who falls victim to their enemies is God Himself. In fact, all shortages and deficiencies (*naqṣ wa-‘ayb*) could be attributed to Him. It would also entail that idol worshippers have worshipped none other than Him. He who bows in front of Satan would have to be considered to have obeyed Allah; furthermore, it would prove the claims of divinity on the part of Pharaoh and Dajjāl, he who is expected to appear towards the end of time (*al-Dajjāl al-muntaẓar*);⁹⁹⁹ whereas the prophet Ibrāhīm pleaded with his idol-worshipping father to stop listening to Satan. Allah, moreover, reminds humankind, in the holy Qur’ān of His covenant with them not to worship Satan by obeying him as he is their avowed enemy. Dakhīl Allāh concludes by stating that belief in *waḥdat al-wujūd* necessitates belief in the divinity of all dogs, donkeys and swines, for it is Allah that exists and nothing else.¹⁰⁰⁰ The Saudi Salafī sees no difference between the notion of *waḥdat al-wujūd* and the Christian conviction of the divinity of Jesus. “Those among Charistians who claim divinity for Jesus are declared by Allah to be disbelievers. For Allah says: “They have certainly disbelieved who asserted: Allah is the

⁹⁹⁸ Al-Tūr 52:35.

⁹⁹⁹ For a detailed account see: Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū‘ al-rasā’il wa-l-masā’il*, vol. IV, Rashīd Riḍā (ed.), Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, n.d, pp. 94-102.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā’id al-Tijāniyya*, pp. 90-94.

Messiah, the son of Mary”.¹⁰⁰¹ Thus, he continues: “What would be the status of those who assert that Allah is united with all of His creation?”¹⁰⁰²

In what follows, Dakhīl Allāh quotes a variety of scholars, including famous Sufis, all of whom have rejected the idea of the unity of the creator and His creation. ‘Abdallāh b. Muḥammad al-Nūrī (d. 591/1195),¹⁰⁰³ the author of *Mi ‘yār al-murīdīn* (The Standard for Disciples), holds *waḥdat al-wujūd* to be a fabrication of extremists (*ghullāt*) among the Sufis, which has nothing to do with true Sufism, bearing rather, a resemblance to Christianity. Abū l-Ḥasan al-Māwardī (d. 450/1058),¹⁰⁰⁴ another of the scholars quoted, finds the contrast between Islam and the notion of unity with God (*ittiḥād*) to be so fundamental that he excommunicates adherents of *ittiḥād* from the community of Muslims. Dakhīl Allāh quotes Kamāl al-Dīn al-Marāghī, who reports an encounter of him with Shaykh Abū l-‘Abbās al-Mursī (d. 686/1287),¹⁰⁰⁵ a student of the famous Sufi Abū l-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī (d. 656/1258),¹⁰⁰⁶ in which al-Mursī bitterly rejected the notion of unity with God claiming the impossibility of any unity between the creation and the creator.¹⁰⁰⁷ The Saudi Salafī further quotes Ibn Taymiyya, who also warned against the dangers embedded in the notion of unity with God, and who even excommunicated those who entertained doubts as to the disbelief of the protagonists of union with God.¹⁰⁰⁸

In his response to Dakhīl Allāh, Aḥmad b. al-Hādī rejects the partition of Tijānīs into three categories in relation to the notion of the *waḥdat al-wujūd*. The Saudi Salafī is further accused of putting words into the mouth of Tijānīs: along with al-Hilālī, he is claimed to have failed to separate *waḥdat al-wujūd* from the Indian notion of the unity of God with the universe. The former,

¹⁰⁰¹ Al-Mā’ida/72.

¹⁰⁰² Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā’id al-Tijāniyya*, p. 94.

¹⁰⁰³ Al-Nūrī was a Sufi scholar who followed the Shafiite school in jurisprudence. He was born in Isfahan and travelled to Damascus. See: ‘Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla, *Mu’jam al-mu’allifīn*, vol. II, p. 274.

¹⁰⁰⁴ On him see: al-Ziriklī, *al-A’lām*, vol. V, p. 146.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Al-Mursī was a Shādhilī Sufi master with expertise in Sufism and jurisprudence who was born in Mursiya, Andalus and lived in Alexandria, Egypt. He met the founding figure of the Shadhiliyya brotherhood, Abū l-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī, in Tunisia and accompanied him there for quite some time. See: Al-Ziriklī, *al-A’lām*, vol. I, p. 179. For further details, see: ‘Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla, *Mu’jam al-mu’allifīn*, vol. II, pp. 467-468.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Al-Shādhilī was the founder of the Shādhiliyya brotherhood. Born in Morocco, he studied and established his own order in Tunisia, and later settled in Alexandria, Egypt. For details of his life and writings, see: al-Ziriklī, *al-A’lām*, vol. IV, p. 304; ‘Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla, *Mu’jam al-mu’allifīn*, vol. II, pp. 467-468; Ma’ mūn Gharīb, *Abū l-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī: Ḥayātuhu, taṣawwufuhu, talāmidhuhu wa-awlādūhu*, Cairo: Dār Gharīb, 2000.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā’id al-Tijāniyya*, pp. 95-96.

¹⁰⁰⁸ For further details, see: Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmu’ al-fatāwā*, vol. II, p. 368.

according to Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, is a legitimate Sufi tenet; it is a taste (*dhawq*) and observation of the divine (*mushāhada*), one's arrival at which is a result of divine emanation (*fath ilāhī*). As he states here:

Waḥdat al-wujūd in the sight of cognizant is *mushāhada* and *dhawq* which can only be realized by divine emanation. Only he who has tasted it understands it; it is beyond words. There is no way of understanding it through logical reasoning... as far as the fusion (*ḥulūl*) of the created (*ḥādith*) and the uncreated (*qadīm*) or their unity is concerned, neither stands to reason... None of the Tijānīs, neither those of earlier nor later generations, praise be to Allah, believe in either *ḥulūl* or *ittiḥād*. Moreover, like the rest of Muslims, Tijānīs excommunicate believers in *ḥulūl* and *ittiḥād*.¹⁰⁰⁹

This is a typical attempt at putting an end to the discussion by declaring the issue to be a question of Sufi taste and divine emanation which the more mundane human faculties (such as logic and reasoning) are insufficient to comprehend. However, the force of his opponent's criticism nonetheless compels the author of *Shams al-dalīl* to discuss it in some detail. He ironically dedicates twenty-five pages to an issue that he considers to be beyond the reach of ordinary human comprehension but accessible to a distinctively Sufi understanding. He argues that Dakhīl Allāh's attribution of belief in *ittiḥād* and *ḥulūl* to the Tijānīs is a slander, further claiming that the latter had made a methodological mistake in asking an enemy of the Tijānīs about the doctrine of the Tijāniyya—this, he says, is a sign of malevolence in itself. “If he really had the purpose of rehabilitation (*iṣlāḥ*) in mind, as he claims”, asks the Mauritanian, “why would he not turn to the Tijānīs and asked them, instead of their enemy al-Hilālī, about their belief concerning *waḥdat al-wujūd*?”¹⁰¹⁰ This was not the only mistake which, he says, was committed by Dakhīl Allāh: he is said to have committed even a greater mistake by attributing the notion of divine unity with the universe to the Tijānīs, as well as their categorization into three groups in relation to this tenet, as, according to Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, even the Tijānī quotations cited by Dakhīl Allāh in support of his argumentation serve to disprove him. “The textual excerpts that you presented as evidence and into which you interpolated alien material (*dallasta*) disprove you”.¹⁰¹¹ Here it should be noted

¹⁰⁰⁹ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 148. On the rejection of *ḥulūl* and *ittiḥād* within Sufism in general and the Tijāniyya in particular, see: Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ, *al-Kāfi fī 'ilm al-tazkiyya*, vol. IV, Cairo: al-Nahār li-l-Tab' wa-l-Nshar wa-l-Tawzī', 2004. pp. 134-144; 'Abd al-Qadir Abū 'Arakī, *Shams al-taḥqīq fī dalā'il al-ṭarīq*, pp. 62-63.

¹⁰¹⁰ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 148.

¹⁰¹¹ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 148.

that the accusation of *tadlīs* (interpolation) remains unsubstantiated by Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, as he fails to specify which parts are the alleged interpolations.

Through invoking the authorities of some well-known Tijānī masters such as Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Kansūsī, Aḥmad Sukayrij and Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, the author of *Shams al-dalīl* attempts to differentiate between the Sufi doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd* and the Hindu conviction of union with God. Al-Kansūsī, in his *al-Ḥilal al-zanġafūriyya* (The Zanġafurian Solution),¹⁰¹² declares *waḥdat al-wujūd* to be a sign of real *tawḥid* ([the] Islamic monotheism)¹⁰¹³ which indicates the high rank of the cognizant one who happens to taste it, and which may be understood only through divine illumination (*fath ilāhī*). Al-Kansūsī further claims that *waḥdat al-wujūd* possesses no reality outside the imagination (*ft l-khārij*) of the Sufi, and yet it is perceived to be real beyond any shred of doubt, taking place in the sight of the cognizant one due to his annihilation in the unity of God.¹⁰¹⁴ In his work *Ahl al-ḥaqq al-‘arīfun billāh* (People of the Truth Who Possess Divine Knowledge), Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz differentiates between the Sufi perception of *waḥdat al-wujūd* and the Hindu perception of unity known as nirvana. Hindus are said to consider a specific kind of light to be the source of creation, of which every creature, including human beings, is a part. For them, according to al-Ḥāfīz, when a human being reaches the peak of perfection, they reunite with the original source and perishes in it. In an attempt to make this more understandable, he uses the metaphor of a plant growing out of soil, which, that after some time, returns to the soil which is its origin, through a process of transformation. Thus, he says, the concepts of separation (*infīṣāl*), mixture (*imtizāj*) and partition (*tajziya*) are central to this type of union, whereas the Sufi perception of *waḥdat al-wujūd* is quite distinct, having nothing to do with these three concepts; rather, he says, it negates the existence of anything but Allah, as follows:

The reality of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, which Sufis relate in their prose as well as their poetry is [that] existence (*wujūd*) belongs to the truth and the self-sufficient one,

¹⁰¹² The full title of the book is *al-Ḥilal al-zanġafūriyya fi l-as‘ila al-ṭayfūriyya*. It was written as a response to the questions of a fellow Tijānī, Ḥasan b. Ṭayfūr, who is said to have directed these questions to al-Kansūsī after reading *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*. See Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Kansūsī, *al-Ḥilal al-zanġafūriyya fi l-as‘ila al-ṭayfūriyya*, n.p, n.d. p. 2.

¹⁰¹³ Contemporary Tijānīs often reiterate the same argument concerning *waḥdat al-wujūd*. Among others, see: Ibrāhīm Ṣalīḥ, *al-Kāfi fi ‘ilm al-tazkiyya*, p. 146, who also advises Sufis to restrain from using erroneous statements that might give rise to the notion of God’s unity with his creation. Many intruders into Sufism, he says, have used problematic statements to besmirch Sufis. As for the problematic phrases of Sufis like Ibn ‘Arabī and others, he says, they should not be taken at face value. See: Ibrāhīm Ṣalīḥ, *al-Kāfi fi ‘ilm al-tazkiyya*, p. 147-148.

¹⁰¹⁴ Al-Kansusi, *al-Ḥilāl al-zanġafūriyya*, pp. 20-22; Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, pp. 148-150.

Allah almighty alone. All others are dependent upon His help. If a Sufi says: “There is no existence apart from that of Allah”, he means that divine existence alone is the true existence, which comes from itself [and] not from any other source outside Him, whereas the existence of other things is a result of the divine existence. Their existence comes not from their essence, since they did not bring themselves into reality; rather, Allah brought them into reality (*awjadahu*)... Therefore, their existence is from Allah, with Allah and for Allah (*min Allāh bi-Allāh li-Allāh*).¹⁰¹⁵

Aḥmad b. al-Hādī’s attempt to prove the negation of the existence of creation—that is, that nothing exists except the divine—can be interpreted in two different ways: First, that every creature needs a creator, who has created different kinds of existence. Thus, these different sorts of existence are united in their trait of being created by one creator. Second, that every creature is an appearance of the creator, through which He has made Himself manifest. This second interpretation would mean that the form of the creature belongs to the creature, but the substance which takes that form belongs to the creator Himself. Dakhīl Allāh’s objection is directed at the second interpretation, a position that, he claims, that Tijānī sources are prone to take.¹⁰¹⁶ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī keeps his own narrative vague, however; not attempting to draw a distinction between the two types, he instead confines himself to the negation of his opponent’s criticism, and reproaches him for being intolerant of Tijānīs. A Muslim, he argues, should adopt an attitude of *ḥusn al-ẓann* (trust) in his fellow Muslims, and try to interpret their statements in a way reconcilable with the religion, even if they have uttered concepts like *ittiḥād*, since the word *ittiḥād* has both negative and positive connotations. While its negative connotations imply *ḥulūl*, which is disbelief, the positive connotations of *ittiḥād* imply the station of *fanā*’ in the Sufi tradition. Aḥmad b. al-Hādī thus holds that one cannot be condemned for one’s terminology, as long as one refers to its true connotations.¹⁰¹⁷ From his point of view, al-Hilālī should have followed the example of al-Suyūṭī, who had attempted to exculpate al-Biṣṭāmī and Ibn ‘Arabī for their problematic utterances,¹⁰¹⁸ by

¹⁰¹⁵ Muḥammad al-Hāfiẓ, *Ahl al-ḥaqq al-‘arīfun billāh*, n.p. 1368/1949, p. 38.

¹⁰¹⁶ For a complete account of his argumentation see the relevant section above.

¹⁰¹⁷ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 154.

¹⁰¹⁸ Ecstatic utterances by al-Biṣṭāmī and Ibn ‘Arabī are generally interpreted as signs of *ḥulūl* and *ittiḥād*. Al-Suyūṭī, based on the principle of *ḥusn al-ẓann* attempts to view the problematic utterances as products of a special Sufi spiritual state of mind. For details Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 154. See also Al-Suyūṭī, *Naẓm al-‘iqyān fī a’yān al-a’yān*, edit: Philipp K. Hitti, New York: Syrian-American Press, 1927, p. 99 and Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Ḥāwī li-l-fatāwā fī l-fiqh wa-l-tafsīr wa-l-hadīth wa-l-usūl wa-l-nahw wa-l-irāb wa-sā’ir al-funūn*, vol. II, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1421/2000, pp. 126-127.

extending *ḥusn al-ẓann* towards his fellow Muslims. Even Ibn Taymiyya, he says, the standard reference for the Salafiyya, had excused Sufis for those of their ecstatic utterances that occur in the state of annihilation, provided that, after returning to their senses, the Sufis realize the mistakes, they have made during *fanā'*—this in contrast with *ittiḥād* and *ḥulūl* that he declared to be disbelief.¹⁰¹⁹ The Mauritanian Tijānī gives the further example of Ibn Qayyim, who exculpated 'Abdallāh b. Muḥammad al-Hirawī (d. 481/1089)¹⁰²⁰ for statements of his that implied *ḥulūl* and *ittiḥād*.¹⁰²¹

Next, Aḥmad b. al-Hādī turns to reinterpreting his opponent's quotations from Tijānī sources, even while, as usual, he maintains a vague strategy in response. The reader is never provided with a full and clear picture. Instead, he proceeds with extremely complicated and cleverly twisted sentences, and of the numerous passages from Tijānī sources discussed by his opponent, Aḥmad b. al-Hādī addresses only two of them, both in this distorted manner, and without providing tangible replies to his opponent's points. Throughout his discussion of the quotations, he intentionally omits important parts of them, mentioning them only in passing, followed by a long, tiresome, and often repetitive response. This makes it very hard for the reader to understand what his opponent had actually objected to, in each quotation, and thus what he, Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, is trying to refute.

Holding that *Jawāhir al-mā'anī* refers to *waḥdat al-wujūd* as a matter of taste for the cognizant, rather than defining it as a belief, Aḥmad b. al-Hādī therefore argues that Dakhīl Allāh has committed a huge mistake in depicting it as a Tijānī belief (*i'tiqād*),¹⁰²² and, further, that neither of the quotations he has provided really supports his position. This is the kind of rather rhetorical approach that one comes to expect from protagonists of the brotherhood. In fact, there is one particular passage in *Jawāhir* which is quoted by Dakhīl Allāh in *Dirāsa li-ahamm 'aqā'id al-Tijāniyya*, but which seems to be deliberately ignored by the author of *Shams al-dalīl*, Aḥmad b. al-Hādī. The quotation concerns how, according to *Jawāhir*, every form of worship (*ibāda*) and

¹⁰¹⁹ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 155.

¹⁰²⁰ Al-Hirawī was a Sufī Ḥanbalī scholar born in Qandahar (present-day Afghanistan) with an ancestry going back to Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī, the host of the Prophet in Medina. He was known for his expertise in the Arabic language and in the sciences of *ḥadīth*, and his bitter struggle against reprehensible innovations (*bid'a*). This is probably the reason for Ibn Qayyim's exculpating him from having made problematic ecstatic utterances. He lived and died in Herat. See al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, vol. IV, p. 122; 'Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, vol. II, p. 288.

¹⁰²¹ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 156.

¹⁰²² Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, pp. 156-158.

prostration (*sajda*) performed in glorification of others (*ghayr Allāh*) is actually made to Allah, for he who is manifest in such a form is none other *than* Allah. As such, every idol worshipper who bows in front of stones and wooden objects they regard as gods is indeed worshipping Allah.¹⁰²³ It appears that Aḥmad b. al-Hādī had deliberately ignored this quotation in his response, as the citation of such a pertinent and compelling passage in the most authoritative text of his order is unlikely to have escaped his attention. In fact, on the basis of this particular passage, one can conclude that the type of *waḥdat al-wujūd* that is approved in *Jawāhir*, and it is of a type which blurs the distinction and boundaries between the creator and his creation—precisely the type which Aḥmad b. al-Hādī had not only defined as *ḥulūl* and *ittiḥād*, and condemned his opponent for presenting as the kind Tijānīs believe in, but which he had also declared to be disbelief and equated with Hindu Nirvana. The type of *waḥdat al-wujūd* that he had defended was rather that of the annihilation of the Sufi cognizant in divine unity. In light of this quotation which Aḥmad b. al-Hādī had omitted to mention, Dakhīl Allāh’s argument that *waḥdat al-wujūd* does mean unification of creation with the creator in Tijānī sources therefore seems accurate, and this belief is in no way reconcilable with the principles of Islam. This is indeed the type of *waḥdat al-wujūd* that endorses Pharaoh’s claim of divinity.¹⁰²⁴ It is therefore no surprise that Aḥmad b. al-Hādī ignored the relevant quotation by his opponent of *Jawāhir*, a trait which may be shown to be common place in Tijānī polemical literature. The contemporary Tijānī scholar (and a member of the family of the brotherhood’s founder), Maḥmūd b. Bensālim, for example, allocates no less than twenty-five pages of his book *al-Ṭarīqa al-Tijānīyya bayn al-intiqād wa-l-i’tiqād* (The Tijānīyya Brotherhood Between Criticism and Belief) to the discussion of the topic of *waḥdat al-wujūd*. He strongly denies any unity between the creator and creation,¹⁰²⁵ dividing the existent (*wujūd*) into that which is dependent on itself and that which is dependent on others. The first form of existence belongs to the divine, and the second to creation.¹⁰²⁶ Beyond this, he persistently avoids discussing any passage that imply such a unity, and the only passage to which he does refer is quoted partially and deficiently.¹⁰²⁷

¹⁰²³ Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā’id al-Tijānīyya*, p. 87.

¹⁰²⁴ For details on how *waḥdat al-wujūd*, thus defined, would strengthen the claim of Pharaoh’s divinity, see the relevant section above.

¹⁰²⁵ Maḥmūd b. Bensālim, *al-Ṭarīqa al-Tijānīyya bayn al-intiqād wa-l-i’tiqād*, pp. 36, 38, 46.

¹⁰²⁶ Maḥmūd b. Bensālim, *al-Ṭarīqa al-Tijānīyya bayn al-intiqād wa-l-i’tiqād*, pp. 37-38.

¹⁰²⁷ Based on a statement by the supreme master of the brotherhood as reported by ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, the creator was said to manifest Himself in creation with His names and attributes—manifestations which outwardly belong to

3.2. *Waḥdat al-Shuhūd*—Arrival at God’s Presence and, Finally, Annihilation in Him

Waḥdat al-shuhūd, also referred to as annihilation (*fanā*’) in Tijānī doctrine, refers to a stage where the servant arrives in the presence of God and is finally annihilated in Him. According to the author of *Jawāhir*, the supreme master of the Tijāniyya was once asked about the state of a Sufi master upon being granted the merit of arrival in the divine presence (*al-shaykh al-wāṣil*). In response, Al-Tijānī depicted it as the disappearance of veils that block one’s vision of reality, and described it as happening in four phases: In the first phase, one witnesses reality but from behind a thick veil; this is the phase of *muḥāḍara*. In the second phase, the veil becomes thinner; this is the phase of *mukāshafa*. In the third phase, the veil perishes, and one witnesses reality unveiled; this is called *mushāhada*. Finally comes the last phase of *mu’āyana* where no other or otherness exists any longer; one loses one’s own existence and becomes annihilated in divine reality. This is also described as annihilation in annihilation (*fanā’ fī l-fanā’*), wherein nothing except Allah remains, and the servant is united with the lord. This is the witnessing of “the real in the real for the real with the real” (*mu’āyanat al-ḥaqq fī l-ḥaqq li-l-ḥaqq bi-l-ḥaqq*).¹⁰²⁸ On another occasion, the supreme master of the brotherhood is reported to have depicted this phase as the stage where one obtains divine knowledge and attains illumination (*maqām al-faḥ*).¹⁰²⁹ Elsewhere, he describes why one loses one’s own existence when arriving in the presence of reality, of the lord: it is because the divine presence is the highest possible level of purity, and does not accepting any pollution whatsoever, that when one enters it, one’s existence necessarily perishes. Nothing remains but pure divinity; even the soul of the servant perishes, and he is no longer in possession of speech, reason, motion or even knowledge; in short, all of his human attributions are gone. If he intended to speak, he would probably say: “There is no deity but I. How exalted am I. How high is my majesty!” because at this stage, he would only be translating divine speech.¹⁰³⁰

creation but inwardly and essentially belong to Him. Ordinary people, the veiled ones (*aṣḥāb al-ḥujub*) fail to observe and see the divine in creation: to them it is blocked by the outward (exoteric) forms of things. See: ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma’ānī*, vol. I, p. 259. Maḥmūd b. Bensālim, solely concerns himself with the first part, claiming that it is the divine attributes and names which are available to observation in different forms, and not God in his essence, but ignores the second part, where al-Tijānī says that only ordinary people fail to observe the divine in the different forms in the universe. Maḥmūd b. Bensālim, *al-Ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya bayn al-intiqād wa-l-i’tiqād*, pp. 35-36.

¹⁰²⁸ ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma’ānī*, vol. I, p. 160.

¹⁰²⁹ ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma’ānī*, vol. I, p. 191. See also vol. II, p. 6.

¹⁰³⁰ ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma’ānī*, vol. II, p. 19-20.

The author of *Jawāhir* cites a Prophetic tradition in support of this idea of annihilation in God, wherein one is stripped of one’s human attributes and overwhelmed by (those of) the divine, and of one’s sustenance (*baqā’*), following the annihilation. The Prophetic tradition in question is one that was transmitted by al-Bukhārī on the authority of Abū Hurayra, in which the Prophet is reported to have said:

Verily, Allah almighty says: “Whoever shows animosity to a friend of mine, I declare war against him. My servant does not draw near to Me with anything more beloved to me than the religious duties with which I have obligated him. And My servant continues to draw near to Me with supererogatory deeds until I love him. When I love him, I become his hearing with which he hears and his sight with which he sees and his hand with which he strikes and his foot with which he walks.”¹⁰³¹

A literal and exoteric interpretation of this Prophetic statement would uphold the Tijānī notion of *wahdat al-shuhūd*; thus, Dakhīl Allāh invokes the authority of well-known *ḥadīth* experts such as al-Ḥāfiẓ b. Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (d. 852/1449)¹⁰³² and Ibn Taymiyya in his refutation of this seemingly unacceptable interpretation, both of whom also rejected the understanding of this Prophetic tradition in terms of union with, and annihilation in God. According to Ibn Ḥajar, this interpretation belongs to the people of deviation (*ahl al-zaygh*). Furthermore, he claims that the subsequent part of the tradition in question—“Were he to ask [any thing] from Me, I will surely give it to him; and were he to seek refuge with me, I will surely grant him refuge” —refutes the union and annihilation based interpretation, since it decisively separates the human being (as the seeker of refuge) and God (the provider of refuge) from one another. For Ibn Taymiyya, this Prophetic tradition speaks of no internal union between Allah and humankind, and he claims that any such interpretation would undoubtedly lead to infidelity, he claims as there is no difference between this understanding and the claims of Christians regarding the prophet Jesus. Following Ibn Taymiyya, Dakhīl Allāh proposes a metaphorical understanding in which the *ḥadīth* is claimed to describe a stage where the friend of Allah unites with his creator in cultivating love for good

¹⁰³¹ ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*, vol. I, p. 118. See also vol. II, pp. 6-15.

¹⁰³² Born in Cairo with roots going back to ‘Asqalān of Palestine, ‘Alī b. Muḥammad Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī belonged to the Shāfi‘ī school of thought. Known for his expertise in history, the sciences of *ḥadīth*, exegesis and jurisprudence, along with his excellent command of language and poetry, his writings are regarded as crucial and are still in circulation among Muslims. He travelled to Yemen and Hijaz to obtain his knowledge of *ḥadīth*, and died in Cairo. See al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām*, vol. I, pp. 178-179; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Jawāhir wa-l-durar fi tarjama shaykh al-Islām ibn Ḥajar*, ed: Ibrāhīm Bājīs ‘Abd al-Majīd, Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 1419/1999.

things and hate for bad things. What is dear to Allah becomes dear to him, and what is detestable to Allah become detestable to him. And even if the Prophetic statement were to be taken in an uncritical literal sense, he says, it does not support the notion of annihilation: the *ḥadīth* specifically mentions four points (as hearing, seeing, hand and foot) at which a union may occur, whereas the protagonists of annihilation argue for one's total union with, and annihilation in Allah.¹⁰³³

Another piece of evidence provided by Tijānīs in favour of *waḥdat al-shuhūd* is a purported Prophetic statement reported by 'Alī Ḥarāzīm, according to whom, when the cognizant reaches the stage of annihilation, he sinks into the oceans of unity, or oneness (*biḥār al-tawḥīd*). He no longer performs *dhikr*, nor displays any motion. This is the stage depicted by the Prophet in his purported saying: "He who arrives at the real knowledge of Allah, his tongue no longer utters [any thing]". For Dakhīl Allāh, however, this statement has no binding nature; he declares it baseless, due to the fact that experts in the sciences of *ḥadīth* have described it as a fabrication attributed to the Prophet. He goes on to say that even if it were perceived to be a legitimate Prophetic statement, it would not prove the annihilation of the cognizant in Allah; rather, he says, it describes, a stage where one realises that, no matter how hard one tries to persevere in God's remembrance, one will not be able to do it justice. Albeit fabricated, this, statement, he says, should be interpreted in the lights of other Prophetic traditions in which the Prophet admits his insufficiency to glorify Allah as befits Him. Dakhīl Allāh's argument is further supported by earlier Sufi authorities like Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj (d. 378/988)¹⁰³⁴ and al-Hujwīrī (d. 465/1072-1073)¹⁰³⁵ who both denied that the notion of *fanā*' meant annihilation in God. Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj states that some ignorant and deviant ones understood *fanā*' as the annihilation of human nature, as a means of access to divine attributes, which led them to abstain from eating and drinking in an attempt to achieve such access, without having noted the difference between human nature and human codes of conduct (*akhlāq*). While

¹⁰³³ Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm 'aqā'id al-Tijāniyya*, pp. 98-99.

¹⁰³⁴ 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī al-Tūsī, known as Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj, was a well-known Sunni Sufi from Khurasan (present-day Iran). He is considered to have been one of the earliest Sufi masters to have written on Sufism (*al-Lama*). Some of the earliest famous Sufi authorities, such as al-Hujwīrī (the author of *Kashf al-mahjūb*) and Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (the author of *Tabaqāt al-sufiyya* and master of al-Qushyirī), are said to have been his disciples. See: al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, vol. IV, p. 104; 'Umar Ridā Kahāle, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, vol. II, p. 261; al-Mawsū'a al-'arabiyya al-muyassara, Beirut: al-Maktaba al-'Aṣriyya, vol. 4, 1431/2010, pp. 1826-1827.

¹⁰³⁵ 'Alī b. 'Uthmān al-Ḥujwīrī, one of the earliest Sufi masters, known for his book (written in Persian) *Kashf al-mahjūb*, was born in Ghazni (present-day Afghanistan) and died in Lahore (present-day Pakistan). His mausoleum, called Datta Ganj Bakhsh, attracts many visitors in present-day Pakistan. See, 'Umar Ridā Kahāle, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, vol. II, p. 475 and Shams al-Din Chishti, *Sirat-i hazret-i dataa ganj bakhs*, Lahore: Akbar Book Salers, 2005.

the former is as inseparable from humans as the blackness of black is (which clearly cannot be separated from him), the latter (human codes of conduct) are changeable if exposed to divine lights.¹⁰³⁶ Al-Hujwīrī points to a misunderstanding regarding the terms *fanā'* and *baqā'*, claiming that *fanā'* is not the disappearance of the essence (*fuqḍān al-dhāt*) and not is *baqā'* the adoption of divine existence by human existence (*an yalḥaqa baqā' al-ḥaqq bi-l-'abd*). Both of these, he says, are impossible: to claim to have experienced annihilation in these terms, as understood by some ignorant persons, is said to be nothing but arrogance.¹⁰³⁷

Dakhīl Allāh concludes the section by drawing attention to the differences between various connotations of *waḥdat al-shuhūd* and *fanā'*. The latter, he says, is neither to be found in the Qur'ān nor the Sunna of the Prophet; nor in the statements of his companions, their followers, nor even in the discourse of first-generation Sufi authorities. Therefore, both its outright rejection and acceptance seem unfair; one first needs to find out what is really meant by the term. *Fanā'*, in the sense of the total allocation of one's worship to Allah almighty, he says, is the very essence of the religion of Islam. *Fanā'* in the sense of one's annihilation in God, also depicted through the use of the term union (*ittiḥād*), is, however, an infidelity which resembles the Christian notion of elevating a human being to divine status, and, furthermore, one which the Sufi authorities of earlier generations rejected, as mentioned above.¹⁰³⁸ If, on the other hand, *fanā'* is understood to mean one's losing the capability of distinguishing and observing other existences, due to the intense experience of divine love and ecstasy, then it resembles the state of intoxication and absence (*al-sakr wa-l-ghayba*). The legal status of this last kind of *fanā'* is dependent on the action and intention of the human being themselves. Any deliberate attempt on their part to experience annihilation is inexcusable, since it may lead to the perpetration of a number of irreparable errors such as delaying one's obligatory ritual prayers, not to mention the problematic statements that are very likely to be made during a state of ecstasy. But if annihilation prevails over one against one's will, one is not to be condemned for it. Dakhīl Allāh further notes that since *fanā'*, in the sense of intoxication and absence, never happened to the Prophet or any of his companions, it follows that the state of *baqā'* is superior to it. He then quotes Ibn Qayyim, who, in his *Madārij al-sālikīn*,

¹⁰³⁶ See, Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj, *al-Lama'*, Maḥmūd, 'Adb al-Ḥalīm.; Surūr, Ṭāhā 'Abd al-Bāqī. (ed.), Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadīth, Baghdad: Maktaba al-Muthannā, 1960, p. 543.

¹⁰³⁷ Al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-mahjūb*, vol. II. (trans. Is'ād 'Abd al-Hādī Qindīl), Cairo: al-Majlis al-A'lā li-l-Thāqafa, 2007, pp. 482-483.

¹⁰³⁸ Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm 'aqā'id al-Tijāniyya*, pp. 101-102.

compares *fanā*’ and *baqā*’ and declares the latter to be superior to the former, for a number of reasons.¹⁰³⁹

Tijānī protagonists of the notion of *wahdat al-shuhūd* and *fanā*’ display an inconsistent and contradictory approach to the issue at hand. Aḥmad b. al-Hādī invokes the authority of Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ to provide an explanation of the Tijānī conception of *fanā*’, giving a four-page long quotation in which *fanā*’ is said to be the “domination of the divine over his servant, to the extent that the servant is prevented from seeing anything else, even his own existence”.¹⁰⁴⁰ For al-Ḥāfiẓ, *fanā*’ begins with divine remembrance (*dhikr Allāh*) and gradually ends up as a state wherein the servant sees that his remembrance of God is from God, for God. This is what Sufis define as God’s remembrance of Himself, by Himself in His servant (*inna al-ḥaqqā dhakara nafsahu bi-nafsihi fi l-‘abd*).¹⁰⁴¹ This is basically another way of interpreting the way *fanā*’ is said by the founding figure of the brotherhood to occur in the four stages of *muḥāḍara*, *mukāshafa*, *mushāhada* and *mu‘āyana*.¹⁰⁴² *Fanā*’, for Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, is a corollary of the servant’s love for the divine, which deactivates all kinds of rational processes in human being. This is a love which, at its peak, ends in the extinction of the human being: the servant sees nothing but the presence of his lord in everything. It is not the return of the part (*juz*’) to the origin (*kul*), but the prevalence of divine love over the servant of the divine, causing a momentary deactivation of his human characteristics. As such, there is no contradiction between *fanā*’ and religious principles for al-Ḥāfiẓ, since *fanā*’ does not mean losing one’s human attributes and obtaining divine ones. Thus, he asks: “What kind of contradiction can be found here? Where is *ittiḥād* and *ḥulūl*? Where is the Indian creed in it?”¹⁰⁴³ Elsewhere, however, he uses problematic phrases in relation to the different stages leading to *fanā*’, wherein *fanā*’ is depicted as a state of alliance with the divine (*jam*’), at which the human soul arrives after leaving aside its human aspects and entering the divine light.¹⁰⁴⁴ These statements

¹⁰³⁹ Ibn Qayyim argues that *baqā*’ in *dhikr* is more perfect than annihilation (*al-ghayba bihi*). On the basis of its name, *fana*’ is annihilation, while *baqā*’ entails immortality. *Fanā*’ is desired for reasons other than itself, whereas *baqā*’ is wished for in itself. *Fanā*’ is an attribute of the servant (*al-‘abd*) while *baqā*’ is the attribute of the lord (*al-Rab*). *Fanā*’ is extinction while *baqā*’ is existence. *Fanā*’ is negation while *baqā*’ is vindication. Wayfaring on the path of *fanā*’ is dangerous, wrapped in adventure and risk, while wayfaring on the path of *baqā*’ is secure, because it is the path of great ones, guides and watchmen. See: Ibn Qayyim, *Madārij al-sālikīn*, vol. II, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Arabī, 1392/1972, p. 437.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Ahl al-ḥaqq al-‘arifūn billāh*, p. 101.

¹⁰⁴¹ For details, see: Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Ahl al-ḥaqq al-‘arifūn billāh*, p. 102.

¹⁰⁴² Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Ahl al-ḥaqq al-‘arifūn billāh*, p. 104.

¹⁰⁴³ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 163.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Ahl al-ḥaqq al-‘arifūn billāh*, p. 99.

seem to stand in sharp contrast to what he describes as *fanā'* in the preceding description. On the basis of a reference to al-Hujwārī, he denies that there is any kind of annihilation of the human existence (*wujūd al-'abd*) in the divine (*wujūd Allāh*); rather, he says, it is the annihilation of the human will in that of the divine. He finds the following metaphor of fire and iron to express the situation most clearly:

Fanā' is annihilation of the will of the servant in that of Allah, not annihilation of the servant's existence in the existence of Allah...like iron being melted by fire, verily fire exercises its influence upon the traits of iron, without obliterating the essence of iron".¹⁰⁴⁵

Al-Ḥāfiẓ further compares the situation of *waḥdat al-shuhūd* with the state of intoxication, in which one may see things contrary to their realities:

So *waḥdat al-shuhūd* is a state like that of he who is intoxicated from vinegar; he sees himself to have filled the house [whereas in reality] he is as he was. He has filled the house in his imagination in the state of intoxication. When the intoxication perishes, he realizes the reality is the contrary of what he was thinking.¹⁰⁴⁶

It is interesting to note that here the Egyptian considers the state of *waḥdat al-shuhūd* to be somehow unreal, or at least tacitly questions its reality, as a rejection of the reality of *fanā'*; could have serious consequences: after all, the founding figure of the Tijāniyya himself considered it to be the station of illumination (*maqām al-faṭḥ*).¹⁰⁴⁷ Nonetheless, in the quotation above, *waḥdat al-shuhūd* appears to have been reduced to a mere state of the imagination of the servant who is dominated and overwhelmed by divine love.¹⁰⁴⁸ As we have observed, the Tijānī polemical texts cited above deny any connotation of *fanā'* which might reverberate with *ḥulūl* in the essence of

¹⁰⁴⁵ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Ahl al-ḥaqq al-'arīfūn billāh*, p. 104.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Ahl al-ḥaqq al-'arīfūn billāh*, p. 106; Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 165.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm 'aqā'id al-Tijāniyya*, p. 97.

¹⁰⁴⁸ In an anecdote related on the authority of Muḥyī al-Dīn b. 'Arabī, the situation is further illuminated. The latter is said to have gone to meet with prophet Hārūn (Aaron) in the realm of spirits to ask him about his statement to the prophet Mūsā (Moses): "So let not the enemies rejoice over me". The context of this was that after spending some time away to receive a new revelation from God, Mūsā returned back to his people to see they had lapsed from the true path and strayed into the worship of a calf idol. He was angry with Hārūn, who he had left behind to undertake the responsibility for them in his absence. Ibn 'Arabī allegedly asked Hārūn who were "the enemies", since as a prophet he was required to see nothing but Allah. Hārūn agreed with Ibn 'Arabī and confirmed the Sufi notion of *waḥdat al-shuhūd*. Nevertheless, he added that the observation of the divine in universe does mean the extinction of the other's existence in reality. For a full account of the conversation, see: Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Ahl al-ḥaqq al-'arīfūn billāh*, pp. 106-107.

God. However, elsewhere, in the same text, and in contradiction of himself, Aḥmad b. al-Hādī has something different to say: Refuting Dakhīl Allāh 's argument that annihilation in the divine essence (*fanā' fī dhāt Allāh*) is rejected by scholars, the Mauritanian states the following:

How could you say that *fanā'* in divine essence is rejected by scholars and pious predecessors? You should provide [at least] a single piece of evidence [but] you could not... which 'ālim rejects that he who has the love of the divine essence poured into his heart is not annihilated in it? Who among Sufis has rejected it? In fact, all have unanimously agreed upon it, [both] the early generations and those who followed them.¹⁰⁴⁹

Also, while he is quick to deny the annihilation of the human body in the divine essence, he nonetheless fails to describe what he means by annihilation in the essence of God. Such inconsistency in discourse is not restricted to him alone; Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, the authority to whom he refers, makes a similar mistake, as while, as, we have seen at the beginning of the discussion he initially attributes ecstatic utterances made in the state of *fanā'* to Allah and not to human beings, for the obvious reason of the obliteration, in that state, of human reason and intellect; later in the same text he appears to attribute such utterances to human beings after all, and goes on to provide excuses for them:

Indeed, Sufi masters have unanimously agreed that whatever has been uttered in a state like this (*fanā'*) can not be taken seriously in the Sufi tradition. The Sufi is excused [for what he might have said], as he is dominated and overwhelmed. Likewise, he himself will disown each and every phrase he has uttered which does not comply with reality when he returns back to his ordinary state; because in such a state he can forget the universe and even his own self, and perceive nothing but Allah, exalted is He.¹⁰⁵⁰

The questions that must now arise in the mind of the reader, are as follows: if it is God who speaks in the servant, as initially claimed, why would the servant apologize for divine utterances which are actually true and do not deserve to be apologized for? And if, on the other hand, it is the servant by whom the ecstatic utterances are made, as the last excerpt from al-Ḥāfiẓ suggests, then how should we understand the previous claim that the utterances are made by God through his servant

¹⁰⁴⁹ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 170.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Ahl al-ḥaqq al-'ārifūn billāh*, p. 106; Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 164.

in the state of *fanā*'? Furthermore, if one must disown the utterances one has made in the state of *fanā*', and deeming an apology to be necessary, then how can we consider this state to be the station of illumination (*maqām al-faḥ*) that the supreme master of the brotherhood claimed it to be? Was not al-Hilālī correct in his argument that they who have made such statements neither deserve our praise, nor should their ecstatic utterances be assumed to be indications of their high rank, particularly if they are products of a state of annihilation in which one loses control over one's senses and reason ('*aql*)?¹⁰⁵¹ In the face of such questions, all that Tijānīs can do is to recall the authority of scholars like Ibn Taymiyya and his disciple Ibn Qayyim, both of whom have excused certain Sufis for their otherwise unacceptable statements made in the state of annihilation. Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz is in favour of the excommunication (*takfīr*) of those who make such problematic statements, if they are recalled in a state of sobriety in which the speaker has full control over his '*aql*. This, Aḥmad b. al-Hādī attempts to use not only as justification for ecstatic utterances made in the state of *fanā*', but also as an instrument to silence the opponents. He thus addresses Dakhīl Allāh as follows:

You have heard Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz's excommunication of he who [dares] to say that he is the truth [implying that he is God] or any thing which implies this, [when] in a state of full control over his human senses. Indeed, he [Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz] is more knowledgeable than you and al-Hilālī.¹⁰⁵²

Protagonists of the Tijānī doctrine of *fanā*' accuse their adversaries of imposing their own terms on the Tijānīs. *Fanā*', they claim, was never a question of one's immersion in divine; rather, it remains a matter of the divine domination of—and as observable in—God's servant. According to the contemporary Tijānī scholar and great-grandson of Aḥmad al-Tijānī, Maḥmūd b. Bensālim of Morocco, the Tijānī doctrine of *fanā*' implies the domination of the human will by that of the divine, to the extent that divine will obliterates that of the servant. The soul of such a person is referred to in the Qur'ān as "the satisfied soul" (*al-naḥs al-muṭma'inna*).¹⁰⁵³ However, a closer look at Aḥmad al-Tijānī's own statement on the state of *fanā*' reveals that the kind of *fanā*' he describes is not identical with that described by the Tijānī defenders of the order. According to the

¹⁰⁵¹ For details of al-Hilālī's objections, see: al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiyya*, pp. 120-121.

¹⁰⁵² Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 166.

¹⁰⁵³ Maḥmūd b. Bensālim, *al-Tijānīyya bayn al-i'tiqād wa-l-intiqād*, p. 47, 49.

founding figure of the brotherhood, when the cognizant is accepted into the divine presence, his human aspect perishes, nothing apart from the divine remains,¹⁰⁵⁴ and divine characteristics (*awṣāf rabbihi*) appear in him.¹⁰⁵⁵ These statements suggest a completely different interpretation of *fanā* from that which later Tijānī polemicists tend to present in their texts. Despite these explicit statements by the supreme leader of the Tijāniyya, Muḥmūd b. Bensālim, for example, claims the annihilation of human attributes and the appearance of divine attributes in the human being to be a Hindu and Chinese doctrine.¹⁰⁵⁶ And even while the statements of the supreme master of the Tijāniyya do point towards an annihilating unity between the divine and the human, Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, nonetheless defends his master's position against his adversary Dakhīl Allāh, claiming that it is the incompetent mind of the objector (*muntaqid*) that has understood the statements of al-Tijānī to mean *ḥulūl* and *ittiḥād*, whereas the supreme master really meant the domination of the servant through overwhelming divine beauty.¹⁰⁵⁷

3.3. Prophets and Shaykhs and the Knowledge of the Unseen (*ilm al-ghayb*)

Tijānī sources from *Jawāhir* to *al-Durra al-kharīda* unanimously agree that both the Prophet and Sufī masters have access to knowledge of the unseen (*al-ghayb*). In fact, it constitutes an integral component of Tijānī doctrine. *Jawāhir* describes access to the unseen as a sign of the perfection of the brotherhood's founding figure Aḥmad al-Tijānī. He reportedly had an all-encompassing knowledge of the activities and the sins committed by his followers, and due to his divine foresight (*baṣīratihi al-rabbāniyya*), is said not only have known the conditions of his disciples (*aḥwāl al-aṣḥāb*) in general, but also to have reported events yet to happen (*ikhbār bi-l-mughibāt*), and to have possessed the knowledge of what their consequences would be.¹⁰⁵⁸ *Bughyat al-mustafīd* depicts this *mukāshafa*, meaning the ability to foresee events that are yet to take place, as a merit of the supreme master's. During his lifetime, al-Tijānī is said to have forecasted uncountable events, either explicitly or implicitly, all of which actually occurred after his demise.¹⁰⁵⁹ According

¹⁰⁵⁴ For further details, see: 'Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma'ānī*, vol. II, pp. 19-20; Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm 'aqā'id al-Tijāniyya*, p. 97.

¹⁰⁵⁵ A details account could be found 'Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma'ānī*, vol. I, p. 118-119; vol. II, pp. 6-14; Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm 'aqā'id al-Tijāniyya*, p. 98.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Maḥmūd b. Bensālim, *al-Tijāniyya bayn al-i'tiqād wa-l-intiqād*, p. 46.

¹⁰⁵⁷ For more information, see: Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 166.

¹⁰⁵⁸ See details in: 'Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma'ānī*, vol. I, pp. 63-64.

¹⁰⁵⁹ For a detailed account of the events forecasted by al-Tijānī, see: al-'Arabī b. al-Sā'iḥ, *Bughyat al-mustafīd*, pp. 246-47.

to *Rimāh*, the spiritual capabilities of the master, in terms of his possessing the knowledge of the unseen, is a doctrine in which disciples should believe. The Sufi master reportedly possesses a comprehensive knowledge of the conditions of his disciples and followers. Their inner state is as obvious to the master as things seen from behind glass.¹⁰⁶⁰ *Al-Durra al-kharīda* claims that Allah discloses knowledge of the unseen to some of his beloved ones (*ba‘d aṣṣūfīyā’ihi*), and presents particular passages in the Qur’ān,¹⁰⁶¹ as textual support in support for this claim. While the passages in question restrict such merit to prophets—and only when Allah wills it so—the author of *al-Durra al-kharīda* includes divinely elected saints within the scope of the passages. He further holds that the Prophet Muḥammad was endowed with the keys to the unseen (*maḥāṭiḥ al-ghayb*) before his death, and that some of the elites of his *umma* had inherited this privilege from him.¹⁰⁶²

Certain Tijānī sources invoke the authority of Abū l-‘Abbās al-Mursī, the famous Andalusian Shadhilī Sufi, regarding the inclusion of divine saints within the scope of the term “messenger” (*rasūl*) mentioned in the Qur’ānic verse (al-Jin:27). ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, for his part, reports a conversation he himself had with the founding figure of the Tijāniyya in which the latter gives his own interpretation of the above mentioned Qur’ānic passage. In it, he clarifies that the kind of knowledge of the unseen that is denied to human beings is the kind of knowledge which it might be imagined, may (but in fact may not) be gained through the mean of senses (*ḥawāṣ*), hearing (*sam‘*) and imagination/thought (*fikr*) (but which in fact may not). In contrast, the God-given knowledge of the unseen (*‘ilm al-ladunnī*), that is inserted directly into the heart of a human being by Allah without the mediation of any intellectual endeavour on their part, is not, and has never been denied to humans. The Prophet Muḥammad had the knowledge of the unseen in his possession, and this spiritual merit was left to Sufis as part of their Prophetic heritage.¹⁰⁶³

¹⁰⁶⁰ ‘Umar al-Fūtī, *Rimāh ḥizb al-Raḥīm*, vol. I, p. 23. Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, another well-known Tijānī shaykh, held the same conviction with regard to Aḥmad al-Tijānī, claiming, during one of his visits to Sudan: “Our shaykh knows his disciples even if they are in the wombs of their mothers”. Al-Fātiḥ al-Nūr, who claims to have hosted the shaykh, relates this in his *al-Tijāniyya wa-l-mustaqbal*. Muḥammad al-Tāḥir al-Sanūsī, another Sufi shaykh, claimed that the supreme master of the Tijāniyya knew his followers before they were born, and trained them while they were yet to come into this world. For further information, see: Al-Fātiḥ al-Nūr, *al-Tijāniyya wa-l-mustaqbal*, p. 209.

¹⁰⁶¹ al-Jin 72:26-27.

¹⁰⁶² Maḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Wāḥid al-Nazīfī, *al-Durra al-kharīda fi sharh al-al-yāqūta al-farīda*, Cairo: Maktaba Mustāfā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1392/1972, vol. I, p. 219.

¹⁰⁶³ ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*, vol. I, p. 218; Al-Nazīfī, *al-Durra al-kharīda*, vol. I, p. 219.

From Dakhīl Allāh’s point of view, Al-Mursī’s interpretation, (even if it truly belongs to him) is not binding in nature.¹⁰⁶⁴ After all, the Saudi Salafī argues, it is the “messenger” (*rasūl*) who is mentioned in the Qur’ānic verse, not the *walī*. Furthermore, early classical interpretations, such as those of Ibn ‘Abbās, (a companion), Qatāda, (a *tābi‘ī*), Qurṭubī, and Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, all restrict the scope of the verse to the prophets. None of them left any room for *walīs* or Sufis.¹⁰⁶⁵ Al-Qurṭubī argues that only divine messengers are privileged with the merit of receiving partial knowledge of the unseen from God, claiming that a further Qur’ānic passage¹⁰⁶⁶ excludes all others from this divine merit.¹⁰⁶⁷ Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī describes the verse (al-Jin:27) as a divine rejection of any claim to the knowledge of the unseen except on the part of the prophets.¹⁰⁶⁸ Prophets are said to be given instructions and guidelines for life which were part of the unseen prior to their revelation. Thus, Dakhīl Allāh argues, the verse itself denies the Tijānī notion of who may have access to knowledge of the unseen, and he goes on to claim that whosoever lays claims to it, apart from the divine messengers, is a liar.¹⁰⁶⁹

In *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā’id al-Tijāniyya*, Dakhīl Allāh provides a comprehensive discussion of the issue at stake, in the light of the Qur’ān and the Sunna. Several passages from the Qur’ān¹⁰⁷⁰ are quoted in which it is explicitly stated that only Allah possesses the knowledge of the unseen. One particular verse¹⁰⁷¹ is an address to the Prophet Muḥammad, instructing him to inform his companions and others that he possesses neither knowledge of *al-ghayb*, nor divine treasures. Another verse¹⁰⁷² predicts a conversation that would take place in the hereafter between the prophet ‘Īsā (Jesus) and God, in which the prophet Jesus would explicitly attribute the knowledge of the *al-ghayb* to Allah, denying such merit for himself. Dakhīl Allāh also recalls that ‘Ā’isha, the beloved wife and confidante of the Prophet, had once stated that “Whoever tells you that the

¹⁰⁶⁴ Dakhīl Allāh is not the only anti-Tijānī polemicist to have raised objections regarding the issue at hand. Al-Hilālī before him also drew the attention of his reader to the fact that Tijānīs believe in the disclosure of the knowledge of the *maḥfūṭ al-ghayb* to prophets and *walīs*. For details, see: al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiyya*, p. 137.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā’id al-Tijāniyya*, pp.104-105.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Āli ‘Imrān 3:179.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jami‘ li-ahkām al-Qur’ān wa-l-mubayyin li-mā tadammā min al-anna wa-ahkām al-furqān*, vol. XXI, ed. ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Abd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī, Beirut: Muassisat al-Risāla, 1427/2006, p. 308.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-‘Asqalānī, *Fath al-barī sharh Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. XIII, Cairo: al-Maktabat al-Salafiyya, n.d., pp. 364-365.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā’id al-Tijāniyya*, p. 105.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Yūnus 10:20; Hūd 11:123; al-Naḥl 16:77; al-Kahf 18:26; Fāṭir 35:38; Āli ‘Imrān 3:179.

¹⁰⁷¹ al-An‘ām 6:50.

¹⁰⁷² al-Mā’ida 5:116.

Prophet knows the unseen is indeed a liar, for Allah says: “Only Allah knows the unseen”.¹⁰⁷³ From the perspective of the Saudi Salafī, this statement of ‘Ā’isha’s, constitutes a perfect rejection of the Tijānī claim, expressed in *al-Durra al-kharīda*, that the Prophet had obtained the keys to the unseen (*mafātīḥ al-ghayb*) prior to his death, and that these had allegedly passed to his Sufi heirs after his demise. For Dakhīl Allāh, “Such a conviction needs no refutation due to its clear nullity (*wāḍiḥ al-buṭlān*), and its contradiction of the Qur’ān and the Sunna”.¹⁰⁷⁴ According to Ibn Mas’ūd, a prominent scholar among the companions, the Prophet was privileged with every merit apart from the keys to the unseen. In a Prophetic tradition reported by al-Bukhārī on the authority of Ibn ‘Umar, the Prophet provides a description of the keys of the unseen and attributes the knowledge of it to Allah.

Dakhīl Allāh argues that ahl al-Sunna wa-l-Jamā‘a (the people of the Sunna and the community), divided the unseen (*al-ghayb*) into two categories: the absolute unseen (*muṭlaq*) and the restricted unseen (*muqayyad*). While the latter may come to be known by certain human beings via technological means such as mathematics, and computers, and other contemporary discoveries, the former is the monopoly of God, any claim to which is regarded as disbelief.¹⁰⁷⁵ Tijānīs are said to have laid claim to this kind of knowledge of *al-ghayb*, which, he argues, may be easily detected from the statements made in the aforementioned sources of the brotherhood: “The unseen of which Tijānīs claim their spiritual master have knowledge is the real unseen (*ghayb al-ḥaqīqī*), which is not known to anyone apart from Allah... This is evident in their aforementioned scriptures”.¹⁰⁷⁶

In his response to this accusation, Aḥmad b. al-Hādī seems to be outraged, levelling some serious charges against his opponent, including those of lying, sectarianism, craftiness, deception, slander, gossip, the mockery of scholars, the distortion of texts and, most gravely of all, of having involved himself in belittling the friends of God and breeding animosity towards them (*idhāya awliyā’ Allāh wa-mu‘ādātihim*).¹⁰⁷⁷ Dakhīl Allāh is reproached for expending his energy to fight against the

¹⁰⁷³ Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā’id al-Tijāniyya*, p. 107.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā’id al-Tijāniyya*, p. 107.

¹⁰⁷⁵ For details, see: Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā’id al-Tijāniyya*, pp. 109-111.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Dakhīl Allāh once again repeats some of the quotations in which the supreme master of the Tijāniyya is said to have forecast events that were yet to happen, and to have been able to know and see the inner states of his disciples as one may see physical objects through glass. See: Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā’id al-Tijāniyya*, p. 108.

¹⁰⁷⁷ A complete list of the charges could be found in Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 180.

people of *dhikr*, whom Allah had praised on many occasions in the holy Qur’ān, when he could have made much better use of it. Aḥmad b. al-Hādī then condescendingly addresses him as follows:

If you had dedicated your study instead to the unity of Muslims and to the promotion of solidarity between them, to struggle for the divine cause, to fight against usury, toward the establishment of *sharī‘a* and the divine instructions, toward the encouragement of the Islamic code of conduct and the discouragement of bad deeds, both explicit and implicit, you would have done the right thing.¹⁰⁷⁸

At the beginning of the discussion, Aḥmad b. al-Hādī gives the impression that Tijānīs had never believed in the availability of the knowledge of the unseen to human beings; their alleged distinction in this regard, in contrast to ahl al-Sunna wa-l-Jamā‘a is said to have been concocted as a result of an intrigue by their adversaries. “Tijānīs believe naught but what other groups of the ahl al-Sunna believe, not what the intruder (Dakhīl) ascribed to them, that some prophets and shaykhs know the unseen... we will debate each other in front of He from whom nothing is hidden. He will judge us”.¹⁰⁷⁹ This statement clearly implies a total rejection of Dakhīl Allāh’s accusation, but, as we will see, in the course of discussion in the book, this claim is not sustained. Aḥmad b. al-Hādī further accuses his opponent of misunderstanding and misquotation with regard to the Qur’ānic passages 72:26–27. Claiming that these passages do not imply that the knowledge of the unseen is restricted to certain prophets,¹⁰⁸⁰ he insists that *walīs* and Sufī masters be included within the scope of the term “messenger” (*rasūl*) that appears in these verses. Furthermore, according to Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, al-Qurṭubī, who Dakhīl Allāh claims to have excluded *walīs* from the term “messenger”, had in fact excluded sorcerers and fortune tellers alone. In his own words: “Al-Qurṭubī, in his commentary of the verses [even] if he did not approve the [availability of the] knowledge of the unseen to *walīs*, did not deny it to them either. He excluded practitioners of astrology and their like”.¹⁰⁸¹ In the same vein, Aḥmad b. al-Hādī goes on to argue that whereas Ibn Ḥajar had denied that the knowledge of *al-ghayb* was accessible to fortune tellers and astrologers, Dakhīl Allāh had attempted to present him as having stated that, in the Qur’ānic passages in question, *walīs* were excluded from having it. The Saudi Salafī is accused of accommodating the

¹⁰⁷⁸ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 181.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 180.

¹⁰⁸⁰ see for details Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 182.

¹⁰⁸¹ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 183.

view of al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144),¹⁰⁸² the famous *tafsīr* expert and diehard defender of the Mu‘tazilī doctrine, who had used the same Qur’ānic passages to deny the possibility of saintly miracles (*karāmāt*). Furthermore, Aḥmad b. al-Hādī argues that although the knowledge of the unseen is discussed in the relevant passages as a divine prerogative which may be disclosed to some among the prophets, the scope of this statement should not be understood as absolute; rather, he says, it relates to the knowledge of the end of the world and the occurrence of the Day of Judgement. He invokes the authority of scholars like Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī in support of his argument.¹⁰⁸³

According to Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, certain highly revered Sufi authorities, such as al-Ghazālī and Ibn ‘Arabī, had approved al-Mursī’s inclusion of divine saints within the scope of the term “messenger” (*rasūl*) that is used in the verse in question with reference to those to whom the knowledge of the unseen may be disclosed. They had arrived at this position, he said, through the logical comparison of God with a king and his prophets with (his) viziers, reasoning that if a king wished to meet with one of his viziers, it does not follow that the entourage of the vizier would be excluded from the meeting. Therefore, they reasoned, the absence of the term *walī* in verses 72:26–27 does not absolutely exclude *walīs* from having access to the knowledge of unseen. It is possible that Allah might disclose *al-ghayb* to a *walī* as he does so to a prophet. The bestowal of such a merit upon the *walī* should therefore be perceived as owing to that prophet’s own merit. Since the *walī* sees thus in the light of that prophet, the miracle of a *walī* (in this case of access to the knowledge of the unseen) should likewise be perceived to belong to his prophet.¹⁰⁸⁴ In addition to this, several Prophetic traditions, anecdotes from the life stories of the companions and Muslim scholars are quoted by Aḥmad b. al-Hādī for further textual support. Ironically, while, the Prophetic traditions in question relate to the notion of the discernment (*firāsa*) of the believer, they

¹⁰⁸² Al-Zamakhsharī (also called Jārullāh/the neighbour of God) was a medieval Mu‘tazilī scholar who was born and died in Khawarizmia, in Central Asia, but travelled to important learning centres, including making a pilgrimage to Hijaz. He is best known for his exegesis *al-Kashshāf fī tafsīr al-Qur’ān*. Al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām*, vol. VII, p. 178; ‘Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, vol. III, pp. 822-823.

¹⁰⁸³ This is said to have been so reported from Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī in Ibn Ḥajar’s commentary on Bukhārī *Fath al-bārī* and in *Tafsīr al-khāzin*. See for details Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, pp. 183-184.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī quotes this from *Diya’ al-ta’wīl*. See: Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 185. This argument seems to have been maintained by contemporary Tijānīs. Muḥammad b. Sa‘īd b. Bidī, for instance, claims that according to the relevant Qur’ānic passages, the reason why the knowledge of the unseen is disclosed to certain human beings is that of the divine satisfaction and gratification with those human being. He further argues that the reason the terms “*walī*” and “*ṣiddīq*” are in those passages is that this gratification is at its peak in case of prophets. For details, see: Muḥammad b. Sa‘īd, *Husn al-taqāḍī*, p. 314.

are presented as further evidence in favour of *walīs*' access to the knowledge of the unseen. In fact, however, *firāsa* may *not* be interpreted in terms of access to the unseen; nor do Salafīs reject it, and nor do the quotations from Tijānī sources made by Dakhīl Allāh speak of *firāsāt*. In the same vein, in *Shams al-dalīl* Aḥmad b. al-Hādī quotes extensively from Ibn Qayyim's *Madārij al-sālikīn*, in which some miraculous incidents that occurred during the life of Ibn Taymiyya are discussed. Ibn Taymiyya is said to have possessed such a tremendous ability to know the inner state of his disciples that it caused a great deal of wonder and astonishment on the part of his followers, who classified this as a sign of his *firāsa*.¹⁰⁸⁵ For the author of *Shams al-dalīl*, this constitutes a perfect justification of the issue at hand. Spiritual masters have access to *al-ghayb* through which they can see the inner state of their disciples. Dakhīl Allāh is therefore reproached by the Mauritanian Tijānī for not giving the same verdict concerning Ibn Taymiyya which he gave with regard to Tijānīs, as follows:

Ibn Qayyim reports that his master (Ibn Taymiyya) on one occasion disclosed to him many of his private affairs not known to others... how is it that Ibn Taymiyya informed him of these hidden personal matters and yet you insist on rejecting the belief of master's ability to see the inner state of the disciple as things may be seen in the mirror? Why would you not deny Ibn Qayyim and Ibn Taymiyya and declare this a corrupt belief.¹⁰⁸⁶

Here it should be noted that Dakhīl Allāh had neither approved the anecdotes reported in relation to Ibn Taymiyya, nor mentioned them at all. One should also take into consideration the fact that the life stories of *walīs* and scholars cannot be treated as religious evidence, particularly when clear evidence from the Qur'ān and the Sunna is at one's disposal. It was on precisely such grounds that he objected to the conviction held by Muḥammad Fathā b. 'Abd al-Wāḥid al-Nazīfī, the author of *al-Durra al-kharīda*, that the knowledge of the keys to the unseen (*mafātīḥ al-ghayb*) had been granted to the Prophet before his death, which merit was said to have been inherited by certain Sufī masters after the Prophet's demise. This, Dakhīl Allāh had dismissed on the basis of numerous Qur'ānic references and Prophetic traditions.¹⁰⁸⁷ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī would, nevertheless, ignore these clear-cut passages of the Qur'ān and insist that the Prophet had been bestowed with the

¹⁰⁸⁵ For a further account of Ibn Taymiyya's saintly miracles, see: Ibn Qayyim, *Madārij al-sālikīn*, vol. II, p. 489-490.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 191.

¹⁰⁸⁷ See the relevant section above.

knowledge of literally everything that was going to happen in future, including the hereafter. As textual support, he refers to certain Prophetic traditions that indicate the disclosure of the knowledge of certain events to the Prophet. This was not something to which Dakhīl Allāh objected; he agreed that knowledge of the unseen could be bestowed on prophets, as mentioned in the Qur'ān. The point to which he did object was the matter of whether or not the Prophet possessed the knowledge of the keys of the unseen, and none of the Prophetic statements quoted in *Shams al-dalīl* by Aḥmad b. al-Hādī really imply that the Prophet had access to *al-ghayb* (the unseen), let alone to the keys of the unseen (*mafātīḥ al-ghayb*).¹⁰⁸⁸ Nonetheless, he presents them as evidence for the Prophet having held an all-encompassing knowledge, extending to affairs relating to the hereafter. His Salafī opponent is then reprimanded, accused of ignorance, and said to have failed to substantiate his argument with textual support, except for one account reported on the authority of Ibn Mas'ūd, that denies that the knowledge of the keys of the unseen was held by the Prophet. The following is an excerpt:

Consult the books of the Prophetic traditions; you will come to know that the Prophet knew all the signs of the last day, the small ones as well as the medium-sized and big ones. [He knew] the conditions of the Day of Judgement and its various phases; the conditions of paradise, hellfire and every tiny detail of these two. He obtained the knowledge of the conditions of the celestial realms in the night of ascension (*mi'rāj*). He knew the world of the divine throne (*'arsh*), its lamps, its pillars, its shadows, its treasures and its carriers.¹⁰⁸⁹

Not all Tijānīs would share Aḥmad b. al-Hādī's view on this topic, however. Al-Tijānī's great-grandson Maḥmūd b. Bensālim, for one, divides the knowledge of the unseen into two categories: the restricted (*muqayyad*) and the absolute (*muṭlaq*). In discussing the adventure of Khidr and Moses, in which the latter had failed to keep up with the former, he denies that absolute knowledge of the unseen may be held by prophets, asserting that nothing of the *muṭlaq* unseen could be accessible to any human being.¹⁰⁹⁰ While we do not know what kind of explanation the great-grandson of the supreme master would provide for the relevant passages in Tijānī sources, this

¹⁰⁸⁸ For details, see: Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 193.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 193. On the prophetic merits which are presented as his having access to the knowledge of the unseen, see: Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, pp. 193-194.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Maḥmūd b. Bensālim, *al-Tijānīyya bayn al-i'tiqād wa-l-intiqād*, p. 86.

stance seems to be almost equivocal with that of Dakhīl Allāh. He even refers to a Prophetic tradition that denies the Prophet's knowledge of the unseen.¹⁰⁹¹ While Aḥmad b. al-Hādī turns a blind eye to the Prophetic accounts and the Qur'ānic passages cited by his opponent that allocate the knowledge of *al-ghayb* to Allah alone,¹⁰⁹² he nonetheless denies that the supreme master of the Tijāniyya had approved the idea that the Prophet held the knowledge of the keys of the unseen, attributing this claim, rather, to his fourth-generation disciple; that is a reference to al-Nazīfī, the author of *al-Durra al-kharīda*,¹⁰⁹³ who had attempted not only to attribute the knowledge of the *maḥāṭih al-ghayb* to the Prophet but also to some of his so-called inheritors.¹⁰⁹⁴ On the basis of the research conducted here, this argument seems to have no basis, since the founding figure of the Tijāniyya had argued in a different direction. According to him, a human being could claim knowledge of the unseen, as well as of *maḥāṭih al-ghayb*, as a correlation of *'ilm ladunnī* (God-given knowledge) bestowed on him by God.¹⁰⁹⁵

3.4. Tijānīs and *Tawassul* Via the Prophet and Other Righteous Ones

Tijānī sources are full of passages that legitimize supplication and invocation of divine help (*tawassul*) via human beings. As one might expect from a Salafī opponent of the brotherhood, this belief is criticized by Dakhīl Allāh, who quotes passages from *Rimāh* and *al-Durra al-kharīda* that endorse *tawassul* via the Prophet and other righteous ones (*al-ṣāliḥin*) in order to refute them. *Rimāh* explains, in detail, how to supplicate via the status and stature of the Prophet and the supreme master of the Tijāniyya;¹⁰⁹⁶ whereas *al-Durra al-kharīda* forbids visiting Sufī masters

¹⁰⁹¹ "If I knew the treasures of the unseen I would have collected them all for myself", says the Prophet on one occasion. See: Maḥmūd b. Bensālim, *al-Tijāniyya bayn al-i'tiqād wa al-intiqād*, p. 81.

¹⁰⁹² Other contemporary Tijānīs, however, argue that the knowledge of the unseen that is denied to human beings in the aforementioned Qur'ānic passages is of a particular type (*'ilm al-dhātī*); that knowledge of the *ghayb* of this type is a divine prerogative, while a second type (*'ilm al-mustafād min l-ghayr*/that which is a result of the divine education) may be claimed by human beings who are prophets and *walīs*. This argument seems very similar to that of Maḥmūd b. Bensālim, discussed above. For details, see: Muḥammad b. Sa'īd, *Ḥusn al-taqāḍī*, pp. 314-316.

¹⁰⁹³ On al-Nazīfī, see: 'Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, vol. III, p. 582; Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Ṭa'mī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Tijāniyya*, p. 91.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 194.

¹⁰⁹⁵ The supreme master of the Tijāniyya makes this argument in a conversation with his confidant 'Alī Ḥarāzīm, when the latter asks him about the knowledge of the *maḥāṭih al-ghayb* that is denied to human beings in the Qur'ān. For details, see: 'Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma'ānī*, vol. I, p. 218.

¹⁰⁹⁶ According to 'Umar al-Fūtī, the author of *Rimāh*, in case of any desire or need (*ḥāja*), be it related to this world or the other, a Tijānī should recite *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* one hundred times and dedicate its reward to the Prophet, with the intention of the desire being fulfilled. As a second step, he should ask Allah no less than one hundred times, via the status and stature of the Prophet, to fulfil his desire. As a third step, he should repeat his supplication to Allah through the status and stature of Aḥmad al-Tijānī, this time specifying his desire no less than ten times. see 'Umar al-Fūtī, *Rimāh ḥizb al-Raḥīm*, vol. I, p. 265.

other than al-Tijānī for the purpose of invoking their help and supplicating through them, whether they are dead or alive. Any such act, which purportedly culminates in the excommunication of the Tijānī disciple from the brotherhood, is depicted by the book's author al-Nazīfī via the metaphor of the separation of the egg from the chicken, or of the skin from a sheep, when it is slaughtered.¹⁰⁹⁷

Tijānīs have attempted to provide a number of pieces of evidence in favour of supplication via the Prophet and *awliyā'*. 'Alī Ḥarāzīm, for example, reports a statement of his master's concerning the interpretation of a Qur'ānic verse which instructs believers to fear Allah and seek the means to achieve nearness to Him.¹⁰⁹⁸ While the standard interpretation of this verse refers to righteous deeds (*al-ṣāliḥāt*) as the means to achieve nearness (*wasīla*) to Allah, Aḥmad al-Tijānī adds the means of supplication via the Prophet and the perfect shaykh (*al-shaykh al-kāmil*) to those of the righteous deeds. 'Alī Ḥarāzīm claims this interpretation to have been extracted from the verse by implication (*bi-ṭarīq al-ishāra*).¹⁰⁹⁹ Dakhīl Allāh takes issue with this implication-based interpretation of the verse, however, arguing that the word *wasīla* in the verse is unanimously understood by *tafsīr* experts to mean the righteous deeds and obedience to Allah. Not a single *mufasssīr*, he argues, has translated it to mean supplication via the Prophet or a perfect shaykh. Thus, from the point of view of the Saudi Salafī, this Tijānī interpretation of the verse collides with the consensus of *mufasssīrīn*, and cannot claim any binding nature.¹¹⁰⁰ Maḥmūd Shukrī al-Alūsī, the author of *Rūḥ al-ma'ānī*, one of the most famous sources of *tafsīr*, rejects any link between this respective Qur'ānic statement and the notion of considering the righteous ones (*al-ṣāliḥīn*) to be means of achieving nearness, or as intermediaries (*wasīla*) between Allah and his creation, or that of calling upon them for help (*istighātha*), as some people may do.¹¹⁰¹

Another piece of Tijānī evidence in favour of such supplication is a Prophetic statement quoted by the author of *Bughyat al-mustafīd*, in which the Prophet is said to have instructed his companions to supplicate via his status and stature: "Seek the means of nearness to Allah via my status and

¹⁰⁹⁷ For details see: Al-Nazīfī, *al-Durra al-kharīda*, vol. III, p. 144.

¹⁰⁹⁸ al-Mā'ida 5:35.

¹⁰⁹⁹ 'Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma'ānī*, vol. I, p. 217.

¹¹⁰⁰ Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm 'aqā'id al-Tijāniyya*, pp. 151-152.

¹¹⁰¹ For further information, see: al-Ālūsī, *Rūḥ al-ma'ānī fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'aẓīm wa-l-sab' al-mathānī*, vol. VI, Beirut: Dār Iḥyā al-Turāth al-'Arabī, n.d, pp. 124-125.

stature, for my status and stature are great in the eye of Allah”.¹¹⁰² This narration is dismissed, by Dakhīl Allāh, on the authority of certain Salafī *ḥadīth* experts such as Ibn Taymiyya¹¹⁰³ and Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Albānī, as a lie attributed to the Prophet.¹¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, he claims, an overwhelming majority of scholars had banned supplication via the status and stature of the Prophet, with the exception of al-‘Iz b. ‘Abd al-Salām, who had argued in favour of supplication via the Prophet on the basis of a Prophetic tradition in which the Prophet was asked by a blind man to invoke Allah on his behalf, for his recovery. In this case, Dakhīl Allāh asserts that the *ḥadīth* in question does not imply the legitimacy of *tawassul*, neither through the essence (*dhāt*) of the Prophet nor his stature (*jāh*). He bases this assertion on the context of the conversation between the Prophet and his blind companion, which, he says, reveals that the latter’s request refers to invocation (*du‘ā*) and not *tawassul*;¹¹⁰⁵ for if it had been *tawassul*, he argues, the blind companion would have not gone to see the Prophet, as he could have performed it wherever he was. Moreover, he observes, from the content of the *ḥadīth* itself that, in this case the Prophet was asked during his lifetime to invoke Allah for the recovery of this blind companion. How then, asks Dakhīl Allāh, should one consider this to be evidence for invoking dead people and calling upon them for help?¹¹⁰⁶

Another piece of Tijānī evidence that is dismissed by Dakhīl Allāh is the reasoning presented by the author of *al-Durra al-kharīda*, al-Nazīfī, in which he compares *tawassul* to God through the means of certain righteous human beings with communicating with a king through intermediaries. He argues that, just as people must communicate with kings through their intermediaries, they must communicate with God through certain of his beloved ones, for the ordinary people do not know how to communicate with God with decorum.¹¹⁰⁷ Dakhīl Allāh dismisses this analogy, reasoning, on the contrary, that the comparison of Allah to a king is null and void, due to the huge differences between the two. In the case of a king, the need for intermediaries arises from his

¹¹⁰² Tijānīs even consider *tawassul* made via the Tijāniyya brotherhood to be *tawassul* through the grandeur of the Prophet. For further details, see: al-‘Arabī b. al-Sā’ih, *Bughyat al-mustafīd*, p. 125.

¹¹⁰³ Ibn Taymiyya, *Qā’ida jalīla fī l-tawassul wa-l-wasīla*, ed. ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Arnawṭ, Riyadh: al-Idāra al-‘Āmma li-l-Ṭab’, 1999, p. 197.

¹¹⁰⁴ Al-Albānī, *Silsilat al-aḥādīth al-da‘īfa wa-l-mawḍū‘a wa-ātharuhā al-sayyī’ fī l-umma*, vol. I, Riyadh: Maktaba al-Ma‘ārif, 1992.

¹¹⁰⁵ The blind companion explicitly asks the Prophet to pray on his behalf (“pray to Allah for the healing of my illness”); the Prophet replies “If you want I will pray for you, but if you stick to patience it would be better for you”. see: Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā’id al-Tijāniyya*, p. 153.

¹¹⁰⁶ Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā’id al-Tijāniyya*, pp. 153-155.

¹¹⁰⁷ Al-Nazīfī, *al-Durra al-kharīda*, vol. IV, p. 80.

incapability to have an all-encompassing knowledge of his kingdom. He thus needs intermediaries to solve the problems of his followers, as, in this case, communication through intermediaries is certainly more effective than any direct form of communication. As such, drawing a comparison between God and a king would be tantamount to accusing God of ignorance and weakness, a severe violation of the divine attributes. On this basis, Tijānīs are accused of insolence and disrespect towards God. Why would they compare God to an ignorant, weak king who needs intermediaries to meet the needs of his followers, while they could compare Him to a king who is capable of doing this without intermediaries? Furthermore, Dakhīl Allāh dismisses this Tijānī claim that people do not know the proper way to communicate with God, and their alleged ignorance of the decorum with which to address Him. The process of communicating with God through invocation, including its prerequisites, he says, has been properly explained in religious texts.¹¹⁰⁸

In the following sections of *Dirāsa li-ahamm 'aqā'id al-Tijāniyya*, Dakhīl Allāh elaborates in detail on the respective meaning, usage, and linguistic connotations of the term *tawassul* in the Qur'ān, the Sunna of the Prophet, and the sayings of the companions respectively. In Arabic, *tawassul* means nearness, location and degree. In perception of the Qur'ān, it means nearness (*qurba*); in the Sunna, it is used to refer to the Prophet's special location in paradise (*manzila*), while in the sayings of the companions, it is used to refer to their demands for the Prophet's intercession (*shafā'a*) and his invocation (*du'ā'*) during his lifetime. On the basis of Salafī sources, particularly those of Ibn Taymiyya Dakhīl Allāh divides *tawassul* into the permissible (*mashrū'*) and the impermissible, prohibited kind (*muḥarram mamnū'*). Supplication through the means of the beautiful names of Allah (*asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā*), through righteous deeds (*al-a'māl al-ṣāliḥa*), and through the invocation of the Prophet (*du'ā' al-nabiyy*) are all considered to be within the category of permissible types of *tawassul*, whereas supplication through the essence of a human being (*dhāt al-shakḥ al-mutawassal bihi*), whether the Prophet or someone else; supplication through the status and stature of a human being (*jāh al-shakḥ al-mutawassal bihi*), whether the Prophet or someone else; and supplication through the means of administering an oath to Allah for the statue and stature of someone else (*al-'iqsām 'alā Allāh bi-l-mutawassal bihi*), are all considered to be impermissible and prohibited types of *tawassul*. The discussion is enriched with

¹¹⁰⁸ For details of Dakhīl Allāh's argumentation concerning and the prerequisites of communication with God (*du'ā'*), see: Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm 'aqā'id al-Tijāniyya*, pp. 155-156.

the quotation of a number of Qur'ānic passages and Prophetic statements, offered as textual evidence for his argumentation.¹¹⁰⁹

Aḥmad b. al-Hādī dedicates no less than twenty pages of *Shams al-dalīl* to his response to the author of *Dirāsa li-ahamm 'aqā'id al-Tijāniyya* on this matter. Some of the late generations' scholars (*tawā'if muta'akhhira*), he argues, rejected explicit religious evidence indicating the permissibility of *tawassul* and *istighātha* by referring to some Qur'ānic passages that are actually concern idol worshippers and polytheists. The antagonists of the Tijāniyya are claimed to resemble to the fourth Umayyad ruler Marwān b. Ḥakam (r. 62-65/683-685),¹¹¹⁰ who admonished Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī (d. 52/672)¹¹¹¹ (an eminent companion of the Prophet, known for his hospitality toward the Prophet when the latter migrated to Medina) for putting his forehead on the grave of the Prophet. Marwān asked him whether he was aware of what he was actually doing; Abū Ayyūb's response was simple and clear. He came to pay a visit to the Prophet in full consciousness; as for putting his forehead on the stone of the grave, it was by no means whatsoever a sign of respect for the stone.¹¹¹² This comparison contains a powerful message, implying that while Tijānīs have been accused by their adversaries of behaving in contradiction to the requirements of the religion, in reality the adversaries themselves are following in the footsteps of the less knowledgeable Marwān, a highly controversial figure in the history of Islam.¹¹¹³ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, thus seems to be outraged by what he considers to be an equation of Muslims with idol worshippers, arguing that the Qur'ānic verses that forbid invocation (*du'ā'*) and supplication to others apart from Allah, such as al-Jin 8, al-Aḥqāf 5 and al-Ḥajj 73, all refer to supplication in terms of worship (*'ibāda*), whereas *du'ā'* has different forms and one should not take every form for worship. He thus subjugates the Prophetic tradition in which *du'ā'* is depicted as worship ("*du'ā'* is indeed worship") to this distinction, and then he puts forward a surprising contradiction, as follows. He is of the opinion

¹¹⁰⁹ For further details, see: Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm 'aqā'id al-Tijāniyya*, pp. 157-163, Ibn Taymiyya, *Qā'ida jalīla fī l-tawassul wa-l-wasīla*, (in particular the second and third chapters) pp. 83-232; Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū' al-fatāwā*, vol. I, pp. 121-126.

¹¹¹⁰ Marwān ascended to power after Mu'āwiye b. Yezīd stepped down in 684. However, he ruled for a short period of less than a year, between 684 and 685. See: al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, vol. VII, p. 207.

¹¹¹¹ He died during the Umayyad blockade of Istanbul (then Constantinople/Qustuntuniyya). See al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, vol. II, pp. 295-296.

¹¹¹² Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 102.

¹¹¹³ Despite being a companion himself, Marwān b. Ḥakam is responsible for killing Ṭalḥa b. 'Ubayd Allah (656), an eminent companion and one of the first eight persons to embrace Islam, also one of the ten companions who were promised paradise during their lives. The Shi'a tradition denies the companionship of Marwān and he is accused of apostasy, as are many others.

that when a Muslim performs *tawassul* and *istighātha* through prophets and the righteous servants of God, he is certainly aware of the fact that they, prophets and the righteous servants of God, do not possess the capability to cause harm or favour, as these are the prerogative of God alone. They are, however, the heirs of high rank in the sight of God. Thus, the Muslim in question is pragmatically using them as mediums and means (*asbāb wa-wasā'il*) to achieve his goals. The call for help is directed to Allah, while the Prophet, due to his high status in the sight of Allah, is a mere means in the process.¹¹¹⁴ “It is not fair”, he argues, “that we place a Muslim who performs *tawassul* and *istighātha* on the same footing with an idol worshipping polytheist”.¹¹¹⁵ Elsewhere in the book, however, and in direct contradiction to this, he explicitly states that the Prophet has been granted the capability to cause harm to, or to benefit persons. Likewise, he claims the soul (*rūh*) of the supreme master of the Tijāniyya to possess the power to provide sustenance to other saints.¹¹¹⁶

A number of Qur'ānic passages are presented as evidence of *tawassul* through human beings, even while none of them are really related to the issue, and nor do they mention the word *tawassul*. Aḥmad b. al-Hādī's attempt to connect them with the issue at hand requires a notable stretch of imagination.¹¹¹⁷ A fair number of Prophetic traditions and the practices of the companions are also quoted in an attempt to prove the legitimacy of *tawassul* through the Prophet; however, a thorough reading of them reveals a few important points. Most of them refer either to the intercession (*shafā'a*) of the Prophet, or supplication through his high rank; none of them depict direct supplication through the person of the Prophet, or asking for his help in a moment of need.¹¹¹⁸ It seems that Aḥmad b. al-Hādī willingly refrains from distinguishing between different types of *tawassul* and *istighātha*, presenting all of them as similar and valid, and claiming that the

¹¹¹⁴ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 103.

¹¹¹⁵ For instance, he refers to al-Qaṣaṣ:15 in which the prophet Mūsā was once asked for help by one of his fellow tribesmen, against a tyrannical mutual enemy belonging to the tribe of Pharaoh. Mūsā did indeed provide the help demanded. If asking for a prophet's help was not legitimate, according to Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, Mūsā would have not responded in the affirmative. Ironically enough, however, he leaves the issue of different types of *istighātha* untouched; this is ironic because that described here in the case of the prophet Mūsā is of a different nature: it is asking a living present human being for help, whereas the bone of contention between Tijānīs and their opponents is the notion of calling upon an absent or dead human being for help. For details of the Qur'ānic passages presented by Aḥmad b. al-Hādī in favour of his argument, see: Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, pp. 103-104.

¹¹¹⁶ For more information, see: Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, pp. 176-177.

¹¹¹⁷ For further details, see: Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, pp. 104-106.

¹¹¹⁸ A detailed account of the Prophetic tradition concerning *tawassul* may be found in Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, pp. 107-110.

companions of the Prophet had performed all of them. He further asserts that ‘Umar b. Khaṭṭāb had recourse to the help of ‘Abbās b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the uncle of the Prophet, in supplicating for rain at a time when Medina was stricken with by drought. This incident is considered as a proof of *tawassul* through the persons of human beings.¹¹¹⁹ Dakhīl Allāh on the other hand, takes a different and, I would assert, more reasonable approach to the case of ‘Umar, claiming that he would have supplicated through the person of the Prophet rather than his uncle, if supplication through the person of human beings was allowed, as the same account mentions that the companions used to ask the Prophet for *du‘ā* in such conditions during his lifetime, while after his death they chose ‘Abbās for the same purpose.¹¹²⁰

Another point which should be taken into consideration is that most of the evidences provided by Aḥmad b. al-Hādī stem not from the six most respected sources of *ḥadīth*, to which are attached a great deal of significance, but rather from sources of less value, often with problematic chains of transmission (*sanad/isnād*). If one considers issues of *tawassul* and *istighātha* to be an issue of faith, as is the tendency among the protagonists of the Salafī movement, then Prophetic traditions that are less than *mutawātir* and *ṣaḥīḥ*¹¹²¹ cannot be cited as evidence. Another equally important question is that, as all these accounts are related to the personality of the Prophet, how may one appropriate them as evidence for *tawassul* and seeking help of (*istighātha*) of other righteous servants of God? Towards the end of his discussion of this matter in *Shams al-dalīl*, Aḥmad b. al-Hādī presents certain Prophetic accounts that approve calling unseen servants of God for help in case of need, and in times of misfortune, while in an unknown land.¹¹²² These are perhaps the only proofs concerning *istighātha* given by Aḥmad b. al-Hādī which might serve as evidence; however, his reading of these accounts not only contradicts Qur’ānic instructions with the utmost severity, but also contradicts his own admission that the source of benefit is Allah alone.¹¹²³ To give an example, Aḥmad b. al-Hādī cites the story of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, one of the standard authorities of

¹¹¹⁹ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 110.

¹¹²⁰ Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā’ id al-Tijānīyya*, p. 159.

¹¹²¹ *Mutawātir* is a technical term in the sciences of *ḥadīth*. A Prophetic tradition can only be called *mutawātir* when it was reported by a huge group of transmitters, such that reason denies their agreement on a lie. For further details, see: Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ al-‘Uthaymīn, *Muṣṭalaḥ al-Ḥadīth*, p. 6.

¹¹²² Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 110.

¹¹²³ Salafīs have a different interpretation of these accounts. According to them, people who are called upon are either djinns or angels and not absent and dead human beings as Sufis would argue. Furthermore, these accounts are classified either as weak (*ḍa‘īf*) or as being affected by other factors which reduce their credibility. See: <https://Islāmqa.info/ar/132642>

reference for Salafīs, who is said to have called upon the unseen servants of Allah for their help upon losing his way during one of his pilgrimage journeys (although without giving the source), and then admonishes his opponents for not following in the footsteps of their own leader (*imām*). If Salafīs excommunicate people for calling upon dead human beings for their help, he says, they should start with their own masters, and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal in particular.¹¹²⁴

Towards the end of the discussion, Aḥmad b. al-Hādī attempts to defend two pieces of Tijānī evidence that were refuted by Dakhīl Allāh, namely the Tijānī interpretation of *wasīla* in al-Mā'ida 35 as *tawassul* through the Prophet and the perfect guide (*shaykh al-kāmil*) by the supreme master of the brotherhood, and the Prophet's instruction to the companions to perform *tawassul* through his status and stature. Dakhīl Allāh's refutation consists of the claim that the interpretation of *wasīla* as *tawassul* through the Prophet and the Sufī master has no basis in authoritative *tafsīr* sources, and his declaration that the Prophetic instruction was a lie that had been ascribed to him (*mawḍū'*).¹¹²⁵ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, for his part, holds that the passage in question approves *tawassul* in its entirety; thus *tawassul* through righteous human beings is equal to *tawassul* through righteous deeds. He then relates that 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb is said to have appealed to Muslims to take 'Abbās b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib as their *wasīla* to God.¹¹²⁶ As for the alleged Prophetic tradition having been declared *mawḍū'*, he takes restrained approach, arguing to the effect that, even if the authenticity of the account concerned is severely contested, and even if it is not reported by scholars of *ḥadīth*, its connotation is still true and valid. The following is an excerpt:

The Prophet has supplicated through his own status and stature (*bijāhihi*). The prophet Adam supplicated through the Prophet's *jāh* in order to undo his mistake, and [some of the] companions supplicated through his *jāh*... the greatness of the Prophet's status and stature in the sight of Allah is so eminent that it needs no evidence, whether you accept it or not.¹¹²⁷

Those arguing against the legitimacy of *tawassul* and *istighātha* are accused of failing to deliver evidence for their claims. According to Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, all four school of jurisprudence have unanimously approved *tawassul* and *istighātha* through prophets and *walīs*, both during their

¹¹²⁴ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 111.

¹¹²⁵ See the relevant section above; also, Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm 'aqā'id al-Tijāniyya*, p. 153.

¹¹²⁶ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 122.

¹¹²⁷ Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 122.

lifetimes as well as after their demise. Among other texts, he refers to *al-Tadhkira fī ziyārat al-Muṣṭafā wa-l-tawassul bihi* (A Remembrance of Visiting the Chosen Prophet and Supplicating Via His Stature) by Abū l-Wafā ‘Alī b. ‘Aqīl (d. 513/1119), an Iraqi Ḥanbalī scholar; *Miṣbāḥ al-ḡalām fī l-mustaghīthīn bi-khayr al-anām* (A Lamp in Darkness for Those who Invoke the Help of the Best Human Being) by Abū ‘Abdallāh Muḥammad b. Mūsā (d. 683/1284), a Moroccan Mālikī Sufī scholar; *al-Jawāhir wa-l-durar fī tarjama shaykh al-Islām ibn Ḥajar* (The Jewels and Pearls Concerning the Life Story of Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Ḥajar”) by Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497),¹¹²⁸ an Egyptian Shāfi‘ī scholar; and *al-Mawāhib al-laduniyya* (The God-Given Talents) by Shahāb al-Dīn al-Qaṣṭalānī (d. 923/1517), another Egyptian Shāfi‘ī, giving lengthy citations. However, one should note that the quotations he offers from these sources mostly reflect personal understandings of the issue, and recount personal experiences, without offering solid religious proofs. Al-Sakhāwī, for instance, reports a dream vision in which a certain Abū l-Mawāhib, known also as Ibn Zughdān,¹¹²⁹ is said to have heard a voice telling him to perform *tawassul* via Ibn Ḥajar if he was in need, and that any *tawassul* performed three times via Ibn Ḥajar would receive divine acceptance.¹¹³⁰ The issue of *tawassul*, holds Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, was made a source of contention in the seventh century, after the migration of the Prophet; prior to this no one had contested its legitimacy.¹¹³¹ Here the author of *Shams al-dalīl* is indirectly referring to the era of Ibn Taymiyya, without explicitly mentioning his name, as Ibn Taymiyya persistently emphasized the fact that *tawassul* through the person of human beings is prohibited. While his writings constitute a point of reference for Dakhīl Allāh, on certain occasions he is also quoted by the Aḥmad b. al-Hādī as well; thus one can understand why he is not mentioned by name here.

It is important to note that Tijānīs are not united on the issue of *tawassul*. Some, like Aḥmad b. al-Hādī approve *tawassul* through the person of the Prophet or righteous servants of God, while others, like Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, have different understandings of the issue. For the latter, the term *wasīla* as it appears in al-Mā’ida 35 refers to righteous deeds (*al-‘amal al-ṣāliḥ*), whereas, as we

¹¹²⁸ On al-Sakhāwī, see: ‘Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, vol. III, p. 399.

¹¹²⁹ On Ibn Zughdān, see: ‘Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, vol. III, p. 100.

¹¹³⁰ Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Shakhāwī, *al-Jawāhir wa-l-durar fī tarjama shaykh al-Islām ibn Ḥajar*, vol. III, p. 988.

¹¹³¹ For details of, and quotations from the sources which Aḥmad b. al-Hādī alleges approve *tawassul* and *istigāḥtha*, see: Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, pp. 111-17.

have seen above, Aḥmad b. al-Hādī understands it to mean *tawassul* through the person of the Prophet and those of *walīs*. From al-Ḥāfiẓ's point of view, love (*maḥabba*) of the Prophet is a kind of righteous deed and it is thus that Sufis perform *tawassul*.¹¹³² This can therefore be understood not only as a rejection of the legitimacy of *tawassul* performed through the persons of human beings, but as an accomodation of the argument developed by antagonists of the brotherhood.

4. Conclusion

Dakhīl Allāh is one of the few anti-Tijānī polemicists to have applied a different method and style of refuting the Tijānī doctrine, distinct when compared to the classical ways in which others have criticized the brotherhood. The initial reason for his undertaking the task of researching the Tijāniyya was his personal curiosity, stirred by an abundance of requests from the African continent asking for the legal opinions of the Saudi Dār al-Ifṭā' (The House of Legal Opinions) about the Tijāniyya brotherhood. He therefore began to conduct fieldwork in a number of different geographical settings, such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Morocco, to collect as much research material as he could, applying a methodological approach which sets him apart from his predecessors. Instead of opening his book *Dirāsa li-ahamm 'aqā'id al-Tijāniyya* with either a criticism, or a foreword to criticism, as per the tradition of the antagonists of Tijānī Sufism, he provides a great deal of information pertaining to the history of Sufism in general and that of the Tijāniyya in particular. The reader is informed about different stages in the formation and development of *taṣawwuf*, as well as the formation of the Tijāniyya brotherhood and subsequent developments in its history, in addition to the life stories of its founding figure and some of his leading disciples. All of this is accomplished in the introduction and first chapter of the book, while his criticism of the Tijāniyya is reserved for the second and longest chapter.

As for the strategy of his critique, he avoids making a frontal attack on the brotherhood. Neither Tijānīs nor their supreme master is disrespected or defamed by him.¹¹³³ By his own account, his critique was undertaken in compliance with the mission of *da'wa*, and conducted for the purposes

¹¹³² Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Ahl al-ḥaqq al-'arifiūn billāh*, p. 131; For more on *tawassul* through the *maḥabba* (love) of the Prophet, see: Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Aḥzāb wa-awrād al-quṭb al-rabbānī wa-l-'arif al-samadānī sayyidunā Aḥmad al-Tijānī al-sharīf al-ḥasanī*, Cairo: al-Zāwiya al-Tijāniyya al-Kubrā, 1427/2006, pp. 144-150.

¹¹³³ This point is even acknowledged by his opponent Aḥmad b. al-Hādī. He is said to have been respectful, compared to al-Hilālī in his discussions of the Tijānī tenets. See: Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, *Shams al-dalīl*, p. 7.

of liberating Tijānīs from the trap they have fallen into, and of expressing reality, for those who seek the truth. This does not mean that he is soft in his critique of the doctrine itself; a fair number of Tijānī tenets are harshly labelled by him as either disbelief (*kufir*) or polytheism (*shirk*).

Another difference that sets him apart from his predecessors is his selection and quotation of authoritative Tijānī sources produced in different periods of the history of the brotherhood. The majority of his quotations are made from *Jawāhir al-mā'ānī* of 'Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Rimāḥ ḥizb al-Raḥīm* of al-Ḥājj 'Umar, *Bughyat al-mustafīd* of Ibn al-Sa'īḥ and *al-Durra al-kharīda* of al-Nazfī, the first two of which, by his own account, are products of the formative period of the Tijāniyya. The last of them, *al-Durra al-kharīda*, was written at the end of the period in which the most authoritative sources were written, while *Bughyat al-mustafīd* was written in between. This range of sources were chosen to emphasize one of his main arguments, that certain Tijānī tenets had been maintained throughout the history of the brotherhood, and had continued to be advocated by Tijānī sources throughout those different periods.

Although his book seems to have been known to a wide range of Tijānī circles, as far as we know, Aḥmad b. al-Hādī is one of the just two Tijānī protagonists of the brotherhood to have responded to Dakhīl Allāh.¹¹³⁴ Much to the disappointment of the reader, however, he adopts a rather different code of conduct than his opponent. Instead of engaging deeply with the topics at hand, his responses focus more on the discussion of the scholarly credentials and ethics of the opponents. Furthermore, he applies a vague strategy in refutation of Dakhīl Allāh's allegations, which blurs the picture for the reader. For one unfamiliar with Dakhīl Allāh's objections, it would often be extremely hard to differentiate between Dakhīl Allāh's objections and Aḥmad b. al-Hādī's refutations of them when reading *Shams al-dalīl*, as the arguments and counterarguments are given as a mixture. This complicates the picture still further, as perhaps was the intention all along, because the audience he addresses is clearly Tijānī.

¹¹³⁴ The other of these Tijānī protagonists is 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ṭālib (d. 1437/2016) of Algeria with his *al-Sayf al-saqīl li-qaṭ' lisān al-Dakhīl* (The Sharp Sword to Cut the Tongue of the Intruder). The manuscript treatise is unfortunately yet to be printed. On Ṭālib's life and writings, see: https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%AF_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%AD%D9%85%D9%86_%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8.

In addition to its loosely organised presentation, the author of *Shams al-dalīl* also applies a selective approach in which not all of Dakhīl Allāh's objections are taken into consideration, and some of the quotations he makes from Tijānī sources are either partially or totally ignored. To take a typical example, Dakhīl Allāh claims on the authority of *Jawāhir* that Tijānīs accommodate polytheism, due to their conviction in the tenet of *waḥdat al-wujūd*.¹¹³⁵ The quotation from *Jawāhir* he gives as evidence of this is ignored by Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, as if it had never existed in the most authoritative source of the brotherhood.¹¹³⁶ This appears to be at odds with the author's own assertion that the notion of the unity of creation with the creator is not a part of Tijānī doctrine, and his claim that this interpretation of *waḥdat al-wujūd* is a fabrication of Dakhīl Allāh's that he has attributed to the sources of the brotherhood. Insead, Aḥmad b. al-Hādī claims that Tijānī sources are concerned with a different type of *waḥdat al-wujūd* in which the Sufī is annihilated in divine unity. This claim by the Mauritanian seems to be based more on strategic considerations, as it is not backed up by Tijānī sources. The passage of *Jawāhir* that he ignores in *Shams al-dalīl*, for example, clearly defines the type of *waḥdat al-wujūd* with which it is concerned. It is for this reason that Aḥmad b. al-Hādī struggles to present the notion of *waḥdat al-wujūd* as a matter of taste (*dhawq*) which may not be understood without one's being subject to divine emanation (*fayḍ al-ilāhī*). A similar attempt to evade the criticism can be observed in the issue of *waḥdat al-shuhūd*, a notion refuted by Dakhīl Allāh precisely on the understanding of it as the annihilation of a human being in God. Despite the fact that the statements of the supreme master of the Tijāniyya himself are prone to suggest that he held such an understanding of the issue, however, later protagonists of the brotherhood suggest a different interpretation. They prefer to describe *waḥdat al-shudūd* and *fanā'* in terms of the divine will dominating the will of the human being, rather than the extinction of their human attributes in such a state, an interpretation which has been shown here to lack consistency. Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, for example, simultaneously attributes the ecstatic utterances made in the state of *fanā'* to both God and the human being, claiming on the one hand, that it is God who speaks through his servant in the state of annihilation, while on the other hand,

¹¹³⁵ The author of *Jawāhir al-ma'ānī* claims on the authority of his master that Allah appears to his worshippers in different forms and transfigurations. Thus, he claims, no matter whom one had worshipped he had worshipped none but Allah Himself. Even polytheists who had worshipped idols are claimed to have seen Allah in their idols, and therefore should not be condemned for doing so. See: 'Alī Ḥarāzīm, *Jawāhir al-ma'ānī*, vol. I, pp. 184-185.

¹¹³⁶ Other protagonists of the brotherhood have also ignored this crucial passage in their discussion of *waḥdat al-wujūd*. Maḥmūd b. Bensālim, a grandson of Aḥmad al-Tijānī's, for example, turns a blind eye to the passage, although he dedicates twenty pages to the discussion of the topic. See: Maḥmūd b. Bensālim, *al-Ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya bayn al-intiqād wa-l-i'tiqād*, pp. 32-57.

he nevertheless feels the need to force the servant to disown what he utters in such a state. This raises a number of questions in the mind of the reader. If it is the divine who speaks through the human, how can those utterances be attributed to the human at the same time? And why should the human being disown those utterances if they belong to the divine? Similarly, in *Shams al-dalīl*, Aḥmad b. al-Hādī first denies *fanā*’ to be annihilation in the essence of God, but later claims the opposite, without further elaboration on what he means by annihilation in the essence of God.

Another example that reveals some inconsistency is the issue of the accessibility of the knowledge of the unseen (*al-ghayb*) to Sufī masters. At the beginning of his reply to Dakhīl Allāh on this point, the author of *Shams al-dalīl* gives the impression that Tijānīs deny the accessibility of the knowledge of the unseen to human beings, but in subsequent sections he argues for the opposite. While Dakhīl Allāh presents evidence from the Qur’ān and the Sunna to dismiss human access to any sort of *al-ghayb*, in *Dirāsa*, in *Shams al-dalīl* Aḥmad b. al-Hādī ignores it all, and insists on the accuracy of the Tijānī tenet in question. He does this on the basis of an interpretation of a particular passage of the Qur’ān, namely al-Jinn 27, provided by the supreme master of the brotherhood. This passage asserts that certain knowledge of the unseen may be disclosed to a divine messenger if God wishes it to be so, and Aḥmad b. al-Hādī insists that *walīs* be included within the scope of the term messenger (*rasūl*) as it appears in this passage. This view is not shared by other Tijānīs; Maḥmūd b. Bensālim, for example, argues against any human being having access to absolute (*muṭlaq*) knowledge of the unseen, even in the case of a divine messenger.¹¹³⁷ Nevertheless, he too remains silent on certain sections of authoritative sources of the brotherhood, which, according to Dakhīl Allāh, allege the Sufī master to have access to absolute knowledge of the *al-ghayb*.¹¹³⁸

Aḥmad b. al-Hādī also maintains a pattern of inconsistency in the matter of *tawassul* via the Prophet and other righteous servants of God. This is dismissed by his opponent Dakhīl Allāh as impermissible and forbidden, with three exceptions: *tawassul* conducted through the beautiful divine names (*al-asmā’ al-ḥusnā*), *tawassul* conducted through righteous deeds, and through supplication (*du‘ā*) of the Prophet. For Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, however, the conduct of *tawassul* via

¹¹³⁷ Maḥmūd b. Bensālim, *al-Tijānīyya bayn al-i’tiqād wa-l-intiqād*, p. 86.

¹¹³⁸ According to the author of *Rimāḥ*, for example, Sufī masters possess the ability to see the inner conditions of their disciples as one may see things through glass; moreover, he obliges their disciples to believe so. See ‘Umar al-Fūtī, *Rimāḥ ḥizb al-Raḥīm*, vol. I, p. 23.

the essence, status and stature of the Prophet was standard practice until the seventh century, in which scholars such as Ibn Taymiyya challenged its legitimacy. In support of this argument and in line with certain Sufi sources, albeit against the opinions of scholars of *tafsīr*, he interprets the term *wasīla* in al-Mā'ida 35 to mean, *tawassul* through the person of the Prophet and through the person of *shaykh al-kāmil* (the perfect guide). Here, too, however, he fails to refrain from exhibiting inconsistency and contradictory behaviour, as at the beginning of his discussion, the righteous servants of God are stripped of their purported capability to cause benefit or harm to humanity, which is said to be a solely divine prerogative. Towards the end of the discussion, however, he defines the righteous servants of God as being in possession of certain extraordinary powers of interference in the affairs of other people, such that their help may be sought when other means are exhausted and one is in despair. Calling upon righteous servants of God for help, is then said by him not only to have been approved by certain Prophetic accounts,¹¹³⁹ but also to have been put into practice by Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, a scholar of immense importance for Salafīs. As for Tijānīs in general, they have not developed a united stance pertaining to the issue of *tawassul*. As discussed above, Aḥmad b. al-Ḥādī's understanding of the issue is not shared by other Tijānī authorities, and, for example, Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ's understanding of *tawassul* is not much different from that of the opponents of the brotherhood.¹¹⁴⁰

¹¹³⁹ Salafīs have a different interpretation of these accounts. According to them, the people who are called upon are either djinns or angels and as such they are assumed to be present (and thus not absent, dead human beings) as Sufīs would argue. Furthermore, these accounts are either classified as weak (*ḍa'if*) or as affected by other factors that reduces their credibility. See: <https://Islāmqa.info/ar/132642>

¹¹⁴⁰ Unlike the author of *Shams al-dalīl*, Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ does not interpret the term *wasīla* in al-Mā'ida 35 as *tawassul* through the person of the Prophet; rather, he argues it means *tawassul* through *muḥabba* (love) of the Prophet, which could be considered as a kind of righteous deed. See: Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Ahl al-ḥaqq al-'ārifūn billāh*, p. 131.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Polemical exchanges between the antagonists and protagonists of the Tijāniyya began as soon as the brotherhood was established. The Qādirī–Tijānī altercations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were primarily shaped by politics, as well as by the competition for followers and dominance between these brotherhoods. The same could be said for the Tijānī–Salafī altercations that took place in North Africa in the first half of the twentieth century. As Jamil Abun-Nasr has observed, while North African Salafīs initially detested Tijānīs for their purported collaboration with French colonialism, the anti-Tijānī campaign they unleashed was grounded in theological arguments, and subsequent clashes were primarily motivated by theology. All three of the Salafī case studies subjected to scrutiny in this dissertation demonstrate that *da‘wa* and *tawḥīd* mission were the main motivations that shaped their authors’ anti-Tijānī efforts. The Tijānī authors, on the other hand, have been shown to have perceived the defence of their brotherhood and its founding figure as an active service to Aḥmad al-Tijānī, which would not only draw one nearer to the shaykh, but also entitle one to divine grace. It would be no exaggeration to state that the production of polemical literature in defence of the brotherhood was thought by them to contain an element of worship, in addition to its being considered as compulsory service and reverence to the supreme master of the Tijāniyya.

In addition to the above-mentioned observation, the field of theological debates is an arena where both protagonists and antagonists of the brotherhood can flex their muscles and construct their own authority. Tijānī shaykhs who are involved in theological wars with their opponents appear as heroic scholars to their constituencies. The Egyptian Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, his Sudanese disciple ‘Umar Mas‘ūd and the Mauritanian Aḥmad b. al-Hādī are all revered by Tijānīs as loyal soldiers who defended the Tijāniyya against the *munkirīn*. They therefore make use of the criticism directed towards their order and its supreme shaykh, by opposing it, as a means to promoting their recognition and increasing their following within Tijānī circles. Furthermore, as observed in the preceding chapters, Tijānīs have tended to avoid full engagement with the details of their opponents’ criticisms in debates. In most cases, they provide partial responses to the allegations directed at them, often ignoring the core of the criticism. This has further encouraged Salafīs to repeat their critique on every possible occasion. The latter may also be seen to follow their own personal ambitions: attacking Sufis is a means of enhancing one’s personal recognition and social

acceptance in Salafī circles as well. All three of the Salafī opponents of the Tijāniyya that are studied here may be seen to have reaped the benefits of their anti-Tijānī campaigns. Not least, each of their works have become standard sources of reference for Salafīs in online social networks on the internet. This trait of polemical exchanges, perceived as a source for enhancing one's personal recognition, seems to guarantee the ongoing, and the repetitive nature of such debates for the time to come.

A thorough scrutiny of the history of the polemics between Tijānīs and their opponents reveals a gradual change in the perception of certain Tijānī tenets among the followers of the brotherhood. This is best illustrated by the changing perception of the extraordinary reward that the book *Jawāhir al-ma'ānī* led Tijānīs to believe would result from the recitation of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ*, in comparison to that resulting from the recitation of the holy divine speech, the Qur'ān. Traditionally, Tijānīs have unconditionally accepted the phrase in this, the most authoritative source of the brotherhood, which equates the reward for one single recitation of this short phrase of saying blessings on the Prophet with six thousand recitations of the whole Qur'ān. However, the constant criticism of their opponents regarding this point may be seen to have forced some Tijānīs towards expressing an alternative view. The Nigerian Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ was the first to deny the equation of the reward for one recitation of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* with that for six thousand recitations of the Qur'ān, announcing it to have been an addition to *Jawāhir*, made by the enemies of the brotherhood. This happened in the early 1980s (CE), when, due to the severe critique that ensued from his fellow Tijānīs, both within and outside of his country, no other Tijānī authority dared to repeat any such bold declaration. However, more recent remarks made by the Sudanese 'Umar Mas'ūd in 2017 CE in 'Arūs al-Zawāyā, in reply to a question pertaining to the comparison of one recitation of this formula with six thousand recitations of the Qur'ān, seem to have expressed the thoughts of other Tijānīs who had hesitated to share them in public. Just as his Nigerian predecessor had done, the Sudanese Tijānī has declared the particular phrase that claims the litany to merit this enormous reward as inauthentic and dismissed any such comparison between the rewards for reciting the Divine speech and non-Qur'ānic prayer formulas. However, when, in return, his remarks were questioned by other Tijānīs, his own son Haytham b. 'Umar al-Tijānī made sure to interpret the remarks of his father in line with the traditional perception of the

brotherhood.¹¹⁴¹ All the same time, this trajectory shows a gradual shift in the Tijānī perception of *Jawāhir*, which previously was actually perceived to have been composed by the Prophet himself. Now, printed versions of the book are suspected of containing additions, accusations that are hard to qualify.

Present indications appear to favour the spread of this new (and for the majority of the brotherhood's followers, still unacceptable) strategy within Tijānī circles, which might gain strength in future. For the time being, however, while the younger generations are attracted by this *sharī'a*-centric argumentation,¹¹⁴² the majority of Tijānīs still follow the traditional strategy of the brotherhood. They are neither ready to accept that any addition has been made to *Jawāhir*, nor to make any compromise in relation to the extraordinary reward that it claims to be due for the recitation of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ*. Despite the uncompromising majority, individual voices from here and there seem to be determined to clean up the Tijāniyya, ridding it of those tenets that are seen as deviations from, and contradictions of, *sharī'a*. Indeed, in doing so, they may even claim to be acting in line with a command of Aḥmad al-Tijānī's, who urged his followers to restrict their obedience to even his own teachings to those conforming with the instructions of the *sharī'a*. In this, too, they seem to have hearkened to the appeals of those of their opponents who have reminded Tijānīs of their master's command, and invited them to get rid of those tenets that not only contradict the religion of Islam but also pollute the reputation of their supreme master, Aḥmad al-Tijānī.¹¹⁴³ Many others, however, such as the Sudanese Ibrāhīm Sīdī, would strictly object to applying the scales of the *sharī'a* to the Sufī teachings of the brotherhood's founder.

¹¹⁴¹ During the extended online discussions, Haytham b. 'Umar al-Tijānī said he was entirely sure of the fact that no functioning mind could equate the reward for one recitation of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* to that for six thousand recitations of the divine speech, and thus that, if there is such a phrase in *Jawāhir*, it must have been an addition to the book. Online conversation with Haytham b. 'Umar al-Tijānī on 17.5.2017.

¹¹⁴² Roman Loimeier argues that the Nigerian Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ has taken this flexible strategy because it not only worked relatively well against the criticism of Izāla, his Salafī opponents in Nigeria, but also gained him considerable recognition and publicity in Nigeria. During a rally of a Council of 'Ulamā' in Kano on March 3, 1988, Loimeier notes, he was the only Tijānī shaykh whose talk was not only welcomed, but received the applause of the delegates of the Muslim Students Society (MSS), while other well-known shaykhs of the brotherhood (including Dahiru Bauchi and Ismā'il Khalīfa) failed to attract such a reception. Roman Loimeier, *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria*, pp. 275-276.

¹¹⁴³ Muḥammad Ḥasanayn Makhlūf, *al-Manhaj al-qawīm*, pp. 14-15, 109. In addition to revering Aḥmad al-Tijānī for encouraging his followers to stick with *sharī'a*, the Moroccan Salafī al-Hilālī, himself once a Tijānī, invites Tijānīs to do so. Furthermore, he sees his own critique of the Tijāniyya as an application of the Tijānī master's own instruction. See: al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, pp. 38, 101. The Nigerian Abū Bakr Gumi glorifies both Aḥmad al-Tijānī and 'Ab al-Qādir al-Jilānī, and blames their followers for attributing certain reprehensible innovations to

Another example which demonstrates a drastic change in the Tijānī perception of the supreme leader of the brotherhood is the issue of how to understand Aḥmad al-Tijānī's statement that he had his feet on the necks of other *awlīyā'* (divine saints). The traditional perception of the brotherhood has been to understand this as an indication of his undoubted supremacy over all other friends of God. One of the master's Moroccan great-grandsons, Maḥmūd b. Bensālīm, however, proposes a different, metaphorical interpretation of the term "feet", which, according to him, refers to *sharī'a* and the *ḥaqīqa*, rather than the actual feet of the founding figure of the Tijāniyya.¹¹⁴⁴ This interpretation posits the supremacy of the religion of Islam, and the Sufī spiritual understanding of it, to be embedded in the statement of Aḥmad al-Tijānī, rather than taking it to be a declaration of his personal supremacy over other divine saints.¹¹⁴⁵

In line with the changing perceptions of certain tenets, a gradual change in the tone of Tijānī responses to their opponents may be observed. This trend is certainly connected to the public appearance and spread of Salafism in previously Tijānī-dominated arenas: the more public recognition gained by Salafīs, the more they made their presence felt, the harder and sharper the tone of the Tijānī responses may be seen to have become. Considering the three Tijānī treatises studied in this thesis in chronological order, the softest in tone of the three is also the chronological first: Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz's response to Ḥasanayn Makhlūf, and, indirectly, to al-Ifriqī. With the exception of some derogatory remarks regarding al-Ifriqī's origin and scholarly credentials, the treatise is an attempt to preserve polemical decorum and observe the etiquette of responding to one's opponents. In fact, Makhlūf, to whom the treatise is a reply in the first place, is never referred to by name. The chronological second of the three treatises, 'Umar Mas'ūd's treatise in refutation of al-Ifriqī, does not, however, observe the same decorum. Al-Ifriqī is not only mentioned by name, but also mocked on every possible occasion: in fact, a whole chapter is dedicated to this end, in addition to the denial of his scholarly credentials. The belittling of al-Ifriqī undertaken by Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz may thus be seen to have reached a new level in 'Umar Mas'ūd's treatise. This seems to have to do with the success of the Anṣār al-Sunna al-

them. Since neither of the shaykhs wrote these innovations themselves, they are said to carry no responsibility for them. See: Abu Bakar Gumi, *al-'Aqīda al-ṣaḥīḥa bi-muwāfaqat al-sharī'a*, Beirut: Dār al-'Arabiyya li-l-Ṭabā'a wa-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzi', 1392/1972, pp. 25-26.

¹¹⁴⁴ For further details, see: Maḥmūd b. Bensālīm, *al-Tijāniyya bayn al-i'tiqād wa al-intiqād*, pp. 140-144

¹¹⁴⁵ A similar understanding to that of Maḥmūd b. Bensālīm had previously been proposed by the Egyptian Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, but his was not as clear-cut as that of the Moroccan great-grand son of the supreme master. For Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz's remarks on the issue, see: Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, *'Ulamā' tazkiyat al-nafs*, p. 15.

Muḥammadiyya movement in both Egypt and Sudan towards the end of the twentieth century, and the role that al-Ifriqī's short and effective treatise, *al-Anwār al-rahmāniyya*, played in the Anṣār's anti-Sufi (and anti-Tijānī) campaign. The chronological third and last of these three Tijānī treatises, the Mauritanian Aḥmad b. al-Hādī's response to al-Hilālī, Dakhīl Allāh and a Sudanese Salafī Hāshim al-Ḥusayn Rajab, is the sharpest in tone of all three, and the most uncompromising in style. Nearly every page (if not all of them) contains derogatory remarks, in belittling the author's opponent; in particular, the replies to the Sudanese Rajab show no respect for the etiquette of polemical altercations. This trait may also be discerned in Aḥmad b. al-Hādī's refutation of Ibn Māyābā, to whom a number of Tijānīs across the African continent had responded; but none using such a derogatory tone, blended with personal mockery, as the Mauritanian.

In comparison with their Tijānī respondents, the authors of Salafī onslaughts against the brotherhood have avoided *ad hominem* attacks and stuck to a more moderate polemical style—even though their judgement was usually outspoken and sometimes harsh. Of the three Salafī treatises studied in this thesis, al-Ifriqī's critique of the Tijāniyya *al-Anwār al-rahmāniyya* is, chronologically, the first of the three; in it, he repeatedly refers to his opponents as brothers, and it contains no derogatory personal remarks whatsoever. Apart from one or two indirect references to Aḥmad al-Tijānī, no direct criticism is levelled at the founding figure of the brotherhood. In the treatise *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, chronologically, the second of the three, al-Hilālī displays the utmost reverence for the Tijānī master, while blaming his followers for the reprehensible innovations al-Hilālī alleges them to have attributed to him. The Moroccan Salafī makes no recourse to derogatory remarks. The softest and chronological last of the three Salafī treatises is Dakhīl Allāh's critique *Dirāsa li-aḥamm 'aqā'id al-Tijāniyya*, which contains no reference to Aḥmad al-Tijānī or his followers; in it, he tries to stick to research ethics whereby his critique remains on an academic level. Despite the sober tone taken by their Salafī opponents, however, the protagonists of the Tijāniyya that have been studied in this thesis often appear to have felt it necessary to employ the sharpest possible manner, blended with derogatory personal comments, at the expense of the etiquette and decorum of polemical debates. They even appear to neglect the instructions of their supreme master Aḥmad al-Tijānī, who explicitly ordered them to abstain from engaging in polemical altercations with outsiders. This raises the question of why Sufis (Tijānīs in this case), who are normally considered more soft-natured than their Salafī counterparts, would

embrace a range of attitudes that do not comply with Sufism as defined by the Sufis themselves, as “polishing the mirror of the heart”? It seems that some Sufis abandoned, perhaps reluctantly, their spiritual ethics at least while responding to their opponents. This renders the colonial portrayal of Sufis as “moderate”, and Salafīs as “harsh” and “rigid” Muslims, questionable, at least in the arena of polemical altercations. This is not to say that all Salafīs have observed the same high decorum in their attacks on Tijāniyya: there have certainly been exceptions. The Salafīs of Dogondoutchi town in Niger, for instance, did not hesitate to use derogatory labels in their altercations with the Tijānīs of the town. Adeline Masquelier has observed that the level of mutual distaste in that town, between the followers of Izāla and those of Sufi brotherhoods had reached the level of their dehumanizing each other, calling each other by the names of “donkeys” and “dogs”.¹¹⁴⁶

Aḥmad al-Tijānī, as a *quṭb* with the purported merits of *‘iṣma* or *ḥifẓ*, is and always has been seen by his followers as a perfect embodiment of the religion of Islam. After all, they believe that he had daylight communications with the Prophet, and a direct channel of access to the emanations coming down from the Prophet down into the world. As such, it is easy to see how any sort of critique directed at him could be seen by them as critique directed towards the Prophet himself, and how, for his followers, no contradiction could be imagined between his genuine teachings and the doctrines of the religion. Thus, for his followers, it follows that he should not be treated just like any other scholar, whose opinions and views may be subjected to scrutiny and investigation. If there is any statement of his which might imply a contradiction of the *sharī‘a*, it can only be so in its outward meaning, while the inward meaning is nothing but the *sharī‘a* itself.¹¹⁴⁷ As such, it is the duty of the interpreter to find the true meaning of the statement and eliminate the seemingly contradictory situation. The rejection of Aḥmad al-Tijānī or any of his sayings would culminate in

¹¹⁴⁶ For details, see: Adeline Masquelier, “Identity, alterity and ambiguity in a Nigerien community: Competing definitions of ‘true’ Islam”, in Werbner, Richard. Ranger, Terence. (eds.), *Postcolonial Identities in Africa*, London: Zed Books, 1996, pp. 222-244.

¹¹⁴⁷ When I asked some Tijānīs about the reason for their holding the supreme master of the Tijāniyya in such high reverence, one of his followers explained to me that “Despite that fact that Ahmad al-Tijānī was not a Prophet himself, he had drunk from the ocean of prophecy. Thus, his statements are and should be considered as true and correct. Only the veiled ones would not understand the inherent value embedded in them”. Online discussion with Amina Javar, a Mauritanian Tijānī, on 24.10.2017.

disastrous results, both here and in the hereafter—or so his followers believe.¹¹⁴⁸ In particular, it is this perception of the founding figure of the Tijāniyya which is viewed by Salafī opponents of the brotherhood as the source of the whole problem. From their perspective, treating a human being in this manner is nothing but pure worship (*‘ibāda*);¹¹⁴⁹ it is naive, credulous and perverse (*ḍalāl*),¹¹⁵⁰ an unjustified exaggeration (*ghulūw*) that leads inevitably to polytheism and the exaltation of the shaykh at the level of God.¹¹⁵¹ For Tijānīs themselves, however, their attitude toward their supreme master has nothing to do with polytheism or a deviated form of worship. Rather, it is the necessary respect for the supreme saint of all time, who was kept hidden (*al-quṭb al-maktūm*) by God, even from the angels. For Tijānīs, it is their adversaries’ lack, of not only esoteric, spiritual knowledge, but also exoteric, outward knowledge that is the main reason for their denial (*inkār*) of the greatest saint of all time.¹¹⁵²

¹¹⁴⁸ Amina Javar warned me that quitting the brotherhood after affiliation would be considered an insult to the Tijānī master and a rejection of him, the punishment for which is dying in the state of disbelief (*kufr*). Online discussion with Amina Javar on 24.10.2017.

¹¹⁴⁹ Al-Ifriqī argues that the unconditional submission of Sufis to their master and their uncritical acceptance of his teachings culminates in the act of worshipping (*‘ibāda*) him and placing him on the same footing as God. This, he said, was a characteristic of Jews and Christians in their submission to the religious authority of rabbis (*aḥbār*) and monks (*ruhbān*) that the Qur’ān declared was tantamount to worshipping them. When ‘Adī b. Hātam, one of the Prophet’s companions who previously had been a Christian, heard the passage he denied having worshipped rabbis and monks; thereupon the Prophet delineated what the Qur’ānic passage was talking about. It was the unconditional submission to rabbis and monks and uncritical acceptance of their sayings that was being called as *‘ibāda*. Al-Ifriqī, *al-Anwār al-rahmāniyya*, p. 19.

¹¹⁵⁰ Al-Hilālī relates how, during his Tijāniyya days, he used to visit a certain Sufi master in the city of Asla in Algeria, who would use abusive language towards Allah during compulsory congregational ritual prayers. Remarkably, the people would take this as indicative of his high rank, and would reach out and kiss his hand for blessings. He relates, furthermore, that during one of his visits to Boussemghoun, a village where Aḥmad al-Tijānī is believed to have experienced his first daylight communication with the Prophet, he met a visitor coming from ‘Ayn Māḍi (Ain Madhi), the birth place of the Tijānī master. The visitor informed him of the descendants of al-Tijānī importing wine and prostitutes from Laghouat to ‘Ayn Māḍi for their personal usage. Even though the visitor had related what he had just witnessed without any intention of disrespecting the supreme master or his descendants, al-Hilālī not only refused to believe but had also accused his interlocutor of lying. “You are lying, I told him”, relates al-Hilālī. When the visitor asked what made him so sure, al-Hilālī pointed to a Prophetic guaranty that had purportedly been communicated to Aḥmad al-Tijānī during one of the latter’s daylight encounters with the Prophet, in which the sainthood of each and every descendant of Aḥmad al-Tijānī was guaranteed upon their reaching the age of puberty. Blind trust, uncritical acceptance and unconditional submission to the master, says he, drives one to find oneself in such pathetic situations as the two instances above. For full details, see: al-Hilālī, *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya*, pp. 121-22.

¹¹⁵¹ Dakhīl Allāh, *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā’id al-Tijāniyya*, pp. 164-165.

¹¹⁵² Discrediting one’s opponent based on their alleged lack of knowledge is a wide spread phenomenon in Tijānī polemical literature. Examples include the description of al-Ifriqī as “*shuwaykh*” by Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz, and his belittling of Muḥammad Ḥasanayn Makhluḥ for the latter’s criticism of Shaykh Marzūq. In the same vein, the religious scholarly credentials of al-Hilālī are denied by Muḥammad Fāl Abbā, who describes his opponent as a mere linguist and nothing else. All three of the Tijānī works subjected to scrutiny in this study consolidate the case for this being a Tijānī trait.

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Informants

- ‘Alī b. Muḥammad Dakhīl Allāh : He provided me with information on his life account through online correspondence (e-mail).
- Prof. Muḥammad Yahya Wuld Babah: is a university professor in Mauritania. I had many conversations with him in our prolonged meetings during his visits as a DAAD fellow to Bayreuth.
- Haytham b. ‘Umar Mas‘ūd al-Tijānī: eldest son of ‘Umar Mas‘ūd al-Tijānī, residing in Sudan. I conducted a series of online conversations with him. He provided me with a number of sources including his own writings on his father’s life account. I even received an audio copy of a lecture given by ‘Umar Mas‘ūd in *‘arūs al-zawāyā*, Saudi Arabia on the virtues of *ṣalāt al-fātiḥ* and its comparison with the holy Qur’ān.
- Ghassān b. Sālim: A Tijānī disciple of ‘Umar Mas‘ūd residing in Saudi Arabia. I had a number of online conversations with him during which he provided me with information on ‘Umar Mas‘ūd as well as Aḥmad b. al-Hādī.
- Fakhruddin Owaysi: A Tijānī *muqaddam* from South Africa well connected with other Tijānī shaykhs.
- Khālid Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Raḥmān: A disciple of ‘Umar Mas‘ūd residing in Sudan. He provided me with useful information in our online conversations on different dates.
- Amina Javar: A Mauritanian Tijānī, with affiliation to the Niyasiyya branch of the brotherhood, residing in Germany. I had online conversations with her.

Appendix I: List of the Writings of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ifrīqī

In refutation of the Tijāniyya:

- *al-Anwār al-raḥmāniyya li-hidāyat al-firqa al-Tijāniyya*: a critical account of the Tijānī doctrines written in response to a letter sent to him by some members of the brotherhood from West Africa.

On legal rulings:

- *al-Jawāb al- Ifrīqī*: a collection of *fatāwā* (legal rulings) in response to religious questions sent to him by Muslims from the Malabar Coast of Indian subcontinent.

Appendix II: List of the Writings of Muḥammad Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī

On debates and controversies:

- *al-Hadiyya al-hādiya ilā al-ṭā'ifa al-Tijāniyya*: also known as *Fikāk al-asīr al-'ānī al-makbūl bi-l-kabil al-Tijānī*, this is critique of the Tijāniyya brotherhood.
- *al-Barāhīn al-injīliyya 'alā anna 'Isā alayhi al-salām dakhil fī l-'ubūdiyya wa-lā ḥaḥḥa lahu fī l-ulūhiyya*: a refutation of Jesus's divinity which is published by Maktabat al-zahra 1993/1973.
- *al-Ḥusām al-māḥiq li-kulli mushrik wa-munāfiq*: a refutation of an anonymous treatise received by a certain Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm, the *imām* of a local mosque in Erfoud, about the Sunna of the Prophet. The *imām* forwarded the treatise to al-Hilālī and the latter responded with bitter criticism, in writing, which contains a number of legal and dogmatic issues. *Al-Ḥusām* was written on 10 Rabī' al-Awwal 1385/9 July 1965 in Meknes.¹¹⁵³
- *al-Sirāj al-munīr fī tanbīh Jamā'at al-tablīgh 'alā akhṭā'ihim*: a critique of certain tenets that had spread among the Tablighi movement of subcontinent and its leaders particularly Muḥammad Ilyās b. Muḥammad Ismā'īl Kāndihlawī (d. 1363/1944). Al-Hilālī takes a thesis on the movement that was written at the Islamic University of Medina by the Pakistani student Muḥammad Aslam as the point of departure for his own criticism. *Al-Sirāj* was finished on 3 Shawwāl 1398/6 September 1978 in Meknes and published a year later.¹¹⁵⁴
- *Munāzaratān bayn rajul sunnī wa-imāmayn mujtahidayn shī'iyayn*: Account of two debates between the author and Shaykh 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-Kāzimī in Muhammara and Shaykh Mahdī al-Qazwīnī in Basra.¹¹⁵⁵
- *al-Qāḍī al-'adl fī ḥukm al-binā' 'alā l-qubūr*: a treatise written in the aftermath of a debate, concerning building domes on the shrines, with Shaykh Mahdī al-Qazwīnī who latter proposed to al-Hilālī to act as judge between him and Rashīd Riḍā with regard to the same issue. Riḍā had published a writing in refutation of domes over shrines with which al-Qazwīnī took issue prior to his debate with al-Hilālī. The debate between al-Hilālī and al-

¹¹⁵³ I have in my possession a copy published by Dār al-Faṭḥ li-l-Tabā'a wa-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzī' in Sharjah in 1415/1994.

¹¹⁵⁴ For an online copy, see: <http://waqfeya.com/book.php?bid=391>

¹¹⁵⁵ For an online copy, see: <http://ia801409.us.archive.org/13/items/monadara/1.pdf>

Qazwīnī was first published in al-Manār in seven parts, and in 1346/1927 it was published as *al-Qāḍī al-‘adl* in Cairo by Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī.¹¹⁵⁶

- *Dawā’ al-shākkīn wa-qāmi’ al-mushakkikīn fī l-radd ‘alā l-mulḥidīn*: as the title suggests it seems to be a refutation of atheism.

On the Islamic creed:

- *al-‘Ilm al-ma’thūr wa-l-‘alam al-mashhūr wa-l-liwā’ al-manṣhūr fī bida’ al-qubūr*: the treatise contains reprehensible innovations regarding graves.
- *Ḥāshīya ‘alā kitāb al-tawḥīd li-l-shaykh al-Islam Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb*: this is a commentary on the famous *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* of Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, the founding figure of the Wahhābiyya movement.
- *Āl al-bayt ma-lahum wa-ma ‘alayhim*: as the title suggests it contains an account of the people of the Prophet’s household from a Sunni perspective.
- *Mukhtaṣar hady al-khalīl fī l-‘aqā’id wa-‘ibādāt al-jalīl*: written on 24 Jamādī al-Thāni 1397 AH in Casablanca, it is an account of the true Islamic creed and worship in the light of true Prophetic accounts.¹¹⁵⁷

On *tafsīr*:

- *Interpretation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur’an in the English Language: A Summarized Version of al-Tabari, al-Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir With Comments from Sahih al-Bukhari*: written together with Muḥammad Muḥsin Khān.
- *al-Ilhām wa-l-in‘ām fī-tafsīr surat al-an‘ām*: a commentary on the chapter of al-An‘ām, 6th among the 114 chapters of the Qur’ān.

On the sciences of *ḥadīth*:

- *al-Zind al-wārī wa-l-badr al-sārī fī sharkḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-bukhārī*: a commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-bukhārī*; it was planned to be in many columns but the author only succeeded to write the first volume.
- *al-Anwār al-muttaba‘a fī taḥqīq sunnat al-jum‘a*: as the title suggests, it contains the Prophetic code of conduct for the Friday.

On the life story of the Prophet:

¹¹⁵⁶ I have in my possession a copy published by by Dār al-Tawḥīd li-l-Nashr in Riyadh, in 1430/2009, with a foreword and commentary by Dr. Sādiq b. Salīm b. Sādiq.

¹¹⁵⁷ Al-Hilālī, *Mukhtaṣar hady al-khalīl fī l-‘aqā’id wa-‘ibādāt al-jalīl*, [Cairo], Dār al-Ṭabā‘a al-Ḥadītha, n.d., p. 6.

- *Kitāb al-ṣīraṭ al-mustaqīm fī ṣifāt ṣalāt al-nabyy al-karīm*: seems to provide a description of the correct way of sending blessings on the Prophet.

On jurisprudence:

- *al-Isfār ‘an l-ḥaqq fī mas’alat al-sufūr wa-l-ḥijāb*: written on *ḥijāb* (head, face, or body covering worn by Muslim women that conforms to a certain standard of modesty) and neglecting Islamic rules on veiling (*sufūr*).
- *al-Ṣubḥ al-sāfir fī ḥukm ṣalāt al-musāfir*: contains rulings on ritual prayer during travel.
- *Aḥkām al-khul‘ fī l-Islam*: written on the issue of divorce for money (*al-khul‘*).
- *Dalīl al-ḥājj fī manāsik al-ḥajj*: handbook for rituals of pilgrimage.
- *Kitāb bayān al-fajr al-ṣādiq*: highlights the issue of true dawn (*al-fajr al-ṣādiq*), a condition for the morning prayer.
- *Ḥukm tārik al-salāt ‘amdan ḥatta yakhruj waqtuha*: Legal ruling on the one who neglect the ritual prayer intentionally.
- *I‘lam al-khāss wa-‘ām bi-buṭlān al-raka‘a li-man fātathu al-fātiḥa wa-l-qiyām*:
- *al-Ṭuruq al-shar‘iyya li-ḥall al-mashākil al-zawjiyya*: this book, which highlights solutions for marital conflicts, was written together with Sulaymān b. Muḥammad al-Hāmidī.

On poems and poetry:

- *Faḍl al-kabīr al-mutta‘āl*: a collection of poems.
- *Al-Hādiyāt*: four poems from an early period of his life.

On journeys:

- *Riḥla min al-Zubayr ilā Jenīf*: contains his journey from al-Zubayr (a district in the Basra Governorate of Iraq) to Geneva of Switzerland.
- *Man yurāfiqunī ilā Berlīn bi-qismayhā al-sharqī wa-l-gharbī*: contains an account of his journey to Berlin of Germany.
- *Riḥla ilā Dar‘a fī al-janub al-sharqī min al-Maghrib*: contains an account of the journey to the former region of *Dar‘a* in Morocco.
- *Riḥla ilā Almānyā*: an account of the journey to Germany.

On history, language, tales and other topics:

- *Mā-waqa‘a fī l-Qur‘ān bi-ghayr lughat al-‘Arab*: is a treatise concerning non-Arabic words mentioned in the holy book of Islam.

- *Tārīkh al-lugha al-sāmiyya*: provide a history of the semitic languages.
- *Al-Ṣīdīqāt al-thalāth*:
- *Madīnat al-‘Arab fī l-Andalus*: written on an Arab city in Andalus.
- *al-Rij‘iyya wa-l-taqaddum*: written on backwardness and progress.
- *Ḥawashī shattā ‘alā Injīl Mattā*: contains comments on the Gospel of Matthew.
- *al-‘Uqūd al-dariyya fī man‘ taḥdīd al-dhariyya*:
- *al-Tamthīliyyāt li-Muḥammad b. Danyāl, ta‘rīf bihā wa-bayān muthawayātihā*:
- *Die Einleitung zu al-Birunis Steinbuch* (Leipzig: O. Harrassowitz, 1941): his PhD dissertation in Berlin Germany.
- *Die Kasten in Arabien, Die Welt des Islams*, 22 (1940): 102-110: a paper on casts in the Arabian Peninsula, published in *Die Welt des Islams*.
- *Kitāb al-jaysh al-jarrār min aḥādīth al-nabiyy al-Mukhtār fī anna al-rubā‘iyya rak‘atān fī jamī‘ al-asfār*, Casablanca: Matba‘a al-Najāḥ al-Jadīda, 1402/1981: written on the issue of shortening ritual prayer (*qaṣr al-ṣalāt*) for the travelers.
- *Madanīyyat al-muslimīn fī Isbāniyā*. 2nd edition. Casablanca: Maktabat al-Ma‘arif li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzī‘, 1985: written on the Islamic civilization of Spain.
- *Qabsa min anwār al-waḥy*, Rabat: Maktabat al-Ma‘arif, 1985: written on the lights of prophetic revelations.
- *Qurrat al-‘ayn fī madḥ al-malikayn*, n.p., 1979: written in the praise of Muhammad V for his his religious qualities and anti-colonial achievements.

Journal publications:

a) in *Lisān al-Dīn*

- *Al-‘Aqīda al-salafiyya wa-l-‘aqīda al-mubtadi‘a*, *Lisan al-Din*, 1, 6 (December 1946): 1-14: written on true creed of the pious forefathers and the false creed of the people of innovations.
- *Dam‘a ‘alā faqīd al-‘urūba wa-l-Islam al-amīr Shakīb Arslān raḥimahu Allāh*, *Lisan al-Din*, 1, 8-9 (March-April 1947): a recall of the memories of Shakib Arslan.
- *Fā‘idat ta‘allum al-lughāt*, *Lisān al-Dīn*, 4, 1 (January 1950): 7-9: an encouragement for learning foreign languages.
- *Ḥukm al-qirā‘a bi-raf‘ al-ṣawt yawm al-jum‘a wa-l-nās yantazirūna khurūj al-imām*

fi madhhab al-mālikiyya, Lisān al-Dīn, 8-9 (March–April 1947): 70-84: written on legal status of the recitation of Qurʾān on Friday while people are waiting for the arrival of *imām* to the mosque according to Malikī legal school.

- *Huqūq al-marʾa al-siyāsiyya, Lisān al-Dīn*, 6, 10 (October 1952): 7-10: written on political rights of women.
- *Hurūf Braille li-taʿlīm al-ʿummī al-qirāʾa wa-l-kitāba, Lisān al-Dīn*, 4, 3 (March 1950): 14-16: written on the tactical written system of Braille used to educate people who are visually impaired.
- *al-Jawāb ʿan muqtarah wa-suʿāl faḍilat Abī l-Samḥ, Lisān al-Dīn*, 1, 6 (December 1946): 29-32: contains a question directed to Abū l-Samḥ and the latter’s response.
- *Lamḥa min tarjamat al-ustādh Abī l-Samḥ imām al-ḥaram al-makkī, Lisān al-Dīn*, 1, 6 (December 1946): 15-19: contains a biographica account of Abū l-Samḥ.
- *Lisān al-Dīn fi Bākistān, Lisān al-Dīn*, 5, 9 (September 1951): 20-24: written on the journal of *Lisān al-Dīn* in Pakistan.
- *Masʿūd al-Nadawī: aḥd al-talāmidhī al-hindiyyīn, Lisān al-Dīn*, 1, 7 (January 1947): 33-38: written on one of his outstanding Indian disciples Masʿūd al-Nadawī.
- *Muṣāb alīm bi-wifāt akh karīm, Lisān al-Dīn*, 1, 8-9 (March-April 1947): 85-87: an obituary written upon the death of a prominent member of the Salafī community of Upper Egypt.
- *Nizām Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Saʿūdiyya li-takhrīj al-murshidīn wa-l-duʿāt wa-l-quḍāt, Lisān al-Dīn*, 1, 8-9 (March-April 1947): 88-92: written on the graguate regulations of the Saudi Dār al-Ḥadīth.

b) in *Daʿwat al-Ḥaqq*

- *Dār al-Ḥadīth wa-faḍl ʿilm al-ḥadīth, Daʿwat al-Ḥaqq*, 7, 7 (April 1964): 1-7: written on the graciousness of the sciences of *ḥadīth*.
- *Hal ikhtassat al-imāmiyya bi-fath bāb al-ijtihād?, Daʿwat al-Ḥaqq*, 4, 1 (October 1960): 25-26.
- *Ḥukm al-murtadd fī l-Islam, Daʿwat al-Ḥaqq*, 6, 5 (February 1963): 29-33: contains the legal status of apostates in Islam.

- *al-Islam wa-l-madhāhib al-ishtirākiyya*, *Daʿwat al-Ḥaqq*, 18, 7-8 (August–September 1977): 15-21: contains his opinion on Islam and socialism.
- *Kalima fī faḍāʾil al-Islam alqaytuhā ʿala waḥd almānī*, *Daʿwat al-Ḥaqq*, 18, 4 (May 1977): 32-34: contains his lecture on Islam to a German delegation.
- *Mabāhith fīl-Kitāb wa-l-Sunna*, *Majallat Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Ḥasaniyya*, 1 (1979): 87-113: contains some discussions on Qurʾān and Sunna of the Prophet.
- *Mā hiya al-dawāʾī allatī tadʿū amīr al-muʾminīn jalālat al-Ḥasan al-thanī ayyadahu Allāh ilā naṣr al-Sunna al-muhammadiyya wa-nashrihā wa-himāyatihā*, *Daʿwat al-Ḥaqq*, 18, 2 (March 1977): 41-44: an encouragement to Ḥasan II for proselytization, diffusion and protection of Sunna in Morocco.
- *Maʾnā daʿwat al-ḥaqq*, *Daʿwat al-Ḥaqq*, 1, 4-5 (November 1957): 19-20: a discussion on the meaning of calling people to truth (*daʿwat al-ḥaqq*).
- *Naqd maqāl al-ʿAwāʾiq al-naḥsāniyya li-l-takḥīṭ*, *Daʿwat al-Ḥaqq*, 10, 2 (December 1966): 38-41.

c) in other journals

- *al-Qadiyāniyyūn: baʿd mā lahum wa-mā ʿalayhim*, in *al-Fath*: a paper on the Ahmadiyya community of Pakistan.
- *al-ʿUrf al-barbarī aw ʿizarf bayn al-kuttāb al-fransiyyīn wa-l-kuttāb al-muslimīn*, in *al-Fath*, 303 (1933): 9-13.
- *Min mā ʾathir al-Rasūl*, in *al-Irshād*, 1, 1 (June 1967): 17-20: written on some virtues of the Prophet Muḥammad.
- *Manqiba li-l-malik Fayṣal qaddasa Allāh rūḥahu*, in *Majallat al-Buhuth al-Islamiyya*, 11 (1984): 313-318: recalls a virtue of the Saudi king Fayṣal (d. 1395/1975).
- *Muqaddima*, in Masʿūd al-Nadawī, *Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb: muṣliḥ mazlūm wa-muftaraā ʿalayhi*, translated by ʿAbd al-ʿAlim ʿAbd al-ʿAzim al-Bastawi, 5-7. Medina: Idārat al-Thaqāfa wa-l-Nashr bi-l-Jamāʿa, 1984: a preface to Masʿūd al-Nadawī’s book on Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb.

Appendix III: List of the Writings of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad Dakhīl Allāh

In refutation of the Tijāniyya:

- *Al-Tijāniyya: Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā’id al-Tijāniyya ‘alā ḍaw’ al-Kitāb wa-l-Sunna*: a refutation of the Tijānī doctrines and teachings.¹¹⁵⁸

On the Islamic creed and Muslim theological denominations:

- *Al-Ṣawā’iq al-mursala ‘alā al-Jahmiyya wa-l-Mu’aṭṭala: Dirāsa wa taḥqīq*: a four-volume edition and study of Ibn al-Qayyim’s refutation of the Jahmiyya and Mu’aṭṭala doctrines. It was produced for the fulfilment of PhD requirements and published in 1408 by the Riyadh-based Saudi publishing house Dār al-‘Āṣima li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzī’.

On philosophy and dialectical reasoning:

- *Al-Wāḍiḥ sharḥ al-sullam al-munawraq fī fann al-manṭiq*: a commentary on ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Akhḍarī’s (d. 953/1546) book *al-sullam al-munawraq fī fann al-manṭiq*, published by Dār al-Zahrā’ li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzī’ in 2015 CE.
- *Ru’ya naqdiyya li-naẓariyyāt Arastālīs al-manṭiqiyya*: a critical study of Aristotle’s dialectical reasoning, published by the above-mentioned publishing house in 2015 CE.
- *Arastālīs fī-l-mīzan*: another work focused on Aristotle’s philosophical teachings, also published in 1436/2015 by the above-mentioned publishing house.

¹¹⁵⁸ For further information see chapter six where a detailed account of the book is provided.

Appendix IV: List of the Writings of Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Tijānī

In defence of the Tijāniyya:

- *Aṣfā manāhil al-ṣafā' fī mashrab khātām al-anbiyā' wa-sayyid al-aṣfiyā'*: a treatise which discusses the conditions of affiliation to the Tijāniyya brotherhood, as distinct from certain general Sufi tenets. Published on 9 Rabī' al-Awwal 1342 / 20 October 1923.
- *Faṣl al-maqāl fī-mā yarfa' al-idhn fī l-hāl*: a small treatise in which the author discusses three important factors that would suspend one's affiliation from the Tijāniyya brotherhood.¹¹⁵⁹ First published in 1347/1927.
- *Ahl al-ḥaqq al- 'arīfūn billāh al-sādda al-ṣūfiyya*: a general defence of Sufism in which the author presents the convictions of al-Qushayrī and Ibn 'Arabī as particular examples, in addition to certain Sufi tenets such as *shafā'a* (the intercession of the Prophet) and *tawassul* (supplication and invocation of the divine help through him). First published on 25 Ramaḍān 1368 / 22 July 1949.
- *al-Risāla al-Thānīya: Ṭarīq ma'rifa sir al-wujūd*: the title suggests that the treatise contains discussions on Sufi doctrines.
- *al-Risāla al-thālitha: al-intiṣāf fī radd al-inkār 'alā al-ṭarīq*: a collection of refutations written by Egyptian Tijānīs in response to criticisms that appeared in various of that country's newspapers, such as *al-Faṭḥ* and *al-Taqwā*. On 6 Dhū l-Ḥijjah 1352/22 March 1934, Muḥib al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb, the owner of *al-Faṭḥ*, is said to have published (in issue 388 of that newspaper) a paper by Ibrāhīm al-Qaṭṭān,¹¹⁶⁰ a disciple of Ibn Māyābā's, in which he criticized the Tijāniyya brotherhood, in response to which, Muḥammad al-Muṣayliḥī Ḥusayn, a Tijānī scholar in al-Azhar, wrote a refutation, also for publication in *al-Faṭḥ*. However, due to a prior dispute in which al-Khaṭīb had been involved with Tijānīs over the title of *Jama'at al-Waḥda al-Tijāniyya*, the refutation did not appear, despite several efforts on the part of its author. A year earlier, Muḥammad al-Muṣayliḥī had written

¹¹⁵⁹ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Faṣl al-maqāl fī-mā yarfa' al-idhn fī l-hāl*, p. 5.

¹¹⁶⁰ Ibrāhīm al-Qaṭṭān (1916-1984) met Ibn Māyābā in 1931 and studied Islamic sciences under his supervision until his death in 1935. Later on he attended the prestigious University of al-Azhar. He was an accomplished poet and served as judge, minister of education and Jordan's ambassador to Morocco, Pakistan and Kuwait. In 1977, he was appointed as the chief judge of Jordan. For details of his life, see: http://www.almoajam.org/poet_details.php?id=72 last consultation on 03.05. 2018. Jordanian ministry of culture has published a book on Ibrāhīm al-Qaṭṭān's memories and journys entitled *al-Mudhakkirāt wa-l-riḥlāt li-l-shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Qaṭṭān*.

a similar refutation to the allegations published by Jawād Tawfiq in issue 118 of *al-Fath* on Sha‘bān 1352/November–December 1933; the allegations, according to Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ had been made by some Sufis of Arish, the capital of the governorate of North Sinai. Muṣaylihī’s response was ignored by the newspaper. Another of the refutations contained in *al-Risāla al-thālitha* is one that was written by an anonymous Tijānī writer (most likely Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ himself) in response to Rashīd Riḍā’s criticism of the brotherhood. The last and final one contained therein is Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ’s response to criticism that appeared in a Palestinian newspaper belonging to Ibn Māyābā’s disciples, and was probably written by Ibrāhīm al-Qaṭṭān himself.¹¹⁶¹ *Al-Intiṣāf* was published by Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ in 1352/1932.

- *al-Risāla al-rābi‘a: Barā’a al-ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya ‘an kull mā yukhālif al-sharī‘a:*
- *al-Risāla al-khāmisa: I‘lān al-hujja ‘alā a‘dā’ al-ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya* (first part); *al-Taḥdhir min l-akhdh bi-zāhir al-mushtabah fa-inna al-ṣarīḥa ya‘ayyin al-murād minh* (second part): written in response to a criticism by Ibrāhīm al-Qaṭṭān that was published in the Egyptian newspaper of *al-Fath*. Since al-Qaṭṭān’s critique had relied heavily on his master Ibn Māyābā, Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ preferred to provide a systematic refutation of the allegations levelled against the brotherhood by the Shinqīṭī shaykh himself. The book, however, is written as a letter to Muḥammad Riḍwān, a Tijānī *muqaddam* in the governorate of North Sinai, and to his *zāwiya* in the city of Arish, to provide them with a true Tijānī perspective, against the purportedly baseless criticism that had been published in *al-Fath*.¹¹⁶² *Al-Risāla al-khāmisa* was published in Jamādi al-Thānī 1354/September 1935.
- *al-Risāla al-Sādisa: Rijāl al-Ṭarīqa alladhīna qāmu bi-nashrihā fī l-quṭr al-Miṣrī:* written in Ramaḍān/November–December 1936 and divided into two parts: in the first part, a brief account of the life of the founder of the order is given; in the second part, the focus is placed on the Tijānī authorities who introduced the order to Egypt.

¹¹⁶¹ For Muṣaylihī’s refutation of al-Qaṭṭān, and his letters to al-Khaṭīb, see: Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *al-Risāla al-thālitha: al-intiṣāf fī radd al-inkār ‘alā al-ṭarīq*, pp. 8-13. For Muṣaylihī’s refutation of Jawād Tawfiq, see pp. 15-17. For the anonymous Tijānī’s refutation to Rashīd Riḍā, see: pp. 19-40 and for Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ’s refutation of the allegations that appeared in the Palestintian newspaper, see: pp. 41-47.

¹¹⁶² Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *I‘lān al-hujja ‘alā a‘dā’ al-ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya* (printed together with *al-Taḥdhir min l-akhdh bi-zāhir al-mushtabah fa-inna al-ṣarīḥa ya‘ayyin al-murād minhu* in *al-Risāla al-khāmisa*) n.p. [Cairo] 1354/1935. pp. 4-7.

- *Ayyām fī zāwiya sīdī Aḥmad al-Tijānī*: written as a letter to certain Tijānīs of Egypt while the author was still in Fez, giving an account of the author’s journeys, activities and meetings with fellow Tijānīs (among others al-Nazāfi and Sukayrij) during a visit to Morocco in 1937. The letter is dated 21 Ramaḍān 1356/25 November 1937.
- *Radd akādhīb al-muftarīn ‘alā ahl al-yaqīn*: a refutation of Muḥammad Ḥasanayn Makhlūf’s criticism of the Tijāniyya through concentrating on Ibn Māyābā and al-Ifriqī. First published in 1369/1950 by the Tijāniyya zāwiya in Mugharbalīn, Cairo.
- *Jawla fī rubū‘ al-Sudān*: an account of a journey to Sudan in Shawwāl 1347/May 1955. Written as a letter to a certain Riḍwān Muḥammad, the author not only provides an account of his activities and meetings during the journey but also gives valuable information on the history of Sudan and the Tijāniyya in that country.
- *Bayn al-Hijāz wa-l-Shām*: a narrative of a journey to Mecca, Medina, Beirut and Jerusalem between 26 Dhū l-Qa‘dah 1383 and -19 Muḥarrām 1384 / 9 April and -31 May 1964. The author was accompanied on the journey by some renowned Tijānī leaders from Sudan.
- *Jawla fī rubū‘ Ifriqiyā*: an anonymous account of a prolonged journey to West and North African countries between 7 Dhū l-Qa‘da 1387 and -26 Ramaḍān 1388/6 February and 16 December 1968.
- *‘Ulamā’ al-tazkiya hum a‘lam al-nās bi-l-Kitāb wa-l-Sunna*: contains three letters by the author. The first, written in response to a certain Ibrāhīm Maḥmūd Faṭḥ al-‘Alīm from Sudan, is a general defence of Sufis, entitled *al-Ṣadda al-ṣūfiyya ḥamalat ‘ulūm al-sharī‘a fī kullī ‘aṣr*. It was written after the author had received a letter from some Sudanese Tijānīs complaining about opponents of the brotherhood, probably *Anṣār al-Sunna al-Muḥammadiyya* of Sudan.¹¹⁶³ The second and third letters respectively concern spiritual companionship (*al-ṣuḥba al-ruḥiyya*) and daylight meetings (*al-ijtimā‘ yaqāzatan*) with the Prophet.
- *Qaṣd al-sabīl fī l-ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya*: completed on 1 Dh al-Ḥijja 1348/30 April 1930, the treatise explains how to get initiated to the Tijāniyya along with discussions on the litanies of the brotherhood.¹¹⁶⁴

¹¹⁶³ Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ, *‘Ulamā’ tazkiyat al-nafs min a‘lam al-nās bi-l-kitāb wa-l-sunna*, n.p. [Cairo], n.d. p. 4.

¹¹⁶⁴ For an online copy of the treatise see: <http://www.atijania-online.com/upload/books/Mohammed-Hafez-Tijani/book/011.pdf>

- *Ruya` al-nabyy fi l-yaqaza*: written on the controversial doctrine of seeing the Prophet in daylight.
- *al-Isrā yaqazatan bi-l-ruh wa-l-jasad*: depends the notion of Prophet's journey to Jerusalem and to his ascension to heavens with both soul and body.
- *Shurūṭ al-ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya*: contains conditions for initiation to the Tijāniyya brotherhood.
- *Radd `alā ba`ḍ al-munkirīn al-ashwiya`*: contains a defence of the Tijāniyya brotherhood.
- *Aḥzāb wa-awrād al-quṭb al-rabbānī wa-l-`ārif al-ṣamadānī sayyidunā Aḥmad al-Tijānī al-sharīf al-Ḥasanī* (edited and interpreted by Muḥammad al-Ḥāfīz)
- *Majmū` al-awrād fi l-ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya*: contains a detailed account of the brotherhood's litanies.
- *Taḥqīq wa-ta`līq `alā al-Ifāda al-aḥmadiyya*: is a commentary of the al-Mishr's *al-aḥmadiyya*.
- *Tuḥfat al-adhkiyā` fi ziyarat al-awliyā`*: written on the doctrine of visiting divinely elected saints.
- *al-Ḥājj `Umar al-Fūtī: sulṭān al-dawla al-Tijāniyya bi-gharb Ifrīqyā shay min jihādihi wa-tārikh ḥayātihī*:¹¹⁶⁵ an account of the life of al-Ḥājj `Umar, collected from several reliable sources, to provide a Tijānī perspective on the struggle of the West African Tijānī *jihād* leader. The book was published in Cairo in 1383.

In refutation of the Qādiyāniyya:

- *al-Risāla al-ūlā: Radd awhām al-Qādiyāniyya*: as the title suggest, the treatise is a refutation of the Qādiyānī creed.

On *tawḥīd*:

- *al-Ḥaqq fi l-ḥaqq wa-l-khalq*: published by the Cairo based Shirkat Dār al-Ṭaba` al-Maṣriyya i on 1924 in 106 pages.
- *al-Ḥadd al-awsaṭ bayn man-afraṭ wa-man farraṭ*: a rare treatise of the author's, written in 1347/1928, which brings philosophy and the Islamic doctrine of monotheism together.

¹¹⁶⁵ For an online copy, see: <https://archive.org/details/AIHagOmarAlFotey>.

- *Al-Ṭarīq bayn al-ṭawā'if al-Islamiyya al-mu'āṣara fī l-uṣūl*: the title suggests that the book contains an account of different view points among contemporary Muslims sect on matters related to creed.
- *Sabīl al-kamāl*: a treatise on Islamic monotheism published in 1924 by the Cairo based Maṭba'a wa-Maktaba al-Funūn al-Jamīla. The treatise is translated into German as well.

On *fiqh*:

- *Risāla fī l-ḥajj wa-l-'umra*: concerning pilgrimage to the holy lands and related issues.

On *tafsīr*:

- *Tafsīr fātiḥat al-kitāb wa-juz' 'amma*: a commentary on the first chapter and the *juz' 'amma* (last part) of the holy Qur'ān.
- *Tafsīr juz' tabārak*: a commentary on *juz' tabārak* (second-to-last part) of the holy Qur'ān.
- *Tafsīr surat al-baqara wa 'al-ajzā' min 25–29 min al-Qar'ān al-karīm*: a commentary of the second chapter of the holy Qur'ān as well as the parts 25–29.

On the sciences of *ḥadīth*:

- *Muqaddima li-kitāb al-Kifāya fī-'ilm al-riwāya*: a preface to the book *al-Kifāya fī-'ilm al-riwāya*.
- *Muqaddima li-kitāb Jāmi' al-kabīr lil-Ḥāfiẓ al-Suyūṭī*: a preface to *al-Suyūṭī*'s book *Jāmi' al-kabīr*.
- *Tartīb wa-taqrīb Musnad al-imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal 'alā ḥuruf al-mu'jam*:
- *Tartīb Dhakhā'ir al-mawāriṭh fī al-dalāla 'alā mawādi' al-ḥadīth li-al-Nābilsī*:
- *Takhrīj aḥādīth Jawāhir al-ma'ānī*:
- *Al-Istidrāk 'alā al-Mustadrak*:
- *Muqaddima 'Umdat al-qārī sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-bukhārī*:
- *Ma'nā qawlihi ṣallā Allāh 'alayhi wa-ṣallam taftariq ummatī 'alā thālath wa-sab'īn firqa*: a commentary on the Prophetic statement which predicts the partition of the Muslimm umma into seventy three groups.
- *Nūr al-yaqīn fī-takhrīj aḥādīth Ihyā' ulūm al-dīn*:

On the Prophet Muḥammad:

- *Rasūl al-Islam wa-risālatuhu al-Jāmi‘a*: is a treatise on the Prophet his universal mission.
- *Sunnat al-Rasūl ṣallā Allah ‘alayhi wa-ṣallam*: written on the exemplary character of the Prophet.

On Islam:

- *Al-Dīn al-qayyim wa-qaḍāyā al-‘aṣr*: Judging by the title, this book most likely highlights the Islamic solutions for the challenges of the modern world.

(This in addition to countless writings published in *Ṭarīq al-ḥaqq* as well as other periodicals and newspapers).

Appendix V: List of the Writings of ‘Umar Mas ‘ūd Muḥammad al-Tijānī ¹¹⁶⁶

In defence of the Tijāniyya brotherhood:

- *al-Radd ‘alā al-Ifrīqī difā ‘an ‘an l-ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya* : as the name suggests, this is meant to be a refutation of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ifrīqī, a Malian Salafī who attacked certain tenets of the brotherhood in his *al-Anwār al-rahmāniyya*.
- *al-Tijāniyya wa-khuṣūmuḥum wa-l-qawl al-ḥaqq*: another polemical production of the author’s which was written in refutation of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abd al-Khāliq’s *al-Fikr al-ṣūfī fī daw’ al-Kitāb wa-l-Sunna* but which also deals with al-Hilālī’s criticism of the brotherhood.
- *Difā ‘an l-Tijāniyyīn fī ta’liqāt ‘alā ra’s al-qalam ḥawl mudhakkira intishār al-Islam janūb sahrā al-Ifrīqīyya*: treatise published in 1999 as a corrective to certain information provided by an anonymous writer in a report called *Intishār al-Islam janūb al-sahrā bi-wāsitat al-turuq al-ṣūfiyya*. The particular bone of contention is the early history of the Tijāniyya and the dispute of Amīr ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī with Tiānīs of his time, for which ‘Umar Mas ‘ūd blames the Qādirī shaykh.¹¹⁶⁷
- *Rid‘ al-mu‘tadī ‘alā l-jināb al-Tijānī al-aḥmadī*: a refutation of three papers published in the newspaper al-Ṣahāfa by a certain al-Tijānī, Sa‘īd Mahmūd Ḥasanayn,¹¹⁶⁸ all of which, according to ‘Umar Mas ‘ūd, contain criticism of the brotherhood.¹¹⁶⁹
- *al-‘Arif al-rabbnī al-Shaykh Yūsuf Ibrāhīm Bogoy al-Tijānī*: a two-volume book containing biographical notes on the life of ‘Umar Mas ‘ūd’s Sudanese master Yūsuf Ibrāhīm Bogoy.
- *al-Shaykh Yūsuf Ibrāhīm Bogoy al-Tijānī fī l-dhikrā al-sanawiyya al-‘āshira li-intiqāliḥ ilā al-rafiq al-‘alā*: another biographical account of the authors master Bogoy, written on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of his death.

¹¹⁶⁶ Here, the focus is on those of ‘Umar Mas ‘ūd’s writings that concern the Islamic sciences. For a list of his writings on economics, the administration and management of companies, see: Haytham b. ‘Umar al-Tijānī, *Shadharāt min tarjamat shaykhinā al-wālid*, pp. 13-14

¹¹⁶⁷ ‘Umar Mas ‘ūd, *Difā ‘an l-Tijāniyyīn fī ta’liqāt ‘alā ra’s al-qalam ḥawl mudhakkira intishār al-Islām janūb sahrā al-Ifrīqīyya*, n.p. [Khartoum], 1999, p. 7.

¹¹⁶⁸ Al-Tijānī Sa‘īd is a Sudanese poet, composer of songs and philosopher, with knowledge of the Islamic sciences. He studied at the Khartoum campus of Cairo University in the 1970s and published his poetry collection *Qasa’id Birma’iyya* in the same decade. For details, see: <http://www.tawtheegonline.com/vb/showthread.php?t=16442>; <http://www.sudaress.com/sudaneseonline/12658>, last consultation May 3, 2018.

¹¹⁶⁹ ‘Umar Mas ‘ūd, *Rid‘ al-mu‘tadī ‘alā l-jināb al-Tijānī al-aḥmadī*, n.p. [Khartoum], n.d., p. 1.

- *Zaytūna al-anwār fī madḥ wārith al-nabyy al-mukhtār*: a collection of poems written in praise of the Prophet, the supreme master of the Tijāniyya, and other Tijānīs shaykhs such as Muḥammad b. al-Mukhtār, ‘Abdallāh Abū Qasisa, Yūsuf Ibrāhīm Bogoy and Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ. Most of the poems in the collection are written in the popular Sudanic Arabic dialect.¹¹⁷⁰
- *Yūsufiyyāt*: a manuscript collection of poems written in praise of Yūsuf Ibrāhīm Bogoy.¹¹⁷¹
- *Itfā’ al-qandīl wa-bayān mā-fīhi min l-kidhb wa-l-ghishh wa-l-tahrīf wa-l-tabdīl*: a refutation of the Sudanese Salafī Hāshim al-Ḥusayn Rajab’s book entitled *al-Qindīl li-kashf mā fī kutub al-Tijāniyya min l-zaygh wa-l-abāṭīl*.¹¹⁷²
- *al-Radd ‘alā l-fi’a al-ṭā’ina fī l-Adab al-mi’a*: this treatise is a response to the voluminous book of Dr. Ghālib ‘Awajī’s, a Saudi salafī, book *Firaq mu’āṣara tantasib ilā l-Islam wa-bayān mawqif al-Islam minhā* by the Saudi Salafī Dr. Ghālib ‘Awajī, in one of the chapters of which the author uses the Tijāniyya brotherhood as an example of a deviated Islamic Sufi group. ‘Awajī at th time was teaching at the Islamic University of Medina at the time. His book was first published in 1993, followed by a second edition in 1996, a third in 1997 and a fourth in 2001.¹¹⁷³
- *Iqāmat al-ḥujja bi-anwār al-maḥajja ‘alā l-fi’a al-ṭā’ina fī adab al-mi’a*: a further response to Dr. ‘Awajī’s book by ‘Umar Mas’ūd.
- *Risāla maftūḥa ilā l-Nadwa al-‘Ālamiyya li-l-Shabāb al-Islamī*: an open letter to the Salafī non-governmental organization *al-Nadwa al-‘Ālamiyya li-l-Shabab al-Islamī* (World Assembly of Muslim Youth), established in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 1972 CE, as an umbrella organization for more than five hundred Muslim youth organizations around the globe. As part of its efforts to spread the true Islamic doctrine, al-Nadwa criticized the Tijāniyya in an encyclopaedia called *al-Mawsū’a al-muyassara fī l-adyān wa-l-madhāhib al-mu’āṣira* (*The Encyclopaedia of Contemporary Religions and Sects*).¹¹⁷⁴ ‘Umar

¹¹⁷⁰ Online conversation with Haytham b. ‘Umar al-Tijānī, May 21, 2017.

¹¹⁷¹ Online conversation with Haytham b. ‘Umar al-Tijānī, May 21, 2017.

¹¹⁷² The book was published in in 1999 in Saudi Arabia by Maktaba al-Fawā’id with an introduction and eulogy by Shaykh Ṣafwat al-Shawādifi (d. 2000), a former vice president of *Anṣār Al-Sunna al-Muḥammadiyya* in Egypt.

¹¹⁷³ For a copy of Dr. ‘Awajī’s book, see: <http://majles.alukah.net/t31583/>.

¹¹⁷⁴ For an account of *al-Nadwa*’s criticism, see: Mānī’ b. Hammād al-Juhanī, *al-Mawsū’a al-muyassara fī l-adyān wa-l-madhāhib al-mu’āṣira*, vol. I, Dār al-Nadwa al-‘Ālamiyya li-l-Ṭibā’a wa-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzī’, Riyadh: 1999/1420, pp. 281-86. For information on *al-Nadwa*’s establishment and goals, see:

<http://www.wamy.org/beta/%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%b1%d8%a4%d9%8a%d8%a9->

Mas‘ūd’s open letter was issued to Mānī‘ b. Ḥammād al-Juhanī (b. 1942 CE), the secretary general of al-Nadwa, under whose supervision the Encyclopaedia was published. The author charges al-Nadwa with bias against the Tijānīs, and urges the organization to reconsider the information it has presented on the brotherhood.¹¹⁷⁵

- *al-Radd ‘alā l-Ṭaṇṭāwī wa-mā nasharahu fī Jarīda al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ ‘an al-Tijāniyya*: a treatise written in response to Muḥammad ‘Alī al-Ṭaṇṭāwī’s (d. 1420/1999)¹¹⁷⁶ criticism of the Tijāniyya brotherhood entitled *Fitnat al-Tijāniyya fī l-Shām wa-l-khilāf bayn Jam‘iyyat al-‘Ulamā’ wa-Jam‘iyyat al-Gharrā’*, published in the newspaper *al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ* on 27 February 1986 CE. ‘Umar Mas‘ūd immediately wrote a refutation and sent it to al-Ṭaṇṭāwī, demanding a reply, which he never received.¹¹⁷⁷
- *Manzūmat ādāb al-murīd ma‘a shaykhihi: sharḥ wa-ta‘līq*: highlights the correct behaviour of the disciple towards the master in Sufism.
- *Akhtā’ al-Albānī wa-awhāmuhu fī Kitāb al-tawassul: anwā‘uhu wa-aḥkāmuhu (khabar Malik al-Dār)*: a book written to highlight the failure of the famous Salafī Shaykh Nasir al-Dīn al-Albānī, who in *Kitāb al-tawassul: anwā‘uhu wa-aḥkāmuhu*, had declared a certain Prophetic tradition, known as khabar Malik al-Dār, to be weak. ‘Umar Mas‘ūd relates that he wrote this book in the aftermath of a debate with a Salafī who had quoted al-Albānī’s evaluation of the Prophetic tradition as evidence. ‘Umar Mas‘ūd thus felt himself obliged to highlight the mistakes of the Salafī shaykh, who he claims to have gone against himself on this particular issue.¹¹⁷⁸
- *al-Dhikrā al-sanawiyya al-‘āshira li-l-shaykh Yūsuf Bogoy al-Tijānī*: a collection of memories written on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of Shaykh Yūsuf Bogoy’s death.
- *Ru’ya al-nabiyy fī l-yaqza: shubuhāt wa-rudūd*: tackles the controversial issue of the daylight encounters with the Prophet. (as yet unpublished).

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¹¹⁷⁵ The author attempts to provide a Tijānī perspective on what the encyclopaedia presents as Tijānī beliefs. See: ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *Risāla mafūḥa ilā al-Nadwa al-‘Ālamiyya li-l-Shabāb al-Islāmī*, n.p. [Khartoum], n.d, pp. 3-12.

¹¹⁷⁶ On al-Ṭaṇṭāwī see: Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *‘Ulamā’ wa-mafakkirūn ‘araftuhum*, vol. III, pp. 189-232.

¹¹⁷⁷ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd provides a photostat copy of al-Ṭaṇṭāwī’s critique of the Tijāniyya brotherhood at the beginning of his treatise *al-Radd ‘alā l-Ṭaṇṭāwī wa-mā nasharahu fī Jarīda al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ ‘an l-Tijāniyya*.

¹¹⁷⁸ ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *Akhtā’ al-Albānī wa-awhāmuhu fī Kitāb al-tawassul*, pp. 5-6.

- *Tarājim al-a'lām wa-l-ma'ālim fī Jawāhir al-ma'ānī*: contains accounts of the lives of famous persons mentioned in *Jawāhir al-ma'ānī*. (Yet to be published).
- *Ḥaḡā'iq yajib an ya'rifahā al-nās 'an l-ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya*: unpublished as yet, this treatise which discusses certain truths about the Tijāniyya order that, to date, are claimed to have remained unknown to outsiders.
- *Buhūth al-mustashriqīn fī l-ṭarīqat al-Tijāniyya: ma-lahā wa-mā 'alayhā*: unpublished as yet, a book regarding the apparent perception of the Tijāniyya brotherhood in orientalist studies, with a focus on the advantages and disadvantages of such studies.
- *Dawr al-sūfiyya fī muqāwamat al-isti'mār fī Ifriqiyā*: a paper written to highlight the roles played by Sufis in struggles against foreign occupation. In it, 'Umar Mas'ūd presents some Tijānī examples, particularly stressing on the struggles of Aḡmad 'Ammār, a grandson of Aḡmad al-Tijānī's, as well as the anti-colonialism of 'Izz al-Dīn al-Qassām and Al-Ḥājj 'Umar.¹¹⁷⁹ This is intended to refute the widespread opinion that Tijānīs were collaborators, particularly with the French colonial powers in North and West Africa.
- *al-Jihād fī sabīl Allah rūḡ al-taṣawwuf al-Islamī*: another text in which the importance of Sufism as a motivating factor in the fight against foreign occupation is highlighted (unpublished).
- *Ḥawl mawthūqiyya maṣādir dirāsa al-shakṡiyya al-ṣūfiyya*: a treatise on Ibn 'Arabī's famous book *Fuṣūṡ al-ḡikam*, revisiting certain passages of it with the aim of providing a correct understanding, which in the opinion of the author is often neglected by researchers. It was initially presented as a paper at the Sufi Studies Conference in Sudan, 28–31 October 1995.
- *Badhl al-majhūd fī bayān qā'ida ahl l-kashf wa-l-shuhūd*: yet-to-be-published, a treatise highlighting certain Sufi tenets such as *kashf* and *shuhūd* (the disclosure and witnessing of reality).
- *al-Iḡtijāj 'alā maqtal al-Hallāj*: this manuscript concerns the author's disdain for the persecution of the famous Sufi Ḥusayn b. Maṣūr known as al-Hallāj.

¹¹⁷⁹ The paper may be found online at: <http://www.atjania-online.com/vb/showthread.php?t=637>.

- *al-Ḥaraka al-taṣḥīḥiyya fī l-taṣawwuf al-Islamī, ḥaraka al-Sarrāj al-Ṭūsī numūdhajan*: a case study of the Iranian Sufi ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Alī al-Sarrāj al-Ṭūsī (d. 378/988), and the author of *al-Lama‘ fī l-taṣawwuf*, as the authority behind an historical Sufi reform movement.
- *Badhl al-was‘ fī al-jawāb ‘alā l-mas‘il al-tis‘*: written in 1983 the treatise contains nine questions concerning mystical issues that are directed at the author and his responses.

Treatises and books currently under-authorship:

- *al-Ziyāda ‘alā l-Ifāda li-murīd al-sa‘āda*: a treatise concerning Sufism.
- *Dirāsa tamhīdiyya fī kitāb Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī*: a preliminary study of *Jawāhir al-ma‘ānī* by ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm, as the most authoritative source of the brotherhood.

On the sciences of *ḥadīth*:

- *Mudhākara fī ḥadīth waḥd ‘Abd al-Qays*: a treatise regarding a Prophetic tradition known as “*ḥadīth waḥd ‘Abd al-Qays*”.
- *Bayān buṭlān ḥadīth yā-wayḥa Tha‘laba*: a treatise written to prove the nullity of the so-called Prophetic tradition *ya-wayḥa Tha‘laba*.
- *al-Mazīd fī muttaṣil al-asānīd: shartuhu wa-hukmuh*: a treatise which highlights the legal status of a certain kind of Prophetic tradition known as “*mazīd fī muttaṣil al-asānīd*”, (wherein one or more transmitters have been mistakenly added to the chain of transmission).
- *Ziyāda al-thiqa: shartuhā wa-ḥikmatuhā*: a treatise in which the addition of trustworthy transmitters to the chains of transmission of Prophetic traditions (*ziyāda al-thiqa*) is discussed.
- *Marātib al-tajhīl wa-aḥkāmuhā ‘ind l-muḥaddithīn*: highlights different ranks of ambiguity (*marātib al-tajhīl*) pertaining to the transmitters of Prophetic traditions and the attitudes of experts in the sciences in *ḥadīth* on the issue.
- *Mushkilāt al-Kutub al-sitta*: a manuscript treatise which highlights the issue of problematic transmissions in the six most authoritative sources of *ḥadīth* in Sunni Islam.
- *Al-Kayl wa-l-tatfīf fī l-jarḥ wa-l-ta‘dīl wa-l-taṣḥīḥ wa-l-taḍ‘īf*: a manuscript which discusses of several technical terms in the sciences of *ḥadīth*.

- *Abū Hurayra rawiyyāt al-Islam bayn al-tajrīh wa-l-tarjīh*: a manuscript discussing the status of the famous transmitter of Prophetic traditions Abū Hurayra, from the point of view of *ḥadīth* experts.
- *Al-Qaṣr wa-l-madd fī tawthīq ‘alā Abī Muḥammad*: a manuscript pertaining to biographical evaluation and the science of narration (*‘ilm al-rijāl*).¹¹⁸⁰
- *Al-Mudākhala al-tafsīrīkyya wa-athāruha fī tawjīh ma‘ānī mutūn al-aḥādīth al-nabawiyya*: here, the author attempts to prove the validity of a certain commentary by Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī, reported in Bukhārī as part of the Prophetic tradition known as the *ḥadīth* or repentance of Ka‘b b. Mālīk.

On *fiqh*:

- *Ijtihāth bid‘a radd al-muṭallaqa thalāth*: a manuscript in which ‘Umar Mas‘ūd gives his view-point on the controversial issue of three divorces in one assembly.

On general/miscellaneous topics:

- *al-Dawr wa-l-tasalsul: al-mu‘awwiq al-ra’īsī fī binā’ manāhij aslamat al-ma‘rifa*: a treatise in which the author discusses certain problematic issues which purportedly continue to hinder the project of the Islamization of knowledge (*aslamat al-ma‘rifa*) from moving forward. The treatise was first published in the fifth issue of the Sudanese periodical *Ta’sil*, dated April 1997.
- *Ghāyat al-kamāl fī bayān maṭālī‘ al-jamāl*: the contents of this treatise are also hard to determine from its title.
- *Kashf al-ghawāshī fī tanbīhāt al-hawāmish wa-l-ḥawāshī*: again, the title provides no clue about the contents. (under-athorship)
- *Hashīm al-muḥtaṣar fī ‘ijāla al-muntaṣar min sha’n al-Khiḍr*: as the title suggests, this treatise discusses the awaited Mahdī. It is estimated to have been written in the 1970s (CE).¹¹⁸¹

¹¹⁸⁰ Information on the above four manuscripts was provided to me in an online conversation with Haytham b. ‘Umar al-Tijānī, May 9, 2017.

¹¹⁸¹ Online conversation with Haytham b. ‘Umar al-Tijānī, May 9, 2017.

- *Al-Qawl al-naḍr al-muwajjah l-il-ustādh al-Khiḍr fī radd abāḥīl al-duktūr ‘Abd al-Mun‘im al-Nimr*: as the title suggests, this is a refutation of ‘Abd al-Mun‘im al-Namr (d. 1991 CE), an Egyptian scholar from al-Azhar (who was also the minister of religious affairs in 1979 CE), who, in one of his writings, entitled *al-Ijtihād*, purportedly argued in favour of the common interest (*al-maṣlaḥa*) at the expense of religious texts (*naṣ*) and the consensus of the umma (*ijmā’*).¹¹⁸² ‘Umar Mas‘ūd exposes al-Namr’s false quotations of certain religious authorities in order to establish his own agenda. This treatise was first written in 1990 as a letter to the Sudanese parliamentarian ‘Abbās al-Khiḍr, also a high-ranking official in the Islamic Movement of Sudan, following a conversation that the author had with him.¹¹⁸³ This refutation is also known by the title *Kashf al-mustatar min ḥaqīqat ‘Abd al-Mun‘im al-Namr*.

On the refutation of Christianity¹¹⁸⁴:

- *Al-Waḥy al-ilāhī al-mafqūd*: an account of the distortion that the author claims to have taken place in the bible, the holy book of Christianity.
- *Hadhā huwa al-ḥaqq radd ‘alā risālat ‘ayn al-ḥaqq*: a refutation of a treatise called ‘*Ayn al-ḥaqq*, which is itself a refutation of Islam and a justification of Christianity.
- *Ta‘īl abāḥīl kitāb Lā dīn al-Masīḥ lam yunsakh*: a systematic refutation of Iskandar Jadīd, a Christian priest who, in his book *La dīn al-Masīḥ lam yunsakh* (written in the 1980s and intended to be circulated among Muslims), maintains that Christianity is still a valid religion and has not been abrogated by Islam, as Muslims think it has. ‘Umar Mas‘ūd had just joined the International University of Africa, in 1999, when he was encouraged to write this treatise by Dr. Ḥanafī, the dean of the faculty of Islamic studies.¹¹⁸⁵

Lost writings¹¹⁸⁶:

- *ql-Taḥbīr fī tarjama al-shaykh ‘Abd al-Kabīr al-Kattānī*: is a biographical account of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Kabīr al-Kattānī.

¹¹⁸² ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, *al-Qawl al-naḍr al-muwajjah l-il-ustādh al-Khiḍr fī radd abāḥīl al-duktūr ‘Abd al-Mun‘im al-Nimr*, n.p. [Khartoum], n.d, p. 2.

¹¹⁸³ Online conversation with Haytham b. ‘Umar al-Tijānī, May 21, 2017.

¹¹⁸⁴ Online conversation with Haytham b. ‘Umar al-Tijānī, May 9, 2017.

¹¹⁸⁵ Online conversation with Haytham b. ‘Umar al-Tijānī, May 21, 2017.

¹¹⁸⁶ Online conversation with Haytham b. ‘Umar al-Tijānī, May 9, 2017.

- *ql-Amr bi-l-ma'rūf fī qalb al-ḥurūf:*
- *al-Mu'tabar fī l-maṣawwar fī l-ṣuwar:*

Lectures and papers presented at international Tijānī forums:

- *al-Mudākhala al-tafsīriyya wa-athāruha fī tawjīh ma'ānī mutūn al-aḥādīth al-nabawiyya, al-imām Muḥammad b. Shihāb al-Zuhrī numudhajan fī ḥadīth tawba Ka'b b. Mālik:* a paper presented to *Jam'iyya al-Imām al-Bukhārī li'Ulūm al-Sunna wa-l-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī* (the Imām Bukhārī Society for the Sciences of Sunna and Prophetic Traditions) at the Islamic University of Omdurman.
- *Ḥawl mawthūqiyya maṣādir dirāsa al-shakhṣiyya al-ṣūfiyya, Ibn 'Arabī min khilāl kitāb fusūs al-ḥikam:* a paper presented at the *Mu'tamar al-Dirāsāt al-Ṣūfiyya fī l-Sudan* (Sufi Studies Conference in Sudan), a conference jointly held by the Universities of Khartoum and Bergen on 28–31 October 1995 in Khartoum.
- *Qawā'id wa-zawābiḥ al-ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya fī tawjīh al-qulūb wa-l-arwāḥ ilā l-ḥadra al-rabbāniyya:* a video of this lecture is available online (see footnote).¹¹⁸⁷
- *Zuhūr al-ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya wa-ususuhā:* a paper on the factors that helped the Tijāniyya brotherhood to find widespread acceptance among Muslims, presented at the annual gathering of the Tijāniyya in Fez, Morocco, on 8 October 2009 CE.
- *Al-ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya wa-l-mustaqbal, ru'ya istiṭlā'iyya:* a paper presented at the Third International Gathering of the Followers of the Tijāniyya Brotherhood (*al-Multaqā al-Duwali al-Thālith li-l-muntasibīn li-l-ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya*) in Fez, Morocco, in 2014 CE.¹¹⁸⁸
- *Al-Bayān al-khitāmī li-liqā' al-'ilmī al-thālith li-l-muntasibīn li-l-ṭarīqa al-Tijāniyya:* concluding remarks made by 'Umar Mas'ūd on 14 May 2014 CE at the closing ceremony of the Third International Gathering of the Followers of the Tijāniyya Brotherhood.¹¹⁸⁹

In addition to the publications listed here, the author has had countless papers and writings published in Sudanese and international newspapers and journals.

¹¹⁸⁷ See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8dsGa70uBt0>.

¹¹⁸⁸ For video documentation, see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KQcymg-d5PI>. For the paper see: <http://www.tidjania.fr/articles/613-mostakbal>. For other lectures from that event, and the delegations that attended the gathering, see: <http://www.tidjania.fr/home/34-latest-nwes/658--2014>.

¹¹⁸⁹ For the video documentation, see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C8D-ZOVftgk>. For a written transcript of his concluding remarks, see: <http://tidjania.fr/fes-2014/112-albayan/636-albaian-alkhitami>.

Appendix VI: List of the Writings of Aḥmad b. al-Hādī al-‘Alawī

Polemical writings:

- *Muntahā al-sayl al-jārif min tanāquḍāt Mushtahā al-khārif fī tahāmulihi ‘alā l-imām Sīdī Aḥmad al-Tijānī al-‘ālim al-rabbānī*: a refutation of Ibn Māyābā’s book *Mushtahā al-khārif al-jānī fī radd zalaqāt al-Tijānī al-jānī*. Aḥmad b. al-Hādī is said to have followed his master Muḥammad Fāl Abbā in his refutation of Ibn Māyābā. In fact, what happened was that Muḥammad Fāl sent him the book by the Qādirī master’s book to Aḥmad b. al-Hādī, along with a refutation of it by a certain Shaykh Abū ‘Asīra, and then asked him to compose a further refutation of the book. For this reason, Mauritians perceive it to be a book of Muḥammad Fāl’s, which carries the name of Aḥmad b. al-Hādī.¹¹⁹⁰
- *Shams al-dalīl li-iftā’ al-qandīl wa-muḥiqq mā li-l-Dakhīl wa ‘l-Hilālī min turrāhāt wa-abāṭīl*: this book is a response to three books written in refutation of the brotherhood. These consist of Hāshim Rajab’s *al-Qindīl*, al-Hilālī’s *al-Hadiyya al-hādiyya* and Dakhīl Allāh’s *Dirāsa li-ahamm ‘aqā’id al-Tijāniyya*. The author is said not to have confronted any of his three opponents in person, but certain Tijānīs nonetheless encouraged him to undertake a written refutation. Ghassān b. Sālīm al-Tūnisī claims that this book was inspired by ‘Umar Mas‘ūd, with whom the Mauritanian had met in Medina shortly before the writing it. Ghassān himself was present at their meeting.¹¹⁹¹ Here, particularly as the idea of writing a refutation is claimed to have come from others in the first instance, one may further argue that it may also have been the Sudanese’s intention to convince the Mauritanian to write his refutation of Hāshim Rajab in a harsh tone.

¹¹⁹⁰ Online conversation with Ghassān b. Sālīm al-Tūnisī, August 9, 2017.

¹¹⁹¹ Online conversation with Ghassān b. Sālīm al-Tūnisī, August 9, 2017.