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AUTHORS: Kadir ÖZKÖSE

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# Psycho-Social, Cultural, Historical and Islamic Dynamics of Sufi Orders in Africa

*Afrika'daki Tarikatların Psiko-Sosyal, Kültürel, Tarihî ve İslamî Dinamikleri*

Prof. Dr.  
**Kadir ÖZKÖSE**

Sivas Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi, İlahiyat Fakültesi, Tasavvuf A.B.D. Sivas, Türkiye  
Sivas Cumhuriyet University, Faculty of Theology, Department of Sufism Sivas, Türkiye  
kadirozko60@hotmail.com  
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3977-3863  
ROR ID: https://ror.org/04f81fm77

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**Abstract**

In terms of Sufi studies, African geography has not been subjected to sufficient examination, both in the Islamic world and in the western world. Studies and researches are also mostly at the level of popular publications. In the works of Western researchers, the subject has not gone beyond reporting. Many western researchers approached Africa within the framework of the orientalist approach and plunged the continent into a whirlpool of marginalization. There is a need for new and appropriate academic studies in order to reveal the mystical accumulation in the continent based on both western and Islamic sources. Based on this fact, we are trying to deal with the activities of the sects that we focus on in our study, particularly in Africa. Our article will be evaluated under six sub-titles. In this context, firstly, the findings on the pioneers of the sufi orders in the field of science, morality and trade in Africa will be revealed. In the second stage, the understanding of al Tariqa al Mohammadi adopted by the sufi orders in Africa will be emphasized. As a third point, determinations will be made about the role of sufi orders in the spread of Islam in Africa. The fourth issue to be discussed will be the efforts of the sufi orders to keep the Islamic culture and civilization alive in Africa. In the fifth dimension, the struggle of the sufi orders against imperialism will be mentioned. In the final analysis, the contributions of sects to social life will be examined.

**Keywords:** Islamic Civilization, Africa, Sufism, sufi education, struggle for independence

**Öz**

Tasavvuf arařtırmaları aısından Afrika coğrafası gerek İslâm dünyasında gerekse batı dünyasında maalesef yeterince inceleme ve tetkike tabi tutulmamıřtır. Yapılan inceleme ve arařtırmalar da daha ok popler yayın dzeyinde kalmaktadır. Batılı arařtırmacıların eserlerinde konu daha ok raporlama zelinden teye gitmemiřtir. Pek ok batılı arařtırmacı Afrika'ya oryantalist yaklařım erevesinde yaklařmıř ve kıtayı tekileřtirme girdabına dřrmřtr. Gerek batılı gerekse İslâmî kaynaklardan yola ıkarak kıtadaki tasavvufi birikimi ortaya ıkar-mak iin yeni ve yerinde akademik alıřmalara ihtiya duyulmaktadır. Bu gerekten hareketle alıřmamızda konu edindiğimiz tarikatların faaliyetlerini Afrika zelinde ele almaya alıřmak-tayız. Makalemiz altı alt bařlıkta ele alınıp değeriendirmeye tabi tutulacaktır. Bu erevede ncelikle tarikatların Afrika'da ilim, ahlâk ve ticaret sahasındaki nclklerine dair bulgular ortaya konacaktır. İkinci ařamada Afrika tarikatlarının benimsediğ-i tarikat-ı Muhammediyye anlayıřı zerinde durulacaktır. nc nokta olarak Afrika'da İslâm'ın yayılmasında tarikatların rolne dair tespitler ortaya konacaktır. Ele alınacak drdnc husus ise tarikatların Afrika'da İslâm kltr ve medeniyetini canlı tutmaya ynelik abaları olacaktır. Beřinci boyutta tarikat-ların emperyalizme karřı verdikleri mcadeleden bahsedilecektir. Son tahlilde ise tarikatların sosyal hayata katkıları tetkik edilecektir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Afrika, Tasavvuf, İslam Medeniyeti, Tasavvufi Eğitim, Bağımsızlık Mcadelesi

## Introductory

Sufism is a way of taking the morality of the Qur'an and the spiritual personality of the Prophet as an example. The Sufis, who aimed to reach the level of ihsan, on the one hand, tried to achieve ingenuity, on the other hand, they made an effort to adorn the feeling of love. In the first two centuries of Hijri, which we describe as the period of asceticism, the practical dimension of Sufism was considered as the basis, the morality of Sufism was emphasized, and the emphasis was placed on taqwa, wara and fear of Allah. In the third and fourth centuries of the Hijra, the realization dimension of Sufism was given importance, and approaches were adopted on the concepts of ingenuity, discovery and being inspired, and attaining knowledge. Since the sixth century Hijri, the Sufi tradition has become a system that has entered the institutionalization process through lodges and Sufi orders and reached wider masses.

The African continent is at the forefront of the lands where Sufi sects became widespread and institutionalized. Dhūl-Nūn al-Miṣrī (d.245/859), Abu Abdallah Mohammad al Maghribi (d. 299/911), Bunan Hammal (d.310/922), Abu Osman Said al-Maghribi (d. 373/983), Abu Imran al Fasi (d. 430/1038), Abdalaziz al Tunusi (d. 486/1088), Abu Cabal Yali (d. 503/1109), Ibn al-Arif (d. 536/1141), Ali Ibn Hirzihim (d. 559/1164), Abu Madyan Shuayb b. al-Husayn al-Ansari al-Andalusi (d. 594/1198), Abu Abbas al-Sabti (d. 601/1205), Abdassalam b. Mashish al-Hasani (d. 625/1228), Abu Hasan al-Shazili (d. 656/1258), Ahmad al-Badawi (d. 675/1276) and Ibrahim b. Abdalaziz al-Dasouki (d. 676/1277) are some of the famous early sufis of Africa.

Although North African lands such as Egypt, Tripoli, Benghazi, Algeria and Tunisia entered the borders of the Islamic world with the first conquest movements, the acceptance of Islam by the peoples of the region and the Bedouin masses was generally by the Sufis.<sup>1</sup> In Africa, Sufi connoisseurs were accepted as armies of the heart, and they were seen as names that warmed hearts of people to Islam. The tradition of Almoravid, which became widespread from the very beginning, led to the strengthening of the spiritual atmosphere in African countries, the implementation of Islamic principles, and the solution to the problems

<sup>1</sup> Hamilton Gibb, *Mohammedanism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), 120.

of Muslim peoples. The spread of Islam from the north to the south was provided by the efforts of trade, science and connoisseurs of the heart instead of the dispatch of armies.<sup>2</sup> In the historical process in Africa, a strong connection and alliance were established between the scholars and the Sufis, the union of the madrasah and the dervish lodge was maintained and the ulema's 'sufis' and the sufis' 'representation of science' became widespread as an attitude. With the wandering dervish type, African Sufis contributed to the conversion of local pagan masses in the lands of Niger, Nigeria, Kenya, Sudan, Chad, Cameroon, Mauritania and Guinea with their commercial expeditions to the interior. After the first conquests, it is observed that Islam gained prevalence and power in three different periods in Africa. The first was with the mass migrations of the eleventh and twelfth centuries,<sup>3</sup> the second, with the mystical activities in the fifteenth century,<sup>4</sup> the third is the developments in the nineteenth century. Sufis, scholars and merchants had a large share in all three stages.

North African lands represented by Muslim states such as Aglebis (800-909), Idrisids (788-985), Tolunis (868-905), Ihshidis (935-969), Fatimids (909-1171), Ayyubids (1171-1250), Almoravids (1056-1147), Almohads (1130-1269), Merinis (1195-1470), Abdalvadis (1235-1550), Hafsidis (1228-1574) and Mamluks began to become Ottoman lands with the conquest of Egypt in 1517. In these periods, the sufi orders in the African continent followed a distinctive line from the sects in other Islamic lands.<sup>5</sup> Since sufism and sufi orders adopted the art of winning hearts and the motto of serving humanity, the sects in Africa also entered a course of formation that would meet the expectations of the African people. When we look at the names of these sects, most of them are institutions that have not been represented in Anatolia. We can list some of these sufi orders that are established and function specific to the African geography as follows: Qadiriya, Shaziliya, Madyaniya, Badaviya, Dasukiya, Arusiya, Zarrukiya, Jazuliya, Darqaviya, Sammaniya, Mirganiya, Nasiriya,

2 Husayn Munis, *Fath al-Arab li Maghrib* (Cairo: s.n., 1947), 52.

3 Magali Morsy, *North Africa 1800-1900 - a Survey the Nile Valley to the Atlantic* – (London: Addison-Wesley Longman Ltd, 1984), 16.

4 Mervyn Hiskett, *The Development of Islâm in West Africa* (New York: Longman, 1984), 6-10.

5 J. Spencer Trimingham, *Islâm in Ethiopia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), 234; Amir Najjar, *al-Turuk al-Sufiyya - Neshatuha, Nizamuha, Rivaduha (Rifai-Gaylani-Badavi-Shazili)* (Cairo: Mektebetu'l-Encelu'l-Misriyye, 1978), 32-44.

Isaviya, Rashidiya, Sanusiyah, Tijaniya, Kattaniya, Bakkariya, Tayibiya, Madaniya, Bakriya and Muridism.

In our study, we would like to discuss the distinctive features and activities of the North African sufi orders.

## 1. Being Connoisseurs of Science, Ethics and Trade

The first madrasas and ribats established in Africa were built at the same time as the conquest movements. The adventure of existence of Islam in Africa brought with it the education of Islamic sciences. Scientific teachings, scientific accumulations, intellectual movements and searches for wisdom in Africa enabled madrasas to become widespread like a network from north to south and from east to west. The scientific activities carried out caused the adoption of basic Islamic sources, the understanding of Islam, and the religious adventure of the masses.<sup>6</sup>

The most important feature that has attracted attention in the African continent since the spread of Islam is the uninterrupted continuation of the union of science and practice. Madrasahs in Africa were also known as zaviyah and rabat, and scholars were also called as righteous, wise, people of wisdom, Sufis, dervishes and poor people. Towards the end of the second century, in the African continent, as in other Islamic countries, Sufi thought emerged and began to develop. The Sufis of the first period were mostly known for their ascetic, righteous, and servant-to-God personalities. Sufi morality, practical mysticism, ascetic life were the distinctive features of the early African Sufis.<sup>7</sup>

In Africa, there is a close connection between the teaching of fiqh, recitation, hadith and theology education, Arabic language and literature, and the ascetic movement. Masjids and madrasas spread rapidly in villages and cities, and a large number of educate volunteers who devoted themselves to spiritual services were trained.<sup>8</sup> Madrasahs, known for their religious service and educational activities, met the expectations of the

<sup>6</sup> Morsy, *North Africa*, 26.

<sup>7</sup> J. Cornell Vincent, *Realm of the Saint: Power and Authority in Moroccan Sufism* (Austin: The University of Texas Pres, 1998), 4.

<sup>8</sup> Hasan Jullab, *al Harakat al-Sufi bi-Marakash ve Asaruha fi Adab* (Marakash: al-Matbaa al-Varakat al-Vatani, 1994), 1/23.

people despite the difficulties and impossibilities of life, and became a shelter for lovers of science and wisdom, travelers and those in need.<sup>9</sup> In the course of time, these places were called zawiyah later on. The leaders of the madrasa lodges, known as both sheikh and mudarris, gained great prestige and value in the eyes of their students and visitors. This respect extended to other madrasahs in villages and remote areas. This situation has revealed the benefit of their knowledge, the people's desire for them and closeness with them. After his death, the sheikh of the madrasa was buried in his madrasa or in a place close to it, and in time, this respect was shown to his grave and tomb instead of his person.<sup>10</sup>

The ascetic movements of the first period, at the same time, started to become schools of wisdom, representatives of the theory of ingenuity, and pioneers of the understanding of unity of existence, starting from the twelfth century.<sup>11</sup> Sufis who grew up in the important cultural centers of Andalusia have come to a strong position both in terms of knowledge of fiqh, hadith and theology, and knowledge of Sufism and philosophy.<sup>12</sup> The Andalusian Sufi line began to raise important representatives in the Maghreb and Africa over time.

Constant and lively contact was established between Africa and other Islamic countries. Both scientific travels, pilgrimages, commercial journeys, and spiritual pursuits have caused African Muslims to create representatives of the ideas, thoughts, understanding, trends, schools and philosophies that have developed in the Islamic world.<sup>13</sup> Another feature of African sufis is that they are traveler dervishes. Their wanderings from land to land enabled them to perform state transfers. Especially Mauritanian sufis, who are the leading representatives of the dervish tradition, have spread to wide areas such as Niger, Nigeria, Kenya, Chad, Sudan, Tanzania, South Africa, Gambia from today's African countries

9 Enver Behnan Şapolyo, *Mezhepler ve Tarikatlar Tarihi* (İstanbul: Türkiye Publishing House, 1964), 443.

10 Jullab, *al Harakat al-Sufi*, 1/23.

11 Bradford G. Martin, *Muslim Brotherhoods in Nineteenth Century Africa* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 40.

12 M. Necmettin Bardakçı, *Sûfî İbnü'l-Arif ve Mehâsinü'l-Mecâlis* (İstanbul: Sır Publishing, 2005), 46.

13 Abu Abdillâh Mohamad b. Abdalkerim al-Tamimi al-Fasi, *al-Mustafad fi Manaqib al-Ubbad bi-Madina Fez ve ma Yaliha min al-Bilad li-Abi Abdallah Mohamad b. Abdalkarim al-Tamimi al-Fasi*, ed. Mohamad Sheriff (Titwan: Qulliyya al-Adab b. Ulum al-Insani, 2022), 1/25.

after they were brought up in madrasahs and zawiyas in Timbuktu, and they tried to spread both science and wisdom. The Tokolor ulama, who grew up in the lands of Futa Tora and Futa Jolon in Senegal, operated as the preachers of Islam in Central and South Africa, and were known as wandering dervishes. Raised in the madrasahs and lodges of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, and representing the Andalusian tradition, the Murabids, who are in love with wisdom, started to envelop the African continent from one end to the other with their long, tiring but equally exciting journeys. The connoisseurs of the tariqa have worked hard to present to the pagan masses the torch of faith and piety they have ignited in their hearts. In the regions that the armies could not conquer, they cured the troubles, healed the wounds and bestowed wealth on the poor. The sect sheikhs, who offered the message of unity against tribal conflicts, caused the loud voice of Islam to resonate in the African geography, especially in the twelfth century. Sufi order groups in Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia and Madagascar, which are known as the geography of Sufi sects, have gained prominence as exemplary Muslim personalities and spirituality leaders in the historical adventure with their journeys of dhikr, rosary, service, religion, morality and decency.<sup>14</sup>

African Sufis, with their knowledge, morality and being a trader, noticed the regional texture, tried to understand their interlocutors, produced services specific to the conditions of the region, and tried to meet the expectations of the peoples. In Africa, zawiya means life. In Africa, zawayah means to keep alive, to give, to show interest, to love, to serve and to win hearts. Lodges in African lands function also as a madrasa, caravanserai, clinic, guesthouse, trade center, mosque, security establishment and courthouse.

## **2. Acceptance of the Understanding of the Sect of Muhammadiyya**

African Sufis have generally been in contact with oriental Sufis. For African *turuq*, pilgrimage and journeys to seek knowledge are almost seen as a leech training. During these journeys, which lasted for months

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<sup>14</sup> Şehbenderzade Filibeli Ahmed Hilmi, *Senûsiler ve Sultan Abdülhamid* (İstanbul: Ses Publishing, 1992), 19-20.

or even years, the familiarity of the local people with the Hejaz region was ensured, and close contact was made with the Abbasid, Seljuk and Ottoman civilizations. We see the clearest example of this in the Maghiriya Sect, founded by Abu Mohamad Salih al-Maghiri (d. 631/1234). It was sect that organized the pilgrimage of the Maghreb people for about three or four centuries. Because of their close contact with the Hejaz region, the African *turuq* took care that their adherents were aware of the developments in the Islamic world, adopted Muhammadan morality, and adopted the Sunnah. They adopted salawat-based dhikr styles such as salat al Fatihiya and salat al Ummiya. These movements, which are partially influenced by the Salafist understandings, have adopted acting in accordance with the spirit of the Qur'an and Sunnah as the basic principle. They have raised a flag for some extravagances and approaches that are against the understanding of shari'a, which are occasionally encountered in sufi practices.

### 3. The Role of the Sufis in the Spread of Islam

The sufi orders in Africa are the institutions that pioneered the spread of Islam in the continent.<sup>15</sup> It would not be an exaggeration to say that Islam, which survived only on the northern coastline after the first conquests, but had not yet spread to the interior, became the dominant religion on the continent by the Sufis. Because Tilmisan, Timbuktu, Marrakesh, Agadir, Bornu, Kanam, Kunta and Bakkai sheikhs and scholars were educated in Central and West African countries such as Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Kenya, Sudan, Chad, Somalia, Senegal, and later in southern Africa have spread in their direction.<sup>16</sup> The general feature of the African sufi order masters is that they are merchants and travelers.<sup>17</sup> Saharan trade routes have been in the hands of these sect sheikhs, which we can call trade coordinators for centuries. As a result of commercial activities, especially in the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, they ensured the

15 Abdarrahman Badavi, *Tarih al-Tasavvuf al-Islam munz al-Bidaya hatta Nihaya al-Karn al-Sani* (Kuwait: s.n., 1975), 15.

16 Hiskett, *The Development of İslâm in West Africa*, 50; Annemarie Schimmel, *Tasavvufun Boyutları*, trans. Ender Gürol (Istanbul: Adam Publishing, 1982), 211.

17 Hiskett, *The Development of İslâm*, 246.

Islamization and nationalization of the peoples of Mali, Guinea, Songhai and Hausa.<sup>18</sup> The Islamization activities of the Tijaniyya in West Africa,<sup>19</sup> the Qadiriyya in Central and West Africa, the Shaziliyya in North Africa and the Sanusiyya in the inner parts of Africa were activities to be remembered in the first place.<sup>20</sup> African sheikhs brought the local pagan tribes to Islam with their spiritual suggestions, mystical guidance, exemplary personalities, simple lives, indelible hymns, composed wisdom, memorized poems and communication in local tribal languages. Therefore, by westerners; it is determined that the verdict was given, “If it is not one of the sufi orders that Islamizes the Equatorial regions in Africa, it is definitely another order.”<sup>21</sup> Islamic and Sufi movements in Africa are more political and more resistant than elsewhere in the Islamic world.<sup>22</sup>

Zawiya in Africa also meant ribat. Ribats were established along the border, and were military towers and garrisons, where volunteer Muslim soldiers kept watch in order to prevent external dangers to Islamic lands. In these ribats, Sufi training was given both for the protection of the homeland against external dangers and for the protection of our heartland against the internal enemies we call the nafs and the devil. Moroccan ribats in the Almoravid period and the ribats established by Mohammed Ballo in Nigeria and Cameroon in the nineteenth century are the best examples that can be presented.<sup>23</sup>

#### 4. Reviving Islamic Culture and Civilization

In Africa, zawiya also meant school. Madrasa and zawiya were a whole. African sheikhs were also Muslim scholars. The dominant language of Arabic was realized thanks to the sheikh. Another feature of African

18 Pessah Shinar, “Note on the Socio-Economic and Cultural Role of Sufi Brotherhoods and Marabutism in the Modern Maghrib”, *Proceedings of the First International Congress of Africanists* (Accra: Cambridge University Press, 1962), 272-285.

19 Jamil Abun Nasr, *The Tijaniyya a Sûfî Order in the Modern World* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 100-141.

20 I. Ethem Bilgin, “Afrika’da İslâm’ın Yayılmasında Tasavvufun Rolü”, *İlim ve Sanat Dergisi* 7 (May/June 1986), 86.

21 İrfan Gündüz, *Osmanlılarda Devlet-Tekke Münasebetleri* (İstanbul: Seha Neşriyat, 1993), 223.

22 Fazlurrahman, *İslâm*, trans. Mehmet Dağ - Mehmed Aydın (Ankara: Selçuk Publications, 1992), 293.

23 Hiskett, *The Development of Islam in West Africa*, 189.

sheikhs was that they were intellectual figures who published widely. Each sufi order had its own unique corpus, library and Sufi works. They had a large share in the increase in the literacy rate. Between the twelve and eighteenth centuries, the cultural fabric of Africa was not so backward compared to the general structure of the Islamic world. Names such as Hassan al-Shazili, Suleym Jazuli, Abdalaziz Dabbagh, Ahmad Zarruq, Omar al Futi, Imam Samuri, Sheikh Mohamad Amin, Rabih Fadlallah, Ahmad Tijani, Uthman don Fodio, Mohamad Ballo, Abdallah don Fodio, Mohamad b. Ali al Sanusi, Mohamad Abdallah Hasan, Sheikh Avis and Abdalqadir Algerian are some of the names that accelerated the enrichment of Islamic culture in the region.

## 5. Struggle for Independence against Colonialism

The most important function performed by the Sufi orders in Africa in the countries where they are widespread is to fill the administrative, political and military gaps. In Africa, Sufi leaders and scholars have held important positions in society, have been respected by the tribes, and have become the motor forces of regional politics. As a result of the policy followed by the colonial powers, the disappearance of political authority, the destruction of traditional local institutions, the power of representation came under the control of Europeans and injecting western ideologies, the sufi order leaders began to feel responsibility for protecting national values, local languages, spiritual feelings and national interests. The enslavement of African peoples by force was met with a strong reaction from the circles of this sufi order. Despite all their technical superiority, modern weapons, armored vehicles and economic power, the western states still had a hard time in the African countries they colonized. The vigilance of the Jazuliyya against the Spanish forces that invaded Morocco in the fifteenth century is the first example of this. The French, who occupied Senegal in the nineteenth century, found a Tijaniyya sheikh named al-Hac Ömer et-Tall, a Muridism master named Ahmad Bamba, and a Fulbe leader named Saku Ahmadu. Known as the “Mahdi of Sudan”, the sheikh of the Sammaniyya sect, Mohammad Ahmad b. Abdallah fought against British colonialism in Egypt and Sudan. Similarly, Mohammad b. Abdallah Hassan, known as the “Somali Mahdi” and the sheikh of the

Salihyya sect, fought against the British and Italian occupation forces in Somalia, and was accepted as the pioneer of the Somali people's war of independence. The Patri Movement led by Abdallah Hassan, one of the caliphs of the Idrisiyya sect, in Sumatra, the Mirgani Movement led by Uthman al-Mirgani in Eritrea, and the Mawarzi Movement led by Abdallah al Mawarzi in Sudan have been the Sufi leaders who struggled for independence against foreign invasion.

Fulbe leaders such as Karamoko Abraham Musa, Abraham Sori, Mohammad Said, Musa Ba, Solomon Bal, Imam Abdalkadir and Malik Si, who attracted attention with their activities in West Africa, continued Islamization activities in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and showed a harsh reaction against foreign occupation. West Africa's struggle for independence in the eighteenth century was continued under the leadership of the sheikh of the Qadiriyya Order, Uthman don Fodio. The Fulbe Movement, led by Uthman don Fodio, ended the existence of the local pagan reign called Hausa and Gobir at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and created a great caliphate center called the Sokoto Caliphate, which lasted for a century. The State of Sokoto, which reached its peak with Mohammad Ballo, struggled for existence against the British occupation.

The Sufi sect, which has the most important position in the struggle for independence, is the Sanusiyya. The followers of Sanusiyya fought for independence against the French in Africa and against the Italians in Libya. So much so that the followers of Sanusiyya fought together with the Ottoman troops against the Italian occupation of Libya, which is considered the last stronghold of the Ottoman Empire in Africa. After the withdrawal of the Ottoman Empire, the Sanusis fought alone for twenty-five years against Italy and the war was flagged under the name of Umar Mukhtar. The Sanusiyya sect is virtually the only organization in Libya, the leader of the sect, Mohammad b. Ali al-Sanusi is recognized as the spiritual leader of Libya.<sup>24</sup>

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24 Kadir Özköse, "Başlangıçtan Günümüze Kadar Afrika'da İslâm ve Tasavvuf", *Tasavvuf İlmî ve Akademik Araştırma Dergisi* 7 (2001), 157-184.

## 6. Constructive Activities in Social Life

Due to the inward as well as outward approach of Sufism, orders have performed different functions as non-governmental organizations in some periods. We see the most important example of this in the sufi orders in Africa. The African sheikhs, who saw that their hometowns, lands, houses and homelands were plundered, started to look for solutions in their own way. It is almost as if each sufi order assumed the spokesmanship of a region. For example, Tijaniyya and Muridism are in Senegal, Qadiriyya in Nigeria, Rashidiyya in Eritrea, Mirganiyya and Sammaniyya in Sudan, Salihyya in Somalia, Arusiyya and Madaniyya in Tunisia, Darqaviyya, Isaviyya and Kattaniyya in Morocco, Shaziliyya in Egypt and Sanusiyya in Libya were the national Sufi orders adopted by the peoples of Africa.<sup>25</sup>

In the hot, arid and desert climate of the Sahara, sectarian lodges were frequented by masses from all walks of life. In Africa, zawiya meant guesthouse, hospital, school, dormitory, administrative center, trade center, entertainment center, place of worship, soup kitchen, security and information office. It was the place where the victims' sought remedies for their problems, the helpless reassured them, and the homeless and homeless took shelter. In short, lodges were the lifeblood of life.

Sufi sects such as Tijaniyya, Muridism, Salihyya, Sammaniyya, Madaniyya, Isaviyya, Hammaliyya, Idrisiyya, Darqaviyya, Mirganiyya, Sanusiyya and Rashidiyya, which emerged from the nineteenth century due to meeting the needs of social life, are called Neo-Sufism, al Tariqa al-Mohammadi. The common feature of these sufi orders is that they are a reform movement. Each order saw the age of crisis, wanted to ensure the trend of transformation in the regions where they operated, and adopted the return to the age of bliss as an ideal. With their attitude reminiscent of the Salafist movements, they took a firm stand against innovation and superstition. They encouraged their followers to lead a simple life in the guise of dervish, to face troubles, to keep their will strong and to be hopeful for their future.<sup>26</sup>

25 Kadir Özköse, *Mağrib'de Tasavvuf* (Sivas: Cumhuriyet University Publications, 2013), 37-64.

26 Kadir Özköse, *Muhammed Senûsi Hayatı, Eserleri ve Hareketi* (İstanbul: İnsan Publications, 2000), 215-222.

In the lands of the Sahara, under the scorching heat of Africa and in the depressions, the only shelters of the masses struggling to survive were the lodges. By opening their doors to everyone, African zawiyas have been able to carry out the services expected from the state in lands devoid of state institutions. Health services and medical treatment opportunities were provided in dervish lodges in the most functional manner as the period and conditions allowed. Sufi lodges were centers where biological and physical ailments were treated as well as mental disorders. In sufi lodges, quarantine practices were made possible against infectious diseases such as malaria, pertussis and typhoid fever, emphasis was placed on healthy eating, hygiene habits were introduced, the prevention of infectious diseases was emphasized and the use of medicinal drugs became a habit. It would be appropriate to mention the names of sects such as Zarruqiyya, Jazuliyya, Shaziliyya and Sanusiyya as examples of sects that try to bring such methods to the peoples of the region.

By the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, tribal quarrels in the continent became unavoidable, blood feuds became widespread, the security of the continent disappeared, and there was no road safety due to sea pirates or armed gangs on land and bandit groups. In such an environment, it has been observed that sufi orders preach Islamic brotherhood, social solidarity, the culture of sharing, the experience of living together, and respect for rights and law. Tijaniyya, Arusiyya, Madaniyya and Qadiriyya zawiyas have pioneered such appropriate efforts. These zawiyas belonging to the aforementioned sects contributed to the establishment of peace and tranquility in the region.<sup>27</sup>

African peoples, who had a hard time due to hunger, famine, drought, poverty and wars, especially since the fifteenth century, have gained the opportunity to fill their stomachs with hot bread, cooked vaccine, taste and eat regularly by taking advantage of the opportunities offered in sufi lodges. Almost all of the sufi lodges in Africa serve as soup kitchens and guesthouses. Regardless of their identity, color, language or religion, the peaceful atmosphere in which every foreigner can easily stay is the sufi lodges. Local or foreign guests who were guests of the Sufi lodges were hosted free of charge for three days, travel supplies were provided, their

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27 Nicola A Ziadah, *Tasavvuf ve Siyaset Hareketi Senusilik*, trans. Kadir Özköse (Istanbul: Risale Publications, 2006), 149-182.

expectations were met, they were helped with their problems, and they were even given a security officer to accompany them to their destination. The pulse of daily life was at the zawayah. In the evening, the local peoples who participated in the conversation and dhikr environment in the zawayah would feed their stomachs almost every evening at the dervish table, where they donated or received support, together with all their family members.<sup>28</sup>

On the other hand, zawayas were convents and masjids where education of faith, morality, decency, morality and humanity was given. The source of morale, the center of hope and the dream world of the people were Sufi lodges. Another tradition that has been kept alive for a long time among African sects is that there is no conflict between sects or the atmosphere of conflict is minimized. It was as if the African lands were divided between different sects. Senegal is referred to as Muridism, Mauritania is referred to as Tijaniyya, Morocco is referred to as Darqawiyya, Tunisia is referred to as Arusiyya, Algeria is referred to as Madyaniyya, Egypt is referred to as Shaziliyya, Libya is referred to as Sanusiyya, Nigeria is referred to as Qadiriyya, Sudan is referred to as Mirganiyya and Eriytre is referred to as Salihyya.<sup>29</sup>

## Conclusion

In Africa, sects and mystical life are a part of life. In fact, Africa is a geography of sects. If the African peoples were still able to survive with their own values despite the tragedies of missionary, colonialism, imperialism, occupation, war, famine and hunger, they felt indebted to the leadership and guidance of the sect sheikhs, whom they considered the most vital source of life. However, in the light of these findings, it should not be interpreted that there are no negative, wrong and deficient attitudes of the sufi orders in Africa. In our study, we tried to present the leading roles of African sects, as their positive and constructive aspects predominate. More precisely, these findings are the common findings of not only Muslim researchers but also western and foreign researchers.

28 Kadir Özköse, *Sûfî ve İktidar (Fülânî Islahat Hareketi)* (Konya: Ensar Publishing, 2008), 285-309.

29 Abdarrazzak Abraham Abdallah, *Afrika'da Tasavvuf ve Tarikatlar*, trans. Kadir Özköse (Konya: Ensar Publishing, 2008), 30-35.

Because especially the French followed a very intense and long-term policy in order to degenerate, set against each other, and even attract these currents, which hindered the colonial attempts in Africa. Sects were followed closely, agents and spies were brought among them, large monetary funds were allocated and very strong investments were made. Although they were considered partially successful in these policies, they did not achieve what they hoped for.

In our study, we stated that the most basic function of the sects is their pioneering work in the field of science, morality and commerce. We stated that the integrity of the madrasa and lodge was preserved in the historical process, that the *ilmiye* class and the sect circles formed a unity, and that the sheikhs of the sect also functioned as the trade colonizers of the region.

We stated that the second important point is the adopted understanding of *al tariqa al-Mohammadi*. In the sufi order circles of Africa, innovations and superstitions were struggled, and sensitivity was shown to comply with the Sunnah of the Prophet. The love of the Prophet and the effort to take the Prophet as an example formed the basis of the *tariqa* education. African sects emerged mostly as a movement to return to Islam in the era of bliss.

The most important function of African sects was to spread the religion of Islam. The spread of Islam in Africa was mostly carried out by the sects. The fact that the native tribes spoke their language, spread to the interior of Africa, and gained the appreciation of the tribal circles with their attitudes and behaviors led to the adoption of Islam in time. With their hymns, odes, poems, literary works, legends and historical figures, African sufis have been the focus of attention of the people of the region. Therefore, Islam in Africa was carried out not with the regular expeditions of the armies of conquest, but with the planned and regular campaigns of the sect circles.

The fourth issue we focus on is the efforts of the sufi orders in Africa to revive the Islamic culture and civilization. The spread of Arabic in the continent, the spread of educational institutions to the interior of the continent, the settled life of nomadic masses, and the realization of on-site administration gained strength mostly with the activities of Sufi sect circles. The absence of a power vacuum in the continent, teaching

Islamic sciences, benefiting from the opportunities of the modern world, and establishing contact with the outside world were realized with the intense efforts of the sect sheikhs.

The fifth important result that emerged in the struggle for existence of African sects is their struggle for freedom against colonialism. As a result of the Berlin Conference, the African geography was almost divided among the western powers. The colonial powers used force against the peoples of the continent with their military superiority and the firearms they sent to the continent, and they exploited the underground and surface resources of the continent. The biggest reaction from local people against these western powers, who violate human rights, usurp lands, enslave people and exploit resources to turn the wheels of the industrial revolution, came mostly from regional movements led by sufi order leaders. As if they were political leaders, interpreters of the problems of the people, and charismatic leaders, the sect sheikhs fought long-term and relentlessly against the colonial powers.

Another area of activity of the sects that we drew attention to in our research is their contribution to social life. Sufi sect circles in Africa lived together with the people. Zawaya is built in central points, not remote corners. Dervishes were not only busy with their private rooms in their cells, but also with the people of the region in the bazaars and markets, schools, streets and avenues, fields and gardens, workshops and workplaces, friendly assemblies, in pain and joy, in villages and towns. Brotherhood, friendship, peace, tranquility, sincerity, cooperation and solidarity have been the reason for their existence.

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