

Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās: The Influence of His Mystical Sojourn In Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The contributions of Shaykh Ibrahim Inyas in mysticism and Islam can not be over emphasized. Shaykh Ibrahim Inyas, a Sufi of twentieth century and a leader of Tijaniyyah who engaged in the field of propagation of Islam and Sufism in West Africa including Nigeria. Shaykh Ibrahim had contact with north and south west Nigeria in 1937 and 1951 respectively. The objective of this paper therefore, is to examine his propagation of Sufism and Islam with his scholarly works in different fields of learning. The paper also discusses the influence of his mystical sojourn on Nigerian Muslims. The paper adopts historical and analytical methods. The paper revealed that shaykh Ibrahim Inyas is a real propagator of Islam and Sufism who influenced many Nigerian Muslims spiritually educationally. The paper concludes that Shaykh Ibrahim Inyas has contributed to the development of Muslim Spirituality in Nigeria. The paper recommends that the Sufis of nowadays should emulate Ibrahim Inyas's method of propagation of Islam and not deviate from the original path laid down by the Shaykh and his predecessors.

Keywords: *Twentieth century, Tijaniyyah, Sufism, Islam, Tarbiyah*

INTRODUCTION

Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās was a prominent mystic and distinguished leader of *Tariqatut-Tijāniyyah* in West-Africa and other parts of the world in the 20th century. He was one of the outstanding scholars, great propagators of Islām and Shaykh of *Tarīqah*. The impact of the Shaykh's *Faydah* (movement) also felt in both north and south Nigeria. He was a reformer and *Sāhibu'l- faydah* (possessor of spiritual movement and divine secrets) of the *Tijāniyyah* brotherhood. This paper, therefore, provides information on this personality with focus on his biography, mystical sojourns and spread of his *Tarīqah* in Nigeria. The paper also discusses his thoughts, some of his scholarly works where issues concerning matters on mysticism and Islam were discussed and his influence on Nigerian Muslims.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The scope of this study covered the influence of Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās mystical sojourn in Nigeria which entailed his propagation of *Sufism* and Islam with his scholarly works in different field of learning. The methodologies adopted were historical and analytical in nature. The historical method was used to account for the biography of Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās, while descriptive method was used to elucidate the the influence of his mystical sojourn on Nigerian Muslims.

BIOGRAPHY OF SHAYKH IBRAHĪM

Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās was born into a highly disposition and religiously inclined family of ʿAbdullāh Inyās in a place called Tayba Niasseme in the Republic of Senegal. Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās's full name is Ibrāhīm Inyās bn ʿAbdullāh Inyās bn Muhammad bn Madnab bn Abū-Bakar bn Muhammad al-

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Amīn bn Samb bn Rida.² The word Inyās that appears in his name is an appellation which means iron-maker in Blacksmith.³ Al-Hājj ʿAbdullāh, Ibrāhīm Inyās’s father was born in 1845 in a town called Beli. He travelled to quite a number of villages within and outside Senegal before he finally established himself in Kawlakh in 1940.⁴ ʿAbdullāh was reported to be a great leader of Tijāniyyah order in Senegambia region with a large number of Murids (followers).⁵ While Sayyidah ʿAisha Janka, the mother of Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās was a pious, devoted, religious and very obedient to her husband, Al-Hājj ʿAbdullāh.⁶

Concerning the date of his birth it was expressed in the translator’s note of *Kashful- Libās* one of the most popular books in which the fame of the Shaykh rested upon that his date of birth was 1320 A.H./1902.C.E.⁷ Shaykh Ibrahim died on Sunday, 15 Rajab 1395AH/ 27th July 1975 at the age of 75 and was buried according to the Islamic rites.⁸

Shaykh Ibrāhīm obtained the two *Ijāzah* in the order viz-a-viz- *Ijāzatut Taqdīm* and *Ijāzatu’l Mutlaq*. *Ijāzatut Taqdīm* is the type of *Ijazah* that limited the receiver only to introduce *Taşawwuf*, initiate and train the intending *Murids*. It also allows the receiver to lead the *Zawiyyah*.⁹ While *Ijāzatul Mutlaq* is the highest peak of permission or certificate in *Tarīqah* which qualifies the receivers to have autonomy to carry out all the responsibilities and duties of the *Muqadam*, for example, he can commence, lead the *Zawiyyah* and appoint whoever is capable as a *Muqadam* among the *Murīds*.¹⁰ The Shaykh acquired all these skills and knowledge from his father according to the belief of his followers.¹¹

Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās was widely acclaimed and accepted as a father figure and spiritual leader of Tijāniyyah brotherhood for his inspiring degree of learning and mystical experiences that he so estimably attained.¹² He was a scholar who excellently contributed to the promotion of scholarship of Islām and *Taşawwuf*. His erudition of Islamic knowledge and exposure couple with contemporaneous thoughts in the field of *Taşawwuf* has given the best value in showcasing Islam and *Taşawwuf* in a systematic way of having special appeal for the Sufis.¹³ This could be felt in some of his publications that will discuss later.

His Sojourn and Spread of His Tariqah in Nigeria

Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās established his mosque in *Madinatu’l- Kawlakh* (city of Kawlakh) and Sayyid ʿAli Cisse was made to be the head of the mosque committee. According to Quadri, the mosque could accommodate up to ten thousand worshippers but presently when the researcher visited the mosque, it has been expanded and can contain an even larger number of worshippers.¹⁴ In fact, and this mosque is among the most popular mosques in the world. Mansūr Inyās asserted that this mosque has been playing a very tremendous role during and after the life of Shaykh Ibrāhīm.¹⁵ People came from different countries of the world for acquiring the knowledge of Islām (*Sharīʿah*) and spiritual training (*Haqīqah*).¹⁶ These two forms

² I.A Inyās, *Firiyad-t-Tafsīr’l-Qurānil-Karīm*, (Senegal: Maktabat Nahudah, 2010), Vol. 1.

³ P.B. Clerk, “West Africa and Islām”, (London: Edward Arnold Publisher Ltd, 1982)

⁴ D.A. Tijāni, “Translation and Appraisal of Shaykh Ibrāhīm’s *Ruḥu’l- Adab* in *Al-Fikr Journal of Department of Arabic and Islāmic Studies University of Ibadan*, Nigeria. (1986).

⁵ Tijāni, “Translation and Appraisal of Shaykh Ibrāhīm’s *Ruḥu’l- Adab*”.

⁶ I.A Inyās, *Kashful Libās ’an Faydatl-khatm Abil Abbās*, (Cairo: Maktabatu Mustapha al-Babi, 1952).

⁷ Z.Wright and A.B. Okene’s “Translator’s Note on the “Removal of Confusion: *Kashful Libās an Faydat-l-Khatm Abil ʿAbbās*” by Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās, (Egypt: International Printing Company).

⁸ Murtala Busoeri, “Shaykh Ibrāhīm between the Law and Mystical Reality”, in Zakariya I. Oseni (ed.) *Fluorescence of Arabic and Islāmic Studies in Nigeria*. (2008).

⁹ B.T Awal, “Icon of Mystics”, (Ilorin: Khādim Hadratu’l Shaykh Publication, 2009).

¹⁰ Awal, “Icon of Mystics”.

¹¹ S. AbdurRazaq, “The Legacy of Ash-Shaykh Ibrāhīm Niyass Al-Kawlakhi in Nigeria” in *the FAIS Journal of Humanities*, 4 (1), (2010), Bayero University, Kano Nigeria.

¹² Busoeri, “Shaykh Ibrāhīm between the Law and Mystical Reality”.

¹³ G. Bilqeez, “A Brief Biography of the Shaykh-Al-Islām”, (Lagos: Queen of Shba Peace Foundation”, (2013).

¹⁴ Y.A. Qadir, “The Tijāniyyah in Nigeria: A Case Study”, unpublished Ph.D Thesis Submitted to the Department of Arabic and Islāmic Studies University of Ibadan, Nigeria, (1981).

¹⁵ Busoeri, “Shaykh Ibrāhīm between the Law and Mystical Reality”.

¹⁶ M. Nadhir, “Ibrāhīm Inyās’*Da’watu’l Haqq ilī Sirātil Mustaḳīm*”, (Lagos: Kunfayacun Enterprises, 1989).

of knowledge enable Muslims to build up their characters which will enhance them to have good relationship and communion with Allāh and their fellow human beings.¹⁷ Consequently, Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās' mosque in Kawlakh became one of the important centres and most popular Islamic sanctuary where the teachings of Islām (*Sharī'ah*) and *Tarīqah* are dispersed to the Muslims. With the aid of this sanctuary, Sufi convent and other activities that take place therein, Ibrāhīm Inyās became a reputable scholar and his fame spread beyond the frontiers of Senegal. He therefore, emerged not only as a prominent leading *Ṣūfi* master, but a venerable scholar who attracted a large number of indigenous and foreign followers to his side.¹⁸ This also injected dose to the influx of membership and establishment of Sufi convents in Senegal and its environ including diasporal.

In the year (1930) some venerable Tijāniyyah leaders and spiritual masters gave oath of allegiance to him and accepted him as *Sāhibu'l-Faydah* and *Gawth* (helper) of the age.¹⁹ Notable among them were the Arabs in Mauritania; the Idaw 'Ali tribe that contributed immensely to the spread of Tijāniyyah order in West Africa, Shaykh Muhammad Wuld, Shaykh Nahwi and Muhammad al-Misri.²⁰ In 1936, Ibrāhīm Inyās reached a milestone and meridian of his spiritual tendencies. He visited Fez Morocco on his way to Makkah for the holy pilgrimage.²¹ The account of Ibrāhīm Inyās to Fez has been given by Y.A Quadri:

On Wednesday, we call on Abdus-salām al-Sa'īd. He has obtained as many secrets of *Tarīqah* as possible and permitted me some secrets and I permitted him some of them. He said you are the successor of Shaykh At-Tijāni and you are the intermediary between people and the Prophet. He said he had been praying God to let him see the successor of Shaykh Tijāni. Then all people of the *Zawiyyah* (in Fez) visited me and acknowledged me as a successor.²²

According to a report, the leader of Tijāniyyah in Fez visited Kawlakh and handed over all the properties of the office of the *Khalīfah* to Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās such as the staff, books of prayer and *Asrār* (litanies) of Shaykh Tijāni. All these indicate the leadership acceptance of Ibrāhīm Inyās by the people of Fez.²³ Moreover, it is suggested that this incidence serves as catalyst to global acceptance of Shaykh Ibrāhīm not only as *Sāhibu'l-Faydah* and successor of Shaykh Tijāni but a recognised leader of Muslim *Ummah* in the world.²⁴

Shaykh Ibrāhīm continued his holy voyage. On reaching Makkah, many Muslims embraced him. One of them was Emir 'Abdullāh Bayero of Kano.²⁵ The latter personality personally invited Shaykh Ibrāhīm in 1937 to Kano, Nigeria. This maiden visit of Ibrāhīm to Nigeria lasted him for six days. Although, the visitor neither attends any outing nor make any public appearance but he met with some indigenous Muslim scholars and distinguished personalities of Kano State.²⁶ Shaykh Ibrāhīm re-visited Kano in 1944 and with this visitation and his fluency, respect and divine grace of God, he gained so many hearts into the folk of *Tarīqah*.²⁷ Another important factor which the fame and acceptance of leadership of Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās rested upon was his book titled *Kashful Libās*. The book educated the Murids who intend to acquire the knowledge of *Ma'rīfah* (gnosis).

Consequently, the visit of Shaykh Ibrāhīm to Kano resulted into a solid agreement and relationship between the people of Kano and that of Kawlakh. The *Salqawa 'Ulamā'* (the Murids of Shaykh Muhammad

¹⁷ An Interview Conducted with Shaykh Mansūr Inyās in Shaykh Ibrāhīm's Mosque in Kawlakh, Republic of Senegal, 10th April, 2022

¹⁸ Bilqeez, "A Brief Biography of the Shaykh-Al-Islām".

¹⁹ A. Muhammad al-Awwal, *Bushra al-habab wal khulan wa hayāt Gawth az-Zamani Sayyiduna Shaykh Inyas*, (Lagos: Kunfayacun Enterprises, n.d).

²⁰ Quadri, "The Tijāniyyah in Nigeria: A Case Study".

²¹ Quadri, "The Tijāniyyah in Nigeria: A Case Study".

²² Quadri, "The Tijāniyyah in Nigeria: A Case Study".

²³ Quadri, "The Tijāniyyah in Nigeria: A Case Study".

²⁴ J.N. Paden, "Religion and Political Culture in Kano", (California: University of California Press, 1973).

²⁵ AbdurRazaq, "The Legacy of Ash-Shaykh Ibrāhīm Niyass Al-Kawlakhi in Nigeria".

²⁶ A. Abubakar, *Ath- Thaqaful 'Arabiyyah fi Najiriyah*, (Lebanon: Muasasaat Abdul-Hafis al-Bisat, 1973).

²⁷ Abubakar, *Ath- Thaqaful 'Arabiyyah fi Najiriyah*.

Salga of Kano) went further for spiritual training (*Tarbiyah*) under the supervision of Shaykh Ibrāhīm in Senegal.²⁸ Among the first set of Murids who went for this higher spiritual training include Sayyid Abū-Bakar ʿAtīq, Sayyid ʿUmar Falke, Mahamud Salga, Sayyid Sanusi and others.²⁹ These scholars came back as authoritarians in the field of spikritual training and experts on *Tariqatut-Tijāniyyah*.³⁰ The Salgawa, therefore, curiously became the followers and companions of the Shaykh and Kano became the headquarter of *Faydah* in Nigeria where a formidable number of *zawayah* and Murids of *Faydah Ibrahimiyah* branch of *Tijaniyyah* are emerged.³¹

In addition, the Salga people curiously encouraged people to travel to Kawlakh in order to obtain the knowledge of *Tarbiyah* and also laid more emphasis on the importance of *Tarbiyah* as a distinguishing feature between a *Murīdu Haqīqi* and *Murīdu Majazi* (i.e a real and sincere *Murīd* and fake *Murīd*). Therefore, Kano served as a fortress which Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās spiritual movement extended to the whole northern Nigeria.³²

In 1951, the South-West Muslims had contact and bilateral relationship with Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās as asserted by Khalīfah Amīnullah Akoshile: Shaykh Ibrāhīm visited Lagos around 1951 and hosted at Itapashi/Itafaji area of Lagos Island.³³ However, a source had it that the Shaykh came to Lagos through the influence of Sayyid ʿUmar Falke one of the students of Shaykh himself. Sayyid ʿUmar Falke decided to stay on Island for a while after he had returned from Kawlakh. He established *Zawiyyah* and initiated a small number of Hausa and Yoruba Muslim traders into *Tariqah* fold. Among the Yoruba Muslim traders whom he initiated were Alhaji Abdus-Salām Akoshile, Oro, Mukadam Muhammad Awwal Omupo, Alhaji Abdus-Salām Adebolu Ibadan and a host of others. The trio personalities mentioned above were taken to Kawlakh in 1952 for higher spiritual training (*Tarbiyah*) before Shaykh Ibrāhīm by ʿUmar Falke.³⁴ After their return from Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās, they started to propagate *Tariqah* in Lagos and its environs and of which they contributed enormously in spreading *Faydah Tijāniyyah* (*Tijāniyyah* order) to other parts of Yoruba land. Moreover, it was stated that after the first visitation of Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās to Lagos, all other subsequent visits made by him were hosted by one Dr. Olumide, a Christian who believes in *Daʿwah* mission of Shaykh Ibrāhīm and efficacy of his prayer and Alhaji Labaran who resides at Yaba axis of Lagos State.³⁵

Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās visited Ibadan before 1961 on two occasions. He re-visited the place in 1961 as expressed by Khalīfah Buseri Ibrāhīm, the grand *Khalīfah* of *Tijāniyyah* in Ibadan. This visit was through the invitation of Alhaji Abdus-Salām Adebolu.³⁶ Shaykh Ibrāhīm was warmly received by the people of Ibadan including some Muslim traditional scholars. We were told that the Shaykh visited the palace of Olubadan and *wazifah* was held in the mosque of the Olubadan Palace. And up till time of this study, *Zawiyyah* is still in progress in that mosque and other places in Ibadan.

In 1964, Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās visited Ilorin; the capital of Kwara State. He was hosted by Emir Zulu Qarnayn Gambari in his palace. He also Ibrāhīm paid visit to many important places in Ilorin such as the Ilorin Central mosque, grave yard of Shaykh Alimi, among others. It was also reported that many scholars who were saints (*Awliyāʿu*) in Ilorin joyously received Shaykh Ibrāhīm and he prayed for them and mentioned that Ilorin is a home of saints and Islāmīc cultural heritage.³⁷ Shaykh Ibrāhīm revisited other places in Kwara State such as Oro, Omupo and other Igbomina land in 1972.

²⁸ AbdurRazaq, “The Legacy of Ash-Shaykh Ibrāhīm Niyass Al-Kawlakhi in Nigeria”.

²⁹ Nadhir, “Ibrāhīm Inyās’ *Daʿwatu’l Haqq ilī Sirātil Mustaḳīm*”.

³⁰ Quadir, “The *Tijāniyyah* in Nigeria: A Case Study”.

³¹ Quadir, “The *Tijāniyyah* in Nigeria: A Case Study”.

³² AbdurRazaq, “The Legacy of Ash-Shaykh Ibrāhīm Niyass Al-Kawlakhi in Nigeria”.

³³ An Interview Held with Khalīfah Aminullāh Akoshile, The Eldest son of Late Shaykh Abdus-Salām Akoshile, a great Disciple of Shaykh Ibrāhīm Nyās on 23rd, April, 2022 at Tokunbo Street, Lagos Island, Lagos State.

³⁴ An Interview Held with Khalīfah Aminullāh Akoshile.

³⁵ An Interview Held with Khalīfah Aminullāh Akoshile.

³⁶ An Interview Held with Khalīfah Aminullāh Akoshile.

³⁷ An Interview Held with Khalīfah Aminullāh Akoshile.

Apart from those places mentioned above, Shaykh Ibrāhīm also visited Shaki in 1967 with the invitation of late Oba Tijāni, Okere of Shaki land. He visited Iseyin and other places in Oke Ogun area of Oyo state. The Shaykh also visited Ijebude and its environ on the invitation of Shaykh Alejulehun and others. It is worthy of noting that the sojourn of Shaykh Ibrahim Inyas to Western part of Nigeria made him to not only convert a large number of non-Muslims and Christians to Islam but to initiate them to the folk of Tijaniyyah Faydah Ibrahimiyah branch of Sufism.³⁸

Undoubtedly, the *Faydah* of Ibrāhīm Inyās cuts across not only the northern Nigeria, but also the South- West and East of Nigeria and other parts of Africa.

His Thought

Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās believes in the teachings of the Glorious Qur’ān and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. He opines that *Taşawwuf* is one of the major precepts of Islām and in fact, it is among the main intents in which the Prophet was being sent to mankind.³⁹ He asserts that *Taşawwuf* is based on *Zuhd* (ascetism), *Tawhīd* (Unity of Allah), *‘Ubudiyyah* (worship), and annihilation of oneself egoism. He also believes that anyone who wishes to take spiritual path of Shaykh Tijāni should be initiated and permitted by its people.

He submits that it is an incumbent on trekkers (*Sālikun*) to love God and His Apostle, and then translate the love into good action and interaction with other fellow human beings. He also believes that the *Şūfis* especially those of *Tijāniyyah* order should join him in the evangelization or propagation of the *faydah* (the spiritual flood or movement) with hearts, attentiveness, leaving aside looking and show off.⁴⁰ He says *faydah* should only be the benefits of those who wholly love Allah and His Apostle and submit totally to Allah in the service and worship. Shaykh Ibrāhīm came to practicalize the science of *Imān* by reviewing the *Tarbiyah* that has been in oblivion among the *Şūfis*.⁴¹ He believes that through the experience of *Tarbiyah*, *Murids* would enjoy re-birth, purity, godliness and hence became perfect (*kamil*) in attributes and qualities in carrying out this mission.⁴² He emphasizes that the *Sharī‘ah* (Islamic law) is a law which the *Murids* must observe and follow in their day-to-day activities while *Ḥaqīqah/ma‘rifah* (knowledge of ultimate reality of God) as his inner attire. He lives by example in such a way that he refutes those *Şūfis* who refuse to obey the Islāmic law i.e *Sharī‘ah*. He says:

نصلى سجدوا راکعين واننا # على ذا درجنا الّتهر لن نتخلف

Meaning:

We are offering Salah, genuflecting and bowing. Surely, on this platform do we meet the predecessors and we shall never deviate from their path⁴³

The propagation of Islām and *Taşawwuf* cannot be overemphasised in the thought of Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās. He spreads the religion of Islām and *Tarīqah* simultaneously and enjoins his Murids to inculcate this habit. He also urges his disciples to seek for the knowledge of *Sharī‘ah* and *Ḥaqīqah*.

His Scholarly Works

Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās was a renowned scholar who enormously contributed to scholarship in Islām. He virtually wrote on all the subjects of Islāmic studies such as sciences of Qur’ān, *Ḥadīth* jurisprudence Arabic literature, prosody, Islāmic ethics, Islāmic History, *Taşawwuf* (Islāmic mysticism), among others. Shaykh Ibrāhīm was a poet who composed varieties of collected works and had over seventy publications to his

³⁸ An Interview Conducted with Shaykh Mansūr Inyās.

³⁹ B. Ismail, *Nazhatul Ashiqīn fi Tārīkh Sayyidna Wamawlana Ibrāhīm Inyās*, Kano, (n.d).

⁴⁰ Inyās, *Kashful Libās ‘an Faydatl-khatm Abil Abbās*.

⁴¹ Bilqeez, A Brief Biography of the Shaykh-Al-Islām.

⁴² Bilqeez, A Brief Biography of the Shaykh-Al-Islām.

⁴³ Ibrāhīm Inyās, *Al-Kibritul Al-Ahmar Fi Tawāssul bi Awa’il Suwar wabil Huruf Ayatil Gurar*, (Senegal: n.n.p, 2003).

credit.⁴⁴ This sub-heading therefore will only discuss some of his works on issues related to Islam and Sufism. Among his works on these are:

1. *Al-Kibritu Alhmar Fi-Tawāssul-b-awwail Suwar wab-Hurufil-ayatil Qur'ān*. This book is written by Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās in poetry form. He uses names of chapters of the Qur'ān, its alphabets and some selected verses in it as means of *Tawāssul*. He uses all these to supplicate and makes requests from Allāh. Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās emphasizes on *Tawāssul* as depicted on title of this work. He uses sacred places and objects including Prophets and Saints to supplicate to Allāh to make his requests for spiritual favour, divine secrets and illumination.⁴⁵ He says:

نسأله بالبلد الحرام # نيلى رضاء سيد الانام
 أسأله بفجر يوم الجمعة # والعرفات كوني الدهر معه
 كفاية يارب شر الغاشية # وقاية المولى لعبد كافية

Meaning:

We make our requests with the Holy city (*Makkah*) and dignity of the leader of the world (Muhammad). I make my request through the dawn of Friday and plain Arafat that enjoy the protection of Him, for security and protection from the evil of dishonest people. A kind of protection which servant enjoys and relies upon from His master (Allāh).

However, *Tawāssul* generates a lot of controversies among the scholars in Islām but Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās did not mention in any of the verses of the poem evidences that support the legality of *Tawāssul* though he discussed it in another book of his. However Scholars such as Ibn Taymiah, Al-Ilorī and others have written extensively on it.⁴⁶

2. *Majmu'at Qaṣā'id-l-Mawlidn-Nabawiyy*: The book is a collection of poems on eulogy and praise of the Prophet. The author discusses the biography and life history of the holy Prophet Muhammad. He emphasises on the good disposition, virtues and honour of the prophet among other prophets and creatures of Allāh.⁴⁷ The significance of this work is that its poems are recited as prayers for seeking the succor, and spiritual elevation inherent *Mawlid-Nabiyy* celebration that usually hold on the 12th day of *Rabi' Awwal* of every lunar calendar. One of the poems is entitled (congratulatory message) (تهنئة) This particular poem is mandatory to be recited in every *Mawlid-Nabiyy* celebrations organize by the followers of Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās. It goes thus:

تأهنية الربيع بمدحة الشفيق # بمنطق البديع ابغى بها مؤمال

Rabi' Awwal's congratulatory message inherent the praise of intercessor which encompasses marvelous dialectic I seek to attain my desires.

In addition, the Shaykh discusses Muhammad's reality by asserting that all the creatures of Allah were emanated from Muhammad's light and he refers to Muhammad as *Aynu'l-Hāq* (real truth).

3. *Qaṣīdatu'l Tawbah*: The rhyme of remorse or repentance is made up of nineteen verses. Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās wrote it in 1957 and published it in 1975 just before to his demise as noted by

⁴⁴ S. Abdur Razaq, "Translation and Commentary on *Risalah At-Tawbah*", (Nigeria: Nasru'l 'Ilmi African American Islāmic Institution (AAII), 2011).

⁴⁵ Ibrāhīm Inyās, *Al-Kibritul Al-Ahmar Fi Tawāssul bi Awa'il Suwar wabil Huruf Ayatil Gurar*.

⁴⁶ A.A 'Abdullāh, *Tawjihud- Da wah Wad-Du āt*, (Agege: Dar-Thaqafatul-Islāmiyyah, 1988).

⁴⁷ Inyās, *Firiyad t Tafsi'r l Quranil-Karīm*.

Solagberu.⁴⁸ The book is highly significant because of its clarification of certain issues that have connections with Şūfism and leadership status of Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās. Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās seeks for the repentance of Allāh and His blessings.⁴⁹

However, this work was highly criticized by many non-Şūfi scholars. They claim that Shaykh Ibrāhīm has deviated from *Tariqatus-Sufiyyah* and renounced his membership in it and also with his erroneous belief and teachings that he inculcated to the mind of his followers. However, this assertion may not be acceptable in the sense that there is no single text of the work that makes reference to Tijāniyyah or its doctrines or any sin at all perpetuated by Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās. As a result of this, *Qasidatu'l-Tawbah* is mystically inclined and it could be hard and complex to comprehend by theologians and other scholars who have deficiency in esoteric or *Haqiqah* knowledge of God. Henceforth, solagberu submits that, the observation of many experts on Tijāniyyah order is that, *Qasidatul-Tawbah* ought to have been written at the period when *Faydah* was globally accepted, and Shaykh wrote the work inline with the lesson derivable in chapter 110 of the Glorious Qur'ān.

4. *Ruḥu'l-Adab*: This is translated as Soul of ethics: *Ruḥu'l-Adab* is the first book written by Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās in 1921.⁵⁰ He discusses moral instructions and guidelines on how a new *Murīd* (novice) would become a Salik, a sincere trekker or faithful *Murīd* in the *Tariqah*. Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās further said in it the kind of relationship requires to be existed and maintained between *Shaykh* (spiritual mentor) and his trainee (*Murīd*). He mentions four kinds of knowledge that could assist a spiritual trainee to reach the zenith position of his spiritual journey.⁵¹
5. *Raf' malām 'an man raf' waqabd Iqtidāi-b-sayyid-l-anām*. In this book, the author discusses jurisprudential issues and matters. Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās mentions issue concerning *Sadl* and *Qabd*, letting down of arms at one's sides and gripping or raising of two hands on chest with right hands on the left when on *Salah*.⁵²

He presents arguments on the two issues but later supports and recommends *Qabd* as the practice of the Prophet and his companions on *Salāh*. Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās further says neither Allāh nor His messenger directs the Muslims to follow any school of thought; rather they were ordered to follow the teachings of Islām as enunciated in the Glorious Qur'ān and explained by the Prophet of Islām. This work of the Shaykh drew the attention of certain scholars who wrote either in favour or against these practice. To mention a few scholars, Shaykh Nasrud-Dīn Kabara (d.1996) wrote a work entitled *Qamul Fasa'd fi taqlid Sadl 'ala Qabd fi hadhil bilad* against the practice of *Qabd*. Also, Shaykh Kafansa (d. 1989) wrote in favour of the practice of *Qabd*. It is imperative to mention here that the issue of *Qabd* and *Sadl* generated a lot of controversies between the followers of Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās and that of *Qādiriyyah* members in the Northern part of Nigeria. This crisis, according to Quadri Y.A, was later settled by the Federal Government by constituting an advisory committee on the matter.⁵³

6. *Kashful Libās an Faydatu'l Khatin 'Abu'l 'Abbas*: This is translated as removal of confusion concerning the flood of saintly sealed Ahmad Tijāni ('Abbas' father). The book confirms not only the scholarship of Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās but his authority in Şufism. *Kashful Libās* majorly focuses on *Tarbiyah*, one of the fundamental aspects of Şufism.⁵⁴ It is a means towards achieving knowledge of *Haqiqah* or *Ma'rifah* (Reality or Gnosis) and intuitive knowledge (*Fayras*). Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās

⁴⁸ Abdur Razaq, "Translation and Commentary on *Risalah At-Tawbah*".

⁴⁹ Y.A Adisa, "Life of Shaykh Ibrāhīm Niass al-Kawlakhiyy al-Tijāniyy and some of the major works", unpublished Long Essay Submitted to the Department of Arabic and Islāmic Studies University of Ibadan, Nigeria. (1978).

⁵⁰ Inyās, *Kashful Libās 'an Faydatl-khatm Abil Abbās*.

⁵¹ Tijāni, "Translation and Appraisal of Shaykh Ibrāhīm's *Ruḥu'l-Adab*".

⁵² Adisa, "Life of Shaykh Ibrāhīm Niass al-Kawlakhiyy al-Tijāniyy and some of the major works".

⁵³ Quadri, "The Tijāniyyah in Nigeria: A Case Study".

⁵⁴ Inyās, *Kashful Libās 'an Faydatl-khatm Abil Abbās*.

emphasises the importance of *Tarbiyah* as a thing that must be felt, tasted and witnessed by all members of the *Tarīqah*. He further emphasises that *Tarbiyah* (spiritual training) can be achieved without going into seclusion or retreat (*Khalwa*) by a *Sālik* (trekker).⁵⁵ He asserts that *Khalwa* is an excessive stressful exercise of training adopted after the earliest centuries of Islām.⁵⁶

Moreover the issue of *Tarbiyah* has been exclusively known with Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās and his followers to the extent that one of the Islamic scholars and a grand *Qādi* of Northern Nigerian Shaykh Abubakar Gunmi (d. 1991) wrote a public letter to Shaykh Ibrāhīm as informed by Maigari requesting him to give more explanation on *Tarbiyah*.⁵⁷ Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās, however, responded to *Shaykh* Gunmi's letter in this manner:

Tarbiyah is not a new thing but started during the days of the Prophet and it is still in practice. As it occurred to prophet Ibrāhīm (A.S.), when he saw stars, he said this is my Lord; when he saw the moon, he said this is my Lord; when he saw the sun, he said this is my Lord. Yet, Allāh declares (as regard to prophet Ibrāhīm). He was not among the polytheists.⁵⁸

7. *Jawāhir Rasā'il* This is another work of Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās compiled by one of the Shaykh's student, Shaykh Barnawi. The work contains his speeches, lectures and talks in both local and international conferences. It also contains letters written to some of his followers in different parts of the world on the essential of *Wazīfah* (daily litanies) and other rituals of the order.⁵⁹ The author also condemns irrelevant mystical utterances mentioned by certain group of *Ṣūfis* as *Jadhb*. He refers to *Majdhūb* as transgressors of the limit of Allāh. He says:

Indeed a *Majdhūb* has completely failed and transgressed the limit. He has no good deeds. But whoever reaches his mystical goal should give thanks to Allāh. Or if not should hold on to the rope till he reaches his destination.

Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās also discusses the connotation of soul, heart and other parts of the body. He claims that soul is a commandment of God not created by God. He buttresses his point by quoting the verse of the Qur'ān which says:

ويسألونك عن الروح قل الروح من أمر ربي...

“And they ask you (O Muhammad) concerning the soul, say: the soul is one of the commands of my Lord...” (Q17:85)

He explains that heart or mind is one of the creatures of Allāh. He further explains that heart or mind is one of the creatures of Allāh.

8. *Dīwān Sayr 'l-Qulūb*: This is another book of Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās which discusses mystical love of the Prophet Muhammad. Shaykh Ibrāhīm expresses in this book his love and desire for the Prophet (SAW).⁶⁰
9. *Firiyadt-Tafsīr-l-Qur'āni 'l-Karīm*: is another work of *Shaykh* Ibrāhīm Inyās on exegesis. This exegesis is classified under *Tafsīru-l-Ishari*. *Tafsīru-l-Ishari* are the books of exegesis that discuss inner meaning and interpretation of the Qur'ān apart from the apparent meaning. *Firiyadt-t-Tafsīr* of Shaykh

⁵⁵ Inyās, *Kashful Libās 'an Faydatl-khatm Abil Abbāsi*.

⁵⁶ Inyās, *Kashful Libās 'an Faydatl-khatm Abil Abbāsi*.

⁵⁷ M.T. Maigari, *Ash-Shaykh Ibrāhīm Nyās As-Sinigali Hayatuhu wa arā'uhu wa'alimuhu*, (Lebanon: Dar-'Arabiyyah, 1981).

⁵⁸ Maigari, *Ash-Shaykh Ibrāhīm Nyās As-Sinigali Hayatuhu wa arā'uhu wa'alimuhu*.

⁵⁹ I.A Inyās, *Qasīdatut-Tawbah*, (Lebanon: Darul Kitāb, n.d).

⁶⁰ Inyās, *Al-Kibritul Al-Ahmar Fi Tawāssul bi Awa'il Suwar wabil huruf Ayatil Gurar*.

Ibrāhīm is one of the exegeses which discuss *Suratur-Rahmān* in esoteric meaning apart from its apparent meaning. The author also discusses *Asmaullah Ar-Rahman* as one of the powerful names and attributes of Allāh.⁶¹

10. *Majmū'at Ad-Dawāwīn*: This is a collection of six different books authored by Shaykh Ibrāhīm on eulogy and pedigree of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.). The whole book is in poetry form and arranged in alphabetical form which contains praiseworthy characters of the Prophet. Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās declares in one of these books that his love for the prophet (S.A.W) cannot be measurable and no mankind could reach the stage at which he loved the prophet. He says:

فمن رام دركي في اشتياق نبينا # فقد رام امرا مستحالا محرما

Meaning:

Whoever desires to compete with me in longing for our Apostle, indeed he has conceived an impossible desire.

He further says:

تذكرت من هو للوري كلهم قوت # وهم حجر والمصطفي القرم ياقوت

فهو تجلي الذات بل هو عينها # فملك العلي منها كذا ملكوت

Meaning:

I reflect who is a victual for all the creation. All creations are like stones while al-Mustapha, the master is like diamond. He is the manifestation of *Dhāt* (Allāh); he is rather His essence. Thus the Exalted Dominion is from that mystery as the kingdom.

In the above lines, Shaykh Ibrāhīm eulogizes the Prophet in a mystical manner that could not be comprehended by the audience with no esoteric mind. He refers to Prophet as the Essence of God, which other creatures emanated from. This means that Prophet is the one who makes every creature to know the supremacy of the Almighty Allāh and he refers to him as Diamond and other creature as stones.

His Influence on Nigerian Muslims

The veracity and well groundedness of Shaykh Ibrahim Inyas influenced the first set of Nigerian Students and Muslims who studied *Tasawwuf* under his tutelage in Senegal and this was proved and confirmed through the erudition and scholarship of these Muslims in the area of *Shari'ah*, *Haqīqah* and propagation of Islam. Many of these Muslims became reputable scholars and Imam in Nigerian society. For example Shaykh Abubakar Atiku of Kano, Shaykh Yusuf Lokoja, Niger states, Shaykh Muhammad Awwal Omupo and a host of others.

The Shaykh also facilitated the understanding of the Muslims and non-Muslims on the message of Islām. He converted a large number of Christians and people of other faith across the nation to Islām and *Tarīqah* (*Ṣūfī* order). He also enlightened the Muslims to comprehend *Tarīqah* (*Ṣūfī* order) in order to have the realities (*Haqīqah*) of religious duties (*Sharī'ah*). This makes a sizeable number of Muslim to embrace *Faydah* (Shaykh Ibrāhīm's branch of *Tijāniyyah*) so that they would be more inclined to religious practices.⁶² These set of Muslims distinguish themselves with nomenclature of *Ahlul-Tariqah or Ahlul-faydah*. They joined hands with their mentor – Ibrahim Inyas in the task of vehicle of propagation to promote the spirit of Islām and *Tarīqatut- Tijāniyyah* They built mosques and *Zawīyyah* (*Ṣūfī* convents) at different areas of the country and educated Muslims on physical and spiritual aspects of religion of Islām.⁶³

⁶¹ Inyās. *Firiyad t Tafsi'r l Quranil-Karīm*.

⁶² Ismail, *Nazhatul Ashiqīn fi Tārīkh Sayyidna Wamawlana Ibrāhīm Inyās*.

⁶³ A.D Khatīr, *Al-Faydah al-Mudafaq*, (Egypt: Darul-Hisam, 2013).

Many of these *Shuyukh* (disciples of Shaykh Ibrahim) wrote varieties of books on different areas in *Sharḥah*, *Ḥaqīqah*, and other Islamic realms which are being read by the generality of Muslims and currently studied by undergraduate and postgraduate students of Islāmic and Arabic Studies in Nigerian Universities. The works of Shaykh Abu-Bakr ‘Atīq on Ṣūfism, a doctoral thesis written by Abdur-Rasaq Solagberu, is a typical example of this.

Conclusion

Efforts have been made in this study to discuss the biography of a mystic and erudite scholar of Islām, Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās of Khaw lakh in the Republic of Senegal. Ibrāhīm Inyās emerged as a celebrated leader of Tijāniyyah fraternity in West Africa and other part of the world. His leadership was internationally accepted due to the erudition of his scholarship and his involvement in Islāmic matters both local and international. Shaykh Ibrāhīm contributed enormously to the propagation of Islām and Ṣūfism in Africa and particularly, in Nigeria. He reached the milestone, meridian and remarkable success of his spiritual sojourn as a result of the training he received from his father, rigorous spiritual exercises and divine grace of God. The position of *Sāhibu’l Faydah* (possessor of spiritual flood) and *Gawth Zamāni* (succor of ages) claimed and proved by Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās made a large number of Muslims drew to his side and they accepted him as the Muslim leader whose spiritual power was sought by both Muslims and non-Muslims alike in Nigeria. The emergence of Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās to be in the position of *Sāhibul-faydah* in his early age injected dosages of courage to the young men not only to aspire to be closer to God, be in the confine of *Faydah*, but become Ṣūfis. This is in contrast to the belief that only old people could practise *Taṣawwuf* or become *Waliyullāh*. This has also corrected the impression that young people who join *Tarīqah* could attain or reach a high level of spiritual position if he works for it.

Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās, as a *Khalīfah* of Shaykh Ahmad Tijāni, the founder of *Tarīqatu’l -Tijāniyyah*, engaged in reforming activities of the *Tarīqah* by re-introducing *Tarbiyah*, a lost legacy and spiritual training of Ṣūfism. He emphasised that before a *Sālik* could obtain the knowledge of reality (*Ḥaqīqah*) that would make him to have a close relationship with Allāh, he must experience *Tarbiyah*. This makes the uniqueness of the Shaykh and distinguishes him from other *Shuyukh* that came before him as well as those of his time. This legacy left by him made his picture to remain in the memory of his followers in Nigeria and beyond, as a real spiritual and physical mentor who harmonized Sufism and Islam and establishes that Sufism is inner dimension of Islam. He also had contacts with Christians and non-Muslims in Nigeria and converted a large number of Christians and non- Muslims to Islām as a result of tolerance and appreciation he showed towards them.

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