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## An Examination of Socio-Religious Practices of *Sufi* Adherents in Bida, Niger State

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**Abstract:** Sufis were known to have contributed to spreading Islam across the world. This paper seeks to encapsulate the early religious belief of the Nupe people in Bida, Niger state, until the introduction of Islam by the Sufis. The emergence of Sufism was assessed rightly from the time of *Qadiriyyah Sufi* practice and some scholars that were known with it, like Sheikh Abdulrahman Muhammad bin Sharif and Sheikh Muhammad Wazir (1882-1945), called “Waziri Mamma” before the emergence of *Tijjaniyyah Sufi* order through a scholar *Man-Haruna*, alias “*Man-yisa Naku*” in Banwuya, during the reign of the 2nd Etsu Nupe Muhammadu Saba (1859-1873) known as “*Ma’asaba*”. The paper adopted a qualitative survey where interviews were conducted with seasoned Sufi members. The researchers purposively selected participants for the study because they are Muslims and possess knowledge about the phenomenon investigated. The paper provides an overview of some socio-religious practices of *Sufis* in Bida, Niger State, with the way and manner they are practised in accordance with the teachings of Islam and also reveals the effects of training on adherents by the Sufis in Bida.

**Contribution:** This study contributes to revealing the shift of the Nupe people from polytheism to Monotheism with the role of the Sufis.

**Keywords:** Bida; Nupe Land; Nigeria; Sufi; socio-religious practices

## Introduction

Islam, from its advent, has been playing a significant role in directing the socio-religious practices of Muslims across the world. Several communities worldwide, including Nigeria, are influenced by its sacred nature as practised by the people. Islam, for example, apart from being a complete way of life, has its etiquettes on how its practice naturally conforms with the teachings of the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, which are embedded in the idea of socio-religious activities, for Muslims, regardless of someone's status in the community must adhere to it strictly.<sup>1</sup> Thus, people of Nupe communities in Nigeria could not be left out, including inhabitants of Bida town in Niger State. Therefore, it is believed that humankind originated from Allah with specific responsibilities to perform while existing on earth for the benefit of his soul from this life to the next world.<sup>2</sup> These responsibilities are Islam's pillars, including prayer, fasting, alms pilgrimage, etc.<sup>3</sup>

Islam requires absolute conviction and belief in the message of the Qur'an, which teaches the concept of Allah and His attributes as a creator and Cherisher to mankind. Therefore, to be fair to some Sufis, the way and manner in which they practice their socio-religious activities, such as marriage, naming and funeral in Bida, are attested to be conducted in line with the teachings of Islam. Even though aberrant Sufis could not be ruled out in any particular community due to their dubious characters being displayed among people who are totally against the teachings of Islam, these dubious displays sometimes endanger the genuine Sufism practice as well as their socio-religious practice because some could be easily tagged as bad people in the eyes of people.<sup>4</sup> Today's socio-religious practices of Sufis in Bida are fascinating to them because of the firm beliefs they attached to them. In this regard, carefulness has to be maintained for unravelling some of these practices of Sufis in Bida town, Nupe land of Niger State, Nigeria.

Sufism, Islam's theological philosophy, is defined as "the comprehension of divine truths" in the oldest surviving definition, and Mohammedan mystics

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<sup>1</sup> Shehu Abdur-Rahman Aboki, "Sufi Values and Contemporary Pseudo Sufism in Nigeria," *Al-Itqan: Journal Of Islamic Sciences and Comparative Studies* 3, no. 2 (2019): 141–158, <https://journals.iium.edu.my/al-itqan/index.php/al-itqan/article/view/129>.

<sup>2</sup> Alhaji Ibrahim Suleiman (55 years), *Sufi Muqaddam*, interviewed at Bwari, Abuja (FCT) on 26<sup>th</sup> June, (2023)

<sup>3</sup> Aboki, "Sufi Values and Contemporary Pseudo Sufism in Nigeria."

<sup>4</sup> Malam Usman Baba (48 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed at Bida on 17<sup>th</sup> May (2023)

refer to themselves as Ahl al- Haqq, or "followers of the Real." Modern Western and Eastern scholars have embraced the Gnostic interpretation of Sufism. Sufism is translated as Islamic or Muslim Mysticism, and it refers to the endeavour of Muslims to comprehend the secrets of life and the universe. The most distinguished of all Western scholars of Sufism, Reynold Nicholson, opens his examination of Sufism by referencing *Ma'ruf's* remarks, which he translates as: "Sufism is the apprehension of Divine Realities."<sup>5</sup> Another famous scholar, Titus Burckhardt, takes it further by declaring theory, not just apprehension, as the criterion of true Sufism and the base and the objective of the Sufi *Tariqah*. Sufi scholars have provided a wide range of definitions of Sufism and the Sufi.<sup>6</sup>

## Literature Review

Stoddart said that Sufis are mystical personalities of Allah. They believe that Muhammad (PBUH) has said every verse of the Quranic has an inner side and an outsider. Sufis are believed in the quest of *haqīqa*. *Haqīqa* is known as inner reality and inner truth. Sufis described that *haqīqa* is the heart of Islamic revelation. They followed the approach of love, brotherhood and harmony in the preaching of Islam.<sup>7</sup> According to Witteveen, Sufis are not a cultural group; they are a Spiritual group in the Islamic world.<sup>8</sup> According to the spiritual school of thinking, knowledge and awareness can bring about the soul through spiritual practices. Orthodox Islam holds that one can attain proper knowledge and understanding through the acts of worship in the Quran and Sunnah. Sufis believe that their teachers are also a foundation for legislation in worship because they would order them to carry out acts of worship that have no origin in either the Quran or the Sunnah.<sup>9</sup>

Trimingham, in his research on the Sufi orders in Islam. He states that Sufis are the people who represent Islam with peace and love in every region of the world. Sufi saints played a significant role in the preaching of Islam. Sufis attracted people towards Islam through miracles which God blessed them. Sufi

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<sup>5</sup> Reynold A. Nicholson, *The Idea of Personality in Sufism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 64.

<sup>6</sup> Titus Burckhardt, *Introduction to Sufi Doctrine* (Indiana: World Wisdom, 2008), 43.

<sup>7</sup> William Stoddart, *Sufism: The Mystical Doctrines of Islam* (Michigan: Paragon House, 1986), 67–69.

<sup>8</sup> Hendrikus Johannes Witteveen, *Universal Sufism* (Virginia: Virginia, 1997), 42.

<sup>9</sup> Witteveen, 43.

saints were religious personalities, and the people of Jhang believed in them due to their religious characteristics and miraculous personalities.<sup>10</sup>

Chittick researched the "Sufi way of preaching Islam" and concluded that they preach Islam in the Sufi way. The Sufi way consists of four stages. The first stage involves learning all religions' goodness and moral values, which is accomplished by studying Islam.<sup>11</sup> Non-Islamic Sufis rely on other religions or the writings of Sufi saints to set up the foundations of morals and principles. The second stage is the path of Sufism, which focuses on the inner practices of worship, and in the third and fourth stages, experiencing God within the spiritual position of Sufism. Sufi saints have a profound influence on Religion, culture and social affairs. Most people get religious guidance from their peers.<sup>12</sup>

## Method

A methodological survey was utilised to conduct this research. There are various ways to collect data for survey-based research, the most popular of which are interviews and questionnaires. However, the primary data used for research is obtained through interviews. Finding and gathering reference materials relevant to this research is the first of three processes the researchers adopted when putting this piece together. Secondly, several interviews were conducted, analysed, and elaborated to fully understand this essay's intersections. Thirdly, the researchers conclude the research by highlighting the research outcome for further study.

## Results and Discussion

### Early Religious Beliefs of Nupe People in Bida, Niger State

Different writers and some oral sources described the early religious beliefs of the Nupe people in Bida Nupe land as polytheism. This, in turn, is referred to as *Kuti* in Nupe tradition. It is affirmed that *Kuti* (idol) among Nupe settlements differ from one place to another. According to some Nupe people, there are varied idols which had once existed in Bida that are peculiar to different households at

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<sup>10</sup> J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

<sup>11</sup> William Clark Chittick, *Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul: The Pertinence of Islamic Cosmology in the Modern World* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2007), 137.

<sup>12</sup> Chittick, 138.

early times in history.<sup>13</sup> To this view, one might concede that several of these beliefs existed in several Nupe lands from time immemorial. Therefore, idol worship is called by different names in Nupe land. For example, *Kuti* (idol) singular or *Kutiko* (big idol) plural, *Soko tetengi* (small God), *Sogba* (God that gives child), *Ndaduma* (God of flood), *Ndakogboya* (masquerade) and *Eya* (friend), *Takun-Zhiko* (black stone), *Ndadoro* (priest) to mention but just a few.<sup>14</sup>

Despite this traditional worship, Nupe people believe in making sacrifices to avert calamities, making steady progress in life, remedying misfortunes, and ensuring their general well-being in all ramifications. Therefore, this practice of idol worship had existed for a long time with Nupe people before the coming of Islam around the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>15</sup> Some of the factors that introduced Islam to Nupe people include Wangarawa scholars from Mali, through river Niger routes from the upper to the middle section of the river and settled at Borgu as traders and scholars in the present-day Niger State, conversion of the first indigenous Etsu Nupe who was called Etsu Jibrilu to Islam, he was said to be among of the kings of Tsoede dynasty before the coming of Fulani rulers to the kingdom. Etsu Jibrilu reportedly reigned around (1746-1759) as a Muslim ruler in Nupe land. Some records established that prior to the conversion of Etsu Jibrilu, a number of his predecessor's kings, such as Etsu Ibrahim, Etsu Abdullahi Tsado, and Etsu Abubakar Kolo, bore Muslim names, but what was not sure about them is whether they were Muslims or not like latter.<sup>16</sup>

Another factor was the account of preaching of Islam among people by indigenous Muslim scholars like Sheikh Abdurrahman bn Muhammad Sherif (d.1829) and Sheikh Musa to the towns and villages in Nupe land before the coming of Fulani. Thus, despite the acceptance of Islam by Nupe people in an early period, some of them continued with traditional practices in Bida. In light of these antecedents, one may be convinced that Islam had been introduced into Nupe land before the coming of Malam Muhammadu Bagana (d.1832), known as "Dendo or *Manko*" in Nupe history. One thing about *Manko* in Nupe land was

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<sup>13</sup> Abdulrahman Shaibu, "Islamic Learning in Nupe Land 1750-1982" (University of Ibadan, 1983), 4.

<sup>14</sup> Shaibu, 5.

<sup>15</sup> Mohammed Kuta Yahaya, "The Nupe People of Nigeria," *Studies of Tribes and Tribals* 1, no. 2 (December 3, 2003): 95–110, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0972639X.2003.11886489>.

<sup>16</sup> Sheshi Tiwugi Sidi, "The Beginning of Islam in Nupeland in North Central Area of Nigeria," in *Proceedings of ADVED15 International Conference on Advances in Education and Social Sciences*, ed. Hitit University Turkey (Istanbul: International Organization Center of Academic Research, 2015), 175–87.

his immense contribution to the reformation of Nupe people, who practised Islam side by side with traditional practices around 1830 CE.<sup>17</sup> This development led to the subduing of the Bida Nupe kingdom to the Sokoto Caliphate. Since then, the descendants of the Fulani rulers in the emirate have assimilated into the Nupe culture and continue ruling as "Etsu Nupe" in the emirate. Although it is true that in Bida today, Nupe culture is mainly synonymous with Islamic culture because Islam has assimilated all the essential aspects of the traditional culture, such as naming, marriage, funerals and others among people in the area.<sup>18</sup>

### **Sufi Practice in Bida, Niger State**

The derivational origin of the word "*Sufi*", which seems to have generally been accepted, links it with '*Sūf*' or wool. Wool garments were believed to be commonly worn by men of ascetic life in the early days of Islam. This was, therefore, to distinguish them from men who wore luxurious dresses. However, it is noted that the *Sufi* way of life is simple. Although it is believed that anything that has to do with lavishness does not attract the interest of a *Sufi* in any way, his endeavour is the constant devotion to Allah. In other words, Sufism is defined as a path of spirituality which consists of worship, virtue and ego training described in the numerous portions of the Glorious Quran, such as *Taqwa* (fear) and *Taubah* (repentance).<sup>19</sup>

With the comprehension of Islam, some outstanding scholars were identified as founders of *Taruq* (paths) in the world, like Sheikh Abdul-Qadir Jilani and Sheikh Ahmad al-Tijjani, to link servants to Allah through *Ibadah* (worship). The two dominant *Sufi* orders in Bida Nupe land in Niger State are Qadiriyyah and Tijjaniyyah.<sup>20</sup> The Qadiriyyah Sufi order was founded by Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani in the 12<sup>th</sup> century C.E. and spread to West Africa around the 15<sup>th</sup> century through Timbuktu where its centre was established for the adherent's practice, prominent *Sufi* scholars that were identified with Qadiriyyah Sufi order in West Africa include Sheikh Ahmad Lobbo of Masina, Sheikh Usmanu Danfodiyo the founder of the Sokoto Caliphate in Nigeria and Sheikh Mukhtar

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<sup>17</sup> Mufutau Oloyede Abdul-Rahmon, "The Islamic Influence on the Brass-Smiths of Bida," in *The Proceedings of the Hijra Celebration Symposium on Islamic Art, Calligraphy, Architecture and Archaeology*, ed. Abdur Rahman (Pakistan: Department of Archaeology, University of Peshawar, Pakistan, 1987), 271–78.

<sup>18</sup> Abdul-Rahmon.

<sup>19</sup> Khalid Hussain, "Spirituality in Islam," in *Essentials of Islamic Sciences*, ed. Anjum Awan (New Delhi: Adam Publishers, 2020), 469.

<sup>20</sup> Malam Sallah Mahmud (57 years), an Islamic scholar, was interviewed in Bida on 12<sup>th</sup> June, (2023)

al-Kunti of Timbuktu among others.<sup>21</sup> The Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order was founded by Sheikh Abul Abbas bn Muhammad bn Al-Mukhtar- Al-Tijjani from North Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> century C.E. He was born in 1738 C.E. at Ain Madi, Algeria. Subsequently, Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order activity started spreading from North Africa to West Africa, particularly Mauritania, through his followers and Nigeria as a result of the influence of Alhaji Umaru al-Futi.<sup>22</sup> Eventually, Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* Order emerged in Bida town in Niger State, Nigeria, through numerous *Sufi* scholars, including *Man*-Haruna, known as "*Man*-yisa Naku" Eban Wuya and a visit of Sheikh Ahmadu al-Bamako during the reign of Etsu Nupe Umaru Majigi.<sup>23</sup> Some Nupe people acknowledge that Etsu Nupe Umaru Majigi promoted peaceful coexistence and Islamization in the Nupe kingdom until he died in 1884 in Bida.<sup>24</sup>

There is no doubt that the Qadiriyyah Sufi order was reported to be the first *Sufi* order that some Muslims in Bida were identified with for decades before the emergence of the Tijjaniyyah Sufi order.<sup>25</sup> The evidence of this was an example of some famous Qadiriyyah Sufi scholars who lived in Nupe land, like Sheikh Abdurrahman Tsatsa, who was born in 1756 CE. He was a revered saint according to Nupe history, whose record shows that he wrote many poems on Islamic verses in Nupe *Ajami* for the teachings of Islam to Muslims. Apart from him is Sheikh Muhammadu Wazir (1882-1945), known as Waziri Mamma. He was reported to be a Qadiriyyah Sufi and literary scholar with at least four thousand lines of Arabic poems to his credit.<sup>26</sup> Apparently, Sufism practice has been established in Bida Nupe land over the past century among people. This is to say that the spiritual aspirations of some Muslims that focus on Sufism in Bida are vast, with different experiences of knowledge of Allah. However, the diverse

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<sup>21</sup> Benjamin Kye Ampadu, Hassoum Ceesay, and Toby Green, "Islam in West Africa. Introduction, Spread and Effects," <https://wasscehistorytextbook.com/>, 2018, <https://wasscehistorytextbook.com/3-islam-in-west-africa-introduction-spread-and-effects/>.

<sup>22</sup> Ampadu, Ceesay, and Green.

<sup>23</sup> Sheikh Idris Muhammadu (73 years), *Imam* Banwuya mosque, interviewed at Bida on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, (2023).

<sup>24</sup> Sheikh Idris Muhammadu (73 years), *Imam* Banwuya mosque, interviewed at Bida on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, (2023).

<sup>25</sup> Malam Sallah Mahmud (57 years), the Islamic scholar, was interviewed in Bida on 12<sup>th</sup> June, (2023).

<sup>26</sup> Muhammad Umaru Ndagi, "Islamic Literary Traditions and the State of Manuscripts Collection in Nupe Land," in *International Conference Held at Arewa House, Centre for Historical Documentation and Research* (Nigeria: Ahmadu Bello University, 2008), 5–7.

expression of Islam cannot be measured, as it has undergone tremendous historical variations over time.<sup>27</sup> Islam encompasses the whole range of human activities, which, to some extent, have become manifest in various forms over history. Therefore, in the social sphere, Sufism has been given its most explicit expression in the lives of those called Sufis. Even though some who claim to be Sufis are not living up to its ideal, many who live by it do not want their name to be known.<sup>28</sup> This may be a form of *Ibadah* that is undertaken by them for the sake of the oneness of Allah and not for worldly materials. *Sufi* practices across the world, including Bida, went through condemnations in its development and withstood these condemnations.<sup>29</sup>

Part of the condemnations was directed "at the phenomenon itself," where it has been labelled an innovation by anti-Sufis. Moreover, Sufis of both early periods, like Dhun Nūn al-Miṣrī, Muhasab and Maṣūr al-Hallāj and late periods, like Sheikh Ahmad al-Tijjani, have all been accused of one thing or the other. But because of the vitality of Sufism as a spiritual force and the determination and belief of *Sufi* leaders in the genuine context of their mission, Sufism survived and grew more robust all the time.<sup>30</sup> This is equally true of reformists and Jihadists in Bida Nupe land. As reported by Sufis, Qadiriyyah Sufi practice influence was very active on some Muslims until after the death of Sheikh Muhammad Wazir, known as "Waziri Mamma" in 1945 when some adherents replaced their allegiance with "*Faydah* at-Tijjani" led by Senegalese Sheikh Ibrahim Niass Kaolack (d.1975).<sup>31</sup>

### Foundation of Tijjaniyyah Sufi order in Bida, Niger State

The Tijjaniyyah Sufi order in Bida Niger State was started by *Man*-Haruna, who is also known as "*Man*-yisa Naku", in the Banwuya area during the reign of 2<sup>nd</sup> Etsu Nupe Muhammadu Saba (1859-1873) called "Masaba". *Man*-yisa Naku was said to be an Islamic scholar who came to Bida and was connected to the Etsu Nupe Muhammadu Saba by his friend Sukude, who resides behind his house

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<sup>27</sup> Hamdy A. Hassan, "Sufi Islamic Discourse in Africa: From the Greatest Jihad to the Establishment of the African Caliphate," *Religions* 11, no. 12 (November 29, 2020): 639, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11120639>.

<sup>28</sup> Andrea Brigaglia, "Sufi Revival and Islamic Literacy: Tijjani Writings in Twentieth-Century Nigeria," *The Annual Review of Islam in Africa* 12, no. 1 (2014): 102–11.

<sup>29</sup> Malam Ndaman Abubakar (49 years), an Islamic scholar, was interviewed at Bida on 14<sup>th</sup> June (2023).

<sup>30</sup> Aboki, "Sufi Values and Contemporary Pseudo Sufism in Nigeria."

<sup>31</sup> Malam Ibrahim Saidu (61 years), the Islamic scholar, interviewed at Bida on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, (2023).



for spiritual assistance for victory over non-Muslims.<sup>32</sup> According to the revelation, Etsu Saba sought this assistance, especially during his raids to some settlements around Patigi, Tsaragi, Ilorin, and Offa in Kwara State and Osun State up to some parts of Oyo empire for the introduction of Islam. *Man-yisa Naku* teaches many Islamic fields apart from the Qur'an, including *Hadith, Ilm Lughah, Tauhid, Irab, Mantiq, Madh, and Balaghah* to Muslims in the Nupe language.<sup>33</sup> However, the chain of his initiation into the Tijjaniyyah Sufi order was not known at the time of this research. Still, his notable disciples who were said to have been initiated by him into the Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order in Bida include Alhaji Usman, Alhaji Alfa and Baba Alhaji Usman.

Later on, reports had it that immediately after the initiation of Baba Alhaji Usman to Tijjaniyyah Sufi order embarked on a journey by foot from Bida to *Makkah* for *the Hajj* pilgrimage, which took some years before he returned with the continuation of Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order development among Muslims in the area.<sup>34</sup> Other Sufis that were said to be initiated by *Man-yisa Naku* include Alhaji "Yan-Bazumagi" to as far as *Makanta Wawagi* area in Bida into Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order. After that, after the acceptance of Alhaji Yan-Bazumagi into the Tijjaniyyah Sufi fold, he went and built his house at Bazumagi and became *Muqaddam*, which he was authorised by his *Sufi* Sheikh *Man-yisa Naku* to initiate women into Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order. From this point onward, history indicates that some women were initiated by him and even led to their convergence at his house weekly for Friday *Kubrah Dhikr* (more considerable praise of Allah).<sup>35</sup> Among these women include "Mama Rahmatu", the mother of famous Alhaji Abdulrahman Dokochi (d.19<sup>th</sup> May 2004); he was the *Imam* of Tifin Tswako area mosque Bida for two and half decades before his death.<sup>36</sup> The acceptability of Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order by Muslims in Bida made it possible for *Man-Abdullahi Shinkafa* (d.1894) through Sheikh Ahmadu al-Bamako of Mali when he visited Nigeria and Bida in particular in Nupe land. *Man-Abdullahi*

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<sup>32</sup> Sheikh Idris Muhammadu (73 years), *Imam* Banwuya mosque, interviewed at Bida on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, (2023).

<sup>33</sup> Sheikh Idris Muhammadu (73 years), *Imam* Banwuya mosque, interviewed at Bida on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, (2023).

<sup>34</sup> Hajiya Aishatu Yawa (88 years), a Housewife, interviewed at Sabongida area Bida on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, (2023).

<sup>35</sup> Sheikh Idris Muhammadu (73 years), *Imam* Banwuya mosque, interviewed at Bida on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, (2023).

<sup>36</sup> Hajiya Aishatu Yawa (88 years), a housewife, was interviewed at Sabongida area Bida on 3<sup>rd</sup> July (2023).

Shinkafa was said to be the one who hosted Sheikh Ahmadu al-Bamako at his residence in Tutijinba Bida during his visit around 1873 CE. Eventually, *Man-Abdullahi* Shinkafa started with the initiation of his students into the Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order. Some notable ones among them include *Man-Jibrilu Jiya Gbere*, *Man-Ibrahim* and *Man-Rufai*.<sup>37</sup>

According to the revelation, the spread of the Tijjaniyyah Sufi order among Nupe people in Bida was fastly facilitated by Alhaji Idris Qudus following his return trip from middle-east to places like *Makkah*, *Madinah* and Palestine around 1926-1935. In addition, while returning home, he visited Haina, Mali and Fez. In Fez in present-day Morocco, he met with the then *Khalifah* of Sheikh Ahmad Tijjani.<sup>38</sup> His arrival in Bida was remarkable; several people were said to have trooped out to welcome him, which paved the way for more acceptance of the Tijjaniyyah Sufi order among Nupe people. One of these initiates includes the late Sheikh Adamu Raji, the founder of *Ma'ahad Arabi Wal Islamiy* Banwuya Bida and others.<sup>39</sup> It is further revealed that during the early emergence of the Tijjaniyyah Sufi order in Bida, its *Wazifah* service was conducted on an individual basis until after the followers of Alhaji Idris Qudus started performing *Wazifah* service in the congregation that report got the then Etsu Nupe Malam Saidu Mahmud which he sought for the clarification of this new trend from Alhaji Idris Qudus. For this reason, Alhaji Idris Qudus convinced him that this is how it is conducted even at its origin centre of Sheikh Ahmad Tijjani in Fez. This explanation to Etsu Nupe Malam Saidu Mahmud resulted in his approval for the continuation of this practice by the members of the Tijjaniyyah Sufi order, which has remained up to date in Bida.<sup>40</sup>

The development of the Ibrahimiyah branch of the Tijjaniyyah Sufi order, otherwise known as "*Faydah* Tijjaniyyah" by Sheikh Ibrahim Niass Kaolack, cannot be left out of its significant role among people in Bida Niger State. This is because many *Sufi* scholars from West and North Africa of this branch visited Bida on different occasions to spread the Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order. Prominent among them include Sheikh ibn Umar, Sheikh Muhammad Hadi, a student of Sheikh Ibrahim Niass Kaolack, Sheikh Ahmad Tijjani Niass Kaolack's son and one-time *Khalifah* of Sheikh Ibrahim Niass Kaolack, Sheikh Abubakar

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<sup>37</sup> M.A. Abubakar, *The Doctrines and Practices of Tijjaniyyah Sufi Order in Bida* (Bida: Masaga Press, 2004), 20.

<sup>38</sup> Abubakar, 21.

<sup>39</sup> Abubakar, 20.

<sup>40</sup> Abubakar, 23.

Suranbaya, his younger brother, Sheikh Aliyu Sise, Sheikh Hassan Deem and Sheikh Hassan Sise.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, there are some Nigerian *Sufi* scholars from various parts of the country who also visited Bida for the spread of the Tijjaniyyah Sufi order; among them include Sheikh Abdulkadir Zaria, Sheikh Yusuf Abdullahi Lokoja, Sheikh Abul Fathi Al-Yarwawi of Maiduguri and host of others.<sup>42</sup>

### **Some Socio-Religious Practices of Tijjaniyyah Sufis in Bida, Niger State**

Socio-religious practices of Tijjaniyyah Sufi order adherents in Bida, according to some people, are similar to Islam because religious tenets and principles of Islam are expressed in various forms by the people. Essentially, the religious tenets of Islam are divinely guided, and nobody can modify them except for external rituals such as dress and location, which are often determined by the culture of people in a particular place.<sup>43</sup> The fundamental pillars of Islam, such as *Salat* (prayer), *Sawm* (fasting) and others, envisaged every aspect of human endeavours, as its practices bear out the unification of Muslims worldwide irrespective of background, colour and race under the umbrella of Islam. For instance, obligatory prayers are performed five times daily, and Islam encourages all Muslims to pray along with other fellow Muslims in the congregation at the mosque. From the look of things, the *Eid* celebration after fasting also facilitates the collectivity of Muslims for socio-religious practice.<sup>44</sup> This, in turn, cements people's social relationships by mingling together in a state of happiness for religious celebration. More so, other socio-religious practices that attract people to the town include *Maulid* for the Prophet (SAW), marriage, naming, and *Janazah*. From all these, socio-religious practices can come in different manners but have to be in tandem with the established norms of Islam as follows:

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<sup>41</sup> Mayaki Isah Naibi (52 years), civil servant and Sufi, interviewed at Bida on 31<sup>st</sup> May, (2023).

<sup>42</sup> Mayaki Isah Naibi (52 years), civil servant and Sufi, interviewed at Bida on 31<sup>st</sup> May, (2023).

<sup>43</sup> Malam Hadi Basiru Ismaila (52 years), a civil servant, interviewed at Bida on 12<sup>th</sup> June, (2023).

<sup>44</sup> John N. Paden, *Religion and Political Culture in Kano* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 65–84.

## 1. Prophet's *Maulid* Celebration

Some Nupe people in Bida town passionately showed their unwavering support for the *Maulid* celebration.<sup>45</sup> *Maulid* is derived from the Arabic root word ' *Walada*, ' meaning to give birth or bear a child or descendant. In contemporary usage, *Maulid* refers to the observance of the birthday of the Prophet (SAW) either on the 12<sup>th</sup> night of *Rabi'al Awwal* of the Islamic calendar or throughout the month annually.<sup>46</sup> It is a programme which is characterised primarily by the recitation of panegyric poems such as *Qasidah Al-Burdah*, *Al-Hamziyyah* of Imam Busiri, *Al-Ishiriniyah* of Sheikh Abdulrahman Alfa Zazi and *Diwan* eulogy of Sheikh Ibrahim Niass Kaolack and other things. *Maulid* is believed not to be all countries of the world that observe, but some Muslims across the globe observe. According to Raana *Maulid* of the Prophet (SAW), it was first celebrated in *Makkah* by the mother of famous Abbasid Caliph Harun Ar-Rashid, who turned the house where her son Haruna Ar-Rashid was born into a mosque.<sup>47</sup>

Arguably, some sources alluded that it was around the 11<sup>th</sup> century that *Maulid* was started by the Fatimid dynasty in Egypt. Its practice continued even when the Fatimid dynasty fell by the Sunnite ruler of Syria, Nur al-Din (d.1174).<sup>48</sup> Therefore, some people are of the view that *Maulid* enthusiasm quickly grew among *Sufi* members across various Muslim communities as a way of remaining connected with the Prophet (SAW). This may be one of the reasons that popularise its observance among Muslim *Sufis* in Bida Niger State.<sup>49</sup> *Maulid's* status has rapidly and steadily attained official recognition as a public holiday in countries like Egypt and Turkey under the Ottoman Empire since 1910. This holiday has extended to Nigeria since the early 1960s in the first Republic.

In Bida town, *Maulid* is reported to have started by the late Sheikh Muhammad Wazir Bida, known as "Waziri Mamma" (1882-1945), at his residence in Banwuya during the reign of 9<sup>th</sup> Etsu Nupe Muhammadu Ndayako

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<sup>45</sup> Malam Sulciman Aliyu Shafii (47 years), farmer and Sufi, interviewed at Bida on 1<sup>st</sup> June, (2023).

<sup>46</sup> Mohammad Seddon and Raana Bokhari, *The Complete Illustrated Guide to Islam: A Comprehensive Guide to the History, Philosophy and Practice of Islam Around the World* (Singapore: Annas Publishing, 2016), 168.

<sup>47</sup> Seddon and Bokhari, 172.

<sup>48</sup> I. Shehu Kasim, "Maulid Activity of Some Muslims," n.d.

<sup>49</sup> Malam Tijjani Yakubu (63 years), a Muslim scholar, was interviewed at Bida on 18<sup>th</sup> February, (2023).

(1935-1962).<sup>50</sup> As of then, Etsu Nupe Muhammadu Ndayako was reported to be one of the high-profile dignitaries who attended it at Sheikh Muhammad Wazir's residence up to his death as Etsu Nupe. According to this revelation, this *Maulid* was attested to be the first of its kind that ever took place in Bida Nupe land and the entire Niger State as a whole. In addition, the schedule of its programme at that time was reported to be fixed after *the Isha* prayer of the 12<sup>th</sup> night of *Rabial Awwal* month of the Islamic calendar, annually and lasted till daybreak. Its proceedings were said to be centred on preaching the life history of the Prophet (SAW), general religious matters and eulogy singing of *Burdah* and *Ishiriniyyah* of Sheikh Alfa-Zazi for Muslims. The revelation continued that the occasion attendees were fed different eateries such as meat, food and drinks like *Kudo*, which is called *Kunu* in the Hausa language, among others, to show appreciation to the people.<sup>51</sup>

The sustenance of this practice in Bida by some *Sufi* adherents kept flourishing to the extent of accommodating modern trends in the way and manner of its observance. Some of these new trends *Maulid* in Bida Nupe land include *Maulid* for Sheikh Ahmad al-Tijjani, the founder of *Sufi Tariqah*, Sheikh Ibrahim Niass Kaolack, *Maulid* throughout other months in the year aside *Rabial Awwal*, weekly *Maulid*, daily *Maulid* and staging of procession on the street by the adherents. But each *Maulid* has a peculiar pattern of observance in the monasteries, lobbies of the houses, mosques, and open places.<sup>52</sup> For example, Sheikh Ahmad al-Tijjani *Maulid* used to be observed in the month of *Rajab*. At the same time, Sheikh Ibrahim Niass Kaolack's own takes place in the month of *Safar* at an open place annually for enumerating their contributions to Islam and Tasawwuf.<sup>53</sup> In objection to this practice, some anti-Sufis maintained that all these practices are unnecessary in Islam because there was nothing like this during the lifetime of the Prophet (SAW) and even the lifetime of these two *Sufi* scholars, Sheikh Ahmad Tijjani and Sheikh Ibrahim Niass Kaolack. It is affirmed by some *Sufis* that *Maulid* of these kinds started after the death of these scholars.<sup>54</sup> As a result of this argument, some *Sufi* adherents posited that *Maulid*

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<sup>50</sup> Sheikh Muhammadu Abdullahi (64 years), a Muslim scholar, interviewed at Bida on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, (2023).

<sup>51</sup> Sheikh Muhammadu Abdullahi (64 years), a Muslim scholar, interviewed at Bida on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, (2023).

<sup>52</sup> Malam Lawal Yusuf (57 years), trader and *Sufi Muqaddam* interviewed at Minna on 14<sup>th</sup> June (2023).

<sup>53</sup> Habibu Muhammadu (46 years), a civil servant, interviewed at Minna on 14<sup>th</sup> June, (2023).

<sup>54</sup> Abdul-Aziz Bukhari (50 years), driver, interviewed at Bida on 18<sup>th</sup> June, (2023).

of any form is centred on the passion of the Prophet (SAW) and promotion of Islam, adding that some of its positive impacts largely contribute to the flourishing of trading, medium-scale businesses among participants.<sup>55</sup>

More so, it empowers even the transportation vehicular service movement of motorcycles and Keke-Napep drivers. This happens because of conveying participants to the venue of celebration; therefore, whoever thinks *Maulid* practice is needed for him, such person should do it with the consciousness of Allah that is devoid of immoral practices and shameful acts that are not permitted in Islam.<sup>56</sup>

## **2. Marriage Ceremony of Sufis in Bida Town**

Marriage has been affirmed to be one of the purification ways for the procreation of legitimate human beings right from the beginning of Islam. This is because its sacred social contract nature made man and woman enter into a mutual agreement in which both partners consent.<sup>57</sup> In addition, mutual agreement for marriage is unique to the extent that even widows or divorced women are encouraged to get married, provided that the requirements of Islamic marriage are fulfilled by them. It is essential to mention that there is an emphasis in Islam on the fulfilment of these essentials of marriage, such as *Sadaq* (dowry), *Wali* (guardianship), offer and acceptance, *Al-Wikalah* (representative) and declaration before any valid marriage. Therefore, any Islamic marriage that fails to meet these requirements is considered invalid.<sup>58</sup> As a result, Islam has dramatically benefited the companionship of marriage to the individual and society.

Apart from this, a good marriage relationship also provides a stable environment for raising children as their role models. It is considered the happiest occasion in a man's life, provided it is publicly proclaimed per Islamic norms. Most Sufi weddings in Bida town used to take place in the morning or afternoon of the week, and its method is simple.<sup>59</sup> This is because *the Imam* commences this process by reading varied prayers generally preceded by the wedding

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<sup>55</sup> Habibu Muhammadu (46 years), a civil servant, was interviewed at Minna on 14<sup>th</sup> June, (2023).

<sup>56</sup> Hassan Ibrahim Ndalikali, a civil servant (50 years old), was interviewed at Bida on 28<sup>th</sup> July (2023).

<sup>57</sup> Abdulrahman I. Doi, *Cardinal Principles of Islam* (Zaria: Hudahuda publishing company, 1981), 126.

<sup>58</sup> Doi, 127.

<sup>59</sup> Malam Muhammadu Danladi, (50 years), a Muslim scholar, interviewed at Tadafu Bida on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, (2023).

*Khutbah* (sermon) that make the congregation realise the importance of marriage in Islam.<sup>60</sup>

It is revealed by some Sufis that many scholars, including Sufis, have contributed to the strengthening of Muslim marriages by enjoining people to fear Allah in dealings with their spouses during their preaching to the celebrants on the virtues of Islamic marriage.<sup>61</sup> Of course, many Muslim scholars, including Sufis, educate couples to protect the rights of each other so that they can achieve a peaceful matrimonial home. Examples of these *Sufi* scholars that some people invite for wedding preaching in Bida include Sheikh Suleiman Jekada, Sheikh *Man-Baba* Essa and Alhaji Labaran Yahaya Dokodza, among others, are adjudged to be experts in the aspect of wedding preaching like *Walimah* gathering.<sup>62</sup> Therefore, these *Sufi* scholars are attested by some adherents for their roles in settling marriage disputes among couples in the community in exceptional cases. This settlement intervention is based on devotees' and non-Sufis' confidence in them because of their Islamic knowledge.<sup>63</sup>

### 3. Naming Ceremony of Sufis in Bida Town

Giving the plurality of human creation on earth, which Allah has endowed nations with, including Bida town in Niger State, motivated some Sufis to give their utmost gratitude to Allah through different forms of naming ceremony prayer.<sup>64</sup> Some revelations indicate that the Sufi naming ceremony tradition is essential to them and their newborn baby because of its avenue, allowing them to seek the blessing and virtue of Muslims for the child. The common names that Muslims name their child in Bida include Abdullahi, Abdulrahman, Abdul Rahim, Muhammad, Amina and Fatima. Still, a few add that the tradition of naming the prayer of Sufis in Bida used to attract a large turnout of people because of the wide coverage invitation mainly from organisers.<sup>65</sup> This goes

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<sup>60</sup> Sulciman Babadoko (48 years), a civil servant, was interviewed at Bida on 27<sup>th</sup> December, (2022).

<sup>61</sup> Malam Muhammadu Danladi (50 years), a Muslim scholar, interviewed at Tadafu Bida on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, (2023).

<sup>62</sup> Baba Nasiru Abdulrahman (66 years), a retired public servant, was interviewed at Bida on 17<sup>th</sup> February, (2023).

<sup>63</sup> Sheikh Muhammadu Gimba (53 years), a Muslim scholar, interviewed at Darachita Bida on 17<sup>th</sup> February, (2023).

<sup>64</sup> Malam Yabagi Abdulkadir (51 years), contractor, interviewed at Bida on 24<sup>TH</sup> May, (2023).

<sup>65</sup> Malama Habiba Abdullahi (58 years), a Muslim woman preacher, interviewed Bangbara Bida on 2 January (2023).

along with the sharing of Kolanut and sweets for invitees. The typical venues for holding this naming prayer in Bida include *Katamba* (lobby), mosques and open places in the morning or afternoon, which is the prayer time method used to take place between 7:00 am to 8:30 am and 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm sometimes. Indeed, the turnout of people used to vary and also depends on the popularity and relationship of the organiser with people in the community. However, this practice of naming it is still maintained by Sufis and some non-Sufis in the town.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, in the process of this prayer, many *Sufi* scholars enjoin Muslims to thank Allah for all His gifts to them and also ask people to desist from sticking to a particular sex of a child. This is because some parents prefer to give birth to a male child than a female; however, whatever the case may be, all human beings are equal irrespective of gender, except through righteous strive and obedience that someone attains the highest rank of Allah.<sup>67</sup>

Muslim scholars, including Sufis, educate people on some recommended *Sunnah* of the Prophet (SAW) regarding a child's birth, including whispering *Adzan* calling into the newborn baby's right ear and *Iqamat* in his left ear immediately after birth. This *Salat* calling starts with *Allahu Akbar* (Allah is great) and ends up with (there is no god except Allah).<sup>68</sup> Indeed, fundamental pronouncements of faith serve as pivotal around which the lives of Muslims rotate. Hence, their symbolic significance at birth. In furtherance to this, some scholars call on Muslims to maintain the practice of *Tahnik* on their newborn babies in accordance with the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (SAW). *Tahnik* means chewing a date, then rubbing the baby's mouth with it by putting a little of the chewed date on a fingertip and inserting it into the baby's mouth. Then, move it gently right and left until the whole mouth is rubbed with the chewed date.<sup>69</sup>

However, if dates are unavailable, substitute with any sweet, such as honey. Some scholars opine that *Tahnik* is a process for strengthening the muscles of the mouth of a newborn baby by moving his tongue and mouth to get the baby ready to suck milk from the mother's breast.<sup>70</sup> In addition, the *Aqiqah* (slaughter) of animals such as goats or sheep is attested by many people as recommended for a newborn baby on the seventh day after birth. Still, scholars differ on slaughtering animals for a newborn baby as some consider *Sunnah* and

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<sup>66</sup> Ndagiman Takowasa (42 years), electrician, interviewed at Bida on 4<sup>th</sup> January, (2023).

<sup>67</sup> Sani Muhammadu (39 years), student, interviewed at Bida on 4<sup>th</sup> January, (2023).

<sup>68</sup> Abdulah Nasih Ulwan, *Child Education in Islam* (Cairo: Darel Salam, 2001), 26.

<sup>69</sup> Ulwan, 27.

<sup>70</sup> M. Sherif, "Upbringing of Muslim Children," 2003, 32.



recommended, while others see it as obligatory.<sup>71</sup> The impact of the naming ceremony prayer on Nupe people in Bida town is that its forum brought about Muslims from different areas in the town on prayers, where scholars enlighten the crowd on the importance of the gift of a child from Allah, instilling a love of Allah and Prophet (SAW) in the mind of children and admonishment of training them properly on Islam so that they can become responsible persons in the society.<sup>72</sup>

#### 4. *Janazah* Prayer

*Janazah* is an Arabic word that means funeral, which is traditionally observed in accordance with the teachings of Islam for the benefit of a dead person. The moment a Muslim dies, his body will be washed and shrouded for funeral prayer. Therefore, anyone participating in this prayer must perform ablution like any other. It is reported that in Islam, *Janazah* prayer service could be performed in a mosque, any open space and other places for seeking forgiveness for the dead before it is buried at a cemetery.<sup>73</sup> The method of *Janazah* prayer involves the placement of the dead body in front of *the Imam* who faces the *Qiblah* standing, and people form rows behind him and say a prayer that has neither *Sujud* (prostration) nor *Ruku* (genuflexion) or sitting but ends with *Taslim* in standing posture. During the performance of this prayer, the *Imam* and followers silently read any prayers they wish. Still, the followers repeat *Takbir Allahu Akbar* (Allah is great) four times openly after the *Imam*, while the fifth time, the *Imam* says the *Taslim*.<sup>74</sup>

Funeral prayer is one of the socio-religious activities that *Sufi* scholars take part in along with other Muslims for the benefit of a deceased person. It is noted that during the funeral or after it, many scholars preach to the suffering people to be patient and mindful of their utterances to Allah over the death of someone among them. They also reiterate to the people that Allah can take or give life to anyone He wishes.<sup>75</sup> This shows that death is inevitable to every soul; it is a reality that every soul must test one day in life. In addition, some deceased

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<sup>71</sup> Zubairu Iliyasu Tela (54 years), the Qur'anic teacher, was interviewed at Bida on 4<sup>th</sup> January, (2023).

<sup>72</sup> Suleimanu Ndabagi Tetengi (46 years), a civil servant and Sufi, was interviewed at Bida on 26<sup>th</sup> December, (2022).

<sup>73</sup> Abdul-Wahid Alam, *A Simple Guide to Funeral Rites in Islam from the Point of Death to the Burial* (Birmingham: Salafi publication, 2019), 6–7.

<sup>74</sup> Shaibu, "Islamic Learning in Nupe Land 1750-1982," 198.

<sup>75</sup> Shaibu, 199.

families are known by a tradition called *Fidau*. This *Fidau* prayer has different types that range from three, seven, and forty days in some Muslim communities.<sup>76</sup>

But one of the popular ones that Sufis and some non-Sufis prefer to attend in Bida town is the three-day *Fidau* prayers, where people gather at the deceased's residence to pray for him as an act of redeeming all his shortcomings.<sup>77</sup> More so, seven and forty days of *Fidau* prayer do not witness many people like that of three days in the town. However, this practice of *Fidau* in some places in Bida used to be a low-key remembrance that some bereaved family members converge for the last collective prayers for the dead person. However, in most *Fidau* convergence of this nature, some family members of the deceased do offer some *Sadaqah* (charity) of a variety of things ranging from raw foodstuffs, money and others to those that attend prayer sessions with them for the benefit of the dead person.<sup>78</sup>

### Effects of Sufis Training on Adherents in Bida Town of Niger State

The influence of Sufis training on people in Bida town has been reflected in so many things they conduct in the community, ranging from acquiring Islamic knowledge to spiritual enhancement.<sup>79</sup> It is, therefore, understood that the most typical way for all Sufis to conceptualise training is to point to the purification of someone's soul, which, according to some revelations, does happen through the connection of the novice to his Sheikh or *Muqaddam*. This is where the Sheikh will set a disciple on guidance rules for true mystical experience and knowledge of Allah.<sup>80</sup> Similarly, Seeseman posits that "training of soul" is aimed at cleansing the evil-commanding of negative influences until one becomes perfect in spiritual connection with Allah.<sup>81</sup> Therefore, acquiring Islamic knowledge is one of the essential prerequisites for all servants before knowing

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<sup>76</sup> Malam Alfa Bamisun (52 years), a Muslim scholar, interviewed at 4<sup>th</sup> January, (2023).

<sup>77</sup> Malam Kudu Tsonfada (67 years), a Muslim scholar, was interviewed at Edogifu, Bida, on 27<sup>th</sup> December, (2022).

<sup>78</sup> Malam Kudu Tsonfada (67 years), a Muslim scholar, was interviewed at Edogifu, Bida, on 27<sup>th</sup> December, (2022).

<sup>79</sup> Alhaji Usman Alhassan (54 years) and *Sufi Muqaddam* were interviewed at Minna on 30<sup>th</sup> December (2022).

<sup>80</sup> Shehu Abdur-Rahman Aboki and Ja'far Makau Kaura, "Reflections on Taşawwuf in the Sokoto Caliphate," *Al-Itqan: Journal Of Islamic Sciences and Comparative Studies Journal of Islamic Sciences and Comparative Studies* 2, no. 2 (2018): 21–42, <https://journals.iium.edu.my/al-itqan/index.php/al-itqan/article/view/92>.

<sup>81</sup> Rüdiger Seesemann, "Spiritual Training: The Way to Mystical Knowledge," in *The Divine Flood* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 67–109, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195384321.003.0004>.

Allah. In essence, whoever lacks knowledge of Islam would be slowly thriving towards Allah. For example, in Bida Sufis, influence shows adherents learning Islamic knowledge books authored by Islamic scholars. This influence manifested through their zeal for going to scholars for learning on a day-to-day basis; this used to be in the morning, afternoon and evening of the week except on Thursdays and Fridays when they rested.<sup>82</sup> Although the mode of Sufis training on knowledge acquisition is traditional from the onset, which used to take place at the monasteries, mosques, the lobby of the house and under the trees where students are taught different areas of knowledge such as *Tafsir, Hadith, Fiqh* and Arabic grammar and others, the standard teaching methods noted by some Sufis as at the time of this research was rote, explanatory and oral methods in Bida town.<sup>83</sup>

It is common knowledge that where there is positive knowledge acquisition training, there must be negative. Therefore, positive knowledge promotes students' character for worthy living. Meanwhile, training could be regarded as a way of deepening morality standards in human behaviours for a better life.<sup>84</sup> Some Sufis assert that training of adherents entails many things ranging from enlightening followers to the best worship of Allah. According to some Sufis in Bida, some of them entrusted their children in the custody of scholars for proper training on character and education. Even though in realising this development, some collate token fees for their services and running of the school. An example of this arrangement was sighted at *Islamiyyah* School established by *Malam* Suleimanu Jekada, Ekpan Etsu Umaru Bida, *Ilmi* School of Emitsu Zango Bida and *Makaranta* Emi-*Malam* Yakubu Muwo Tifin Tswako area, Bida and others.<sup>85</sup>

More so, the influence of Sufis on spiritual enhancement is one of the strides that is seen with most of them in Muslim communities, including Bida town in Niger State. It is affirmed that spiritual connection is the best avenue that propels the elevation of servants to greater heights from this life to the next

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<sup>82</sup> Baba Alhaji Ndaman (47 years), the student, was interviewed at Banyagi Bida on 27<sup>th</sup> December, (2022).

<sup>83</sup> Baba Alhaji Ndaman (47 years), a student, interviewed at Banyagi Bida on 27<sup>th</sup> December, (2022).

<sup>84</sup> Malam Mustapha Sanusi (54 years) and *Sufi Muqaddam* were interviewed on 13<sup>th</sup> January, (2023).

<sup>85</sup> Malam Ismaila Badamasi (49 years), a Muslim scholar, interviewed at Bida on 27<sup>th</sup> December, (2022).

world.<sup>86</sup> These spiritual influence exercises on adherents are sometimes possible through the availability of genres produced by some *Sufi* scholars for the elaboration of the essence of spirituality and training that deals with this aspect, including annotation of verses and chapters of the Glorious Qur'an on the supplication of prayers. Moreover, this kind of genre of *Sufi* scholar's annotation usually begins by showing some names of Allah that the Qur'an contains.<sup>87</sup> This, to some extent, indicates that man has the potential to know Allah through the deep knowledge of Islam. Obviously, the task of interpreting the Glorious Qur'an is endless by all means.

However, *Sufi* scholars, as well as some Muslim scholars, use this method of annotation to explain some chapters and verses of the Glorious Qur'an based on their understanding for the benefit of Muslims in various communities. *Sufi* scholars who produce this kind of genre feel that details of particular historical circumstances surrounding the revelation of chapters or verses need to be known by Muslims to fully understand the primary intent and purpose of the revelation of the Qur'an.<sup>88</sup> Therefore, it is believed that the Qur'an's interpretations are varied. They are varied according to the taste and understanding aim of the interpreter. Examples of annotation genres include *Laṭā'if al-Fā'idah al-Qur'āniyyah* (subtle virtue of Al-Qur'an), which focuses on the signs and oneness of Allah with many verses of the Glorious Qur'an with their purposes and places of revelation. It is composed to teach Muslims the importance of the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW). This work was produced by Sheikh Yusuf Abdullahi Lokoja (d.2016). His sources of reference are *Tafsīr Jalālayn Sawi*, *Hadith* and other Islamic books. Notably, many of his followers have adopted the usage of this work for supplication recounting and teaching at his monastery in Lokoja and Bida town in Niger State.<sup>89</sup>

## Conclusion

The paper reflected the examination of the socio-religious practices of Sufis in Bida, Nupe land in Niger State. Therein, the historical foundation of the

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<sup>86</sup> Malam Sani Yusuf (62 years), a Muslim scholar, interviewed at Gwagwa Abuja on 15<sup>th</sup> July, (2023).

<sup>87</sup> Mufutau Oloyede Abdul-Rahmon, *Introduction of Glorious Qur'an* (Lagos: Islamic Publication Bureau, 1986), 84.

<sup>88</sup> Malam Nasir Yusuf (60 years), a Muslim scholar, was interviewed at Abuja on 12<sup>th</sup> December, (2022).

<sup>89</sup> Malam Bukhari Aminu Yusuf (54 years), a Muslim scholar, interviewed at Bida on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, (2023).

Bida town was provided with the kind of Fulani descendants that have been ruled as Etsu Nupe since after the 1804 *Jihad* in the area. The people have assimilated into the culture of the indigenous Nupe people, which portrays them as Nupe. The paper unveils where Nupe people are located in North Central Nigeria at the places like Niger State, Kwara, Kogi Nasarawa and Abuja, Federal Capital Territory (FCT). It shows the religious beliefs practised by the Nupe people in Bida from early history. After a while, the introduction of Islam set in through some agents of Islamization such as Wangarawa Muslim scholars, some indigenous Muslim scholars like Sheikh Abdulrahman bn Muhammad Sherif, the first indigenous Nupe Muslim ruler in Nupe land known as Etsu Nupe Jibrilu and the reform of Muhammadu Bagana popularly known as *Manko* in Nupe history. The kind of *Sufi* practice that was prevalent among people in Bida, such as *Qadiriyyah* and *Tijjaniyyah* orders with clear scholars that were identified with each since their emergence in the area, including some socio-religious practices like *Maulid*, its types, marriage, naming and funeral ceremonies to the congruent of their Islamic tenets and effects of *Sufi* training on adherents all featured respectively.

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