

Sufi Islam in Senegal

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Islam

- ▶ One of the three Abrahamic traditions of faith.
- ▶ Transmitted by the Prophet Mohamed in the 7th Century
- ▶ The word *Islam* means "submission", or the total surrender of oneself to God (Allah)
- ▶ Islam includes many religious practices. Adherents are generally required to observe the five pillars (1- Testimony of Faith, 2- Five daily prayers, 3- Fasting during the month of Ramadan, 4- Giving alms, 5- Making the pilgrimage to Mecca for those who have the means)

Significance of Islam in the world

- ▶ Fastest-growing religion (2.9% per year)
- ▶ Muslims represent 19.2% of World population
- ▶ Nearly one in five people in the world today claims the faith of Islam.
- ▶ Over fifty countries have Muslim-majority populations, while other groups of believers are clustered in minority communities on nearly every continent
- ▶ Although Islam is often associated with the Arab world and the Middle East, fewer than 15% of Muslims are Arab.

Distribution of Muslims in the world

Africa	308,660,000	27.4%
Asia	778,362,000	69.1%
Europe	32,032,000	2.8%
Latin America	1,356,000	0.1%
North America	5,530,000	0.5%
Oceania	385,000	0.0%
World	1,126,325,000	100%

Majors Muslim Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa

Nigeria	40.2 Million
Sudan	20.4
Ethiopia	18.3
Mali	9.4
Somalia	8.5
Senegal	7.7
Niger	7.5
Guinea	6.5
Cote d'Ivoire	5.9
Burkina Faso	5

Trade and Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa

- ▶ The commercial activities of Muslim merchants, not Arab military conquests, introduced the faith south of the Sahara Desert, beginning around the year 1000.
- ▶ The initial converts were local merchants who shared a commercial ethos with foreign Muslims, and political elites who adopted the religion of their trading partners to solidify ties with them.
- ▶ Most residents of these states, however, remained faithful to the polytheistic beliefs of their ancestors.
- ▶ Tolerance of local customs became a hallmark of most African states.

Sufism and African Societies

- ▶ Sufism is an orientation within Islam which emphasizes the personal search for mystical meaning.
- ▶ Rhythmic and continuous repetition of special prayers.
- ▶ Historians of religion suggest that pre-Islamic Persian practices may have mixed with Arabian traditions to produce Sufism as it emerged in the 9th century.

Shaykh and disciple relation

- ▶ The core Sufi relationship is the individual bond between a student and shaykh ("master") who expects complete submission to his or her guidance.
- ▶ In the process of study, the shaykh reveals efficacious litanies to students, and eager disciples seek to acquire all such religious secrets as well as the shaykh's permission to transmit them to others.
- ▶ Widespread belief in the power of particular shaykhs led to the practice of making pilgrimages to the tombs of shaykhs, where pilgrims asked the dead to intercede for them before God.
- ▶ Disciples often work for the shaykh expecting *Baraka*, or blessing, in return.

Sufism in Sub-Saharan Africa

- ▶ Sufism became a dynamic force in sub-Saharan Africa at the beginning of the 18th century.
- ▶ The Sufi movements which gained followers in much of Sub-Saharan Africa were led by shaykhs who linked the organization to social as well as spiritual concerns.
- ▶ The practice of students giving gifts to their shaykhs, often was transformed into a system for the accumulation and redistribution of wealth by the leader of the movement.
- ▶ Major Sufi orders in Senegal: Qadiriyya, Tijaniyya, Muridiyya, and Layene

Cheikh Ahmadu Bamba: The founder of the Muridiyya (1853-1927)



The Miracle of Ahmadu Bamba

- ▶ The most important event, which is collectively remembered and recounted by contemporary Murids, is the miracle of Shaykh Ahmadu Bamba praying on the waters. Different glass painters have rendered the scene in their own way, but always emphasizing the colonials watching from the ship as the Saint rises from his prayer rug, surrounded by fish who have come to receive benediction.

Ahmadu Bamba praying on the waters



Ahmadu Bamba visited by Archangel Gabriel (Jibril in Wolof)



Reconstructing the Ahmadu Bamba Story Through Art



Transparent Image of Saint on City Wall



The Great Mosque of Touba



Magal of Touba

- ▶ Every year more than 2 million Murid followers converge on the holy city of Touba to celebrate the annual pilgrimage at the great Mosque where Ahmadu Bamba was buried. This celebration commemorates the day Ahmadu Bamba left for exile in Gabon.

Train transporting Murid followers from Dakar to Touba



Reporting the Magal live around the world

▶ “As an effort to bring Murids closer to one another and celebrate the Grand Magal in the spirit of togetherness, the AL-Radio team in collaboration with our correspondents throughout the Murid Diaspora World will be covering the Magal live on AL-Radio all day Tuesday February 26, 2008. There will be live reports (by phone) from Touba (Senegal), Paris, London, Spain, Italy, Germany, South Africa, Morocco, New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Memphis, Atlanta, Cincinnati, Washington, DC, Houston, North Carolina, Canada and many other cities around the world. If your city does not have a correspondent yet (to report how the Magal is being celebrated there and etc) and you want to be part of the Diaspora Magal 2008, you may contact the AL-Radio crew at 310-928-6646 or email us radio@alazhartouba.org”

Magal in Los Angeles

▶ “The Murid community of Los Angeles, CA is cordially inviting you to its annual celebration of the Grand Magal of Touba taking place this Tuesday February 26, 2008 from 7 a.m. to midnight. All the Murids from the Los Angeles, Hollywood, Long Beach, Beverly Hills, San Diego, Sacramento, San Francisco, Oakland, Las Vegas, Arizona, Oregon, Seattle, and the whole West Coast area is invited. Please come early and plan to stay for the day. You may bring guests as well. There will be Koran & Qassida recitation, various meals, and refreshments. This event will take place at 1734 South Mansfield Los Angeles, CA 90019 for those who want to mapquest it. For more information, please contact Serigne Assane Dem at 323-864-8157 or Serigne Mamadou Diagne at 310-590-6543 Murid Community of the West Coast”

The Baay Faal (Adepts of Shaykh Ibra Faal)



Magal Preparations in Italy



Sharing food during a Magal in Italy



El Hadj Umar Tall (1797-1864)



Old Mosque In Northern Senegal



El hajj Malick Sy (1855–1922)



The Great Mosque of Tivaouane



A Modern Mosque in Kaolack constructed by migrants



A Tijaniyya Mosque in Memphis



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