

Arguments and Counter-Arguments: A Critical Analysis of the Ahlus-Sunnah and Tijāniyyah Brotherhood Dispute in Ghana.

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ABSTRACT: The paper recalls the different violent clashes between the Ahlus-Sunnah and their Tijāniyyah Brotherhood counterpart in Ghana. It explores the historical origins of Islam before listing the myriad of issues that triggered the violence. The *Sharī'ah* rulings pertaining to the subjects of dispute were then highlighted. The paper concludes with an admonition of the feuding parties to respect Qur'anic injunctions on peaceful co-existence.

KEYWORDS: *Ahlu-sunnah, Tijaniyyah, Brotherhood, Dispute, Ghana.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Little did anyone imagine that what began as mere theological debate over the permissibility of the birthday celebration (*Mawlid an-Nabiyy*) of the Prophet could turn amoeboid and extend to other matters that devolves around the outcomes of the interaction between local Ghanaian cultures and Islam, degenerating into the type of violence that characterized the relationship between the Ahlus-Sunnah and their Tijāniyyah Brotherhood counterpart in Ghana. The disturbances did not only negatively affect the peace of the nation but also raised doubts in non-Muslim minds as to whether the factions involved realized the contradiction between the implication of their conduct and the meaning of the Faith (Islam). The issue at the heart of the problem borders on norms and rituals. The critical pronouncements of the Ahlus-Sunnah returnee graduates on the religious activities of the Tijāniyyah Scholars marked the beginning of competition between the two sides. This later transmuted into conflict. With the passage of time, and when the file and rank of the clerics decided to openly support their leaders, the theological dispute degenerated into violent confrontations due partly to the inability of both sides to tolerate each other's practice of Islam.

Conflict between Šūfi inclined Muslims and orthodox Islām is deep rooted in Islamic history (Lammens, 1968). These conflicts, for example, are reflected in the literature on arguments and counter arguments raised by both parties in respect of their position (Jimoh, 2005). These conflicts, which have had an untold effect on the entire Muslim *Ummah* are neither the first nor the only one in the annals of Islamic history. It began very early in the history of Islām when the issue of succession polarized the *Ummah* between 'the Outsiders' who were represented by Caliph Abū Bakr on one hand and Ali, the scion of the Quraysh on the other. Ali was believed to be the right choice to the caliphate by those who viewed that the post should be reserved for the prophet's family. The *Khawārij*, literally 'Dissenters', were the first to rise up in armed opposition to this prerogative conferred on the Quraysh. In the words of Lammens (1971:75): "The revolts of these democratic Muslims troubled the first three centuries of the *Hijra* and caused the shedding of rivers of blood..." Another sect that also grew out of this imbroglio are the Shi'ites; a group that was sympathetic with Ali on the issue of caliphate. The extent and ramification of this sect, which later professed different doctrines, gave birth to several other sects.

It is usually explained that inadequate knowledge about other people's religion is a major reason for inter-faith conflicts (Kurtz, 2005). But how does one justify the incessant intra-religious conflicts between two Muslim rival groups as is the case with the Ahlus-Sunnah and the Tijāniyyah Brotherhood in Ghana?

II. BEGINNINGS OF MUSLIM CLASHES IN GHANA

Ghana's first experience of intra-faith dispute dates back to the early 1930's when the Ahmadiyyah Mission clashed with other Muslims in the Upper West regional capital of Wa (Fisher, 1963). While it is agreed that the Sunni-Ahmadi conflict is the first in the history of Islām in Ghana, it had not formed any formidable threat either to other Muslim groups or disturbed the peace of the nation as the clashes between the Ahlus-Sunnah and Tijāniyyah Brotherhood has done. The sour relationship between the two groups has at various times disturbed the peace of civil society. The 'Badr I' and 'Badr II' violent clashes between the Tijāniyyah and

Ahlu-Sunnah in Tamale and Prang respectively in the late 1970's over the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet (*Mawlidun-Nabiyy*) for example, showed the level of intolerance of the two groups.

It is interesting to note that the reference to the violent clashes as 'Badr I and II' shows the extent to which the two groups disliked and considered each other as infidels. It is a fact of history that the Battle of Badr was fought between the Muslims and the Quraysh of Makkah. Can it then be concluded that the Ahlu-Sunnah and Tijāniyyah Brotherhood saw each other as fighting disbelievers (*Kuffār*)? The clashes affected the socio-economic life of the two towns. Apart from the disturbances of the 1970's between the two groups, a series of other Ahlu-Sunnah and Tijāniyyah clashes occurred in Tafo, a suburb of Kumasi between 1986 and 1987. In 1995, the two national Ghanaian dailies (*Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times*) carried stories of another confrontation between these two groups during which the Ahlu-Sunnah were reported to have set ablaze two buildings belonging to the Tijānis in Wenchi and a retaliatory attack by the Tijānis resulting in the death of a member of the Ahlu-Sunnah (see *Daily Graphic*, Tuesday 24/11/95 and *Ghanaian Times* 11/12/95). Again in 1997, the Tijāniyyah versus Ahlu-Sunnah violent clash repeated itself at Gumani a suburb of Tamale (*Daily Graphic*, Dec. 11, 1997). Ghanaians however, experienced a more violent conflict of the two Muslim factions the following year, the *Daily Graphic* published the incident on the front page under the title: "Muslim Sects clashed at Wenchi Again, 4 dead, 26 wounded". It later spread to Kumasi, the Ashanti regional capital where a hundred and six Muslims were arrested by the police as a result of the disturbances (*Ghanaian Times*, September. 4, 1998). These unfortunate clashes continued and occasionally disturbed the peace of the nation through the year 2001 to date, though of a less violent dimension.

On Friday, February 18; 2011, the Police were called in to prevent a bloody clash between the Ahlu-Sunnah and the Tijāniyyah Brotherhood at Aboabo, a suburb of Kumasi. This incident was said to have been ignited by a demeaning comment which some members of Ahlu-Sunnah were alleged to have made about the way and manner members of the Tijāniyyah Brotherhood went about the burial of their deceased Imām- Ustāz Kāmil Khalīfah by name (*Daily Graphic*, No: 18463. Saturday, February 19, 2011).

Half-way into the *Ramaḍān* fast of July, 2012, another tension began mounting again between the Ahlu-Sunnah and Tijāniyyah in the northern regional capital of Tamale over an alleged irresponsible and shallow interpretation of *Sūratul Ahzāb* (Q. 33: 64-68) by an Ahlu-Sunnah visiting cleric from Saudi Arabia. The verses in question describe Allāh's curse on the Unbelievers and their torture in hellfire on the Day of Judgement for behaving contrary to the ways of the Prophet. In actual fact, one cannot claim the punishments mentioned in the said verses are meant for the Tijānis since they are not Unbelievers (*Kuffār*). The situation remained tense culminating into a violent conflict between the two groups a day before the 'Īd festival. The conflicts have attracted the attention of some researchers. But almost all who ventured into it failed to highlight the *sharī'ah* rulings on the myriad of issues that underlie the conflict which is a reason for undertaking the present exercise. Such studies include Mbillah (n.d.), Samwini (2003), Hussein (2003), Abdussalam (2009) and Dumbe (2011).

III. ISLAM IN GHANA: HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS

Islām reached present day Ghana in the later stages of the 14th century through the activities of Wangara (Dyula/Yarse) trader-clerics (Clarke, 1982:58). It came with some features of *Taşawwuf* (Sufism). This was accepted and embraced by many people. The royal class particularly did not only recognize the spiritual services of these migrant Muslim clerics and traders but also patronized them. Such spiritual services include amulet-making, writing chapters or verses of the Qur'ān on wooden planks and decocting it for oral administration or rubbing the body, offering prayers as well as predicting events. They also wrote proceedings at the court of kings in Arabic and kept some records on state affairs (Samwini, 2003). Ghana also had a slight experience of the Mahdi Movement from the Sudan shortly after this period. The Qādiriyyah *ṭarīqah* was the next form of Islām introduced into Ghana but was not propagated as did the Tijāniyyah which followed it and became more widespread due to the missionary efforts of its members and involvement in other mystical practices. It then became the turn of the Ahmadiyyah Missionaries to enter the country through Fantiland at Saltpond. The introduction of Wahnābi ideas about Islām in the late 1950's by Ghanaian Muslim graduates from theological institutions in the Arab world Saudi Arabia in particular, set the tone for rivalry with the older 'traditional' Tijāniyyah *Ṣūfi* scholars (Weiss, 2007).

It is important to note that the Ahlu-Sunnah (i.e. Wahnābiyyah) hold the belief that Sūfism is not part of Islām and as such there is the need (a religious duty) to spread the call (*da'wah*) for a restoration of pure monotheistic worship. But in reality, the Ahlu-Sunnah (i.e. Wahnābis) promote their '*Aqīdah* instead of *Da'wah*. They see themselves as, reviving true Islamic belief and practice. Consequently, instead of the Wahnābi label, they prefer to be seen as either *Salāfi*, (one who follows the ways of the first Muslim ancestors {pl. *Salāf*}), or *Muwāhhidūn* (Unitarians). On the other hand, the Tijāniyyah Brotherhood rather sees Wahnābiyyah as a deviant Islamic sect that has spawned heretical movements since early Islām. Both sharply disagree on what constitutes pristine Islām.

What then were the key issues at the centre of the problem? It is to this subject that one ought to turn attention and the *Sharī'ah* verdicts pertaining to each accusation must be highlighted. Essentially, the charges brought against the Tijāniyyah Brotherhood by the Ahlus-Sunnah (Wahhābis) which they consider an affront to the letter and spirit of the *Sharī'ah* include: i-Engaging in acts that fall in the category of forbidding things (*Bid'ah*), ii-Celebration of the birthday of Prophet Muḥammad (S.A.W.), iii- Singing and dancing during the celebration, iv- Mixing of the sexes, v-The loud pronouncement of *Ḥamdan Kathīran Tayyiban Mubārakan fīhi* when the Imām is in *I'tidāl* by the followers of the Jallo Bāba group, vi- Hanging the Shaykh's picture around the neck, on walls and in vehicles, vii-Amulet-making with the employment of Quranic chapter(s) or verse(s) and writing Quranic chapter(s) or verse(s) either alone or intermingled with numbers or names of Angelic beings on wooden planks to be decocted and administered orally or smeared on the body, viii- Practice of divination, ix- Name-calling, x- Veneration of leaders, living or dead, xi- The supplicatory prayer sessions during which the *Ṣalātil Fātiḥ* and *Jawharatul Kamāl* are recited while devotees sit around the white piece of cloth called *Izār*.

It is worth noting that membership of the Tijāniyyah Brotherhood did not sit unconcerned to the accusations. They call the Ahlus-Sunnah (Wahhābis) variously as *Munkiray* (People who detest good things), *Yan Izāla* (The *Izāla* group) and *Wahhābiyāwā* (Followers of the ideology of Muḥammad 'Abdul-Wahhāb). In Nigeria, the group is identified by the name *Jamātu Izālatul-Bid'ah Wa Iqāmatus Sunnah* (A group calling for the eradication of innovation and upholding of the Sunnah i.e. authentic practices of the Prophet and his recommendations) (Bari, 2009). On their part, the Ahlus-Sunnah tagged the Tijāniyyah Brotherhood under different names as *Yan Ṭarīqah* (Followers of the 'path' i.e. *Ṭarīqah* of Shaykh Aḥmad Tijāni), *Akwāshi Rawa* (Dancing group) and *Yan Faylah* (Fayḍah group). By so doing, both have resorted to name-calling. Ḥusein (2011:14) writes on the reaction of the Tijānis:

Members of the Tijāniyyah, on the other hand, describe the Ahlus-Sunnah...as very gullible and yet ignorant; that their ignorance makes them think that the philosophies, litanies and practices of Tijāniyyah cannot be found either in the Qur'an or the Sunnah. It is the same ignorance, according to Tijani sources, that makes the Ahlus-Sunnah think that whatever is not directly traceable to the Qur'an or the Sunnah of the Prophet is forbidden in Islam. They reason further that Allāh gave to humans not only law; He also, in addition, endowed them with reflection, intelligence and discernment to enable them live in the world without handicaps and hardships. After all, the desire of the Creator is that human beings will live in ease. Once, in the use of the reflective capabilities of humankind, Sharia stipulations are not violated, nobody can claim that such acts are forbidden.

Having come this far, the *Sharī'ah* stipulations on the issues isolated above should be our next engagement. Regarding the charge of celebrating the birth anniversary of Prophet Muḥammad (S.A.W.), it is an undeniable fact that the Prophet never celebrated his birth-day nor did he grant permit to the *Sahābah* to do so. Celebrating it should be regarded as an acceptable innovation. It is rather the manner of the celebration that should be a matter of concern if it violates *Shari'ah* guidelines. If the celebrations are accompanied by acts that constitute an affront to the tenets of Islām including his over-glorification, then such celebrations become sinful acts. But if the gathering listens to the word of Allāh and are educated about the faith and current events beneficial to the Muslims, it becomes rewarding and therefore acceptable (Qaradawi, 2001). During such celebrations in Ghana, renown clerics preach and offer guidance on the principles of Islam. Children from Islamic schools partook in the celebrations by enacting the lives of some selected Messengers of Allāh interspersed with Islamic music and dance. They also read aloud memorized aḥādith of the Prophet.

On the accusation by some members of the Ahlus-Sunnah against the Tijāniyyah (Jallo Bāba group) with regards to innovation (*Bid'ah*) in their manner of prayers (*Salāt*). The innovation, they assert, has to do with the loud pronouncement made by Tijāni Jallo Bāba followers of an Imām when rising from the *rukū'* (bowing posture). In this posture (*I'tidāl*) when the Imām has said: "*Sami' Allāhu liman ḥamidah*" meaning: "Allāh listens to him who praises Him", the Tijāni followers will say loudly and in unison: "*Ḥamdan Kathīran Tayyiban Mubārakan Fih*" meaning: "Pure praises and blessings of high magnitude".

In Islām, innovated actions can be put into two categories - *Bid'ah Ḥasanah* (praiseworthy innovation) and *Bid'ah Sayyi'ah* (offensive innovation). *Bid'ah Ḥasanah* (praiseworthy innovation) is that action which does not contradict the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* and was brought into practice after the time of the Prophet (S.A.W.). Examples include printing the Qur'an in the press, to use a machine to pump out water from the *Zam-zam* well through taps within the *Haramayn* for the use of pilgrims as is the case in our time, using the microphone to invite people to *Ṣalāt* or *Da'wah* among others (Keller, 2002). On the other hand, *Bid'ah*

Sayyi'ah (offensive innovation) is that action which contradicts the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* and was not in practice during the time of the Prophet (S.A.W.). An example is the Imām being led to the mosque for Ṣalāt amidst singing and drumming etc. The accusation of *bid'ah* in the matter of utterances in the *I'tidāl* by the Tijānis and their leader cannot therefore be put in the category of harmful innovation on the ground of the fact that it does not render the prayer invalid. Supporting this view, Shaykh 'Abdul 'Azīz b. Bāz (2003:8-9) in his: *The Prophet's manner of performing prayers* states: "...To raise one's head up from bowing, raising one's hands to the level of his shoulders or ears, saying, in case being Imām or praying alone: "*Sami'a Allāhu liman hamidah*" meaning: "Allāh listens to him who praises Him". While resuming the standing position, he should say: "*Rabbanā walakal ḥamd, ḥamdan kathīran tayyiban mubārakan fīh mil'as samāwāti wa mil'al arḍi wa mil'a mā baynahumā wa mil'a mā shi'ta min shay'in ba'd*" meaning: "Our Lord, praise is for Thee Only, Pure praises and blessings of high magnitude as to fill the heavens, the earth and what is in between, and fill that which will please Thee besides them". But if the worshipper is a follower, and was led in his prayers by an Imām, then, he should say when rising up: "*Rabbanā walakal ḥamd....*" (Thus, repeating same as the Imām.). It is advisable for the Imām, the follower, or who prays alone to add also: "*Ahlal thanā' walmajd ahaq mā qālal 'abd wakulnā laka 'abd, Allāhumma lā māni'u limā a'tayta walā mu'tī limā mana'a'ta walā yanfa'u dhal jadd minkal jadd*" Meaning: "You Allāh who deserve all praises and all glory, Your praise is the best and most true of whatever Your servant can say, we all are Your servants. Our Lord, no one can ever deprive aught of what You have bestowed and no one can ever give aught of what You have deprived." The worshipper is advised to put his hands on his chest, as he had done before he bowed. Both Wā'il ibn Ḥajjar and Saḥl ibn Sa'id reported that this was the manner of the Prophet when he used to raise his head up after bowing".

The logical deduction that one can make from the above statement is that the Tijāniyyah members have not introduced a harmful innovation (*bid'ah sayyi'ah*), but rather resorted to a kind of division of task where the followers complete the pronouncement of the Imām. In fact, the utterance is an emphasis on the Imām's saying of: *Rabbanā walakal ḥamd*. So to put this action in the category of unacceptable innovations (*bid'ah sayyi'ah*) is to stretch the meaning of heresy.

In respect of amulet-making and usage by some Tijāni members and the writing of certain Qur'anic verses or entire chapters on wooden planks to be decocted for oral administration or smeared on the body with the hope of getting some spiritual benefits, Al-Qairawāni (n.d.) states:

ولا بأس بالإكتواء والرقى بكتاب الله وبالكلام الطيب، ولا بأس بالمعازة تعلق وفيها القرآن

There is no harm (sin) in the use of cautery and the spell from the Book of Allāh and in the use of good words (supplications). There is also no harm (sin) in the hanging of amulets (talismans) which contain Qur'anic verses (p.131).

Dahlān (1996:71) expresses a similar sentiment when he raises objection to Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abdul-Wahhāb's negative stand on the subject. He cites Muḥammad b. Shaykh Aḥmad b. Abdul-Latīf as quoting from Ibn Ḥajar's *Al-fatawī al-manthūrat* that he (Ibn Ḥajar) was asked concerning the Islamic verdict on the writing and hanging of amulets on children and animals. Ibn Ḥajar was reported to have answered that it is permissible to prepare and use amulets which do not contain names which are hardly comprehensible and that it was permissible to hang them on human beings and animals as well. Ibn Ḥajar was also asked about the writing of ambiguous names and hanging them on human beings as *ruqya*, whether it is reprehensible or a forbidden act. His response like that of Imām Al-Ghazzālī was: "As I have stated in *Sharḥ al-'Abāyā'*", Imām al-'Izzu b. 'Abdus-Salam's verdict is that, it is not permissible to write ambiguous letters as cure for illness and *ruqya*. This is because when the Prophet (S.A.W.) was asked about *ruqya*, he replied: "Let me have a look at your *ruqya*". When it was shown to him (S.A.W.), he said: "There is nothing wrong with that". As a matter of fact, he (S.A.W.) did not oblige them to embark on such acts because some *ruqya* are disbelief and if their writing is forbidden, then their use in invocation is also consequently forbidden.

The above verdict is consistent with Al-Qaradawī's (2001) ruling on the matter. He adds that if what is written is comprehensible and includes the name of Allāh, it becomes commendable because it is a supplication to Him. The writings intermixed with magical formulae; polytheistic phrases are those frowned upon by Islām (Zino, 1996). Again, the content and motive behind amulet usage is important in determining its legality in Islām. The Prophet said that actions are judged according to intention (Hadīth 1 of Nawawī). Only actions carried out in line with the dictates of Islām attract reward. Those that run contrary to the laid down rules of the faith lead to sin and result in punishment in the Hereafter.

On the legality of having pictures of some *shuyūkh* (leaders) and hanging them in houses and sometimes on necks of people or in vehicles, one will again have to resort to the *sharī'ah* and analogical reasoning. Both the Ahlus-Sunnah and Tijānis are trading accusations on this matter. It is true Tijānis cherish having pictures of their *shuyūkh* in their homes, cars at times hanged on their necks. But they return the charge to their counterparts who also keep images of members of the Saud family and other financiers in their homes

and offices. The relevance of the hadith on motive behind actions will have to be considered in this case. Photography is a recent invention which was absent in the days of Prophet Muḥammad (S.A.W.) and the *Sahābah* (early companions of the Prophet). Outright proscription of pictures should sound extreme and absurd today. This is because photos are necessary for illustrative purposes in schools, identity cards, passports, driving licenses, medical or scientific investigations etc. For instance, in today's world, banning the use of pictures will make it difficult for pilgrims to go on Hajj. Wanted criminals, robbers and other criminals cannot be easily tracked down and arrested to go through due process. Therefore, the hadith narrated by Abū Dāwūd and others that stipulates that pictures of human beings should have the head part severed cannot be taken seriously in this case. The most reasonable questions to consider in arriving at a decision on the matter are: What does the picture depict? Where is it placed and for what motive? Answers to these questions will help in rightful decision-making. Al-Qaradawi's (2009:108-17) verdict on these questions is worth citing. He writes:

If the pictures become objects of worship, as for example the cow does for Hindus, whoever makes them with this purpose is in reality nothing but an unbeliever propagating *shirk* and error. Again, the Prophet (peace be on him) threatened such people with dire punishment in the Hereafter.... Similarly, if someone hangs such pictures (*on the neck*) on the wall in order to venerate them his act is not that of a Muslim, for Islām has departed from his heart....

Even those who are very strict in classifying all kinds of figures, including photographs, as detestable, exempt, according to necessity, pictures retained for identity cards, passports, keeping a record of suspects and criminals, pictures for instructional purposes, and so on, with the proviso that there is no intention of respect or sanctification of these pictures which would affect Islamic belief. The need for such pictures is definitely greater than the "prints" on cloth which were exempted by the Prophet (peace be on him).

The late Egyptian Jurist, Muḥammad Bakhit opines that since photographs simply captures the image of an object via a camera, it is *sharī'ah* compliant. He points out that prohibited pictures are those whose object is not present and which is originated by the artist whose motive is to imitate Allāh in creation (Al-Qaradawi, 2009). Consequently, the subject matter of a picture and the motive behind its acquisition is key in establishing its legality in *Sharī'ah* terms. So pictures, drawings and paintings depicting nudity or its forms, and sexy scenes are inconsistent with the *Sharī'ah* because they excite lust and are accordingly proscribed.

Another charge against the Tijānis by the Ahlus-Sunnah is the practice of divination, sooth-saying or fortune-telling all of which have to do with predicting events that are yet to occur. In Sūratul Mā'idah (Q.5:93-4), divination by arrows together with gambling and alcoholism have been described jointly as Satan's handiwork and that believers should distant themselves from them if they are to be successful. Most Tijāni clerics interviewed denied knowledge of the art. The few who engage in it explain that their practice is *Hisāb* (calculations or mathematics) which comes under Astrology rather than divination. They explain that through mathematical permutations facilitated by the knowledge of astrology, it is possible to state with a certain degree of precision, the occurrence of certain events or the period during which a particular activity stands the chance of success or failure. This is what horoscope is about and does not make a person Allāh's competitor. They argue further that, this activity, like all other branches of knowledge which is given by Allāh himself to whosoever seeks it is *Halāl* (permissible). They see nothing wrong with the practice.

However, Karim (2008:95) rules that fortune-telling is unlawful and asserts further that both the soothsayer and the one who solicits his assistance are not only cursed but have also transgressed the limit set by Allāh require repentance. He writes:

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) said that the devils catch words from the discussions of the angels and then inform them to men after mixing thousand lies therewith. In this way, some sayings come out to be true, and in most cases false. Secondly, the soothsayers used to utter such words as conveyed double meanings....He who comes to a fortune-teller and ask any question of the future, his prayers for forty days will not be accepted" (Karim 2008:95).

It has been observed that during peace times, Tijānis often compose songs that constitute praise to Allāh, the Prophets and their leaders. But the songs assume a different style when tension starts mounting between the two groups or when the conflict turns violent. In conflict periods Tijāni songs are composed based on the message and attacks of their practices preached by the Ahlus-Sunnah. For instance, about fifteen songs

were composed in response to the publication of *Risālatud dā'ir ilas Sunnah az-Zājir anil bid'ah* by Shaykh Abdus-Şamad, the then leader of the Ahlus-Sunnah in Ghana. It appears the Tijānis have discovered a powerful tool to combat the preaching methods of the Ahlus-Sunnah. Their preaching sessions are interlaced with songs amidst drumming and dancing to neutralize the effects of boredom which the Ahlus-Sunnah consider as forbidden activity. The Tijānis maintain that their songs are *Sharī'ah* compliant. But what is the place of music, dancing, drumming in Islām? It is important to highlight on this issue also.

It is true that Islām permits singing but this permissibility rests, to a very large extent, on the type of the music which should not violate the moral standards of the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* (Al-Qaradawi, 2001). Muslim opinion on songs are diverse. While some see it as a useless pastime, others see it as a thriller of the soul and a source of joy to the ear. Although, there is no schemed out service of songs in the Mosque, nevertheless, it has performed significant functions of entertainment and communication (Mujahid, 2007). One can sing during celebrations such as out-dooring ceremonies, *'aqiqah* (the celebration of the birth of a baby), the days of *'Id*, wedding feasts, on the return of a traveller and at other Muslim social gatherings whose purpose is to create a state of happiness (Al-Qaradawi, 2001).

It is an undeniable fact that when the Prophet (S.A.W.) arrived at the outskirts of Yathrib (Madīnah) during the Hijrah, he was received by the Ansārs amidst singing whilst beating a drum which is called the *'duff*'. Historians are silent on whether the singing and drumming included dancing. However, the Prophet (S.A.W.) did not permit the companions to enjoy music and be given up to it, neither was that their habit (Mujahid, 2007).

'Ā'ishah reported that once a woman was married to an *Ansāri* man and the Prophet (S.A.W.) remarked: "O 'Ā'ishah, did they have any entertainment? The Ansār are fond of entertainment". (Al-Qaradawi 2001:297).

In another tradition, Ibn Abbās said: "'Ā'ishah gave a girl relative of hers in marriage to a man of the *Ansār*. The Prophet (S.A.W.) came and asked: 'Did you send a singer along with her?' 'No, 'Ā'ishah responded'. The Messenger of Allāh then said: "The Ansār are a people who love poetry. You should have sent along someone who would sing: Here we come, to you we come, greet us as we greet you" (Al-Qaradawi, 2001:297).

'Ā'ishah also reported that whilst at Mina on the day of *'Idul Ad-ha*, two girls were with her, singing and playing on a hand drum in the presence of the Prophet (S.A.W.). Abū Bakr then entered and scolded the girls. The Prophet (S.A.W.), was reported to have shown disapproval of Abū Bakr's conduct by saying to him: "Let them be, Abū Bakr. These are days of *'Id*" (Al-Qaradawi, 2001:297).

In the section dealing with "Habits: Listening to Singing" of the *Ihyā' 'Ulūmud-Dīn*, Imām Al-Ghazālī mentioned the traditions about the singing girls, the Abyssinians playing with spears in the Prophet's mosque, the Prophet's encouraging them by saying, "Carry on, O Banū Arfīdah, "his asking his wife, 'Ā'ishah, "Would you like to watch?" and standing there with her until she became tired and went away, and 'Ā'ishah's playing with dolls with her friends. Imām Al-Ghazālī then points to the fact that all the mentioned traditions were contained in the *Saḥīḥayn* and which is a clear proof of the legality of singing and playing (Karim, 2008).

All the instances cited above point to the permissibility of singing and playing on the drum. It is narrated that many companions of the Prophet as well as the second generation of Muslim scholars had the habit of listening to singing (Al-Qaradawi, 2001). Al-Qaradawi adds that, Abū Bakr al-Arabi the jurist, ruled that no authentic hadith is available on the prohibition of singing, while Ibn Ḥazm is of the view that all that is said against music is fabricated and false. It is only on account of it being linked with drinking parties and nightclubs, that many scholars have declared it to be unacceptable on account of it being judged as the kind of idle talk which is mentioned in Sūratul Luqmān (Q.31:6).

Al-Qaradawi (2001:299) argues further that Ibn Hazm also refuted the argument of those who say that since singing is not of "the truth" it must be of "error," in reference to Sūratul Yūnus (Q.10:32). He cites Ibn Hazm:

The Messenger of Allāh said, 'Deeds will be judged according to intention, and everyone will get what he intended (Narrated by Bukhāri & Muslim). Accordingly, the one who listens to singing with the intention of using it in support of a sin is a sinner, and this holds true of anything other than singing (as well), while one who listens to singing with the intention of refreshing his soul in order to gain strength to do his duty toward Allāh (Glorified be He) and to do good deeds, is a good and obedient servant of Allāh, and his action is of the truth. And he who listens to singing intending neither obedience nor disobedience is doing something natural and harmless, which is similar to going to the park and walking around, standing by a window and looking at the sky, wearing blue or green clothes, and so on.

- Al-Qaradawi however, sets the limitations to be observed with respect to singing: that
- i. the content of songs must be within the boundary set by *Sharī'ah*.
 - ii. the manner of singing may render it a forbidden act if it is done with suggestive sexual movements.
 - iii. moderation in entertainment should remain a watchword since over-indulgence is always accompanied by neglect of duty.
 - iv. songs which arouse a person's passions and excites one's instincts excessively must be avoided since it does not only weakens one's spirituality but opens the door of other prohibited acts.
 - v. if singing is done along with proscribed activities, such as intake of intoxicants, dancing whilst mixing with the opposite sex, in nudity or making gestures and movements that arouses the sexes etc, it becomes a forbidden act.

The statement of the Prophet (S.A.W.) pertaining to singers or those who listen to music is this:

Some people of my *Ummah* will drink intoxicants, calling them by other names, while they listen to singers accompanied by musical instruments. Allāh will cause the earth to swallow them and will turn some of them into monkeys and pigs (Al-Qaradawi, 2001:300).

On the other hand if a song increases one's faith (*Imān*) i.e. singing in praise of Allāh or the Prophet (S.A.W.) then such a song cannot be placed in the category of forbidden acts. In their discourse on music, Al-Faruqi & Al-Faruqi (1986:441) were very careful so as not to undermine its extent as well as not to stretch it beyond its limit. To them, the Arabic term "*musiqah*" applies only to particular genres of sound art and not extended to all types of artistic vocal and instrumental arrangements of pitches and rhythms. They conclude by saying:

Therefore to deal with "music," as it is understood in Islamic culture, would confine the discussion to a limited segment of the sound art genres of the Muslim peoples, and would exclude the more important and accepted types. On the other hand, to use the term as inclusive of Qur'anic chant and other forms of sound are not judged to be music in that culture would result, for the Muslims, not only in inaccuracy but even in blasphemy.

To avoid misrepresentation and distortion, Al-Faruqi & Al-Faruqi thus adopted the term "*Handasah al-sawt*" with a view to containing all artistic combinations of tones and rhythms arising within Islamic culture. With this, the *Adhān* and the recitation of the Qur'ān with melodious voices are regarded as a form of vocal music.

It is nowhere mentioned in the Qur'ān that Muslims should not listen to music nor partake in the profession (Jafari, 2005). However, it should be noted that music and other arts are not in themselves evil, but its usages as well as the utterances of those who practice it make it lawful or unlawful. For instance, Nowsheeravi (1983) mentions that, Ṣūfīs like Rūmī used music for attaining peace for the soul and that soft music was played during the medieval period in Muslim hospitals during the night to lull the sleepless patients. He adds that in *Dar-ash-Shifa*, the hospital of Sultan Bayazid (1481-1512 C.E.) of Ottoman Empire, ten musicians were employed for the mentally sick and they performed three times a week to meliorate and soothe those suffering from pain and mental illness.

In the case of dancing and mixing of the sexes, Al-Qaradawi (2001:130-131) points out that Islām does not permit sexually exciting dances, mixing of the sexes or any other erotic activity, such as provocative drama. In his words:

Islām prohibits every sort of sexual contact and sexual relationship outside marriage. This is the secret behind the significant words of the Qur'ān prohibiting *zina* {fornication and adultery}.

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الزَّانِيَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا

And do not come near *zina*; indeed, it is an abomination and an evil way (Sūratul Isrā' - Q.17:32)

This indicates that not only is *zina* forbidden, but likewise anything which brings one near to it. Everything to which we have referred above as people are well aware, for example, provocative dances and songs, constitutes "coming near *zina*;" these things are certainly intended to tempt, excite, and lead one toward such a sin. And, what havoc they wreak in the lives of people!

Again results of the Focus Group Discussion with the two main factions reveal that within the Ahlus-Sunnah group, the Research Group is more prone to violence than their Majlis counterparts since to them *Bid'ah* is *Bid'ah* and '*Sunnah* is *Sunnah*'. They have no room to accommodate the practices of the Tijāniyyah Brotherhood at all. With the Tijāniyyah Brotherhood, the Jallo Baba group were seen to be the counterpart of the Research group in terms of intolerance. They are unwilling to shift ground and address issues such as drumming and dancing including mixing of the sexes considered *Bid'ah* by the Ahlus-Sunnah. They (Jallo Baba group) assign two reasons for their actions – (i) That when Prophet Muḥammad (S.A.W.) arrived in Yathrib (Madīnah), both men and women went out to receive him amidst singing and fanfare without any separation between the sexes. (ii) That during *Tawāf* (Circumambulation) of the *Ka'bah*, as well as the *Sa'y* (hastening between Mountain Safā and Mount Marwa) both sexes perform the religious acts together and this is permissible. It is important to state that both actions find expression in the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, they contend. Can this be applied to the singing, drumming, dancing and mixing of the sexes as displayed during Tijāni sessions? These issues have received attention in earlier discussions on the issues. It must be pointed out however that, at the time of the Hijra in 622 C.E., Islām was still at its formative stage. Revelations were still descending to the Prophet (S.A.W.) but as the faith developed certain permissible acts became proscribed due to the fact that some later revelations abrogated earlier ones (*Naskh wa mansūkh*). Such acts as dancing together with the opposite sex fall under the division of forbidden things. Interestingly, it is nowhere mentioned in scripture or history that the delegation of men and women who received the Prophet in Yathrib segregated themselves amidst the singing which heralded Prophet Muḥammad's (S.A.W.) entry into their city. What is important with regards to the subject of singing, dancing, drumming and mixing of the sexes as indicated earlier, is the motive and nature of the activity. If the intention is good, the act becomes good. A bad intention courts Allāh's displeasure. The Prophet (S.A.W.) said: "Verily Allāh does not look to your faces and your wealth but He looks to your heart and to your deeds" (Ahmad, 2009:184)".

An examination of the statement: 'He looks to your heart' in the above statement points to looking at intentions, according to Ahmad. It is the intention that urges one to action. This is reflected in another Prophetic tradition which says: "If a person intends a good deed but did not do it, a reward will be recorded for him" (Ahmad, 2009:184).

It can be seen from above that, to possess a good intention is a good deed by itself for which one earns reward. In the *Encyclopedia of Islamic jurisprudence concerning Muslim women*, Ahmad (2009:186) states: "...intention is neither a mere statement uttered with the tongue nor a mere presentiment. It is a heart's preparation to carry out an action that corresponds with a valid purpose such as bringing about a benefit or averting harm- whether it is an immediate or future one. It is a will to carry out an action in search of Allāh's pleasure or in implementation of His commandment".

And An-Nawawī's Hadith collection No.1 declares that actions are judged by intentions, so each person will have but what he or she intended. Commenting on this tradition, Badi (2011:6) citing Ibn al-Qayyim, says that any action of a person is subject to three things:

- i- Being conscious that others are observing our actions
- ii- Seeking a return (benefit/reward) for the action
- iii- Being satisfied with the action.

Badi (2011:7) further poses the question that: "what happens if one were to change one's intention (*niyyah*) in the course of an action?" Using the verdict of Ibn Rajab, he asserts: "the jurists say that if the *niyyah* at the end of the action matches the beginning (i.e. doing the action for the sake of Allāh), then any changes in the middle of the action will be forgiven or does not matter. However if the *niyyah* at the end does not match the beginning, i.e. we do the action for other than the sake of Allāh, then we must repent (*tawbah*)".

It is important to note that a person's actions are undermined by his or her intentions- whether they are good or bad. One should always be conscious of one's intention before carrying out any action. One should ensure that the act being embarked upon is for Allāh's sake and this merits reward.

Some Ahlus-Sunnah members regard the Tijāniyyah group as Unbelievers (*Kāfirūn*), falling outside of the fold of Islām. They were however, rebuked by a section of their colleagues for going to the extreme in their criticism of the Tijāniyyah Brotherhood and their practices. But how right is this group since the issue bothers on doctrinal differences? Honestly speaking, once a person has proclaimed the *Kalimah*, the person falls within the Islamic faith. Such a person according to *Shari'ah* cannot be pilloried a *Kāfir* unless he subjects himself to acts that constitute *Kufr* like associating a partner with Allāh, which is an unpardonable sin. An-Nawawī's *Maqāsid* states that once a person accepts Allāh as Creator, observes *Ṣalāt*, does not associate partner(s) with Allāh nor reject anything considered part of Islam, that person remains a Muslim and cannot be considered an unbeliever (*Kāfir*) on the basis of opinions and imaginations.

Consequently, it is wrong to declare those who hold different opinions from ours as Unbelievers (*Kuffār*) unless the degree of deviance reach the level of negating what is necessarily known as being part of Islam entailing blameworthy innovation (*bid'ah*). In dealing with issues of this nature it is safer and better to follow the way of greater precaution, which in this context, consists of understanding people's states insofar as possible as if they were still within the fold of Islām and under its rubric. For the mistake of giving them the benefit of the doubt does not entail the losses entailed by accusing them of unbelief.

This verdict is also consistent with a ḥadīth in the "Book of manners" of *Sahīh Bukhārī* and narrated by Abū Dhār that he heard the Prophet (S.A.W.) saying: "If somebody accuses another of *Fusūq* (by calling him *Fāsiq* i.e., a wicked person) or accuses him of *Kufr* (disbelief), such an accusation will revert to him (i.e., the accuser) if his companion (the accused) is innocent" (Shafiq, 2003:101). In another tradition Thābit bin Aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk narrated that Allāh's Messenger said: "... and whoever accuses a believer of *Kufr* (disbelief), then it is as if he killed him" (Karim, 2008: 345). Citing the leader of the Sokoto Jihad, Jimoh (2005:46) says that while commenting on *takhlit* (syncretism), Shaykh 'Uthmān b. Fūdi observes that a person: "who performs acts of Islām without showing elements of unbelief and from whom no contradictory speech against Islām is heard, it is not allowed for anyone to say that such a person is a *Kāfir* (unbeliever) either on (the basis of) the claim that he harbours unbelief in his heart since there is no means of verifying such a claim or on the (basis of the) claim that he commits grave sins, for this also is a baseless claim since no one among the peoples of the *qiblah* can be declared an unbeliever on account of a sin" (*Kaff al-ikhwān 'an al-ta'rrud bi 'l-inkār 'alā ahl al-Īmān*).

On the issue of name calling, the Tijānis have shown preference for the title Tijāniyyah Brotherhood and insist that if members of the Ahlus-Sunnah are uncomfortable with the name Tijāniyyah, then their preferred alternative is *Ahlul Ḥaqq* (People of Truth). At worst, according to a section of the Ahlus-Sunnah, the Tijāniyyah could be classified as *Ahlul Bid'ah* (The group who engage in wrong innovations). Members of the Tijāniyyah in reaction to this also called the Ahlus-Sunnah variously as *Munkiray* (People who detest {good} things), *Yan Izāla* (People of the Izala group), *Wahhābiyāwā* (Followers of the ideology Muḥammad b. 'Abdul-Wahhāb). Whilst *Munkiray* is an Hausa word with negative connotation referring to people who dislike good things, *Yan Izāla* is a combination of Hausa and Arabic words. *Yan* meaning Those (People) and *Izāla* meaning Rejecters. *Wahhābiyāwā* is the Hausa form of Wahhabiyya. The late Tijāni leader 'Abdallāh Aḥmad Maikano Jallo Bāba refers to them as *Ahlul fitnah wal ḥamāqah* (Trouble makers and vectors of Stupidity). It is significant to point out here that name-calling weakens or undermines efforts at reconciliation. Besides the practice has no accommodation in Islām. Sūratul Hujurāt (Q.49:11) states:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرُ قَوْمٌ مِّن قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِّن نِّسَاءٍ
عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ بِئْسَ الْإِسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ
الْإِيمَانِ وَمَن لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

O you who believe! Let not a (group of) people laugh another (to scorn) who may be better than they are, nor let (some) women (laugh at other) women who may be better than they are; nor slander one nor give one another (offensive or derogatory) nick-names. After believing, it is bad to give (another) a bad name. And those who do not desist are (indeed) doing wrong.

It is a detestable act and sin to call others by offensive or derogatory nicknames; or nicknames which are derived out of hatred, mockery, sarcasm, envy, jealousy, etc as expressed in the above Qur'ānic injunction. There is however no harm in assigning or calling another by a good nickname, a name which has been derived out of love and compassion, not out of hatred, or sarcasm, or mockery. This is because the name and title of a person are the manifestation of the character of that individual (Yahya, 2004). Consequently, a good name and title are classified as being the value and goodness of a person, whilst a bad name leads to mockery and takes away one's dignity.

According to Subhani (2003), the pre-Islamic Arabs had bad names for many of their towns and tribes. They also gave repulsive names to some of their children. The Prophet immediately banned the practice and directed that all such names be changed. The Prophet (S.A.W.) was said to have instructed his followers that, whenever they want to send a person to him, they should send someone with a good name. There were many instances when the Prophet had to change bad names for good ones. Subhani notes that a man was asked by the Prophet (S.A.W.) about his name and the man replied that he was called Ghāwī ibn Zālim. This translates as: A deluded person son of a Tyrant. The Prophet (S.A.W.) immediately changed his name to Rāshid ibn 'Abdullāh i.e. the guided one son of Allāh's slave. Another person called Baghidh (i.e. the hated or despised one) had his name changed to Ḥabīb (the beloved) which was the exact opposite of Baghidh. 'Abdush-Sharr (the servant of Evil) was renamed 'Abdul Khayr' i.e. the servant of Good. Abdul Jān (Servant of the Jinns) got his name changed to 'Abdullāh (Servant of Allāh). A woman called Aṣiyah" (one who commits sins) had her name

changed to ‘Jamīlah’ i.e. beautiful (Subhani, 2003). Subhani further reports that some people who had names such as Jabbār or Qayyūm which are names reserved for Allāh (Glorified and Exalted is He) were instructed by the Prophet (S.A.W.) to add ‘Abdul (Servant of) to their names. Those people who had names such as ‘Abdul ‘Izzah (Servant of Respect), ‘Abdul Shams (Servant of the Sun), ‘Abdul Lāt (Servant of the Stone Idol named Lāt) or even Shayṭān (Satan) where all told to change their names and the new name of ‘Abdullāh (Servant of Allāh) was given to all of them. Ibn Athīr in his work, *Asadul Ghāh*, which is a biography of the people around the Prophet (S.A.W.), has narrated many more examples of people who had repulsive names and by the directives of the Prophet (S.A.W.), their names were changed (Subhani, 2003). Calling one another by rude or obscene names or titles is a form of violation of the rights of the one so called.

IV. CONCLUSION

Peaceful coexistence and unity generally among people and specifically among Muslims is a central theme in Islām. A number of *Qur’ānic* verses and Prophetic traditions address this. For example, Allāh states in Sūrat Āl ‘Imrān (Q3:103- 105):

- (i) **وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ (103)**
 ولتكن منكم امة يدعون الى الخير ويامرون بالمعروف وينهون عن المنكر واولاءك هم المفلحون (104)
 وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ (105)

And hold fast, all together, by the Rope which Allāh (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves. And remember with gratitude Allāh’s favour on you. For you were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His Grace, you became brethren. And you were on the brink of the pit of Fire and He saved you from it. Thus, Allāh made His Signs clear to you so that you may be guided.

Let there arise out of you a band of people, inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: They are the ones to attain felicity.

Be not like those who are divided amongst themselves and fall into disputations after receiving Clear Signs; for them is a dreadful penalty (Q.3:103-105).

Allāh says again in Sūratul Anbiyā’ (Q21: 92-93).

- (ii) **إِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُون. وَتَقَطَّعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ كُلَّ إِلِيْنَا رَاجِعُونَ. فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَا كُفْرَانَ لِسَعِيهِ وَإِنَّا لَهُ كَاتِبُونَ**
- (iii)

Indeed this community of yours, is one community, and I am your Lord, so worship Me. And (yet) they divided their affair (i.e., that of their community) among themselves, (but) all to Us will return. So whoever does righteous deeds while he is a believer, his efforts will not be rejected. Verily, We record it for him.

A Prophetic tradition lends credence to the foregoing injunctions when Abū Hurairah reports that the Messenger of Allāh (S.A.W.) says:

Do not envy one another; do not deceive one another in bidding; do not hate one another; do not turn your backs on one another; and do not undercut one another, but be, O servants of Allāh, brothers. A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim: he neither oppresses him nor abandons him; he neither lies to him nor looks down on him. Piety is right here- and he pointed to his breast three times. It is evil enough for a person to hold his brother Muslim in contempt. The whole of a Muslim to another Muslim is inviolable: his blood, his property and his honour.

(Karim, 2008:499)

“The Book of Manners” in the *Muwatta’* of Imām Mālik b. Anas also quotes Prophet Muḥammad (S.A.W.) as saying:

A strong man is not the person who throws his adversaries to the ground. A strong person is one who restrains himself when angry (Ḥadīth No: 1681).

It is not lawful for the Muslim to shun his brother more than three nights. Meeting each other and one turning away and the other turning away. The better of the two is the one who salutes the other first (Ḥadīth No1682).

Do not hate each other, nor do envy each other. Do not turn away from each other as well. And be slaves of Allāh in brotherhood. And it is not lawful for the Muslim to shun his brother (Muslim) more than three nights (Ḥadīth No: 1683).

Shake hands and rancour will disappear. Give gifts to each other, and love each other and enmity will disappear (Ḥadīth No: 1685).

The doors of paradise open on Mondays and Thursdays. Any Muslim bondsman, who does not associate any partner with Allāh, will have his sins forgiven except one who has enmity between him and his brother. It will be said: Wait for these two men until they reconcile (Ḥadīth No: 1686) (Anas, n.d: 150-156).

The message derivable from these passages is that humankind is in reality one people and one community, and that there is but one Supreme Being which they must serve together and live as members of one family. Such is the message delivered by all living faiths. The essence of Islām is peaceful submission to Allāh (Sūratul Baqarah-Q2:112). That is why the most preferred form of greeting in Islām is (i.e. *Assalāmu Alaykum wa Raḥmatu Llāh*) meaning: ‘May the peace and blessing of Allāh be upon you’. Also, the Muslim prayer (*Ṣalāt*) does not end without the words “Peace and blessings of Allāh be upon you”. In addition, the revelation of the Qur’ān brought with it the angels of peace and the night of its (Qur’ān) revelation was a peaceful night (Sūratul Qadr – Q97:1-5). It is only logical that its adherents shun disputes and embrace peace.

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