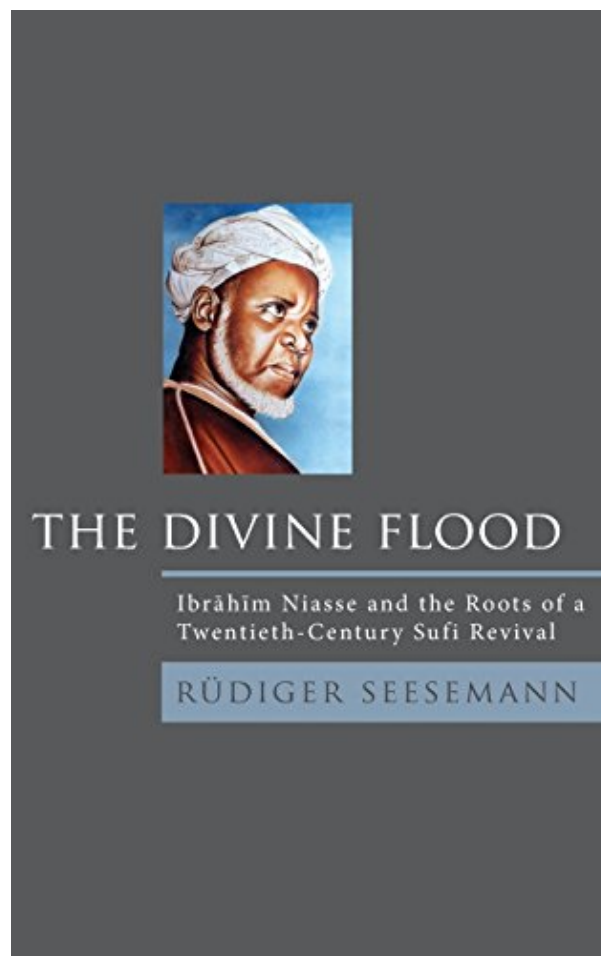


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Ibrāhīm Niasse and the Roots of a  
Twentieth-Century Sufi Revival

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## Review

"Based on a meticulous analysis of the relevant literature in both Arabic and European languages, **The Divine Flood** traces the appeal of the Sufi message brought by Ibrahim Niasse from its doctrinal origins to its reception in the popular imagination. Few books provide such balanced insight into the inner dynamics of an expansive Muslim movement in sub-Saharan Africa."

-- Louis Brenner, Emeritus Professor of the History of Religion in Africa, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

"Seesemann provides a truly remarkable portrait of a major Muslim scholar presenting a significant case study within the broad framework of Islamic spirituality in the twentieth century. The volume is based on a familiarity with both archival and analytical sources, extensive interviews, and the literary resources of the spiritual traditions of Ibrahim Niasse. This book should be required reading for anyone interested in the continuing dynamism of religion in the contemporary world."

-- John Voll, professor of Islamic history and associate director of the Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University

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#### About the Author

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Until recently, academic studies of Sufism have largely ignored the multiple ways in which Islamic mystical ideas and practices have developed in the modern period. For many specialists, Sufism was "on the way out" and not compatible with modernity. The present study of a twentieth-century Sufi revival in West Africa offers critical corrections to this misconception. Seesemann's work revolves around the emergence and spread of the "Community of the Divine Flood," established in 1929 by Ibrahim Niasse, a leader of the Tijaniyya Sufi order from Senegal. Based on a wide variety of written sources and encounters with leaders and ordinary members of the movement, the book analyzes the teachings and practices of this community, most notably those concerned with mystical knowledge of God. It presents a vivid and intimate portrait of the community's formation in Senegal and its subsequent transformation into a veritable transnational movement in West Africa and beyond. Drawing on letters, poetry, hagiography, and testimonies of opponents of the movement, the book traces Niasse's spectacular ascension as the widely acclaimed "Supreme Saint of His Era" and shows how the various stages of his career intersect with the development of his mystical teachings. Seesemann makes a compelling case for studying Sufis and their literary production in their social and historical contexts, throwing light on a little known chapter of the intellectual and social history of Islam.

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