



IRCICA JOURNAL

A Journal on Islamic History and Civilisation

VOLUME VIII © SPECIAL ANNUAL ISSUE 2024

***Muslim Thinkers, Intellectual and Civil
Currents in Africa***

IRCICA JOURNAL

VOLUME VIII © SPECIAL ANNUAL ISSUE 2024
ISSN 2148-2772

Organisation of Islamic Cooperation
Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture
IRCICA

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الأستاذ عباس محمد عبد الواحد من أعلام العلم والأدب في تشاد

د. أحمد الرفاعي محمود

جامعة الملك فيصل بتشاد

Editorial

IRCICA Journal has excelled in providing a globally esteemed scholarly platform for original academic research spanning diverse aspects of Islamic history and civilization since its inception. Various editions of the journal have illuminated specific dimensions of Islamic history, encompassing arts, literature, culture, sciences and architecture through insightful studies focusing on distinct geographical regions. It is with great satisfaction that we introduce the Special Annual Issue for 2023 to the global scholarly community on the theme of "Muslim Thinkers, Intellectual and Civil Currents in Africa".

The selection of this theme was driven by a need to reexamine, reassess, and rejuvenate the body of scholarly work dedicated to the interrelationship between Islamic thought and African cultural heritage. This approach is prompted by the recognition that, despite growing research interest in the cultural, political, and social aspects of the history of Islam in Africa, many scholars studying Islam and Muslim societies in Africa remain unaware of the substantial intellectual contributions in Arabic and local languages. There exists a pressing need to spotlight and document the intellectual productions of various influential scholars, particularly those who reflected and shaped the social dynamics of their times. This Special Issue aims to bridge this gap in the literature and contribute to a broader understanding of the links between Islamic intellectual traditions and Africa's rich cultural heritage.

The presence of path-breaking works on various aspects of Islamic history and civilization in Africa, written in English, Arabic and French demonstrates our commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive scholarly discourse. We are pleased to have accomplished this objective with the publication of seven articles-four in English, two in French, and one in Arabic. Among the seven articles included in this Special Issue, the first one on "The Cultural Heritage of Islam in Mozambique: The Case of 'Ajamī Manuscript Culture" by Dr. Chapane Mutiua from the Centre for African Studies, University Eduardo Mondlane, Maputo, explores the history of manuscript culture in Mozambique. The article argues for the inclusion of 'ajamī manuscripts' in Mozambique's cultural heritage, emphasizing their role to empower the identity of Muslim communities. It highlights the neglect of 'ajamī manuscript culture in both the public domain and among Muslims, despite legal protection, and calls for its rectification. The second article, "Hamidia Islamic Society and Civil Resistance in British South Africa (1906-1909)" by Ebrahim Salie, an independent South African Historian and Archival Researcher, critically analyses the initiation of the first passive resistance campaign in South Africa by Hadje Ojer Ally's Hamidia Islamic Society. The article delves into the transition from the "politics of petitioning" to the "politics of satyagraha" emphasizing the roles of key figures and contextualizing the resistance within the socio-political landscape of British South Africa. The third article, "Against the Dying of the Light: Spiritual Epistemologies of Revivalist Pedagogies in Islamic West Africa" by Oludamini Ogunnaike, an Assistant Professor at the University of Virginia, explores the epistemologies, pedagogies, and educational outcomes of three Islamic reform movements in West Africa. The study covers movements from the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial periods, providing a comparative analysis of their philosophical orientations, educational practices, and historical trajectories. The fourth

article, "Al-Hajj Umar Tall: Contribution to Islamic Revivalism and Resistance to French Colonization in West Africa in the 19th Century" by Samba Diop, PhD Researcher at the University of Oslo, examines the life and impact of Al-Hajj Umar Tall in the context of Islamic revival and resistance to European expansion in West Africa. The study draws on fieldwork, epic poetry, and oral traditions to unravel the complex interplay between tradition and identity in the Senegambia region. It emphasizes the Islamic revivalism of Umar Tall and explores the geopolitical shifts in the 19th century West Africa.

Highlighting diversity in African religions and intellectual currents, the Special Annual Issue of the IRCICA Journal also features two articles in French. The first article in French is entitled "Tijani Sufi Scholars in North Cameroon: Religious and Intellectual Heritage of Chioukh Moodibbe Oussoumanou Dalil (1934-2015) and Nana Younoussa (1939-2017)". It is authored by Dr. Fadel Soubiane Bah, researcher at the Department of History, University of Ngaoundéré, Cameroon. Soubiane Bah explores the intellectual heritage of Chioukh Moodibbe Oussoumanou Dalil and Nana Younoussa, prominent figures of the Tijaniyya Sufi spiritual order in North Cameroon. The focus is on their contributions to higher education, religious actions, and intellectual activities, highlighting their impact on the history of Islamic knowledge and scholarship in Cameroon. The article aims to identify their training, career, and intellectual productions, by shedding light on their roles in shaping African intellectual and cultural heritage. The second article of the French section "Amadou Hampâté Bâ: Wisdom and Intellectual Heritage (1901-1991)" by Dr. Gassim Ibrahim, researcher at IRCICA, pays tribute to Amadou Hampâté Bâ, a crucial African writer and thinker, and his spiritual guide Tierno Bokar, a Sufi master. The article highlights Hampâté Bâ's dedication to the defence and conservation of African oral cultures. The article aims to

reconsider the vitality of Hampâté Bâ's work, focusing on the virtues and Islamic and traditional wisdom conveyed in his writings. In the context of contemporary Africa and globalization, the article suggests that the principles of tolerance and openness to others, recurring themes in Hampâté Bâ's works, can contribute to peace, social cohesion, and universal peace if effectively promoted through modern and traditional education structures.

In addition to articles in English and French, the Special Annual Issue features an article in Arabic titled "Abbas Muhammad Abdulwahid: A Chadian Scholar and Poet" by Dr. Ahmad Rufai Mahmud from King Faisal University, Chad. Abbas Muhammad Abdulwahid, a distinguished scholar, has significantly contributed to the development of Islamic and Arabic sciences in Chad. The article sheds light on Abdulwahid's academic standing, acknowledging his efforts in promoting science and literature. Through a comprehensive approach, the article conducts a literary analysis of Abdulwahid's famous poems, revealing intricate themes that highlight his exceptional ability to blend artistic expression with a deep understanding of societal nuances and religious teachings. In conclusion, Abdulwahid's poetry is celebrated as a testament to the harmonious integration of literary excellence, social awareness, and adherence to Islamic values.

This Special Annual Issue on "Muslim Thinkers, Intellectual and Civil Currents in Africa" offers a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the diverse intellectual landscape from exploring 'ajamī manuscript culture in Mozambique to unravelling the spiritual epistemologies of revivalist pedagogies in Islamic West Africa; and to paying tribute to influential figures such as Al-Hajj Umar Tall and Amadou Hampâté Bâ. The inclusion of articles in Arabic and French is meant to strengthen the journal's global reach. The outcome demonstrates the richness of Islamic thought and cultural contributions across linguistic and regional boundaries. This

collaborative effort aims to foster a deeper appreciation of the intellectual heritage of African Muslim thinkers and promote dialogue and understanding within the global scholarly community on the intellectual and religious heritage in Africa.

We are convinced that this Special Issue of the IRCICA Journal will also attract scholarly attention and encourage further research on various aspects of Islamic history and civilisation in Africa by scholars from all over the world. As the Director General of IRCICA, the cultural subsidiary of the OIC, I would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks to all the distinguished authors for their valuable contributions.

Mahmud Erol Kılıç, Prof.
Director General, IRCICA

"Against the Dying of the Light": Spiritual Epistemologies of Revivalist Pedagogies in Islamic West Africa

Oludamini Ogunnaike*

ABSTRACT

One of the most exciting developments in recent years in the field of Islamic studies has been the increased attention given to Islamic reform movements in West Africa, and the central role of education in these remarkably influential campaigns. One of the other most dynamic areas of debate and research in the contemporary study of Islam in Africa has been the different pedagogies and epistemological orientations at play in various forms of Islamic education in West Africa. This article will attempt to bring these two strands of research together through an in-depth examination of the epistemologies, pedagogies, and educational outcomes of three such movements -one from the pre-colonial period (the Sokoto Jihād of Shehu 'Uthman dan Fodio), one predominantly from the colonial period (the Murīdiyya of Shaykh Aḥmadu Bamba) and one from the predominantly post-colonial period (the Fayḍa Tijāniyya of Shaykh Ibrāhīm Niasse). After describing the particular theories and practices of knowledge and education in each movement, and briefly describing their educational outcomes and legacies, this article will compare and contrast the epistemologies and pedagogies of these movements to explore the relationship between different philosophical orientations, educational practices and historical trajectories of these movements. Through an examination of primary source materials (treatises, poetry, histories, teaching texts) and some secondary historical sources (colonial records and scholarship), this study hopes to highlight both the important differences and continuities between these three different African Sufi reform movements, correcting some common

* Assistant Professor, Department of Religious Studies, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, US.

misconceptions about them in both the European and Arabic scholarly literature.

Introduction

One of the most exciting developments in recent years in the fields of Islamic and African studies has been the increased attention given to Islamic reform movements in West Africa, and the central role of education in these remarkably influential campaigns.¹ One of the other most dynamic areas of debate and research in the contemporary study of Islam in Africa has been the different pedagogies and epistemological orientations at play in the various forms of Islamic education in West Africa.² This article will attempt to bring these two

1 For example, see Ahmad Dallal, *Islam without Europe: Traditions of Reform in Eighteenth-Century Islamic Thought* (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press Books, 2018); Cheikh Anta Babou, *Fighting the Greater Jihad: Amadu Bamba and the Founding of the Muridiyya of Senegal, 1853–1913* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2007); Fallou Ngom, *Muslims Beyond the Arab World: The Odyssey of Ajami and the Muridiyya* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); Rüdiger Seesemann, *The Divine Flood: Ibrahim Niasse and the Roots of a Twentieth-Century Sufi Revival* (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2011); Zachary Valentine Wright, *Living Knowledge in West African Islam: The Sufi Community of Ibrāhīm Niasse* (Boston: Brill, 2015); Rudolph Ware, Zachary Wright, and Amir Syed, *Jihad of the Pen: The Sufi Literature of West Africa* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2018); Ousmane Kane, "From a Neglected to a Crowded Field—The Academic Study of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Religions* 13, 5 (2022): 461.

2 For example, see Rudolph Ware, *The Walking Qur'an: Islamic Education, Embodied Knowledge, and History in West Africa*. (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press Books, 2014) and Louis Brenner, *Controlling Knowledge: Religion, Power, and Schooling in a West African Muslim Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001); Ousmane Kane, *Beyond Timbuktu: An Intellectual History of Muslim West Africa* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016); Rüdiger Seesemann, "Epistemology or Ideology? Toward a Relational Perspective on Islamic Knowledge in Africa," *Journal of Africana Religions* 6, 2 (2018): 232-268; idem, "'Ilm and Adab Revisited: Knowledge Transmission and Character Formation in Islamic Africa" in *The Piety of Learning: Islamic Studies in Honor of Stefan Reichmuth*, ed. Michael Kemper and Ralph Elger (Boston: Brill, 2017): 13-37; Robert Launay (ed.), *Islamic*

strands of research together through a summary examination of the epistemologies, pedagogies, and educational outcomes of three such movements—one from the pre-colonial period (the Sokoto Jihād of Shehu ‘Uthman dan Fodio (d. 1817)), one predominantly from the colonial period (the Murīdiyya of Shaykh Aḥmadu Bamba (d. 1927)) and one predominantly post-colonial period (the Fayḍa Tijāniyya of Shaykh Ibrāhīm Niasse (d. 1975)). After describing the history and role of education and Sufism in each movement, this article will compare and contrast the epistemologies and pedagogies of these movements to explore the relationship between these different philosophical orientations and educational practices and the historical trajectories of these movements. Through an examination of primary source materials (treatises, poetry, histories, teaching texts) and some secondary historical sources (colonial records and scholarship), this article hopes to highlight both the important differences and continuities between these three different African Sufi reform movements, correcting some common misconceptions in European and Arabic scholarly literature.

Background: The History of Islam in West Africa

Due to certain unfortunate colonial and racial divisions of African and the Muslim world, the study of Islam in Africa remained marginal in both Islamic and African studies. It was also dominated by the colonial myth of *Islam noir* -the racially-based conception Black African Islam as passive, oral, mystical, irrational, expressive, and peaceful in contrast to the “pure,”

Education in Africa: Writing Boards and Blackboards (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016); Paul Naylor, *From Rebels to Rulers: Writing Legitimacy in the Early Sokoto State* (Rochester, NY: James Currey, 2021); and Ousmane Kane (ed.) *New Directions in the Study of Islamic Scholarship in Africa* (Rochester, NY: James Currey, 2021).

Arab Islam of North Africa and the Middle East, which was conceived of as active, written, legalistic, rational, intellectual, and militant in the colonial imagination.³ While this myth has been widely-debunked for decades, its legacy has lingered outside of the works of specialists on Islam in Africa. However, thanks to the works of these specialists, the study of Islam in Africa in Europhone languages has expanded greatly over the past several decades, demonstrating important connections between and mutual influence of Muslim communities both North and South of the Sahara, and establishing the importance of connections of commerce, culture, and scholarship between Sub-Saharan Africa and the rest of the Muslim world from the 1st century Hijri to the present day.

Islam first entered the Saharan and Sahelian regions of West Africa through trans-Saharan trade routes connecting North Africa with Saharan salt mines, oasis travel stops, and Sahelian gold mines as early as the 8th century following the rapid conquest and Islamization of Egypt by the Maghreb by the armies of 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ (d. 43/664) of 'Uqba ibn Nāfi' (d. 62/683), and ensuing waves of Muslim and Arab migration and influx of Muslim traders into the previously-established trans-Saharan trade routes. The history of Islam in West Africa can roughly be divided into five periods: 1) the early period of isolated communities of scholars and traders, 2) the classical royal/imperial period in which kings and royal courts such as Takrur and Kanem-Borno converted to Islam in the 11th century and the larger Muslim-ruled empires of Ghana (11th century CE), Mali (14th century CE), and Songhai (16th century CE) emerged, 3) the period of reform movements in which scholars led sometimes-militant movements to establish new polities led by scholar-statesmen in the context of the collapse of larger empires and emergence of new, smaller polities, 4) the colonial phase in which the popularization of Sufi orders

3 see Ware, *The Walking Qur'an*, 19-25, for a concise summary and trenchant refutation of this thesis.

throughout the region witnessed, and 5) the postcolonial period which witnessed the rise of Salafism in the region and competition between Sufis, Salafis, and Christians in the post-colonial public sphere. This article will examine one of the most influential reform movements of the third period, a Sufi reform movement of the colonial period, and the region's most popular Sufi reform movement of the post-colonial period.

While the political and social structures of Muslim societies in West Africa are marked by profound differences across time and geography, the classical Islamic educational tradition in the region -characterized by Qur'an schools and what one scholar has termed Mālikī-Ash'arī-Sufi complex⁴- has remained relatively homogenous across the region and different eras with a standard, mostly-shared "core curriculum" of texts and commentaries, similar pedagogies and epistemologies that have remained resilient down to the present day. It was from this West African tradition of Islamic learning that the three movements examined in this article have emerged.

The Sokoto Jihād: A Pre-Colonial Reform Movement

The Sokoto Jihād of 'Uthmān ibn Fūdī (d. 1817) (known locally as Usman dan Fodio) marked a turning point in the history of West African Islam. It was the largest and most successful of these reform movements, establishing the Sokoto Sultanate the largest state in Africa at the end of the nineteenth century, with a population of around 7 million people⁵ in 30 different emirates covering over 450,000 square kilometers by the time it fell to the British in 1903. The basic structure of the Sokoto Sultanate was co-opted by the British colonial system of

⁴ see Seesemann, "Epistemology or Ideology?," 240.

⁵ see Paul Lovejoy, *Jihād in West Africa during the Age of Revolutions* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2016), 259-262. Some estimates put the population of the Sokoto Sultanate above 10 million, see Toyin Falola, Ann Genova, and Matthew Heaton (eds.), *Historical Dictionary of Nigeria* (Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, 2009), 327.

indirect rule, and retained after Nigeria's independence, so there is still a Sultan of Sokoto, who is the symbolic leader of Nigeria's 100 million Muslims, and the offices and structure of the Sokoto emirates remain important religious, political, and cultural forces in Northern Nigeria and surrounding countries.

A Brief History

The Sokoto Jihād was preceded by several similar movements across West Africa which created similar "Fulani jihād states," so called because, although these movements cut across ethnic lines, many of the scholars who led these movements were Fula/Fulani/Pulaar-speakers. Fulani scholars led military movements to establish the state of Futa Bundu in the 1690's,⁶ the state of Futa Jallon in 1727, that of Futa Tooro in 1776, establishing polities led by scholars instead of hereditary kings and characterized by their rigorous adherence to the sharī'a and promotion of Islamic education. While most of the leaders of these movements were affiliated with Sufi orders and embraced Sufi practices, it was the Sokoto Jihād that would mark the merging of the spiritual and political authority of Sufi masters as heirs of the Prophet (saw) in a new

6 This movement was in turn preceded and influenced by the failed 1673-1674 jihād of the Lamtuna Berber Imam Nāṣir al-Dīn as a part of the larger Shar Bubbah war (1644-1674) of Mauritania in which the warrior Ḥassanī tribes defeated the Berber scholarly Zwaya clans who were forced to relinquish claims to political and military authority and submit to Ḥassanī rule. Fulani scholars from the Senegal River valley participated in Nāṣir al-Dīn's jihād, and upon his defeat, moved south to Bundu where they established their own jihād state along many of the same principles and structures (e.g. the election of a notable Islamic scholar as Almamy (Imām), the political ruler of the state). see Michael Gomez, *Pragmatism in the Age of Jihad: the Precolonial State of Bundu* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), Muḥammad al-Mukhtār Wuld Sa'ad, *Ḥarb Shar Bubbah au Āzmat al-Qarn 17 fī al-Janūb al-Gharbī al-Mūrītānī* (Nouakchott, 1993); Ismaël Hamet, *Chroniques de la Mauritanie Sénégalaise—Nacer Eddine/Nubda fī ta'rikh al-ṣaḥrā'* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1911).

formation that would come to structure Sufi reform movements in the region down to the 21st century. As Zachary Wright explains,

What differentiates earlier local jihad movements in West Africa (those of Mālik Sy [d. 1699], ‘Abd al-Qādir Kane [d. 1809], Sulāyman Bal, in the 17th and 18th centuries) from the broader regional campaigns of ‘Uthmān b. Fūdī (d. 1817) and ‘Umar al-Fūtī (Tāl, d. 1864) may be partially explained by the increased spiritual authority of the shaykh. This allowed the Sufi orders to appeal to groups beyond their own lineages and ethnic backgrounds, and to consolidate the Sufi affiliations of particular groups.⁷

The Sokoto Jihād would inspire the similar political/religious state-building projects of al-Ḥājj ‘Umar Ṭal (d. 1864), who founded the Toucouleur Empire, Seku Aḥmadu (d. 1845), who founded the Masina Empire, Modibo Adamwa (d. 1847) who founded the Adamawa emirate, as well as the Mahdist movement of Muḥammad Aḥmad (d. 1885).

‘Uthman ibn Fūdī’s reform movement emerged in the context of the 18th-century Hausa city-states, whose rulers and politico-economic elites, like those of the neighboring kingdom of Kanem-Borno were largely Muslim, ruling over large populations of farmers, artisans, and pastoralists who were both Muslim and non-Muslim.

Ibn Fūdī was born in 1754 to a prominent Fulani scholarly family of Torodbe origin⁸ residing in present-day northern Nigeria. The young Ibn Fūdī studied with his father and the reform-minded, itinerant Tuareg scholar Jibrīl ibn ‘Umar (d. 1785?), who wrote and spoke strongly against the Hausa city-states. Ibn Fūdī was invited to settle in the village of Degel in the city-state of Gobir, by its ruler Bawa, where he began teaching and attracting students, scholars, and disciples.

7 Wright, *Living Knowledge*, 58.

8 A clan of Fulfulde-speaking Islamic scholars from Futa Tooro (Northern Senegal).

'Uthmān ibn Fūdī publicly admonished the people and rulers of the city of Gobir and the surrounding areas, much to the consternation of members of the ruling elite, although some of them, such as the prince Yunfa, came to study with ibn Fūdī, and would seek his *baraka* before going into battle. Due to his popularity and prestige, Dan Fodio was able to effectively advocate for Yunfa to take the throne of Gobir upon its ruler's death in 1801. However, relations between them soon soured. But the spark that was to set off the Sokoto Jihād came when Yunfa's forces attacked and enslaved the inhabitants of village of a Muslim scholar, 'abd al-Salām, who was associated with Dan Fodio, and who had been critical of Yunfa's rule and piety. As Yunfa's army marched their captives past Dan Fodio's village of Degel, his brother 'Abdullāh ibn Fūdī led a raid on the soldiers, freeing the captives. Yunfa ordered 'Uthmān ibn Fūdī to leave his community and go into exile, but he responded that he would take his community and make hijra to the village of Gudu, on the outskirts of the territory of Gobir.⁹ Here Ibn Fūdī was elected Amīr by his community who took an oath of allegiance to him, in imitation of earlier ceremonies of the so-called Fulani jihād states and the pact of 'Aqaba from the biographies of the Prophet Muḥammad (saw). This marked the beginning of the Sokoto Jihād. In Gudu, Ibn Fūdī was soon joined by other Fulani scholar-warriors, Muslims angered by the prevalent slave raising of their communities by the Hausa rulers, Fulani nomads involved in disputes over grazing and watering rights for their herds, and numerous Hausa peasants' discontent with the rule of the elite. After a series of battles, sieges, military campaigns and alliances, by 1810, the jihād movement had successfully captured all the major Hausa city-states and consolidated their rule over the region, establishing courts, tax collectors, ministers, standing armies, secretaries, diplomatic emissaries, etc. -in short, the full political, bureaucratic, legal, economic,

9 See Hiskett, *Sword of Truth*, 71-73.

and religious apparatus of a Muslim state of the day. 'Uthmān ibn Fūdī continued to rule as Sultan of the newly- established Sokoto Sultanate (named after its newly-founded capital) until 1815, putting down rebellions, mediating conflicts between Emirates and neighboring polities, expanding the territory of sultanate, and writing several treatises and epistles in which he outlined and justified his philosophy and practice of governance, until he retired from his administrative duties, and was succeeded by his son Muḥammad Bello (d. 1837).¹⁰

The Role of Education in the Sokoto Jihād

It is noteworthy that this list of achievements/blessings begins with the establishment of a sound doctrine ('*aqīda*) and then sound deeds ('*amāl*). As Ibn Fūdī writes,

I say and success is from God, my brothers first it is obligatory upon you to seek knowledge. This is due to the fact that all things are dependent upon knowledge. Realize that knowledge (*al-'ilm*) and worship (*al-'ibāda*) are two essential fundamentals. It is due to knowledge and worship that the heavenly books were revealed and the Messengers were sent. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the servant to possess some share of each of these two important matters. However, sound worship can never occur except by means of knowledge.

It is for this reason that it is necessary to give beneficial knowledge preference over worship. After this, you must know that anyone who seeks knowledge in order to turn the faces of people towards him, then his trade has become unprofitable. Therefore, purify your hearts from hatred, envy, pride, showing-off, conceit, and love for this world; this is in order that you can truly gain beneficial knowledge. O brothers! Verily the knowledge which is obligatory for every Muslim to seek after are three: the science of divine unity ('*ilm al-tawḥīd*)

¹⁰ For more on the history and politics of the Sokoto state see Murray Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate* (London: Longmans, Green&Co. Limited, 1967); Lovejoy, *Jihād in West Africa*; Naylor, *From Rebels to Rulers*; Stephanie Zehnle, *A Geography of Jihad: Sokoto Jihadism and the Islamic Frontier in West Africa* (New York: de Gruyter, 2020).

[theology]; the science of the law (*'ilm al-sharī'a*); and the science of secrets (*'ilm al-sirr*). What we mean by the science of secrets are those sciences which relate to the heart and its spiritual endeavors.¹¹

In this, and indeed in most of his writings, Ibn Fūdī emphasizes the centrality of education to the reformation and cultivation of Muslim character and describes it as the foundation of his reform movement. It is important to remember that the leaders of the Sokoto Jihād, male and female, were virtually all Islamic scholars and teachers who primarily made their living teaching the Qur'an, Ash'arī *kalām*, Māliki *fiqh*, *taṣawwuf*, Arabic language, and a host of other Islamic sciences. Even after the launch of the jihād movement, Ibn Fūdī, his students, and fellow scholars split their time between teaching, writing, governing, and military campaigns. While the Arabic, Fulfulde, and especially Hausa treatises and poems penned by the Sokoto scholars were an important means of justification and propaganda for the Sokoto Jihād, these texts and the classes (*majālis*) also served as a means of constructing a shared identity, orientation, and ethico-religious disposition. While the armies of the Sokoto movement carved out the territory of the sultanate, it was the Qur'an schools and teaching sessions (*majālis*) that articulated a vision of, and helped to create, the ideal Muslim subjects and society that were the ultimate goal of the jihād.¹²

One of the stated reasons for the jihād was the lack of Islamic education provided to Hausa women, and Ibn Fūdī taught mixed-gender classes, even defending this practice in a

11 Uthman dan Fodio, "Tariq'l-Janna (The Path to Paradise)," trans. Muhammad Shareef, (Maiurno, Sudan: Sankore Institute of Islamic African Studies International, 1996). <https://siiasi.org/digital-archive/shaykh-uthman-ibn-fuduye/tariql-janna/>. Accessed 1/19/2019.

12 see Beverly Mack and Jean Boyd, *One Woman's Jihad: Nana Asma'u, Scholar and Scribe* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).

treatise, when challenged by other scholars.¹³ However it was through the efforts of Ibn Fūdī's daughter, Nana Asmā'u (d. 1864) that female Islamic education in the sultanate really took off. An accomplished author, scholar, and Sufi in her own right, Nana Asmā'u created a network of female teachers called *jajis*, whom she authorized to travel around the Sokoto Sultanate teaching Qur'an, Sunna, basic Islamic law and theology, ethics, Sufism, and history (often through Hausa poems written by Asmā'u) to women in their homes. This network was called the *Yan Taru* (those who congregate) and continues to inspire Islamic women's educational movements in the region and the diaspora in the early 21st century.¹⁴

The Sokoto Jihād led to an efflorescence of Islamic scholarship and literature in Arabic, Fulfulde, and Hausa, and a dramatic increase in Arabic and 'Ajamī literacy in the region. Ibn Fūdī was first and foremost an *'ālim* (scholar) and his community was initially a community of scholars, students, and their families, and the leaders of the movement continued to teach the Islamic sciences (particularly the summary teaching texts written by 'Uthmān and 'Abdullah dan Fodio) throughout the jihād, which served to further unify the jihād movement, bolster the authority of Ibn Fūdī, and create a shared culture and Muslim identity. These educational institutions, shared culture, and political institutions have proved resilient, profoundly shaping Northern Nigerian culture, identity, and religio-political practice to the present day.

For Ibn Fūdī, education, the acquisition and transmission of sound Islamic knowledge was both the foundation and goal of the jihād movement. Whenever he deputized an Amīr to carry out the jihād in a particular region or rule a newly-conquered territory, Ibn Fūdī would send a flag and a copy of

13 Ahmad Tahir, "Shaykh Uthman b. Fudi (1754-1817): An Analytical and Critical Study of His Social Writings," *Islamic Quarterly* 44, 1 (2000): 316.

14 See Mack and Boyd, *One Woman's Jihad*, pp. 89-91.

his work, *The Revival of the Sunna and the Destruction of Innovation (Ihyā' al-Sunna wa Ikhmās al-Bid'a)* a work outlining the individual and social religious responsibilities of Muslims in general, and the Amīr in particular, in accordance with the Prophetic Sunna. The 33rd and final chapter of this work concerns *taṣawwuf* (Sufism), which he equates with *ihsān* and regards as the fulfilment of the Sunna.¹⁵

The Role of Sufism in the Sokoto Jihād

In an excellent discussion on Ibn Fūdī's movement, Ahmad Dallal writes "Ibn Fūdī was a Sufi, yet Sufism was not part of his intellectual discourse. His few references to Sufism were part of larger discussions of proper Islamic practice for individuals and had nothing to do with Sufism's intellectual merits."¹⁶ And in the footnote to this passage, Dallal claims that Ibn Fūdī "does not engage in theoretical discussion of Sufism..."¹⁷ However, a quick glance through Ibn Fūdī's catalogue of writings shows that this is far from being the case, as in addition to writing over a dozen treatises in Arabic and Fulfulde on the subject of Sufism,¹⁸ he studied, taught, and commented upon 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī's highly theoretical book *al-Insān al-Kāmil*, Ibn 'Aṭā Allāh's *Ḥikam*, Aḥmad Zarrūq's *Qawā'id al-Taṣawwuf*, and quoted from and wrote summaries of the works of *taṣawwuf* of al-Zarrūq, al-Suyūṭī, al-Muḥāsibī and of al-Ghazālī's *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*.

15 Uthman Dan Fodio, "The Revival of the Sunna and the Destruction of Innovation: *Ihyā' al-Sunna wa Ikhmās al-Bid'a*," trans. Muhammad Shareef (Maiurno, Sudan: Sankore Institute of Islamic African Studies International, 1998).<https://siiasi.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/ihyas-sunna-wa-ikhmadl-bida-complete.pdf>. Accessed 1/19/2019.

16 see Ahmad S. Dallal, *Islam without Europe*, 44.

17 Ibid.

18 Dan Fodio's more esoteric discussions are found in his Fulfulde works as they were only meant for his family and inner circle, while his Arabic works had a wider intended audience.

The reason for the misrecognition of the role of Sufism in the Sokoto Jihād is twofold: first the common modern stereotype of Sufis as quietist, passive, and otherworldly mystics makes it hard for some scholars to recognize the historical reality of jihādī Sufi movements. The second reason, which I suspect is the reason for Dallal's mischaracterization of Ibn Fūdī's intellectual discourse, is that due to contemporary concerns, studies of Ibn Fūdī's writings have tended to focus on a particular genre of his political and legal writings, namely those concerning *takfīr*.¹⁹ However, Ibn Fūdī's writings in other genres demonstrate the central importance of Sufism in his intellectual project, personal life and practice and the jihād movement as a whole.

Moreover, Sufism played an integral role in Ibn Fūdī's vision of the creation a Muslim community individually and collectively modeled on the Sunna. In works such as *Fath al-Baṣā'ir*, he frequently divides the Islamic tradition into three fundamental dimensions (based on the Hadith of Jibrīl), each with an individually obligatory (*fard 'ayn*) and communally obligatory aspect (*fard kifāya*): *tawhīd* (basic belief (*uṣūl al-dīn*)) and scholastic theology (*kalām*), *fiqh* (actions of worship (*'ibādāt*) and law), and *taṣawwuf* (perfection of character (*takhalluq*) and spiritual realization (*taḥaqquq*)).²⁰ In his *Book of*

¹⁹ It is important to remember that many if not most of the military adversaries of Ibn Fūdī's jihād were self-proclaimed Muslims (like Yunfa, the Sarkin of Gobir), and thus Ibn Fūdī had to derive careful legal justifications for taking up arms against such people, the status of captives and their captured property, etc. He did this by distinguishing political *takfīr* (being a member of a polity whose ruler is not a true Muslim) from individual *takfīr* (not being a true Muslim). In any event, although Sufism plays an important role in many of his other works, it does not in this discussion which is rooted firmly in the disciplines of *fiqh* and *uṣūl al-fiqh*.

²⁰ Uthman dan Fodio, "*Fath al-Baṣā'ir*: the Opening of Discerning Faculties," trans. Muhammad Shareef, (Maiurno, Sudan: Sankore Institute of Islamic African Studies International, 1996).

http://sias.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Fathl-Basaair_The_Opening_of_the_Mental.pdf, Accessed 1/19/2019.

Distinction (*Kitāb Tafriqa bayna 'ilm al-Taṣawwuf alladhī lil-Takhalluq wa 'ilm al-Taṣawwuf alladhī lil-Taḥaqquq*), Ibn Fūdī is even more explicit, writing that, "the science of *taṣawwuf* for the transformation of character is required to be given and transmitted to everyone."²¹ Ibn Fūdī's *Mirāt al-Ṭulāb*, a primer that provides Qur'anic verses, hadith, consensus of early Sunnī scholars and prominent Mālikī jurists on fifty major issues that are obligatory for students to put into practice, concludes with a section on Sufism and spiritual unveiling (*kashf*).

However, Ibn Fūdī does not consider *taṣawwuf* to be separate from the *sharī'a* or *'aqīda* (which he identifies with Islām and Imān of the Hadith of Jibrīl, respectively). He writes:

There is no *taṣawwuf* without jurisprudence (*fiqh*), since the outward legal judgments of God cannot be known except by means of jurisprudence. Furthermore, there can be no jurisprudence without *taṣawwuf*, since there can be no precepts with jurisprudence unaccompanied with sincerity of attention. Consequently, both jurisprudence and *taṣawwuf* cannot be realized except with genuine belief (*imān*), since they cannot be valid devoid of it.... So realize that the relationship of *taṣawwuf* to the religion is like the relationship of the human spirit (*rūh*) to the corporeal body, because it is the station of spiritual excellence (*maqām al-ihsān*).²²

Thus, Ibn Fūdī and the scholars of the Sokoto movement conceived of Sufism as the perfection of the Sunna, an individual and collective obligation, necessary for the cultivation of the ideal Muslim subject and ideal Islamic society that was the goal of their movement.²³ Virtually all of

21 Uthman dan Fodio, "*at-Tafriqa bayna 'ilm al-Taṣawwuf*: the Book of Distinction," trans. Muhammad Shareef, (Maiurno, Sudan: Sankore Institute of Islamic African Studies International, 2017).

http://siiasi.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Fathl-Basaair_The_Opening_of_the_Mental.pdf, Accessed 1/19/2019.

22 Ibid. 15.

23 'Abdullāh Ibn Fūdī's *Tahdhīb al-Insān* explicitly connects the two, drawing on works of Islamic philosophical ethics to describe the cultivation of the

the leaders of the Sokoto Jihād movement were Qādirī Sufis, and Ibn Fūdī's spiritual authority charisma, and ethical example, in addition to his scholarly attainments, are what allowed him to plausibly present himself as an inheritor of the Prophet's political and spiritual authority. Thus, Sufism and Sufi discourse about authority played an important role in establishing and justifying the political authority of the Sokoto Sultanate and its rulers.

The writings of the Sokoto scholars make it abundantly clear that the stated goal of their jihād was the establishment of the Prophetic Sunna in the spiritual, personal, social, and political domains for the purpose of establishing justice (*'adl*) in the societies under their control, and with the ultimate goal of facilitating the felicity (*sa'āda*) of their people in this life and the next. This was to be achieved through military, political, economic, legal, intellectual, and spiritual means, but at the foundation of all of these means of social and spiritual transformation was education (*tarbiya*), broadly conceived as intellectual, moral, religious and spiritual training to conform to the model of the Prophet (saw). This is why so many of the leaders of the Sokoto movement spent their lives teaching, writing, and dispensing spiritual training -for them, following the Prophet (saw) was the goal of life and facilitating this goal was the purpose of the state.

The Murīdiyya: A Colonial Sufi Reform Movement

While more localized than the Sokoto reform movement, the movement founded by Aḥmadu Bamba dramatically reshaped the cultural, religious, political, and even economic landscape

ideal Muslim subject through education by comparing the soul to a city with the heart as the king and the intellect as the *wazīr*. See Abdullahi Dan Fodio, "The Training of Humanity (*Tahdheeb'l-Insaan*)," trans. Muhammad Shareef, (Maiurno, Sudan: Sankore Institute of Islamic African Studies International, 2003). <https://siiasi.org/digital-archive/shaykh-abdullahi-ibn-fuduye/tahheeb-l-insaan/>. Accessed 1/19/2019.

of Senegal and the diaspora. The Murīdiyya, the Sufi order founded by Bamba, claims millions of followers worldwide, has founded its own nationally-accredited University (Université Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba), and governs the city of Touba, the second largest city in Senegal with an estimated population of close to one million. The Grand Magal, an annual pilgrimage which members of the Murīdiyya take to the city of Touba, attracts around 3 million pilgrims annually.²⁴ Moreover, Bamba's impressive scholarly output (over 200 titles across multiple disciplines) and non-violent resistance to French colonial authority continue to influence and inspire West African Muslim scholars to this day.

Brief History

Aḥmadu Bamba was born in 1853 in the village of Mbacké in the Wolof kingdom of Bawol to a respected family of Torodbe Fulani scholars. His mother was a scholar and claimed descent from the Prophet Muḥammad (saw), while his father was a judge, scholar, teacher, leader of the local Muslim community and advisor to the newly-converted king of the neighboring Kingdom of Kajoor (Cayor). During this time, the Senegambia region was rife with warfare, as various polities battled each other and the encroaching French colonial state. The Kingdom of Kajoor finally fell to the French armies in 1886, and the surrounding region fell firmly under the control of the French colonial state. During this early colonial period a number of Sufi leaders, especially of the Tijāniyya, led a series of jihāds against the French army, and after the establishment of colonial rule, many Sufi leaders became important power-brokers and political leaders in the newly-created colony of the *French Soudan*, including Aḥmadu Bamba.

²⁴ see Christine Thu Nhi Dang, "Pilgrimage Through Poetry: Sung Journeys Within the Murid Spiritual Diaspora," *Islamic Africa* 4, 1 (2013): 69–101.

Bamba's family was associated with the branch of the Qādirī tarīqa, and the young Aḥmadu Bamba also showed an early interest in mysticism, often spending long periods of time away from his schoolmates to meditate alone in the bush.²⁵ He received the standard education for Muslim children of the region: he began his preliminary study of Arabic and memorization of the Qur'an at the age of seven, and completed this at age twelve. Next, he studied the linguistic sciences of Arabic grammar, rhetoric, and prosody, and Islamic sciences of *tafsīr* (Qur'anic exegesis), *hadith*, *sīra* (the history of the life of the Prophet), *fiqh*, and *taṣawwuf*. He quickly earned a reputation as a patient and brilliant teacher, and showed a particular aptitude for poetry, summarizing many of the texts that he studied in verse. His father actually replaced one of these texts with the young scholar's versification in his curriculum.²⁶ Although he was his father's assistant and secretary, Aḥmadu Bamba also showed a strong independent streak, sometimes disagreeing with his father and even criticizing him for his close association with Lat Dior, the Muslim ruler of Kajoor.²⁷ Nevertheless, he was so admired for his piety and scholarship, that when his father died in 1883, the other scholars at court offered to recommend Aḥmadu Bamba to take his father's place among their company—a great honor and source of income for the village schoolmaster. Bamba, however, publicly turned the offer down at his father's funeral, saying, "I thank you for your condolences and for your advice. However, I do not have the habit of visiting kings. I have no ambition with regard to their riches, and I only seek honor from the Supreme Lord."²⁸

25 see Babou, *Fighting the Greater Jihad*, 54.

26 see *Ibid.* 55.

27 see *Ibid.* 56.

28 Dider Hamoneau, *Vie et Enseignement du Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba: Maître Fondateur de la Voie Soufie Mouride* (Beyrouth: Dar al-Bouraq, 1998), 92.

After a brief sojourn in Mauritania, he returned to Kajoor to institute a new system of education that required students to submit to the discipline of spiritual/ethical training of *tarbiya*, which aimed to purify the soul and perfect moral conduct. Bamba called these new learning communities, *daara tarbiya*, modifying structure of the existing Qur'anic schools/villages of scholars, students, and their families (*daara*) by modifying the curriculum (using many of his own works), and requiring students to work, take Sufi initiations, and submit to the training of a spiritual master. In 1887, Bamba founded the village of Touba on the basis of a visionary experience and made it the center of his spiritual and educational network.²⁹

Bamba and his cadre of close disciples, many of whom were teachers and shaykhs in their own right, established schools based on this new curriculum combining spiritual and intellectual education throughout the countryside. These schools, and the shaykhs which led them, were largely autonomous, although they all embraced Bamba's pedagogy and regarded him as their spiritual leader. Many of the students and shaykhs of these new schools did not come from the scholarly families that had traditionally controlled education in the region, and the combination of new methods and personnel was a source of some controversy and consternation amongst the established educational elite. Nevertheless, through these new schools and their founding Shaykh gained many new adherents from amongst both the non-scholarly and scholarly population. Cheikh Anta Babou summarizes these developments:

Drawing lessons from centuries of failed jihads, the inability of court clerics to bring about any substantial change in the fate of the people, and an increasingly assertive French power, he resolutely opted for a gradual transformation of the society through education. However, for Bamba, not every type

²⁹ Ibid.

of education was suitable to meet this goal of changing the society. Spiritual education was for him the most appropriate means to correct the wrongs in society and to provide people with a protective shield against the perils of the epoch.³⁰

First Exile: Gabon (1895-1902)

The French military expansion into West Africa in the 19th century coincided with a wave of military jihāds waged by a generation of African Muslim leaders seeking to establish a new Muslim social order in the region. Although in some instances, these wars facilitated the French conquest of West Africa by weakening and dividing the pre-existing socio-political order, the mass mobilization of professional and semi-professional soldiers with modern weaponry made the French Soudan a rather difficult area to govern, and the French forces even suffered a few defeats and near-losses at the hands of al-Ḥājj 'Umar Tāl, Maba Diakhou Bâ, Lat Dior, and Samory Toure. The Tijānī Ṭarīqa of Tāl and Bâ became associated in the French colonial imagination with militant Islam, particularly in the region of Senegal, which bore witness to two such uprisings in the 1860's and 70's led by Tijānīs. The mere association with the Tijānī order was enough to arouse the suspicion and surveillance of the French authorities,³¹ and this is precisely the means by which the enemies of Bamba brought him to the attention of the colonial government.

Bamba had never been involved in these jihāds and even criticized them, writing:

Certain people among them are misled by their jihads, which are carried out against others

³⁰ Cheikh Anta Babou, "Educating the Murid: Theory and Practices of Education in Amadu Bamba's Thought," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 33, 3 (2003): 320.

³¹ see David Robinson, "Beyond Resistance and Collaboration: Aḥmadu Bamba and the Murids of Senegal," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 21, 2 (1991): 155.

They continuously raid with the sole goal of gaining honor and riches

They claim to hear the voice of God, but their objective is only fame and riches

*They return heavy with sin and crimes, which cover their whole army*³²

And

"The warrior in the path of God is not one who takes his enemies' life, but the one who combats his nafs [carnal soul] to achieve spiritual perfection."³³

By his own account, Bamba's non-violent orientation was not a mere political strategy, but rather a religious duty imposed upon him by the Prophet (saw) in a vision in which he was instructed to leave aside the lesser jihād (the physical holy war) and exclusively take up the greater jihād (the spiritual holy war) against his evil and ignorance, "without shedding a drop of blood."³⁴ However, the French saw his public lack of militancy as a clever ploy to disguise his true ambitions. Due to his large following, and increasing popularity, the French decided they could not risk the possibility of another uprising, and in 1895, an armed column was dispatched to arrest the Shaykh and bring him to the colonial capital of St. Louis, where he was imprisoned and sentenced to exile in Gabon for seven years.

Bamba did not resist his arrest, imprisonment, or exile, and in many accounts, was defiant in the face of intimidation and persecution. Bamba affirmed that he was willing to undergo any trial, and interpreted his imprisonment and exile in light

32 Aḥmad Bamba Imbākkay, "Masālik al-jinān fi mā farraqahu al-daymāni" in *Dīwān al-'Ulūm al-Dīniyya* (Dakar: Rabita Khadimia lil-baḥithīn wa'l-dārisīn, n.d.), 52.

33 qtd. in Babou, *Fighting the Greater Jihad*, 5.

34 see Cheikh Abdoulaye Dieye, *Le Centenaire du Jihad al-Akbar* (Mauritius, 1995), 80.

of his vision.³⁵ Instead of cowing Bamba's followers and diminishing his reputation, the exile to Gabon only increased the Shaykh's following as legends about his miraculous defiance in the face of colonial oppression began to circulate throughout Senegal. Historian David Robinson writes,

He never lashed out at his captors. His responses, reminiscent of Jesus in his final days or of Gandhi with his *satyagraha*, made the apparatus of repression helpless. The fact that Bamba returned to Senegal after seven years with his charisma intact confirmed his sainthood, and the sainthood became, in the eyes of his followers, successful resistance to French conquest and rule.³⁶

While these fantastical accounts spread amongst his followers in Senegal, Shaykh Aḥmadu Bamba devoted himself with even greater intensity to his spiritual exercises and writing. He also produced a voluminous body of poetry during this period, based on his new understanding and experience of the Qur'an and the Prophet (saw). Bamba also corresponded with his family and disciples at home, giving them encouragement and instruction, and asking about the affairs of his disciples and schools. When Bamba returned to Senegal in 1902 after seven years in exile, he received a hero's welcome at the docks and found that his pedagogical experiment had become something of a mass movement.

Second Exile: Mauritania (1903-1907) and Rapprochement with the French

However, it wasn't long before the Shaykh's wildly increasing popularity and influence again gave the colonial administration cause for concern. Worried about rumors of preparation for jihād in the Sahara, the French decided to exile Bamba again. This time, however, he was to stay with his old

³⁵ Babou, *Fighting the Greater Jihad*, 112.

³⁶ Robinson, "Beyond Resistance and Collaboration," 161.

teacher and mentor Shaykh Sidiyya Baba in Mauritania, in hopes that the latter, an ally of the colonial government, would have a moderating influence on the Senegalese shaykh.

Bamba again clarified his position to his disciples in a poem written on the eve of his second exile.

[O ye my persecutors] ye banned me on the pretense that I am waging a war (Jihad) against you.

Indeed ye are right because I am really combating for the Countenance of the Lord.

But I am waging my jihad through Knowledge ('ulum) and Fearing the Lord (taqwa), as [an humble] subject of God and the servant of His Prophet...

While others hold material weapons to be feared, my two weapons are [knowledge] and [worship]; and this is surely my way of fighting.³⁷

While it is possible that Shaykh Baba, who enjoyed very good relations with the colonial regime, influenced Bamba's new policy of support for the French regime, this letter also shows the same stance on war and violence that Bamba had articulated elsewhere. However, his vocal support of the colonial government stands in stark contrast to his typical antipathy towards political power. Nonetheless, given Bamba's priorities, this tone is understandable, even if surprising. Aḥmadu Bamba was first and foremost concerned with the spiritual well-being of his community, and as long as the French regime allowed Muslims to practice in peace and did not interfere with his program of spiritual education, their rule could be tolerated. As usual, he wanted to have nothing to do with political leaders and wanted them to have nothing to do with him. Bamba also noted a trend that was true

³⁷ Mbacke, *Jihad for Peace*, 17.

throughout much of West Africa: the rapid spread of Islam amongst the masses during the colonial period.³⁸

Bamba spent five more years under house arrest, and the rest of his life under surveillance. However, impressed by the positive economic and social contributions of the Murīdiyya, whose *daaras tarbiya* provided the colony with a significant portion of its groundnut exports and commercial food supply, the colonial administrators had become confident that Bamba and his order did not pose a direct threat to their rule. After this rapprochement, the colonial administration began to treat the Murīd shaykhs like colonial chiefs, exchanging services with them and relying on them to fill quotas for cash crops and soldiers to support their efforts in World War I. In recognition of this service, Bamba was awarded the Cross of the Legion of Honor in 1918, and although he declined the award, it showed a dramatic change the relationship between him and the officials who had exiled him to Gabon some twenty-three years earlier. In this time, the Murīdiyya had grown from its humble, rural beginnings to become an order of close to 100,000 disciples.³⁹ Shaykh Aḥmadu Bamba spent his last days in retreat and prayer, teaching and writing. He died in 1927 and was buried in his city of Touba, where every year, thousands and now millions of people visit his grave during the *magal*, a pilgrimage which celebrates the spiritual triumph of him being sent into exile in Gabon.⁴⁰ Today, the Murīdiyya is the second-largest Sufi order in Senegal, and the *daara tarbiya* system that Bamba founded is still being used to train Islamic scholars, and his texts and methods have been adopted in so-called hybrid Franco-Arabe schools throughout the country.

38 Which was also noted by colonial officials, for example see Vincent Monteil, *L'islam Noir: une religion à la conquête de l'Afrique* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1964) and J. Spencer Trimingham, *A History of Islam in West Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 224-231.

39 Babou, "Educating the Murid," 312.

40 Babou, *Fighting the Greater Jihad*, 193.

Spiritual leader, educational pioneer, sometime resistor and sometime collaborator, the picture that emerges from accounts of Aḥmadu Bamba's life is that of a man whose primary concern was his own spiritual condition, and then that of his disciples and surrounding community. Although he frequently displayed a defiant attitude to the French colonial authorities, local chiefs, and other Muslim leaders, this must be understood as stemming from his conception of himself as the *khādim al-Rasūl*, or servant of the Prophet (saw), and his consciousness of being subject to no authority but God's. When he deemed that the interests of the colonial regime or other powers was in line with his mission of service to the Prophet (saw), he collaborated; when he saw a conflict, he resisted. Bamba's movement was first and foremost a spiritual one, and its socio-political consequences were always looked upon as secondary, at least by its founder. The associated social, economic, and political transformations emerged from this spiritual project like leaves from the branches of a tree. For Bamba, the social and political chaos of his time was merely the symptom of a deeper spiritual crisis. He therefore shifted the focus of resistance from the sphere of politics to that of the heart, adopting a program of spiritual education to address the problems of his time at their root.

Role of Education and Sufism in the Movement

Bamba's movement was explicitly focused on combining Islamic learning (*ta'līm*) and spiritual training (*tarbiya*), and his writings are very much in line with the classical traditions of Islamic learning and Sufism, quoting heavily from al-Ghazālī, al-Zarrūq, Ibn 'Aṭā Allāh, and Mālikī and Ash'arī authorities (such as al-Shāṭibī and al-Sanūsī, respectively). What was novel about Bamba's movement was the popularization of the spiritual training of Sufism, which had previously been somewhat limited to circles of scholarly elites. Although Bamba continued to view Sufism as the crown of the

sciences and their perfection and fulfillment, he also regarded the spiritual training of Sufism as the foundation of the correct practice and understanding of these other branches of knowledge. Since, according to a hadith frequently cited by Bamba in his poetry, "Actions are only judged by their intentions,"⁴¹ and *taṣawwuf* is the science of purifying one's intentions, this science was seen as being indispensable for any action, including the acquisition of knowledge. In the poem, *Masālik al-Jinān*, he writes,

*Knowledge acquired for the sake of being admired or praised is
of no use to the servant on the day of resurrection*

*Nor that sought for the sake of competition, rivalry, or
obfuscation*

*Nor that sought for the pleasure of domination, to be the only
one who knows and gives harmful judgments*

Nor that sought to oppress others

Nor that sought as a pastime for play and diversion...

*Nor that which fills the heart with jealousy, rancor or
arrogance, which distances the knower from guidance*

*Nor that which leads to hatred, hidden or manifest, rivalry, or
polemics and controversy*

*Nor that which leads to arrogance and pride, or which creates
quarrel and dissidence.*

*Nor that which leads to anger, obstinacy in error and
misguidance, in indifference and in argument*

Nor that which uses intrigue to cheat people of their goods...

*No, rather beneficial knowledge is that which clearly teaches a
man his own faults.*⁴²

⁴¹ Quoted in Fernand Dumont, *La Pensée Religieuse de Amadou Bamba, Fondateur du Mouridisme Sénégalais* (Dakar: Nouvelles Editions Africaines, 1975), 321.

⁴² Aḥmadu Bamba, *Masālik al-Jinān: Les Itinéraires du Paradis: Traité de Soufisme*, trans. Sam Mbaye, (Dakar: n.p., n.d.), 77-78, 20.

Like many Sufi authors before him, and most pre-modern West African Islamic scholars, Bamba described a close relationship and even identity between the ethical and epistemological, regarding knowledge as necessary for ethical cultivation and ethical cultivation as being necessary for the acquisition of knowledge. He writes:

Everyone who acts without knowledge is like a speck of dust in the wind

*And he who acquires knowledge without practicing it is a loaded donkey.*⁴³

...

Is it useful for the hungry to hold a sickle without ever farming in the fields?

Is it useful for the thirsty to have a rope without ever using it to draw water?

...

If your progress in knowledge does not lead to spiritual growth and detachment from worldly things

You are regressing and harming yourself because you are distancing yourself from God Most High. Consider the saying of the Messenger of God

The peace and blessings of God be on him, his family, and his noble companions:

*"Certainly, going hunting without a weapon is the action of ignorant fools."*⁴⁴

And

Spiritual insight is like the vision of the eye; even the most miniscule particle can prevent it from seeing clearly

*Each of these blameworthy things (no matter how small), down here, in the heart, prevent the lights of God from entering in.*⁴⁵

43 Ahmadu Bamba, *Dīwān fi 'ulūm al-dīniyya lil-Shaykh Aḥmad Bāmbā al-Mbakkay, khādīm al-Rasūl*, ed. Sam Mbaye (Dakar: n.p., 1988), II: 234.

44 Bamba, *Masālik al-Jinān*, 77-78, 20.

45 Ibid. 50.

In addition to popularizing Sufism, Bamba's movement was also notable for its transformation of existing social hierarchies. During this time, most members of Wolof society were members of castes, lineages attached to a certain trade, such as the aristocracy, the *ceddo* warrior caste, the blacksmiths, the leatherworkers, and the Muslim scholars. Bamba sought to erase these social divisions in his *daaras*, assigning manual labor and leatherworking (regarded as menial and degrading tasks) to students from noble backgrounds, and appointing students from low-caste backgrounds to teach the religious sciences. As he wrote, "whatever nobility one might claim for one's ancestors, the truth is that these ancestors originated from water and clay."⁴⁶ He sought to replace the traditional hierarchy of Wolof society which was based on birth and wealth with the hierarchy of his schools and Sufi order, which was based on piety and learning.

Bamba officially divided his educational system into three stages or modes (based on the *Imān-Islām-Ihsan* ternary of the hadith of Jibrīl), each with a different master/teacher (*shaykh*): 1) *ta'līm* (teaching)-the theoretical study of exoteric subjects such as Arabic, reading and memorizing the Qur'an and hadith, *'ilm al-tawhīd* (theology), *fiqh* (Islamic law), and other sciences, such as logic and medicine; 2) *tarbiya* (spiritual training)-the practical education or rearing of the soul through the proper performance of religious rites and regulations (observance of the *sharī'a*), noble behavior and comportment (*adab*), and the purification of the soul from defects and vices through work and Sufism (*taṣawwuf*); and 3) *tarqiya* (ascension)-the perfection of spiritual training, the cultivation of *ihsān*, and realization of direct knowledge of God (*ma'rifat Allāh*).⁴⁷

Only a select few students/disciples ever went through this final stage of instruction, but those who did became highly

46 qtd. in Babou, *Fighting the Greater Jihad*, 99.

47 Babou, "Educating the Murid," 321.

regarded spiritual guides and teachers in their own right. However, all of Bamba's students and disciples were required to undergo *ta'lim* and *tarbiya* to varying degrees, depending on their situation, capacity, and intentions. Many of the people who came to study with Shaykh Aḥmadu Bamba were adults with no knowledge of Arabic, and had neither the time nor the inclination to spend years learning the language (which was necessary for higher-level formal textual study) alongside children. Many notable Muslim scholars and shaykhs also came to study with Bamba, seek his blessing, and become affiliated with his Sufi order.⁴⁸

The two institutions of the *daara* and the *ṭarīqa* spread and continue to carry Bamba's intellectual and spiritual legacy throughout Senegal and the diaspora today. Bamba's political legacy is evident in the city of Touba, which remains a semi-autonomous region of Senegal, governed by the leadership of the Murīd order. Through these institutions and relationships, Shaykh Aḥmadu Bamba and his closest disciples sought to apply his pedagogy of teaching (*ta'lim*), spiritual training (*tarbiya*), and perfection (*tarqiya*) to the diverse array of students who came to them for instruction. Based on his epistemology, Bamba viewed the root cause of the problems afflicting his society as a lack of knowledge in all of its dimensions. The decay and collapse of the old Wolof social order and the encroachment of the new colonial order made this pedagogical crisis particularly acute. He saw his people perishing for lack of the *right kinds* of knowledge, and established his pedagogy and system of education/spiritual training as a way to provide the theoretical, practical, and spiritual knowledge he believed all people needed to lead truly happy and fulfilled lives.

⁴⁸ Babou, *Fighting the Greater Jihad*, 99-100. This tripartite division of education into *ta'lim*, *tarbiyah*, and *tarqiyah* seems to come from the Andalusian scholar and Shādhilī Sufi shaykh, Ibn 'Abbād al-Rundī (d. 1390) whose works were known in the Senegambian region at this time.

The Fayḍa: A Post-Colonial Sufi Revivalist Movement

Perhaps the most influential African Islamic scholar of the 20th-century, the Senegalese Shaykh Ibrāhīm Niasse (d. 1975) founded a branch of the Tijānī order, known as the *Fayḍa* (flood or outpouring) that became the largest Sufi movement on the continent, with some estimates placing its membership in the tens of millions.⁴⁹ Niasse outlined an educational philosophy to Bamba's, but in the face of the new social, political, and economic order of late colonial and post-independence West Africa, he advised his disciples to participate in the new European educational system, as long as they remained grounded in their spiritual training (*tarbiya*), which he popularized on an even greater scale.⁵⁰

Brief History

In 1900, Ibrāhīm Niasse was born in the village of Ṭayba to al-Ḥājj 'Abdallāh Niasse (d. 1922), a prominent Tijānī Sufi scholar and contemporary of Aḥmadu Bamba, who modeled the same kind of religious and political authority as Bamba and al-Ḥājj Mālik Sy during the colonial period. The elder Niasse participated in Maba Diakhou Bā's jihād against the French in the 1860's, and founded the scholarly village of Ṭayba, where he served as a judge (*qāḍī*) and an influential teacher of the Islamic sciences and Sufism. 'Abdallāh Niasse went on ḥājj and visited al-Azhar in Egypt, where he received an honorary diploma (*shahāda*); he also traveled widely throughout West Africa and the Maghreb studying and collecting *ijāzas* from prominent Tijānī scholars, eventually settling in the town of Kaolack in 1911. Niasse's son, Ibrāhīm, was a precocious

49 see Christopher Gray, "The Rise of the Niassene Tijaniyya, 1875 to the Present," *Islam et sociétés au sud du Sahara*, 2 (1988): 34-60; Zachary Wright, *Living Knowledge*, Rüdiger Seesemann, *The Divine Flood*; and Ousmane Kane, "Shaikh al-Islam al-Hajj Ibrahim Niasse," in *Le temps des marabouts*, ed. David Robinson and Jean-Louis Triaud (Paris: Karthala, 1997): 299-316.

50 see Wright, *Living Knowledge*, 192-206.

student showing a remarkable early aptitude for all of the Islamic sciences, especially the Qur'anic sciences, poetry, and Sufism, in which his father instructed him. After the death of his father, although not the eldest son, Ibrāhīm Niasse began to attract hundreds of students, as he was already renowned for his scholarship, teaching, and spiritual attainment, with several local scholars proclaiming that he "did not study these sciences under any human being: he was taught only by the One who is All-Knowing, by means of Divine inspiration (*ilhām*)."⁵¹ His public *tafsīr* sessions, conducted during the month of Ramaḍān, were particularly popular and influential in establishing his reputation as his father's successor in both scholarship and leadership of the Tijānī ṭarīqa.

However, it was the claim to fulfill a Tijānī prediction of a *fayḍa* or flood of *ma'rifa* (direct knowledge of God) that would bring people to Islam and the Tijānī ṭarīqa in droves during a period of great difficulty for humanity,⁵² that began Ibrāhīm Niasse's movement. In 1929, Ibrāhīm Niasse began to publicly declare himself as the possessor of this flood (*ṣāhib al-fayḍa*), and began to dispense a particular form of spiritual training (*tarbiya*) that he and his followers claimed to tremendously accelerate disciples' spiritual progress and attainment of direct knowledge of God (*ma'rifa*). With some passing through the onto-ethico-epistemological stages (*manāzil*) and stations (*maqāmāt*) of the spiritual path as outlined in Tijānī and broader Sufi literature in as little as a few days or weeks. These claims to spiritual authority and disciples' ecstatic utterances (*shaṭihāt*) during their states (*aḥwāl*) of annihilation in God

51 Ibrahim Niasse, *The Removal of Confusion: Concerning the Flood of the Saintly Seal Ahmad al-Tijani: A Translation of Kāshif al-Ilbās an Fayḍa al-Khatm Abī al-'Abbās by Shaykh al-Islam al-Hājj Ibrāhīm b. 'Abd-Allah Niasse*, trans. Zachary Wright, Muhtar Holland, Abdullah el-Okene (Louisville KY: Fons Vitae, 2010), xxxvi.

52 see Seesemann, *The Divine Flood*, 29-58, and *Removal of Confusion*, 81-110 for a description of this prediction and early accounts of Niasse's and his disciples' claims.

(*fanā' fi'llāh*) provoked great controversy amongst Niasse's fellow Tijānīs and Islamic scholars, but Niasse's impeccable scholarly credentials and conformity to the traditional model of the West African scholar-saint-teacher limited the scope of these attacks. Like his father 'Abdullāh, Ibrāhīm Niasse was also careful to retain good relationships and mutual respect with other prominent Sufi scholars of the region and took care not to establish school-villages in territories where other Sufi movements already had a strong presence. This resulted in the majority of Niasse's followers coming from the central Saloum region and Mauritania, and later, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, Chad, and Sudan.

Nevertheless, soon after his first declaration, Niasse moved from his family settlement in Kaolack to the town of Kossi, where he began to dispense this unique spiritual training. While the particular litanies used in this training already existed in Tijānī literature and handbooks, Niasse's followers claimed that it was his own spiritual attainment and the grace granted to him that rendered his spiritual transmission so effective in making accessible the highest levels of both sanctity and mystical knowledge (*ma'rifa*).

Niasse traveled widely in West Africa, where he spread Islam and his branch of the Tijāniyya, often integrating previously-existing networks of Sufism and Islamic scholarship into his movement. In many regions, these changes led to a renaissance of Islamic literary production as Niasse's followers and detractors exchanged treatises and poems, and new scholars (often not from established scholarly families) were emboldened by their affiliation to Niasse and the new hierarchies his *tarbiya* created to write their own works in addition to teaching the classics of the West African curriculum. The increasing availability of print, radio,

television, and air travel also contributed significantly to these trends and the spread of Niasse's movement.⁵³

Ibrāhīm Niasse made the ḥājj several times, and traveled throughout the Middle East and Europe, even making trips to Pakistan and China, establishing relationships and maintaining correspondence with religious and political leaders in addition to teaching and dispensing *tarbiya*. He led the Friday prayer at al-Azhar Mosque in Cairo, where he was awarded the title "Shaykh al-Islam" after impressing the rector and scholars there with his knowledge, and was elected to the Academy of Islamic Research in Cairo. Niasse also served as the vice-president of the World Islamic League (*Rābiṭat al-'Alām al-Islām*) based in Mecca. While Niasse was popular in the Middle East, it did not stop him from criticizing what he saw as the religious deficiencies of the Arab world, particularly the secular politics and practices of Arab nationalism.

While Niasse insisted in an interview that "I am not the founder of a political party (*ḥizb*), or the leader of a sect (*tā'ifa*)."⁵⁴ -he nevertheless was an important political figure who advised the leaders of African independence movements and newly-independent states such as Sekou Touré of Guinea, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, and Ahmadu Bello and Yakubu Gowon of Nigeria. He wrote a treatise entitled "Africa for the Africans" promoting African independence and political unity, but advised his followers to use the weapons of supplication (*du'ā*) and litanies (*aḥzāb* and *awrād*) to free their lands of European colonial oppression instead of taking up armed struggle—unless the European powers threatened the practice of Islam. He did however, encourage participation in the democratic political processes of the newly-independent nations, while maintaining that

53 For example, see Andrea Brigaglia, "Learning, Gnosis and Exegesis: Public Tafsīr and Sufi Revival in the City of Kano (Northern Nigeria), 1950-1970," *Die Welt des Islams* 49, 3-4 (2009): 334-366.

54 qtd. in *Ibid.* 274.

God's rights and law superseded that of the state. His political rhetoric was centered more on justice than the religious identity of the ruler, as he often declared, "Beware of injustice, for if it persists, it can only bring destruction. A believer can live for a long time with those of no faith, but he will not last long with the unjust."⁵⁵ All of this earned Niasse the suspicion of many colonial and post-colonial governments who surveilled him and his disciples through wiretaps, interception of correspondence, and spies.⁵⁶

Nevertheless Niasse insisted that his project was simply one of "reviving the Sunna" through teaching the Islamic sciences and facilitating access to direct knowledge of God (*ma'rifa*), which was for him and his community, both the crown and foundation of the Islamic tradition.

In general, Niasse's approach to reform was based on the classical Islamic epistemological and pedagogical of cultivating people who fully embodied the Sunna, the "Walking Qur'ans" of Rudolph Ware's formulation (following the hadith). It was through such people and the communities that developed around them that true reform was believed to take place, as in the examples of Shaykh Aḥmadu Bamba and 'Uthmān ibn Fūdī. In contrast, as Zachary Wright contends,

"Modern" reformers suggest that Islam's success was found in modern political power... For Islamists, the modern state became the key evaluative reference, representing a new conception of religious authority and subjectivity. Islam's involvement in politics was not new; it was the harnessing of Islam to the modern state, which was structurally and ideologically unwilling to admit alternative modes of authority, religious or otherwise, that was new... Reformists attempted to produce good servants of the idealized Islamic state. The community of Ibrāhīm Niasse, like many other West African

55 Ibid. 266.

56 Ibid. 265.

clerical communities, remained committed to producing good servants of God.⁵⁷

By the end of Niasse's life, his movement could claim over millions of followers, mostly in West Africa, but over the past few decades the *Fayḍa* has made significant in-roads in the Middle East, North America, Western Europe, South East Asia, and the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa.⁵⁸

Role of Sufism and Education in the Movement

The main vehicle of Niasse's reform movement was his branch of the Tijānī Sufi order, the representatives (*muqaddams*) of which he authorized to dispense spiritual training and train new *muqaddams*, who were the primary vector for the spread of the *Fayḍa*. However, the transmission of Niasse's texts and perspective was often accomplished through the scholarly channels of teacher-student relationships. As Zachary Wright writes,

For the community of Ibrāhīm Niasse, the method of teaching Islamic knowledge, including Sufism, reactivated and adapted an enduring *habitus*—learned subjectivity, acquired disposition, or way of “inhabiting” the world—that had characterized West African Muslim identity for centuries. True knowledge, whether of jurisprudence, of God's revealed word, or of God Himself, was actualized through the physical presence of a living master. The community thus attempted to preserve the transmission of knowledge through the teacher's inscription of disposition into the student's very being.⁵⁹

However, in the 1960s, in response to the need for government-recognized diplomas and French-language

57 Ibid. 291. This is somewhat of an overgeneralization as the various strands of reformism in West Africa have very different orientations towards the modern nation state (For example, see Alex Thurston, *Salafism in Nigeria: Islam, Preaching, and Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

58 see Gray, “The Rise of the Niassene Tijaniyya.”

59 Wright, *Living Knowledge*, 4.

education to secure employment in the post-colonial state, Niasse founded a government-accredited Franco-Arabe *madrassa* which taught Arabic and Islamic subjects alongside modern, Western-style subjects and French in Western-style classrooms with desks and blackboards and timed classes. Niasse encouraged his disciples to "make every effort to seek and acquire more knowledge; not only Islamic knowledge, not only mathematics and its branches, but also be a part of and co-operate with those whose zeal is to discover the unknown and unseen things of this world,"⁶⁰ while maintaining the traditional Qur'an schools and learning circles (*majālis*) and above all, relying on their spiritual training (*tarbiya*) to acquire *ma'rifa*, the direct knowledge of God, which for Niasse and other Sufis was both the foundation and goal, not only of Islamic education, but also human existence. As Shaykh Tijānī 'Alī Cissé, one of Ibrāhīm Niasse's grandsons and successors said:

The most important of the religious obligations and the most sublime honor, as it is the foundation of faith and the goal of Islam. The Knowledge of God is the utmost goal in the perfection of the human condition, the highest rank of spiritual realization, and the most cherished ideal... Mankind's knowledge (*ma'rifa*) of God is above all other types of knowledge.⁶¹

Comparison of Reform Movements

Epistemology

While the reform movements of the Sokoto Jihād, Aḥmadu Bamba's Murīdiyya, and the Fayḍa of Ibrāhīm Niasse took place in radically different socio-political climates and historical contexts, all three movements were based upon the centrality

60 Ibid. 199.

61 Tidiane Ali Cissé, *What the Knowers of Allah Have Said about the Knowledge of Allah*, trans. Zachary Wright and Muhammad Hassiem Abdullahi (Atlanta: Fayda Books, 2014), 20.

of knowledge as the primary vector for reform, and a conception of knowledge and its transmission, an epistemology and a pedagogy, that Rüdiger Seesemann has dubbed the *sanad* paradigm, after the chains of personal transmission (*sanad*) through which knowledge and texts were transmitted in traditional Islamic learning circles (*majālis*) around the world. In this paradigm, students would typically study a text with someone who had studied with someone who had been granted an *ijāza* (a diploma, an authorization or license to teach the text) by someone else who had studied the text and been granted an *ijāza* by someone else...all the way back to the author of the text, and in the case of the Qur'an and hadith, and Sufi initiations, back to the Prophet himself. As Seesemann writes, obtaining such an *ijāza* and "becoming attached to the master's *sanad* is not limited to discursive means of knowledge transmission but also implies the acquisition of the required habitus (*adab*), learned through *mulāzama*—that is, "spending extensive periods of time in the company of the master."⁶² As William Graham has emphasized, in this traditional Islamic epistemological and pedagogical paradigm, "truth does not reside in documents, however authentic, ancient, or well-preserved, but in authentic human beings and their personal connections with one another."⁶³ This orientation has profound implications for Islamic pedagogies, as Rüdiger Seesemann explains:

If the acquisition of *adab* is contingent on person-to-person transmission, and if we conceive of *adab* in this context as a habitus that can only be attained through internalization rather than communication through oral or written channels, a full appreciation of *adab* as character formation requires us to widen our focus to include not only "book knowledge" in the analysis, but also actual practices that characterize student-

62 see Seesemann, "Ideology or Epistemology," 239.

63 William Graham, "Traditionalism in Islam: An Essay in Interpretation," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 23, 3 (1993): 505.

teacher relationships. *Adab* in this sense was, and continues to be, a practice based on physical absorption and embodiment rather than an abstract ethical concept confined to and taught through written tracts. As such, it escapes textual fixation, regardless of the large number of treatises composed to define the proper code of conduct, whether for Sufis, teachers, students, preachers, judges, or rulers.⁶⁴

Thus, not only ethical cultivation is important to the acquisition of knowledge, but certain forms of knowledge are inaccessible to those without the proper ethical qualifications. From the perspective of the Sufis, this is because knowledge is contained in the heart, which is often likened to a mirror that can be "occluded or rusted" by corrupt passions, character flaws, and evil thoughts and "polished" (in the terms of a *ḥadīth*) by keeping company with and obeying a spiritual master (*shaykh*) and by spiritual exercises such as the remembrance/invocation (*dhikr*) of God, prayer, fasting, contemplation (*fikr*) and observing the *sharī'a* (divine law) and the *sunna* (Prophetic example). Knowledge was and is seen as a Divine bestowal that could not be received or contained by a heart or intellect unprepared for it—just as damp wood cannot carry flame or a sieve cannot carry water. Thus, higher or more subtle forms of knowledge required a higher degree of spiritual/ethical cultivation, just as a loosely-woven basket can carry wood chips, but not sand. In a famous sermon given in Mauritania, Shaykh Ibrāhīm Niassé explained:

The first thing required of the believing servant is to know knowledge, and reverence (*taqwā*) is the key to knowledge. God, Most High says, *Revere God and God will teach you, God is of every thing knowing* (2:282). The first thing required of man is knowledge. So whoever desires knowledge, let him revere God. As Imām Shāfi'ī has said in this regard:

I complained to Waki' of the weakness of my memory
And he advised me to leave aside disobedience

64 Seesemann, "Ilm and Adab Revisited," 24.

He told me that knowledge is a light
And God does not give light to the disobedient

Reverence (*taqwā*) is conforming to the commands and avoiding the prohibitions outwardly and inwardly. I say reverence (*taqwā*) is avoiding leaving what God has made obligatory for you and avoiding doing what God has prohibited...⁶⁵

This stands in sharp contrast to modern pedagogical and epistemological paradigms in which the ethical and epistemological are conceived of as separate. The difference between these two paradigms is succinctly defined by Michel Foucault:

If we define spirituality as being the form of practices which postulate that, such as he is, the subject is not capable of the truth, but that, such as it is, the truth can transfigure and save the subject, then we can say that the modern age of the relations between the subject and truth begins when it is postulated that, such as he is, the subject is capable of truth, but that, such as it is, the truth cannot save the subject.⁶⁶

In the traditional epistemological paradigm, the acquisition of knowledge was a sacred process that necessarily involved the spiritual purification and transformation of the knowing subject in order for it to be able to access and contain knowledge of the known object, whereas in the "modern" paradigm, knowledge is conceived of as information to which every and anyone potentially has access. There are no moral or spiritual qualifications necessary to learn modern mathematics or physics, whereas the traditional paradigm held that the deeper levels of meaning of the Qur'an, *sunna*, and even that of sciences such as mathematics and logic were

65 Ibrāhīm Inyās, *Jawahir al-Rasa'il Wa-Yaliyya Ziyadat al-Jawahir al-Hawi ba'd Ulum Wasilat al-Wasa'il*, ed. Aḥmad Abī Fath (Borno: n.p, n.d.), 56.

66 Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1981–82*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 19.

inaccessible to those without the necessary spiritual cultivation. From this perspective, attempting to access these deeper levels of knowledge without the concomitant spiritual cultivation would be like trying to understand a symphony with your ears blocked—you would see something but miss the essential meaning.

Louis Brenner has called this modern paradigm “the rationalist episteme” in contrast to the traditional “esoteric episteme,” while Rüdiger Seesemann refers to the former (in the Islamic context) as a “*dalīl* (scriptural evidence)-based paradigm,” and the latter as the “*sanad* (chain of transmission)-based paradigm.” So despite the profound contextual differences and practical approaches of the three reform movements considered in this article, all of them were founded and based on the traditional “esoteric episteme” or *sanad*-paradigm, which is why they prioritized intellectual and spiritual cultivation through spending time with realized teachers and Sufi masters as the primary means of cultivating and transmitting reform.

Sufism and the Political/Military

While the spread of Western-style education has led to the retreat of the *sanad*-paradigm throughout the world, in West Africa, this paradigm of conceptualizing, cultivating and transmitting knowledge has remained popular in the institutions of Sufi orders to the present day. However, while the Sokoto movement, the Mūrīdiyya, and the Fayḍa can all be classified Sufi movements, yet the form and function of Sufism was distinct in each movement. In Ibn Fūdī’s jihād, Sufism appears to have been a predominantly elite movement limited to scholarly families and their students, and although Sufi orders existed in the region, their litanies and practices were primarily transmitted through lineage and teacher-student relationships rather than the *ṭarīqa* structures that emerged later in the region. As such, while Ibn Fūdī’s practice of Sufism was essential to his conception and personal justification of the

jihād, participation in the movement did not require participation in Sufism, except at the highest levels. Moreover, Ibn Fūdī's reform project involved both a "top-down" reform of the state and society achieved through primarily military and bureaucratic means as well as an "inside-out" reform achieved primarily through educational and spiritual means.

In contrast, despite the profound political power Bamba and his deputies wielded in Touba and their teaching settlements, the Murīd movement emphasized the latter dimension of educational reform more than the "top-down" state reform of the Sokoto Jihād. However, it should not be forgotten that the social practice and implementation of the *sharī'a* was part and parcel of the spiritual practice of Ibn Fūdī, Bamba, Niasse and their representatives, so a divide between the "spiritual" and the "political" does not necessarily obtain in these cases. Bamba's movement also explicitly involved Sufism at all but the lowest levels of participation (and even here, virtually all of the teachers authorized by Bamba had gone through Sufi initiation and training) and marked a kind of merging of the networks of Qur'an schools and scholarly networks with networks of Sufi initiation and training. While, like Ibn Fūdī, Bamba's practice of Sufism was foundational to the formulation of his mission (and its success, in the view of Bamba and his followers), the results were very different: a Sufi order, network of schools, and scholarly settlements in French colonial Senegambia for Bamba, and the largest state in 19th century Africa for Ibn Fūdī.

However, it is Ibrāhīm Niasse's transnational movement that Sufism and the structure of the Sufi order (*ṭarīqa*) appears to be the most central. While Wright has demonstrated that traditional Islamic scholarly transmission and Qur'anic study played a larger role in Niasse's religious authority and the *Fayḍa* movement than previously described in the secondary literature, it was through the institution of the Tijānī *ṭarīqa* that Niasse's project of reform was primarily accomplished.

Niasse's reform movement was founded on facilitating access to *ma'rifa* through the practice of *tarbiya*, which was popularized on a scale hitherto unseen in West Africa. New Muslims, housewives, servants, truck drivers, and leatherworkers were believed to be able to join the scions of prominent scholarly and *sharīfian* families in accessing the highest levels of Islamic knowledge and ethical perfection by undergoing *tarbiya*. Quoting the adage, "seek knowledge of God before you worship Him, for if you don't know Him, how can you worship Him?" members of the *Fayḍa* often regarded *tarbiya* and the acquisition of *ma'rifa* as the beginning or foundation of the quest for Islamic knowledge, with many of them undergoing *tarbiya* early on in their training or before any study of the outward sciences (*'ulūm al-rasmī*). Although Sufism played a prominent role in the movements of Bamba and Ibn Fūdī, it appears to have been most central in the *Fayḍa*, where participation in the movement was essentially identified with initiation into the Tijāniyya and successfully undergoing the process of *tarbiya*, which produced a radically reformed subjectivity.

While Niasse had considerable political influence, advising several African and Middle Eastern heads of state and local political leaders, he generally eschewed involvement in party politics and seemed to keep both the colonial and post-colonial state at a healthy distance, and his interactions with these political leaders seems to have been primarily motivated by securing the safety and welfare of his disciples in particular, Muslims in general, and fulfilling what he understood to be his spiritual function and mission of spreading *ma'rifa* throughout the world and facilitating ease for people in this life and the next. Niasse's movement was and is by far the most popular and international of the three, but it is also the least centralized and explicitly politically organized—although sections of the town of Kaolack and surrounding villages, as well as numerous communities throughout West Africa are

essentially run by Niasse's family and disciples who are responsible for a number of educational and "development" initiatives.⁶⁷ Bamba's movement remains highly centralized and organized under the structure of the Murīdiyya Sufi order, which governs the city of Touba and is responsible for a number of independently-funded schools, mosques, and even a university. The Sokoto Jihād resulted in the creation of a large and powerful state, whose structures the British adapted, co-opted, and transformed through a policy of indirect rule in the colonial period. As a result, the Sultanate of Sokoto still exists as do most of the traditional Emirates and offices of Emir, although as Muhammad Sani Umar notes, these positions gradually went from being ones of immense political/military power and little direct social influence, to now being positions of tremendous social and religious influence with little direct political or military power.⁶⁸

Less obvious, however, is the immense scholarly legacy of the Sokoto Jihād, whose texts and networks of scholarly families and schools continue to produce some of the region's most influential Islamic scholars and Sufis. The intellectual/spiritual legacy of Ibn Fūdī's movement also lives on in the Sokoto sultanate in-exile in Maiurno, Sudan, which was founded when Attahiru I, the 12th Sultan of Sokoto, and a number of his followers made *hijra* after their defeat at the hands of the British in 1902 instead of submitting to colonial

67 For example, see Adam Barnes, "A Comparative Spirituality of Liberation: The Anti-Poverty Struggles of the Poverty Initiative and the Tijaniyya Sufi of Kiota," (PhD diss., Union Theological Seminary, 2016); Abdoulaye Sounaye, "'Go Find the Second Half of Your Faith with These Women!' Women Fashioning Islam in Contemporary Niger," *The Muslim World* 101, 3 (2011): 539-554; and Pearl T. Robinson, *African Traditional Rulers and the Modern State: the Linkage Role of Chiefs in the Republic of Niger* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975).

68 "Exploring Islam in Nigeria," *The Harvard Gazette*, September 27, 2011, <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2011/09/exploring-islam-in-nigeria/>. Accessed June 20, 2021.

rule. Although Attahiru was killed by British forces while fleeing, his son Mai Wurno, managed to escape with a small contingent of loyalists and settled in the region of Sennar on the Blue Nile in Sudan.⁶⁹ This small community of scholars and merchants continues to teach the texts and transmit the intellectual and spiritual legacy of the Sokoto scholars, and through the efforts of Muhammad Shareef and his Sankore Institute of Islamic-African Studies, the spiritual and intellectual legacy of the Sokoto movement has spread throughout the African diaspora in the Americas and Caribbean.⁷⁰

Conclusion

While spiritual education was central in all three reform movements, and based upon the same classical epistemological paradigm, the radically different contexts (pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial), and visions of their leaders led to distinct mechanisms of spiritual education, and radically different outcomes. The Sokoto Jihād led to the creation of a large state and the spread of Islamic education—including Sufism—throughout its territory and beyond—inspiring similar jihād movements throughout the region. The Murīdiyya and Fayḍa were explicitly non-military, and while the traditional structures of the Qur'an school and teaching village played an important role in both movements, the structure of the *ṭarīqa* became more and more important as modern, Western-style schools replaced the traditional Islamic teaching circles (*majālis*). Sufism and the spiritual education of Sufi training (*tarbiya*) was increasingly central in these latter reform movements, which popularized the explicit practice of Sufism and membership in a Sufi order on a scale hitherto unseen in the region, resulting in Sufism being more popular

69 see Toyin Falola, *Colonialism and Violence in Nigeria* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 15-16.

70 see <https://siiasi.org/>

in West Africa than any other region of the world.⁷¹ Nevertheless, the foundation of all of these reform movements was the quest of their founders to conform themselves to the model of the Sunna, and the methods of transmission of knowledge (*'ilm*), *adab*, and *ma'rifa* they used to convey effectively the living embodiments of the sunna to their communities.

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71 A recent study by the Pew Research Center reported that 92% of Senegalese Muslims, and 37% of Nigerian and Ghanaian Muslims claimed affiliation with a Sufi order (Pew Research Center 2012). Pew Research Center. "The World's Muslims: Unity and Diversity," Last modified August 9, 2012, <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/08/09/the-worlds-muslims-unity-and-diversity-1-religious-affiliation/>. Accessed January 12, 2019.

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The Cultural Heritage of Islam in Mozambique: The Case of 'Ajamī Manuscript Culture

Chapane Mutiua*

ABSTRACT

This article, drawn from extensive literature review, fieldwork, and archival research, serves a dual purpose: investigating the history of 'ajamī manuscript culture in Mozambique and elucidating its role as an element of cultural heritage within the Muslim communities. Despite the cultural richness and diverse local communities, Mozambique's historiography inadequately represents the Islamic narrative, although officially acknowledged as protected cultural heritage. The article argues that 'ajamī manuscript culture is conspicuously neglected, not only in the public domain but also among Muslims, despite legal protection. It contends for the inclusion of 'ajamī manuscripts in Mozambique's cultural heritage, aligning with the cultural policy emphasizing culture's pivotal role in development. Structured into four sections, the essay explores the adoption of the Arabic alphabet, categorizes 'ajamī manuscripts, examines materiality, and addresses the safeguarding of tangible and intangible aspects. The conclusion calls for rectifying the marginalization of 'ajamī manuscript culture in Mozambique's cultural discourse.

1. Introduction

Based on literature review, fieldwork, and archival research, this article has a twofold aim. On the one hand, it examines the history of 'ajamī manuscript culture in Mozambique and, on

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the other, it describes its social role as cultural heritage of Mozambique's Muslim communities. Through that, it offers a descriptive narrative that forms part of the complex puzzles of Mozambican identity(ies). The territory of nowadays Mozambique had been already connected with the South-East Asian region and the wider Indian Ocean prior to Islam. With the advent of Islam in seventh century AD, Arab and Persian traders who carried the then new faith and religion brought it to the East, Central, and Southern Africa through their trading networks. Mozambique served as the main hub of trade between the wider Indian Ocean and Southern Africa. The routes of trade became the routes of Islam. This long history of Islam in Mozambique, although rich in sources and diverse in cultural manifestation through the local communities, is poorly represented in the country's historiography. It is officially part of the country's protected cultural heritage.

The article argues that *'ajamī* manuscript culture in Mozambique is one of the most neglected elements of cultural heritage not only in the general public sphere but also among Muslims. Cultural heritage in Mozambique is officially defined and legally protected by the Decree 10/88 of 22nd December.¹ According to this decree, cultural heritage is defined as a set of material (tangible) and immaterial (intangible) goods or values produced or incorporated into local culture throughout history, which play an important role for the definition of national or indigenous cultural identity.² Adding to this legal and foundational approach, the Mozambican government approved a political instrument in 1997 to guide the paths of cultural management in national level, the "Política Cultural e suas estratégias de implementação" – cultural policy and its strategies of implementation - which highlights in 'point 1', the principle through which the state promotes the development of culture and national personalities; and guarantees free

1 República Popular de Moçambique 1988, 13-14.

2 Ibid.

expression of the traditions and values of Mozambican societies. The policy defines culture as a complex group of ways of being, behaviour and relationship (Republic of Mozambique 1997, 'point 1'). The document considers that culture is at the centre of social and economic development ('point 2.1.a'). Combining the Decree 18/88 of 22nd of December and the "cultural policy," we can assume that '*ajamī* manuscripts and the culture in which they are produced should be included in the large mosaic of Mozambican cultural heritage. However, research undertaken along the last ten years in the area of '*ajamī* manuscript suggests that the academic approach and political discourse in Mozambique marginalizes the practice and the products of '*ajamī* literacy. In relation to the abovementioned framework, this essay is organized in four sections. The first section introduces and describes the history of establishment and development of the use of Arabic alphabet by the Muslim communities of Mozambique. The second section approaches different typologies of '*ajamī* manuscripts, the textual genres and layouts. The third section approaches the issues of materiality in the context of the Mozambican '*ajamī* manuscript culture. The fourth section explores issues concerned with the safeguarding of the tangible and intangible components of the Mozambican '*ajamī* manuscript culture. The article closes with some concluding lines and recommendations for future research.

2. '*Ajamī* manuscripts in Mozambique

The term '*ajamī* is rooted in an Arabic word (عجمي) meaning foreigner or non-Arabic. It has historically developed as the use of Arabic script for the register of non-Arabic languages worldwide. In Africa, '*ajamī* occurs in several Muslim societies such as Swahili, Hausa, Kanuri, Bambara, Malinké, Yoruba, Soninké, Koti, Makhuwa, Afrikaans, and Fulfulde among others. The development of '*ajamī* literacy in Mozambique is the result of the diffusion of Islam and Islamic education in the

region. As approached above, Islam arrived in Mozambique during the first century of its revelation to the Prophet Muhammad (saw). According to Trimingham,³ the expansion of Islam in East Africa developed through three stages. The first stage, he classifies as the stage of "quarantine Islam". During this phase, Islam was confined to the coastal and commercial entrepots where the Arab and Persian Muslim traders were settled and engaged with trade rather than the spread of Islam. The quarantine Islam period in the eastern coast of Africa started in the first century AH corresponding to seventh century AD and lasted until the fifth century AH corresponding to twelfth/thirteenth century AD.

The second stage of the expansion of Islam was termed the "court Islam". During this phase, Islam was voluntarily received by the African rulers (mainly those of the coast but also in the hinterland), who were in constant contact with Arab and Persian Muslim traders. The court Islam in Mozambique must have lasted from the fifth century AH (twelfth/thirteenth century AD) to the second half of the nineteenth century AD. During this period, many Muslim city-states were founded or/and developed along the coast of Mozambique. The final and third stage was termed the "popular Islam". During this period which starts from the second half of nineteenth century AD, Islam was spread from the court to the ordinary people through the *tariqa* networks. It is important to highlight that the two earlier stages of the expansion of Islam were characterized by limitations in the context of Islamic education which was non-inclusive (of the masses) and elitist. However, the stage of "popular Islam" was characterized by the spread of Muslim schools which adopted a more inclusive approach. Another dividing line between the "court Islam" and the "popular Islam" is marked by the shift from Arabic language to

3 J. S. Trimingham, *Islam in East Africa*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964).

Kiswahili* as the language of teaching and learning in the Qur'anic schools. This is also an important moment for the development of 'ajamī manuscript culture in the Swahili coast. However, this does not mean that Swahili 'ajamī manuscript did not exist before the second half of nineteenth century AD.

In fact, the earliest Swahili 'ajamī manuscripts were produced during the period of "court Islam". *Qasida Hamziyya* a Swahili rendition of *Qasida al-Burda* composed by the Egyptian poet al-Būṣīrī and *Chuo cha Herekali* or *Utendi wa Tambuka* (composed/produced in 1728) by Bwana Mungu b. Athumani, another Swahili rendition of the Arabic poems about the stories of the battle of Tabuk are considered the earliest Swahili 'ajamī literary productions (Knappert 1968), and they mark the transition from Arabic language to Kiswahili as the literary language of East African Muslims. The occurrence of these earlier translations and adaptations of Arabic literature, most of them from *maghazi* traditions to Swahili suggest that by this period (early eighteenth century) Kiswahili which was already established as a *lingua franca* in the spheres of trade and politics, was gradually assuming important role in the arena of literature, religious mediation and education. In nineteenth century, with the massive spread of Islamic education through the *turuq* followed by the above-mentioned shift in literary and educational language to Kiswahili, 'ajamī literacy practice enjoyed its highest peak in northern Mozambican Muslim societies. Such development was witnessed by the huge numbers of the nineteenth century 'ajamī correspondence,⁴ and the abundance of *tenzi* poems

* While "Swahili" can refer to the people, the culture, and the language, "Kiswahili" refers to the language alone. When speaking the language, the language is called "Kiswahili". The prefix "ki" refers to a language with any language. For example, the Swahili name for the English language is "Kiingereza". (ed.n.)

⁴ see Chapane Mutiua, "Ajami Literacy, Class and Portuguese Pre-Colonial Administration in Northern Mozambique", (MA Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 2014) and Liazzat Bonate, "Tradition and Transition: Islam and

most of which were composed in this period. The 'ajamī literacy practice was also very active from the second half of nineteenth century to the 1990s. During this period, the northern Mozambican Muslim intellectuals not only imported the Swahili texts circulating in the western Indian Ocean, but they also composed poems, prose texts, and educational works of their own. Examples of these texts can be found in *Utenzi wa Naby Musa*, *Utenzi wa Nazajina*, *Utenzi wa Kaisari*, *Utenzi wa Tambuka* and *Utenzi wa Khupula*. These poems were vividly performed in public and private ceremonies in the regions of Angoche, Moma, Moginqual, Mussoril, Mozambique Island, and Nacala. Other examples of expansion and appropriation of 'ajamī literature in northern Mozambique can be found in the local composed *qasida* or translation of Swahili and Arabic *qasida* into Emakhuwa and Ekoti.

The massive acceptance of 'ajamī literature favoured the growth of 'ajamī literacy practice in the coastal regions of Cabo Delgado and Nampula and the hinterland province of Niassa, all of them with a large majority of Muslim population. As a consequence, many Islamic scholars who specialized in scribal works played important roles in the context of 'ajamī as well as overall Islamic manuscript culture. Scribes had the role of copying the manuscripts which were previously produced both locally and abroad. Their works were ordered under commission of local intellectuals who owned Qur'anic schools (in the case of teaching materials) and performing groups (in the case of *tenzi* poem manuscripts). The raising of importance of the scribes introduced a competitive approach among them which was based on the beautifulness of their writing and calligraphy. Some of the scribes became famous.

In the area of Angoche, for instance, the names of Abubakar b. Muhammad, Muhammad b. Abdallah, Omar b. Abdallah, Muhammad b. Saddiq and Molide b. Muhomade became

Chiefship in Northern Mozambique, ca. 1850-1975", (PhD. Dissertation, Cape Town: 2007).

references in the area of copying the manuscripts. Other scribes were referenced in commission of writing correspondence, a tradition that was adopted even in the Portuguese colonial administration with the creation of the position of *lingoas dos estado* or state official translators.⁵ While the scribes of correspondence were also requested to have some notions of Kiswahili and Arabic languages which were still in use, the scribes of *tenzi* literature were only requested to have a beautiful *hati* (calligraphy). The work of the scribes emphasized the important role of traditional Qur'anic schools, locally termed as *kioni* or *chuo*, where handwriting and beautiful *hati* were cultivated since the earlier stages of education. According to Sheikh Hussein b. Hussein,⁶ the use of *lipau* (*lawh*) was fundamental for the development of handwriting technics which together with memorization were considered as important tools for the earlier levels of Qur'anic education in the region. In this sense, traditional Qur'anic education was intimately connected with the development of '*ajamī*' literacy practice in northern Mozambique in two aspects. On the one hand, the development of handwriting abilities within the system of traditional Qur'anic education prompted the creation of a class of scribes who produced and reproduced the manuscripts. On the other hand, the development of recitation and memorization also created the class of performers and interpreters of *tenzi* literature; that assumed the role of 'popular literature' between the 1960's and the 1980's in northern Mozambican Muslim societies.

Tenzi literature and correspondence were the most popular and well-spread products of '*ajamī*' literacy practice in northern Mozambique. As mentioned above, its highest peak concerning

5 Chapane Mutiua, "Swahili Manuscripts from Northern Mozambique: Some Notes on Ajami Correspondence Letters", in *One Text, Many Forms – A Comparative View of the Variability of Swahili Manuscripts*, edited by Ridder H. Samsom and Clarissa Vierke, (Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures Universität Hamburg 2021), 31.

6 interviewed in Angoche in 2019.

the production and usage lasted until the late 1980s. In early 1990s, with the massive arrival of TV entertainment systems to the region⁷ as well as the rise of a new wave of conservative Islamic perspective among the *ulama* in the country,⁸ contributed to the dropping down of the practice of '*ajamī* literacy which was accentuated by the shift from traditional Qur'anic education to the modern *madrasah*.⁹

The spread of TV entertainment in northern Mozambique was dynamized by the returners from the German Democratic Republic who introduced the TV and Video Home Systems (VHS) into the tents. The VHS tents attracted the masses who saw on them the opportunity to see TV recorded programs and movies. The arrival of VHS coincided with the rapid spread of the new wave of more conservative approaches whereby the *ulama* preached against the performance of *tenzi* poetry, *dhikr* and the recitation of *qasida* in the traditional way it was made before. Adding to this, and as mentioned above, the transformations made in the system of Muslim education promoted the abandonment of the use of *lipau* and introduced the blackboards and exercise books in the 'modern *madrasah*'. This move is considered as the 'choke knot' that blocked the social reproduction of '*ajamī* literacy practice.¹⁰

Apart from the desertion of the traditional methods and tools of Islamic education such as the use of *lipau*, Hussein b. Hussein (interviewed in Angoche in 2019) points out that one of the most negative impacts on the '*ajamī* literacy practice originates from degradation of the relationship between the learner and the teacher within the system of Islamic education. According to this local intellectual, children do not have the

7 This was said during interviews in Angoche.

8 See Liazzat Bonate, "Islamic Education in Mozambique", *Annual Review of Islam in South Africa*, no 9, (2006-7): 53-57.

9 *Ibid.*, 56, for more details about the change from traditional Qur'anic education to modern *madrasah*.

10 Interviews with Chame b. Jamal, Angoche 2019, and Hussein b. Hussein, Angoche, 2019.

patience to follow what the teachers say because the moral value that surrounded the whole system was broken and the use of black boards do not promote the practice of beautiful *hati*. In addition, the current system of Islamic education is centred on a foreign curriculum since the books in use are produced and sponsored by foreign organization.¹¹ Another innovation accused of negatively impacting the '*ajamī* literacy practice by the supporters of traditional system of *kioni* is introduction of training and salary payment for the teachers of *madrassas*. The training of teachers of the *madrassahs* is made through foreign programs. Unlike the previous system where the teachers of the *kioni* or *chuo* were working for the community without any fixed salary, the teachers in the current system of Muslim education earn salaries sponsored by foreign organizations. The current system is accused of de-nationalization of the youth by ignoring the local and national culture (Sheikh Tahiri, Nampula, 2022).¹² The disregard of local and national culture includes the marginalization of the '*ajamī* literacy practice as well as the '*ajamī* literature, considered as the emblematic symbol of the local and transregional identity of East African Muslim communities.¹³ In the next section, I approach '*ajamī* manuscript culture and literature focusing on the definition and typological analysis.

3. Typology of '*Ajamī* Manuscripts in Mozambique

Manuscript culture is a complex concept that is better understood from the cultural studies approach that views culture as a methodological guide for history and memory.¹⁴

11 Sheikh Tahiri, Nampula, 2022; speech given during the "Atelier Filosófico" on 15th of August 2022.

12 Speech given during the "Atelier Filosófico" on 15th of August 2022.

13 Chapane Mutiua, "Bridging the Land to the Sea: *Tenzi* Literature, Oral Historiography and the Construction of Identities from Late 19th Century Angoche", (PhD. Dissertation, Universität Hamburg, 2022), 18.

14 Alon Confino, "Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method", *The American Historical Review*, vol. 102, no. 5 (Dec., 1997): 1386.

Confino adds that the concept of culture viewed in this way provides sources for the study of history and through this it paves the paths for the understanding of individual and collective identities.¹⁵ This approach helps to understand how 'ajamī manuscript culture contributes to the construction of Mozambican identity and represents the legacy of Mozambican Islamic culture. Confino assists our argument in approaching 'ajamī manuscript culture as part of cultural heritage. This argument is complemented by Stryker and Burke's approach on the concept of identity as an object of scientific disciplines such as history, sociology, psychology, cultural and literary studies,¹⁶ which highlights the connection between culture, history, literacy and identity. Muhammad Haron contributed to this debate by arguing that manuscripts (or written artefacts) "are important because they lock away aspects of the past which can shed light on the present and future."¹⁷ The link between the past, present and future, is also the main role of cultural heritage in whatever shape and origin. However, the studies on 'ajamī literacy in African societies has expanded the scope of the scientific disciplines related and fed by this phenomenon.

The extension of the scope of 'ajamī script in African societies and in Mozambique, particularly, is due to its multiple use in diversified fields of social, political and spiritual interests. Many scholars have raised interest in African 'ajamī studies, most of them with focus on religious education, literature and chancellery or epistolary documentation.¹⁸ In Mozambique 'ajamī manuscripts were

15 Ibid.

16 S. Stryker, & P. J. Burke, "The Past, Present, and Future of an Identity Theory", *Social Psychology Quarterly*, vol. 63 no. 4, (2000): 284.

17 Mohammed Haron, "The Making, Preservation and Study of South African Ajami MSS and Texts", *Sudanic Africa*, vol. 12, (2001): 3.

18 see Dmitry Bondarev, "Qur'anic Exegesis in Old Kanembu: Linguistic Precision for Better Interpretation", *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, vol. XV, no. 3 (2013): 56-83; Nikolai Dobranravin, "Classical Hausa Glosses in a

first revealed in an unpublished paper by Jan Knappert who had received what he then termed as "Swahili manuscript in Arabic script on Islamic theology,"¹⁹ which was probably shared by Eugeniusz Rzewuski. Nancy Hafkin and Eugeniusz Rzewuski pioneered the studies of Swahili 'ajamī literature in Mozambique that were later continued by Liazzat Bonate and Chapane Mutiua.²⁰ The emphasis of this earlier studies like in many other regions of Africa, was focused on the chancellery manuscripts, critical literary editions and the use of the

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- Nineteenth Century Qur'anic Manuscript: A Case of 'Translational Reading' in Sudanic Africa", *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, vol. XV, no. 3 (2013): 84-122; Darya Ogorodnikova, "'Ajami Annotations in Bilingual and Manuscripts from Mande Speaking Areas: Visual and Linguistic Features", *Islamic Africa*, vol. 8, (2017): 111-143; Xavier Luffin, "On the Swahili Documents in Arabic Script from the Congo (19th Century)", *Swahili Forum*, vol. 14, (2007): 17-26.
- 19 Jan Knappert, *The Discovery of an Unknown Swahili Manuscript in Arabic Script on Islamic Theology in Mozambique*, [1991], Unpublished notice.
- 20 See Eugeniusz Rzewuski, "Asili ya Bangwana – origine des Mangwana. Enregistrement de la tradition orale relative à l'histoire de la communauté Musulmane de Kisangani", *African Bulletin*, no. 21, Waszawa, (1974); Eugeniusz Rzewuski, Eugeniusz, "Origins of the Tungi Sultanate (Northern Mozambique) in the Light of Local Traditions", in Stanislaw Pilaszewicz and Eugeniusz Rzewuski (eds.), *Unwritten Testimonies of the African Past: Proceedings of the International Symposium held in Ojrzanów n. Warsaw on 07-08 November 1989*, (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1990): 193-213; and Eugeniusz Rzewuski, "Mothertongue/Fathertongue Convergence: Or Swahilization and Deswahilization in Mozambique", in James R. Dow and Thomas Stolz (orgs.), *Aktes des 7 Essener Kolloquiums über 'Minoritätensprachen/Sprachminoritäten'*, Universidade de Essen: Universitätsverlag, Bochum, (1991); Nancy Hafkin, Nancy, "Trade, Society, and Politics in Northern Mozambique, ca. 1753-1913", (PhD Dissertation, Boston: Boston University, 1973), Liazzat Bonate, "The Use of Arabic Script in Northern Mozambique", *Tydskrif vir Letterkunde*, vol. 45, no. 1, (2008): 120-129; Chapane Mutiua, "Ajami Literacy, Class and Portuguese Pre-Colonial Administration in Northern Mozambique", (MA Diss. Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 2014) and Chapane Mutiua, "O Islão e o processo de literacia no norte de Moçambique entre os finais do século XIX e princípios do século XX", in Teresa Cruz e Silva and Isabel Maria Casimiro (eds.), *A ciência ao serviço do desenvolvimento? Experiências de países africanos falantes de língua oficial portuguesa*, Dakar: CODESRIA, (2015): 205-219.

content as historical sources. In the meantime, none of these studies have deepened the role of 'ajamī manuscripts of Mozambique as cultural heritage of Muslim communities. This article points to this direction by approaching Swahili 'ajamī manuscripts as both tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Muslim communities in Mozambique and as part of the *Moçambicanidade* or Mozambican identity. The 'ajamī manuscript culture in Mozambique comprises different genres of texts with different roles and functions in the society. The main genres of Mozambican 'ajamī manuscripts as mentioned above are the correspondence, poems and prose. These three categories or genres can also be classified according to the languages in which they are written. For instance, the correspondence exists in Kiswahili, Ekoti and Kimwani. The poems, exist in Kiswahili, Ekoti, Kimwani and Emakhuwa. Poetry and prose can also be divided into secular and religious categories.



Figure 1: Letter from Agostinho Teixeira de Oliveira
Source: Arquivo Historico de Moçambique (AHM), Governo do distrito de Moçambique, Caixa (Box) 13, Maço (File) 4, 1863

Most of the correspondence analysed in the context of this research were produced during the second half of nineteenth century and are currently held in the Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique/Mozambican Historical Archives (AHM). This collection is mainly in Swahili, Kimwani and some Ekoti, Emakhuwa and Portuguese loanwords. Below is an example of a nineteenth century 'ajamī correspondence. Muslim communities in northern Mozambique still used 'ajamī literacy for their interpersonal and long-distance correspondence at least until early 2000s. Some of these correspondences can be found in private collections and under the protection of family members.

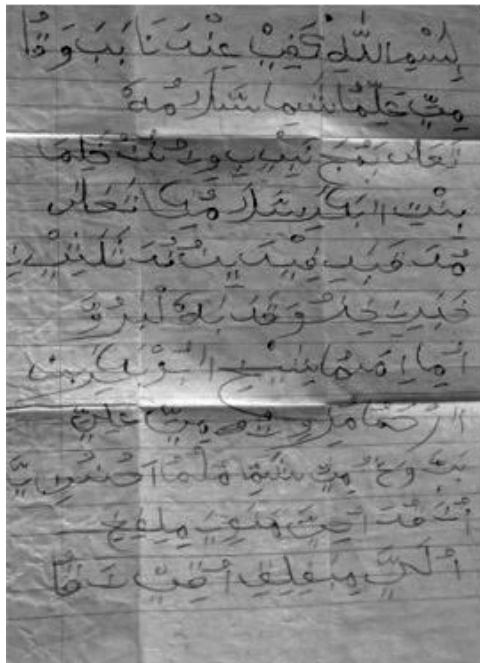


Figure 2: Letter from Seikh Abubakrb. Arham Mwinyi 'Ali
Source: Collection of Nunu Mahija binti 'Ali Angoche

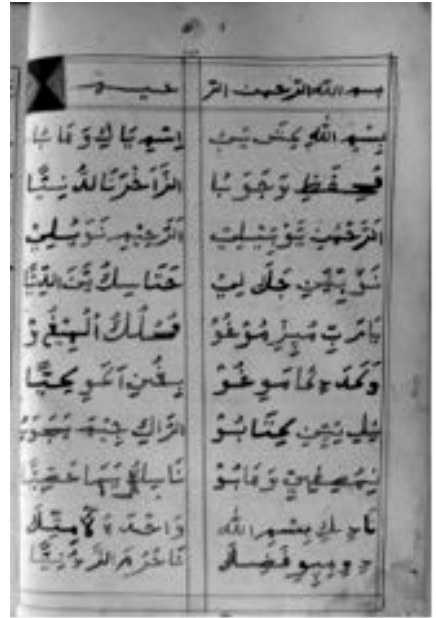
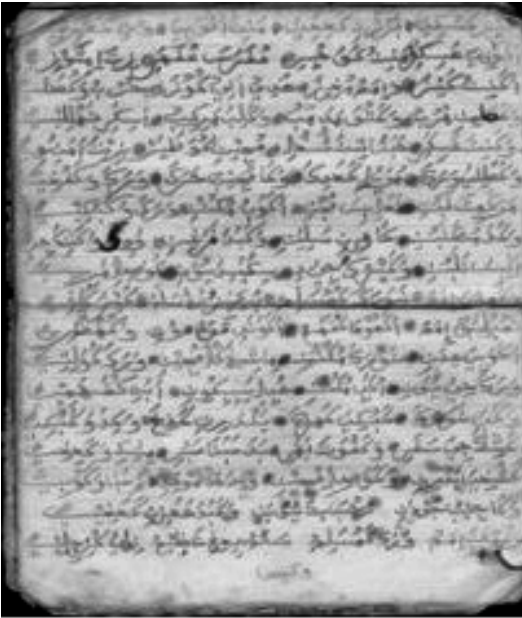
The use of 'ajamī correspondence in Mozambique is also negatively impacted by the massification of mobile phones. Today, long-distance communication is facilitated both by text messages and voice calls. It seems consensual in local communities that the emergence of new communication technologies facilitates the communication system in local levels but it also undermines traditional ways of communication such as 'ajamī correspondence. One of the most popular genres of 'ajamī literature in Mozambique is the Swahili *tenzi* poetry. Developed from the translation and adaptation of Arabic traditional poetry that was inherited by Islam, *tenzi* poetry was widely spread in East Africa from the late eighteenth century. In northern Mozambique, the spread of *tenzi* poetry was also popularized by the emergence of Qadiriyya and Shadiliyya *туруq* (orders) in late nineteenth century.²¹ Meanwhile, prior to the arrival of the two orders, 'ajamī literature was already spread to the local intellectual elite of northern Mozambique and it seems that it consisted mostly on the circulation of texts composed in northern Swahili coast. The available texts of *tenzi* poems composed in northern Mozambique sustain this argument.

For instance, *Utenzi wa Khupula*, a poem composed by Sheikh Yussuf b. Nura of Calukulo, in Angoche and talking about the resistance of the Makhwawa-Swahili alliance in the former *Capitania-mor*²² of Angoche was composed soon after the establishment of the *de facto* colonial administration in Angoche, in 1912. Another local composed *tenzi* poem is a version of *Utenzi wa Kaisari* which seems to have been composed after the end of the First World War. As mentioned above, according to the content or motif of composition, *tenzi*

21 Liazzat Bonate, "Tradition and Transition: Islam and Chiefship in Northern Mozambique, ca. 1850-1975", (PhD. Diss. Cape Town: UCT, 2007).

22 Captaincy – a administrative unit in the context of Portuguese colonial administration in Mozambique. The captaincy of Angoche included the current districts of Angoche, Moma, Moginqual and Mogovolas.

poems are classified into two categories: the religious and the secular. The two poems mentioned above are both secular and are also part of what José Arturo Saavedra Casco labels as “war poems” as they narrate about military confrontations.²³



Utenziw a Kaisari version from Mozambique Island

Utenzi wa Khupula, from Angoche

Figure 3: Utenzi Examples from Mozambique

Although these two poems seem to be the most popular in the regions of Angoche, Mozambique Island, Mussoril and Moma, the best known secular *tenzi* from or about Mozambique in the international context is *Utenzi vya vita*

²³ Saavedra Casco, *Utenzi, War Poems and the German Conquest of East Africa: Swahili Poetry as Historical Sources* (Trenton and Asmara: Africa World Press, 2007).

Uhuru wa Msumbiji (The Epic of the War for the Liberation of Mozambique) composed or published by Jumane Mayoka (1978). Mayoka is probably a Mozambican Makonde intellectual who was raised in southern Tanzania where the poem was published. Unfortunately, this poem is quite unknown in Mozambique historiography and we have never come across the text or manuscript of Mayoka's work which according to Saavedra Casco²⁴ can be found in Dar as-Salaam archives. Apart from the secular narrative *tenzi*, we also have the religious ones. Most of the religious *tenzi* found in northern Mozambique were composed in northern Swahili coast and some of them are the result of adaptation of Arabic *qasida* into Swahili narrative about the life and teachings of Prophet Muhammad (saw). The most popular of these *tenzi* manuscripts are the *Utenzi wa Nazajina*, *Utenzi wa Tambuka* and *Utenzi wa Naby Musa*. *Utenzi wa Nazajina* and *Utenzi wa Naby Musa* are still in circulation within recitation and performance circles and several versions and copies were produced throughout the last seventy years.

In the meantime, the *Utenzi wa Tambuka* manuscript is considered as extinct by the local intellectuals. The latest manuscript of *Utenzi wa Tambuka* was reported in Tibane, in the district of Mozambique Island by Mussa "Na Tambuka" in 2013. According to him, the manuscript belonged to Emame Carsane who lived in Lunga, in the district of Mussoril. The book was inherited by his brother-in-law Hassane Yomwirana who performed with Musa "Na Tambuka". The manuscript disappeared soon after Hassane Yomwirana passed away. Worthy to highlight is the fact that *tambuka* in the concept presented by Musa "Na Tambuka" is a different text from the earlier *Utenzi wa Tambuka* or *Chuo cha Herekali* which circulated in the region in nineteenth century AD. Musa's concept of *tambuka* which was shared by the latest declaimers of this "genre" is defined according to the style and the melody

²⁴ Ibid.

(*mahati*, in Ekoti and Emakhuwa) applied in the oral performance. The manuscript of *tambuka* described by Musa was written in the Arabic alphabet in Emakhuwa. Its motif of composition was based on different local stories and not the battle of Tabk which was the motif of the "original" Swahili *Utenzi wa Herekali*.



Utenzi in private archives in Angoche



Utenzi wa Nazajina

Figure 4: Poems in Angoche's Private Archives
Utenzi in private archives in Angoche

The fifth genre of 'ajamī manuscript that is worthy to mention apart from religious *tenzi*, secular *tenzi*, letter correspondence and prose mostly in the form of local *nasaba* is *qasida*. A well-known genre of elegiac poetry in the Muslim world, *qasida* appears in northern Mozambique in Arabic language but also in Kiswahili and Emakhuwa 'ajamī. Some of the *qasida* in Emakhuwa 'ajamī might have been translated from earlier Arabic or Swahili versions. However, the majority of them were locally composed. Below are some samples of *qasida* in Makhuwa 'ajamī.

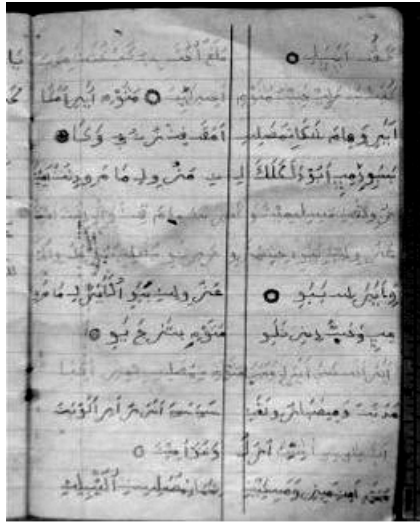


Figure 5: A Qasida in Makhuwa Ajami
Source: Collection from Raja Malua, Angoche.

4. The Materiality of Manuscripts – The Tangible Component of 'Ajami Manuscript Culture as Cultural Heritage

'Ajami manuscript culture is viewed in this article as incorporating components of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The tangible component in 'ajami manuscript culture is constituted by the materiality of the manuscripts or written artefacts. The concept of manuscript or written artefact used in this article is borrowed from the ideas of Jan Knappert and Graziano Krätli;²⁵ both consider the definition as basically framed by the technology used for its production. Krätli goes further by considering that a manuscript or written artefact is

²⁵ Jan Knappert, "Swahili Literature in Arabic script", *Manuscript of the Middle East*, vol. 4, (Leiden, 1989): 74, and Graziano Krätli, "What Makes a Manū Scriptus a Manuscript: Content Contained in Context", Paper Presented at the Training Workshop titled *Working with African Arabic-Script Manuscripts*, Northwestern Uni., Program of African Studies, (14-20 August 2017): 1-2.

composed of two elements: the container and the content. Krätli emphasizes the role of the manuscript as a product of an 'individual act of writing' integrated in a broad cultural context and stresses the influential role of manuscripts on the culture in which they are produced.²⁶ Adding to this, Wimmer et al highlight²⁷ the role of manuscripts as containers of specific information and as cultural objects in their physical materiality.

In this sense, manuscript or written artefact of any type of script and in whatever language and genre has a double significance. On the one hand it represents the product of cultural practice, and on the other hand it plays a role as an agent of cultural conservation and transformation. Manuscripts viewed in these ways are part of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. As an element of intangible cultural heritage, '*ajamī* manuscripts represent traces of the local intellectual history of a certain society in a given period while at the same time carrying information and knowledge from past, through present to future generations.

This means that '*ajamī* manuscripts are the agents of conservation, preservation and circulation of collective memory – the source and product of common cultural and historical references. As '*ajamī* literacy practices of whatever use (secular or religious) are framed in the context of Islam and Muslim education, they are a product and the core value of Islamic culture and thus, '*ajamī* manuscripts or written artefacts are among the most important and influential cultural heritage of each society in which they are produced. Muhammad Haron adds that "manuscripts are important because they contain ideas of scholars who have seriously

26 Krätli (2017): 1-4.

27 Hanna Wimmer, Dmitry Bondarev, Janina Karolewski, and Vito Lorusso, "A Heuristic Tool for the Comparative Study of Manuscripts from Different Manuscript Cultures", 2015, [Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures– Occasional Paper No. 3, <https://doi.org/10.25592/uhhfdm.9800>], can be accessed http://www.manuscript-cultures.uni-hamburg.de/papers_e.html

pondered over their subject matter but did not have the opportunity of making them readily available for students or readers."²⁸ Haron's approach highlights the importance of manuscripts as a medium for transmission of ideas and knowledge and as such they (manuscripts or written artefacts) become much more crucial for the study of the intellectual history of the society in which they are produced and/or circulated. The production of manuscripts is crucially determined by the content approached above and the material used. We have tried to highlight the relevance of the content which in the core argument of this study represents the intangible component of this type of cultural heritage. The material component (paper, ink, *lipau*, bamboo pen or *kalamu* in local languages of northern Mozambique) constitute what we consider as tangible components of the manuscript culture. However, Graziano Krätli highlights what he calls "the container" described as what contains the text of the manuscript (content).

In Krätli's approach it seems that the tangible element of the manuscript is limited to the paper, parchment, stones, wood, palm leaves or stretched animal skins in which the texts of manuscripts are written. However, the experience of research within the area of cultural studies highlights the centrality of cultural artefacts as the main results of the process of social construction.²⁹ Manuscript culture as a process of social construction embeds literacy practice and as such goes far beyond the container and the content. This is because cultural studies theory views literacy products such as '*ajamī* manuscripts in twofold: on the one hand as cultural

28 Muhammad Haron, "The Making, Preservation and Study of South African Ajami MSS and Texts", *Sudanic Africa*, vol. 12, (2001): 3.

29 Aleida Assmann, *Introduction to Cultural Studies: Topics, Concepts, Issues*, Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, (2012).

artefacts of a specific period and a specific culture,³⁰ and on the other hand as producers of identities and subjectivities in the context of power relations.³¹ Borrowing Silva and Trindade³² arguments, we need to consider the "intangible networks" created within the manuscript culture as part of intangible cultural heritage of Muslim societies in Mozambique and overall western Indian Ocean. This "intangible networks" are constructed through the circulation of manuscripts, ideas, and scholars and are crucial for the development of Islamic education, knowledge sharing and 'ajamī literacy practice in Mozambique. Northern Mozambique 'ajamī manuscripts as well as the manuscript culture in which they are produced play an important role in a society because "they lock away aspects of the past which can shed light on the present and future."³³ As a social production which mediates the past, present and future aspiration of the society, 'ajamī manuscripts represent intellectual cultural heritage which is important for the configuration of Mozambican Muslim identity.

5. The Challenges of Safeguarding 'Ajamī Manuscripts in Mozambique

Due to the reasons listed in in this study, such as the transformations within the system of Muslim education, the impact of new religious approaches and the massification of the use of new technologies (TVs, computers, smart phones), the 'ajamī manuscript culture in northern Mozambique is facing a crisis which can be described by the interruption of

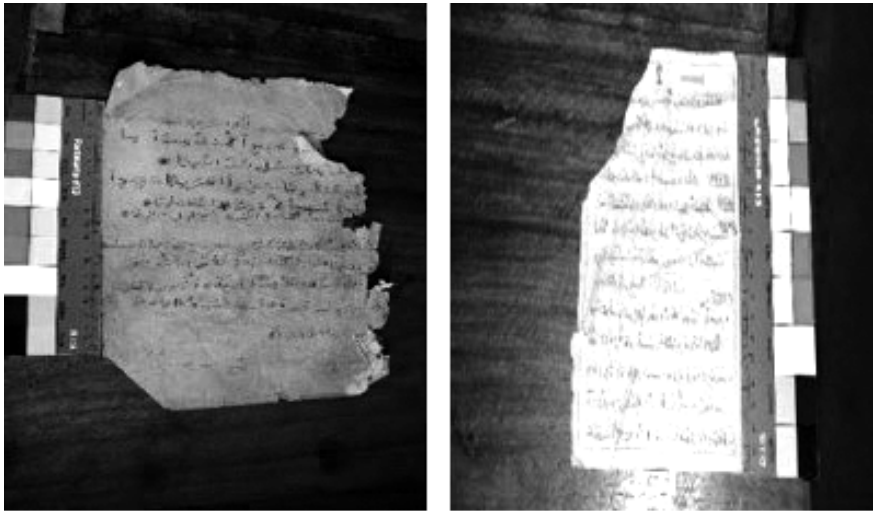
30 Iole Maria Faviero Trindade, "Uma análise cultural de discursos sobre alfabetização e alfabetismo/letramento e suas representações", *Educação*, Santa Maria, vol. 32, no. 1, (2007): 43.

31 *Ibid.*, 42-43.

32 Iole Maria Faviero Trindade, "Uma análise cultural de discursos sobre alfabetização e alfabetismo/letramento e suas representações", *Educação*, Santa Maria, vol. 32, no. 1, (2007).

33 Muhammad Haron, "The Making, Preservation and Study of South African Ajami MSS and Texts", *Sudanic Africa*, vol. 12, (2001): 3.

the '*ajamī* literacy practice. The disruption of '*ajamī* literacy practice in northern Mozambique is explained by the lack of social reproduction of scribes, declaimers and composers of '*ajamī* literature. The misuse of the '*ajamī* manuscripts has led to its neglect and to the destruction of huge collections which were held by the families of local scholars. A great number of manuscripts were inherited by the young *ulama* who found them useless and considered most of them as out of the ambit of Islamic faith. While other manuscripts were inherited by the people who do not know how to use and conserve them, the remaining collections are thus in very bad conditions of conservation with a sentence to a silence and slow death.



Samples of Manuscripts

Figure 6: Damaged Angoche Manuscripts

6. Conclusion

We have attempted to draw the main lines of the history of manuscript cultures in Mozambique. However, due to the

limitations of the national historiography in the study of Islam and Islamic culture, the argument has focused on the northern Mozambican region where we have conducted research. The overlooking of Islam in the historiography of Mozambique is an inheritance of colonial impact and post-independent communist ideology. Its visible impact is the marginalization of Islamic culture.

'*Ajamī* manuscript culture is thus a victim how the national historiography was built since the colonial and post-colonial periods. One example of this process can be taken from the critical analysis of what is scholarly defined as Mozambican literature (*Literatura Moçambicana*) which is limited to literature in Latin script and in Portuguese language. The scope of this concept of Mozambican literature excludes the '*ajamī* literature of Mozambique and as such neglects an important component of the national cultural heritage.

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Hamidia Islamic Society and Civil Resistance in British South Africa (1906-1909)

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ABSTRACT

This article critically analyses the initiation of the first passive resistance campaign in South Africa by Hadje Ojer Ally's Hamidia Islamic Society. The study delves into how the Hamidia Islamic Society transitioned from the "politics of petitioning" to the "politics of satyagraha," incorporating prayer, fasting, spiritual purity, non-violence, and providential guidance as essential components. The pivotal roles played by Hadje Omar Ally and Imam Abdul Kadir Bawazeer are critically examined, spanning the period from the formation of Hamidia Islamic Society in 1906 to 1909. The article contextualizes this historical shift within the broader socio-political landscape of British South Africa, highlighting discriminatory practices and resistance to oppressive legislation. The article also contributes to a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted resistance against colonial injustice, and provides a comprehensive historical analysis of the socio-religious dynamics and resistance strategies employed by the Hamidia Islamic Society during a critical period in South African history by shedding light on the complex dynamics within the society during this pivotal period.

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1. Introduction

Unlike Surendra Bhana,¹ Bala Pillay,² Maureen Swan,³ and Surendra Bhana and Goolam Vahed,⁴ in this article, the first attempt will be made, by using primary unprinted and printed sources, to analyse the formation of Hadje Ojer Ally's pro-Pan Islamism merchant class Hamidia Islamic Society (HIS) in 1906, and also show how the Holy Qur'an and, among others, Hadje Ojer Ally and Imam Abdul Kadir Bawazeer, as members of a Muslim organization (HIS), (i) effected a shift from the "politics of petitioning" to the "politics of *satyagraha*" (passive resistance), that is, constitutional reformist protest and civil disobedience not only bent on protecting commercial interests but also Islam; as Muslims, they were not only ostracized on the basis of colour and country but they were also excluded on the grounds of their religious identity, (ii) furnished the initial infrastructure and financing for the first organized Islamic resistance to British imperialism in the former Transvaal Boer Republic and passive resistance in South Africa, (iii) played a key role as devout Muslims, immensely contributing to the promotion of Muslim culture and Muslim-Hindu unity and fighting for the Muslim passive resistance prisoners' rights to pray and fast during the holy month of Ramadan in 1909 and, (iv) served as the backbone of the first passive resistance campaign against British pseudo-liberalism, discrimination, and oppression, against "Indians" and Islam at the southern tip of Africa in the early twentieth century since the

1 Surendra Bhana, "The Tolstoy Farm: Gandhi's Experiment in 'Co-operative Commonwealth'", *South African Historical Journal*, vol. 7 no. 1 (1975): 88-100.

2 Bala Pillay, *British Indians in the Transvaal: Trade, Politics and Imperial Relations 1885-1906*, (London: Longmans, 1976).

3 Maureen Swan, *Gandhi: The South African Experience* (Johannesburg: Raven Press, 1985).

4 Goolam Vahed, *The Making of a Political Reformer: Gandhi in South Africa, 1893-1914* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2005).

establishment of his Hamidia Islamic Society in 1906 up until the struggle for the rights of Muslim passive resistance in 1909.

2. Historical Context

Both indentured "Indians" and "voluntary"⁵ "Indian" immigrants who arrived in British South Africa since 1860 were subjected to many injustices; they were derogatorily and wrongly referred to by whites as "Arabs,"⁶ "Bombay Traders" (especially the Gujarati commercial elite), "coolies" (whether high-caste "Indians" or not), and viewed as an "Asian menace". They were held responsible for the spread of urban squalor, portrayed as a risk to public health, and perceived as a threat to white traders. Moreover, building restrictions and sanitation codes (such as laws relating to the subdivision and

5 Defined as "passenger" Indians, who included males, females, children, Gujarati [Muslim] Bombay traders, mineral water manufacturers and the laboring poor (fruit and vegetable hawkers, butchers, shop assistant, shoemakers, priests etc.), and who paid their own way to the colonies of South Africa as opposed to the indentured who came under contracts to work in Natal. See U. Dhupelia-Mesthrie, "The Passenger Indian as Worker: Indian immigrants in Cape Town in the Early Twentieth Century, *African Studies*, vol. 68, no.1, (2009):114 [111-134]. In fact, as for the place of origin of "passenger" Indians, the 1911 census shows that only 25,9 % were born in the Bombay Presidency, which suggests that many Cape Town Indians may have come directly from India. The census also shows Madras, Bengal, and Punjab as the other major places of origins. See Bhana, Surendra and Brain, Joy, *Setting Down Roots: Indian Migrants in South Africa, 1860-1911*, (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1990), 126-127. Lastly, nearly all Tamil-speaking Hindus had migrated from Natal, presumably as free Indians, whereas most Gujarati-speakers had come direct from Surat. See C. M. Brand, "Solidarity Patterns in a Minority Group: A Study of the Indian Community in the Cape Peninsula" (MA. Thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1966), 93. In short, the dominating image of the "passenger" as a migrant of much resource, influence and investment is historically inaccurate.

6 Probably attributable to their mode of dress as well as their religious affiliation. See Maureen Swan, *Gandhi: The South African Experience* (Johannesburg: Raven Press, 1985), 3. Hereafter, cited as "Gandhi: The South African Experience"

overcrowding of social and commercial property) were used against "Indians" in an attempt to curtail their economic advancement and restrict them to certain social spaces. For example, attempts were made to segregate them into "locations". They were also stripped of political rights, subjected to a permit system to control their freedom of movement, and had to observe implemented curfews in Durban and Pietermaritzburg municipalities; in addition, they were responsible for the payment of a compulsory 'poll tax' of £3 that was employed to encourage repatriation to India.

The ending of the South African War (1899–1902) spelled a deathblow to non-white freedom, accompanied by non-white disillusion with England's duty to spread "openness", equality, and freedom.⁷ Consequently, the introduction and implementation of restrictive immigration laws (which, amongst others, included finger-printing as a form of identification) and the outbreak of the plague epidemic [the Bubonic Plague, (1901 & 1904)] became ideal opportunities for promoting white supremacy⁸ and segregationist solutions to social problems such as urban racial segregation.⁹

7 André Odendaal, *Vukani Bantu! The Beginnings of Black Protest Politics in South Africa to 1912* (Cape Town, Johannesburg: David Philip, 1984), 37-39; Bill Nasson, *Abraham Esau's War: A Black South African War in the Cape, 1899-1902* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 186-189, and Diana Cammack, *The Rand at War, 1899-1902: The Witwatersrand and the Anglo-Boer War* (London: James Currey, 1990), 199-200.

8 The "sanitation syndrome" was more than a metaphor. It was a powerful agency for change because it was deeply embedded in the consciousness of Victorian society and provided a scientific rationalisation for the separation of the races and the assertion of white, British, dominance. See Van Heyningen, Elizabeth Boudina, "Public Health and Society in Cape Town 1880-1910", (Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History. University of Cape Town. 1989, ii.).

9 Maynard Swanson, "The Sanitation Syndrome: Bubonic Plague and Urban Native Policy in the Cape Colony, 1900-1909", *Journal of African History*, vol. XVIII no. 3 (1977): 387-410.

Among the latter, the authorities imposed urban racial segregation, and this was accompanied by the dislocation of the Muslim community and the disastrous socio-economic consequences of the South African War (1899-1902);¹⁰ the latter aggravated class, racial, and religious discrimination as well as ethnic classification¹¹ and opposition to the enfranchisement of non-whites by non-official, nominated local members of the Transvaal legislature. This was despite

10 The war was fought essentially in the interests of mining capitalism. In the post-war period, thus, Britain attempted to create a modernized state compatible with the needs of mining capital. Therefore, the essential aim of Britain's reconstruction plans after the war, was not to engineer social changes in the interest of South Africa's non-white population, since the latter will stifle capitalist development, and weaken the consolidation of white supremacy. See Peter Warwick, *The Black People and the South African War 1899-1902* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press (Pty) Ltd., 1983), 182-184.

11 Thus, discriminatory legislation of the former Boer Republics, were largely maintained by the British and in some instances, reinforced and extended. The Imperial Government in London accepted the right of self-governing colonies to determine their own future, which included the right to be a "white man's country". See Hugh Tinker, *A New System of Slavery: The Export of Indian Labour Overseas, 1830-1920* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 286. Thus, while the British government sympathised with the determination of white settlers to prevent large scale influx of Asiatics with "alien" customs and cultures, the Colonial Office was reluctant to sanction legislation which was exclusionist on the specific grounds of race and colour. Edna Bradlow, "Prejudice, Minority Rights and the Survival of a Community: Indians in South Africa", *South African Historical Journal*, vol. 24 (1991): 204. However, ultimately, most decisions tipped in favour of the former for, firstly, "... the Home Government and the people of England did not have the will to redress the grievances of British Indians at whatever hands they may be suffering..." (*The Times*, 30 November 1906, quoted in Bala Pillay, *British Indians in the Transvaal: Trade, Race Relations and Imperial Policy in Republican and Colonial Transvaal 1885-1906* (London: Longman, 1976), 220 and, secondly, "... an alien race ["Asiatic immigrants"]... cannot be assimilated into social relationships with either the present white or black population, without disastrous and unthinkable consequences to civilization." See H. J. Crocker, "Notes on the Asian Question", *African Monthly*, vol. 3 no. 16, (1908): 349. Former Boer Republics, were largely maintained by the British and in some instances, reinforced and extended.

the fact that the imperial British government supported a class-based and colour-blind franchise, which would have given educated and "civilized" non-white British subjects the vote. Hence, Muslim immigrant "Indians", in particular, complained about the "half-educated white men [who] have no historical knowledge of the great coloured races of the world but [who] despise all alike, and [therefore] resent that [they] should accumulate capital, improve their status, or aspire to any rights of equality of treatment."¹²

In fact, the fate of "Indians" differed from region to region within the same colony. In Cape Town, for example, while "Indians enjoyed ordinary civil liberty", allowing Muslims "to keep their heads covered while attending sittings of the legislative Council as a mark of respect" a contentious issue was raised because "Mahommedans did not permit Christians to enter their mosque without taking their boots off, so why should [we] extend a privilege when it was not given to Christians?" However, a general motion was passed that allowed Muslims to keep their heads covered in the Cape Town House of Parliament.¹³ The same controversy occurred in the Kimberley Court in 1895.¹⁴

¹² *Indian Opinion*, 18/2/1905, 02, col.3, "Indians in South Africa".

¹³ *Indian Opinion*, 3/6/1905, 347, cols.1-2, "Moslems in the cape House of parliament allowed to keep their heads covered."

¹⁴ Muslims ("Malay" and "Indian") of Kimberley (Griqualand –West, Diamond Fields) protests against resident magistrate, who ordered them to remove their fezzes in court. To them this was tantamount to "reforming the Moslems and teaching them European manners (*Diamond-Fields Advertiser*, 20/11/1895, p.5, col.7. "Letter to editor by "A Moslem Priest"). Police officials at the resident court ordered Muslims, who refused to remove their fezzes in court, to remove their boots, "in order that some respect might be shown to the court." (*Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 23/11/1895, p.5, col.4, "Magistrate and Moslem"). Eventually, Muslims were, allowed to keep on their fezzes and boots, as a Hindu 'fire-worshipper', was allowed to keep his hat on." (*Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 30/11/1895, p.9, col.5, "Hats off in Court" (Letter to the editor by "The Truth").

Nevertheless, according to Hesham Neamatollah Effendi (d.1945), who was the then President of the Moslem Association of South Africa, the issue of removing the head covering in the Cape Parliament was confined to British South Africa; when Effendi visited the House of Lords and the House of Commons in England in 1904, he stated that, "I was never asked to remove my cap or even a suggestion to that effect."¹⁵

Moreover, in his January 1906 letter to the Colonial Secretary in Pretoria, Abdul Gani,

chairperson of the British Indian Association [BIA], protested against the Draft Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance published in the Government Gazette dated the 22nd instant, as:

Section 2 sets the seal of approval on the part of the British Government on the insulting and false definition of the term "Asiatic" given by Law 3 of 1885¹⁶, which ignorantly includes

¹⁵ *Cape Argus*, 19 May 1905,4, col.7, "Moslem Customs: Letter to the Editor by Neamatollah Effendi, President of Moslem Association of South Africa."

¹⁶ "Law 3 of 1885 as amended in 1886 is applicable to Asiatics, including "Coolies, Malays, Arabs, and Mahomedan subjects of the Turkish Empire", and as interpreted by the Supreme Court of the Transvaal, (1) confines as to residence those who come under it to locations or streets set specially apart for them, for a breach of which provision there is no sanction provided in the law and which is therefore nugatory in effect, (2) deprives them of burgher rights, (3) deprives them of right of ownership of fixed property except in locations and streets before referred to, and (4) requires those who may settle in the Transvaal for purposes of trade or otherwise to pay a fee of £3 and be registered within eight days of their arrival." See Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 5 [6 November 1905—3 November 1906], Doc.#407." Representation to Lord Elgin: Letter by M. K. Gandhi & H. O. Ally [members of the Transvaal Indian Delegation] to the Right Honourable The earl of Elgin, Colonial Office, London. 31 October 1906, 449-450 (pp.448-458)].

In fact, between 1885 and 1895, the Law 3 of 1885 practically remained a dead letter, although the Boer Government always threatened to enforce it. The question of the interpretation of Law 3 of 1885 was left to the courts of the *Zuid-Afrikaanshe Republiek* [Z.A.R.]. British "Indians" appealed to the British Government for protection. The British government, however, was satisfied with the amended version of Law 3 of 1885 and it included sanitary

the so-called Coolies, Arabs, Malays, and Mahomedan subjects of the Turkish Dominion". Such a definition is degrading to the Asiatics, in that it takes note only of Coolies and perpetuates the use of the term as applied to all the inhabitants of Asia. The definition is false because there are hardly any Arabs and Mahomedan subjects of the Turkish Dominion, and does grave injustice to the Malays who have never yet been molested under Law 3 of 1885 and who have not suffered the misfortune in common with British Indians of being classed as competitors in trade with the Europeans.¹⁷

He echoed the same sentiment a few months later, in September 1906, with the launching of the Hamidia Islamic Society and the issuing of the "Gaol Resolution". We quote:

... in this country, the doors are open to the whites and Christians, even if they be foreign nationals. In their view, the whites are descended from Heaven and we, they think, have come from the another place. This Bill is most objectionable. If it is passed, I solemnly declare that I will never get myself registered again and will be the first to go to gaol.¹⁸

conditions to achieve its goals, as the latter were bent on the protection of public health, though it recognized that the law was still a contravention of the 14th Article of the London Convention. See I. E. Jaffer, "Muslims in Pretoria during the 19th Century" in *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Islamic Civilization in Southern Africa, Johannesburg. South Africa. 1-3 September 2006*, edited by Muhammad Haron and S. Essop Dangor, (Istanbul: Research Centre for Islamic History, Art, and Culture, 2009), 138 [pp.133-141]. Thus, it was in the enforcement of the infamous Law 3 of 1880, by the British, which showed up the true nature of imperialism and the "virtues" of liberal government.

17 Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 5 [6 November 1905—3 November 1906] (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1961). Doc.# 288. Letter of Abdul Gani, Chairperson of the British Indian Association to the Colonial Secretary, Pretoria, 314 (pp.313-316). *Indian Opinion*, 9/1/1906.

18 *Ibid.*, Vol.5 (6 November 1905—3 November 1906), Doc.#324, "Johannesburg Letter: Gaol Resolution", 359 (pp.356-362). *Indian Opinion*, 22/9/1906.

A month later, in October 1906, the South African Moslem Association, under H. N. Effendi, criticized the Natal Immigration Authorities for subjecting Malays to the Immigration Act. Malays and Asiatics were separately classified in the Returns of the Immigration Restriction Department. Yet Hadje Abdullah Brown, an English convert to Islam, was subjected to restrictive immigration laws because he wore the "Mohammedan Fez."¹⁹ This clearly indicates that discrimination was also based on practicing a non-Christian religion. In fact, H. O. Ally, in his farewell letter to the editor of the *Indian Opinion* in 1907, said that he was leaving the British Transvaal Colony because he refused to submit to the Asiatic Registration Act, for "as a good Moslem, it is not

19 *The Cape Argus* (Weekly Edition), 5/10/1906,10, "S.A. Moslem Association". In fact, two years earlier, in 1904, at a meeting of the South African Moslem Association against constituting part of a "South African Citizens' Defence Committee" H. N. Effendi, focused more on the "the position of the Cape-born Moslems" vis-à-vis "any legislation in the Transvaal affecting the liberty of persons styled "Asiatics". In the Transvaal he was styled an Asiatic "simply because he is a Mohammed and wears a red cap, or fez." But he "protested against being put on the same footing as those who really are Asiatic, [as] he his parents,... and his great grand-parents, had been born in South Africa... [while] the Asiatics were born in Asia and lived in Asia for a greater part of their lives." Hence, "The Cape-born Moslems are no Asiatics, [and therefore], why should they live in a location?... we are not Asiatics but Afrikaners; why should the law [Immigration] apply to us?" He argued further that Cape Moslems are styled Asiatics in Natal, and as such, "suffer under all the disabilities of the immigration laws that applied to the natives of Asia." He then used a few examples to illustrate his point: "Hadj Brown, an Englishman converted to Islam, was refused under the immigration laws a passage to Natal, when he wore his red fez. He was allowed a free passage, when he wore a hat! He (N. H. Effendi) himself fell prey to the wrath of Immigration laws of Natal, when he was "not allowed to go on to the ship, [to wish his friend Hadji Brown farewell], because he wore a fez." (*The Cape Argus* (Weekly Edition), 20/7/1904,11 "A Moslem Meeting: No Asiatics").

possible to see Turkish Moslems insulted whilst Turkish Jews and Christians were exempted."²⁰

To make matters worse, "Indians" were not permitted to "walk on footpaths, [despite the fact that] the Union Jack wafts over Bloemfontein [for] it affords no shelter to British "Indians" who [are] shunned like parrot[s] in East London."²¹ In fact, according to H. J. Crocker: "Restrictive legislation... is primarily based on... the principle of maintaining here, ethnically uncorrupted, the claims of Western against Eastern civilization and upon the *necessity for arresting the tide of Mohammedanism which threatens to sweep over the African continent as it swept over Western Asia in an earlier stage of world-development.*"²² Most significantly, the Honourable Marharul Haque's reflection on the lot of British "Indian" Muslims in the Transvaal Colony in the Imperial Council in London in 1910 clearly showed how ill-fated legislation, especially after the South African War, 1899–1902, not only discriminated on the grounds of colour and ethnic nationality but also negatively impacted the Muslim faith. To quote:

One of the most loudly-proclaimed reasons for the Boer War was the ill-treatment of the Indians by the Dutch government... [but] the lot of the Indian after the war is worst... The religion of Islam itself has been attacked. Our Hindu, Parsi, Christian, and Buddhist brethren, are ostracized on the ground of their colour and country only, *but we Musselmans have been excluded on the ground of our religion... This is an insult which no Mohammedan can brook without protest.* Our religion is not a philosophical abstraction nor is it a creed of idealism. It is a religion which enters the stern realities of every-day life. It pervades and models our very existence. If Islam is insulted in

20 Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol.7 (15 June 1907—12 December 1907), Doc.#91, "Ally's Letter", 122-123, and *Indian Opinion*, 10/8/1907, p.319, cols.1-2, "Mr. Ally's Letter to the Editor".

21 *Indian Opinion*, 31/12/1904,3, cols.1-3, and *ibid.*, 4, cols.1-2, "Yearly Balance Sheet".

22 H. J. Crocker, "Notes on the Asiatic Question: The Transvaal Standpoint", *African Monthly*, vol.3, no.16, March 1908, 351[339-351 and 452-462].

one corner of the globe, it sends a thrill of indignation into the hearts of all its votaries throughout the world. Have these [white] colonists counted the cost to the [British] Empire by their ill-fated legislation?²³ [my emphasis]

Thus, in the British Transvaal colony, whites discriminated against Muslim "Indians". For example, the exclusively white Potchefstroom Vigilance Association, at a general meeting held at the Royal Hotel in December 1904, passed a resolution that not only called for the boycotting of 'Indian' businesses and colonial firms to stop doing business with 'Indians', but also for "pressuring the Johannesburg Council to prevent [them] from erecting a mosque within yards of the market square."²⁴ Four months earlier, in August 1904, the Pretoria Mosque Committee of Hajie Habib objected vehemently to the British government's desire "to take over mosque property in Pretoria in its name as it was contrary to the Mohammedan religion to have any property for religious purposes held in the name of a non-Mahomedan."²⁵

Moreover, Abdul Gani, who was the chairperson of the British Indian Association (B.I.A.), in a letter in January 1906 to the Colonial Secretary in Pretoria, protested against the Draft Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance, one that was published in the Government Gazette dated the 22nd instant. It stated that "Section 2 sets the seal of approval on the part of the British Government on the insulting and false definition of the term "Asian" given by Law 3 of 1885, which ignorantly includes the so-called Coolies, Arabs, Malays, and Mahomedan subjects of the Turkish Dominion". More significantly, it "does grave injustice to the Malays who have never yet been molested

23 Extract from a speech reflecting on the lot of the Muslims in the Transvaal Colony, made by the Honourable Marharul Haque in the Imperial Council in London. *Indian Opinion*, 14/5/1910, p.161, cols.1-2, "A Mahomedan Protest: The Transvaal's Insult to Islam."

24 *The Indian Opinion*, 31/12/1904,4 col.3, and p.5, cols.1-3, "Potchefstroom Vigilantes."

25 *The Indian Opinion*, 27 /8/1904,4, cols.4-5, "Pretoria Mosque".

under Law 3 of 1885 and who have not suffered the misfortune in common with British Indians of being classed as competitors in trade with the Europeans."²⁶ Abdul Gani echoed the same sentiment a few months later, in September 1906, at the launching of the Hamidia Islamic Society and the issuing of the "Goal Resolution," when he said, "In this country, the doors are open to the whites and Christians, even if they be foreign nationals."²⁷ To summarize, European injustice manifested itself in the form of the draconian pass system, the literary tests for "Asians", the creation of "Coolie" locations, immigration restriction laws, and the compulsory finger-print registration for those of Asian or Oriental descent.

Thus, attempts to instil a sense of religiosity, particularly "Muslimness", were, therefore, accompanied by draconian British legislation and sanitary measures aimed at promoting Anglo-Saxon ideas about "class and civilization", scientific racism, and social Darwinism. It also, therefore, allowed them to draw on the discourse of an ancient religious and social tradition, which helped them ethnically mobilize themselves; but, at the same time, these assisted them in discussing, enacting, and defending their religiosity; in the case of Muslim Indians, they defended Islam.

Hence, invoking "Indianness" occurred by way of corresponding with their "mother country", which kept the idea of "home" alive; discussing, enacting, and defending cultural and religious performances brought from India in order to forge a common cultural ethos and identity; forging links with political leaders in India who championed their

26 Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol.5 [6 November 1905—3 November 1906] (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1961). Doc.# 288. Letter of Abdul Gani, Chairperson of the British Indian Association to the Colonial Secretary, Pretoria, 314 (pp.313-316). *Indian Opinion*, 9/1/1906.

27 Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* vol. 5 (6 November 1905—3 November 1906), Doc.#324, "Johannesburg Letter: Gaol Resolution", 359 (pp.356-362). *Indian Opinion*, 22/9/1906.

struggle against oppression in British South Africa; and attempting to construct an idea of "comradeship" and "collectivism" amongst "Indian" South Africans in order to build an alternative political platform. Hence, the founding of a newspaper, *The Indian Opinion*, in 1903 used Indian history, politics, and religious texts to constantly invoke images of the "Motherland", and these were used to show pride in India's ancient traditions, which, in turn, reinforced the popular imagination among them in South Africa.

Similarly, through the founding of the *African Chronicle* in 1908 by P. S. Aiyar, a South Indian journalist, important links with "home" were formed.²⁸ Alongside these, extensive coverage of religious practices and the interpretation of religious texts were stressed, thus re-establishing a sense of religious authenticity (denied to them by the British) in South Africa, and this reflected the close relationship that existed between religion and politics. In the same breath, religious figures were invited to South Africa "to keep India alive in people's minds", and to form ways of imagining "how to be "Indian" through discussions of religious observations. And lastly, invoking also assisted "Indian" Muslims to discuss, enact, and defend their religion. Hence, invoking "Indianness" did not only include ethnic mobilization but also the discussion, enactment, and defence of religiosity, in particular Islam. That new *modus operandi*, among others, facilitated the meshing of Hindu and Islamic scriptures by Mahatma Gandhi. The Qur'an, the Sufi tradition, and the Ramayana and the Bhaki tradition, as Gandhi understood them, conveyed images and symbols that made sense in the immediate context of "Indian" suffering in British South Africa.

²⁸ Surendra Bhana and Vahed Goolam, *The Making of a Political Reformer: Gandhi in South Africa, 1893-1914* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2005), 15. Hereafter, cited as, "The Making of a Political Reformer".

Consequently, all the above-mentioned factors played no small role in the establishment of Hadje Ojer Ally's merchant-class Hamidia Islamic Society, and the commencement of the first passive resistance campaign in South Africa against British pseudo-liberalism, discrimination, and oppression. The strategy shifted from the "politics of petitioning" to the "politics of *satyagraha*", with prayer, fasting, spiritual purity, non-violence, and providential guidance as its essential constituents. Muslims, Hindus, Christians, and Parsees invoked a common "struggle narrative", bent upon the destruction of a "common evil". Hence, we will be critically analysing the formation of Hadje Ojer Ally's Hamidia Islamic Society in 1906 and the role played by Hadje Ojer Ally and his successor Imam Abdul Kadir Bawazeer therein up until 1909.

3. The Formation of the Hamidia Islamic Society in 1906

Initially, the Hamidia Islamic Society was formed by Hadje Ojer Ally as a benevolent society in order to assist the poor among Muslims and remove their special hardship through social regeneration. Its presence was a necessity in the sense that, at that juncture, there were no social welfare organizations in the Transvaal tending to the needs of Muslims. Also, much of the structure of Muslim society was dislocated by the ravages of the Bubonic Plague (1904), the government's deliberate policy of urban segregation, which forced "Asians" into urban ghettos, and by the outbreak of the South African War (1899–1922) the latter initially caused many "Asians", "Africans", and "Coloureds" to flee the Transvaal but who, in the aftermath of the war, were wrestling with the problem of re-integration into Transvaal society.²⁹ Its

²⁹ Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 6 (5 November 1906—12 June 1907), (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1961). Doc.# 129, "[Letter of M. K. Gandhi and Hadje Ojeer Ally] to the Private Secretary of the Earl of Eglin, on 20 November 1906: The Petition", 129-130 [pp.126-133].

formation was also determined by "greatly helping" the Muslims, who were backward in education, and appealing to them to do their best to overcome this disadvantage.³⁰

Nevertheless, the Hamidia Islamic Society soon became a pro-Pan-Islamic movement³¹ that served as an important political platform for the commencement of the first passive resistance campaign in South Africa against British oppression. Under the chairmanship of Hadje Ojer Ally, the passive resistance movement's ideology was expounded, tactics were reviewed, and the commitment to resistance was constantly reaffirmed at all meetings convened by the Hamidia Islamic Society. The latter, therefore, played a crucial role in mobilizing every aspect of "Asian" society—be it the powerful merchant class (Gujerati Muslims), Hindu Tamils (mostly hawkers and workers), petty traders, Christian "Indians" (mostly Catholics), Muslim comrades world-wide, and Buddhist Chinese—which eventually led to the taking of the famous Forth Resolution (the "Passive Resistance Pledge") at the Empire Theatre on September 11, 1906, and ultimately to the commencement of the first passive resistance campaign in South Africa.

Thus, the Hamidia Islamic Society not only served as an important organizational base for first passive resistance, but also served as a social welfare organization that was determined to assist non-white refugees with "social

30 Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 5 (6 November 1905-3 November 1906), Doc.# 278. "[Gandhi's] Speech at Hamidia Islamic Society, on 12 August 1906", 304 [pp.303-304], *Indian Opinion*, 25/8/1906.

31 The delegates on behalf of the British Indians in the Transvaal rejected a petition drawn up by Dr. William Godfrey, an "Indian" trained, Edinburgh University educated medical doctor, and signed by 437 Indians, accusing, amongst others, the Hamidia Islamic Society of being a "politico-religious body which has its object, recognition of the Sultan as both spiritual and political head of Moslems." See Fatima Meer, ed. *The South African Gandhi: An Abstract of the Speeches and Writings of M. K. Ghandhi 1893-1914* (Durban: Institute for Black Research, University of Natal. 1995), 643.

regeneration" and integration into a post-South African War Transvaal society. Support from the local "Indian" community for the Hamidia Islamic Society, therefore, became axiomatic and inevitable. In fact, in October 1906, it was described as being in a flourishing condition with several hundred Muslim members. Its eventual gain in membership was largely attributed to the fact that it played a crucial role in mobilizing the merchant class (Gujerati Muslims), Hindu Tamils (mostly hawkers and workers), and petty traders against the August 1906 Transvaal Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance. The latter required all "Asiatics", eight years of age or older, to carry passes and be finger-printed. Any police officer could demand the passes and, failing to do so, make the carrier liable to a fine of £100,000 or three-months imprisonment. The Ordinance also prohibited the immigration of new "Asians" into the Transvaal, enforced trade and residential segregation, and severely jeopardized the rights of those who had lived in the Transvaal prior to the South African War (1899–1902).

4. Hadje Ojer Ally's Departure from the Transvaal British Colony

Hadje Ojer Ally departed from the Transvaal for the following reasons: First, after the September 1906 meeting, he was faced with increasingly mutually exclusive demands, namely: from the largely Hindu Tamil-speaking community, who accused him of bolstering up the Ottoman Empire and Pan-Islamism; and from his own conscience and "goal-pledge", whereby he committed himself to ending injustice, even to the point of risking imprisonment, as he had lost confidence in human endeavour to eradicate injustice. But he did not fear going to prison, for, in a speech at a protest meeting at the Empire Theatre in Johannesburg on September 11, 1906, he made it very clear that, "In Cape Town, I exercised the right to vote and other rights as well." He qualified for the municipal and political vote and, therefore, had freedom of political

expression and “more opportunities than others to win rights and safeguard them”³² but in the Transvaal Colony, he felt like he was “under police surveillance”. Hence, “nowhere, except here in the Transvaal, have I seen such oppression of our people. [Therefore] we [“Indians”] will not take up rifles as they [Boers] did, but like them, we shall go to gaol.”³³ Thus, to him, “liberal” Britain had deserted her subjects and had left them to the mercy of Boer oppression. He, like Mahatma Gandhi and the “Indian” intelligentsia, was “content with whites ruling the Transvaal colony, but do feel that we are entitled to all the other ordinary rights that a British subject should enjoy.”³⁴

5. Enter Imam Abdul Kadir Bawazeer and Moulvi Syed Ahmad Mukhtiar

Hadjje Ojer Ally’s departure from the Transvaal Colony in 1907 coincided with the emergence of several religious figures—around the same time the ‘*satyagraha* campaign’ began in earnest—who were key supporters of the passive resistance movement, namely: Hamidia Mosque’s Imam Abdul Qadir

32 Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol.7 (15 June 1907—12 December 1907), Doc.#139, “Cape Town Indians”, 173. *Indian Opinion*, 31/8/1907. To many “Indians” the Cape Colony “became their naturalized home... in which they had lived and hope to have lives in undisturbed quietness... until [the tabling of the Asiatic Registration Bill] and the discussion in parliament of more drastic measures of ‘bazaars for the Indians’ [in Cape Town] which brought an end to this laudable and humane broad-mindedness which silver-lined the greatness of the British nation...” (*Cape Times*, 25/5/1903, p.9, cols.7-9. “The Indian League—Meeting Last Night—Aliens Immigration Act: Proposal ‘Bazaars: Vigorous Protests’”).

33 *Indian Opinion*, 22 /9/1906, 678, col.1. “The Mass Meeting: Telling Speeches: We’ll Go to Gaol”.

34 L. E. Neame, “*The Asiatic Danger*” in the Colonies (London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd, 1907), “Appendix VI”, 173-174. Hereafter cited as “The Asiatic Danger”, and NLSA Cd—3308, Transvaal: Correspondence relating to legislation affecting Asiatics in the Transvaal, “Proceedings of interview between the Secretary of State and a deputation on behalf of British Indians resident in the Transvaal”, 18 November 1906, 43-44.

Bawazeer, Assistant "Preacher" who succeeded him as chairperson of the Hamidia Islamic Society. Thus, Ally's departure from the Transvaal did not spell an end to the Hamidia Islamic Society.³⁵ On the contrary, the appointment of Imam Bawazeer clearly indicated that the duty of the imam of the attached Hamidia Mosque was not only to lead prayer meetings but also to lead the Muslim brethren against "earthly tyrants" and unjust legislation through intensifying the "righteous war" (*jihād*) started by Ally and M. K. Gandhi.³⁶

Indeed, he, like Ally, regarded finger-print impressions of people as contrary to Islamic law (*shariah*)³⁷ and that going to prison was the "best course". Thus, he worked with extraordinary courage to engage in a "righteous war". Consequently, he believed, like Moulvi Syed Ahmad Mukhtiar, who was a member of the Habibia Moslem Society³⁸ and the

35 Swan, *Gandhi: The South African Experience* (Johannesburg: Raven Press, 1985), 120.

36 Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol.7 (15 June 1907—12 December 1907), Doc # 34. "Mass meeting at Pretoria", 45 [pp.43-45], *Indian Opinion*, 6/7/1907.

37 *Rand Daily Mail*, 15/1/1908,7, col.7, 'At the Court: Fifty Asiatics Dealt With'.

38 At the inauguration of the Habibia Moslem Society of Cape Town at the Chiappini Street Hall, in Cape Town, its chairperson, E. J. Gabrow, stated its aims, namely: (i) "wielding together the different nations professing Mohammadanism"; (ii) "elevating them in all essentials of life"; and (iii) "assisting those whom unpreventable misfortune had overtaken." (*Cape Argus*, 7/1/1909,6, col.1. "A New Moslem Society"). Thus, at a large and influential meeting of the members of the Habibia Moslem Society of Cape Town held in their Hall in Pontac Street, Cape Town, presided over by A. L. Gabru, a resolution was passed by Molvi Ahmed Mukhtar, acting chief priest in the Transvaal, bent on, "protecting Indians against imprisonment, and other indignities [because] of our race and nationality... under the civilized system of government and under the British flag." (*Cape Argus*, 10/2/1909, 3, col.4, "The Habibia Moslem Society of Cape Town"). In March, the next month, Ahmed Ally, vice-chairperson of the Habibia Moslem Society, extended his cordial greetings to the Hamidia Islamic Society of Johannesburg, and bid it to "be strong in the fight and not be discouraged in their struggle for the course of righteousness and justice, and for the dethronement of wrong." (*Cape Argus*, 10/3/1909, 3, col.4. "The Habibia

Muzan Afghan Society founded both in Cape Town³⁹ and Surti Mosque in Johannesburg,⁴⁰ that "the duty of a priest was not merely to lead prayers but also to share fully the hardships of the people." Hence, Imam Bawazeer and Moulvi Mukhtiar believed that "those running into the field of battle cannot listen to men who keep themselves at home."⁴¹ Consequently, both offered prayers in the mosques that God "should help us if we are right" and appealed to Muslims that "With Him [God] on one's side, one will never suffer defeat."⁴²

Moreover, under Imam Bawazeer's chairpersonship of the Hamidia Islamic Society, women were also drawn into the struggle and showed immense solidarity and support for their

Moslem Society of Cape Town"). A few months later, in July 1909, they held a special meeting in Cape Town "for the purpose of protesting against the ill-treatment of British Indian Mahomedans in the Transvaal, and the sudden and unwarranted arrests of several well-known Mahomedan merchants who were to be appointed as delegates to England and India..." (*Indian Opinion*, 3/7/1909, 238, col.1. "Cape Mahomedans: Supporting Transvaal Mahomedans"). They also appealed to the Imperial Government and the Indian Government "to give sympathetic consideration to the deputations that have proceeded, on behalf of the British Indians of the Transvaal, to England and India, and end the unfortunate struggle [waged] for the past two-and-a-half years, causing to hundreds of British Indian families untold suffering and great pecuniary loss." (*Indian Opinion*, 31/7/1909, 337, col.1. "Cape Town Habibia Moslem Society", and KAB: GH 23/115, ref.no. 168. Re: deputation of British Indian subjects which proceeded to England and India, 24 July 1909, folios 167-171.)

³⁹ *The Indian Opinion*, 15/4/1909, 3, col. 5, "Islamism: An Educational Movement".

⁴⁰ *The Indian Opinion*, 25/1/1908, 51, cols. 2-3, "Mohammedan Priest Ordered Out", and *Rand Daily Mail*, 15/1/1908, 7, col.6, "Indian Law Breakers".

⁴¹ Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 7 (15 June 1907—12 December 1907), Doc.#68, "Ally's mistake", 91 [pp.89-91], *Indian Opinion*, 27 7/1907.

⁴² Mahatma Gandhi, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 7 (15 June 1907-12 December 1907) Doc.# 156. Johannesburg letter: Hamida Society, 191 [pp.190-194], *Indian Opinion*, 7/9/1907.

jailed husbands.⁴³ Furthermore, unlike Ally, he was one of the few Muslim leaders who joined Mohandas K. Gandhi in the latter's attempts at forging Hindu-Muslim unity; they did this by, for instance, reading from the Qur'an while simultaneously singing the Islamic version of Gandhi's favourite composition, "Vaishnava Jana", and by replacing "Vaishnava" with the word "Muslim".⁴⁴ Thus, he, like M.K. Gandhi, believed that a passive resister, "by placing faith in God only, should give up the love for money and wealth."⁴⁵

He, therefore, sympathized with the families of prisoners for their suffering and imprisonment by the unjust Transvaal Government in July 1908. In fact, way before Ally departed for Cape Town in August 1907, he warned that the Asiatic Law Amendment Act "applies to all "Indians" but with double rigour to the Mahomedans in that it specially insults our religion and hurts the self-respect of Mahomedan "Indians" of the community. Therefore, he called for "a joint battle [by Muslims and Hindus] to be waged against prejudice and oppression."⁴⁶ On July 21, 1908, a day after *satyagraha* began, Imam Bawazeer, in his capacity as chairperson of the Hamidia Islamic Society, was arrested and convicted for "hawk[ing] without a licence" [as] he could not bear to think that he was free while his brethren who were obliged to take out a licence were in goal." After his imprisonment, a meeting was held in an open space near the court. A few days later, it was resolved that all Indian shops were to be closed and all

43 *Cape Argus*, 30/1/1908, 6, col.7, "Indian Women: Want to go to Goal with Their Husbands."

44 Surendra Bhana and Goolam Vahed, *The Making of a Political Reformer: Gandhi in South Africa, 1893-1914* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2005), 87.

45 Sushila Nayar, *Mahatma Gandhi: Satyagraha at Work*, vol. 4 (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1989), 682.

46 Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol.7 (15 June 1907—12 December 1907), Doc # 115, "Appeal to Indian Muslims, on 19 August 1907, Johannesburg", 145-146, *Indian Opinion*, 31/8/1907.

work to be suspended all over South Africa.⁴⁷ Fifty percent of "Indian" hawkers in the Transvaal traded in defiance of the law, without licenses. Many of them had yielded to Ally's call to reject Gandhi's compromise with General Jan C. Smuts, which according to Ally included, among others, voluntary registration, and therefore had not given "Indians" "honour and responsibility" and "victory of the truth", but "had ruined them [the Muslim traders]."⁴⁸

6. Ill-treatment and Reactions

Passive resistance prisoners were given a mielie-pap diet—a "native kaffir's diet" which was "unsuited to Indians".⁴⁹ Vegetables were served mostly with potatoes. No ghee was allowed at all. Prisoners were entitled to red meat twice a week. However, because "most of us were either vegetarians or could not take the meat as it was not religiously cut", they were obliged to have "one pound of vegetables", which "did not last long." Hence, the diet they were forced to accept "constipated some of us and gave diarrhea to the others."⁵⁰

What is significant is that the prison's governor "professed helplessness by regulation" [while] being "quite willing to respect any religious objections." The dietary scale had been "fixed without due regard for the national habits of Asiatics

47 Ibid. vol. 8 (14 December 1907—22 July 1908). Doc.# 271. "Johannesburg Letter: Imam Saheb arrested, 21 July 1908", 474[pp.472-477], *Indian Opinion*, 25/7/1908.

48 Ibid., vol. 8 (14 December 1907—22 July 1908), Doc.# 85. Letter to General Smuts, Johannesburg, 22 February 1908, 163-165. [Enclosure] Draft Immigration Restriction Bill to amend act No. 15 of 1907, 165-166. *Indian Opinion*, 4/7/1908. and Ibid., vol. 9, *Indian Opinion*, 21/3/1908.

49 The diet of prisoners was proven to be "unsuitable and inadequate to sustain health", according to Dr. J. van Niekerk at the request of the British Indian Association. *The Indian Opinion*, 30 October 1909, 476, cols. 2-3, "The Diet Scale".

50 Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 8 (14 December 1907—22 July 1908), Doc.# 92. "My gaol experience[-I]: The Meals, 184 [pp.183-184, *Indian Opinion*, 7/3/1908.

[and therefore], [p]rison life was horrible and people's tastes [were] not respected." Moreover, Indian prisoners received only twelve ounces of beans, but whites received the same quantity of beans and eight ounces of bread. Therefore, "they received a greater variety of superior or more expensive food."⁵¹ During the holy Month of Ramadan The Muslim passive resistance prisoners, were subjected to wilful religious humiliation by the Transvaal colony's prison authorities. The attorney-general of the Transvaal colony refused to grant any concessions for Muslim prisoners during their month of Ramadan. For example, they were refused facilities for observing the fast⁵² and any food before sunrise, so as to uphold "one of the most important of their obligations."⁵³ Moreover, their porridge was mixed with *haram* (prohibited) animal fat, and they were also denied weekly visitations by the Muslim priest Moulvi Ahmed Khan, though accredited ministers of the Christian churches were allowed that privilege.⁵⁴

Muslim passive resistance prisoners were given insufficient clothing and inadequate accommodation, and they were treated as common hard-labour convicts.⁵⁵ And lastly, they were restricted to one mat and one blanket, manhandled by the "native wardens" placed in charge of them, and left unprotected against the bitter winter, leading to many suffering from "semi-starvation."⁵⁶ Passive Resistance

51 Ibid. vol.8 (14 December 1907—22 July 1908), Doc.# 105. "My gaol experiences [-II]: Change in diet", 209, 210 [pp.209-210], *Indian Opinion*, 21/3/1908.

52 *Indian Opinion*, 12/2/1910,53, col.3, "Indian Moslems in the Transvaal".

53 *Indian Opinion*, 18/12/1909,545, cols.2-3, "Political Prisoners and Their Fast".

54 *Indian Opinion*, 16/10/1909,447, col.1, & Ibid., 448, col.2, "Moulvi's Visits Prohibited".

55 L.W. Ritchie, *An Outline of the Case of the British Indians in Transvaal* (London: Temple, 1909), 6.

56 *Indian Opinion*, 10/7/1909, 298, col.3 and Ibid., 299, col.1, "Rigorous Imprisonment Indeed". For example, Dawood Mahomed was released from

prisoners transferred to the Diep Kloof were brought in a manure cart and forced to walk barefoot and bareheaded for nearly 3.2 kilometres without being given any breakfast.⁵⁷ Thus, passive resistance prisoners, particularly at Diepkloof prison, saw their "gratuitously harsh treatment" as "an attempt by the authorities to unfairly break down [their] resistance."⁵⁸ Moreover, Muslim prisoners who had been imprisoned in Johannesburg jail were publicly made to stand in a naked condition for a prolonged period in the presence of others and forced to bathe naked in the open air. In addition, they were coerced "to, on occasion, use a latrine and to use water kept in a receptacle specially used for that purpose".

In a letter to the Attorney-General, the Muslim-dominated British Indian Association (B.I.A.) and the Hamidia Islamic Society complained that the "Fast of Ramadan" had been "unscrupulously observed", as "the diet scale for Indian prisoners in the Transvaal prison system hardly provides sufficient food to keep body and soul together", which had deeply stirred the Muslim community. They desired that "a better meal should be provided every evening for the compatriots" or "that friends outside the jails should be

Volkstrust jail a month before his term of six months' rigorous imprisonment had expired suffering from rheumatism, brought on and aggravated by the excessive cold prevailing in Drakensberg, where the jail was situated. (*The Indian Opinion*, 17/7/1909, 309, col.1, "Owing to ill-health.").

57 *Indian Opinion*, 5/3/1910, 8, col.1, Letter of A.M. Cachalia, Chairman of the British Indian Association to the editor.

58 *Indian Opinion*, 12/2/1910, 53, col.3, "Indian Moslems in the Transvaal". NLSA: Cd-5663. *Transvaal: Further Correspondence: Asiatics in the Transvaal*, Enclosure in No. 110, Acting Chairperson, Hamidia Islamic Society to the Private secretary to the governor, 23 December 1909,72; TAB: GOV 1194, ref.no. PS 15/1/104/09 Acting chairman: Hamidia Islamic Society: Asiatics: transmitting a copy of 3 resolutions passed 19 December at a meeting of the Hamidia Islamic Society relative to certain action of the government in connection with the fast of Ramadthan, 23/12/1909, and TAB: GOV 1234, ref/no.PS 15/1/9/10: Hamidia Islamic Society. Asiatics: Treatment of Mohamedan prisoners during the fast of Ramadhan, 1910.

permitted to supply such extra food."⁵⁹ According to Imam Bawazeer, "most of the passive resisters have lost weight owing to insufficiency of food, and especially owing to a lack of ghee as opposed to fat, which was interpreted by my community to mean that the government intends to starve into submission the conscientious objectors to the anti-Asian legislation of the Transvaal Colony."⁶⁰

Furthermore, Abdul Gani's⁶¹ appeal to the British government to "provide Muslim passive resisters with a small relief"⁶² against anti-Indian legislation fell on deaf ears; this was because the British recognized and supported local authorities in the British Transvaal that regarded and legislated Asiatics as "foreign immigrants", "practitioners of "polytheism", and "followers of a false prophet(s) with a 'non-western culture'" in the Transvaal Colony, and thus faced severe discrimination. Hence, the necessity for continued, orchestrated massive urban upheaval campaigns, which took the form of passive resistance. However, by October 1908, the Volksrust goal was overflowing with Muslim prisoners. The Governor of the Transvaal, therefore, furnished special permission for them to observe the fast in the month of Ramadan.⁶³ Hence, prison authorities allowed Muslims to

59 *Indian Opinion*, 25/9/1909, 413, cols.3, and *Ibid.*, 414, col.1, "The Fast Ramadhan".

60 Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol.10 [5 August 1909—9 April 1910], (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1963). Doc.# 255. "Letter to Colonial Secretary, February 23, 1910", 426 [pp.425-427], *Indian Opinion*, 5/3/1910.

61 Abdul Gani was the chairperson of the British Indian Association [BIA] and a comrade in the struggle against unjust legislation in the Transvaal colony alongside Gandhi and Ally.

62 *Indian Opinion*, 2/10/1909, 430, col.3, "Governor Appealed to: Re-Fast Ramadan".

63 TAB: GOV 1194, ref.no. PS 15/1/88/09. From Secretary of State: Date 9 October 1909. Technical advisor of Transvaal government views on observance of fast incorrect. Special rules prescribed to enable Moslems to

"keep a clock and a light in their cell". Also, light work had been given to Muslims, while the sick was totally exempted from work. And lastly, orders had been issued permitting the Parsees to wear their customary shirt and sacred thread as well as their own cap.⁶⁴ Prison life was, nevertheless, a heavy cross to bear. But, though passive resisters, like "Kazi and Imam Bawazeer, were ill all the time, they were not broken in spirit, [as] [t]hey were happy to bear this particular kind of hardship for the sake of the motherland."⁶⁵ In fact, Imam Bawazeer's conduct in prison was influenced by his Islamic principles as opposed to the display of outward hatred. However, his "just quietism" did not mean acquiescing; for, on his release from the Diepkloof Prison, he lashed out against the injustice he experienced while being incarcerated by giving a graphic report on police brutality and prisoner ill-treatment by wardens to his organization's political wing, the BIA.

Thus, to Imam Bawazeer and the other satyagrahis—who had been sentenced to four days' imprisonment—"imprisonment had meant no hardship whatsoever for them." As a result, when they were released, "[t]hey were ready for a second, longer term of imprisonment... [for] it is truly wonderful that the Imam of a mosque should spend even an hour in jail in defence of a fundamental right."⁶⁶ Furthermore,

uphold the fast, 1909, and TAB:GOV 1194, ref.no. PS 15/1/89/09. From Ministers: 13 October 1909. Asiatics Question of granting facilities to Indian prisoners to observe the Fast, 1909.

64 Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 9 (23 July 1908—4 August 1909) Doc.# 115. Prisoners' Condition, 10 October 1908, 197 (pp.196-199). *Indian Opinion*, 17/10/1908, and TAB:GOV1194, ref.no. PS 15/1/88/09. From Secretary of State: Date 9 October 1909.: Technical advisor of Transvaal government views on observance of fast incorrect. Special rules prescribed to enable Moslems to uphold the fast, 1909.

65 Ibid., vol. 9 (23 July 1908—4 August 1909) Doc.# 176. "My Second Experience in Gaol: Illness in Gaol", 13 December 1908, 290 [pp.289-293], *Indian Opinion*, 30/1/1909.

66 Ibid. vol.9 (23 July 1908—4 August 1909), Doc.# 14, "Johannesburg Letter: Mass Meeting on Thursday", 17,18 [pp.17-25], *Indian Opinion*, 1/8/1908.

despite "the carrying of loads of gravel from one place to another" and being forced against their will "to eat mealie-pup for breakfast every day", they "remain[ed] full of courage and [were] not worried by [the prospect of] imprisonment,"⁶⁷ according to Imam Bawazeer. Consequently, a resolution was passed by Imam Bawazeer and Hamidia Islamic Society many months later, on March 14, 1909, congratulating the release of passive resisters who had gone to jail for the sake of their religion and the welfare of their brethren. It was, therefore, the wish of the Hamidia Islamic Society to "follow the noble example thus set, and to [continue] the passive resistance struggle at any cost, until the government shall have granted relief."⁶⁸

7. Transvaal Conciliation Committee & Its Consequences

The exceedingly torrid prison conditions did not deter Ally and the Muslim prisoners from continuing their struggle against the Asiatic Regulation Act, for they regarded the oppressive legislation as "an unmeaning and wanton insult to Islam, and therefore, the Mohammedans are specifically determined to agitate for [its] repeal." Ally, after he read out the English translation of a speech by E. I. Aswat, who was the acting chairperson of the BIA, welcomed those passive resisters on their release from prison. He also condemned the Transvaal commissioner's findings on the death of one of the passive resisters, Nagappan, in detention, and he elaborated on how imprisonment and the memory of those who died in detention only intensified resistance to injustice. According to Ally, British Cape Province was increasingly becoming an illiberal and "closed society", and thus was no different from the other

67 Ibid. vol.9 (23 July 1908—4 August 1909), Doc.# 14, "Johannesburg Letter: Conditions in Prison", 20 [pp.17-25], *Indian Opinion*, 1/8/1908.

68 NLSA: Cd—5663 Transvaal: *Further Correspondence: Asiatics in the Transvaal*, Enclosure in No. 9, The Hamidia Islamic Society to the Private Secretary to the governor, 18 March 1909, 6.

British colonies of Transvaal and Orange Free State. Thus, Ally and Hadje Habib, both of whom had returned to the Transvaal Colony, set up a "Conciliation Committee", the Transvaal British Indian Conciliation Committee, at a meeting held at the Hamidia Islamic Society's Hall in June 1909. The meeting was well attended by the businessmen and political figureheads from Standerton, Pretoria, Zeerust, Krugersdorp, and Johannesburg. The Committee's goals were not in contradiction to the cause of *satyagraha* but complemented it, and it, therefore, received M. K. Gandhi's blessings. In other words, it was formed in order to "interpose between the government and passive resisters" and to serve as a haven "for those who did not see eye to eye with the methods employed by the passive resisters [and] for those who have found themselves unable to participate in the goal-going and other programmes of the *satyagraha* campaigns." In essence, "[t]he Conciliation Committee was formed in order to bring about conciliation between the (Transvaal) Government and the passive resisters."⁶⁹

Therefore, Ally and Hadje Habib (the appointed president) desired that the formation of that Conciliation Committee "will show the authorities that there is no division in the [Indian] community and that there is no difference of opinion" and therefore, it would "help the cause of *satyagrahis* [by] bringing about the end of the struggle itself and [by] securing the release of the prisoners still serving their terms of imprisonment. Hence, the resolution proposed by Ally to set up that committee was "passed unanimously."⁷⁰ Moreover, a deputation of the Conciliation Committee—consisting of Abdol Ganie, Ally, Habib Motan, S. V. Thomas, Adam Desai, Ally Mohamed Khamisa, Jusab Ebrahim Gardi, and George Godfrey

69 *Indian Opinion*, 26/6/1909, 279, col.1, "Notes on the Transvaal Struggle".

70 Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 9 (23 July 1908—4 August 1909), Doc.# 228, "Johannesburg Letter: British Indian Conciliation Committee", 368 [pp.367-369], *Indian Opinion*, 26/6/1909.

was set up to meet General Jan Christiaan Smuts, deputy leader of the *Het Volk* ("The People") Party and Colonial Secretary of the Transvaal Colony, with the following demands: the repeal of the obnoxious Asiatic Registration Act, the granting of equality with Europeans *vis-à-vis* immigration rights; the non-applicability of thumb impressions to all educated "Asians", the non-allowance of all business partners to be present when applying for a license; the allowance of registration to occur within the Transvaal; the provision for the right to appeal to the Supreme Court against a ruling made by the local magistrate and the issuing of temporary permits, and the non-allowance of those who did not possess a permit to be required to adduce proof of three years' "domicility."⁷¹ In essence, the Committee aimed at, *inter alia*, repealing the Asiatic Registration Act and other measures affecting the Asian community, and by implication ending the passive resistance campaigns and securing the release of political prisoners, while, simultaneously, retaining unity in the struggle.

In the meanwhile, another deputation to England, led by Ally and Gandhi, was appointed to add voice to the discussions on the union of South African colonies scheduled to start shortly in London. However, the deputation failed dismally, as General Jan Christiaan Smuts refused to make concessions on essential demands. He, for example, agreed not to enforce the Act but he rejected to repeal it. That meant that one of the Conciliation Committee's main aims of securing the release of prisoners still serving their terms of imprisonment was rendered unrealisable, as it could only be brought about if the Act was repealed. Also, concessions were only offered on less important demands. He also agreed that only in "deserving" cases would permission be granted to educated men to enter the Transvaal colony. However, that concession proved highly trivial, as Transvaal authorities could in an *ad hoc* fashion apply the immigration regulations pertaining to "Indians".

71 *Indian Opinion*, 26/6/1909,279, cols.1-2, "Notes on the Transvaal Struggle".

That meant that the destiny of “deserving” “Asian” educated men remained largely in the hands of immigration officers. In summary, Smuts refused to amend highly discriminatory regulations.⁷² The Conciliation Committee was, therefore, superfluous and was advised to dissolve. Nevertheless, that did not imply its end, for the second resolution proposed now had to call for a petition to the Colonial Secretary in London for acceptance of its demands, which, upon failure, would oblige members to “court imprisonment”— in that case, the issue of people not going to gaol would not arise.⁷³

Hence, a mass meeting convened and assembled at the Hamidia Islamic Mosque in Johannesburg in December 1909 “had disproved the allegation that the “Indian” community was weakening [for]... A community with heroes like [Imam] Bawazeer cannot be said to have accepted defeat... [t]he strength of the *satyagrahi* lies entirely in self-suffering.”⁷⁴ Furthermore, “the vast majority of the community is completely in sympathy with the struggle, and that as passive

72 Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 9 (23 July 1908—4 August 1909) Doc.#228, “Johannesburg Letter: British Indian Conciliation Committee”, 379-383, *Indian Opinion*, 26/6/1909; *Indian Opinion*, 3/7/1909, 285, col.3 and 286, col.1, “The Conciliation Committee and General Smuts”, *Indian Opinion*, 5/6/1909, 250, col.1, “A Conciliation Committee”.

73 Ibid. vol. 9 (23 July 1908—4 August 1909), Doc.#228, “Johannesburg Letter; British Indian Conciliation Committee”, 368 [pp.367-369], *Indian Opinion*, 12/6/1909. For information on Ally, together with approximately 800 “Whites” and “Indians”, wishing *bon voyage* to Hadje Habib and M. K. Gandhi on their deputation’s departure by the *Imperial Mail* for Cape Town en route to England, see, *Indian Opinion*, 5/6/1909, 278, col.3, ‘Departure of the Deputation’.

74 Mahatma Gandhi *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 10 [5 August 1909—9 April 1910], (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1963). Doc.#179, “Speech at Johannesburg, 5 December 1909”, 345 [pp.345-347], *Indian Opinion*, 11/12/1909.

resisters, and therefore as servers of the Truth, [they] have nothing to conceal."⁷⁵

Consequently, Gandhi, in a letter to Professor G. K. Gokhale in December 1909, referred to Imam Bawazeer as a "cultured Mahomedan priest" who was imprisoned with "[s]ome of the bravest Indians representing all races in Diepkloof Goal."⁷⁶ He, however, "returned almost a physical wreck⁷⁷, though a tower of strength to the cause, [but] the whole Indian community in general suffers in [his] sufferings."⁷⁸ Thus his bravery and self-sacrifice were poignantly described: "The Hamidia Society and the Indian community as a whole see that Imam Saheb has much to be proud of. He is reduced to health and has been afflicted with something; despite this, he has courted repeated terms of imprisonment. So long as the community has such brave men, who can say we'll be defeated?"⁷⁹ In light of the above-mentioned, it becomes evident that their treatment in Transvaal prisons were bent on "cruelly intensifying their punishment"⁸⁰ and not, as Maureen Swan has pointed out, "a

75 *Indian Opinion*, 11/12/1909, 13, col.2, "Johannesburg Mass Meeting: Welcome to Delegates".

76 Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 10 (5 August 1909—9 April 1910). Doc.#182. Letter to G. K. Gokhale, 6 December 1909, 350 [349-351].

77 Imam Bawazeer had suffered very severely. When he was extremely feverish and when he was obliged to report himself sick, the medical officer suggested, without even examining him, that he was shirking work; but when he indignantly repudiated the suggestion, his temperature was taken by the officer, and it was found to be 104 degrees. That alarmed the officer and he was placed in the prison hospital. As a consequent, he had lost 22 lbs. in weight, and was too weak to walk about only with difficulty. See Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol.10 (5 August 1909—9 April 1910). Doc.# 255. Letter to Colonial Secretary, February 23, 1910", 426 [pp.425-427), *Indian Opinion*, 5/3/1910.

78 Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol.10 (5 August 1909—9 April 1910). Doc.# 252. "Imam Saheb", 422, *Indian Opinion*, 19/2/1910.

79 Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol.10 (5 August 1909—9 April 1910). Doc.# 253. "Parsee Rustomjee", 423, *Indian Opinion*, 19/2/1910.

80 *Indian Opinion*, 12/2/1910, 53, col.3, "Indian Moslems in the Transvaal".

by-product of cultural misunderstanding". It, therefore, can be logically argued that these punitive prison measures were complemented by "the imposition of heavy fines on "Indians", the seizure of goods of "Indian" merchants, and the forceful deportation to India of many "Indians by the Transvaal government."⁸¹ Consequently, many wives and children of passive resisters were left destitute, and, therefore, "they were obliged to hawk fruit and vegetables in the streets."

What made matters worse was the Imperial Parliament's sanctioning of the Transvaal Government's and, in particular, the Council of Pretoria's attempts to "put old laws and [oppressive] regulations into effect."⁸² In fact, according to the Imperial Government, "the self-governing colonies in [South Africa] had a right to exclude whom they willed."⁸³ So, "British Indians" lost faith in the Imperial Government in London to ameliorate their fate. In the words of the Natal Indian Congress at a mass meeting convened at the market in Durban in order to express its solidarity with fellows in the Transvaal on the imprisonment and on the sentencing to hard labour of Imam Abdol Bawazeer, chairperson of the Hamidia Islamic Society: "We believe in imperial protection, but where have we found it? Where is the King? He whom we call Raja?... We see people suffering, almost dying, yet we do hear the welcome approach of a helper. We must rely on ourselves, and in the circumstances, we feel justified in pursuing this course of passive resistance."⁸⁴ And indeed, the struggle continued for the Hamidia Islamic Society, as its leadership remained committed to resistance despite the fact that, by May 1909, the vast majority of "British Indians" in the Transvaal rejected the

81 *Indian Opinion*, 12/2/1910, 53, col.3, "Indian Moslems in the Transvaal".

82 *Indian Opinion*, 14/5/1910, 156, col.2, "The Position of the Coloured People: Worse than it was Twelve Months Ago".

83 *Cape Argus*, 6/1/1909, 5, col.5. "Mr. Gandhi's Views: Passively fighting for a principle".

84 *African Chronicle (Supplement)*, 25/7/1908, 3, vol.1, "Mass Meeting Protest against Imprisonment and Persecution".

path of resistance.⁸⁵ The resistance movement was, however, far from collapsing, as thousands continued to attend mass rallies or receptions for returning comrades, and even pledged their support to passive resistance, long after they had ceased actively supporting it.⁸⁶ In fact, Hamidia Islamic Society's key figures continued to court imprisonment again and again. For example, in June 1909, Ebrahim Saleji Coovadia, treasurer of the Hamidia Islamic Society and the BIA, was sentenced to three months' imprisonment with hard labour for declining to pay the fine imposed. In that same month, Omar Saleji, Hamidia Islamic Society's vice-chairperson, was also sentenced to three months' imprisonment, but without hard labour owing to his advanced age⁸⁷, while Dawood Mohammed, after being released from Volksrust prison a month before his term of six months' rigorous imprisonment had expired, vowed to continue the struggle immediately after his recovery.⁸⁸ Thus, to conclude, Ally on his return to the Transvaal Colony, was willing to suspend the passive resistance campaigns and negotiate with the Transvaal State. For that reason, he became a co-founder of the Transvaal British Indian Conciliation Committee. However, the Transvaal governor's cosmetic and superficial amendments, which merely "papered over the cracks", forced him to choose imprisonment and passive resistance as the most acceptable responses.

Conclusion

Discussing, enacting, and defending their religious customs and beliefs, in particular Islam, by indentured, immigrant, and colonial-born "Indians" against the backdrop of increasing anti-"Muslim" legislation, sanitary measures bent on

85 Swan, *Gandhi: The South African Experience*, 175.

86 Swan, *Gandhi: The South African Experience*, 178.

87 *Indian Opinion*, 26/6/1909, 279, col.2, "More Imprisonments".

88 *Indian Opinion*, 17/7/1909, 309, col.2, "Owing to Ill-Health".

promoting Anglo-Saxon ideas on "class and civilization", scientific racism, and social Darwinism —manifested in the government's deliberate policy of urban segregation which forced "Asians" into urban ghettos—the outbreak of the South African War (1899–1902) resulted in, amongst others, social erosion of communities, which contributed to the establishment of Ally's Sunni-dominated, pro-Pan-Islamist, Hamidia Islamic Society. The last-mentioned initially served as a social welfare organization that was dedicated to assist non-white refugees with "social regeneration" and integrate into a post-South African War Transvaal society, but later commenced the first passive resistance campaign in South Africa against British oppression. A shift has now occurred from the "politics of petitioning" to the "politics of *satyagraha*". The latter took the form of reformist, non-violent protest, and civil disobedience bent on forcing a change or securing concessions that not only protected their commercial interests but also Islam as their religious traditions— "Indian" Muslims were not only ostracized on the basis of colour and country but were also excluded on the basis of their religion.

Under Hadje Ojer Ally's chairpersonship, the ideology of the passive resistance movement was expounded, tactics were reviewed, and the commitment to resistance was constantly reaffirmed at all meetings convened by the Hamidia Islamic Society. Hadje Ojer Ally, however, departed from the Transvaal to a more liberal Cape Town in August 1907, as the Hindu Tamil-speaking community, in particular, accused him of supporting the Ottoman Empire and Pan-Islamism. Hadje Ojer Ally's departure from the Transvaal did not spell an end to Hamidia Islamic Society. On the contrary, he was succeeded by Imam Bawazeer, who, like Moulvi Syed Ahmad Mukhtiar of Cape Town, in particular, clearly defined their duty as not only leading prayer meetings but also leading their brothers against "earthly tyrants" and unjust legislation through intensifying the righteous war (*jihad*) started by Hadje Ojer Ally and M. K.

Gandhi. Also, like Hadje Ojer Ally, he regarded finger-print impressions as contrary to Islamic law (*shariah*) and saw imprisonment as the "best course" against British injustice. Furthermore, unlike Hadje Ojer Ally, he was one of the few Muslim leaders who joined Mohandas K. Gandhi in the latter's attempts at forging Hindu-Muslim unity. Thus, he called for "a joint battle [by Muslims and Hindus] to be waged against prejudice and oppression against us." Hence, on July 21, 1908, a day after *satyagraha* began, he, as the new chairperson of the Hamidia Islamic Society, was arrested and convicted for "hawk[ing] without a licence".

In fact, imprisonment did not break their spirit of resistance, as they were ready for a second, longer term of imprisonment. Moreover, Imam 'Abdul Bawazeer's conduct in prison was influenced by his Islamic principles as opposed to the display of "outward hatred". But his "just quietism" did not mean acquiescing; for, on his release from the Diepkloof prison, he, as leader of the Hamidia Islamic Society, lashed out against the injustice he experienced while being incarcerated by giving a graphic report on police brutality and prisoner ill-treatment by wardens to his organization's political wing, the BIA. Furthermore, ill-treatment in prison did not deter Hadje Ojer Ally and other Muslim "Indians" from continuing their struggle against the Asiatic Regulation Act, for they regarded the oppressive legislation as "a wanton insult to Islam", and therefore, "the Mohammedans are specifically determined to agitate for [its] repeal." Thus, Hadje Ojer Ally's return to the Transvaal— as the illiberal Cape Province treated "Indians" "in the same way as kaffirs"— led to him co-founding the Transvaal British Indian Conciliation Committee, bent on complementing *satyagraha's* cause in order to bring about conciliation between the Transvaal government and the passive resisters.

The deputation of the Conciliation Committee, set up to meet General Jan Christiaan Smuts' *vis-à-vis* "Indian"

grievances, failed dismally, as Smuts agreed not to enforce the Act but refused to repeal it. That meant that one of the Conciliation Committee's main aims of securing the release of "Indian" prisoners still serving their terms of imprisonment was rendered unrealisable. The Conciliation Committee was, therefore, superfluous and was advised to dissolve. That did not imply the end of the Hamidia Islamic Society, as subsequently, a mass meeting convened and assembled at its mosque in Johannesburg in December 1909 and at that meeting it disproved the allegation that resistance had weakened, for the attendees believed that "a community with heroes like Imam Bawazeer cannot be said to have accepted defeat".

Worse, the Imperial Government in London believed that the self-governing British colonies in South Africa had the right to exclude whomever they chose. Thus, it sanctioned the Council of Pretoria's attempts to implement its old oppressive laws and regulations. Consequently, "British Indians" lost faith in the Imperial Government in London to ameliorate their fate. Thus, despite the fact that, by May 1909, the vast majority of "British Indians" in the Transvaal rejected the path of resistance, the struggle, nevertheless, continued for the Hamidia Islamic Society, as its leadership remained committed to resistance. Two years earlier, in September 1907, it was Moulvi Mukhtiar who urged "Indians" to firmly hold onto the rope of God to achieve victory from oppression ultimately. Hence, Gandhi, in February 1908, praised "the massive effort of Hamidia Islamic Society and a large number of Muslims who worked hard for [securing a] victory" through the crucial role they had played in initiating successful passive resistance campaigns against anti-Asian legislation in the Transvaal. The resistance movement, therefore, was far from collapsing, as thousands continued to attend mass rallies or receptions for returning comrades and even pledged their support to passive resistance, long after they had ceased actively supporting it.

The society, especially under the leadership of Iman Bawazeer, not only continued the passive resistance struggle but it also initiated the first organized Islamic resistance to British imperialism in the former Transvaal Boer Republic by, among others, (a) fighting for the right of Muslim passive resistance prisoners to pray and fast particularly during the month of Ramadan; (b) defending the legitimacy of Muslim marriages (The Case of Adam vs. the Registrar of Asiatics 1911; the Case of Fabian Jussat vs. Rex 1912; and the case of Hassan Mohamed, 1912); (c) condemning Britain's neutrality in the massacre of Muslims during the Italian-Turkish conflict of 1911-12; and, (d) organizing a mass meeting against the decision of the Transvaal High Court to deport Salomi Bhyat, a "Cape [Worcester-born] Malay" married to an "Indian" in 1912.

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Al-Hajj Umar Tall: Contribution to Islamic Revivalism and Resistance to French Colonization in West Africa in the 19th Century

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ABSTRACT

This article conducts a thorough examination of Al-Hajj Umar Tall's life and impact as a prominent figure in the Islamic revival and a fervent opponent of European expansion in West Africa. Grounded in fieldwork spanning from 1989, the study delves into Umar's historical and mythical dimensions within the Senegambia context, utilizing epic poetry and oral traditions to unravel the intricate interplay between tradition and identity in the region. The narrative traces Umar's life from birth to his encounters with French colonizers, culminating in his mysterious disappearance in the cliffs of Bandiagara in present-day Mali. The paper grapples with the challenge of discerning between the historical and legendary aspects of Umar, recognizing the complexity of separating fact from fiction in historical narratives. Emphasizing the central role of oral traditions, the study highlights the symbiotic relationship between epic narration and music, particularly the kora and xalam instruments. Umar's heroism and Islamic revivalism are contextualized within the 'Islamic epic,' presenting him as a multifaceted figure. The second section meticulously details the "Life and Times of Omar," covering his birth, childhood, travels across West Africa, pilgrimage to Mecca, and encounters with French colonizers. The concluding section explores the geopolitical shifts in 19th-century West Africa, challenges colonial portrayals of Umar as ruthless, and delves into his mysterious disappearance, symbolically significant amid changing territorial boundaries. The article concludes by examining the integration of the Qur'an in oral epic narratives, and positioning Umar Tall as a towering epic figure

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whose story resonates in contemporary discourse, underscoring the enduring relevance of his legacy in the Senegambia region.

Introduction

Al-Hajj Umar Tall has become a symbolic figure who played a critical role in the Islamic revival and resistance against European expansion into West Africa. Consequently, he was celebrated by the famous griots, *gweles*,¹ *jelis*, performers, oral composers, and Masters of the Word (*Maitres de la parole*) hailing from the Senegambia region. In turn, the patrons give gifts and money to these oral performers, a kind of *potlatch*.² Over the years, since 1989, the author of this article have conducted fieldwork bearing specifically on the two historical and mythical figures of Ndiadiane Ndiaye and El Hadj Omar Tall. This fieldwork took place in the Waalo region, northern Senegal. It is important to note that as a specialist of epic poetry, we derived our sources from oral traditions and literatures. According to C. Seydou, "The epic is the genre that condenses the maximum amount of cultural data elements which, in turn, are ordered in a precise form conducive to a semantic and pragmatic vocation: That of symbolizing an identity and that of calling to live this identity within the community that identity defines."³

As for the expression of 'tradition,' it is harder to define; in his work on South Slavic oral tradition, Lord highlights both the comprehension and appreciation pertaining to individual idiosyncrasies within the term 'tradition' because they (the

1 From the Arabic *Qawwal*, meaning a narrator who belongs to the Sufi order.

2 We narrate a similar story in *Épopées Africaines: Ndiadiane Ndiaye et Hadj Omar Tall*, (Paris: Éditions l'Harmattan, 2003). The great writer Birago Diop also depicts a similar experience around 1934, when he returned from France after completing his veterinary studies. (cf. Birago Diop, *Les Contes d'Amadou Koumba*, (Paris: Éditions Présence Africaine, 1947).

3 See Christiane Seydou, "Comment définir le genre épique? Un exemple: l'épopée africaine," *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford* 13, 1 (1982): 86.

idiosyncrasies) are so flexible and complex. He notes: "A tradition is easy to define, but not easy to know. It is the sum of all its parts, by which I mean that it consists of all the singers of epic, good and bad and all the performances, also good or bad, of all the songs, likewise of variable quality, in the course of the life of a culture."⁴

Africa in general —and the Senegambia region in particular— abounds with oral traditions; for millennia, the Word (*La parole*) has been used —and still is, to some extent— in order to create, compose, perform, transmit, and preserve stories; tales; epic narratives; legends; proverbs and sayings; poetry; genealogies, etc. Writing was hardly used, except in a few regions. In the West African Sahel region, the Arabic script has been used to transliterate and transcribe African languages. To cite two examples, we have *wolofal* in Senegal with the transcription of the Wolof language using the Arabic script; the Pulaar language has also been widely transcribed thanks to Arabic. The other example is *Ajami* which is the transcription of the Hausa language using the Arabic alphabet in northern Nigeria, present-day Niger, northern Cameroon and as far afield as present-day Mali. It is important to take stock of the two instruments played in these narratives, namely the *kora* and the *xalam*. Thus, epic narration and music go hand in hand. In ancient Greece for instance, many musical instruments were used during the oral composition and performance of oral poetry: the *kithara*, a plucked string instrument, the *lyre*, also a string instrument, and the *aulos*, a

4 Albert Bates Lord, *Epic Singers and Oral Tradition* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), 78. Beyond tradition, one can consider writing history from the angle of 'regressive history,' a concept developed by Philippe Descola in his book titled *Par-delà nature et culture* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2005), 16; here is how the author defines this concept: "Look first to the present in order to better interpret the past." (Ibid. 17). Thus, with the enthusiasm that the disciples of Omar have for the latter, in the present time, their posturing can provide a better understanding of the past.

double-reed instrument. Some of (or all) of these instruments were probably used in Homer's *Odyssey*. The soundtracks contain the recitations of the epic narratives from Gambia, along with notes of the *kora* and *xalam*. Thus, these soundtracks merrily complement and enrich the written texts at once because these texts can be very dry; as is obvious, reading involves only one of a human being's five senses, i.e. eyesight, whereas music adds hearing.⁵

It is being presumed that is very difficult to distinguish between the historical and legendary (epic) figures. In other words, to separate fact from fiction is not an easy task. In a chapter of his book titled *Odysseus' Scar*, E. Auerbach starts by acknowledging that to write history is so difficult that most historians are forced to make concessions to the techniques of legend.⁶ He further stressed that in the "Old Testament, in so far as it is concerned with human events, ranges through all three domains: legend, historical reporting, and interpretative historical theology." In our discussion and analysis below, we discuss "the Life and Times of Omar," a section which provides a descriptive analysis of his birth, family background, childhood, adolescence, travels across the length and width of West Africa as well as his pilgrimage to Mecca. We also discuss Umar's encounter with the French colonizers and his subsequent disappearance in the cliffs of Bandiagara in present-day Mali.

5 See Homer, *The Odyssey*, translated by George Chapman, Introduction and Notes by Adam Roberts (Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 2002).

6 Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1953), pp. 20-21. To complement Auerbach's remarks, one can read Paul Ricoeur who, in his book entitled *Temps et récit Vol. III-Le temps raconté* (Paris: Éditions de Seuil, 1985) defines the reality of historical time, along with the concept of the configuration of time, as well as historical knowledge of the 'real' past. In addition, the author poses the following question: what does the term 'real' mean when applied to the historical past (see 203).

In order to close these introductory remarks, I concur with G. Meyer to the effect that: "Epic tales are not historical tales, they are ideological reinterpretations to exalt the specific qualities of heroes."⁷ In addition to ideology, the main marker of these Senegambian epic narratives is religion, namely Islam; the reader will come across numerous references to the Qur'an and to the Islamic faith in general, which fact leads us to believe that these narratives belong to the category of the 'Islamic epic,' defined by J. Knappert as "a crucible in which various oriental motifs have been incorporated."⁸ In the final analysis, Umar –the central character who is featured throughout these narratives— is hailed as a hero by members of his constituency, in addition to being sung about and celebrated in various languages by various cultures. According to Oumarou Watta, the epic of El Hadj Omar is found "among the Fulfulde, Bambaras, Songhais and Zarma as well as among the Peuls and all these societies appropriate for themselves and adapt to their realities the epic of Omar."⁹ Indeed, he is both a complex historical personality and a legendary epic figure.

The Life and Times of Omar

The history of Shaykh Umar Tall, popularly known in the literatures as El Hadj Omar, is well documented in many history books. In a recent book written by Thierno Mountaga Tall, the author asserts that when he was born, Omar's mother wanted to name him after her maternal uncle; thus, she chose

7 Gérard Meyer, *Récits épiques toucouleurs* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 1991), 9. For a detailed analysis related to the interaction between history and oral sources, cf. Théodore Nicoué Gayibor, *Sources orales et histoire africaine: Approches méthodologiques* (Paris: Éditions l'Harmattan, 2011).

8 Jan Knappert, "The Epic in Africa," *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 4, 2-3 (1967): 190.

9 Oumarou Watt, *Rosary, Mat and Molo: A Study in the Spiritual Epic of Omar Seku Tal* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1993), xiii.

the name El Hadji Yakhya Mandiaye Diop.¹⁰ However, a marabout (holy man) came to the house and, instead, chose another name for the baby, namely Thierno Mountaga Daha Cheikh Oumar Tall. This is his full name, shortened to Oumar or Omar Tall. Actually, a slight differentiation is to be made here to the effect that when it comes to naming the historical figure,-that is, the person that actually existed,-the name El Hadj Omar Tall or Sheikh Omar Futiyu is used, whereas the legendary epic figure is referred to simply as El Hadj Omar (in the French-speaking world). There are other examples of famous historical or quasi-historical figures who have really existed; naturally, their name, actions, and fame gave rise to an epic treatment; that is the case of Roland, said to be the nephew of Charlemagne. Roland is mentioned in the famous biography of Charlemagne titled *Vita Karoli Magnus* (Life of Charles the Great). Thus, in medieval France, *The Chanson de Roland* was born in the 11th century.¹¹

In most narratives, Umar as an historical figure, is referred to as Seeku Umar; 'Seeku' (spelled in French as Sékou) is a deformation of 'Cheikh.' In the English-speaking world, the name is usually spelt as Al-Hajj Umar with the spelling adopted henceforth in this article. It is important to note that Al-Hajj Umar is named after Umar Ibn al-Khattab (ra); the latter was a leading companion to the Prophet Muhammad (saw). Umar (ra) became the second Caliph after the passing

10 Thierno Mountaga Tall, *El Hadji Oumar Tall: L'aigle de Alwar* (Paris: Éditions l'Harmattan, 2018), 27. See the book by Samba Dieng, *La geste d'El-Hadj Omar et l'islamisation de l'épopée peule* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 2018). see also Mohammadou Aliou Tyam, *La vie d'El Hadj Omar, qacida en poular*, transcription, traduction, notes et glossaire par Henri Gaden (Paris: Institut d'ethnologie, 1935).

11 In the final analysis, we can borrow the two expressions of 'ancestrality' and 'ancestralized', as developed by Djibril Samb, *L'heur de philosopher la nuit et le jour Tome 5: Qu'il est difficile de rester humain* (Dakar: Éditions l'Harmattan, 2019), 107. All this to say that Omar was 'ancestralized,' therefore he became an ancestor, which fact, in turn, reinforces the character of legend built around his character.

away of Prophet Muhammad (saw). He ruled the Islamic state for ten years.

In our article titled "The Wolof Epic: From Spoken Word to Written text,"¹² we recounted the circumstances surrounding the birth and life story of the hero. He is born during Ramadan, the holy month of fasting for Muslims. He refuses to be breast-fed during the day—in effect, fasting just like the adults. His worried parents consult with a marabout who tells them that the baby is not an ordinary one. As a child, Umar quickly memorizes the Holy Qur'an, thus showing his precious extraordinary intellectual skills. When he is somewhat older, he starts his holy wars (*jihad*). Umar travels eastwards, into present-day Mali, fighting and converting the natives to Islam. He continues his trip to Sokoto (present-day Nigeria) and then makes it all the way to Mecca; he performs the pilgrimage and, on his way back to West Africa, he makes a stopover in Cairo at the famous Al-Azhar University where he is challenged to demonstrate that he is a learned man. His hosts underestimate Umar's learning and show bias vis-à-vis the Tukolor chief being a black man, thinking that because of his sub-Saharan African origins, Umar would not be able to retain an adequate knowledge of the Qur'an. Umar successfully shows his vast knowledge and erudition, gaining a lot of respect in the process.

Umar probably visited Gambia region after having accomplished the Mecca pilgrimage and, subsequently, returning to West Africa. According to one of our sources, —Landing Janneh, an inhabitant of Bakau, a town situated on the coast, a stone's throw away from the capital-city of Banjul— Umar was informed that there are seven (7) holy stones in the world, and one of them was situated in Gambia, (more precisely in Gunjur, nowadays a coastal town situated 56 kms south of Banjul). This was the mission that compelled

12 Samba Diop, "The Wolof Epic: From Spoken Word to Written Text," *Research in African Literatures* 37, 3 (2006): 120-132.

Umar to go to Gambia. In those days, the concept of country borders was non-existent; Senegal itself was just about to become a French colony; thus, the region was experiencing the last stage of the vestiges of pre-colonial Africa.

He encountered various ethnic groups across the vast region of the Sahel: Fula, Bambara, Mandinka, Moors, Soninke, Sereer, Wolof, etc. Today, The Gambia is a modern independent republic, after having been a British colony from 1821 to 1965. One must differentiate between 'Gambia' and 'The Gambia'. The former term refers both to the pre-colonial space which extended all the way into present-day Senegal and to the British colony, whereas the latter alludes to the independent country. Therefore, within the frame of these epic narratives, the term 'Gambia' is the appropriate one because the events took place before independence.¹³ During the colonial epoch, Banjul was called Bathurst; Henry Bathurst was a well-known English Member of Parliament and one of the stalwarts of the British colonial policy. The city was renamed Banjul in 1973.

It is important that we narrate some anecdotes relating to our fieldwork in Gambia which, in turn, hopefully shed light on Umar's arrival there. Umar was arriving from Senegal, thus traveling in a north-south direction. When he reached the village of Barra, situated at the tip of the north bank of the River Gambia, he wanted to cross to Banjul. Prior to that, according to our sources, Umar approached some men who were playing drafts (*yooté* in Wolof) wanting to talk to them; however, they were so engrossed in their game that they scarcely paid attention to him. He turned to the women and asked for water for his ablutions before performing his prayers; the women also ignored him. Thereupon, he decided to cross into Banjul. The reason he was ignored was probably

13 On the Wolof in Gambia, see David Gamble & Linda K. Salmon with Alhaji Hassan Njie, *Peoples of The Gambia I, The Wolof* (San Francisco: Gambian Studies No. 17, 1985), pp. 41-43.

due to his appearance for it is said that Umar was a humble man, poorly dressed, with a cotton-made boubou and leather sandals at his feet. Therefore, many people underestimated him, and quite a few even went to the extent of scorning him and showing him contempt.

At this juncture, there are different versions of events: the first one states that Umar approached the owner of a dug-out and the man transported him across the river; the second version from Mansour Njie when I interviewed him in 2009: according to Njie, a man from Saint-Louis (Senegal) called Macoumba Diallo is the one who ferried Umar from Barra to Banjul. Diallo's family possessed dug-out canoes scattered between Saint-Louis and Gambia. Still, according to Njie, there is another version which proclaims that Diallo carried Umar in his canoe from Saint-Louis to Banjul.

When he arrived in Banjul, it was a poor small village situated on an island that the British named Saint-Mary. Umar was welcomed by the Faye family, in particular Ibrahima Faye, the patriarch of the family. The house still exists today and is situated on Dobson Street; we visited it. It is a traditional compound with a vast yard surrounded by low separate houses; at the back, there is a small mosque; we were told that Umar's room was situated next to the mosque. That room does not exist anymore. The first night, Ibrahima asked his wife to bring an oil lamp to the guest; a few minutes later, the woman returned and said that Umar did not need the lamp because the room was illuminated by a bright light.

Before leaving Banjul, Umar told his host Ibrahima that his wife was pregnant, an early pregnancy that the wife herself did not know of. Umar gave instructions to Ibrahima that, when the baby was born, he should be named after him (Umar). That is exactly what took place for the current Minister of Defense (a scion of the Faye family) is called Sheikh Umar Faye, named after his ancestor. All in all, Umar was well treated, be it in Banjul, Bakau, or Gunjur, so much so that it is said that he

prayed for the women of the Kombos. Banjul and the rest of the Western Region, going southwards towards the sprawling neighborhoods of Serrekunda, Kanifing, Talining, Churchill's Town, Fajara, Bijilo, Brufut, etc. are all comprised within a geographical zone traditionally called the Kombos. According to one of our sources, the women of the Kombos are the wealthiest in the country, whereas the women in Barra are the poorest, this state of things is attributed to Umar's prayers. This illustrates the saying that a good deed is paid with a good deed and a bad deed with a bad one.

In adhering to the prevalent and extant chronology, it appears that after coming to Gunjur in order to see the rock, he found it, prayed there, built a small mosque and then left. The rock still exists and all our sources mentioned it (Mansour Njie, Landing Janneh, and El Hadj Cham Joof). Needless to say, this rock is entrenched in oral popular lore. The rock is now enclosed inside a big new mosque that was built in the 2010s by the then President Yahya Jammeh. Prior to that, when we first visited the site in 2000, the rock was in open air and next to it there was an old mosque. People come from all over the West African sub-region (and beyond) in order to pray on top of the rock and then make their wishes. Before the prayer, they would perform their ablutions with sea water on the beach, the same spot where it is said that Umar did his ablutions but with fresh water because when he came there and needed fresh water, he had a spring splash from inside the ground up. Nowadays, that spring does not exist any longer; thus, people use sea water in order to perform their ablutions before doing the prayers atop the rock. During our interview with Mansour Njie, he said that in those days, the area where the rock is situated was a dark place, full of trees and wild animals.¹⁴ According to Njie, when he came to Gunjur, Umar was accompanied by his disciples; one of them died and was buried on the spot. Still according to Njie, Umar was in Fuuta when

¹⁴ *Par-delà nature et culture*, 70.

the existence of the rock was revealed to him thanks to a trail of light which he followed all the way to Gambia. It is important to consider that the epic, in addition to its literary, poetic, and historical value, is filled with valuable information relating to nature (flora, fauna, waterways, etc.) Thus, many epic texts reveal to us the state of planet Earth before the Industrial Revolution and the advent of the machine; at that time, the earth was equated with the Garden of Eden. Thus, in traditional African societies—partly represented in the epics—communion, communication, and life in symbiosis with nature are established facts; thus, the Western conception of the naturalization of the world is not universal. According to Descola, "the way in which the modern West represents nature is the least shared thing. In many parts of the planet, humans and non-humans are not conceived as developing in incommunicable worlds and according to separate principles; the environment is not objectified as an autonomous sphere; plants and animals, rivers and rocks, meteors and seasons do not exist in the same ontological niche defined by its lack of humanity."

According to these oral epic texts, to various chronicles, and to oral lore and folklore, Umar headed east, toward Dinguiraye (in present-day northern Guinea) where he encountered various people (including his nemesis Tamba Bukari). After that he fought against the Peul chief Amadou Amadou of the Macina Kingdom¹⁵ and, finally, arrived in Bandiagara. The narrator often invokes another important town of knowledge, namely Timbuktu (in present-day Mali). Starting in medieval times, around the 12th century, Timbuktu gradually became an important trading and commercial center. However, it was mostly known as a radiant learning center to where students, scholars, and teachers flocked; needless to say, these people

¹⁵ According to Hampâté Bâ, it was in 1862 that Umar conquered the Macina Kingdom (cf. *Vie et Enseignement de Tierno Bokar* (Paris: Éditions de Seuil, 1980), 15).

hailed from all corners of Africa and beyond. There, he confronted the French colonizer but was defeated by superior European fire power. Interestingly, M. Kane and D. Robinson give a vivid account of the encounter between Umar and Faidherbe: "The portrayal of the two protagonists suggests that Umar and the clerical tradition rely on faith, while Faidherbe and the Europeans look immediately to the question of material resources."¹⁶ Other famous West African figures are invoked by the griot, namely Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba (1853-1927) the founder of the *Mouridiya* brotherhood in Touba (Senegal). Likewise, Samory Toure (1830-1900) is also cited; however, these two leaders have not met with Umar Tall who preceded them. The most likely reason for the *jeli* to bring Bamba and Samory into the fray of his performance is to give more prestige to his narration. The authors conclude their remarks by establishing a virtual evenness between the two standard-bearers: "The encounter of the two men gives added legitimacy to the Umarian cause; the pilgrim cleric is 'equal' to the 'founder' of colonial Senegal." Are we in the presence of the opposition between the sacred and the profane, the religious and the layman? Not really, because Umar is at once a religious conqueror and a political chief who wants to establish an Islamic state, thus following in the footsteps of the Prophet Muhammad (saw).

What gave additional power to Umar's leadership status was the fact that he belonged to the *Tidjaniya* Sufi brotherhood. He is referred to as 'The Grand Master of the Tidjani Order.'¹⁷ According to H. Bâ, this Sufi brotherhood was created by Cheikh Ahmed Tidjani who was born in 1737 in Algeria and died in 1815 in Fès (Morocco).¹⁸ Up to today, the *Tidjaniya*

¹⁶ Moustapha Kane and David Robinson, *The Islamic Regime of Fuuta Tooro: an Anthology of Oral Tradition* (Michigan: Michigan University Press, 1984), 107.

¹⁷ see Bâ, *Vie et Enseignement de Tierno Bokar*.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 244.

brotherhood is very famous and alive across the West African Sahel in general and Senegal in particular. In Senegal, their headquarter is situated in the hinterland, in the city of Tivaouane, about 95 kms far from the capital-city of Dakar. It was founded by El Hadj Malick Sy (1855-1922), a well-known Sufi Malikite spiritual leader. Both Malick Sy and Umar Tall are the inheritors and spreaders of the teachings of Cheikh Ahmad Tidjani in Senegal and beyond. Other religious brotherhoods such as the Niasse family of the city of Kaolack also belong to the *Tidjaniya* larger brotherhood. Furthermore, the same author asserts that Ahmed Tidjani and his new brotherhood were the synthesis of the previous brotherhoods (known as *tourouq*-plural in Arabic) such as the Qadiriyya, Shadiliyya, etc. Bâ also mentions a very important fact, namely that, Tidjani's teachings were characterized by a high spirit of tolerance, coupled with open-mindedness. The reason why we insist on Bâ's idea of tolerance is the fact that the proposition does not match the idea spread by the French colonizers—that Umar was a bloodthirsty, ruthless chief. That is primarily what school children, including myself, are taught. Of course, that description is far from being accurate. The European colonizers portrayed all the African resistants (Samory Toure, Usman Dan Fodio, Umar Tall, Lat Dior Diop, Shaka Zulu, Maba Diakhou, Aline Siteo Diatta, just to name a few) as bloodthirsty mindless killers. This description was understandable given the fact that propoganda and ideology constitute elements of war and domination. Additionally, this negative presentation is meant to undermine the self-confidence of the Africans and make them feel inferior to the European invaders.

The episode recounted above, in which Umar faces Faidherbe, encapsulates the demise of all the kingdoms of the Sahel, through their defeat at the hands of the French, and thus heralds the advent of a new territorial and geopolitical order in West Africa with the new boundaries that, in great part, still survive. Concerning Umar's disappearance into the cliffs of

Bandiagara, up to today, his disciples and followers emphatically claim that Umar did not die; he just vanished into the cliffs of Bandiagara. Nobody has ever seen his body, much less his grave.¹⁹ A major geostrategic shift took place in 19th century West Africa, i.e. the gradual abandonment of the Trans-Saharan trade in favor of the Atlantic trade; at the dawn of the Renaissance, the Europeans started navigating to and around Africa thanks, to sail ships at first and, later, to modern and more powerful marine ships and boats with steam engines. Ports were also developed along the West African Atlantic Ocean shorelines.²⁰

The reader will also come across numerous wars that Omar waged across the length and breadth of the West African Sahel region, a vast area which covers portions of territories that belong to the present-day countries of Senegal, Gambia, Mauritania, Mali, Guinea, and Burkina Faso. What were the causes of these wars? According to R. Smith, "a fundamental

19 cf. Diop, "The Wolof Epic: From Spoken Word to Written Text," 122. Here's a savory anecdote: In the late 1970s, one day, one of my father's friends came to visit us at lunch time which was very common because that was the best time to find my father at home. The man was agitated, shaking and even livid in appearance. My father asked him what was bothering him; the man replied that he was sure that the man he had just encountered was Umar Tall because he was wearing that famous white boubou, and wore his leather sandals and, last but not least, Umar's famous long white beard. Pursuing his narration, my father's friend unequivocally said that as soon as the man walked past him, upon realizing that it was Umar, when he (the man) turned and wanted to greet him and asked for his prayers, he (Umar) has disappeared! It is pointless to say that, that day, my father's friend was inconsolable; he did not have lunch with us and left soon after his hurried arrival.

20 Gérard Chenet, *El Hadj Omar. La grande épopée des Toucouleurs* (Dakar, Sénégal: L'Harmattan, 2009), 18. On page 19, the same author writes: "Omar managed to reach the Atlantic coast by taking the natural route of the river [it can be the Senegal River or the Niger River, or both] and, despite the resistance opposed by a European colonization in full expansion under the command of Faidherbe, he tried to establish his sovereignty there in order to take part into the trade circuit." It's important to keep in mind that Chenet's book is a play; thus, room must be made for fictional elements.

cause of most West African wars—and, indeed, the most prevalent cause of wars in any part of the world—was the desire of the more vigorous societies for territorial expansion and to exercise a measure of physical control over their neighbors."²¹ In the same author's opinion, in addition to the fact that war confers a degree of legality, other preeminent reasons were the acquisition of wealth and the capture of slaves. Concerning West Africa proper, Smith writes: "Once a properly constituted Islamic state had been established, however, these Muslim conquerors [such as Usman dan Fodio, El Hadj Omar, Askia Muhammad] aimed primarily at ensuring the provision of tribute and levies rather than conversion or political domination."²² Smith's remarks may be accurate in many instances; however, in my opinion, in the case of Umar Tall, the latter was more interested in converting the natives than anything else; additionally, the very nature of Islam lends itself to conversion.²³

As is evident in the epic narratives, Umar's main aim was to destroy the native indigenous religions which, by definition, were not interested in conversion. As is also obvious in the narratives—as well as in real life—the co-existence of both the Islamic and animist worlds is testimony to the syncretic reality that obtains—up to today—in these societies. The animist world is usually associated with magic, divination, witchcraft, amulets, charms, sorcery, etc. Epic texts are replete with myths, supernatural, and superhuman feats that illustrate the pre-Islamic African world as well as all pre-Christian societies

21 Robert S. Smith, *Warfare & Diplomacy in Pre-colonial West Africa* (London: James Currey, 1989), pp. 29-30.

22 Ibid. 33.

23 This evangelization process was not confined to Islam; still according to Smith (*Warfare & Diplomacy in Pre-colonial West Africa*, 32), "Christianity came to West Africa peaceably, and until the missionary impetus of the nineteenth century got under way its influence was on a very small scale."

and cultures.²⁴ In the Arab world, the pre-Islamic period is known as *Jahiliyyah*, the so-called period of ignorance and barbarism.

In the final analysis, in the epic narratives, Umar is a syncretic hero because he partakes in that supernatural world, mixed with Islamic tenets; in effect, he performs miracles as we mentioned above. All in all, our epic hero is part and parcel of the world of orality. In order to conclude this section, we revert back to E. Auerbach who made above the tripartite division related to the Old Testament. Likewise, we posit that these three elements (legend, historical reporting, and interpretative historical theology) collapse inside both the epic character and the real-life human being of Umar. In the next section, we provide Islamic religious elements culled from the Qur'an and as featured in the epic narratives themselves.

²⁴ Divination and orality go hand in hand, as illustrated by the author Ibrahima Sow who, on page 175 writes: "Divination is only operational and has meaning for the individual in the cultures of orality, in the civilizations of the Word in which exchanges, relationships, arts and techniques are focused or interdependent on rites and myths that feed the collective mentality." (see Ibrahima Sow, *Divination marabout destin: aux sources de l'imaginaire*, (Dakar: IFAN Ch. A. Diop, 2009). In *The Odyssey*, the famous soothsayer Halitherses is described in these glowing words: "The old heroë Halitherses, the son of Mastor, that of all old men, his peers in that court, only could foresee by flight of fowls man's fixed destiny." (see Homer, *the Odyssey*.) One may add the concept of 'primitive mentality' as defined by the French scholar and philosopher Lucien Lévy-Bruhl (1857-1939) in his book *How Natives Think* (1910); that mentality is opposed to 'modern,' i.e. European/Western mentality. Additionally, according to Lévy-Bruhl, the primitive mind does not differentiate between the supernatural and reality; in addition to the fact that the primitive mind does not address contradictions and relies entirely on mythical systems. (Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, *How Natives Think (Les fonctions mentales dans les sociétés primitives)* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1985).

The Quran and Its Insertion in Epic Narratives from Senegambia

The insertion of the Qur'an in the oral epic narratives from Senegal and Gambia is an established and verifiable fact. Actually, the same thing obtains in the other epic texts in whose collection, transcription, and translation we were involved. Cheikh Niang the reciter of *The Epic on Ndiadiane Ndiaye* is well versed in Qur'anic and Islamic matters whereas Birahim Thiam (performer of *The Epic of El Hadj Omar Tall* in 1998) is a Qur'anic erudite. To come back to Niang, the latter joined the French army in the 1950s as a conscript and was exposed to French military officers and the French language, thus, in a small measure, to French influence. In the epic narratives from Gambia, in one episode, Umar pays a visit to a man called Pasil Manka; while the guest is about to take his leave, the host accompanies him. On their way, Umar declared: "I am smelling the Qur'an." Sure enough, when they look up a tree, they saw a *taalibé*²⁵ sitting on a branch and reciting the Qur'anic verses written on a wooden slab. Upon closer inspection, Umar and his companion saw that the Surah Yaasin²⁶ was written on the slab. Yaasin is considered as 'the heart of the Qur'an' and plays a central role in the teaching of Islam—it also relates to the doctrine of Revelation and the Hereafter. This surah puts great emphasis on the oneness of God and denounces unbelievers and polytheism. Additionally, Surah Yaasin contains commandments and historical elements about the prophets.

25 A word that comes originally from the Arab *ṭālib*, طالب. In West Africa, they are learners at Qur'anic schools; over time many of them were forced to beg in the streets.

26 Surah Yaasin contains 83 verses. In his translation of the Qur'an and in his introduction to the surah Yaasin M. A. S. Abdel Haleem writes: "Ya Sin is a Meccan sura that emphasizes the divine source of the Qur'an and defends it from the charge of being poetry made by man." (*The Qur'an: English Translation and Parallel Arabic Text*, translated with an Introduction by Abdel Haleem, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 441).

Slightly over twenty-five years ago, during the research related to our PhD thesis, we came across a translation of the Qur'an by the Pakistani scholar A. Yusuf Ali. In the Introduction, Ali points to "a little perfume from the garden of the Holy One [Allah/God] that has already gladdened our nostrils."²⁷ What catches our attention here is the association made between the text and the sense of smell; normally, the eyesight is associated with writing and a text. The mention of the two words 'perfume' and 'nostrils' by Ali can be closely associated with the passage in the epic narrative in which Umar smells the Qur'an. This is a powerful representation of a holy text and, in our opinion, this amalgamation of text and sensory input is meant to showcase the prestige of the Qur'an while invoking, at the same time, the idea of Paradise.

A prominent feature in African religions and beliefs — whether traditional, Islamic, or else— is the syncretism that they carry in them. That syncretic characteristic is highlighted by the blending of elements hailing from the revealed religions (primarily Islam), on the one hand, and paganism and animism, on the other. A few examples culled from the epic narratives from Gambia indicate a strong presence of nature: the sun, rainstorms, rivers and waterways, trees, etc. There is an interesting scene in which Umar's baby son called Lamin Julde was sleeping while the man and his wife were praying; a hyena came and started sniffing the baby, but surprisingly does not eat it, considering that the hyena is one of the most ferocious and carnivorous beasts in the jungle. When he finished his prayer, Umar asked the wife why she did not interrupt her prayer and look after the baby; she replied that since she is praying behind her husband, she must respect the

²⁷ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an, An English Interpretation of The Holy Qur-an with a Full Arabic Text* (Lahore, Pakistan: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf Publisher, 1975), viii.

Islamic tenet.²⁸ The overtone to this episode is that the baby is protected by God thanks to the father's strong spiritual powers.

Embedded in the Umarian epic narrative is the salient twin concept of nemesis and pairing. Most great epics feature the twin concept of nemesis and pairing: Roland faces Ganelon in *The Song of Roland*. In the ancient Indo-European epic *Gilgamesh*, the hero Gilgamesh has a powerful enemy called Enkidu whereas in the ancient Greek epic, Poseidon is Odysseus's mortal antagonist. In the African epic texts, Sunjaata is known to have confronted and killed his biggest enemy called Soumangourou Kante, king of Sosso. At the heart of the epic story is the battle between good and evil. In the epic narratives from Gambia, Umar's archenemy is Tamba Bukari. As is expected, the former defeats the latter. Additionally, the enemy must be labelled as a *kaffir*; thus, the nemesis must be the absolute representative of evil and darkness in order to deserve to be killed. From the Arab *kāfir*, meaning an infidel. In southern Africa, white people refer to Blacks as *kaffirs*. The issue of race is raised in the epic narratives from Gambia; the singer narrates the episodes related to Umar's pilgrimage to Mecca. There, he is challenged by his hosts for the latter wanted to know if a black man can be cognizant of the Islamic tenets. Umar rose to the challenge by showcasing his Qur'anic erudition; thus, he imposed respect, in addition to the admiration shown by his hosts. In *The Epic of Omar Tall* as sung by Birahim Thiam, the same matter arises, namely Umar being tested by the Arabs in Mecca. On the reverse, Umar represents light, righteousness, justice, etc. Interestingly enough, in one episode, the narrator says that a *kaffir* should not listen to the *Taara* which is a tune intended solely for Umar's ears. Consequently, according to L-J. Calvet, "the text of oral

²⁸ In Muslim prayers, one is not supposed to interrupt one's prayer once the latter has started. That is, unless a life-threatening event occurs which must be the exception.

tradition is steeped in a culture and an ideology which give it most of its characteristics."²⁹

Another specific feature of these epic narratives is humor; in an episode, Umar's griot prods the hero and encourages him; however, the funny thing is that the griot does so while scoffing and mocking him. In this instance, the griot derisively tells Umar that he has anointed his head with oil and wears a turban, but that is all he can do; he must get up and fight his enemies. The attitude of the griot is understandable if we take into account the remarks by Mazisi Kunene. In the "Introduction" to his book bearing on the South African Zulu epic, Kunene calls attention to the eminent role of the performer: "It is through the poet and the singer that the criticism and the evaluation of the heroes and rulers are fully and freely expressed."³⁰ In the epic narratives from Gambia, humor is also wrapped in proverbs; this is an apt way for the performer to avoid being too blunt, for proverbs provide secondary meanings and allusions.

Conclusion

It is not surprising that, with the passing of time, Umar Tall has become a tall epic figure which mixes legend, mythology, oral tradition, oral history, folklore, hagiography, and history. The history of Umar's feats and achievements is sung by specialist narrators (griots and *jelis*), hailing from various ethnic groups of the Senegambia region: Fula, Hausa, Mandinka, Wolof, etc. In the final analysis, the story of Umar Tall is a solid living tradition, held in high esteem by his community, a story that still holds relevance in the contemporary world and resonates with current issues.

²⁹ Lous-Jean Calvet, *La tradition orale* (Paris: PUF, 1984), 92.

³⁰ Mazisi Kunene, *Emperor Shaka The Great: A Zulu Epic* (London: Heinemann, 1984), 36.

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**“Érudits soufis tijânis au Nord-Cameroun:
l'héritage religieux et le patrimoine
intellectuel des *Chioukh Moodibbe*
Oussoumanou Dalil (1934-2015) et Nana
Younoussa (1939-2017)”**

Fadel Soubiane Bah*

RESUME

Le Nord-Cameroun a connu la présence de plusieurs personnalités religieuses éminentes. *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil de Koïnderi et Nana Younoussa de Ngaoundéré, en sont deux hautes figures intellectuelles de la spiritualité soufie de *tariqa* Tijâniyya. À partir de leurs *zawaya*, en plus d'un enseignement supérieur de qualité qu'ils dispensaient et des actions d'ordre religieux, ils se livraient également aux activités intellectuelles que cette réflexion se propose d'évaluer. À travers leurs actions, ces deux imminents penseurs musulmans tijânis ont marqué de leurs empreintes l'histoire du savoir et de l'érudition islamiques au Cameroun. Leurs riches patrimoines intellectuels ont surtout contribué à la consolidation, au développement de la pratique de l'islam et à répandre la *tariqa* Tijâniyya. L'objet de cette communication est de cerner la formation, l'itinéraire, la carrière ainsi que les productions intellectuelles de ces *Chioukh*. Ceci afin de saisir leurs rôles dans la construction du patrimoine culturel intellectuel africain.

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Introduction

Avec l'évolution de la société, et, grâce à un revirement épistémologique opéré en sciences sociales, la biographie est devenue un genre prisé et privilégié au point de constituer le fondement de l'historiographie.¹ De plus en plus, dans les milieux académiques et universitaires, le genre biographique comme mode de production historique connaît un regain d'intensité. La biographie se présente alors comme un champ historique qui permet de retracer le passé humain à travers la trajectoire personnelle d'une figure de proue d'une communauté donnée.² Du fait qu'elle soit un genre qui se trouve au cœur des préoccupations des historiens, il est désormais possible d'établir une présentation très documentée d'histoire de vie, bien située dans leur contexte. C'est le lieu de parler de la production biographique comme source de l'histoire. Ainsi, considérée à juste titre comme un genre qui s'intéresse à la vie des acteurs de l'histoire, la biographie fournit un aperçu des nouveaux aspects de l'histoire locale, marquée par l'émergence d'hommes, qui par leur charisme, leur détermination, et surtout l'étendue de leur savoir, donnent une impulsion nouvelle à l'évolution de leur société. Dans ce contexte, l'acteur important est celui qui dispose d'un pouvoir, d'une autorité et obtient une obéissance.³ De par leur influence manifeste sur la dynamique de l'histoire, les acteurs de l'histoire marquent fortement leur époque par des empreintes indélébiles. Dans ce sens, il est aisé de comprendre que l'homme ne peut exister que dans un réseau de relations

1 Fadel Soubiane Bah, "Moodibbo Ahidjo Moctar et la problématique de la Tijâniyya à Ngaoundéré au Cameroun (1928-2014)", (Mémoire de Master-Recherche, Université de Ngaoundéré, 2014), 3.

2 Ahmadou Abdoul Aziz, "Imam et vie politique locale au Nord-Cameroun : liman Djidji Issa (1905-1982), lamido et guerre de leadership au Lamidat de Ngaoundéré", *Vakanüvis-Uluslararası Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 6 / (Prof. Dr. Süleyman Büyükkarcı Özel Sayısı), (Aralık 2021): 4.

3 Thierno Moctar Bah, "La biographie comme genre historique et l'histoire locale", *Ngaoundéré-Anthropos*, numéro spécial 1, vol III (1998) : 5.

sociales diversifiées. De ce point de vue, il est un produit de la société à laquelle il appartient. D'ailleurs, pour analyser et interpréter les différentes actions menées par l'homme, il est important de l'intégrer dans la société où il a grandi. Ainsi, l'individu est toujours au centre des souvenirs mémorables.⁴

Par ailleurs, qu'il s'agisse des angles d'analyse, des sources et de la problématique objectivité/subjectivité, l'approche biographique fait face à des carences d'ordre méthodologique. De ce point de vue, la production biographique exige de l'historien non seulement un sens aiguisé de responsabilité et une indépendance (politique ou intellectuelle, sociale ou financière), mais aussi le respect méticuleux des canons de la discipline à savoir : l'exigence de la vérité et d'objectivité⁵. De toute évidence, la biographie s'impose comme un exercice méthodologique rigoureux et complexe qui fait appel à la prudence. Évidemment, la réussite d'un tel exercice nécessite une mise en relief de rapports de forces entre les déterminants intérieurs (émotions, sentiments), les déterminants extérieurs (famille, société) et les facteurs liés au destin.⁶ Dans cette logique, il est utile de percevoir que le récit de vie d'un acteur de l'histoire doit choisir, dans une fourchette chronologique précise, les moments forts et les inscrire dans une durée optimale pour repérer la dialectique de la permanence/mutation.⁷ Toutes les étapes de la vie d'un acteur doivent être considérées dans l'analyse.

La présente communication qui s'inscrit dans le large champ des études sur la connaissance islamique en Afrique se propose d'étudier l'histoire et le patrimoine intellectuel de deux savants musulmans soufis du Nord-Cameroun. En d'autres termes, il est question de cerner dans une perspective dynamique la formation, l'itinéraire, la carrière ainsi que les

4 Ibid., 1.

5 Bah, "Moodibbo Ahidjo," 3-4.

6 Ibid., 3.

7 Bah, "La biographie," 7.

productions intellectuelles des *Chioukh*⁸ *Moodibbe*⁹ Oussoumanou Dalil (1934-2015) et Nana Younoussa (1939-2017). Ceci afin de saisir leurs rôles dans la construction de l'histoire du savoir et de l'érudition islamiques au Cameroun. Il s'agit surtout de mettre en lumière leurs riches patrimoines intellectuels qui ont contribué, non seulement, à la consolidation, au développement de la pratique de l'islam, mais aussi et surtout, à répandre la *tariqa* Tijâniyya.

Cette réflexion tourne autour de trois axes principaux. La première partie s'intéresse aux origines et itinéraires d'acquisition du savoir des *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa. La deuxième partie examine leurs sources d'inspiration et leurs débuts dans l'activité de production intellectuelle. La troisième partie elle, se propose de répertorier leurs productions intellectuelles ainsi que leurs contributions au développement et à la consolidation de la Tijâniyya.

I. Origines et itinéraires d'acquisition du savoir des *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa

Dans cette partie, il est question de mettre en lumière les origines de ces deux érudits musulmans et de s'intéresser aux particularités des enseignements qu'ils ont reçus.¹⁰ En d'autres termes, il s'agit de retracer la vie et l'itinéraire d'acquisition du savoir des *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou

8 *Chioukh*, singulier *Cheikh*, est un mot d'origine arabe qui désigne les *Muqaddamûn* ou maîtres spirituels qui effectuent auprès des adeptes tijânis un travail d'assistance, d'accompagnement et de guidance spirituel.

9 *Moodibbe*, singulier *Moodibbo*, est un mot d'origine peule qui signifie Érudits musulmans.

10 Nous tenons à remercier tous les informateurs qui ont, à travers leurs réponses édifiantes, permis de reconstituer l'histoire ainsi que le parcours des personnalités religieuses étudiées. Nous exprimons notre profonde gratitude notamment à Abdoul Aziz Malloum et *Moodibbo Khalifa* Mohamadou Bachirou.

Dalil et Nana Younoussa. Ceci, en vue d'appréhender les fondements de leurs instructions religieuses. Si le premier a connu un parcours singulièrement exceptionnel, le second, lui, est passé par des canons traditionnels pour acquérir la connaissance. Quoi qu'il en soit, l'éducation religieuse islamique concerne précisément la formation de l'âme et l'acquisition du savoir.¹¹ Toutefois, il est à noter qu'en islam, les maisons d'enseignement qui doivent presque toujours leur existence à des initiatives privées sont assumées par l'autorité religieuse.¹² Dans ce contexte, la formation islamique traditionnelle prépare ses plus fidèles étudiants à l'exercice des carrières littéraires en *ajami*¹³ ou en arabe. En est-il autant pour les *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa ?

1. Genèses et formations religieuses de *Cheikh Moodibbo* Oussoumanou Dalil

Originaire de la ville de Kano au Nigéria où son arrière-grand-père (Abdullahi) y fut un lettré musulman de renom, *Cheikh Moodibbo* Oussoumanou Dalil naquit en avril 1934 dans la localité de Baajaari dans le Mayo-Rey, région du Nord du Cameroun. Issu d'une famille peule de lettrés musulmans, le jeune Oussoumanou Dalil avait, dès le berceau, une immense aptitude à apprendre. Selon les témoignages recueillis, ses parents Alhadji Dalil (m. 1984) et Hadja Asma'u (m. 1993) l'élevèrent rigoureusement et méthodiquement telles que le

11 Fadel Soubiane Bah, "Itinéraire d'acquisition du savoir et éducation religieuse dans la Tijâniyya : état des lieux et analyse du curriculum dans l'Adamaoua au Cameroun," in *Curriculum et problématique de l'évaluation des apprentissages dans les institutions éducatives : Pour une approche plurielle des intervenants*, ed. Alhadji Mahamat, Mohamadou Galy et Arabo Mohamadou Bassirou (Monange : Yaoundé, 2022), 107.

12 Cheikh Bouamrane et Louis Gardet, *Panorama de la pensée islamique* (Paris : éditions Sindbad, 1984), 205.

13 Hamadou Adama, *L'Islam au Cameroun, entre tradition et modernité* (Paris : L'Harmattan, 2004), 114.

recommandent l'islam et le code moral peul. Bien qu'il n'ait pas été possible de retracer, avec objectivité et en profondeur, certains pans de l'histoire familiale d'Oussoumanou Dalil, force est de reconnaître qu'il fut encadré dans la chaleur de la cellule familiale dans plusieurs différentes localités de migration de ses parents. Ce fut certainement à l'occasion de ces différents déplacements qu'il façonna son apprentissage aux sciences religieuses islamiques avec une focalisation sur les sciences dogmatiques et la théologie.

Par ailleurs, à propos de l'itinéraire d'acquisition du savoir de *Moodibbo* Oussoumanou Dalil, les enquêtes réalisées sont lacunaires. L'absence des traces écrites sur la question conjugée à la faiblesse de l'oralité, rendent toute entreprise de restitution moins évidente. De ce fait, il ne semble pas possible de donner des indications précises ni sur son cadre et méthodes d'apprentissage, ni sur ses différents maîtres éducateurs. La seule certitude étant que *Moodibbo* Oussoumanou Dalil fit l'essentiel de ses études auprès de ses parents dans les différentes localités de séjour de ceux-ci. Ayant grandi auprès de ses parents, il semble être prédestiné à disposer et/ou à acquérir le savoir. Dans ce sens, le poids de l'oralité rapporte sa forte capacité de rétention pendant les périodes de l'apprentissage. La passion de *Moodibbo* Oussoumanou Dalil étant alors la lecture à travers la mémorisation. Ses contemporains gardent de lui, l'image d'un homme persévérant qui semble avoir la capacité de mémoriser les documents en une seule lecture. Du haut de son rang et de sa notoriété, *Moodibbo* Oussoumanou Dalil semble être un élu à qui Dieu confia la lumière de la sagesse et du savoir livresques. Cela aurait fait de lui un érudit musulman de renom.

Par ailleurs, des sources dignes de foi, témoignent que lors d'un voyage dans les lieux saints de l'islam, Alhadji Dalil fit la

rencontre de *Shaykh* Alfā Hāshim¹⁴ qui lui confia un manuscrit destiné à sa progéniture. *Shaykh* Alfā Hāshim fit savoir au père d'Oussoumanou Dalil qu'il n'avait qualité à décrypter le contenu dudit document. Par contre, l'un de ses fils le pourra. Par ce geste, *Shaykh* Alfā Hāshim aurait prédit que l'un des fils d'Alhadji Dalil allait devenir un pieux et savant musulman. Selon toute vraisemblance, l'avènement d'Oussoumanou Dalil comme un lettré musulman semble avoir confirmé, sans doute, la prédiction faite par *Shaykh* Alfā Hāshim.

2. Origines et itinéraires d'acquisition du savoir du *Cheikh Moodibbo Nana Younoussa*

Natif de l'Adamaoua (Cameroun), Nana Younoussa est né à Ngaoundéré en 1939. Issu d'une famille de lettrés musulmans fortement ancrée dans la culture soufie, Nana Younoussa effectua l'essentiel de ses études religieuses à Ngaoundéré et à Belel. D'après les entretiens réalisés, ce fut auprès de son grand-père, Lawan Gana à Ngaoundéré, que le jeune fut initié à l'apprentissage du Coran. À Belel, auprès de *Moodibbo* Djingui, il bénéficia de l'enseignement coranique classique. Âgé de 14 ans, il revint à Ngaoundéré continuer ses études. À l'âge de 16 ans, Nana Younoussa se rendit à Ganye au Nigéria (Adamawa State). Ce fut auprès de *Moodibbo* Hassan qu'il fit des études complémentaires. En plus des livres théologiques préliminaires, traditionnels en Afrique subsaharienne, Nana Younoussa perfectionna ses connaissances en matière du *Fiqh* (droit musulman), du *Nahwu* (grammaire arabe), du *Lunga* (langue arabe), du *Sîra* (histoire ou vie du Prophète), du *Tafsîr* (exégèse), du *Hadith* (tradition du Prophète) et du *Kalām*

14 Alfā Hāshim (1865-1931/2) fut un célèbre érudit d'origine ouest-africaine. Neveu du *Shaykh* Al Hajj 'Umar Tall, il fut le *mufti* et conseiller d'Ahmadou Sheku, fils et successeur d'Al Hajj 'Umar. Il fut un enseignant à la mosquée du Prophète à Médine et à la Madrasat al-'Ulum al-Shar'iyya. Il fut à la fois *Moqaddam* des tijânis à Médine et la figure qui liait les tijânis de l'Afrique de l'Ouest à ceux du Machrek, d'Arabie et de l'Afrique de l'Est.

(théologie). À Jada (Adamawa State), auprès de *Moodibbo* Mourtala, aux termes de ses *Askaru*¹⁵, il fut naturellement sensibilisé aux vertus de la voie de *Cheikh* Ahmad al-Tijâni. Ce fut d'ailleurs au cours de son séjour d'étude au Nigéria qu'il fit la connaissance des érudits d'obédience tijânîe de l'Adamawa (*Cheikh* Jeilani) et du Borno (Abul Fathi, Ibrahim Saleh) qu'il côtoya.

De retour à Ngaoundéré (Cameroun), Nana Younoussa entama la profession de vendeur de livres. Ce fut à l'occasion d'un voyage pour l'achat de sa marchandise à Kano (Nigéria) qu'il décida de se rendre au Sénégal. Ainsi, vers 1972/3, alors âgé de 33 ou 34 ans, il fit la *tarbiyya*¹⁶ auprès de *Shaykh* Ibrahim Niasse à Kaolack (Sénégal). Ce long voyage pour le Sénégal lui permit de connaître plusieurs érudits musulmans de renom (leaders de la Tijâniyya) du Nigéria, du Niger et du Sénégal. Désormais auréolé du titre de *Moodibbo* et de *Moqaddam*¹⁷ de la *tariqa* Tijâniyya, Nana Younoussa pouvait se mettre au service de la confrérie. Au préalable, il fallait lentement et progressivement se construire une personnalité au sein de l'*establishment* tijâni. Ce qui passe d'abord par l'ouverture et l'animation d'une *zaouïa* tijânîe à son domicile à Ngaoundéré. À partir de sa *zaouïa*, *Moodibbo* Nana Younoussa dispensa un

15 *Askaru* est un mot d'origine arabe qui désigne une sorte de mise à l'épreuve d'un disciple en quête de savoir par un *Cheikh* attiré. L'objectif étant de parvenir à la connaissance illuminative et intuitive de Dieu. Par extension, le terme signifie un ensemble d'exercices spirituels qui consiste à éduquer l'âme d'un disciple à travers diverses épreuves dont la finalité est l'administration des secrets du *dhikr*. Et dans le cadre de cette réflexion, *Askaru* est une sorte de voyage spirituel mené par un disciple jusqu'à l'atteinte de la présence divine. Ce voyage libère le disciple de la tare de la finitude et d'imperfection.

16 *Tarbiyya* est un mot d'origine arabe qui signifie l'éducation spirituelle à travers la transmission ou l'enseignement de la méthode de formation spirituelle.

17 *Moqaddam*, pluriel : *Muqaddamûn*, est un mot d'origine arabe qui désigne un Chef, un administrateur ou un gérant des biens d'une communauté soufie. Il s'agit d'un *Cheikh* de la *tariqa* Tijâniyya.

enseignement de qualité. Dès lors, enseigner, encadrer et éduquer la jeunesse (jeunes disciples tijânis) étaient devenus l'une de ses occupations quotidiennes.

Somme toute, il est évident que les grands moments de la formation religieuse acquise par *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa permettent de saisir les fondements de leur orientation idéologique en rapport avec la spiritualité soufie. Toutefois, il convient de noter que l'essentiel de leur vie religieuse et spirituelle avait été façonné par plusieurs maîtres spirituels et centres religieux de formation et de transmission de la culture arabo-musulmane. C'est le lieu d'évoquer les autres influences extérieures qui ont permis de compléter leurs parcours éducatifs. En d'autres termes, qu'est ce qui a motivé les *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa à embrasser l'activité de production intellectuelle ?

II. Sources d'inspiration et débuts de l'activité de production intellectuelle des *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa

Dans cette partie, il est question de revenir sur les facteurs ayant inspiré les *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa. Ces différentes sources d'inspiration, qui ont permis l'éclosion d'une production littéraire et poétique ou d'une activité intellectuelle, permettent surtout de mettre en relief l'histoire du savoir et de l'érudition islamiques en Afrique.

1. Travaux des *Chioukh* soufis et de quelques savants africains

Divers travaux des différents savants et éminents penseurs ont donné à l'histoire du savoir et de l'érudition islamiques en Afrique une place prépondérante. L'avènement de ces différentes productions littéraires et poétiques permet de saisir l'influence des maîtres à penser du monde arabo-musulman

ainsi que de ceux des confréries religieuses musulmanes. C'est le lieu d'évoquer les influences culturelles et religieuses subies par *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa, preuve que dans la religion, l'islam soufi en l'occurrence, la seule chose à peu près stable est l'expérience religieuse.¹⁸

D'après les entretiens réalisés, au cours de leurs années de formations religieuses et spirituelles, les érudits musulmans au Nord-Cameroun sont, le plus souvent, influencés par les réflexions des personnalités religieuses de renom. De fait, les enseignements ainsi que les écrits des grands auteurs du monde musulmans ont une influence certaine sur la philosophie et le devenir des érudits en formation. *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa ne dérogent point à cette réalité. Dans ce sens, il est aisé de mentionner l'influence des auteurs des premiers manuels soufis¹⁹ ainsi que celle des réflexions de Muhammad ibn Abd al-Karim al-Maghili.²⁰ Ce spécialiste des sciences religieuses, de l'exégèse coranique, du *Fiqh*, de la rhétorique et de la logique, a largement influencé le style d'écriture des *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa. Il en est de même des idées et écrits de l'intellectuel égyptien Jalal al-Din as-Suyuti. L'influence des ouvrages des grands auteurs soufis (Ghazali, Muhassibi, Ibn Arabi, al-Zarruq, As'âri et Junayd) s'inscrit également dans cette perspective. Les écrits et réflexions de ces soufis, qui furent des écrivains fertiles²¹ dans le domaine de la

18 Sabino Acquaviva, Enzo Pace, *La Sociologie des Religions*, trans. Patrick Michel (Paris : Cerf, 1994), 8.

19 Il s'agit de "Qūt al-qulūb" d'Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī et "Risāla fī 'ilm al-taṣawwuf" d'Al-Qushayrī.

20 Originaire de Tlemcen en Algérie, Muhammad ibn Abd al-Karim al-Maghili est un savant musulman de très grande réputation. Considéré comme un défenseur acharné de l'orthodoxie musulmane, al-Maghili fut un auteur qui lutta contre la corruption et le polythéisme.

21 Rüdiger Seesemann, "Three Ibrāhīms: Literary Production and the Remaking of the Tijāniyya Sufi Order in Twentieth-Century Sudanic Africa", *Die Welt des Islams* 49, (2009): 301.

poésie, de l'hagiographie et de la littérature doctrinale, auraient certainement permis aux *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa de se positionner dans la logique des pensées mystiques et philosophiques de ces grands soufis.

Et que dire de l'influence exercée par les auteurs des ouvrages issus de la littérature des soufis djihadistes de l'école de Sokoto ? Appartenant à la bibliothèque islamique subsaharienne, les auteurs des ouvrages relevant de la littérature nigériane, de celle dite "dévotionnelle" ou encore de celle dite du modèle prophétique, ont largement façonné les écrits des *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa. Leurs écrits abondent des références aux différents auteurs (Oussoumanou, Abdullahi et Nana Asma'u) desdites littératures. Autrement dit, l'avènement d'une importante production littéraire et poétique au Nigéria avec les activités intellectuelles d'Oussoumanou bi Fodouyé²², marqué par l'essor de la littérature djihadiste et post djihadiste, avaient aussi façonné les plumes des *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa. Aussi, l'impressionnante œuvre de production littéraire et poétique de *Shaykh* Ibrahim Niasse participe-t-elle à cette logique. Son leadership spirituel, sa figure charismatique ainsi que son statut spirituel ont permis le développement d'une féconde activité littéraire et poétique. Rappelons que plusieurs titres soufis²³ de cette imposante littérature ont largement influencé les textes et les approches d'écriture des *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa. *Chioukh* Oussoumanou bi Fodouyé et Ibrahim Niasse furent dans cette logique des véritables modèles à

22 Oussoumanou bi Fodouyé a écrit quatre-vingt-dix manuscrits arabes et *ajami*. Il y a également écrit plusieurs ouvrages en hausa et fulfulde (480 poèmes).

23 Il s'agit du manuel soufi intitulé : "*Kāshif al-ilbās 'an fayḍat al-khatm Abī l-'Abbās* ; du traité intitulé : "*al-Sirr al-akbar*" ; la collection "*al-Dawāwīn al-sitt*" ; de "*Raf' al-malām 'amman rafa'a wa-qabaḍa iqtidā' an bi-sayyid al-anām*".

suivre. Et qui plus est, ces auteurs prolifiques et prolifiques que furent *Chioukh* Oussoumanou bi Fodouyé et Ibrahim Niasse avaient consacré l'essentiel de leur vie à l'enseignement, à l'éducation et à la rédaction. D'ailleurs, les ouvrages, traités et manuscrits qu'ils rédigerent, fournissent des précieuses indications sur leur vision du Soufisme ainsi que sur leurs expériences spirituelles respectives.

En outre, dans la culture soufie, les écrits se présentent, à la fois, comme un outil de propagation de la réputation d'un saint et un canal supplémentaire pour la transmission des enseignements soufis.²⁴ Dès lors, l'écriture, un exercice intellectuel, par ailleurs, moyen d'atteindre une large audience, se présente comme "la formulation et la standardisation des enseignements soufis."²⁵ Conscients de cette réalité, *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa se consacrèrent, avec vigueur, à l'activité de production intellectuelle.

2. Débuts de l'activité de production intellectuelle de ces deux *Chioukh* tijânis

En raison du fait que l'islam en Afrique soit orienté vers et/ou concerne la question du charisme et de la soumission aux maîtres spirituels d'envergure, au sein de la *tariqa* Tijâniyya, l'activité intellectuelle semble être l'apanage des élites alphabétisées et intellectuelles. Dans cette optique, il est à noter qu'une littérature abondante composée principalement des œuvres versifiées existe dans presque toutes les bibliothèques privées des érudits musulmans.²⁶ Dans ce sens, leaders, personnalités religieuses et disciples de la Tijâniyya proposent différentes sortes de productions littéraires et poétiques. Cette activité intellectuelle débouche évidemment

²⁴ Seesemann, "Three Ibrāhīms," 304.

²⁵ Ibid., 303.

²⁶ Adama, "L'islam au Cameroun," 114.

sur l'avènement d'une "littérature de la Tijâniyya"²⁷ répandue grâce à l'existence d'un réseau religieux islamique prolifique. Cette littérature sur la Tijâniyya traduit, à bien des égards, la dimension hautement intellectuelle de l'islam africain.²⁸

De prime abord, pour situer les débuts de l'activité de production intellectuelle, il faut remonter aux périodes d'intronisation des *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa en qualité de *Muqaddamûn* tijânis. Ce fut cette étape d'engagement et de responsabilité dans la *tariqa* Tijâniyya qui leur stimula vers l'effort intellectuel, gage de leur charisme et de leur énergie. Autrement dit, les deux *Chioukh* se sont véritablement lancés dans l'activité de production intellectuelle dans l'optique de pérenniser et de légitimer les recherches des *Chioukh* soufis et de quelques savants africains antérieurs. L'effort intellectuel amorcé par les *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa visait alors à atteindre une large audience afin de faciliter et de rendre accessible des enseignements soufis. Pour le cas de *Cheikh Moodibbo* Oussoumanou Dalil, l'oralité soutient qu'il se lança dans cette activité à la demande de *Shaykh* Jeilani du Nigéria (Adamawa State), à qui, *Shaykh* Ibrahim Niasse avait confié les clefs spirituelles de l'espace qui s'étend de Yola jusqu'aux confins de l'océan Atlantique. Ce dernier lui aurait fait la demande de consigner par écrits toutes ses réflexions, visions et expériences mystiques.

Dès lors, dans l'imagerie soufie tijânie au Nord-Cameroun, rédiger un texte d'envergure, consigner par écrits ses expériences spirituelles et mystiques, ou composer des poèmes, constituent la trame d'une activité intellectuelle. À ce titre, la composition d'un poème panégyrique est synonyme d'une passion pour louer le Prophète, Ahmad al-Tijâni ainsi

27 Andrea Brigaglia, "Sufi Revival and Islamic Literacy: Tijani Writings in Twentieth-century Nigeria", *The Annual Review of Islam in Africa*, issue n°12/1 (2013-2014): 102.

28 Seesemann, "Three Ibrâhîms," 301.

que les différents *Chioukh* ou *Muqaddamûn* de la *tariqa* Tijâniyya. De ce fait, pratiquement chaque *Moqadam* est tenu de rédiger un texte en l'honneur du Prophète de l'islam, Muhammad. Avec cet impératif catégorique, il est presque difficile, voire impossible de trouver un *Cheikh* tijâni dans le Nord-Cameroun qui n'a pas composé au moins un poème panégyrique à la louange du Prophète. Par convenance personnelle, certains *Chioukh* en font des textes pérennes en optant pour leur vulgarisation systématique. Ils font alors de la composition une véritable passion et leur propre activité intellectuelle. Le cas des *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa est fort éloquent à propos. À l'image des *Chioukh* qui prennent le soin de faire lire leur texte uniquement dans leurs *zawaya* respectives, dans le cadre de l'animation de la vie confrérique tijânie, *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa en firent de même. Qu'est-ce qui constitue alors le patrimoine intellectuel de ces deux *Chioukh* du Nord-Cameroun ? C'est le lieu de faire un inventaire exhaustif de leurs productions intellectuelles en arabe et en *ajami*.²⁹

III. Répertoire des productions intellectuelles des *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa et leurs contributions à la consolidation et au développement de la Tijâniyya

Dans le Nord-Cameroun, les écrits des érudits tijânis s'adressent à une audience identifiée tels les musulmans, les tijânis, les *hulafa'u*³⁰ et les *Muqaddamûn*. Une toute autre

29 Initialement *Ajami* est un mot d'origine arabe qui signifie tout ce qui est non arabe. Cependant, en Afrique subsaharienne, ce mot désigne l'emprunt des caractères arabes en vue de la transcription des langues locales. C'est précisément un système d'écriture qui repose sur l'adoption de l'alphabet arabe par les langues africaines en vue de traduire tout ce qui est non arabe.

30 *Hulafa'u*, singulier : *Khalifa*, est un mot d'origine arabe qui signifie successeur.

catégorie d'écrits vise ceux qui s'attaquent à la légitimité de la *tariqa* Tijâniyya. Le plus souvent, les travaux rédigés ne font pas l'objet d'une publication sous forme d'un ouvrage édité. Pour la plupart, les écrits sont des éditions de marché produits et distribués par les auteurs et leurs propres disciples. Ces écrits sont lus dans le cadre de l'animation de la vie confrérique dans les *zawaya*³¹tijânies et lors des grandes manifestations culturelles et culturelles à l'instar du *Mawlid*³² et de la *Ziyāra*.³³ Si certains écrits peuvent être rédigés en l'honneur d'un *Cheikh* en vue de gagner sa sympathie et/ou de bénéficier de son aura pour avoir plus de visibilité, d'autres, conservés jalousement et reproduits par les disciples, sont destinés à la postérité.

L'étude des écrits d'éminents soufis tijânis est d'une pertinence certaine dans le cadre de la transmission du savoir soufi tijâni. Dans le Nord-Cameroun, plusieurs titres rédigés en arabe ou en *ajami* constituent la production littéraire et poétique des lettrés musulmans tijânis. Il convient de noter que ces titres sont classés en trois principales catégories, à savoir, les manuels de poésies panégyriques, les commentaires et comptes rendus des ouvrages célèbres, la description des états et expériences mystiques. Il est à noter que les copies manuscrites de ces titres sont jalousement conservées dans les bibliothèques privées logées dans leurs différentes *zawaya* à Koinderi (*Cheikh Moodibbo* Oussoumanou Dalil) et à Ngaoundéré (*Cheikh Moodibbo* Nana Younoussa).

31 *Zawaya*, singulier : *zaouïa*, est un mot d'origine arabe qui désigne des maisons, des loges locales et/ou des centres cléricaux.

32 *Mawlid* est un mot d'origine arabe qui désigne un rituel religieux qui célèbre la naissance du Prophète Muhammad ou la fête d'anniversaire d'un saint.

33 *Ziyāra* est un mot d'origine arabe qui désigne une visite pieuse.

1. Inventaire analytique du patrimoine intellectuel des *Chioukh Moodibbe Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa*

L'histoire de l'élitisme intellectuel dans le Nord-Cameroun est l'apanage d'une élite intellectuelle initiée au sein des écoles islamiques et des confréries religieuses.³⁴ Leur production intellectuelle, riche et abondante, embrasse plusieurs genres et excelle particulièrement dans l'épistolaire, la chronique, la narration, la généalogie et la poésie.³⁵ Ainsi, au Nord-Cameroun, les différentes approches d'écriture de la littérature tijânie se déclinent sous plusieurs genres, à savoir : *Madh al nabi*³⁶, *Rihlât*³⁷ et *Marsiya*.³⁸ Ces genres traduisent, à bien des égards, le fruit des méditations personnelles profondes.

D'après les entretiens réalisés, *Chioukh Moodibbe Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa* furent deux écrivains-poètes autorisés et reconnus au Nord-Cameroun. Si le premier fut un penseur tijâni qui aurait rédigé près de 2000 *qaça'id*³⁹ constituées aussi bien des manuscrits en arabe qu'en *ajami*, le second, lui, fut considéré à juste titre par ses pairs et par les tijânis comme le plus grand écrivain de la poésie tijânie dans l'Adamaoua au Cameroun. De ce point de vue, il dispose à son actif plus d'un millier de *qaça'id* constituées des textes rédigés en arabe et *ajami*.

34 Adama, "L'islam au Cameroun", 116.

35 Ibid., 116.

36 *Madh al nabi* est un mot d'origine arabe qui désigne un sous genre de la poésie dans la littérature tijânie. Il s'agit en réalité de la poésie panégyrique pour les louanges / éloges au Prophète Muhammad.

37 *Rihlat* est un mot d'origine arabe qui désigne un genre de la littérature poétique arabe. Il s'agit d'un récit de voyage composé d'observations géographiques, ethnologiques et religieuses.

38 *Marsiya* est un mot d'origine arabe qui signifie un poème religieux et élégiaque rédigé en guise de lamentations dans l'optique de pleurer la disparition d'une âme décédée.

39 *Qaça'id*, singulier : *qāšida*, mot d'origine arabe qui signifie une ode représentée par un ensemble de vers (de sept à un nombre infini) rédigée dans la poésie arabe classique.

Ces détails chiffrés furent d'eux des auteurs prolifiques et prolifiques dans le Nord-Cameroun. Leurs différentes œuvres de composition sur la *tariqa* et sur le *taṣawwuf*, abondantes, furent un outil de construction et de développement de leur réputation. Qu'il s'agisse des *qaṣa'id* rédigées en *ajami* ou en arabe, leurs différentes compositions relèvent, principalement, du genre panégyrique *nabawiyya* ou *Madh al nabi*, du genre *Radd alā l-munkirin* (réponses aux critiques), de la description des états et expériences mystiques, de la poésie didactique, des conseils pratiques, des explications et supplications mystiques et des poèmes relevant du *Riḥlat*. Les thématiques abordées dans leurs travaux concernent, non exhaustivement, plusieurs domaines des sciences religieuses. Il s'agit des thèmes en rapport avec les mérites et les règles du *dhikr*⁴⁰ ou du *wird*⁴¹, la nécessité et le rôle des *Chioukh* en Islam, la biographie et l'hagiographie des saints soufis, l'importance de la formation spirituelle, la lutte contre les imperfections de l'âme (*Nafs*), la connaissance, l'adoration et la crainte de Dieu, la nécessité d'un repentir sincère, la nécessité de suivre la Sunna, les pratiques et règles de l'éducation enseignée par le Prophète, les pieux conseils donnés aux adeptes de la Tijâniyya, les interprétations poétiques des expériences reçues lors des voyages pieux, les miracles (*karamat*) qui renforcent la notoriété des saints qui les a réalisés, la splendeur de Dieu qui l'a pourvu de tels dons et les limites de l'intellect qui ne peut les comprendre, etc.

Selon les témoignages recueillis, dans le patrimoine intellectuel de *Cheikh Moodibbo* Oussoumanou Dalil, les célèbres compositions, à son actif, qu'il faille retenir, sont au nombre de six. Il s'agit de : "*Tafhiimu adillatti tariqati al mah'hûzatu minal kitabi was sunnati*" (arabe), "*Samira*"

40 *Dhikr*, pluriel, *adhkâr*, est un mot d'origine Arabe qui désigne un Rappel, une récitation répétée ou prolongée d'une formule ou parole sacrée. Le *dhikr* est une prière révélée qui élève à Dieu, le fidèle qui l'invoque.

41 *Wird*, pluriel, *awrād*, est un mot d'origine arabe qui désigne l'ensemble des rituels propres à une voie maraboutique ou confrérique. Il s'agit aussi d'un serment de fidélité observé et pratiqué par un adepte à un ordre soufi.

(fulfulde), "*Daarogal Jey'yaabe*" (fulfulde), "*Nasaabe*" (fulfulde), "*Mooborde Guimi fulfulde* (deux volumes)" (fulfulde), "*Guimi begoordi Jaagorbe*" (fulfulde). De son côté, dans le patrimoine intellectuel de *Cheikh Moodibbo* Nana Younoussa, bien que divers et varié, les célèbres compositions, à son actif, qu'il importe de retenir, sont au nombre de cinq, à savoir : "*Soubi yiide*" (fulfulde), "*Yimre Taskitaare Jahangal*" (fulfulde), "*Jawharatul Kāmal*" (fulfulde), "*Hiyāzatul Kah'assi fi Ziyarati Fāsi*" (arabe) et "*Nā'am Nā'am*" (fulfulde).

En vue de se rendre compte de la sagesse de la plume ainsi que de la profondeur des contenus des productions intellectuelles à l'actif des *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa, il importe, à titre d'illustration, de procéder à l'examen minutieux de quelques-unes. Dans ce sens, *Guimi Begoordi Jaagorbe* de *Cheikh Moodibbo* Oussoumanou Dalil, *Jawharatul kāmal* et *Yimre Taskitaare Jahangal* de *Cheikh Moodibbo* Nana Younoussa, sont des compositions à prendre en considération.⁴²

Guimi Begoordi Jaagorbe (Chansons pour valoriser les saints), est une composition de 48 pages qui regroupe quatre *qaça'id* rédigée en *ajami* par *Cheikh Moodibbo* Oussoumanou Dalil. Il s'agit des *qaça'id* rédigées en l'honneur des *Chioukh al-Tijâni* & Ibrahim Niase, à savoir : *Roummanure Cheikh Ahmad al-Tijâni*, *Pinaari woumtube*, *Kibritu ahlil Fayda et Barhaama*.

Roummanure Cheikh Ahmad al-Tijâni, est une *qāšida* rédigée en *ajami* qui comporte des précieuses indications sur la biographie linéaire de *Cheikh Ahmad al-Tijâni*. Après avoir formulé la prière sur le Prophète de l'islam, l'auteur adresse le *salam* sur la famille du Prophète, sur ses compagnons, sur le *Cheikh Ahmad al-Tijâni* et sur les musulmans. Par la suite,

⁴² Les informations relatives à l'examen de ses écrits ont été obtenues grâce aux travaux inédits et non soutenus de Fadel Soubiane Bah dont la Thèse de Doctorat PhD en Histoire s'intitule : "Avènement, religiosité et mécanismes d'adaptation de la Tijāniyya face aux contraintes dans l'Adamaoua (Cameroun) de 1809 à 2017", Université de Ngaoundéré.

Cheikh Moodibbo Oussoumanou Dalil décline son intention en déclarant que cette chanson sur l'histoire fut entonnée à l'occasion du *Mawlid* du *Cheikh*-fondateur de la Tijâniyya. La *qāṣida* revient, ensuite, sur les attributs de *Cheikh al Tijâni* (*Qutb, Gauth, Khatm al wilaya*, détenteur de la *haqiqa*, l'intercesseur, le sauveur qui conduira son peuple auprès du Prophète. Aussi, la *qāṣida*, insiste-t-elle sur la nécessité d'adhérer à la *tariqa* d'al-Tijâni, un spécialiste des sciences islamiques et ésotériques. En 16 pages et en 545 vers, *Cheikh Moodibbo Oussoumanou Dalil*, donne des renseignements sur la jeunesse, l'éducation ainsi que sur les voyages effectués par al-Tijâni en vue de rencontrer les saints, de transmettre les secrets de la *haqiqa Muhammadiyya*. Il ne manque pas, également, d'aborder les circonstances de la réception du *wird* par al-Tijâni en état de veille. Après avoir explicité les circonstances de la disparition d'al-Tijâni, l'auteur clôt la *qāṣida* par une série de prières de pardon adressée à Dieu.

Pinaari woumtube est une *qāṣida* qui énonce les valeurs des adeptes de la Tijâniyya. Il s'agit de montrer la valeur de ceux qui suivent la voie de la vérité muhammadienne. Dans ce texte, l'auteur énonce, non seulement, les comportements à observer par les disciples, mais, présente surtout, les invocations à lire en vue de devenir l'héritier ou le détenteur des secrets de la Tijâniyya.

Kibritu ahlil Fayda et *Barhaama* sont des *qaṣa'id* qui parlent de *Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse*. Si *Barhaama* est une *qāṣida* qui renseigne sur les différents grades et la charge mystique des différents noms du *Cheikh*, à l'instar d'Ibrahima, Ibrahama, Ibrahouma, Ibra Hama et Barhaama, *Kibritu ahlil Fayda*, elle, est une *qāṣida* qui présente la biographie, les différentes *karamat* de *Cheikh-Barhaama* ainsi que l'avènement de la *Fayda*.⁴³

⁴³ *Fayda* est un mot d'origine arabe qui signifie littéralement "déborder", "inonder", s'emploie dans le contexte de débordement des larmes de Dieu. La notion *Fayda* qui représente un réseau islamique dynamique, dérive des

Dans *Kibritu ahilil Fayda*, l'auteur, débute par la *basmala* et une formule de prière sur le Prophète. Il ne manque pas de signaler que cette *qāṣida* est un *wird* rédigé à l'occasion du *Mawlid* du *Cheikh-Barhaama*. Après avoir donné des indications sur la biographie de *Cheikh Baayi*, *Cheikh Moodibbo Oussoumanou Dalil* donne des informations sur son enfance, sa jeunesse ainsi que son éducation. Étant issu d'une famille de lettrés musulmans, *Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse* a appris auprès d'elle les sciences religieuses et mystiques. Ibrahim Niasse, un amoureux du Prophète, aimait la Sunna et la *tariqa*. C'est un homme généreux, beau, respectueux, humble et souriant. Sur les caractères et les *karamat* de *Cheikh-Barhaama*, le texte précise que plusieurs saints venaient à lui, ils soignaient les cœurs, les blessures et les fractures. À travers la connaissance de Dieu, il offrait une paix spirituelle à ses visiteurs. Il fit des invocations pour une femme qui voulait des enfants, il en fit aussi pour faire tomber la pluie. *Baayi* était un *Cheikh* constamment en déplacement. Il a été dans plusieurs pays à l'instar du Mali, du Niger, du Tchad, du Soudan, de la Mauritanie, de l'Égypte, de l'Algérie, de la République Centrafricaine, du Cameroun, du Nigéria, des États-Unis, de la Guinée Conakry... Dans cette *qāṣida*, l'auteur présente l'avènement de la *Fayda* et les circonstances de la prédiction du statut de *Khalifa* et de *Sahib al Fayda*. *Cheikh Mohammad*, disciple de *Cheikh Ahmad al-Tijâni* avait psalmodié 1000 fois le Coran à chaque point cardinal. À la suite de cette œuvre pieuse d'adoration, al-Tijâni prédit et confirma qu'il y aura un "*Gauth*" dans la descendance de *Cheikh Mohammad*. Ainsi, ce dernier, sur ordre d'al-Tijâni, migra dans plusieurs pays de par l'Afrique de l'Ouest (Niger, Mali, Burkina) pour finalement

concepts *fayd* (déluge) et *fuyud* (émanation spirituelle), est la doctrine ou la pratique distinctive du mouvement de *Shaykh Ibrāhīm Niasse*. C'est le flot de grâce ou savoir divin qui envahit l'adepte par l'intermédiaire du *Cheikh Barhaama* à travers la *tarbiyya*. La *Fayda* est encore appelée *Tijāniyya Ibrahimiyya*, *Inyassiyya*, *Tijāniyya réformée* ou popularisée.

s'établir au Sénégal. Il fonde une *zaouïa* à Kaolack et prit en noces, Koubra, la mère de *Cheikh Abdallah* (père de *Baayi*). C'est donc le *Cheikh Abdallah* qui donna naissance au *Gauth*, *Khalife* et *Sahib al Fayda*. En plus des invocations de fin et une série de *tawassoul*⁴⁴, *Kibritu ahlil Fayda* se termine par la présentation des circonstances de décès de *Baayi* à Londres.

De son côté, considérée à juste titre comme un chef d'œuvre et l'une des plus grandes et importantes productions écrites de *Cheikh Moodibbo* Nana Younoussa, *Jawharatul kâmal* est une production poétique rédigée en *ajami*. Pour son auteur, cette contribution qui se présente comme l'ultime version de la recherche sur le genre *madh*, contient près de 150 pages. Rappelons que "l'esprit du *madhu* est de prendre pour repère l'image du Prophète Muhammad, s'adresser à Lui comme s'Il se dressait devant le rédacteur. Ce dernier s'efface complètement pour chanter Ses louanges". C'est une contribution qui s'est largement inspirée de l'ouvrage de *Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse*, intitulé *al-Dawāwīn al-sitt*. C'est pourquoi cette œuvre, en *ajami*, se base sur le modèle prophétique (*al-ouwa al-hassana*). Le véritable maître étant le *Shaykh al-haqiqi* (le Prophète Muhammad), *Jawharatul Kâmal* célèbre ainsi les qualités distinctives et les mérites du Prophète. Cette louange, par ailleurs une invocation nocturne, constitue l'amour et les sentiments que ressent l'auteur de la *qāṣida*. Son amour se manifeste, évidemment, à travers les pleurs et lamentations. C'est pourquoi, son insomnie est entretenue par le souvenir du Prophète Muhammad. Comme honorer le Prophète est un devoir religieux, dans cet ouvrage, *Cheikh Moodibbo* Nana Younoussa énonce une série d'invocations et de prières sur le Prophète.

⁴⁴ *Tawassoul* est un mot d'origine arabe qui signifie adjuration ou imploration.

Dans le Soufisme, ce terme est une pratique religieuse qui fait appel à la notion d'intercession. Il s'agit d'une recherche de bénédiction auprès du Prophète, d'un saint ou d'un *Moodibbo*. Par extension, *tawassoul* est une demande adressée à Allah par l'intermédiaire ou l'évocation du nom du Prophète, de celui d'un saint ou d'un *Moodibbo*.

En outre, il traduit ses sentiments en évoquant l'histoire des compagnons (*sahaabo'ain*), des enfants et épouses du Prophète Muhammad. L'auteur les prend en exemple pour illustrer son amour pour le bien Aimé (Prophète). À titre d'exemple, dans plusieurs pages, *Cheikh Moodibbo* Nana Younoussa évoque les noms de plusieurs *sahaabo'ain*. Aussi, l'ouvrage abonde-t-il des qualificatifs et attributs du Prophète de l'islam. Dans une perspective historique, *Jawharatul Kāmal* revient sur la vie du Prophète, de sa famille et de ses compagnons. Dans cette histoire de vie contée, l'auteur, à travers des élans lyriques, adresse ses louanges au Prophète Muhammad. Ce qui se traduit par la présentation des différents traits distinctifs du véritable maître, le *Shaykh al-haqiqi*.

Par ailleurs, *Yimre Taskitaare Jahangal* (Chanson pour les préparatifs de voyage) est une *qāṣida* de 144 vers, rédigée en *ajami* le 4 de mois de Muharram 1419 par *Cheikh Moodibbo* Nana Younoussa. Cette *qāṣida*, considérée à juste titre comme un chant de voyage, est une composition poétique rédigée dans un état d'extase. C'est, précisément, lors d'un déplacement pour une visite pieuse à Sanganaaré-Galim que *Cheikh Moodibbo* Nana Younoussa rédigea cette *qāṣida* présentée comme le fruit d'une inspiration mystique et spirituelle. Il s'agit, en réalité, des provisions du voyage et du voyageur, d'un ensemble de précieuses invocations formulées par le *Cheikh* en voyage. Dès lors, l'auteur prend pour prétexte son voyage pour faire du *tawassoul* et de l'*istighāthā*⁴⁵ par l'intermédiaire du *Cheikh Barhaama*. Cette *qāṣida* s'ouvre par des louanges adressées au saint de tous les musulmans, le *Cheikh Barhaama*.

D'entrée de jeu, l'auteur fait le *tawassoul* afin que *Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse* lui permette de faire partie de la *Jama'at al Fayda*. Ensuite, *Cheikh Moodibbo* Nana Younoussa implore

⁴⁵ *Istighāthā*, est un mot d'origine arabe qui signifie une demande d'aide et d'assistance adressée à Dieu par l'intermédiaire d'un *Cheikh*. Il s'agit spécifiquement d'une recherche de bénédiction, d'une imploration du secours auprès d'un *Cheikh tijāni* lors d'une visite pieuse par exemple.

Cheikh Barhaama de lui permettre de rentrer sereinement de son déplacement. Le voyage étant souvent très pénible, l'auteur implore qu'Ibrahim Niasse lui permette un assouplissement pour ses futurs déplacements. À travers le voyage à Sanganaaré-Galim, l'auteur de cette *qāṣida* implore le détenteur de la *Fayda* (*Sahib al Fayda*) de lui offrir de l'aisance matérielle ; de le sortir de la souffrance et de l'ignorance ; de lui faciliter l'accès à la *baraka*, au savoir vertueux, aux secrets mystiques et aux biens ; de lui donner de l'ouverture (*Fath*), de la sainteté et de mettre entre ses mains les lumières de la *Fayda*. À cet effet, *Cheikh Moodibbo* Nana Younoussa déclare : "Je viens à toi afin que tu exauces mes désirs" ; "Du fait que tu sois l'aimé du Prophète, que tu sois nanti de l'*Adab*, que tu sois un grand wali, sauve-moi des égarements, facilite-moi le voyage vers la tombe du Prophète, permet-moi d'aimer le Prophète et de suivre sa Sunna". *Cheikh Moodibbo* Nana Younoussa clôt son texte par une série de *ṣalāt* (prières) adressée d'abord au Prophète, à al-Tijâni et au *Cheikh Barhaama*.

2. Impact de leurs écrits sur l'évolution de la Tijâniyya au Nord-Cameroun

Les travaux respectifs des *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa ont eu un impact considérable sur la consolidation et l'évolution de la Tijâniyya dans le Nord-Cameroun. De fait, il importe de souligner que l'émergence des érudits tijânis ainsi que leur parcours atypique permettent d'apprécier, à juste titre, l'apport de "l'élitisme intellectuel"⁴⁶ dans la maturation de l'islam confrérique de *tariqa* Tijâniyya. De ce point de vue, tous les écrits des *Chioukh* tijânis au Nord-Cameroun contribuent à l'émergence d'un mouvement intellectuel islamique au Cameroun, et cela, bien que les productions littéraires et poétiques soient dans l'anonymat,

⁴⁶ Adama, "L'Islam au Cameroun", 116.

car ne disposant pas d'un canal officiel de valorisation et de diffusion.

Au Nord-Cameroun, la production et l'activité intellectuelles ont fait survenir plusieurs mutations qu'il importe de relever. Les différents écrits des *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa ont permis de renforcer le poids de la Tijâniyya en renforçant sa vitalité sur le terrain. Comme certains écrits sont lus dans le cadre de l'animation de la vie confrérique dans les différentes *zawaya* tijânies, d'autres y sont rédigées pour la postérité, les productions écrites permettent d'entretenir une large audience sur diverses thématiques dans le domaine de l'Islam et du Soufisme. Ce qui permet, non seulement, de gagner la confiance et la sympathie d'un saint, de garnir les bibliothèques personnelles de leur auteur, mais surtout, d'améliorer la qualité de l'encadrement et de l'éducation des disciples tijânis au Nord-Cameroun. Ainsi, avec les différents écrits lus et enseignés, avec leurs visées didactiques, les disciples de la Tijâniyya semblent mieux outillés et disposent d'une meilleure formation. Étant entendu que les écrits engagés soient une invitation à une profonde réflexion, les lecteurs prennent parti de la cause défendue en toute connaissance de cause. C'est pourquoi, ces textes permettent une meilleure sensibilisation des adeptes tijânis sur le bon comportement et la meilleure compréhension de la pratique du *dhikr*. De ce point de vue, les écrits des *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa ont permis de renforcer la pratique de l'islam confrérique. Si leurs écrits ont favorisé un changement évident des mentalités, elles ont tout aussi permis une meilleure compréhension du Soufisme et de l'islam.

L'autre dimension des productions littéraires et poétiques réalisées par *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa réside dans leur rôle exercé en tant que *Chioukh-réformateurs*. Les contenus de leurs textes étaient des exhortations constantes à l'adoption de l'image et des qualités

prophétiques. Indubitablement, ils furent des *Chioukh* tijânis dont les écrits ont permis l'acceptation, l'adoption et la consolidation progressive de la Tijâniyya réformée. *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa en furent d'ailleurs les porte-étendards les plus en vue de leur époque. Dans cette perspective, à travers leurs écrits, la *Fayda*⁴⁷ gagna du terrain au point de donner à la Tijâniyya au Nord-Cameroun un nombre assez éloquent d'adhérents et d'adeptes. En d'autres termes, les efforts de renouveau islamique initiés par *Shaykh* Ibrahim Niassé furent repris et reproduits par *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa. Ce qui, non seulement, permet de redonner un souffle nouveau à la *Fayda*, mais surtout, de disposer des outils d'analyse et de compréhension de ce mouvement transnational.

Outre à travers les écrits, *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa ont posé des actions qui ont permis le développement et la consolidation de la Tijâniyya. Les prédications, l'organisation et la promotion du *Mawlid*, ainsi que toute autre opportunité, sont mises à contribution par ces deux *Chioukh* dans le cadre de l'extension du prosélytisme tijâni. Étant des enseignants expérimentés et chevronnés, ils purent trouver les mots justes capables de convaincre les sceptiques à la Tijâniyya. Les prêches prononcés par ces deux érudits étaient destinés à informer sur les fondements de la *tariqa*, sur les preuves qui justifient de la présence dans les textes authentiques de l'islam, des traces et/ou des fondements de la Tijâniyya. Dans ce sens, toutes leurs prédications abondaient des versets coraniques et des *Hadiths* authentiques qui viennent confirmer que la Tijâniyya est une voie étroite réservée aux seules âmes fortes, par ailleurs élues de Dieu,

47 Pour plus de précisions à ce sujet, lire Christopher Gray, "The rise of Niassene Tijaniyya, 1875 to the present", in *Islam et Islamisme au sud du Sahara*, ed. Ousmane Kane & J.L. Triaud (Paris : Karthala, 1998), 59-82. Ou Andrea Brigaglia, "The Fayda Tijaniyya of Ibrahim Nyass : Genesis, and Implications of a Sufi Doctrine", in *Islam et Sociétés au Sud du Sahara*, 14/15 (2000/2001), 41-56.

réunies afin d'atteindre "la connaissance intuitive de Dieu". Par leur exemplarité et simplicité, ces deux érudits ont pu gagner la confiance des musulmans de leurs localités respectives. La qualité de leurs enseignements a permis à de nombreux disciples de fréquenter les *zawaya* qu'ils édifièrent. En raison du fait que leur instruction bénéficiait d'un crédit moral certain et d'une considération toute particulière, les *fukaraabe defte*⁴⁸ qui venaient à eux, sont *ipso facto* affiliés à la Tijâniyya. Ainsi, à l'issue de leur formation spirituelle, ils se mettent au service de la voie. De la sorte, le nombre des adeptes ne cessait de croître. Il en est de même des *zawaya* tijâniés. Ainsi, il est aisé de mentionner que l'aura des *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa a contribué au rayonnement de la Tijâniyya dans tout le pays.

Conclusion

Il était question de présenter l'histoire et le patrimoine intellectuel de deux érudits soufis tijânis au Nord-Cameroun, à savoir, *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa. Il convient alors de retenir que ces *Chioukh* tijânis, véritables pôles d'attraction en matière de savoir islamique ont été des penseurs musulmans qui ont marqué l'histoire du savoir et de l'érudition islamiques en Afrique. Leur histoire et leur patrimoine intellectuel ont été étudiés avec la plus grande acuité. Sobres, discrets et engagés, *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa furent parmi les plus grandes personnalités religieuses tijâniés de leur génération. La rigueur de leurs formations se reflétait dans l'éducation de leurs nombreux disciples. D'ailleurs, ce fut cette rigueur qui leur valut d'avoir une descendance pieuse. Leur qualité d'homme ainsi que l'immensité de leurs actions pour la Tijâniyya firent d'eux, des érudits tijânis écoutés, respectés et

⁴⁸ *Fukaraabe defte* : est un mot d'origine peule qui désigne les étudiants de niveau complémentaire dans une école coranique peule.

adulés. Leurs compositions, riches et variées, ont contribué à l'émergence d'un mouvement intellectuel islamique au Cameroun. Leurs écrits touchent plusieurs domaines des sciences islamiques et plusieurs genres avec une focalisation sur la poésie panégyrique soufie. Cette dernière est devenue une expression essentielle d'invocation de Dieu. Composante fondamentale de la dévotion soufie tijânie, la poésie panégyrique qui s'impose comme une forme de culte confrérique tijâni, est scandée dans les différentes *zawaya* tijânies disséminées dans le Nord-Cameroun. Il est à noter que les *Chioukh* éducateurs tijânis, lors de certaines séances d'éducation spirituelle, enseignent en guise d'exercice spirituel la répétition et la mémorisation d'un certain nombre de *qāṣida*. Les disciples tijânis soumis à leur autorité connaissaient un très grand nombre de poèmes qu'ils prenaient plaisir à réciter ou à chanter. Il se peut aussi que l'art poétique spirituel tijâni soit en amont de l'initiation et de la pratique spirituelle.

Inspirés des travaux des *Chioukh* soufis et penseurs africains précédents, *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa, deux écrivains-poètes autorisés et reconnus au Nord-Cameroun, disposent respectivement près de 2000 *qaṣa'id* et plus d'un millier de *qaṣa'id*. L'inventaire exhaustif de plusieurs de leurs compositions a été réalisé avec précision. Toutefois, l'examen analytique de certaines compositions a été effectué. Il s'agit de *Guimi Begoordi Jaagorbe* de *Cheikh Moodibbo* Oussoumanou Dalil, de *Jawharatul kāmāl* et de *Yimre Taskitaare Jahangal* de *Cheikh Moodibbo* Nana Younoussa. Il y ressort que ces écrits sont engagés et s'adressent à un public-cible. Toutefois, il reste qu'au Cameroun, cette activité de production littéraire et poétique n'est pas coordonnée et institutionnalisée. Chaque érudit en fonction de sa détermination, de ses ambitions et compétences, se livre à la rédaction à condition d'avoir en amont l'approbation des grands représentants de l'ordre au Maroc, au Sénégal, au Nigéria et/ou de leur représentant attitré au Cameroun.

Bien que contribuant à l'émergence d'un mouvement intellectuel islamique et faisant partie intégrante de l'élitisme intellectuel, l'activité de production littéraire et poétique des *Chioukh* tijânis dans le Nord-Cameroun reste peu valorisée, car ne disposant pas d'un canal de diffusion adéquat. Le plus souvent, les écrits tijânis, qui ne sont pas publiés, pour la plupart, remplissent essentiellement les bibliothèques privées des érudits musulmans. Afin de venir à bout de ce manquement, la création d'un cadre institutionnel adéquat de valorisation des manuscrits en arabe ou en *ajami* devant permettre la publication des travaux de ces *Chioukh* tijânis, est hautement souhaitable et fondamentale. À propos de la réalisation d'un inventaire global des sources écrites tijânies, non publiées, des recherches complémentaires semblent nécessaires. En l'absence d'une politique publique viable dans ce domaine au Cameroun, la création d'un centre de recherche et de documentation pluridisciplinaire est souhaitable à plus d'un titre. Ce qui permettra non seulement d'inventorier, mais surtout, d'analyser et de publier leurs contenus.

Au final, cerner les personnages et la carrière de *Chioukh Moodibbe* Oussoumanou Dalil et Nana Younoussa, reste le but visé par cette contribution, dont l'objectif est de mettre en valeur de leurs productions intellectuelles existantes en arabe et en *ajami*. Il est évident que pour atteindre cet idéal des approfondissements s'imposent pour davantage de clarté.

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“Amadou Hampâté Bâ : sagesse et héritage intellectuel (1901-1991)”

Gassim Ibrahim *

RESUME

Cet article est avant tout l'occasion de rendre hommage à Amadou Hampâté Bâ, écrivain et penseur africain, et par ricochet à son guide spirituel Tierno Bokar, maître soufi et homme de Dieu. Hampâté Bâ a consacré toute sa vie et son œuvre à la défense et à la conservation des cultures orales africaines. En effet, notre contribution se propose dans une perspective plus large, de reconsidérer la vitalité de l'œuvre d'Hampâté Bâ, et plus précisément, les vertus et les sagesse islamiques et traditionnelles véhiculées et prônées dans son œuvre, dans le contexte africain actuel à l'heure de la mondialisation. Nous pensons que la tolérance et l'ouverture à l'autre, principes fondamentaux de l'islam et de la tradition orale africaine, qui reviennent de façon récurrente dans les ouvrages de l'auteur en question, peuvent jouer un rôle important dans le retour de la paix et la cohésion sociale aujourd'hui en Afrique, voire dans la promotion d'une paix universelle, si elles sont bien vulgarisées et imprégnées dans la masse populaire à travers les structures d'enseignements modernes et traditionnels.

Introduction

A. Hampâté Bâ est l'un des plus grands écrivains, poètes, ethnologues et traditionnalistes africains du XXe siècle. Il est l'auteur de plusieurs ouvrages et articles littéraires et historiques qui l'ont rendu célèbre dans les milieux intellectuels et l'ont transformé en une figure universelle. Il

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mena un grand combat pour la conservation des cultures et traditions africaines, d'abord, face à la menace des politiques d'exploitation et d'assimilation coloniales, plus tard, face aux phénomènes d'acculturation et de déculturation. Il avait entrepris alors la lourde tâche de collecter, de sauvegarder et de diffuser les traditions orales dont les vieillards sont les détenteurs privilégiés. De nombreux ouvrages, articles, études, thèses, congrès et conférences ont été consacrés tant à l'œuvre qu'il a léguée à la postérité, qu'à sa carrière et à sa vie personnelle et spirituelle. Cependant, trente ans après sa mort il y a lieu de s'interroger sur le plan pratique que théorique la place qu'occupe son héritage en Afrique aujourd'hui à l'heure de la mondialisation. D'une part, nous nous demandons si l'œuvre d'Hampâté Bâ a survécu à l'usure du temps ? Quelle est sa place et son importance dans une Afrique sous l'emprise de la déculturation ? D'autre part, les vertus et les sagesse telles que la tolérance, le vivre ensemble, le dialogue et l'humanisme qu'il défendait et prônait dans son œuvre, sont-elles d'actualité de nos jours ? Or, nous savons que nombre de pays africains, plus particulièrement les pays de la zone Sahélienne où l'auteur a passé une grande partie de sa vie, sont en proie à des attaques armées et des violences intercommunautaires.

Par conséquent, il y a un grand intérêt de repenser l'œuvre d'Amadou Hampâté Bâ afin de faire revivre les enseignements et les sagesse, tirés des sources variées, en vue d'un développement durable dans la région. En clair, le but de cet article est de ressortir, à titre non exhaustif, la quintessence de certaines valeurs contenues dans l'œuvre d'Hampâté Bâ. Loin de fournir une vue d'ensemble de toute l'œuvre de l'auteur et de tout ce dont elle regorge, nous nous limitons à quelques-uns de ses ouvrages et une série des vertus et sagesse qui nous ont semblé primordiaux. Nous prendrons pour champ de lecture ses ouvrages autobiographiques *Amkoullel l'Enfant Peul* et *Oui mon commandant*, ainsi que *Vie et enseignement de Tierno Bokar*.

"Amadou Hampâté Bâ : sagesses et héritage intellectuel (1901-1991)"

Le sage de Bandiagara. Après avoir présenté une biographie succincte de l'auteur, nous allons passer en revue les ouvrages précités, puis nous nous attèlerons sur le combat de l'auteur pour la tradition orale et surtout pour la conservation des cultures et traditions africaines. Enfin, nous allons nous attarder sur les vertus et sagesses véhiculées dans ces différents ouvrages, et comment les envisager sous un regard positif, et surtout plus attractif en les promouvant dans la société au-delà de l'enseignement académique.

Les mille et une vies d'Amadou Hampate Bâ

De Bandiagara, berceau de sa famille où il naquit en 1900/1901, dans l'ancien Soudan français (actuel Mali), à Abidjan, en Côte d'Ivoire, où il mourut le 15 mai 1991, en passant par Paris, Amadou Hampâté Bâ mena une vie aussi dense et épaisse que sa production intellectuelle. Une vie mouvementée, pleine d'expériences et d'enseignements dont on connaît les détails à partir de ses deux romans autobiographiques posthumes. Hampâté Bâ est issu d'une famille aristocratique peule, dont les branches appartiennent à deux lignées rivales qui ont joué un rôle important dans l'histoire de la région. Sa mère Khadidja est la fille de Paté Poullou, un fidèle d'Elhadj Omar Tall, fondateur de l'Empire Peul Toucouleur, tandis que son père Hampâté appartient à la famille de Chekou Amadou, fondateur en 1818 de l'Empire Peul Théocratique du Macina, annexé plus tard, en 1862, par l'empire d'Elhadj Omar Tall.¹

En parlant de sa famille dans *Amkoullel, l'Enfant Peul*, Hampâté Bâ dit :

"Toute l'histoire de ma famille est en effet liée à celle du Macina [...] et aux guerres qui le déchirèrent, particulièrement celles qui opposèrent les Peuls de l'Empire peul du Macina aux

1 Voir. Amadou Hampâté Bâ et Jacques Daget, *L'Empire peul du Macina. I (1818-1853)*, (Études Soudanaises, No. 3.) Koulouba : Institut français d'Afrique noire, Centre du Soudan, 1955).

Toucouleurs de l'armée d'Elhadji Omar [...]. Chacune de mes deux lignées s'apparente d'une manière directe ou indirecte, à l'un de ces deux grands partis antagonistes. C'est donc un double héritage à la fois historique et affectif que j'ai reçu à ma naissance, et bien des événements de ma vie en seront marqués."²

Son enfance est marquée par l'écho des drames familiaux, des guerres fratricides et guerres de conquête et de pacification coloniales qui eurent ultérieurement un effet très stimulant sur sa production littéraire. Après la mort précoce de son père, alors qu'il était âgé de trois ans, le jeune Amadou est adopté par Tidjani Thiam, le second mari de sa mère. Ce dernier va très tôt l'initier aux traditions peules, puis aux préceptes de l'islam en le confiant à un maître coranique, Thierno Bokar "le sage de Bandiagara", qui deviendra plus tard son guide spirituel. À l'âge de 12 ans, alors qu'il vaquait tranquillement à ses occupations traditionnelles, qui l'auraient conduit vers une carrière classique de marabout-enseignant, selon les expressions de l'auteur, il sera réquisitionné par l'administration coloniale pour aller d'office à "l'école des Blancs", alors considérée par la masse musulmane comme la voie la plus directe pour aller en enfer. C'est ainsi que bascule le destin du jeune Amadou, au grand dam de sa mère, Khadidja, qui souhaitait le voir grandir dans le respect des valeurs peules et musulmanes.

En 1915, après avoir obtenu son certificat d'étude primaire indigène, il se sauve pour retrouver sa mère à Kati, qui lui manquait terriblement. Toutefois, deux ans plus tard, il sera envahi par le désir de retourner à l'école afin de rejoindre ses camarades à la prestigieuse École normale de Gorée. Sa fugue en 1915 lui coûta son premier certificat d'étude qu'il allait repasser quatre ans plus tard en 1919. Admis au certificat d'étude pour la deuxième fois, Amadou fut transféré, comme

2 Amadou Hampâté Bâ. *Amkoullel, l'Enfant peul* (Paris : Actes Sud 1991), 19-20.

les autres élèves, à l'École professionnelle de Bamako où il prépara le concours d'entrée pour les grandes écoles du gouvernement, installées dans l'île de Gorée, au Sénégal. Bien qu'admis au concours, après deux ans de formation, Amadou ne verra pas son rêve se réaliser. Car, sa mère Khadidja s'opposa cette fois-ci de le voir partir pour le Sénégal, et pour plusieurs années d'études supplémentaires. Malgré l'insistance de l'administration, Amadou, obéissant à l'ordre de sa mère, était sanctionné contre ce refus par un poste, à Ouagadougou, "d'écrivain temporaire à titre essentiellement précaire et révocable". Ce poste qu'il qualifiait de plus bas dans l'échelle administrative marque aussi le début de sa carrière professionnelle.

Dès son arrivée à Ouagadougou, il n'a pas tardé à laisser derrière lui ce poste en passant un concours interne. Entre 1922 et 1942, Hampâté Bâ gravit les échelons, occupa plusieurs postes d'interprète, de secrétaire et atteignit le sommet de la hiérarchie dans son cadre administratif, ce qui lui permit de connaître le système auquel il était soumis et de gagner la confiance de l'administration coloniale. Cependant, Hampâté Bâ a failli subir le même sort que son guide spirituel Tierno Bokar, à cause de sa proximité et sa dévotion à ce dernier, qui après s'être converti au Hamallisme³ était combattu et abandonné par les siens, et taxé de nourrir un sentiment anti français. Alors que Tierno Bokar était persécuté et réduit au silence et à la solitude, Hampâté Bâ, affecté à Bamako, était plus ou moins assigné à une résidence surveillée, ne pouvant

3 Le Hamallisme est un mouvement soufi tidjani fondé par "Chérif Hamallâh", qui avait été élevé à la dignité de Khalife (Grand Maître) de l'Ordre. Il avait reçu pour mission de faire retourner la Tidjaniya à sa source et de la faire revenir, entre autres, à la pratique originelle de la *wazifat* consistant à réciter l'oraison *Perle de la perfection* (*Djawharatul-kamâl*) onze fois et non douze comme l'usage s'en était peu à peu institué. Cf. Amadou Hampâté Bâ, *Vie et Enseignement de Tierno Bokar, le Sage de Bandiagara* (Editions du Seuil, 1980).

quitter la ville.⁴ Les pressions et les tracasseries policières contre lui ne cessèrent d'augmenter après la mort de Tierno Bokar en 1940. C'est en 1942 qu'il fit appel à Théodore Monod, fondateur et directeur de l'Institut français/fondamental de l'Afrique noire (IFAN), qui demanda son affectation auprès de lui en tant qu'interprète.

À l'IFAN, Hampâté Bâ commence une carrière studieuse, durant laquelle il se consacre exclusivement à des travaux de recherche et d'enquête ethnologiques, historiques et religieuses à travers tous les territoires de l'ex-Afrique occidentale française (Sénégal, Soudan, ex-Haute-Volta, Niger, Guinée, Nord-Côte d'Ivoire...) jusqu'en 1958. À la même date, il fonde à Bamako l'Institut des sciences humaines dont il sera le directeur. De 1962 à 1966, il est ambassadeur extraordinaire et ministre plénipotentiaire du Mali en Côte-d'Ivoire, et en même temps membre du Conseil exécutif de l'Unesco jusqu'en 1970. Après cette date, il se consacre à ses recherches personnelles et ses écrits jusqu'à sa mort en 1991.

Hampâté Bâ : traditionaliste et soufi

Amadou Hampâté Bâ appartient à la culture et civilisation fondées sur des mythes et légendes, des us et coutumes et des croyances, qui ont influé sur son éducation de base, sa personnalité, son caractère et sa carrière littéraire. Cette culture appelée tradition orale, est la grande école de la vie qui recouvre et concerne tous les aspects, pour reprendre les termes de l'auteur. "Elle est tout à la fois religion, connaissance, science de la nature, initiation de métier, histoire, divertissement et récréation."⁵ Fondée sur l'initiation et l'expérience spirituelle et matérielle, allant de l'ésotérisme à l'exotérisme, elle a contribué à créer le sage, traditionaliste,

4 Hampâté Bâ, *Vie et Enseignement de Tierno Bokar*, 113.

5 Amadou Hampâté Bâ, "La Tradition vivante", dans *Histoire générale de l'Afrique, I : Méthodologie et préhistoire africaine*, ed. Joseph K. Zerbo (Editions UNESCO, 1980), 193.

conteur et maître de la parole qu'est Hampâté Bâ. Hampâté Bâ reçut sa première initiation à l'ésotérisme des Peuls par son grand-père maternel et sa mère qui avait acquis dans l'initiation féminine des Peuls le rang d'une "reine du lait". Quant à la tradition et l'art de la narration des Peuls, il l'acquit auprès de Koulel, le conteur renommé, qui lui transmet également des contes traditionnels peuls, parmi lesquels : *Koumen* (1961), *Kaïdara* (1969), *L'Éclat de la grande étoile* (1974), *Petit Bodiel* (1977) et *Njeddo Dewal. Mère de la Calamité* (1985).⁶ Cependant, l'influence de la religion musulmane sur Hampâté Bâ et sa pensée est aussi incontestable.

Réquisitionné d'office pour aller à l'école des Blancs à l'âge de 12 ans, Hampâté Bâ, en tant que Peul descendant d'une famille noble, n'avait pas effectué des études avancées en matière de religion comme l'aurait voulu la tradition. Bien que son éducation de base débuta à l'école coloniale, Hampâté Bâ devint avec l'âge un fervent musulman et acquit le titre de maître soufi au crépuscule de sa vie. Il fut d'abord marqué par les enseignements et conseils de son maître coranique, Tierno Bokar, qu'il revisita en 1922, lors de son voyage pour son premier poste dans l'administration coloniale à Ouagadougou. Au cours de cette visite, qui fut de courte durée, Hampâté Bâ, bien que musulman de naissance, fut reconverti par Tierno Bokar en véritable musulman, en prononçant librement et consciemment l'attestation de la foi islamique (*aš-šahāda*). Ensuite, Tierno lui prodigua les conseils suivants qui furent déterminants dans sa vie :

"À partir de ce moment, tu es vraiment musulman, fils de musulmans. Je souhaite que, plus tard, tu veuilles adhérer à la Voie *tidjani* à laquelle j'appartiens moi-même, et le moment venu, si tu le désires, je pourrai te l'enseigner. Mais ne te crois

6 Maguèye Kassé, "Le maître de la parole. Vie et œuvre d'Amadou Hampâté Bâ," dans *Bérose – Encyclopédie internationale des histoires de l'anthropologie*, (Paris 2020). Le maître de la parole. Vie et œuvre d'Amadou Hampâté Bâ - Bérose (berose.fr)

pas obligé de m'emboîter le pas. Comme il est dit dans le Coran : "Pas de contrainte en religion !". En attendant ce jour, sache que tu viens d'inhumer l'enfant que tu étais et d'exhumer l'homme que tu vas devenir. Désormais, tu es responsable de tes actes et de tes paroles. Surveille-toi comme un avare veille sur sa fortune. Ton cœur, ta langue et ton sexe sont les trois organes à surveiller."⁷

Avant de quitter, il reçut la bénédiction de son maître qui avait promis de l'aider sur cette voie en lui envoyant régulièrement des lettres. Cependant, sa véritable conversion ne se complète que plus tard, lors d'une nuit d'intempéries, où Hampâté Bâ accablé par la peur, se remémore des paroles de son maître Tierno Bokar. Réalisant l'oubli et l'insouciance dans lesquels il vivait, il décida de revenir à ses engagements et de devenir un vrai musulman, par la conscience. C'est ainsi que le jour d'après, au petit matin, il se rendit chez le célèbre maître coranique de Ouagadougou, Alfa Ismaïla Cissé, et demanda à reprendre les études coraniques. Aussi, Hampâté Bâ se rendit chez Babali Hawoli Bâ, son oncle lointain, le marabout le plus savant de l'époque, qui vivait dans cette ville depuis des années. Il demanda à ce dernier de lui enseigner le livre de base de la liturgie et du droit islamiques selon l'école malikite, connu sous le nom de *Rissalat*. Babali Hawoli Bâ accordait à Hampâté Bâ la matinée de chaque dimanche, de neuf heures à douze heures. Il enseigna à celui-ci non seulement la *Rissalat* mais l'initia également à l'ordre *tijdjanite* du soufisme, enseignement spirituel et ésotérique de l'islam dont Babali Hawoli Bâ, ainsi que Tierno Bokar, étaient les maîtres. En outre, Hampâté Bâ avait repris la communication avec son maître, Tierno Bokar, à qui, il faisait part de sa réflexion et de son expérience, par des correspondances régulières, et qui à son tour suivait son disciple dans son cheminement.⁸

7 Amadou Hampâté Bâ, *Oui Mon Commandant !* (Paris : Actes Sud, 1994), Chap. I.

8 Ibid.

Afin de combler ses lacunes et de compléter ses connaissances religieuses, surtout sur les différentes formes et organisations de la confrérie *tidjanite*, Hampâté Bâ passait régulièrement ses vacances à Bandiagara, près de son maître Tierno Bokar. C'est lors de ses longs congés de 1933 qu'il fut désigné par le maître, comme son successeur spirituel. Tout au long de ce séjour à Bandiagara, Hampâté Bâ suivit une formation intensive sur l'enseignement du maître, à la fois ésotérique et exotérique. Cette formation, basée sur les enseignements que Tierno Bokar avait préparés et appelés "Maddîn" (Qu'est-ce que la religion ou ce qu'est la religion), est pleine de sagesses et vertus religieuses que nous allons développer plus bas. En quittant Bandiagara après sa formation, pour son nouveau poste à Bamako, il emportait avec lui un trésor enfoncé au fond de lui. Comme le souligne l'auteur lui-même, les enseignements et les conseils de son maître Tierno Bokar marquèrent profondément sa vie. Les paroles que ce dernier avait semées en lui comme des graines, allaient germer et féconder le reste de sa vie, et devenir partie intégrante de son être. Désigné comme héritier et dépositaire de cet enseignement, Hampâté Bâ avait reçu l'agrément de son maître, de l'enseigner et de le diffuser à sa guise. Cependant, fort de son humilité, il n'a jamais voulu fonder de *zaouïa*⁹ ni être entouré d'une façon permanente par un groupe d'élèves et de disciples, même après avoir été investi des fonctions de *moqaddem*,¹⁰ puis de *cheikh*,¹¹ dans la confrérie *tidjani*.¹²

9 *Zaouïa*, est un mot d'origine arabe qui désigne des maisons, des loges locales et/ou des centres cléricaux.

10 *Moqaddem* est un mot d'origine arabe qui désigne un chef ou leader d'une communauté soufie. Il s'agit d'un *Cheikh* de la *tariqa* Tijâniyya.

11 *Cheikh* est un mot d'origine arabe qui désigne *Moqaddem* ou maître spirituel qui effectue auprès des adeptes tijânis un travail d'assistance, d'accompagnement et de guidance spirituel.

12 Voir. Christopher Gray, "The rise of Niassene Tijaniyya, 1875 to the present", dans *Islam et Islamisme au sud du Sahara*, ed. Ousmane Kane & J.L. Triaud (Paris : Karthala, 1998).

Suivant les traces de son maître, Tierno Bokar, Hampâté Bâ vécut dans la modestie et l'humilité, se méfiant des "titres", quels qu'ils soient, observant à la fois le code peul et les principes islamiques. Malgré l'influence remarquable de la culture occidentale, et française en particulier, qu'il a apprise à l'école et au cours de sa carrière d'auxiliaire colonial, Hampâté Bâ est resté enraciné dans la tradition et les principes islamiques. Grâce à cette multitude de cultures auxquelles il s'identifie, il est devenu un homme tolérant, infiniment ouvert et disponible, respectueux et généreux vis-à-vis des hommes, des religions, des cultures et de toutes les civilisations. Car, sa pensée est nourrie en grande partie de l'enseignement islamique de Tierno Bokar qui prône la tolérance et l'ouverture à l'Autre. En bref, il a adopté un humanisme théocentré qui exalte l'Homme et qui pousse à penser l'Homme par l'Homme à la lumière de Dieu contrairement à l'humanisme anthropocentré de Jean-Paul Sartre, qui pense l'Homme par l'Homme et pour l'Homme sans référence aucune à une quelconque transcendance divine.¹³ Hampâté Bâ avait adopté cette philosophie qui lui permettait de juger en toutes circonstances et de garder la mesure et l'équité, sans douter ni de sa culture ni de sa religion.

L'œuvre d'Amadou Hampâté BÂ

Après vingt ans de carrière, passés dans l'administration coloniale, Amadou Hampâté Bâ se mue en chercheur professionnel lorsqu'il fut affecté à l'IFAN en 1942 et surtout après avoir bénéficié d'une bourse de l'UNESCO en 1951. Grâce à l'immensité et à la diversité de l'œuvre qu'il a produite, il est qualifié à la fois d'écrivain, d'historien, de traditionaliste, d'ethnologue et de philosophe. Connu comme un infatigable défenseur des cultures africaines, son cri d'alarme pour la

¹³ Seydi Diamil Niane, "L'humanisme théocentré dans la pensée d'Amadou Hampâté Bâ," *Revue Conscience Soufie*, no.1 (septembre 2017), 18-21.

collecte et la conservation de la tradition orale reste un événement mémorable pour tous les hommes de bonne volonté. Hampâté Bâ mena personnellement un grand combat pour la tradition orale et la conservation des cultures et civilisations africaines à travers l'immense œuvre qu'il a léguée à la postérité. Bien qu'il ne se consacre officiellement à cette tâche qu'à partir de 1942, lorsqu'il a été recruté à l'IFAN par Théodore Monod, où il a mené des enquêtes systématiques sur des sujets donnés, Hampâté Bâ avait commencé à recueillir les richesses de la tradition orale depuis son enfance. D'abord dans le milieu familial, où il a tout enregistré de mémoire, puis dans les milieux peuls où il a vécu, au Mali comme en Haute-Volta, à partir de vingt-et-un ou vingt-deux ans, et où il a tout noté systématiquement par écrit (documents manuscrits qui donneront naissance à l'important Fonds d'archives Amadou Hampâté Bâ).¹⁴

Dans cette immense œuvre qu'il a réalisée grâce à ses enquêtes et collectes des traditions orales, figurent des essais historiques ou théologiques : *L'Empire Peul du Macina, 1818-1853* (1955) ; *Tierno Bokar, le Sage de Bandiagara* (1957) ; des récits traditionnels directement écrits en peul, accompagnés d'une traduction française : *Koumen* (1961) ; *Kaïdara* (1969) ; *L'éclat de la Grande Etoile* (1974) ; des adaptations en français des textes oraux du patrimoine oral peul : *Kaydara* (1978) ; *Njeddo Dewal* (1985) ; un roman et une autobiographie écrits en français : *Wangrin* (1973) ; *Amkoulel, l'Enfant Peul* (1991) ; des essais inspirés de ses conférences : *Aspects de la civilisation africaine* (1972) ; *Jésus vu par un Musulman* (1976) ; *Petit Bodiel* (1976) ; un essai théologique et historique revu et augmenté : *Vie et enseignement de Thierno Bokar, le sage de Bandiagara*

14 Hélène Heckmann, "Amadou Hampâté Bâ et la récolte des traditions orales," *Journal des africanistes*, t. 63, fascicule 2 (1993), 53-56.

(1980).¹⁵ En dehors de ces ouvrages mentionnés, Amadou H. Bâ a publié des articles et des travaux et a collaboré avec de nombreuses émissions radiophoniques ou télévisées. Il a participé à des rencontres internationales sur les civilisations africaines, à des colloques interreligieux ainsi qu'à des congrès scientifiques (historiques, ethnologiques ou linguistiques), dont certains au titre de l'UNESCO.

Les ouvrages *Amkoullel l'Enfant Peul* et *Oui mon commandant* que nous avons retenus dans le cadre de ce travail sont des mémoires autobiographiques qui relatent la vie de l'auteur. Publiés juste après sa mort, Hampâté Bâ nous livre dans le premier volume *Amkoullel*, les souvenirs de son enfance et de son adolescence à travers des faits historiques, sociaux et oraux retracés par les ancêtres, dans un style vif, mêlant à la fois le réalisme historique et le merveilleux traditionnel. Dans *Oui mon commandant*, qui constitue la suite de *Amkoullel* et la seconde partie de ses mémoires, il relate la grande aventure de sa vie d'homme et sa carrière dans l'administration coloniale jusqu'en 1933. Quant à son ouvrage *Vie et Enseignement de Tierno Bokar*, c'est une hagiographie de son maître et guide spirituel dont l'ouvrage porte le nom. L'ouvrage, composé de trois chapitres accompagnés d'une annexe, retrace, tour à tour, la vie de Tierno Bokar, ses paroles et ses enseignements ésotériques.

L'importance qu'Hampâté Bâ accorde à la tradition orale s'inscrit dans une volonté de préserver la mémoire du continent africain, et plus particulièrement des peuples de l'Afrique de l'Ouest. Son combat à travers ses œuvres, remplies d'enseignements et de sagesses, porte sur l'histoire qui constitue la mémoire et l'identité des peuples et dont les dépositaires privilégiés en Afrique sont les vieillards, les langues qui reflètent l'âme d'un peuple et la littérature

15 Léa Zame Avezo'o, "Amadou Hampâté Bâ: quel sens donner à son Héritage Aujourd'hui?" *Revue du CAMES Littérature, langues et linguistique*, no. 6 (2e semestre 2017), 78.

traditionnelle comme véhicule des connaissances et support d'enseignement aussi bien pour l'éducation de base des enfants que pour la formation morale et sociale, voire spirituelle ou initiatique des adultes. D'autre part, le caractère fort de son œuvre relève de la portée d'un message destiné à la fois aux jeunes générations et aux personnes adultes du continent, mais surtout, à un public de lecteurs extérieur à sa société. Hampâté Bâ enrichit ses récits d'une qualité remarquable d'images et par des comparaisons les plus expressives. En utilisant fréquemment des anecdotes, l'auteur nuance les idées générales et relie une histoire collective à une histoire individuelle et inversement. Grâce à ses œuvres, Hampâté Bâ avait acquis non seulement le titre de conteur, d'écrivain et de penseur traditionnaliste unique en son genre, mais plus encore, il a joué le rôle d'intermédiaire dans le passage de la culture orale africaine à la culture écrite occidentale.

À la question de savoir si dans la transcription sur papier des récits et autres informations orales, l'on peut accorder à l'oralité la même confiance qu'à l'écrit pour témoigner l'histoire, l'auteur répond que le problème est mal posé. Selon notre auteur, le témoignage, qu'il soit écrit ou oral, n'est finalement qu'un témoignage humain et vaut ce que vaut l'homme. Car, pour lui, *Les premières archives ou bibliothèques du monde furent les cervelles des hommes. Par ailleurs, avant de coucher sur le papier les pensées qu'il conçoit, l'écrivain ou le savant se livre à un dialogue secret avec lui-même. Avant de rédiger un récit, l'homme se remémore les faits tels qu'ils lui ont été rapportés ou bien, s'il les a vécus, tels qu'il se les raconte à lui-même.*¹⁶ Toujours est-il que, le passage de l'oral à l'écrit, ne fut pas sans conséquences pour la continuité des traditions, cultures et civilisations africaines, dont il était le fervent défenseur.¹⁷

16 Amadou Hampâté Bâ, "La Tradition vivante" 191-192.

17 Cf. Ahmadou Touré et N'Tji Idriss Mariko (dir), *Amadou Hampâté Bâ, homme de science et de sagesse : mélanges pour le centième anniversaire de la naissance d'Hampâté Bâ*, (Paris : Karthala, 2005).

Les vertus et sagesse dans l'œuvre d'Hampâté Bâ

Appelé "le sage de Bandiagara", titre qu'il a hérité de son maître Tierno Bokar, Amadou Hampâté Bâ est un homme de paix, de conciliation et de dialogue, appelant constamment à la "mutuelle compréhension" entre les hommes. Il a légué à l'humanité une œuvre immense, pleine de vertus et de sagesse religieuses et traditionnelles qui ont une portée universelle. Comme nous l'avons mentionné précédemment, Hampâté Bâ est non seulement un traditionaliste, mais aussi un religieux soufi, initié par son maître Tierno Bokar à la confrérie Tidjani dont il est investi comme un cheik vers la fin de sa vie. Le soufisme, qui est un courant mystique de l'islam, une voie spirituelle basée sur l'élévation de l'esprit et de l'âme et la recherche de la purification du cœur, prône de façon générale, des valeurs humanistes et universelles qui assurent à l'homme l'harmonie, la sérénité et la paix intérieure, mais aussi la réconciliation de la famille humaine. Faisant partie de ce courant, Hampâté Bâ, en plus des valeurs et enseignements émanant de la tradition orale, transmettait des vertus et sagesse soufies à travers toute son œuvre, dont la quintessence se révèle dans *Vie et Enseignements de Tierno Bokar*, son ouvrage phare. Ces vertus et sagesse sont indispensables aujourd'hui aux sociétés africaines et ouest africaines en particulier, minées par des violences intercommunautaire et religieuse.

Depuis les événements du 11 septembre, et surtout après la chute du régime de Mouammar Kadhafi en Libye face aux rebelles soutenus par l'OTAN, on observe une recrudescence de la violence, des attaques armées et des conflits intercommunautaires en Afrique de l'Ouest, et plus précisément dans la zone sahélienne. Ces conflits et affrontements, généralement causés par la discrimination, les injustices sociales, l'instrumentalisation ethnique et l'intolérance religieuse, ne sont pas inhérents aux sociétés africaines contrairement aux explications simpliste et

essentialiste avancées par certains auteurs. Ils sont plutôt la conséquence d'un long processus dont les racines remontent à la période coloniale. D'ailleurs, Amadou Hampâté Bâ l'exprime clairement dans son œuvre lorsqu'il parle de la captivité sévère de ses ancêtres Toucouleurs par leurs rivaux du Macina, remis au pouvoir par les Français après la conquête de la région en 1894. Selon l'auteur, la chasse à l'homme, lancée à cette époque contre les chefs Toucouleurs, fit oublier au pays qu'il était celui de la tolérance et de la charité traditionnelles.¹⁸ Amadou Hampâté Bâ, qui fut auxiliaire de l'administration coloniale, et plus tard fonctionnaire de l'État malien décolonisé, met en exergue dans son œuvre les vertus et les sagesses, inspirées de l'islam et de la tradition orale, qui assuraient, à un moment donné, la paix et la cohésion au sein des sociétés africaines précoloniales.

La tolérance est l'une des vertus qui reviennent de façon récurrente dans l'œuvre d'Hampâté Bâ. Par définition, la tolérance est une attitude qui admet chez les autres des manières de penser et de vivre différentes des nôtres. D'autre part, cette attitude consiste dans le respect de la liberté de conscience et l'ouverture d'esprit à l'égard de ceux qui professent une religion, des idées ou des doctrines différentes.¹⁹ La tolérance est un principe fondamental de l'islam que Tierno Bokar, maître et guide de notre auteur, mettait en avant dans ses enseignements. Imprégné de ces enseignements et initié à la tradition orale, Amadou Hampâté Bâ avait emboîté le pas de son maître. Non seulement il prônait la tolérance à travers ses récits, mais fut aussi, à l'image de Tierno Bokar, un bon exemple, en tant que maître soufi, dans la mise en pratique de cette vertu au cours de sa vie. La conception d'Hampâté Bâ de la tolérance était inspirée de la

18 Amadou Hampâté Bâ, *Vie et Enseignement de Tierno Bokar*, 26.

19 Dictionnaire Larousse en ligne,

<https://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/tol%C3%A9rance/78312#citation>.

pensée et des enseignements de son maître Tierno Bokar, qui étaient devenus partie intégrante de son être, à telle enseigne qu'il en était venu à douter, lorsqu'il parlait, si ce n'était pas Tierno Bokar lui-même qui s'exprimait à travers lui !

Dans *Vie et Enseignements de Tierno Bokar*, on note la volonté de l'auteur de sensibiliser et d'inciter le lecteur à la tolérance, à travers les paroles, les enseignements et la vie exemplaire de Tierno Bokar qui se caractérisait par une tolérance sans limite et une grande ouverture d'esprit. Une tolérance totalisante qui englobait tout et n'excluait rien et qui allait au-delà du cercle confrérique jusqu'à embrasser les autres religions, idéologies et doctrines. Interpellé un jour par ses étudiants quant à l'attitude à adopter face aux différences des pratiques religieuses, Tierno Bokar donna l'exemple de l'arc-en-ciel qui doit sa beauté aux tons variés de ses couleurs. Selon lui, les voix des divers croyants qui s'élèvent de tous les points de la terre, devraient être considérées comme une symphonie de louanges à l'adresse de Dieu, qui ne peut être qu'Unique. Tierno Bokar insistait sur l'importance du respect et de la tolérance envers toutes les religions et les hommes de Dieu, et mettait en garde ses élèves et disciples, dont Hampâté Bâ faisait partie, en leur inculquant l'esprit de tolérance. Pour lui, la seule chose qui compte par-dessus toutes les autres était de confesser l'existence de Dieu et Son unicité. Par ailleurs, Tierno Bokar incitait à communiquer avec les autres, quelles que soient leur race ou leur religion, et ce, afin de mieux les connaître et de raffermir sa propre foi. Car, selon le sage de Bandiagara, croire que sa race ou sa religion est seule détentrice de la vérité est une erreur et cela ne saurait être.²⁰

En outre, Hampâté Bâ met en évidence dans cet ouvrage la bonté de son maître, Tierno Bokar, qui était un homme au cœur large, rempli d'amour et de charité, débordant le genre humain pour embrasser la création tout entière, jusqu'aux plus humbles des créatures de Dieu. En prônant l'amour et la

20 Amadou Hampâté Bâ, *Vie et Enseignement de Tierno Bokar*, 145-149.

charité, Tierno Bokar se positionne contre toute forme de violence, dénuée, selon lui, de toute efficacité morale. Pour lui, le mal ne peut être détruit par la violence, mais par les armes du bien et de l'amour.²¹

Dans le passage ci-dessous, Hampâté Bâ décrit l'extension de l'amour et de la charité de son maître :

"Tierno Bokar était l'incarnation même de l'amour et de la bonté. Amour pour Dieu, d'abord, absolu, sans réserve ; puis amour pour toutes les créatures vivantes, depuis l'homme jusqu'aux créatures les plus modestes de la nature, animales ou végétales. Tierno Bokar aimait tous les hommes, sans considération de race, de religion ou de rang social. La distinction qui lui paraissait la plus futile était celle qui consiste à regrouper les hommes sous des emblèmes religieux différents qui se croient ennemis les uns des autres. Tous les hommes, et plus particulièrement ceux qui sont animés d'une foi sincère, ne renferment-ils pas une "parcelle de l'Esprit de Dieu" ? La tolérance devait donc devenir le souci permanent des élèves, comme elle avait été le fondement de l'enseignement du Cheikh Ahmed Tidjani, et l'un des principes fondamentaux de l'Islam."²²

Héritier de Tierno Bokar, Hampâté Bâ aussi se réclame de cette école qui prône la tolérance, l'ouverture à l'autre, l'amour et la charité dont il s'est fait le représentant et le porte-parole au cours de sa vie. À cet égard, il consacre dans son œuvre de nombreux passages relatifs à ces vertus, où l'expérience personnelle se confond au récit, en se référant tantôt à la tradition orale, tantôt aux paroles et enseignements de son maître. Par l'intermédiaire des événements et des personnages qui ont marqué sa vie, l'auteur trouve toujours une manière de prôner ces vertus et de condamner les vices qui minent la société. Dans la première partie de ses mémoires, Hampâté Bâ relatent des événements et anecdotes de son enfance, à travers

²¹ Ibid., 160.

²² Ibid., 129.

lesquels il fait valoir les mérites de la tolérance et de l'ouverture à l'autre, au sein des communautés traditionnelles. Il livre au lecteur les secrets de la vie dans l'Afrique traditionnelle animiste où les relations de bon voisinage et d'acceptation mutuelle reposaient sur le vieux fond de tolérance religieuse, où toutes les formes de pratique religieuse ou magico-religieuse étaient acceptées et où, de ce fait, les guerres de religion étaient ignorées. L'auteur affirme que c'est dans cette Afrique traditionnelle qu'il a appris, dès son enfance, la tolérance et l'ouverture à l'autre avant de recevoir les leçons de Tierno Bokar.²³

Dans la seconde partie de ses mémoires, l'auteur véhicule plusieurs vertus et sagesse à travers les souvenirs de sa carrière et les expériences de sa vie d'adulte, qu'il livre au lecteur. Hampâté Bâ souligne l'importance de la paix, du pardon de la réconciliation en parlant de sa rencontre avec Sidi Mohammed Kounta, dont les paroles eurent un effet considérable sur sa vie. Sidi Mohammed Kounta, qui était un marabout issu d'une famille rivale ayant eu des différends avec celle de Hampâté Bâ, décida, lors de leur rencontre, de faire table rase de ces différends qui ont opposé les deux familles depuis fort longtemps. Selon Sidi Muhammed, ces différends n'ont d'autre source que les conflits et convoitises de ce bas monde - conflits maquillés aux couleurs de l'honneur ou de la piété religieuse pour les justifier - sont des erreurs regrettables qui ne devraient jamais opposer des croyants entre eux. Tierno Bokar, quant à lui, attribuait la source de tous les conflits humains à quatre causes essentielles : la sexualité, l'appât du gain, le souci de préséance et la mutuelle incompréhension, compagne de l'intolérance. Pour lui, l'incompréhension et l'intolérance sont les bases de toutes les divergences humaines.²⁴

23 Amadou Hampâté Bâ, *Amkoullel, l'Enfant Peul*, chap. 3.

24 Amadou Hampâté Bâ, *Oui mon Commandant*, chap. 7.

Remué profondément par les paroles du marabout Sidi Mohammed Kounta, Hampâté affirme :

"C'est à partir de ce jour que commença à se former vaguement en moi le souhait d'une réconciliation entre les trois grandes familles maraboutiques de mon pays, déchirées par trop de souvenirs de guerre, de massacres et de malédictions mutuelles : les Kountas de Tombouctou, les Peuls Cissé du Macina et les Tall, descendants d'El Hadj Omar. Cet espoir ne trouvera son accomplissement que cinquante-cinq ans plus tard, dans la nuit du 20 au 21 juin 1977. En cette nuit mémorable, consacrée à la prière et à la lecture du Coran, les délégations représentatives des trois grandes familles maraboutiques, en présence de milliers de personnes et du chef de l'État lui-même, se rencontreront sur les ruines de la grande mosquée de Hamdallaye, l'ancienne capitale dévastée de l'empire peul du Macina, et s'y donneront la main en gage de réconciliation et de pardon solennel."²⁵

En outre, Hampâté Bâ s'interrogeait sur l'origine des injustices sociales et les raisons de son existence et interpelle le lecteur sur le sens de la justice. Auxiliaire de l'administration coloniale pendant une grande partie de sa vie, Hampâté Bâ, tout en reconnaissant certains apports positifs de la colonisation d'une part, n'en dénonçait pas moins ses principes et ses pratiques. Il fustigeait et s'indignait contre les pratiques discriminatoires et injustes qu'elle avait instaurées contre les peuples africains. Selon lui, la colonisation n'est jamais une entreprise philanthropique. L'un de ses buts premiers serait de défricher le terrain conquis, c'est à dire d'arracher les valeurs, les coutumes et les cultures locales pour pouvoir y semer à leur place, par des institutions coloniales, celles du colonisateur, considérées comme supérieures et seules valables. Ce processus qui assimile l'Africain, à la longue, lui fait douter de ses propres valeurs et finit par l'aliéner à la culture occidentale. Face aux injustices de

²⁵ Ibid., chap. I.

l'administration coloniale dont il était le témoin, Hampâté Bâ trouvait refuge dans les paroles et enseignements de son maître, Tierno Bokar, qui affirmait que la justice était divine. À cet effet, il invitait Hampâté Bâ à éviter la critique, à résister au phénomène d'acculturation et à conserver les valeurs auxquelles il était attaché, en prenant dans l'administration ce qu'elle a de bon.

Conclusion : quelle place accorder à son héritage aujourd'hui en Afrique ?

En définitive, l'œuvre d'Amadou Hampâté Bâ, écrivain africain et musulman, est généralement reconnue comme appartenant au patrimoine de l'humanité. Cependant, cette immense œuvre est relativement peu connue et peu appropriée par le grand public en Afrique. De même, l'ensemble des récits, des informations et du savoir collectif, qui constitue la tradition orale, défendue par l'auteur, est aujourd'hui à l'épreuve de la disparition. En cause, la substitution de l'oralité par l'écriture, ou en d'autres termes, la transcription par écrit de tout ce savoir, initialement transmis par voie orale de génération en génération. Or, contrairement à l'objectif poursuivi, celui de sauvegarder par écrit les traditions orales en péril face à la colonisation, le passage de l'orature à l'écriture a confisqué ce savoir autrefois accessible à toute la grande masse populaire, et l'a consigné à l'élite intellectuelle, héritière de la langue du colonisateur. La conséquence directe de ce passage est la disparition progressive des traditions orales et du savoir qu'elles contiennent, au profit du savoir moderne inspiré des sciences modernes et de la méthodologie occidentale. C'est pour cela que la réception de l'œuvre d'Hampâté Bâ est restée très faible au niveau de la plus grande masse. Il y a donc une urgence de sauvetage, de revalorisation et de popularisation de la tradition orale, afin d'assurer le lien de continuité avec le passé pour mieux penser un avenir authentique de l'Afrique.

"Amadou Hampâté Bâ : sagesses et héritage intellectuel (1901-1991)"

Car, les éléments de la sagesse religieuse et traditionnelle, contenus dans l'œuvre d'Amadou Hampâté Bâ, méritent d'être vulgarisés aujourd'hui en Afrique, où les différences religieuses et culturelles sont de plus en plus sources de conflits. Ceci dans le but d'éveiller les consciences pour mener l'ensemble des vivants vers le vivre-ensemble. La tolérance et l'ouverture à l'autre, en particulier, enseignées par Tierno Bokar et prônées par l'auteur dans ses différents ouvrages, peuvent jouer un rôle important dans le retour de la paix et la cohésion sociale en Afrique, voire dans la promotion d'une paix universelle. En plus, ces vertus et sagesses, inspirées en grande partie de l'islam et de la tradition soufie, pourraient interpeller les esprits influencés par les représentations médiatiques négatives, par suite des multiples conflits et attaques qui sont perpétrés soi-disant au nom de l'islam, et qui dénigrent et ternissent l'image de cette religion. Afin que cette vulgarisation atteigne toutes les couches sociales, les œuvres d'Hampâté Bâ devraient être inscrites non seulement dans les programmes scolaires des enseignements primaire, secondaire et universitaire, mais aussi popularisées en langues locales au sein des cercles éducatifs traditionnels tels que les madrassas.

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الأستاذ عباس محمد عبد الواحد من أعلام العلم والأدب في تشاد

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خامساً: المقابلات

مقابلة مع الشيخ تجاني أحمد عبد الواحد، يوم الثلاثاء 9/8/2022م بمنزله في حي

أنجمينا كدو، عند الساعة السادسة مساء.

مقابلة مع الدكتور محمد الصغير محمد عبد الواحد، يوم الأحد 7/8/2022م بمنزله

بحي أم رقيبة، عند الساعة العاشرة صباحاً.

- 2- أن تقوم مراكز البحوث بنشر أعمال العلماء وتشجيعهم على البحث العلمي والوقوف معهم من أجل تطويرهم.
- 3- تنظيم المؤتمرات العلمية التي تهتم بالدراسات الأفريقية في جميع المجالات.

المصادر والمراجع

أولاً: القرآن الكريم

ثانياً: الحديث النبوي الشريف

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الأستاذ عباس محمد عبد الواحد من أعلام العلم والأدب في تشاد

الإضاءات التي تبيّن لنا القيمة الفنية لهذا النتاج الأدبي، ولا ندعي أننا أعطينا الجانب الفني حقه من الدراسة، لأننا وجدنا الإسهاب في هذا المجال يحتاج إلى عمل أوسع من هذا، ولذلك اختصرنا على بعض الجوانب الفنية وبصورة موجزة. ثم بعد ذلك سنقوم بذكر النتائج والتوصيات.

النتائج والتوصيات

توصلنا من خلال هذه الدراسة إلى النتائج الآتية:

- 1- إن الأستاذ عباس محمد عبد الواحد له همّة عالية في طلب العلم، إذ كان طموحا منذ نشأته، هذا ما ساعده أن يكون عالما متميزا.
- 2- لم يحصر عباس نفسه في علم معين فهو عالم في العلوم الشرعية واللغوية والأدبية، وكان يتقن اللغة الفرنسية.
- 3- عمل عباس في التدريس والدعوة، كما عمل في الإدارة.
- 4- كان لديه الموهبة لقول الشعر، قرض الشعر قبل الدراسة الجامعية وواصل في قرض الشعر إلى آخر حياته.
- 5- قال الشعر في كل الأغراض باستثناء الغزل، وأوصى بعدم نشر ما قاله في الهجاء.
- 6- هو شاعر ملتزم بعمود الشعر، فلم يكن ينظم على نمط الشعر الحر.
- 7- شعره صورة واضحة لما كان يدعو إليه من قيم ومبادئ تنسجم مع تعاليم الدين الإسلامي.
- 8- شعره صورة لما كان يهتم به من القضايا الاجتماعية والانسانية.
- 9- شعره جيد من حيث الناحية الفنية، لما يتوفر فيه من نعوت الجودة والجمال.

أما التوصيات فنوصي بما يلي:

- 1- الاهتمام بجمع المعلومات المتعلقة بالنتاج العلمي والأدبي للعلماء الأفرقة للاستفادة منها، خوفا من الضياع بعد وفاتهم.

قد أهدى لك الرحمن مجداً تقاعس دونه ههم الرجال
ثم يقول في نفس القصيدة:

فكم أنقذت للإسلام حصناً منيعاً شامخاً رحب المجال
فأنت لليبيا ابن ولكن على أفق العوالم كالهلال

والصورة التي رسمها الشاعر في هذه الأبيات يريد أن يوضح من خلالها مكانة القائد في قلبه، فهو -رحمه الله- شخصية عظيمة حظيت بالتقدير في بقاع كثيرة، والشاعر أراد أن يبين الفكرة فاستعان ببعض الصور الجزئية حيث قال: «أمير الفكر»، فقد جعل للفكر أميراً، فحذف الإنسان ورمز إليه بشيء من لازمه على سبيل الاستعارة الممكنة وهو أمير.

ورسم صورة أخرى لها أثرها العميق على النفس فوصف الممدوح بأنه «علم التحرر» و«يرفر» و«مجد تقاعس» كلها صور لها أثرها في رسم الصورة المركبة، وأتى في البيت الأخير بصورة جزئية مشهورة عرفت منذ القديم، وهي التشبيه في قوله: «كالهلال». فإن كان الشاعر قد قلد الشعراء من حيث الشكل، فإننا نجد لم يبتعد عن قالبهم إلا قليلاً.

وللشاعر لوحات فنية جميلة رسمها عند وصفه لمدينة وارا، وقد تزينت القصيدة بهذه الصور، مما جعلها من أروع القصائد التي أنتجها الشاعر، وهي من قصائده المشهورة التي ترددها ألسنة القراء منذ عقود، ولكن لا يسع المقام هنا للخوض في تحليلها من حيث الناحية الفنية، ومطلع القصيدة:

وارا وقفت على ربوعك ساعة فاكتظ قلبي هيبة وجلالا

وخلاصة القول في هذه الدراسة أننا حاولنا الحديث عن العالم والأديب التشادي عباس محمد عبد الواحد، فهو علم من أعلام هذا القطر، فبينما نشأته ومرآحله حياته التعليمية، ثم استعرضنا جهوده التي بذلها في التعليم والدعوة إلى الله، ثم إسهاماته في الجانب الإداري، ثم تناولنا جهوده الأدبية وأثرنا إلى كثير من قصائده في مختلف الأغراض سواء كانت في ديوانه الذي أطلق عليه «الملامح» أو كانت خارج الديوان، ثم ختمنا الدراسة بالوقوف على الجوانب الفنية لشعره وقمنا بذلك كي نعطي بعض

الأستاذ عباس محمد عبد الواحد من أعلام العلم والأدب في تشاد

لبعض حظ وبعض قل موهبة وبعضهم حظه في القسم منعدم
فخص من بينهم أستاذ معرفة وشيخ علم تجلت عنده الحكم
استفاد الشاعر في هذه الأبيات من قول الشاعر حافظ إبراهيم:
فإذا رُزقتَ خليفةً محمودة فقد اصطفاك مُقسماً الأرزاق
فالناس هذا حظه مال، وذا علم وذاك مكارم الأخلاق⁽¹⁾

(2) الصورة الشعرية:

الصور والأخيلة من أهم عناصر الشعر لأن الأديب يعتمد عليها كل الاعتماد في التعبير عن عواطفه الجياشة وأحاسيسه النبيلة وتجاربه الشعرية الصادقة، والخيال نوعان:

1- تفسيري يبدو في صور جزئية مثل التشبيه، والاستعارة، والكناية.
2- ابتكاري يعتمد على روابط بعيدة بين الأشياء تحتاج إلى رهافة الحس، ونفاذ البصيرة، والإدراك العميق للأشياء، فيشخص المعنويات، ويكسب المعنى جلاء ووضوحاً، ويثري الفكرة، وهو أحسن أنواع الخيال، ومقياس الجمال في اللون أن تأنس النفس إلى العلاقات الجديدة بين الأشياء، وأن تستشف من خلالها آفاقاً من المعاني الطريفة المثيرة.⁽²⁾

فإذا كانت الفكرة تعتبر عنصراً مهماً من عناصر العمل الأدبي وتكسبه رشاقة وجمالاً، فإن شعر عباس محمد عبد الواحد فيه صور كثيرة وُفق في تركيبها من خلال استخدامه للصور الجزئية التي قد تكون أحياناً تقليدية استمدتها من صور الأقدمين، وقد تكون من ابتكاره، ومع هذا فإن لثقافته العربية والدينية أثر كبير فيها، وبإمكاننا أخذ نماذج من صوره كما جاء في قصيدته (تحية القائد):

أمير الفكر يا رمز المعالي ويا أمل الشعوب لدى النضال
ويا علمَ التحرر والتسامي يرفرف فوق هامات الجبال

(1) ديوان حافظ إبراهيم، مكتبة جزيرة الورد، القاهرة، مصر، 2008، ص 374.

(2) الجبري، محمد رمضان وغيره، النقد العربي القديم، مرجع سابق، ص 374.

وقوله:

قلب ابن آدم صلب في تعامله أو قل إن شئت وصفاً أنه حجر
استفاد الشاعر من حيث المعنى من قول الله عز وجل: «ثُمَّ فَسَّتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ
ذَلِكَ فَهِيَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً وَإِنَّ مِنَ الْحِجَارَةِ لَمَا يَتَفَجَّرُ مِنْهُ الْأَنْهَارُ... الآية»⁽¹⁾
ب - الاستفادة من معاني الأحاديث النبوية:

قال الشاعر عباس محمد عبد الواحد:

إن إفريقيا شمالاً وشرقاً وجنوباً وسائر الأنحاء
جسم فرد ما مسه السوء إلاً بات يسري في سائر الأعضاء
استفاد الشاعر في البيتين من قول الرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم: «مثل المؤمنين في
توادهم وتراحمهم وتعاطفهم كمثل الجسد الواحد إذا اشتكى منه عضو تداعى له سائر
الجسد بالسهر والحمى».⁽²⁾

ج - الاستفادة من معاني الشعراء:

- قال الشاعر عباس محمد عبد الواحد:

بالعلم يبني الناس مجداً شامخاً لا يستهان فنعلم هذا المطلب
(والجهل يهدم عزاً شامخاً) وعن التقدم والتعاقد يحجب
استفاد الشاعر في البيتين من قول الشاعر أحمد شوقي:
بالعلم والمال بين الناس ملكهم لم يبين ملك على جهل وإقلال⁽³⁾
أو من قول الطغرائي:

العلم يرفع بيتاً لا عماد له والجهل يهدم بيت العز والشرف

- قال الشاعر عباس محمد عبد الواحد:

أقسمت والقول من تأكيده القسم إن الفضائل بين الناس تنقسم

(1) سورة البقرة، 2/74.

(2) صحيح مسلم، النيسابوري، الإمام الحافظ أبو الحسين مسلم بن الحجاج القشيري، بيت الأفكار
الدولية، السعودية، الرياض، ص 1014.

(3) أحمد شوقي، الشوقيات، دار الفكر، 185/I.

ثانياً: من حيث المضمون

عند الحديث عن مضمون الشعر لابد من النظر إلى الأفكار أو المعاني والصور، ولا يقول الشاعر قصيدة إلا بعد أن تخطر بباله فكرة ينفعل بها فتدفعه إلى التعبير عن أحاسيسه ومشاعره، وهي عنصر مهم في العمل الأدبي، وحين يريد الشاعر التعبير عن الفكرة يقوم بتخييل صور ثم يعبر عنها، ويجب أن يكون دقيقاً في تصويره، بحيث يحقق الانسجام بين الصورة والفكرة. وقد احتفل أبو هلال العسكري في كتابه الصناعتين بالمعنى واللفظ جميعاً، أما المعنى فعقد له فصلاً بين فيه متى يكون حسناً مستقيماً يقبله النقد ومتى لا يكون كذلك، ولكي يدل على قيمته ذكر أن من عرف لغة أجنبية غير لغته مكنته من التنويع في أفكاره ومعانيه.⁽¹⁾

ويمكننا دراسة المضمون من ناحيتين: 1- المعاني 2- الصورة الشعرية.

1) المعاني:

عندما نتأمل في معاني شعر عباس نجده بارعاً في صياغتها، ونجد معانيه تحمل كثيراً من القيم النبيلة، والأخلاق الفاضلة، والرؤية المستمدة من تعاليم الإسلام ومبادئه، وفي معانيه دعوة إلى ترسيخ الفضيلة ونبذ الرذيلة، وأن مصادر معاني شعره هي القرآن الكريم، والحديث النبوي الشريف، والحكم والأمثال، وأقوال الشعراء. ويمكن توضيح ذلك على النحو التالي:

أ- الاستفادة من معاني القرآن الكريم:

يقول عباس محمد عبد الواحد:

فقلت في سهوة المغمى وقد أخذت ترنو إلي بقلب فارغ صادي
استفاد الشاعر من حيث المعنى من قول الله عز وجل: «وَأَصْبَحَ فُؤَادُ أُمِّ مُوسَى
فَارِعًا...»⁽²⁾

(1) ضيف شوقي، في النقد الأدبي، دار المعارف، مصر، القاهرة، الطبعة السابعة، 1988، ص 162.

(2) سورة القصص، 28/10.

وظف الشاعر ألفاظا تبرز مدى اهتمامه بممدوحيه وتعظيمه لهم، ففي مدح أبناء وطنه العظماء أورد في شعره الألفاظ الآتية (قادة، أبطالاً، الفتى، المرتضى، التقي، العادل، المفضلاً)، في قوله:

رمز يذكر عهد إرشاد مضى نوراً وأنجب قادة أبطالاً
عهد الفتى عبد الكريم المرتضى كان التقي العادل المفضلاً⁽¹⁾
كما وظف الشاعر ألفاظاً في الرثاء تدل على مكانة الميت في نفسه، وهي (منهل، بحر، نبراس، نور الهدى) في قوله:

ومنهل طالبي التعليم حقاً وبحر لا تكدره الدلاء
ونبراس تزول به الدياجي ونور البدر تم له رواء⁽²⁾
واستعمل الشاعر ألفاظاً فيها دعوة إلى الوحدة والتكاتف ولمّ الشمل وهي (تماسكا، كالجسم، التلاحم، وحدة الشمل) في قوله:

يا شعبنا التشادي كن تماسكا كالجسم واعمل كي تصير مرمما
يا إخوة الوطن المفدى فلنعش وعرى التلاحم بيننا لن يفصما
اجمع لنا اللهم وحدة شملنا واحفظه من كيد العدى كي نسلما⁽³⁾

2. استعمال ألفاظ في غير ما وضعت له

استعمل الشاعر لفظة (الدلاء) في غير ما وضعت له في اصطلاح التخاطب، في قوله:

ومنهل طالبي التعليم حقاً وبحر لا تكدره الدلاء
فالدلاء ومفرده (دلو) لا يستعمل للبحر وإنما يستعمل للبر، فالأولى أن يبحث عن لفظة أخرى تناسب المقام.

(1) ديوان الملامح، مرجع سابق، ص 16.

(2) ديوان الملامح، مرجع سابق، ص 43.

(3) قصيدة مخطوطة.

2- الأسلوب:

عرف النقاد الأسلوب فقالوا إنه "الضرب من النظم، وإنه المنوال الذي ينسج منه التراكيب أو القالب الذي يفرغ فيه"⁽¹⁾.

يقول عبد القاهر الجرجاني: إن الألفاظ لا تتفاضل من حيث هي ألفاظ مجردة ولا من حيث كلم مفردة، وإن الألفاظ تثبت لها الفضيلة وخلافها في ملائمة معنى اللفظة لمعنى التي تليها أو ما أشبه ذلك مما لا تتعلق له بصريح، ومما يشهد لذلك أنك ترى الكلمة تروقك وتؤنسك في موضع ثم تراها بعينها تثقل عليك وتوحشك في موضع آخر.⁽²⁾

وذكر البلاغيون عيوباً للفظ ولا تكون الجملة فصيحة إلا بسلامة ألفاظها من هذه العيوب، وهي تنافر الحروف، غرابة الاستعمال، مخالفة القياس، والكراهية في السمع.

وعند النظر في شعر عباس من حيث اللفظ نلاحظ ما يأتي:

1. استعمال ألفاظ لها دلالة عميقة على المعنى المراد

نلاحظ في شعر عباس أن هناك ألفاظاً وُفق الشاعر في استخدامها، فكانت لها دلالة عميقة على المعنى المراد والتعبير الدقيق عن الفكرة، فاستعمال اللفظين (القلب) و(مرتها) في قوله:

فارقتها وتركت القلب مرتها لها وواصلت أسفاري بإجهاد

ف«مرتها» تعني تعلق قلب الشاعر بأمه حبا وشوقاً إليها خلال وجوده في العراق، ولا يطمئن قلبه إلا بعد العودة.

(1) بكار حسين يوسف، بناء القصيدة في النقد العربي القديم، مرجع سابق، ص 148.

(2) الجرجاني عبد القاهر، دلائل الاعجاز، مكتبة سعد الدين، دمشق، سوريا 1987، ص 92.

ف"رائعا" و"روائع" جناس.

والجناس في قوله:

أرض الرشيد ومأمون ومعتصم وأرض من ملأ الدنيا بإرشاد⁽¹⁾

"أرض" في صدر البيت، و"أرض" في عجز البيت، جناس.

والجناس في قوله:

غذوا النفوس بما تحويه من أدب وحكمة فهي للآداب تفتقر⁽²⁾

الجناس في "أدب" و"آداب".

حسن التقسيم:

التقسيم هو أن يذكر متعدد ثم يضاف إلى كل من أفراده، ماله على جهة التعيين،⁽³⁾

نحو قوله تعالى: «كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودٌ وَعَادٌ بِالْقَارِعَةِ. فَأَمَّا ثَمُودُ فَأَهْلِكُوا بِالطَّاغِيَةِ. وَأَمَّا عَادٌ

فَأَهْلِكُوا بِرِيحٍ صَرْصَرٍ عَاتِيَةٍ»⁽⁴⁾

نجد التقسيم في أبيات عباس الآتية:

أواصر الدين والتاريخ تجمعا في ركن حصن منيع غير مضطرب

وفي قوله:

من كان في المغرب الأقصى مساكنه ومن يقيم بأرض الصين أو حلب

تضمهم في رحاب الله رابطة الإسلام لا عروة الأنساب والحسب

والتقسيم في قوله:

من كان في هذه الأوطان مسكنه أو كان في ليبيا قد جاءه الخبر

عن موته فأنا حقا أشاطره ذاك الشعور الذي مازال يستعر

(1) ديوان الملامح، ص 19.

(2) المرجع السابق، ص 29.

(3) الهاشمي السيد أحمد، جواهر البلاغة، دار الفكر للطباعة والنشر والتوزيع، بيروت، لبنان، 2006،

ص 325.

(4) سورة الحاقة، 6-4/69.

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فالضرب فعولن، والعروض مثله لمكان التصريح، وهي في سائر القصيدة مفاعلن
كالأولى، فكل ما جرى في هذا المجرى في سائر الأوزان فهو مصرّع.⁽¹⁾
وللشاعر عباس محمد عبد الواحد قصائد مصرعة، كما له قصائد أخرى ليست
مصرعة، فمن النوع الأول قصيدته (إنه الفراق) ومطلعها:
غادرت موطن آبائي وأجدادي مخلفاً عنده أُمي وأولادي
وكذلك من المصرّعة قصيدته التي عنوانها (عن هدية من الدكتور عادل البياتي)
يقول فيها:

حسبي فخاراً في سجل مفاخري ومناي في ماضيه أو في الحاضر
ومن قصائده غير المصرعة، قصيدته دور العلم، ومطلعها:
غذوا النفوس بما تحويه من أدب وحكمة فهي للآداب تفتقر
ومن غير المصرعة قصيدته (وقفه في وارا) ومطلعها:
وارا وفتت على ربوعك ساعة فاكتظ قلبي هببة وجلالا

الجناس:

يرى النقاد عند حديثهم عن موسيقا الشعر أن "الجرس اللفظي فضلة تأتي بعد
الوزن والقافية ويدخل فيها الجناس والطباق وسائر المحسنات اللفظية مع تركيب
الكلمات وتخيرها وكل ما من شأنه أن يعين على تجويد البنية والرنين في أبيات
القصيدة، كما أن للجناس والطباق دوراً في طبيعة الصناعة الشعرية. فالجناس يظهر
أثره في وحدة الجرس، والطباق يظهر أثره في تنويع هذه الوحدة."⁽²⁾
لم يخل شعر عباس من الجناس سواء كان تاماً أو ناقصاً.
فقد ورد في قوله:

تحوي من الفن الجميل روائعاً فدهشت من تلك الروائع بالاً⁽³⁾

(1) ابن رشيق أبي علي الحسن، العمدة في محاسن الشعر، وآدابه ونقده، مرجع سابق، I/145 وما بعدها.

(2) بكار حسين يوسف، بناء القصيدة في النقد العربي القديم، مرجع سابق، ص 197.

(3) ديوان الملامح، ص 15.

"كانت الموسيقى من أقوى عناصر التأثير في الشعر، لأنها تدرك بالإحساس فتساعد على التأثير في العاطفة، وتكسب الكلام جرساً محبباً للنفس."⁽¹⁾
وتنقسم الموسيقى إلى قسمين:

1. الموسيقى الخارجية: تتمثل في انتظام الوزن الواحد والقافية الموحدة وكل ماله جرس صوتي تحسه وتسمعه الأذان وتتأثر به.

2. الموسيقى الداخلية، وتنقسم إلى:

أ- موسيقى داخلية ظاهرة: تتكون من وجود بعض المحسنات البديعية التي لها جرس صوتي، مثل التصريح، الجناس، وحسن التقسيم.

ب- موسيقى داخلية خفية: وهي التي تشع في كل النص، ولا يتحدد موضوعها، ونعرفها بأثرها في نفوسنا، لأنها تحدث في النفس ذبذبات خاصة، مصدرها تفاعل الصور والأخيلة والألفاظ في وحدة نغمية مؤثرة، وهي أحسن أنواع الموسيقى لأنها تمثل بحق روح الشاعر وبراعته وتنبع من اختيار الألفاظ الموحية وترابط الأفكار وروعة التصوير.⁽²⁾

التصريح: هو ما كانت عروض البيت تابعة فيه لضربه تنقص بنقصه، وتزيد بزيادته،⁽³⁾ نحو قول امرؤ القيس:

قفانك من ذكرى حبيب وعرفان ورسم عفت آياته منذ أزمان⁽⁴⁾

وهي في سائر القصيدة مفاعِلن، وقال في النقصان:

لمن طلل أبصرته فَشَجَانِي كَخَطِّ زبور في عسيب يَمَانِي

(1) محمد رمضان الجبري وعلي رمضان الجبري، النقد الأدبي، مصلحة الوسائل والمستلزمات التعليمية، ليبيا، طرابلس، 2001، ص 40.

(2) المرجع السابق، ص 40.

(3) ابن رشيق أبي علي الحسن، العمدة في محاسن الشعر، وآدابه ونقده، دار الطلائع، مدينة نصر، مصر، 2009، 145/I وما بعدها.

(4) ديوان امرؤ القيس.

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دعاء وابتهالات تليها نقدمها إلى روح الفقيد

ومن الوافر أيضاً قصيدته (الوفد السعودي):

أيها الوفد السعودي وترحيباً بمقدمك السعيد

ومن البحر البسيط قوله:

القسم والقول من تأكيده القسم إن الفضائل بين الناس تنقسم

ومن البسيط كذلك قوله:

غادرت موطن آبائي وأجدادي مخلفاً عنده أمني وأولادي

ومن البحور التي نظم بها قصائده البحر المتقارب والخفيف والرجز والطويل،

والطويل أقل استخداماً في شعر عباس.

والحديث عن القافية يستوجب على الشاعر الملتزم بعمود الشعر مراعاة الروي،

وهو صوت تنسب إليه القصائد، فيقال: سينية البحري، وهمزية شوقي، إلى غير ذلك

مما تعارف عليه الأدباء واصطلحوا عليه، فلا يكون الشعر مقفى إلا بأن يشتمل على

ذلك الصوت المكرر في أخريات الأبيات.⁽¹⁾

فإن كانت الحروف التي تأتي رويًا بكثرة وإن اختلفت نسبة شيوعها في أشعار

الشعراء هي الراء، اللام، الميم، النون، الباء، الدال، السين، والعين، نجد بعضها أتى

رويًا في شعر عباس.

فنجد اللام رويًا لقصيدته في مدح الخضير التي مطلعها:

أزف لك التحية والأمني لأنك عالم علم نبيل

ونجد الميم رويًا في قصيدته (العفة تاج المرأة) حيث قال في مطلعها:

مجد الفتاة وعزها أن تحتمي بدروع عفتها وألا ترتمي

والنون رويًا في قصيدته (أهلاً وسهلاً بالضيوف) ومطلعها قوله:

أهلاً وسهلاً في ربا الأوطان أهلاً بكم وفد أرفع الشأن

وله قصائد رويها همزة، منها قصيدته (بزوغ النور) التي مطلعها:

ولد الهداية يوم مولد أحمد والعدل فانتظمت به الأشياء

(1) أنيس إبراهيم، موسيقى الشعر، مرجع سابق، ص 233.

أولاً: من حيث الشكل

1. الوزن والقافية:

يعدّ الشكل أحد الأدوات الفنيّة للقصيدة العربية، فالشاعر الملتزم ما التزم بركنين للشكل: الوزن والقافية. فقد "اهتم النقاد بشروط معينة في الوزن وعولوا عليها كثيراً، فقد أصر قدامة بن جعفر -فيما مضى- على أن يكون الوزن سهل العروض. وألحّ ابن طباطبا على اعتداله، وأراد ابن رشيق من الشاعر أن يركب مستعمل الأعراب، ويأتي بألفها موقعا وأخفها مسمعا، ويتجنّب العويص والمستكره لأنهما يشغلانه ويمسكان من عنانه، ويوهنان قواه ويخرجانه عن قصده." (1)

عرّف الدكتور أنيس القافية بقوله: "ليست القافية إلاّ عدة أصوات تتكرر في أواخر الأَشطر أو الأبيات من القصيدة، وتكررها هذا يكون جزءاً مهماً من الموسيقى الشعرية، فهي بمثابة الفواصل الموسيقية، يتوقع السامع ترددها، ويستمتع بمثل هذا التردد، الذي يطرق الأذان في فترات زمنية منتظمة، ويعد عدد معين من مقاطع ذات نظام خاص يسمى بالوزن." (2) فعباس شاعر ملتزم، وشعره عمودي ولم يجد الباحث أي قصيدة خارجة عن نمط القصيدة العربية التقليدية التي عُرفت بطابعها الخاص ذي الوزن الواحد والقافية الموحدة، ورغم أنه متمسك بأوزان الشعر الخليلية إلاّ أنه قد أكثر من استعمال بعضها وأهمّل بعضها الآخر، وأكثر البحور استعمالاً لديه هي البسيط والكامل والوافر.

ومن قصائده من البحر الكامل قصيدته (الدرّة الناجحة)، ومطلعها:

أمل تحقّق يا أخا العباد من درة منحتك بالعباد

ومن قصائده من الكامل قصيدته التي يقول في مطلعها:

روح التآلف بيننا تستوجب حباً وإخلاصاً بها هو أعجب

ومن البحر الوافر قصيدته التي يقول فيها:

(1) بكار حسين يوسف، بناء القصيدة في النقد العربي القديم في ضوء النقد الحديث، دار الأندلس، بيروت ن لبنان، 1982، ص 168.

(2) أنيس إبراهيم، موسيقى الشعر، مكتبة الانجلو المصرية، القاهرة، 2010، ص 233.

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بيكي لفقدان أم لازمته وقد أضنى جوانحه جوع وحرمان⁽¹⁾
تناولت هذه القصيدة ما يعانیه اليتيم من بؤس وحرمان، والشاعر يدعو
المحسنين للوقوف معه والأخذ بيده.

يتضح من خلال ما ذكرنا أن عباس قال الشعر في أغراض كثيرة، ويؤكد أنه يقول
في أي فكرة تخطر بباله، أو أي موقف تفاعل معه، والأغراض التي لم نورد له شعرا
فيها فلا يعني أنه لم يقل فيها، وغيابها في هذا البحث إما من أجل الاختصار مراعاة
لطبيعة الدراسة، أو لأن الشاعر كان لا يرغب في نشر بعض أشعاره كالتي قالها في
الهجاء، وقد أوصى أسرته بعدم نشرها، وتنفيذا لهذه الوصية لم تسلم أسرته مثل هذه
القصائد للدارسين، ففضلتُ عدم ذكرها في هذا البحث.

أما الغزل فلم أفد عند أي قصيدة له في هذا الغرض، وأرجع ذلك إلى شخصيته
المعروفة بالورع والتمسك بمبادئ الإسلام، فيرى أن الغزل لا يليق به، والتطرق إليه
ليس من اهتماماته.

المبحث الثالث: الخصائص الفنية لشعر عباس محمد عبد الواحد

إن الحديث عن نتاج الشاعر لا يكون مختصرا على الحديث عن الأغراض فقط،
ولكن معرفة الشعر وقيمه تستلزم الوقوف على الخصائص الفنية لهذا الشعر، لأن
النظرة الفاحصة للشعر من هذه الناحية تجعلنا نكشف قيمته ومعرفة ما يميزه من
أعمال الشعراء الآخرين.

وقد خصص الباحث هذا المبحث للحديث عن خصائص شعر عباس من حيث
الشكل، فيتناول فيه جانب الوزن والقافية، ثم يتطرق إلى المضمون فيتناول فيه
المعاني والصور.

(1) قصيدة مخطوطة.

وإذا كان الشعر الوطني ما ارتبط بقضية الوطن أو الشعب الذي يقيم بقطر معين، وأنه أضيّق نطاقاً من الشعر الذي يتسع ليشمل الأمة أي مجموعة من الشعوب الشقيقة،⁽¹⁾ فقد اهتم الشاعر عباس بهذا الصنف من الشعر، وفيه دعا إلى كمّ الشمل ووحدة الكلمة، فقال:

يا إخوة الوطن المُفدّي فلنعش وعرى التلاحم بيننا لن يفصما
لا فرق بين جنوبنا وشمالنا فالكل للوطن العزيز قد انتما
والكل يعلم أن وحدة أرضه أن لا يكون الشعب فيه مقسما
أن لا يرى خلاً لخدمته لها وعليه أن يبقى محباً مغرماً
من لم تكن في قلبه وطنية لبلاده فلقد أساء وأجرماً

لم يهمل الأستاذ عباس في شعره النواحي الاجتماعية والانسانية التي لا يتوقع استبعادها من شاعر له رؤية ورسالة كعباس، ومن شعره الذي عالج فيه قضايا أمته الاجتماعية قصيدته (العفة تاج المرأة) يقول فيها:

مجد الفتاة وعزها أن تحتمي بدروع عفتها وأن لا ترتمي
تحت الرذائل فهي معول هدمها وهو الدمار لغادة أو أيم
والحرة الحسنة تحفظ عرضها وتقيه من دنس الخبيث المجرم
فتظل طاهرة ويعلو قدرها إن الطهارة من عطاء المنعم⁽²⁾

وللشاعر قصائد تلمست الجانب الإنساني، وهذا متوقع صدوره من عالم جليل يعرف للإنسانية قدرها، وللتكافل الاجتماعي أثره في التخفيف عن آلام الضعفاء والمحتاجين، فقال في قصيدته (الاحسان):

هذا الصبي له همٌّ ووجدان وحل في قلبه روع وأشجان
بالأمس مات له جد والدة فبات في الناس لا يأويه إنسان

(1) الدقاق عمر، الاتجاه القومي في الشعر الحديث، دار الشعر العربي، بيروت، لبنان، 1989، ص 15.

(2) قصيدة مخطوطة.

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وارا وقتت على ربوعك ساعة فاكتظ قلبي هيبة وجلالا
لاحت معالمها علي بعيدة فقطعت قبل وصولها أميالا
فإذا بقلعتها بدت وكأنها أهرام مر رونقاً وجمالا

ويتحدث الشاعر في وصفه لوارا عن دوافع الإعجاب بها، ويتطرق إلى التقنية التي استعملت في بنائها، وإبراز خبرة من بنوها، ومع مرور الزمان بها إلا أن اللمسات الجمالية فيها باقية، يقول الشاعر:

ومن العجائب أن هيئة قصرها مضت القرون بها ودامت حالا
عكست علينا مجد أجداد سمو فوق الثريا عزة ومجالا
بهرتة هيبتها فأصبح ينطوي ذات اليمين تلفتاً وشمالا

يشير الشاعر في وصفه لمدينة وارا إلى ما آلت إليه من خراب، إذ أصبحت خالية بعد أن كانت مأهولة بالسكان لا يوجد فيها إلا الوحوش، وأصبحت مبانيها أطلالا، فعبر عن ذلك بقوله:

واليوم لم تر حولها شخصاً ولم تر دونها نصباً ولا تمثالا
فخلت مراعها الجميلة والتي ظل البهاء إزاءها يتلالا
وترى الوحوش تجوب في عرصاتها وترى حيال بنائها أطلالا

وبجانب الأغراض التي سبق الحديث عنها، للشاعر قصائد أخرى في موضوعات ذات صلة ببيئته، فاعتباره عالماً متبحراً وداعية ومصالحاً اجتماعياً، وارتباطه بوطنه وثيق جداً، إذ يأمل أن يراه دائماً صاعداً في عتبات التقدم والازدهار، وأن يرتقي المواطنون أخلاقياً واجتماعياً، فيقول في قصيدته (الوحدة):

يا شعبنا التشادي كن متماسكا كالجسم واعمل كي تصير مرمما
وانظر بنور الوعي أمرك وابتعد من أن يكون الفكر فيك مسمما
وانس الخلاف لأنه السبب الذي يدعوك جهراً كي تدوم مهشماً⁽¹⁾

(1) قصيدة مخطوطة.

غادرت موطن آبائي وأجدادي مخلفاً عنده أمي وأولادي
 تركت فيه أناساً ليس لي بدل عنهم ورؤيتهم شوقي وإسعادي
 فهم حماية فكري من تشرده وهم أحاسيس أحشائي وأكبادي
 أكاد أفقد وعيي حين أذكرهم وناظري بات في دمع وإسهادي⁽¹⁾

ونلاحظ في أبياته بعض العبارات التي يحاول من خلالها أن يخفف آلام الفراق عن أمه معللاً في ذلك بذكر السبب الذي دفعه إلى السفر وهو طلب العلم، وأنه يريد أن يبلغ فيه شأواً بعيداً وأن ينهل من المعرفة ما استطاع، فلا تتحقق أمانيه إلا بهذا السفر، حيث قال:

أما هذا وداعي اليوم فانتظري لي عودة بالمنى من بعد إيفاد
 إن الأماني التي ما زلت أطلبها تقضي علي بأسفار وإبعاد
 عنكم وما زالت الآمال تدفعني للمجد فارتقبي يا أم انجادي
 فارقتها وتركت القلب مرتها لها وواصلت أسفاري بإجهاد

ثم وصف العراق وما لحظه في العراقيين من حسن المعاملة، وما يتمتع به علماؤها من علم غزير، ونتاج أدبي وفير، وما للعراق من تاريخ مشرق مجيد، فقال:

مر سيليا وإلى باريس رحلتنا ومنه تواء إلى أرجاء بغداد
 أرض الألبى بلغوا شأواً وقد تركوا للناس آثار تاريخ وأمجاد
 أرض الرشيد ومأمون ومعتصم وأرض من ملاء الدنيا بإرشاد
 للوافدين إلى بغداد مغتنم ونائل جل عن حصر وتعداد

ثم قال في القصيدة نفسها:

معلمي أرى منكم مصارحة تريح قلبي وتبقي سر إرفادي
 مناهل العلم والآداب إن لكم فيها مشاهير كتاب ونقاد
 فما خلعت أرضكم من شاعر لبق عبر العصور ومن أقطاب رواد

ومن قصائده في الوصف قصيدته في وارا عاصمة سلطنة وداي قديما، فكان وصفها وصفا دقيقا، محاولاً أن ينقل إلى المتلقي الصورة الجميلة التي التقطها عن وارا فقال:

(1) ديوان الملامح، مصدر سابق، ص 18.

ثالثاً: الوصف

الوصف يعني "نقل صورة العالم الخارجي أو العالم الداخلي من خلال الألفاظ، والعبارات والتشبيه، والاستعارات التي تقوم لدى الأديب مقام الألوان لدى الرسام، والنغم لدى الموسيقي".⁽¹⁾

وقد عُرف بأنه "تعبير عفوي عن المشاعر التي يحس بها الأديب أمام الأحداث والمشاهد المحيطة به والعوامل الفاعلة في وعيه وفي لا وعيه".⁽²⁾

قال قدامة "الوصف إنما هو ذكر الشيء بما فيه من الأحوال والهيئات، ولما كان أكثر وصف الشعراء إنما يقع على الأشياء المركبة من ضروب المعاني، كان أحسنهم وصفاً من أتى في شعره بأكثر المعاني التي الموصوف مركب منها، ثم بأظهرها فيه وأولاهها، حتى يحكيه بشعره ويمثلها للحس بنعته".⁽³⁾

فالشاعر منذ القديم كان يصف الطبيعة من حوله، ووصف الطعينة والمرأة وغيرها، وقَلَّ أن يخلو غرض من أغراض الشعر عن الوصف، ولذا فإنه يعتبر أبا الأغراض كلها.⁽⁴⁾

إن الأستاذ عباس محمد عبد الواحد كما وقفنا عند نماذج من شعره في أغراض أخرى لا نستبعد أن يكون له شعر في الوصف، فاليبيئات التي عاش فيها بلا شك يكون لها أثر في نفس الشاعر يدفعه إلى التعبير وتصوير ما شاهده فيها من مناظر وأحداث. فالحنين إلى الوطن وتعلق القلب بمواطن الذكريات يُعدّ مثيراً له إلى قول بعض شعره في الوصف، وقصيدته "إنه الفراق" تعدّ واحدة من القصائد التي تطرقت إلى هذا الصنف من الشعر. فقد وصف في هذه القصيدة رحلته من أبشه إلى بغداد من أجل مواصلة الدراسة، وقلبه كان متعلقاً بموطنه وأهله، حيث قال:

(1) عبد النور جبور، المعجم الأدبي، دار العلم للملايين، بيروت لبنان، ص 292 وما بعدها.

(2) المرجع السابق، ص 293.

(3) ابن جعفر قدامة، نقد الشعر، مكتبة الخانجي، القاهرة، مصر، 1979، ص 118 وما بعدها.

(4) الشنطي محمد صالح، في الأدب العربي القديم، دار الأندلس، حائل، المملكة العربية السعودية، 1997، ص 108.

وركن في الديانة قد تداعى فصار الصرح هدماً أو خراباً⁽¹⁾
ثم ذكر في القصيدة نفسها ما كان يتّصف به الشيخ ابن باز من مكارم الأخلاق
والبسطة في العلم فقال:

طيباً بارعاً في كل داء يصيب الدين إن أضحي مصاباً
وكان محدثاً علماً تقياً حليماً ناصحاً ورعاً مهاباً
وكان مجاهداً وأباً حكيماً يزور الناس حضرته ركاباً
تبدى في سماء الحق فذاً وبدراً قد أنار به وغاباً
حباه الله إيماناً قوياً ووقفه وألهمه صواباً

ومن المشايخ الذين مدحهم الشيخ نوح محمد الأمين أحد علماء أبشة البارزين
في زمانه، فقال:

تورى في حمى الرحمن نوح ولاقى حين طال له اللقاء
بكته بأرض أبشة رجال وأطفال وتتبعهم نساء
أصاهم الدهول فيا لخطب أمارط الصبر فانقطع العزاء
لفاجعة تلم بهم فأوحت بأشجان قرائنها عناء⁽²⁾

وقال في رثائه للشاعر عبد الله يونس المجبري الذي وافته المنية في رمضان
1398هـ:

مات الذي حسنت في الناس سيرته فكان بالحلم والأخلاق يشتهر
طلق المحيا قوي في إرادته وفي المكاره والضراء يصطبر
قد كان في الخير ركن يستعان به واليوم أصبح هذا الركن ينكسر
وكان للحق عوناً في موافقه لا ينثني عنه مهما ناله خطر⁽³⁾

(1) قصيدة مخطوطة.

(2) ديوان الملامح، مرجع سابق، ص 42.

(3) ديوان الملامح، مرجع سابق، ص 46.

الأستاذ عباس محمد عبد الواحد من أعلام العلم والأدب في تشاد

همه أن يكون للدين دعماً وخدمياً للغة القرآن⁽¹⁾ ومدح الأستاذ الدكتور عبد الله محمد آدم أبو نظيفة⁽²⁾، وهو من علماء اللغة المشهورين، ومشهود له بالأخلاق الفاضلة.

ثانياً: الرثاء

يقول قدامة في نعت المرثي: "إنه ليس بين المرثية والمدحة فصل إلا أن يذكر في اللفظ ما يدل على أنه هالك، مثل (كان) و(تولى) و(قضى نحبه) وما أشبه ذلك، وهذا ليس يزيد في المعنى ولا ينقص منه، لأنَّ تأبين الميت إنما هو مثلما كان يمدح في حياته، وقد يفعل في التأبين شيء ينفصل به لفظ المدح بغير (كان) وما جرى مجراه، وهو أن يكون الحي مثلاً وصف بالوجود، فلا يقال (كان جواداً) ولكن بأن يقول (ذهب الجود) أو (فمن للجود بعده) ومثل (تولى الجود)، وما أشبه هذه الأشياء."⁽³⁾ وقد رثا الشاعر عباس العلماء والإخوان، كما جادت قريحته برثاء أساتذته ومن لهم أثر في نفسه. ورثا من العلماء العالم السعودي المشهور في عصره الشيخ عبد الله بن باز - رحمه الله - رئيس مجلس الإفتاء بالمملكة العربية السعودية، ورثا الشيخ محمد الخضير، كما رثا من الإخوان زميله الذي كان مقيماً بأبشة الشاعر الليبي الأصل عبد الله المجبري، رئيس الجالية الليبية في أبشة، ورثا من شيوخ أبشة الشيخ زكريا حسن، والشيخ نوح محمد الأمين.

قال في رثائه للشيخ عبد الله بن باز رحمه الله:

تذكر يا أخي خطبا أصابا تزد أسفا وحزنا والتهابا
لفاجعة ألم بنا جميعا فأصبح في القلوب لنا حرابا

(1) قصيدة مخطوطة.

(2) الدكتور عبد الله محمد آدم أبو نظيفة سوداني من أصل تشادي، حصل على الدكتوراه في النحو والصرف من جامعة الأزهر، درس في نيجيريا والمملكة العربية السعودية، وأشرف على عدد من طلاب مرحلتي الماجستير والدكتوراه، وهو أستاذ بجامعة أفريقيا العالمية بالخرطوم.

(3) ابن جعفر قدامة، نقد الشعر، مرجع سابق، ص 100.

تحلى كل فرد منك حتماً بروح الدين والنهج الحميد⁽¹⁾
مدح الشاعر العلماء وخاصة علماء وطنه تشاد ومنهم الشيخ الشاذلي صالح
فقال:

هذا هو الشاذلي صرح يُشادُ به وقمة تتهادى دونها القمم
حوى من العلم قسطاً لا تزاخه أترابه وهو في أقرانه علم
أكرم به عالماً قلت نظائره ذو هممة قصرت من دونها الهمم
إن جئته زائراً تلقاه مبتسماً مهذب النفس بئر ماؤه شيم⁽²⁾
وقال في القصيدة نفسها:

طلق المحيا تقنيّ مخلص ورعٌ وصادقُ القول بين الناس محترم
تراه إما مقيماً في تنسكه أو كان في يده القرطاسُ والقلمُ
ومدح أستاذه عادل جاسم البياتي من جمهورية العراق فقال:

أفلا يحق لي الثناء عليك يا سيل المعارف والخضم الزاخر
ستر اليراعة أنت مصدر نبعها ومليك ناصية الغريب النادر
فإذا نثرت فأنت أفضل كاتب وإذا قرضت فأنت أحسن شاعر⁽³⁾

كما مدح الشيخ أحمد عبد الله بركة من علماء أبشيه، ومدح الأستاذ الدكتور عبد
الله حمدنا، عالم من السودان الشقيق، أوفد للتدريس في جامعة الملك فيصل بتشاد،
فلما انتهت فترة عمله وأراد العودة إلى بلاده أقيم حفل لتوديعه، فقال الشاعر عباس
فيه قصيدة منها الأبيات الآتية:

كان فينا مرآة تعكس الواقع عوناً من أعظم الأعوان
وطبيباً يشخص الداء في الشعر عليمًا بوصفة الأوزان
ظل فينا معلماً يفعل الخير جواداً كالعارض الهتان

(1) قصيدة مخطوطة للشاعر عباس محمد عبد الواحد.

(2) قصيدة مخطوطة.

(3) ديوان الملاح، مصدر سابق، ص 22.

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أنبت منذ أزمته سحيفة فحول الشعراء، إضافة إلى أن الشاعر عباس قد تلقى تعليمه في كلية الآداب قسم اللغة العربية، كل ذلك أعانه على أن يكون متمكناً في قول الشعر. من يطالع شعر عباس يدرك أن الشعر عنده ينساب كالماء المتدفق من القمم العالية، وكانت لديه المقدرة على القول في أغراض الشعر المختلفة، كالمدح والوصف، والرثاء، والفخر، وغير ذلك، وما لم نجده في شعره من أغراض فلا يعد عجزاً منه أو عدم استطاعته للقول فيها، وإنما يعود ذلك إلى عدم رغبته نظراً لما عرف عنه من ورع والتزام بتعاليم دينه الحنيف، ومما يمكننا أن نلفت إليه النظر أن للشاعر شعراً في الهجاء ولكن أسرته احتفظت به ولا تريد نشره تنفيذاً لوصيته.

وسنقوم بعرض بعض أشعاره مراعين في ذلك طبيعة هذه الدراسة التي لا يناسبها التوسّع والإسهاب.

أولاً: المدح

يقول قدامة: "إنه لما كانت فضائل الناس من حيث هم ناس، لا من طريق ما هم مشتركون فيه من سائر الحيوان، على ما عليه أهل الألباب من الاتفاق في ذلك، إنما هي العقل والشجاعة والعدل والعفة، كان القاصد لمدح بهذه الأربع الخصال مُصيباً، والمادح بغيرها مخطئاً، ثم قد يجوز مع ذلك أن يقصد الشاعر للمدح منها بالبعض والإغراق فيه دون البعض..."⁽¹⁾

فإن كان المدح هو أحد أهم أغراض الشعر العربي القديم، وجل الشعراء لا يغيب عن أشعارهم، فعباس قد تناوله وتنوع فيه. فقد مدح فيه الشعوب والعلماء والأدباء وأمناء المؤسسات الإسلامية كما مدح الشعراء.

ومن مدح الشعوب ما قاله في الوفد السعودي الذي زار تشاد بمناسبة تأسيس مراكز إسلامية، حيث قال:

سلاماً أيها الوفد السعودي وترحيباً بمقدمك السعيد
حللت بأرضنا أهلاً وسهلاً عزيزاً عندنا بين الوفود
نكن لك الولاء بكل صدق وبالإخلاص يا رمز الجهود

(1) ابن جعفر قدامة، نقد الشعر، مكتبة الخانجي، القاهرة، مصر 1987، ص 65 وما بعدها.

الشعرية، ومقدرته الأدبية.⁽¹⁾ فقد كسب شهرة كبيرة، وكان له دور كبير في نشر الثقافة الإسلامية والاهتمام باللغة العربية.

المبحث الثاني: إبداعاته الشعرية

يعدّ عباس محمد عبد الواحد أحد الشعراء التشاديين العظام، فهو من الفحول الذين أسهموا في حركة الأدب العربي، وهو أحد الأعلام الذين أجادوا الشعر إجادة تامة، فهو يمتاز عن شعراء العصر الذي قبله بصقل موهبته الأدبية بالثقيف والممارسة، مما جعله يمتلك الكلمة الجميلة واللفظة الرشيقة واللحن الشجي، والأسلوب الرصين الجزل، وقد يصدق على شعره ما وصف به البارودي شعره حين قال:

لم تبين قافية فيه على خلل كلا ولم تختلف في وصفه الجمل
فلا سنادٌ ولا حشوٌ ولا قلقٌ ولا سقوط ولا سهو ولا علل
تغايرت فيه أسمعٌ وأفئدةٌ فكل ناد عكاظ حين يُرتجلُ
لا تنكر الكاعب الحسناء منطّقه ولا يعاد على قوم فيبتذل⁽²⁾

كان شعره تشادي النشأة، نظم الشعر قبل هجرته إلى الخارج، فقد قال القصائد الرائعة قبل سفره إلى العراق للدراسة، وقصيدته التي تناول فيها مغادرة وطنه من أجل طلب العلم بالعراق تنبأ عن نبوغه في الشعر وإجادته لقرضه، إذ قال في مطلع قصيدته (إنه الفراق):

غادرت موطن آبائي وأجدادي مخلفا عنده أُمي وأولادي⁽³⁾
ولا ننكر أنّ هجرته للدراسة قد صقلت موهبته الشعرية ومدّته بمعين لا ينضب، أعانه في إثراء تجربته الشعرية، فبيئة العراق المعروفة بالثقافة العربية الأصيلة التي

(1) حسن محمود، تاريخ الشعر التشادي، مرجع سابق، ص 777.

(2) ديوان البارودي، تحقيق: فوزي حمزة، مكتبة الآداب، القاهرة، مصر، 2011، ص 354.

(3) ديوان الملامح، عباس محمد عبد الواحد، مطبعة أسعد، بغداد، العراق، ص 18.

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• شرح منظومة (المقنع في علم أبي مُقرع) لمحمد بن سعيد السوسي في علم الفلك.

• المهمات في علم الميقات، في علم الفلك.

• الميقات الدائم، في الفلك.

ومن جهوده الدعويّة باعتباره عالمًا كونه ينشط في هذا المجال، وقد عُيّن داعية من قبل رابطة العالم الإسلامي في عام 1982م، وأثره في الدعوة واضح، فهو عالم وقُدوة ومخلص في دعوته، وهو ما حبّبه للناس، فكانوا يتردّدون عليه لأخذ العلم والاستماع إلى نصائحه وتوجيهاته القيمة.

وفيما يتعلق بالدعوة فقد شارك الأستاذ عباس في دورة شرعية لمدة شهرين في كانبو بنيجيريا عام 1994م، وكان عضواً في بعثة الحج التشادية.⁽¹⁾

وكان يقدم في الإذاعة الوطنيّة لجمهورية تشاد برنامجاً دينياً كل يوم أحد من كل أسبوع يسمى (ركن الدين)، وهو عبارة عن فتوى للمواطنين الذين يسألون عن أمور الدين، وكان يقدّم هذا البرنامج باللغة الفرنسية.⁽²⁾

أنشطته الإدارية:

عندما عاد من العراق عمل في التدريس ثم عُيّن ناظراً للقسم الثانوي بثانوية الملك فيصل في الفترة من 1986 إلى 1991م، ومديراً للشؤون الدينيّة والأعراف بوزارة الداخليّة من 1992 إلى 1993م، وأميناً للمالية بالمجلس الأعلى للشؤون الإسلاميّة بجمهورية تشاد.

وجهود الأستاذ عباس تدل على أنه "يتمتع بذكاء نادر وقوة في الحفظ وسرعة في البديهة، وتوقد في الذهن، وحدة في الخاطر، فضلا عن موهبته الأدبية، ومملكته

(1) مقابلة مع الشيخ تجاني أحمد عبد الواحد، المقابلة السابقة.

(2) عبدالله بابكر محمد، «شعر عباس محمد عبد الواحد جمع وتحقيق»، رسالة ماجستير غير منشورة جامعة أفريقيا العالمية، 1433هـ/2012، ص 32 .

مجتمعه في مواقع شتى، فكانت وظيفته الرسمية معلماً، ويُذكر أنه كان يدرّس الميراث منذ أن كان في المرحلة الثانوية بأبشه، ودّرّس بعد تخرّجه في معهد المعلمين في المدارس الابتدائية، وبعد العودة من العراق عُيّن مدرساً بثانوية الملك فيصل بأنجمينا، ودرّس بثانوية الحرازية بأنجمينا. وفيما يتعلّق بتدريسه في الحلقات فقد كان يُدرّس في الزاوية المجاورة لبيته في حي مرجان وفق بأنجمينا كتب النحو، مثل كتاب قطر الندى، وألفية بن مالك، وكتاب أبو مقرر في الفلك، ومن الكتب الفقهية كان يدرّس رسالة ابن أبي زيد القيرواني، ويدرّس الرحبية في علم الميراث، ومقامات الحريري، ومقامات الهمداني. وله دروس سنوية في المسجد العتيق بمدينة بطن في شهر رمضان يفسّر فيها القرآن الكريم، وفي الفترة المسائية يدرّس الكتب الدينية واللغوية. وكذلك شارك الأستاذ عباس في الدروس الحسنية بالمملكة المغربية.⁽¹⁾

ومن أبرز تلامذته في أنجمينا موسى كُلبالي، وأبو رأس، وإبراهيم عباس.⁽²⁾

1. ومن إسهاماته في مجال نهضة العلم في بلاده أنه كان -رحمه الله- أحد مؤسسي جامعة الملك فيصل بتشاد، ومن جهوده الفكرية المهمة إسهاماته في البحث والتأليف، فقد ألّف كتباً بعضها قد نشرت، كما له مؤلفات لم تنشر، ومن كتبه المنشورة:⁽³⁾

• إزالة الغموض في تصحيح مسائل الفروض، كتاب في المواريث، طبع عام 1987م.

• صحيح المقال في معرفة ظل الزوال، طبع عام 1416هـ الموافق لعام 1996م.

وله مؤلفات أخرى غير منشورة وهي:

• شرح منظومة الشيخ أحمد بن الهاشم في (مهمات علم النحو).

(1) مقابلة مع الدكتور محمد الصغير محمد عبد الواحد، المقابلة السابقة نفسها.

(2) مقابلة مع الشيخ تجاني أحمد عبد الواحد، المقابلة السابقة.

(3) حامد الجد بشارة، التجربة الشعرية، مرجع سابق، ص 20.

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بعد أن قضى الأستاذ عباس جزءا كبيرا من عمره في تحصيل العلم الذي أخذ قسطا منه في بلاده ونهل قسطا آخر في الخارج، وبعد حصوله على الإجازة وعودته إلى الوطن، استقرّ في العاصمة أنجمينا وارتبط بالعلم والدعوة وإنتاج الشعر إلى أن لقي ربّه في ليلة الأربعاء التاسع والعشرين من شهر رمضان 1423هـ الموافق لثالث عشر من شهر ديسمبر 2002 م بمدينة أنجمينا. وبعد موته أقام المثقفون وطلاب العلم وعشاق الأدب حفل تآبين تقديراً لجهوده ووفاء لما قدّمه لأمتّه، وجاء التعبير عن التقدير لشخصية الراحل في ثنايا كلماتهم وقصائدهم، وقد رثاه عدد من كبار الشعراء التشاديين منهم: الشاعر عيسى عبد الله، والشاعر محمد عمر الفال، والشاعر حسب الله مهدي فضلة.

حيث قال الشاعر عيسى عبد الله في رثاء عباس:

عباس من تركت للمغازي والنحو والحديث والفروض
هل قلت للجهالة اطمئني فالجو قد خلى لكي تبيضي
أنت الذي دعوت من تأخوا في الضاد للسداد لا الدحوض
تبغي ليرق النبي رفعا والبعض يبتغيه في الحضيض⁽¹⁾

وقال الشاعر حسب الله مهدي فضلة:

قد مات عباس وما أقساك من كَلَم بل أسهم وقعها في القلب أدمانا
قد مات عباس ليت الأذن ما سمعت أو أن قائلها من قبل ينُعانا
قد غاض مائي حُزناً واستعصتُ به دَمعاً فليس بماء كُـل ما لانا⁽²⁾

جهوده العلمية والدعوية

حظي الأستاذ عباس محمد عبد الواحد بتكوين علمي متين في مجالات شتى كما سبق الحديث عن ذلك، فقد جمع بين العلوم الدينية واللغوية والفلكية، وأتقن اللغتين الرسميتين لتشاد: العربية والفرنسية، وقد مكّنه هذا من أن يؤدّي دوراً فاعلاً في

(1) مخطوط للشاعر عيسى عبد الله.

(2) مخطوط للشاعر حسب الله مهدي فضلة.

مولده: ولد عباس محمد عبد الواحد عام 1944م في قرية حُقني بمركز مرفا على بعد ثمانين كيلو مترا من مدينة أبشة من ناحية الجنوب.⁽¹⁾

نشأته: نشأ عباس في مدينة بلتن التي كان والده أحد علمائها الكبار، وكان إماماً لمسجدها العتيق، كان والده معلماً لأبناء المنطقة يُحَفِّظُهُم القرآن الكريم ويعلمهم مبادئ العلوم العربية والشرعية، وقد ساعده وجوده في بلتن على تعليم القرآن الكريم، واستفاد كثيرا من حلقات الدروس التي يقيمها والده من العلوم الشرعية كالفقه والتوحيد والحديث والسيرة، وعلوم العربية كالنحو والصرف والأدب، كما أخذ العلم عن عمّه حامد عبد الواحد الذي كان مقيماً في مدينة بلتن. ثم سافر إلى أبشه للالتحاق بالثانوية المزدوجة (الفرنسية العربية) في العام الدراسي 1965/1966م. وحصل على الشهادة الإعدادية في العام الدراسي 1968/1969م، وبعد ذلك التحق بمعهد المعلمين الذي كان يسمح لحامل الشهادة الإعدادية بالمشاركة في دخول المعهد بعد النجاح في المعايينة، وبعد تخرجه من المعهد عمل في التدريس لأنه كان شغوفاً بالعلم، ثم ترشّح للشهادة الثانوية في دورة عام 1978م فنجح في القسم الثنائي اللغة (عربي فرنسي)، ثم حصل بعد ذلك على منحة دراسية لمواصلة تعليمه الجامعي، فسافر إلى العراق للدراسة بالجامعة المستنصرية في كلية الآداب قسم اللغة العربية، وتخرج منها في عام 1983م.⁽²⁾ تزوّج الأستاذ عبّاس باثنتين، زوجته الأولى تسمى مريئة محمد حسن، وهي أم أولاده محمد، وأمّنة، وعبد الرحمن، وزهرة، وعبد القادر، وسعاد، وإبراهيم. أما زوجته الأخرى فاسمها زنوبة عبد النبي وهذه لم تنجب له ولدا.⁽³⁾

(1) حسن محمود حسن، تاريخ الشعر التشادي، دار طيبة للطباعة والنشر والتوزيع، مصر 2006، ص

(2) حامد الجد بشارة، «التجربة الشعرية عند عباس محمد عبد الواحد»، رسالة ماجستير غير منشورة،

(3) مقابلة مع الدكتور/محمد الصغير محمد عبد الواحد، المقابلة السابقة نفسها.

الأستاذ عباس محمد عبد الواحد من أعلام العلم والأدب في تشاد

2. تبين ما تميّز به عباس محمد عبد الواحد عن العلماء والشعراء التشاديين في عصره.

3. الوقوف على موضوعات شعره وخصائصها الفنية.

4. توضيح المكانة التي كان يحظى بها عباس محمد عبد الواحد في المجتمع التشادي وغيره.

وستتم معالجة الموضوع من خلال المباحث الآتية:

المبحث الأول: مولده ونشأته وجهوده العلمية، والدعوية، ووظائفه الإدارية

المبحث الثاني: إبداعاته الشعرية

المبحث الثالث: الخصائص الفنية لشعر عباس محمد عبد الواحد

النتائج والتوصيات.

المبحث الأول: مولده ونشأته وجهوده العلمية والدعوية وأنشطته الإدارية

نسبه: هو عباس بن محمد بن عبد الواحد بن عبد الله إبراهيم إسحاق جابر، تُعرف أسرته في المنطقة بـ «شَمَا» بمعنى شاميين، أي أن أصلهم من الشام. واسم أمّه بريصة رضوان نورالدين، وهو أخ لعبد الواحد جد الأستاذ عباس، فيلتي نسب أبيه وأمّه في جدّه عبد الله.⁽¹⁾

وللأستاذ عباس أخت شقيقة واحدة تسمّى فاطمة، وإخوة لأب وهم: خديجة وإبراهيم وعليو، وهو إمام المسجد العتيق لمدينة بلتن، ورئيس المجلس الأعلى للشؤون الإسلامية الحالي لإقليم وادي فيرا، ومن إخوته للأب: عبد الله، والدكتور محمد الصغير، وهو حاليا يعمل محاضرا بالمعهد العالي لإعداد المعلمين بأنجمينا.⁽²⁾

(1) مقابلة مع الشيخ/تجاني أحمد عبد الواحد، يوم الثلاثاء 2022/8/9 بمنزله في حي أنجمينا كدو، عند الساعة السادسة مساء.

(2) مقابلة مع الدكتور/محمد الصغير محمد عبد الواحد، يوم الأحد 2022/8/7 بمنزله بحي أم رقيبة، عند الساعة العاشرة صباحاً.

ديباجة

تشاد بلد يقع في قلب القارة الأفريقية، وهي عضو في تجمّع دول وسط أفريقيا الذي يتكوّن من الكاميرون والغبون وأفريقيا الوسطى والكونغو وغينيا الاستوائية وتشاد، وهذه الدول لغتها الرسمية هي الفرنسية باستثناء تشاد التي لها لغتان رسميتان: العربية والفرنسية، والكاميرون كذلك لها لغتان رسميتان هما الفرنسية والانجليزية. وتعتبر تشاد الدولة الوحيدة في هذه المجموعة التي تتمتع بانتشار واسع للغة العربية وتطوّرها من حيث الجانب العلمي، فمنذ زمن بعيد انتشر التعليم العربي في تشاد، وكان يتطوّر شيئاً فشيئاً إلى أن وصل إلى ما وصل إليه الآن، إذ يوجد في تشاد علماء في مختلف العلوم والفنون العربيّة والشرعيّة، وكذلك العلوم العصريّة. وبرز في تشاد جملة من العلماء قديماً وحديثاً، وهم الذين حملوا لواء الثقافة العربية والإسلامية، ومن العلماء الذين لهم إسهامات كبيرة في العلم والشعر العربي الأستاذ عباس محمد عبد الواحد -رحمه الله- وهو عالم جليل وشاعر مبدع مجيد لا يشقّ له غبار، وهو من القلائل الأفاضل في عصره، ترك للأمة إرثاً نفيساً من العلم والشعر.

عندما دعا مركز الأبحاث للتاريخ والفنون والثقافة الإسلامية (إرسيكا) -الذي يتخذ من استانبول مقراً له- الباحثين للمشاركة بأبحاثهم التي تتناول رجال الفكر والعلماء المسلمين في أفريقيا للتعريف بهم وبتأجهم العلمي والأدبي ونشرها في العدد الخاص لمجلة إرسيكا، تاقّت نفسي إلى المشاركة ببحث أتناول فيه أحد العلماء التشاديين الذي تتلمذ على يده عدد كبير من طلاب العلم، وأسهم في النهضة العلميّة والأدبيّة في بلاده، وهو يستحقّ أن نتحدّث عنه ونذكر جهوده العظيمة التي يجب علينا أن نشيد بها ونعتزّ بها، ونعرّف الآخرين بها متمثلاً في شخصيّة الأستاذ عباس محمد عبد الواحد.

وتكمن أهداف الدراسة في النقاط التالية:

1. التعريف بالأستاذ عباس محمد عبد الواحد من خلال الحديث عن نشأته وجهوده العلميّة والأدبيّة.

الأستاذ عباس محمد عبد الواحد من أعلام العلم والأدب في تشاد

أحمد الرفاعي محمود*

المستخلص

تعدّ تشاد من بلدان وسط أفريقيا التي انتشرت فيها الحضارة الإسلامية والعربية انتشارًا واسعًا منذ زمن بعيد. ونشأ في هذه الدولة علماء ساهموا في نشر العلوم الإسلامية والعربية في القارة الإفريقية. ويعتبر عباس محمد عبد الواحد أحد العلماء التشاديين الذين كان لهم الفضل الكبير والأثر البالغ في تنمية العلوم الشرعية والعربية في بلاده، فكان عالمًا جليلاً، وأديبًا نحريًا وشاعرًا نابغةً لا يشقّ له غبار. له مؤلفات عديدة، وقصائد مشهورة، وتعلم على يديه ثلّة من طلاب العلم. وهدفت هذه الدراسة إلى التعريف بشخصية عباس محمد عبد الواحد ومكانته العلمية وجهوده الجبّارة في نشر العلم والأدب العربي. كما سعت المقالة أيضًا إلى إجراء دراسة أدبية لقصائده المشهورة، وبيان موضوعات شعره وخصائصه التي تميّز بها عن غيره من الشعراء التشاديين. وقد توصلت الدراسة إلى أن عباس محمد شاعر نابغة بدأ نظم الشعر منذ نعومة أظفاره، وأشعاره تهتم بالقضايا الاجتماعية وتراعي تعاليم الدين الإسلامي. وأكدت الدراسة أيضًا أن أشعاره جيّدة من حيث الأسلوب والمضمون والناحية الفنية.

* دكتور في جامعة الملك فيصل بتشاد.

بتشاد. وقد كان لعباس محمد عبد الواحد، وهو عالم جليل، الفضل الكبير في تنمية العلوم الإسلامية والعربية في تشاد. ويسلط المقال الضوء على مكانة عبد الواحد الأكاديمية، مشيداً بجهوده في نشر العلم والأدب. ومن خلال منهج شامل، يجري المقال تحليلاً أدبياً لقصائد عبد الواحد الشهيرة، ويكشف عن موضوعات معقدة تبرز قدرته الخارقة على مزج التعبير الفني مع الفهم العميق للفروق المجتمعية والتعاليم الدينية. وفي الختام، يُحتفلُ بشعر عبد الواحد باعتباره شهادةً على التكامل المتناغم بين التميّز الأدبي والوعي الاجتماعي والتمسك بالقيم الإسلامية.

ويقدّم هذا العدد السنويّ الخاصّ حول موضوع "المفكّرون المسلمون والتيارات الفكرية والمدنيّة في أفريقيا" فهماً شاملاً ودقيقاً للمشهد الفكريّ المتنوّع بدءاً من استكشاف ثقافة المخطوطات العجميّة في موزمبيق وحتى كشف المعرفة الروحية للتربية الإحيائيّة في غرب أفريقيا الإسلاميّة؛ وكذلك الإشادة بشخصيات بارزة مثل الحاجّ عمّر طُلّ وأمادُو همبّاطي با. ويهدف إدراج المقالات باللغة العربية والفرنسية إلى تعزيز التغطية العالمية للمجلّة. وتوضح النتيجة ثراء الفكر الإسلامي والمساهمات الثقافية التي تتجاوز الحدود اللغوية والإقليمية. والغاية من هذا الجهد التعاوني هي تقدير التراث الفكري للمفكّرين المسلمين الأفارقة حق قدره وتعزيز الحوار والتفاهم داخل المجتمع العلمي العالمي حول التراث الفكري والديني في أفريقيا.

ونحن على قناعة بأن هذا العدد الخاصّ من مجلّة إرسিকা سوف يجذب أيضاً اهتمام الباحثين من جميع أنحاء العالم ويشجّعهم على القيام بمزيد من الأبحاث حول مختلف جوانب التاريخ والحضارة الإسلامية في أفريقيا. وبصفتي مديراً عاماً لإرسিকা، الجهاز الثقافي المتفرّع عن منظّمة التعاون الإسلامي، أودّ أن أغتنم هذه الفرصة للتعبير عن شكرنا لجميع المؤلّفين المتميّزين على مقالاتهم القيّمة.

أ.د. محمود أروول قليج

المدير العام لإرسিকা

منطقة سِنْعَامِيَا. ويؤكد على النهضة الإسلامية لِعُمَرِ طُلِّ ويستكشف التحولات الجغرافية السياسية في غرب أفريقيا في القرن التاسع عشر.

ومن خلال تسليطه الضوء على التنوع في الديانات والتيارات الفكرية الأفريقية، يتضمّن العدد السنوي الخاصّ لمجلة إرسیکا أيضًا مقالتين باللغة الفرنسية. وأعدّ المقال الأوّل باللغة الفرنسية بعنوان "العلماء الصوفيون التيجانيون في شمال الكاميرون: التراث الديني والفكري للشيخين مُودِيِي عُثْمَانُو دَلِيل (١٩٣٤-٢٠١٥) وَنَانَا يُونَسَا (١٩٣٩-٢٠١٧)"، فَاضِلُ سُبِيَانُ بَاهُ، وهو طالب دكتوراه وباحث في قسم التاريخ في جامعة نَغَاوَنْدِيرِي بالكاميرون. ويستكشف سُبِيَانُ بَاهُ التراث الفكري للشيخين مُودِيِي عُثْمَانُو دَلِيل وَنَانَا يُونَسَا، وهما من سادات الطريقة الصوفية التيجانية في شمال الكاميرون. وتركّز المقالة على مساهماتهما في التعليم العالي والأعمال الدينية والأنشطة الفكرية وتبرز تأثيرهما في تاريخ العلم والمعرفة الإسلامية في الكاميرون. ويهدف المقال إلى التعرّف على تحصيلهم العلمي ومسيرتهم المهنية وإنتاجهم الفكري، من خلال تبيان أدوارهما في تشكيل التراث الفكري والثقافي الأفريقي. ويشيد المقال الثاني بعنوان "أَمَادُو هَمْبَاطِي بَا: الحكمة والتراث الفكري (١٩٠١-١٩٩١)"، وهو للدكتور قاسم إبراهيم، الباحث في إرسیکا، بَأَمَادُو هَمْبَاطِي بَا، الكاتب والمفكر الإفريقي الكبير وبشيخه الصوفي تَبِيرُونُو بُوَكَارُو. ويسلّط المقال الضوء على تفاني هَمْبَاطِي بَا في الدفاع عن الثقافات الشفهية الأفريقية والحفاظ عليها، كما يهدف إلى إعادة النظر في مؤلّفات هَمْبَاطِي بَا الرائدة، مع التركيز على الفضائل والحكمة الإسلامية والتقليدية التي نقلتها كتاباته. وفي سياق أفريقيا المعاصرة والعولمة، يشير المقال إلى أن مبادئ التسامح والانفتاح على الآخرين، وهي موضوعات متكرّرة في مؤلّفات هَمْبَاطِي بَا، يمكن أن تساهم في السلام والتّماسك الاجتماعي والسلام العالمي إذا عزّزت بشكل فعّال من خلال الهياكل التربوية الحديثة والتقليدية.

وبالإضافة إلى المقالات باللغة الإنكليزية والفرنسية، يضمّ العدد السنوي الخاصّ مقالاً باللغة العربية بعنوان "الأستاذ عبّاس محمد عبد الواحد من أعلام العلم والأدب في تشاد"، وهو للدكتور أحمد الرفاعي محمود من جامعة الملك فيصل

المقالات السبعة التي يتضمّنُها هذا العدد الخاصّ، يستكشف المقال الأوّل حول "التراث الثقافي للإسلام في موزمبيق: حالة ثقافة المخطوطات العجمية"، وهو للدكتور شَابَانُ مُوتِيُوَا من مركز الدراسات الأفريقية بجامعة إدْوَاردُو مُونْدُلَانِي في مابوتو، تاريخ ثقافة المخطوطات في موزمبيق. ويدعو المقال إلى إدراج "المخطوطات العجمية" في التراث الثقافي لموزمبيق، مع التركيز على دورها في تمكين هويّة المجتمعات الإسلامية. وهو يسلّط الضوء على إهمال ثقافة المخطوطات العجمية سواء في المجال العام أو بين المسلمين، على الرغم من الحماية القانونية، ويدعو إلى تصحيح ذلك. ويحلّل المقال الثاني بعنوان "الجمعية الإسلامية الحميدية والمقاومة المدنية في جنوب أفريقيا البريطانية (١٩٠٦-١٩٠٩)"، بقلم إبراهيم سالي، وهو مؤرّخ جنوب أفريقي مستقل وباحث أرشيفي، تحليلاً نقدياً لحملة المقاومة السلمية الأولى التي شنتها في جنوب أفريقيا الجمعية الإسلامية الحميدية بزعامة حَاجِي أُوجِيْر عَلِي. ويبحث المقال في الانتقال من "سياسة تقديم الالتماسات" إلى "سياسة السّاتّيَاغْرَاهَا أو الإصرار على الحق" مع التركيز على أدوار الشخصيات الرئيسية ووضع المقاومة في سياق المشهد الاجتماعي والسياسي في جنوب أفريقيا البريطانية. ويستكشف المقال الثالث بعنوان "ضدّ موت النور: المعرفة الروحية للتربية الإحيائية في غرب أفريقيا الإسلامية" بقلم أُلوودَامِينِي أُوكُونَايِكِي، الأستاذ المساعد في جامعة فيرجينيا، المعرفة والتربية والتأجج التعليمية لثلاث حركات إصلاحية إسلامية في غرب أفريقيا. وتبحث الدراسة في الحركات قبل عهد الاستعمار وأثناءه وبعده، وتقدّم تحليلاً مقارناً لتوجهاتها الفلسفية، وممارساتها التعليمية، ومساراتها التاريخية. وأما المقال الرابع بعنوان "دور الحَاجِ عُمَرُ طُلُّ في النهضة الإسلامية ومقاومة الاحتلال الفرنسي في غرب أفريقيا في القرن التاسع عشر"، وهو من إعداد سَامْبَا دِيُوبُ، باحث دكتوراه في جامعة أوسلو، فيتناول حياة الحَاجِ عُمَرُ طُلُّ وتأثيره في سياق النهضة الإسلامية ومقاومة التوسّع الأوروبي في غرب أفريقيا. وتعتمد الدراسة على العمل الميداني والشعر الملحومي والتقاليد الشفهية لكشف التفاعل المعقّد بين التقاليد والهوية في

افتتاحية

لقد امتازت مجلة إرسিকা منذ إنشائها بتوفير منصة علمية عالمية مرموقة لأبحاث أكاديمية أصيلة تغطي جوانب متنوعة من التاريخ والحضارة الإسلامية. وقد أبرزت الأعداد المختلفة للمجلة جوانب مهمة من التاريخ الإسلامي، تشمل الفنون والأدب والثقافة والعلوم والعمارة من خلال دراسات استقصائية تركز على مناطق جغرافية متميزة. وإنه ليسرنا جداً أن نقدم العدد السنوي الخاص لعام ٢٠٢٣ للمجتمع العلمي العالمي حول موضوع "المفكرون المسلمون والتيارات الفكرية والمدنية في أفريقيا".

وكان اختيار هذا الموضوع بدافع الحاجة إلى إعادة النظر في مجموعة الأعمال العلمية المخصصة للعلاقة المتداخلة بين الفكر الإسلامي والتراث الثقافي الأفريقي وإعادة تقييمها وتجديدها. ولهذا يليق بنا أن نقرّ بأنه على الرغم من الاهتمام البحثي المتزايد بالجوانب الثقافية والسياسية والاجتماعية لتاريخ الإسلام في أفريقيا، إلا أن العديد من الباحثين الذين يدرسون الإسلام والمجتمعات الإسلامية في أفريقيا ما زالوا غير مدركين للمساهمات الفكرية الكبيرة المقدّمة باللغة العربية وباللغات المحلية. فثمة حاجة ملحة لتسليط الضوء على الإنتاج الفكري للعديد من كبار العلماء وتوثيقه، ولاسيما الذين كان لهم دور وأثر كبير في الديناميكيات الاجتماعية في عصرهم. ويهدف هذا العدد الخاص إلى سدّ هذه الفجوة في الأدبيات والمساهمة في فهم أوسع للروابط بين التقاليد الفكرية الإسلامية والتراث الثقافي الغني لأفريقيا.

إن وجود أعمال رائدة حول جوانب مختلفة من التاريخ والحضارة الإسلامية في أفريقيا، مكتوبة باللغات الإنكليزية والعربية والفرنسية يدل على التزامنا بتعزيز الخطاب العلمي المتنوع والشامل. ويسعدنا أننا حققنا هذا الهدف بنشر سبع مقالات - أربعة باللغة الإنكليزية، واثنين بالفرنسية، وواحدة بالعربية. ومن بين

مَجَلَّةُ

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المفكرون المسلمون والتيارات الفكرية

والمدينة في أفريقيا

