

Jihad, Peace and Non-violence in Mouridism (1883-1927)

by

Cheikh Seye

A Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

Approved April 2013 by the
Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Charles Haines, Chair
Abdullahi Gallab
Shahla Talebi
Yasmin Saikia

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

May 2013

ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I probe into the ways in which the much-debated word *Jihād* lends itself to multifarious meanings within the Mourid Sufi Order and examine the foundations of the principles of peace and non-violence that informed the relationships between Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba, the founder of Mouridism (1853 ca - 1927) and the French colonial state from 1883 to 1927. As a matter of fact, unlike some Senegalese Muslim leaders who had waged a violent *Jihād* during the colonial conquest and expansion, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba promoted peaceful forms of *Jihād* which partook of his reform and revival movement in the Senegalese society. Yet, it is worth pointing out that the Mourid leader's ethics of peace and philosophy of non-violence as methods of struggle (the etymological sense of the word *Jihād*) during colonial times have been largely unexplored within academia. The contours of these new forms of resistance were grounded on a peaceful and non-violent approach which, according to Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba, was the only way to reach his spiritual, educational and social goals. This thesis proffers a counter-example to religious violence often associated with and perpetrated in the name of Islam. I argue in this thesis that a close investigation into Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's epistemology of *Jihād* evidences that the term *Jihād* has spiritual, educational, social, cultural and economic functions which naturally contrast with its one-sided and violent connotation spotlighted over the last two decades. In conducting research for this work, I used a transdisciplinary approach that allowed me to address the complex issues of *Jihād*, peace and non-violence in a more comprehensive way. Accordingly, I have used a methodology that crosses the boundaries of several disciplines (historical, anthropological, sociological and literary).

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to:

My parents Mamadou Seye and Bintou Fall

My wife and siblings Mame Diarra, Aminata and Cheikh Abdou Ahad

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis would not have been completed without the supervision of the following committee members: Dr Chad Haines, my adviser for accepting to supervise this work. I thank him for his useful comments and corrections that are instrumental in this work, Dr Abdullahi Gallab and Dr Shahla Talebi whose encouragement, advice and availability throughout my graduate studies I have truly appreciated.

I'd like to express my heartfelt thanks to Dr Joel Gereboff who has guided my steps into this new Program and in this new academic system ever since I started the Master in fall 2011. He has been very helpful in many other academic issues. I am thankful to Dr Mark Woodward who, while being thousands of miles away from ASU, accepted to conduct an independent class with me last spring. I'd like also to express my gratitude to Pr Omar Sougou at UGB (Senegal) who, ever since he supervised my Master's thesis in literature, has closely followed my academic development in which he has been instrumental in many ways.

The *Archives Nationales du Senegal* (ANS) has been a useful resource for archival materials I have used in this work. I profit by this opportunity to thank ASU's Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict (CSRC) for granting me a summer fellowship to conduct archival research in Dakar, Senegal.

I could not close these acknowledgements without being grateful to the Fulbright Program whose grant has made possible my stay and studies in the United States. This thesis hopefully partakes of its goal which is "to increase mutual understanding between the United States and other countries".

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This Master thesis investigates the notions of peace and non-violence within the West African Sufi order known as Mouridism during the period stretching from 1883 (the year it was founded) to 1927 (the year of the demise of its founder).

What is Mouridism's conception and understanding of *Jihād*? In which ways does Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's conception of non-violence during his encounter with the French colonizers enhance our understanding of this concept? How could he have founded and led a Sufi Order during colonization and stood up to the powerful colonial state for decades? These are probing questions among others that this thesis proffers to investigate.

Historical Background

The advent of Islam in Africa dates back to the formative years of Islam. According to Khadim Mbacké, "Islam first reached Africa through the migration to Abyssinia of a group of some of the earliest converts to the religion. These were in essence refugees fleeing persecution at the hands of pagan Meccans. This event occurred before the migration of the Prophet to Medina and the beginning of the Muslim conquests" (xiii).

Islam in Africa particularly in the West African region is shaped by Sufism, a protean Islamic philosophy to which Mouridism belongs. The Mourid Order was founded in 1883 by Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba (1853 ca -1927), a Senegalese Muslim scholar and

reformer. Islam in Senegal is dominated by Sufi Orders which exert a towering influence over the daily life of the majority of Muslims.

Prior to the founding of Mouridism, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba was a peripatetic and ascetic figure. He was a teacher of Qur'an and religious sciences, a poet and a prolific author (Fernand Dumont, Mahmoud Niang, Didier Hamoneau, and Mbacké). Although he composed numerous panegyric poems dedicated to Prophet Muhammad, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba wrote several books and treatises dealing with theology, Islamic jurisprudence, Sufism, religious sociology and Arabic literature. It is worth noting that the issues of *Jihād*, peace and non-violence are a transversal theme that runs through all his writings, regardless of the subject matter.

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba was dedicated to his teaching profession and scholarly activities until a time when he gathered his students and informed them about his decision to give up teaching. He set out to initiate a few of his students who were willing to follow him to the path of *tarbiyya* (from the Arabic verb *rabbā* which means “to raise, to bring up”). *Tarbiyyah* meaning “upbringing” is used by extension in Sufism to refer to spiritual training. The *tarbiyyah* method was implemented by Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba for spiritual as well as for peaceful purposes as it was primarily meant to instill into his disciples religious and moral qualities such as piety, honesty, forbearance, endurance, sense of forgiveness and surrender to God's Will (interview with Serigne Saliou).

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's method of *tarbiyya* consisted in educating each of his followers according to his own idiosyncrasies. Those who espoused that new spiritual

method took an oath of allegiance (*jebbëlu* in Wolof and *Mubāya'a 'a* in Arabic) and were thus his followers. The word Mourid (from Arabic *Al Murīd*) refers to the Muslim who aspires (*arāda*) to accede to God's Satisfaction (*Riḍallāhi*). The word "Mouridism" is then the religious philosophy of the Mourids.

Historically, the advent of Mouridism in 1883 virtually coincided with the end of the French colonization process in Senegal. Soon after the founding of Mouridism, the co-habitation between the new spiritual Order and the French colonial state was fraught with tensions. The present study consequently attempts to unravel the historical events that pitted the French colonizers against the Mourid leader and analyzes Mourid responses to colonialism.

The huge diversity and complexity of religious and social movements and the specificity of the context in which they emerge and operate make it impossible to approach one movement against a particular social or religious theory. Moreover, one major criticism leveled against SMT (Social Movement Theory) is its "one-size-fits- all" approach to social and religious movements. That is why Joel Benin and Frederic Vairel suggest that SMT should be used cautiously and critically (23).

In addition, Western conceptual tools are often used to make sense of and comprehend Islamic movements to which Sufi Orders belong. This methodology oftentimes problematizes the validity and legitimacy of some assumptions made about these movements. A more in-depth investigation into social, historical and religious

realities that presided over the emergence and shaped the trajectories of social and religious movements are necessary for such types of studies.

Indeed, social and religious movements spring from a particular historical context, undergo changes in the course of their evolution and have different goals. Hence Beinín and Vairel underscore “the importance of integrating history and context into the analysis of social movements” (12). In fact, the historical and contextual framework of social and religious movements always sheds useful light on and allows us to get insights into their processes and dynamics.

Statement of Purpose

In this thesis, I set out to investigate and theorize the multiple function of the meaning of *Jihād* in Mouridism by looking at the colonial as well as local processes that led to the tense relations between the Mourid leader and the French colonizers. What are the ways in which Mouridism improves our understanding of the much debated notions of *Jihād*, peace and non-violence? What are the different forms of *Jihād* in Mourid epistemology?

At this juncture, it is worth noting that this thesis is not one more apologetic enterprise to foreground an idyllic or apologetic image of *Jihād* – or of Islam for that matter – by harping on the litany of “Islam is a religion of peace, tolerance...” as it has been overused in many scholarly works (John Esposito, Khaled El Fadl, Abdul Gafoor Noorani). The iterative discourse on the irenic dimension of Islam is not indeed enough to make Islam a religion that values and promotes peace and abhors violence.

This work is not meant to celebrate an iconic Sufi figure either, nor to commend his conception of *Jihād* or his philosophy of peace and non-violence. It mainly attempts to highlight and emphasize forms of *Jihād* initiated by a Sufi leader in the nineteenth century colonial Senegal that have gone largely unexplored in academia.

Jihād is an Arabic word which means “struggle”, “sustained effort”. It is derived from the verb *jāhada* meaning “to strive”, “to struggle”. The notion of *Jihād* has been profusely theorized in a huge body of literature. Over time, it has taken on a polysemic function so much so that it is difficult to delineate all its contours. But how does the word of *Jihād* render the polysemic function of the term with regard to Mouridism?

Jihād, peace and non-violence are recurrent themes in contemporary Islamic/religious studies. Within the *Jihād* literature, the concept of *Jihād al Akbar* or “greater *Jihād*” has extensively been used in a narrow sense to just mean the struggling process against the self or the soul – *Jihād al nafs*. *Jihād al nafs* which amounts to a spiritual struggle is one of the many forms of “greater *Jihad*” promoted by Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba. Incidentally, the “greater *Jihād*” is predicated on a much-quoted and debated Hadith in which Prophet Muhammad was reported to have said: “we have come from the lesser *Jihād* and we are heading towards the greater one”.

David Robinson identifies three categories of Muslim leaders in the relationships between Islam and politics at the colonial as well as at the local level in Senegal: “The first was maintaining distance from the centers of power while maximizing the autonomy of one’s own Muslim community. The second was participation at the courts of the ruling

classes, as counselors, judges, and imams. The third was the determination to change the system through the jihad of the sword” (*Paths of Accommodation* 16-17).

Among these three aforementioned positions of Muslim leaders, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba would be classified in the first category: those who distanced themselves from what they considered secular political systems, whether from the local or from the colonial side. Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba used *Jihād* as an alternative to previous ways of waging *Jihād* in colonial Senegal by focusing on the educational, social and economic dimensions. He also attempted to bring about an egalitarian Mourid community freed social inequities based on castes and social positions. From then onwards, spiritual and social merits were contingent upon personal achievements rather than upon social background. But is it worth noting that those reforms affected more the dominant Wolof society than other ethnic minorities. Monir Moniruzzaman argues that:

The main objective of Islam is to eradicate anti-social elements that are harmful to human society. Such elements could be of various natures such as political oppression or injustice, economic exploitation, moral decadence, social crimes, administrative discrimination and corruption, environmental degradation and threats, and military brutality and oppression. Islam uses the concept of *jihad* as a value-based “ultimate effort” (the literal meaning of *jihad*) to eliminate these harmful elements in order to make human society safer and more peaceful (2).

This thesis provides a multiple reading of *Jihād* through the prism of colonization, Sufism and reform and peruses the concepts of peace and non-violence in Mouridism. In the process, it proffers practical examples pertaining to the social, educational, financial

realms with regards to the “path to accommodation” theory which, according to Robinson, marked the last period of the relationships between Mouridism and colonialism.

Literature Review

There is an extensive amount of literature on Mouridism but those materials – mostly written in French and in English – mainly deal with the historical, social and economic issues in the Order. The first book ever written by a Western author on Mouridism has been the work of the French Islamicist and colonial administrator Paul Marty (1882-1938). Marty, as director of Muslim Affairs, was commissioned to do research on Mouridism and on its leader.

Marty’s two-volume book titled *Etudes Sur L'Islam Au Sénégal* published in 1917 has been extensively and severely criticized by scholars for presenting Mouridism as no more than a heterodox Islamic movement the aim of which was to exploit the *naïveté* and ignorance of popular masses for religious ends. (Donal Cruise O’Brien, *The Mourides of Senegal*, Christopher Harrison, Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation*, Mbacké, Cheikh Anta Babou, and John Glover). The criticism levelled against Marty is accounted for by the fact that his book was written through the lens of colonial theories to primarily serve the interests of the colonizers. Hence *Etudes Sur L'Islam Au Sénégal* needs to be put into perspective.

The theme of peace and non-violence in Mouridism has briefly been touched upon by a few historians, Islamicists and political scientists (O’ Brien, *The Mourides of*

Senegal, Dumont, Harrison, Robinson *Paths of Accommodation*, Mouhammadou Diop, and Babou). Indeed most of these scholars were interested in and therefore stressed the historical aspects, the socio-economic dimension of Mouridism and the political issues involving the Order around the 1970s during the post-independence era in Senegal.

Dumont was the first Western scholar to study the religious thought of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba, a terrain that was left unexplored until then. Dumont's main task was to build upon the writings of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba to debunk the heterodox theories his French compatriot Marty had popularized about the Mourid Sufi Order.

As historians, Harrison, Robinson and Babou have each traced the founding of Mouridism and delineated its evolution from its inception up until the decease of its founder in 1927. Their works are at the crossroads of colonialism and power relations between the local and colonial powers while dealing with the construction of identity within the Mourid Sufi Order as well.

All the above-mentioned scholars have emphasized in their works the relationships between Mouridism and colonialism and the gradual *rapprochement* that eventually marked their relations during and shortly after World War I. But none has underscored the polysemic functions of *Jihād* in Mourid epistemology, nor highlighted the ethics of peace and non-violence in Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's religious philosophy. Moreover, the issue of *Jihād* was undoubtedly at the root of the tensions between Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba and the colonial state as the accusation of fomenting *Jihād* led to the former's two exiles.

Thus far, no comprehensive academic work in English has been devoted to the peaceful confrontation between Mouridism and colonialism. This work, to some degree, purports to fill the gap left by previous scholars regarding such crucial issues as *Jihād*, peace and non-violence. Central are indeed those issues in the historic encounter between Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba and the colonial authorities as they shape the way the Mourid leader is viewed till nowadays i.e an advocate of peace and non-violence.

Methodology

This thesis relies on historical, archival, literary, anthropological and sociological sources. During my summer archival research in Senegal at the *Archives Nationales du Senegal* in May-June 2012, I gleaned materials that are relevant to this work, especially in the second chapter. Whenever those documents appear in the text, they are followed with the acronym ANS (*Archives Nationales du Senegal*). In addition, the ground-breaking book by Omar Ba, former archivist at ANS, constitutes a supplemental resource to archival materials.

I have sparingly used interviews as a minor source of rendering oral documents. For methodological purposes and owing to other constraints peculiar to a Master's thesis, I have avoided using many oral sources in this present study. The only interview I have conducted is with Serigne Saliou, a scholar and researcher on Mouridism, Sufism and Islam at the *Research Center for Training and Islamic Education* in Senegal based in Dakar.

Thus, the theoretical framework of this thesis is based on a transdisciplinary approach. It is worth pointing out that all the English translations provided in this work, whether from Arabic, French and Wolof sources are mine.

Significance and Limitations of the study

Straight off, it is noteworthy that this work is one of the rare Master theses written in English about Mouridism and certainly the first work in English that exclusively focuses on *Jihād*, peace and non-violence in Mouridism. This work purports to contribute to the debate about the role of non-violent religious movements. Non-violent Islamic movements are not indeed enough researched in scholars' works.

This thesis enhances our understanding of the much-debated notion of *Jihād*. As a matter of fact, it identifies and explores original and unique ways of making sense of *Jihād* in Islam, especially within the understudied "African Islam" in which Sufi leaders play a crucial role. El Fadl stresses the significance of Sufi discourse in Islam as follows: "To not acknowledge these important voices of religious authority in the past and present is to ignore the traditional plurality of authorities in Islam, especially if these authorities do not situate themselves in the center of the state apparatus" (83).

This thesis which centers around and focuses on a Sufi Order and its founder with respect to the issues of *Jihād*, peace and non-violence is inevitably subject to some limitations. Given the narrow scope of the subject and because of the specific requirements and inherent limitations of such a work, I could not have included many

Muslim scholars and Islamic movements. In fact, there are many reformers in Islam in and outside Africa who would fit well in this type of study.

However, while focusing on a particular Sufi tradition, the overall arguments of this thesis are to be put in, as they partake of, the broad philosophy of Sufism referred to as the mystical tradition of Islam. Furthermore, such an academic choice is accounted for by and points to the culture of diversity within Sufism and Islam in general and testifies to the plurality of Islamic schools of thought.

In conducting this work, I encountered uncommon challenges. First off, I have not received any undergraduate training in Religious/Islamic studies and I was admitted to the Master's program less than two years ago. The second challenge bears on the complexity and intricacy of issues such as *Jihād*, peace and non-violence which have been theorized profusely but understood differently. In the process of undertaking such an arduous task, my work, like those of many scholars who wrote on those subjects (such as Esposito and El Fadl to name but a few), is exposed to the thin and easy-target brand of apologetics.

The truth of the matter is Islam – of which Mouridism is only one among the many branches – has been on a defensive posture ever since the attacks on World Trade Center occurred on 9/11 2001. Those unfortunate events ushered in a new era in the relationships between Islam and the West (Esposito) the civilizations of which would enter into a perceived “clash” (Samuel Huntington). For a Muslim, writing on issues of

Jihād being non-violent and on related subjects such as peace and non-violence becomes a daunting enterprise.

Structure of the Work

The first chapter of this thesis is devoted to the introduction. In the second chapter, I am investigating Mourid responses to colonialism and highlighting the ways in which they were regarded as peaceful. How did the French colonizers react to the non-violence advocated by Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba in that particular context? In order to delineate an overview of the historical context in colonial Senegal, it will be necessary to historicize Mourid encounter with the French colonizers. At some point in the colonial era, there arose the need for the spiritual and colonial orders to embark upon a period of *rapprochement* which Harrison refers to as “the symbiotic relationships between the state and the Mouride brotherhood” (165).

The third chapter in this work theorizes Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's epistemology of *Jihād* by underscoring different forms of *Jihād*. In the process, it touches on the connections between *Jihād*, *hijra* and *fatwa* in a historical perspective.

The fourth chapter analyses the rhetoric of non-violence in the writings of and on Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba and in his life by looking at the theories, principles and ideas which underpin it. How was non-violence used by the Mourid leader as a means to reach his educational, social and spiritual goals?

CHAPTER 2

INVESTIGATING MOURID PEACEFUL RESPONSES TO COLONIALISM

The Founding of Mouridism and the Issue of Political Islam

The birth of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba (ca 1853) corresponds with the beginning of the French conquest of West Africa. More interestingly, the Mourid Order coincidentally came into being in 1883 when the French colonization had almost completed its process in the former colony of Senegal.

This historical coincidence has been viewed by many scholars as a formative and decisive period in the future relationships between the newly born spiritual order incarnated by Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba and the temporal order embodied by the French colonizers. O'Brien argues that "[t]he Mouride movement originated ... as a response to French imperialism, which (in its direct and indirect effects) created the social environment in which the brotherhood took root and grew" (*The Mourides of Senegal* 286). Incidentally the French term "mouridisme" is said to have been coined in 1917 by the French colonial administrator and scholar Paul Marty to refer to the Mourid Order.

The Wolof ethnic group was (and still is) the largest ethnic group in Senegal. Most of the local powers in pre-colonial and colonial times were held by Wolof people. The Wolof were at the heart of the colonization process and many Wolof kings fought against the French colonizers who were expanding their territorial conquests inside their heartland. The French colonization brought about some changes in the socio-political structure of the Wolof society which managed to preserve its feudal and royal political system.

Following the defeat of the last Wolof sovereign Lat Dior in 1886, the French were faced with no real resistance in the colony. Wolof power structures were disrupted by the French colonial system. Depicting the socio-political atmosphere in Senegal shortly before the advent of Mouridism, Creevey elaborates upon this situation:

Those who resisted were beaten in war. Those who did not, or who at least eventually made peace with the colonialist, found themselves auxiliaries of the French. Their source of power was destroyed as the French abolished their lines of revenue and made them dependent on the colonial system for their authority. The Wolof communities were broken up into smaller units whose rulers were impotent adjuncts to the French government. With the destruction of the power of the rulers the whole related religious and social system of the Wolof was dislocated. (295).

French colonization in West Africa – of which Senegal was the headquarters – started in 1854 (Maranz 22). On account of the complex nature of the French colonial system, it is very difficult to investigate it in a comprehensive way as it touched upon many realms in human activity and social life. As a matter of fact, as explained in the second chapter, the French adopted a form of administrative rule commonly called “direct rule”. This form of colonial administration had a multifaceted face leaving little leeway to the colonized subjects who were under the total control of the colonial metropolis in all matters concerning their life (political, social, cultural, religious, and economic).

O’Brien has delineated a panoramic picture of the politico-religious situation in the French colony of Senegal, shortly prior to the advent of the Mourid Order. During French conquest and expansion, he argues, “Islam acquired something of the status of an

‘anti-colonial religion’ [...] as the warrior *marabouts* [religious guides] led much of the most tenacious and effective local resistance” (*The Mourides of Senegal* 32).

Indeed all of the armed resistance groups whether belonging to the political or to religious movements, were crushed by the French powerful colonial state which was no match to the armies of local warriors. Based on Hamoneau’s study of the religious philosophy of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba, it can be inferred that the Mourid leader chose the third option among the ones Hamoneau presents about the attitude of Senegalese religious leaders at that time: “Between the suicidal revolt of some people and the ashamed subservience of others, a third attitude one might call the happy medium full of dignity was an available option while awaiting God’s assistance” (96).

The types of *Jihād* (in terms of armed and non-armed struggle) waged by Islamic leaders in Senegal such as Elhadj Oumar (1797-1864), Ma Ba Diakhou Ba (1809-1867), Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba, Elhadj Malick Sy (1855-1922) and in other African countries such as Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio (1754-1817) in what is now Nigeria, Mouhammad Ahmad al-Mahdi in Sudan (1845-1885), Cheikh Ma El ‘Aynayni (1830-1910) in Mauritania to name but a few raise the question of what should the relationships between religion and politics be. More specifically, it comes to posing the debate between Islam and what is referred to as “political Islam”.

From Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba’s perspective, it is to be understood by the usage of the word “politics” its secular sense i.e the administration of state and governmental affairs involving politicians and political groups. Such a conception of politics entails ways, means and strategies to accede to and exercise political power in contrast to the

spiritual power claimed by some Muslim leaders in pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial times. In keeping with their Sufi principles, Muslim leaders like Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba wanted to keep some distance with non-spiritual matters.

The relationships between religion and politics are indeed viewed differently. In the time of Prophet Muhammad, religion was inextricably linked to politics as politics was based on religion. Nowadays, the trendy concept of “Political Islam” has generated so many debates among Muslims and among scholars of Islam over the last decade (El Fadl, An-Naim, and Bayat). In colonial Senegal, “political Islam” did not have much currency as most Muslim leaders shunned involvement with politics, a realm they left to local and colonial authorities.

As far back as the early 1500s, a Soninke scholar named Al-Hajj Salim Suwari and who was living in the former Western Sudan known as present-day Mali developed a religious peaceful philosophy to help the *Juula* people cope with the particular context in which they lived. Indeed they were living in a non-Muslim dominated society. Al-Hajj Salim Suwari then initiated peaceful efforts which gave rise to a pacific co-existence with non-Muslims in the former Sudan (Robinson, *Muslim Societies in African History* 56). This peaceful philosophy is commonly referred to as the “Suwarian tradition”.

As will be seen later in this chapter with the Mourids in colonial times, the *Juula* “left the realm of “politics” to their local hosts” (Robinson, *Muslim Societies in African History* 55). By promoting a separation between religion and politics, Al-Hajj Salim Suwari urged his fellow Muslims to adopt a peaceful posture when living on a land dominated by non-Muslims and accommodate themselves with the non-Muslim rule:

“[Muslims] could accept the jurisdiction of non-Muslim authorities, as long as they had the necessary protection and conditions to practice the faith. In this teaching Suwari followed a strong predilection in Islamic thought for any government, albeit non-Muslim or tyrannical, as opposed to none” (Robinson, *Muslim Societies in African History* 56).

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba seemed not to be interested in, nor was he involved in any political positions prior and during the colonial era. His religious agenda, as he wrote in some of his poems, was to revive the *Sunna* of Prophet Mouhammad he believed was trampled upon by local leaders. He then spiritually trained his followers according to *Sunna* tradition and Sufi principles such as *tarbiyya* and *tarqiyya*. In this respect, Creevey asserts: “More potentially valuable as support for the argument that Murīd founder was not concerned with politics are his poems and books, both published and hand-copied” (297).

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba’s life was “marked by a rejection of deliberate involvement with rulers, an aspiration to separate the politics of Islam from the politics of kings, and an attraction to mysticism” (Babou 55). To substantiate his claim, Babou reports a scene in which Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba confided in his son Mouhammadou Bachir: “I lost the slightest interest I had in worldly and temporal matters when I saw, while living in Kajoor, the bodies of Muhammad Fati and Ale Lo, two persons from a respected Muslim family in Njambur, killed by dammeel for mere political reasons” (56, and Glover 69).

The Mourid leader could not militarily oppose the French on the grounds of imperialism or colonialism as this would mean he would have been involved in politics or

interested in worldly matters. Creevey expands on this issue of political Islam in the following statement:

The strongest evidence that Ahmad Bamba was not interested in fighting the French comes from the proliferation of books and letters which the Shaykh wrote. All of those demonstrate an overwhelming concern with the matters of religion and of Islam specifically [...] the letters which he wrote to the French administrators (preserved in the Dakar Archives) exhibit a uniformly peaceful intent on his part. Almost all of them seem to have the purpose of denying accusations and expressing his desire to live tranquilly in amity with the authorities. (295).

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba has indeed witnessed the failure of political Islam in Senegalese history. In this respect, Babou states that Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba “experienced firsthand the devastating effect of political violence on Wolof society and the failure of the remedies proposed by the Muslim leadership, whether through alliance with rulers or violent opposition to them” (55).

Glover explains that after Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba questioned the legitimacy of the *fatwā* about fighting and taking the boot of Ahmadou Cheikhou issued by King Lat Dior’s judicial adviser *Qādi* Madiakhate, the Kajoor sovereign summoned him to the court for interrogations. The religious leader refused to comply with the royal summon, by referring to the Islamic tradition by which the king goes to visit the scholar rather than ordering him to the royal court. He cited as precedent the refusal of the famous scholar Malik ibn Anas to visit the court of the Abbasid ruler Harun al-Rashid due to his belief that the khalifah was only interested in secular matters. [Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba]

informed Lat Joor that, “[he] would be ashamed if the angels saw [him] before the door of a sovereign for a [purely] secular affair (Glover 71).

In spite of his avowed detachment from the political realm, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba was branded by the colonial as well as by some local authorities as a religious man who had political ambitions, which prompts Diop to render his ascetic stance in this emphatic statement: “the difference between [Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba] and those who seek this world is comparable to the distance between East and West” (39).

The Mourid founder believed that the Islamic religion and politics have different (albeit not divergent) ultimate objectives and foci as the former mainly trains the believer to have salvation in the after world while the latter is primarily focused on this world. Between power and piety, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba chose the latter to paraphrase Robinson (*Muslim Societies in African History* 185).

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba’s attitude which frowned upon involvement in what he viewed as “non-religious” politics did not though keep him out of the reach of the holders of political power as soon he found himself

entangled in the struggle for power between the king of Jolof [Samba Laobe] and Fara Biram Lo... When the governor learned through intelligence sources, which would prove later to be fabrications, that Samba Laobe [the king of Jolof] had become a disciple of [the Mourid leader] and that he was conspiring with him to wage jihad, he decided to take radical action. (Babou 75). The “radical action” that the governor meant to take was the colonial decision to exile Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba to Gabon for seven years (1895-1902).

Mouridism and Colonialism

The interplay between French colonialism and Mouridism – or for that matter the broader theme of the relationships between France as a colonial superpower and Islam in West Africa – was complex and complicated. The tension that was continuously growing between Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba and the colonizers was exacerbated by the struggle for power among the local aristocrats who seemingly bore a grudge against the Mourid leader for attracting so much power on him (Glover 91). In fact, a growing number of Senegalese people by that time recognized Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba as the holder of legitimate authority even though the Mourid leader overtly stated and wrote many a time that he was not interested in any authority and power in this world.

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's personality and the popularity of the Sufi order he had just founded were viewed as obstacles to the process of colonization in Senegal by the French colonial state which relied on local chiefs' unfavourable reports against the religious leader (Glover 97). To make matters worse, the continuous back-and-forth movement of local populations flocking to and seeking benediction from the Mourid Sheikh aroused suspicion among the colonizers who feared the advent of a new spiritual order (Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation*, O'Brien, *The Mourides of Senegal*, Babou, and James Searing). Later on Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba was accused of paving the way to *Jihād* as “holy war”, “a tradition which [he] never embraced”, Robinson upholds (*Muslim Societies in African History* 187).

The crux of the matter is that the Mourid Order was perceived as a counter-power to the colonial state which, in its eyes, stood as an overpowering authority over local

populations. It was not only the French colonial authorities who started feeling the threat of the new religious order founded by Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba. In reality, much of the accusation of fomenting *Jihād* labelled against Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba, Glover observes, was orchestrated by local chiefs and colonial agents who viewed Mourids and their leader as a threat to the effective administration of their territory (7).

Babou further elaborates on the attitude of the Mourid disciples as follows:

Chiefs also protested that their power was undermined by the prestige of Mourid sheikhs, who snubbed them and bragged that they recognized only the French commandants and residents as superior authorities. They asserted that the Murids were trying to create a state within the state, an idea that was later endorsed by the French administration. They also denounced the reluctance of Murids to pay taxes even as they lavishly donated to their sheikhs (117-118).

As a result of the numerous complaints filed by the local chiefs against Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba to the colonial authorities warning them against Mouridism and its leader, any Mourid actions, activities and movements were under strict surveillance.

Furthermore, the Senegalese colony suffered economically due to the refusal of many Mourid disciples to pay off taxes. On the other hand, they voluntarily gave pious gifts or *hadāyā* (sing *hadiyyah*) to their Sheikhs to the detriment of the colonial state, waging a sort of Gandhian ‘war bereft of every trace of violence’ (Namita Nimbalkar).

Several former local chiefs who were members of kings defeated by the French colonizers along with their subjects joined Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba in Jolof and became his disciples. This situation, combined with reports issued by local and colonial chiefs, sent alarming signals to the colonial state.

In a report issued by Leclerc, a French colonial officer, on 10 July 1895, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba was accused of making numerous predications to his disciples and storing munitions in his house. To make matters worse, about 1000 Mourid disciples ready to wage *Jihād* (as “holy war”) against the colonizers were rumored to be at the disposal of the Mourid Sheikh (quoted in Oumar Ba 31).

As a result of this tense atmosphere, the colonial authorities sent out letters to summon Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba to account for his alleged preparation for *Jihād*. He responded that he was awaiting God's order to go, which the colonizers construed as an act of defiance. Robinson contends that the French had some colonial axe to grind in condoning the accusations labelled against Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba without prior verification: “It was not easy for the French to verify what they were saying, and the informants learned to manipulate the system. They knew what kind of information was sought, needed, and believed, and how to integrate their own interests with that information” (*Paths of Accommodation* 4).

Thus, the colonial *Conseil Privé* met to decide upon Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba’s exile. Following is an excerpt of the report of the deliberation:

On Thursday 5 September 1895 at 9am on the convening of the Governor, the Privy Council met in the usual deliberation room [...]After having investigated some issues of the Colony, the Council approves of the decision of its above-mentioned members to send on exile to Gabon the religious guide Ahmadou Bamba who will board on September 21st 1895. A monthly stipend of 50 francs will be granted to him during his stay in Gabon (in Ba 22).

As a writer and archivist by training, Ba remarks that Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's responses to the accusations leveled against him were not included in the report of the Privy Council, nor do they feature in any official document (66).

In an archival report dated August 29th 1895 and made by the Director of Political Affairs to the Governor of Senegal, the colonial administration acknowledged that there had been no overtones of "holy war" in Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's sermons, as previously claimed, but simply he enjoyed a towering influence in the country and his authority over the colonial subjects was too great (quoted in Ba 43-44).

In an ultimate attempt to isolate Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba after eleven years of exile, the colonizers confined him in custody in Thiëyeen (1907-1912), a landlocked place located in the region of Jolof to which Mourid disciples would find it hard to get access. Towards the end of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's confinement in that region, a decision was issued by the French colonial office known as the *Bureau Politique* to suspend and later restrict visit permits delivered to Mourid disciples. The report specified only his immediate family members who had "good reasons" to see him were allowed to do so (Report addressed to the General Governor ANS). Notwithstanding, archival sources never reported any complaint or letter of protestation emanating from Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba.

In other respects, it is worth noting that the French *mission civilisatrice* (which I will discuss in the next chapter) was carried out along with the French concept of *Islam noir* (Black Islam) which the French employed to designate what is now referred to as African Islam. The *Islam noir* concept, which was theorized in 1917 by Paul Marty, was

instrumental in the colonizer's approach to Islam in West Africa. Upon Marty's suggestion, the French colonial authorities created and entrusted him with the Direction of Muslim Affairs. The colonial history and the French understanding of the concept *Islam noir* make Glover call it the "African variant" of Orientalism (4).

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's exile to Mauritania was largely interpreted by scholars who wrote on the subject as a continuation of the French conception of *Islam noir*, (Harrison, Ba, and Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation*). *Islam noir* was, in Harrison's account, predicated on the French belief that "African Muslims were not true Muslims because they practiced a 'bastardized' form of Islam" (2). French understanding of how Africans practiced Islam marked their imperialistic moves.

The Ethics of Peaceful Resistance in Mouridism

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba emerged on the religious scene at a time when all armed anti-colonial resistances, whether from the religious side (Elh Omar Tall, Maba Diakhou, Amadou Cheikhou and Mamadou Lamine Dramé) or from the secular side (King Lat Dior Diop, King Alboury Ndiaye) had been defeated. But how did Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's ethic of peace get translated in his life and in his relationships with the French colonial authorities?

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's peace-building efforts started years before his troubles with the colonial authorities began. As a matter of fact, King Lat Dior, who had spiritually submitted to him, fell foul of the French colonizers over the building of railways in his kingdom of Kajoor. King Lat Dior was resolute to wage war on the

French; when the sovereign turned to the Mourid leader for prayers, he “promised to pray for him so that peace might return” (O’Brien, *The Mourides of Senegal* 13).

Nonetheless, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba tried to dissuade King Lat Dior from his warlike behavior by telling him the issue was not worth fighting for, but to no avail. His call for peace is consistent with the Wolof saying which goes, “*jāmm ci la lepp xejj*” meaning “only in peace can things be achieved”. However, King Lat Dior made it clear to the religious leader that he had already made his decision and his determination to fight the French was irreversible; therefore he could no longer back down from his resolution (interview with Serigne Saliou). King Lat Dior later died at Derkhlé (in the Kajoor region) in 1886 during a confrontation with French soldiers.

The same year Lat Dior died (1886), Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba founded his first village he named after Darou Salam to symbolize his desire to live in peace. But soon after he settled in his new village, he began to be under French strict surveillance because of his large and agitated following. When tensions between the two parties reached a stalemate, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba sent his brother and close disciple Mame Thierno Ibrahima to bear a peaceful message to the French authorities (Glover 92).

According to Robinson, upon the encounter between the Mourid leader - who was then alone on horseback – and the French military contingent which occurred in the village of Jeewol, the former did not hold out against them, nor made any defense for himself. Once in Saint-Louis (the Senegalese town that served as the colonial headquarter), Robinson writes, the then director of political affairs Merlin

brought the case not before the General Council, where he would have been closely questioned, but to the *conseil privé*, which the administration dominated. [Merlin]

marshalled his case in terms of the ‘warrior’ following of the marabout, the flow of arms into the peanut basin, and the high level of agitation that made the task of the colonial chiefs impossible (*Paths of Accommodation* 215).

In spite of two exiles (from 1895 to 1902 and from 1903 to 1907) and two home arrests (from 1907 to 1912 in Thiëyeen and from 1912 to 1927 in Diourbel), Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba never resorted to armed struggle, nor called on his disciples to fight back the French colonizers despite the ever-growing following which O’Brien estimated to 70,000 people in the year 1912 – the year marking the end of his custody in Thiëyeen and the start of his home arrest in Diourbel (*The Mourides of Senegal* 15).

Moreover, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba’s peace-making and non-violent attitude was underscored by the French colonial officer Merlin but for some reasons the colonizers had to crack down on the Muslim leader, as Babou suggests. “Merlin, who was the acting governor at the time, certainly understood that the cleric was not a man of violence, but for the sake of preserving the prestige and authority of the colonial state, he believed it was necessary to force the cleric to comply, using lethal force if necessary” (147).

Mourid followers were agitated and determined to prevent their leader's arrest by all means. As an advocate of non-violence, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba deterred his followers from resorting to armed struggle and consequently avoided any violent clash between the armed men of Commandant Leclerc in charge of arresting him and the Mourid disciples (Ba).

Furthermore, Ba states that Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba’s peaceful and non-violent attitude caused him to avoid another human bloodshed in 1903 – one year following his first seven-year long exile – when a squadron of 150 French soldiers and 50 spahis came

to pick him up from his residence to exile him a second time (1903-1907) as thousands of Mourid disciples were determined to prevent their leader's arrest (Ba 93).

At this juncture, it is worth pointing out that the agitation and zealous behaviour of some Mourid disciples who were rescued from the royal courts may have been unfavourable to the religious leader who nonetheless had unsuccessfully tried to shun the company of the growing people who were following him.

At any rate, Ernest Roume, the French General Governor of Senegal and dependencies (1902-1908), wrote in one of his reports addressed to the French Ministry of Colonies that the Mourid leader's second exile to Mauritania was due to the "turbulence of fanatic disciples of the marabout [religious guide] rather than by his personal hostility" (Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation* 218).

In other respects, Robinson notes that Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's peace-making efforts were not tantamount to frailty or lack of any other alternative but proceeded from a willful religious choice he made. Robinson outlines the peaceful but firm resistance of the founder of Mouridism as follows: "while he never expressed open resistance to his treatment by the French, he apparently never gave them the affirmation of colonial rule that they sought" (*Paths of Accommodation* 216).

Mouridism and the *Détente* Period

After depriving Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba of liberty for 33 years, the French colonizers realized they had never found any evidence indicating Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba was fomenting *Jihād*. But since the Mourid leader was declared innocent, what prompted the colonizers to put him under home arrest and under strict surveillance for the

rest of his life (1912-1927)? What were the ways in which this period of “accommodation” helped appease the tensions that marred the rapport between the Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba and the colonizers? What events ushered in the period I refer to in this section as *détente* and how did they create a sort of *entente* between Mouridism and colonialism?

The period in the history of Mouridism and Colonialism following 1912 corresponds to the pacification process that marked a sort of *rapprochement* in the once strained relations between the two orders – the spiritual and the colonial. The colonizers eased the persecution of the Mourid leader but were all the same concerned about the swift development of the Mourid Order which stood as a local socio-religious response to their imperial and cultural enterprise.

Such a concern was substantiated by a confidential letter issued in 1911 by the Governor General of AOF (French West Africa) William Ponty (1866-1915) in which the French colonial officer expressed his serious concerns about the development of Mouridism which stood as a threat to their actions in different parts of the Senegalese territory (ANS). In the letter in question, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba was required not to welcome any visitor who was not provided with a visa issued by the colonial administrator.

Robinson believes there was a kind of “accommodation” during the *détente* period i.e the two parties had to avoid as much as they could any conflict and make concessions on many issues. Glover renders Robinsonian accommodation as follows: “the French had come to an entente with the Sufi order through recognition of the vital

and productive roles that the Mourids played in maintaining social order among a large segment of the population and their contributions to the economic expansion of the colony' (2).

Albeit different in context and nature, the “paths of Accommodation” theorized by Robinson was similar to the Suwarian accommodationist philosophy (from Al-Hajj Salim Suwari) which dated back to the years around 1500s. This accommodationist philosophy which partook of the “Suwarian Tradition” was a significant aspect of Islam in Africa. It has been elaborated upon by Robinson in his book titled *Muslim Societies in African History* as follows: “Suwari formulated the obligations of the faithful in West Africa into something that we can call the “*Suwarian tradition*”. In this understanding, Muslims must nurture their own language and piety and thereby furnish good examples to the non-Muslims who lives around them” (56).

In other respects, scholars who touched on the special period in the Mourid-French relations (Robinson, Babou, and Glover) have indeed underscored the economic side of the new dispensation which has profusely been reported in the colonial archives. Moreover, the French *Rapport politique* (Political Report) issued in 1926 acknowledged the economic significance of the Mourid Order which was instrumental in the peanut cash crop production (David Maranz 207). Emphasizing the economic dimension of the Mourid/colonial relation, Harrison writes: “it must be admitted that from an economic point of view the actions of the Mourides have contributed enormously to the development of agricultural production on the region of Baol. This beneficial action is clearly a serious counterbalance to the possibility of future difficulties” (166).

For the sake of argument, during World War I, “Darou Mousty (village created by the Mourid leader which he entrusted with his younger brother and disciple Mame Thierno Ibrahima) delivered one hundred tons of millet and fifty tons of peanuts in response to a French request for aid during a famine caused by the war. Part of the donated food was also to be used to help the French feed their prisoners of war” (Glover 131).

Ba highlights the fact that Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba was not resentful, nor spiteful towards the French colonizers in spite of what he was made to suffer for over three decades of persecution. He stresses the social and humanitarian dimension of the Mourid leader by pointing out that in 1909, while he was still under custody in Thiëyeen, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba sent an amount of 550francs to the French colonizers as his financial contribution to the building of an infirmary in Diourbel – the town where he will later be later sent under house arrest for the rest of his life (7).

In spite of their long-held hostility to the Mourid leader, the colonial power turned to Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba for services. Indeed in 1914, the French colonial authorities made a request to Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba to help them provide for desks, chairs and handbooks destined for a school they wanted to set up in Diourbel, which the religious man provided for (Administrator of Diourbel’s January 1st 1914 Report, ANS).

On 28 April 1916, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba was appointed as member of the Advisory Committee on Muslim Affairs in French West Africa (Ba 157). According to Ba, the Mourid leader never attended the Council’s meetings though. Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba certainly wanted to remain true to his longtime-expressed will to distance himself

from secular leaders, be they local or colonial and to reiterate his lack of interest in any titles, as stated by Marty in his report dated on 29 October 1918: “[Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba is] detached from matters of this world and is exclusively concerned with celestial issues and does not want to be granted futile honors of this world” (quoted in Ba 159).

In effect, at its inception, Sufism started as an Islamic movement which stood as “a personal and ascetic reaction to the increasing worldliness of established Islam” (O’Brien, *The Mourides of Senegal* 26). Hence, from that perspective, it is no wonder that, as a Sufi master, the Mourid founder showed such an ascetic posture.

Furthermore, during the recruitment campaign in World War I, at the French's request, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba sent and asked some of his main disciples to send recruits to help the French colonizers in their war efforts (Glover 131).

Besides, in 1919, in recognition of Mourid endeavors to militarily support the French government and by way of thankfulness to Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba’s different financial contributions on several occasions, he was awarded a *Certificate of Recognition* and the *Croix de Chevalier de la Légion d’Honneur* (a high French distinction) in 1919 (the Administrator of Diourbel’s Report to the Lieutenant-Governor of Senegal, 14 January 1919 in O’Brien, *The Mourides of Senegal* 46 and in Ba 166).

In other respects, according to Harrison, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba made a financial contribution of 500,000 francs to the French to help them cope with the devaluation of their currency; the amount of money represented the quarter of the financial contribution of the entire Senegalese colony (166). Robinson asserts that after

he made this financial contribution, permission was issued by the colonial authorities to allow the Mourid leader to build his mosque in Touba (*Paths of Accommodation* 224).

In this chapter, I argue that the historic coincidence between the advent of Mouridism and the making of colonialism in Senegal were crucial elements in the tensions that played those two entities against each other. But the confrontation between the colonial state and the spiritual order was in all respects peaceful insofar as it did not involve violence or armed struggle.

Scholars such as Diop, Robinson and Babou have argued that violent conflicts on the local as well on the colonial side have, in a sense, shaped and made a lasting impact on Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's personality and prefigured his rejection of armed struggle as a form of waging *Jihād*. In fact, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba early understood that his country was under the yolk of French colonization and given the military and economic power of the colonial apparatus, it was impossible to face them.

Cultivating peace and avoiding head-on confrontation was the path he followed along his disciples. Notwithstanding, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba went through a double deportation after being accused of fomenting "holy war" against the colonial authorities. In the following chapter, I will lay out Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's polysemous notion of *Jihād*.

CHAPTER 3

THEORIZING CHEIKH AHMADOU BAMBA'S NOTION OF JIHAD

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's Epistemology of *jihad*

Jihād al akbar or “the greater *Jihād*” is an important concept in Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's life and it permeates his writings. *Jihād al akbar* or *Jihād al nafs* (*Jihād* against the self/soul) is regarded by the Mourid leader as *fard al ‘ayni* or individual obligation as opposed to *fard al kifāya* or collective obligation; in other words, it behooves each and every member of the Islamic Umma to wage *Jihād* against his own self (*Masālik al Jinān*).

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba conceives of his overall *Jihād* as a “struggle in the path of Allah” which is profusely mentioned in the Qur'an (Surat 4, Verses 95, S 5 V35/54, S9 V41/ 81, S 61 V11 etc.). This kind of *Jihād* can take many shapes as it is not a determinate form of *Jihād*. A close investigation into Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's epistemology of *Jihād* evidences that he identifies many forms of *Jihād* which embrace the spectrum of spiritual and moral, educational, cultural, social and economic realms.

Spiritual *Jihād*

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba approaches the concept of *Jihād al akbar* (the greater *Jihād*) through the struggle against what he considers “the four enemies”. He states that, in his spiritual quest, a Muslim is confronted with four enemies which are: *nafs* (self or ego), *shaytān* (Satan), *hawā* (lower desires) and *dunyā* (this world) which he encapsulates

in the four-letter Arabic acronym *na-sh-ha-d* i.e *nafs*, *shaytān*, *hawā*, and *dunyā* (*Tazawwud al Shubbān* verse 627).

To each of the four enemies above mentioned, the Mourid Sheikh argues, there is a prison (to lock them in) and a weapon (with which they fight the Muslim). He argues that:

The prison for *nafs* is to put it in a state of hunger for a longtime and the weapon it uses is the state of being satiated; the prison for Satan consists in embarking upon *zikrullāhi* (remembrance for God) and the weapon it uses is negligence (*ghufūl*) [of the Muslim in matters relative to religious prescriptions and prohibitions]; the prison for *hawā* is silence about useless things and the weapon it uses is prolixity; the prison for *dunyā* is detachment from the futile world by dedicating oneself to [religious] science and action for the face of Allah and the weapon it uses is involvement in frivolities (*Tazawwud al Shubbān* verses 628-636).

1. *Jihād* Against the Self

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba defines the notion of *Jihād* as an individual endeavor to get rid of one's spiritual shortcomings so as to move forward towards spiritual perfection through self-purification. Moreover, the etymology of the word *Jihād* points to such individual endeavor. In the Mourid leader's argument, the real battle worth fighting is the struggle against one's self which is the source of many troubles: "Not really is a brave person he who violently gets rid of his enemies in a fight but the true warrior is indeed he who strives to prevent his eyes from watching lascivious images and abstain from going

to obscene places”, thus he wrote in his poem on religious ethics and decorum (*Nahju*, verses 71-72).

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba initiated *Jihād al nafs* for his disciples but he used to practice it himself in an even more austere and rigid way. He was reported to have imposed a very ascetic life upon himself as he was described as very sober in eating, simple in clothing and very short in sleeping (Niang 4-6).

Besides, Donal O’Brien writes that in the year 1925, a large amount of money was stolen from Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba. The colonial authorities had to get involved by making inquiry into the affair. In their report, they mentioned that Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba “does not keep any accounts of the numerous and substantial offerings which he receives...possessing neither cupboard, nor safe, and furthermore perfectly detached from the things of this world...he stuffed his fortune in an old bathtub, where worthless papers, banknotes and other objects were jumbled together” (*The Mourides of Senegal* 48, sic).

At the end of the spiritual initiation process, the initiated Mourid disciples were expected to be freed from what their leader called “heart shortcomings” such as lying, ostentation, backbiting, slandering, self-conceit etc. and to avoid being under the influence of the *nafs al ammārah bil sū* (“the inciting soul”).

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba ordered his disciples, especially young people (to whom he devoted a long poem called *Tazawwud al Shubbān* or *Provisions of the Youth*) in these terms: “O young people, wage *Jihād* against the self, so may you reach Paradise in the

afterlife. Whoever does not wage *Jihād* against his own self will not be favored with many blessings and bounties” (*Tazawwud al Shubbān* verse 621).

2. *Jihād* Against Satan

Satan, in Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba’s view, is a perpetual and relentless combatant whose only wish is to stand in the spiritual way of the Muslim. Hence the need to wage war on it as it constantly preys upon its target and tries to defeat him. Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba draws upon the Qur’an to fight a tireless *Jihād* against Satan he considers an enemy. “Let not the Chief Deceiver [Satan] deceive you about Allah. Verily Satan is an enemy to you: so treat him as an enemy.” (Surat 35, Verses 5-6).

According to the Mourid leader, Satan first attempts to move the Muslim away from carrying out his or her devotional practices; if its ploy is thwarted, it will gradually lure the faithful into one of these attempts (if any one of those schemes fails): expediting his or her religious practices (‘*ajal*), falling in ostentation (*riyā*) and ultimately having a feeling of self-admiration (‘*ujb*). Satan will thus proceed to its fight till it destroys the religious action in question (*Masālik al Jinān* verses 683-685).

The haunting and daunting image of Satan in Sufis’ consciousness requires them to constantly be on the alert and to be ready to fight it. A *Hadith* about Satan reads as follows:

There are two impulses in the soul, one from an angel which calls towards good and confirms truth; whoever finds this let him know it is from God and praise Him. Another impulse comes from the enemy which leads to doubt and denies truth and forbids good;

whoever finds this, let him seek refuge in God from the accursed devil.” Then [the Prophet] recited the verse: “The devil shows you fear of poverty and enjoins evil upon you” (2:268) (“Ghazali on Jihad al Nafs, sic”).

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba has identified three shields against Satan: being a regular mosque-goer; remembering Allah regularly by making *zikr* and reading the holy Qur’an while being in a state of purification and by musing on its meanings. (*Taqreeb al Aqṣa* verses 1-6).

3. *Jihād* Against Lower Desires

The *Jihād* against *hawā* or lower desires is one of the fiercest battles in the spiritual fight according to Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba. The Arabic word *Hawā* is very often translated into “lower desires” but it sometimes refers to “worldly pleasures”. It is worth noting that it is meant by those pleasures or desires the illicit or unlawful ones with regards to Islamic Law or *Sharia*. Yet Islam does not prohibit Muslims from enjoying life or world pleasures as long as they are sought within the framework of what is considered licit or legal.

In his poem titled *Masālikul Jinān*, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba asserts that the mind should lead the lower desires and not the reverse. Hence Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba states that felicity (*Ṭūbā*) is to those whose desires are directed by his or her mind in view of obtaining God’s satisfaction (verse 678). The *Jihād* against the “lower desires” is akin to the *Jihād* against the self as both are concerned with the inner struggle to control one’s passion and desires. In fact, as Noorani explains, “[t]he Greater Jihad is fighting one’s

animal tendencies. It is internal rather than external striving in the path of God to overcome one's animal side. Man shares with animal certain characteristics which, if let loose, make him a very dangerous beast. To bring these passions under control, that is what Jihad means” (46).

4. *Jihād* Against Duniyā.

Detachment from this world or *zuhd* is a subject to which Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba time and again refers in his writings. As chapter 4 will highlight, he wanted to live an ascetic life. Lo and Nadhiri explain that “Sheikh Amadou Bamba established the Muridiyyah order to express the constant will to pull oneself from earthly possessions and to be totally devoted to the esoteric principles of Islam” (234, sic).

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba’s ascetism draws extensively on the life of the Companions of Prophet Muhammad. In *Nahju*, he addresses their detachment from this world in these terms:

They renounced fortunes to make pious spending, with neither ostentation, nor hypocrisy. They trusted in God, the Provider and were submissive to Him with regard to their subsistence. They were all resolutely turned to the Beyond [the after world] because they had irremediably repudiated its rival [*Duniyā*]. They were not scared by destitution. In truth, they were devoted to the execution of [divine] Orders Through Science, they had dissipated darkness from the horizons (*Nahju* Verses 10-16).

Moreover, it worth pointing out that Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba’s conception of *duniyā* also speaks to Imam Al Ghazali to whom he refers time and again in *Masālik al*

Jinān. As a matter of fact, Imam Al Ghazali argues that this world is a world fraught with deception and illusion:

The deceitful character of the world comes out in the following ways. In the first place, it pretends that it will always remain with you, while, as a matter of fact, it is slipping away from you, moment by moment, and bidding you farewell, like a shadow which seems stationary, but is actually always moving. Again, the world presents itself under the guise of a radiant but immoral sorceress, pretends to be in love with you, fondles you, and then goes off to your enemies, leaving you to die of chagrin and despair (*The Alchemy of Happiness* 34).

At the twilight of his life and prior to the advent of Mouridism, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's father Muhammad alias Mam Mor Anta Sally advised him to be detached from the traps of this world and to shun involvement in political affairs:

Continue to learn the Quran and the sacred texts, without forgetting [Arabic] grammar and jurisprudence. It is only in this way that you will be able truly to understand religion and serve God and His Prophet. The country at this moment is in a very confused state. The only way in which you can aid others and yourself is to flee from the things of this world. (Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation* 212, *Muslim Societies in African History* 185).

As a matter of fact, at the funeral of his father in 1882, the young Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba was called upon by the *imam* who led the post-mortem prayer to take over his father's religious office as *qādi* (judge) of King Lat Dior and to go and offer his

condolences to the king. King Lat Dior was a “pagan” who had converted to Islam and wanted to rule his subjects according to Islamic Law.

The future founder of Mouridism agreed to go for condolences arguing his deceased father was the friend and spiritual advisor to the king but turned down the offer consisting in serving the office of the king. He indeed argued that he did not nurture the ambition of holding any title in this world coming from secular rulers and he was not keen on mixing with secular or political authorities (Hamoneau, Diop, and Babou).

On hearing the young man renounce such an honorific position coveted by so many Muslim scholars at that time, the assembly concluded that he must have been insane. He then composed a poem titled “*Qāloo safeehun*” (“They say he is mad”) and another more famous poem titled “*Qāloo liyarkan*” in which he laid out the spiritual foundation of his detachment from worldly prestige:

I was told to head for the doors of the kings and [I] will be blessed forever. I replied that I surrender my self to God in Whom I trust and I desire nothing but science and religion. I do not bargain on and neither do I fear anybody but my Lord because He is the One Who assumes responsibility for my subsistence and protects me ... O you who blame me, stop blaming [me] because lacking something from this *Dunyā* does not make me unhappy at all. If my detachment from their privileges is considered a flaw, then that is indeed a precious flaw that does not make me unhappy (*Qāloo liyarkan*).

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba argues that the world we are living in is very transient and very deceptive and a perceptive and wise person should focus his/her greatest attention on the eternal world. At this juncture, it is worth mentioning this *Hadith* he

quotes in one of his corpuses: “this present life is a prison to the Muslim and a Paradise to the unbeliever” (*Majmū’a*).

Educational and Cultural *Jihād*

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba founded and grounded Mouridism on the educational, spiritual and social pillars. The praxis of this aforementioned trilogy is expressed in the Mourid slogan: “*jāng, jāmu Yalla ak liggeey*” i.e. education, devotion and action (work).

One year after the decease of his father, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba introduced a new spiritual program which prefigured the founding of the *Mouridiyya* path. The Mourid leader implemented *Tarbiyya* as an educational and spiritual tool to educate his disciples in view of fighting the “enemies” referred to earlier. He initiated a teaching method that he meant to break away with the previous ones that were then being implemented in local religious schools in Senegal and which drew heavily on traditional curricula. He was in favor of an eclectic pedagogic method that emphasized ethical and spiritual values.

In a corrupt Wolof society marked by the tyrannical rule of local leaders and the oppression of the colonizers at that time (Searing), the context was not conducive to a proper educational system that could fully include those values. As a matter of fact, the local aristocracy had been reigning over most of the Senegalese country for centuries prior to the settling of the French colonizers. Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba then conceived of education as an efficient tool that could bring a radical change in society.

The *Tarbiyya* method was tailored to the ontological abilities and idiosyncrasies of each initiated disciple who was trained in diverse vocational trades in the *dāra tarbiyya* or social training school. *Tarbiyya* was meant to shape a Muslim who was knowledgeable with his religion but also who was useful to his society. Through diverse didactic methods the leaders of the Mourids strove (*jāhada*) to inculcate the quintessential message of the Qur'an into his disciples and imparted to them the principles and purposes of *Taşawwuf* (Sufism) through the pedagogy of pattern and paradigm i.e Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba, as a Sufi master, wanted to set a good example for his followers to imitate his behavioral patterns.

As part of his educational *Jihād*, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba and some of his disciples set up *dāras* across the country where children and young people were given a free educational, spiritual and social training. He emphasized education and encouraged the young people who adhered to his newly founded Order to value education: “O children, make rectitude your destination and knowledge your preoccupation. Dedicate yourselves to rote learning and reading and do avoid evil company” (*Tazawwud al Şighār* verses 12-13).

The *Jihād* promoted by Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba was predicated on two principles which are stressed in his writing: education and religion. After he was accused and later indicted by the French colonizers for fomenting *Jihād* (as armed struggle), he wrote a poem in which he denied this accusation and made it clear that his *Jihād* was educational, spiritual and peaceful: “If you [French colonizers] say I wage *Jihād*, you are indeed right but my *Jihād* is waged for the sake of God: I’m waging *Jihād* by

[promoting] sciences (*'ulūm*) and [living by] fear of God (*taqwā*)” (*Yā Jumlatan*, verses 5,6).

Alongside the “*Jihād* of the pen”, there is a fair amount of oral literature about what may be termed “*Jihād* of the tongue”. The “*Jihād* of the tongue” replicates the Qur’anic injunction couched in the famous phrase “*al amr bil ma’ ruf wa nahy ‘anil munkar*” (commanding good and prohibiting evil). Among those Bambian maxims bearing on the “*Jihād* of the tongue”, one can mention:

Any Muslim who lives by these nine principles will be protected in this life and will live a happy life here and in the hereafter: showing reverential fear for God; showing respectful fear for the one who shows reverential fear for God; keeping away from the one who does not show reverential fear for God; refraining from spiritually or morally wrong deeds; staying away from bad people; staying away from bad places; abstaining from anything about which you have no knowledge; not undertaking anything you are sure of being incapable of doing; keeping away from anything that does not belong to you. (interview with Serigne Saliou).

In many respects, Bambian *Jihād* was premised on the revivification of Islamic sciences (as he was inspired by Imam Al Ghazali) and the promotion of a culture of piety. Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba was keen on writing about the principle of piety upon which he based his *Jihād* along with promoting religious science. In a letter addressed to the Mourids, he set the tone for his mission as a teacher and an educator and highlighted the intellectual *Jihād* (effort) to which he intended to dedicate himself:

... I order all those who plead allegiance with me for the sake of Allah to learn ‘*aqāid* [tenets of Faith], *tawheed* [theology], *Ahkām al tahārati* [rules of purification], *ṣalāt* [prayer], *ṣawm* [fasting] and other issues that a ‘*mukallaf*’ [a mature person] should know. Therefore, I have set myself the task of writing books dealing with all those issues for the sake of Allah... (Diop 19).

The leader of the Mourids then took to composing books, poems and treatises on theology (*tawheed*), Islamic Jurisprudence (*fiq*), Sufism, religious sociology and moral philosophy. He links together the *Jihād* through *taqwā* (*Jihād* for piety) and the *Jihād* through ‘*ulūm* (*Jihād* for religious sciences) as he believes that the quest for knowledge should be grounded on an intention to worship God and be helpful to the Muslim community.

During the colonial period, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba designed a project of society which aimed among others at constructing and preserving the colonized's spiritual and cultural identity which was believed to be threatened by French cultural imperialism. Indeed French colonialism was not only premised on political, ideological and economic issues but was tinged with cultural imperialism bolstered by an assimilation politics. Peter Clark underscores the alternative offered by Mouridism in colonial period as follows: “The Murīdiyya, moreover, offered those who opposed colonialism a society, a community and an authority structure which, at least at the more immediate, local level, were Islamic and indigenous rather than non-Muslim and alien” (205).

It is noteworthy that French colonization and British colonization had a few discrepancies in the way they were implemented: while the British opted for a colonial

system called “Indirect Rule”, the French applied a form of administration known as “Direct Rule”. In this respect, Lackner Helen explains that the “British were faced with the problem of administering vast expanses of conquered territories throughout the planet with little money [...] and few men. Added to this, their previous experience in India had been in centralized societies, ruled more or less autocratically by princes” (127).

On top of sending their colonial officers and administration agents to run the colony based on French law and customs, the French colonizers pursued an aggressive cultural policy as theorized in their famous “*mission civilisatrice*” (civilizing mission). The *mission civilisatrice* was predicated on the belief that the African people, especially Black people were considered by the French “uncultured” and accordingly they set out to “civilize” the indigenous people by imposing French civilization and culture upon the colonized subjects.

Mourid resistance was not only geared to the political dimension of colonialism but was equally carried out in defense for the cultural substratum that was thought to be threatened by the French *mission civilisatrice* (civilizing mission) as noted by Robinson: “An important cultural dimension of resistance emerges out of the colonial history of Senegal. Outlined by Louis Faidherbe and conquered in stages in the late nineteenth century, Senegal endured a longer and more intense colonialism any other French possession in Africa” (*The Holy War of Umar Tal* 370).

Indeed colonization in French West Africa involved a cultural agenda embedded in the famous *mission civilisatrice* which was the hallmark of French cultural imperialism. French cultural imperialism consisted in inculcating their culture and

civilization to the colonial subjects making them culturally assimilated. As a matter of fact, in colonial times, Black people were considered uncultured and uncivilized by French colonizers. Maurice Delafosse (1870-1926), a French scholar who got embroiled in French colonial politics but who showed a more scholarly posture than his fellow colonial administrator Marty, challenged the very notion of “non-civilized people” and argued that:

If by ‘civilisation’, one understands the state of social, moral, material culture attained by the great nations of Europe and America, it is certain that one is forced to consider the natives of the Sudan [i.e the Blacks] as not being members of what is commonly called ‘the civilized world’. But if one gives to the word ‘civilisation’ its true meaning, that is if one understands by this word the present state of culture of any society or nation, if, in other words, one speaks not of ‘the civilisation’ but of ‘civilisations’...one is forced to admit that although they have a societal state that is very different from ours, the inhabitants of the Sudan nonetheless have themselves civilisations which are worth the trouble of studying and describing. They are constructed by a group of customs which although only transmitted by tradition have an effect on the life of the people as considerable as our customs augmented by our laws have on our life (quoted in Harrison 104).

The culture and civilization denial was encapsulated in the famous *tabula rasa* theory which consisted in denying Black people any culture, which will later spark off the *Négritude* Movement. Pinpointing the Manichean nature of the colonial world, Frantz Fanon argues that the colonized subject has been goaded into believing that he lives in a separate, different world from that of the colonizer's which is presented as the normative

cosmos (6). Such duality is woven in an imperial colonial discourse against which much criticism has been leveled in the colonial and post-colonial literature.

The French policy of culture denial was encapsulated in the famous *tabula rasa* theory which consisted in denying Black people any culture, which sparked off the *Négritude* Movement spearheaded by Leopold Sédar Senghor (1906-2001) from Senegal, Aimé Césaire (1913-2008) from Martinique and Léon-Gontran Damas from Guyana (1912-1978). The aim of *Négritude* was to fight cultural alienation and promote Black culture. French cultural policy exacerbated the already tense political and socio-economic atmosphere that were prevailing in their colonies, which soon led to bloody wars of independence in countries like Algeria (Glover 4) and Indochina (current Vietnam).

Faced with cultural imperialism, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba set out to inculcate cultural and spiritual values into his disciples so as to bring about the renaissance of his people, much to the detriment of the colonizers who started to force some local chiefs to send their children to French schools. This is how the “*Ecole des fils de chefs*” (chiefs’ children’s schools) was set up. As for Mourid disciples, they shunned French educational systems to which they refused to send their children for fear of being “*assimilés*” (culturally alienated). Robinson writes:

Education is a revealing arena because of the emphasis that the French put on their language, culture, and school system, in its metropolitan and imperial dimensions, and the close relationship that they assumed between knowledge and power. The French often said that an “educated native” could not be “fanatic”, by which they meant a Muslim hostile to French imperialism. (*Paths of Accommodation* 52-53).

Learning the French language was, in the eyes of Mourids, tantamount to assimilating French culture and civilization. They instead sent their children to Islamic schools where they were taught Islamic sciences and where they received a cultural program as well.

All things considered, in their behavioral patterns as well as in their dressing code, Mourids endeavored to remain faithful to their Sufi and Senegalese identity embedded in their Mourid faith and Wolof culture lest they might be influenced by the culture of their colonized, which was a challenging task for colonial subjects indeed.

Social and Economic Jihād

Central to Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's social *Jihād* is Mourid ethics of work which claims spiritual dimensions. The ethics of work in Mouridism has been the subject of much research by scholars (Sy, O' Brien, *The Mourides of Senegal*, Ebin, and Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation*).

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's socio-economic *Jihād* has set the foundation of the Mourid ethics of work. Working is not only a lucrative activity in the Mourid Order; it is regarded by Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba as a form of worship and as such is part of devotional practices (*Tazawwud al Shubbān*). Work is a way of securing double salvation in the Mourid philosophy as it enables Mourids to cater for their needs and those of their family in this life while preserving their dignity and allowing them to focus on their devotional practices without being bothered by material things.

Indeed, Mourids value work not only for economic purposes but also for spiritual ends (Ebin). To have a sense of how Mourids value work, it suffices to quote the famous Mourid saying “*liggeey ci Jāmu Yalla la bokk*” i.e “working is part of devotion”. This Mourid saying has now become part of Wolof proverbial repertoires. In fact, the “ethics of hard-work” proceeds from the spiritual training or *tarbiyya* that was being implemented in Mourid teaching and training centers called *dāras*. *Dāras* were set up by Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba in order to impart a religious education to young disciples and foster the ethics of hard work among older people.

The Mourid leader taught the ethics of work to his disciples as way of liberating themselves economically but also morally from dependency upon the French colonizers who then dominated the economy. For the sake of argument, when in 1926 the Mourid leader wanted to build a mosque, he asked each of his disciples to make a small financial contribution. After the money was collected, he gathered them and told them that by involving everybody in the fundraising, he wanted to teach them to bargain on their own and not to depend on others’ help to realize whatever plan they have for the community (interview with Serigne Saliou). It is within that spirit of work ethics that Mourids rushed to the fields in colonial times to grow the types of food they lived on like millet and peanuts to acquire self-sufficiency in food supply (O’ Brien, *The Mourides of Senegal*, Copans, and Robinson, *Muslim Societies in African History*).

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba called for *Jihād* (struggle) to provide the needy community with their basic needs (food, shelter, clothes etc.). Working for hours on end

in their fields was equally deterrence from indulging in unlawful or illicit activities. The economic *Jihād* had a spiritual but also a social purpose.

It is noteworthy that all forms of *Jihād* promoted in Mouridism (spiritual, educational, social and economic *Jihād*) are implemented in the *dāra*. Hamoneau elaborates on this “socio-economic *Jihād*” in the Mourid Order as follows:

What seems often to distinguish Mouridism from previous forms of Sufism is basically due to socio-economic realities peculiar to Senegal, which prompted spiritual guides, as social guardians of tradition, to sometimes transcend the mere role of spiritual and moral leaders so as to take care of the daily life of their disciples who are often needy people because of their living in an economically weak and sociologically destabilized by a recent colonization (285).

Jihād and Hijra

Jihād and *Hijra* (migration) have been at some point closely linked in the Qur’an (Surat 2 Verses 216, Surat 9 Verse 20) and in the *Sunna* (Prophetic tradition). There is a hadith reported by Bukhari which reads as follows: “Yahya related to me from Malik from Abu'z-Zinad from al-A'raj from Abu Hurayra that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless and grant him peace, said, “Allah guarantees either the Garden or a safe return to his home with whatever he has obtained of reward or booty for the one who does *jihad* in His way, if it is solely *jihad* and trust in His promise that brings him out of his house.” (Imam Malik ibn Anas).

It is worth pinpointing the fact that it is Prophet Muhammad's call for a new religious Faith that led to his persecution in Mecca and later to his emigration to Medine (then called Yathrib). This event is referred to by Muslims as *hijra* or Hegira and marks the beginning of the Muslim calendar. The notion of *Hijra* is associated with the concept of *Jihād* (striving) in the path of Allah.

Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio (1754-1817) was one of the first Muslim leaders in Africa to theorize the relationships between *Jihād* and *Hijra*. The leader of the Sokoto Caliphate upholds the idea that hijra is an obligation which is incumbent on all Muslims; hence the title of his book *Bayan Wujub al-hijrah 'ala al-'ibad* (About the Obligation of Migration for Muslims). In Sudan, as Peter Holt has shown, Muhammad Al Mahdi (1845-1885), also regarded hijra as a necessary step to implement his politico-religious agenda. In fact, since *Mahdi* (meaning the Guided) was believed to appear at a specific place in a specific time, upon self-proclaiming *Mahdi*, the Sudanese leader ordered his followers to migrate so as to better resist the colonial state. It is important to note that both Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio and Muhammad Ahmad placed their *hijra* within the framework of the *tajdeed* or renewal movement the inspiration of which was clearly Prophet Muhammad's *Hijra*.

In 1886, three years after he founded Mouridism, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba left Mbacké Kajoor (the birth place of Mouridism and the homeland of his father). As a matter of fact, the new Sufi Order had attracted so many people he could not quietly fulfill the educational and spiritual goals he had set himself when founding Mouridism. He then moved eastwards to found his first village he named Darou Salam (*dār al salām*)

meaning “the abode of peace”. This movement is regarded by Mourids as *hijra* (in the literal sense of the term which just means emigration).

A few decades prior to the advent of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba, a Tijāni leader named Elhaj Omar Foutiyou Tall (1797-1864) initiated a *hijra* for the purpose of *Jihād* (as holy war). Elhaj Omar realized that he needed *hijra* to mobilize people around his *Jihād* against the Masina people who were not enough good Muslims in his eyes. Hence he fought a very violent battle against those Fulbe people. According to Robinson:

Umar's most lasting contribution to Muslims in Senegal and West Africa was probably his call to *hijra* during the recruitment crisis of 1858-9. By attaching the Islamic conception of emigration to the 'pollution' brought on by French expansion, the Shaikh articulated a response to European intrusion that fell between the futility of fighting and the humiliation of surrender (*The Holy War of Umar Tal* 374).

Jihādists like the Tijāni leader Elhaj Omar Tall invested many efforts to create and maintain a “*dār al Islam*” (land of Islam) which they diametrically contrasted with the “*dār al harb*” (“land of war”) associated with the land of unbelievers (Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation* 143). As for Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba, he took a different perspective on *Jihād* and *Hijra* than his compatriot Elhaj Omar who stressed the need for an armed struggle against “pagans”. Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba co-habited peacefully with those people referred to as “pagans” and with other worshippers of African traditional religions before and after he founded Mouridism.

The “pagans” and “*Ceddos*” (Wolof word for local aristocrats and secular warriors) were known for being very heterodox people who lived a very liberal life: they married more than four wives, drank beer, ransacked people’s goods, raped women and killed at will without incurring any form of punishment. Hence, in the eyes of the *Jihādists*, those people were not Muslims and therefore they should be fought.

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba only spent two years in his residence at Darou Salam as he founded a second village he named after Touba (a word from the Qur’anic term *Ṭūbā* meaning “felicity”, “Bliss”) in 1888. The second and most significant *hijra* in the history of Mouridism took place in 1895 when Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba moved from Touba (about which he wrote several nostalgic verses, especially during his first exile) to settle in Mbacké Bāri in 1895.

In the introductory words to his poem titled *Maṭlabul Fawzayni*, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba mentions the term *hijra* to explain he had settled in Touba as a way of “making *hijra* to revive the Sunna of Prophet Muhammad” (*Maṭlabul Fawzayni*). The main cause of his leaving his town is, according to Diop, due to the overwhelming number of disciples who joined him in Touba, which, in the Mourid leader’s eyes, constituted an obstacle to his spiritual ambitions (35).

As explained by Diop (who quoted Mouhammadou Mbacké Bousso), in Touba many of the disciples came of age, got married and started having children. The growing number of the disciples’ offspring added to the number of people who flocked there to pay a visit (*ziyār*) to the religious leader made the educational and spiritual *Jihād* difficult

to implement (33). As a matter of fact, *Tarbiyyah* in Sufi way requires the initiated disciples to be isolated from non-initiated people who may distract or draw them away from their spiritual training. That is why most of the time the disciples who were going through the *tarbiyyah* process were shut off from the outside world which was believed to be fraught with temptations, distractions and many forms of aggressions.

Jihād and Fatwā

The term *fatwā* (Arabic plural *fatāwā*) has almost the same fate with the term *Jihād* with regards to misunderstanding and one-sided understanding. Nevertheless, like *Jihād*, most cases of *fatwā* issues deal with peaceful and non-violence-related issues which are not brought into the limelight like *fatāwā* bearing on killing or other forms of violence. Very seldom has a non-violent *fatwā* been spotlighted. In the following lines, I investigate two *fatāwā* directly or indirectly implicating the Mourid leader and which stress his irenic conception of *Jihād*.

The first *fatwā* involving Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba was issued a few years prior to the founding of Mouridism. In the 1870s, Amadou Cheikhou, a *Tijāni* Sheikh got embroiled in a violent struggle he called *Jihād* against Kajor king Lat Dior Diop who had converted to Islam. The former was defeated and killed at the battle of Samba Sadio and his booty confiscated by Lat Dior's warriors. Within the framework of the colonial "divide-and-rule" policy – a strategic weapon that helped speed up the colonization process in West Africa, the French colonizers militarily helped Lat Dior fight and crush

the *Jihād* waged by Ahmadou Cheikhou who nevertheless had previously been an ally to Lat Dior. (Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation* 211).

Following the war, the partisans of King Lat Dior looted their opponents' goods. Later on, there was a big controversy opposing a *qādi* named Madiakhate Kala (who was serving at Lat Dior's royal court and who legitimized the war between Lat Dior and Amadou Cheikhou) and the young Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba who openly questioned the legitimacy of the *fatwā*, arguing that by virtue of being Muslims, it was illegal Sharia-wise to take Amadou Cheikhou's and his fellows' booty (Diop 26, and Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation* 24).

Judge Madiakhate grounded his *fatwā* on Amadou Cheikhou's alleged claim to be a Prophet, which led to the following sparring upon which the two scholars embarked in front of King Lat Dior:

[Ahmadou Cheikhou] claimed to be a Prophet and was fighting because of that; therefore his blood is fit to be taken away and it is legitimate to take away his booty as well", the *qādi* argued, to which Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba retorted: "who told you that he claimed to be a Prophet"? – "the people of Kajoor", the *qādi* replied. Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba counter-argued: "the people of Kajoor are his enemies and his feudists, so how can you accept their accusation"? (Diop 29).

Beyond the jurisprudential side of the heated *fatwā* debate, the sparring between the two scholars highlights Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's abhorrence of violence and his outright rejection of war. Besides, the courage he showed before the then powerful king

of Kajoor by daring to question a *fatwā* issued in his favor earned him his admiration and led him to become his disciple later on. According to a Hadith cited by Noorani, “[t]he highest form of jihad is to speak the truth in the face of an unjust ruler” (45).

The “Samba Sadio” episode and the subsequent events apparently affected the Mourid leader and “sharpened Bamba’s criticism of the practice of power” (Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation* 211). Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba distanced himself even more from political power which oftentimes entailed violence at that time. He then started to be reluctant to mingle with holders of power, whether from the local aristocracy or from the colonial apparatus. According to Foucault, because human beings are entangled in power struggle, there have been in the course of history “diseases of power” affecting human relations (779). Power indeed may warp human character and people who are invested with much power may in the long run lose their sense of humanity.

Later on when Ibrahima Macodou Diop – one of King Lat Dior’s relatives – converted to Islam and wanted to take the oath of allegiance to become a Mourid disciple, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba made it clear to him that his allegiance to him was contingent upon his returning all the goods he had looted during the battle of Samba Sadio and to set free the enslaved captured people. The prospective disciple gave back the booty and became part of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba’s following.

Waging *Jihād* against one’s fellow Muslims was not uncommon in Islamic history. As far back as during the Medieval era, the Muslim scholar Ibn Taymiyyah issued a *fatwā* against the Mongols who, in spite of their conversion to Islam, were

declared unbelievers by Ibn Taymiyyah (Esposito 46). Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba believed that Senegalese people who were preyed upon and inflicted violent and deadly use of force by the so-called *Jihādists* in the name of Islam were professing the Islamic Faith and by virtue of which they were as Muslims as the *Jihādists* themselves.

The second *fatwā* in question was supposedly written by Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba about a war against the French colonizers waged by a Mauritanian Sufi leader named Cheikh Ma al-'Aynayni (1830-1910) who belonged to the Fadliyyah Sufi order (an offshoot of the Qadiriyyah order) founded by his father Muhammad Fadil Ould Māmīn. Cheikh Ma al-'Aynayni waged “*Jihad*” against the French colonizers during Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba’s second exile to Mauritania which lasted four years (1903-1907).

Realizing the dire consequences of such a war campaign in terms of human losses and the collateral damages that it may bring in a Muslim society, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba issued a *fatwā*. Following is an excerpt:

...I am determined to write a summary piece of advice to my Muslims brothers so as they do not embark upon wars and ponder over the effects of such things and not let Satan, partisan of chaos, deceive them and lead them to situations they will not be able to come out. Therefore I say: O my Muslim brothers ...do not get involved in this so-called *Jihād* which only would result in human losses and material destruction, not to mention the havoc it would wreak in the country. If you say [to me] that *Jihād* is prescribed by [Islamic] Law and by Sunnah, my response is that it was so in times and circumstances that are different from yours and for people who are different from you [...] we should

treat Christians the way they were treated by Prophet Muhammad. They lived in a peaceful cohabitation without any hostility, nor contempt [...] (ANS)

In other respects, the Mourid leader argues that the French colonizers did not prevent the Muslim community to practice their religion freely. No visible actions were carried out to obstruct or hamper Muslims' worship and devotion; henceforward since there was no obstacle posed by the French colonizers to the free expression of Muslims' religious beliefs, there was no need to foment a *jihād* against the French colonizers.

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's peaceful attitude is reminiscent of Al-Hajj Salim Suwari's. According to Robinson, this Muslim scholar believed that "[t]he military jihad was a resort only if the faithful were threatened. Suwari esteemed that Allah would bring non-Muslims to convert in His own time; it was not the responsibility of the faithful to decide when ignorance should give way to belief" (*Muslim Societies in African History* 56).

Jihād for Social Transformation and Change

As argued in the foregoing passages, there are multifarious forms of *Jihād* waged by Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba. But there is a no less important *Jihād* in Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's epistemology which could be called "*Jihād* for bringing about change in the social fabric". How did this form of *Jihād* contribute to implementing Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's societal reform? How did it speak to his revival movement? How did that type of *Jihād* bring about the dynamics of societal change that transformed to some extent the relations and the local and colonial power structures in colonial Senegal?

Prior to the advent of Mouridism, the Wolof society was very hierarchical and feudal. In that society, one could find “noble men” or *geer*, people who belonged to the group referred to as cast or *ñeeño* and the *jām* or slaves. The appearance of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba on the socio-religious scene became a salvation to the wretched people who were victimized in the ruthless local aristocratic system. As a matter of fact, the Wolof society was then plagued by violence, repression and dictatorship from local kings. As in the pre-Islamic era called *Jāhiliya* (period of ignorance) marked by inhumane practices, local rulers and their acolytes ruled with an iron hand, looting people’s goods, burglarizing their property, raping women, killing innocent people etc.

The *Ceddos* (Wolof for “local aristocrats”) were not enthusiast about the nascent Mourid Order. The Mourid project of society indeed purported, among others, to remove social inequities in the Wolof society (Babou 99). The *Ceddos* domineered over much of the country and ruthlessly subjugated local populations. They garnered support from the local chiefs and formed a coalition meant for hampering the social and spiritual liberation which the Mourid Order wanted to bring about.

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba travelled through the Senegalese Wolof society far and wide. As a matter of fact, he needed to be conversant with Wolof culture, their belief system and mode of life so as to be prepared when the time comes to launch his social reform for the purpose of transforming Wolof society. After getting enough insight into Wolof culture which was keen on secular traditional realities, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba gradually introduced some social reforms that brought about unexpected changes in the social fabric.

For the sake of argument, “[t]he lower-class groups benefitted from a certain relative social promotion, through membership in a community where class and caste were at least formally de-emphasized” (O’Brien, *The Mourides of Senegal* 56). According to O’Brien, the Mourid leader “discouraged the expression of class or caste differences among his followers” (ibid). Class and caste were indeed very symptomatic of the Senegalese society, not only among the Wolof people but also among other ethnic groups. But those reconsiderations of class and caste were more conspicuous in the Wolof community.

Within the framework of his reforms, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba introduced the concept of egalitarian society based on spiritual merits. He grounds his philosophy of an egalitarian society on the provision of the Qur’anic verse that stipulates that the “noblest among you is the one who fears Allah most” (Surat 49, Verse 13). This verse is reiterated several times in his writings.

Mourid egalitarian philosophy helped set up a more stable and equal-opportunity community in many parts of the Senegalese society. From then onwards, any Mourid disciple, no matter his or her family background, could aspire to high spiritual and social rankings. Thus many people who had a low-status social background and who showed commendable religious commitments were consecrated *sheikhs* or religious guides by the supreme leader of the Mourids.

Babou has exemplified this assertion by providing several names of Sheikhs consecrated by Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba among the lower class disciples (99-100). The

consecrated sheikh rises to prominence and takes on the task of leadership and guidance within the Mourid community. As a result, the co-disciples who were socially “superior” to him prior to his spiritual promotion become his subalterns.

Mourid reform movement partakes of the wide meaning of *Jihād* as explained by Esposito: “Depending on the circumstances in which one lives, [Jihād] also can mean fighting injustice and oppression, spreading and defending Islam, and creating a just society through preaching, teaching...” (28). Mouridism indeed claims to be more than a mere Islamic religious philosophy or one more Sufi *tariqa* (Sufi Path) among the host of Sufi Orders that exist in Islam today. As a matter of fact, it purports to offer a project of society or a societal contract aiming at creating welfare in a Senegalese society that was plagued spiritually, morally and socially.

The project of society that Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba wanted to set up was meant to build a society conducive to harmony in the community, sustainable peace and prosperity in the whole social fabric. Because of those reforms, O’Brien concludes, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba was “the mediator of this great social change” in the Senegalese colonial society (*The Mourides of Senegal* 57).

This chapter has evidenced that the word *Jihād* encompasses several societal issues ranging from the spiritual, educational, cultural to the economic realms. In the epistemology of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba, *Jihād* is multifunctional. The Mourid leader makes it clear that his *Jihād* does not point to the *Jihād* of the sword promoted by

previous Muslim leaders in colonial Senegal but it consists in *striving* (the etymologic meaning of the word *Jihād*) and contriving a means to promote religious and cultural education (*tarbiyyah*) while instilling an ethics of work among his disciples which would enable them to be on their own in a particular colonial context.

Sufism ultimately is for Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba about purifying one's *nafs* (soul, self) so as to achieve spiritual perfection while living a peaceful and non-violent life. For the sake of argument, when he wrote that he had forgiven the French colonizers for what they had made him go through, he stated in his poem called *Midādee* (“my ink”): “I have forgiven [the French colonizers] for the sake of Allah with a heart purified [i.e without any resentment]” (*‘afawtu li wajhi allāhi ma’a ṣafwi kalkalee*, verse 27).

The advent of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba was hailed as a turning point in the socio-religious space in Senegal. His epistemology of *Jihad* was meant to bring about social and spiritual transformations in the Senegalese social fabric through the Wolof community where the Mourid Order took shape and developed before expanding across the country. In the process, the Wolof society was re-shaped and reconsidered as the Sufi master worked out an egalitarian philosophy that disregarded social hierarchies based on aristocracies and castes as Babou and O’Brien have argued. As a matter of fact, people belonging to castes (referred to in Wolof as *ñeeño* as opposed to the *geer* or the “noble”) were considered in Wolof societies a lower class (Searing 10-11).

CHAPTER 4
ANALYZING NON-VIOLENCE IN THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF CHEIKH
AHMADOU BAMBA

The Literature of Peace and Non-violence in Mouridism

In this chapter, I delve into some works by Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba which specifically deal with the rhetoric of non-violence. How did the Mourid Order's agenda based on the notion of non-violence take shape in its founder's writings? How did the notions of reform and revival play out in Mourid philosophy of non-violence?

Peace literature abounds in the Mourid Order, whether written by its founder himself or by other Mourid sources, both written and oral. The colonial archives include a large amount of literature (reports, letters etc.) about the relationships between Mouridism and colonialism. Those archival sources have extensively expanded upon the peaceful and non-violent attitude of the Senegalese religious leader who was reported to have frowned upon all forms of physical as well as verbal violence.

Non-violence in Mouridism, as theorized by its founder, is not only the absence of violence or conflict but it amounts to a culture, a way of life and a religious philosophy every Mourid should be endowed with in his everyday life. Albeit not interchangeable, one cannot investigate non-violence without touching on the idea of peace which underlies and sustains it. The need for peace is actually the mainstay of non-violent attitudes or techniques.

The notion of peace in Islam has been extensively explored by scholars such as Abu-Nimer and Maranz to name but a few. Many Muslims argue that the term Islam rhymes with and stems from the word *peace*. In fact, the word *Islam* has been subject to many interpretations: while *Islam* (which etymologically derives from the Arabic verb *aslama* meaning “to submit oneself”) means “submission [to Allah]”, there are people who uphold the idea of the term originating from “peace” (based on the Arabic root *salām* meaning “peace”).

Whatever the origin of the word *Islam*, and whatever semantic or pragmatic functions it may play, one can argue that both notions of *submission* to Allah and of *peace* are somewhat interrelated and there even seems to be a causal relationship between the two terms. “Peace in Islam”, according to Mohammed Abu-Nimer, “is understood as a state of physical, mental, spiritual, and social harmony, living at peace with God through submission, and living at peace with one’s human fellow beings by avoiding wrongdoing” (60).

Moreover, the wish for peace also constitutes the Islamic greeting *al salām* ‘*alaykum* (peace be upon you). But does the peace-related greeting mean anything with regard to promoting a culture of peace among Muslims? To what extent words and actions or theory and practice relate to each other? As the saying goes, “actions speak louder than words”.

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba was said to be so keen on peace and non-violence that he would avoid using any violent or dismal words his fellow people used to refer to

animals or things. For instance, he would not use the normal Wolof phrase *weer wu dee* (literally “the death of the month” but it means “the end of the month”) because the term “death” in this instance is associated with *month* ; he would rather use *weer wu mat* i.e the completion of the month (interview with Serigne Saliou).

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba witnessed the tragedy of civil war that opposed some religious and local leaders and the many wars that each of those two groups waged on the French colonizers. The founder of the Mourid Order tried to cope with the colonial order while avoiding any form of guilty collaboration which would alienate him and jeopardize his objectives, which caused colonial authorities to exile him twice and place him under custody and home arrest. Unlike other Senegalese Muslim leaders who resorted to deadly force to reach their goals, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba used non-violent methods to attain his goals, creating a sort of civil peace in the country both during and after the colonial period.

In his journey diary titled *Jazā al Shakoor* (Reward of the Worthy of Gratitude), Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba recounts some trials and tribulations of his odyssey. At this juncture, it is worth noting that no single document can be found in the Senegalese National Archives about the period stretching from 1895 to 1902. Those archival documents bearing on the seven-year exile of the Mourid leader were indeed reported “missing” without further explanation. Only archival documents about the post-exile period are available by the time my archival research concluded (in June 2012). *Jazā al Shakoor* is one of the rare informational resources available to get insights into the exile to Gabon.

The first instance of non-violent resistance occurs during the historic meeting between Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba and the colonial authorities. As a matter of fact, the Mourid leader did not oppose any resistance with the French soldiers who came to arrest him (Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation*). On hearing about his impending arrest, he rather left his residence to meet with the military squadron sent to pick him up. They met at a village called Jeewol (located in central Senegal). On seeing the chief of the troop drawing near his place, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba turned round and recited *basmala* i.e *Bismi al lāhi al Rahmāni al Raheemi* fifty times and the chief's anger subsided (Diop 41).

In Gabon, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba wrote in his *carnet de voyage* that he underwent some hardships he would not talk or write about. He indeed read those troubles as involving the will of God Who wanted to have him got through ordeals and test his Faith (*imān*): “In Saint-Louis [in Senegal], I encountered ill-treatments from the colonizers I will never mention for the sake of the Worthy of Gratitude [God] as they partook of the *tarbiyyah* (spiritual training) on the part of He Who made me avoid resorting to arms [God]” (*Jazā al Shakoor* 11).

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's literature on non-violence is informed with the analogies of the pen, the ink, the sword, the arrow etc. The pen is regarded as an efficient weapon with which he shields himself against the arms: “*kitābatee nābat ‘ani al ṣilāhi*” “my writings stand as a replacement for arms” (Rayāheen 135). This kind of statement, which is not uncommon among Sufi masters and points to the mystical dimension of Sufism, can be plainly understood when read through the lens of the English saying, “the pen is mightier than the sword”.

Because of his belief that his spiritual and mystical power is a shield against arms, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba did not deem it necessary to carry weapons or keep them inside his residence. When his brother and close disciple Cheikh Anta once gave him a gun and explained to him its usefulness, he immediately turned it down and replied to him: “any satisfaction that this weapon provides to you while carrying it with you, it will take it away once you do not carry it” (interview with Serigne Saliou).

In Gabon, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba was sent to an island called Mayomba where he spent five consecutive years during which he wrote in his journey diary without any further details how he went through many forms of sufferings from the colonizers but responded peacefully and stoically by waging instead a *Jihād* against his own soul (*Jazā al Shakoor* 13). One day at Mayomba, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba was approached by a French commandant who entered into the following dialogue with him: “are you Ahmad”? – “yes I am”; “I just want to let you know that I will execute all the orders I receive about you” – the Mourid Sheikh replied: “I will execute the order I receive about you as well”; “what is the order you receive about me”?, the commandant asked – “God ordered me to endure anything you do to me” (interview with Serigne Saliou).

After his five-year stay on the island of Mayomba, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba was transferred to another island called Lamberene (in Gabon) and there the Mourid leader narrates in his *carnet de voyage* that he went through sufferings on the part of the colonizers “only the popping out of the soul (*rūh*) from the body is more painful” (*Jazā al Shakoor* 31).

Following is a letter written by Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba following his first exile after he was convened by the French authorities who will soon send him to his second exile.

The purpose of this letter is to let you know that I have read the letter you sent me on 16 Safar (14May) and I am glad you convened me on hearing defamatory words on me you do not want to buy into prior to hearing from me first [...] Ever since I arrived in Gabon till my return to this land [Senegal], my health has deteriorated. During those 7 years and a half spent in Gabon, I have not gone on foot, nor do I have rode on horseback. I have only been moving by a steam-powered vehicle. I was staying in my room [during the exile years]; that is the reason why it took me two months to go from Saint-Louis to my home. When I walk for a little or ride on horseback, I get sick and this I hide to people...

(French-translated Arabic letter dated 15 May 1321H [1903] ANS).

In the light of this letter, it is evident that the French colonizers took actions and made decisions against Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba on the ground of reports they were receiving from local and colonial agents who had some vested interests in playing the religious man against the French authorities. In a poem he composed during his first exile, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba prayed to God that the French colonizers' suspicious behavior towards him turn into a positive attitude: "O the Omnipotent divert the heart of [the colonizers] so as they will not be able to harm me. [Do so] in such a way that they be helpful to me and tame for me anyone who is powerful or weak. " (*Wa Laqad Karramnā*, verses 19-20, 109).

It is worth noting that two years after he founded his first village Dār al Salām and seven years prior to the beginning of his troubles with the colonizers, the founder of the Mourid Order wrote a book titled *Maṭlab al Fawzayni* in which he made the following prayers: “[O my Lord] whoever swears or blames me, make him repent and do forgive him. And whoever is suspicious towards me, make him change his mind, O my Lord”. Spare me the harm of all the creatures but protect them from any harm that may come from me” (*Maṭlab al Fawzayni*, verses 121-126). In *Muqaddamāt al Amdāh* meaning “the Start of Panegyrics”, the Mourid Sheikh states: “I have forgiven [the French colonialists] for the sake of the One [God] shielded me against any harm” (verses 155-156).

In my conversation with Serigne Saliou, he told me that the Mourid leader strongly advises his disciples to forgive anyone who is unjust with them and not to fight back as he said upon his return from his first exile: “I have come to the full realization that anytime I undergo an injustice and I show endurance, God has got my back and on top of that reserves a reward to me” (interview with Serigne Saliou).

It is obvious from this peaceful bearing that Bambian non-violence is premised on religious principles. In other words, in order to be efficient, non-violence needs to be underlain by faith in and assistance from God as Mahatma Gandhi noted: “The non-violent technique does not depend for its success on the goodwill of the dictators, for a non-violent resister depends on the unfailing assistance of God which sustains him throughout difficulties which could otherwise be considered insurmountable” (quoted in Paige et al. 17).

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba sets out to instil religious and moral qualities into his disciples within the framework of the *Jihād al nafs* he was promoting. Like Jesus Christ who advises Christians: “Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also” (*Holy Bible New International Version*, Matthew. 5:39), Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba encourages his disciples to abide by the universal spiritual and ethical principles of Messengers of God who underwent many hardships and sufferings during their lifetime but always showed mercy, patience and fortitude.

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba’s non-violence was echoed by his leading disciple Cheikh Ibrahima Fall. Cheikh Ibrahima Fall was consecrated Sheikh (spiritual guide) shortly after the founding of the Mourid Order. He was followed by hundreds of disciples by the time his spiritual master was in exile. But in spite of his large and dedicated following, he lived by the principle of non-violence and was even praised in the colonial archives for his astute diplomatic talents.

On 23 January 1909, two years after the leader of the Mourids had been subject to home custody following his two exiles, Cheikh Ibrahima Fall wrote the following letter to the Lieutenant-Governor of the colony beseeching him to set free his religious master and let him alone:

On this matter which I am submitting to you I have already asked MM Descemet and Carpot to act on my behalf. I now beg you directly to liberate Shaikh Amadu Bamba, our guide in the spiritual life. It will be a gesture of mercy that will never disappear from our hearts. For fourteen years he has been in the hands of the French because of the false rumors circulated against him (Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation* 221).

In 1903, shortly after Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba returned from his first exile, it was again rumoured that he was concealing weapons in his residence to prepare for *Jihād* (as “holy war”). The rumor was fuelled by local chiefs and colonial agents who reported to the colonial authorities that their authority was being flouted by Mourid disciples (O’Brien, *The Mourides of Senegal* 44). As a result, Mbakhane Diop, King Lat Dior’s son and colonial administrator of the Baol province, was sent by the colonial authorities to search Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba’s residence and look for arms.

When informed that Mbakhane was on his way to his house, the Mourid Sheikh told one of his disciples to recite out loud a poem he had just completed and titled “*Yā Rahmānu Yā Raheemu*” (the Most Lenient, the Most Merciful):

1. My Lord [God] has surprisingly favored me with Enlightenment of spirit for the sake of the Best creature [Prophet Muhammad].
2. My thanks go to the Lord Who is Noble and Has no match. He has today filled my heart with Light.
3. Muhammad – may God's Peace and Benediction be upon him for ever – has made me a member of his folks.
4. I pray to my Lord, Whose Bounties are incommensurable, to give to all of His creatures what He has chosen for them.
5. I communicated with His sublime Highness [God]. The Guide [God] has ennobled me and has purified my life from any trifles.

6. O the Lenient, give to all of Your creatures the Benediction that is given to the one who reads Your Qur'an and which shields him against any harm.
7. Shield the community of the Your elected Prophet [Muhammad] against any destruction and be merciful to Your creatures, o You Whose Beauty is conspicuous.
8. *O The Master of the Monarchy [God], You Who are too Great to be revengeful, shower Your Mercy on all Your creatures.*
9. *You [God] have removed from my heart any revengeful spirit* for the sake of the Best Creature [Prophet Muhammad] (emphasis added).

During his search for arms in Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's residence, Mbakhane did not find what he came for. Babou writes that there ensued a verbal confrontation between Mbakhane and the Mourid leader who was reported to have told him:

If I did not ruin your life, it is because I have pity for you and I know your father [King Lat Dior]. Also your aunt, whom I met at Ker Mataar, recommended you to me. Beware, something bad could happen to you on your way back... (sic). Mbakhane leave me alone and go away, I am not a man of this world, I belong to the hereafter, I only see God and my sight is beyond the mortals." (Mbakhane's Report to du Laurens in Babou 144).

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's aforementioned statement is to be put within the framework of what is called charisma, a saintly power attributed to religious men endowed with *wilāya* or sainthood. According to Robinson, the charisma of the Mourid leader which can be evidenced in his own survival of "both the effort to break his spirit in

Gabon and the severity of years of exile” conferred upon him “a special symbolic capital” (*Paths of Accommodation* 226).

But it seems that Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba did not use this “symbolic capital” to destroy his adversaries as few years prior to his first exile, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba had prayed in his poem *Maṭlab al Fawzayni*: “[O my Lord] spare me the harm of all the creatures and *protect them from any harm that may come from me*” (verse 125-126, emphasis mine).

O’Brien follows up with the once tense relationships between Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba and Mbakhane Diop and reveals that the latter will later on be on speaking terms with the Mourid Sheikh and even named one of his sons after Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba after he had become a Mourid disciple himself (*The Mourides of Senegal* 68).

Mbakhane played a major role in having the Mourid leader exiled a second time. (O’Brien, *The Mourides of Senegal* 68, and Babou 144). After his residence was thoroughly searched and no alleged concealed weapons were found, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba wrote a letter to the colonial administrator of Saint-Louis to reiterate his non-violent philosophy after he had received a convening order for further explanation:

In the name of God, Most Lenient and Most Beneficent. [This letter is] from Muhammad Bamba and destined to the administrator of Saint-Louis. Peace to the one who follows guidance. Do know that I do not write and do not say [something] with my tongue that does not reflect what is in my inner heart. As of today, do not listen to the words of those who seek [something] through calumny, slander, lies and betrayal. As for my not coming

to Saint-Louis, it is not caused by anything that is liable to cause your wrath. Have a positive and favourable attitude towards me as I only seek from God peace, tranquillity and worshipping Him through the way of Sunnah (letter in Arabic written on June 3rd 1903 in Ba 114).

Non-Violence as the Backbone of Reform and Revival in Mouridism

The idea of renewal in Islam (*tajdeed*) pervades Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's writings but it is not exclusively tackled in a single work as a main subject matter. Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba set himself the task of reviving the oath of allegiance or *mubāya'a* which originates from the Sunni Tradition. The oath of allegiance is reported in the Qur'an to have been taken by the Companions of the Prophet (Surat 48, Verses 10 and 18).

After practicing the *awrād* (sing. *wird*) Tijāniyyah, Shādhiliyyah and Qadiriyyah for years, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba founded his own Sufi Order known as Mouridiyyah or Mouridism. Maranz notes that after the Mourid Order was founded, people from every corner across Senegal flocked to his house in quest of this new religious light (207). In fact unlike Tijāniyyah and Qadiriyyah (which were then the dominant *turuq* (sing *tarīqa*) in Senegal), Mouridism was a “homegrown” Sufi Path. This, in a sense, certainly was one of the reasons that attracted local populations to the new religious movement.

The rhetoric of non-violence in Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's life and in his literary production informs his overall reform movement (Glover 58). How did reform and

resistance permeate the culture of non-violence in Mouridism? Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba was reported to have said when he founded Mouridism:

I have found the path left behind by Prophet Mouhammad full of weeds; so have I cleared it and paved the way for its renewal. Therefore I'm asking anyone who is willing to follow it to come and join me. This path is nothing but living rightly according to the Qur'an and the Sunnah of Prophet Mouhammad (interview with Serigne Saliou).

In other respects, in Medina, Prophet Muhammad took on the functions of Head of State and spiritual leader of the community; he showed a great sense of tolerance and open-mindedness towards the non-Muslim community. His democratic and philanthropic nature prompted him to work out a constitution (a kind of charter of human rights and liberties) called the *Medina Charter*. *The Medina Charter* guaranteed to each citizen of Medina – Christians and Jews included – freedom of worship, peace, justice, and security (Yildirim, “The Medina Charter: A Historical Case of Conflict Resolution”).

In a poem dedicated to Prophet Muhammad, the Mourid Sheikh prayed to God that he should be a *Mujaddid* i.e a renovator or a renewer of the Islamic religion and he should undertake his reforms without involving violence: “[O my Lord] renew the path [of Islam] through me without causing any harm, nor any [armed] conflict” (*Jazb al Quloob*, verse 44).

The above cited verses set the foundation of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's renewal process: “*wa biya jaddid al sabeel*” i.e “through me, renew the Path”. Henceforward the Mourid leader situated himself among the renewers (*al Mujaddidoon*) of Islam, those

Muslim leaders who set themselves the task of reviving the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad. In his book on Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's religious thinking, Hamoneau cites a Hadith which reads as follows: "he who preserves my Tradition [Sunnah] while my community is getting corrupt will be favored with the reward of one hundred martyrs" (268).

Renewal and revival are regarded in the philosophy of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba as a symbolic and spiritual weapon. The previous Islamic reformers who used violent *jihād* used this strategy to claim a reform of the Islamic religion. They used the same method of violence championed by the same people they were fighting (such as the British and the French colonizers) against their subjects.

As for Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba, his revival process precluded violence as was previously the case in the colonial Senegalese society. He built upon previous experiences among Muslim leaders with regards to the use of violence and unequivocally showed that his renewal efforts were sustained by non-violence as will be seen in the rhetorical questions featuring in the following section.

Non-violence as a Means of Attaining One's Socio-religious Goals

As the foregoing passages have shown, non-violence has been adopted by Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba as a weapon for liberating his people spiritually, culturally and intellectually (Dumont, Hamoneau, and Diop). How have non-violent methods been instrumental for Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba in reaching his social, educational, cultural, and spiritual goals?

Prior to Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba’s first exile and when the tension between him and the French colonizers began, his relatives and disciples were worried about his fate. The spectrum of *Jihād* as “holy war” loomed large as they did not know about whether or not Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba would stage *Jihād* against the colonizers as did some previous religious leaders and local kings. On hearing the worries of his people, he gathered some of them and asked the following questions:

Where is Elhaj Oumar Foutiyou? — “vanished” at Bandiagara

Where is Ma Ba Diakhou Ba? — killed at Somb

Where is Ahmadou Cheikhou? — killed at Samba Sadio

Where is Mamadou Lamine Dramé? — killed at Lamén-Kotto?

Where is Lat Dior? — killed at Dekhelé

Where is Samba Laobe? — killed at Tivaouane

Where is Albouy Ndiaye? — sent on exile (Ba 66).

According to Ba, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba wanted to convey a strong message to his people and made it clear that he had chosen his “own path” which consisted in using non-violent means to reach his goals. Armed with the realization that “violence breeds violence” and aware that previous wars wrought much havoc in the Senegalese social fabric, the Mourid leader indeed understood that only through peaceful and non-violent methods could he implement his religious reforms.

According to Michelle Kimball, the religious philosophy of non-violence promoted by the founder of Mouridism led to his success in the historic, yet “symbolic confrontations” (O’Brien, *Symbolic Confrontations*) between him and the French colonial power. Famous in the Mourid oral literature is Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba maxim on non-violence: “the true brave person is the one who neither fights, nor quarrels but rather shows endurance until s/he obtains what s/he wants”. This maxim is another rendering of this Wolof proverbial wisdom “*ku muñ mūñ*” (he who supports with patience will be happy).

However, it is worth noting that at some point in the life of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba, there arose the will to have recourse to arms and fight back the French colonizers. This idea which was immediately stifled by the Mourid Sheikh dawned to him in Dakar on his way to exile.

As a matter of fact after the colonial decision was made to exile Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba, he was put on a train to travel from St-Louis to Dakar (a 124-mile distance). Soon after he arrived in Dakar, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba notes in *Jazā al Shakoora* that he was getting ready to break his fast after a long and tiresome journey when a French military officer led him to a tiny and dirty cell and locked him up there for two nights (35).

The stay inside that cell and the Dakar episode was described by Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba as so “painful” that he wrote in his *carnet de voyage*: “whenever I recall that lock-up and think of that officer [who gave the order], my heart is prone to

staging *Jihād* using arms but the Prophet deters me from this idea” (ibidem) .For the first time, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba entertained the idea of waging *Jihād* (as holy war) against his oppressors, bearing out the old saying “if you want peace, prepare for war”.

In showing lenience and resilience towards the people who had caused him so many troubles for 33 years of exile and deprivation of liberty, the Mourid leader meant to follow in the footsteps of Prophet Muhammad who displayed a great sense of mercy and fortitude over the Meccan non-Muslims following the conquest of Mecca known as *Fath al Makkah*. “The day of Mohammad's greatest triumph over his enemies” Lane-Poole writes, “was also the day of grandest victory over himself. He freely forgave Quraysh all the years of sorrow and cruel scorn with which they had afflicted him and gave an amnesty to the whole population of Mecca” (quoted by Razi Ahmad in Paige et al 37). Kimball writes that “the contribution Bamba made in the cultural and spiritual revival of his people will demonstrate the significance his universal message and nonviolent struggle has for attaining peace in the world today” (4).

Shortly after he arrived in Diourbel, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba composed a poem titled *Nūr al Dārayni* (Light of the two Worlds) in which he gave thanks to God for the blessings and bounties he was favored with during his odyssey: “[O my God] You have favored me in the month of Safar [2nd month in the Muslim calendar] with benefits that can be secured neither through acquisition nor through journey, *nor by using arms*” (verse 717-718, emphasis mine).

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's philosophy of non-violence is an overarching theme in Mouridism. Creevey pinpoints the fact that non-violence was instrumental in the survival of the Mourid Order in colonial times:

What is particularly interesting in all this is that French authorities clearly intended to destroy the Murīd order when they exiled Ahmad Bamba in 1895 and 1903 but this they were unable to do. [Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba] represented a vital step in the evolution of the society. His doctrine and his order had a strong appeal which was not easily controlled. The colonialists were unable to prevent the expansion of the Murīd order although they kept Ahmad Bamba under constant surveillance until the end of his life (300).

The culture of non-violence has been institutionalized in Mouridiyya in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial times. Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's message of peace of non-violence has outlived him and reached posterity. It seems to have a universal appeal as explained by Kimball:

Amidst the heightened state of turmoil in the world today, associated with the apparent clash between Islamic and Western cultures, the life of one Muslim peacemaker warrants recognition - a Muslim saint who led a successful and completely nonviolent struggle for peace within the last century. His life of teaching, amidst 33 years of imprisonment was spent in western Africa, but his profound message is global and continues today in the vibrant tradition he transmitted ("A Muslim Peacemaker of the Twentieth Century - Shaykh Ahmadou Bamba").

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

There has been a growing tendency in Islamic studies to exclusively focus on the Arab world (which represents a tiny percentage among Muslims) when it comes to talking about issues regarding Islam, leaving out voices that resonate in many parts of the Muslim world including West Africa, East Africa, parts of Asia, the Balkans and many other regions.

Shortly before the colonial process came to its conclusion in Senegal, which corresponded to the advent of Mouridism, there emerged Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba, a Sufi leader who promoted peace and developed non-violent forms of *Jihād*. The founder of Mouridism may have drawn upon the lessons of the *Jihād* of the sword or armed struggle that was staged by previous Muslim leaders in Senegal and in other parts of Africa such as Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio (1754-1817) from Sokoto (in present day Nigeria), Elh Omar Tall (1797-1864) from Senegal, Ma El ‘Aynayni (1830-1910) from Mauritania, Muhammad Ahmad (1845-1885) from Sudan to name but a few. Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba’s *Jihād* enterprise was rather geared to the spiritual, educational, social, economic and cultural *Jihād* as this work has shown.

This thesis has shown that the Mourid agenda based on the philosophy of non-violence promoted by its founder was instrumental in the peaceful cohabitation with the French colonizers. As a matter of fact, as the colonial administrator and writer Robert Arnaud suggested, Mouridism was considered a threat by the French colonizers who feared that the new Sufi Order might create spiritual and social forces capable of standing

as a counter-power to imperialism and hampering the near-finished process of colonialism. Henceforward, Arnaud proposed that “Islam should never be anything other than a religious belief” (quoted in Harrison 97).

To the aggressiveness and drastic politics of assimilation undertaken by the French colonizers, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba opposed an irenic response. Hence this kind of resistance has given rise to a period of *entente* between the two spiritual and temporal protagonists which was conspicuous in the economic, financial and military realms (during and after World War I).

“Accommodation” in that relationship meant that the two protagonists had to avoid as much as possible any conflict and conceded on several issues. In other words, the new relationships were based on the colonizer’s concessions and the colonized subject's adaptation to the colonial state. Hence there was a redefinition of power structures to accommodate the new dispensation.

Babou borrows the “accommodation theory” from Robinson and defines it as: “an evolving dynamic of mutual adjustments, in which the dominator as well as the dominated struggle to minimize conflicts [...].The need for accommodation is rooted in the understanding that coercion cannot be an effective tool for administration and that minimal consent from the colonized is necessary for colonial rule to be successful” (141).

Practical examples of that “accommodation” between the spiritual and colonial order are the financial help provided by the founder of Mouridiyya to the French when their currency was devalued and his financial contribution to build an infirmary. Besides, upon the request of the colonial state, many Mourid disciples were sent out to aid France

during World War I.

Yet this period of *rapprochement* in Mourid-colonial relations bumped into and defaulted on the issue of the transfer of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba to Touba, his founding town. As a matter of fact, the Mourid Sheikh repeated requests to be allowed to settle in Touba but to no avail. In a report dated 3 March 1921, the General Governor of AOF made it clear that there was no way they could allow the Mourid guide to settle in Touba (ANS). The colonial authorities indeed felt obliged to exercise a tight control over the religious leader who was regarded as an impediment to the colonial process. Naturally, it was believed that “the political surveillance of Islam primarily involves the surveillance of Muslim personalities” (Harrison 166).

Jihād, peace and non-violence are far-reaching issues that cannot be investigated in a comprehensive way. However, this thesis has attempted to proffer a new reading of these issues from the perspective of a Sufi Order (Mouridism) and in a particular historic context (colonial period). While it proffers some answers, it opens new questions that can be investigated in a broader venue than a Master’s thesis which does not provide much room for so many possibilities to look deeper into those issues.

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