



BRILL

Educating the Murid: Theory and Practices of Education in Amadu Bamba's Thought

Author(s): Cheikh Anta Babou

Source: *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 33, Fasc. 3, Islamic Thought in 20th-Century Africa (Aug., 2003), pp. 310-327

Published by: [BRILL](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1581852>

Accessed: 17/11/2010 20:51

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=bap>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



BRILL is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Journal of Religion in Africa*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

EDUCATING THE MURID:
THEORY AND PRACTICES OF EDUCATION
IN AMADU BAMBA'S THOUGHT

BY

CHEIKH ANTA BABOU
(University of Pennsylvania)

ABSTRACT

The scholarship on the Muridiyya focuses mainly on the examination of the political and economic aspects of the brotherhood. Dominant scholarly interpretations see the organisation as an effective instrument of adaptation to a turbulent period in history. Disgruntled Wolof farmers joined the Muridiyya as a way of adjusting to the new order brought about by the demise of the pre-colonial kingdoms and the establishment of French domination in Senegal, in the second half of the nineteenth century. Since the role of religious innovations and beliefs was considered peripheral in this process of adjustment, not much attention has been devoted to doctrinal and spiritual issues within the brotherhood. Emphasis had been put on the analysis of the socio-political context of the founding of the Murid brotherhood, and the economic and psychological incentives that might have motivated people to join the organisation. In contrast to this interpretation, I conceive of the Muridiyya as the result of a conscious decision by a Sufi shaikh who saw it primarily as a vehicle for religious change, but also for social and political transformation. Education was the principal tool for the realisation of this social change. This article describes and analyses Amadu Bamba's views on educational theory and practices and explores how his Sufi orientation shaped Murid pedagogy. It reveals the centrality of the theme of education in his writings, sermons and correspondence and documents the continuing influence of this education on the Murid ethos.

* * *

Introduction

Since Amadu Bamba Mbacké founded the Muridiyya at the turn of the 20th century, the organisation has experienced a continuing growth of its followers and an increasing cultural, political and economic influence in Senegal. The Murids have shown a remarkable ability to adapt to changing contexts and environments and to preserve their cohesion and continuity across space, time and significant social change.

The Murid Muslim brotherhood is the most influential religious institution in Senegal. Its followers have spread beyond the borders of the country and are found in other regions of Africa, in Europe and in the United States. Over one-third of the ten million Senegalese are Murid.

Because of its central role in the economy and politics of colonial and post-colonial Senegal, the Muridiyya has attracted much scholarly attention.¹ However, studies of the Muridiyya emphasise the socio-political context of the founding of the Murid brotherhood, and economic and psychological incentives that might have motivated people to join the organisation. Scholars have paid little attention to Amadu Bamba's writings and they have not shown much interest in the religious beliefs and motivation of Murid shaikhs and disciples.

In contrast to this approach, I conceive of the Muridiyya as the result of a conscious decision by a Sufi leader who saw it as an instrument for religious change and socio-political transformation.² Education was the principal tool for the realisation of this social change.

This article describes and analyses Amadu Bamba's thoughts on educational theory and practices and reflects on how his Sufi orientation shaped Murid pedagogy. It also reveals the centrality of the theme of education in his writings, sermons and correspondence. By emphasising educational theory and practice and by relying on Murid written and oral sources, this research departs from the existing scholarship on the Murids and broadens scholarly knowledge of the history and development of the Muridiyya. My study also contributes to understanding the continuing vitality of the organisation despite the fading away of the structural factors that purportedly explain its emergence.

A brief biography of Amadu Bamba

Amadu Bamba, the founder of the Muridiyya, was born in the early 1850s to a renowned Muslim family in Mbakke Bawol, west-central Senegal.³ He was educated by his father and uncles but was soon attracted to Islamic mysticism, or Sufism. His asceticism and rejection of worldly power fascinated his contemporaries. In the context of late 19th-century Senegal, marked in the Wolof states⁴ by the deleterious effect of slavery, increasing exploitation by the rulers and French colonial conquest, Bamba was a harbinger of hope. Suspected by the French who feared that he might declare holy war, he was exiled twice then kept under house arrest until his death in 1927.

However, despite French repression, Bamba persisted in his peaceful

calling. To those who advocated war against the traditional ruling class and the colonisers, he proposed 'a holy war of the soul'. He regarded education as the main weapon in this battle to control the soul and provide his people with a shield against the corrupting influence of *ceddo* culture and the French.⁵ The pedagogy he developed from 1884, after he inherited the leadership of his family, emphasises work and religious practices rather than ideology. This pedagogy, which he called *tarbiyya*, was a practical program that aimed at taming the *nafs*⁶ and educating the soul.

Bamba organised his disciples in the *daara tarbiyya* or working school and in villages supervised by his early followers. Murid doctrine taught love and submission to one's shaikh, solidarity and hard work for the sake of God. By the last decade of the 19th century, the Muridiyya had gained a considerable following in the provinces of Kajoor and Bawol, then under French colonial domination.

The French effort to stamp out the brotherhood produced the contrary effect. The organisation's constituency grew dramatically when Amadu Bamba returned from exile in French Equatorial Africa in 1902, and its popularity was further enhanced when the leader was sent to his native land of Bawol in 1912. Furthermore, Murid farmers soon became major pillars of the colony's economy as they made a substantial contribution to the production of millet and of peanuts, the single colonial cash crop, in Senegal. By 1912, the French had worked out a policy of accommodation with the Murids, as they understood that the cost of suppressing the organisation far outweighed the benefit they could earn by establishing stable and peaceful relationships with Bamba and his disciples. By the end of 1912, the Muridiyya had gained some recognition from the French although its leaders had remained under close surveillance.⁷ Despite French pressure the brotherhood's following continued to grow. By the eve of World War I, French sources numbered the Murid disciples at over 70,000 people. In the early 1950s, colonial estimates put the number of Amadu Bamba's followers at 300,000; now the Muridiyya counts over three million disciples in Senegal.⁸

Amadu Bamba's conception of Sufism

Amadu Bamba's pedagogy was profoundly shaped by his Sufi orientation, and his path to Sufism was paved by his scholarship and his family tradition. His ancestors belonged to the Qadiriyya⁹ and it was

through his family that he was first initiated into this brotherhood. He then sought the renewal of his affiliation from different qadiri shaikhs before receiving the ultimate initiation from Shaikh Sidiyya Baba, heir of the founder of the Sidiyya branch of the Qadiriyya to which his family was affiliated. The Sidiyya Sufi network was founded by Shaikh Sidiyya El Kebir of Butlimit (1780-1868) in Southern Mauritania. El-Kebir studied with Shaikh Sidi Mukhtar El Kuntiyu of Timbuktu, who was a major actor in the revival and diffusion of the Qadiriyya brotherhood in the western Sahara in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The Kunta are credited with introducing the Qadiriyya brotherhood to West Africa in the 16th century.¹⁰

Sufi networks such as those built by Shaikh Sidiyya El Kebir have made of the Qadiriyya one of the most popular Sufi organisations. From its cradle in Baghdad, the Qadiriyya brotherhood has spread around the Muslim world, making contact with different cultures at different times, experiencing in the process transformations of varying importance. Numerous autonomous offshoots of the Qadiriyya, functioning sometimes under different names, are found in Africa and Asia. However, despite the diversity of experiences and leaderships, followers of the Qadiriyya believe in some core doctrinal principles. Qadiriyya doctrine teaches moderate asceticism that allows the Sufi to seek God sincerely while remaining involved with his society. It rejects the extreme mysticism of the ascetics who shun societal life and place spiritual perfection over formal worship. The Qadiriyya recommends adherents to follow the teachings of the Qur'an and the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad while maintaining a pure soul, giving charity, adopting good manners in society, and being merciful, patient and magnanimous. The Qadiriyya also emphasises profound respect and submission to the shaikh.¹¹ This form of Sufism is what some scholars have called minimalist Sufism. Minimalist Sufism combines a moderate esotericism with the respect of orthodox rituals and forms of worship.¹² This type of Sufism dominates in North Africa and the Western Sudan, where the *ulama* combined legal scholarship and leadership in a Sufi order, in contrast with the Middle East, where the two groups were often opposed.¹³

Qadiriyya teachings are reflected in Amadu Bamba's writings and practices, but his conception of Sufism was also influenced by Sufi thinkers and writers outside the qadiri brotherhood. Bamba was a reader of the major Sufi scholars such as Abu Talib Al Makki (d. 386H/996), Ghazali (d. 1111), Ibn Atta Allah (d. 1309), Al Yaddaali and their local

commentators such as the Kunta and Deymani families of Western Sahara. His writings are replete with quotations from these scholars. Among the Sufi thinkers Ghazali is the author who had the most influence on Amadu Bamba. Bamba classified him among the renovators of Islam and the great imams, and saw in him a spiritual master.

Ghazali, who was both a legist and a Sufi, is known for his effort to reconcile the rigorous and rational interpretation of Islam by the *ulama* with the spirituality and esotericism of the mystics. He was also a staunch advocate of independence of thought for scholars. Commenting on the relations between rulers and clerics, Ghazali notes that although obedience is owed to the unjust prince, one must not condone his injustice. He noted that the devout Muslim should avoid the court and company of the unjust ruler, and should rebuke him, by words if he can safely do so, by silence if words might encourage rebellion.¹⁴ Similar statements pervade Amadu Bamba's writings. For example, in *Tazawudu Shubaan* he notes, 'Those who frequent them (the unjust rulers) because of their wealth, share in the corruption which is the source of their power.'¹⁵

Amadu Bamba's conception of Sufism echoed the debates and compromises that have marked the relations between Sufi and anti-Sufi scholars since the 12th century. In his attitude as well as in his teachings, he was careful to combine the two dimensions of legitimate Sufism outlined by Ibn Khaldun in his commentary on Ghazali: that is Sufism as a 'science of praxis' rooted in the *sharia* and Sufism as mysticism geared toward the education of the heart. He viewed *tasawwuf* as a central element of Islam but only second to *tawhid* (science of the oneness of God) and *sharia* (Islamic jurisprudence), which he considered to be the soul and body of the religion.¹⁶ This preoccupation is also reflected in his teachings and his scholarly works where *tawhid* and Islam (worship) always come before *Ihsaan* (purification). His conception of Sufism was shaped by a desire to reconcile mysticism, *sharia* and involvement in society. Distancing himself from extreme asceticism, Amadu Bamba advocated the involvement of the Sufi shaikh in the life of the community. For him, seclusion is acceptable in only two situations. First, when the shaikh is not well prepared to deal with the dangers (to the faith) inherent in an active participation in societal life, and second, when the society is so corrupt that the shaikh is unable to get his message across. However, he wrote, 'Whenever the society needs the shaikh to repair a wrong, then his contribution becomes compulsory.'¹⁷

Philosophy and practices of education

Qur'anic education has a long tradition in Senegambia. As early as the 15th century, the first European travelers in West Africa noted the existence of Qur'anic schools in the region.¹⁸ Some Senegambian ethnic groups, for example the Jakhanke, constructed their identity around this profession.¹⁹ In Senegal, some regions such as Njambur, Mbaakol and Sañaxoor and some families such as the Jaxate, Syll and Jaane are historically associated with Islamic scholarship and piety. Amadu Bamba belonged to a prestigious family of Muslim scholars who cultivated Islamic learning and practices.

In the second half of the 19th century, some local Muslim scholars had become critical of Islamic education in the Wolof country.²⁰ They lamented that the teaching of the Qur'an had become a scholastic exercise that focused almost exclusively on memorising the book and that Islamic knowledge was increasingly dissociated from wisdom.

This decline in the quality of education was blamed on the betrayal of the values that had traditionally shaped the life of *ulama* and teachers, and on the influence of *ceddo* values and mores on the Muslim scholarly community. Teachers were accused of placing the quest for prestige and wealth over their duty of dispensing knowledge for the sake of God and the good of the community. They competed with each other and became complacent with the aristocracy, whose bad behaviour they justified. This attitude led to the corruption of the whole system of education, as exemplified by the adoption of practices such as *wañ* and *lawaan*,²¹ where masters of the Qur'an rivalled each other before a crowd of admirers, at the sound of drums, to display their mastery of the holy book. Referring to this situation, Musa Ka, the famous Murid poet, lamented that the Qur'an had become an orphan, and that knowledge and wisdom had migrated to the East (Moorish country) because of the turpitudes of the Muslim leadership in the Wolof country.²²

Amadu Bamba's system of education was a response to this situation of crisis. He produced his major works on education between his installation in Pataar in the mid-1870s and his settlement in Mbakke Bawol in 1883-1884.²³ In the tradition of Muslim scholars, he formulated his thought and ideas on education in the form of books, letters and sermons presented as responses to questions asked by his disciples and colleagues.

For Amadu Bamba, the primary duty of a human being is to seek an education. However, the ultimate goal of education is to make good

Muslims who model their actions on the teachings of Islam and serve their community.²⁴ Knowledge for him includes the esoteric or mystical sciences as well as the exoteric sciences (classical disciplines). In his major work, *Masalik al Jinaan* (Paths to Paradise), completed in 1884/85, he wrote, 'There is no doubt that a limited time devoted to scientific work is better than a lifetime spent in ignorance'.²⁵ And he added, 'It is an obligation for one to accord the same attention to the Qur'an and the religious sciences as to mystical science'.²⁶ Amadu Bamba also considered that the acquisition of knowledge without practice was a waste of time. He saw science²⁷ and action as the twin foundations of a virtuous life. These two elements underpin the pedagogy he gradually developed.

The system that Amadu Bamba designed was a lifelong education geared towards the transformation of the character and behaviour of the disciples. It comprised three main steps: exoteric education or *ta'lim*, which aimed at feeding the brain by the study of the Qur'an and the Islamic sciences, and esoteric education or *tarbiyya*, which aimed at educating the soul. The third step, *tarqiyya*, which was reached by only a small number of especially gifted disciples, allowed the elevation of their souls beyond the futility of material life and put them in a position of leadership in the community.

Amadu Bamba theorised this system of education in his writings, which were widely read among the Murids, and experimented with it from the 1880s until the mid-1890s, when he was exiled to French Equatorial Africa. His emphasis on spiritual education and the efforts he deployed to promote and implement a pedagogy that would expand this form of education constitute his major innovation. However, in contrast to the opinion expressed by Rawane Mbaye, Bamba did not abandon classical instruction.²⁸ He believed in the necessity of providing different options to respond to the diversity of demands stemming from the social and political context of his time. The first generation of his disciples, using the *daara tarbiyya* (working school) as a model, played a key role in developing and implementing the system.

For Amadu Bamba, the success of education is predicated on the choice of an adequate teacher for the task. Every type of education requires specific skills and competence from the educator in charge. In a response to an anonymous disciple's question about the Sufi conception of education, he described the criteria that should guide the choice of an educator.²⁹ In this correspondence, Amadu Bamba distinguished between three major types of teachers: the shaikh of instruction, responsible for classical teaching of the Qur'an and the Islamic

religious sciences (law, mysticism, tradition of the Prophet Muhammad, interpretation of the Qur'an and worship); the shaikh of education whose aim is to educate the soul and guide the disciple towards spiritual perfection; and the shaikh of *targhiyya* or ascension. Each of these shaikhs requires a specific profile.

The shaikh of instruction

Classical teaching of the Qur'an and the Islamic religious sciences occupies a central place in Amadu Bamba's system of education. The Mbakke family has a strong tradition of scholarship. From Maaram, the founding father who lived during the 18th century, to Momar Anta Sali, Bamba's father, the shaikh's ancestors have always been associated with Qur'anic teaching. Growing up in Mbakke, Saalum and Pataar, Bamba matured in an environment where knowledge was highly valued, and at a young age he was already involved in the theological debates and controversies between his father's colleagues.

The shaikh of instruction plays the crucial role in Bamba's system of education. For Bamba, adequate knowledge, ability to communicate, intellectual sagacity and honesty constitute the three criteria that should guide the choice of this shaikh who specialises in the teaching of the Qur'an, the Arabic language, classical and religious sciences. In the Western Sahara, the principal disciplines taught in the Islamic religious sciences were Qur'anic exegesis or *tafsir*, *hadith* or traditions of Prophet Muhammad, *fiq* or Islamic jurisprudence, *tasawwuf* or Islamic mysticism, and *siira* or biography and hagiography of Prophet Muhammad. In the Arabic sciences, *nahwu* or grammar, *luqa* or lexicography, *balaqa*, use of the language, and *uruudh* or poetry were taught. The ancient sciences were composed of *mantiq* or logic, *ilm al-nūgūm* or astrology and *tibb taqlīdī* or traditional medicine.

Amadu Bamba considered that adequate knowledge for the shaikh of instruction is knowledge that is based, on the one hand, on the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, and, on the other, on the use of rational thinking and comprehension that derive from observation of concrete reality. However, the mastery of adequate knowledge is not enough; the teacher also needs to be able to communicate effectively with his students. For that purpose, Amadu Bamba thought that eloquence was equally important because it allows the teacher to explain his objectives with clarity and without the use of confusing hypotheses. He believed that the quality of an educator was measured by his communication skills.

For Bamba, the teacher must also be intellectually fit. That is, he should be able to research and master the knowledge that would help him identify and overcome the shortcomings in his spiritual and material life. The educator's ability to acquire this knowledge is manifested in his willingness to accept the truth without hesitation, always to be on the side of the right, to be able to say, 'I don't know,' if necessary, and to abstain from saying or doing things if he is not sure of their lawfulness.

The shaikh of instruction plays an important role in society as a producer and disseminator of knowledge. He specialises in the *ilm as zahir* or exoteric sciences such as the Qur'an, law, literature and history. His place is all the more central in the community, for without schools and teachers it is difficult for people to develop knowledge, whereas, for Amadu Bamba, understanding must always precede action.³⁰ But the teacher's function should not be limited to disseminating knowledge; his life also must serve as a model to his students. Bamba observed that access to books does not free one from seeking a guide, and, paraphrasing Ghazali, he noted that books are important, but the teacher enlightens and God is the Supreme Knower.³¹ Hence, for Amadu Bamba, venerating an honest and knowledgeable teacher is tantamount to venerating God.³²

However, Bamba believed that many teachers of his epoch did not deserve this veneration because of their failure to uphold the very principles that should guide the good scholar. *Doomi soxna* and *seriñ fakk taal* played a critical role in the diffusion of Islam in Senegal, but by the end of the 19th century they were no longer up to the task.³³ For Bamba, they had failed to provide adequate responses to the educational needs of their society in the context of turmoil that marked the century. Bamba's criticism was mostly directed towards the *doomi soxna*. He blamed this category of Muslim scholars of aristocratic origins for failing to conform to the principles and ethic that should guide the Muslim teacher. In place of acting with integrity, they humbled themselves before the rich, and collaborated with unjust rulers.³⁴ In his book *Tazawudu Shubaan*, Bamba emphasised how associating with the unjust and the powerful leads to corrosion of the faith.³⁵ He noted that to visit an unjust ruler, unless extraordinary circumstances dictate so, destroys one's faith. He also advised his disciples to refrain from mingling with the rich because humbling oneself before the wealthy dramatically weakens the virtuous savant's faith. This criticism echoes the well-known Sufi saying that 'the best prince is the one who frequents the learned and the worst scholar is the one who deliberately mingles

with the prince.' Amadu Bamba also criticised his contemporaries for not seeking knowledge to please God but rather for the sake of honour, higher social status and unproductive polemics. In *Masalik al Jinaan* he wrote:

Some of them [scholars] are abused by their sciences and religious erudition, they do not acknowledge their weaknesses, they are very proud of the number of their disciples, and they are over-confident of their wisdom, whereas their heart is full of such grave sicknesses as pride, hatred, jealousy etc. . . .³⁶

For Amadu Bamba, the only way to cure those sicknesses was to educate the soul by submitting to a shaikh of education.

The shaikh of education

Amadu Bamba lists three qualities that are required from the shaikh of education, who specialises in the esoteric sciences. First, he must understand the nature of the soul in its different states and he should master the means of curing its defects. He also must be capable of identifying the sources of sicknesses that can affect the soul and the instruments that can assure its protection. In order to fulfil this task, the shaikh needs to combine scholarly insights and practical knowledge derived from experience with his soul. Second, the shaikh of education is required to understand the subtleties of the world and the practical and religious laws that govern the existence of matter and of the soul so that he can always apply the adequate remedy to the different problems submitted to him. Third, to act in this way, the shaikh must analyse every problem without passion and prejudice. To do so, he needs to fear God and to show repentance by shunning all self-glorification and by ridding himself of anything that distances him from his Lord.

The work of the shaikh of education is not to transmit formal knowledge per se, but rather to forge character. The techniques he uses are geared towards the control of the *nafs* or lower self, which is seen by the Sufi as the major obstacle that stands between the believer and God.³⁷ *Nafs* is the animal instinct that is found in every human being and it is the very enemy that lures people's mind and body to the search for worldly pleasures. Sufis consider the fight against this formidable enemy to be the greatest jihad. In fact, for the Sufi, God cannot enter the heart of a human being unless the heart is emptied of all trivial earthly preoccupations.

In *Tazawudu Shubaan*, Amadu Bamba identified seven organs through which the lower self works and described the method to counter its deleterious effect on the heart and mind of people.³⁸ These organs are:

the stomach, the tongue, the genitalia, the feet, the eyes, the hands and the ears. Referring to the stomach and the adverse effect it can have on the faith, Bamba warns against consuming illicitly acquired food and eating too much. He argues that behaving in such a way only leads to corruption of the spirit, the drought of the heart and to laziness. As for the tongue, it should be prevented from lying, slandering or engaging in [futile] controversies. Bamba advised disciples to refrain from seeking unlawful sexual pleasure and recommends chastity before marriage. The feet should be restrained from walking to do illegal acts or from visiting unjust rulers. Instead, they should be used to frequent the mosque and to build and strengthen ties between members of the Muslim community. The eyes should be taught not to look at forbidden things, to threaten or to embarrass people. The hands must respect the body and property of Muslims, and must be banned from writing indecencies or anything one would be ashamed of saying in public. As for the ears, Bamba recommended keeping them from listening to futile conversation such as slander and gossip or violating people's privacy.

The shaikh of education occupies an important place in Amadu Bamba's system. If the shaikh of instruction feeds the brain, the shaikh of education nurtures the spirit as well as the body through his ability to touch the soul. The work of these two shaikhs is complementary. However, a lack of spiritual education constitutes the greatest danger to disciples. Bamba blames the deterioration of the mores and characters of the people of his generation on the absence of this form of education. He noted that the path to the truth is paved with pitfalls and traps, and only the guidance of those who had already trodden this path can prevent one from being misled by Satan.³⁹ Amadu Bamba's emphasis, from 1884, on spiritual education or *tarbiyya* constituted his response to the crisis that plagued his society.

Drawing lessons from centuries of failed jihads, the inability of court clerics to bring about any substantial change in the fate of the people, and an increasingly assertive French power, he resolutely opted for a gradual transformation of the society through education. However, for Bamba, not every type of education was suitable to meet this goal of changing the society. Spiritual education was for him the most appropriate means to correct the wrongs in society and to provide people with a protective shield against the perils of the epoch. As noted above, these perils for him were *ceddo* culture and the encroachment of French colonisation.⁴⁰ The Muridiyya was conceived by Amadu Bamba as the framework for disseminating *tarbiyya* education among the masses of

Senegal. This attempt to consciously use Sufi doctrine as a tool to reform the society and for fostering a new moral order constituted a change with local perception that saw Sufism as a mostly esoteric intellectual tradition disconnected from social reality.

The shaikh of ascension

When the shaikh of education reaches a certain level of spirituality, he can become a shaikh of ascension or *tarqiyya*. At this spiritual juncture, his demeanour and appearance, and just the fact of interacting with him, become a source of inspiration and an incitement to persevere on the right path. The shaikh of ascension teaches by example and leads the disciples to spiritual perfection through imitation.

Disciples pursuing the path of *tarqiyya* live with their shaikh in his compound, learning from everyday activities. They assist him in administering the family and the followers. Sometimes they are assigned specific tasks in the household or the community. They interact with the Shaikh's guests, travel with him. They observe the shaikh solving problems, arbitrating conflicts, making decisions about different issues. Only particularly gifted disciples can reach this ultimate stage in the education of the soul. In the quest for spiritual education, the learner also has a major role to play. Bamba defines this role in his writings, sermons and correspondence.

Duties of the students

For Amadu Bamba four major objectives should guide the knowledge seeker. First, to combat ignorance, second, to be useful to humanity, third, to enrich the religious sciences, and fourth, to act and live in accordance with the teachings of the sciences. However, he warned that those seeking sciences only for the sake of engaging in polemics or for prestige and honour would earn nothing but punishment from God.⁴¹

Bamba urged the disciples to start seeking an education at a young age before they are caught in the multiple constraints of adult life. Learning is much easier for the young brain than for the mature one. He further compares the education of a youth to engraving a rock while educating an old person is tantamount to writing on water.⁴²

Amadu Bamba warned the young disciple about the difficulties of acquiring knowledge. He affirmed that the sciences are not easy to conquer; they only reluctantly yield to those who consent to devote their

entire lives pursuing them. Therefore, he advised the learner to accept the necessary sacrifices for the challenging endeavour of mastering the sciences. The student should learn to tolerate hunger and to be patient and resolute. He must be passionate in his quest, soft in his demeanour, chaste and humble.⁴³ But, above all, the student must respect the master's rights. Bamba even suggested putting the teacher's rights over the rights of parents because if the former educates the substance of humanity, which is the spirit, the latter only take care of the body, which is a perishable envelope. To completely respect the teacher's right is to honour him, to follow his recommendations without hesitation, and to give him material support.⁴⁴

Conclusion

Education occupies a central place in Amadu Bamba's thought and practices. The importance that Amadu Bamba ascribed to education reflected his belief in the crucial role of Islamic knowledge for the achievement of social change and the preservation of positive social values. The system of education that he developed was a response to both the contemporary socio-political situation in the increasingly dysfunctional Wolof states that he judged detestable, and the deterioration of the classical system of education that was no longer fulfilling its societal function.

Amadu Bamba tried to put into practice Sufi principles and ideas that were probably known as theory and knowledge in Senegal, but never concretely articulated as a basis for the formulation of a method of education. The type of education he proposed encompassed the body, the mind and the soul and called for a new pedagogy and teaching techniques that differed from those used in the classical Qur'anic school that mostly focused on the transmission of knowledge. His objective was to make of education a transforming force. That is a powerful instrument for social change.

For Amadu Bamba, to achieve enduring impact, the seeds of change must be sown in peoples' heart and soul. In face of the imposition of French authority over the people of Senegal, he shifted the battle to the control of the soul, which, for the Sufi, remains the centre that regulates people's feelings and actions. By focusing the struggle on the control of the soul, Bamba aimed to defeat two major enemies, the expansion of *ceddo* values, and French cultural influence, that confronted his society.

French repression and tight surveillance prevented Amadu Bamba

from playing the major role in implementing his educational agenda. This task fell on the shoulders of his early companions. The *daara tarbiyya* or working school developed by Murid shaikhs appeared as an attempt to put into practice Bamba's ideas on education. With the increasing urbanisation of the brotherhood, the *dahira* or circle of devotion is progressively assuming this role.⁴⁵

The expansion of Sufi education through the *daara* and the *dahira* had a profound impact on the development of the Muridiyya. It fostered the Murid ethos that allowed the cohesion and continuity of the brotherhood. This ethos that is shaped by values such as solidarity, self reliance, rootedness in the local Islamic culture, submission to the shaikh and distrust of temporal power-holders contributed to the development of a counterculture. That is a set of values, practices, a cultural code and a worldview that provide structure and meaning to the disciples' lives. This counterculture appeared as a viable alternative to traditional court culture and French cultural imperialism and provided a basis of passive resistance to colonial rule.

NOTES

This article is based partly on material collected during research carried out in Senegal between 1999 and 2000 for a PhD thesis defended at Michigan State University. I wish to thank the Rockefeller Foundation for providing funding for the research. I am grateful to David Robinson at Michigan State University and Lee Cassanelli and Robert Eng of the University of Pennsylvania for their comments and suggestions on early drafts of this article.

1. See Cheikh Tidiane Sy, *La Confrérie Sénégalaise des Mourides*, Paris: Présence Africaine, 1969; Donal Cruise O'Brien, *The Mourides of Senegal: The Political and Economic Organization of an Islamic Brotherhood in Senegal*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971; Jean Copans, *Les Marabouts de l'Arachide*, Paris: Le Sycomore, 1980; Christian Coulon, *Le Marabout et le Prince: Islam et Pouvoir au Sénégal*, Paris: Pedone, 1981; Cheikh Guèye, 'L'Organisation de l'Espace dans une Ville Religieuse: Touba (Sénégal)', doctoral thesis, Strasbourg, 1999; James Searing, *'God Alone is King'*, Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002; Adriana Piga, *Dakar et les Ordres Soufis*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2002. For a thorough review of this literature see Cheikh Anta Mbacké Babou, 'Amadu Bamba and the Founding of the Muridiyya: The History of a Muslim Brotherhood in Senegal, 1853-1913', PhD thesis, Michigan State University, 2002.

2. For a further elaboration of this view, see Louis Brenner, 'Concepts of Târiqa in West Africa', in Cruise O'Brien and Christian Coulon (eds.), *Charisma and Brotherhood in African Islam*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988, 35.

3. For more on the biography of Amadu Bamba, see my PhD thesis, 'Amadu Bamba and the Founding of the Muridiyya', chapters III and IV. See also Cheikh A. Mb. Babou, 'Autour de la Genèse du Mouridisme', *Islam et Sociétés au Sud du Sahara* 11, 1997, 5-38.

4. Wolof is the dominant ethnic group in Senegal. Prior to the French colonial onslaught of the late 19th century, the Wolof lived in the kingdoms of Bawol, Kajoor, Jolof and Waalo.

5. *Ceddo* is a Wolof word that describes the aristocracy of the Wolof states and their associates. It is sometimes used to depict the army of crown slaves attached to the different dynasties that ruled the Wolof kingdoms. *Ceddo* culture refers to the values of the court that celebrated bravery, pride and leisurely life.

6. *Nafs* or lower self is the animal instinct found in every human being and which, according to the Sufi, lures people to worldly pleasure and impedes their effort to clean their soul and get closer to God.

7. See David Robinson, 'The Murids: Surveillance and Accommodation', *Journal of African History* 40, 1999, 13-21.

8. French estimates of the number of Murid disciples come from Paul Marty, *Etudes sur l'Islam au Sénégal*, Vols. I and II, Paris: Leroux, 1917, and Lucien Nekkach, 'Le Mouridisme depuis 1912', Rapport au Gouvernement du Sénégal (1952), Archives Nationales du Sénégal, sous-série 2G. For the latest estimates, Senegalese censuses do not break down the Muslim population along confessional lines, but unofficial demographic projections as well as journalistic and Murid sources concur that around one-third of the population of the country (ten million) are Murid. The population of Tuubaaaa, the holy city of the Murids, is estimated at over 500,000 people, and every year around two million disciples attend the annual Murid pilgrimage or *Maggal*. On the city of Tuubaa see Cheikh Guèye, *Touba*, Paris: Karthala-Enda and IRD, 2002.

9. The Qadiriyya is one of the oldest Sufi brotherhoods. It was founded in the 11th century by Abd Al Qadir Al Jilani (1077-1166), a Sufi saint and scholar, in Baghdad. For more on the history and doctrine of the Qadiriyya, see *The Journal of the History of Sufism*, special issue, 'The Qādiriyya Order', 1-2, 2000.

10. On the Sidiyya network and its connection with the Kunta of Timbuktu see Charles C. and E.K. Stewart, *Islam and Social Order in Mauritania*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973.

11. See Al Yassin Nadem Ahmed, 'Les racines qadirites du Mouridisme', Mémoire de DEA, Faculté des Lettres, Département Arabe, Université de Dakar, 1983. See also Depont and Coppolani, *Les Confréries Religieuses Musulames* (1987, first publication Algiers, 1897), 154.

12. See Fernand Dumont, *La Pensée Religieuse de Amadou Bamba*, Dakar, 1975, 342-343.

13. Rahal Boubrik, *Saints et Société en Islam*, Paris: CNRS, 1999, 49. See also Lamin Sanneh, *The Crown and the Turban*, Westview Press: Colorado, 1997, 104.

14. Quoted in Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age (1798-1939)*, Cambridge, 1983, 6.

15. See *Tazawudu Shubaan (Viatique des Jeunes, Viaticum for the fulfillment of the Youth)* in *Recueil de Poèmes en Sciences Religieuses*, Vol. 1, Rabat: Daar El Kitab, 1988, 437.

16. *Tazawudu Shubaan*, in *Recueil*, 265.

17. *Masalik al Jinaan (Les Itinéraires du Paradis or Paths to Paradise)*, Rabat: Dar El Kitab, 1984, 102.

18. See A. de Cà da Mosto, *Relations des Voyages à la Côte Occidentale d'Afrique 1455-1457*, published by Charles Schefer, Paris: Leroux, 1895; Valentim Fernandes, *Description de la Côte Occidentale d'Afrique*, translated by Monod, Da Mota and R. Mauny, Bissau, 1951.

19. See Lamin Sanneh, 'The Origins of Clericalism in West African Islam', *JAH* 17, 1976, 49-72.

20. This criticism is echoed both by Amadu Bamba in *Masalik al Jinaan* and other works and by Elhaj Malick Sy, the leader of the major branch of the Tijaniyya brotherhood in Senegal. See Rawane Mbaye, 'La Pensée et l'Action de Elhadji Malick Sy' (doctoral thesis, 1992-1993).

21. *Wañ*, literally to count in Wolof, is a public contest, where erudite people who knew the Qur'an by heart challenged each other, by saying at the sound of the drums how many times a word appears in the book and the one who succeeded in getting

right all his count won the contest, and was celebrated by his friends and the young girls of the village. *Lawaan* was a ceremony where young men who finished studying the Qur'an wore dreadlocks and circulated from village to village to celebrate their achievement.

22. See the poem 'Xarnubi' or the 'end of time', which Ka wrote after the death of Amadu Bamba during the depression of the 1930s. One must signal, however, that reformers often tend to exaggerate the wrongs of their time in order to legitimise their own agenda.

23. See for example *Nahju* (Path to fulfilment of the disciple) in *Recueil de Poèmes en Sciences Religieuses, de Cheikh A. Bamba* Vol. 2, Rabat: Dar El Kitab, 1989; *Viatique des Jeunes*, and *Masalik al Jinaan*. After his return from Gabon in 1902, Amadu Bamba devoted most of his writing to the mystical sciences and praises of the Prophet Muhammad. On Amadu Bamba's writings, see Fernand Dumont, *La Pensée*.

24. See Fernand Dumont, 'Amadou Bamba, Apôtre de la Non-Violence', *Notes Africaines* 121, 1969, 23.

25. See page 36.

26. Amadou Bamba Mbacké, *Masalik*, 34.

27. By science he primarily meant Islamic religious sciences.

28. See Rawane Mbaye 'L'Islam au Sénégal' (doctoral thesis, University of Dakar, 1975-1976), 398. In reality, as evidenced by his writings and the different reports filed by the colonial administration, Amadu Bamba has always taught and has created a Qur'anic school wherever he settled.

29. See *Majmuha*, a collection of letters and sermons of Amadu Bamba in Arabic edited by Caliph Abdul Ahad Mbackke, Tuubaa, 1985, 129-132. The following discussion of Amadu Bamba's conception of education is based primarily on this document. See also Muhamad Fadl Na, 'Sufism in Senegal: The Example of the Muridiyya' (thesis for a Masters in *Sharia*), University Qarwiyyin, Morocco, 1999. Originally in Arabic.

30. See Mbacke, *Masalik al Jinaan*, 36.

31. *Majmuha*, 131.

32. See Mbacke, *Nahju*, 349.

33. The *doomi soxna* or 'son of an honorable woman' was the name given to clerics who originated from aristocratic families. They were erudite Muslims, but they were blamed for harboring the ethos of their noble origin that promoted pride, shunned humility, and celebrated power and wealth. The *seriñ fakk taal*, on the other hand, were clerics of modest social origins who worked at the grass root levels and helped preserve and expand the Islamic religious culture.

34. On the Muslim attitude towards unjust rulers see Jean L. Triaud, 'Le Renversement du Souverain Injuste', *Annales ESC* 3, May-June 1985, 509-519.

35. Mbacké, *Tazawudu Shubaan*, 437.

36. Mbacké, *Masalik Al Jinaan*, 128.

37. See below for a description and analysis of the instruments the Sufi use to control the *nafs*.

38. See Mbacké, *Tazawudu Shubaan*, 427.

39. Mbacke, *Tazawudu Sighaar*, in *Recueil*, Vol. 1, 1988, 409.

40. In an article in preparation I look at how the remnants of the *ceddo* regime, recycled by the French in the sort of indirect rule that they put into place after the overthrow of the Wolof kings, managed to manipulate the colonial administration in the late 19th century and make it endorse their own hostile perception of Amadu Bamba and the Muridiyya. This atmosphere of hostility and tension, partly inspired by the *ceddo*, led to the exile of the founder of the Muridiyya and to the tumultuous relationships between the French and the Murids that lasted until the death of the cleric in 1927.

41. Mbacké, *Tazawudu Shubaan*, 417.

42. See Mbacké, *Nahju*, 365.

43. Mbacké, *Tazawudu Shubaan*, 421 see also *Nahju*, 377.

44. See Mbacké, *Nahju*, 391 also *Viatique*, 421.

45. See Cheikh Anta Babou, 'Brotherhood Solidarity, Education and Migration: The Role of the *Dahiras* among the Murid Muslim Community of New York', *African Affairs* 403, 2002, 151-170.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Al Yassin, Nadem A. 1983. 'Les Racines Qadirites du Mouridisme' (Mémoire de D.E.A.), Faculté des Lettres, Département d'Arabe, Université de Dakar.
- Babou, Cheikh Anta Mbacké 2002. 'Amadu Bamba and the Founding of the Muridiyya: The History of a Muslim Brotherhood in Senegal (1953-1913)', PhD thesis, Michigan State University.
- 2002. 'Brotherhood Solidarity, Education and Migration: The Role of the *Dahiras* Among the Murid Muslim Community of New York', *African Affairs* 403, 151-170.
- Boubrik, Rahal 1999. *Saints et Société en Islam*, Paris: CNRS.
- Brenner, Louis 1988. 'Concepts of Târiqa in West Africa', in D. Cruise O'Brien and C. Coulon (eds.), *Charisma and Brotherhood in African Islam*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Cà da Mosto, A. de 1895. *Relations des Voyages à la Côte Occidentale D'Afrique 1455-1457*, published by Charles Schefer, Paris: Leroux.
- Coulon, Christian 1981. *Le Marabout et le Prince: Islam et Pouvoir au Sénégal*, Paris: Pedone.
- Copans, Jean 1980. *Les Marabouts de l'Arachide*, Paris: Le Sycomore.
- Cruise O'Brien, Donal B. 1971. *The Mourides of Senegal: The Political and Economic Organization of an Islamic Brotherhood*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Depont, O., and Copolani, X. 1897. *Les Confréries Religieuses Musulmanes*, Algiers.
- Dumont, Fernand 1975. *La Pensée Religieuse d'Amadou Bamba*, Dakar.
- 1969. 'Amadou Bamba: Apôtre de la non-violence', *Notes Africaines* 121, 2-24.
- Fernandes, Valentim 1951. *Description de la Côte Occidentale d'Afrique*, translated by T. Monod, T. Da Mota and R. Mauny, Bissau.
- Guèye, Cheikh 1999. 'L'Organisation de l'Espace dans une Ville Religieuse: Touba (Sénégal)', doctoral thesis in Geography, Université Louis Pasteur, Strasbourg.
- Hourani, Albert 1983. *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age (1798-1939)*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mbacké, Amadu Bamba 1985. *Majmuha*. A collection of letters and sermons of Amadu Bamba in Arabic, edited and published by Caliph Abdul Ahad Mbacké. Tuubaa.
- Mbacké, Amadu Bamba 1984. *Masalik al-Jinaan*. Rabat: Dar El Kitab.
- 1988. *Tazawudu Shubaan*, 'Viatique des jeunes.' [Viaticum for the Youth] in *Recueil de Poèmes en Sciences Religieuses de Cheikh A. Bamba*, Vol. 1. Rabat: Dar El Kitab.
- 1988. *Tazawudu Sighaar*, 'Viatique pour les Adolescents', in *Recueil de Poèmes en Sciences Religieuses de Cheikh A. Bamba*, Vol. 1. Rabat: Dar El Kitab.
- 1989. *Nahju*, [Path to fulfilment of the disciple], in *Recueil de Poèmes en Sciences Religieuses de Cheikh A. Bamba*, Vol. 2. Rabat: Dar El Kitab.
- Marty, Paul 1917. *L'Islam au Sénégal*, Vols. I and II, Paris: Leroux.
- Mbaye, Rawan 1976. 'L'Islam au Sénégal', doctoral thesis in History, University of Dakar, 1975-1976.
- 1993. 'La Pensée et l'Action d'Elhaj Malik Sy', doctoral thesis, Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1992-1993.
- Nekkach, Lucien 1952. 'Le Mouridisme depuis 1912', Rapport au Gouvernement du Sénégal, Archives Nationales du Sénégal, Sous Série 2G.
- Ña, Muhamad Fadl 1999. 'Sufism in Senegal: The Example of the Muridiyya', masters thesis in *Sharia*, University Qarwiyyin, Morocco.
- Piga, Adriana 2002. *Dakar et les Ordres Soufis*, Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Robinson, David 1999. 'The Murids: Surveillance and Accommodation', *Journal of African History* 40, 13-21.

- Sanneh, Lamin 1976. 'The Origins of Clericalism in West African Islam', *Journal of African History* 17, 49-72.
- Sy, Cheikh Tidiane 1969. *La Confrérie Sénégalaise des Mourides*, Paris: Présence Africaine.
- Triaud, Jean L. 1985. 'Le Renversement du Souverain Injuste', *Annales ESC* 3 (May-June), 509-519.