

1

Hierarchy, Community, and Nonviolence in Senegal

Amadou Bamba [1853–1927]

I have agreed to certain conditions with God, such that even if the [messianic] Mahdi descends to earth I would not assist him in battle [of *al-malḥama al-kubra* or Armageddon]. I will not kill neither scorpion nor serpent, nor anything that is living. According to the direction I have taken it is absolutely forbidden for me to shoot from a weapon, such that even if the Mahdi were to arrive, and if I were to take up arms, my mission would be lost.

[Amadou Bamba, reported in Ba, 1982: 104; Babou, 2007: 145–146; Kimball, 2019: 220–221]

Though separated by generations, geographical location, and religions, Murīd ʿAjamī hagiographic sources suggest that Shaykh Ahmadu Bamba (1853–1927), the founder of the Murīdiyya Ṣūfī order of Senegal, and Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. (1929–1968) shared a similar preoccupation with equality between all human beings and morality. These ʿAjamī sources indicate that the two also shared the philosophy of nonviolence as the best investment for their people and humanity.

[Ngom, 2016: 41]

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba, apôtre de la non-violence, fut aussi un ascète mêlé à la foule, par générosité de cœur et par grandeur d'âme, parce qu'il avait choisi de vivre sa foi, pour être utile à son prochain, en étant agréable à Dieu.

[Dumont, 1976: 135]

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Not only is Sheikh Amadou Bamba [Sheikh Amadu Bamba; Amadou Bamba; *Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb Allāh*; *khādim al-rasūl*; d. 1927] widely regarded as 'without any doubt the outstanding figure in the history of Islam in Senegal' [Coulon, 1999: 197], he has been 'easily ranked as one of the greatest sons of Africa in modern times' [Kimball, 2019: xi]. He stands out among the major thinkers and activists discussed in the present study for a number of reasons. He is at once more and less famous, more and less influential, than his companions in this book. Whereas some figures discussed here (such as Wahiduddin Khan [see Chapter 5]) enjoy wide international recognition, and others (such as Bacha Khan [see Chapter 2]) are arguably more appreciated outside of their own countries than within them, the memory of Amadou Bamba is densely and endemically concentrated in West Africa and its diaspora. He is arguably the most salient figure of modern Senegalese history. His memory is particularly treasured by members of the Murīdiyyah Sufi Muslim brotherhood [*ṭarīqah*] which he established in or around 1883. Its Murid members today number many millions [e.g. Babou, 2007: 1; Pettman, 2010: 205]. He is at once the lauded leader of an anti-colonial movement of national liberation and the sainted founder of an enduring religious community. More pertinently for our present purposes, he is a figure who achieved such significant status while preaching and practising the principle of nonviolence. That ideal remains 'a hallmark of the order and an expectation of Murīd discipleship' [Ngom, 2016: 132]. The fact that his otherwise egalitarian understanding of Islamic nonviolence was so intimately entwined with Sufi ideas and institutions of spiritual hierarchy, moreover, gives rise to what initially appear as stark contradictions. These, it is argued, can only be reconciled through a centring of moral disposition and spiritual status as an essential element of ethical evaluation.

Not only was Amadou Bamba a pre-eminent opponent of French colonialism in Senegambia but the religious order he founded was later embraced by and influential upon the political class of independent Senegal. Amadou Bamba, a seminal proponent of Wolofal linguistic culture and economic self-sufficiency, and the religious brotherhood he shaped would soon come to economic dominance both domestically and translocally. Murids rose to prominence as both traders and businessmen and as farmers. Their extensive cultivation of the pre-colonial staple millet and groundnuts, which are at once Senegal's main cash crop and the prime guarantor of food security to its poorer inhabitants, earned the Murids the sobriquet *Les Marabouts de l'Arachide* ['The

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Peanut Sufis'; Copans, 1988]. The African 'Mecca' [Coulon 1999: 201] founded by Bamba as Senegal's second city of Touba is today the centre of the country's largest pilgrimage, while the Murīdiyyah brotherhood's presence permeates the whole country. It claims some third of the population as adherents and raised the country's greatest mosques. The largest such structure in all of West Africa is the vast Massalikoul Djinane [Ways to Paradise] Mosque: itself named after the title of Bamba's 'most important work' [Babou, 2016: 62]. That text, which began as a versification of the prose *khātim al-taṣawwuf* [*The Seal of Sufism*] by Mauritanian polymath al-Yadālī [d. 1753], will naturally be drawn upon repeatedly in this chapter.

Though Amadou Bamba's writings are read and his poetry [see e.g. Bamba, 2017] ritually chanted by his followers to this day, it is not only through words that he is recalled. Bamba's visual image is as iconic as it is ubiquitous. One finds it in a single, endlessly reproduced photograph taken after *ʿaṣr* prayers in Diourbel [Babou, 2007: 57] by an anonymous French photographer in 1913; in a kaleidoscope of street art on the walls of Touba or Dakar [Roberts and Roberts, 2007]; or in omnipresent depictions in the Senegalese businesses of New York's far distant Harlem [Salzbrunn, 2004: 472]. It is 'pressed onto button pins, stitched into clothing, mounted on walls and moving vehicles, and painted on glass surfaces' [Abdullah, 2010: 117]. More than decorative adornment or even pious commemoration, to the devout these likenesses constitute metaphysical extensions of the sainted Sheikh's very being, and thus channels for his beneficent *barke* [a Wolof loanword from the Arabic *barakah* or blessing]. In stark contradistinction to widespread misapprehensions in the West which wildly exaggerate aniconic Muslim objections to the visual depiction of animate beings (spurred by the acrimonious *Jyllands-Posten* and *Charlie Hebdo* affairs unfolding after 2005), the Murid experience of religion is intensely graphical. 'To the Murid disciples the photographs on display [are] not so much historical "evidence" but embodiments of Bamba's enduring presence' [De Jong, 2016: 43]. And yet despite all of this, '[t]he observation made by [noted Africanist scholar] Donal Cruise O'Brien in the 1970s that little is known about the thinking, actions, and role of the founder of the Muridiyyah is still largely valid' [Babou, 2007: 3; see also Cruise O'Brien, 1971: 37–38].

Outside of Senegal, and outwith Senegalese diaspora communities in France and the United States – in New York and Atlanta, Paris and Marseilles [see e.g. Abdullah, 2010; Bava, 2003; Salzbrunn, 2004; Diouf-Kamara, 1997] – Amadou Bamba is astonishingly anonymous.

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Foreigners are frequently quite unaware of his life and work, glimpsing it only dimly through its many artistic refractions from visual arts to popular music. It is a matter of no small irony that he is most widely familiar to outsiders by virtue of a celebration of his life which his own followers often abhor. Youssou N'Dour, among the most fêted musicians of modern Senegal (and indeed all of sub-Saharan Africa), dedicated several songs explicitly to Amadou Bamba on his Grammy Award-winning album *Egypt* (notably *Shukran Bamba* [Thanks to Bamba] and *Bamba the Poet*). As one of the most critically acclaimed and bestselling releases of 2004, this is surely the most common point of contact between outsiders and the legacy of Amadou Bamba. Yet it must at the same time be recognised that many in Senegal objected vehemently to that same record which brought Amadou Bamba's name to an international public. They did so not because there is debate over Amadou Bamba's towering stature, nor over his deserving celebration and commemoration. There exists neither. Rather, it prompted controversy culminating in bans and boycotts precisely because it was so widely felt that its religious themes were simply too sacred to be communicated in so ostensibly frivolous a medium. Like the Islam he aspired to embody, Amadou Bamba is to be taken extremely seriously.

MARGINALISATION, RACIALISATION, AND DISPUTATION

Not only has popular culture outside the Senegalese societal sphere failed to appreciate the significance of Amadou Bamba but so also have both Islamic and secular scholarship been relatively slow to do so. There exist many reasons which affect both alike – not least the conscious and unconscious biases which too often relegate black Africans to the status of second-class persons and second-class Muslims. This latter in particular is a perennially persistent bigotry reportedly condemned in the Prophet Muḥammad's Farewell Sermon [*khuṭbat al-widāʿ*], shamefully embodied in the historical trans-Saharan slave trade, and explicitly challenged by Amadou Bamba himself. The relative marginality or 'otherness' which such racialising notions impose upon black Africans such as Amadou Bamba is one which unfairly limits his appeal to other Muslims – let alone to humanity as such. By the same token, it denigrates him in the eyes of those secular scholars who take mere popularity to be the pre-eminent marker of importance and authenticity when selecting Muslim subjects of study. This remains the case even if they remain blessedly unburdened by the French colonial taxonomy of 'l'Islam Noir'

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distinguished by its alleged degeneracy and impurity [see e.g. Triaud, 2014]. Too often, Amadou Bamba is a seen as a parochially Senegalese figure in spite of the fact that so much of his thought and action is quite conspicuously universal [Bamba, 2009: 11, 17, 39; Kimball, 2019: xvi].

Another barrier is linguistic. Amadou Bamba did compose voluminous pious poetry in excellent classical Arabic – particularly praise for the Prophet and versifications of traditional prose texts. Yet the indigenous Wolof language was and remains the favoured language of Murid religious discourse, with its written Wolofal a variation of the Arabic script known as *ʿajamī* [originally an Arabic term meaning 'barbarous', 'non-Arab', or 'Persian'], of whose 'literatures little is known outside areas in which they have originated' [Ngom, 2009: 99]. This linguistic barrier is not only an intercontinental one but it even separates Amadou Bamba and his followers from others in the Senegambian region who have benefitted from more secular educations. 'Consequently, the flow of knowledge between *ʿajamī* scholars and those trained in Western schools is virtually nonexistent, and although they live in the same societies, their intellectual universes remain largely separate' [Ngom, 2009: 120]. The result was a sizeable theological literature left relatively 'untapped' [Babou, 2007: ix] and a predictably lamentable imbalance in the proper identification of primary textual sources on Muridism [discussed by a pre-eminent scholar of the movement in Ngom, 2016: 245–252].

A more ideological setback to the scholarly study of Amadou Bamba has also been identified by his foremost academic biographer. This is the tendency in early literature to focus on the 'economic and political aspirations spurred by colonisation as the major causative and explanatory factors of religious social movements' [Babou, 2007: 3–4]. Such context is indeed indispensable to the proper contextualisation of a given philosophy but cannot substitute for it; it is one thing to recognise that ideas arise in a context but quite another to dismiss them as mere epiphenomena or disguises for it. While individual writers bear some of the blame for the latter interpretive tendency in the present case (and Babou often points to the seminal but misleading 1913 reports of Paul Marty [Babou, 2007: 17; Babou, 2016: 64]), wider movements are also at play. Many in the twentieth century have approached religion through a broad hermeneutics of suspicion if not an outright presumption of bad faith: morality and theology have often been understood not on their own terms but as discursive strategies employed for the attainment of material ends. The *école du soupçon* produced many graduates [for classic critiques see Ricœur, 1965 and Gadamer, 2003]. In the context of the Global South,

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moreover, this interpretive predilection reflects not only the attempt to reconceive of religion 'as a dependent variable subordinated to the perceived political and economic ambitions of the Muslim leadership' [Babou, 2007: 4]. It sometimes also betokens the lingering colonial presumption of an active Northern metropole ineluctably shaping a passive Southern periphery. By the close of the twentieth century, such ideas increasingly fell into well-earned disrepute. Their essentially dogmatic and unscientific nature has been rightly recognised by the great anthropologist of religion Talal Asad as a form of

> the sociologism according to which religious ideologies are said to get their real meaning from the political or economic structure, and the self-confirming methodology according to which this reductive semantic principle is evident to the (authoritative) anthropologist and not to the people being written about … I regard this position as untenable. [Asad, 1993: 189–190]

If it is clear that an understanding of Senegalese Muridism calls for biographical and theological engagement with the figure of Amadou Bamba, then that same need should be all the more evident for our present and more modest project. We are concerned less with the modern history of the Murid order *in toto* – let alone that of wider the Senegambian populations and their various diasporas – than with a very specific Muslim articulation of pacifism and nonviolence: that of Sheikh Amadou Bamba. Even this narrower focus does face challenges beyond those already enumerated. Recent years have seen some outstanding studies which both re-examine historical assumptions and engage substantively with heretofore neglected Murid and Wolofal sources (such as the outstanding work of Robinson, Babou, and Ngom cited extensively throughout this chapter). Each rebalances colonial distortions in its own fashion. But by the same token a greater respect for indigenous perspectives necessarily also engages with material 'on the intersection of hagiography and local historical evidence' [Babou, 2007: 2]. Simply substituting a Senegalese Murid narrative for a colonial French one does not in itself guarantee an accurate representation: it may only replace one set of distortions with another. Amadou Bamba is after all not only an historical figure but a religious icon to the community which has done most to preserve his memory. This is even notwithstanding the fact that some of his finest biographers are connected to him not only by creed and culture but by family relation. It is not the place of this study to defend or to desecrate his religious function among his devotees. Our intention is to provide neither praise nor condemnation but rather to identify the specific

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themes and modalities which make Amadou Bamba's experience of Islamic nonviolence particular to him – and distinct from those other figures which concern us in this study.

Amadou Bamba Mbakke was born in the early 1850s (1853 according to Murid tradition) in either the town of Khuru Mbakke or Mbakke Bawol (opinions also divide on this point [see Babou, 2007: 52, 215]) in the last days of the Senegalese Kingdom of Baol. Readers unfamiliar with Wolof customs may reasonably but mistakenly infer that Mbakke is Bamba's demonym: that is, that he derives his name from the place of his birth. In point of fact, something like the reverse is the case. Amadou Bamba's father, Momar Anta Sali Mbakke [d. 1882 or 1883], founded numerous settlements – of which Khuru Mbakke was the first. These in turn duly commemorated their founder in their own names. Bamba would in time take after his father in many respects, from an embrace of scholarship to initiation into the Qādiriyyah Sufi order. He would also come to observe the practice of founding villages of his own. In this respect, however, Amadou Bamba would deliberately break from the custom of naming towns after family and instead opt for abstractly Islamic religious imagery.

Amadou Bamba would more dramatically depart from his father's example by actively distancing himself from political rulers. His father had, by contrast, enjoyed a close relationship with the Damel (or king) and *jihād*-leader Lat Joor Joob [*Demel Lat Dior Ngoné Latyr Diop*], serving as his judge and advisor while binding their families together in marriage to Lat Joor's niece Coro Maarooso Joob. While Momar Anta Sali Mbakke 'played an active role in the campaign Lat Joor initiated in the late 1860s to regain his throne' [Babou, 2007: 45], Amadou Bamba Mbakke would turn his back on the king and his 'compromised' court scholars. One of Amadou Bamba's earliest religio-political contests was in fact his conflict with his father's erstwhile patron over the Islamic illicitness of taking Muslim prisoners of war as slaves. This and other abuses were common in Senegal at the time, afflicting even Amadou Bamba's own family [Ngom, 2016: 223]. He might have agreed with later scholars' observations that the subsequent 'French conquest was not the disruption of an African Garden of Eden' [Cruise O'Brien, 1975: 88] but the supplanting of one form of structural violence by another. Amadou Bamba condemned these practices on moral and Shariah-minded grounds, refusing the gift of slaves [Robinson, 2000: 211] and ultimately rebuffing a summons from the ruler by quoting a famous *bon mot* attributed to the Prophet's Companion Muḥammad Ibn Maslamah al-Anṣārī: 'a cleric who

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seeks the favours of a king is like a fly feeding on excrement' [Babou, 2007: 59]. While Amadou Bamba's later relationship with the colonial French would vacillate between open opposition and pragmatic accommodation, this same basic insistence on keeping secular powers at arm's length would remain a constant throughout his life. One might also sense its influence at work in his successors' maintenance of a veritable state within a state in independent Senegal, allowing only limited government influence within their largely autonomous holy city of Touba [Babou, 2007: 260; Coulon, 1999: 203–204, 208–209].

It is worth underlining from the outset that Amadou Bamba's distrust of worldly potentates corresponded not only to an aversion to reliance upon them but also to a scornful disdain for those men of religion who are not so averse. In this he manifests a principle in Islamic scholarly ethics [*adab*] which is as long-standing as is the failure of scholars scrupulously to observe it. The insulting witticism quoted earlier is after all as much an insult to the coprophagic 'fly' as it is to the excremental 'king' which is its most obvious target. Amadou Bamba moreover clearly intended it as such, quarrelling even with his own erstwhile instructors (including judge Majakhate Kala) when they sided with what he regarded as Lat Joor's religiously prohibited policies [Babou, 2007: 58; Robinson, 2000: 24, 211]. As we will see, Amadou Bamba's hauteur towards his less incorruptible colleagues would ultimately earn him and his followers considerable distrust among the Wolof establishment. This would in turn contribute directly to his decades of oppression by France, as those increasingly wary Wolof elites became the main conduit of intelligence to the colonisers [Robinson, 2000: 214]. It is often remarked of Amadou Bamba that 'once he had made a decision, it was not easy to make him change his mind, and he did not fear adversity once he thought he was in the right' [Babou, 2007: 57]. Whether out of conscientiousness or obstinacy, he would not resile from this principled position that faith and morality must not be dictated to or subverted by temporal powers. The contrary, he judged, is a sinful hypocrisy which he would not countenance:

> In his work *Jawhar Nafīs*, the Sheikh gives these followings particulars concerning such a grave sin (verses 146 to 149): 'The worst of the creatures are definitely those who make their fortune through the pretext of religion and who live deliberately thereon. Their bellies shall be, in the Hereafter, as gigantic as castles and towers – without [this image] yielding in the least to legend . . . Scorpions and snakes will crawl therein, torturing them for aye and not shall they be granted the favour to die at length . . . When they let out a wind, the fetid smell coming from

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their intestines shall harm all [their criminal companions] that are held under detention in Hell.' [Bamba, 2009: 157]

In light of such uncompromising convictions, Amadou Bamba's relationship with his openly politicised father seems likely to have been considerably more strained than either hagiographical platitudes or Wolof cultural expectations of filial piety permit one easily to recognise. The two men's lives differed profoundly, even if Amadou Bamba persisted in formally identifying himself as 'the disciple of my father' [Bamba, 2009: 34]. He is even reputed to have declared that, 'If my father does not leave the king, I will leave him' [quoted in Robinson, 2000: 211]. In contradistinction to any such equivocacy, his relationship with his mother Maam Jaara Buso [1866] is perfectly unambiguous. The heir to a 'prestigious clerical lineage' [Robinson, 2000: 210], she is universally regarded as a hallowed figure among Murids and receives a degree of veneration which entirely eclipses any due to her husband. Indeed, reverence for her rivals even that for her sainted son. Part of this is the result of her connection with Amadou Bamba, of course, and 'the traditional Wolof conception of the mother's role and place in the family as to the local Islamic culture. There is a Wolof saying that sums up this conception: "Legee yu ndey agnub doom," which translates as "A child's destiny is determined by his mother's labour [in the household]"' [Babou, 2007: 198]. She is nevertheless also held in high esteem on her own merits, and

> receives much of the credit for her son's election as a saint. She is portrayed in the hagiographic literature as an erudite Muslim woman and an exemplary wife and mother, endowed with much spiritual power ... Her tomb in the village of Porokhaan in [the Kaolack region of] east-central Senegal is the object of a cult of men and women (but mostly women) whose devotion culminates each year in the only pilgrimage dedicated to a female Muslim saint in Senegal. [Babou, 2007: 8–9; see also Rosander, 2003]

Not only is the pilgrimage in memory of Maam Jaara Buso the only such devotion to a female saint in Senegal but it is also greater than those of any male saint save Amadou Bamba himself [see Coulon, 1999]. Whereas the mother is revered, the father receives no such commemoration. It was, moreover, Maam Jaara Buso's brother Muhammad Buso who was tasked with raising Amadou Bamba after he reached the age of seven [Babou, 2007: 52]. At the age of twelve Bamba moved with Buso to Saalum, opening new avenues for the growing child to improve his classical education. By the time Amadou Bamba returned to his recently widowed father, he was in his early twenties and an accomplished young

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scholar. His learning and the respect which it earned him would lay the groundwork not only for his own spiritual development but for the growth of a religious community around him.

A NONVIOLENT CONFRATERNITY UNDER VIOLENT COLONIALISM

The precise founding of the Muridiyyah order has become a matter of minor debate. Earlier secular writers (in contrast to members of the order themselves [Babou, 2007: 110]) explicitly correlate it with the death of Lat Joor in 1886. They do this by invoking the image of a *fin de siècle* consummation of French conquest: the dusk of one era and the dawn of the next are defined by their forms of resistance to European empire. Militancy gives way to nonviolence, Lat Joor to Amadou Bamba. Some go so far as to dramatise this mythical moment through (conflicting) accounts of a deathbed reconciliation between Amadou Bamba and the ailing *Geej* dynast [see e.g. Cruise O'Brien, 1971 for both of these tendencies]. More recent writing challenges such simplistic narratives of the passing of the torch between Great Men of History, questioning its historicity [Robinson, 2000: 212] even to the point of concluding that '[i]t is likely that the meeting between Lat Joor and Amadu Bamba never actually took place' [Babou, 2007: 109].

The political usefulness of this apocryphal tale in laying claim to the remaining social capital of the *ancien régime* is conversely quite evident – and it seems likely that Murids themselves played a part in propagating it. More indubitable is the fact that French archival sources on Amadou Bamba are most prevalent during the period beginning in 1885. This is, however, most parsimoniously explained by acknowledging that colonial agents wrote more about him in this period due to their growing fear of his potential as a troublemaker, and not necessarily because of the institutional cohesion or theological crystallisation of his movement. One might finally add to all of these observations that Amadou Bamba did not receive or distribute the Murid *wird*, the signature litany which is generally seen as setting a Sufi order apart, until considerably later. According to his son's hagiography, written within five years of Amadou Bamba's death, the precise date of this moment was the twelfth of Rabīʿ al-Awwal AH 1322 [Mbacké, 1984: 152]. That is, the twenty-seventh of May, 1904, and the birthday of the Prophet Muḥammad [*mawlid al-nabī*].

Rather than regarding the founding of the order as a single historical instant, then, one may be better advised to regard it as a process of

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consolidation taking place during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is clear that Amadou Bamba's popularity grew steadily between the 1880s and the beginning of the twentieth century. While he seems unlikely to have understood himself as the founder of a Sufi *ṭarīqah* (order, lit. *path*) during all of that time, he certainly did exert active influence on his countrymen. This not least through his founding of the holy city of Touba in 1888 [Babou, 2007: 70; some sources give a slightly earlier date of 1887, e.g. Coulon, 1999: 199] 'at a strategically located site bordering the kingdoms of Bawol, Kajoor, Jolof and Saalum' [Babou, 2016: 58]. Touba remains the centre of Muridism and is often described as the Murid Mecca or Vatican City [e.g. Coulon, 1999: 199]. Like those hallowed sites, it is considered a *ḥaram* or religiously reserved sanctuary. Its name denotes 'blessing' in Quranic Arabic [*ṭūbā*; often confused in the secondary literature with the far more common Arabic term *tawbah* for 'repentance'] and evokes an eponymous tree of Paradise described in the *ḥadīth* literature [e.g. *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān* no. 7573; al-Suyūṭī's *al-Jāmiʿ al-Saghīr* no. 3918]. The image is certainly a paradisical one, even if some of Amadou Bamba's biographers are mistaken in conflating it with the Quranic Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary [or *sidrat al-muntahā*; e.g. Kimball, 2019: 112; Ross, 2006: 29; cf. Quran 53:14].

The importance of this symbol, and the Quranic passage [Quran 13:29] to which it most directly alludes is returned to later in this chapter. It forms part of a discussion not of historical or philological niceties but rather of Amadou Bamba's religious ethics. His educational initiatives on behalf of those ethics, and particularly his method of practical spiritual pedagogy (or *tarbiyyah*), have furthermore been dated back as far as 1884 [Ngom, 2009: 103]. These, too, are outlined in what follows. Our ultimate concern in all of this is not with attempting to fix the parameters of Amadou Bamba's career immutably in time so much as exploring what its emerging structures and teachings tell us about his distinctive approach to nonviolence. Evidence of such an approach is plentiful: 'the call for nonviolence pervades ʿAjamī sources' [Ngom, 2016: 132]. An examination of that call, however, once more compels us to return briefly to Amadou Bamba's relationship with France. This is not because it was the mere product of, nor simple reaction to, French action. Rather, it is because it was through his conflict with the colonial power that his philosophy found its most celebrated manifestation.

It is often observed that Amadou Bamba was born into a time of enormous disruption [e.g. Robinson, 2000: 208–210; Ngom, 2009: 103]. Not only did local leaders war upon one another but the

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centuries-old French foothold in Senegambia was now rapidly expanding under Governor Louis Faidherbe [d. 1889], with the aim of conquering the entire territory. As Amadou Bamba's popularity and influence grew, he was subject to mounting suspicion on the part of the ambitious colonial authorities. Justifications for these misgivings were as numerous as they were circumstantial. The mere fact that Amadou Bamba was a notable figure and a Sufi religious leader (or 'marabout') might have sufficed to justify a degree of apprehension. While Sufism in the twenty-first century is often caricatured as placidly self-absorbed and otherworldly, during the nineteenth century 'marabouts' of multiple brotherhoods played the leading roles in opposing colonialism across the continent and beyond. They often did so by violent means. During the 1830s and 1840s, for instance, the French conquest of Algeria was fiercely resisted by followers of the Qādirī Sufi and statesman ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī [d. 1883; see esp. Woerner-Powell, 2017] and his female contemporary, the Raḥmānī Sufi freedom-fighter Lalla Fatma N'Soumer [d. 1863; see e.g. Touati, 2018]. One might similarly note that the most famous armed resistance movements to the British and Russian Empires in Sudan and the Caucasus during that same century were similarly led by Sufis: in the respective persons of the Sammānī Sufi 'Mahdi' Muḥammad Aḥmad [d. 1885; see e.g. Shaked, 1978] and the Naqshbandī Sufi Imām Shāmil [d. 1871; see e.g. Blanch, 1960]. By the 1850s in Senegal, the Tijānī Sufi al-Ḥājj ʿUmar Tal was himself raising the banner of *jihād* – first against his 'pagan' neighbours and then against the encroaching French.

In Amadou Bamba's West African context, colonial administrators increasingly saw affiliation with the Tijāniyyah brotherhood in particular as tantamount to an active embrace of *jihādist* insurrectionism. Avowals to the contrary availed little. 'In the colonial discourse, pacifist clerics were the Trojan horse of religious radicalism and had to be confined at every opportunity' [Sanneh, 2016: 15]. The fact that Amadou Bamba had accepted initiation, not only into the Qādiriyyah and Shādhiliyyah orders but also into the usually more exclusivist Tijāniyyah, cast him in a most dangerous light. This even before one considers how well known it was that Amadou Bamba's father had (to his son's chagrin) been the confidant and advisor of a famous military leader and opponent of France in the form of king Lat Joor Joob. The fact that Amadou Bamba and his Murids had earned the ire of many Wolof chiefs by refusing to pay homage to them or to respect their court religious scholars only encouraged French suspicions that he was building an independent-minded 'state within a

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state' which might come to threaten their expanding interests [Babou, 2007: 116–118]. His attempts at mollifying the French Governor Léon Émile Clément-Thomas through a letter-writing campaign and exchange of gifts beginning in 1889 [Babou, 2007: 120] brought only brief respite from state suppression.

Amadou Bamba was singled out less by dint of any manifest guilt of his own than by association. His vocation, affiliation, and relation to others were considered sufficient evidence. When these were joined with unsubstantiated accusations of the hoarding of weaponry brought by Saint-Louis regional administrator M. Leclerc on the basis of rumours spread by aggrieved nearby chiefs [Babou, 2016: 59], Amadou Bamba's sentencing would swiftly follow. The case against him was conducted by the director of political affairs (and later acting governor-general), Martial Merlin, a man deeply 'wedded to stereotypes about the Tijaniyya, fanaticism, and danger to the fledgeling colonial regime' [Robinson, 2000: 230]. He concluded that

> Amadu Bamba, pupil of Shaikh Sidiyya, Moorish marabout of the Qadiriyya sect, had professed in the last few years the Tijani doctrine which involves preaching holy war. Anyone with experience in the country and with the preachers of holy war will immediately understand that Amadu Bamba, *without seeming to*, was preparing very adroitly to act in the near future, almost surely during the next dry season. [Merlin, quoted in Robinson, 2000: 215, emphasis added]

Far from plotting the political murder of Frenchmen, Amadou Bamba had already in the previous decade insisted through his *Masālik al-Jinān* that '[i]t is positively prohibited to shed the blood or to misappropriate the good of a human being, be he Muslim or not' [Bamba, 2009: 121], as 'abusing those who have done us injustices is itself an injustice' [Bamba, 2009: 170]. Indeed, it has been recorded that he was by the time of his arrest on 10 October 1895 practising degrees of nonviolence which forbade even the killing of insects [Ngom, 2016: 121; Ba, 1982: 65–66]. Murid hagiographical tradition simultaneously underlines and defends his pacifism during this period through reference to a spiritual vision of the Prophet and his Companions:

> The absolution from jihad is central to Bamba's overall nonviolent thought and it is rooted in his visionary experience in Touba in 1895 before being sent into exile. During that encounter, he saw the Prophet with his companions that fought at the famous battle of Badr in the second year of the hegira (624 CE) and asked how he could join their illustrious company. He was told that the time for spilling blood was over, but that if he wished to be raised into their company he would have to go face his enemies in his time as the people of Badr

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had faced theirs. According to internal Murid sources, Bamba completed his fast and went to Mbacké-Bari in Jolof, where he was arrested and later deported. [Ware, 2013: 240–241; 247–248; see also Ngom, 2016: 131]

When Amadou Bamba was finally brought before the Conseil d'État Privé in Saint-Louis on 5 September, judicial deliberations reached their foregone conclusion. Though court archives omit to record his defence, Murid tradition holds that he prayed two *rakʿah* prostrations. This event is now commemorated each year as *la prière des deux rakhas* or the *Maggal de Saint-Louis*, many pilgrims also visiting the cell in which he was detained in order to pray and to meditate [De Jong, 2016: 37]. What is reflected in official records is that Amadou Bamba was sentenced to exile. In total, he 'spent three months in Saint-Louis before being brought by train to Dakar, the present-day capital of Senegal, and from there [two days later] he was sent by ship to Gabon' [Ngom, 2016: 121]. He would remain in Gabon until 1902, while his foremost deputies, his shrewd half-brother Sheikh Anta and the charismatic ecstatic Shaykh Ibra Fall, both developed his order and campaigned for his release.

'While the archives deal profusely with the arrest and trial of Amadu Bamba, there is very little information about the exile' [Babou, 2016: 60]. Nevertheless, both his own memoires and Murid tradition describe it as both terrible and sublime. Amadou Bamba is recalled as 'endur [ing] sufferings that only death surpasses' [Amadou Bamba quoted in Babou, 2016: 60] while at the same time being granted ever more beatific visions of the divine, explicitly likening his travails to the tribulations endured by the Prophet Muḥammad during his early Meccan period of nonviolent resistance to pagan persecution [Babou, 2016: 61]. Legends concerning the saint's ordeals, and of the miracles (or *karamāt*) which sustained him throughout, soon began to circulate and to inspire his followers [Robinson, 2000: 216]. These crystallised after his death through his community's artistic genius into a veritable religious epic, when 'the famous Murid poet, Musa Ka, developed an elaborate master narrative that pieced together the different exile stories' [Babou, 2016: 64]. He placed Bamba's 'call for nonviolence' [Ngom, 2016: 132] at its heart. These legendary narrations have been argued to 'serve two purposes: first, to counter French official narrative of the events and, second, to promote Bamba as a *walī* Allah, or friend of God' [Babou, 2016: 57]. The latter feature, in particular, must be returned to later as it has a direct bearing on the nature and function of the particular variety of Islamic nonviolence preached and practised by Amadou Bamba.

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No sooner had Amadou Bamba returned to Senegal after his first exile, to be 'greeted as a hero at the docks of Dakar' [Robinson, 2000: 216], than he was again deported by the authorities. This time, in 1903, he was detained in Mauritania. His final move back to Senegal in 1907 was not so much liberation as a more domestic detention. He remained under closely surveilled house arrest: first in Ceyeen-Jolof until 1912 and then in Diourbel (where his single and celebrated photograph was taken) until his death in 1927. His entreaties to be permitted to return to his beloved Touba were decisively denied – though it is there that he now lies buried.

It is safe to say that Amadou Bamba's exiles and imprisonments were grievous miscarriages of justice. He was almost certainly innocent of all substantive charges brought against him. Even the more nebulous fear that he was essentially an enemy of France is somewhat belied by his preparedness to pragmatically accommodate to aspects of French rule. This is evidenced both before his imprisonment – for instance in his relationship with Léon Émile Clément-Thomas mentioned earlier – and subsequent to it [e.g. Babou, 2007: 162–174]. After 1910, he would begin to advise his followers to pay their taxes and observe a degree of obedience to the colonial state, recognising both that it freely permitted the practice of Islam and that it guaranteed a greater degree of security than would otherwise obtain [Robinson, 2000: 177, 210, 222]. With the outbreak of the First World War, in fact, when his devotees numbered at least 70,000 [Babou, 2016: 59] and France pursued a more conciliatory policy towards them, Amadou Bamba went so far as to play 'a pivotal role in enrolling his followers as conscripts in the French army, for which he received the French Legion of Honour' [De Jong, 2016: 39; see also Robinson, 2000: 224]. Many of the African soldiers who died in the Dardanelles were Murid followers of the shaykh, present with his permission. This final fact must also be returned to when further considering the nature of his commitment to nonviolence if not his attitude to the coloniser. Nonetheless, the three decades of oppression he faced at the hands of the authorities not only cemented his reputation as a martyr for the people but also honed his nonviolent approach to Islam to a piercingly practical point. He would write:

> O ye my persecutors! Ye banned me on the pretence that I am waging a war [*jihād*] against you. Indeed ye are right because I am really combatting for the Countenance of the Lord. But I am waging my Jihad through Knowledge [*ulūm*] and Fearing the Lord [*taqwā*], as [a humble] subject of God and the servant of His Prophet; and the Lord who oversees everything may assuredly bear witness thereof . . . While others hold material weapons to be feared, my two weapons are [knowledge] and [worship]; and this is surely my way of fighting. [Bamba, 2009: 12]

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SPIRITUAL *JIHĀD* AND NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE

Amadou Bamba's *jihād fī sabīl allāh* [struggle in the cause of God] in the face of state and colonial oppression may have been both 'subtle' [Mai-Bornu, 2020: 8] and ostensibly 'cultural' in its methods, but it was nevertheless undeniably political. One would be quite mistaken in seeing his lifelong disdain for worldly powers as either a retreat from reality or as a form of quietism [*pace* for instance Coulon, 1999: 198]. Rather, his was 'an aspiration to separate the politics of Islam from the politics of kings' [Babou, 2009: 55]. Both the form and the content of his religious teachings, to say nothing of his own exemplary practice, constitute the basis of both his Murid order's beliefs and of his distinct variety of Islamic nonviolence.

Like many other advocates for Islamic nonviolence discussed elsewhere in this volume (perhaps most saliently Jawdat Said [see Chapter 6]), Amadou Bamba's religio-political itinerary begins with a sense of personal spiritual accountability. Self-criticism and the purification of one's own motives form the foundation for all that follows from them. Whereas Jawdat Said, for example, begins from a psychological critique inspired by the Algerian philosopher Malek Bennabi [Mālik bin Nabī; d. 1973], for Amadou Bamba this exercise is expressed in very traditionally (but far from exclusively) Sufi terms. It is the *jihād al-nafs* [struggle against oneself] or *al-jihād al-akbar* [the greater or greatest struggle]. One's own appetites and egotism [*al-nafs*] are conceived of as the primary source of violence and suffering, and one is advised to '[s]tay always watchful and on thy guard against [the *nafs*] just as one would do if he meets a lion in the bush who is getting ready to leap over him' [Bamba, 2009: 92]. The battle against these is as such 'the toughest Jihad [which] consists in hindering one's mind from ever involving in aught that is not proper' [Bamba, 2009: 62]. To this end, the believers are urged not only to restrain themselves but to practice frequent meditation [*fikr*] on their own nature in all its failings and shortcomings:

> Because it is through *Fikr* practice man can gaze forthrightly at himself and can discern his good deeds – to which he will be delight – as well as his shortcomings – [he will have to put right] … Such self-fairness [through the practice of *fikr*] is a requirement for any servant that is seeking for Loftiness from our MOST GRACIOUS LORD … That unremitting meditation is the best occupation a Believer can spend his time on, because man can get sound and discriminating knowledge only in exercising regularly his reflexive reason in meditation. [Bamba, 2009: 57–58]

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This concern for the motivation of the moral actor is not limited to the desire to cultivate good habits and discourage bad ones. It is not undertaken instrumentally so as to foster certain outcomes in lieu of others. Rather, for Amadou Bamba the motive informing an action forms an essential part of the moral value of that action itself. An apparently meritorious act performed for the wrong reasons will as a result be blameworthy. One may here recall his lurid condemnation of professional religious scholars mentioned earlier. Their great learning is for Amadou Bamba blasphemously defiled by the desire for wealth and fame which he takes to animate it. In his *Masālik al-Jinān* he repeatedly states both this point and its inverse corollary directly:

> Concerning any act which has been done without any earthly aim [and that has been performed for the sole Sake of God], we call it *Ikhlās* (Absolute Purity) – no not fear the outcomes [of ostentation]. But as for any such that is aiming inwardly the creatures through his good deeds [and whose profound objective is not the LORD], his act is tainted by ostentation. Yea! Was he acting in secrecy. As for the servant who acts quite conversely, he is ranked amongst the *Mukhlisīn* (Sincere Worshippers [who practice *ikhlās*]). This even if his act has been performed publicly, because people's attendance has no effect on his heart … Some others have been deluded by Satan … in driving them unto exaggerated asceticism, excessive self-restraint and tendency to deliver endless sermons and admonitions at any circumstance … for in naught people's praises will profit one of them as long as he brings himself upon the Divine Wrath. [Bamba, 2009: 128, 108–109]

Given our present concern with the nonviolent dimension of Amadou Bamba's thought and action, it is important to note that pharisaic clerics are only one of the two most typical targets of his charges of hypocrisy and impure motivation. The other are those who wage armed warfare and attempt to justify it on spiritual grounds:

> Others have been deluded by their 'holy war' [*jihād*], because they wage war against human beings. They set themselves against their fellow creatures and make regular assaults in the sole order to gain more glamour and more spoils of war. Thus they pretend *raising* GOD's Word whereas their sole objective is *rising* to fame and not anything else! So they come back from their so-called '*Jihād*' covered with sins and a host of misdeeds with all their troops. [Bamba, 2009: 107]

Armed *jihād* is consistently framed in Amadou Bamba's writing in terms of its physically and spiritually destructive consequences. It is directly contrasted with the true challenge for the believer, and he is often quoted as saying that '[t]he warrior in the path of God is not [the one] who takes his enemies' life, but the one who combats his [own] *nafs* to achieve spiritual perfection' [e.g. Babou, 2007: 5; Ngom, 2009: 103].

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Amadou Bamba's conscientious concern for critical 'self-fairness' [Bamba, 2009: 57–58] leads him to adopt a particular attitude towards suffering – one which the mythologised accounts of his great mistreatment at the hands of the French would come to embody. Misfortune and difficulty are for him an opportunity to identify weakness in oneself and to address it; *παθήματα μαθήματα* (sufferings are lessons) might be considered his watchword. Struggle is essential for self-improvement. Even if such trials are not forthcoming from without one is urged to discover them within, as '[a] true Believer stays never forty days without feeling any fear, [e]ither by a very frightening prospect or by some other trial likely to increase his afterlife Rewarding' [Bamba, 2009: 182]. Conversely:

> The worst state of mind for a human is confiding entirely in one's ability or esteeming too much the power of any creature ... Indeed the feeling of humbleness deriving from sinning or from undergoing firmly a trial is more meritorious than exhilarating feeling of grandeur ensuing from one's uprightness or from one's gifts. Because, in the first case, man is led to be aware of his own weakness and inadequacy; he also becomes afraid of sinning again and so he will redeem himself. [Bamba, 2009: 97]

Amadou Bamba does not consider suffering to be a good in and of itself, it is crucial to note. He does not praise those who inflict it, nor encourage others to do likewise; his is not a spiritual masochism. Rather, misfortune is to be regarded as the most readily accessible road to the cultivation of self-criticism and the chief moral virtues of *ṣabr* and *shukr* [patient forbearance and the enduring thankfulness to God] which are given great prominence in his writing [e.g. Bamba, 2009: 173–187]. While these are not available only through the path of suffering, achieving them in its absence is so much more difficult and demanding that

> patience [*ṣabr*] in times of peace and happiness; this is assuredly the hardest and the most meritorious of them all ... The most deserving and brave person is indeed who that manages to remain patient [that is, practice *ṣabr*] in times of peace and joy. Such patience consists in not confiding in one's material welfare, in not letting oneself deluded by one's material goods ... Anyone who spends undisturbed and perfectly peaceful life in this world will deeply regret it in the Next World, in seeing those who have undergone ordeals. Then he will wish almost he had his body permanently torn into shreds in his past life ... Because of the Wonderous and Boundless Rewards which will be imparted to the suffering Believers on that Day. [Thus we can understand more why] the LORD often overburdens His believing and striving Servants with misfortunes on this earth. [Bamba, 2009: 174, 180]

Some readers may find these views strange, or even perverse: at best a distraction from real injustice in the world and at worst an otherworldly

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apology for it. One should recall at this juncture that Amadou Bamba earned so much of his fame not by ignoring but by confronting political evils. The tension which one may feel between his theology and his activism does not arise from its internal contradiction. Rather, it flows from its disjuncture with a (now widely hegemonic) secular-liberal presumption that one's internal life and one's social and political experience are fundamentally separable – indeed that they should ideally be kept politely separate. Amadou Bamba simply did not share this frame of reference, and given his historical background and traditional education could not easily have done so. His moral framework is undergirded by the famous saying of the Prophet Muḥammad *innamā al-aʿmālu bi-l-niyyāti*: 'verily actions are according to intentions' [the first saying listed in both the *ṣaḥīḥ al-bukhārī*, and the even more widely read *40 Ḥadīth* of *al-Nawawī*]. One must also underline that for Amadou Bamba this special concern for motivation is not sufficient unto itself. It forms an essential part of the moral value of an action but does not alone define it. It is, in other words, a necessary but not sufficient condition for righteousness: it is an indispensable element of nonviolence. This is a crucial consideration for our present exploration of his moral philosophy and is reflected furthermore in his account of the role and nature of the Sufism which animated it.

It is certainly true that many past and present Sufis have afforded spiritual experience a greater importance than the scrupulous observance of outward ethics. In some cases, this has even taken the form of thoroughgoing antinomianism or the deliberate flouting of religious law [see Karamustafa, 2006]. Amadou Bamba did not practise such forms of Sufism but rather regarded them as a 'delusion sent by Satan' [Bamba, 2009: 71]. He chastised even his most senior followers when they appeared to be slipping into it – as evidenced by his letter to his lieutenant [*khalīfah*] Shaykh Ibra Fall [reproduced in Babou, 2007: 103]. Right motivation must in Amadou Bamba's view necessarily be joined with right action, each completing the other. Like many Shariah-minded North and West African Sufis, he attributed the following stricture to the founder of the region's pre-eminent school of Islamic law, the Imām Mālik [Bamba, 2009: 45; cf. Woerner-Powell, 2017: 198]:

> It behoves to any believer to comply first with the Rules of *Fiqh* [jurisprudence, law] prior to practicing *Taṣawwuf* [Sufism]. Thence whosoever disregards the Legal Rules of Worship (*Fiqh*) [and undertakes the practicing of *Taṣawwuf*] shall perish in this world by the sentence of the Doctors of the Law. Any who neglects the inner aspects of religion (*Taṣawwuf*) shall perish in the Next World by the Will of the MAJESTIC LORD. [Bamba, 2009: 44]

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This is more than an abstractly theological question, or indeed an apologia for mystical Islam against the criticisms of other Muslims. Rather, it relates directly to the relationship between spiritual vocation and practical application – and in consequence between Amadou Bamba's teaching and his politics. The position he takes is one which rejects the idea that the typically Sufi attitude of *tawakkul* [absolute dependence upon God] is in conflict with earning one's earning a living through action in the world by *kasb* [acquisition]. The latter is a term which at the same time means economic gain or profit, the receipt of reward for good deeds, and the causal efficacy of acts by created beings (which are theologically seen to 'acquire' their power from God). The tension between these two concepts – very broadly corresponding to fatalism and activism – is one which has been debated by Sufis since at least the tenth century: it is for instance a *topos* in Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī's [d. 996] seminal *Qūt al-Qulūb*. Amadou Bamba's position, however, is unequivocal:

> Giving up rational efforts [*kasb*] on the pretence of having 'put one's entire trust in the LORD' [*tawakkul*], while one expects people's assistance, is an insane behaviour indeed. Do know that confiding in GOD [*tawakkul*] and making rational actions are not mutually exclusive – waste not thy time [in such a misconception]! … The proper mind-set is to combine both of these [*Tawakkul* and *Kasb*], even if there is some divergence amongst the Masters about this question [The fact is that] GOD has ordained for aye that the effects He produces will always be connected somehow to the apparent rational causes proceeding from His creatures. [Bamba, 2009: 139–140]

The result of Amadou Bamba taking this theological position (which happens also to reflect mainstream ʿAsharite orthodoxy on the question of *al-qaḍā' wa al-qadr* or free will and predestination) is expressed in both ethical and economic terms. In terms of ethics, his equivocation between *kasb* and *tawakkul* becomes the means by which the spiritual dimensions of Sufism are reconciled with the normative strictures of Islamic law:

> Thus wilt thou combine *Shari'a* [religious moral law] and *Ḥaqīqah* [mystical awareness of metaphysical reality] – this is assuredly the most balanced attitude one may adopt. Giving up totally rational means is considered as a heresy [in contradiction with the Prophetic Sunna] but disregarding any concern for *Tawakkul* amounts to assigning partners to GOD [*Shirk*] … So wilt thou conform simultaneously to *Ḥaqīqah* and *Shari'a* – indeed GOD commands to combine both of these. Any that neglects thanking GOD is guilty of unbelief but whoever disregards thanking the mediators is considered as ungrateful. [Bamba, 2009: 142, 166]

In economic terms, meanwhile, Amadou Bamba's attitude is one which not only permits gainful employment but actively encourages it as a

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necessary form of responsible self-sufficiency. Gaining wealth and giving of it in alms is praised while relying on others' charity is discouraged. Personal accountability and communal independence would come to characterise not only his theology but the practical organisation of his religious brotherhood and the modalities of its resistance first to colonial rule and latterly to the control of the independent Senegalese state. For all that the foregoing discussions may strike the reader with their esoteric otherworldliness, Amadou Bamba's nonviolent Islam stands out both for its interest in the temporal and its success in worldly affairs. This manifests itself on levels from the symbolic to the structural.

PEACE AS A PEDAGOGY OF PRODUCTIVE SERVICE

It has already been noted that Amadou Bamba followed in his father's footsteps in continuing the Wolof tradition of village-founding. In starting new settlements, however, he also laid the foundation for new communities outside of the control of either expanding France or the local potentates she supplanted. These he gave conspicuously religious rather than the traditional temporal names his countrymen would have expected. Nowhere is this more salient than in the case of the Murid's 'holy city'. The religious themes outlined earlier – the inseparability of good deeds and good intentions and the importance of humble forbearance in the face of adversity – are powerfully evoked by the name Amadou Bamba chose for his new 'capital'. Touba [*ṭūbā*] is a very rarely used term in modern Arabic, only highlighting its scriptural origin for those familiar with the Quran.

The Quranic verse in which the word *ṭūbā* is used, and chosen by Bamba to anchor his community, is revealed at the end of the Prophet's nonviolent period of persecution by the polytheists of Mecca. It promises that '[f]or those who believe and work righteousness [*wa-ʿamilū al-ṣāliḥāti*] is (every) blessedness [*ṭūbā*] and a beautiful place of (final) return' [Quran 13:29]. It entails an explicit wedding of faith and good works. The wider context in which it arises, moreover, is one which describes 'those who believe and work righteousness' as '[t]hose who patiently persevere [*alladhīna ṣabarū*], seeking the countenance of their Lord; Establish regular prayers; spend, out of (the gifts) We have bestowed for their sustenance, secretly and openly' [Quran 13:22]; and as '[t]hose who believe, and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah: for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction' [Quran 13:29]. The verses which precede the Quranic reference to Touba,

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that is, specify the virtues of *ṣabr*, ritual observance, and charitable donation from one's own wealth. Those which follow it point to the remembrance of God [*dhikr*] which Sufis regard as their core practice. Amadou Bamba's rejection of the Wolof custom of naming settlements after oneself may therefore be understood as a concise intertextual manifesto: dynastic glory is rejected in favour of humbly steadfast religious ethics and Sufi piety. By the same token, it offers a promise for the future. The *ṭūbā* verse was after all revealed to the Prophet as his period of oppression by the ungodly Meccans was giving way to his triumphant time as head of a self-sufficient religio-political unity in Medina. The same happy future that awaited the Companions of God's Messenger [*rasūl allāh*] might by implication also await the followers of the *khādim al-rasūl* [Servant of the Messenger of God], as Amadou Bamba increasingly styled himself.

Amadou Bamba's sobriquet Servant of the Messenger of God has a double meaning. Most obviously, it reflects his enormous veneration for and spiritual relationship with Muḥammad. 'According to hagiographic sources, he began emulating the virtues of the Prophet directly in 1891 when he was thirty-eight years old' [Ngom, 2016: 107]. Praise and prayer for the Prophet is a particularly salient theme of Amadou Bamba's poetry, what is more, and it is recorded earlier that his receipt of the Murid litany [*wird*] took place on no less auspicious date than the Prophet's birthday [*mawlid al-nabī*]. Amadou Bamba himself reports multiple spiritual visions of the Prophet, and attributes some of his most important teachings directly to Muḥammad's influence. This very much includes his nonviolence, as he writes that '[w]henever I recall my sojourn in such a[n awful prison] they put me in, and the [misbehaviour] of that unfair governor, I feel like taking arms [to combat them]. But the Prophet himself dissuades me therefrom' [Bamba, 2009: 17]. Ultimately, even these feelings of resentment are dissolved in adoration for God and His Messenger: 'I have forgiven all of my enemies for the Holy Face of Whom has driven them away, so never shall I try to avenge myself' [Bamba, 2009: 153]. The second meaning of Amadou Bamba's new title of Servant of the Messenger of God relates to the centrality it accords the notion of 'service' [*khidmah*], which becomes a core organising principle for his fledgling community (as it would for others discussed later in this text [see esp. Chapter 2]).

For Amadou Bamba and the Murids who follow him, *khidmah* denotes devotional service and 'spiritual investments for success in [ones] personal quest for spiritual perfection' [Ngom, 2016: 108]. In spite of this

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personal focus, however, *khidmah* also encompasses all forms of labour and profit [ʿ*amal* and *kasb*] 'when they serve to produce the resources needed to accomplish pious acts or for subsistence which enables people to accomplish their religious obligations' [Ngom, 2016: 108]. The result is both a strong ethos of mutual aid the potent work ethic which many observers [e.g. Salzbrunn, 2004: 489] attribute to the Murids:

> Unlike the concept of ʿ*amal* or ʿ*amal saalih* [work or righteous work], which is much more focused and goal-oriented, *khidma* can create an ecstatic energy, collapsing the religious and the everyday into a single moment. In other words, with ʿ*amal*, the workday becomes punctuated with religious rites such as prayers or verbal incantations. By comparison, *khidma* encompasses the total round of one's activities, both secular and religious, blurring any distinctions between them, since its focus is to transform all actions into divine service. [Abdullah, 2010: 190]

Amadou Bamba attracted followers from all sections of society – very much including its 'lower strata' [Ngom, 2016: 84], and sought to inculcate in them through a tiered and flexible pedagogy the virtues of assiduous nonviolent service. 'He organized the system around "knowledge schools," "quranic schools," "working schools," and personalized instruction for disciples with special needs' [Ngom, 2009: 107]. His 'mission statement' is recorded as follows in Mahmuud Ñaŋ's ʿAjamī text, "What is the Murīd Way?":

> Similar to verses 111 and 112 in the chapter *al-Tawba*, the Murīd way is grounded in *īmān* [faith], *islām* [submission to God], and *iḥsān* [beneficence]. It came to remove ignorance, poverty, and idleness; to bring knowledge combined with civility; self-sufficiency combined with work; vigor coupled with prudence; to unite the hearts and intents of people and to teach them steadfastness. Murīd disciples are vigorous and generous Muslims who combine worship of God with work ethic. They share the fruit of their labor selflessly. They are determined and comply with God's injunctions and prohibitions. They do not quarrel, bicker, or fight. They must be humble and pursue excellence. They must empathize with anyone below them and honor and respect those above them. They must treat their peers the way they would like to be treated. These are some of the virtues of The Master [Amadou Bamba] that he cultivated in all his followers. [Quoted in Ngom, 2016: 85–86]

Other Murid Wolof pedagogical texts also emphasise Amadou Bamba's openness to all comers, his preparedness to match curricula to their differing abilities, and the ineluctable centrality of active labour:

> (Bamba said): I instruct all disciples (1) to cultivate knowledge, courtesy, and discipline. I order every disciple who relies on me (2) to keep studying al-Quran, the best of the books. If your brain could not hold these two things, he would send

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you to the working school where you would be educated and taught all types of work. If you were beyond the working age or could not do it, he would find something useful that brought divine reward and ask you to do it. But no one ever stayed with Boroom Tuubaa ['the leader of Touba', i.e. Amadou Bamba] without doing anything. [Quoted in Ngom, 2009: 106]

It is again worth noting that Amabou Bamba's embrace of the socially marginal and his elevation of exemplary religious ethics over any other marker of status was not limited to his own society but also reflected a more global egalitarianism. Amadou Bamba is often described as the first black African to found a Sufi order [e.g. Bamba, 2009: 5–6; De Jong, 2016 : 39] (though the smaller Layène brotherhood founded by Seydina Mouhammadou Limamou Laye is for instance roughly contemporaneous) and was similarly unusual in making no claim to Prophetic descent. He was well aware of the condescension with which his ethnicity and his language were regarded by other Muslims, including many of the 'white' 'Arab' Mauritanians [Robinson, 2000: 5; Ngom, 2009: 103–104] with whom he had studied in early life [Coulon, 1999: 197]. His *Masālik al-Jinān* addresses these directly in reminding them of the universality of Islam and the fact that 'the most honourable human being before GOD is who that fears HIM the most, without any possible doubt [e.g. Quran 49:13]. So black skin does not imply insanity or ill understanding' [Bamba, 2009: 39]. He never argued for the converse superiority of black Africans (as Elijah Muhammad and the separatist Nation of Islam would later come to do), nor did he insist upon use of the Wolof language he reinvigorated [Ngom, 2009: 103] and defended from 'French and Arab acculturation' [Ngom, 2009: 104]. His attitude was anti-racist rather than reactionary or chauvinistic, and

[h]is denunciation of racism, as his primordial pledge of living up to the ideals of Islam required, is celebrated in Murīd sources as one of his first confrontations against immorality. It is also important because of its corollaries. ʿAjamī sources indicate that by rejecting the Arabization model of Islamization, Bamba also rejected the notion that Islamic erudition and 'orthodoxy' are exclusive properties of Moors/Arabs, and dismissed the belief in the superiority of people of sharifian pedigree (people who claim to be descendants of the Prophet). [Ngom, 2016: 237]

On the basis of this discussion of Amadou Bamba's biography and teachings, we are now in a position to make some more general observations regarding the character of his variety of nonviolence. Its culturally Islamic character is unquestionable, even if some Muslims might question

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its theological correctness: in terms of its language, symbols, and practices it consistently draws upon Islamic tradition. Given the Islamic character of Amadou Bamba's education and upbringing, moreover, it is difficult to imagine any other secular or religious body of knowledge informing his thought. What is more, his practice and teaching of nonviolence performs a crucial religio-political function within the Murid Muslim social and economic order which developed around him. This latter fact is moreover directly relevant to some of the modalities and limitations of what is in other aspects an extremely broad, deep, and uncompromising understanding of nonviolence.

RECOGNISING GAPS AND RECONCILING CONTRADICTIONS

The breadth of Amadou Bamba's Islamic nonviolence is reflected in the range of violence which it rejects. In its ideal form, as embodied by the shaykh himself, it is unambiguously pacifist in its total refusal of warfare until the end of time – as this chapter's epigraph illustrates. Not only does its nonviolence preclude intercommunal violence, moreover, but also all other instances of the deliberate killing of human beings for any reason. We have furthermore seen clear evidence of his directly counterposing his nonviolent and universalistic Islam to several forms of structural and cultural violence: from anti-black racism, to both Wolof and Arab-sharifian dynasticism, to the social exclusion of marginal Senegalese social classes, to the erosion of indigenous linguistic culture by that of French or Arab hegemonic forces.

One can certainly identify lacunae in this campaign against social and political force. One might, for instance, point to his eventual creation of a stratified clerical dynasty in which supreme leadership has indeed been inherited through primogeniture. This literal patriarchy may not be unrelated to his relative silence on the question of women's rights, even notwithstanding veneration for his hallowed mother – or indeed the later prominence of his 'powerful' daughters [Cole, 2022: 376]. His understanding of economic violence is furthermore marked by its conservatism. It is unwilling or unable to recognise systemic causes and consequences of deprivation. While Amadou Bamba regards both grinding poverty and excessive wealth as respectively material and spiritual problems to be overcome, neither is for him a political question. Still less are they mutually reinforcing aspects of the same political problem. One could imagine nothing farther from the approach taken by Ali Shariati's socialistic account of Islamic nonviolence discussed in this volume [see Chapter 5],

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or indeed from the anti-capitalism of the Reverend Dr Martin Luther King, Jr, to whom Bamba is directly compared in this chapter's epigraph by Ngom. It is likewise distinct from the democratic liberalism of Jawdat Said, explored elsewhere in the present text [see Chapter 6]. More broadly, Amadou Bamba not only accepts the conservative presumption of natural hierarchies but also builds his entire career (as a Sufi shaykh) around them. This in turn has some ambiguous consequences for the scope of his commitment(s) to nonviolence as it applies to others, and which are returned to very shortly.

Beyond the strictly human sphere, we have seen several reports of Amadou Bamba extending the ambit of his nonviolence to encompass also violence against non-human beings. This even to the point of including dangerous pests, insects, and scorpions. It may perhaps be argued that this refusal to do harm to animals falls short of considering ecological damage as a form of violence. His followers' peanut monoculture has certainly harmed the biodiversity and soil ecology of the Senegalese environment. Yet this harm can hardly be suggested to have been his or their intention. The contrary assertion would be anachronistic given that it relies upon both scientific discoveries and ecological discourses which were not known to him or to his contemporaries.

The uncommon breadth of Amadou Bamba's application of the principle of nonviolence to both human and non-human spheres is matched by the profundity of its depth. Proceeding as it does from conspicuously Sufi concerns for the inner workings of human psychology and motivation, his model of nonviolence is one which absolutely begins with the most personal – even if it does not end there. Uncovering and refashioning one's own innermost drives of selfishness and violence into selfless and peaceful service [*khidmah*] to God and His creation is avowedly its main aim. Though his is not a doctrine of salvation by faith alone, the place of right motivation and the cultivation of good character are ineradicably crucial to his project. It begins from the characteristically Sufi discipline of the self [*jihād al-nafs*] and the pedagogical methods and institutions he and his lieutenants developed to foster it in others – for all that these were often centred on physical work. It is, moreover, this ethical and spiritual cultivation which Amadou Bamba sees not only as leading to the best comportment in this life but as also to the ultimate reward in the afterlife: the Murid hope for 'paradise in this life and in the afterlife' [Ngom, 2009: 119]. What one might call the internally transformative dimension of nonviolence is for him at once practical and eschatological, concerned

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with both this life and the end of time. It is the alpha and omega of his understanding of Islam, and it is consistently reflected throughout both his own writings and the *ʿajamī* devotional literature produced by his devotees in the Muridiyyah.

The classical *ṭarīqah* [Sufi order] organisation which Amadou Bamba develops after the last decade of the nineteenth century is arguably the greatest guarantor of the cultural, economic, and political success now enjoyed by the Muridiyyah. It provides an institutional structure to preserve and perpetuate his ideas. But it is also a complicating factor in our analysis of his call for nonviolence. Like all of the Sufi brotherhoods which have arisen since the high middle ages, the Muridiyyah is an unabashedly hierarchical organisation with a single saint at its spiritual and political apex. The blessings and authority of the shaykh then descend through expanding tiers of lieutenants and subordinates. Spiritual inequality is not only a product of this organisational structure but is its founding principle. If some believers are not spiritually superior to others then its hierarchical model falls quickly into meaninglessness. Indeed, this ingrained inequality is foremost among the features of traditional Sufism which would earn it so much condemnation from more egalitarian modernist and Salafist Muslims (including some of the other advocates for nonviolence discussed here [see Chapter 6]) in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The question of spiritual hierarchy is not primarily problematic for Amadou Bamba's philosophy of Islamic nonviolence on the grounds that hierarchy is inherently a form of structural violence – though some might argue that this is also the case. Rather, it arises from the manner in which social capital is accrued within it and from the expectations of and upon its members which result from that process. The founding shaykh is in Weberian terms a *religious virtuoso*, and his exalted position is justified to his followers precisely by his exceptional achievements in Islam. Unlike other varieties of Muslim authorities, Sufi shaykhs are distinguished not primarily by their learning in one science or another (though they may also be so distinguished) but by their having risen to a place of particular closeness to God: to be a *walī allāh*, a Friend of God. By definition, they operate on a different plane from the mass of believers. If they did not, they would not be singled out as *walī* or saint. To extrapolate directly from their words and actions to those of the group they lead, and to judge each by the same standard, would therefore be a mistake. Amadou Bamba's own *Masālik al-Jinān* in fact explicitly warns against this error [Bamba, 2009: 191], and

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reminds his readers that a saint will unavoidably remain inscrutable to them. If the abilities of the novice do not match those of the master, then neither do the demands upon them. One might by way of parallel recall Thomas Hobbes' observation in his *Leviathan* concerning the inequality of expectation to be placed upon inhabitants of his own highly stratified seventeenth century society:

> The honour of great persons is to be valued for their beneficence, and the aids they give to men of inferior rank, or not at all. The violences, oppressions, and injuries they do are not extenuated, but aggravated, by the greatness of their persons, because they have least need to commit them. [Hobbes, 2005: 272]

Bamba's life is recalled as nothing if not outstanding. It is not incidental that Murid hagiography paints Amadou Bamba's suffering as so extreme, the visions and *karamāt* which sustained him through it as so miraculous, or his moral discipline as so unwaveringly exacting. These extremes are at once sources and proofs of his authority – precisely because they are exceptional. 'The *baraka* [blessing] and aura of Murīd spiritual leaders are measured in the number of difficult challenges that they overcome miraculously. Just as Bamba is presented as the "isiñoor" who founded the brotherhood and successfully paved the way amid insurmountable obstacles and animosity' [Ngom, 2009: 117]. This dynamic explains several of the underlying tensions touched upon in this chapter. Not least among these is the fact that the same man who refused to kill scorpions or to bear arms even were the battle of Armageddon to break out also enrolled followers into the French army, to fight and die on the Western Front. For all the ubiquity of their nonviolent ethos, Murids today are not automatically barred from membership in the Senegalese armed forces nor from the *gendarmerie nationale* (let alone their Touba local militia which until recently alone policed its streets) – that is, from the inherently violent coercive apparatus of the state.

> Muusaa Ka and his fellow ʿAjamī scholars treat [Amadou Bamba's] call for nonviolence while enduring unjust suffering as one of the most salient traits that set him apart from his contemporaries, as the following verses illustrate: 'If he was a saint allowed to retaliate with force, he could have destroyed his enemies in the same way Moses drowned Pharaoh and his people, and in the same manner Noah drowned his foes' ... unlike other saints who were allowed to fight back, retaliation was proscribed for him because he was specifically mandated to epitomize nonviolence. [Ngom, 2016: 132]

Just as the Murid Sufi organisation is hierarchical, so also must its ethical standards be understood as reflecting degrees of gradation.

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Whereas for Amadou Bamba himself the commitment to nonviolence is both absolute and encompassing, for his followers this is more an ideal to be aspired to than an inescapable obligation. For the latter, it is contingent upon their circumstances and their degree of spiritual development. The scriptural and juridical precedence for defensive violence (which Amadou Bamba does not systematically disrupt) thus becomes not so much an obstacle in the way of a more thoroughgoing pacifism as a means by which a hierarchical spiritual distinction may be embodied between *murīd* and *murshid*, master and disciple. The licitness of their defensive violence is both justified by and evidence of their spiritual inferiority to their shaykh. Amadou Bamba's tolerance of the violence of others (up to and including the Great War in Europe) therefore serves at the same time to facilitate accommodation with France; to avoid doctrinal ruptures with the wider Muslim tradition on the jurisprudential *fiqh* of *jihād* which tends to permit defensive warfare; and to underscore his spiritual preeminence over his religious community as a *religious virtuoso*.

More than this must be said, however. Just as one would be mistaken to conclude from the comprehensiveness of Amadou Bamba's own practice of nonviolence that his understanding of Islam admits no use of force whatsoever, so it would also be erroneous to attribute to him a simple moral duality of one rule for me and another for thee. On the contrary, his role within his religious community is as much exemplary as it is exceptional. While the moral proof of proximity to God which his nonviolence embodies is not expected of the common people, it is offered to them as a guiding principle. The standards demanded of the spiritual guide and of the devotee are neither discretely separate nor regarded as of equal merit – again, the presumed *inequality* of their merit is the central justification for the very existence of the order itself. If higher echelons were not preferable to lower, there would be no need to persevere or progress. Rather, these exist in dynamic tension with one another through the pedagogical goal of their consummation at the highest, and *ipso facto* least violent, point possible for a given believer. The flexibility and pragmatism which we have seen observed in Amadou Bamba's teaching institutions is also reflective of his moral philosophy. Just as his academic and vocational instruction adjusted itself to the special needs of the student, so also his ethical guidance begins at the same place as his own *jihād al-nafs*: with the improvement of the inmost heart of a specific individual in all its peculiarities, faults, and potentials. As such, the (non)violence of an act is understood not simply in terms of its material outcomes but in terms of the spiritual disposition and moral intention [*niyyah*] of the actor who

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undertakes it. It follows from this, at least for Bamba, that while the ultimate goal of moral development is absolutely pacific, the stratified spiritual starting points at which believers find themselves naturally results in different constraints being placed upon them. The absolute nonviolence expected of the elect is therefore intimately connected with the contingent nonviolence incumbent upon the aspirant. The latter is moreover ultimately conditional not (as is usually the case in secular writing on nonviolence) on immediate and material circumstances but on the degree of moral development of the agent themselves.

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