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Rebecca Masterton

Al-Islam.org

Author(s):

Rebecca Masterton [4]

Topic Tags:

Mysticism [5]

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Islamically-influenced literature from francophone West Africa has been mainly written about by Africanists, or scholars of francophone literature. This means that, in general, an interpretation of such literature usually neglects its Islamic elements, inhibiting any deeper understanding of the tradition that has informed it. Over the years, one or two articles considering the Islamic mystical elements of literature from West Africa have been published, but these unfortunately do not really do justice to the depth and complexity of the tradition.

In seeking to redress this imbalance, this article takes a narrative from what is now Senegal: a nomadic Fulbe (Fulani) tale of initiation called *Ka'idara* (published 1968), well known by francophonist scholars. This narrative can be compared to the *risala* of the Ishraqi tradition, which was initiated by Ibn Sina (d. 1037 CE), Ibn Tufayl (d. 1185 CE) and developed by Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi (d. 1191 CE).

Muslims made contact with West Africa as early as the eighth century CE. By the eleventh century CE, Islam was already an established part of Soninke culture in the empire of Ghana. With the main Islamic influences corning from North Africa and Egypt, Ibn al-'Arabi, Ibn Tufayl, Ibn Sina and Suhrawardi are likely to have been studied in West Africa for some considerable time. Ahmad Tijani (d. 1815), founder of the now widespread Tijani order, was a Maliki and learned the works of Ibn Rushd. Knowledge of Persian and Central Asian *awliya* and scholars may well have been known through the teachings of 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, as the Qadiri order had become established in Senegal by the fifteenth century CE and al-Jilani mentions Abu Yazid Bistami in his *Futuh al-ghayb.* 1

The historian Nehemia Levtzion writes: 'Through its trade in gold, the fame of Ghana [now Senegal and Mali] extended beyond the Sahara, as far as Baghdad.'2 Information about Baghdad up until the time that al-Jilani was living there in the twelfth century CE is likely, therefore, to have travelled back to West Africa. Moorish book traders in West Africa also sourced texts from Algeria, Morocco, Egypt, and Syria3 (such traders came under the suspicion of the French authorities during the colonial era).

The Fulbe (sing. Fula) have their own legends about their origin. They say that they came from east

Africa, possibly Egypt, and settled in the west with their cattle. The Fulbe are 'those who speak Fulfulde' and are spread out across Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, Senegal, and Mauritania. There are groups that are strictly pastoral and those who are sedentary. In their heyday, their educated aristocracy mostly spoke and read Arabic fluently and were knowledgeable in the Islamic sciences, including *tasawwuf*. Up until the nineteenth century jihad movements of ' Uthman clan Fodio and al-Hajj 'Umar Tall, there were still Fulbe pastoralists who were 'pantheist'. They had men of esoteric knowledge known as *silatigis*. To become a *silatigi* one had to perfect one's behavior in order to be able apprehend divine secrets–much like the path of initiation traced out in the Islamic mystical tradition. Thus, when the Islamic mystical tradition spread to West Africa, there was already, in Fulbe culture, an acceptance of and knowledge of the higher, immaterial realms and invisible, sacred laws.

The tale of *Ka'idara* was collected by the Malian traditionalist, Amadou Hampaté Ba (d. 1991), from the nomadic Fulbe of the Ferlo region, central Senegal, although some scholars argue that its complex symbolism is unlike any other tales from that region. A close analysis definitely shows similarities to the Islamic teachings that Ba acquired in his own lifetime. In some sense, the tale does not really have a 'true origin', like much oral literature that is told and re-told as it is passed down the generations.

Nobody knows the real meaning of the name 'Ka'idara', although one hypothesis is that it is a rendering of the name 'Khidr'. Certainly Ka'idara, the guardian of gold and of knowledge in the tale, shows characteristics similar to those of Khidr in the Islamic mystical tradition, as will be shown below. However, before that, an outline of the tale needs to be given: it is about three friends, Hammadi, Hamtoudou and Demhourou, who meet at a crossroads and witness a beautiful, a blinding light, after which a door opens up in the ground and they descend nine steps into the land of Ka'idara.

They proceed on a journey through desert and mountain, experience thirst and hunger, and encounter approximately twelve symbols in the form of animals, who give them a coded message before saying 'my secret belongs to Ka'idara. As for you, son of Adam, go your way.' They finally reach the inner sanctum of Ka'idara, who appears to them as the structure of time, seated on a revolving throne. He gives them three oxen-loads of gold, advising them to use it wisely. Immediately Hamtoudou begins to plan how he can become powerful, while Dembourou plans how he can multiply the gold to become even richer. Only Hammadi vows to use the gold to search for the meaning of the symbols.

On their way out of the land of Ka'idara, Ka'idara appears to them in the form of a flea-ridden beggar. Hamtoudou and Dembourou mock him, while only Hammadi gives him the respect due to elders. The beggar gives Hammadi three pieces of seemingly arbitrary advice in exchange for Hammadi's oxen-loads of gold, which Hammadi willingly gives. The three pieces of advice save Hammadi's life, while Hamtoudou and Dembourou die horrible deaths. Hammadi awakens near his own village, next to him all nine oxen-loads of gold. He becomes a just ruler and gives financial support to scholars. One day, a little old man (Ka'idara again), turns up at Hammadi's palace and asks to eat with him. Hammadi notices that this is no ordinary little old man and asks him to share his knowledge. Through this, Hammadi

discovers the secret meanings of the symbols. The little old man then transforms into an angelic manifestation of Ka'idara and flies away, leaving Hammadi in a beatific state.

While there is not enough space in this article to discuss all twelve (or thirteen) symbols that appear in the narrative, an exploration of some other aspects reveals a close affinity to the Islamic mystical tradition.

Ka'idara And The Risala

Ka'idara is not a typical Fulbe tale of initiation. Its imagery and symbolism are more complex and have similarities to those found in the *risala*, which was employed by Ibn Tufayl, Ibn Sina and Suhrawardi to convey the teachings to selected aspirants of the Ishraqi school. Its subject matter and tripartite structure are also similar. An aspirant sets out on a journey, usually accompanied, enters the imaginal realm where he gains esoteric knowledge from a wise figure and returns to the material realm to transmit that knowledge.

Ka'idara follows this tripartite structure: in part one the friends set out across the land of Ka'idara during which they encounter a number of symbolic events; in part two they are given three oxen–loads of gold by Ka'idara, and in part three Hammadi returns home and has the meaning of the symbols explained to him. Suhrawardi's 'A Tale of Occidental Exile' has a similar structure. In the first part the protagonist and his brother are imprisoned by the inhabitants of the West; in the second part they embark on their journey on a ship, wander through the land of Gog and Magog and the wilderness, until they reach Mount Sinai and meet their father, who bestows upon them esoteric knowledge; in the third part the protagonist has to return, albeit temporarily, to the West, with the knowledge that he has gained.

Like *Ka'idara*, the time scheme in this tale is flexible. The protagonist's journey is packed with symbolic events. His journey back to the West is instantaneous and he likens its pleasurable events to 'a dream that quickly passed'.[4] In the risala, the protagonist's experience of symbolic events is more important than any 'realist' depiction of time more appropriate to the material realm. The flexibility of time in relation to structure in one sense takes the reader or listener beyond such confines, just as the aspirant also journeys beyond them.

With regard to language, the Fulfulde of *Ka'idara* is Hampaté Ba's own Malian dialect. That does not necessarily mean that he composed it entirely himself but that, as in the tradition of oral literature, he simply adapted it to his own context. As with the structure, Ba's linguistic style is very close to that of the *risala*. The function of the words and images of Ka'idara goes beyond simply telling the tale in an effective or artistic way. They have multiple dimensions and are like a kind of *ishara*:[5] 'Like a trap, nearly every image conceals some symbol; and behind the symbol is an idea which is often complex. The same symbol may sometimes lie behind a dozen different ideas.'[6] Communicating through *isharat* is a technique which can be found in *risa'il*, such as Suhrawardi's 'A Tale of Occidental Exile'. The message conveyed through this imagery frequently overrides a 'logical' progression of the tale. Events are not

subject to the laws of cause and effect and are not always directly or sequentially linked.

The sources for Suhrawardi's imagery are the Qur'an and Neoplatonic Islamic philosophy. For example, he writes that, when the protagonist was imprisoned in the town of the western realm: 'Above the "unused well", which was built for our presence, was a "lofty palace" on which were numerous towers.'[7] The notes explain that the 'unused well' and 'lofty palace' are from the Qur'an, Surah Al-Hajj.[8] In Suhrawardi's context: '[t]he lofty palace is the souls that were created before the [celestial] bodies and orbs. The towers are celestial spheres.'[9] Likewise, Ka'idara contains imagery which strongly resembles that of the Qur'an and Neoplatonic Islamic philosophy, as will be explored in greater detail below. [10]

In *Ka'idara*, most of the symbols are in the form of animals. It is in knowing their characteristics and habits that Hammadi can gain knowledge of his own self, learning the desirable attributes to which he should aspire and the reprehensible attributes against which he must guard. Such animals include the salamander, the scorpion, and the bat. For example, the bat represents one whose ability to perceive the truth is so acute that, even when everyone else is submerged in ignorance, he alone is able to perceive the unity of reality that lies beyond the darkness:

When all is drowned in the great darkness,
only the bat is able to see.
It reflects the unity of all beings
in doing away with limits.[11]

A similar use of animal symbols can be found in Suhrawardi's 'The Treatise of the Birds', in which Suhrawardi says:

Brothers in reality, shed your skins like a snake and go like an ant, that no one may hear your footsteps. Be like a scorpion, with your weapon always held behind you [...] Be like a salamander, which is always in the midst of fire, that tomorrow may do you no harm. Be like a bat, which does not emerge during the day, that you may be safe from enemies.[12]

There is, however, another aspect to these symbols. The *risala* does not simply come from the author's imagination. As mentioned above, it is a visionary recital. This means that the author has been inspired by visions from the immaterial realm, as many mystics of the Islamic tradition were when writing in other forms.

The images in *Ka'idara* cannot be taken in the same way as depictions of creatures of the material realm, neither are they 'surreal' or 'fantastic'; they are of the immaterial realm, '*alam al-mithal*, or *mundus imaginalis*. In one way, they could be considered as depictions of metaphysical realities, as manifestations of Ka'idara's teachings and as images which inspire a realization of transcendent reality, much like the signs in nature that the Qur'an mentions. They are realities dressed in the imagery pertaining to the storyteller's knowledge, as well as acting 'as mirrors, which reflect back to man his own image, from different angles'.[13]

Regarding the symbolism of tales of the imaginal realm, Henry Corbin warns against the 'reduction of the image to the level of sensory perception', saying that 'the more the sense of the *imaginal* is lost, [...] the more we are condemned to producing only the *imaginary*'.[14]

The richness and beauty of Ba's language need not only be taken as poetry, therefore, but as an expression of the spiritual beauty which the story is about and which is characteristic of the imaginal realm. The symbols, some of traces can be found in the Islamic mystical tradition, are not descriptions of character-types, but are signs that speak directly to the faculty of perception which is able to 'see' that which lies beyond the material realm.

The Land Of Ka'idara: 'Alam Al- Mithal

Considering that Islam has been in West Africa for more than a thousand years, it should not be surprising to find Islamic elements even in forms of literature that are not of Islamic origin. The basis for Islamic mysticism is that the non-Muslim African cultures which encountered Islam already acknowledged the existence of immaterial realities and had their own methods of initiation into the knowledge of these realities.

In some tales from the Islamic mystical tradition, a journey to an immaterial realm constitutes part of the process of initiation.[15] Suhrawardi has called this realm 'a world where there are cities whose number it is impossible to count, cities among which our Prophet himself named Jabalqa and Jabarsa'.[16] It is also known as '*alam al-mithal*, or *'alam al-khayal- the mundus imaginalis* in Corbin's rendering. It is in the nature of this journey that there are no clear boundaries between the material and the immaterial realms. Only when characters begin to notice events that usually do not occur in the material realm does it dawn on them that they are now in another realm.[17]

Although the *mundus imaginalis* has no material existence, one must still 'journey East' to get there. The material realm lies in the West. Likewise, the land of Ka'idara lies in the direction of the East, and the friends go West when they begin their journey back home.[18]

In Fulbe thought there is an acknowledgement of a *mundus imaginalis*.[19] When the three friends enter the land of Ka'idara, it is through a large, flat stone which is white on one side and black on the other:

The stone also represents the three countries: the two sides are the countries of light and darkness, the thickness of the stone is the country of shadows; in initiation, the disciple asks, "How can I pass from the dark to the light without turning over the stone?" and the master answers, "You must turn yourself into toad oil," for toad oil can penetrate stone; likewise, man does not need to move things in order to penetrate into their deepest points, he needs only his acuity of perception.[20]

Compare to Suhrawardi's 'Red Intellect' in which a *shaykh* advises an aspirant on how to reach *na-koja abad*, which lies beyond Mount Qaf: 'that person who has the aptitude can, without making a hole, pass

instantly like balsam–oil, which will pass through from the palm of the hand to the back of the hand if it is held up to the sun.'[21]

The story opens with 'the mysterious, distant country of Kaidara, which no one can locate exactly'.[22] From the beginning, the country of Ka'idara is removed from geographical or spatial limitations and the three protagonists are removed from any specific historical period–except that 'It was only a few years after the mountains had hardened'.[23] It seems, in fact, that they are standing at a crossroads on the edge of the land of Ka'idara, for before they enter and embark upon their journey, they must sacrifice an animal and wait to see if the sacrifice is accepted.[24]

Hammadi and his friends enter the land of Ka'idara by means of a stairway with nine steps leading underground. They enter as if not completely conscious of crossing the boundary between different realities. They descend the stairs 'without hesitating at all.'[25] The editor says: 'In Islamic esoteric science, going down nine steps means mastering the nine senses',[26] although Ba has not specified from which Islamic mystical tradition this theory comes.[27] The three friends' descent down the nine steps of the senses, and their journeying through one valley after another, is also like a journey into their own being.[28] Contrary to the editor's notes, however, although the friends do go down the nine steps, the subsequent behavior of Dembourou and Hamtoudou indicates that they have not actually mastered their senses.

The story of *Ka'idara* demonstrates that there is no clear–cut division between the material and immaterial realms. Apart from the initial surprise that the three friends show, when the door to the land of Ka'idara opens for them, they do not seem to wrestle with the concept that they have actually entered a realm that does not seem to exist on the map. They journey through it, much as they would journey through their own land, tired, hungry and in search of water. It is only after they have passed through forests and valleys, encountering creatures that speak in apparent riddles that Hammadi begins to realize that these creatures are manifestations of immaterial realities, which have a hidden meaning. Up until they meet a bustard, which is the sixth symbol, they believe that they are witnessing merely strange events or miracles.

The valleys and deserts through which the friends travel are much like the landscape of the *mundus imaginalis*. Ibn Sina writes: 'Now, when thou proceedest toward the Orient, there first appears to thee a clime in which there is no inhabitant [...] Having crossed it, thou wilt come to a clime where thou wilt find immovable mountains, streams of living water, blowing winds, clouds that drop heavy rain'.[29] One of the first landscapes in which the friends find themselves is described as 'a dry arid plain' with 'nothing but the solitary sun fluttering, flickering'.[30] Another landscape is described as 'a valley surrounded by high mountains' where '[r]ain and stagnant water had worn down pinnacles'. [31]

The journey to the *mundus imaginalis* is in itself part of the initiatory journey of the soul and involves specific stages. For example, in Farid al–Din 'Attar's *Conference of the Birds*, the birds must cross seven valleys in order to reach the king, who is called 'Simurgh';[32] in Suhrawardi's 'The Treatise of the Birds',

the birds must cross eight mountains before they reach the mountain where there is a king who can relieve anyone who has suffered injustice. In 'The Red Intellect', the falcon must cross eleven mountains.[33] Likewise, in Ka'idara, the three friends experience different stages in the form of symbolic events, encountering each through their journeys across mountains and valleys.

The journey back from the *mundus imaginalis* also defies the usual modes of travel. Corbin reports that, in a tenth century account of an Iranian man who is lost on his way home after going on *hajj*, he finds himself in a garden, where two young men walk a little way with him, until he realizes that in front of him is a town very near his home.[34] In 'A Tale of Occidental Exile', the narrator suddenly finds himself back in the material world: 'I was in the midst of this tale when my condition changed and I fell from the air into a low place.'[35] Similarly, when Hammadi wakes, having been taken across a river, he finds that, 'he had been brought/miraculously to just outside his own yard.'[36] Although the events in the story seem to have passed quickly, it is more than twenty years since he set out. The *mundus imaginalis* is a timeless realm. It is where the traveller enters another state of being.

When Ka'idara visits Hammadi in the material realm, Hammadi refers to him as 'master who knows the secret of lands and transformations, such as places where flowers produce birds'.[37] Hammadi's words also seem to be a reference to the *mundus imaginalis*, where the laws of cause and effect are not the same as in the material realm. Transformations are actually imaginal manifestations of spiritual states, not bizarre physical anomalies.[38]

The Presence Of Esoteric Forces And Realities

The story of *Ka'idara* acknowledges the existence of esoteric forces and of realities that lie behind the surface of phenomena. *Ka'idara*, as the Qur'an also does, demonstrates that the relationship between the human being and these realities is governed by forces which we do not perceive, and which are beyond our control. The human being is only partially autonomous.

Ibn al-'Arabi explains that, on the spiritual journey, different levels of existence are revealed as the traveller progresses: 'And if you do not stop, He will reveal the animal world to you. [The animals] will greet you and acquaint you with their harmful and beneficial qualities. [...] Then after this, He reveals to you the infusion of the world of life-forces into lives, and what influences this has in every being according to its predisposition.'[39]

In *Ka'idara*, certain forces are evident even before the three friends commence their journey[40]: 'All three found themselves arranged like stones in a triangle at the hearth'. Once in the land of Ka'idara, they then continually experience the effects of such forces[41]: 'in an instant, like an invisible hand/ a force turned the triangular stone over'. A scorpion informs them that 'invisible forces' take the soul of their sacrifice[42].

Spatial dimensions are distorted by such forces: 'the immense plain stretched before them as they walked, as though an invisible hand were pulling it longer'[43]. The friends are able to walk for unusual

lengths of time 'as though drawn by an invisible, powerful force'[44].

Dembourou says, 'Let the creative force guide my footsteps'[45]. As the three travellers become closer to Ka'idara, their state changes:

They were as though drawn by an invisible, powerful force.
Without will, they were carried on, possessed.
Even as water entering the throat of the drinker,
so they imbibed that virile force
like air entering into the nostrils of the breather.[46]

Hammadi realizes, once they discover Ka'idara, that they have been 'conquered by a sovereign and secret force; we were compelled, guided to this place'[47]. When Ka'idara later visits Hammadi back in the material realm, to explain the meaning of the symbols to him, he does not at first name the scorpion directly, for, according to the editor's notes: 'To name something is to unleash forces'[48]. The experience and knowledge of esoteric forces–how they influence the lives of human beings; how they function in the material and immaterial realms, and how they are to be handled–are part of the initiatory journey of the aspirant, both in the non–Muslim Fulbe and Isla mic mystical traditions.[49]

Knowledge of esoteric realities is also an essential part of these traditions. The unveiling of hidden realities in *Ka'idara* demonstrates that appearances are insubstantial, bordering on illusory, yet the human being's perception of himself and of his circumstances so greatly depend upon the assumption that nothing lies beyond the surface of what is seen: while Hammadi and his friends suffer from thirst, abundant waters lie just beyond the surface of a reality which appears to be a desert. As soon as Dembourou recites the words, which the scorpion instructed them to say so that they might find water, ending with 'Lift your veils, oh sons of the waters/who make the rivers of Ka'idara invisible!'[50], then 'all that was dry on the plain, disappeared. A mere step away, a valley stretched before them, bordering on a pond of cool, clear waters.'[51] The words reveal that behind one reality lies another. The rivers are actually there, but they are concealed from the travellers by guardian spirits.[52]

For a moment, Hamtoudou seems to show some aptitude for gaining esoteric knowledge. He laments[53]: 'Why does the heart fail to see and fail to teach the meaning of the symbols?' There are many references to 'the eye of the heart' in Islamic mystical teachings. It is the eye of the heart which perceives immaterial realities and comprehends their meaning.

Al–Jilani says: 'What is necessary for man is to find those who have insight, whose eyes of the heart are open, and to be inspired by them.'[54]

At this moment, affected by the influence of his experiences, Hamtoudou shows longing and impatience to have the kind of knowledge which enables him to 'know the true meaning of things'[55], but a spirit replies that he must be humble and learn patience: 'The apprentice blacksmith works the bellows many long years before his master teaches him the secret meaning of things'.[56]

As the story proves, Hamtoudou does not have such patience, fooled instead by his desire for wealth.

The unveiling of immaterial realities extends to Ka'idara himself. He tells Hammadi: 'not everyone has the gift of perceiving me'.[57] He is described as one who 'changes form at will, and each of whose forms is unique'[58]. This again indicates that the substance of reality is not immutable and that our identity is not something fixed.

The editor's notes identify Ka'idara with Khidr, the initiator of all the prophets, or 'El Khoudr', as he is called in Senegal[59]. Like Ka'idara, Khidr frequently appears in different guises and often goes unrecognized. Another quality which both Ka'idara and Khidr share is the ability to be in more than one place at once.[60] In the Islamic mystical tradition, the gift of such an ability is bestowed upon the masters and sincere aspirants of the path.[61]

Ka'idara, a being, although not necessarily human, is at once nowhere and everywhere: 'I am distant because formless' and 'I eliminate distances as I choose'.[62] Hamtoudou begins to recognize the ubiquitous nature of Ka'idara's presence: 'All we see is Ka'idara. All we hear leads us to Ka'idara. Our master is Ka'idara.'[63]

When the three friends finally meet Ka'idara, he appears as 'the very structure of time': 'The seven heads correspond to the seven days of the week, the seven stars of the Big and Little Dippers [...]; the twelve arms correspond to the twelve months of the years [*sic*] [...]; the thirty feet represent the thirty days of the month.'[64] This manifestation is similar to Ibn al-'Arabi's description of one of the stages of the spiritual journey: 'He reveals to you the light of the ascendant stars and the form of the universal order'.[65] Ka'idara is also described as an illuminated being: 'his 'sunlit splendor was indescribable'.[66]

In the dramatic climax of the narrative, the old man finally reveals that it was he himself whose presence witnessed in detail all the stages of Hammadi's journey, confirming Hamtoudou's earlier exclamation[67] of 'All we see is Ka'idara': 'The multicoloured chameleon of the valley I saw, as I did the bat'. His presence also disguised itself in multiple forms[68]: 'I worked on the construction of the closed wall. I fed the rooster belonging to the stringy-legged man.'[69]

These forms increase in dramatic power[70] : 'I am the town that is inaccessible to the guest. I am the cyclone, and the lightning bolts.' The power of the old man's knowledge is revealed when Hammadi goes to touch him: 'he felt a shock and was frozen stiff. The discharge did not kill him; he inched back three steps'. The old man finally reveals to Hammadi that he is Ka'idara, and he appears in a form very similar to an angel: 'This new being stretched out two wings striped with gold. "Ka'idara, yes it is I! I am here!"' The shining being' into which Ka'idara is transformed is not necessarily his 'true manifestation', but simply another form that conveys to Hammadi something of his essence.[71] Having told Hammadi[72] to pass on the knowledge which he has been given, Ka'idara flies off into the air leaving Hammadi 'stretched out on the ground, overcome with joy, knowledge and wisdom'.

Ka'idara not only demonstrates characteristics associated with Khidr. Beyond even this possible

manifestation there can be seen the presence of a disembodied intelligence that is able to see, comprehend and act in order to guide seekers of knowledge. Ka'idara, disguised as the old beggar, says of himself[73] that 'he caused movement in the instants that pile up'; that is, he is the force behind the movement of time. The editor's note[74] also says that 'Ka'idara is "a beam emanated from the hearth which is Guéno."'[75] Whether this is Ba's specific wording or not, such a concept of existences as emanations of light can be found in the Ishraqi school of Ibn Sina and Suhrawardi.[76]

In Suhrawardi's 'A Tale of Occidental Exile', the protagonist's father and initiator, who is called al-Hadi ibn al-Kha yr al-Yamani–*al-hadi* meaning 'guide'–is also entitled 'the First Emanation'.[77]

In Neoplatonic Islamic mysticism, such emanations of light are also called 'intellects'. 'Abd al-Karim Jili's notes to Ibn al-'Arabi's *Journey to the Lord of Power* explain that the First Intellect 'is the first teacher [...] It is the director and emanator of everything by permission and order of God Most High [...] For the Intellect transmits to the Soul all that is received from God Most High.'[78]

The mutability of material and immaterial realities is therefore a theme which is woven into the substance of the story and is one of the key lessons for the aspirant. *Ka'idara* teaches the aspirant not to take appearances for granted. It shows that that which lies beyond the surface is more real and therefore truer. By extension, the implication is made that those who do not seek truth beyond appearance live and die within an illusion.

As the narrator of *Ka'idara*[79] says, to some the tale is 'merely a fantastic story', but to others 'it is a truthful story that has much to teach'. This story alerts its listeners to the existence of elements of reality that might not always be perceived or understood. While it might indeed seem to be 'merely fantastic', it is also designed to show the listener how reality might be perceived if he or she seeks to know what lies beyond appearances.

Ka'idara In The Light Of The Qur'an

Ka'idara uses words and images that reflect those in the Qur'an in the same way as Suhrawardi's *rasa'il* do. The Qur'an tells of the hidden laws of cause and effect; of space and time; of ideal and noble codes of behavior and gives an objective view of man's inner nature, his innermost thoughts and desires. It often speaks about the catastrophic results of turning away from a perception of immaterial reality.[80] Ka'idara warns of a similar catastrophe.

Throughout the story of *Ka'idara* is the repeated reference to the cycles of time, of life and death. Apprehension of the laws of these cycles forms a part of both non-Muslim Fulbe and Islamic knowledge.

This teaches that man is not a separate, autonomous entity, but part of a much greater fabric, his life subject to the same cyclical laws that govern everything in the material realm. Such teachings are manifested in symbolic form when the friends, in search of respite from their troublesome journey,

decided to go and rest under a tree, but[81]: 'As soon as they had begun to sleep, the tree bloomed, its foliage gave way and went to decorate a dead tree.' The friends go to rest under the other tree, but the same thing happens. The cycle is repeated three times.

Ka'idara teaches the meaning of this symbolic manifestation[82]: 'Light dissipates night, night envelopes light. Which of the two will win out over the other? When one family mourns over a man departed, another rejoices over a birth.' This is almost identical to the words of the Qur'an:

'God causes the night to pass into the day and causes the day to pass into the night' **(*31:29*).**

'He covers the night with the day, which is in haste to follow it' **(*7:54*).**

The trees, which are also a manifestation of the cycle of life and death, echo of the following verse:

'He brings forth the living from the dead, and He brings forth the dead from the living, and He revives the earth after her death'. **(*30:19*).**

The theme of cycles continues where Dembourou, clearly affected by his experiences, begins to show a greater awareness of sacred laws[83]: 'Manna told me, "child, be good! Be good to your two parents. Nine months under a veiled membrane your mother kept you like a dead person in a shroud".' His words are like the Qur'an, 3114:

'And We have enjoined upon man concerning his parents–His mother bears him in weakness upon weakness' **(*31:14*).**[84]

Hammadi also reflects upon the cycle of birth, death and decay (*Ka'idara*, 63): 'We emerge from a tiny drop fallen as miracle rain in a fertile hollow, veiled and hidden.' The Imagery used has strong similarities to that of the Qur'an:

'O mankind! [..] ***We have created you from dust, then from a drop of seed*** [...] ***And We cause what We will to remain in the wombs for an appointed time'. Hammadi continues: 'We are destined to putrefy. We follow the return cycle.'*** **(*22:5*).**

The Qur'an says:

'Thereof We created you, and thereunto We return you'. **(*20:55*).**

Hammadi goes one step further, citing mankind's part in the creative process: 'We are created creatures. We are creative creatures.'[85]

Ralph Austin's explanation of Ibn al–'Arabi's perception of mankind provides an appropriate exegesis to this statement: 'As a spiritual being, man shares with God, in Whose image he is created, in the divine power to create, as also in the power to articulate and give expression to knowledge and consciousness.' [86]

As in the Qur'an, there are apocalyptic images in *Ka'idara*. These support the concept of a cataclysmic termination of the material realm which Seydou says does not belong to non-Muslim Fulbe eschatology.[87] For example, after the friends cause disaster by failing to look after the rooster, which symbolizes a secret, destruction happens suddenly: 'It all happened in the blink of an eye. Everything burned, smouldered, became ashes.'[88] What seemed so solid is in reality fragile and ephemeral. Death, destruction and the end of a cycle come in a split second. This is one of the sacred laws reiterated in the Qur'an[89].

Glad to have escaped the disaster that they caused, the friends resume their journey and walk for forty days and nights.[90] The editor's note[91] says that forty is a sacred number in Fulbe culture; certainly it is so in the Qur'an:

'And when We did appoint for Moses thirty nights* (*of solitude*)*, and added to them ten, and he completed the whole time appointed by his Lord of forty nights'. (***7:142***).[92]

When they reach the valley with the rain-worn pinnacles, voices sing out[93] : 'Thus all beings are prisoners at the mercy of implacable death', a concept of existence which is found, not in non-Muslim Fulbe culture, but in the prophetic traditions and in Neoplatonic Islamic mystical teachings, that we are trapped in the material realm for a specific period of time.

The cycle of birth and death eventually must come to an end and souls are finally released.[94]
Signs of the apocalypse are given also when the three friends finally set eyes upon Ka'idara. Ka'idara's throne turns unceasingly, much like the relentlessly turning cycles of time and[95]:

The throne's foot-symbols spoke as they turned:
The first said Great Wind.
The second said Earthquake.
As for the third, it invoked Flood.
The fourth brought on Conflagration.

The note[96] says that 'the four legs of the throne are the four elements [air, earth, water and fire], and prefigure the four cataclysms that will destroy the world.' Seydou is clear that this does not exist in non-Muslim Fulbe eschatology.[97] The Qur'an, however, mentions just such events at the end of time:

'And when the sky is torn away' (***81:11***)***;***

'And when the mountains are blown away' (***77:10***)***;***

'When the Earth [***quakes***] ***with her*** (***final***) ***earthquake'*** (***99:1***)***;***

'When the seas are poured forth' (***82:3***).

Other Qur'anic teachings which can be found in Ka'idara include instructions on noble behaviour;

warnings against the consequences of rejecting the symbols; marital legislation, and a reminder of the illusory nature of worldly gain. A spirit tells them: ‘Oh travellers, refrain from crying out. Try henceforth to speak in low tones.[98]' There is a similar verse in the Qur'an:

'O you who believe! Lift not up your voices above the voice of the Prophet, nor shout when speaking to him as you shout to one another.' (***49:23***).

The spirit warns: 'The symbols you have seen were not presented in vain. More than one clan has been swallowed up for spurning them, and many others will be destroyed for the same reason.'[99] The Qur'an has:

'And We created not the heaven and the earth and all that is between them in vain' (***38:27***).

'How many a generation before them have We destroyed!' (***17:17***).

'Those who reject Our Signs and treat them with arrogance – they Are Companions of the Fire, to dwell therein (***forever***)***'.*** (***7:36***).

The fates of Dembourou and Hamtoudou also follow this pattern:

Moses came unto them with clear proofs [***. . .***]***, but they were boastful in the land. And they were not winners*** (***in the race***)***. So We took each one in his sin; of them was he on whom We sent a hurricane, and of them was he who was overtaken by the*** (***Awful***) ***Cry, and of them was he whom We caused the earth to swallow, and of them was he whom We drowned.*** (***Qur'an, 29. 39–40***).

Dembourou meets a horrible death in the middle of a hurricane, while Hamtoudou drowns.
During his exposition of the symbols to Hammadi, the old man says: 'You will wed exactly four women'[100], but that it is better to 'content yourself with one woman', echoing Qur'an:

'Marry of the women, who seem good to you, two or three or four; and if you fear that you cannot do justice (***to so many***) ***then one*** (***only***)***'.*** (***4:3***).

He also demonstrates to Hammadi[101] how the bustard symbolizes the illusory treasures of world– 'Everyone who sees it thinks it's easy to capture. But the strange bird takes off beneath their feet'–and warns:

Just as death cannot extinguish the soul,
so a monarch cannot alter his days,
lengthening or shortening them.
Fill your days well and then leave without regret
from this world which will always turn,
duping those who take a fancy to it,
who seek to dominate or rule it.

Likewise, in Islam, though ***'every soul must taste of death'*** (***Qur'an, 21:35***), this is merely a part of the journey towards its eternal state in proximity to transcendent reality. Ka'idara's words echo those in the Qur'an:

'Allah receives [***people's***] ***souls at the time of their death'*** (***39:42***).

'Every nation has its term, and when its term comes, they cannot put it off an hour nor yet advance (***it***)***'*** (***7:34***).

'Let not the life of this world beguile you' (***31:33***).

'Know that the life of this world is only play' (***57:20***). 102

Samb has a chapter on the place of asceticism in Tijani practice in which he says: 'God the Most High warns us against attachment to this base world and invites us to detachment'. 103

As well as containing Qur'anic teachings on right conduct and how to relate to the material realm, *Ka'idara* tells of a miracle which, as has been noted by the editor, is similar to that which Moses performed 104: while disguised as an old beggar, Ka'idara takes a string, made of baobab fibres, out of his bag and says 'Rope! Wood thou art, turn back to wood!' The rope turns green, before drying and turning into a staff. The notes to *Ka'idara* () say that this is 'a frequent trick among magicians' 105, but the words which the old man uses to command the rope 106 imply that he is not using magic:

I command by Him whose power is irresistible,
Guéno who continues life after death
Guéno who burns by wet hail
and who, if He wants, cools by burning fire.

In the Qur'an, God is described as the ***'Subduer'*** (***40:16***), ***The One who gives life after death'*** (***53:44***) 107.

The imagery of the burning fire that cools is similar to that of the Qur'anic account of Ibrahim:

'We said: O fire, be coolness and [***safety***] ***for Abraham'.*** (***21:6***).

Thus, while magic plays an important part in non–Muslim Fulbe culture, the story of *Ka'idara*, In line with the Qur'an, teaches that it is through proximity to the transcendent reality, gained through knowledge that the aspirant is given to see that which many others are not, and to perform acts, which many others may call 'miraculous'.

In understanding and in living in harmony with sacred laws, the human being may discover a state of grace, a particular way of existing, that many others may never know.

Conclusion

This article gives a small sample of the Qur'anic and Islamic mystical elements of *Ka'idara*, which up to now have not been investigated in sufficient depth, even though the tale was first published nearly forty years ago. It is a unique tale, possibly Amadou Hampaté Ba's own particular rendering.

Nevertheless, by considering the Islamic scholarship and mysticism of Senegal seriously, its particular message–that esoteric knowledge is essential to mankind–can be apprehended as part of a rich and complex tradition that has not yet been fully appreciated by scholars of West African literature.

1. 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, [Futuh al-ghayb] Revelations of the Unseen, trans. Muhtar Holland (Ft. Lauderdale, FL: Al-Baz Publishing Inc., 2nd edn., 1999), 27.
2. Nehomla Lcvtzion, Ancient Ghana and Mali (London: Methuen & Co.,1973), 3.
3. 'Amadou Hampâté Bâ, Oui Mon Commandant! (Aries: Acres Sud, 1994), 324.
4. A Tile of Occidental Exile', in: The Mystical and Visionary Treatises of Subrawardi, trans. W. M. Thackston, Jr. (London: The Octagon Press, 1982).
5. 'Junayd l...I refined the art of speaking in ishaara, subtle allusion to the truth': Annemarie Schimmel, Mystical Dimensions of Islam (Chapel Hill: The Univer1iry of North Carolina Press, 1975), 59.
6. Introduction in Ka'idara, trans. Daniel Whitman (Washington, D.C.: Three Continents Press, 1988), 40.
7. Introduction in Ka'idara, trans. Daniel Whitman (Washington, D.C.: Three Continents Press, 1988), 101.
8. 'How many a township have We destroyed while it was sinful, so that it lies [to this day] in ruins, and [how many] a deserted well and lofty tower!' (22:45).
9. 'A Tale of Occidental Exile', 101. In Ka'idara, 64, the friends come across 'a high metal fortification that touched the clouds'. Inside it is the sanctum of Ka'idara.
10. However, the Neoplatonic aspects of Bâ's imagery are not as clearly delineated as in Suhrawardi's work.
11. Ka'idara, 88.
12. 'The Treatise of the Birds', in Thackston, Mystical and Visionary, 22.
13. Bâ, Aspects of African Civilization, ch. 2, http://pender.ee.upenn.edu [6]
14. Henry Corbin 'Mundus Imaginalis', Swedenborg and Esoteric Islam, trans. Leonard Fox (West Chester, PA: Swedenborg Foundation, 1995), 31
15. See Corbin, 'Mundus Imaginalis', 4. In Persian, this realm is called na-koja abad, literally 'Nowhere City', which is 'a climate outside of climates, a place outside of place, outside of where' (ibid, 9). The aspirants in Ibn Sina's Hayy ibn Yaqzan and Suhrawardl's 'The Sound of Gabriel's Wing' both journey towards na-koja abad. Claude Addas also explains in similar terms Ibn al-'Arabi's vision of 'the Vast Land of God' (Qur'an, 29:56): 'A supernatural land where everything is not only incorruptible, but lives and speaks; a spiritual land where bodies are composed of subtle matter, while the intelligibles are clothed with form' (The Voyage of No Return, trans. David Streight, Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 2000, 54). Plato mentions a place 'upon the back of the universe', which is 'the abode of the reality with which true knowledge is concerned, a reality without colour or shape, intangible but utterly real' (Phaedrus and Letters VII and VIII, trans. Walter Hamilton, London: Penguin, 1973, 52).
16. Suhrawardi in Corps spirituel et terre céleste: de l'Iran madéen á l'Iran shi'ite (Paris: Buchet-Chastel, 1979, 147), quoted in Corbin, 'Mundus Imaginalis', 8.
17. Significantly, Corbin writes ('Mundus Imaginalis'14): 'One sets out; at a given moment, there is a break with the geographical coordinates that can be located on our maps. But the "traveller" is not conscious of the precise moment; he does not realize it, with disquiet or wonder, until later.'
18. Ka'idara, 74.
19. The 'Introduction' (Ka'idara, 41) explains the realm of the spirits in non-Islamic Fulbe culture: 'This is the middle ground between the land of light where visible beings of all species live, and the land of darkest night, resting-place of the souls of

the dead and of beings not yet born.'

20. Ka'idara, 106, n. 17. Whether this is originally non-Islamic or influenced by Islam cannot be verified.

21. 'The Red Intellect', in Thackston, M ystical and Visionary Treatises, 37.

22. Ka'idara, 47. In Suhrawardi's 'The Sound of Gabriel's Wing' (Thackston, Mystical and Visionary Treatises, 27), the narrator enters his father's khanqah and meets a group of old men who say they are from na-koja abad: '" In which clime is that?" I asked. "In the clime to which your index finger cannot point," he said.'

23. Ka'idara, 47.

24. The importance of sacrifice is found both in the Bible and the Qur'an, where Abraham is commanded to sacrifice his own son. Only after proving his piety is he allowed instead to sacrifice a lamb (Qur'an, 37:102-107; Genesis, ch. 22).

25. Ka'idara, 49. In Suhrawardi's 'A Tale of Occidental Exile', the narrator, trapped in a prison in Kairouan, suddenly embarks on a ship in order to sail to the East (Thackston, The Mystical and Visionary Treatises of Suhrawardi, 103).

26. Ka'idara, 107, n. 22. Mastering the senses entails preventing the eyes from desiring to look at what is forbidden, the ears from desiring to listen to what is forbidden, the nose from desiring to smell what is forbidden (e.g., a man smelling a woman's perfume), the tongue to taste what is forbidden, the hand to touch what is forbidden. These are the external senses. There are then the internal senses that must be mastered.

27. Plato also mentions nine levels of perception (Phaedrus, 54). Henry Cornelius Agrippa lists the Platonic nine senses: memory, cogitative, imaginative, common sense, hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, and touching (Three Books of Occult Philosophy, trans. James Freake, ed. Donald Tyson St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2004, 285).

Corbin ('Mundus Imaginalis', 5) explains that, according to Suhrawardi, the region of na-koja abad 'begins "on the convex surface" of the Ninth Sphere'. Rumi also refers to 'the nine heavenly spheres' Masnwavi-I Manavi, trans. E. H. Whinfield, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd., 1898, Bk 2, p. 63).

28. In 'On the Reality of Love', Suhrawardi tells the tale of how Love goes in search of Beauty. Love comes from Na-koja abad, the mundus imaginalis, which Love describes as 'a province which is the last of our provinces. Someone who knows the way can reach it in nine stages from your realm' and 'Know that above this nine-storied pavilion is a vault called the City of the Soul' (Thackston, Mystical and Visionary Treatises, 66).

29. 'Translation of the Recital of Hayy bin Yaqzan', in Henry Corbin, Avicenna and the Visionary Recital, trans. Willard R. Trask (London: Routledge and Keffa n Pa ul, 1960), 145.

30. Ka'idara, 49.

31. Ka'idara, 62. A similarly dramatic landscape can be found in Bâ's description of his journey from Bandiagara to Ouagadougou, a destination which he describes as 'un pays inconnu' (Oui Mon Commandant!, 67).

32. The Conference of the Birds, trans. and intro. by Afkham Darbandi and Dick Davis (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1984).

33. Thackston, Mystical and Visionary Treatises, 37.

34. Corbin, 'Mundus Imaginalis', 30

35. Thackston, M ystical and Visionary Treatises, 107.

36. Ka'idara, 80.

37. Ka'idara, 93.

38. 'We will touch here on the decisive point for which all that precedes has prepared us, namely, the organ that permits penetration into the mundus imaginalis [...] It is the organ that permits the transmutation of internal spiritual states into external states, into vision-events symbolizing with those internal states' (Corbin, 'Mundus Imaginalis', 12-13).

39. Journey to the Lord of Power, trans. Rabia Terri Harris, New York: Inner Traditions International, (1981) 1989, 39.

40. Ka'idara, p. 48.

41. Ka'idara, p. 49.

42. Ka'idara, p. 52.

43. Ka'idara, p. 50.

44. Ka'idara, p. 64.

45. Ka'idara, p. 58.

46. Journey to the Lord of Power, p. 64. According to Bâ, his teacher, Tierno Bokar, once said: 'En effet, la foi est d'une nature comparable á celle de l'air. Comme l'air, elle est indispensable à la vie humaine' ['In effect, faith has a nature which is comparable to air. Like air, it is indispensable to human life'] Bâ, Vie et enseignement de Tierno Bokar, le Sage de Bandiagara. (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1980), 149.

47. Ka'idara, p. 65.

48. Ka'idara, p. 121 n. 125.

49. French colonialists attempted systematically to wipe out this form of knowledge, as Bâ explains: 'Thus from the outset the Western school began to do battle with the traditional African school and to hunt down the keepers of traditional knowledges. This was the epoch when all healers were thrown in prison as "charlatans" or for "practicing medicine without a license."' (Bâ, Aspects of African Civilization, ch. 2).

50. Ka'idara, p. 52.

51. Ibn al-' Arabi (Journey to the Lord of Power, 35): says 'Know that God tests you through what He spreads before you. What He first discloses to you is His gift of command over the material order [. . .] It is the unveiling of the sensory world which is hidden from you.'

52. In Suhrawardi's 'The Sound of Gabriel's Wing', an old man tells an aspirant in search of knowledge: 'we have always been on this bench: the fact that you did not see us does not mean that we were not here' (Thackston, Mystical and Visionary Treatises of Suhrawardi, 29).

53. Ka'idara, p. 53.

54. 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, The Secret of Secrets, trans. Shaykh Tosun Bayrak al-Jerrahi al-Halveti (Kuala Lumpur: S. Abdul Majeed & Co.; 1995), 8.

'For indeed it is not the eyes that grow blind, but it is the hearts' (Qur'an, 22:46).

55. Ka'idara, p. 57.

56. Ka'idara, p.58. This progressive method of training can also be found in Islamic mystical tradition. Often when an aspirant desires to attach himself to a shaykh, he is first given menial tasks to do, sometimes for a long period of time: 'The Mevlevis, to mention a prominent example, trained the novice in different kitchen functions' (Schimmel, Mystical Dimensions, 234). This is in order that he learn humility, the most important attitude to have if one is to become a true master

57. Ka'idara, p. 102. 'Inspired states such as seeing in this visible world the proof of Allah's existence [...] the truth behind appearances [...] are the rewards for selfless righteous acts and devotions. So also, to this world belong the miracles that may appear to one [...] Yet all these are bounties of the first level of Pradise, the earthly paradise' (al-Jilani, The Secret of Secrets, 20).

58. Ka'idara, p. 65.

59. Ka'idara, p. 128.

60. Khidr is also 'the patron saint' of travellers-'the immortal who drank from the water of life. Sometimes the mystics would meet him on their journeys; he would inspire them, answer their questions, rescue them from danger' (Schimmel, Mystical Dimensions, 105-6).

61. 'The saint was able to disappear from sight to become completely invisible, and to practice buruz, exteriorization, i.e., he could be present at different places at the same time.' (Ibid, 205)

62. Ka'idara, p. 102. The elimination of distances is a common theme in tasawwuf: 'Hadrat Abdul-Qadir spoke. "Just now a man was transported from Mecca to Baghdad in an instant, repented in my presence, and flew back."' (The Secret of Secrets, XXXI). Corbin ('Mundus Imaginalis', 13) quotes Swedenborg's description of the nature of 'distance' and 'movement': 'change of place is nothing else than change of state [...] When anyone goes from one place to another [...] he arrives more quickly when he eagerly desires it and less quickly when he does not, the way itself being lengthened or shortened in accordance with the desire.

63. Ka'idara, p. 57. The visible manifestation of God's attributes, as opposed to the incarnation of God per se, has been theorized by Ibn al-'Arabi. See Addas's The Voyage of No Return, 91, where he notes that Ibn al-'Arabi based his theory on the ayah,

'Wherever you turn, there is the Face of God' (Qur'an, 2:115).

Fakhry explains: 'God is multiplied only through his attributes or modifications. Considered in Himself, He is the Real (al-Haqq). Considered in relation to His attributes as manifested in the multiplicity of possible entities, He is the Creation (al-Khalq). The two, however–the one and the many, the first and the last, the eternal and the temporal, the necessary and the contingent–are essentially one and the same reality' (Majid Fakhry, A History of Islamic Philosophy, New York: Columbia University Press, 2nd edn., 1983, 252). Hamtoudou's acceptance of Ka'idara as his master is similar to the method of taking bay'a with a shaykh in tasawwuf.

64. Ka'idara, p. 113, n. 64. Of the calendar of non-Muslim Fulbes, Christiane Seydou writes: 'Regarding the pre-Islamic calendar: there is not much precise information. In Labourer's "La langue des Peuls" 1952), it is said, p. 103: "The pastoral and agricultural populations who speak Fulfulde have two calendars which coexist without harming or cancelling each other. One is the Muslim lunar calendar, mentioned by numerous authors, the other the Christian solar calendar. borrowed once by the Romans from the Egyptians, corrected by Caesar, transmitted to the Berbers and passed down with them to tropical Africa' (Personal correspondence, 9 August, 2005, trans. from French).
65. Ibn 'Arabi, Journey to the Lord of Power, 40.
66. Ka'idara, 65. In 'A Tale of Occidental Exile', when the narrator and his brother go in search of their father and they finally meet him, he is described as 'an old man from the brilliance of whose light the heavens and earth were nearly split open' (Thackston, Mystical and Visionary Treatises, 106)
67. Ka'idara, 98.
68. Ka'idara, 99.
69. The construction of a wall occurs in the story of Khidr:

'And they found therein a wall upon the point of falling into ruin, and he repaired it' (Qur'an, 18:77).

70. Ka'idara, 101.
71. In 'A Tale of Occidental Exile', the narrator describes being almost obliterated 'by the 'radiating light' of the old man, his father (Thackston, Mystical and Visionary Treatises, p. 107). Hammadi says to Ka'idara: 'May your life lengthen, sparkle and shine, your infinite light dissipating the shades' (Ka'idara, 88).
72. Ka'idara, 102.
73. Ka'idara, 98.
74. Ka'idara, 41.
75. 'Suhrawardi believed in creation through sudur, emanation, from one central source: Allah. He is the First, the Light of Lights [...] the principle cause upon which all that is mumkin [...] depend for their existence' (Shaykh Tosun Bayrak, 'Introduction', in Hazrat Shihabuddin Yahya Suhrawardi, The Shape of Light: Hayakal al-Nur (Louisville, KY): Fons Vitae, 1998, 33).
76. Seydou (personal correspondence, 20 June 05, trans. from French) points out that, in a note to Njeddo Dewal, Bâ reveals a similar concept of emanation in the essential monotheism underlying the apparent 'gods' of the non-Muslim Pulbe: for the Fulbe, these gods arc only the attributes or the agents of Guéno. They arc in some sense specific aspects of the Great Primordial Power emanated from a supreme God' (Abidjan-Dakar-Lomé: Les Nouvelles Éditions Africaines, p. 149, n. 53).
77. 'A Tale of Occidental Exile' (Thackston, Mystical and Visionary Treatises) 101, note f.
78. Ibn 'Arabi, journey to the Lord of Power, 89, n. 24.
79. Ka'idara, 47.
80. In his study of Swedenborg's esoteric hermeneutics and Qadi Nu'man's ta'wil of the Fall of Man, Corbin writes: 'In the humanity that was obliged to pass the spiritual catastrophe called the Flood, there was no longer perception of anything else in external objects except what is in this world, material and terrestrial. On the other hand, communication of man with his hell was opened' ('Comparative Spiritual Hermeneutics', 63).
81. Ka'idara, 57.
82. Ka'idara, 93.

83. Ka'idara, 58.
84. Al-Jilani says that the state of the one who has surrendered totally God 'comes to resemble that of a suckling babe in its nurse's arms, of a corpse in the hands of a washer of the dead' (Futuh al Ghayb, 12).
85. Ka'idara, 63.
86. Ralph Austin, 'His Thought', in Ibn al-'Arabi, The Bezels of Wisdom (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1980), 37
87. Personal correspondence, 9 August 2005.
88. Ka'idara, 61.
89. e.g.:
'It was but one Shout, and lo! they were extinct' (36:29).
90. Ka'idara, 62. The friends walk 'while everyone else slept' and sleep 'when everyone else got up to walk.' Schimmel (Mystical Dimensions, 112) mentions that, in some mystical orders 'The main duty of the adept is to act exactly contrary to the nafs's appetite and wishes', but there does not seem to be such an approach in the Tijani or Qadiri tariqas. Razavi says that, in the Ishraqi tradition 'Night represents the esoteric, the hidden aspect, and the day the exoteric' (Mehdi Amin Razavi, Suhrawardi and the School of Illumination, Abingdon: Routledge Sufi Series, 1996), 18.
91. Ka'idara, 112 n. 56.
92. Based upon this, aspirants in the Islamic mystical tradition are recommended to go on retreat for forty days and nights: Retreat is, for one advanced on the Path, an opportunity for further proficiency, and for the ordinary adept, an occasion for advancement, of which the duration can vary between ten days at the minimum and forty days at the maximum, in memory of Prophet Moses' (Samb, Amadou Makhtar. Introduction á la Tariqah Tidjaniyya: ou, Voie Spirituelle de Cheikh Ahmad Tidjani (Dakar: Imprimerie Saint-Paul, 1994), 229.
93. Ka'idara, 62.
94. In his discussion on Biblical and Qur'anic spiritual hermeneutics, Corbin
succinctly captures exactly what this imprisonment is: talking about humankind's fall from a higher state, he writes, 'In both instances [Biblical and Qur'anic] there is revealed essentially a drama of knowledge, a dislocation of the conscience, a fall of perceptive and cognitive powers, which cuts off the human being from his presence in other higher universes, in order to imprison him in the fate of his solitary presence on earth. (Corbin, 'Comparative Spiritual Hermeneutics', 101, my italics).
95. Ka'idara, 65.
96. Ka'idara, 114 n. 68.
97. Personal correspondence, 9 August, 2005.
98. Ka'idara, 61.
99. Ka'idara, 64.
100. Ka'idara, 91-2.
101. Ka'idara, 91.
102. 'Ali ibn Abi Talib says, 'Asceticism is not that you should not own anything, but that nothing should own you' (John Baldock (ed.), The Little Book of Sufi Wisdom, London: Vega, 2002, 38).
103. Samb, Introduction á la Tariqah Tidianiyya, 118). 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani says: 'You see this world in the hands of those who keep it going, with its ornaments and vanities, its deceptions and snares, and its lethal poisons' ('Fifth Discourse', in Futuh al-Ghayb, 15).
104. Recounted in the Qur'an, 20:17-21.
105. Ka'idara, 125, n. 160.
106. Ka'idara, 97.
107. Refer also to the following Verse:

Allah is He Who created you, then gave you sustenance, then He causes you to die, then brings you to life. Is there any of your associate-gods who does aught of it? Glory be to Him, and exalted be He above what they associate (with Him). (30.40).

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