

A Critical Study of the Hajj Caravan of The Asaki through the Book "Al-Fattash"

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Abstract:

The book Al-Fattash is considered one of the most important historical sources that cannot be dispensed with in writing the history of Western Sudan in particular. This is because its author is a prominent figure in terms of academic level, social status and political position. We add to that that this composition is the result of the effort between the grandfather and the grandson until it reached its final form. Despite the distortion it was subjected to, many researchers attribute this case to the main accused being "Sheikh Ahmed Lobo" and "Alpha Noah bin Al-Taher Al-Fulani". This is what made us choose this point from the points that were exploited in distorting Al-Fattash, namely the events of the Hajj caravan that the forger focused on for Al-Fattash to be a historical background that gives legitimacy to what is intended to become legitimate despite its falsehood and lack of credibility. This is what we will discuss in this study.

Keywords: Hajj caravan, Al-Fattash book, Timbuktu, Mahmoud Kaat, The Askia Hajj Muhammad.

Introduction:

The Hajj caravan in the modern period is one of the trips that were organized from different parts of the world. Especially those organized by rulers and kings. Therefore, it had a great impact on the political, social, economic and cultural levels of life. These trips that were immortalized by narrators or writers, although their cultural and religious orientations differed, and in terms of the motives that led to documenting this trip by order of the rulers or kings or for personal motives because its owner was a traveler or a scholar... This resulted in the existence of a huge balance as a source of information that ultimately formed a rich material for researchers to

understand and analyze events related to the Hajj caravan and to stand on the facts and consequences arising from them. This study falls within the Hajj journeys that Sudan in general and Western Sudan in particular have known. Among these trips, we can mention the Hajj of Askia Muhammad Al-Kabir, which took place in the last third of the 15th century AD., and which has caused a lot of ink to be spilled. In turn, we address the subject through a problematic issue, which is the exposure to the effects of the Hajj caravan of Askia Muhammad during his reign and what resulted from it, and how it was addressed by the historian Mahmoud Kaat in his book, *History of Al-Fattash*? And how was this book later employed by its distorters? And what was the motive for that?

1. Issue: Who wrote Al-Fattash from the triliteral Kaat?

What made Al-Fattash's book a matter of wide controversy was the time it took to come out in its final form, on the one hand, and on the other hand the existence of three individuals with the same name and from the same family: "Mahmoud Kaat". Meaning Mahmoud Kaat I, Mahmoud Kaat II, and Mahmoud Kaat III. It is worth noting the study of "Dr. Haroun Al Mahdi Mega", one of the scholars of this issue, who explained this matter to us in a focused and precise manner that makes it easy for the reader and researcher to understand the issue without ambiguity or confusion. This is through an eye-catching study entitled: **Who are those called Mahmoud Kaat? And who among them is the author of the History of Al-Fattash?** Among what he said: Mahmoud Kaat I is Haj Al-Mutawakkil Mahmoud Kaat bin Ziyad Al-Wa'akri, and a contemporary of Askia Muhammad Al-Kabir, who lived a long life of 125 years, and who wrote down a lot of information that became historical material to which both Mahmoud Kaat II and Mahmoud Kaat III referred, and this latter is the real author of Al-Fattash, and his full name is: Mahmoud Kaat bin Al-Mukhtar Al-Qunbali.¹

The historian "Panikkar", author of the book: *Paganism and Islam*, says: **((... The history of Al-Fattash is the result of cooperation between the grandfather and the grandson..., and it seems that this grandson was characterized by an enormous degree of self-denial..., so he was keen to attribute the entire work to**

¹ Al-Haroun Mahdi Mega, who are those called Mahmoud Kaat? And who among them is the author of the History of Al-Fattash? African Readings Magazine, Issue 24, April-May 2015, pp. 126-131.

his grandfather, and thus he did not mention his name, and we only know about this grandson the name of his father, “Al-Mukhtar Qunbal”)).²

There has been a great deal of confusion in attributing the book to its real author in many studies. The reason, according to what was mentioned in the version verified by a group of researchers at the Ahmed Baba Institute for Higher Studies and Islamic Research in Timbuktu, is that it was customary for copyists in Mali to mention the author's name in the first lines of the author's book, so this was applied to the book *Al-Fattash*, because the name of the judge "Mahmoud Kaat bin Al-Hajj Al-Mutawakkil Kaat" was mentioned at the beginning of the text, which led many researchers to attribute the book *History of Al-Fattash* to him. This is the same mistake that the French writer "Houdas" made, and those who quoted from him followed his example.³

As for the issue of distortion, many researchers refer it back, headed by the historian "Adam Bamba", who stated that the main accused are "Sheikh Ahmed Lobo"⁴ and "Alpha Noah bin Taher Al-Fulani"⁵. This is what made us choose this point from the points that were exploited in the distortion of *Al-Fattash*, which is the events of the Hajj caravan of "The Askia Al-Hajj Muhammad", since this topic revolves around a fundamental issue that the forger focused on for *Al-Fattash* to be a historical background that gives a legitimate character to what he wants to become

² Madhu Panikkar, *Paganism and Islam*, translated and annotated by Ahmed Fouad Balbaa, Dar Al-A'la for Culture, 1998, p. 54.

³ Mahmoud Kaat bin Al-Mukhtar Al-Qunbali: *History of Al-Fattash, Study and Investigation*, a Group of Researchers, Ahmed Baba Institute, Timbuktu, 2014, p. 7.

⁴ He was born in 1776 AD in the city of Malangal, and studied under some Qadiri Sufis in the city of "Djenné". He joined Sheikh "Uthman dan Fodio" in his jihad against the Hausa, which made him gain more knowledge and develop the idea of reform. He returned to his hometown "Masna" after his Sheikh "Uthman dan Fodio" authorized him to work in preaching and jihad. Therefore, his jihad movement was initially affiliated with the jihad movement in Sokoto. Due to what he did in the region, many Fulani tribes rallied around him against the Bambara tribes. As a result of his pursuit by the ruler of Masna, he withdrew with his group to "Dina Din", establishing his emirate with its capital "Hamdullah" in 1818 AD, northeast of the city of Djenné. He was able to defeat the Bambara tribes in many battles. What made matters more complicated was the anger of Sultan "Muhammad Bello" against him after he gained independence from the Sokoto Kingdom after the death of "Uthman Dan Fodio". Moreover, he allied with Sheikh "Al-Hussein Koita" and the latter was killed by Ahmed Lobo in 1823 AD. Lobo's rule lasted for 27 years until he died in 1845 AD. See: Adam Bamba, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-55.

⁵ He was one of the Fulani who fought against the pagan tribes. At the age of forty, he devoted himself to seeking knowledge and studied under many sheikhs, including Sheikh Al-Mukhtar Al-Kunti. Then he joined Sheikh Osman Dan Fodio, and did not stay with him for long before joining "Ahmed Lobo" who brought him very close. This made Sheikh "Alpha Noah" reinforce the idea of the Mahdist Caliphate in Ahmed Lobo so that he could confront his opponents, especially from an intellectual perspective. This made many researchers accuse him of being behind the idea of distorting the book: *History of Al-Fattash*.

legitimate despite its falsehood and lack of credibility, and this matter is represented in the claim of the Mahdist Caliphate by "Ahmed Lobo".

Researchers noted that Ahmed Lobo was successful in organizing his state in a strict manner based on Islamic law from the social, administrative and religious aspects. Therefore, the motive for sliding towards the idea of the Twelfth Imam was a political motive promoted by "Alpha Noah" and approved by "Ahmed Lobo". This does not absolve Ahmed Lobo from fabricating the details of this fake project.

"Alpha Noah" exploited his religious position as a jurist at the head of the Council of Forty in the state of Ahmed Lobo, and his prestigious position among the sheikhs of the Qadiriyya order in the region. Therefore, when he issued a letter entitled: "A Letter on the Appearance of the Twelfth Caliph" and stated that Ahmed Lobo was that Caliph, and that he was the heir of "The Askia Al-Hajj Muhammad", many people believed him. Hence, researchers have deduced the relationship between the distortion of the book of the history of Al-Fattash and the case of Ahmed Lobo claiming the Mahdist Caliphate, whose engineer was "Alpha Noah" and whose hero was "Ahmed Lobo". Therefore, before we delve into the connection between the events of the Hajj caravan of "The Askia Al-Hajj Muhammad" and how it was exploited by "Alpha Noah" and "Ahmed Lobo", we will discuss the circumstances surrounding this caravan.

Circumstances of the Hajj Caravan of The Askia Al-Hajj Muhammad Al-Kabir:

The Western Sudan Hajj Caravan was known as the Takruri Hajj Caravan. Although "Takrur" is just a part of this geographical area,⁶ this is due to the importance and status that the pilgrims of this region enjoyed in the Orient and the Hijaz. Among the most famous Hajj trips of the Takrur people, we find: the Hajj caravan of The Askia Al-Hajj Muhammad Al-Kabir. He was one of the great leaders of the army under "Sunni Ali" and was able, with his cunning, to seize power from "Abu Bakr Da'u" after defeating him in the city of "Deng". When the news reached the daughters of "Sunni Ali", they said: ("Askia" means, according to Al-Saadi, he cannot be him. When The Askia Muhammad heard that, he gave himself this title).⁷

⁶ Ibn Fadlallah Al-Omari, Paths of Sight in the Kingdoms of the Countries, Vol. 4, Scientific Books House, Lebanon, 2010, p. 49.

⁷ Abdul Rahman bin Abdullah bin Imran bin Amer Al-Saadi, History of Sudan, Paris, 1981, p. 72.

- This journey is considered one of the most important the Hajj journeys known to Western Sudan, as it concerns a ruler who represents the beginning of a transitional phase in the history of the Songhai Kingdom's rulers, meaning that it is a break between the end of the rule of the "Sunni" dynasty and the beginning of the rule of the "Al-Askai" dynasty. Thus, it is the first the Hajj trip of the Asaki family, and the second in terms of the mark it left on the local and external levels of the Songhai Kingdom after the Hajj trip of Sultan "Mans Musa" in 1324 AD.⁸
- This journey came after The Askia Muhammad had consolidated the foundations of his rule in all areas. Thus, it was the culmination of his most important works in the Songhai Kingdom, as Mahmoud Kaat says: **((All of this was at first to win the hearts of his people, but when he established power and the kingdom was established, he left all of that and began to ask the working scholars about the Sunnah of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace.))**.⁹

Al-Saadi says in his book, History of Sudan: **((God Almighty relieved the Muslims of their distress through him - meaning The Askia Muhammad - and removed their calamities and misfortunes, and he strove to establish the religion of Islam and reform matters...))**.¹⁰

Studies agree that the Hajj journey of the Askia Muhammad was after things had settled down and become straightened out in his kingdom, in which he had assumed power by revolting against Ibn Sunni Ali. Abdul Qader Zabadia says in his book, The Kingdom of Songhai during the Era of the Asiqids 1493-1591 AD: **((It appears from all of this that Muhammad al-Kabir had seen, since assuming power, that he did not deserve it by inheritance or lineage, but rather by revolution. Therefore, he had to prove his worthiness through actions in order for people to submit to him...))**.¹¹

⁸ Bashar Akram Jamil: The Hajj Journey of Sultan Mansa Musa bin Abi Bakr Al-Takrouri 724 AH/1324 AD, Adab Al-Rafidain Magazine, Issue 79, 2019, pp. 443-462.

⁹ Mahmoud Kaat Al-Timbukti, History of Al-Fattash in the News of Countries, Armies, and the Notables, and Mentioning the Incidents of Toucouleur people, Great Matters, and Separating the Lineages of Slaves from the Free, Study and Commentary by Adam Bamba, Al-Risala Publishers Foundation, 1st ed., 2014, Damascus, p. 92.

¹⁰ Al-Saadi, previous reference, p. 72.

¹¹ Abdul Qader Zabadia: The Songhai Kingdom during the Era of the Asiqids (1493-1591 AD), National Publishing and Distribution Company, Algeria, p. 36.

2. The Events of the Hajj Caravan of the Askia Al-Hajj Muhammad and his most important works:

The Hajj route of "the Askia Hajj Muhammad" is one of the Hajj routes known to the Songhai state. Where he took: (Gao, Takda, Agades, Fezzan, Awjla, Alexandria, Cairo, then the land route through Sinai to Mecca), which is the shortest route between Cairo and Gao. This route became the most important for the pilgrims of Songhai after the death of the Askia Hajj Muhammad until Sultan "Ahmad Mansour Al-Dhahabi" took over Songhai. The Takruri Hajj caravan lost its status and became subordinate to the Moroccan Hajj caravan. One of the things that draws attention is that "the Askia Hajj Muhammad" married them in order to ensure the loyalty of the Berbers and secure the road for the Hajj, and so did his son, the Askia Ishaq.¹²

The Askia Hajj Muhammad caravan was described as being comparable to the Hajj caravan of "Mansa Musa". Among what was mentioned by Al-Saadi: **((This Caravan included more than a thousand men, and five hundred horsemen)).**¹³ Mahmoud Kaat, the judge accompanying the Askia Al-Hajj Muhammad, said: **((...and he was accompanied by scholars: Alpha Saleh Jour, Kaa' Zakaria, and the one afflicted with authorship, I'm Mahmoud Kaat, and he was accompanied by eight hundred slaves)).**¹⁴

Among the donations he gave, he gave one hundred dinars in charity, and he established endowments for the poor, scholars, and needy, including gardens in Medina that he established for the people of Takrur. The value of these endowments reached one hundred thousand dinars. Al-Saadi reported: **((As for the money, it was three hundred thousand gold that he took from Al-Khatib Omar from the money of "Sunni Ali")).**¹⁵

3. The events of the Hajj Caravan of the Askia Al-Hajj Muhammad and the Most Important Things that was Exploited in it to Distortion of Al-Fattash:

¹² Ibrahim Ali Youssef Al-Shami: Hajj Routes in the Sahara Desert during the Era of the Mali and Songhai States (636-1000 AH/1238-1591 AD), Center for African Research and Studies - International University of Africa, 2016, pp. 1-27.

¹³ Al-Saadi, previous reference, p. 73.

¹⁴ Mahmoud Kaat Al-Timbukti, previous reference, p. 101.

¹⁵ Al-Saadi, previous reference, p. 73.

Among the events of the Hajj caravan: What was mentioned in the book Al-Fattash is the emphasis on mentioning the “title of Caliph” as Mahmoud Kaat says: **((...Until everyone agreed in his era that he was the caliph, and those who declared that to him were Sheikh Al-Suyuti, Sheikh Shahmarush Al-Jinni, and Al-Sharif Al-Husayni Moulay Al-Abbas, the prince of Mecca))**.¹⁶ What can be concluded from this statement is that among the interests and goals of the Askia Muhammad was to obtain the title of Caliph over the lands of Western Sudan, and this was so that he could crown his political achievements in his country and the neighboring regions by distinguishing himself with this title from the rest of the sultans who preceded him. This is what made the historian "Kaat" write this implicit and confirmed confession by the scholars and the Emir of Mecca. His mention of the two great scholars: "Abdul Rahman Al-Suyuti" and "Abdul Karim Al-Maghili" is an indication of a confession by the great scholars of the era, one of them in the Islamic West, Al-Maghili, and the other in the Islamic East, Al-Suyuti. The first is one of the greatest men of knowledge and fatwas in sub-Saharan Africa in particular, and is considered one of the close associates of the Askia Hajj Muhammad, as Al-Maghili visited Songhai in 1498 AD. And so that the matter is not limited to Al-Maghili, reference was made to Al-Suyuti Abd Al-Rahman, who was one of the greatest scholars of Egypt at his time, and even one of the scholars with whom the Askia Al-Hajj Muhammad sat and asked him about many issues. However, this session between the Askia Al-Hajj Muhammad and Al-Suyuti was employed in a way that suggests that the speaker of this conversation wanted to give legitimacy to a project he intended to undertake in the future.

There are those who say that Al-Suyuti visited Western Sudan, and this is because many people fall into confusion when reading the texts, and only his writings have traveled, in addition to those letters that were between him and many scholars. When we returned to an important source written by Imam Al-Suyuti entitled: The Book of “Speaking of the Grace of God Almighty”, this important source indicates that close relationship between Sheikh Al-Suyuti and Western Sudan, especially the Takrur people, and what was stated in it: **((... In the year eighty-two, a man traveled to the land of Takrur, and he took with him some of my works...the Book of The isthmus, the system of the collection of comprehensive texts, and "The Shadow of the Throne" So, I arrived there and distributed them to the**

¹⁶ Mahmoud Kaat, previous reference, p. 92.

students)). He added, regarding the meeting that took place between him and the Sultan of Takrur, who asked him to ask the Commander of the Faithful to delegate to him the matter of the legitimate rule of his country, and this is the text: ((... The Takrur caravan arrived, including the Sultan, the judge, and a group of students. They came to me with all of them and took knowledge and hadith from me, and read from me a group of my books, and took another group of my books, more than twenty, such as the explanation of Al-Bukhari..., and the judge presented his cousin, a eunuch servant, as a gift to me. The Sultan of Takrur asked me to speak to the Commander of the Faithful to recommend to him the affairs of his country so that his rule would be valid according to the Sharia, and I sent to the Commander of the Faithful about that, and he did, and I established the tradition for him, and its text will come)).¹⁷

This indicates that the issue of how the Askia Al-Hajj Muhammad assumed the throne by force was one of the matters that needed to be given some sort of legitimacy. Especially when it was derived from the Commander of the Faithful. When we compare this text with what was mentioned in Al-Fattash, we find it identical. But "Alpha Noah" exploited this point to distort it and make it consistent with what Ahmed Lobo needed to confirm that he was the twelfth caliph after "the Askia Al-Hajj Muhammad", and that he was his heir, and this was not mentioned in Al-Suyuti's words in his book "Speaking of the Grace of God Almighty".

And what also came in the texts of Al-Fattash: **((As for Al-Sharif Moulay Al-Abbas, he was sitting next to the Kaaba with the Commander of the Faithful and Caliph of the Muslims, the Askia Al-Hajj Muhammad, talking. Al-Sharif Moulay Al-Abbas said to him: "O man, you are the eleventh of the caliphs mentioned by the Messenger, may God bless him and grant him peace, but you have come to us as a king, and kingship and caliphate do not meet...)).¹⁸** This paragraph is one of the paragraphs that attract researchers, especially the sudden change in style and the weakness in expression. This indicates that these paragraphs were not written by one writer. This is what made it difficult for critics to separate and investigate them. The writer of Al-Fattash in its final form is Mahmoud Kaat III. And the one who intended behind this speech was aware of the content and facts

¹⁷ Jalal Al-Din Abd Al-Rahman Al-Suyuti: Speaking about the Grace of God Almighty, investigation by Elizabeth Marie Sartain, Modern Arab Press, 2019, pp. 158-159.

¹⁸ The same, p. 93.

about Al-Fattash and exploited them in distorting it. Although the authorship of Al-Fattash does not go back only to Mahmoud Kaat I, but extends beyond him to Mahmoud Kaat III. We find some words that indicate that Mahmoud Kaat's style includes weak words that create a kind of confusion in expression. For example, the phrase ((... next to the Kaaba they are talking...)). The word (next to) reflects somewhat the level of the writer of this paragraph, and we exclude that from Mahmoud Kaat I, if we follow his style in terms of the paragraphs he wrote. Hence, it appears that the one who wanted to distort the book of Al-Fattash took advantage of what Al-Saadi mentioned in mentioning a period of three days and added to it the word "seclusion." Rather, he added to Al-Saadi's words the color of the skullcap (green) and the color of the turban, and mentioned the sword even though it was not mentioned by Al-Saadi.

Al-Saadi says: **((In that land, he met the blessed Al-Sharif Al-Abbasi and asked him to make him his successor in the land of Sangha, and he agreed to that)).**¹⁹ And the one who ponders the words mentioned in the two sources about the matter of Moulay Al-Abbas and Al-Sharif Al-Husayni, then according to Al-Saadi, was the appointment of the Askia by the Abbasid Caliph or by the Emir of Mecca? Thus, the Hajj of the Askia coincided with the Hajj of the Abbasid Caliph Abu Al-Izz Abd Al-Aziz Al-Mutawakkil in Egypt (1479-1498 AD).

We notice the focus on two important matters in the Hajj journey in terms of showing the Askia Hajj Muhammad speaking with the Emir of Mecca, and his meeting with Abd Al-Rahman Al-Suyuti. The first one clarified the matter of how to decide the issue of kingship and caliphate and focused on the solution being after seclusion for three days. This means that he found or saw the solution in his seclusion, and even called for it on Friday in order to give it a sacred character, and thus it is unlikely that he would discuss this matter with him. From this it is proven that the Askia Muhammad is the caliph who will come after him again, then he mentioned him by name, attributes, and the place where he will appear - his name is Ahmad and the place is Masna - and from this the one who distorted the book of Al-Fattash was able to make the added words unambiguous. This is what made researchers point out that the issue of the distortion of Al-Fattash goes back to "Ahmed Lobo" because he is the one to whom the evidence applies and he is the first

¹⁹ Al-Saadi: Previous reference, p. 73.

to benefit from this distortion, and there is no doubt about that because he needs to give legitimacy to his rule.²⁰

Then he returns to mentioning Al-Suyuti again, so he asked him about the caliphs and he mentioned twelve, ten appeared and only two remained, one of them is you in the land of Takrur. Rather, more than that, he reviews for him all the conquests that will happen in the future, and even specified the places that he cannot conquer, such as "Brook".²¹ This place was mentioned to pave the way for mentioning the second caliph who is expected to appear after the Askia Hajj Muhammad, who is unable to conquer Brook City, and the caliph who will come after him will conquer it, and from this the importance of the caliph who will complete the conquests becomes apparent, as he says: **((Then God will open that place in the hands of the Caliph after you))**. What caught the attention of some researchers, including "Adam Bamba", was the request of the Askia Hajj Muhammad to be recognized as a caliph by those below him.

Moreover, he goes on to narrate the rest of the Askia Hajj Muhammad's life, describing how it would end up. Among the things he said was that he would go blind, be isolated by one of his sons, and even be exiled to an island. All of this talk indicates that he supports the idea of predicting the unseen on the one hand, and on the other hand he mentions the name of the caliph who will come after him, but he does not mention the name of the son who will depose the Askia Al-Hajj Muhamma. He also did not mention the name of the son he would bring back and how he did not insist on him. Anyone who follows the biographies of kings will find that they usually brutalize those whose goal is to overthrow them, even if they are among their closest relatives. This did not happen during the reign of the Askia Hajj Muhammad, which indicates that the one who wrote these words either witnessed the events that happened to the Askia or lived after them. Therefore, it was written in the future tense in a way that suggests that it will certainly happen, all in order to establish the idea of the awaited caliph after the Askia.

There are those who justify that he did not mention the names of the Askia's sons so that there would be no strife between the father and the sons. This is a weak argument. Because if this talk were true, then strife would exist at the time of declaring the issue of dismissal. The most appropriate way to avoid strife is to not

²⁰ See: On the Case of Ahmed Lobo., Adam Bamba, previous reference, pp. 48-55.

²¹ It is currently known as "Biosa" in northern Nigeria. See: Al-Fattash, p. 95.

say that at all. And to follow the example of the Prophet Muhammad, may God bless him and grant him peace, in the issue of knowledge of the unseen.²²

Another issue that we can conclude from the speech that indicates the distortion is the determination that the second caliph will not be from the lineage of the Askia Hajj Muhammad. From this, the one who distorted the text is able to guarantee the alleged legitimacy of the awaited caliph and is certain with the word “will not be” from the lineage of the sons of the Askia, and he goes on to mention the attributes, knowledge and righteousness and determines his name as “Ahmad” and he will appear in “Masna”. Hence, Al-Fattash was exploited to pass on some of the matters that were added to the Hajj journey of the Askia Al-Hajj Muhammad.

Anyone who follows Mahmoud Kaat's writing style will find that he tends to be brief and refrains from narrating events in detail. How can he expand on the issue of his sitting with "Al-Sharif Moulay Al-Abbas" and expand on the issue of his sitting with Sheikh Abdul Rahman Al-Suyuti? Moreover, it is attributed to him that he was the one who narrated to him the unseen matters that would happen to him in the land of Takrur. On the other hand, as far as we know, Al-Suyuti did not mention in his writings or letters that he presented this unseen vision to the Askia Al-Hajj Muhammad. We referred to this issue previously.

Among the texts of Al-Fattash, he often began his speech with: ((Sheikh Mahmoud Kaat said...)), ((And let everyone who has read these stories that we have mentioned know...)), and in one of the paragraphs he indicates: ((Faqih Mahmoud said...)), and in another place in two paragraphs he says: ((On the tongue of Mahmoud Kaat)), but in the paragraph that begins: ((And let us return to what we were concerned with, which is mentioning the virtues of the just imam and the virtuous sultan...)), here the writer directly began writing the paragraph and did not say Sheikh Mahmoud Kaat said or Faqih Mahmoud said, but rather he immediately continued speaking, which shows a clear change in the method of narration and writing.

²² Knowledge of the unseen belongs to God Almighty, and is not with the Messenger of God, Muhammad, may God bless him and grant him peace. God Almighty said in His perfect revelation: {Say, I hold not for myself [the power of] benefit or harm, except what Allāh has willed. And if I knew the unseen, I could have acquired much wealth, and no harm would have touched me. I am not except a warner and a bringer of good tidings to a people who believe} (Surah Al-A'raf-Verse 188).

The issue of the innocence that Sheikh Abdul Karim Al-Maghili ordered him to write - after he asked him questions whose answers matched those of Sheikh Abdul Rahman Al-Suyuti, as stated in the wording of the speech: **((And their statements agreed as the hoof falls on the hoof))** - and this is in order to give his speech that it is from the greatest jurists of the era, including: that Al-Maghili is the one who ordered him to write this innocence for his caliph and to ask him to pray - Ahmed Al-Mansour according to what he said - Among what was stated in it: **((This is a letter from the Commander of the Faithful, the suppressor of the wicked and the infidels, the Askia Al-Hajj Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr, to his heir, the one who is in charge of his affairs, supported by the believers, Ahmad Al-Mansour..., informing you and giving you the good news that you are the last of the caliphs, the conqueror of the enemies, and the guide of the happy ones, according to the consensus of the scholars...)).²³**

This is another proof of the distortion. It was not mentioned in Al-Maghili's writings that he ordered the Askia Al-Hajj Muhammad to write an innocence asking him to pray for him, and he gave him the good news that he would be the last of the caliphs and the conqueror of the enemies. We know that Sheikh Al-Maghili is one of the scholars who do not fear the blame of anyone for the sake of Allah, no matter what his position or rank. He is known for speaking the truth and forbidding evil. How can he slip here and say and acknowledge matters of the unseen concerning fateful events related to the affairs of Muslims, such as mentioning and specifying who the last of the caliphs will be, and specifying that he is his appointed heir. Rather, he acknowledges that this is agreed upon by the scholars, that is, the scholars of that era, since he mentioned Al-Maghili and his sheikh Abd Al-Rahman Al-Tha'alibi and Al-Suyuti.

We add to this the focus on matters that confirm and emphasize the issue of the appearance of the awaited Imam or Caliph. He says: **((Al-Faqih Mahmoud said: The Imam's statement is supported and agreed upon by what was narrated on the authority of Sheikh Abdul Rahman Al-Tha'alibi, that at the end of time there will be two caliphs in the land of Takrur, one of whom will appear in the ninth century, and the other will appear at the beginning of the thirteenth century, and the people of their time will strongly deny them...)).²⁴**

²³ Al-Fattash, previous reference, p. 99.

²⁴ The same, p. 100.

When we contemplate this paragraph, we notice that it is an argument against those who distorted the book of the History of Al-Fattash. Especially what was stated: (One will appear in the nineteenth century, and the other will appear at the beginning of the thirteenth century, and the people of their time will deny them most vehemently). Therefore, the distorter put that so that those who support Ahmed Lobo will not be surprised that this opposition to “Ahmed Lobo” had been predicted in advance, so that he would not give it more than it deserved, especially by scholars, and thus he achieves the desired goal behind this distortion of Al-Fattash, to confront the opponents of “Ahmed Lobo” with this message that “Alpha Noah” put in place.

Conclusion:

Through this research paper, we have addressed the Hajj caravan of the Askia Al-Hajj Muhammad, which had a great impact on the level of Western Sudan, and on the level of the Orient after the Hajj caravan of “Mansa Musa”, for several considerations, including:

- It is considered the first Hajj caravan for the Asaki rulers at the Songhai level. Therefore, the Askia Al-Hajj Muhammad wanted to make it the beginning of a tradition that would be followed by those who would come after him.
- The Askia performed the Hajj after his country had settled down. Through it, he wanted to give legitimacy to his rule. Therefore, he asked Imam Al-Suyuti to ask the Commander of the Faithful to delegate to him the legitimate rule of his country.
- The Hajj caravan had a great impact on the Orient, as a result of the gold that Sultan Tadrari carried and the endowments, he made for the people of Tadrari.
- This caravan represents a link in the chain of cultural communication between Western Sudan and the countries of the Orient. There were scientific sessions and fatwas between jurists. The caravan of the people of Tadrari brought many books, especially those mentioned by Imam Al-Suyuti in his book “Speaking of the Grace of God Almighty”.
- The book “History of Al-Fattash” is considered one of the most important historical sources for western Sudan in particular, as it was the result of an effort between the grandfather and the grandson. Despite the confusion that occurred in attributing it to its real author.

- The book of Al-Fattash was distorted, and the accusation was placed on both "Ahmed Lobo" and "Alpha Noah". Their motive was political, so that they could face the challenges they faced from their opponents. They had no choice but to exploit the book of Al-Fattash. They focused in particular on inserting some texts related to the period of the Hajj caravan of the Askia. They inserted phrases referring to the issue of the Twelfth Imam (the issue of the awaited Mahdi). They claimed that his name was Ahmed and that he was the heir of the Askia Al-Haji Mohammed, which made the case of the forgery of Al-Fattash closely linked to "Ahmed Lobo" and "Alpha Noah".

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