

Amir Abdul Qadir Algeri: A Role Model for Modern Sufi Movements

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Abstract

In this paper, an attempt has been made to elaborate the personality and character of Amir Abdul Qadir of Algeria as a Sufi freedom fighter. Amir Abdul Qadir's personality is a combination of religion and politics as evident in the early days of Islam, and in personality of the exalted Prophet (ﷺ). The prophet was an epitome of religiosity and mundane knowledge, he combines the religious and worldly affairs. In this paper the relation between *tasawwaf* and struggle in the view of current socio-political scenario is discussed. The struggle of Amir Abdul Qadir Algeri is analysed as a Sufi, freedom fighter, statesman and reformer. Different tools of methodology are used: comparative method, internal and external criticism of different sources, and fusion of horizons for reliable findings. It is found that Amir Abdul Qadir Algeri was not only a Sufi or scholar fighting for his personal interest rather he was the man who not only defended his territories from imperial occupation but also resisted for long time and established state and system. Modesty and broadness of thought of Amir Abdul Qadir and his behaviour to other religions earn the fame from all over the world not only as the leader of Muslims but also as the survivor of humanity without any religious discrimination. Some steps have been proposed to counter the modern socio-religious issue in the view of Amir Abdul Qadir Algeri's struggle.

Keywords

Amir Abdul Qadir, Sufism, Freedom, Colonization, Algeria, North Africa

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Introduction

Sufism is interesting aspect of Islam. It is a comprehensive term for philosophical, social, and literary practice occurring within the Muslim world. *Sufism* is defined by many schools of Islamic mystical philosophy and theology known as orders of *Sufism* which played considerable role for the development of spirituality, Islamic politics and society with *Sufi* shrines throughout the Muslim world. *Sufism* is known by different names like '*tasawwuf*' and Islamic Mysticism. Etymological analysis found different views about of term '*Sufi*'. The first view is that the word '*Sufi*' is derived from the Arabic word '*saff*' which means line and row of early companions of exalted Prophet (ﷺ) (Stoddart & Nicholson, 1998) who stood in the first row for prayer, reached well in time before others in Mosque. Some historians viewed that this term is derived from the word '*suffah*' the terrace situated in the Mosque of exalted Prophet (ﷺ) in Medina (Platts, 1930). Many companions of exalted Prophet (ﷺ) renounced their homes and all worldly engagements and desires. They worshipped all the time and memorized noble Quran and Prophetic Traditions (Hadith). Terrace of the Mosque of exalted Prophet (ﷺ) was a virtual house of these companions. Essence of this term is from the Arabic word '*suf*' which means 'wool' (Suhrawardi, 1973). Some of the *Sufis* defined this term as the stem from the word '*safa*' which means 'purity' (Suhrawardi, 1973).

The term *sufism* holds the philosophy that the person has to denunciate material desires and activities, he has to work hard for communion with his Creator; the followers of this philosophy are called '*Sufis*'. There are different interpretations in the historical treatise of Arabic descent like Abu Nasr Al-Saraj's treatise on *Sufism* that the woollen dress is a habit (*sunnah*) from the Prophets and friends-of-Allah (*Awliyā*) (Arabi, 1980). The history of term *Sufi* can be traced in different sources as 'Abd ar-Rahmān Jāmī stated that the first person who followed this way to be known as '*Sufi*' was 'Abu Hashim Kufi (d. 776) (Rizvi, 1975).

There is also an opinion that word '*tasawwuf*' is neither Arabic nor an Islamic term. It is derived from the Greek word 'sofia' which came to

Arabic during the translations of Greek words into Arabic (Hastings, 1921). There is another tradition of exalted Prophet (ﷺ) which is considered as the inspiration of Sufism in Islamic theology. Once the messenger Angel Gabriel (ﷺ) approached the exalted Prophet (ﷺ) and discussed the three basics of Islamic theology ‘Islam’, ‘*Iman*’, and ‘*Ihsan*’. As he disappeared, on asking exalted Prophet (ﷺ) told his companions that it was Gabriel who was teaching him Islam. First (Islam) and Second (*Iman*) are the basics for Islamic rule of law (*Sharia*) comprising of the outer perspective of Islamic teachings and the third (*Ihsan*) is defined as "It is that you worship God as if you see Him (ﷻ), and if you do not see Him (ﷻ), He (ﷻ) nevertheless sees you." It is considered as the inner aspect of Islam and *Iman*. These terms are respectively related to the physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of Islam. There is another point that these terms concern one’s body, mind, and soul respectively. Sufis explain it in the say that these terms refer to the stages of belief i.e. *Ilm-ul-Yaqeen* (knowledge of certainty), *Ain-ul-Yaqeen* (eye of certitude), and *Haq-ul-Yaqeen* (truth of certitude). Out of these, the later one can only be acquired by inner purification of heart by perpetual and deep remembrance (*dhikr*) of Allah (ﷻ) and the renunciation of worldly defilements. This tradition is known as the *Hadith-e-Gabriel* in the early treatise of *Hadith*. All *Sufis* consider this tradition as a foundation for Islamic knowledge as well as *Sufism*. All these Prophetic traditions show that the essence of Islam is *Sufism* and there is great importance of this school in Islamic theology.

The deep study of Islamic history and thought shows that the driving forces for the formation of Islamic society are evolution and change; continuous struggle and self-consciousness are the basic essence for this change. Its practical form can be witnessed in different educational and ideological movements when, due to the passage of time, there was situation of conservativeness and lack of practical struggle.

In the Muslim world, *Sufis* played leading role through different movements by reviving Islamic society and by presenting Islam like a power which lies in continuous struggle against wrong behaviour. One of such names is Amir Abdul Qadir Algeri. This article analyses his

character, organizational struggle and comprehensiveness of his personality as role model for *Sufi* movements of the contemporary Muslim world.

Tasawwuf and Struggle

If *tasawwuf* and struggle are seen in Islamic perspective, both trends are associated with each other. There is no inactivity in Islamic thinking instead it is a metaphor for continuous struggle and activity for the sake of establishment of ideal welfare of Islamic society. In the early days of Islam during the time of exalted Prophet (ﷺ) there were many companions of exalted Prophet (ﷺ) who played dual role i.e. being *Sufi* as the member of the terrace of exalted Prophet (ﷺ) named *Suffa* and being a fighter in the battle of Badr with exalted Prophet (ﷺ) like Honourable Abu Ubaidah ibn al-Jarah (رضي الله عنه), Honourable Bilāl al-Ḥabashī (رضي الله عنه), Honourable ‘Abdallāh ibn Mas‘ūd (رضي الله عنه), Honourable Suhibe ibn Sinan (رضي الله عنه), Honourable Rafa’h bin ‘Abdul Manzar (رضي الله عنه), Honourable Zayd ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه), Honourable Abdullah bin Zayd (رضي الله عنه), and Honourable ‘Ammār ibn ‘Yāsir (رضي الله عنه) (Al-Suhayli, 2005). These companions of exalted Prophet (ﷺ) were reformed internally (*tazkia*) which is called *tasawwuf* and then they were sent to the battlefield. The followers and successors of these early leaders of Islam had also their abilities like followers of *Naqshbandia* order of *tasawwuf* who considered Honourable Abu-Bakr Siddique (رضي الله عنه) as their spiritual mentor and source for bounty (*faiz*) to exalted Prophet (ﷺ) Honourable Abu-Bakr Siddique (رضي الله عنه) was the first caliph and successor of exalted Prophet (ﷺ) and he had the ability of *irfan* and *tazkia* that placed him on this high pedestal in Islamic state as exalted Prophet (ﷺ) narrated, “The Superiority of Abu-Bakr Siddique (رضي الله عنه) over other companions is not due to the abundance of worship but due to the secret which is vested in the chest of Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه)” (Al-Ghazālī, 1997). When there was issue of fake claimers of Prophet-hood and non-payers of Islamic-taxation (*zakat*) he fought in battlefield for revival of the writ of Islamic state. Honourable Ali Ibn Abī Tālib (رضي الله عنه) is

another successor and companion of exalted Prophet (ﷺ), who is the king (*Sultan*) of *tasawwuf* and also the king of battlefield (due to his bravery); after him his grand Son Zayn al-Abidin (d.713) was proficient in both fields. Most of the successors of the noble companions of exalted Prophet (ﷺ) also continued this tradition as they highly achieved in *tasawwuf* and rectified society as they showed great abilities in battlefield like Sheikh Mohayi-ud-Din Shah Abdul Qādir Gīlānī (d.1166) who is the greatest spiritual mentor as well as he worked hard for the prosperity of Islam so that he was graced with the title of “*Mohayi-uddin*” (the reviver of Islam). *Tasawwuf* and *marīfat* (recognition of the Essence of Almighty) raised the state of Imam Al-Ghazālī (رحمته) from a philosopher and a scholar to a legal authority in Islamic theology and he practically faced all the intellectual issues raised in Islam.

A popular name of Islamic history, Sultan Salah ad-Dīn Ayubi, was graced from the court of exalted Prophet (ﷺ) and it was due to the spiritual training of Sultan Nūr ad-Dīn Zengī (d.1174) that Sultan (Salah ad-Din d.1193) fought many battles for the prosperity and stability of Islamic state and system. The Sultan was also helped by the son of Shaikh Mohayi-ud-Din Shah Abdul Qādir Gīlānī (d.1166) and the students from the (son’s) school and they were martyred in the battlefield.

In Sub-continent Islam was spread and highly contributed by Sufis like the reviver (*mujaddad*) of Islam Sheikh Ahmad al-Sirhindī (d.1624); by facing the demands of modern era, due to his hard work and spiritual insight, he revived *deen-e-mateen* (Islam) and became worthy of the title of Mujaddad Alif Thani (the person who reviewed and modernised Islam for the first millennia). His teaching will always be remembered. Between the relation of *tasawwuf* and *taharruk* (Struggle), Iqbal says in *Sharah Zabor e Ajam, Hameed Yazdani*:

First intoxicate yourself with *Darweshi* (*tasawwuf*, purification, spirituality) and then be competent in it so that you control your evil-self (*nafs*). After that God will grace you with the kingdom.

He further defines this relationship in *Bal e Jabriel* like:

Issi Mein Hafazat Hai Insaniyat Ki

Ke Hon Aik Junaidi-o-Ardsheri

Mankind's deliverance lies in the unity

Of those who rule the body and those who rule the soul.

In above quotation *Junaydi* means Junayd Baghdadi (d.910), a renowned *Sufi*. His name is being used as a metaphor for *faqr* and friendship-with-Allah while *Irdshairi* is a metaphor for power and kingdom. Iqbal means when *tasawwuf* and politics of the kingdom are associated with each other then the peaceful humane society is formed. In his popular book *Asrar-e-Khudi* he defines the methodology for the subjugation of universe:

The person who subjugates his/her body under Islamic-law (*Sharia*) and whose right will dominate his/her evil will, God graces him the power and authority over the laws of nature so that he can bring back the setting sun (a metaphor for one such occurrence in the history of Islam).

Further, he says:

Self-recognition leads someone to such climax that God graces his hands with His (ﷺ) special powers to implement His (ﷺ) orders on the earth, so the person is graced with special powers.

Another example is the movement of renowned Sufi Sultan-ul-Ārifeen Sultan Bahoo (d.1691) who practically worked to solve problems faced by Islam in his time; at one side he wrote one hundred and forty books for the readers of all eras and left a great and vast treasure of Islam while on the other side he purified the hearts of thousands of people with his perpetual struggle.

There were many *Sufis* who not only worked to spread the message of Islam, but they also fought for their territorial integration against the foreign occupation notably colonization of Muslim world by western colonial powers in east and west. In this article, we will discuss and analyse the struggle of Afro-Arabian freedom hero known as the 'Napoleon of Arabian World' Amir Abdul Qadir Algeri for freedom of his country against French colonizers.

Brief Introduction of Formative Influences

Name: Nasir-ud-Din Ameer Abdul Qadir (Al-Fawratî, 1911), Father's Name: Al-Syed Mohayi-Uddin, Area: Algeria/Al-Jazair (North Africa), Period: 06 September, 1808 A.D to 26 May, 1883 A.D (15 Rajab 1223 A.H to 1300 A.H), Jurisprudence: *Malikite*, Belief: Asha'aria, Sufi Order: *Qādiri* Methodology of *Tasawwuf*: Sheikh Al Akbar ibn 'Arabī (d.1240) (Marston, 2013).

Amir Abdul Qadir was the third son of Al-Syed Mohayi-Uddin. He belonged to the 'Riya' tribe who were pious than "Mukhzan" tribes and due to this affiliation "Riya" was known as "Marabitoon". Mohayi-Uddin was from descendants of exalted Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and due to this blood line, he was known as "Shurafa". His lineage was traced to Honourable Ali Ibn Abī Tālib (رضي الله عنه) through his son Hassan (رضي الله عنه). Therefore, Amir Abdul Qadir was known as Amir Abdul Qadir Al-Hassani (Comte, 1888). His father was a follower of the renowned *Sufi* order *Qādiriya* through Sheikh Mohayi-ud-Din ibn 'Arabī (d.1240) and he was the regional head of *Qādiriya* lineage (*Sufi* Brotherhood) (Marston, 2013). Mohayi-Uddin played a leading role in Guetna and enhanced the social, economic, religious, and educational services as at the time of Amir Abdul Qadir's birth Guetna became the hub for foreigners, refugees, students, and disciples of *Qādiriya* order. His father had a status of spiritual mentor, mediator, and judge among the local tribes (Denziger, 1977). Abdul Qadir was born in 1807 (in 1808 according to different sources like Marston (2013), and Azan (1925)) in Wadi al Hamam El Guetna near Mascara in western Algeria. Amir Abdul Qadir received his early education in his home town Guetna and after that; he went for religious and spiritual education to the coastal areas of Arzew and Oran. People showed their allegiance to him through "*baiyat*" and Abdul Qadir assumed the title of *Amir-ul-Momineen* (commander of the devotee-Muslims) which became the part of his name as an 'Amir'. He was popular as a pious man with high religious profile; he implemented Islamic-Divine-law (*Sharia*) and five-time congregational prayer in Mosque in his rule and he strongly prohibited evil acts like gambling, smoking, and drinking (Shinar, 1965).

Pilgrimage

In 1826 he went for the pilgrimage (*Hajj*) with his father. At that time the pilgrimage in African tradition did not only mean visiting Medina and Makkah but it was considered a very intellectual activity bearing the visits of different centres of knowledge and cultures like Tunis, Cairo, Mecca, Damascus, and Baghdad along with studies, lectures, and the minor pilgrimages the shrines of *Awliyā* (friends-of-Allah). The journey used to span up to two years.

A Glance on the Time of Amir Abdul Qadir

It was very unfortunate when many colonial powers were using all available tactics to attain wealth and to extend their rule even by bloodshed. At that time there were French colonies in Morocco, Algeria, Sudan, North and Eastern Africa (Boahen, 1985), British colonies in Uganda, Nigeria, Kenya, Turkish Islands, and Sub-continent; while Portuguese had occupied Angola and Brazil. At that time, for the sake of wealth and to divide humanity, western colonial powers were extending their rule while the weaker nations were striving to defend themselves (Woodward, 1912).

Legitimacy of the Movement

There are different points of view whether the struggle of Amir Abdul Qadir was legitimate. If we look at from the view of occupation of Algerian land by French and the right of self-determination of the people of Algeria then the struggle of Amir was legal and legitimized as he was fighting for the rights of indigenous people. If we analyse the struggle of Amir Abdul Qadir in the view of modern law which provides every human the fundamental rights of life, security and state, again the struggle of Amir was legitimate and legal because all international conventions give right to every state and its people to defend themselves from any foreign occupation; which is their legal right. Hence, Amir Abdul Qadir used this right to protect his territory from imperial powers. If it was the territorial conflict between the two states French and the Algeria as the part of Ottoman rule then during the first attack on Algeria Ottomans did not defend the Algeria and Amir Abdul Qadir decided to defend their territories from French occupation (Marston, 2013).

According to international laws – formulated by many international organizations like International Counter-Terrorism Conventions, United Nations, Geneva Conventions, International Customary Law, and Rome Statutes; which are considered the supreme profunder of International Laws – any kind of terrorism and occupation or non-provocative intervention in the matters of a state either through military or non-military form is a crime, illegal and unjustified and every independent state has the right to resist and fight against any imperial power humiliating its sovereignty (Rupérez, n.d.). United Nations’ Charter about the Non-Intervention Article 2(4) refers that all member states shall stop the threat or use of power by any state that shall violate the territorial integrity and independence of that state. Another provision in the United Nations Charter Article 51 (Charter of the United Nations, 1945) acknowledges the right for the individual or collective defence if any military attack wages against any member state. United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) prohibits all actions of violation and inhumane behaviour and acknowledges the basic socio-Political rights. Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 3 gives everyone the right to have life, liberty, and security. Colonising any territory is a type of political and economic slavery under imperial power Article 4 of UDHR that prohibits all forms of slavery and slave trade. Everyone has the right to establish and defend their state and people without any discrimination and no one can harm any state and its people. Article 30 of UDHR prohibits all states, groups, or individuals to engage in any activity aiming for the destruction of any state or freedom of any country (Assembly, 1948). Amir Abdul Qadir’s struggle for freedom was legal even in the view of modern International law of basic human rights, freedom, liberty, and political sovereignty.

Amir Abdul Qadir defended his state and people from the illegal occupation. Many other nations e.g. England, USA, and France also fought against imperial powers to defend their sovereignty and integrity in different times and areas. For instance, the fighters who fought against foreign occupation Thomas Jefferson and George Washington are considered as the freedom fighters and heroes of American history. International laws and conventions legitimise their movement as freedom movement and France provided all moral and material support as well.

That freedom movement was sparked by extra taxes (Bullion, 1992) introduced by Britain on basic human needs to oppress Americans (Puls, 2006). The struggle of Amir Abdul Qadir was also against a foreign occupation for his nation's political integrity and sovereignty. He did not attack any country and did not breach the sovereignty or security of any state. The principals of war and humane conduct shown by Amir Abdul Qadir preceded the International Geneva Convention of Human Rights about a century ago (Marston, 2013).

Algeria Before Freedom Struggle

Before discussing the struggle of Amir Abdul Qadir it is prudent to analyse the situation of Algeria, its socio-political fabric, Socio-economic conditions, the type of political system, and other intellectual and religious conditions at that time which made his independence movement a success. The status of Algeria before eighteenth century was known as the "Regency of Algiers" under the Ottomans governed by the "Dey" of Algiers appointed from top military leaders. In eighteenth-century as Ottoman rule weakened the regency became mostly independent but their leadership was Turkish who imposed taxes. Many tribes tried to revolt against them but all in vain. The people of Algeria can be divided politically into two groups "Makhzen" with warrior skills and "Raya" who were religious people. The first group was the tax collectors under the Turks and the second group consisted of public. Makhzen were dominant over Raya. Raya was basically the religious people and known as Marabouts and Abdul Qadir belonged to this group. After French attack, when Amir Abdul Qadir asserted his authority as the leader for struggle, he had to face the resistance of Makhzen people – a politically privileged class – apprehensive to lose power and prestige because of Amir Abdul Qadir.

There was a unique situation with Europe concerning the African coastal areas which were not secure for the people and trade-ships due to the Berbers is known as "Corsairs" of coastal areas. They were pirates but not lawless like pirates but loyal to their African leaders. The Europeans were forced to pay them tribute and made treaties with them to secure their ships and people.

From 1803 onwards a new character made entry into the situation: the American fleet whose ships started attacking these areas and in 1816 there was a massive attack. This was the situation of North Africa when the French arrived there (Marston, 2013). There were three different approaches of French generals regarding war strategists about Algeria. First one was about the dangers faced by French troops, second was about increasing colonies of French occupation while the third wanted a complete colonisation of Algeria (Boutaleb, 2011).

Amir Abdul Qadir as Leader

There was conflict between Alawis and Ottoman garrison who refused to surrender the citadel to the representative of Sultan of Morocco Ali bin Sulayman and in addition there was the issue of tribal conflicts with both powers. In this situation there was power vacuum in Algeria which was filled by Mohayi-Uddin. Therefore Marabouts found the opportunity to lead the struggle. Mohayi-Uddin transferred the mantle of leadership To Abdul Qadir and following the path of exalted Prophet (ﷺ). He presented Abdul Qadir as *Amir-ul-momineen* to the Gharis tribes so he had the responsibility to defend Algeria to get rid of French occupation and to restore the rule of true Islam (Bennison, 2011).

At the age of 25, following his spiritual and military training, Amir Abdul Qadir was accepted as a leader and he started his struggle for freedom as a spiritual and worldly leader of the people of Algeria (Marston, 2013). Amir Abdul Qadir's father gave him the title of honour "*Nasir-al-din*" (Helper of Faith) inspired from the history of two leading figures Abdul Rahman III and Yousaf bin Tashfeen who had same title and they both fought for the religious cause (Al-Fawratî, 1911). As soon as Amir Abdul Qadir assumed the title of *Amir-ul-momineen*, the people of Algeria started questioning his legitimacy and because Mawlay Abdul Rahman, a representative of Ottomans and Alawi Sultans, was also known as the same title. In the areas of *Qādiri* families Amir was well received and in non- *Qādiri* areas his legitimacy was as an heir of his father and as a deputy of Mawlay Abdul Rahman. While in the areas of Alawi Sultan people were under the impression that Amir Abdul Qadir was resisting French on behalf of Alawi Sultan. As French attacked Mascara, the areas of Mawlay Abdul Rahman was occupied by French

due to the lack of cooperation by tribal people. Hence, Mawlay Abdul Rahman moved to Marrakesh and Amir Abdul Qadir became the sole leader of the area (Bennison, 2011).

In the religious communities there is much influence of *Ulema* (religious leaders) and the acceptance of any leader is based on the verdict of ulema. In the case of Amir Abdul Qadir, there were two major ruling-points (*fatwa*) by Al-Tasuli in 1836 and Alawi chief Qazi of Fes Abd al-Hadi in 1839 that legitimised the struggle of Amir (Weismann, 2001a).

Deceitful French occupation of Algeria was pretended if it was for “civilising mission” to introduce and civilise the nations through science and high moral values of French standards (Genty de Bussy, 1839). During the Napoleonic wars France had to buy wheat from the Regency of Algiers and a huge debt was built up. Once the monarchic system resumed in France, Regency asked for their debt while French was not in the mood to pay the debt. When “Dey” offensively responded to the French consuls who refused to pay the debt, France initiated war following this dishonour of Dey (Marston, 2013). Due to heavy bombardment, Algiers fell to French and “Dey” and Turkish rulers of Algiers fled. The invading French armies made announcements promising not to attack the religious places and not to violate basic human rights but after short time mosques were desecrated, houses were burned, and people were killed. The reports by French war observers show a quite horrific situation of Algiers.

The period from 1830 to 1847

In 1830 when Algiers was attacked and the forces sailed to the Oran the people requested Alawi Sultan of Morocco for help through a letter sent to Sultan with many gifts (Bennison, 2011). Amir Abdul Qadir’s father Mohayi-Uddin also showed allegiance through *Baiyat* on the hand of the representative of Sultan of Morocco Ali Bin Sulaiman, when he arrived in Tlecment. After French invasion in 1830 Mohayi-Uddin asked Sultan for help against foreign occupation because he was well aware that he was too old and unable to lead the struggle against foreign occupation, but Sultan did not respond (Bennison, 2011). It indicates that

Mohayi-Uddin considered the Sultan of Morocco as a legitimate leader at that time.

When French attacked Algiers in 1830 Amir Abdul Qadir enforced a unity-order between tribes and planned a unified resistance against French. He established the base of operations in Mascara province of Oran and successfully resisted many expeditions from 1832 to 1833. Amir Abdul Qadir was considered as an extraordinary personality because there were many incidents in warfare which popularised Amir as a blessed figure having special insight and skills (Churchill, 1867). Amir visited all tribes and after mobilising people for war he besieged the three basic coastal citadels occupied by French. After miserable situation of French people General Desmichel sent three letters asking for peace. As a result in 1834 Desmichels treaty was negotiated. This treaty was formulated through translators and one was written in French while the other one was in Arabic. Arabic version had a clause which was contradictory to the French version. It was about recognising Amir as the prime leader of Algeria, but the French version had France as the superior power representing the falsehood by a civilised state (Marston, 2013).

According to this treaty Amir recognised the French superiority in the areas of Oran, Mostaghanem, and Arzew permitting them trade in these areas. France recognised the sovereignty and the monopoly of trade of Amir in rest of western Algeria. There was also clause for exchange of prisoners (Marston, 2013) by which French recognised Amir Abdul Qadir as the freedom fighter and administrative leader of western Algeria. Negotiations and treaty were also an impression of recognition of French colonial existence as party, though the acceptance of French as the party of this treaty by Amir was to get time in order to establish his rule and stability.

The Desmichel treaty was no longer followed by French generals as they broke it by attacking the areas near Macta River and they were badly defeated by Amir's people. They decided to take revenge and general Clauzel attacked many notable towns (including Mascarra- the capital of Amir) and destroyed those areas. In 1836 general Clauzel decided to attack the Arab resistance in eastern areas of the country and

sent the army of more than seven thousand men, which was thoroughly defeated by Amir's forces. French generals understood well their inability to fight in many areas of the country simultaneously, so they adopted peace. On this occasion Amir also showed willingness to peace and in 1837 a new treaty was signed known as the Treaty of Tafna (a river in Algeria). With this treaty French recognised the sovereignty of Amir over two-third of whole Algeria (Rashid, 1960). With the treaty of Tafna peace was restored and Amir got the time period of five years: a reasonable opportunity to establish his authority.

i. Good Administration

Amir Abdul Qadir was not only a warrior but also a leader with acumen's abilities of an administrator. He established the government comprising of a hierarchy of officials like pyramid with himself on the top. He divided his territory into eight equal parts known as "Khalifaliks". Its in-charge was "Khalifa" a highly trustworthy person of Amir. Khalifa was responsible to collect taxes, to establish peace, and to settle complaints. Khalifaliks were further subdivided into "Aghaliks" governed by the "Aghas" who were tribe leaders. Further there were "Qaids" in-charge on tribal level and "Sheikhs". He also appointed "Qazis" and gave them salaries to discourage corruption and encouraged the fair trial system. He organised the revenue system well, abolished all the taxes of Ottomans and just imposed the taxes according to Islamic provisions as 'Zakat' and 'Ushar'. He imposed the tax of holy war for the establishment of a strong army (Denziger, 1977).

Amir Abdul Qadir was the leader of a deep insight, who could analyse the upcoming challenges and needs of time. He felt dire need for a strong and well-equipped army to resist French ammunition as France had excelled in possessing the modern technology in the world at that time. Amir was the first person in Arabian world who comprehended the importance of Modern Army and who was well aware that military modernisation was the need of time. He not only created a good and well organised army but also equipped it with industrial infrastructure. He proved the existence of a multi-dimensional ruler having the ability to combat all the socio-political and religeo-cultural threats to the Muslim rule in Algeria. He resisted continuously for fifteen years against colonial

power and gave tough time to French forces. Defence of his territories from foreign occupation, unification of all tribal entities, and establishment of a state and system of government in Algeria supported by the well-trained army are the landmarks of his struggle (Rashid, 1960).

ii. After the Five Years of Stability

There was a time period of five years of peace and stability and Amir established a commendable system. After five years French thought of either reviewing the plans of full occupation of Algeria or following the treaty. On the other hand, Amir and his counsellors were conscious about the slogan of freedom struggle which was not yet continued. While the tribes were inclined to think that Amir had become lazy. In this situation French attacked but they were successfully resisted by Amir, resultantly governor-general was replaced by general Bugeaud and the preparation was made by French for final war to get rid of Amir and the occupation of whole Algeria. Amir sent messages for peace, but the response showed that there was a different plan this time. French followed a very despicable policy and they decided not to attack on Amir's army but on the native people and as a result their areas were destroyed, olive gardens were cut off, orchards were scorched, and the people were driven out from their homes. All of this done to cut the moral and economic support of Amir received from the tribes. French changed the war strategy due to weather and Amir's guerrilla warfare nature because Amir had experienced in 1836 at Sikak River that winning a pitched war against well-trained and well-equipped French army was difficult. War continued and the tribal support to Amir was declining with the passage of time. Notable cities which could be used as the military and political centres like Mascara, Tegdempt, Tlemcen all fell to French. Even his own Zawia where Amir was grown up, was also destroyed. All centres of Khalifas were occupied by French forces. Despite all this, Amir's treatment to the French prisoners was outstanding as Amir was the believer of Human dignity and morality. He appointed his mother to take care of female prisoners, so they to be saved from any possible abuse common in any war situation and terror. Amir's

behaviour set an example for future human convention and laws about warfare (Marston, 2013).

As French captured most of the areas of country, Amir's family and many other tribes fled for their safety to the place known as Samala. That was a tent town shift-able from one place to another in critical situation like a floating capital consisting of 60-70 thousand people where all the basic needs of people were met. In 1843 Samala was also destroyed by French and Amir was distressed on hearing the news. After destruction of his Samala Amir surrendered in 1847 on the condition that he himself and his people would be treated well. It was promised to send them into a predominantly Muslim country like Egypt or Palestine.

The life of Amir in exile is also a part of discussion in this paper especially his conduct to new people, culture, and traditions faced in the new countries. Some scholars condemned the rigidity and conservativeness of some traditionalist not to welcome the trends of time, technology and blessings of modern development, the analysis of Amir's life from this perspective is unique. There are many examples bearing the aesthetic and modern sense of Amir's conduct. Finally, he was sent to Damascus where he settled in the hope of good life (Marston, 2013).

Imprisonment

In the days of imprisonment, he neither stopped the practical worship himself nor the teachings to his people and visitors. His place of imprisonment resembled the Zawiya of Amir. He played a very vital role in Damascus when he rescued and saved thousands of Christians during a clash. The clash was between the French supported Catholic Christians of northern areas shifting to western areas and the British supported Druze in western areas. He earned fame for that cause and was highly appreciated for such merciful conduct particularly in Europe (Marston, 2013). Some scholars claim that Amir Abdul Qadir's struggle was not on the national level because he could not mobilise general public. It was only the struggle of Amir's devotees (*mureed*) due to their spiritual respect towards the Amir. On the other hand many primary sources show

that this was not the case but people from all the classes and communities gave a long and tough resistance to French (Kemper, 2007).

Amir Abdul Qadir was not only a freedom fighter struggling for the noble cause but through his generosity, loyalty, spiritual teaching, and brotherhood he impressed many people, some from the general public and some notable figures, co-religionist as well as from other religions and origins during his spiritual life, struggle, exile, imprisonment, and battlefield.

Innovations of Amir Abdul Qadir in his Thought

Amir Abdul Qadir was a man of extraordinary qualities, he was a scholar-soldier, although he was trained on traditional knowledge. He learnt and followed the modern trends of technology and intellect and showed enough broadness to become a man of the modern age with all its luxuries. His reflective life as a spiritual heritage is a model for youth being a perfect devotee-Muslim (*momin*) and a trustee of spiritual heritage. He accepted modern and contemporary thoughts and education and was compassionately patient towards the people of other faiths. During his exile in Damascus he did not stay away from practical life and its engagements instead he became the good administrator of his family due to his import/export business of grain with France and Britain and he earned fame as a notable landlord (Schilcher, 1985). He established his state, set up rudimentary bureaucratic machinery, and ruled many warring tribes under one umbrella (Denziger, 1977).

Amir Abdul Qadir in Damascus

Amir Abdul Qadir spent three decades in Damascus. Most of his time was spent in preaching and propagating religion in general and Ibn-al-Arabi's *Sufi* teachings specifically (Weismann, 2001b). His house formed the "Zawiya" a type of a religious centre where people gathered for purification of soul through sermons and other rituals within the realm of Sufi traditions. Amir Abdul Qadir trained a class of scholars who followed the teachings of ibn'Arabī (d.1240) and heavily contributed towards research and compilation of ibn'Arabī's work (Marston, 2013). In some case due to the lack of knowledge and ignorance while in other cases due to the fanatic difference of

methodology, some people say that the philosophy of *wahdat-ul-wajood* (outward and inward of everything one sees Allah) eliminates the practical motivation of struggle and often blame is attributed to Sheikh-ul-Akbar Mohayi-Uddin ibn 'Arabī (d.1240). Firstly, the *Sheikh* did not use the term *wahdat-ul-wajood* in his books and this term is attributed to him after many generations¹. Secondly, if the teachings of Ibn-al-Arbi were to propagate stagnant and lazy behaviour then how his followers like Amir Abdul Qadir carried out a great freedom struggle? Therefore, this argument gets further strength that such blames are either due to the lack of knowledge and ignorance or due to the fanaticism of different methodology. This argument is not the topic of the article otherwise a comprehensive comparative analysis on this question can be summarised on how the followers of Ibn 'Arabī made sacrifices for the dominance of Islam and self-determination of Muslim Ummah and how the critics of his philosophy made blunders and mistakes in the struggle for the dominance of Islam.

Amir Abdul Qadir's Respect in Modern World

Analysis of historical sources shows that there have been innumerable Sufis who played leading role in movements and they revolutionised the lives of people on individual as well as collective levels. For example Sheikh Mohayi-ud-Din Shah Abdul Qādir Gīlānī (d.1166), Dātā Ganj Bakhsh Alī al-Ghaznawī (d.1077) from sub-continent, Khwājā Mu'īn al-Dīn Chishtī (d.1236), Mujaddid Alif Thani Ahmad al-Sirhindī (d.1624) and Sultan-ul-Ārifeen Sultan Bahoo (d.1691) are some prominent names who paid much attention to the revival of Muslim society and political and social stability and peace. Similarly, Amir Abdul Qadir had a personality with the colours of tradition, modern ideas, and technology. As far as Islamic theological perspective is concerned he believed that exalted Quran is not only a Divine testament for specific time and people but it is a source having the ability of perpetual renewal in every era, which is constituted on the base of traditions bearing such building of modern interpretations and

¹ Wiliam Chittick at <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ibn-arabi/>

ideas that consists of the rationality and reason, the sole essence of Islamic theology towards the modern intellect (Al-Jazā'irī, 1964).

Amir Abdul Qadir as an International Leader

Keeping in view the contemporary world, Amir Abdul Qadir focused on two basic principles. Firstly, he believed in the importance of modern science and technology which could be a major driving force for progress in this world. Secondly, it was his compassion towards Christians which reflects his religious perception of west and others (Weismann, 2001b). The struggle of Amir Abdul Qadir changed the international view about the Algerian struggle of freedom. French colonisation of Algeria sparked the nationalistic zeal in the people of Algeria. People mobilised the religious and *Sufi* slogans raised by the Amir. Amir Abdul Qadir's request to Ottomans and Alawis for reinforcement (in armed struggle against French) shows Amir's believe in unity among Muslims all over the world. The basic reason behind Amir's resistance against colonial power was to protect Muslims and his Algerian identity which brought all the Arabian and Berber tribes at one platform for this struggle on the base of patriotism (King, 1992). However, Amir's role in Damascus especially regarding protection of Christians shows that he was not only the leader of Algerian Muslims but a leader for whole Muslim Ummah. Therefore, he fought for the protection of Christians as the attack on minority could become an act of shame for any Muslim country. Such conduct shows that although he belonged to Muslim community and led Muslims, yet he was the leader of whole humanity. During his resistance against French he was offered the leadership on the part of his country that was under French rule but he refused. It clearly shows that his resistance against French was not for the sake of rule or any personal interest, rather meant for the protection and rule of Muslims in Algeria against the foreign occupation (Kiser, 2008).

Fame and Popularity

Amir Abdul Qadir was not only popular in France and Africa but his fame spread all over the world. Even during his life in 1846 tribute was paid to him by the Congressman Timothy Davis who named the

American city as “Elkader” after the Algerian freedom fighter Amir Abdul Qadir Algeri due to his struggle against colonial power². Amir Abdul Qadir’s struggle was appreciated by his enemies as he was paid tribute by France through the High Military medal “Grand Cross of Legion of Honour”. The Greek government also honoured Amir Abdul Qadir with its highest Military Medal “Grand Cross Order of Redeemer”³. The leader of Christian world Pope also honoured him with the “Grand Cross Order of Pope Pius IX”. Amir Abdul Qadir was honored by Ottomans with the “Order of Majidie” due to his struggle for the Muslims of Algeria⁴. American President paid tribute to Amir Abdul Qadir through sending him two Special Pistols and Horse as Gift⁵. Amir Abdul Qadir’s struggle for freedom was appreciated by many western authors and poets. Popular British novelist and author Willian Makepeace Thakeray authored a poem titled “A Caged Hawk Amir Abdul Qadir Algeri in Toulon” in which he appreciated his struggle and life⁶. Another British poet Robert Browning wrote a poem in 1840 under the title of “Through the Matijdja to Abd-El-Qadir” to pay tribute to Amir Abdul Qadir Algeri (Brower, 2011). After ten years another poet Viscount Maidstone wrote a very long poem under the title of “The Numidian Emir” and paid tribute to the struggle of Amir Abdul Qadir. A British officer Charles Henry Churchill wrote a biography of Amir Abdul Qadir titled “The Life of Abdel Kader: Ex Sultan of the Arabs of Algeria” (Churchill, 1867).

Books and Letters

Amir Abdul Qadir was an able commander, a Sufi, a Scholar, and a poet. He found very little time of leisure. He did not only train people morally and spiritually but during his youth he was took responsibilities of a very hectic job i.e., to defend his country from colonialists.

Amir Abdul Qadir’s writings are available in form a book titled ‘Spiritual writings of Amir Abdul Qadir Algeri’ (Chodkiewicz, 1995).

² <http://www.elkader-iowa.com/history.html>

³ <https://al-jaziri.weebly.com>

⁴ <http://primrose-interiors.co.uk>

⁵ <http://www.humantrustees.org>

⁶ <https://theidealmuslimman.com>

He was also a poet and wrote poems like “Life of a nomad” in which he tried to implicit the aim of human life and communion with God (Studies in Comparative Religion, World Wisdom, Inc). He wrote a poem to pay tribute to his teacher Muhammad Al Fasi who belonged to *Shazlia* Sufi order. Amir Abdul Qadir played an active political role in the Muslim world and he wanted to see the Muslim world United. This face is obvious in the letters of Amir written to the Alawis, Ottomans, and French. After reading these letters one can judge that these letters are important as the primary document of a country’s foreign policy. Some of these letters have been published. One was published by Georgia following its translation (Brower, 2011). However, a lot of work is to be done in this field.

Death

The life of Amir Abdul Qadir is a model of determination and continuous struggle. During his youth he resisted the French occupation of Algeria for fifteen years and in the days of imprisonment and exile he proved himself as an embodiment of Islamic teachings. His guards and security officers were impressed due to his gentle behaviour and embraced Islam; the Muslim graveyard in France still reminds the dignity and purity of Amir Abdul Qadir that he never ignored the message of Islam with other engagements. In the second week of May 1883, he got unwell with heart disease and on the night of Friday May 25, 1883 he passed away (may Allah bless his soul). At that time he was in the western area of Domar in Damascus and over sixty thousand people offered his funeral prayer; he was buried near the grave of his spiritual mentor Sheikh ul Akbar ibn‘Arabī (d.1240) which was his utmost desire (Arabi, 1980).

Conclusion

Amir Abdul Qadir Algeri was the man of multi-dimensional personality and as a Sufi he belonged to *Qādiri* order and *Marabout*. He was known due to extraordinary communion with God, piousness and his attention towards the message of Islam. As a freedom fighter he had leading abilities to resist French on the bases of human honour and dignity which were obvious in the war in a defensive mode. As an

ambassador he successfully negotiated with a great power of his time even when there was no state or system in Algeria. Through the treaties, he got time to establish his state system, showed leadership qualities, united all warring tribes, and directed them to one cause. When we analyse these diverse characteristics of his personality, we notice that different titles awarded to him by Europeans are well suited because he fought not less than any other contemporary freedom fighter like those of Thomas Jefferson and George Washington. He successfully established a state to resist the occupation for fifteen years.

As a Muslim statesman, he showed his high interest in education, society and in the implementation of Islamic law as his house was like a *Zawiya* or *Khankah* with all aspects of social welfare, Islamic teaching and training. This was the case not only under his rule in his state but also during his exile. Amir Abdul Qadir was a role model for the *Sufis* of this age and he was an answer to orientalists, conservatives and liberals regarding their questions on war and Sufism.

According to Allama Iqbal war is not only the situation where a soldier is fighting with weapons, but in ideology the situation is like “The battles of Sharia are hand to hand” or it can be understood through the times of Iqbal where there was the issue of “geographic nationalism” and “religious nationalism” about which Iqbal says:

Barh Ke Khayber Se Hai Ye Maarka-e-Deen-o-Watan

Iss Zamane Mein Koi Haidar-e-Karar Bhi Hai?

This conflict of religion or land is bigger than Khyber

To decide it, in this time and age is there any Haider?

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